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Forms of the Supernatural on Stage: Evolution, Mutations

Textes réunis par
Richard Hillman

Staging the *Peregrini**

John J. McGavin
University of Southampton

If one looks at medieval images of the crucifixion, what seems most striking is not the central image of Christ on the cross so much as the episode's capacity for change, its openness to being re-envisaged in different contexts and for different functions. The more ideologically central an image, the more it seems likely to permit, or even *require*, such re-envisioning. That is what makes and keeps it a core image: its adaptability. This is fairly obvious when one considers pictorial images, but we have not allowed the idea to run as far as it should in dramatic criticism. Why should we consider the playmaker as any more of an *auteur*, let alone an *auctor*, than the painter who knew for whom the image was to be produced, and for what purpose, and created the work to suit those exigencies? I would argue that the dynamic of play production is not so much driven independently by the writer or the playmaker as by the needs, desires, fears and tastes of the expected audience, in their relation to the core ideology they have received, its imagery and traditions. At its most fundamental, what the audience will be *able* to comprehend limits the making of a play, but over and above that, the playwright will make many finer judgements about the audience and the local context of production. One reason we have been relatively slow to follow this through is that pinning down a chronology for individual plays or collections has been exceptionally hard, and is constantly being revised, so it is hard to link a play's style or content to a specific time. The collections of civic drama which we now have in the so-called "cycles", even where the manuscript's date comes from the period of production, contain plays from different periods of composition, having undergone varying degrees of revision, sometimes, as in the case of Chester, to make them support what was already defined as

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house-style. But if anything, that should encourage us to look *more* at what the plays themselves suggest their audiences' needs and desires might have been. The evidence we find could then be linked to the interpretation of other cultural objects, and a chronology gradually proposed by internal literary reading as much as by external evidence.

I could choose many plays to exemplify this, but there are a number of reasons that make the *Peregrini* suitable. These include the nature of its source, in which the roots of its adaptability lie, its varied action, and its metatheatrical quality. To adumbrate this study one might mention that the very definition of the disciples and Christ as *peregrini* ("pilgrims") is itself a liturgical re-envisaging of the biblical source, and English plays often opted for a title which included "Emmaus", the place where the central event took place.

The story of the *Peregrini* concerns the risen Christ's appearance to two sorrowing disciples on the road to Emmaus, his conversation with them, including instruction in the prophecies about Christ while not revealing his real identity to them, and then his subsequent disappearance after he had blessed bread and given it to them at supper, at which point the disciples belatedly realise who has been with them. It is attested only at the end of Luke's gospel (24:13-35), where it follows the discovery of the empty tomb by the three Maries and precedes Christ's appearance to eat fish and honey with his disciples in the upper room. In the most obvious instance of re-packaging the narrative, plays in various genres sometimes unbiblically combined the Emmaus or *Peregrini* episode into a larger set of Christ's resurrection appearances, including those to Mary Magdalen in the garden and to Thomas Didymus from the gospel of John, but I will mainly focus here on the single episode.

The biblical story has a mythic power, making profound claims about the human condition through a simple narrative. It affirms that the supernatural and natural worlds can intersect in the most intimate and ordinary of circumstances, the divine encountered on the road, God coming *in medias res*, as it were, to walk and talk with men, willing to be persuaded to sit down and eat with them at an inn. But it also says that human vision is imperfect—Christ is unrecognised for most of the story, but is then identified by the disciples when he disappears. It is one of these myths about whether thresholds can be crossed—like Orpheus's failure to recover Eurydice because he looked back when only he had passed over into life, or Mary Magdalene's seeing Christ only as the gardener until her own identity was given by Christ in speaking her name. As in the best myths, the narrator seems to be absent, events largely speaking for themselves; the story's paratactic style sequences events without always stating their causal relationship: "Et factum est, dum recumberet cum eis, accepti panem, et benedixit, ac fregit, et porrigebat illis. Et aperti sunt oculi eorum. [And it came to pass, whilst he was at table with them, he took bread and blessed and brake and gave to them. And their eyes were opened.]" (Luke 24:30-31;

Vulgate with Douay-Rheims trans.). It does not say here that their eyes were opened *because* Christ blessed, or broke or distributed the bread, though the disciples later say they recognised Christ *through* his breaking the bread at supper (24:35). In addition, emotions are limited and emerge almost tangentially rather than as a prominent feature of the story: for example, one hears that the disciples are sorrowful only because Christ asks them why they are. They do not express their grief, and the biblical narrator does not tell us subsequently about their feelings of joy or regret or penitence when they discover whom they encountered and at first failed to identify. The biblical narrative is suggestive and emotive rather than determinative and emotional. Precisely because it leaves so much unsaid, it comes over as mythically emblematic of the complex relationship of the natural and supernatural, and so open to further discussion. At the end the *peregrini* may claim to have recognised Christ from his breaking bread, but the story itself included other details which were linked to recognition without being explained or put into any hierarchy of causation: the blessing, the distributing, Christ's miraculous disappearance, the affective force of his teaching—"Was not our heart burning within us?" (24:32 [Douai-Rheims]), the disciples say. In this respect, the biblical source has a degree of disparateness, even of incoherence, that invites further attention, and would be problematic if one were determined to look for precise explanations. And Christians did, whether they were theologians or playmakers.

If one wants to appreciate further the room for manoeuvre that the story allowed, one only needs to look at the attempts made to pin it down. When myth turns to scripture, and scripture becomes the Word, and especially when the Word becomes the only ground of faith, as was the case in the Reformation, narrative has to bear the weight of theological desire. Gaps in the narrative need to be filled; what might be incidental details become potentially symbolic; actions are treated as exemplary, and bare fact is turned towards teaching. Although there was already a long-standing Catholic tradition of interpreting the story, hermeneutic transformations of the myth are particularly evident in the Reformist writings of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, where there is hardly an aspect of the story that was not picked over and turned to didactic advantage.[1]

Topics included *why* the pilgrims were going to Emmaus, and what the name "Emmaus" means linguistically and allegorically (Patten, p. 81; Boys, p. 359; Andrewes, p. 404); why they were going *away* from Jerusalem, and why they were not believed by the disciples when they returned to report (this not, in fact, a detail in the Luke story,

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[1]   The theological commentaries and sermons referenced in what follows were accessed on the *EEBO: Early English Books Online* website: <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/home> (accessed 29 January 2018).

but rather inferred from Thomas's doubt in John's gospel); whether Christ's pressing to continue his journey is to be understood figuratively or literally (Fisher, p. 260); how his expounding Moses, Psalms and the prophets to the *peregrini* supports the importance of scripture over the *unwritten* traditions of the Catholics (Bell, p. 110); how it was that the disciples didn't recognise Christ and what *exactly* led to their eventually recognising him (Ambrose, pp. 31-32 [chap. 2, sect. 7]; Allen, pp. 371 and 384; Rollock, pp. 354-55). As we will see, medieval civic drama also found the cause of their recognition an area of doubt ripe for exploitation. Other topics included the warmth of the effect that his words had on the disciples, and what we should feel (Ambrose, p. 345; Perkins, p. 395); how this day of multiple resurrection appearances (Easter Monday) confirms the dignity of the Christian over the Jewish Sabbath (Widley, p. 38); and, in an imaginative plundering of the text, how the scriptures used by Christ to instruct the disciples on the road to Emmaus all speak against usury (Fenton, p. 35). Particularly important, and for obvious reasons, was whether Christ gave the sacrament to the two disciples, or simply blessed bread as one would do before any meal (Allen, p. 384); and, if he *was* giving the sacrament, whether he used only the element of bread, since wine was not mentioned (Sarpi, pp. 519-20). This had been an issue for various church fathers—some fathers had thought it *was* the sacrament—and was still current at the Council of Trent. Calvin thought it was not the sacrament but just blessing bread; some reformed commentators thought it simply a synecdoche for having a meal, with no literal exclusions one way or the other (Lindsay, p. 42). On the Catholic side of the debate, one finds a tract arguing that Christ's unrecognised appearance to the disciples shows how he can be invisibly present in the sacrament (Gwynneth, fol. 52^r). The *Peregrini* story was even recommended to Catholics as a justification for equivocating under interrogation, following the example Christ set when he pretended to be going forward on his journey (Worthington, p. 215). The blindness of the apostles to Christ's identity could be seen as giving comfort to someone actually blind (Hakewill, pp. 168-69), whereas at the level of international politics the story was caught up in the episcopal controversy between the Scots and English churches about the lawfulness of ceremonies, such as private sacraments and kneeling at communion: if Christ's blessing the bread meant that he was giving communion to the disciples, did this validate private communion, which the Presbyterians opposed but King James supported? And did it support sitting, rather than kneeling, at communion (Lindsay, p. 42)—the first of these things being correct in the view of Presbyterians, as against the king's insistence on kneeling? Interpreted with diverse degrees of theological, practical, personal, sectarian and political emphasis, the story could be made valuable to everyone. A scriptural text which could be regarded as modelling how people encounter and recognise God was bound to have its indeterminacies transformed into specific ideological assertions and exploited, shifting with genre, to meet the needs of specific audiences.

Nothing shows this more powerfully than dramatic versioning of the biblical story, and that's where this article goes next.

Rosemary Woolf called the *Peregrini* episode "a subject difficult to invest with dramatic life" (p. 280). This judgement has always troubled me, partly because Woolf had very good judgement, partly because I personally find the episode moving, even, if I am honest, *deeply attractive* about how things might be in the world, and so I can't understand how it could not translate into good theatre. It is also true that the story already contains several of Aristotle's core dramatic elements: *hamartia* (= failure, in this case a failure to recognise Christ); *peripeteia* (= a sudden reversal of circumstances, in this case when the disciples' interlocutor miraculously disappears); and *anagnorisis* (= recognition, in this case when the disciples realise who was with them). Admittedly, the most important element, *catharsis*, is missing, because the story is, in medieval terms, a comedy, which moves from inauspicious beginnings to a happy conclusion. However, I also find Woolf's judgement challenging because the *peregrini* episode was in fact very popular as a dramatic subject in different medieval theatrical and national traditions over a period of at least 400 years.

From the twelfth century it was part of a liturgical drama for Vespers on Easter Monday, the *Ordo ad Peregrinum*, where it was combined with the appearance to the disciples and Doubting Thomas. Found in versions from Rouen, Fleury, Beauvais, and Madrid, it was evidently important on the continent.[2] As regards English liturgical observance, researchers at the University of Durham working on the *Records of Early English Drama* (*REED*) for the North-East have recently identified, performed and reconstructed the music for a verse play written there by Prior Lawrence around 1150, on the model of the *Ordo*, and it can be seen on YouTube.[3] Other English examples may well now be obscured by the accidents of recording, hidden behind general references to "resurrection" plays or plays which name more prominent figures such as Doubting Thomas, as Lincoln Cathedral's records do. Furthermore, while Lincoln's Corpus Christi plays are recorded in the last thirty years of the fifteenth century, there is no detailed information about their content, so one is not in any position to see whether the prominence of the *Peregrini* in the Easter liturgy of fourteenth-century Lincoln (*REED: Lincolnshire*, II: 408) resulted in its being present in the now-lost Corpus Christi plays of the fifteenth century, but the general impression one gets from what detail there is does not suggest identifiable transference of material between the venues. Stokes writes

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2   Gardiner includes extended analyses (and translations) of these versions.

3   See <http://community.dur.ac.uk/reed.ne/?page_id=80> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7a_jG3nLuGs> (both accessed 30 January 2018). See also Bevington, ed., which contains the Beauvais *Ordo ad Peregrinum*.

that "Evidence concerning the pageants that were embedded in the procession is sketchy at best" (*REED: Lincolnshire*, II: 417). However, one record fortunately shows that the episode was indeed part of the liturgical tradition at Wells Cathedral. Payments for an Easter week play continued through most of the fifteenth century, and that for 1417-18 evidences the *Peregrini*: "Item Solut*um* p*ro* tinct*ione* 1 tog*e* S*an*cti Saluator*is* p*ro* ludo in Ebd*omada* Pasch*atis* & p*ro* barbis pro ij palmer*ijs* xvid [Also paid for the dyeing of one robe of the Holy Saviour for the play in Easter week and for two beards for two pilgrims, 16d]" (*REED: Somerset,* I: 243; trans. Abigail Ann Young at II: 834). What is not clear is whether this episode had always been and would remain part of what was presumably a liturgy-linked play. More seriously, the records do not show how the episode worked as theatre—for example, *when* in the play Christ wore this special dyed robe, whether it contributed theatrically to the pilgrims realising who he was, or how the spectators' knowledge of Christ wearing it affected their response to the disciples when they were slow to recognise Christ. These are the points where the real experience of spectators is lost to us.

However, we have more evidence if we pass to another generic transformation of the story—that of English vernacular drama produced under civic or partially lay auspices, in which the *Peregrini* episode seems to have had wide currency. It appears in all four extant collections of biblical plays, *York*, *Chester*, and the *N-Town* and *Towneley* anthologies. It was not apparently in Coventry's famous cycle, but I will return to this. It is relatively easy to see what theatrical possibilities might have attracted any playmaker, regardless of the episode's significance in the story of salvation. These possibilities were permitted by both what the Bible did include, and what it left unspoken.

Firstly, it allowed variety in a number of areas: in the range of possible emotions in the characters, only hinted at in the Bible; and in the styles of acting, which could run from the intimate to the manneristic, and hence prove adaptable to new tastes. Its action could incorporate set-piece lament, set-piece instruction, conversation, ceremonial or even sacramental action, and theatrical special effects—all of which could make the episode dramatically adaptable, permitting different emphases of treatment and theatrical exploitation. For example, the disappearance could be managed in a number of ways from the casual to the spectacular, not least because the important element was not the actual event and how it happened, but rather the reactions of the disciples, whose responses would guide those of the spectators. Secondly, the central event of Christ's blessing and breaking bread, in suggesting the Mass, would have created links with the experience of a broad spectrum of spectators, offering engagement for more spectators than even the meeting of Christ with Mary (though that must have had a gendered appeal) or Thomas putting his hands into Christ's wounds. Thirdly, without being specific, the biblical story, with its passage from confusion to understanding, and from

loss to recovery, offered the possibility of a definable emotional dynamic in spectator response. The English dramatists made a point of exploiting this to create different emotional trajectories through the play, as well as allowing contrary feelings to over-lie each other, creating at times the characteristically turbulent affect of lay piety, in which pity, anger, sado-masochistic fascination with brutality, self-reproach, joy, comprehension, sympathy, and so on, mingle.

And lastly, the story offered central characters of relatively lowly status, who were adaptable to local circumstances because they came without a clear traditional profile (or even in some cases names) and thus allowed the spectator to feel more directly implicated in the action. If we turn to the plays themselves, what presses for our attention is the variety of routes which were taken, some of which seem clearly identifiable with local culture or the special conditions of production and preservation.

The *Chester* cycle, for example, has come down to us largely as the product of mid-sixteenth century revision partly at least in response to Reformist pressure, but it also shows evidence that such revision attempted to preserve the character, emphases and style of the cycle as it had developed. As David Mills showed, this valuing of the local product was responsible for the antiquarian manuscripts of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, in which the cycle was preserved a generation or more after its performances had ceased (Mills, *Recycling*, p. 185; see also Mills, "Chester Cycle"). Chester's *Peregrini* story is combined with Christ's appearance to the disciples and to Thomas, thus following the pattern of liturgical drama but *also* Chester's preference for multi-episode plays. The manuscript entitles it *Concerning Christ's appearance to the two disciples going to the Castle of Emmaus and to other disciples* (*Chester*, p. 356; my translation). In many of its plays, *Chester* contrasts the reaction of believers and unbelievers to Christ's miraculous signs, but, while it cannot quite do that with the two disciples of this story, Lucas and Cleophas, it nuances them towards such an effect by making one appear more confident and the other more doubting at different stages. The sense one gets is that this play is hedging its bets, and particularly so in the vexed area of *how* exactly the disciples came to realise that their companion was Christ (as previously noted, that was one of the questions addressed by theologians).

Most strikingly, *Chester* changes the order of events in the Bible so as to elide the difference between the sacramental sign of the breaking of bread and the miraculous sign of Christ's disappearance, the latter corresponding to *Chester*'s traditional emphasis on the miraculous signs and tokens by which Christ revealed his identity. The bible says that the disciples' eyes were opened after the blessing, breaking and distribution of the bread, and *then* Christ disappeared (Luke 24:31). *Chester* changes this so that the disappearance comes before the recognition. And Lucas actually responds to the disappearance (ll. 126-27) *before* Cleophas comments on the blessing of the bread (ll. 130-31). The recogni-

tion of Christ is thus neatly sandwiched between the two comments at ll. 128-29. Later, Cleophas reports the episode's events to the disciples in their biblical order, with revelation coming from the breaking of bread, and the vanishing following it (ll. 156-59), but that is not how the event was dramatized for the spectator, who was encouraged to promote the disappearance to the same level of proof as the sacramental action. Also in keeping with *Chester*'s sixteenth-century, and possibly Reformist, emphasis on words themselves (and especially the biblical text) as signs, *Chester*'s Christ expounds the prophets, and the manuscript includes the Latin biblical text which he is explaining, a pattern one finds throughout the cycle. The consequence of all this is, firstly, a reminder to the spectators through Cleophas and Lucas that they should be conscious of varying degrees of faithfulness and, secondly, a balanced account of the relative power of teaching, sacramental sign and miraculous sign to reveal God—this version being strongly along the lines of the cycle's established style and, in the theologically fraught context of mid-sixteenth century pressures on drama, producing a performance which would not frighten either camp.

In contrast, *York*'s single episode play, its manuscript begun around 1476-77 (*York*, ed. Beadle, I: xii), emphasises less the means by which God is disclosed to man than a narrative that can generate affective piety. Three things principally distinguish it from *Chester*. Firstly, it emphasises the recounting of the passion story by the pilgrims—before Christ's appearance, in greater detail to Christ himself, and then again with new material after he has disappeared, Secondly, this narrative emphasis (directed through the pilgrims to the audience) *and* the final breaking of the fourth wall when the disciples announce that they must leave because of the press of oncoming plays serve to construct a close identity between the pilgrims and the spectator. Thirdly, the play integrates its prosody and drama so that interruptions, shifts, and changes in the prosody actually create the theatrical effects of Christ's entrance, his reluctance, his acceding to the pilgrims' demands, his disappearance, and its aftermath. The consequence of these features is to make the episode an extended and detailed reflection on the Passion by men who are positioned as close to the spectators (they re-narrate what the spectators have seen dramatised)—men whose failings in faith are recognised but not emphasised by Christ, and whose passage from sorrowful memory to joyful mission is the overall dynamic of the play. Christ's teaching is substantially reduced, the penitential largely absent. Christ's miraculous disappearance is not separated from his blessing of the bread as leading to their recognition: instead, both seem covered by the lines: "be the werkis that he wrought full wele might we witte / Itt was Jesus hymselffe—I wiste who he was" (*York*, Play 40 [*The Supper at Emmaus*], ll. 165-66). While a later line, in accordance with the bible, emphasises the breaking of the bread as the proof that it was he—"We saugh hym in sight, nowe take we entent, / Be the brede that he brake vs so baynly between" (ll. 179-80)—the emphasis

is more on his wonderful ways and works together providing a theatrical antidote to the cruel narrative of the Passion. Similarly, there is no nuancing of the two pilgrims, as there is in *Chester*. Indeed, only one of them is named (the usual one being, as here, Cleophas), and actually he is II *Peregrinus*. So, while the play follows tradition in naming Cleophas, it does not want to project any contrasts on stage, but rather seeks to draw the audience close to both men.

The *Towneley* version is distinctive in several respects. The emphasis as a whole falls upon the pilgrims' feelings, beliefs, reactions and limitations, and this is quite drawn out (what *Chester* does in 144 lines, *York* in 194, and even *N-Town* in 240, *Towneley* gives 386 to). Narrating what has happened previously (a frequent *Towneley* device) is used to emphasise the disciples' penitential questioning, rhetorically directed at the Jews but then also at themselves—in ways we can recognise as common in treatises promoting lay piety through emotional involvement in imagined scenes. The potential in the biblical story for confusion about precisely what revealed Christ to the disciples is, if anything, increased by the author's attempt to resolve it. Theatrically, the pilgrims' recognition of Christ seems to come about after his miraculous disappearance (*Towneley*, Play 27 [*Pilgrims*], ll. 287-303), but then the play concentrates on the pilgrims' self-criticism for not recognising him from his teachings and his beauty (l. 314); then they backtrack, saying that they *did* recognise him from the bread breaking (ll. 334-35 and 346-51). But they also propose that he disappeared *because* he realised that they had recognised him (ll. 352-55), which is obviously a rationalising of the inexplicit ordering of events in the bible. There seems to be a disparity between, on the one hand, how the play would have worked *in practice*, with the symbolic triune breaking of the bread, the blessing of it, and the miracle of disappearance working powerfully together, and, on the other, the internal characters' confusion of chagrin, penitence and self-deluding attempts at self-justification. The play exploits the difference between a piece of pure, clear action, in which all the stages of the eating and disappearance are combined in a single stage direction at line 296, and a welter of confused, inconsistent and penitential responses by the participants. Add to this the author's decision to explain why Christ disappeared, and one has a perfect example of how the perceived needs of the audience drive the playmaking, but also of how complicated it might be to unpick those needs. This play allows for powerful action and complex emotion in actual performance, but it also seems to speak to a different reception, one perhaps more reflective of the *Towneley* manuscript's mid-sixteenth century date and its role as a late reassurance about the worth of Catholic doctrine: one has the sense that the play, even if it is not intended for readers, is being composed by someone whose characteristic activity is reading, or writing for readers! The affective piety overlaps with affective lyric poems and treatises; Christ's exposition of the prophets is also extended, and the general character of the writing, whatever its

original auspices, is in keeping with the practices of private reflection. This is a text in which explanations of what was left unspoken in the Bible were as important as any real theatrical experience.

The *N-Town Peregrini*, whose manuscript date puts it into the later fifteenth century, close to *York*, may have originally been performed on its own (as the Proclamation suggests), but it became joined to other resurrection appearances climaxing with Doubting Thomas, and this is significant because it thus became part of a larger structure focused on proof and unbelief. The nature of proof is at the heart of the play, the *peregrini* being allowed to dispute Christ's teaching so as to draw from him a set of quite traditional analogies for life after death—Jonah in the whale, Aaron's flowering rod, and finally Lazarus—which progressively offer more convincing evidence for the truth of the resurrection. Christ's breaking the bread and his disappearance must have provided a climactic *coup de théâtre*, though it is hidden behind a single line of stage direction, but this theophany is also a slightly enigmatic affair, for there is a substantial delay of about sixty lines (which would have included the disciples returning to Jerusalem) between Christ's breaking the bread and the disciples, as the bible directs, stating to Peter that it was this that revealed the truth to them. In their account, Christ's manual breaking of bread is additionally miraculous (and traditional, as evidenced by its presence in *Cleanness*[4]) in its precision: "As ony sharpe knyff xuld kytt brede" (*N-Town*, Play 37 [*Cleophas and Luke; The Appearance to Thomas*], l. 286).

N-Town does, in fact, dramatise both the miraculous vanishing and Christ's *blessing* the bread, which he himself draws attention to (ll. 213-14), but the pilgrims do not refer to either of these in their own account of how they came to believe. Instead they seem to achieve belief through the power of the feelings inspired by Christ's teaching, his kindness, and his proofs. So the play has it both ways, allowing the power of miracle and sacrament to work on the audience, but emphasising the probative force of teaching—thus setting up the moment when Christ will say in the Thomas episode (ll. 349-52) that those who have faith despite *not* having seen are more blessed. It is a clever way for drama to resolve the diverse routes to divine recognition in the biblical story, since it provides the excitement of theatrical revelation to an audience living after Christ, but in a context where teaching is presented as the better means of arriving at faith. It is also a combination which we can see as distinctively regional, a late-fifteenth century East Anglian achievement, defending faith in a scholarly and exact manner against perceived heresies, but also satisfying the theatrical and emotional desires of personal lay piety. Its orthodox

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4   A hundred or so years earlier than *N-Town*, the anonymous author of the poem *Cleanness* wrote (clearly about the Last Supper) that Christ was so gracious in his touch that he needed neither knife nor edge to break bread perfectly (ll. 1101-8). I am grateful to Greg Walker for this point.

but also proto-Reformist position is rather like other contemporary East Anglian plays, such as *Wisdom*.

A hundred years later, when the Coventry authorities were engaged in mid-sixteenth century Reformist revisions of the Coventry Playbook, amongst other things by removing Marian material, why, one wonders, did they record payment for the *addition* of material on "the Castle of emaus" (*Coventry*, ed. King and Davidson, p. 41; *REED: Coventry*, p. 191) —in other words, pay to include the story of the *Peregrini*? The answer to that question, I believe, is to be found in the diversity we have encountered in the other English plays. Most obviously, they turned to it because of the contemporary importance of the core topic: whether, and by what means, ordinary people might identify the supernatural; how the divine could be recognised and drawn within the human realm; and how people could gain understanding of themselves from success or failure in taking the routes to identification open to them. These were routes which the biblical story, almost despite itself, had allowed to be varied, so permitting different accounts of how the supernatural could be recognised by questioning, limited human beings. This variety, whereby either miracle, scriptural teaching, affect, sacramental or purely ceremonial action might provide a means of accessing the divine, is probably what made the episode so ubiquitous in Catholic theatrical tradition, but it also ensured that the episode was one to which Protestant playmakers might also turn. One could pick one's route to recognising the divine, so the *Peregrini* was an amenable subject for drama in changing local circumstances.

I think that Rosemary Woolf thought the subject "difficult to invest with dramatic life" because she did not like the kind of life with which it was invested. She did not like the realist, indecorous comedy around the inn at Emmaus employed by continental dramatists (Woolf, p. 280); she didn't like *Chester*'s "perfunctory" attempt to add theological weight (p. 280); she evidently didn't find the *York* or *Towneley* versions worthy of much comment. On the whole, she didn't engage with spectator emotion. What she *did* like was the *N-Town* version, but her praise of it is really a reflection of herself: its scholarly creativity in turning tradition to new uses, its balance "between instruction and scepticism", its structural adroitness and its theological seriousness, the author's "subtle and devotional imagination" (Woolf, p. 281). I say this not to criticise Woolf, but to emphasise the point that the *Peregrini* episode's relative unfixedness enables us to like what we like. It offered the dramatist scope to shift the story in a direction appropriate to the context in which spectators would view it; its different parts allowed the spectator room for personal engagement of a varied, possibly even diffuse, kind. It permitted a kind of "smudged" affectivity, blending different kinds of response, not always coherently and rarely single in character. Staging the *Peregrini* meant staging the self in reaction to the supernatural, but the different ways in which that was done reveal much about local cul-

tures, which saw in the episode an opportunity to exploit drama's distinctive capacities and pleasures.

But we can argue for a further feature which may have made the play attractive—one fundamental to drama as a medium. Play is an instantiation of change telescoped into the one or two hours traffic of the stage: events occur, characters are affected by them, and a plot develops. It is in that fundamental sense that it is a mimesis, a representation of life. It allows the spectator to feel emotional change as events unfold. Perhaps spectators achieve an emotional resolution which would not be achieved if the events were experienced in real life, but in any case they can feel, and explore within limits, emotions which they might not consciously wish to feel outside the play or ideas they might not consciously wish to confront. It is a space whose social value lies in exposing human beings to that which they might normally feel anxiety about—the condition of change in which we all live—but in a controlled manageable environment. In plays where the end is known, either because the play has been seen before or because it conveys a narrative which is traditional and ideology which is to any degree accepted, that process of confrontation with, and management of, change may be less frightening or challenging *because* of what is known, but the power of feeling can still be safely experienced afresh under the pressure of the event. However, some plays, and the *Peregrini* is one, go further, actually replicating the experience of the spectator within the play's action.

In our case, this is done, firstly, by showing the interruption of a journey and later allowing it to continue with new purpose and meaning—something that the spectators may recognise as symbolic of their own lives, but which is essentially what the play itself is doing to their normal life. But more than that, the play takes its characters, the *peregrini*, through a process of revelation which mimics the one being forced on the spectators by the medium itself. The rather ordinary disciples within the story go through a parallel experience to that of the spectators: looking, listening, recognising, understanding, being changed; and so spectators have their own experience doubled in what they watch. This may be a different kind of dramatic life from what Woolf envisaged, but it is one which the plays seem to have particularly valued, for staged moments of revelation were frequent elements in the revelatory medium of late-medieval drama.[5] The integration of biblical revelation in the *Peregrini* with the revelation which constitutes the dramatic medium itself, both unfolding through time, gave intensity, conviction and authority to the ideological adaptations which served local needs and tastes.

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5   See McGavin and Walker, pp. 105-43.

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Theta XIII
Forms of the Supernatural on Stage: Evolution, Mutations

Textes réunis par
Richard Hillman

Mary — Fourth Person of the Deity?

Jean-Paul Débax
Université Toulouse-Jean Jaurès

This essay deals with the character of the Virgin Mary as it appears in the Middle English dramatic cycles. I wish to explore by what means and to what extent these plays contributed, at a strategic time (fourteenth and fifteenth centuries) and in a privileged medium (religious drama), to the birth and construction of a quasi-divine character, the Virgin Mary.

I will take as a basis for this study the plays dealing with the life of the Virgin, mostly from the "N-Town" manuscript (formerly sometimes known as the *Ludus Coventriae*), not restricting myself to what Peter Meredith calls the "Mary play", and with the occasional help of individual plays from other cycles, when necessary. I will address the plays staging the Virgin regardless of the construction of the cycle, my standpoint straddling the fields of religious concepts and, on the other hand, dramatic construction.

As a sort of introduction to the following interpretation, two remarks are necessary concerning the general background which presided over the conception of the texts under consideration. Although well known to modern criticism, they need to be mentioned again, as they bear directly on my argumentation.

It all starts in 1215. Indeed, the principles and tenets laid down in the edicts of the Fourth Lateran Council (and incarnated by the Peckham Constitutions of 1281 in the case of the English Church) constitute the core of the dogmas and practices of the European Catholic Church, still valid in Roman Catholic countries until fairly recently: definition of a ritual year, with regular confessions and communions, and the dogma of transubstantiation, among others. Those instructions were not radically new when published, but should rather be considered as an official reaction to the needs which were more and more urgent in a changing society. The Church, having become by 1215 an official institution, had to adopt a new attitude towards the faithful, as will be strikingly worded towards the end of the period by Knowlege [*sic*] in

Everyman: "Eueryman, I wyll go with the and be thy gyde, / In thy moost nede to go by thy syde" (ll. 522-23). The Church had to comply with the new notions of help, guidance and understanding to mitigate the rigour of a stern justice. In other words, a third type of destination for the souls of the dead was felt necessary, superseding the hard and fast binary choice between hell and paradise. Is it not interesting to remark that that period is also that in which the belief in the existence of purgatory became acceptable to most Christian thinkers, and to Christians in general?[1]

My second point concerns the schism following the excommunication of the Patriarch of Constantinople by Leo IX (1054), which provoked an awareness of the differences (institutional and theological) between the Eastern and Western Churches (differences embodied in the "Filioque" controversy). The cult of the saints was probably more developed in the East, and particularly the veneration of the Virgin. Paradoxically, the break between the two churches coincides with an increased influence of eastern traditions.[2] Marian shrines and pilgrimages crop up all over Europe, and in such numbers in England that the country came to be known as "Mary's dowry".[3]

The Parliament of Heaven

In order to exemplify the method used in the late Medieval plays for the representation of divinity, I will select, as a first example, Play 11 of the N-Town cycle, *The Parliament of Heaven* (with *The Salutation and Conception*).[4] This play is wedged in between two pseudo-historical episodes (in fact derived from the apocrypha), the play of Mary's betrothal (Play 10, *The Marriage of Mary and Joseph*) and *Joseph's Doubt* (Play 12), an episode of pure fiction, and showing some farcical features, but inserted in a realistic time sequence. Play 11 has an ambiguous relationship with time, situated as it is within neither chronological worldly time nor divine eternity. It is the only play among those introduced by Contemplacio's Prologue[5] that begins with a precise temporal landmark: "Fowre thowsand sex vndryd four" years (Pro., l. 1)—the length of time that the damned have suffered in hell since the Creation and the Fall of Man. The mention of a precise date creates an effect of urgency, since Contemplacio's argument is that if they were kept longer, "thanne xulde perysche [God's] grete mercye" (l. 5).

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1   See Le Goff, pp. 9-27 ("Le troisième lieu"). Le Goff suggests that Augustine is the true father of purgatory (pp. 92-94).

2   For the influence of the Eastern Church, see Clayton, p. 269.

3   See Gibson, p. 138, and Saul, p. 208.

4   All references are to *The N-Town Play*, ed. Spector.

5   Contemplacio introduces Plays 8, 9 and 11 and provides a retrospective and anticipatory link at the end of Play 9. The importance of the Prologue to Play 11 is pointed out by Gauvin, p. 143, who notes the logical sequence which links the Fall of Man to the Incarnation.

The motif of the Parliament of Heaven, ultimately derived from Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica,* was frequently used in the French Passions, the most famous example being Arnoul Gréban's *Mystère de la Passion*, where it is developed over 1000 lines at the beginning of the play.[6] It is also known as the most impressive episode of a famous English morality play, *The Castle of Perseverance*, a solemn conclusion to the story of man's temptation, fall and final conversion to virtue. In the French passion, it belongs to the first Advent of Christ, immediately after the Fall of Man, and is used to show Christ deciding in favour of man's salvation through his own sacrifice on the cross; in *The Castle of Perseverance*, it acts as a summing up of Christ's mission after man's salvation has been completed. In both cases, it appears as a rather abstract theological pronouncement, whose consequences can be extended to the whole of mankind.

In Play 11 of the N-Town cycle, the argument is conducted along the traditional lines already used in Continental passions, but its topical use is particularly effective. The motif opens on a fervent prayer by Contemplacio, asking God to come down to earth "And levyn ʒerys thre and threttye" (l. 11). The episode belongs both to time (4604 years after the Fall) and to an abstract duration, a moral or providential time which is neither today nor the end of the world. The success of Mercy allows Jesus to rescue the damned from hell. The ambiguous chronology allows the spectators to combine this episode with the more "historical" Harrowing of Hell, which is generally placed in the cycles between the Passion and Resurrection, and can be interpreted as belonging to the same compassionate plan in favour of mankind. Forgiveness should not worry about logic, but its nature is presented as a rencociliation of "contraries":[7] only a God who would at the same time be a man can realise this sublimation of human contradictions.

Here, in the first part of the play, which consists of the debate between the so-called Four Daughters of God, the introduction of Jesus and the Holy Spirit results in what I would call a humanisation of the situation, as the sisters' presence is a prefiguration of the canonical episode of the Annunciation. Jesus exclaims, "It peyneth me þat man I mad, / Þat is to seyn, peyne I must suffre fore" (ll. 169-70). This human touch is to be found side by side with a reference to the Trinity: "A counsel of þe Trinité must be had (l. 171). The answer comes from God the Father ("Pater"), whose intervention restores the intimate character of the dialogue. The Holy Spirit finds emotive and poetical words to describe his (or its) active part in the realisation of the new unity brought into being by the kiss between the four daughters: "I, Love, to ʒoure lover xal ʒow lede. / Þis is þe assent of oure Vnyté" (ll. 183-84). This action is inspired by the original kiss mentioned in Psalm 84:10 (85 in Protestant bibles).

6　　See esp. Gréban, pp. 81-96.

7　　"Twey contraryes mow not togedytr dwelle" (l. 64).

Immediately after that famous kiss, the Virgin is evoked, as Pater directs the angel Gabriel to descend

> To a mayd, weddyd to a man is she,
> Of whom þe name is Joseph, se,
>   Of þe hous of Davyd bore.
> The name of þe mayd fre
>   Is Mary, þat xal al restore. (ll. 192-96)

The victory of Mercy is justified by the mission imparted to Mary, which constitutes the "historical" conclusion to the heavenly decision, and Gabriel finds himself by Mary's side.

A familiar touch is used to prove that all this is "real" history and concerns every humble spectator. After this allusion to Elizabeth's example, devised to convince Mary of the possibility of this divine conception, and the recourse to that rather abstract argument, the stage direction is quite down-to-earth:

> *Here, þe angel makyth a lytyl restynge and Mary beholdyth hym, and þe aunge seyth*
> (containing a surprisingly matter-of-fact import):
>
> Mary, come of and haste the,
>   And take hede in thyn entent.
> Whow þe Holy Gost, blyssyd he be,
>   Abydyth þin answere and þin assent. (ll. 261-64)

Such is Mary's introduction into the cosmic controversy of the Four Daughters of God, which constitutes her as a central pivot of the spiritual history of mankind.

History/Fiction

A divine election is more credible if it is presented as a heritage of long standing and authority. Thus, following that principle, the poet behind Plays 8, 9 and 11 of the N-Town cycle borrowed some elements from Luke 1:5-25. In Luke, there is no mention of Mary's parents but of a priest of the Temple named Zachariah, married to Elizabeth, who is sterile. The angel of God brings her the good news that their prayers have been heard by the Lord. In the play, the sterility is transferred to Anne; as a result of this divine intervention, Joachim's wife is no longer sterile and will conceive.

In Luke, no allusion is made to the two famous sterile women in the Old Testament, Sarah and Rachel. In Play 8, Anne is explicitly included in that class of elect women (ll. 181-84) and, implicitly, so is Mary, who will be the object of a similar (and better known) Annunciation. (It was a favourite subject of iconography.)

The Holy Spirit of Play 11 is the first to draw a parallel between Mary and Elizabeth: the latter is pregnant is spite of her old age. To be sure, Mary is not old but bound by a

vow of virginity. In both cases, their husbands are old men, and both situations are meant to illustrate the principle stated (twice) by the Holy Spirit: "Sey here to vs is nothynge impossyble"; "Nothynge is impossyble to Goddys vsage" (ll. 210, 259).

Gabriel is the herald of what may be called a formal proposal, which Mary is free to accept or refuse, making use of her free will (ll. 261-64). The angel uses as an argument the anguished expectation of the damned souls in hell, when he refers to Adam, Abraham and David, all men of "good reputacyon" (l. 278). His pressing questioning and Mary's delayed answer create a suspense, a dramatic tension, which is not present in Luke. Twenty-five lines stand between the question and Mary's expected answer: "Se here þe handmayden of oure Lorde" (l. 287).

The visit paid to Elizabeth, the suject of Play 13, is drawn from a famous episode, although it appears in Luke only. Contrary to the situation described in the Gospel, however, in the play Joseph is part of the visiting party, together with Mary, thus creating an apocryphal parallelism between the two couples. The play uses and puts into relief the connection between Zacharias's incredulity and his dumbness,[8] which at the same time gives an excuse for Joseph's "doubts". In this encounter, Zacharias plays the part of a dumb partner in a sort of comic interlude, echoing the comic tone of Joseph's return. They are both old men, thus disqualified in matters of fecondity, as is highlighted by Joseph's greeting of Zacharias: "A , how do ȝe, how do ȝe, fadyr Zacharye? / We falle fast in age, withowte oth" (ll. 139-40). This sounds like a trite remark in this play devoted to a holy celebration, constituted as it is by the composition, under divine inspiration, of a psalm by the two cousins: "This psalme of prophesye seyd betwen vs tweyn, / In hefne it is wretyn with aungellys hond" (ll. 127-28).

Play 19, *The Purification*, is the last to be inspired by an episode from the Gospels. After the adoration of the Magi, the Purification appears as a sort of second Epiphany: the Magi bear witness to the whole world; the Purification is an event significant for the whole of the religious community (Simeon is a priest, Anna a Prophetess). They have come to greet the infant "þat is kynge of alle" (l. 83). They symbolise the supersession of an old religion by the birth of a new church. Mary is not only a witness to this change, but plays an active part in the celebration. She has to be purified according to the Old Law, which shows that she is the natural mother of a human child, and she is at the same time the celebrant, when she lays the child on the altar, and, later, offers the turtle-doves in sacrifice "in my sonys name", as she says (l. 192), thus anticipating the active part she plays in the rite of her own burial and evincing a priestly attitude very similar to that assumed by Jesus during the Last Supper. This superposition of different roles is also exemplified

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8   See Luke 1:20-22.

by Joseph's meaningful confusion when he calls the old religion "Holy Kyrke" (l. 196), thus drawing our attention to the symbolic meaning of this religious continuity.

In order to provide his plot and characters with a setting that was already religious, the author of these plays has had recourse to the only religious environment familiar to his spectators, the Jewish religion, in keeping with Christ's own words, as reported by Matthew: "Think not that I have come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil" (5:17). In using those "historical" elements, the poet biased the plots and characters in order to situate Mary in a central position and make her conform to a religious archetype already in existence.

Public/Private

The series of three N-Town plays concerned with the Virgin's life-story opens on the feast of Enceniae (or Dedication Festival), at which a great number of Jews convene three times a year (8, ll. 34-41). The setting is the Temple of Jerusalem. The first speaker is Ysakar, the High Priest. It is against such an official background that the dramatic situation of Joachim and Anna is revealed. Their presence at such a feast is declared unwelcome, and criticised by the High Priest, on the grounds of their having no offspring, thus revealing the private tragedy of a couple to the assembled community. It is difficult not to draw a parallel between the public function in the Temple of Jerusalem and the public theatre in which the play is being performed—a parallel which was announced in Contemplacio's Prologue (ll. 1-8).

Our first encounter with Mary also coincides with a public occasion within the walls of the Temple: Mary's Presentation (9, ll. 1-41). That scene appears like an anticipation of the Epiphany, that is, a publication of a personal quality. In order to prove that her behaviour is responsible, although aged only three, she talks like a woman of twenty, says her father Joachim: "ȝe answere and ȝe were twenty ȝere olde!" (l. 43). What is original is that, as a sort of introit to the ceremony, in a scene strongly redolent of the taking of vows by a nun in a Christian convent, she acts not only as a young nun, but also as the celebrant in charge.

Another public ceremony, the scene meant to designate a husband, takes place when she has reached the age of fourteen. Now she has to declare publicly that she means to obey both her promise and the laws of the Jewish religion concerning the marriage of young virgins. This double obligation provokes a debate that the audience is called upon to join by singing all together the *Veni Creator Spiritus*. The rule that every candidate should hold a wand in his hand, which is supposed to bloom in case of success, is the occasion for a spectacular scene, symbolic of the presence of the deity in everyday life. The public character of that *mise en scène* is underlined by the use of a crier, who summons, and so solemnises, the meeting with a formal call to attention in answer to the Bishop's orders (10, ll. 138-45).

Side by side with those public sessions, some intimate exchanges occur in the midst of the more formal and "official" situations. At the opening Play 8, *Joachim and Anna*, the shame to which they will be submitted is anticipated by the couple, and draws tears from their eyes. Anne sympathises with her prospective husband's anxiety—"For dred and for swem of ȝoure wourdys I qwake; / Thryes I kysse ȝou with syghys ful sad" (ll. 78-79)—although she refrains from showing all her grief, and utters this delicate and intimate remark after Joachim's departure, which she shares with the audience: "Now am I left alone, sore may I wepe. ... / Tyl I se ȝow ageyn I cannot sees of wepynge (ll. 90-93).

From the same play, one could also quote the "realistic" dialogue between Joachim and his shepherds. As an inset within the main action (the sacrifice of Encaenia), the scene with the shepherds shows Joachim as a landowner, dealing with daily problems of management:

> *Shepherd.* How do ȝe, Mayster? Ȝe loke al hevyly.
>   How doth oure dame at hom? Sytt she and sowyht?
> *Joachim.* To here ȝe speke of here, it sleyth myn hert, veryly.
>   How I and sche doth, God hymself knowyth (8, ll. 137-40)

Some time later, the same shepherds share his joy about the good news concerning Anne's recovered fertility: "Haue ȝe good tydyngys, maystyr? Þan be we glad" (l. 206). This familiar down-to-earth, even comic, tone becomes general in certain plays from this cycle, such as *Joseph's Doubt*, which may appear as a piece of comic relief. Joseph unexpectedly turns up and knocks at the door; Susanna, the maid, replies:

> *Joseph.* How, Dame, how! Vndo ȝoure dore, vndo!
>   Are ȝe at hom? Why speke ȝe notht?
> *Susanna.* Who is there? Why cry ȝe so?
>   Tell us ȝoure herand; wyl ȝe ought? (12, ll. 1-4)

A third type of discourse, neither public nor private, is constituted by the messages brought by non-human envoys, heavenly messengers or angels, interpreters of the *vox Dei*, probably inspired by a biblical convention whereby the deity has a continued and intimate intercourse with the Jewish people. Evangelical instances are the message brought by the angel of the Annunciation and the voice of God heard during the Transfiguration.[9] The number of such messages makes them appear as normal, and, conversely, the mortals to whom they are addressed become partakers of the supernatural.

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9   For the Transfiguration, see Matt. 17:5, Mark 9:7 and Luke 9:35. In the N-Town play, Angels appear at Play 8, l. 175; Play 9, ll. 246, 262; Play 10, l. 120; Play 11, ll. 237, 251, 289, 312; Play 12, ll. 143, 151; and Play 19, l. 41. A very telling instance of intimacy with the divine is given by Gabriel's manner of speaking in the Coventry Purification episode (*Pageant of the Weavers*, *Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays*, ll. 367-82, 387-92).

Conclusion

It appears from these remarks that the Virgin Mary has historically been the beneficiary of a transfer of biblical and evangelical episodes and patterns. These include, among others, the sterility motif, the notion of an immaculate conception, the insistence on virginity, and her bodily ascent after death—this last being asseverated as recently as 1950 by Pius XII in his dogma stating that Mary went up to heaven "body and soul", as indeed the angels in the York *Death of Mary* had affirmed: "Body and sawle we schall hir assende, / To regne in þis regally, be regentte full right" (45, ll. 189-90).

The time has come to give a clear answer to the question contained in my title: is Mary a fourth person of the deity? Purgatory was not presented as a third and final destination of souls in the Last Judgement plays, such as that of York (Play 48, *The Judgment Day*). It was presented as a place of temporary sojourn for purgation, with only salvation in view. To be sure, Catholic tradition had always given Mary a privileged rank among the saints and heavenly creatures. As is the case with the life of Christ, miracles pave her way as warrants for divine benevolence towards her—witness the appearance of the apostles at Mary's death, according to her wish (York Play 45, ll. 28-91). She also received the title of "Queen of Heaven", in echo of "King of Heaven", applied to Christ. But that and other qualifiers can be held to have a purely metaphorical value. And so it seems that those in charge of the writing and staging of those cycle plays (clergy, bishops, members of the professional and municipal guilds) managed to keep away from a charge of heresy.

When dealing with the profound change in the doctrine of the Christian Church brought about at the time of the Fourth Lateran Council, I stated at the beginning of this essay: "It all began in 1215". The question remains: "When did it end?". The professed intention behind this new direction was certainly most commendable: the Church acknowledged the importance of the care of the souls, and sometimes also of the bodies, of her flock, and the new leading precept was Mercy, Misericordia, a new version and practical application of the fundamental Christian virtue of Love. In fact, we know today how it all ended: in the traffic of indulgences, money scandals, prevarication and maintenance[10]—a religious and moral *débâcle*.[11]

It had to end, because the situation had reached a "Machiavellian moment". I am no historian; it is only recently that I came across G. A. Pocock's concept, coined in 1975. If I use that phrase here, it is not out of pedantry, but because it coincides with an intuition of mine, which prompted me to posit that at particularly critical and dangerous

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[10] "Maintenance" in the legal sense of "The action of wrongfully aiding and abetting litigation" (*OED*, def. I.i).

[11] See Waller, pp. 1-27 (chap. 1: "1538 and After").

moments, the structure of a society reaches a state of crisis that cannot be solved by traditional means, intellectual or political, and a break is then the only solution possible.

Gradually, for several reasons, in the course of the fifteenth century, that soothing process known as Marian intercession was made to appear for what it actually was: an illusory construction, a sort of fairy tale, which called for a complete revision and reformation. In the particular case of England, this led to what has been called "the long summer of iconoclasm" (Waller, p. 1, citing Parish), that is, the summer of 1538, during which an astounding number of statues and images of the Virgin were burnt in public bonfires, justified by Bishop Hugh Latimer on the grounds that they had "been the instrument to bring many (I fear) to eternal fire" (cited in Waller, p. 1).

With both reformations—the Protestant Reformation, with its stern moral demands, and the Catholic Counter-Reformation, with its stiff formalism and outrageous display of luxury—Misericordia disappeared and, with it, the fragile emotional link between men and the Christian supernatural, and, consequently, room for consoling fiction. This was an inestimable loss, no doubt, and if we consider that we mortals are "such stuff / As dreams are made on" (Shakespeare, *Tmp.*, IV.i.156-57), and that Mercy is nothing but the "milk of human kindness" (Shakespeare, *Mac.*, I.v.17), shouldn't we agree that illusions and fairy tales are the most precious present, or grace, that the gods have vouchsafed suffering mankind?

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Theta XIII
Forms of the Supernatural on Stage: Evolution, Mutations

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Richard Hillman

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Richard Hillman

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Supernatural Characters
in Interludes

Peter Happé
University of Southampton

The main objective for this essay is to consider the interrelationship between ideology and theatricality in the use of supernatural characters in interludes. These two topics are closely intertwined and I shall have to confine myself to a limited sample from the available corpus. Before doing so, it is desirable to take a brief look at the types of character that might be considered, and to notice some details and characteristics of the plays which are commonly called interludes. The question under review also raises some issues about how characters are used in these plays, which are not for the most part concerned with realistic presentation.

If we take twenty-nine plays, from *Wisdom* (written *c.*1460) to Thomas Lupton's *All for Money* (printed in 1578), we find that the commonest type of supernatural characters are the devils, of which I have counted thirteen examples. There are nine plays which feature Christ and five with God the Father, though in a few cases it is difficult to identify which is predominant.[1] Angels appear in six plays, where they act primarily as messengers, and there are three with classical characters. This last category is intriguing, if only for its paucity. It suggests that although the classical pantheon was well known, it did not appeal to dramatists, even if they had humanistic interests. The appearance of Jupiter in John Heywood's *The Play of the Wether* is an exception, one that may have been engendered in the interest of satire, or possibly out of the need to tread warily, especially if anyone realised who was being implied by this character.

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[1]   One of the plays in the sample is *Everyman*, in which God appears at the beginning when he summons the protagonist. But the English version is a translation which follows the Dutch original in this episode. See *Everyman and Its Dutch Original Elckerlijc*, ed. Davidson, Walsh and Broos, pp. 16-21.

In spite of such reference, the characterisation of this figure is largely comic and the style of his speeches invites a bombastic performance.[2]

The incidence of supernaturals may have been determined by theatrical considerations as well as ideological ones, as we shall see. It is noticeable that for most of these plays the supernatural characters appear in short episodes, suggesting that their usefulness to the writers and performers was rather limited, or perhaps that other types of characterisation had a stronger appeal. Probably they were used because they were convenient as a means of framing other structures, such as narrative or debate. The most frequent use of supernatural characters is that they set up the action, giving it a starting point and picking out themes to be treated. Though there are exceptions, for the most part the supernaturals were less active in the main part of the plays, but they sometimes reappeared near the end so as to be present at the resolution. The main part of the plot dealing with the attack upon the protagonist is often the work of the Vice and his close companions, though there are some interludes where he is linked with devils. Nevertheless, the inclusion of devils is notable for both ideological and theatrical reasons. The chronological spread of a little more than a century in the sample is relevant because it shows that the number of such characters increases, and we should bear in mind that this period was one of enormous and contradictory changes in systems of religious belief and in the development of the nature of theatre. The latter is especially relevant because it involved changes in text, in performance, and in the popularity of plays as ways of ensuring exposition and engagement with didactic as well as controversial topics.

There is another feature to bear in mind with these changes, in that printing became a factor in disseminating plays to readers, and to those interested for ideological reasons, as well as to theatrically motivated producers or performers. It was a complementary relationship, as printing encouraged plays and plays encouraged the printing and the reprinting. The development was no doubt related to the attempts to control both printing and performance which are evident in the sixteenth century, as interludes became more and more involved with political and religious confrontation, and indeed what we might now regard as propaganda for the governing authority.[3]

The genre of plays called "interludes" is rather permeable. The word was used commonly on title pages and within plays, as well as in other types of writing, including financial documents and records of expenditure. It is especially common in court records, which show that Christmas entertainment regularly, year by year, required payments to

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2   In the anonymous *Jack Juggler*, which is an adaptation of *Amphitryon* by Plautus, the translator has converted Jupiter and Mercury, his messenger, into human beings.

3   There were proclamations against interludes in 1543, 1545, 1549, 1553 and 1559; see *Tudor Royal Proclamations*.

interluders from court expenditure. This holds true for all the Tudor monarchs, in spite of their differences in belief and policy. Nevertheless, a precise definition for "interludes" is hard to find, and it seems likely that it became a common, catch-all designation for "plays", and it so happened that there were some features which were commonly used. For example, in the surviving texts we find that interludes were often performed by small companies of up to six players, and it was a characteristic of the structure of these plays that they were adaptable to a variety of locations and capable of being taken on tour. There were very few purpose-built playing places available, and plays were constructed to have few specific physical requirements for performance. Interludes could no doubt be managed so as to fit into spaces at short notice. At court, however, expenditure could be rather higher, on furniture as well as costume.[4]

From the corpus of surviving plays it is apparent that there was a culture of performance involving subject matter and stage proceedings. Most of the interludes were peopled by abstract characters, who were used to construct an allegory illustrating the play's main message. For the purposes of this investigation, it has been interesting to ask whether such abstract characters should be considered as supernatural. Although they are like supernaturals in not being realistic or human, and in being perennial, the answer is probably negative. But they do share with supernaturals a function which operates alongside the unfolding of the main narrative, making them useful as a means of commentary and interpretation, and in creating a different perspective. Such abstract characters were fitted into patterns which became conventional, often showing a rise and fall in the fortunes of the principal character and a conflict between personifications of vices and virtues. Stage proceedings like the adoption and forgetting of aliases, the redemption of the fallen, and the exposure and punishment of transgressors became common. It was usual procedure to manage a large number of characters by having the individual players double several roles, and this required skill in construction from the playwrights and adaptability from the performers.

The supernatural characters had to be fitted into this theatrical culture, and it is clear that they made a significant contribution. Since many of the characters were abstractions, these supernaturals provided an extra way of interesting the audience, not least because they could be made to offer entertainment of various kinds, including singing, dancing and word-play. Their physical appearance in costume might be another factor. It should not be forgotten that allegory itself could be made entertaining through the ingenuity expended on it and the appreciation of its appropriateness. Perhaps it could be welcomed by audiences recalling earlier presentation of allegories in morality plays. The devils must

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4   See the index in Streitberger.

have been especially valuable because of the mixture of apprehension and comedy they could bring to performances. Their effect upon individuals in the audience may have varied considerably, but it should not be forgotten that the performances took place at a time when it was normal and expected that onlookers would accept the existence of a supernatural world alongside the everyday one. It seems possible that some of the audience might experience a mixture of fear and amusement, and such an ambiguous effect is likely to have been engaging for the audience. It would also provide a tempting device for authors.

From the fifteenth century there are three extant representations of devils in the morality plays. This type of play is difficult to generalise about, as there are so few survivals, but what is available may give us some clues about the inheritance available to those composing interludes in the sixteenth century. What remains points to some variety in concept and design. In *The Castle of Perseverance* we have a play conceived on a large scale and with more than thirty characters. The devil, here called Belyal, appears as part of the traditional configuration of the World, the Flesh and the Devil, each of these enemies to human beings having his own stage in the acting arena. In his exposition Belyal explains that he is supported by the Deadly Sins of Pride, Anger and Envy. He also attracts Backbiting (Detraccio). The characterisation is consistently allegorical, as the three main enemies besiege Humanum Genus in the castle and Belyal takes an active part in urging on the attack (*Castle*, ll. 945-57) and in the fighting:

> Haue do, boyes blo and blake.
> Wirke þese wenchys wo and wrake.
> Claryouns, cryeth up at a krake,
>   And blowe ȝour brode baggys! *Tunc pugnabunt diu.* [5] (ll. 2195-98)

The other two morality plays are conceived quite differently. Though *Wisdom* is not on as large a scale as *The Castle of Perseverance*, it was apparently written for a spectacular production, and we have in the text some useful details about the dramatic method, including costume and movement. Lucifer appears in "a dewyllys aray wythowt and wythin as a prowde galonte" (*Wisdom*, SD preceding l. 325), and he switches his costume when further deception is needed. He promises an attack upon the Soul, who is the protagonist: "I xall make yt most reprouable / Ewyn lyke to a fende of hell" (ll. 537-38). This intention is fulfilled subsequently, as a further stage direction reveals: "Here ANIMA apperyth in þe most horrybull wyse, fowlere þan a fende" (l. 902 SD). The spectacle is further developed moments later: "Here rennyt owt from wndyr þe horrybyll mantyll of

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5   "Then they will fight for a long time."

þe SOULL seven small boys in þe lyknes of dewyllys" (l. 912 SD). Wisdom comments here that the act of contrition has driven out the evils (l. 979), but this is a good example of how fitting and intriguing an allegory might be, as the components are recognised and appreciated.

Further details suggest that the costumes for this play were elaborate and that this entertainment was designed for a socially superior performance, including masks, dances, instrumental music and expensive costuming. This elaboration is matched by the use of richly suggestive language. For *Mankind*, which was planned for an itinerant performance, in almost any convenient location, the performance was much more basic and the language more demotic in places. The devil Titivillus, who has a history outside this play, fulfils a crucial part in the plot against Mankind.[6] He manages to trick the hero into evil ways and to make him absent himself idly from church, when the other conspirators, who are the abstract characters New Guise, Nowadays, Nought and Mischief, have all failed.

These elements suggest that as the interludes were developed in the sixteenth century, the presence of the devil was valuable and almost inevitable in view of the moral conflict.[7] We shall see that a series of conventional aspects came to be part of this, but it is interesting that he did not become either a sole figure or one closely involved in the details of trickery and seduction. As we have noted, he was used more generally to start things off, and sometimes to re-appear at the end to complete the plot. His presence was probably an indication of the inevitability of the long-term struggle between good and evil.

The process I am considering here has a chronological aspect, and before looking in more detail at the use of the devils in the interludes, I should like to start with the plays of John Bale, which were written in the 1530s, apparently with support from Thomas Cromwell, who was interested in the promotion of Protestant ideology. At this time the English mystery cycles were still being performed in a number of places, notably at Chester and York, and they were undergoing further development, as they were being created or enlarged. This happened partly as a response designed to counter Protestant pressures and sometimes as an emphasis upon Catholic values of the old religion. In the history of the mystery cycles in the sixteenth century, it is undeniable that they were changed and enlarged for a number of different reasons, some of which were religious or philosophical rather than theatrical. In the biblical drama the use of supernaturals was commonplace, as there was so much legendary material interwoven with the biblical narratives. Bale, in his work as a reviser or re-writer of the cycles, would follow his own Protestant agenda, which avoided the traditional flow of narrative and substituted episodes which he could

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6   See Jennings.

7   This point is made by Cox; see pp. 76-81 and 225.

use as opportunities for carrying Protestant messages. His use of supernaturals shows that he was not afraid to incorporate God or Christ for specific situations which could be justified.

We can illustrate this by contrasting the use of God in *God's Promyses* (1536?) with that of Christ in *The Temptacyion of our Lord* (1536?).[8] The structure of the former in seven acts comprises a series of exchanges between God and chosen human representatives from Adam to John the Baptist in a chronological sequence, but one which virtually ignores realistic time. In a parallel structure, each act contains the wrath of God, as well as his merciful promise to each generation if they follow him. For Adam this comprises enmity with the serpent with forgiveness if the people reject this enemy. Noah learns that God's vengeance shall never again destroy mankind. Abraham is promised that he will be the father of generations, with circumcision as a sign.[9] Moses will conduct God's people and a prophet shall come to them. David will rule God's kingdom and will be allowed to begin building the Temple. Isaiah will have the rod of Jesse to save all, bringing the spirit of heaven. John the Baptist should preach repentance and give baptism of the spirit. Each act ends with the singing of an appropriate antiphon, which the human representative begins, the Latin words of each being translated in the text. Bale's method is thus to use the character of God with his unique oversight to create the possibility that all generations might be faithful to him. There is no narrative here, and the play works by establishing a repeated pattern for each of the promises which emphasises that they are to be trusted. It is likely that if Bale was looking towards the development of a Protestant version of the mystery cycles, the comprehensive presentation of spiritual history in *God's Promyses* was intended to be the opening episode. The play was probably written at a time when Bale was much concerned with revaluing historical events in the light of his developing Protestantism. In doing so he used material that is based upon biblical reference, even though he avoids a narrative where possible. However, the music in this play adds much that might have been attractive and familiar to many in an audience, even though its origin was a traditional rite which Bale sought to adapt.

For *The Temptacyion of our Lord* there is also some biblical support, and Bale's plan was to observe the scriptural narrative, but to elaborate the encounter between Christ and Satan to draw attention to the false arguments of the latter and to support other points of doctrinal dispute. These included rejection of the supposed value of fasting and

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8   Bale's plays are cited from Bale, *The Complete Plays*, ed. Happé, vol. II.

9   The Abraham episode has him search for reassurance that if there were fifty faithful people God would spare a city, and then, to show the quality and reliability of God's mercy, Abraham negotiates with God the requisite number of faithful downwards until it is as low as ten (*God's Promyses*, ll. 347-77).

of the element of the miraculous in the story, both of which were not acceptable to many Protestants. An important clue to Bale's approach comes in the characterisation of Satan. Although he is required to wear a religious habit to facilitate his deception (*Temptacyion*, l. 77 SD), there is no sign of comedy or mockery in what he does and says, and the conventions of stage jokes and word-play, as well as grotesque appearance, found elsewhere in the representation of the devil in interludes, are not found here. The Prolocutor makes this serious emphasis quite clear at the beginning of the play: "ye maye loke to have no tryfelinge sporte / In fantasyes fayned, nor soche lyke gaudysh gere" (ll. 17-18). From this response it looks as though Bale was reacting against the commonly ludicrous aspects in the presentation of devils. The representation of Christ dwells upon his humility and his ability to outwit Satan by his knowledge of the bible, and to this end Bale creates a dialogue which shows Christ's skill in argument. The latter detects Satan's distortion of the bible, and the devil's crafty presentation of himself. In this Satan pretends to be holy and to have power on earth, which he uses for his own benefit. The characterisation is firm and powerful but entirely without self-display. After Satan disappears, Christ talks to the Angels who come to succour him. He explains that he has not come to seek glory (l. 377), and his last words are a version of John 14:6: "For I am the waye the lyfe and the veryte / No man maye attayne to the father but by me" (ll. 393-94). In these aspects of the characterisation Bale exploits the dual nature of Christ by making him seem very human and, as the Angel says, "In mannys frayle nature ye have conquerred the enmye" (l. 395).

These examples come in plays which are recognisably versions of episodes in the mystery cycles, but in *Thre Lawes* Bale followed a significant custom of the morality plays, adopting extensive allegory. God is used in two traditional places: as part of the setting-up of the moral structure and as a contributor to the final resolution. The play begins with an echo of God's self-description in the mysteries, as he seeks to present his spiritual essence and he gives himself a name and recalls the Trinity: "I am Deus Pater, a substaunce invysyble / All one with the Sonne and Holy Ghost in essence" (*Thre Lawes*, ll. 36-37). In Act One he sets up the structure and function of the three laws, and stage directions require that he gives to each of them an appropriate sign: a heart for the Law of Nature, stone tables for the Law of Moses, and a New Testament for the Law of Christ. At the ending of the play in Act Five, Bale exploits the supernatural in a different way by bringing on a character called Vindicta Dei. At first this character is separated from Deus Pater, giving his own name (l. 1781). He punishes Infidelity, the Vice, with water, sword and fire and drives him away. At this point he changes into Deus Pater, and the speech prefixes are altered in the text accordingly. The other characters address him as though he is now God the Father, and his speeches and actions are made to match this new identity. His last move is to instruct the Laws to teach the people about the truth and, reminding them of his promises, he blesses them on their way. This sequence is particularly inter-

esting because Deus Pater is supernatural and yet he is talking with characters having abstract names, and he refers to his people, who presumably are human beings. Bale is thus able to make effective use of three different concepts of characterisation in order to achieve his didactic objective.[10] He moves between supernaturals, abstractions and human beings. We may suppose that Bale sought to use this manipulation of traditional elements in ways which would be noticeable to those familiar with them.

The three examples of the devil in interludes which I am going to deal with were written after 1562, and by that time they operated in different contexts, and the interludes that include them are designed with individual purposes. Ulpian Fulwell's *Like Will to Like Quoth the Devill to the Collier* illustrates a proverb, and although the play has some moral content, it is really conceived as a kind of joke, which is repeated as often as possible with reference to a series of circumstances, the recognition of which seems to be the main business of the play. However, the play is a notable example of the interaction between a devil and a Vice, as it draws upon a number of characteristics conventional to the latter. The Prologue explains that what is to follow will "moove you to be mery" (Fulwell, l. 9), and this is echoed a number of times in this preliminary speech. There is some reference to "[t]he avauncement of virtue, and of vice the decay" (l. 18), but the impression that the attempt to create mirth outweighs the serious parts is sustained through the play as a whole. Indeed, the first half is almost entirely given over to comic material.

The Lucifer who appears in this follows some conventions of the part and is treated with such ridicule that he is hardly a serious threat. Nichol Newfangle, who is called the Vice on the title page, introduces himself as soon as the play begins, and he is quick to explain that he has made a journey to hell, where he was apprenticed to Lucifer. He tells the audience that Lucifer must have his name on labels on his chest and back. There is some scatalogical mirth around the description of Lucifer as a "bottle-nosed knave" (l. 89), but that does not prevent him from calling Newfangle "mine own boy" (l. 77), while the latter responds by calling Lucifer his "godfather" (l. 82). It must be admitted that these devices are ;at a pretty basic level of comedy, but there is no doubt about what Fulwell is trying to do in providing "mirth". Perhaps the salient moment is when Lucifer is required to take the Collier by the hand (l. 168 SD) and presumably they pose while he applies the eponymous proverb "Like wil to like" (l. 170). This pose, incidentally, makes it apparent that this devil must have a black face to match the Collier's. Lucifer tells Newfangle that his task is to adjoin like to like. The episode ends with a dance performed by the three characters, who add a song which repeats the proverb twice. This is a dancing

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10   Though the circumstances are rather different, it may be that Bale shows a similar imaginative flexibility in characterisation when Sedition, the Vice in *King Johan*, is changed into the historically real character of Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury.

devil, noted for his clumsiness (l. 72). Lucifer, following precedents in other interludes,[11] then blesses Newfangle, who turns each phrase of the mock ceremony into nonsense. The approach here has very little moral content, though Lucifer does remind Newfangle at one point that he fell from heaven through pride and he urges him to stimulate pride by using new fashions (ll. 103-10).

As the play develops, Newfangle makes a mockery of a group of low-class crooks, but Lucifer does not reappear until they have been sent to the gallows through the machinations of the Vice. Lucifer then invites Newfangle to leap on his back (l. 1204). The latter claims he is going to ride to Spain, but the presumption must be that this conventional exit will take him back to hell as quickly as possible. Like many other Vices, he claims that he will soon be back again to resume his wicked ways.

To sum up the details of this supernatural characterisation, it is evident that although Fulwell does show an appreciation of evil in his allegorical characters, especially Virtuous Living, he was determined to rely heavily upon the comedy of evil, making use of many conventional elements to sustain the performance.

The tone of Thomas Garter's *The Most Virtuous and Godly Susanna* is altogether more serious, and it has a convincing presentation of the evil aspirations of the two lustful judges, here named Sensualitas and Voluptas. The serious aspect of the play, drawn from the Book of Daniel in the Apocrypha, turns on Daniel's exposure of the inconsistency of their accusation that Susanna is unchaste and unfaithful to her husband. Garter approaches this by means of a close relationship between Sathan and his "child", Ill Reporte, who is named as the Vice. This name is well chosen, in that the play is clearly intended as a comment upon legal issues regarding evidence, and there must be a possibility that it was intended for performance in a legal context. In its leading theme, it is altogether more serious and profound than the routines using "like will to like", but the author broadens his approach and takes in a good deal from the conventions of presentation of evil.

The play begins with Sathan's typical boast about his power and achievement:

> I wallow now in worldly welth,
> And haue the world at will,
> Into eche hart I créepe by stealth,
> Of blood I haue my fill. (Garter, ll. 31-34)

But because he is frustrated that he has had no success with the exceptionally virtuous Susanna, he calls upon Ill Reporte to help him. Though this Vice recognises the prob-

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[11]   Titivillus blesses his associates with his left hand in *Mankind* (l. 522).

lem, he calls his father a "crookte nose knaue" (l. 61) and, following the convention, he mocks him and his appearance in a typical way: "You neuer saw such a one behynde, / As my Dad is before" (ll. 94-95). The Devil blesses Ill Reporte, but what he actually says is a mocking deception as well, for he claims that his blessing is the same as the one God gave the serpent who tempted Eve, and the one given to Cain for the killing of Abel, and it comes with "a thousande plagues more then euer were found in hell" (l. 128). In reply, Ill Reporte offers Lucifer ten thousand more plagues. As they part, the Devil leaves a "pestilence" and the Vice a "vengeaunce" (ll. 135-36). This exchange is followed by the Vice's introductory soliloquy, in which he explains how he will "blow the leaden Trumpe of cruell slaunderous fame" (l. 180), and that is how he makes his assault upon Susanna's reputation by tempting the two judges to rely upon an "ill report". Daniel's demonstration of an inconsistency in their evidence destroys them, and they are stoned to death. However, the stage direction reveals that the Vice's conduct is substantially comic, and includes a fight:

> *Here they stone them, and the Vyce lets a stone fall on the Baylies foote, and fall togither by the eares, and when the Iudges are deade, the Vyce putteth on one of their gownes.*
> (ll. 1251-54)

Ill Reporte, after more comic byplay, is tried and hanged, though his end is complicated by his ridiculous negotiation as to whether he will say his *pater noster*. Once he is dead, Lucifer reappears, crying, according to a stage direction, '*Oh Oh, Oh*' (l. 1383). He complains about how God keeps on doing him wrong, and then he turns to Ill Reporte, who is probably still hanging onstage, presumably dead, as he does not say anything. Lucifer then describes what will happen to him in hell. However, the threats are all comic, though potentially devastating if taken seriously. Lucifer intends to gnaw his bones and, recalling his designs upon Susanna, he claims that "what I would haue done to her, thou shalt haue all and some" (l. 1401). This sequence is interesting, in that the Vice, who sometimes appears as though he too were supernatural, is actually to be subjected to torments usually applicable to human souls. We see here that the distinction between natural and supernatural is permeable and the playwright's procedure is opportunistic.

The third play featuring a devil, Thomas Lupton's *All for Money*, is one of a group of early Elizabethan interludes dealing with wealth and money, its consequences and responsibilities, and the disastrous effects of its misuse.[12] These plays are less focused upon spiritual matters than upon the virtually satirical exposure of corruption in the use of money in this world. Lupton writes a complicated moral play, with a large number of

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12   See Harper and Mize.

characters, to demonstrate how urgently discipline is needed in making the right choice. Most of it involves the interaction between moral abstractions and figures representing social types, such as the use of bribery and the plight of those without money. But Lupton starts the play with an elaborate demonstration of the links between some of them which is allegorical in nature. This provides a useful demonstration of how an allegory can be made to comment upon the action, and in this respect it operates similarly to the supernaturals as a register outside the plot. The text requires that Money has a "*chayre for him to sit in, and under it or neere the same there must be some hollowe place for one to come up in*" (Lupton, sig. Aiiii^r SD). This prop is the means of making an allegorical motif work. Money becomes sick and vomits up Pleasure. He in turn vomits Sin, who vomits Damnation (sigs. Bi^v-Bii^r). Satan then appears '*as deformedly dressed as may be*' (sig. Biii^r SD), and rejoices in this genealogy. He cries and roars and gets into a quarrel with Sin. Later, when the corruption has been portrayed, Sin, having reported his success to the Devil, asks a blessing from Money, which he proceeds to mock as it is pronounced (sig. Ciiii^r). This action again puts in question the nature of these abstract allegorical characters. They could be regarded as supernatural, drawing upon similarities of different kinds, but rather they are a sort of hybrid, partaking of some supernatural characteristics, but also separated from the other characters by their function as part of the allegory. The Virtues, working against abuses, plead in favour of charity and against the inordinate love of money. The predicament is made more complicated later when Judas and Dives come on, apparently as human beings drawn from the bible, who bewail their earthly life. Damnation takes them over and a familiar motif ensues, in that they are taken back to hell.

Though the devils we have been considering are only a part of the portrayal of evil, there is little doubt that they were theatrically impressive, perhaps indeed a high spot in the performance. As supernaturals they have an iconic significance, and they are used to respond theatrically by the mixture in their status, whereby they might induce mirth as well as revealing their faults. It may be that, although they are persistently comic, they have a sort of authority which is embedded in their not being human. They have a different reference from human characters, and they are not integrated into the allegories which are so common in the interludes and which provide much of their structure. But they are sometimes linked with other allegorical evil characters as though by family relationships. In the case of the devils in particular, their immunity from death makes it possible for them to have a distinctive status which can be exploited. Presumably they were expected to go on with their evil work until Judgement Day, and then go on boiling away for ever after that.

From the practices we have been describing, it is apparent that authors of interludes found it useful to exploit the supernaturals as an extra dimension in their plays. Such characters could carry authority, as well as enhancing the threat to human beings

in the moral and political confrontations. The use of angels is pertinent here because they provide a direct link between the eternal and permanent, on the one hand, and the transitory nature of everyday life, on the other. This extra dimension linked ephemeral actuality to a set of values which could be perceived as transcending the normality of life and presenting something permanent and unchanging. Alongside this, the need to interest and affect an audience led to ingenuity in creating stage conventions and developing them over about a century. This process would have been influenced by a variety of beliefs. As it happens, the material we have before us is slanted in one particular dimension. Most of the plays we have discussed here are Protestant in their orientation, and that raises the question of how far such an orthodoxy would regret the use of the stage with all its temptations and distortions. The imbalance in the survivals may be the effect of censorship by the government, but it is interesting that authors felt they could use the supernaturals that had come down to them from the earlier drama, including the mystery cycles. However, as the appearances of God and Christ are relatively rare in the interludes, it seems likely that there was some inhibition about their appearance, whereas for the mystery cycles these characters appeared where the narratives from the bible or other sources required them.

In the case of the devils, this survival from the earlier forms is an indication that drama, like most art forms, is in part dependent upon memory and the recall of something previously experienced, even though the later requirements were to change it, rather than merely to preserve the earlier form. However, it seems to me that we should see this as a dynamic process which could be influenced by later recall and the exigencies of giving the audience something they could enjoy afresh on stage. But such conventions eventually came to the end of their time when plays with different theatrical idioms were evolved, and the devils could hardly go on being figures of fun as the drama developed new forms and purposes. But Ben Jonson was one of those who did not lose a comic view of them, as he showed in the relationship between Satan and Pug in the 1616 play which he entitled *The Devil Is an Ass*.

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Theta XIII
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Representing God and Christ
in John Bale's Biblical Plays

Roberta Mullini
University of Urbino "Carlo Bo"

Even before any attempt by city guilds to have their cycle plays rewritten according to Reformist tenets, as happened in Norwich in the 1560s when the Grocers' episode of Man's Fall was adapted to Protestant doctrine,[1] the biblical plays John Bale wrote in the late 1530s show the new religion at work. In *God's Promyses*, *The Temptacyion of our Lord, Johan Baptystes Preachynge,* and the extremely satirical and vitriolic *Thre Lawes,* the very strong legacy of the Catholic mystery plays is still evident, but the divine characters they contain appear to be different from their contemporary cycle homonyms.[2] This results not only from the content of what they say, obviously derived from Protestant principles and often caustically satirical of popish doctrine and traditions, but also from the structure of their speeches. Pater Coelestis in *God's Promyses* is a character easily talked to by some of the Old Testament protagonists of the play, who sometimes interact with him in relaxed and comfortable terms in spite of the spiritual weight of what is being discussed (mankind's salvation). In *Temptacyon* the long speeches of both Christ and Satan are interpolated with short exchanges that imitate colloquiality. My paper will analyse the persistence and/or change of the traditional features of sacred personages represented in Bale's biblical plays, limiting the investigation to *God's Promyses* and *Temptacyon*. To do that,

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1   See Mullini, "Norwich Grocers' Play/s".

2   The following are the full titles of these plays: *A Tragedye or enterlude manyfestyng the chefe promyses of God*; *A brefe Comedy or enterlude concernynge the temptacyon of oure lorde and saver Jesus Christ; A brefe Comedy or Enterlude of Johan Baptystes preachynge in the wyldernesse*; and *A Comedy concernynge thre lawes of nature, Moses and Christ* (see Bale, *The Complete Plays*, ed. Happé, vol. II, from which quotations will be drawn). For the sake of brevity, the plays will be mentioned as *God's Promyses*, *Temptacyon*, *Johan Baptystes Preachyng*, and *Thre Lawes*.

the rhetorical structure of their dialogue will be studied to verify how and how much this contributes to the theatricality and performability of the dramatic texts.

A Short Summary of Criticism on Bale

All Bale's critics have highlighted the playwright's transformation of the mystery play tradition into his own Reformist cycle of biblical plays. I think that it is neither necessary nor possible to mention all of them, but that nevertheless it may be helpful to outline the main issues that have arisen in criticism on Bale.

In his critical edition of Bale's plays, Peter Happé, when writing about Bale's canon, shows that the creation of a new cycle was a constant preoccupation in the playwright's mind (pp. 8-9). He also discusses the "Sources and Analogues" of Bale's biblical plays, that is, the episode of the Prophets from the N-Town and from the Chester cycles as foundations for *God's Promyses*, the John the Baptist plays in York, Towneley and Chester for *Johan Baptystes Preachynge*, and York, N-Town and Chester for *Temptacyon* (pp. 12-13). Happé also notes that, in general, Bale's biblical plays are longer than their corresponding sources. These analogues are then widely examined in the notes to each play in the second volume of *The Complete Plays*. In his later book, *John Bale,* Happé devotes a whole chapter to these plays, underlining the fact that, "though they heartily embody the new Protestant doctrines, [they] do not set forth their ideas in quite such an adversarial way as *Three Laws* and *King Johan*" (p. 108), once again pointing to the persistence and, at the same time, the transformation of the Catholic tradition. As well as studying the extant plays, Happé has investigated Bale's canon in search of the dramatist's possible "phantom plays", while renewing his interest in the structure and language of the surviving dramas ("John Bale's Lost Mystery Cycle"). In a paper originating in the fourth Tours "Table Ronde" on Tudor drama ("*The Temptation of our Lord*"), Happé offers a detailed analysis of *Temptacyon*, studying not only Bale's Protestant standpoint as it emerges in the text, but also the play's dramatic structure, its use of monologues and its various rhythms.

In a 2007 essay, Cathy Shrank specifically deals with Bale as "reconfiguring the 'medieval'" when he offered his readers his polemical works and his audience a new theology. Shrank's discussion of Bale's plays is particularly interesting for the present topic, in that she argues that

> However much Bale is indebted to medieval drama in his prose works, his adaptation of it on-stage, in his bible plays, is (unsurprisingly) distinctly anti-dramatic. *God's Promyses* is probably the most striking example. (p. 185)

It is true that the structure of this play is "repetitive", as Shrank claims, with all its seven characters (six from the Old Testament plus John the Baptist) asking God to save mankind in spite of its trespasses, at first having to negotiate with him, and then praising

him for his concession. It is also true that, while the various cycles of mystery plays have prophets and other personages from the Old Testament as protagonists of events which are shown on-stage (thus Adam is created and eats the apple from the forbidden tree, Moses receives the tables of the Law, Noah builds the ark, etc.—and all this when something theatrically relevant occurs on stage), Bale's play shows these same characters only in the act of talking. There is no dramatic action in *God's Promyses*, but only the story of man's salvation, which—as Bale underlines—comes from faith and God's election, not from man's works. Baleus Prolocutor, the expositor's role Bale wrote for himself in this and the other biblical plays, declares that the "knowledge" of the Gospel is necessary if people want to belong to "the faythfull chosen sorte" ("Praefatio", l. 13). But I consider that *God's Promyses* is an *ante litteram* play of ideas, where "*discourse*, not representation, is the way to enlightenment", as Shrank herself affirms (p. 185; my italics). It was this preponderance of discourse over action, and the way words and dialogue are used, that struck me first when I re-read the play. Therefore, while siding with Shrank about the lack of physical action, I do not subscribe completely to her statements that "[a]ll opportunity for dramatic representation is consequently removed" from *God's Promyses* (p. 185) and that Bale's "plays … are explicitly aligned against spectacle" (p. 186).[3]

One also has to consider Paul Whitfield White's opinion concerning what late twentieth-century critics have written on Bale's plays—that is, that their interest in "technical and performance aspects of the drama", while illuminating "our understanding of Reformation interludes", has isolated "theatrical practice from the concrete historical conditions which produced it" (p. 5). To take into consideration Shrank's and White's criticism allows one to see that the plays are, on the one hand, the object of theatre and performance studies, and, on the other, of historical and ideological investigations. I recognise the legitimacy of both attitudes, especially because, when dealing with a cultural object such as a play, the "how", I think, goes hand in hand with the "what" and "why". White himself, in spite of his critique of those scholars who have been concerned mainly with the theatrical dimension of Reformist plays, highlights Bale's career as a player and the leader of "his felowes" performing in various parts of England in order to spread his own beliefs and reinforce Thomas Cromwell's propaganda.[4] In this way White shows his own interest in "things theatrical + historical". In the last chapter of his book but one, White

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3   We might wonder at this point whether Southern avoided discussing Bale's plays for this reason, that is, judging them non-dramatic, even though he adduces a more elevated excuse for his omission. He writes that his book does not deal with Bale's plays since they "have already received much study chiefly because of their particular literary, religious and historical significance" (p. 304). Paradoxically, then, he does not analyse Bale's plays in a book mostly devoted to possible performances because they have been studied from other points of view.

4   See White, esp. pp. 16-27.

also tries exactly to reconstruct the performance of *God's Promyses* in St Stephen's Church, Hackington—that is, in a church setting (pp. 149-58)—and of Bale's other biblical plays in similar venues (pp. 158-62), letting his interest in performance surface anyway. As for Bale's theatrical activities, one must also remember that on 20 August 1553, on the occasion of Mary Tudor's accession to the throne, Bale provocatively performed his biblical plays in Kilkenny, thus "living" their performability himself.[5]

The question remains of whether Bale's biblical plays are almost completely non-theatrical, as Shranks argues, or are "real" plays. The same question has long been at the basis of critical discussion (my own included) of John Heywood's drama, and has usually been answered affirmatively, confirming that, besides being "plays of ideas" themselves, they work well when performed.[6] And, of course, with the performance of Heywood's *The Play of the Wether* at Hampton Court (2009), the "Staging the Henrician Court Project", involving Tom Betteridge and Greg Walker as principal investigators, has amply shown that theatrical discourse and dialogue, even when a traditional plot is lacking, are performable with great success.[7]

As stated above, in approaching Bale's plays, my curiosity was aroused by the way such a usually stately and dignified character as God is made to speak in *God's Promyses*, and by Christ's verbal behaviour in *Temptacyon*, two features that, in my opinion, contribute to the theatricality of the plays. In what follows, I will try to evaluate that impression through analysis, even if—as Happé writes about *God's Promyses*—"[i]n strict terms there is no story and no plot to be developed" (*John Bale*, p. 111).

God's Promyses, or When God Speaks in a Friendly Manner

First of all, one must keep in mind that Bale "was writing drama not primarily for an elitist audience … but for the socially diverse audience that the Lord Privy Seal's Players [Thomas Cromwell's] would have been expected to address"; that the "'plain style' of the dialogue and speeches … was sufficiently close to the language of the contemporary parish pulpit for both learned and illiterate to understand"; and that "the frequent use of familiar proverbs is a clear sign of the plays' popular interests" (White, pp. 28-29).

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5   See Happé, ed., I: 6-7.

6   Writing about Heywood's and Rastell's plays as "plays of mind" and "debates", Altman says: "These plays reflect the curious amalgam of delight in disputation—in the opportunity to entertain opposing ideas and to discover how they might be defended—and an embracing piety characteristic of a culture that assumes the wide morality of such inquiry" (p. 107).

7   I realised this myself not only when directing students' performances of Heywood's *The Pardoner and the Frere* and *Johan Johan,* but also when studying less theatrical plays, so to say, such as *The Four PP* and *The Play of Love* by the same playwright. (For the texts, see Heywood, ed. Axton and Happé.)

Concerning the use of proverbs, Happé places Bale in the "humanist tradition", together with Erasmus, Heywood and Udall (Happé, ed., pp. 16-17), while highlighting the playwright's East Anglian regionalisms and parallels with the language of his times (p. 17).[8] In this linguistic context, the character of Pater Coelestis starts speaking in a very formal way, with five rhyme royal stanzas in the first act (ll. 36-70), three in the second, third and fourth acts (ll. 183-203, 301-21, 429-49), and two in Acts Six and Seven (ll. 682-95, 803-16), whereas he pronounces only one introductory rhyme royal stanza in Act Five (ll. 556-62). Later on, although now and then resuming this rather ceremonious stanza, the divinity speaks in more colloquial lines, using rhyming couplets or even just one single line of a couplet matched with a line spoken by another character. Happé observes that in Bale's plays "the change from rhyme royal to couplets … is usually associated with a new character or a different tone" (Happé, ed., p. 18). Let us now see how God's speeches reveal this "different tone" and, possibly, how this makes Bale's God different from the same figure in some parallel mystery plays.

As mentioned above, *God's Promyses* draws from the Prophets episodes in the mystery cycles, since Bale occupies each act with a dialogue between God and personages from the Old Testament, starting from Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Moses, moving forward to David and Isaiah, and ending with John the Baptist from the New Testament. To each of them God laments the degenerate state of mankind, which is guilty especially of idolatry, threatening hard punishments, until the human figure obtains mercy after negotiating with the divinity. It is exactly in the negotiating process that Bale makes his Pater Coelestis speak differently from the corresponding figure in the mystery cycles. God's speeches—all of them, like the other characters', of pentameter-like length,[9] divided by a strong caesura after the first five syllables—sound less ceremonial after the initial stanzas. Some examples will now be examined.

Act One: God and Adam

After God has expressed all his wrath because of Adam's disobedience in Eden and menaced "greater ponnyshment" (l. 68), Adam—at the end of a rhyme royal stanza—laments, "Alas, I am frayle: my whole kynde ys but slime" (l. 77). God then retorts, "I wott it is so, yet art thu no lesse faulty / Than thu haddyst bene made of matter much more worthye"

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8   Happé comments that Bale shares some linguistic forms with Tyndale, Coverdale and More because of the "stress" of "religious controversy", which "allowed mutual influence by the participants" in the struggle (Happé, ed., p. 17).

9   The syllables in Bale's lines often number more than ten; however, they tend to have five stresses, as if they were pentameters. Rather than being based on a regular number of syllables, they draw on the "English tradition of alliterative verse which relied upon a fixed number of stresses, but tolerated variation in the number of syllables" (Happé, ed., p. 19).

(ll. 78-79), while the formal stanza gives way to both speakers' rhyming couplets. God's sharp reply is but a foreboding of his later ironical one-line answer to Adam's attempt at an excuse for his trespass:

> *Adam Primus Homo*. Soch heavye fortune hath chefelye chaunced me
> For that I was left to my owne liberte.
> *Pater Coelestis*. Then thu art blamelesse, and the faulte thu layest to me?
> (ll. 83-85)

These lines show how direct and unhedged by any politeness God's answer is (and, of course, how the playwright has chosen to mark God's language in this way). At the same time, the divinity's nearly joyful irony stands out through the easy parataxis.

Then Adam admits his sin, due, according to his words, to God's absence from Eden. He ends with "Good lorde, I axe mercy" (l. 98). God is not yet ready to give in and three times reiterates his unwillingness to be merciful to man, even after Adam's repeated requests:

> *Pater Coelestis*. Thu shalt dye for it with all thy posteryte.
> *Adam Primus Homo*. For one faulte good lorde avenge not thyself on me,
> Whych am but a worme, or a fleshelye vanyte.
> *Pater Coelestis*. I saye thu shalt dye, with thy whole posteryte.
> *Adam Primus Homo*. Yet mercy, swete lorde, yf anye mercy maye be.
> *Pater Coelestis*. I am immutable; I maye change no decree.
> Thu shalt dye, I saye, without anye remedye. (ll. 99-105)

God will relent only after Adam's fourth prayer not to "throwe away the worke which thu has create / To thyne owne image" (ll. 107-8). The change in God's mind surfaces through his following words, a question which presupposes forgiveness, or at least a fresh turn in his attitude: "But art thu sorye from bottom of thy hart?" (l. 109). The character of God, whom Bale very aptly names *Pater* Coelestis, actually reveals fatherly feelings toward Adam, in spite of the toughness of his initial threats. He also seems subject to a touch of vanity, so to speak, since he grants Adam's prayers only after Primus Homo's mention of God's creation of man "to thyne owne image".

Act Three: God and Abraham

While Noah in Act Two appears to be the most obliging character among the Old Testament personages of the play, Abraham is certainly the most responsive one. He "banters with God", as Happé writes (*John Bale*, p. 116), about the number of just men to be found in order to save mankind from the divinity's wrath (reducing the number from fifty to ten), but what is more relevant is that God accepts the "game", so to speak. And not only

that: the dogged pressing of Abraham's requests makes God answer according to a colloquial rhythm given by single lines (ll. 365-77). Abraham, in order to move God to mercy, also uses specific pragmatic strategies able to pay deference to God's positive face (that is, to his desire to be appreciated by others[10]), for example, in lines 350-53:

> Be it farre from the soch rygoure to undertake.
> I hope there is not in the so cruell hardenesse,
> As to cast awaye the iust men with the rechelesse,
> And so to destroye, the good with the ungodlye.

On the one hand, certainly Bale's text in this phase of the play is more or less an exact translation of Genesis 18:22-32, this showing the playwright's will to adhere to Scripture but to use Abraham as a character differently from what the mystery cycles made of him, when they represented only the touching episode of Abraham and Isaac. On the other hand, the adaptation of biblical dialogue to stage dialogue happens to be very efficacious, especially when each speaker uses single-line speeches:

> *Abraham Fidelis.* What if the cytie maye fortye ryghteouse make?
> *Pater Coelestis.* Then wyll I pardone it for those same fortyes sake.
> *Abraham Fidelis.* Be not angrye, lorde, though I speake undyscretelye.
> *Pater Coelestis.* Utter thy whole mynde and spare me not hardelye.
> *Abraham Fidelis.* Paraventure there maye be thirty founde amonge them.
> *Pater Coelestis.* Maye I fynde thirty I wyll nothynge do vnto them.
> *Abraham Fidelis.* I take vpon me to moche lorde in thy syght?
> *Pater Coelestis.* No, no, good Abraham, for I knowe thy faythe is ryght.
> *Abraham Fidelis.* No lesse I suppose than twenty can it have?
> *Pater Coelestis.* Coulde I fynde twenty that cytie wolde I save.
> *Abraham Fidelis.* Ones yet wyll I speake my mynde, and than nomore.
> *Pater Coelesti.* Spare not to utter so moche as thu hast in store.
> *Abraham Fidelis.* And what if there myght be ten good creatures founde? (ll. 365-77)

In comparison with the bible verses, God speaks three times more (ll. 368, 372, 376), using words that are not biblical. Actually, Bales splits Abraham's verses 30, 31, and 32 in Genesis 18 so as to multiply God's responses. At l. 368 ("Utter thy whole mynde and spare me not hardelye"), God orders, rather invites, Abraham to speak boldly to him, without any fear; at l. 372 ("No, no, good Abraham, for I knowe thy faythe is right"), God calls his interlocutor by name and acknowledges his faith, also using a colloquial repetition of the initial negation "no"; at l. 376 ("Spare not to utter so moche as thu hast in store"), God

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10   See Brown and Levinson, p. 61.

reinforces his invitation to Abraham to speak freely to him. These three added speeches portray the divinity as truly a heavenly father, all in all very similar to a human one, friendly to a child of his and ready to please it.

Act Four: God and Moses

In Act Four, there is nothing like what has just been analysed. Nevertheless, there is a passage in which the paternal and friendly relationship between God and man is once again present, above all when the sin of idolatry, so abominable to Bale the Reformer, is introduced:

> *Pater Coelestis.* Never wyll I spare the cursed inyquyte,
> Of ydolatrye for no cause—thu mayst trust me.
> *Moses Sanctus.* Forgeve them yet, lorde, for thys tyme if it maye be.
> *Pater Coelestis.* Thynkest thu that I wyll so sone change my decre?
> No, No, frynde Moses, so lyght thu shalt not fynde me.
> I wyll ponnysh them: all Israel shall it se. (ll. 507-12)

After reaffirming his decision to punish idolaters, God addresses Moses, who has just prayed for forgiveness, with a friendly and colloquial, albeit firm, tone, conveyed by the repetition of the negation (as with Abraham) and by calling him "frynde". Therefore, even though speeches showing God as an easily approachable figure are fewer in Act Four than in Act Three, we see the dialogue between man's representative, in this case Moses, and the divinity take place in fairly amicable terms. In other words, God threatens while being tender. In the following acts, the relationship between Pater Coelestis and David, Isaiah and John the Baptist is more formal and less inclined to imitate conversation, but the examples discussed previously manifest the attempt on the playwright's part to show God's compassionate attitude towards mankind on the basis not only of what he says, but also of how he speaks. That is, God's mercy also passes through his way of interacting with man.

The Temptacyon of Our Lord, or Christ's Patience

The play, after the introduction by Baleus Prolocutor, starts with Jesus talking to the audience. It is a way of differentiating this drama from the mystery cycle tradition, given that the three cycles containing the Temptation episode (Chester, York and N-Town) all have Satan speak first.[11] Christ's speech has, at its very beginning, the apparent purpose of informing the audience of the dramatic situation: "Into thys desart the holy Ghost

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11   For a thorough analysis of the doctrinal and theological issues of this play, see Happé, "*Temptation*".

hath brought me, / After my baptyme of Sathan to be tempted" (ll. 36-37). These two lines, though, have various additional functions: they look back to the previous play (in a possible sequential performance), that is, Christ's baptism by John; present the location of the following action (the desert); announce Satan as the other protagonist; and summarise the action itself —the temptation. Christ speaks three rhyme royal stanzas, the second and the third of which are devoted to explaining the meaning of his fasting in the desert. Contrary to the Catholic doctrine about fasting as a devotional practice, Jesus claims that his abstinence from food serves "Sathan to provoke to worke hys cursed intent" (l. 46). Bale, therefore, uses Christ at this point in the play (and later as well) to stress Protestant doctrine and oppose Catholic teachings.

Nevertheless, the last lines of the third stanza go back to the present action and highlight Christ's being a man, who feels hunger in "Thys mortall bodye" (l. 56). Soon after Satan enters, in his turn pronouncing three rhyme royal stanzas, the content of which is parallel to what can be found in the mystery plays (his doubts about Christ's divinity and his desire to tempt him). The phases of the temptation are the same as those in the cycles; first, Jesus will be tempted to change stones into bread, then to plunge down from the pinnacle of the Temple, and at last to accept Satan's worldly gifts and to adore him. That is, according to the tradition linking the temptation to the seven deadly sins, he is tempted to commit the sins of gluttony, vainglory and covetousness. For brevity's sake, my investigation will be limited to some aspects of the interaction and focus on the traits of character emerging from the conversation, as well as on some details resulting from the pragmatics of the exchange.

Satan's first words to Christ praise him as a "virtuous" "yonge man", living in "godly contemplacyon" (ll. 79-80). The devil presents himself "*simulate religione*" (l. 77 SD), very probably in a monastic habit strikingly different from the fantastic costume possibly worn by the cycle Satan.[12] Satan arrives as if he were a wanderer, or rather he presents himself as a travel mate to Jesus, who soon accepts his company, although he defines as "your fantasye" what the devil can say: "Your pleasure is it to utter your fantasye" (l. 82). The term chosen, in fact, is not at all a positive one, since "fantasy" is a word having largely unfavourable meanings. According to the *OED* definitions, it may simply mean "Inclination, liking, desire" (def. 7.), or, more pungently, "A supposition resting on no solid grounds; a whimsical or visionary notion or speculation" (def. 5.a), and "Caprice, changeful mood; an instance of this; a caprice, whim" (def. 6).[13] In other words, Christ accepts Satan as

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12   Especially in Chester: see Happé, ed., II: 152n77, and Happé , "*Temptation*", p. 76.

13   *OED* def. 7, examples for which are attested between Geoffrey Chaucer and Walter Raleigh, considers "fantasy" as "obsolete"; def. 5.a cites sources between 1440 and 1878, while def. 6 ranges between 1450 and 1883, with most examples from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

an interlocutor, even if he well knows in advance the nature of his discourse. Satan then starts the process of temptation, claiming to want "to talke with yow of goodnesse, / If ye would accept my symple companye" (ll. 84-85). Jesus's reply manifests his willingness to listen to godly matters, when he says: "I dysdayne nothynge whych is of God trulye" (l. 86). But Satan, in order to better negotiate the terms of the dialogue, adds, "Than wyll I be bolde a lyttle with yow to walke" (l. 87), thus also indicating the physical action of the actors on stage, while trying to ingratiate himself with Christ by admitting to his own boldness. (In pragmalinguistic terms, he plays on Christ's negative face, acknowledging that he is intruding in the other's desire to be alone.[14]) Later, Satan again uses very polite phrases, such as "I yow praye" (l. 96) and "Well shall it please ye any farther with me to walke?" (l. 163), to which Christ always acquiesces.[15] For much of the text the tempter does not assault his "victim" but gradually weaves his web to attract him. His antagonist, however, is well equipped not only to resist him, but also to counterstrike, and this while expressing all his patience in tolerating Satan's proposals to walk and talk together. Christ is not there anyway to accept what the devil says. On the contrary, he is always ready to rebuke and counterattack him, adding Reformist scriptural readings to the traditional quotations from the bible present in the cycle plays—for example, when citing Psalm 90 (ll. 208-44) and phrases from Deuteronomy 6 and 10 (ll. 249 and 318, respectively).

The two protagonists' speeches evolve along a debate about the power of God and of the devil, but the debate structure does not correspond to a regular and formal use of stanzas. Sometimes the pace changes and the speakers share a rhyming couplet, thus strengthening the dialogic rhythm of the play. This is particularly efficacious in ll. 85-88, 97-100, and 251-54.[16] Here is an example:

> *Jesus Christus.* Fourty dayes and nyghtes, without any substenaunce.
> *Satan Tentator.* So moch I judged by your pale countenaunce;
> Than is it no marvele, I trowe, though ye [be] hungrye.
> *Jesus Christus.* My stomach declareth the weakenesse of my bodye. (ll. 97-100)

As for the personal pronouns used by the two debaters, it is interesting to notice that up to l. 300 (the whole play is 433 lines long), the protagonists use the forms of the second-person plural pronoun: in this way, they do sound like debaters who are discuss-

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14 Brown and Levinson define the negative face as "the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction—i.e. the freedom of action and freedom from imposition" (p. 61).

15 Happé affirms that, especially in ll. 78-81, Satan "patronizes Christ outrageously" ("*Temptation*", p. 73).

16 As Happé points out, "This metre facilitates rapid exchanges, for couplets can be divided between speakers at times" ("*Temptation*", p. 77).

ing their issues in a polite dialogue. But in l. 301, for the first time, Satan addresses Christ with "the", after which the latter answers with "thu". From now on, till l. 350, when the defeated Satan presumably leaves the stage (even if there is no stage direction to sanction this), the two address each other only by second-person singular pronouns. It seems reasonable to wonder whether this has a dramatic meaning.

When Satan first thous Jesus, his purpose is to convince him to adore the devil instead of being faithful to God: "Forsake that father which leaveth the without confort / In thys desolation, and hens fourth to me resorte" (ll. 301-2). As earlier in the play, when the tempter wants to sound caring and sympathetic to Jesus's hunger, Satan stresses his interlocutor's human status. During the first temptation, after alluring Christ to change stones into bread, he still gets a polite, albeit firm, answer from Christ, which—while adding to the scriptural words to be found in both Matthew 4:4 and Luke 4:4—subsumes the negative Reformist attitude to miracles:[17] "No offence is it to eate whan men be hungrye; / But to make stones breade it is unnecessarye" (ll. 105-6). Here, towards the end of the play, Satan's superficially paternal and friendly offer to meet what he considers Christ's needs receives only a complete and violent refusal:

> *Jesus Christus.* Avoyde thu Sathan, thu devyll, thu adversarye!
> For now thu perswadest most damnable blasphemye.
> As thu art wycked, so is thy promise wicked. (ll. 309-11)

Christ has put aside his patience and attacks Satan by calling him by his negative biblical names ("devil" and "adversary"), overtly accusing him of blasphemy and wickedness, and, as is clear from the use of the second-person singular pronouns, showing all his contempt for him. Certainly, if Satan's employment of "thou" might still sound like an attempt at catching Christ by endearment, Christ's "thou" implies only scorn and rebuke. Christ has abandoned his forbearance and turned into the definitive winner in this mid-term, so to speak, confrontation with Satan. (The first ends with Lucifer's fall into the newly created hell; the final one is at the centre of the Harrowing of Hell episode, which also finishes with Satan's discomfiture.[18])

While in the York, N-Town and Chester episodes of Christ's Temptation, the character who speaks most lines is Satan, with a distinct imbalance to Christ's disadvantage, in Bale's play the latter pronounces 146 lines and the former 169—still more than Jesus,

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17   As Happé writes, we can find in the play "a deep suspicion of hagiology and the miraculous" ("*Temptation*", p. 60).
18   See Mullini, "Action and Discourse".

therefore, but with a percentage (46%) very similar to that of his antagonist.[19] In this way, the playwright balances the protagonists' speeches, so that Satan is not given any particular dominance as far as the quantity of his lines is concerned (and therefore Christ's dramatic importance is enhanced). Christ, furthermore, as already mentioned, enriches his speeches with quotes from the whole bible, thus adding to his status as a biblical hero and stressing the importance of the knowledge of the Scripture. Of course, this does not mean that the cycles diminish Christ's personage, but rather that Bale is particularly concerned to make him a more active and less formal combatant in the debate with Satan.

Conclusion

The Temptacyon, especially because of the movements the characters have to make on stage, and possibly because of the costumes of the two protagonists, appears to be more "theatrical" than *God's Promyses*. I think, though, that the performability of both plays is determined not only by the physical action they contain, but also — to a large extent — by how Bale constructed the dialogues between the protagonists. In comparison with the cycle episodes, a calmer and more obliging Christ is staged up to a certain point, so as to better mark his change of attitude towards Satan when this happens. He is also allowed dialectically and rhetorically to stand his ground by being given many biblical quotations. In *God's Promyses,* Pater Coelestis is shown being transformed from the stubborn and resolute divinity of the Old Testament towards a more fatherly figure, always firm and steadfast, but familiar and colloquial in his dialogues with the prophets and thoroughly determined to help man towards salvation. Bale, in other words, composed two plays which, without denying the previous and still contemporary rich dramatic tradition of the cycles, not only incorporate Protestant beliefs and tenets, but also re-interpret two of

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19   This calculation takes into account the fact that of the total of 433 lines of Bale's play, thirty-five are attributed to Baleus Prolocutor at the beginning of the play, plus another thirty-five at the end; to this the dialogue between Christ and the angels must be added (forty-eight lines), thus leaving only 315 lines to the debaters. The Chester Temptation episode, combined in Play 12 with the "Woman taken in Adultery" story (*The Chester Plays*, vol. I), occupies the first 216 lines, the last forty-eight of which are spoken by the Doctor, so that the dialogue between Satan and Christ is 168 lines long. In it Satan has 140 lines (83%), Christ only twenty-eight (17%). The corresponding York play (The Smythis, *The York Plays*, vol. I) has 210 lines, only 180 of which, however, are devoted to the protagonists' interaction. Here Satan speaks 134 lines (74%), and Christ forty-six (26%). Only in the N-Town *Temptation* (Play 23, *The N-Town Plays*) do the two protagonists pronounce a better balanced number of lines: Christ speaks forty-three lines (33%), Satan eighty-seven (66%). In this version, the confrontation between Christ and Satan is preceded by a sixty-five-line "Parliament in Hell", where the future temptation is discussed by the devils. This 221-line play thus leaves only 156 lines to the biblical narrative; from Christ's sixty-nine lines, however, the final twenty-six must also be subtracted, since they are a summary and a doctor-like speech. This justifies the previous ascription of only forty-three lines to this character.

the major protagonists of the mysteries. He wrote for the popular audiences of his times, which were accustomed to watching the pageants. And for those audiences Bale, still believing in the propagandistic and homiletic power of drama, re-invented the mystery plays from a Reformist point of view, enriching his texts with those complex and power-ful rhetorical features which he had learnt and cultivated during his "Catholic" life.

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Theta XIII
Forms of the Supernatural on Stage: Evolution, Mutations

**Textes réunis par
Richard Hillman**

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"Jupiter . . . appointed his majesty as judge":
Classical Gods and the Performance of Monarchy

Sarah Carpenter
University of Edinburgh

Classical gods and goddesses have a long history in medieval and early modern performances at court, in Britain as elsewhere in Europe. In England, from at least the mid-fourteenth century, Roman and planetary deities had a presence in disguisings and combat games, interludes and revels, as well as in royal entries, tapestries and visual arts. In the 1350s, for example, they featured in theatricalised letters of invitation to jousting. These adjuncts to tournament encounters were written as if from exotic imaginary ladies recommending combatants to the court of Edward III.[1] So Penthesilia, Queen of the Amazons, writes to the lady presiding over a joust, probably Queen Philippa, from "our Castle of Maidens, in which Venus often takes her ease", while another letter comes from "our Kingdom of Joyfulness" where kings Mars and Phoebus are part of the company. By 1401, in another set of jousting invitations, Phoebus himself writes to the princess Blanche, the nine-year-old daughter of Henry IV, who was presiding over a tournament at Eltham in honour of the visit of the Byzantine emperor Manuel II Palaeologus.[2] Phoebus congratulates "your royal court which is the fountain of nobility" and asks Blanche's permission to send "our dearly beloved child Ferombras" to join the joust. The gods do not themselves appear to be represented at these festivities. But they open a channel of communication with the court, enhancing the performance by acting as peers of the royal hosts and patrons of the jousters.

In the 1430s the gods begin to have a more tangible presence. One disguising, with a prologue written by John Lydgate, introduces a pursuivant sent directly from Jupiter (Lydgate,

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1   These letters are to be found in Edinburgh University Library, MS 183.

2   See Anglo, as well as Barker, pp. 97-98. For the translations, see Priestley, pp. 133-38.

"Mercers"). This Twelfth Night event, presented to Mayor Estfield of London by the guild of Mercers, opens with an evocation of Jupiter, and the Mediterranean geography associated with Mars, Venus, Pallas, the Muses, Bacchus and Bellona. The prologue then describes in detail the pursuivant's exotic and arduous journey from Syria to London, bearing letters from the god. Lydgate's speeches also survive for a Christmas mumming "tofore the Kyng and the Qwene" at Eltham, in which Bacchus, Juno and Ceres send envoys to present symbolic gifts of "wyne, whete, and oyle" (Lydgate, "Eltham", l. 5) to honour the court. While the gifts are formally presented "by marchandes that here be", the speeches seem to imply that the gods themselves may also be silently present in the performance. While their role is to act as divine patrons from afar, their theatrical presence is becoming a more fully realised and more active part of the proceedings.

From the early sixteenth century we find the deities making more elaborate personal appearances. In 1527 Cardinal Wolsey, a promoter of classical entertainments, held a revel for Henry VIII in which a performance of Plautus's *Menaechmi* was followed by an elaborate pageant of Venus and Cupid (Streitberger, pp. 122-24). According to an Italian observer, Venus sat on a stage with her damsels "forming so graceful a group for her footstool, that it looked as if she and they had really come down in person from heaven" (*Calendar of State Papers, Venice*, no. 2 [p. 2]). Cupid was then drawn in, in a pageant car, and delivered "a most elegant Latin oration" in praise of a band of elderly lovers who were led at his wheels. This pageant, giving more spectacular and scripted parts to the gods, is clearly more self-contained than previous appearances of the deities, presenting a neo-classical, humanist spectacle rather than any direct engagement with the members of the court. As Streitberger points out, while earlier courtly revels, including Henry VIII's own, were "principally oriented toward a celebration of chivalric virtue and courtly love", Wolsey's are closer to Italian court entertainments, including "classical plays … *intermezzi* of mythological and classical characters" (pp. 123-24). The gods take an important role, but one that seems subtly different from earlier performances.

In spite of Wolsey's innovations, it appears that the earlier tradition of the classical gods remained strong at the royal court. Venus and Cupid were joined by Mars for an elaborate triumph for the young Edward VI on Twelfth Night 1553 (Streitberger, pp. 201-2). From Revels' records we know that Mars and Venus were each borne in, in an elaborate "chaire trivmfall" (Feuillerat, ed., p. 93). Venus and her ladies rescued the child Cupid from a "Marshall", while Mars's followers were to be dressed in "theire owne armure", perhaps suggesting a combat game of some kind. We have no indication that the two gods had speaking parts, but the form of the triumph does suggest a confrontation, and so possibly a debate. This certainly seems to have been the case when Queen Elizabeth watched Juno and Diana debate the pros and cons of marriage in 1565. The Spanish ambassador Guzman de Silva reported watching "the representation of a comedy in

English. The plot was founded on the question of marriage, discussed between Juno and Diana, Juno advocating marriage and Diana chastity. Juno gave the verdict in favour of matrimony" (*Calendar of State Papers, Spain*, p. 404).[3] Famously, this comedy was also clearly understood as a direct engagement between the goddesses and the chief spectator. Guzman goes on to report that "The Queen turned to me and said 'This is all against me'". In more decorative mode, later in the same year at the wedding of Mary Queen of Scots with Lord Darnley, ten gods and goddesses, including all seven planetary deities, came to congratulate the couple (Buchanan). On this occasion the deities had clearly settled into a role developed from their earliest appearances, of celebratory visitation to congratulate and honour the court.

This selection of examples suggests how acclimatised the classical gods became in courtly entertainments. Mostly what they show seems primarily decorative. The gods flattered the knowledge of educated audiences; they would be familiar from both classical and courtly vernacular literature. They acted as patrons or appeared in person, lending heightened spectacle, dignity, sometimes even a degree of comedy to court revels. They played into the taste for mythology and antiquity that is evident from the late Middle Ages onward, running into and through the popular mythographies of the fifteenth century and the humanist revival of classical learning. But in the sixteenth century we begin to find evidence of some rather different roles for the deities in court shows. Alongside the largely decorative and spectacle-enhancing appearances are some more complex theatrical encounters. The gods may be drawn upon to act as figures of identity for the monarch, to represent or stand for the sovereign; or they may engage directly with the monarch, offering or seeking advice, or inviting a shared exercise of power. These are the performances that will be considered further here, exploring the sorts of issues such entertainments articulated, and how the gods they presented were conceived and developed to address questions of monarchy. Underlying this is perhaps a broader question: why was it that the classical deities were used for this purpose? Were there particular benefits to playmakers in drawing on these mythological figures in plays for and about the monarchs?

I

Although some gods seem perennially popular, different deities were used to address different monarchs through the sixteenth century. In the 1520s and early 1530s, Henry VIII was represented as Jupiter; Edward VI was reflected in his coronation revels by Orpheus, bringer of harmony. Mary Tudor appears as Nemesis on her accession, while Elizabeth was most often addressed on the subject of her marriage, by Juno and Diana, Pallas and

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3   See Doran, pp. 264-65.

Venus. Later in the century, in a fragment of a masque composed by James VI himself in 1588, the young king seems to take self-conscious charge of the now well-established trope. James opens his masque, in a presenter's speech apparently designed to be spoken by himself, by negotiating directly with the gods, asking for their favour, "If euer I ô mightie Gods haue done you seruice true / In setting furth by painefull pen your glorious praises due" (James VI, ll.1-2). He is reassured by Mercury, who enters to reply: "I messager of Gods aboue am here vnto yow sent / To schowe by proofe your tyme into there seruice well is spent" (ll. 35-36). This masque was recorded in manuscript as designed for the wedding of two of the young James's favourites, the Earl of Huntly and Henrietta Stewart, the daughter of his beloved deceased cousin Esmé Stewart, Seigneur d'Aubigny and Duke of Lennox.[4] Apparently it was never completed, and although two manuscripts of the fragments are carefully preserved, there is no record that it was actually performed. But it offers a striking finale to the tradition: it is now the king who initiates the encounter with the gods, presenting himself as their suitor, even as his masque by its existence tacitly defines and demonstrates him as their creator.

Of all these events which create direct theatrical encounters between monarchs and gods, this paper will concentrate on two: the shows addressed to Henry VIII and to Mary Tudor. These performances introduce different gods, and were markedly different in kind: in elaborate triumphal revels staged in May 1527, it is Jupiter who sends to request Henry to take his place in judging a debate between Love and Riches. Just a few years later, in 1533, the King of the Gods makes a personal appearance in John Heywood's *The Play of the Wether*, offering a richly ambiguous representation of the king. A very different deity is chosen as a dramatic figure for Mary Tudor in 1553. The political morality *Respublica* brings in the goddess Nemesis, who is explicitly introduced as a personification of the queen. Despite the differences in deity, genre and tone, these are all entertainments which engage audiences directly with topical issues of royal identity and rule.

By the sixteenth century, theatre had long been a mode through which kings and kingship might be examined. From the play of *Rex Vivus*, "King Life" (now known as *The Pride of Life*), which was probably written down in the late fourteenth century, through to Shakespeare's history plays in the late sixteenth century, the nature and practice of monarchy constituted a common dramatic topic. But performances presented at court, whether addressed directly to the monarch or to the wider courtly community, are clearly subject to rather different stresses, and might wish to say rather different things, from those designed for audiences beyond the court circle. Performance at court, in particular the spectacular disguising entertainments developed in-house, will always have

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4   For analysis of this masque, see Rickard, pp. 54-56.

an investment in celebrating and complimenting the ruler. Other kinds of performance, often including plays, were at times brought in from outside performers rather than developed by the Revels Office. But however far these, or any sort of court drama, might seek to offer counsel, or even some level of criticism, the performance context would require at least an overtly positive representation of the ruler. This might put a certain limitation on what devisers and creators of court entertainment could express, or at least prompt the development of different dramatic strategies, which might offer less direct and explicit means of opening up questions of monarchy.

This may suggest one reason for choosing the pagan gods for important roles in these shows. In a discussion of Renaissance visual art, Malcolm Bull points out that "Christian imagery was … low on positive images of secular power" (p. 382). Christian representations of kings and rulers, whether biblical, historical or allegorical, tend to focus on the necessary subordination of human power to God, and the dangers of pride or of the abuse of power. The representations of monarchs in plays that stick to overtly Christian forms, such as John Skelton's Prince in *Magnyfycence* or David Lyndsay's King Humanitie in *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*, do indeed show faulty or vulnerable rulers who must suffer falls before recovering their sovereignty. For shows which are looking to stage positive images of sovereignty to compliment a monarch, the classical world provides richer resources.

The pagan-ness of the classical gods is also itself paradoxically significant. Although long-established as poetic symbols, in strictly theological Christian terms these gods were clearly false deities, condemned by the Church as idols.[5] Partly for this reason, the burgeoning fascination with classical mythology focused increasingly on the allegorical qualities which the gods and their deeds were understood to represent. This is clearly reflected in the many mythographies that developed through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, following from Boccaccio's *De genealogia deorum gentilium* (Bull, pp. 15-36). These linked the pagan gods with literary reflections on the nature of poetic allegory. Poetry is not itself true, but it can reveal truth through its fictions; likewise, the classical deities are false, but can express truths through their falseness. Boccaccio had defined his own aim as being to

> explain the meaning wise men had hidden under the outer layers of these inane fables. … [for] these ancient poets, despite not being Christians, were gifted with such prudence that no creation of human genius was ever veiled in fiction more cleverly. (Boccaccio, p. 21)

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5   A foundational text on this issue in Christian theology is St Augustine's *The City of God*: see Books 2-4.

Tudor monarchs, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, had relatively few Christian role-models for positive images of human power; nor could they safely be supernaturally represented as figures of Christian divinity. But to represent Henry VIII as Jupiter, or Mary as Nemesis, is neither blasphemy nor hubris, since Jupiter and Nemesis are not true gods. Nonetheless, these divinities can act as poetic figures for true qualities of absolute power and justice, while their supernatural status serves to enhance and glorify the human monarch. Another benefit of introducing them as fictive images of the sovereign is in allowing a certain distancing from the actual monarch. This gives scope not only for some degree of critique, but even at times for a playful humour around these flamboyantly fictional deities. They can represent, and yet remain separate from, the observed or observing monarch.

II

Jupiter's association with Henry VIII seems to peak in the late 1520s and early 1530s.[6] The first entertainment we know of which links the two, in 1527, is very much in the mode of decorative compliment that had come to characterise the gods' appearances in courtly revels. But without breaking that pattern, it establishes and develops the theatrical relationship between the divine and human kings in ways that are more significantly suggestive. The evening of revels on 6 May 1527 celebrated an important, if short-lived, treaty of alliance, orchestrated by Cardinal Wolsey, between England and France.[7] It took place in a newly-constructed revels chamber, "the long hous", which was "ordayned and maad for pastyme and to do solas to strangers".[8] This new building was magnificently decorated for the occasion; it was dominated by a roof with internal hangings designed by the king's astronomer, Nicholas Kratzner, and painted by Hans Holbein. These represented a map of the world; but the earthly geography was enhanced by a further special effect, described in careful detail in Edward Hall's *Chronicle*:

> By a connyng making of another cloth, the zodiacke with the .xii. Signes … apered on the earth and water compassing the same … and above this were made the seuen planettes, as Mars, Jupiter, Sol, Mercurius, Venus, Saturnus, and Luna, euery one in their proper houses made according to their properties, that it was a connyng thing and a pleasant sight to beholde. (Hall, p. 723)[9]

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6   For extensive discussion of Henry as Jupiter, especially in *The Play of the Wether*, see Walker, *Plays of Persuasion*, pp. 144-53, and *Writing under Tyranny*, pp. 105, n. 14, and 112-18.

7   For the full entertainment, see Streitberger, pp. 124-29, and Rawlinson.

8   Richard Gibson's day-book TNA SP2/Fol. C, fol. 106, as quoted in Streitberger, p. 125.

9   Hall describes the venue and the evening in great detail, suggesting that he was either an eyewitness or working from an eyewitness report. Unlike our other eyewitness he does not, however, specifically identify the gods among the characters of the show.

This ceiling thus established the astrological universe, with its seven planet gods, as the setting for the entire event, enfolding the audience as well as the performers of the entertainment. The revels chamber had become the house of the classical deities.

This was confirmed in the opening moments of the show. Hall reports:

> Then entered a person clothed in cloth of golde, and ouer that a mantel of blew silke, full of eyes of golde, and ouer his hed a cap of gold, with a garland of Laurell set with beries of fine gold. (p. 723)

The account of Gasparo Spinelli, the Venetian ambassador's secretary, who was present at the event, echoes Hall's closely, but gives a fuller interpretation of some of the elements of the entertainment. He explains that this actor was "in the guise of Mercury, sent to the King by Jupiter" (Spinelli, p. 59). So the messenger of the gods opened the evening's proceedings by bridging the astrological heaven of the gods and the earth of the revels. Mercury then

> announced that Jupiter, having frequently listened to disputes between Love and Riches concerning their relative authority, and that being unable to decide the controversy, he appointed his Majesty as judge, and requested him to pronounce and pass sentence on both of them. (p. 59)

Jupiter himself does not appear, except on the ceiling; but he is actively present in his messenger, inviting Henry to take on his power as judge of all. While retaining his own person and presence, Henry is invested with Jupiter's role, not only as his equal but even as his superior, to judge an issue that Jupiter has not been able to resolve.

From the accounts we have, it is not entirely clear whether the king did actively take on Jupiter's role as arbiter of the debate that followed. It was performed by teams of choristers, led by figures representing Love and Riches, while, according to Spinelli, "in the centre walked one alone, in the guise of Justice". When they failed to reach a resolution in argument, the issue was referred to combat, with a staged contest at barriers. That was also apparently inconclusive, and Hall claims the debate was finally resolved by "an olde man with a siluer berd, and he concluded that loue & riches, both be necessarie for princes (that is to saie) by loue to be obeyed and serued, and with riches to rewarde his louers and frendes" (p. 723). So the dynamic conjunction of Henry and Jupiter may have dissolved as the debate concluded; Henry does not appear to have proclaimed a judgement himself, although in the context of the performance his presence was perhaps understood as validating the enacted resolution. In any case, although not quite fully exploited, the identification of the king with the god opened very interesting possibilities for the complimentary enacting of the king's sovereignty.

III

This was much more richly exploited a few years later in John Heywood's *Play of the Wether*, performed, it is now largely believed, at court in 1532/3 (Heywood, ed. Axton and Happé, pp. 50-52). This is a more fully developed drama, which presents a much fuller and more complicated fictional conflation of Henry with Jupiter. Again the King of the Gods is seen in his role as universal arbiter, this time deciding between conflicting requests for weather that are brought to him by a wide variety of petitioners. The relationship to Henry is never spelled out explicitly, but as recent scholarship and dramatic reconstruction has suggested, it seems clear that Jupiter provides a complimentary, but also comically ironic, figure for the king in a highly topical satirical play.[10] The fiction presents Henry through the person of Jupiter, rather than in encounter with him, with Jupiter's judgements in the play standing for those recommended to Henry. *The Play of the Wether* thus inverts the previous show, where the king was invited to replace Jupiter, recommending decisions to him.

The relationship between the two kings is complex and many-layered. Jupiter's mythological embodiment of supreme power, fire and light, his "jovial" support of pleasure, youth and life, all compliment Henry. But the god's mythical history of promiscuous, and sometimes embarrassing, amorous escapades is also incorporated into the parallel, especially in light of Henry's developing relationship with Anne Boleyn, which seems to have come to a head at this period. It is explicitly and comically referenced, with Anne's promise as the "new moon" contrasted to the wasted and leaking "old moon" of his wife Katherine (ll. 795-814). It is not clear whether such daringly irreverent and open allusions imply a performance without the personal presence of the king, or whether they were included in the expectation that Henry would himself be in the audience. Either way, however, they would seem to suggest a confidence that the king would not object to the parallel being drawn. Jupiter's reputation for vigorous sexuality acts at least in part as a comic celebration of Henry's own virility.

However, the lightly satiric touch with which the characters and situation are handled, and the performance of the play largely, we believe, by boys of the chapel royal, also allow for a degree of critical deflation of Jupiter. Although formally complimentary, this is clearly not a wholly reverential portrait of Henry. Insofar as Jupiter is a god, and a supernatural symbol of power, he aggrandises the king, while flattering him towards the mild and even-handed political decisions Heywood's play recommends; but as a pagan fiction he can also offer a comic distance on kingship. The figure of Jupiter encourages Henry, or those around him, to recognise the practical limitations and weaknesses of

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10   See Walker, "Jupiter".

secular human authority; but the classical, pagan context in which the god exists means that neither play nor audience are under a Christian obligation to condemn them.

Of the many qualities that Jupiter was held to stand for, there is one central power that both of these entertainments depend upon: that is, Jupiter's role as absolute arbiter in the cases of warring or foolish petitioners. This is an aspect of special significance for an earthly ruler, whether offered as compliment or as advice. Yet while both shows foreground this role for the god, stories of Jupiter's arbitration do not in fact feature heavily in the key episodes of his mythology. However, there is one literary source, popular at the time, which presents telling parallels to the role designed for Jupiter in these shows: the Aesopian fables. Collections of the fables were regularly printed through the early sixteenth century, with some ten editions appearing between Caxton's first printing in 1484 and the date of *The Play of the Wether*.[11] Caxton's collection provides several telling examples of Jupiter receiving and passing judgements on suitors who approach with short-sighted or unwise requests: the frogs ask for a king; the bee asks to be able to kill honey-thieves with her sting; the camel seeks for horns. In all the woodcuts illustrating these fables, the god is shown as a king enthroned in judgement, echoing the iconography of the secular ruler.[12] In each case, the dilemma or request is solved by Jupiter turning the request against the petitioner: he either gives them what they have asked for, to their detriment; or he reverses the request, allotting the opposite of the suitor's improper wish; or he decides on the status quo as the best outcome. This rarely works out as positively as it does for the suitors in Heywood's genial play; but in each case it demonstrates how Jupiter, as wise king, can see further than his petitioners and makes his judgements apparently in the light of a greater good.

In the well-known fable of the frogs, Jupiter first gives the frogs a log of wood to be their king. When they beg for a replacement for this passive monarch, he gives them instead the heron, who eats them. He then refuses to replace this tyrant, telling them that "the kynge whiche ye haue demaunded shalle be your mayster".[13] While the frogs are given exactly what they have asked for, the bee's request is reversed. When she asks Jupiter for her sting to kill the honey-thief, she is told that it will instead kill herself; the lesson here is that "men ought not to demaunde of god / but suche thynges that ben good and honest" (p. 172). When the camel, who is mocked for her ugliness, asks the god for horns in order to become more attractive, he not only denies her the horns but also removes her ears, explaining that "by cause that thow demaundest that / whiche thow oughtest not

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11   *The English Short Title Catalogue* (*ESTC*) records ten editions in English and in Latin between 1484 and 1535.

12   See, e.g., Aesop, fols xlii^v, ciii^r and cix^v.

13   Aesop, ed. Lenaghan, p. 90; subsequent references are to this edition.

to haue I haue take fro the that whyche of ryght and kynd thou ouȝtest to haue" (p. 181).
The Tudor playmakers clearly do not borrow the example of Jupiter's harshly comic
judgements themselves, which all seem savage in comparison with the benign arbitration
between Love and Riches, or the positive treatment of the petitioners of *The Play of the
Wether*. But they do adopt the figure of Jupiter as a supernatural model for the secular
exercise of kingly authority, personifying in comic fiction a monarch who makes judge-
ments that go beyond the limited perception of the petitioners. Both as compliment and
as advice, they draw on the fables of Jupiter to present Henry with an image of himself
as the all-wise judge. As Caxton himself pointed out in the introduction to the fable of
the frogs, "fable is as moche to say in poeterye / as wordes in theologye" (p. 89), though
he also reminds his readers that such theology is couched in comedy which "shalle aguyse
and sharpe thy witte and shal gyue to the cause of Ioye" (p. 74). As a pagan god, Jupiter
has the poetic distance to represent Henry with comic wit, while nonetheless dramatising
serious truth.

IV

Respublica is a play written some twenty years later, celebrating the accession of Henry's
daughter Mary in 1553; like *The Play of the Wether*, it personifies the monarch by means
of a classical deity, but in very different ways and for different ends. Most of this polit-
ical morality play is satirically and comically directed against the abuses of the previ-
ous administration of Mary's brother Edward VI.[14] The deft comic routines of the Vices
which occupy most of its action are vividly used to represent the economic and political
corruption that has resulted, "yls whche long tyme have reigned vncorrecte" (l. 51). Mary,
arriving as saviour of the nation, is represented by the late classical goddess Nemesis; she
appears only at the end to resolve the play as judge, so taking a similar role to Jupiter. The
Prologue tells the audience right at the start that

> Marye our Soveraigne and Quene
> . . . .
> is oure most wise *and* most worthie Nemesis
> Of whome o*ur* plaie meneth tamende *that* is amysse. (ll.49-54)

The theatrical identification of the queen with the classical deity is thus much more expli-
cit than that of Henry with Jupiter, and the figure of Nemesis is accordingly less open to
playful irony. Mythologically, Nemesis was a narrower and less ambivalent figure than
Jupiter: in visual media she is represented emblematically as a winged figure standing on

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14   For fuller analysis, see Walker, *Politics of Performance*, pp. 172-95, and Carpenter.

a wheel and carrying a bridle or other instruments of control.[15] This is clearly how she was envisaged in the play. Truth, one of the Daughters of God who brings her on stage, explains:

> Hir cognisaunce … is a whele and wings to flye,
> In token hir rewle extendeth ferre and nie.
> A rudder eke she bearethe in hyr other hande,
> As directrie of all things in everye Lande. (ll. 1792-95)

When Nemesis/Mary speaks, it is as this emblem of universal authority.

However, there is a significant difference from the *Play of the Wether* which complicates *Respublica*'s presentation of monarchy: unlike Heywood's play, *Respublica* combines the classical deity with Christian figures of divinity. Before the arrival of Nemesis, the fifth act opens with the appearance of the Four Daughters of God—Mercy, Truth, Justice and Peace—who intervene to protect the exploited Lady Respublica from the corrupting Vices of Avarice, Insolence, Oppression and Adulation. The Four Daughters then re-enact, in this political setting, the popular Roman Catholic redemption allegory of the Parliament of Heaven; their debate on the consequences of the Fall was first imagined as performed before God, and resulted in the Incarnation as the means to redeem fallen mankind.[16] Introducing these figures and their allegorical parliament into the play tacitly asserts Mary's renewed allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church, following her brother's Protestant reforms. The Four Daughters directly represent the power and purposes of God, suggesting that heaven intervenes to support the nation of England. But there is no space within the allegory of the Parliament of Heaven for the figure of Mary as the queen of England: she cannot herself be a Daughter of God, nor can she represent the Sovereign Father. But if she were incorporated in the play alongside the widow Respublica, as one of the recipients of God's grace, she would lose the role of her own sovereign power, which the play is designed to celebrate.

Intriguingly, another role for Mary in the allegory is perhaps obliquely hinted at by the staging of the episode. Jean-Paul Débax points out that the Parliament of Heaven in the earlier play of the N-Town cycle moves directly into the Annunciation, and by doing so incorporates the Virgin Mary into the divine process as the means toward redemption.[17] This association between the Four Daughters and the Virgin is in fact widespread:

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15   See Twycross.
16   For the theological background to the allegory, see Traver.
17   See Débax, "Mary — Fourth Person of the Deity?", in the present volume.

a variety of visual and literary representations bring the two together.[18] So in *Respublica*, when the Four Daughters conclude their initial debate and turn to bring in a new figure of divinity with authority to resolve the nation's problems, the audience may well be primed to expect the entrance of the Virgin. This way of extending the allegory would bring the Queen of Heaven and the Queen of England into at least imaginary conjunction, both of them recuperated from years of neglect, and re-established in glory.

However, whether for religious, political or dramatic reasons, the playwright tellingly chose not to realise this latent possibility. The dilemma of balancing Christian divinity with human and political power is instead addressed by casting Mary as the figure of Nemesis. As a classical deity, an accepted fiction, the personification does not carry any blasphemous connotations. She stands outside the Christian allegory of the Four Daughters; but emblematically she can be subsumed into it. So once the Daughters have exposed the ill deeds of the Vices, Verity (Truth) explains:

> the punishment of this
> Muste be referred to the goddesse Nemesis
> She is the mooste highe goddesse of correccion
> Cleare of conscience *and* voide of affeccion . (ll. 1780-83)

Verity then continues by conflating the Christian and pagan allegories. Nemesis, she says, has been sent by God:

> she hath power from above, *and* is newlie sent downe
> To redresse all owtrages in cite *and* in Towne
> She hath power from godde. (ll. 1784-86)

The classical goddess has been co-opted into the Parliament of Heaven; like the Four Daughters themselves, she becomes a symbolic representation of an aspect of the Deity. This integration of the two supposedly conflicting kinds of divinity is made easier by the nature of Nemesis and how she was understood. Unlike the Olympian gods, such as Jupiter, she was not a goddess around whom narrative myths had collected.[19] From the beginning, she was more significant for the ideas and forces she represented than for

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18   A foundational sermon by St Bernard of Clairvaux (*c*. 1120) and the influential pseudo-Bonaventuran *Meditationes Vitae Christi* (translated into Middle English by Nicholas Love as *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*), on which many literary versions are based, also present the Parliament of Heaven as leading directly to the Virgin Mary and the Annunciation; for visual representations of the Four Daughters with the Virgin Mary, see Chew, pp. 60-62. I am grateful to Richard Hillman for pointing out the tacit but suggestive allusion to the Virgin in this staging.

19   For Nemesis's qualities, see Brumble, pp. 241-42.

her mythical personal history, and this meant she could sit more comfortably within a Christian context.

Nonetheless, in this play she is primarily used as a figure for secular monarchy, rather than for divine power. Her judgements fall on the Vices, who personify political rather than spiritual opponents. Her role is also precisely directed towards the political and governmental situation, and the purposes of a play which was designed for performance at Mary's first Christmas in power, following hard upon the overthrow and execution of her brother's chief minister, the Duke of Northumberland. Popular modern understanding of the concept of Nemesis now tends to focus almost solely on ideas of violent vengeance and terrifying doom, which might lead us to expect the goddess to present a severe and punitive model for Mary's power. The playwright of *Respublica*, however, is clearly following scholarly sixteenth-century notions of the goddess, and while destructive vengeance is one part of her role, her power is significantly more nuanced and corrective than this suggests. Nemesis was seen as especially bringing down those who proved arrogant in success, while equally restoring those who had suffered injury. As one Elizabethan commentator explained:

> Nemesis … [was] held and taken to bee the goddesse, to whom only it belonged to punish and castigate the offences of the wicked and malefactors, afflicting them with paines and torments, according to the qualitie of their sins; and also rewarded the vertuous and well-liuers with aduancements, honour, and titles of place and dignitie: and that she did know and see all things euen into the darkest and most priuate corner of the world. (Linche, sig. Aa4ᵛ)

She was associated both with Fortune, and importantly with Justice, as the widely circulated definition in Thomas Elyot's *Dictionary* makes clear:

> *Nemesis,* a goddesse, whiche was supposed to take vengeance on malefactours. Some tyme it sygnifieth fortune, also iustyce, also reproche. (Elyot, s.v. "Nemesis")

Nicholas Udall, who is thought to have been the author of *Respublica*, also includes comments on the figure of Nemesis in his translation of Erasmus' *Apothegms*. She is, he reports, "yᵉ Goddesse of takyng vengeaunce on such as are proude & disdeigneful in tyme of their prosperite … [and] no such persone may escape hir handes" (Erasmus, fol. 329ᵛ). When Verity introduces Nemesis in *Respublica* she outlines very similar qualities:

> To hir office belongeth the prowde toverthrowe /
> And suche to restore as iniurie hath browght lowe.
> Tys hir powre to forbidde and punishe in all eastates
> All presumptuous immoderate attemptates. (ll. 1788-91)

As with Jupiter and Henry VIII, the qualities of the chosen classical god seem to be carefully matched to the exercise of monarchical power appropriate for the contemporary situation. In the opening months of her reign, Mary was preoccupied with dealing with her brother's collapsed administration, whose members were blamed for the economic and social difficulties of the realm. Nemesis's judgement of the corrupt Vices, enabling restoration of the afflicted Respublica, fulfils her allegorical function as defined in scholarly tradition; but it also specifically reflects this political crisis. Mary is presented as purging the corruption of the earlier government; the Vices of the play represent, in general terms, those who had dominated Edward's council and are presented as mismanaging the economy, exploiting the nation and profiting for personal gain. These were the kinds of accusation that had been levelled against the previous administration, and the four Vices embody the particular ills that Erasmus had identified as the targets of Nemesis: "such as are proude & disdeigneful in tyme of their prosperite".

Nemesis enacts her role by overthrowing Avarice and Oppression. But as with Heywood's Jupiter, the absolute judgements of the goddess are moderated for the practicalities of secular sovereignty. Henry-as-Jupiter was offered a model of benevolent exercise of authority, rather than the severely witty judgements of the fables, while Mary-as-Nemesis does not simply destroy, but invokes the processes of civil justice in dealing with the damage caused by the Vices. Proclaiming that "neither all nor none, shall taste of severitee" (l. 1874), she judges each on individual merit. Adulation is given a second chance and pardoned, on promise of future reform. Avarice, the chief Vice, is sentenced to restorative justice, returning to the commonwealth the vast wealth that he had extorted. But he is not handed over for popular vengeance: when People, Avarice's exploited victim, offers to take responsibility for his punishment, Nemesis commands, "Naie, thowe shalte deliver hym to the hedd Officer / which hathe Authoritee Iustice to mynister" (ll. 1908-9). Insolence and Oppression, similarly, are to be delivered into safe custody until "the tyme maie serve texamine *and* trie their cause / … and Iudge them by the lawse" (ll. 1918-19). Nemesis's last words in the play are not of punishment at all, but of affection and redress to Respublica, and the play ends on the wish "to mainteine Comonwealthe" (l. 1937). While Nemesis is a complimentary, even adulatory personification for Mary, her role is very carefully pitched to offer a hopeful direction to the Queen's own policy.

V

Jupiter and Nemesis present some obvious differences in these court shows. They are from different orders of classical gods, supernaturally representing different kinds of qualities. They appear in different genres of entertainment, offering different balances between compliment and counsel. Yet underlying their immediate theatrical aims, which are clearly directed to the topical circumstances of performance, are deep-rooted similar-

ities. Each is introduced as a direct theatrical representation of the possibly spectating monarch. They present specific powers of secular kingship, dramatising arbitration and justice, recommending decisively authoritative but even-handed and conciliatory judgement. Both also draw on the particular metaphorical faculty of classical gods: they can compliment and aggrandise the monarch, but without hubris or Christian over-reaching. By deploying this powerful but transparently fictional metaphor, playmakers also open up a space between monarch and god which enables a critical as well as adulatory vision of sovereignty.

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Theta XIII
Forms of the Supernatural on Stage: Evolution, Mutations

Textes réunis par
Richard Hillman

Desacralization in John Heywood's
A Merry Play betwene the Pardoner and the Frere

Olena Lilova
Mediteran University, Podgorica, Montenegro

Desacralization, or the depreciation of religious or sacred status, is one of the principal mechanisms of creating a carnival world-view, elements of which are perceptible in John Heywood's *A Mery Play betwene the Pardoner and the Frere, the Curate and Neybour Pratte*. The play, published in April of 1533 by William Rastell, represents a humorous dispute aimed against the clergymen's hypocrisy in carrying out religious practices. It is believed to have been written somewhat earlier, though, in the late 1520s, since some dramatic, topical and textual similarities have been traced between it and such plays by Heywood as *The Four PP* and *Johan Johan* (Heywood, Axton and Happé, eds., p. 38). Their farcical tonality happens to be one of the discursive features that the three plays mentioned have in common. This observation has encouraged researchers to suppose that *The Pardoner and the Frere* might turn out to be an adaptation of a French source, as *Johan Johan* is. Indeed, scholars have made a clear link between *The Pardoner and the Frere* and *La farce d'un Pardonneur, d'un Triacleur, et d'une Tavernière* (The Farce of a Pardoner, a Charlatan and a Woman Innkeeper), from which Heywood took "burlesque saints" , like "swete saynt Sondaye" (l. 134), whose arm the Pardoner possesses, and some relics, like "the great too of the Holy Trynyte" (l. 139) or "of Saynt Myghell … the brayn pan" (l. 162).[1] These are just incidental borrowings, however, and not sufficient to establish the French farce as a comprehensive source. The fact that a source text has not been identified suggests the originality of Heywood's idea of making the Pardoner and the Frere the two central characters in the play, as well as of having them talk simultaneously—indeed, talk over each other—for the larger part of the performance.

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1   See Axton and Happé, eds, p. 38-39. References to *The Pardoner and the Frere* are taken from this edition.

The Pardoner and the Frere compete for influence over the churchgoers to whom they serve up their sermons and whom they ask for offerings. This verbal contest finally turns into fighting, which makes the parson of the local church, with the help of "ney-bour Pratte", arrest the two rogues so as to discipline them. But the knaves escape punishment by breaking out of the place. This is in contrast with the French farce, where the two central characters make peace at the tavern and then fool the innkeeper by leaving her.

In keeping with farce's closeness to carnival travesty, things that are sacred and respectable in real life become laughable objects of mockery and derision in the drama. Thus *The Pardoner and the Frere* focuses upon the churchmen's fraudulence, as well as the worthlessness of the actions they perform. It is usual enough for farce dramaturgy that two rogues are made antagonists. They normally represent typical social characters, with the wittier one—as is interesting—usually losing out to his opponent (Михайлов, p. 25). So the dramatic pattern in *The Pardoner and the Frere*—the verbal combat between two rogues that turns into a physical fight—seems to be typically farcical. This dramatic structure conforms to the basic plot for all plays written in this genre. According to the prominent Russian expert in French literature Andrey Mikhajlov, a farce's main plot consists of "permanent, persistent and cruel war of everyone against everyone" (Михайлов, p. 21; my translation).

The mutual misunderstanding of characters that is a common device in popular drama is quite characteristic of farces, too. It is particularly flagrant in the central part of Heywood's play, in which the Pardoner and the Frere make efforts to outdo each other, crying as loudly as they can, without listening to one another.

Mikhajlov points to several sources that the French medieval farce springs from. On the one hand, it reflects a philistine individualism, the untrusting attitude of the bourgeois towards his neighbour, his joyful discovery of various flaws or problems in his neighbour's private or professional life. On the other hand, one cannot but notice typical features of popular culture in the French farce: unquenchable joyfulness, a readiness for tricks that are not innocent at all, including more or less cruel cheating and other such devices. So, according to Mikhajlov, farce's dramaturgy is closely connected both with denunciatory tendencies in medieval town culture and with its carnivalesque laughter (Михайлов, p. 12).

Despite all its similarity to farces, Heywood's play is not a pure example of the genre. It appears that the playwright's choice of characters for the central figures in his play involves transforming the typical farcical conflict—which is ordinary, deprived of acuteness, confined to the sphere of everyday life (Михайлов, pp. 18-19)—into something essentially different. This has implications for the probable responses of Heywood's audiences. A majority of spectators would undoubtedly perceive *The Pardoner and the*

Frere as light entertainment. At the same time, certain spectators would be able to see the serious issues behind the usual farcical devices, as well as to feel behind the joyful laughter in the play the author's anxiety about the current crisis in both the religious and social spheres, with his apprehension concerning the possibility of solving this crisis.

Let us focus on the motif of desacralization as one of the prominent motifs in the play that is associated with its farcical nature. It is especially made evident in the Pardoner's speeches, mainly through his references to "holy relics".

It is well known that the cult of relics was an indispensible part of the medieval cult of saints. Already in late antiquity, the idea formed about a saint's presence in his remains or the objects he used during his lifetime (Парамонова, p. 405). The cult of relics became particularly important at the time of the medieval crusades, especially to Jerusalem and to Constantinople.

In many works of western European literature of the Middle Ages, especially those of the popular or "low" variety, as opposed to courtly or religious texts, relics are closely associated with the figure of the pardoner (just as in *The Canterbury Tales*, to which we will return a bit later). He is a typical comic character in the narrative genres of medieval literature. His presence in novellas, fabliaux, jests and schwank helps to create laughter based on the principle of desacralization. The emphasis in different genres may differ, however. As scholars observe, in the tradition of Romance languages and literatures, in fabliaux in particular, the clergymen's moral faults are mainly criticized, while the schwank and jests of the late Middle Ages and Renaissance focus criticism on the institutions of the Catholic Church itself, as well as the practice of the Latin service. As to the range of the clergymen's vices, in different national literatures their nature obviously depends on the social and historical conditions in a particular time and place (Сидоренко, p. 14). As far as pardoners are concerned, their greed and intention to gain as much as they can, which makes them deceive naïve churchgoers, are usually the focus of authors' attention. In their long speeches, while displaying extraordinary inventiveness, brilliant acting and rhetorical skills, pardoners normally demonstrate sheer hypocrisy and, finally, profound ignorance.

As an example, let us recall the pardoner from the tenth novella of the sixth day in *The Decameron* (1353), by Giovanni Boccaccio (pp. 519-28). Among his relics he has a feather from the Archangel Gabriel's wing, which he promises to demonstrate to the churchgoers in the afternoon. The action takes place in Certaldo, a town in the vicinity of Florence, where Boccaccio lived the last years of his life, by the way. The local jesters make up their mind to make a laughing stock of the pardoner, Frate Cipolla ("Brother Onion"), and steal his relic. Instead of the feather they put some coal into the pardoner's bag. According to the narrator, this feather was taken from an ordinary parrot, a bird that had not yet come into fashion at that time, because not many of them had been brought from Egypt to Italy. On finding some coal in his bag in the middle of his pas-

sionate speech, Frate Cipolla does not get confused; he says that he must have mixed up the bags of relics and have taken the wrong one from home. Nevertheless, he sees nothing but God's will in this situation and is happy to demonstrate to the people the coal from the fire in which saint Laurencia was burnt. In this case, the pardoner's quick wit and inventiveness might inspire the reader's admiration, together with indignation at his deceitfulness. This is also a clear example of how the clergy exploited ordinary people's belief in miracles—and more broadly in the supernatural—to serve their own interests.

As is emphasized by A. Gurevich in a work whose title can be translated as "Medieval World: Culture of the Silent Majority", medieval clergy constantly came across ordinary people's persistent desire for miracles. Churchgoers sought to satisfy their need for the supernatural, the magical, as compensation for the imperfection and prosaic nature of their everyday existence. So it is only logical that in medieval society miracles, as a powerful means of psychological and social influence on the masses, were placed under the ideological control of the clergy (Гуревич, p. 54).

Geoffrey Chaucer depicts the Pardoner in *The Canterbury Tales* in a similar way. As Axton and Happé state, the Pardoner of *The Pardoner and the Frere* is taken most directly from Chaucer's "vehement and unscrupulous salesman, while the mendicant Frere, with his hackneyed diction of the friar song-books … develops the lisping preacher from the *Canterbury Tales* too" (pp. 16-17). Heywood's text has much in common with the Pardoner's Prologue, in particular. This likeness is manifested in the Pardoner's greediness and disingenuousness, his treatment of his public as easily deceived, and the set of relics that the rascal offers to the people's attention. As an example, Chaucer's Pardoner produces a piece of bone from the shoulder of a Jew's sheep. It is to be put in a well, and then domestic animals can be healed with the help of the water. It also helps to get rid of jealousy. Another relic of his is a mitten that allows one to increase the grain harvest.[2]

Similarly, in Heywood's interlude the Pardoner is equipped with "of a holy Jewes shepe / A bone" (ll. 105-6) and a mitten ("He that his hande wyll put in this myttayn, / He shall have encrease of his grayn / That he hathe sowne") (ll. 129-31). Besides the items already mentioned—"The blessed arme of swete saynt Sondaye", so as not to get lost "by se nor by lande" (l. 136), "the great too of the Holy Trynyte", which helps to relieve toothache (ll. 141-44), "of Saynt Myghell … the brayn pan", which preserves one from headaches and injuries (ll.163-66)—he also offers "of Our Lady … / Her bongrace, which she ware with her french hode" (ll. 145-46), which helps in childbirth (ll. 148-50), and "Of All Helowes the blessyd jaw bone" (l. 153), which protects against poisoning (ll. 155-61). The only mischief that holy relics are powerless to cure is women's infidel-

2   See Chaucer, ll. 350-76.

ity. Therefore, the pardoner dissuades sinful women, who have betrayed their husbands, from buying. A relic will not wash away their sin (ll. 173-80). Continuing in the misogynist vein, which was typical enough of medieval farces, the comic device in this passage is used to make sure that women come to buy rather than expose themselves as guilty.

In a present-day performance, those stage objects or props used by Pardoner in Heywood's play would probably be of particular interest. It is known that in the modern theatre things can lose their characteristic properties, turning into toy mechanisms, abstractions, when they acquire the status of esthetic or poetical objects (Паві, p. 342), or metaphors, so that they virtually become *dramatis personae* and act on the stage (Паві, p. 576). Thus, in a staging today the way of representing relics in *The Pardoner and the Frere* could become an interesting element of the play's scenography, which would contribute even more to the intensification of the motif of desacralization in the play. Contrastingly, in Heywood's day, as we know, props were normally scarce in indoor theatrical presentations. The emphasis was placed on the characters and their interaction. At the same time, it is important that modern methods of representing props should correlate with the setting of the play. In Heywood's conception, the setting is obviously a church, with the audience serving as the congregation.[3] As John M. Wasson observes concerning *The Pardoner and the Frere*, "any setting except the nave of the church would have been entirely inappropriate for this particular play" (p. 34). A nave as a setting certainly imposes some restrictions on the use of props, though present-day light shows on church walls and other artistic presentations that take place on church premises widen our notions about the possibilities of a church as a playing space.

As far as the second principal part of the play is concerned—the preaching and retorts of the Frere—in this case one of the effective means of desacralization seems to be his use of numerous verbs that are synonymous with "talk" and belong to the colloquial or low style. Paradoxically, this combines with his claims that he has come to bring God's sacred Word to the congregation: "Wherfore I now, that am a pore frere, / Dyd enquere were any people were / Which were dysposyd the worde of God to here" (ll. 60-62). Already at the beginning of his introductory speech, the Frere gives notice that he has come not for tattling but to deliver a serious sermon: "I com not hyther to glose nor to flatter, / I com not hyther to bable nor to clatter, / I com not hyther to fable nor to lye" (ll. 11-13). But his piling up of verbs meaning "to tattle" with the negation of "not" stylistically produces the opposite impression. That is, in the public's perception, the Frere is revealed as a boring babbler, who complains of everything in the world. Similarly, when giving his first comment on the Pardoner's presence close to him, he uses the

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3   See Bevington, p. 39.

same lexicon: "What a bablynge maketh yonder felow!" (l. 212). A bit further on he asks the question, "What standest thou there all the day smatterynge?" (l. 254). In this way he again expresses his discontent with the Pardoner's presence and his rival's interference with his sermon. The two characters are also desacralized by the numerous curses they exchange so freely—to say nothing of the fighting between them that occurs at the end of the play.

Clearly, the author's intention in *The Pardoner and the Frere* is quite different from the subversion of the existing social order that can, according to Mikhajlov, result from the farcical denunciation of social flaws and vices (Михайлов, p. 12). The playwright warns against such religious figures as the main characters of the play by showing that their activity is potentially destructive, not only for the church, but also for society in general. His critique cuts deeper than typical anticlerical satire by means of the opposition of the two rogues to the figures of the Parson and neighbour Pratte, who try to restore peace and order in the church and punish the disrupters. The rogues' reaction to the representatives of the official religious and civil authorities (Pratte is a constable) adds a further dimension to their characters and discloses the possible consequences of their destructive activity. Neither of them feels sorry for quarrelling and starting a fight in the church. While the Pardoner tries to cheat Pratte with his feigned contrition and the promise, "I wyll never come hether more" (l. 599), he contradicts himself a few lines later, saying, "Than adew, to the devyll, tyll we come agayn!" (l. 640). The Frere is quite bellicose. He demonstrates his contempt for the Parson ("I defy the, churle preeste" [l. 617]), threatens him and finally starts beating him. This actual subversion of order by the chaotic forces in the play, with the rogues beating the Parson and the constable severely on stage, was intended, not to arouse careless laughter on the part of the spectators, but rather to provoke disquietude and apprehension in them. Besides, the two central characters' unanimity in the final scene of the play, their finding themselves on the same side of the fence in beating the officials who fulfill their duty and try to pacify the church, betrays them as Vice-figures. This supposition is only intensified by the hint that *they* may be going "to the devyll" till they "come again". This conventional division of the play's characters into Vices and Virtues is a clear allusion to the allegorical drama that was still very popular in Heywood's time. Definitely, it would not leave the viewers hesitant about the nature of the two main characters in *The Pardoner and the Frere*.

In this way, the early Tudor dramatist makes an attempt to protect society from the possible tragic consequences of the current alarming situation in the state of religion. Heywood places himself among those English humanists, statesmen and artists who perceived with much apprehension the emergence of the Protestant movement in Europe and traced its features in the English context with anxiety and desire to warn their compatriots against what Thomas More termed "those perilous and pernicious opinions"

(More, p. 5 [Table, bk. I, chap. 2]). [4] The salient examples of books in this vein are More's polemical *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies* (1529) and *Confutation of Tyndale* (1532, 1533). Certainly, scholars have noted similarities in "the tone and specificity of satire" in works by More and *The Pardoner and the Frere,* similarities which they consider to be "evidence of the climate of a particular time" (Axton and Happé, eds, p. 39). [5] At the same time, one cannot but see a difference between the approaches to the topic of relics in More's work and Heywood's play. While in the former rejection of relics is considered to be heretical, in the latter it is not the concept of relics but the Pardoner's abusive practices that are being critiqued. It is shown that such subversive manipulations involving relics, which could provoke Protestant attacks on their use, form part of the vicious and chaotic world that the Pardoner and the Frere represent in Heywood's play.

Heywood leaves behind the generic boundaries of farce: his way of interpreting problems and ideas in the play is far from farcical at a simplistic level. The English playwright takes the play's subject matter to a new level of comprehension. He focuses his attention on the clergymen's violation of ethics in fulfilling their duties, on their interaction with each other, with the authorities and with the churchgoers. And he exposes their hypocrisy and mendacity, vices which should be eradicated so as not to threaten peace and order in society. Heywood's intention testifies to his conscious civic-mindedness and his sense of responsibility for the events that occur in the life of a society. He transforms the farcical basis of his play by setting and developing topical themes and problems within it. This could have hardly been done without the introduction of characters representing certain tendencies within the English clergy of the late 1520s. Their activity is interpreted by the playwright as menacing social order. The exposure of the two central characters' vicious nature, which is made particularly evident at the end of the play, creates a somewhat similar effect to that of a medieval morality play. Consequently, the nature of the laughter provoked by *The Pardoner and the Frere* would be rather different from the laughter heard at a typical farce: there is likely to have been bitterness beneath its surface of nonchalance and carefree enjoyment.

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4   More includes among heresies the denial of validity to pilgrimages, images and prayers made to saints; prejudices against miracles and relics are also mentioned.

5   See also Greg Walker's essay on Heywood's *The Four PP* in the present volume.

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Theta XIII
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"Ye seem to have that ye have not":
Religious Belief and Doubt in John Heywood's *The Four PP*

Greg Walker
University of Edinburgh

John Heywood's *The Four PP* is in many ways his most initially enigmatic interlude. Although it seems at first glance surprisingly straightforward, it nonetheless invites a number of questions concerning its sources, date of composition, auspices, and religious and political implications. Its title, meaning merely "the four Ps", alludes to the fact that the names of its four characters, the Palmer (pilgrim),[1] the Pardoner, the Potycary (apothecary) and the Pedlar, all start with that letter. So even its title page, unlike those of his later plays (*Love*, *Gentleness and Nobility*, *The Play of the Weather*, *The Pardoner and the Friar*, and even *Witty and Witless*) initially gives little away about the matters that will preoccupy it—a fitting beginning, perhaps, for a play that itself seems to resist the imposition of a single coherent theme that would make sense of its various parts.

As we shall see, the issue broached at the outset, and to which *The Four PP* returns at the end, is which of two traditional religious practices, pilgrimage or the receipt of pardons and indulgences, offers the readier route to salvation. But this question seems to disappear once the third "P", the Potycary, enters and describes the lethal properties of his own medicines, arguing roguishly that they can send a soul to heaven more swiftly than any religious practice, however sincerely pursued. Following the Potycary's distracting intervention, and the arrival of a second huckster, the Pedlar, the debate gives way to a series of recognisable comic set-pieces: the Pardoner displays and describes his fraudulent relics; the Potycary and the Pedlar exchange misogynistic comic banter prompted by the goods the latter offers for sale; and finally the Potycary, Palmer and Pardoner engage in a storytelling contest, judged by the Pedlar, in which

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[1] Palmers were so called because pilgrims returning from the Holy Land, and especially Jerusalem, often carried a palm frond as a token of their completion of the journey.

each must attempt to tell the greatest lie. Only after the conclusion of this competition does the play return directly to the question of religious practices, and then only to conclude that pilgrimage and indulgences are equally valid, as are a range of other orthodox good works, if practiced honestly, with due contrition, faith and charity, and following the time-honoured teachings of the Church.

What should we make of this apparent profusion of modes and material? As what follows will argue, the interlude begins to appear more coherent if we consider it in light of the contemporary discussion of questions of faith and practice in the works of Erasmus and Thomas More. For the interlude seems to be, in part at least, Heywood's considered reaction to the humanist critique of popular religion to be found in Erasmus's *The Praise of Folly* and *Familiar Colloquies*, and needs to be read alongside those texts, and, most obviously (as Axton and Happé have suggested[2]), alongside More's own *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies* (1529), if the full impact intended is to be appreciated. Its studied defence of pilgrimage and indulgences (offered in the context of a clear, broadly comic acknowledgement of the abuses and naiveties to which they sometimes give rise), coupled with its final assertion of the need to trust the authority and wisdom of the established Church in matters where the truth is not obvious, are central here. They amount to an attempt to draw a clear line between the kinds of orthodox scepticism about the excesses and abuses of popular piety that animate Erasmian satire, and the more radical and destructive criticisms of those practices themselves voiced by Luther (and evangelical reformers closer to home) in a period when the two were becoming increasingly difficult to tell apart. In this, Heywood sets out a position for himself that is somewhere between the cautious even-handedness of Erasmus (who remained reluctant to condemn Luther outright, and saw some merit in his spirited assault upon the abuses of popular practices and the contemporary church hierarchy) and the increasing severity of More, who was unwilling to grant the evangelicals any concessions or acknowledge any good intentions on their part. Heywood's position asserts the need for a tolerant accommodation of differences of emphasis, capacity and vocation among the orthodox, while defending the limits of orthodoxy itself against the more radical views of the evangelicals. In this it is in keeping with More's *Dialogue*. But *The Four PP* is also distinct in a number of its emphases. It is ultimately more affirmative in its conclusions about the value of traditional religious practices than either Heywood's own later interlude, *The Pardoner and the Friar*, or the work of Erasmus. Why this might be is a question to which we will return towards the end of this essay.

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2   Axton and Happé, eds, p. 45. All quotations from Heywood's plays are taken from this edition, with spelling and punctuation modernised.

The play commences, in familiar Heywood fashion, with a character entering the place to "make his boast". Here it is neither a conniving Friar (as is the case in *The Pardoner and the Friar*) nor a lamenting lover (as in *Love*), but a humble pilgrim, who has seemingly entered the hall in search of shelter, not knowing quite where he is. His tone seems to mark him out as a broadly virtuous figure. And, in contrast with *The Pardoner and the Friar* or *Gentleness and Nobility* (in which characters are introduced in ways that arouse conventional expectations only for them subsequently to be disappointed), this time the early cue does not prove misleading. A little naive he may be, but the Palmer will prove to be exactly what he suggests, when, bound by courtesy, he feels obliged to declare his vocation and life-story:

> I am a palmer, as ye see,
> Which of my life much part hath spent
> In many a fair and far country,
> As pilgrims do of good intent. (Heywood, *Four PP*, ll. 9-12)

And yet a degree of ambivalence nonetheless attaches to this role and character. In the speech that follows, he offers a list of over thirty shrines, holy sites, and cities that he claims to have visited in a life of pious peregrination. Such lists of places (religious or secular) or things are a stock element of late medieval and early Tudor interlude drama.[3] Sometimes serious, sometimes satirical or nonsensical, sometimes a mixture of all three, such speeches can be found in a number of surviving plays. Merry Report offers a prime example in Heywood's *The Play of the Weather*, when he names the forty towns and regions that he claims to have visited in the gap between lines 178 and 186 of that play, ranging from "Louvain, London, and Lombardy" (l. 198) to "Gravelines, Gravesend, and Glastonbury" (l. 210), the list ending with an allusion to the manor near Chelmsford where Heywood's eldest brother, William, held lands: "Ynge Gyngiang Jayberd, the parish of Butsbury" (l. 211). The exuberance of the recital, the growing implausibility of the claim, and Merry Report's mixing of the exotic with the parochial all invite a kind of tolerant, knowing laughter from spectators here.[4] But the Palmer's list resists such ready definition and response. Does it cue cynicism or respect, scorn or sympathy? Its tone is deftly poised, as is the catalogue of shrines it contains.

The Palmer's speech is also less intrusively crafted than Merry Report's insistently alliterating lines, and mixes the seemingly numinous with the ribald less artfully. His

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3   See McGavin, pp. 45–62.
4   See Reed, p. 31.

commitment to his vocation is manifest, as is the pride in his achievements evident in statements such as this about his journey to "Josophat and Olivet" (*Four PP*, l. 17):

> On foot, God wot, I went right bare.
> Many a salt tear did I sweat
> Before this carcass could come there. (ll. 18-20)

Yet the sites that he goes on to describe range from the impeccable—"Christ's blessed sepulchre" (l. 14) and "the Mount of Calvary" (l. 15)—to shrines of scurrilous saints such as "Uncumber" (Wilgefortis) and "Tronion" (Ronion) (l. 31), familiar from satirical accounts of the excesses of popular devotion from Chaucer through Erasmus to More himself.[5] As he speaks, the very length of the list seems to invite laughter, yet the Palmer's evident commitment to its content works to hold that laughter at least partially in check. The audience is thereby denied a clear cue to the kind of ready scornful amusement prompted by texts such as Erasmus's colloquy, "A Pilgrimage for Religion's Sake", in which the author's contempt for the credulousness of the pilgrims and the greed of the clerics who exploit it is clear. And, as we shall see, such suspension of judgement in the face of conflicting signals about the authenticity of what is being claimed proves to be the key to the Palmer's role in the play, and to a central concern of the interlude more generally.

In Heywood's other debate plays, it is when a character moves from inviting sympathy and understanding for his or her lot to claiming exclusivity for their own virtue or misfortune that the debate is joined, and *The Four PP* is no different. For what draws the appearance of the next character, the Pardoner, is the Palmer's observation that

> Who seeketh saints for Christ's sake—
> And namely such as pain do take
> On foot to punish [their] frail body—
> Shall thereby merit more highly
> Than by anything done by man. (ll. 59-63)

This the Pardoner roundly mocks with the quip:

> And when ye have gone as far as ye can,

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5   See, e.g., Erasmus, "Pilgrimage", *passim*. As Axton and Happé, eds, note (p. 249, nn. to ll. 29, 30, 31; p.251, nn. to ll. 48, 49), a number of the shrines and saints listed by Heywood's Palmer ("the Rhodes", "Amyas", "St Uncumber" [properly Wilgefortis], Willesden, and "St Roke") also feature in More's *Dialogue of Heresies* (1529). As More observes of Wilgefortis, "women hath … changed her name, and instead of St Wilgefort call her St Uncumber, because they reckon that for a peck of oats, she will not fail to uncumber them of their husbands" (p. 227).

> For all your labour and ghostly [*spiritual*] intent,
> Yet welcome home as wise as ye went! (ll. 64-66)

The challenge hints at criticism of pilgrimages that spans a spectrum from Erasmian satire of abuses to fundamental evangelical rejection of the practices themselves. In both "Rash Vows" and "The Old Men's Chat", for example, Erasmus has pilgrims admit that they have returned from Jerusalem no wiser or holier than they left. Indeed, in the latter, the returning traveller, Pampirus ("Jack of All Trades"), concedes that he is now "considerably worse than I had been before I went" ("Old Men's Chat", p. 458).[6] And when he came to revisit and defend the *Colloquies*, and "Rash Vows" in particular, in "On the Usefulness of the *Colloquies*", published in 1526, Erasmus was still more outspoken on the subject. The aim of "Rash Vows", he noted, was to curb "the superstitious and shameful fancy of some folk who think the essence of holiness is to have visited Jerusalem" ("Usefulness", p. 1098), whereas, in fact—here he cites St Jerome—"To have been in Jerusalem is not of great importance, but to have lived righteously *is* important" (p. 1099).

Heywood, by contrast, avoids such contentious language. He is careful to ensure that his debate does not focus on principle or doctrine. The Pardoner does not criticise pilgrimage *per se*. When asked directly, "Why, sir, despise ye pilgrimage?" (l. 67), he swiftly responds,

> Nay, for God, sir, then did I rage. [*I'd be mad if I did*]
> I think ye right well occupied
> To seek these saints on every side.
> Also, your pain I not dispraise it,
> But yet I discommend your wit. (ll. 68-72)

His point is thus not theological but rather more pragmatic and personal: while virtuous, the Palmer's vocation is not as rational or effective as his own. And, moreover, it takes up far too much time and effort, as he proposes to demonstrate. The Palmer, he implies, is just not thinking things through rationally enough, for the same objective, the saving of his soul, could have been achieved without journeying at all:

> For at your door myself doth dwell,
> Who could have saved your soul as well
> As all your wide wandering shall do,
> Though ye went thrice to Jericho. (ll. 97-100).

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6   Cf. Erasmus, "Rash Vows", p. 37.

As their dispute develops, it becomes clearer that what is primarily at stake beyond the particularities of the two men's experience is a desire for certainty and reliability in the matter of religious belief. When it is his turn to criticise the Pardoner, the Palmer, like his opponent, does not deny the value of pardons outright. He simply knows from experience that not all pardoners can be trusted to have authentic pardons to offer. Thus, when *this* Pardoner tells him, "Truly I am a pardoner" (l. 106), the Palmer is wryly sceptical. And his response, quibbling on different senses of "truly" and "true", focuses on the apparently greater certainty of salvation offered by praying to saints oneself than by trusting to the bona fides of third parties with a questionable general reputation:

> Truly a pardoner, that may be true,
> But a true pardoner doth not ensue [*necessarily follow*].
> Right seld [*seldom*] is it seen, or never,
> That truth and pardoners dwell together.
> For, be your pardons never so great,
> Yet to enlarge [*exaggerate*] ye will not let [*never stop*]
> With such lies that oftentimes, Christ wot [*knows*],
> Ye seem to have that ye have not.
> Wherefore I went myself to the self [*same*] thing.
> In every place and without feigning
> Had as much pardon there, assuredly,
> As ye can promise me here doubtfully. (ll. 107-18)

It is that contrast between what can be "assured" by his own agency and what can only be promised "doubtfully" by others that troubles the Palmer, and by extension the interlude as a whole. In this respect, it is very much a product of the early years of the English Reformation, before confessional allegiances had been drawn and legislation had established the limits of what Henry VIII wanted his subjects to believe about religious practice and doctrine. In that environment, traditional criticisms of abuses mingled with evangelical assaults on doctrine, as claim and counterclaim echoed through polemical tracts, sermons and satirical texts, leaving many well-meaning Christians, like the Palmer, uneasy about what was acceptable practice, what was abuse, and what was outright fraud.[7] In such situations, individuals might well be more inclined to trust their own instincts and agency over the uncertain assertions of others—or at least it might be feared that they would do so. This is the anxiety that runs through the text that most closely echoes and informs *The Four PP*, Thomas More's first lengthy engagement with the evangel-

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7   See Betteridge, pp. 104-6.

icals, *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, on which he must have been working through autumn 1528 and the first part of 1529.

More's *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies*

Written, initially at least, in response to the trial and abjuration (on 8 December 1527) of a young evangelical scholar, Thomas Bilney, the *Dialogue* represents an encounter between More himself and a young visitor, referred to only as "the Messenger", who has been sent by a friend in the hope that More can resolve his doubts about the current religious situation. The younger man has been unsettled by the claims of Luther and the evangelicals to the point where he is now unsure of the value and efficacy of a number of traditional pious practices, primarily pilgrimage, prayer to saints and the veneration of images and relics. He is also alarmed by the church courts' severe treatment of contemporary preachers who, despite appearing to do no more than criticise the abuse of such practices, have been accused and convicted of heresy. This has brought the Messenger to the point where he has begun to doubt whether it is not the convicted preachers who are the true Christians, and the ecclesiastical authorities the persecutors (More, *Dialogue*, pp. 31-32).

Over the four books of the *Dialogue*, More painstakingly addresses and seeks to refute each of the evangelical claims that his interlocutor claims he has heard his friends and acquaintances advance, deploying a combination of "natural reason", Scripture, and the teachings of the Church Fathers to demonstrate that the heretics' assertions are false, the intentions and authority of the Church impeccable, and the devotional practices that the evangelicals deride laudable and necessary for salvation, however susceptible to abuse they may be. But alongside the relentless logic of More's step-by-step scholarly refutation runs an equally insistent refrain of doubt and desire for certainty voiced by the Messenger in variations of the phrases, "whereby shall I know?" (p. 182), and, "How can I … be sure thereof?" (p. 217). Part intellectual query, part lament for lost clarity, the demand voices the concerns of the well-meaning, intelligent layman suddenly plunged into a world of contested religious truths and ambivalent claims to virtue in which many matters previously held "very certain and out of doubt" were suddenly "ne[ver]theless of late by lewd people put in question" (p. 21). In such circumstances folk might, like the Messenger, reach the point where they become "so circumspect that [they] … will nothing believe without good sufficient proof" (p. 83) for fear of otherwise falling for the false claims of deceivers and charlatans.[8]

That More should write so much in response to the abjuration of a single scholar demonstrates just how dangerous he thought the precedent set by Bilney's case. For the

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[8]   For the cultural environment of these years, see Betteridge, pp. 104-6.

outcome of his trial and submission had not been the resolution of the issues it raised but the casting of almost every aspect of the case into doubt, and in the full glare of public scrutiny.[9] What exactly had Bilney preached? Had he condemned pilgrimage and the veneration of saints, their images and relics, as unnecessary? He denied it. But credible witnesses claimed that he had, or that they had understood him to have done so. Were such views heretical? He readily accepted that they were, but managed to leave his hearers uncertain if he meant it. Was he a critic of the Church, an evangelical? He denied this too, and a number of observers took him for an honest, devout scholar, "little Bilney", who had fallen unwittingly into the clutches of a vindictive Church determined to convict him regardless of his innocence or guilt. As a result, his case had become a *cause célèbre* among those unsympathetic to the processes and privileges of the church courts, as well as those with a more obviously evangelical agenda. So when Heywood's Palmer asks his interlocutor, "Why, sir, despise ye pilgrimage?", he is asking a question that would have had an immediate local resonance in the England of 1528-29. Hence, perhaps, the rapidity and firmness with which the Pardoner denies it: "Nay, for God, sir, then did I rage".

Most dangerous of all, perhaps, from More's perspective, was the fact that, when it was demanded of him if he had been influenced by Luther and his allies, Bilney had told one of his judges, More's friend Cuthbert Tunstall, Bishop of London, that his inspiration had come rather from reading Erasmus's translation of the New Testament, and by implication the *Paraclesis*, the text which acted as its preface and which set out the Erasmian vision of the *Imitatio Christi*.[10] Here was seemingly material proof that imperfectly explained humanist criticism, and encouragement to engage personally with Scriptural mysteries unguided, could lead to heretical conclusions, that the kind of idealistic mockery of clerical abuses that Erasmus and More himself had delighted in during the first two decades of the century had led, not to healthy self-scrutiny and moral reform of the Church from within, but to doubt, rancour, division and heresy—heresy, moreover, so cunning that it seemed to the unsophisticated indistinguishable from simple Christianity. Thus, while studiously refusing to add to his notoriety by naming him, More devoted over half of the *Dialogue* to Bilney and a defence of the practices which he seemed to have called into question, only in the final book turning his ire consistently on the more obvious threats to orthodoxy posed by Luther's writings and William Tyndale's English translation of the New Testament, which were highlighted on the book's title page.[11]

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9   For an analysis of Bilney's trial, see Walker, "Saint or Schemer?", pp. 219-38.

10   A similar claim was made by the Augustinian friar, Thomas Topley. When describing and abjuring his own fall into error before Tunstall, he cited "Erasmus' fables"—perhaps, as Duffy suggests (p. 204), the *Colloquies*—as the crucial influence.

11   The first edition, printed by John Rastell "at London at the Sign of the Mermaid at Paul's gate next to Cheapside, in the month of June, the year of Our Lord, MVC XXIX, *cum privilegio Regali*",

The Four PP, Doubts, Lies and Pardons

"Whereby shall I know?" and "How can I … be sure thereof?" are questions that also hover tantalisingly over *The Four PP*, as each character advances claims about his own vocation and experience that range from the questionable to the utterly preposterous, offering no verifiable evidence on which others can judge them. It is thus in keeping with the mood of the play that, when the Pardoner responds to the Palmer's scepticism about pardons, he does so, not by offering proof or assurance of his own honesty, or of the merits of the practice, but by casting doubt in turn on the Palmer's own credibility. Since he has been travelling for so long, and so far beyond all official scrutiny and control, how can anyone know where he has really been? Has he actually visited all the shrines that he mentions? Is he really a humble penitent? How can it be proved? Since no one travelled with him, he "may lie by authority" (l. 134). Again, a character finds himself doubting the claims of another about a fundamental matter of religious faith and practice, based on an absence of definitive personal knowledge. If the Pardoner has not seen proof of the Palmer's journeys with his own eyes, he will not believe them. And lying itself becomes the focus of the play once the Pedlar proposes that the other three resolve their dispute by each trying to tell the biggest lie.

The ensuing contest pitches a Rabelaisian tale from the Potycary of a woman who, when administered a "glister" (l. 731) or suppository, expelled it with such force that it flew for ten miles, only stopping when it struck and demolished "a fair castle of lime and stone" (l. 744), against the Pardoner's story of how he once travelled to hell to release the soul of an old friend, one Margery Coorson. Each narrative contains details which give it more of a local habitation and name. The Potycary mentions the Tudor ship, the *Regent*, which had been sunk off Brest in combat against the French in August 1512.[12] The Pardoner, the more loquacious of the two, mentions meeting a devil who was an old acquaintance of his, as "oft in the play of Corpus Christi, / He hath played the devil at Coventry" (ll. 831-32). Given that the Rastells, More and Heywood himself all had connections with Coventry, and perhaps with its cycle play, the joke presumably had additional, private resonances that only they would appreciate. And as Axton and Happé have suggested (pp. 44-45), there is also a good deal of topical, and potentially mischievous, detail in the Pardoner's description of his visit to the devil's court in hell, at the centre

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was titled, *A Dialogue of Sir Thomas More, Knight, one of the Council of our Sovereign Lord the King, Chancellor of his Duchy of Lancaster, wherein be treated diverse matters, as of the veneration and worship of images and relics, praying to saints, and going on pilgrimage, with many other things touching the pestilent sect of Luther and Tyndale, by the t'one begun in Saxony and by the t'other to be brought into England* (STC 18084).

12 See Walker, *Plays of Persuasion*, pp. 46-47, 56-57, for an allusion to the *Regent* in another Tudor interlude, the anonymous *Hick Scorner*.

of which he discovers a laughing Lucifer sitting in his jacket watching his devil-courtiers playing a game of tennis with firebrands for rackets. From the wry subscription of the safe-conduct granted to the Pardoner for the duration of his visit ("Given at the furnace of our palace, / In our high court of Matters of Malice, / Such a day and year of our reign" [ll. 865-67]), to the manly bonhomie of Lucifer himself, all seems suspiciously redolent of the court of King Henry, its pastimes and protocols.

Rather than draw any more pointed conclusions about the similarities between the Tudor and infernal courts, however, the Pardoner's narrative soon turns in a jocularly misogynist direction. For, rather than seeking to keep Margery Coorson in hell with them, Lucifer and the devils are only too willing to let her go. Indeed, they instruct the Pardoner to be more ambitious and "[a]pply thy pardons to women so / That unto us there come no mo [*more*]" (ll. 941-42). For Lucifer claims that "all we devils within this den / Have more to do with two women / Than with all the charge we have beside" (ll. 937-39). Was the number two merely symbolic (any two women cause more trouble than any number of men …)? Or is the allusion, perhaps, as Axton and Happé suggest (p. 260, n. to l. 38), to the mutual hostility of the two rival "queens", Henry's legitimate wife, Katherine of Aragon, and the would-be queen, Anne Boleyn? Is Heywood suggesting that the debate over the king's Great Matter currently convulsing the court could be boiled down to the rivalry between two wilful, factious women? Rather than spell out the joke, however, or even give spectators the chance to do more than notice it in passing, the anecdote rushes to its conclusion, and the Palmer caps it off with the incredulous observation that he finds the devils' attitude incomprehensible, for,

> in all the places where I have been,
> Of all the women that I have seen,
> I never saw nor knew, to my conscience,
> Any one woman out of patience. (ll. 1000-3)

At this remark, the other characters spontaneously declare they have never heard a greater lie, thereby unwittingly declaring the Palmer the winner of the contest. True to the terms initially set out by himself (the best lie should be "in the fewest words thou can" [l. 654]), the Palmer has naively triumphed with what seems to be a lie far more succinct than the lengthy tales told by his rivals.

When the Pardoner and Potycary lament their fate in consequently being bound to wait upon the Palmer in perpetuity, however, the latter (with a little prompting from the Pedlar) decides graciously to release them from their servitude, and the interlude begins pointedly to change in tone one last time, shifting from ribald comedy to something more serious and politically inflected. The Palmer tells the Pedlar,

> Sir, I am not on them [*the Pardoner and Palmer*] so fond
> To compel them to keep their bond.
> And, since ye list not to wait on me,
> I clearly of waiting discharge thee. (ll. 1131-34)

And this, abruptly, he does. So, in a way that will become characteristic of his later work, Heywood chooses to end an interlude with matters restored roughly to where they seemed to be at the outset. As the Pedlar observes, "Now be ye all even, as ye began; / No man hath lost nor no man hath won" (ll. 1137-38). But, as in *Weather*, where a similar circular trajectory is traced, this apparent return to the *status quo ante* conceals a subtle but distinct change to both the mood and the substance of the group concerned. Here, too, the journey travelled in search of dominance has itself brought about a new appreciation of the virtues of the existing order—here of freedom from the sovereignty of another and (in the Palmer's case) from responsibility *for* others. Thus the Pedlar follows the claim cited above with a lengthy homily concerning the virtues of both the Palmer and the Pardoner's vocations, and the need to recognise both in the interests of all:

> Yet in the debate wherewith ye began,
> By way of advice I will speak as I can.
> I do perceive that pilgrimage
> Is the chief thing that ye [*Palmer*] have in usage,
> Whereto in effect for love of Christ
> Ye have, or should have been enticed,
> And whoso doth with such intent
> Doth well declare his time well spent.
> And so do ye [*Pardoner*] in your pretence,
> If ye procure thus indulgence
> Unto your neighbours charitably,
> For love of them in God only.
> All this may be right well applied
> To show you both well occupied.
> For though ye walk not both one way,
> Yet, walking thus, this dare I say:
> That both your walks come to one end. (ll. 1139-55)

Again, the claim picks up on a Christian commonplace that was given added weight and social force in the work of Erasmus. In the *Enchiridion* for the aspirant Christian soldier, first published in 1503, and printed in English translations in 1524 and November 1533 (Schoeck, p. 34), the scholar had stressed Christ's emphasis on virtue enacted communally through charitable awareness of and concern for one's neighbours. And this unity was, as Erasmus stressed throughout his writings, the accommodatingly broad Church

of the life lived in the fullness of Christ's love, a seamless garment "where different gifts called forth different missions from the baptized" (McConica, p. 51). More had voiced the same principle in the *Dialogue*, arguing explicitly that it was never a straight choice between giving alms to the poor or edifying shrines, doing good works at home or going on pilgrimage abroad. That would be the case only if there was sufficient wealth in the world to support just one of these activities:

> But God giveth enough for both, and giveth men diverse kinds of devotion, and all to His pleasure. In which, as the Apostle saith [*I Thessalonians 4*]: let every man for his part abound and be plenteous in that kind of virtue that the spirit of God guideth him to. (p. 50)

Within that broad diversity of gifts of the spirit, each Christian can, guided by grace, choose to follow the vocation that bests suits their inclinations. More's point is directly echoed by the Pedlar:

> And so for all that do pretend,
> By aid of God's grace to ensue
> Any manner kind of virtue—
> As some great alms for to give,
> Some in wilful poverty to live,
> Some to make highways and such other works,
> And some to maintain priests and clerks
> To sing and pray for soul departed—
> These, with all other virtues well marked,
> Although they be of sundry kinds,
> Yet be they not used with sundry minds,
> But as God only doth all those move.
> So every man, only for His love,
> With love and dread obediently
> Worketh in these virtues uniformly.
> Thus every virtue, if we list to scan,
> Is pleasant to God and thankful to man.
> And who that by grace of the Holy Ghost
> To any one virtue is moved most,
> That man by that grace that one apply,
> And therein serve God most plentifully.
> Yet not that one so far wide to wrest
> So liking the same to mislike the rest.
> For whoso wresteth, his work is in vain.
> . . . .
> One kind of virtue to despise another
> Is like as the sister might hang the brother. (ll. 1156-79, 1185-86)

Only the cynical Potycary opts out of the reconciliation of the virtuous offered by the Pedlar, declaring boldly that "I thank God I use no virtue at all" (ll. 1188). But this claim prompts only further moralising from the Pedlar, who, unwilling to allow his point to be lost in flippancy, concludes that to use no virtue at all "is of all the very worst way" (l. 1189), even if the Potycary is "well beloved of all this sort [i.e., *the audience*] / By your railing here openly / At pardons and relics so lewdly" (ll. 1198-200). The Potycary's retort that his railing is the product of his knowledge of the fraudulent nature of the Pardoner's stock in trade ("For all that he hath I know counterfeit" [l. 1202]), leads to the clearest statement yet of the necessity for careful and humble reflection by the faithful before they rush to judgement in an uncertain world:

> For his [*the Pardoner's*] and all other that ye know feigned,
> Ye be neither counselled nor constrained
> To any such thing in any such case
> To give any reverence in any such place.
> But where ye doubt, the truth not knowing,
> Believing the best, good may be growing.
> In judging the best, no harm at the least,
> In judging the worst, no good at the best.
> But best in these things it seemeth to me,
> To make no judgement upon ye.
> But as the Church doth judge or take them,
> So do ye receive or forsake them,
> As be sure ye cannot err,
> But may be a fruitful follower. (ll. 1203-16)

The Pedlar readily concedes the reality of abuses here. There may well be forged pardons around, as well as fraudulent relics, and some false claims are also, no doubt, made about relics and shrines that may themselves be genuine. But this does not invalidate the practices of pilgrimage, pardons and indulgences as a whole, and does not preclude the existence of genuinely miraculous interventions in human affairs in response to prayers.

More makes the same point repeatedly in the *Dialogue*. Preposterous claims are made for the efficacy of some religious practices, he concedes (although he carefully cites as his principal evidence an example taken from France, rather than anything nearer to home).[13]

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[13]   More has fun giving the Messenger a lengthy account of the Abbey of St Valéry in Picardy, where pilgrims of both sexes seek the saint's aid against kidney stones by hanging wax effigies of their genitalia along the walls, and the men place their penises through one of two silver rings ("one much larger than the other", he pointedly observes) placed "at the altar's end", where a monk ties a silver thread around each one while intoning prayers (*Dialogue*, pp. 227-28).

But one cannot and should not argue from this that, because something is open to abuse, the practice itself must be invalid. Should we "find a fault in every man's prayer?", he asks, just because thieves pray for success in their robberies (More, *Dialogue*, p. 257). In matters of faith, being too sceptical—"over-hard of belief of things that by reason and nature seem and appear impossible"—can bring as much peril of error as being "too light of credence" (p. 70). The truly Christian response is thus for More, as it is for Heywood's Pedlar, to believe the best where one cannot be absolutely sure of the worst. And like the Pedlar, More's mantra throughout the *Dialogue* is that, where an individual has reasonable doubt about the validity of a claim or a practice, but no absolute proof, the only sure recourse is to trust, not one's own insight, but the judgement of the Church through history.[14] The long continuity of a doctrine or practice among the faithful was thus the best guarantee of its value and authenticity. This would be the principle on which More would later stake his opposition to the Royal Supremacy and the Boleyn marriage, and for which he would ultimately die, asserting that the individual will of Henry VIII could not outweigh the consensus of fifteen hundred years of catholic belief in the primacy of St Peter and the papacy.

Dating *The Four PP*

It is hard not to see More's position and Heywood's here as not only congruent but coordinated, so close are the echoes between the *Dialogue* and the interlude. Each writer sets up the Church as the only sheet anchor for those who are uncertain, subordinating the individual intellect to its wisdom. To be too sceptical, they both argue, is worse than being too trusting of the claims of others, for good may come of the latter, while from the former it never can. Thus, it is the benevolent credulity of the Palmer that ultimately triumphs, rather than the pragmatic scepticism of the Potycary and Pardoner. And the interlude ends, like the *Dialogue*, with a sense of order restored through humility, and a shared recognition that human frailty may be reconciled with virtue through the operation of God's grace.

Given its lack of precisely datable allusions, *Four PP* might conceivably have been written and performed at any time between the late 1520s and 1534. But, given its close parallels with both the focus and the arguments of More's *Dialogue*, it seems much more likely that the two works were composed at roughly the same time, perhaps even simultaneously, during the later months of 1528 and early 1529, and with the same agenda in mind. Both texts, as we have seen, discuss the merits of pilgrimage, relics, the veneration

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14   For More's attitude here, see Duffy, pp. 197-99.

of saints and pardons, and both strive to counter scepticism about the validity and value of these practices in an environment in which such doubts were newly pressing.

To think of Heywood and More working on their separate texts roughly simultaneously thus makes good sense. More may not have known what Heywood was doing, but it seems highly likely that Heywood was keenly aware of his uncle's endeavours. More states in the prologue to the *Dialogue* that he had showed drafts of the text to friends, "other mo than one, whose advice and counsel for their wisdom and learning I asked in that behalf, and which have at my request vouch[ed]safe to read over the book ere I did put it forth" (pp. 22-23).[15] Might one of those friends have been Heywood, or one of the Rastells, through whom Heywood could have had access to the text or gained a good sense of its contents? Certainly, by the time it was ready for publication, John Rastell, who would print it, would have access to the completed text, and could have described its contents to Heywood. Either way, it seems safe to assume that at some point before its publication the playwright was well-informed about the emphases and agenda of the *Dialogue*, and that *The Four PP* offers a more light-hearted rehearsal of the same broad positions, perhaps intended for the entertainment of More's friends and family circle.[16]

Indeed, the play seems particularly well designed to address the kind of community newly troubled by religious doubts and differences over the appropriate response to evangelical reform evident in the More-Rastell circle in the period following Bilney's trial. Heywood's characters make the case for the reliability of their own vocations as a means of counteracting the prevailing uncertainty created by conflicting claims to religious truth and for the efficacy or otherwise of the traditional devotional practices allegedly criticised by the young scholar. In the light of the interlude's interest in the verifiability of claims to religious truth and the reliability of individual testimony, even its apparent diversion into a lying contest seems more obviously part of a sustained discussion of doubt and its consequences than might appear at first glance. In the months following Bilney's abjuration, the question of what constituted a lie, how one might lie, or conceal the full truth, and how honest folk might tell truth from falsehood were newly pressing public issues, nowhere more so than in More's close family circle. And Heywood's play seems designed to cast a burlesque comic light on all sides of the question.

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15   More implies that more than simply one or two "friends" were asked to look through the draft, as he claims that in his corrections, "let I nothing stand in this book but such as twain advised me specially to let stand against any one that any doubt moved me to the contrary" (*Dialogue*, pp. 23-24).

16   For the suggestion of a performance among "like-minded family and friends", see Axton and Happé, eds, p. 45.

Heywood, More and Erasmus

If we read *The Four PP* in the light of More's concerns with the Bilney case in mind, and the criticisms of pilgrimage, relics and the veneration of saints that it raised, this also helps us to see more clearly the relationship with its other great source of inspiration, the colloquies and satires of Erasmus. For More's own attitude to his great friend and his writings seems to have undergone a significant shift during the later 1520s, a shift that colours the *Dialogue*, and hence also Heywood's interlude. In March 1527, Erasmus had "politely rebuffed" overtures from More encouraging him to write decisively against Luther in defence of traditional belief and practice.[17] And his friend's disappointing refusal to be drawn decisively into the controversy was probably another contributing factor in More's willingness to take on the evangelicals in print himself, beginning with the *Dialogue*.

It is in the context of More's reassessment of the "Erasmian project" in the light of the spread of Lutheran heresy abroad and Bilney's trial nearer to home that Heywood's *The Four PP* is most profitably read. Where More brings a painstaking scholarly mind to the refutation of criticisms and the resolution of doubt about pilgrimage, relics, saints and pardons, Heywood offers a burlesque version of the same arguments. He has no equivalent of More's Messenger against whom to have his characters react, but the play nevertheless rehearses the same objections raised by More's interlocutor. They are voiced collectively by his quartet of flawed comic stereotypes, who argue with, insult, mock and try to deceive each other, only to discover that they have more in common than they think. And, finally choosing obedience to the Church over claims to individual agency or supremacy, they find a way to reconcile the differences that seemed at first to divide them without giving up the distinct vocations they pursue.

If Heywood was indeed at work on *The Four PP* alongside More in late 1528 or early 1529, this would make it among the earliest of his extant interludes. Probably only *Johan Johan* (which is hard to date on internal evidence) and *Witty and Witless* are earlier. And, whereas with the latter Heywood would feel a need to go back and revise it in the light of later events, he would seemingly never return to *The Four PP* to rework it to suit the changing circumstances of the coming years. It was probably too much a work of its moment for it to be readily adapted to suit later circumstances. Its faith in the reconcilability of differences within the self-regulating community of the faithful would struggle

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17   Marius, pp. 334, 339-40. Hoping to prompt his friend to complete the second volume of his *Hyperaspistes*, written in defence of Free Will against Luther's views, More had written, on 18 December 1526, "If, according to some reports, the delay is due to the fact that you have been terrorized, and have lost all interest in the work, and have no courage to go on with it, then I am thoroughly bewildered and unable to restrain my grief. . . . I would not want you to become absorbed in anything that might turn your interests elsewhere and thus prevent you from completing this work at the earliest possible date" (*Selected Letters*, pp. 161-65).

to survive the disputatious first session of the Reformation Parliament, just as its sense that doubts could be resolved with good faith on all sides would struggle to account for the increased hostility between clergy and laity, reformers and conservatives, that spilled out after the fall from office and influence of Thomas Wolsey. A play like *The Four PP* might encourage members of a broadly conservative community collectively to reflect on the value of the diversity of existing practice, and not to fall out among themselves over degrees of virtue, or mistake the perversion of laudable practices for commentary on the value of the practices *per se*. But it was ill-designed to reflect the more turbulent energies unleashed in England over the course of the long summer of 1529. To engage with these, Heywood would have to turn to more outward-looking and overtly political forms of theatre.

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Theta XIII
Forms of the Supernatural
on Stage: Evolution, Mutations

Textes réunis par
Richard Hillman

Naturalising the Supernatural in a French Reformation Morality:
*Mankind Justified by Faith: Tragicomedy,** *
by Henri de Barran (1554)

Richard Hillman
Université de Tours / Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance – CNRS

The play I am dealing with here may appear out of place in a setting devoted to Tudor dramatic phenomena. Certainly, it would have seemed so to Hardin Craig, who, in *English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages* (1955), magisterially identified the "universally representative character" as "the fundamental feature of English moralities" (p. 383) and proclaimed it a feature exceptionally exempt from foreign—and especially French—influence (p. 389). Of course, in order to maintain this position, Craig needed to ignore, among other things, the priority of *Elckerlyck* over *Everyman*, which he enshrined as typical of the oldest English tradition (not to say "finest", although he does [p. 389]). Scholarship has long since kicked this pasteboard cornerstone out from under the house of cards—and continues to trample on the wreckage: witness Anston Bosman's very recent (perhaps unnecessarily strenuous) wresting of *Everyman* from the cultural grip of the *Norton Anthology* in the cause of rehabilitating it within an "*Elkerlijk* network" (Bosman, p. 311-16).

Of course, *Mankind Justified by Faith*, composed by a Protestant pastor connected with the court of Navarre, is hardly medieval: it was published in Geneva in 1554, two years after its composition, according to the author's preface. But it certainly is French—the original title makes a point of saying so—and its existence, had Craig known of it (five copies survive, including one in the Bodleian), might have seriously impinged on his narrative. For the protagonist of Barran's play—"Mankind", in my translation—is about as universal as they come, and he is placed at the centre of symbolic action that takes him from sinful ignorance to despair to redemption in a comprehensive way comparable to his late fifteenth-century English namesake

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*   Original: *Tragiqve comedie francoise de l'homme iustifié par Foy*. All citations will be taken from my translation, available online (see Bibliography).

or to Humanum Genus in *The Castle of Perseverance*, the most comprehensive surviving morality of all.[1]

Paradoxically, the very feature that might have most troubled Craig about the mid-sixteenth-century French play might also have helped him, willy-nilly, to bridge a troublesome gap in his narrative, as it passes through the Tudor interlude and into the public theatre of Elizabethan and later London. For he seeks to arrive at an Everyman-like universality as appropriated by numerous characters of the later dramatists—with, naturally, Shakespeare in the forefront—yet finds himself hindered by the contrary cent-rifugal tendency of the English moral interludes: "most moral plays of the later Tudor period dealt, even when they proceeded according to the pattern of the morality play, with some special human situation already recorded in story or chronicle" (p. 386).[2] Craig's solution is twofold: on the one hand, he allows that some interludes did present "individual men"—though some women also figure—"whose dramatic situations were all-inclusive and whose actions were typical of human behaviour" (p. 383); on the other hand, he invokes the "moral earnestness of the Elizabethans" (p. 389), which supposedly led them, as if by collective instinct, spontaneously to recuperate a medieval English mode of thinking about character in universal terms.

In fact, Barran's dramaturgy arguably looks forward to Elizabethan stage practice in ways that go beyond actually providing a universal mankind figure such as Craig had to fabricate virtually. The elements in question bear, in turn, on an evolution in the staging of the supernatural, whereby what the traditional moralities presented as exteriorised

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1   For that matter, Barran's is far from the only, or the first, French morality to feature a generalised mankind figure as a protagonist. In the surviving texts, the practice can be traced back at least to the anonymous *Moralité à six personnages* (late fifteenth century), which centres on Aulcune ("some-one", "anyone") as a typical young man on the make; Chascun ("everyone") is the protagonist of the probably slightly later *Moralité du lymon et de la terre* (Recueil Trepperel, 19). (On the Trepperel collection, which has never been fully edited but is available on *Gallica* in sometimes hard-to-read facsimile, see Droz, pp. xi-xiv.) Cf. also L'Homme in the *Moralité nouuelle des iiii elemens* (Recueil Trepperel, 22), a similar piece roughly of the *Everyman* stamp, seemingly datable between 1517 and 1521. Both Trepperel moralities have been attributed (doubtfully) to "Jehan d'Abundance" (name regularised according to the BnF standard, whose catalogue terms this a "Pseudonyme d'un poète dont on ignore le nom et la vie, sauf qu'il mourut après 1550"). See also, and especially, L'Humanité in what may (or may not) be the same author's much later *Le Gouvert d'humanité* (1540-48; see Leroux, ed., p. 16). This last work, a distinctively counter-Reformation drama published in Lyons, presents sufficient points of intersection with Barran's work to suggest at least the type of Catholic piece which he aimed at countering. (For further detail, see Barran, *Mankind*, trans. and ed. Hillman, Introduction, pp. 9-11.)

2   Cf. Bevington on the "increasing structural tendency in the intermediate morality to alternate camps of godly and profane figures", thereby producing a "bifurcation of the central mankind fig-ure" (p. 153). Bevington's account, it may be noted, is equally innocent of Continental parallels.

forces of good and evil, linked with the influence of the divine or diabolical, are shown to operate within and through the human "heart"—whatever that may be.

It is tempting simply to associate this shift with the play's Protestant *parti pris*,[3] and to a point this is fair enough—even making, if we like, a fit with Elizabethan "moral earnestness". But the extent of Barran's technical innovation within the morality form can also be measured by comparison with Reform analogues. These include another Continental text which was demonstrably influential within the English dramatic milieu of the late 1580s and early 1590s but which has been equally neglected by criticism. This is the fiercely polemical neo-Latin morality—it is labelled a tragedy—of the German Thomas Kirchmeyer (*alias* Naogeorgus): *Mercator seu Judicium*. *Mercator* was published in 1540 and translated into French some four years after Barran's work appeared, probably by Jean Crespin, who is best known for applying John Foxe's model of martyrology in support of the Huguenot cause; the title has become, more optimistically, *Le Marchant converti*.[4] Both the original and (especially) the translation went through several editions, and I have found what seems to me specific influence on at least two public theatre plays: *A Looking Glass for London and England*, by Thomas Lodge and Robert Greene (1589-90?), and Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, whose original version is usually dated between 1588 and 1592.[5]

This evidence confirms continuity with the morality tradition of vividly representing supernatural forces as exterior, even if human reaction to them is necessarily the point. Lodge and Greene have an Evil Angel, who tempts the conscience-stricken Usurer with the means of suicide (V.ii.21 SD), as Mephistopheles does Faustus. And, most unusually for an Elizabethan text, their good Angel is actually addressed by Jonas at one point as "Jehovah", even as "my God" (V.iii.42, 50). Kirchmeyer, like John Bale, or Lewis Wager in *The Life and Repentaunce of Mary Magdelene*, takes the medieval liberty of bringing Christ on stage, although with a distinctly Calvinist twist. For although quite understandably pronouncing the deserved damnation of a Prince, a Bishop and a Friar who adhere to Catholic doctrine, Christ in *Mercator* offers a quite arbitrary-seeming gift of mercy to the Merchant, who is certainly no inclusive Everyman figure, and who, though driven to penitence, is too despairing to ask for mercy.[6]

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3   The broad passage of post-Reformation theatre towards evocations of inwardness by way of conscience is at least implicit in the overview offered by Slights, who discusses the morality of Woodes (to be considered below), but who is not concerned with specifically dramaturgical issues.

4   Crespin is identified on the title page only as the printer (in Geneva), not the translator; the latter, whoever he was, shows considerable literary and dramaturgical ability.

5   For details of the connection, see Hillman, "Faustus".

6   *Pace* Bosman, p. 316, who incorporates *Mercator* within his "*Elckerlijk* network", claiming that it depicts "the salvation of a merchant from the misguided counsel of a prince, a Catholic bishop, and

The key point for my purposes, however, is that the sinner's penitence in Kirchmeyer's play is not arrived at on stage through inward struggle, as the full Latin and French titles might suggest ("*in conscientiae certamine*", "*au combat de la Conscience*"). Rather, it is effected by the trenchant attacks of the character incarnating that function, Conscientia, seconded by the threats and taunts of an exuberant Satan. Mercator is subsequently purged (literally) of false doctrine by Paul and Luke, whom Christ despatches for the purpose. Such an exteriorised and activist conscience, then, is not an abstract allegory but the key element of a dynamic cluster of supernatural forces. The point is all the clearer by contrast with the silent, mournful and ineffectual figures incarnating the passive consciences of the Catholic characters destined for damnation. (As if in ironic response to this technique, we actually see Conscience brought down to earth, and indeed corrupted, as one of *The Three Ladies of London* by Robert Wilson [1584], who anglicises Kirchmeyer's *Mercator* and *Lucrum* as well.)

In *A Looking Glass*, conscience is not incarnated, but its operation is likewise attached directly to the supernatural. The sinful lords and ladies of Nineveh have their consciences given virtual voices to echo what they hear, as the inspired Jonas delivers his rebukes and the message of divine destruction ("The Lord hath spoken, and I do cry it out" [V.i.129]): "My soul is buried in the hell of thoughts … Horror of mind, disturbance of my soul" (169, 174); "Assailed with shame, with horror overborne … Woe's me, my conscience is a heavy foe" (184, 191). Next, the play's Usurer, a clear derivative of Mercator (whose crimes include usury), has his conscience jolted into action by what he is given to see in his mind's eye. This includes his victims supplicating God ("Methinks I see their hands reared up to heaven / To cry for vengeance of my covetousness" [V.ii.8-9]), a gaping hell, and finally the Judgement itself: "Methinks I see him sit to judge the earth. / See how He blots me out of the book of life" (14-15).

Conscience as a confrontational instrument of revelation and chastisement is likewise highlighted in *The Conflict of Conscience*, by Nathaniel Woodes (1581), a fascinating hybrid of allegory and pseudo-documentary,[7] notorious for its alternative endings but also notable, I believe, because it actually suggests the influence of Barran as well as Kirchmeyer. (The resemblance of Sensual Suggestion to Barran's seductive Concupiscence

a Franciscan friar". This is, at least, a misleading summary, although the play certainly deploys the device of the summons to death and judgement, as well as the Book of Reckoning, while pointedly refuting *Everyman*'s Catholic solutions. Curiously, Bosman fails to mention the French translation, perhaps because it does not fall within the Northern European limits he propounds for his "network" (pp. 315-16).

7   The "factual" basis is the well-known cautionary example of Francesco Spiera; on its adaptations and appropriations, see Overell.

is especially strong at several points, even if Woodes disallows female characters.[8]) With regard to Conscience, however, the dominant model is again Kirchmeyer.

As in *A Looking Glass*, God sends a warning, here through the character called Spirit:

Let not Suggestion of thy flesh, thy Conscience thée betray,
Who doth conduct thée in the path, that leadeth to all woe:
Waigh well this warning giuen from God, before thou further goe.
(Woodes, IV.iv)

It is when the power of Suggestion (literally) proves too strong that Conscience confronts the sinner as an exteriorised figure, as in *Mercator*, where Conscientia, by her own account—and she is female, as grammatical gender alone would warrant—has been driven out of the Merchant's house by his sins. There, she has the backing of a summons by death to render her reproaches efficacious. In Woodes's play, Conscience at first preaches to no avail. It takes an encounter with Horror to strike Philologus with despair, the "griping gréefe of hell", as in *Mercator*: "The peace of *Conscience* faded is, in stead whereof, I bring / The Spirit of Sathan, blasphemy, confusion and cursing" (Woodes, V.iv). In sum, while all of these are resolutely Protestant plays, there is no radical break with traditional dramaturgy when it comes to the sinner's confrontation with his dire state. Conscience, personified or not, functions as a discrete force within a supernatural nexus opposing good and evil influences. It is this established pattern, surely, that Launcelot Gobbo in *The Merchant of Venice* plays with in his monologue imagining the conflicting exhortations of the devil and his conscience—the latter at one point "hanging about the neck of my heart" (Shakespeare, *MV*, II.ii.13-14)—as he comically debates whether or not to desert his master Shylock.

What might be termed an "activist" conscience also features in the Tudor interlude that stands in the closest—and most puzzling—relation to Barran's play, Lewis Wager's *The Life and Repentaunce of Mary Magdelene*. The puzzle is a function of dates. The first edition of *Mary Magdelene* appeared in 1566, some four years after the author's death, but the Prologue's reference to a king, rather than a queen, has been taken to push the date of composition back into Edward's reign (White, ed., pp. xxii-xxiii), hence to at least 1543. It would otherwise seem evident that the author had borrowed a number of Barran's dramatic ideas. Wager's vices, including Carnall Concupiscence, are introduced into Mary's heart at the instigation of Infidelity, child of Satan; her accord with them issues in a song. Infidelitie puts on a Pharisee's gown. The Law, carrying the Mosaic tables and supported by Knowledge of Sinne (the counterpart of Barran's Spirit of Fear) "pricketh [Mary's]

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8   On this point, see Kelly, pp. 395-96.

conscience" (l. 1150)—the occasion, however, for a most un-Barran-like bawdy quibble; she recognises that she can never satisfy the Law and despairs of her salvation, which is nevertheless effected by grace and a personified Faith, with Love delivering the lesson that "by Faith onely, Marie was iustified" (l. 2131).

All these features have more or less close counterparts in Barran's *Mankind*, and obviously there is a fundamental convergence of Reform doctrine. Yet Wager's play is diffuse and composite, drawing on a wide variety of elements, including social satire, in elaborating its very roughly biblical version of Mary's conversion and redemption. It is tempting, then, to take the printed version as reflecting revision and amplification, whether or not by Wager himself,[9] and this is where bits of Barran might have proved useful. In any case, *Mary Magdalene* remains a traditional biblical interlude in its basic structure and dramaturgy, following very much in the line of Bale's *Thre Lawes* in its use of shape-shifting vices, including Infidelitie, and their defeat by divinity (Christ's presence here having, moreover, a "historical" rationale). Then, too, its central figure, while obviously a potential model for all sinners, is hardly Everyman, or even Everywoman.

To return to what is most distinctive about Barran's play, conscience here is no simple minatory spur to conversion through confrontation, and not a character at all, but nothing less than the *theatre* of spiritual operations, *platea* rather than *locus*. It is also explicitly the ground on which spectator and spectacle meet, as the Prologue establishes: "in his conscience / Each one of you will be interpellated" (Pro. 66-67). Indeed, the play's readers, who have access to the author's introductory address "To the Reader", are there exhorted to "realise feelingly in their conscience" (p. 5) the truth of the doctrine of justification by faith which is the play's *raison d'être*. I use "realise feelingly" to translate Barran's "epreuuent", a term which foregrounds the notion of experience. It points, as well, to the extended dramatic mechanism by which Barran's sinner is made aware of his condition, and ultimately redeemed.

The key is the complex role assigned to the Law, which focuses Barran's doctrinal objective. The issue of Law's place in the salvific system is a familiar and important preoccupation of Reform theology, given the supersession of the Old Testament Law of Justice by the New Testament Law of Mercy, as well as the Lutheran principle of *sola fides*. So much is attested by Bale's *Thre Lawes*. But whereas Bale allegorizes and distinguishes these three—"*of nature, Moses and Christ*"—in expounding their functions, and Wager settles for Mosaic Law's message of sin, Barran presents a composite and enigmatic figure who confronts Mankind—that is, us—with a challenge of interpretation and integration. Mankind is hampered by two factors. Most fundamentally, his vision is clouded by the

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9   A less likely possibility would be a common source, now unknown, presumably in French or Latin, for both Wager and Barran.

seductive blandishments of Concupiscence, the daughter of Satan, implanted within his heart from birth, who at first actually blindfolds him. (She thereby anticipates—but to far greater effect, thanks to her femininity—Woodes's device of Suggestion, who induces "the blindnesse of the flesh" by way of a "Glasse of vanyties" [IV.iii].[10]) Concupiscence then urges Mankind literally to break the Law (in some form, presumably, resembling the Mosaic tablets), and later, when he has resolved on outward compliance, makes a secret pact with him—and Satan—to remain in his heart.

This inward corruption is abetted, albeit unwittingly, by the figure of Rabbi, the advocate of the Law, who preaches the doctrine of salvation through obedience and good works, in opposition to Paul. Rabbi attempts to turn Mankind to virtue, leading him to the Law (at first together with Paul) and asking her to remove the blindfold and strike him with terror. She does so by having Sin and Death, who, like Concupiscence, are the spawn of Satan, molest and torment him. This is where Law's role ends in Wager's play. In a subsequent twist, however, Barran's Rabbi falsely convinces Mankind that he can satisfy the Law and, to make this plausible, casts a veil over her terrifying countenance. Mankind then embarks on a pharisaical phase, hypocritically showing a pious and virtuous exterior while remaining inwardly devoted to worldliness.

It is in this phase that the play develops its specifically anti-Catholic critique, exploiting the common association in Reform rhetoric between the biblical Pharisees and the clergy of the Roman church. Mankind boasts of fasting and alms-giving. In comparison with such precedents as Bale and Kirchmeyer, however, the critique is muted and assimilated to the doctrinal point. Mankind is now costumed, not like a contemporary ecclesiastic, but like the Jewish priests denounced by Jesus in Matthew 23:5, while the active support of Rabbi keeps the focus on the contrast between Old and New Law.

It is Paul's highly theatrical removal of the Law's veil, enacting the imagery of II Corinthians 3,[11] that brings the sinner to insupportable knowledge of his damnable state, which is confirmed by the physical opening of his breast by Sin and Death to expose Concupiscence and associated evils lurking within what Romans 2:5 terms a "hardnes and heart that can not repent". There follows, inevitably, despair, with the diabolically abetted impulse to suicide, until Paul gets him to listen to the words of Faith. Through

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10 This is a parodic adaptation of the use of true mirrors of self-knowledge, as in John Redford's *Wit and Science* (*c.* 1530-40), where the protagonist receives from Reason a "glas … wherein beholde yee / Yourselfe to yourselfe" (ll. 2-3), which finally proves efficacious, or *Moralité du lymon et de la terre*, in which Chascun is given a mirror by his parents, Lymon ("silt") and Terre ("earth"), and enjoined to look at himself daily to keep himself from sin by remembering his mortal nature. They are supported by Reason, but it will take the stroke of Death to convert him.

11 Cf. Bale's *Thre Lawes*, where Ambycyon and Covetousness "A vayle … have cast doughtles, / The lyght of the lawe to hyde" (III.1245-46); Deus Pater finally removes it (V.1890)

her Mankind is strengthened to receive Grace, who deigns to come to him with the promise of pardon—in effect, to cite Romans again, the "circumcision … of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom. 2:29). He is thereby freed from fear of Sin, Death and Satan. Concupiscence is duly relegated to a subordinate place. As for the Law, she is no longer terrifying, since Mankind is inwardly in harmony with her just, indeed divine, requirements.[12]

Such a summary suffices, I hope, to throw into relief Barran's representation of Mankind's negotiation of the relation between Law and Faith as an inward process involving not just the awakening of conscience in the moral sense but a coming to *consciousness*. It seems very much to the point that "*conscience*" in French carries both meanings, as does Latin "*conscientia*"—and as English "conscience" also did in this period (*OED*, s.v., II).[13] Certainly, Mankind can be hindered and helped by bad and good preaching: the former entails Rabbi's deceit and exposes Mankind's reason as inadequate, as when he reckons logically that since he first fell into sin by offending against the Law, he must get out of it by satisfying her. Paul's preaching, by contrast, carries the authority of the divine word (the printed text abounds with marginal references to scripture, especially to the apostle). But the necessary transformation, passing through torment to comfort, ultimately comes through experience.

To review the cast of characters shown to operate on the universal protagonist, it is striking that only one, Satan, unambiguously incarnates a supernatural entity. The hell to which he strives to bring Mankind is correspondingly real, in Barran's understanding. The other onstage figures, however, are either allegories or adjutants, or both, and they all lead back to inward process. Even Sin and Death, Satanic offspring though they are in theological terms, work by symbolically producing mental—coded as physical—torment, initially in service to the Law. They, like Concupiscence, are part of the fallen human condition, themselves capable of infiltrating the heart. The Law itself, though divinely established, functions according to Mankind's varying perception of it. So do Faith and Grace, representing those qualities of heavenly origin that the heart must be ready to receive. With regard to the representation of the supernatural, then, Barran's dramaturgy marks an evolution of morality tradition. Mankind is no longer the object of contestation between forms, or surrogates, or allies, of the Good and Evil angels. He has become the subject who must work out (the Geneva version reads "make an end of") his "owne saluation with feare and trembling" (Phil. 2:12).

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12   The play thus decisively makes a transition towards the more hopeful and inspiring stance regarding salvation that Happé has usefully traced across a number of English interludes, including that of Wager.

13   To the extent that "consciousness" opens a broad channel between what is inward and what is outward, this doubleness allows for the shaping of the former by the latter as propounded by Tilmouth.

It is doubtless, in part, Barran's sense of theatrical and theological decorum that keeps him, unlike Bale, Kirchmeyer and Wager, from putting divinity on stage. His prefatory address to the reader reveals a deep distrust of the potential of theatricality to impede or even subvert doctrinal instruction. But he nevertheless shows a keen theatrical sense in many respects, and the invisibility of God paradoxically points to a highly personal process of discovery on Mankind's part, such as John Donne evokes in "Satyre III": "on a huge hill, / Cragged, and steep, Truth stands, and hee that will / Reach her, about must, and about must goe" (ll. 79-81).

Such an evolution at least foreshadows the essentially secular but spiritually resonant adaptations of analogous morality features in the later public theatre—and for once, I am not thinking of the Vice, whose legacy has been so well served by Bernard Spivack and others. Holding in abeyance the possibility of direct influence, I believe that Barran may be brought productively to bear on two comedies of Shakespeare in which an advocate, even an embodiment, of Law-as-Justice sets in motion a potentially tragic process that is only belatedly turned aside by mercy. An intertextual reading of *The Merchant of Venice* might well posit an inflection of the *Il Pecorone* story by Kirchmeyer's *Mercator*, but also by Barran's use of Rabbi in delineating a mankind-figure tormented, and nearly destroyed, by a strict application of the Old Law.[14] It uncannily points up the last-minute intervention of Shakespeare's spokesperson for Mercy that Antonio is nearly put through an opening of his breast that would be more than a symbolic revelation of his heart, and at a moment when he despairingly deems himself "a tainted wether of the flock, / Meetest for death" (IV.i.114-15). (By the way, it is only in Shakespeare's version that the prospective victim's heart is specified.) Similar spiritual terms, in more abstract form, permeate *Measure for Measure*. The hypocritical upholder of the Law in that toughly problematic comedy, a devil posing as an angel, who likewise resists a heavenly discourse of Mercy, finds himself caught out by Law in a way that imposes such agony of conscience—and consciousness—that, like Mankind, or Antonio for that matter, he seeks to die. Mercy in these plays is conspicuously in human hands, and, ironically, neither Shylock nor Angelo appears grateful for it.

More broadly, and of course more distantly from Barran's isolated precedent, the production of subjectivity through conscientious guilt runs throughout Shakespearean tragedy, often by way of dreams or ghosts that exteriorise an inward phenomenon. When the victims of Richard III successively enjoin him, on the eve of Bosworth field, to "[d]espair and die" (*R3*, V.iii.120, 126, etc.), driving him to a sense of self-loss through "coward conscience" (179), the traditional morality structure is adapted, as by Barran, so as to naturalise the supernatural. When Lear is persecuted by a perverse application of

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14   For such a reading, see Hillman, "Mercy Unjustified".

retributive law—"to willful men / The injuries that they themselves procure / Must be their schoolmasters" (*Lr.*, II.iv.302-4)—he strives to appear "a man / More sinned against than sinning" (III.ii.59-60) but reveals himself desperately in need of grace, which is freely offered from a naturalised "soul in bliss" (IV.vii.45): "No cause, no cause" (74). The point of recalling the morality pattern here extends precisely to the absence of the supernatural.

The universe of Shakespearean tragicomedy literally revels, if one may say so, in attaching supernatural resonances to naturally generated actions, and here too, the pattern of subjectifying conscience/consciousness as a prelude to pardon comes closer to Barran's tragicomic morality than to Kirchmeyer's tragedy. The most concise case is Ariel's confrontation of the "men of sin" (*Tmp.*, III.iii.53) with their guilt and the threat of "[l]ing'ring perdition" (77), so that they become "desperate" (104). After Prospero rewards the "penitent" (V.i.28) villains and holds out hope of "pardon" (294) even to Caliban, who will "seek for grace" (296), he makes a famous gesture towards putting himself in their place: "And my ending is despair, / Unless I be reliev'd by prayer" (Epi., 15-16).

It seems most fitting, however, to end this brief tour of a vast territory, if not with Paul, at least with Paulina in *The Winter's Tale*, who enforces and prolongs Leontes' guilt-stricken conscience over sixteen years in terms redolent of the familiar spiritual pattern:

> Do not repent these things, for they are heavier
> Than all thy woes can stir; therefore betake thee
> To nothing but despair. (*WT*, III.ii.208-10)

The gods, she affirms, will never forgive him. But Hermione will, finally fulfilling her intuition that enduring Leontes' perversion of Old Law "[i]s for my better grace" (II.i.122). He will be reminded by the sight of Florizel to include his childhood friend in his offences against heaven, which have been punished with a symbolic death:

> You have a holy father,
> A graceful gentleman, against whose person
> (So sacred as it is) I have done sin,
> For which the heavens, taking angry note,
> Have left me issueless. (V.i.170-74)

But life will shortly be redeemed from death, and a supposed statue be made to move and speak, on condition that "[y]ou do awake your faith" (V.iii.95).

No medieval or early modern morality that I know models this despairing sinner's moment of redemption, as managed by Paulina, so closely as does Barran's—and to the point of gendering the redemptive force as female:

> *Mankind.*   I feel God's ire fierce and harsh in me.
> What succour, then, may I from you expect?

> No recourse but by hanging to effect
> My death at once and strangle utterly.
> *Paul.*   Wait a little, for you shall presently
> Hear words delivered by a voice divine
> To soothe you, if your ear you will incline. (V.vi.1433-39)

The voice belongs to Faith awakened, "from high heaven appearing" (V.vii. 1478),

> The cognizance of God with you to share
> And that supreme benevolence declare
> He shows to those who for their ill atone
> And will return, through Faith, to him alone. (1482-85)

Faith must be awakened in Mankind at large—which is to say, in the spectators themselves, who are first exhorted to gaze on an image of their own hard-heartedness, as if on a block of stone, with its message of despair and death, so that they may "realise feelingly" a coming-to-life along with it.

The Winter's Tale, of course, actually puts its key spectators on stage, and Leontes asks, already moving beyond the "hardnes and heart that can not repent" of Romans 2:5, "does not the stone rebuke me / For being more stone than it?" (V.iii.37-38). Barran never cites the prophecy of Ezekiel, but he certainly knew it, and it happens to fuse with particular resonance the tragicomic work of Paul and Paulina, anticipating even the assimilation of the Old Law to the New:

> I will take away the stonie heart out of your bodye, and I wyll gyue you an hearte of fleshe.
> 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walke in my statutes, and ye shall kepe my iudgements and do them. (Ezek. 36:26-27)

Only with the utmost diffidence would I propose a French morality, perhaps never acted in any country and now all but forgotten, as a theatrical model that even morally earnest Elizabethans would consciously, or conscientiously, have allowed to inflect the evolution of the supernatural and the spiritual on their especially dynamic stage. But I would suggest that Barran's text substantially illuminates that evolution, at least as background. And I cannot help wondering whether Hardin Craig would be pleased—or not—by the suggestion.

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Theta XIII
Forms of the Supernatural on Stage: Evolution, Mutations

Textes réunis par
Richard Hillman

La collection

THETA

The Disappearing God:
From Anthropomorphic to Internalised Relationships of Faith in the Earlier Elizabethan Drama

Jan Tasker

The Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham

Writing in the 1960s, T. W. Craik claimed that the character of God ceases to appear after the plays of Henry VIII's reign (p. 50). Whilst this is not strictly accurate, God does seemingly disappear as an onstage character from new English dramatic writing by the 1570s. During the period 1533–58, the Christian God is involved in approximately twenty percent of extant plays, compared to only about nine percent in the first twenty years of Elizabeth's reign.[1] However, analysis of these later plays suggests that God was instead internalised, thus illustrating a faith-based relationship with humanity aligned with the new Protestant theology. Starting with the explicitly anthropomorphic God and externalised God-human relationships of the early 1560s, and culminating with the external representation of psychomachia in Nathaniel Woodes's *The Conflict of Conscience* (1581), this paper explores the evolution of God's dramatic representation in the first twenty years following the Elizabethan settlement.

After 1559, God rarely appeared in plays. The second commandment, "Thou shalt not make to thy selfe any graven Image, nor the lykenes of any thyng that is in heaven above" (*The Book of Common Prayer* [1559], p. 152[2]), was being interpreted in an increasingly precise manner. Theologians were concerned about lay perceptions of God as anthropomorphic even

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1   There are 298 known new plays written between 1533 and 1558, of which sixty-five involved a god or gods. Nearly ninety percent of these were the Christian God. This compares to 374 plays in the first twenty years of Elizabeth's reign, with sixty-nine involving gods and only thirty-three of these the Christian God. (Data calculated by reference to Wiggins, vols I and II; all subsequent play dates come from Wiggins.)

2   *The Book of Common Prayer* is used, as those were the words parishioners would hear regularly in church during the communion service and which they would be required to learn as part of the preparation for Confirmation. The language was probably slightly more accessible to the less educated than that of the Bishops' or Great Bibles (1568 and 1541, respectively), which would have been used when Exodus was the

within the imagination, and such representations were condemned. Only two known Protestant plays written after 1559 featured God as an explicit character: an untitled play probably dating from about 1564, and the re-written Norwich Grocers' play of 1565. The former was possibly written for congregational performance at Limebrook in Hereford-shire. It is referred to by W.W. Greg as *Processus Satanae*. Only the actor's part for God, with cues from Satan, is extant, so there is little context for God's characterisation, but it is clearly anthropomorphic. Throughout, the tone is conversational, the answers to Satan reflecting one half of an obviously two-way dialogue. God is clearly responding to Satan's complaints:

> *Satan.*   … robbed me
> *God.* Nay Sathan when yt is well knowen
> I have taken that wch was but myne owne (ll. 23-25)

Here is another example:

> *Satan.*   … suche pollicye in god
> *God.* Why not Sathan in all thinges w[hi]ch be good. (ll. 55-57)

Additionally, God expresses human emotions towards Christ, referring to him as "my welbeloved" (l. 4), and calls on him to "Sitt on my right hand" (l. 8). Whilst the direct biblical sources of these phrases grant them legitimacy, the personification they imply posed problems for Protestants increasingly averse to anthropomorphic imagining of the Trinity.[3]

Conversely, the Norwich Grocers' play attempts to de-humanise the relationship between Adam, Eve and God in its representation of the temptation in paradise. This play is extant in two versions, one, the "A text" from 1533, by Stephen Prewett, and the 1565 "B text", re-written by an unknown author for an anticipated revival of the Norwich craft guild cycle. It is the last Protestant play known to have been written with a fully anthropomorphic God.[4] Initially, God is distant and there is no conversation between him and Adam. His opening speech takes the form of an apostrophe, indicated by the reference to Adam in the third person:

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text for the day. These read: "Thou shalte make thee no graven image neyther any similitude that is in heaven above" (Exodus 20:4).

3   For example, Mark 16:19 tells of Christ's ascension to sit on God's right hand. Equivalent references occur in Matthew, Luke, Acts, Romans and Hebrews.

4   Catholic plays for English audiences, written abroad and in England, continued to involve an an-thropomorphic God. For example, several of the plays now known as the *Stoneyhurst Pageants* (1624) have a role for God.

> I am *Alpha et homega*, my *Apocalyps* doth testyfye,
> That made all of nothinge for man his sustentacion;
> And of this pleasante garden that I have plant most goodlye
> I wyll hym make the dresser for his good recreacion. (*Norwich Grocers' Play*, "B text", ll. 1-4)

This is immediately followed by instructions to Adam:

> Therefor, Man, I gyve yt the, to have thy delectacion.
> In eatyng thou shalt eate of every growenge tre,
> Excepte the tre of knowledge, the which I forbydd the. (ll. 5-7).

Apostrophe, imperative and avoidance of personal name are distancing techniques, dehumanising the relationship between the characters, and reducing the anthropomorphic effect of having God played by an actor. After the temptation scene, God asks questions of Adam (now named), the Woman (still impersonal) and the Serpent but does not respond to their answers, so there is still no conversation. The formal tone maintains a distance between God and the human characters, and their relationship with him is explicitly exteriorised.

Other plays of the early 1560s humanise God through rhetorical references. *Aegio* (*c.*1560) is a play-fragment used by its presumed author, William Alley, Bishop of Exeter, to illustrate a sermon on providence and free will. The protagonist speaking for these, Phronimos,[5] uses the contemporary understanding of God as a loving parent correcting a wilful child. Man commits "the il of sinne" of his own free will, whilst "Gods *hand* doth inflicte"[6] the "ill of payn" (Alley, sig. 2F5ᵛ). These references to God's hand and the parental nature of the relationship personify God. Alexander Nowell, in his highly popular 1570s *Catechism*, insisted that the reference to Christ sitting on God's right hand was simply a metaphor to illustrate Christ's closeness to God and not intended to be taken literally to imply God had hands like humans (p. 163). However, the two metaphors are mutually supportive, creating a mental image of a humanised God. Additionally, the parental metaphor suggests a direct external relationship between God and humans. This implies a physical, rather than spiritual, God.

In the late 1560s, authors of morality plays introduced allegorical characters representing aspects of God's engagement with humans. These present God in terms similar to William Perkins's mental conception of him as "his properties and works" (sig. A7ʳ), as articulated in his popular 1590 catechism, *The foundation of Christian religion*, whilst

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5   "Phronimos", meaning "in one's right mind", indicates to an educated audience that this was the "correct" argument. I am grateful to Mr John Fox for this translation.

6   All emphases are my own throughout unless otherwise stated.

also acting as agents for those works. They therefore help to reduce the mental perception an audience may have of an anthropomorphic God. Simultaneously, their abstract nature allows a shift from an external relationship between God and humans towards an internal one, based on faith.

For example, in *The Longer Thou Livest the More Fool thou Art,* written by William Wager, probably in 1569, God's Judgement declares, "I *represent* God's severe judgement" (l. 1763), and "Hither am I sent" (l. 1765), indicating his separateness from God. He personifies one of God's works, passing judgement, rather than being an abstraction of God *per se*. The characterisation is distant. His speech is directed at the audience, not the protagonist, Moros, whom he refers to in the third person:

> Hither I am sent to the punishment
> Of *this* impious fool, here called Moros
> Who hath said there is no God in *his* heart. (ll. 1765-67)

His distinction from God is also apparent in his use of the present tense for his own immediate actions and the future for God's in the hereafter. After articulating Moros's sins, God's Judgement directly addresses him—"With this sword of vengeance I *strike* thee" (l. 1791)—and then adds:

> Thy wicked household *shall be* dispersed,
> Thy children *shall be* rooted out to the fourth degree
> Like as the mouth of God hath rehearsed. (ll. 1792-94)

The nature of the relationship with God is thus de-humanised by distance, time, and the intervention of a third character.

Another description that Perkins used for God was as a "spirit, or a spirituall substance" (sig. A6ʳ). This metaphor was used earlier in *The Trial of Treasure* (1567), also attributed to William Wager. This play sets two allegorical characters against one another: Just, the elect, and Lust, implicitly reprobate. Lust is supported by the character Natural Inclination, whom Just attempts to restrain. Early in the play, God's spiritual nature and the interiorised nature of his relationship with the elect is articulated by Just when he defeats Lust: "Not of my power I doe thee expell / But by the mighte of his *spirite* that dwelleth *in* me" (ll. 152-53). The use of "in" here reminds the audience that those elected for salvation under the doctrine of predestination were deemed to have God's holy spirit within them, making their relationship with God an internal one. It confirms Just's status as one of the elect. Just's companion, Sapience, also reminds the audience that the fight against sin is an internal one:

> suche as are led by their lust,
> To incline evil are alwayes appropriate,

> They have not as you have, battel & combate,
> Against the cogitations that *inwardly* spring. (ll. 446-49)

The Elizabethan homily on salvation made it clear that justification came from "a true and lively faith", given as "the gift of God" (*Certain Sermons or Homilies*, p. 22). For contemporaries, fighting one's natural inclination evidenced this grace. This fight is realised literally in the play when Just puts a bridle on Natural Inclination. God's active participation in aiding Just with this is repeatedly articulated. Ultimate justice however, is enacted by God's Visitation. That he is not God is made clear in his opening declaration that "I am Gods minister called Visitation" (l. 963). "Minister" indicates his subordinate status as God's agent, although the activities ascribed to him, which affect both individuals and nations, show his power. His tone is stern and forbidding. The interaction between him and the other characters is distant but direct, emphasising the finality of God's judgement and punishment.

Despite their distinct natures, these allegorical characters still represent God in the plays. Through them, God's relationship with the protagonists is increasingly internalised, usually by making the onstage characters unable to see them. In *Enough Is as Good as a Feast* (*c*. 1568), Wager uses a dramatic device to reflect this. God's Plague visits the reprobate, Worldly Man, and speaks into his mind as a dream, while he is alone and sleeping. Worldly Man's companions, Covetous and Ignorance, are unaware of God's Plague when they return, although he is still on stage.

Similarly, in *The Longer Thou Livest*, Moros cannot see God's Judgement. He mutters to himself when struck:

> Either I have the falling sickness,
> Or else with the palsy I am stricken.
> I feel in myself no manner of quickness;
> I begin now strangely to sicken. (ll. 1795-98)

This unawareness is reinforced by his immediate reaction to Confusion's appearance: "Here is an ill-favored knave, by the mass / Get thee hence, thief, with a wanion" (ll. 1811-12). The stage directions give Confusion an "ill-favored visure" (l. 1806 SD), clearly referenced here. Conversely, Moros makes no comment on God's Judgement, who nevertheless required a "terrible visure" (l. 1758 SD). If Moros could see God's Judgment he would surely have mentioned this. Instructed by God's Judgement, Confusion replaces Moros's clothes of office with a "fool's coat" (l. 1820), causing Moros to believe he is dreaming: "Am I asleep, in a dream, or in a trance?" (l. 1823). Again this indicates he can neither see nor hear God's Judgement. The references to dreams in both plays internalise the experience for the protagonists. They do not share the audience's physical

awareness of God's representatives. Nevertheless, they do experience what those characters effect. In this way, God's actions are indirectly internalised.

Conversely, all the characters can see and hear God's Visitation in *The Trial of Treasure* and respond directly to his pronouncements. Nevertheless, God's relationship with Just is internalised. Innate human sinfulness, even of the elect, is emphasised when God's Visitation notes that he has already inflicted pain on Just. By not staging this, however, the internal nature of Just's faith and hence his relationship with God are implied, in contrast to Lust's lack of faith, which requires an external, staged, engagement.

The allegorical representative of God is rather different in Ulpian Fulwell's *Like Will to Like Quoth the Devill to the Collier*, possibly written for performance by boys *circa* 1568. God's Promise attends on Virtuous Living with another character, Honour, and makes a similar pronouncement to those made in earlier plays: "I am Gods Promise" (l. 838). Despite this declaration that he *is* God's Promise, he references it in the third person. He and Honour come "As messengers *from* God, *his* promise to fulfil" (l. 845) and he states that "Gods Promise is infallible; *his* word is most true" (l. 865). This distances him from God. However, he differs from other allegorical representations of God, as, instead of being distant, he is intimate, both with the protagonist, Virtuous Living, and with the other allegorical blessings, Honour and Good Fame. Whereas other allegorical representations of God were formal and rather forbidding, God's Promise is friendly and cheerful. His opening line, addressed to Virtuous Living and Good Fame, is very human and friendly: "God rest you merry both, and God be your guide" (l. 835), and at the end of the section he joins them in a song in praise of God. However, this is in keeping with the blessings that he brings. The other plays enacted the punishment sinful Man should expect for transgressions, whilst this character brings reward. Nevertheless, the consequence is that this play does not have the same sense of an interiorised God evident in other plays of this period and genre.

This may reflect the different interests of its author. Although Fulwell was an ordained minister, David Kathman, his biographer in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* ("Fulwell, Ulpian"), suggests he was not very assiduous, preferring to focus on his secular writing. Conversely, Peter Happé ("Wager, William") notes that contemporaries praised William Wager for his pastoral care. *Like Will to Like* is doctrinally sound but is much less careful to reinforce the importance of God's grace. Also, the action implies that the fate of the wicked characters lies with the Vice, Nichol Newfangle, acting on behalf of Lucifer. Nevertheless, the fact that Fulwell avoids a direct anthropomorphic representation of God suggests that this was becoming the norm by 1569.

The process of internalising God and his relationship with humanity is completed in Nathaniel Woodes's *The Conflict of Conscience* (possibly *c.* 1572, pub. 1581). Spirit and

Horror[7] visit the protagonist, Philologus, as messengers from God. In contrast with the earlier plays, they are not allegorical representations of God or his works. Philologus is initially a godly Protestant advising others on the scriptures. Consequently, he is threatened with loss of life and worldly goods by the Catholic Church. So, encouraged by Sensual Suggestion's promises of wealth and power, he renounces his faith. This leads to a visit from Spirit.

Spirit does not introduce himself other than to say that the warning he brings is "given *from* God" (l. 1677). His subsequent reference to "thy Lord and God" (l. 1697) in the third person also indicates his own separateness from God. Spirit's opening remarks warn Philologus of his danger:

> In time take heede, goe not to farre, looke well thy steps unto!
> . . . .
> Waigh well this warning given from God, before thou further goe. (ll. 1674, 1677)

The alliteration in "waigh well this warning" creates a sombre, stern tone appropriate to a divine warning, further underlined by the monosyllabic imperatives. This all distances Spirit from Philologus, and hence also the relationship with God that Spirit represents.

However, Spirit is clearly intended to be part of Philologus's consciousness, rather than having an external existence. Although he is given an entrance in the text, neither Philologus nor Suggestion can see him. Philologus asks, "Alas, what voice is this I heere, so dolefully to sounde, / Into mine eares?" (ll. 1681-82). Suggestion, meanwhile, gives no indication of having heard anything. He subsequently responds to Philologus' articulation of the warning that he has received with "These are but fancies certainly" (l. 1712). Spirit's interiority is reinforced by Philologus's heart and conscience responding to the character's words: "My hart doth tremble for distres, my conscience pricks mee sore" (l. 1707). Previous protagonists, like Moros, experienced bodily pains as a consequence of God's message to them, but Philologus's suffering is spiritual, further internalising the relationship with God.

Indeed, there is considerable focus on internal and outward aspects of faith in this scene. Spirit reminds Philologus that Sensual Suggestion, though represented as a separate character, is an inherent part of his own human nature: "Let not Suggestion *of thy flesh*, thy Conscience thee betray" (l. 1675). The association with the flesh is a negative one. As Anna Bertolet explains, flesh was not simply the body but a part of the soul. It was an active agent alongside the spirit, and frequently in combat with it. Accordingly, Spirit

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7 The full name of the character referred to as Horror is "Confusion and Horror-of-the-Mind". He states that in an early speech, but the speech prefix is Horror throughout, and I will use that name to avoid confusion.

warns Philologus that though "the frailtie of the flesh" has encouraged him to "denye with *outward lyps*, thy Lord and God most deare", he should not "the same to stablish with consent, of Conscience" (ll. 1696-98). He goes on to advise Philologus:

> Shut up these wordes *within* thy brest, which sound so in thine eare:
> The *outwarde* man hath caused thee, this enterprise to take,
> Beware least wickednesse of spirit, the same doo perfect make (ll. 1703-5).

Inner faith is being stressed here, externalised by the actor playing the part of Spirit.

This internal struggle is articulated by Philologus in the next scene, when, under pressure from the character Conscience, he moans: "My flesh and Spirit to [*sic*] contende" (l. 1893). This was a commonplace experience for the godly, and equally indicative of the elect as of the reprobate. Philologus and his pupil, Mathetus, discuss this concept early in the play. Later drama developed the soliloquy to represent inner dialogue and struggle of conscience, but that has the danger of self-deceit, as was recognised by contemporaries.[8] Furthermore, and importantly for these plays' religious didacticism, soliloquy leaves the audience in doubt as to the legitimacy of the protagonists' words—one might think of almost any of Shakespeare's soliloquies, for example. Using a physical character to externalise the engagement with God ensures the audience is clear about the authority of what is said.

The final play from this period with a similar allegorical character is *New Custom*, written by an unknown author around 1573. The internalisation in this is more explicit. God is represented by God's Felicity, who visits the newly converted protagonist. Previous allegorical characters made statements of the form: I *am* God's' Visitation, Plague, Judgement or whatever. This externalises the physical experiences God is sending the protagonists, even when the mode of presentation internalises the relationship. As these experiences are themselves physical, external and visible (death, poverty and so on), this procedure is apt. Although the eternal consequences of their protagonists' lack of spiritual faith are referred to, the immediate outcomes are essentially terrestrial. This is in keeping with the earlier plays' concerns with specified contemporary moral issues.

In *New Custom* the rewards of conversion to the "true" Protestant faith are less tangible, and deliberately unworldly, so the nature of the persona bringing those rewards changes. Instead of "I am God's Felicity", the character says: "Which Felicity in person here I do represent" (III.i [p. 201]). The character standing on the stage only *represents* the state of happiness promised by God. He does not represent God. The allegorical

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8   For discussion of contemporary understandings of the role of the conscience, see, e.g., Braun and Vallence, eds, esp. Introduction and Walsham; see also Wilks, pp. 7-43.

nature of the representation is explicitly articulated. Clearly, happiness is an emotional state. It cannot easily be shown physically on stage without reference to worldly causes. Here the purpose is to emphasise spiritual contentment. God's Felicity only appears at the end, with no subsequent action other than a prayer of thanks by the recipients of God's Felicity. The protagonist then explains the eternal, spiritual, post-mortem, nature of the happiness Felicity brings: "Give grace to thy people, that *after this transitory / Life*, they may come to thy perfect Felicity" (III.i [p. 202]). This physically external character, God's Felicity, is only representing a temporary worldly state as an exemplar of the "perfect Felicity" to follow after death. God has been fully internalised.

In conclusion, then, during the first twenty years of Elizabeth's reign there was a growing antagonism towards anthropomorphic representations of God as breaches of the second commandment. Plays during this time increasingly reflect this by replacing God with allegories of his works and properties. Furthermore, the protagonists' contact with these is increasingly internalised. Rhetorical descriptions of God in the dialogue also focus on his works and properties in precisely those terms later employed by Perkins. These changes simultaneously have the effect of distancing God and also of reflecting an internal relationship between humans and God based entirely on faith.
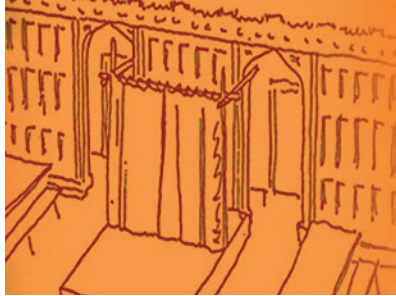
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Theta XIII
Forms of the Supernatural on Stage: Evolution, Mutations

Textes réunis par
Richard Hillman

The Oxford Ghost Walk:
Staging the Supernatural in Oxford University Drama*

Elisabeth Dutton
University of Fribourg, Switzerland

Plays written and performed in Oxford Colleges in the late medieval and early modern period abound in supernatural beings of all sorts—from the allegorical, for example in Barten Holyday's *Technogamia, or the Marriages of the Arts* (first performed 1617/1618, printed 1618), to the risen Christ and the demonic spirits of Nicholas Grimald's scriptural plays in classical style, *Christus Redivivus* (first performed 1540/1541, printed 1543) and *Archipropheta* (first performed 1546/1547, printed 1548), to the classical deities and Senecan revenge ghost of William Gager's *Dido* (first performed 1583). This paper will focus specifically on ghosts, a category of supernatural being not always easy to define. Classical gods are not ghosts, of course; nor, perhaps, are all supernatural beings in human form: in order to define a ghost, Stanley Wells suggests that a ghost appears of its own volition, whereas visions and apparitions are summoned by others, and ghosts must have some claim to objective reality—the ghosts in *Richard III* he allows as ghosts because they appear to both Richmond and Richard and so seem objectively real. So Wells, who is writing about Shakespeare, sees ghosts in *Richard III, Julius Caesar, Hamlet* and *Macbeth*.[1] By complete contrast, Simon Palfrey and Emma Smith characterise Shakespearean ghosts as expressions of the mental or moral states of others. The ghosts in *Richard III, Julius Caesar* and *Macbeth* are principally markers of a protagonist's guilt: "It isn't so much the murdered who cannot rest in peace. It is the murderers. . . . The ghosts are less figures of the afterlife than projections of restless ambition or emotional desire" (Palfrey and Smith, p. 167). For Palfrey and Smith, in Shakespeare only Hamlet's ghost truly

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1   See Wells, pp. 255-70.

stalks beyond the land of the living and is a restless soul, arriving without warning and wandering at his own will. It thus seems necessary to think beyond the question of volition as alone defining the theatrical ghost.

Place seems to be important to ghostliness: Old Hamlet's ghost alludes to the torments of his life beyond the grave—indeed, his obsession with his former sensual sins and his present physical suffering make him paradoxically remarkably corporeal—and these torments imply a hell, or perhaps here a purgatory, from which he has broken loose, in the style of the true Senecan spectre. But the ghosts of *Richard III*, while some allude to the time and place of their death, do not tell us where they come from or go to, and this is part of our sense that they do indeed seem to be conjured up by a protagonist's mind, albeit not willingly or consciously. And if they are articulations of a protagonist's fears or desires, they perhaps move closer, in a sense, to the allegorical beings of morality drama, and come not from a supernatural world but a theatrical one. Wells writes:

> certain kinds of character or types of action call for a differentation that will set them off from the norm. One may think of happenings such as dumbshows, plays (or masques) within plays, processions, theophanies, and the like, and characters such as witches, jesters, and spirits who by no stretch of the imagination can be expected to behave like even the theatrical manifestations of ordinary human beings. The point of them is their otherness—that they are different even from other stage characters. (p. 255)

This final point, that these particular theatrical beings are different even from other stage characters, helpfully indicates the possibility of generic irregularity, a possibility explored by Janette Dillon in relation to Shakespeare's history plays. Dillon writes of the scene in *Henry VI, Part Two,* in which the rebel Cade enters a garden looking for something to eat, and his prosaic discussion of salads is interrupted by the arrival of Alexander Iden, the garden's owner, who in calm rhetoric praises the garden as an emblem of the good life; by evoking the Eden for which he is apparently named, Iden encourages the audience to reflect both on the contemplative order that a garden could represent and the state or commonwealth, often represented as a garden. Iden is at this point the presenter of a pageant. He is not, of course, a ghost, but he is certainly from another world. He is a generic disruption to the conventions of the history play,[2] as a ghost is a spatial and temporal disruption to the here-and-now, and a staged ghost is to a theatrical present.

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2   See Dillon, pp. 13-28.

This idea of the staged "different", of which the ghost is an aspect, may be in creative tension with the idea of "haunting", since, as Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass note, haunting is, prior to the 1590s, an allusion to the familiar, most particularly the familiar place. To "haunt" was simply to practise or to use habitually, or to associate with someone habitually (Jones and Stallybrass, p. 260); only in the 1590s, it seems, did the term come to refer to ghostly activity, and the first recorded uses in *OED* are Shakespeare's: from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, "O monstrous! O strange! We are haunted. Pray masters; fly, masters: help!" (III.i.93-94), in response to the fairy transformation of Bottom, and, from *Richard II*, "Some haunted by the ghosts they have deposed" (III.ii.154).[3] So it seems possible that part of the fascination of the ghost on the early modern stage lay in rich contrasts and paradoxes: the supernatural being and fleshly existence; human desire and otherworldly judgement or torment; the familiar and the different, in relation to genre and, most importantly, in relation to place.

Jones and Stallybrass observe heightened interest in stage ghosts in the 1590s, and they offer as explanation the rise of the professional playhouse: "the haunting of ghosts emerges as part of a theatrical apparatus…. it requires the costumes, the trapdoors, the special effects of the new professional theater, a theater which … profoundly displaces the familiar *topoi* or places of the dominant culture" (p. 261). A connected argument is advanced by Palfrey and Smith, who suggest that the "basic physical fabric" of Shakespeare's stage makes it appropriate for the staging of death (p. 125). In the secular playhouses the roof was called the "heavens", and the stark wooden boards represented a potentially desolate space in which an actor might be isolated, awaiting heavenly judgement and that of the audience—

> As in a theatre the eyes of men,
> After a well-graced actor leaves the stage,
> Are idly bent on him that enters next. (*RII*, V.ii.23-25)

The stage was referred to as a "scaffold", also, of course, a platform for executions, and the trapdoor in the bare boards could stand for grave, or purgatory, or hell; thus, Palfrey and Smith suggest, Shakespeare often associated playing with death (p. 127): furthermore, "Another word for a player was a 'shadow'—a non-body, essentially insubstantial" (p. 127). As Macbeth declares, "Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player" (*Mac.*, V.v.23). Yet, as Palfrey and Smith acknowledge, the name of the Globe connects the professional playhouse to medieval drama, in which the playing space is a microcosm

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3   Quotations from Shakespeare throughout this article are from *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Greenblatt *et al.*

suitable for stories dramatising the path through life to judgement: in medieval drama any space could be used to represent specific locations, often biblical or metaphysical, such as the hell-mouth (p. 125). So it is clear that, while the apparatus of the playhouse may have facilitated a particular manner of staging ghosts, the supernatural is far from particular to the playhouse: the point is rather, perhaps, that death and judgement might play differently in the empty "wooden O" (*HV*, Pro.13) than in a street or church. This might be the case not least because the very emptiness of the playhouse differentiated it from spaces the architecture, art, and artefacts of which might remind the viewer of his Christian doctrine—indeed, should do so, for medieval drama to work the magic of its assertion of immanence.[4] The playhouse stage could perhaps more readily accommodate plays with a pre-Christian world-view—particularly Senecan tragedy, which of course is one of the more vital genres in the early 1590s—and Shakespeare's plays, which exhibit a potentially unorthodox interest in in-between states: life within death, but also death within life.[5]

But the supernatural beings that appeared in Oxford drama haunted places of a very particular, defined and contained culture, and were realised with very different material resources from those of the professional playhouse. If the ghosts of professional revenge tragedy are formed and informed by their playhouse setting, what is the impulse behind the ghosts of the Oxford College drama, and how were they staged?

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I will focus here on two vernacular plays which have a common central character: Julius Caesar. The first, an anonymous tragedy, was published in London *circa* 1606 as *The tragedie of Caesar and Pompey or Caesar's reuenge* (STC 4339) and in a second edition of 1607, whose title page adds the information that it was "Priuately acted by the Studentes of Trinity Colledge in Oxford" (STC 4340).[6] *Records of Early English Drama (REED)* for Oxford suggests that it was written and performed at Trinity sometime between 1592

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4   Lerud explores the significance of performance place in scriptural drama, and the interaction between a town's physical landmarks and the narrative played out there.

5   The ambivalence, explored throughout Palfrey and Smith, is also noted, though characterised differently, by Shell, who suggests that the complexities of Christian doctrine are reflected in the generic development of the tragic-comedy: the mixed genre accommodates both Christian insistence on a happy—and thus comic—ending and the challenges of pre-destination that mark some men as fated for suffering and thus bear a striking resemblance to classical tragedy. So for Shell the 1590s interest in tragedy is doctrinally inspired, and so is the shift away from tragedy in the early 1600s: as stricter Calvinist doctrines were challenged, tragi-comedy became a dominant force. See Shell, pp. 175-222 (chap. 4).

6   References to this play, henceforth as *Caesar's Revenge*, are by line numbers in the Malone Society edition by Boas.

and 1596 (II: 804), but Wiggins gives a "best guess" date of 1605 (V: 183).[7] The second play I will discuss was printed in London in 1633 as *Fuimus Troes. Aeneid 2. The true Troianes, being a story of the Britaines valour at the Romanes first inuasion: Publikely represented by the gentlemen students of Magdalen Colledge in Oxford* (STC 10886).[8] The play was written by Jasper Fisher, who entered Magdalen as a commoner in 1607 and took a degree in arts before becoming Reader in divinity or philosophy: by the time his play was published he was Rector of Wilden, Bedfordshire.[9] *REED: Oxford* gives the performance date as between 1611 and 1633 (II: 811), and Wiggins's best guess is 1619 (VII: 156). The second play at least is thus somewhat later than the 1590s, but both plays contain ghosts that bear considerable similarities to their playhouse cousins: in both cases the playwright explicitly designates them as "Ghost".

Caesar's Revenge shows Julius Caesar in Egypt, offering to restore Cleopatra to the throne in exchange for Pompey, who has fled to her following his defeat at Pharsalus: Cleopatra, though made joint heir to the throne, has been deposed in favour of her under-age brother, Ptolemy. Pompey is assassinated on Ptolemy's orders and his widow Cornelia kills herself; Caesar buries Pompey with honour and has the murderers executed. Caesar returns in triumph to Rome; Cato Senior, fearing that Caesar will become a tyrant, kills himself. Anthony [*sic*], who has fallen in love with Cleopatra, nonetheless decides to forget her when he is visited by his "good genius" (l. 1310 SD), who prophesies that Rome will bleed because of their love (ll. 1332-35). Cassius recruits Brutus for a conspiracy against Caesar. Caesar plans a military expedition against Parthia, and despite a prophecy that only a king can defeat the Parthians, refuses Anthony's offer of the crown; his wife Calpurnia dreams of his death, but Caesar nonetheless goes to the Senate, where he is assassinated by the conspirators. Anthony and Caesar's nephew Octavian plan to avenge his death but argue over precedence until Caesar's Ghost appears and persuades them to unite in the cause of revenge. They face the army of Brutus and Cassius at Philippi: Caesar's Ghost appears to Brutus; the battle goes against Brutus's side, and Cassius, fearing Brutus has been killed, kills himself; Brutus finds Cassius's body and also com-

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7   The issue of dating is caught up with the issue of the possible relationship between this play and Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, a topic that is treated in Bullough, ed., pp. 33-35, and discussed further below.

8   References to this play are to the 1633 edition, which has no page or line numbers, and thus are by act and scene number. There is also an online edition by Chris Butler with the primary title of *The True Trojans*.

9   Fisher was Rector of Wilden from 1631; he was later also created Doctor of Divinity. As well as this play, a number of his sermons were published: he may have been blind. For further biographical information see Butler, ed., p. 3.

mits suicide, watched by Caesar's Ghost, which then returns, satisfied, to the underworld of dead heroes.

The main narrative source for the play's plot is Appian's *Roman History*, which was also available in an English translation of 1578; the playwright draws further material from Velleius's *History of Rome*, Lucan's *Pharsalia*, and Plutarch's *Lives* ("The Life of Pompey").[10] These classical sources are supplemented by material from vernacular playhouse drama, including works by Christopher Marlowe and Thomas Kyd, and Shakespeare's *Richard II* and *Richard III*, as well as, probably, *Julius Caesar*. In this last case, the uncertain dating of the anonymous play make it difficult to be confident of the direction of influence, but, as Wiggins notes, "Shakespeare the borrower requires a much greater hypothesis than Shakespeare the lender", not least because the Oxford playwright clearly borrows from the Stratford playwright's histories elsewhere, and although the *Caesar* play of neither writer was in print at the time of composition of the other, "Shakespeare's play was readily available in the repertoire of a commercial company that performed not only in London but occasionally in Oxford" (Wiggins, V: 183).

The Oxford play follows the playhouse revenge tragedy in many ways, and Caesar's Ghost comes from the underworld to call for vengeance in true Senecan fashion: Anthony and Octavian must execute Caesar's "iust reuenge" (l. 2016). Before Caesar's death and ghostly re-appearance, however, ghosts have haunted the stage in various guises. Brutus, though not literally dead, finds a prophecy "written on my seate"—"Brute mortuus es" (l. 1382)—and comments:

> I, thou art dead indeed, thy courrage dead
> Thy care and loue thy dearest Country dead,
> Thy wonted spirit and Noble stomack dead. (ll. 1383-85)

When Cassius tells him rather that he is "in a dream" (l. 1398), ignoring the suffering of Rome, his reply combines death and dreaming as a longed-for ignorance:

> O that I might in *Lethes* endles sleepe,
> Close vp mine eyes, that I no more might see,
> Poor *Romes* distresse and Countries misery. (ll. 1399-401)

Cassius urges, however, that Brutus must "live" and "wake his sleepy minde" (l. 1402), as well as the "dying sparkes of honors fire" (l. 1403), to rescue Rome by assassinating Caesar. Such an act will not simply restore freedom to Rome; it is also an act of vengeance: "Thy kins-mans soule from heauen commandes thine aide" (l. 1408)—the kins-

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10   See Wiggins, V: 185.

man here being Lucius Junius Brutus, who expelled the tyrant Tarquin, and to whom the present Brutus asserts that he will never prove "A bastard weake" (l. 1416). This scene therefore sets up two figures seeking revenge from beyond the grave, though neither is the direct and expected one: Brutus stirring himself from idleness to action presents himself as "living again", a new life that will "with the Tirants death begin" (l. 1420); Brutus is urged on to this action by the earlier Brutus, who does not appear but rather is invoked by Cassius as a soul in heaven commanding help—"that lastly must by thee receiue his end" (l. 1408): apparently his soul, though in heaven, cannot rest while the threat of tyranny hangs over Rome. He is later mentioned again by Brutus as defeating Tarquin and providing a pattern for the defeat of an even worse tyrant:

> An other *Tarquin* is to bee expeld,
> An other *Brutus* liues to act the deede:
> Tis not one one nation that this *Tarquin* wronges,
> All *Rome* is stayn'd with his vnrul'd desires. (ll. 1551-54)

Similarly, in the next scene Caesar speaks for a ghost seeking vengeance: Crassus's ghost, he declares, "roues by the Stygian strond" complaining of the "sluggish negligence" of the Roman armies in claiming due "ransom" from the Parthians (ll. 1431-34). Disconcertingly, the typesetter has misread "Crassus" as "Caesar",[11] so when the play is read rather than seen, the *reader* encounters the living Caesar telling his entourage about Caesar's Ghost in the underworld. Thus Caesar's Ghost haunts the play even before Caesar has died: the typesetter's error becomes curiously prophetic of the fact that, despite numerous references to hauntings, Caesar's is the only ghost that will actually be allowed to appear. Thus all the earlier references to vengeful ghosts somehow anticipate Caesar's Ghost and prepare audience expectation of it.

When Caesar's Ghost does appear, "Out of the horror of those shady vaultes" (l. 1972), he first declares that he has come "to tell his wronges" (l. 1975) and narrates his triumphs over a long list of nations and tyrants. However, his vaunting is apparently interrupted by his realisation that his tale is of no avail, since at his height he was cut down by "Brutus base hand" (l. 2005). The realisation inspires a frustrated impulse to revenge:

> Giue me my sword and shild Ile be Reueng'd,
> My mortall wounding speare and goulden Crest.
> I will dishorse my foeman in the field,
> Alasse poore *Caesar* thou a shadow art,
> An ayery substance wanting force and might. (ll. 2007-11)

11   The emendation to "Crassus" is suggested by Boas, ed., p. x.

The Ghost's vision of his military prowess poignantly melts into a realisation of his material impotence: he immediately resolves that Anthony and Octavian must avenge him, and at that moment the two enter, "Anthony at on dore, Octauian at another with Souldiers" (l. 2019 SD). The "Souldiers", who do not speak, perhaps stage a generalised audience for the Ghost's dramatic appeal through the exhibition of his wounds:

> See *Romaines*, see my wounds not yet clos'd vp,
> The bleeding monuments of *Caesars* wronges.
> Haue you so soone for got my life and death?
> My life wherein I reard your fortunes vp.
> My death wherein my reared fortune fell,
> My life admir'd and wondred at of men?
> My death which seem'd vnworthy to the Gods,
> My life which heap'd on you rewards and gifts,
> My death now begges one gift; a iust reueng. (ll. 2044-52)

Caesar's Ghost does the rhetorical work, stirring Anthony and Octavian to revenge, appealing also to Octavian's army and, implicitly, to the play's audience. His words are reified by wounds to his body, which bear witness to his violent murder and appeal also to those who benefitted from his patronage in life. The moment recalls Roman custom, as recorded, for example, by Plutarch in his account of Coriolanus, who exposes the wounds he has received defending Rome in order to win the support of the Roman people for his consulship. A version of the Coriolanus story was of course brought to the playhouse stage by Shakespeare, but in 1606-7, too late to have influenced *Caesar's Revenge*. However, Shakespeare also presents the potent effect of dead Caesar's wounds on the Roman people, exhibited not by Caesar's Ghost but by Mark Antony, as he addresses the crowd over Caesar's corpse.[12]

The moment also, perhaps, recalls images of Christ as the Man of Sorrows, displaying his wounds to appeal to the devotion of the viewer, and the related presentation of Christ in some lyrics and in the mystery cycles, where he speaks from the cross, enjoining the viewer to behold his wounds and repent:

> Thou man that of mis here has mente,
> To me tente enteerly thou take.
> On roode am I ragged and rente,
> Thou sinfull sawle, for thy sake.
> For thy misse, amendis wille I make;

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12   See Plutarch, *The Life of Martius Coriolanus*, *Shakespeare's Plutarch*, pp. 317-19, and Shakespeare, *Cor.*, II.i.231-36, and *JC*, III.ii.168ff.

My bakke for to bende here I bide.
This teene for thy trespase I take.
Who couthe thee more kindines have kidde
Than I?
Thus for thy goode
I schedde my bloode.
Manne, mende thy moode,
For full bittir thy blisse mon I by. (*Christ's Death and Burial* [York plays], ll. 118-30)

Christ, however, is on the cross at the moment of this speech: even if his appeal to the audience is atemporal, crossing from the time and place of scripture to the time and place of the audience, within the historical narrative he speaks while still alive. In the case of *Caesar's Revenge*, by contrast, attention is being drawn paradoxically to the bleeding wounds and thus the corporality of a ghost.

Caesar's Ghost incites his avengers, but also damns his foes. When he appears to Brutus on the night before battle, he immediately creates such despair that Brutus begs him to "end my life and sorrow all at once", though he is uncertain whether the Ghost is a "fiend below" or a fury (ll. 2283-93). The Ghost identifies himself again by his wounds—"Knowest thou not me, to whome … / Thou three and twenty Gastly wounds didst giue?" (ll. 2295-96)—but explains that it is Anthony who will kill Brutus on his behalf. Brutus seems then to recognise the Ghost, addressing him as "Caesar", but when he sees the Ghost again, on the field of battle, he reverts to "vgly fend" (l. 2502) and again entreats the Ghost to kill him (l. 2509). Here, however, he goes further, urging that the Ghost drag his body down to the "infernall Styx" (l. 2512) and torment it in numerous apparently diabolical ways: "Boyle me or burne, teare my hatefull flesh, / Deuoure, consume, pull, pinch, plague, paine this hart, / Hell craues her right" (ll. 2513-15). There, Brutus says, the hell-hounds with hungry mouths will seek not his body but the "endless matter" of his soul as prey (l. 2522): Brutus understands this rather conventionally Senecan Ghost as demonic as much as human, calling for a vengeance more than earthly.

Though not ghosts, two other supernatural figures stalk the stage. Firstly, as Caesar enters Rome in triumph, Anthony declares himself unmoved by the pomp and glory, thinking only of Cleopatra, who has "triumphed" over his "conquered heart"—and immediately "Anthonies bonus genius" enters, to challenge Anthony's attitude to such triumph. Such conquests leave Anthony a "womans souldiar", fit only for the "assaults" of night, choosing the soft pillow over the steely helmet and neglecting the disciplines of his youth (ll. 1311-16); Bonus Genius prophesies that Anthony and Cleopatra's love will end in "bloud and shame" (l. 1351), and Anthony responds to his admonishments by urging himself to wake from the "idle dreame" of his love and "Cast of these base effeminate passions" (ll. 1361-62). Here, then, is a curiously hybrid supernatural onstage figure.

The term "genius", which in Latin can refer to either a guardian deity or a person's wit or talent, is borrowed in late Middle English to signify the moral spirit who guides an individual through life: in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, Genius is the confessor priest of Venus, who guides Amans through his confession to self-understanding. Anthony seems to interpret his visitor in this way: "my Genius … / They say that from our birth he doth preserue" (ll. 1352-53). Shakespeare, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, gives his Antony a "spirit which keeps thee" (II.iii.17), evoked by a Soothsayer, who warns him away from Octavius Caesar. This play almost certainly post-dates *Caesar's Revenge*, but Shakespeare is drawing here on Plutarch's *The Life of Marcus Antonius*, in which the Soothsayer refers to "thy Demon … this is to say, the good angel and spirit that keepeth thee" (*Shakespeare's Plutarch*, pp. 215-16), and it is possible that the playwright of *Caesar's Revenge* draws on the same source. In addition, that the stage direction and Genius's own lines specify a *good* Genius may imply the possibility also of a *bad* Genius; this hints perhaps at the influence of morality drama and its appropriation in Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*, in which a Good Angel and a Bad Angel compete for the protagonist's soul. *OED* indicates that the *bonus genius* became, in the seventeenth century, a benevolent guardian spirit, often opposed by a malevolent one. This appears to be the use invoked in *Fuimus Troes*, where it seems a country, as well as a person, can have such a guardian spirit:

> Could Countries loue, or Britaines Genius saue
> A mortall man from sleeping in his graue:
> Then hadst thou liu'd great Nennius. (III.vii)

Anthony, however, provides a further interpretation of his supernatural visitor:

> hee comes as winged *Mercurie*,
> From his great Father *Ioue*, t'*Anchises* sonne
> To warne him leaue the wanton dalliance,
> And charming pleasures of the *Tyrian* Court. (ll. 1357-60)

Anthony's Bonus Genius is likened to Mercury, messenger of the gods, urging Aeneas to leave Dido and Carthage in order to fulfil his destiny of founding Rome. Thus Anthony both berates himself for falling into the same trap as Aeneas and implies for himself a similarly great destiny, ordained by the gods. The lines present ambiguous evidence, however, as to the staging of this visitation: does "he comes as winged *Mercurie*" imply that Bonus Genius is actually costumed as the messenger of the gods, with wings, perhaps a helmet and snaked staff, perhaps descending from above? Or is the similarity of the message conveyed the only comparison between the messengers? The latter seems more likely, since the gods do not otherwise appear in the play. Nonetheless, this supernatural visitation seems to represent a moment of generic disruption: Anthony is not

haunted by the ghosts of heroes calling for revenge, but by a moral spirit with a hint of the medieval, and by the ghost of his classical education, interpreting as he apparently does his own moral spirit in the light of Virgil's *Aeneid*. This particular haunting most likely stems from the playwright's attempt to present directly the "demon" that Plutarch, and Shakespeare after him, present indirectly, through the Soothsayer's words.

The second supernatural figure stalking *Caesar's Revenge* is Discord, who speaks the Prologue and introduction to each act. The appearance of this allegorical personification is marked by special effects, according to the initial stage direction: "*Sound alarum then flames of fire*". He explains that the bloody battles of the Romans have caused disturbance even among the elements: the stars tremble and the constellations hide in the sea, while the earth seems thrown off its axis. He calls on the heavens, the furies and the stars to destroy Rome, and to break apart "What Lawes, Armes, and Pride hath raised vp" (l. 38):[13] thus, appropriately of course, his apparent concern at the disruption of the natural order leads only to a wish for further violence and discord, and the punishment for Pride seems inevitably to require also the destruction of the rule of Law, since Law is enforced by might of Arms. Discord apparently remains onstage throughout the play, since there is at no point a stage direction for him to exit: he may thus be likened, perhaps, to the figure of Revenge who introduces and presides over Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, and is perhaps most readily imagined stalking an upper stage or gallery, such as exists in the dining hall of Trinity College where the play was probably performed. In the margins of early printed editions, Discord's speeches are marked as the Chorus: "*Chor. I*", "*Chor. II*", "*Chor. III*" and so on. There are repeated stage directions, "*Enter Discord*", as the character delivers commentary at the beginning of each act,[14] and that at the beginning of the second act also specifies "*Flashes of fire*". Perhaps, if Discord has never exited, these would in performance simply signal the moment when the watching character stands and comes forward to speak.

Near the play's conclusion, Discord begins a summation speech that sounds like an epilogue; now his hopes are fulfilled because

> Hell and Elisium must be digd in one,[15]
> And both will be to litle to contayne,

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13 This Senecan device is applied to overweening Rome by Robert Garnier in *Porcie*, where the Fury Mégère invokes discord in an opening monologue. See Hillman, p. 38.

14 A typesetter's error follows the stage direction, "*Enter Discord*", at the beginning of the second act with an attribution of the choric lines to Anthony, even though the lines actually declare: "I, being Discord hight . . . " (l. 632).

15 The line perhaps echoes Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*, I.iii.61 (A-text), where Faustus claims that he "confounds hell in Elysium".

> Numberles numbers of afflicted ghostes,
> That I my selfe haue tumbling thither sent. (ll. 2541-44)

But then, as if to prove the point that the ghosts cannot now be contained in the under-world, Caesar's Ghost interrupts with an epilogue of his own, explaining that his thirst for revenge is satisfied, and, as is conventional in an epilogue, asking that the audience, observing the cycle of revenge complete, should clap: "Doe thou applaud what iustly heau-ens haue wrought, / While murther on the murtherers head is brought" (ll. 2547-48). If the audience do, in response, applaud, the applause is perhaps cut short by Discord, who challenges the Ghost's presentation of the action of the play as divine justice and retri-bution: for Discord, the play's violence does not offer ordered resolution but simply a proliferation of violence in which he takes great delight. Furthermore, Discord's version of the epilogue refutes an Aristotelian idea of tragedy as inspiring pity alongside terror:

> Caesar, I pitied not thy Tragick end:
> . . . .
> Nor doe I that thy deaths with like repayd,
> But that thy death so many deaths hath made:
> Now cloyde with blood, Ile hye me downe below,
> And laugh to thinke I caused such endlesse woe. (ll. 2549-54)

As these lines are spoken by the personification of Discord, the audience need not, perhaps, see in them any serious ethical challenge to ideas of the moral purpose of tragedy; however, they do present one possible audience response, one that simply delights in watching violence. Given the possibility thus presented that this play may be enjoyed at this rather unedifying level, the smooth surface of the beatific vision with which Caesar's Ghost does, then, finally close the play cannot be entirely untroubled: the audience may struggle to believe in the "fragrant flowry fields at rest" (l. 2560) to which the Ghost says he is now going; or they may be troubled by the idea that Caesar will now spend his "dateles houres" in "lasting ioy" with the "Heroes of the Goulden age" (ll. 2569-70) when his quietus is apparently bought with such carnage. At the least, the audience may be uneasy with an ending that, while it may offer reward to the virtuous, still allows Discord to revel wickedly in the destruction he has caused, particularly since, as he heads "downe below" to laugh, he seems to be almost the devil himself, not defeated but laughing in hell.

II

The action of *Fuimus Troes* is framed by scenes in which two ghosts—of Brennus, a British military commander, and of Camillus, a Roman military commander—discuss

Caesar's military campaigns. Each argues for the superiority of his own nation. Then we see Caesar looking from the northern coast of Gaul, which he has conquered, to the white cliffs of Dover; he resolves to conquer Britain, too, and sends Volusenus with a proffer of peace that he confidently, and correctly, expects will be refused; Volusenus will also spy out the land. King Cassileban mobilises his troops against the planned Roman invasion; Caesar invades but suffers heavy losses while landing troops and is defeated by Duke Nennius, who nonetheless dies from a wound inflicted by Caesar's poisoned sword. At Cassibelan's triumphs, his nephew Hirildas is killed by Eulinus: when Cassibelan seeks to avenge Hirildas, Eulinus's uncle Androgenus turns against him and joins forces with Mandubrace, the dethroned prince of Troynovant (London), which Cassibelan has entrusted to the rule of Androgenus. Mandubrace, in revenge for Cassibelan having murdered his father and usurped his throne, allies himself with Caesar and encourages a second invasion. Cassibelan allows the Romans to land so that a land-battle can be fought; many of Caesar's ships are wrecked, but as other British kingdoms take Caesar's side, he gains the upper hand. A captured Druid tells Caesar that Brutus will seek to avenge the treatment of the British descendents of the Trojan Brute: he warns him to avoid the Senate. Cassibelan agrees to Caesar's terms for peace; Mandubrace is restored to his birthright, Cassibelan is to pay Rome tribute, and a tower is to be build in Troynovant as a monument to Caesar's triumph.[16] A time of universal peace is achieved as Britain is joined to the Roman Empire: the play concludes with Brennus and Camillus somewhat reconciled by the lesson that both Rome and Britain are heirs of Troy, blessed by the gods.

Whereas *Caesar's Revenge* presented Julius Caesar in a tragedy, this is usually considered a history play,[17] dramatising the prose histories of Caesar (*Gallic Wars*), Geoffrey of Monmouth (*History of the Kings of Britain*) and Livy (*Roman History*).[18] From Caesar, Fisher takes details of military strategy and the story of Mandubrace (V.20). From Geoffrey of Monmouth, Fisher adapts the stories of Cassibelan's triumph and defeat, of Nennius' death by Caesar's sword (though the notion that the sword is poisoned is not

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16   There is also a subplot with romantic interests, but it is not relevant to the present discussion.

17   It is categorised as such by *REED: Oxford* (II: 810) and by Wiggins, although the latter also notes (VII: 156) that the play refers to itself as a tragedy, and as a "story" on the title page.

18   In addition to these main sources, Virgil's *Aeneid* is explicitly mentioned as the source of the play's name on the title page of the early printed editions; Horace's *Odes* and *Epistles* are cited in mottoes on the title page and at the foot of the text; Wiggins also notes (VII: 159) citations from Ovid's *Amores* and Suetonius's *Twelve Caesars*. There is also at least one direct Shakespearean reference, to *Richard III* (see I.i), and echoes of the *Henry IV* plays in the presentation of Rollano, who, although Belgian, seems an imitation of Falstaff. Fisher's treatment of his sources is discussed in more detail in Dutton.

in Geoffrey of Monmouth), and of Eulinus's accidental killing of Hirildas. From Livy, Fisher draws information about Brennus's defeat of the Romans and Camillus's military successes and political wisdom. Fisher does not simply "download" his sources:[19] he cuts and expands, rearranges and conflates, often following only a broad narrative, and sometimes adding details that manipulate the sympathies of the reader/audience. The major sources of *Fuimus Troes* are specified, intriguingly, in the cast list, which arranges its *dramatis personae* according to the sources in which they can be found. The ghosts and the gods are identified as coming from Livy's *Roman History,* Book V, the Romans and the British kings who fight with them from Caesar's *Gallic Wars*, and the Britons who stand against the Romans from Geoffrey of Monmouth: the clash of worlds and of armies is presented as an act of compilation, or perhaps even of competition between sources.

History plays employ theatrical magic to bring the dead to life, challenging boundaries between past and present and making dead heroes live: "a parade of dead monarchs and nobles briefly revives, and dies again" (Palfrey and Smith, p. 105). Palfrey and Smith argue that the procession of Richard's victims' ghosts before the battle at the end of *Richard III* can be considered the metonymic scene of historical drama (p. 105). The rapid procession of victims provides a concise recapitulation of the action of the play, but of course because they are ghosts, it is theatrically, not historically, that they revive and die again: they reappear on a stage they had apparently left, and then disappear forever. They cannot act, in the sense of fight or kill;[20] they can affect the action of a play only by urging the living on to victory (Richmond) or despair (Richard). The Ghosts of Brennus and Camillus will serve a function very similar to Caesar's Ghost in *Caesar's Revenge*, and to the ghosts of *Richard III*, who seek vengeance both by cursing Richard and by spurring on Richmond. In the Prologue to *Fuimus Troes*, firstly, Mercury incites them to spur on their own tribes:[21]

>   with gastly lookes
> Incite your Country-men, when night and sleepe
> Conquer the eyes, when weary bodyes rest,
> And senses cease: Be Furies in their brest. (Pro.)

Then, Camillus indicates that the Ghosts of those killed by the Northerners must be "expiated with a fiery deluge" of Caesar's unleashing: they need to be avenged. As in

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19   Dillon suggests that it was "the usual practice of historiography at that time" to "incorporate the writings of earlier historians wholesale and without question into the work in hand" (p. 19); dramatists were freer than other writers to select, adapt and rearrange material (pp. 20-21.)

20   Of course, the ghosts include the young princes and Lady Anne, as well as martial nobles.

21   In this he is strangely reminiscent of Discord in *Caesar's Revenge*.

Caesar's Revenge, in *Fuimus Troes* revenge seems to be an important motive, though it is perhaps more to be expected of tragedy than history: *Richard III*, of course, is sometimes labelled a tragedy (First Quarto) and sometimes a history (First Folio). However, *Fuimus Troes* finds its own ways to complicate the ethics of revenge.

In the second act of *Fuimus Troes*, we see the Ghosts fulfilling their role. The Ghost of Brennus urges Nennius to war with arguments based on family and honour. Nennius is encouraged to remember his ancestors, who spread Britain's fame far and wide: such a noble race should not be in thrall, and Nennius should repel the Roman invaders; Nennius's anticipated defeat of the Romans is described in allegorical terms that give the battle a significance beyond the immediate and political. Brennus urges:

> Play thou a second *Brennus*, let thy Lance,
> Like an Herculean clubbe, Two monsters tame,
> *Romes* Auarice and Pride; So come Life or Death,
> Let Honour haue the Incense of thy Breath. (II.vii)

The embodiment of avarice and pride as monsters to be beaten recalls the conventions of morality drama, and the injunction to "play a second Brennus" heightens the metatheatrical awareness: an actor representing a historical figure, including the actor speaking these lines, is always their "second", impersonating their action just as Nennius is to imitate the military feats of his predecessor and interlocutor. Here the analogy is strained by the very nature of the imitation required: Nennius's lance must be used for killing, just as Hercules's club was, but there seems something dissonant about asking the lance to be like the club—perhaps because the lance sounds so much more noble than the club, and because of the strange implication that a club is the only weapon for monster-taming. Furthermore, of course, the club is that of Hercules, who is neither the first nor the second Brennus, so the invocation seems overloaded with reference.

Finally, however, Brennus's Ghost urges honour as the goal of the soldier, and Nennius entirely buys into his argument, asserting that "the smallest drop of Fame" is worth "death and dangers", that he will happily follow the Ghost to "knocke at *Plutoes* gate", and echoing the Ghost's parting words in his own vow: "Come Life or Death, / Honour, To thee I consecrate my Breath." Brennus's Ghost thus not only provides the pattern for Nennius' action, but also writes his best lines.

Camillus's Ghost, by contrast, explicitly and insistently advocates revenge, telling Caesar that he has appeared in order to

> bid thee take a full Reuenge on this,
> This Nation, which did sacke and burne downe Rome.
> . . . .
> To thee belongs, To render Bad for Ill. (II.vii)

Although, as Caesar points out, the armies that sacked Rome were mainly Gauls, Camillus's Ghost is keen to render the British the target of Caesar's vengeance—specifically, he indicates that Brennus, brother to the British king, led the armies. Camillus's Ghost then urges on Caesar the courage of "three *Scipios*, / *Marius*, and *Sylla*", and seeks to breathe his own Spirit into Caesar: "O bee my Spirit doubled in thy breast". Thus the living Caesar becomes, paradoxically, another Ghost of Camillus—not by taking on external signs of identity but by being internally moved by Camilllus's spirit; and as Nennius becomes a second Brennus, the living men become proxies for the dead men who haunt them.

The battle between Caesar and Nennius thus enacts the mutual struggle that the Ghosts play out in their heroic rhetoric, but also in their competition over the telling of history. As the play concludes, Camillus and Brennus are very much the epilogue, summarising and commenting on the action they have witnessed, though each still argues for the superiority of his tribe. The shared couplets of their verses might imply the cut and thrust of argument, or perhaps here might give a rather comical sense that, as hard as the Ghosts try to argue, they are drawn into cooperative rhyme:

> *Camillus*. How brauely Cesar past the angry Maine?
> *Brennus*. How brauely was he backe repulst againe? (V.vii)

In any case, they seem more solid than supernatural—these are squabbling schoolboy ghosts, with the all-too-human worldly need to belong to the winning team. Finally, Mercury reprimands them and commands that they must be friends, since Jupiter has ordained a "Vniuersall peace".[22] But the argument between the Ghosts, whether comical or not, enacts an important point about history—that it looks different from different sides. If history is written by the victor, then when Mercury declares there is no victor, but only a draw, the history will remain contested.

Furthermore, as the Ghosts discuss what they have seen, there is a curious potential slippage between history and performance: are they admiring the skill of Caesar as military leader, or are they commenting on the "brave" quality of the performance in which he has been presented? It is perhaps not accidental that this moment also supplies the only reference in the play to the setting of its performance—Oxford:

> *Camillus*. How did they pierce through Isis dangerous flood?
> *Brennus*. But made her swell, and bank-rupt with their blood.

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22   This ending is strongly reminiscent of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, with its declaration of peace and evocation of the advent of Christ (V.vi.466-85): *Cymbeline* also, of course, features ghosts of ancestors in Posthumus's vision (V.v).

The comment brings the violent battles by which Caesar conquered Britain to the banks of Oxford's river Isis: the image of the river swelling with soldiers' blood depends for its effect on an extraordinary pun that carries potential moral weight. Clearly a river that is "bank-rupt" is one that has broken its banks: consultation of *OED* under "bank" and "bankrupt" confirms that the coinage is a hybrid, combining an Old English word from a Scandinavian loan, meaning the sloping earth on the side of a river, with the Latin derivation from *rumpere*, "to break". But the word "bankrupt" was actually first coined from the Italian *banca rotta*, a broken bench, and meant an insolvent person from the 1530s on, and the state of being unable to repay one's debts from the 1560s. Fisher here suggests a fake etymology that capitalises on an extreme contrast between the river that has broken its banks through excessive content and the state of being so empty as to be unable to pay any debt. Does this semantically heavy line hint, too, that conquest, which has so preoccupied these Ghosts and the history they observe, is diminished by bloodshed, that excessive bloodshed creates only empty ruin, that such slaughter is, in modern terms, morally bankrupt?

Or perhaps it is the men of Magdalen who have been bankrupted by the expenses of presenting the play of which this is the epilogue. If the mention of Isis references the location of the present performance, the blood that flooded the Isis is almost immediately given a theatrical frame of reference, in Mercury's lines:

> Ioue's will is finisht: And (though Iuno frowne,
> That no more Troiane blood shall die the stage)
> The worlds fourth Empire Britaine doth embrace.

The "fourth Empire" was Rome, which succeeded the empire of Greece and would in turn be overcome by the kingdom of Christ.[23] Trojan blood has merely dyed the stage red: the entire history of the Trojan war can be contained within its stage presentation; the wars themselves, perhaps, were merely short tragedies for the entertainment of the queen of the gods—or is it their theatrical re-enactment that delights Juno?

Of course, in *Fuimus Troes,* as in *Richard III*, *all* the characters of the history play are already dead—they are all spectral: "History is the preferred genre of the revenant" (Palfrey and Smith, p. 107). The Ghosts of *Fuimus Troes* draw our attention to the predicament of those who return to witness happenings from a time they cannot occupy,

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23   The scheme of the "Four Monarchies" derived from Daniel's interpretation of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar: see the note to Epi.20 in Butler, ed.

and can do nothing directly to alter—also to the predicament, perhaps, of the audience, and to the nature of the history play and of history itself.[24]

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III

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How were these ghosts staged? In *Fuimus Troes*, the first stage direction specificies that Mercury leads the ghosts of Brennus and Camillus "*in compleate armour, and with swords drawne*" (Induction). Mercury explains that he has brought this "paire of Martiall Impes" on Jupiter's orders from one of the "pleasant Groues" of "faire Elysian fieldes"—that apparently devoted to the souls of soldiers "clad in steele, / Whose glittering Armes brighten those gloomy shades / In lieu of Starry lights". Thus Mercury's lines draw attention to the armour of his ghostly charges. Jones and Stallybrass discuss armour in relation to tombs that display an armoured effigy above and a cadaver below:

> The surface (the armored body) is elaborately identified through complex heraldic devices; it is identified, of course, not as an "individual" but as a genealogical body, a body marked, on the shieds that surround it, by its kinship connections. The cadaver beneath is unidentified, unidentifiable; it is simply food for worms.... One recognizes Hamlet's father, in death as in life, by his armor. The Ghost wears, or we might almost say *is* ... a suit of armor. (p. 250)

However, as Jones and Stallybrass acknowledge, the armoured Ghost presents considerable theatrical difficulty, being inevitably noisy and difficult to move around the stage: the Ghost of Hamlet's father is always in danger of provoking mirth as much as horror, and it is possibly for this reason that, at least from the nineteenth century on, he more commonly appears in his winding sheet (p. 246). Among Renaissance stage ghosts, Jones and Stallybrass suggest that Hamlet's father's Ghost is "unusual, if not unique" (p. 251) in returning in armour: the ghosts of Brennus and Camillus give the lie to "unique", but are perhaps also "unusual". In *Fuimus Troes*, the armour that comes from the world of the living, and that can reveal the identity of a ghost because it had identified his character when alive, here rather guarantees the supernatural character of these Ghosts, since it is identified as the uniform of the brave soldiers who have achieved this sector of Elysium. It is likely, then, that these were noisy, clattering Ghosts. The playwright perhaps authorises us to laugh, by having Mercury comment on the inappropriateness of the Ghosts' drawn swords: "sheath your conquering blades: in vaine / You threaten

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24   A detailed analysis of the loaded political significance of *Fuimus Troes* for its first audiences is presented in Butler, ed., Introduction.

death: For Ghosts may not be slaine". For immortal spirits, armour is presumably similarly obselete.

In Act Two, Scene Seven, of *Fuimus Troes*, Brennus's Ghost visits Nennius, while Camillus's Ghost visits Caesar. Nennius is "*in night robes*" (SD), and Caesar comments that the Ghost "disturbs his rest", so it seems likely that this scene presents a diptych, in both halves of which a fully armoured supernatural Ghost encounters a natural man in a white shift. Potentially, the armoured Ghost may seem more substantial than the living man, whose white shift might recall the Ghost in a winding sheet. Brennus's Ghost enters first and bids Nennius, "Follow me". Nennius is reassured that the Ghost is friendly when it calls him by name, but clearly apprehends the danger of following supernatural beings: "I'll follow thee, though't be through Stygian lakes." Caesar, by contrast, enters with "*Camillus Ghost following*"; the Ghost speaks first: "*Iulius*, stay heere." The contrast between these two actions has comic potential: Brennus's Ghost, like Hamlet's, will command a man to follow, but Camillus's Ghost apparently cannot quite keep up with Julius Caesar, and rather than commanding him to follow must beg him to stop—so that the Ghost can catch his breath, perhaps. Perhaps there is also an allusion here to Caesar's ultimately fatal capacity to miss supernatural signs: he almost misses the Ghost following him, just as he will later (though not in this play) miss the point of the auguries and dreams that warn him against going to the Capitol on the day of his assassination.

As Jones and Stallybrass discuss, stage directions for ghosts are often much more precise about where they should appear and disappear than are the stage directions for other characters. This is because the nature of the Ghost is defined by its "local habitation" as well as by costume (Jones and Stallybrass, p. 249). In *Caesar's Revenge*, Caesar's Ghost describes himself as coming from the shades where "Centaurs, Harpies, paynes and furies fell, / And Gods and Ghosts and vgly Gorgons dwell (ll. 1973-74). Once his revenge is complete, however, he will go to an "eternall home" of a rather different kind—"sweete Elysium" with its flowery fields, where

> Mild *Zephirus* doth *Odours* breath diuine:
> Clothing the earth in painted brauery,
> The which nor winters rage, nor Scorching heate,
> Or Summers sunne can make it fall or fade. (ll. 2564-67)

Here he will dwell with the heroes of the Golden Age in "lasting ioy" (l. 2570). The offstage Elysium, like the offstage Hades, is created through the lines of the Ghost, on the authority of one come from beyond the grave to speak of these things.

Interestingly, to get to Elysium the Ghost will still "descend" (l. 2557)—this may reflect a sense of the topology of the classical afterlife, but perhaps also indicates the practicality of a trapdoor as a means of ghostly exit. If, as seems likely, the play was presen-

ted by the men of Trinity in Trinity's hall, "descent" could be achieved in one of two ways: descent from the minstrels' gallery to a playing area on the main hall floor, or descent through a trapdoor in a specially constructed scaffold area in the main hall. As Caesar's Ghost has earlier been following Brutus (l. 2501 SD), he cannot have been in the minstrels' gallery: thus a stage and trapdoor are probable. The construction of stages, both commissioned from college carpenters and improvised using dining tables, is well attested in Oxford drama.[25]

In *Fuimus Troes*, no stage direction indicates where, physically, the Ghosts enter or move, but Mercury later in the Prologue declares that he has brought Brennus and Camillus "to this vpper skie; / Where you may wander, and with gastly lookes / Incite your Country-men". The Ghosts are apparently raised up, and on a platform large enough for them to walk around on; this could be the minstrels' gallery, or it could be a scaffold constructed for the occasion. As Mercury ends the Prologue by urging the Ghosts to "Fly to your parties, and inrage their mindes", it seems possible that the Ghosts then watch the earthly action of the rest of the play from their celestial vantage points, one at each end of the platform to establish their allegiance to the Roman or the British side, though this is not, perhaps, what is implied by the stage direction, "*Exeunt*". The main content of the scene could then be read as a competition between Mercury and the Ghosts to establish place. Mercury describes the Other World from which he has come, in the "vaults" of the "big-bellied earth", where there are both dungeons, whips and flames for the Ghosts of the wicked, and Elysian fields for the spotless souls, including, as already cited, "Two pleasant Groues", with myrtle boughs for true lovers and glittering arms for soldiers. Brennus then describes the earthly route of his march against Rome, from the "vnbounded Ocean" and "cold climes" near the North Pole, across the "white-pated Alpes", to the Capitol, "cloath'd in skarlet of patrician blood". Camillus, finally, describes the Rome he won back, the City fattened and the Latin fields fertilised with the bodies of its enemies. None of these settings is actually the setting of the play: those described by Mercury are in another place, and those described by the Ghosts are in a different time. But since location is achieved in early drama through words, rather than elaborate stage sets, the audience is presented with a palimpsest of times and places, any or all of which could be the setting of a play, and all of which are relevant to the action that will in fact unfold. Furthermore, cumulatively they define and identify the Ghosts.

In the final scene of the play, after the plot's resolution and a merry song, there enters "*Mercury reducing the Ghostes of Camillus, and Brennus*". To "reduce", in Middle and early Modern English, means to "lead back" or "restore" (*re-ducere*); interestingly, the

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25   See Nelson.

stage direction here may have been influenced by the words of Mercury in the opening scene, where he promises the Ghosts that he willl "backe reduce you to grimme Pluto's hall". The stage direction does not specify how the Ghosts are dressed here; they are most likely still in their armour. That there is a leading back rather than a leading down obviates the need for a trapdoor. *Fuimus Troes* could have been staged without a constructed scaffold, using only the minstrels' gallery and the floor space of Magdalen dining hall: the characters would move among the audience, on their level, and when the Ghosts appear to Nennius and Caesar, they too would walk among the audience.

When a ghost walks among the audience, his problematic corporality is again emphasised. The audience will hear all the more clearly the clinking armour of the ghosts of Brennus and Camillus; perhaps it is only the ghosts' rhetoric that gives them any power to chill. But perhaps also there is a crucial difference between the ghost who appears in a playhouse and the ghost who appears in an Oxford College play: the armoured ghost who clanks into a college dining hall is most markedly an intrusion into another world that is not, like the "wooden O" of the playhouse, empty, awaiting the actors' event, but rather is already occupied, defined and animated by the life of the audience. This ghost haunts—in the supernatural sense—the habitual haunts of the College members, who eat every day in the space that is suddenly appropriated by shadows. These shadows are ghosts, and also more generally actors: all of the characters of *Fuimus Troes* and *Caesar and Pompey* are dead, so all of their appearances are hauntings; the ghosts are simply the most extreme manifestations of the logic of the history play, and of the tragedy played out in a college hall. The shock of Caesar's Ghost exposing his wounds with a direct appeal, not just to the actors in the play with him, but to the College members watching the play, is a corporeal shock: the exposed body, and bleeding wounds, have no place in a dining hall. Perhaps, therefore, it is the materiality of the ghosts of Caesar, and of Brennus and Camillus which highlights their intrusion, and makes them chilling as well as potentially comical: to meet a historical figure in one's own space is surely a more powerful intrusion than to encounter one in the neutral or "other" space of the theatre.

It is possible that *Fuimus Troes* explicitly links itself to *Caesar's Revenge*: when the Roman spy, Cominus, is captured and chained by Cassibelan, he threatens that the King must "looke for due reuenge at *Caesars* hand" (II.v), a vengeful threat that perhaps also makes intertextual reference to the earlier Trinity College play. Furthermore, the localising allusion in *Fuimus Troes* to Oxford's river Isis is matched by a line in *Caesar's Revenge*: Julius Caesar, listing the places and peoples of his many bloody conquests, comments that "Isis wept to see her daugter Thames / Chainge her cleere cristal, to vermilian sad" (ll. 1278-79). Perhaps these plays are haunting each other; perhaps they are also haunted by the shadows of Shakespeare and Kyd; most strongly, they seem to suggest haunting by the classical texts from which their playwrights, performers and audiences

learned their Latin. The world of Caesar's *Gallic Wars* is itself a shared haunt, collectively imagined by all those habitually dining in the halls of Oxford colleges. And these plays, while occupying ancient times and places, are also hinting at the significance of their Oxford haunt as the impulse behind their ghostly presentations.

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Theta XIII
Forms of the Supernatural on Stage: Evolution, Mutations

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THETA

Sham Shadows on the Stuart Stage:
Between Scepticism and Spectacle

Pierre Kapitaniak
Université Paul-Valéry – Montpellier 3, IRCL

Sham shadows, or false apparitions of the dead, started to appear in English drama only in the first decade of King James's reign, that is, after the popularity of the "real" ghost figure had been well established on the London stages. The former are not necessarily a derivative from the latter, as a ready-made model for an apparition scam could be found in Plautus's *Mostellaria*. Let me quote a French lawyer who devoted a thousand-page volume to the question of apparitions in 1586 and who was translated into English some twenty years later in 1605:

> But it is not in our age and daies onely, that these pranckes have beene vsed, but even almost two thousand yeares ago, or thereabouts. Plautus in his Comedie intituled *Mostelaria*, faineth, how by a cunning sleight and devise of a servant, an olde man his maister, was made beleeve, as hee came home from out of the Country, that the spirits did haunt his house: and that therefore, both his sonne and he had forsaken and abandoned the same in his absence. And this the servant did, that he might the better cover and conceale the loose and dissolute behaviour of the sonne from the father, and the better to colour the sale which hee had made of the house. And what shall wee say of those, who counterfaiting themselves to bee spirits in an house (where themselves are domestically dwelling,) doe thereby cause the death of some other, by their lascivious and lewde behaviour. (Le Loyer, *Treatise*, fol. 80ʳ)

Although there is no proper ghost appearing onstage, Plautus provides the idea of deceiving people using the widespread belief in ghosts and their haunting. That Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights perfectly knew their Plautus, and that play in particular, is attested by Shakespeare's borrowing of the servants' names Grumio and Tranio in *The Taming of the Shrew*.

The active impersonation of a ghost is to be distinguished from a character taken for a ghost by others, in that the former is a deliberate action. Although the motif of the false ghost is often combined with scenes where a character mistakes a living person for his or her ghost, it

is on this intended imposture that I wish to focus the present reflection. For this reason I have excluded from my study John Day's *Law Tricks* (1604), where one of the characters is merely content with playing an echo, with no intention of impersonating a ghost, and his trick leads to his being mistaken for a ghost by the other character speaking. Three kinds of guileful ghosts may be distinguished: the character impersonates either his or her own ghost, or the ghost of a dead person, or that of someone who is presumed to have died. Here is the list of plays staging such figures:

1607	Francis Beaumont	*Knight of the Burning Pestle*
1607	John Mason	*The Turke* (T)
1611	Cyril Tourneur	*The Atheist's Tragedy* (T)
1611	John Fletcher	*The Night-Walker*
1614	Robert Tailor	*The Hog Hath Lost His Pearl*
1615	S. S.	*The Honest Lawyer*
1617	John Fletcher	*The Mad Lover*
1619	Thomas Goffe	*The Courageous Turk* (T)
1633	Walter Montague	*The Shepherd's Paradise*
1637	William Berkeley	*The Lost Lady*
1637	Lodowick Carlell	*The Fool Would Be a Favourite*
1638	William Cartwright	*The Siege*
1638	Alexander Brome	*The Cunning Lovers*
1639	William Heminges	*The Fatal Contract* (T)
1639	James Shirley	*St Patrick for Ireland*
1640	Anon.	*The Ghost*

In all, the motif of impersonating a ghost occurs in four tragedies and twelve comedies.[1] I shall focus on the first four plays staging false ghost figures between 1607 and 1611, as the subsequent plays merely offer less elaborate variations on the models developed in those earlier plays. Although the motif later became largely associated with comedy, in the first decade of James's reign it appears rather indifferent with regard to genre. What first strikes one when reading these plays is that there is a major difference between tragedies and comedies as far as the motivation leading to such impersonation is concerned: in tragedies the main motive is revenge, while in comedies two motives are often combined—love and money. I shall therefore deal separately with the specificities of the two genres before showing that both may obey a similar logic.

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1 I have marked the tragedies with a (T).

The Tragedies, or Avenging Apparitions and Anathematised Atheists

Little is known about the exact date of composition of the two tragedies. John Mason's *The Turke* was published in 1610, and performed by child actors at the Whitefriars, but is estimated to have been written between 1607 and 1608 (Gurr, p. 365). Cyril Tourneur's *The Atheist's Tragedy* was published in 1611, and its *terminus a quo* is also around 1607 (Harbage). It is therefore possible to consider the two plays as roughly contemporary.

The whole revenge plot of *The Turke* rests on a series of false apparitions of various ghosts that trigger and further the intricate threads of the revenge plot from act to act. Borgias, the governor of Florence, is the tutor to Julia, the young and rightful Duchess. Wishing to keep his power and to rid himself of the two suitors for Julia's hand — the Duke of Venice and the Duke of Ferrara — Borgias spreads the rumour of Julia's death. Simultaneously, we learn of the death of Borgias's wife, Timoclea, apparently poisoned by Mulleasses (the Turk of the tragedy), but in fact only drugged by a sleeping potion, as Mulleasses has his own political agenda and plots with Timoclea (who is in love with him) to cause her husband's fall. In Act Three, Timoclea disguises herself as the ghost of Julia and appears to the Duke of Venice to tell him that she (that is, Julia) was murdered by Borgias. Just after this scene, the apparition is exploited for more comical purposes, as Timoclea is surprised by the servant Bordello, who also takes her for a ghost (although the ghost is not identified). The comic effect is carried on in the next scene, when some servants make fun of Bordello's vision, only to see Timoclea appear again and make them all run away. The ensuing scene returns to a more serious apparition scene, in which Timoclea appears to the Duke of Ferrara: the effect of this vision is similarly to spur Ferrara to avenge Julia. In Act Four, wishing to kill her own daughter Amada out of jealousy over Mulleasses, Timoclea plays her own ghost to Amada and Julia and, once left alone with her daughter, murders her. As the next step in their plot, Mulleasses manipulates her to haunt Borgias, and she drives the latter to jump off a wall, leaving him for dead. To complicate the deployment of the motif even further, Timoclea in turn feels as if she were haunted by her daughter Amada's ghost, and Borgias, in hiding, exploits this fear to play an echo scene; then, when he appears before the distracted Timoclea, he is taken for his own ghost. After strangling Timoclea, Borgias is surprised by the servants, who cry "ghost" and start chasing after him. While trying to escape, Borgias arrives in front of Mulleasses, who threatens to kill Julia because she refuses to marry him. Although Mulleasses also takes Borgias for his ghost, he does not hesitate to stab him to death.

It is easy to see that the motif of false apparitions is at the very heart of the multiple plots in the play. This gives the impression that the author — who is not known to have written any other play (Eccles) — wanted to make the most elaborate use possible of a

single plot element, multiplying the characters who pretend to be ghosts, the dead or the presumed dead, as well as the witnesses who experience such visions.

A similar attitude may be perceived in Cyril Tourneur's *The Atheist's Tragedy*, whose surviving dramatic work modern criticism has reduced to this single play, since *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1607) has been definitely attributed to Thomas Middleton.[2] In the second act of Tourneur's tragedy, which is better known than Mason's, the real ghost of murdered Montferrers appears to his son Charlemont to inform him of his recent death:

> Return to France, for thy old father's dead
> And thou by murder disinherited.
> Attend with patience the success of things,
> But leave revenge unto the King of kings. (Tourneur, II.vi.20-23)

As Charlemont doubts his own senses, the ghost appears a second time in the presence of a soldier accompanying Charlemont, so as to objectify the apparition. After this first ghostly experience, Charlemont goes back home to discover that he has been declared dead, and when his fiancée Castabella sees him, she faints, taking him for a ghost. In the following scene, his uncle D'Amville (the atheist of the play) *pretends* to take him for a ghost. He has to resort to such a stratagem because of the presence of his son Sebastian and of the puritan Languebeau Snuffe, though he knows perfectly well that Charlemont is alive, as it is he who had spread the rumour of his nephew's death:

> [*Enter Charlemont. D'Amville counterfeits to take him for a ghost.*]
> *D'Amville.* What art thou? Stay! Assist my troubled sense.
> My apprehension will distract me. Stay!
> [*Languebeau Snuffe avoids [Charlemont] fearfully.*]
> *Sebastian.* What art thou? Speak!
> *Charlemont.*   The spirit of Charlemont.
> *D'Amville.* O stay! compose me. I dissolve. (III.ii.17-21)

Languebeau Snuffe, a character from the subplot, offers a typically Protestant explanation of the apparition, rejecting the very possibility of the return of the dead:

> *Languebeau.* No, 'tis profane. Spirits are invisible. 'Tis the fiend i'the likeness of Charlemont. I will have no conversation with Satan. (22-24)

Sebastian overcomes his apprehension and strikes the ghost, only to find out that it is perfectly corporeal:

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2   See Lake, *passim*, and Jackson, *passim*.

> *Sebastian.* The Spirit of Charlemont? I'll try that.
> [*Strike[s], and the blow [is] returned.*]
> 'Fore God, thou sayest true; th'art all spirit. (25-26)

With this pun on "spirit", the two men start to fight and are only interrupted by the irruption of the real ghost of Montferrers.

As in *The Turke*, the play provides a comic counterpart of the false apparition, when Languebeau brings a girl to a cemetery and puts on a ghost-disguise so as not to be bothered by passers-by. Unfortunately for him, his stratagem does not work, and the lovers are made to run away by Charlemont, who comes to spy on D'Amville. The latter surprises a dialogue between Castabella and D'Amville, and in order to save his fiancée, he pretends to be his father's ghost and makes D'Amville run away. In the following act, the real ghost of Montferrers comes to haunt D'Amville and finally makes him repent and believe in God.

Just as Mason plays with comic and serious false apparitions, so does Tourneur, further adding several levels of "reality" for his ghostly apparitions, which interact and create a subtle system of echoes and counterpoints, providing a comic counterpart to the "serious" apparitions of Montferrers' ghost. Languebeau's comic scene also introduces what is to be the main motive of false apparitions in the context of comedies, namely love and/or money, to which I shall presently return.

Atheism, Catholicism and False Supernatural

Both Mason's and Tourneur's tragedies are built around the central figure of an "atheist". D'Amville's irreligious outlook—for one must remember the looser meaning of "atheist" in the early seventeenth century[3]—is apparent from the title of the play, while Borgias confesses a similar attitude very early in *The Turke*:

> Religion (thou that ridst the backes of Slaves
> Into weake mindes insinuating feare
> And superstitious cowardnesse) thou robst
> Man of his chiefe blisse by bewitching reason.
> Nature . . . I stoope at thy renowne
> And thinke al's *vacuum* above a crowne,
> For they that have the soveraignty of things,
> Do know no God at all, are none but Kings. (Mason, I.iii.[80-94])[4]

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3   See Hunter.
4   The line numbers in brackets are those added to the original edition as reproduced in the Literature Online database.

Both Borgias and D'Amville are the only ones to be referred to as atheists, and this happens only once in the course of each play. Borgias is denounced by his niece Julia as a "Detested Atheist" (II.ii.[116-18]), and D'Amville proudly professes his lack of faith by labelling himself a "confirm'd . . . Atheist" (Tourneur, I.ii.214). As these two plays are also the first to stage sham shadows, it is tempting to look for a connection. In both plays, the atheistic protagonists are directly associated with the false apparitions: Borgias fakes one himself, while D'Amville is the target of both true and false apparitions, and, moreover, fakes being taken in by one.

At a time when an anti-Catholic sentiment had been reawakened by the recent Gunpowder Plot (1605), the highly fashionable subject of apparitions became again charged with doctrinal undertones, as the belief in the return of the dead opposed Protestants and Catholics. After the Council of Trent, the question of ghosts had been a privileged battleground between the two confession, and the most telling example is the way in which the Parisian Franciscan friar Noël Taillepied returns the Tigurine minister Ludwig Lavater's ideas against him, by actually plagiarising three-quarters of his treatise, systematically rewriting, editing and distorting the conclusions of his opponent.[5] Among the notable edited passages are those in which Lavater generalises about Catholic priests and monks who often impersonate ghosts, either to lay their hands on wealth that would otherwise be inherited by the rightful heirs, or to obtain sexual favours from mourning widows or gullible women. And it is precisely such tales that Pierre Le Loyer refuses to believe, attacking those who have circulated them, like the reformed historian Johannes Sleidanus or the Basel-based printer Johann Bebel:

> A ces personnes il faut autant adjouster de foy, comme à un Plaute Comicque. . . . Et qu'est-ce que tels imposteurs taschent de gaigner dans les coeurs des simples par leurs bourdes? Vrayment ils leur veulent à la longue faire croire qu'il n'y a point d'Esprits, par les fausses apparitions qu'ils en apportent, et de là les reduire en un pur Atheisme que les ames sont mortelles. (Le Loyer, *Discours*, p. 79)

In order to silence his adversaries, Le Loyer reduces their accounts to mere dramatic plots, resorting again to the archetypal figure of Plautus's *Mostellaria*. Even though the playwrights generally seem to take hardly any interest in theological theories about the ghosts (with the exception, perhaps, of Shakespeare in *Hamlet*), it is nevertheless likely that the post-Gunpowder Plot wave of anti-Catholic sentiment, coinciding with the publication of a partial translation into English of Le Loyer's treatise the same year, triggered a new vogue for false apparitions.

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5   See Kapitaniak.

At the time, accusations of atheism could quite easily be thrown at Catholics, as shown by the inclusive formula used by Josias Nichol in 1602: "Papistes, Atheistes, and all wicked enemies of the Ghospell" (cited by Hunter, p. 139). Thus, for Mason and Tourneur, writing before or in 1607, to associate the figures of atheists with sham shadows might establish a parallel between their irreligion and a propensity to deceive credulous people with false apparitions, further enriching a motif that both playwrights deployed extensively, as we have seen.

The Comedies, or Mischievous Manes and Matters of Matrimony

Like the two tragedies, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* was written in 1607, though published in 1613, and, like *The Turke*, it was performed by child actors at the Blackfriars. Although several quarto editions of the play mention Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher as its authors, Fletcher's collaboration has long been discounted by modern critics.[6] On the other hand, Fletcher is certainly the author of *The Night-Walker, or The little Thief*, which he wrote around 1611, though the play has survived only in a version that was later revised by James Shirley, including the haunting title of *The Night-Walker*, added by the reviser.

Beaumont's comedy does not offer so sophisticated and saturated a treatment of false apparitions as the two tragedies. There is only one such scene, which takes place in the last act. In the main plot of the play, Jasper Merrythought, an apprentice to the Merchant, is in love with the latter's daughter Luce, but the Merchant opposes the union, intending to marry Luce to Humphrey, a wealthier suitor. After a series of love tests and mishaps, Luce is locked up by her father, and in order to help her elope, Jasper spreads the rumour of his own death. He then sends a letter of apology for his former behaviour, in which he asks the Merchant to have his coffin brought to Luce so "that she may truly know [his] hot flames are now buried" (IV.201-2). Once alone with Luce, he hides her in the coffin, and she can thus leave the paternal house. As for Jasper, he pretends to be his own ghost to confront the Merchant:

> *Enter Jasper, his face mealed.*
> *Jasper.* Forbear thy pains, fond man; it is too late.
> *Merchant.* Heaven bless me! Jasper?
> *Jasper.*   Ay, I am his ghost. (V.5-7)

Jasper then tells the impressed Merchant how he should behave, ordering him to chase his wealthy rival: "Repent thy deed, and satisfy my father, / And beat fond Humphrey

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6   See Beaumont, ed. Hattaway, Introduction, pp. ix-x; citations are taken from this edition.

out of thy doors" (V.33-34). The Merchant does so immediately. On closer examination, it is evident that the theme of this ghostly apparition is announced earlier in the play, when, at the end of the second act, Old Master Merrythought, Jasper's father, sings a proleptic ballad:

> *When it was grown to dark midnight,*
> *And all were fast asleep,*
> *In came Margaret's grimly ghost,*
> *And stood at William's feet.* (II.427-30)[7]

In fact, throughout the play, the passages from ballads sung by Old Merrythought provide a sort of chorus to the play, and logically a ghost ballad relates to Jasper's ghostly scheme. As in the tragedies, the apparition scene is not an isolated episode, as the scene is framed by two other episodes: at the end of Act Four, Luce mistakes Jasper for his ghost, as does Old Merrythought in the final scene. The motif of the false ghost thus resonates here with other moments in the comedy, playing on the variations of the ghostly figure, the ballad even hinting at a "real" ghost.

The Night-Walker begins as a domestic tragedy, when Maria is forced to marry Algripe for his money. Her lover Frank is unhappy about this, and, thanks to the help of his friend Jack Wildbraine, he manages to meet Maria secretly in her room just after her marriage. Yet Wildbraine betrays his friend, and when they are discovered together, Maria faints and, assuming she is dead, Frank swears to avenge her. A detail of the scene already announces the spectral motif, when Frank, waiting for Maria to join him, thinks he sees a ghost on her arrival: "Something comes this way, wondrous still, and stealing / May be some walking spirit to affright me" (I.[466-67]).[8]

In the following Act, Tom Lurcher, a thieving friend of Wildbraine, and a Boy (who is in fact Alathe, Lurcher's sister in disguise) get ready to burgle Algripe's house, making the best of the wedding festivities. Sent on a reconnaissance round the house, the Boy is surprised by the deadly silence that reigns there. While discussing the best disguise for the burglary, they discard "a devils face" (II.[52]), then "A winding sheet" (II.[56]), and finally opt for the outfit of a tall Turk:

> *Boy.* Where's the long Cloak?
> *Lurcher.* Here, here.

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7   This is actually a passage from the ballad of "Fair Margaret and Sweet William" (no. 74 in *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, ed. Child, II: 200), also known as "Sweet William's Ghost" (no. 77 [II: 226-34]). Cf. Hattaway, ed., n. to II.427-30.

8   The line numbers in brackets are those added to the 1679 edition, which is cited here, as reproduced in the Literature Online database.

> *Boy*. Give me the Turbant
> And the false beard, I hear some coming this way,
> Stoop, stoop, and let me sit upon your shoulders. (II.[62-66])

Although the thieves do not disguise themselves as ghosts, the Nurse and the coach-man, who are mourning Maria's death around her coffin, and are quite drunk already, hear noises and, seeing the tall shape, mistake it for a mixture of devil and ghost:

> *Nurse*. Methinks the light burns blew, I prethee snuff it,
> There's a thief in't I think.
> *Tobie*. There may be one near it.
> *Nur*se. What's that that moves there . . . ?
> That thing that walks.
> *Tobie*. Would I had a Ladder to behold it,
> Mercy upon me, the Ghost of one oth' Guard sure,
> 'Tis the devil by his clawes, he smels of Brimstone,
> Sure he farts fire, what an Earth-quake I have in me;
> Out with thy Prayer-book Nurse. (II.[91-101])

The Nurse and Tobie run away scared, while the two thieves leave with the coffin, which they mistake for the chest filled with gold. The identification of the thieves with a gigantic ghost is further developed a few lines later, when Tobie finds himself alone and interprets yet another noise as follows: "The devil's among em in the parlour sure, / The Ghost three stories high, he has the Nurse sure" (II.[123-24]).

Once the thieves are alone, they discover their mistake and decide to bury Maria in the churchyard. Of course, Justice Algripe passes by the graveyard just when they set about their task, and the Boy improvises, pretending to be Maria's ghost and telling Algripe to repent. After Algripe runs away frightened, Maria comes to her senses and fidgets in the coffin, thus scaring the thieves, who run away in turn.

In the following act, Wildbraine is tortured by guilt and thinks he is haunted by ghosts. When Frank finally discovers that his friend betrayed him, he wants to kills him and is only prevented from doing so by the arrival of Maria, who decides to play her own ghost to stop the fight. Finally, in Act Four, Scene Three, Lurcher and the Boy return to see Justice Algripe, whom they had treacherously locked in a cellar in a previous scene, and their accomplices appear to him disguised as furies:

> [*Enter two Furies with blacke tapers.*]
> We are helhounds, helhounds, that have commission
> From the Prince of darkenesse,
> To fetch thy black soule to him. (IV.[362-64])

He repents, and the Boy arrives, disguised as an Angel, and tells him to give the money back to Maria's family and to Lurcher, whose lands he had stolen. He also orders Algripe to annul the marriage to Maria and to repair the injustice done to his previous wife. Even more than *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, the play is saturated with variations upon the motif of apparitions, principally of ghosts but also those of other supernatural beings such as devils, furies and angels.

These four examples—two tragedies and two comedies—show a very inventive treatment of this relatively new motif of a false apparition, which plays not only on the tradition of the real ghost character that had successfully developed over the past two decades, but also on diverse disguise conventions. In the early years of the seventeenth century, a few plays had introduced situations in which one character mistakes another for a ghost, thereby paving the way for the more active deception we have seen here. The novelty of the device may perhaps explain that these four quite contemporary plays multiply its variations with an enthusiasm that sometimes verges on saturation. There are rather few additional innovations in later plays, and the motif seems to establish itself more firmly in the comic genre.

Conclusion: Sham Shadows as Parody and Authority

Several false apparitions examined here, whether in tragic or comic contexts, turn out to be at the same time allusions to or comments on famous ghost figures, especially those in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*.

In *The Turke*, Venice's exchange with Timoclea when the latter is pretending to be her own ghost offers several echoes of the prince's confrontation with his father's ghost in *Hamlet*. Beside the structure of the scene, in which Timoclea appeals to Venice's love of her and reveals the identity of her murderer, several lines might remind the audience of its famous precedent. Timoclea's exclamation, "My uncle Borgias" (III.i.[73]), could go unnoticed alone, but the end of the scene sounds even more like *Hamlet*:

> [*Timoclea*] . . . Do it as ever thou didst Julia love.
> *Venice.* I will.
> *Timoclea.* Whilst I borne upon aire attend my blisse.
> *Venice.* Peace to thy soule: Adieu.   [*Exit.*]
> *Timoclea.* Remember Julia. (III.i.[96-100])

Timoclea's plea sounds almost word for word like Old Hamlet's—"If thou didst ever thy dear father love" (Shakespeare, I.v.23)—and it clusters with the surrounding echoes of "My uncle" (41) and "Adieu, adieu, remember me" (111), to which might be added the mention of the "villain" by Venice (Mason, III.i.[81]) and by Hamlet (Shakespeare, I.v.106).

Two short examples will suffice to provide insight into the playfulness with which the false apparition scenes are written in *The Atheist's Tragedy*. The first echo of *Hamlet* may actually be noticed from the start, when the real ghost of Montferrers reappears to his son in the presence of the fellow soldier who tries to attack it (II.vi.66), just as Marcellus and Barnardo do when meeting the Ghost with Horatio (Shakespeare, I.i.139). An openly parodic echo of *Hamlet* occurs in Act Four, when Languebeau explains how he is going to disguise himself as a ghost to keep intruders away. When asked about the efficacy of his disguise, his paramour Soquette answers: "So like a ghost that, notwithstanding I have some foreknowledge of you, you make my hair stand almost on end" (Tourneur, IV.iii.65-66). Her reaction is reminiscent of Old Hamlet's description of the effect of his tale of murder on his son, which would make "each particular hair to stand on end" (Shakespeare, I.v.19).

Likewise, in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, Jasper's long speech to the Merchant contains several echoes of two of Shakespeare's famous ghosts. Jasper's threatening of his future father-in-law is reminiscent of Banquo's ghost tormenting Macbeth during the banquet scene: a table full of guests, wine flowing abundantly, the ghost being visible only to the father, and the paralysing fear. At the same time, the allusions to the "great offences" and the "sad tale" also point back to Hamlet's ghost in Act One, Scene Five:

> never shalt thou sit, or be alone
> In any place, but I will visit thee
> With ghastly looks, and put into thy mind
> The great offences which thou didst to me.
> When thou art at thy table with thy friends,
> Merry in heart, and filled with swelling wine,
> I'll come in midst of all thy pride and mirth,
> Invisible to all men but thyself,
> And whisper such a sad tale in thine ear
> Shall make thee let the cup fall from thy hand,
> And stand as mute and pale as Death itself. (Beaumont, V.18-28)

The parodic dimension of such scenes suggests that even in tragedies, the primary objective is entertainment. The Shakespearean allusions support a reading of these scenes as dramatic conventions, deliberately presented as such to the audience and easily decoded as such by it. More generally, this metadramatic dimension further undermines any attempt at gauging popular beliefs about ghosts through dramatic production.

A closer look at the motives behind both tragic and comic false apparitions reveals an anthropological trait that unites the different cases I have examined. It is the authority of the deceased, which the living put to use in order to have an impact on what matters most for power, wealth and matrimony—the patriarchal lineage. Timoclea's and Bor-

gias's successive impostures aim at ensuring power through marrying; the aim of Charlemont's pretended apparition is to restore his father's estate and ensure his endangered marriage. The comedies focus even more overtly on matrimonial concerns—whether for love or for money, or both, as in the case of Jasper—which provide the ultimate motivation for such schemes.

Being souls of dead people returning for a certain term to haunt the living, ghosts are a privileged vehicle for a reflection on theatrical representation. As such they offer a meaningful parallel to the characters in plays, which are often remembrances of people long gone and which are performed onstage by actors. It is a well-known fact that in early modern English both ghosts and actors were termed *shadows*, whether returning from the undiscovered country or strutting and fretting their hour upon the stage. And even more than the genuine ghosts, the sham shadows offer the perfect metaphor for stage illusion, embodying the essence of actors, pretending to be who they are not, while making the dead live again.
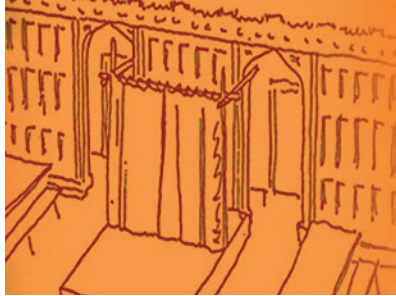
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Theta XIII
Forms of the Supernatural
on Stage: Evolution, Mutations

"O for a Muse of Fire":

Revenant-Authors, *Pericles* and *The Golden Age*

Pádraic Lamb

Université de Tours / Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance – CNRS

> O for a muse of fire, that would ascend
> The brightest heaven of invention,
> A kingdom for a stage, princes to act
> And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!
> Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,
> Assume the port of Mars; and at his heels,
> Leash'd in like hounds, should famine, sword and fire
> Crouch for employment. But pardon, and gentles all,
> The flat unraised spirits that have dared
> On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
> So great an object: can this cockpit hold
> The vasty fields of France? or may we cram
> Within this wooden O the very casques
> That did affright the air at Agincourt?
>
> (Shakespeare, *H5*, I.Cho.1-14)[1]

This is the lament of the Chorus in *Henry V*, regretting the human limits of the capacities of the acting troupe, and thus the limits of the spectacle. We recognise in this prologue the topos of recusation and the figure of preterition: the Chorus shrouds the entire theatrical enterprise in modesty, framing the images (*enargeia*) of the description with the figure of preterition—the very absence of the unnamed inspiring Muse. The energetic vividness (*energeia*) of the spec-

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tator's imagination,[2] is only further excited by this: "If *only* we had a Muse of Fire, we could…". There is, in this famous passage, a pairing of the rhetorical art of *evidentia* with the grandiose intimation of unrepresentability, whereby the audience sees what the Chorus claims not to be able to describe.[3] Recusation and the preteritive mention of the Muse have their intended ironic effect, and I contend that the Chorus's speech strikes the audience with a sublime effect, as if indeed the Muse herself had spoken. The answer of the audience member to the question, "can this cockpit hold / The vasty fields of France?", is surely a resounding "yes".[4] After the bravura, the audience is left to ask, as intended, if this is what the "flat unraised spirits" can do, what on earth would a play authored by the Muse or acted by *raised* spirits be like?

That is the question I would like to explore in this article, in relation to the revenant-author, particularly in the role of Chorus in *Pericles* (1608) and *The Golden Age* (1610).[5] Leaving aside the learned question of what kind of revenant he is, I want to ask what are the rhetorical and dramatic effects of a choric revenant-author. In order to understand the functioning of this supernatural figure, I will first relate its use to the idea of the sublime as a rhetorical effect in poetic texts. The examples of the representation of Homer in Ennius and George Chapman, and that of Chaucer in Spenser, will be used to show the operation of the literary sublime in relation to celebratory invocations of the revenant-author's inspiration. Two dramatic recusations of supernatural authorship, by the Chorus of *Henry V* (1599) and the Prologue of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (1613-14), will then help me to distinguish the dramatic functioning of the revenant-author in *Pericles* and *The Golden Age*. In these two plays, Gower and Homer, respectively, are at once raised spirit, author and Chorus. As such, they embody supernatural authorship on stage. These revenant-authors seem ideally placed to overcome the limitations of the theatre as formulated by *Henry V*'s human Chorus.

It has been true at all times that the supernatural sells. The supernatural effectively grabs attention, as the underrated practical critic, the poet and playwright George Gascoigne frankly recognises in his "Certayne Notes of Instruction in English Verse" of 1576. Though he was writing in particular about love poetry, his point stands for other genres of verbal art. The supernatural is the opposite of *trita* and *obvia*:

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2   For clear distinctions of *enargeia* (the mental image) from *energeia* (its effect), see Plett, pp. 120-30.

3   On *evidentia* (including prosopopoeia), see Lausberg, §§810-19, 826-29. On preterition as an instrument of *evidentia*, see §882, §885. References are to paragraph numbers of that work.

4   I find, then, that critics who say the answer "of course, is no", like Garber (p. 251), rather miss the point.

5   For an analysis of the Author-Presenter on the principle of "credibility", see Débax. I would argue that *Henry V*'s Chorus makes and wins the initial case for credibility by rhetorical brilliance.

> If I should undertake to wryte in prayse of a gentlewoman, I would neither praise hir christal eye, nor hir cherrie lippe, etc. For these things are *trita et obvia.* But I would either finde some supernaturall cause wherby my penne might walke in the superlative degree, or els I would undertake to aunswere for any imperfection that shee hath, and thereupon rayse the prayse of hir commendacion. (Gascoigne, p. 48)

As a theme, Gascoigne notes, the supernatural is essentially piquant and captivating. By the mere choice of a supernatural theme, he asserts, a writer gains easy access to sublime effects. The traditional division of styles, *humilis-mediocris-sublimis*, reserved the sublime or grand style for divine and noble matters, which further associates sublimity with the supernatural. The sublime effect in the passage from *Henry V* is doubly facilitated by its treatment of the "Muse" and the "brightest heaven of invention", as well as of heroic war.

The sublime has always been associated with the supernatural in the Western tradition, including but not limited to (Pseudo-)Longinus. Surely unbeknownst to himself, Gascoigne was echoing the views of earlier critics. That supernatural subjects give what is, in effect, a rhetorical shortcut to effects of grandeur and sublimity had been observed by Pseudo-Demetrius and Hermogenes (Till, 58-59). Rhetoric admits of different means of capturing attention with a sublime effect, which range from *copia*, in the dominant Ciceronian tradition, to a single elevated thought, as particularly promoted by Longinus: the biblical "*Fiat lux*" is notably cited by the latter as an example of this (IX.9). Both means of creating a sublime effect rely on moving the listener: hence the Latin *movere* in Cicero and Quintilian, and the exaggerated *movere* of ecstasy, rapture and transport in Platonic texts and in Longinus (Goyet). In what follows, I will use "sublime" as a tool for the rhetorical analysis of the supernatural, both the means employed and the effects achieved.[6]

What I will call Gascoigne's principle, the supernatural subject as a shortcut to the sublime, explains some of the appeal of the supernatural as a rhetorical or theatrical element. Operating across genres, the revenant-author can be seen as a particularly strong opening gambit which sublimely represents the excellence of the text to follow, as emanating from a supernaturally-present author.

Literary Precedents and Aspiring Authors

The revenant-author has a distinguished literary history, with the invocation of the spirit of an author very often being coupled with a prosopopoeia of the same. From Ennius to George Chapman, Homer is invoked by poets in order to establish a lineage between

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[6]   Borris, drawing on Porter, has recently renewed the study of the literary sublime in the Renaissance on a Platonic basis.

their works and his, to endorse a continuity between the canonical work of poetry and their groundbreaking attempts. This model was then applied to authors in the native tradition, including Gower and Chaucer.

Ennius is a key figure in the transmission of epic from Greece to Rome, though only fragments of his works now subsist. The proem to his historical epic, the *Annals* (2nd century BCE), is the first appearance of the revenant Homer. Ennius relates how, in a dream, Homer appeared to him and told him that he is the latest incarnation of the Greek poet's soul; previous habitacles include at least a peacock. The fragments on their own are not very clear, but allusions in a scholiast of Persius helps clarify the situation. Ennius's description of the apparition and some lines of the prosopopoeia of Homer are extant:

> Fettered in soft calm sleep
> Homer the poet appeared at my side
> . . . .
> "O loving kindness of thy heart
> . . . .
> I remember becoming a peacock".[7]

The anonymous scholiast, clarifying an allusion in Persius, elucidates the fragments of Ennius and confirms the presence of the two features of this representation in the fragments of Ennius I wish to underline—that is, Homer's manifestation and his speaking *pro persona sua*: "Persius alludes to Ennius, who states that in a dream he saw a vision of Homer on Parnassus; Homer said that his soul was in Ennius."[8] The scholiast goes on to report that Homer states his soul "had been conveyed into Ennius" according to the "rule laid down by the philosopher Pythagoras" (pp. 8-9). This is a reference to metempsychosis or transmigration and relates, therefore, the manifestation and prosopopoeia of the revenant-author to a mystical, supernatural phenomenon.

Homer's most famous apparition in the English Renaissace is in the translations and texts of George Chapman, who attempts something similar to Ennius. In a verse-preface first published in 1609, he points to a failure of metempsychosis or "ample transmigration" ("To the Reader", l. 35), as he calls it, in other translations of Homer, and implies the success of metempsychosis in his case. This implication is fleshed out and given poetic expression in an account of his inspiring encounter with Homer in *Euthymiae Raptus or The Teares of Peace*, also published in 1609. The passage occurs in the poem's induction,

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7   "[S]omno leni / visus Homerus adesse poeta / … / 'O pietas animi! / … / Memini me fiere pavum'…" (Ennius, ed. and trans. Warrington, ll. 4-13).

8   "Tangit Ennium qui dixit se vidisse per somnium in Parnaso Homerum sibi dicentem quod eius anima in suo esset corpora"; the scholiast is cited by Warrington, pp. 6-7. Cf. Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, I.120-26 who also refers to Homer's rising from Acheron and speaking to Ennius.

before the visionary encounter with Peace herself. The detailed physical description, the prosopopoeia of Homer and the dialogue between the latter and the speaker, are rhetorical means of creating a vivid image of this scene for the reader, of giving an immediate dramatic energy to the account of the supernatural encounter.[9] In Chapman's poem, the speaker is musing on man's condition,

> When sodainely, a comfortable light
> Brake through the shade; and, after it, the sight
> Of a most grave, and goodly person shinde;
> With eys turnd upwards, and was outward, blind;
> But, inward; past, and future things, he sawe;
> And was to both, and present times, their lawe.
> His sacred bosome was so full of fire,
> That t'was transparent; and made him expire
> His breath in flames, that did instruct (me thought)
> And (as my soule were then at full) they wrought.
> At which, I casting downe my humble eyes,
> Not daring to attempt their fervencies;
> He thus bespake me; Deare minde, do not feare
> My strange apparance; Now t'is time t'outweare
> Thy bashfull disposition, and put on
> As confident a countnance, as the Sunne.
> . . . .
> I brake into a trance, and then remainde
> (Like him) an onely soule; and so obtainde
> Such bouldnesse, by the sense hee did controule;
> That I set looke, to looke; and soule to soule.
> . . . .
> I am (sayd hee) that spirit Elysian,
> That (in thy native ayre; and on the hill
> Next Hitchins left hand) did thy bosome fill,
> With such a flood of soule; that thou wert faine
> (With acclamations of her Rapture then)
> To vent it, to the Echoes of the vale;
> When (meditating of me) a sweet gale
> Brought me upon thee; and thou didst inherit
> My true sense (for the time then) in my spirit;
> And I, invisible, went prompting thee,
> To those fayre Greenes, where thou didst english me.
> Scarce he had uttered this, when well I knewe
> It was my Princes Homer …

9   Millet explores the links between prosopopoeia, spectres and dramatic representation.

. . . .
That hee was Angell to me; Starre, and Fate. (*The Teares of Peace*, ll. 33-93)

Both Ennius and Chapman draw on the notion of the transmigration of souls to underline the Homeric inspiration of their verse, explicitly charging the representation of the revenant-author with the sublime. They aim to demonstrate a seamless transition from Homer's achievement to an innovative Latin epic or the first integral English translation of the Homeric poems. "*Anima*" in the Latin texts is notably supplemented with the Neoplatonic vocabulary of "*spiritus*" ("spirit", "breath", "wind"), "*infundere*" ("flood") and "Rapture" in Chapman's verse. Through prosopopoeia, the Latin and English poets imbue their respective vernacular poetic voices with the mystic authority of the Homeric Muse: Homer speaks Latin and English. The process of inspiration creates a spiritual identity between Homer and Ennius and Homer and Chapman. Crucially, this inspirational framework of supernatural communion makes the later poet's voice the necessary divine intermediary between Homer and the readers of the *Annals* or of Chapman's translations. Resting thus on the laurels of Homer, these Homeric epigones are also trying to place their works beyond criticism as canonical.

The revenant-author as canonizer is a role ascribed to Gower in his brief appearance (one rhyme royal stanza) in the dream-vision of John Skelton's *The Garland of Laurel*. His role here, along with Chaucer and Lydgate, is to welcome Skelton to the "collége" (l. 403) of great English poets. This revenant Gower, then, is an endorser but not an inspirer of the laureate Skelton. It falls to Chaucer to provide the first native example of a supernatural or sublime model prior to Gower's stage début in *Pericles*, in an example which predates Chapman's encounter with Homer.

In the fourth book of *The Faerie Queene* (1590), Spenser undertakes to complete *The Squire's Tale* and invokes Chaucer's aid to help him (canto 2, stanzas 32-34). Resisting the call of the tradition exemplified in Ennius or Chapman, Spenser does not insert a prosopopoeia here. The speaker of *The Faerie Queene* invokes the spirit of "Dan Chaucer" to help him, and employs the jargon of Ficino's Neoplatonism familiar from the Chapman extract:

Then pardon, O most sacred happy Spirit,
That I thy Labours lost may thus revive,
And steal from thee the Meed of thy due Merit,
That none durst ever whilst thou wast alive,
And being dead, in vain yet many strive:
Ne dare I like, but through Infusion sweet
Of thine own Spirit (which doth in me survive)
I follow here the footing of thy Feet,
That with thy meaning so I may the rather meet. (Spenser, IV.2.34)

This passage, like the lines from Chapman, casts the relation with its literary predecessor in supernatural terms, conjoining the ancient notion of metempsychosis with Platonist ideas concerning poetic inspiration. The supernatural is exploited through the use of the Platonist vocabulary, but prosopopoeia of the Chaucer-Muse is strategically withheld. The opening line of stanza 32 ("Whylome as antique stories tellen us") channels the *incipit* of *The Knight's Tale* ("Whilom, as olde stories tellen us" [Chaucer, l. 859]). This verbal identity denotes a spiritual and enunciative identity: "thine own Spirit (which doth in me survive)". An explicit prosopopoeia, which essentially signifies a distinction of voices and personae, is not needed, it is implied, because the revenant has already joined, through "Infusion sweet", with the Spenserian speaker. The Chaucerian voice is already inspiring the Spenserian "I".

These poetic revenant-authors need to be accounted for in two ways: in terms of the fiction of inspiration and in terms of rhetoric and genre. The praise of the Ancients is to the glory of the Moderns, as Chapman and Spenser exalt Homer and Chaucer better to author their claims for themselves as rightful, anointed successors: representing this supernatural communion is a guarantee of the authenticity of the transmission and the corresponding value of their own works. Spenser seeks aesthetic validation of his "warlike numbers and Heroicke sound" (IV.2.32); Chapman claims the philosophic mantle of Homer and initiation into the "hidden Truthe" (*The Teares of Peace*, l. 125). The importance of the contemporary writers' intercession has already been alluded to: Homer, Gower and Chaucer have a privileged supernatural relation with the poetic speakers in the poems I have looked at, and not with the reader.

The second way of looking at these passages is through the lens of rhetoric and genre. These callings-up are rhetorical set-pieces indicative of how the poem is to be read: invocations and prosopopoeia are part of the sublime style, fit for genres like the hymn or epic, with correspondingly grave subjects such as the gods and war. The tone is lofty, to say the least. More particularly, prosopopoeia and invocation are part of the rhetoric of vision, allowing the poet to prove his capacity to represent vividly, as if before our very eyes, as in a theatre, the scene of inspiration between Author and author.

The aspiration to embody the *vates*-figure means that the highest test for the poet is producing this sublime effect. The aspiration to sublime effects mentioned in the introduction are, however, subject to caution. Badly done, the attempted sublime seems bombastic and affected.[10] Over-use deadens the effect, and so the skilful poet, according to

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10   Thus, for Longinus, over-ornateness dooms attempts at the sublime to failure:

The cunning use of figures is peculiarly subject to suspicion. … Wherefore a figure is at its best when the very fact that it is a figure escapes attention. … For just as all dim lights are extinguished in the blaze of the sun, so do the artifices of rhetoric fade from view when bathed in the pervading splendour of sublimity. (XVII.1-2)

Longinus, must use the "curb" as well as the "spur" with the sublime rhetoric at his disposal: "It is true that it [the expression of the sublime] often needs the spur, but it is also true that it often needs the curb" (Longinus, II.2). Judicious use of the raised spirits of ancient authors, for example, ensures drawing the readers' attention to an undertaking, sequence or effect made to seem so great that it requires supernatural intervention: the transposition of epic into Latin, the initiation into the philosophical secrets of Homer and translation of his works into English, or the continuation of a story begun by Chaucer, are all examples. This sublime representation of the power of the author, striking the reader like a "thunderbolt or flash of lightning", or "swell[ing] like some sea", or burning with "all the glow of a fiery spirit" (Longinus, XII.2), is designed to take hold of the imagination and dispose the reader to appreciate the poetic feat which follows, according to the text's pretensions. In this, it is similar to the rhetorical functions of epic invocations of the Muse, one of which, according to Ernst Curtius (p. 232), was to emphasise and invite admiration of the narrative's high points.[11]

These examples have shown the use of the revenant-author as a sublime poetico-rhetorical effect, capable of variation and subtleties. On the whole, revenant-authors provide external praise of the new text supposed to frame readers' reactions; their supernatural status is used to represent a degree of excellence of the new work which touches on the sublime.

Staging the Sublime Author

The poetic examples talk up the wonderful effects of inspired authors and Muse-figures, and indeed the Chorus of *Henry V* pays homage to the topos. This may have prepared an audience for shock-and-awe effects. At the same time, the Chorus very precisely raises possible problems with staging this supernatural Muse: how indeed can "this cockpit hold / The vasty fields of France?"

Following on from Spenser's use of Chaucer as revenant-author, we come to the prologue to *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, which addresses the theatrical problems raised by the Chorus and the question of poetic invocation with the figure of a distinctly Spenserian Chaucer-figure. Contrary to the passage from *The Faerie Queene*, however, this prologue contains a prosopopoeia of Chaucer but no invocation. Taking the story not from *The Squire's Tale* but from *The Knight's Tale*, the Prologue shares his fear with the audience that if the play, drawn from such noble stock, is a failure, Chaucer will be spinning in his grave. This is a variant on the modesty topos. Gary Taylor writes something about *Henry V* which, I think, can help clarify this procedure: "the modesty of the Chorus

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11   Curtius does not explore the sublime in depth because Longinus's treatise was unknown to the Middle Ages, but what he terms "high points" can be equated with rhetorical effects of the sublime.

implies considerable confidence: in the theatre, one apologises only for one's most reliable effects, while expressing the greatest possible confidence about anything wobbly" (Taylor, p. 56). By bringing it up, the Prologue shows that he does not in fact think it likely the play would give cause for Chaucer to be outraged. In a marked contrast with the tone of the opening lines ("New plays and maidenheads are near akin; / Much followed both, for both much money gi'en" [*TNK*, Pro.1-2]), Chaucer is evoked as the model of a supreme noble, learned and inspired poet (the "bays" of Apollo). He is not invoked or staged, but the Prologue proceeds with a prosopopoeia of what Chaucer would say, were he outraged by the play, and finishes with express admiration of Chaucer's sublime eloquence:

> It [the play] has a noble breeder and a pure,
> A learned, and a poet never went
> More famous yet 'twixt Po and silver Trent.
> Chaucer, of all admired, the story gives;
> There, constant to eternity, it lives.
> If we let fall the nobleness of this,
> And the first sound this child hear be a hiss,
> How will it shake the bones of that good man
> And make him cry from underground "O, fan
> From me the witless chaff of such a writer
> That blasts my bays and my famed works makes
> 　　lighter
> Than Robin Hood!" This is the fear we bring;
> For, to say truth, it were an endless thing
> And too ambitious, to aspire to him,
> Weak as we are, and, almost breathless, swim
> In this deep water. (*TNK*, Pro.10-25)

Prosopopoeia, though in poetry an effect of presence, is by contrast in this dramatic use an effect of absence, as it is spoken by the same actor as the Prologue and explicitly hypothetical ("If"). The Prologue's "fear" is that the play will not be equal to Chaucer. The speaker of *The Faerie Queene* found a way to overcome the same fear through the use of the revenant-author topos and invocation of the spirit of Chaucer: "Ne dare I like, but through infusion sweete / Of thine owne spirit". Chaucer's near-invocation in Shakespeare and Fletcher's play can be seen as a recusation on the part of the Prologue to "aspire" to Chaucer, to channel his inspiration for this enterprise. True to form, this recusation does not fail to maximise the evocation of the suppressed topic—that is, Chaucer's sublime eloquence. Rhetorical commonplaces ("deep water"[12]), as well as Platonic topoi of inspiration (*spiritus* and *infundere*, spirit/breath and liquid), also used by Spenser, are used to represent

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12　　Cf. Puttenham, p. 214.

Chaucer's eloquence as sublimely overwhelming the Prologue. The emphasis on the sep-
aration of the "weak" and "breathless" Prologue from the "deep water" of Chaucer's elo-
quence more forcefully represents Chaucer's mysterious power. Thus, Chaucer is figured
as an absent divine Muse, his writing as sublime eloquence, which the Prologue evokes but
renounces calling up, because of the insufficiencies of the troupe. They are only so many
"flat unraised spirits" (*H5*, I.Cho.9): "it were an endless thing / And too ambitious to aspire
to him / Weak as we are, and, almost breathless, swim / In this deep water." As presence or
as absence, sublime poetics are sufficiently evoked to influence understanding of the play.

 The recusation of the Chaucer-Muse is used by *The Two Noble Kinsmen*'s dramatists
to avoid falling into the ever-present danger of failed sublimity. In theatrical terms, by
making Chaucer into a sublime Muse, the Prologue could fall under this heading. This
particular renunciation can, then, be seen as an illustration of the precept of the spur and
curb. The evocation and hypothetical prosopopoeia of a disapproving divine Chaucer is
a "reliable effect" posing as a "wobbly one" (to cite Taylor again), which, while explicitly
disclaiming Chaucer's otherworldly influence, ironically presumes Chaucer's approval of
the play. The confidence of the Prologue, in daring to broach the possibility of the play's
failing, gives the audience confidence in the play. The sublime effect is further curbed
by the audience seeing and hearing the Prologue struck by a sublime effect when talk-
ing about Chaucer but not being party to the effect itself. This intimation of supernat-
ural eloquence foreshadows the series of prayers to Venus, Mars and Diana in Act Five,
Scene One, where a sublime effect is spurred on, indeed given full rein, as it were.

 There is a major difference between the direct approach of Skelton, Chapman and
Spenser and the oblique approach of the playwrights. The poets represent revenant-au-
thors as Muse-figures to orchestrate external approval for the poet and his work in a way
which lends them a sublime rhetorical charge. In *Henry V* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, on
the other hand, the supernatural authorship topos, through the figures of the Muse and of
Chaucer, is evoked and expressly denied. Despite this denial, the force of the topos is won
for the plays through the rhetorical brilliance of the Chorus, who speaks as if inspired by
the Muse, and the Prologue's confidence-trick, which assumes Chaucer's approval.

 I want to turn now to *Pericles* and *The Golden Age*, where the revenant-author's
role is not limited to providing initial external validation, however sublime, of another's
enterprise. Theatrical representation elides the mediating poetic "I" seen above. Here,
the revenant-author is raised from the shades and produced on stage as author of the
spectacle. What Apollo, what oracle, what "Muse of Fire" awaits the audience of *Pericles*?

  To sing a song that old was sung,
  From ashes ancient Gower is come
  Assuming man's infirmities,
  To glad your ear, and please your eyes.

> It hath been sung at festivals,
> On ember-eves and holy-ales;
> And lords and ladies in their lives
> Have read it for restoratives:
> The purchase is to make men glorious;
> *Et bonum quo antiquius, eo melius.* (Shakespeare [and Wilkins?], *Per.*, I.Cho.1-10)

This opening announces Gower as a revenant, assuming human form, which he refers to as "infirmities", while going on in the next lines to give a demonstration of the rhetoric of the *excusatio propter infirmitatem*, part of a general *captatio benevolentiae*: "If you, born in these latter times, / When wit's more ripe, accept my rimes" (11-12). He prolongs the exercise in a telling image of his greatly reduced aspiration, compared to the lofty ambition for the Muse of Fire: "I life would wish, and that I might / Waste it for you, like taper-light" (15-16). Gower has emerged from the "ashes" of a fire which seemingly has gone out. The reason for his return is his concern to transmit an edifying tale, which, it is implied, has some religious note or significance: his "song … / … / hath been sung at festivals, / On ember-eves and holy-ales". This establishes a positive *ethos* for Gower as a trustworthy, moralising but infirm old man, in some performances the butt of gentle humour. There occurs a triple denegation of a possible supernatural authority for this revenant-author; he mentions his human and then rhetorical infirmities, as well as explicitly referring to his human sources: "I tell you what mine authors say" (20). We seem to have another recusation on our hands, after all.

I highlighted above the Muse-function of the poetic revenant-author, which allows the latter-day poetic persona to speak through the transfer of authorship from the revenant-author. A stark difference in the drama is that the stage establishes a direct relationship between Chorus-author and audience. A typical choric function which Gower adopts is to constantly solicit and address the audience, to the extent that the audience is made to participate, in a non-speaking role, in the staging, and is felicitated for it. No longer Muse to an aspirant poet, the revenant-author is here a cajoling collaborator with the public:

> In your imagination hold
> This stage the ship, upon whose deck
> The sea-tost Pericles appears to speak. (III.Cho.58-60)

The speech of revenant Gower is largely bereft of sublime rhetorical figures, and the old-fashioned octosyllabics (as used in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*) are unlikely to stimulate the audience "of these latter times" (*Per.*, I.Ch.11). Gower is unwilling to undertake the essentially serious sublime rhetoric, preferring punning jokes about his pedestrian verse:

> Only I carry winged time
> Post on the lame feet of my rhyme;

> Which never could I so convey,
> Unless your thoughts went on my way. (IV.Cho.47-50)

On this score, one could draw a contrast with the inspired energy of the opening speech of the Muse *manquée* in *Henry V*, or the subtle allusions to inspiration in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. It is as if it were too much to combine the theatrical representation of the revenant-Muse figure and supernaturally impressive inspired speech, with the result that, while the Chorus and Prologue are made to declaim style which can attain sublime effects, revenant-Gower is made to deliver deflated lines in humdrum rhymes—"stodgy yet charming", as F. David Hoeniger memorably put it (p. 468). The supernatural status of the revenant-author seems to be inversely proportional to the sublime poetics enunciated. To avoid the possible failure of staging an inspired author, Gower is made to seem "wobbly", in Taylor's terms, and any expectations for Gower as raised spirit are purposely dashed.

Richard Hillman has provided an analysis of Gower's structural importance, which accounts for the author's role in establishing on stage a "moral and spiritual context" for the play:

> [F]ortune's operations are firmly contained within a structure that is not arbitrary. The character of Gower, from the beginning of the play, is the chief means of establishing this structure and keeping us aware of it. He virtually stretches a safety net beneath the hero, thus enabling us to view tribulations and relief in the proper perspective. His supplying of a moral and spiritual context assures us that there is a point to growth, change, and response. (Hillman, p. 431)

Hillman then cites in support the Chorus opening Act Two:

> Be quiet then, as men should be
> Till he hath pass'd necessity.
> I'll show you those in troubles reign,
> Losing a mite, a mountain gain. (II.Cho.5-8)

Gower, unlike the revenants in the poetic tradition, does not draw special attention to his own status, nor to the transcendent, rather than the ancient, nature of his speech. This revenant's stage presence is not the transcendental signifier, as Homer's apparition and speech are in Ennius or in Chapman; the situation is quite reversed. Whereas the transcendent expression of the revenant-author justifies the succeeding action, in *Pericles*, Gower's apparition and prosopopoeia are justified by the play he presents, with its transcendent elements.

The providential "structure" indicated by Gower is revealed and retrospectively confirmed in its full transcendence by the apparition and prosopopoeia of "celestial Dian" (V.i.249). Diminishing revenant Gower by naturalising him, and even sending him up slightly as a bungler, contributes to the force of the supernatural in the Diana-scene, which finally satisfies the expectation he raised from his first appearance. Seen in this way, the revenant-author device in the person of Gower works by contrast. Gower's initial bathos facilitates Diana's sublimity. As a revenant, he evokes a supernatural capital but one which is diverted from his person and expended for a maximal effect in the manifestation and address of the goddess to Pericles. The pathos of Pericles' situation, the spectacular suddenness of Diana's appearance, combined with the poetic/rhetorical force of the divine subject matter (the mysteries of pagan worship) and the vehement expression of the goddess, speaking in the first person (and using the imperatives "hie", "do", "[r]eveal", "call", "give", "perform", "do", "[a]wake", "tell"), conspire to endow this scene with a potentially sublime effect in performance:

> My temple stands in Ephesus: hie thee thither,
> And do upon mine altar sacrifice.
> There, when my maiden priests are met together,
> Before the people all,
> Reveal how thou at sea didst lose thy wife:
> To mourn thy crosses, with thy daughter's, call
> And give them repetition to the life.
> Or perform my bidding, or thou livest in woe;
> Do it, and happy; by my silver bow!
> Awake, and tell thy dream. (V.i.239-48).

In his succeeding intervention, the tone has fallen somewhat, but Gower confirms with dignity the nature of the play's structure as supernatural, and his own role as guarantor of the operation of heavenly providence:

> In Antiochus and his daughter you have heard
> Of monstrous lust the due and just reward:
> In Pericles, his queen and daughter, seen,
> Although assail'd with fortune fierce and keen,
> Virtue preserved from fell destruction's blast,
> Led on by heaven, and crown'd with joy at last. (Epi.1-6)

Pericles's Gower is the only fully-realised apparition of the revenant-author in Shakespeare. Unlike the poetic revenants, Gower modestly downplays his supernatural potential. As such, he represents a disappointed supernatural expectation. This is a confid-

ence-trick of delayed gratification, which adds to the impressiveness of Diana in Act Five and the satisfaction the audience gains from this later irruption of the supernatural.

The influence of *Pericles* on Heywood's *The Golden Age* has long been noticed, and authorship of the Gower-role sometimes even attributed to Heywood.[13] Whatever the case may be, *Pericles* was undeniably a model for Heywood. Ernest Schanzer has summarised the likenesses between the two plays:

> the first three Ages share the device of using as the presenter of each play the poet the stories that are dramatized are pretended to be taken from. … Both poet-presenters upon their first appearance speak of the performance that is to follow as the singing by them of an old song. … And in most of the prologues that are prefixed to each of the acts in both *Pericles* and *The Golden Age* the same pattern is the first part of the prologue is followed by a dumb-show, some incident, essential to the plot, which is not dramatized, followed by the remainder of the prologue. (p. 21)

Despite *The Golden Age*'s reliance on *Pericles* for much of its distinctive dramaturgy, it takes a new course in relation to the revenant-author. It is an especially suitable terminal point for these reflections because the play started out as a poem. *The Golden Age* was adapted from the first five cantos of Heywood's mythographical chronicle in a grand register, *Troia Britannica*,[14] with the addition of the Homer-presenter role. While Shakespeare's Gower presents a modified version of the tale from the *Confessio Amantis*, Heywood's Homer presents a hodgepodge of wholly un-Homeric material,[15] which perhaps explains why Heywood felt the need to introduce a single presenter for the diverse mythological tales. He plumped for the prestige of a prosopopoeia of Homer; Chapman's recent publications bringing Homer's divine glory to a wider audience may have influenced this decision (Schanzer, p. 21; Coffin pp. 61-63).

The action of the play recounts the bloody rivalries between Titan and Saturn, and subsequently Saturn and his son Jupiter, for the throne. These characters are presented euhemeristically, that is, as extraordinary men honoured as gods. Divinised by Homer in the Choruses, Saturn is also given a divine title by his people because of his prodigious inventions: "Tis thy people … / Proclaime to thee a lasting deity./ And would have *Saturne* honoured as a God" (*The Golden Age*, I [p. 12]) This perhaps casts light on the choice of Homer as author-Chorus: poetry itself is the source of the supernatural and divinity in the poem. As hinted at in the full printed title, poetry, as represented by Homer, is the

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13   See Schanzer, p. 21, and Jackson, p. 81, for recent dismissals of the theory. Gossett (pp. 135-36) points out common elements of plot between *Pericles* and Heywood's *The Royal King and the Loyal Subject* (pub. 1637), a play which, she believes, antedates *Pericles*.

14   See Holaday.

15   On the question of sources, see Peyré.

agent of deification: *The Golden Age or The Lives of Jupiter and Saturne, with the deifying of the Heathen Gods*. Who better than the inspired poet *par excellence* to orchestrate the deification of the Olympians?

And so, *The Golden Age* in its opening scene plays the supernatural author-Chorus *captatio* for all its spectacular value. This Homer *redivivus* asserts his power to raise men to deities; his speech is filled to bursting with the grandiloquence of divine names and attributes:

> The Gods of Greece, whose deities I rais'd
> Out of the earth, gave them divinity,
> The attributes of Sacrifice and Prayer
> Have given old Homer leave to view the world
> And make his own presentment. I am he
> That by my pen gave heaven to Jupiter,
> Made Neptunes Trident calme, the curled waves,
> Gave Aeolus Lordship ore the warring winds;
> Created blacke hair'd Pluto King of Ghosts,
> And regent ore the Kingdomes fixt below.
> By me Mars warres, and fluent Mercury
> Speakes within my tongue. I plac'd divine Apollo
> Within the Sunnes bright Chariot. I made Venus
> Goddesse of Love, and to her winged sonne
> Gave severall arrowes, tipt with Gold and lead.
> What hath not Homer done, to make his name
> Live to eternity? I was the man
> That flourish'd in the worlds first infancy:
> When it was yong, and knew not how to speake,
> I taught it speech, and understanding both
> Even in the Cradle: Oh then suffer me,
> You that are in the worlds decrepit Age,
> When it is neere his universall grave,
> To sing an old song; and in this Iron Age
> Shew you the state of the first golden world,
> I was the Muses Patron, learnings spring,
> And you shall once more heare blinde Homer sing. (I.Cho. [p. 5-6])

The verbal similarities to Gower's prologue serve to highlight the differences: though they both have returned "To sing an old song", Gower makes apologies for the effect his dated style must have for his modern audience, "when wit's more ripe" (*Per.*, I.Cho.12). Not so Homer, who reminds the audience that he is conjuring up the "golden world" for his audience living in a "decrepit Age". Despite the supernatural theme and the grand style, there are several signs that this particular Homer is aiming not for the sub-

lime but for the light-hearted: the bombastic insistence on his grandeur, the gratuitous insult of "decrepit", the logical fallacy of the situation, as well as the original production in the popular Red Bull Theatre. The latter two reasons perhaps require some explanation. The logical fallacy consists in Homer's obtaining permission to return to the world from the gods he repeatedly says he himself created: "The Gods of Greece, whose deities I rais'd / Out of the earth, gave them divinity. … I am he / That by my pen gave heaven to Jupiter". The contrived logic attracts attention to the dramatic illusion. The association of the Red Bull with vulgar shows and rowdy audiences has been challenged recently, but *The Golden Age*, not least by its composite nature, does not seem pitched at an elite audience.[16] While it was a possibility for the interpretation of Gower, the revenant-author as comic turn seems much more pronounced in *The Golden Age*. The revenant-author function here, beyond the generic responsibilities of the Chorus, seems to be to draw attention to and celebrate dramatic poetry's capacities for forging and staging entertaining and enduring fictions, specifically these Ovidian tales of the Olympians.[17] The supernatural element involved, Homer's power to deify, is the metaphorical expression of the theatre's power to reify, or produce these tales on stage.

The numerous euhemeristic references in the play proper are a case in point. Saturn's invention of the art of architecture, for instance, prompts this effusion from 1 Lord: "*Saturnes* inventions are divine, not humane, / A God-like spirit hath inspir'd his reigne" (I [p. 12]). The spectator identifies this "God-like spirit" with Homer's choric interventions and poetic inventions. The references in the play to the divinity of the Olympians are a form of dramatic irony; the audience is party to the conflation of god-making with Homer's spectacular poesis. Homer recounts that Pluto built a "strange City", whose inhabitants had warlike plundering habits. The city was called "Hell"; its people became known as "Divels" (II.Cho. [p. 20]). The audience understands that these places have acquired their dreadful supernatural reputation not through any innate transcendence but through a poetic process. The supernatural becomes a trope of superlative praise of poetry's powers to create "immortal" fictions.

Homer's epilogue is exemplary in this respect. Homer promises the audience to represent the apotheosis of the Olympians, "By vertue of divinest Poesie" (V.Cho. [p. 78]). The choric frame blithely draws attention to the fictionality of the play, helped by the syntactic ambiguity of the adverbial clause. The audience will see, "By vertue of divinest

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16 See Griffith, pp. 3-28 *et passim*, and Coffin, pp. 65-66, 74-75.

17 Coffin makes a similar point, stressing, however, the assimilation of Homer to Heywood himself: "Because Homer is here acting as a Prologue, he initiates the transfer of authority from poetry to theatre and may speak both for the poet and the playwright" (p. 72).

Poesie", the apotheosis of the gods, and at the same time, will see how these mortals were made gods "By vertue of divinest Poesie":

> Yet to keepe promise, ere we further wade,
> The ground of ancient Poems you shall see:
> And how these (first borne mortall) Gods were made,
> By vertue of divinest Poesie. (V.Cho. [p. 78])

What follows is the division, by the Fates, "Of Heaven, of Sea, of Hell" (V.Cho. [p. 78]) among Saturn's three sons, Jupiter, Neptune and Pluto. The scene of apotheosis belongs to the Poet; the Fates and the Olympians wordlessly act out the stage directions, while Homer's voice sounds to expound the dumb-show:

> *Sound a dumbe shew. Enter the three fatall sisters, with a rocke, a threed, and a paire of sheeres; bringing in a Gloabe, in which they put three lots.* Jupiter *drawes heaven: at which* Iris *descends and presents him with his Eagle, Crowne and Scepter, and his thunder-bolt.* Jupiter *first ascends upon the Eagle, and after him* Ganimed.

> To *Jupiter* doth high Olimpus fall,
> Who thunder and the trisulke lightning beares.
> Dreaded of all the rest in generall:
> He on a Princely Eagle mounts the Spheares. (V.Cho. [p. 78])

Poetry as an instrument of apotheosis amounts to the apotheosis of poetry, as the truth of Homer's earlier boast concerning "The Gods of Greece / Whose deities I rais'd" (I.Cho. [p. 5]) is realised. This spectacular scene of ascension to the heavens, performed with a winch and augmented perhaps with fireworks (Griffith, pp. 106-7, 112-14), shows the chorus as author and the author as godmaker. It appropriates the supernatural theme to stage a celebration of dramatic poetry's own superlative powers of representation.

Conclusion

The supernatural has long been a weapon of choice in the struggle to avoid the trite and the obvious. The presence of the revenant is a guage of supernatural quality which can endow a new work, through the inspiration topos, with the prestige of a canonical poet. Filiation, by genre or subject-matter, is claimed, but in every case it can be said that the older author is remade to suit the purposes of the newer one. This filiation, in the poetic texts studied, is represented to sublime effect and insists on the evident supernatural status of the revenant as a Muse, as well as on the divinisation of the epigone's poetic utterances.

In the plays looked at, supernatural authorship is a possibility evoked but not fully realised. Differing ironic uses of the revenant-author are evident in *Henry V* and *The Two*

Noble Kinsmen. Gower as Chorus resembles the poetic revenant-author insofar as he vouches for the quality of the play, but he is not used to produce a sublime effect himself. With blustery Homer in *The Golden Age*, we appear to have come full circle. Chapman's use of Homer, aiming at the sublime, precluded the use of humour. Heywood, writing for the public theatre, put the supernatural to other uses, with Homer as a mouthpiece divorced from the poetic sublime. The supernatural becomes an excuse for the spectacular.

As we have seen, the revenant-author is a topos of supernatural authorship whose use can range from the sublime to the light-hearted. Similar in this to liminary verses written by request of the author, it is a reflexive frame for generic and stylistic reception of a text. It has the advantage over liminary verses of giving a far more compelling, energetic, poetic form to the representation of external endorsement: the alliance of authority, of personification and of the charge of the supernatural. As the diversity of Homers alone in my examples shows, the revenant-author enables a paradoxical appeal to tradition in order to license creativity.

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Theta XIII
Forms of the Supernatural on Stage: Evolution, Mutations

Textes réunis par
Richard Hillman

Unnatural Naturals?
Changelings and Issues of Intellectual Disability in Early Modern English Drama

Alice Equestri
University of Sussex

Stories of "changelings" were among the most popular pieces of fairy lore in early modern England, in particular after the middle of the sixteenth century (Latham, pp. 148-50). The term was used in reference to the nightly substitution of babies in their cradle by supernatural beings such as fairies and demons. These, according to Christian beliefs, were more likely to act on individuals dwelling in a theological limbo, such as unchristened infants and unchurched nursing mothers (Buccola, pp. 49-50; Briggs, *The Fairies in Tradition*, pp. 136, 141).[1] A changeling could be either the beautiful child that was taken away to fairyland or the child that was left behind by the fairies in the place of the rightful baby (Buccola, p. 49). In the second case, there was usually something wrong with the substitute baby, also called an "elf", "killcrop" or "oaf" (Haffter, p. 56)—often its appearance, as it could be ugly, deformed or monstrous, or maybe its behaviour, as it might be unruly, peevish or motionless, or even its lack of normal growth. The subnormality of these children, however, was sometimes related also to the insufficiency of their intellectual performance, and this is where the notions of changeling and fool converged.

The relation between the two in Renaissance thinking has recently been considered by psychological historians such as C. F. Goodey and Tim Stainton (pp. 223-40), but its relevance to drama has only been cursorily remarked on by literary historians of the early modern period. M. W. Latham briefly mentioned how "elf" and "changeling" could be used generally to des-

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1   Latham has found "no records in England until the middle of the 16th century of the exchange of fairy children for mortal offspring which resulted in the disappearance of the human infant and the appearance of a strange and supernatural baby in its stead" (p. 150).

ignate a silly or foolish person.[2] Susan Schoon Eberly, in focusing on fairy offspring and issues of disability, neglects early modern drama and draws most primary material from later folk tales (pp. 58-77). More pertinent is Regina Buccola's section on changelings, as she mentions a few foolish dramatic characters associated directly or indirectly with fairy lore. Among those who deal with fairies but are not termed changelings themselves she lists Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, stressing his virtual role as an inferior substitute for Titania's Indian boy. She also applies the notion to the stupid prince Cloten in *Cymbeline*, who acts as a replacement for the king's lost sons for twenty years before the twins are almost magically restored to their father. As concerns dull characters passed off as children of the fairies, Buccola lingers only on Dapper in Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist* but focuses more on his (fraudulent) connections with the fairy world than on his idiocy (pp. 52, 120-22, 160). My main aim in this essay is to study more in depth and to clarify the connection between the two stock figures of the fool and the changeling. Starting from theological, folkloric and proto-psychological definitions of the changeling, I will discuss some early modern dramatic examples of the changeling in relation to ideas of idiocy. I will show how, although the characters' fairy contacts or supposed origins seem to connect them with the supernatural, their idiocy is more extensively shaped by tangible ideas of intellectual deficiency, which draw on the social, legal, medical and physiognomical knowledge available in the early modern period.

Scholars of psychology and developmental disability have often linked the making up and transmission of changeling stories with what is now defined as the parental bereavement model: then, as now, the grief that parents felt when they found out that their child was not what they expected—that it was malformed or had difficulty learning—gave way to a mourning for the child that they had not had. In an age when science had not yet given explanations for congenital bodily or mental deviations from the norm, people found in the supernatural and the demonic a justification for what they could not understand and found hard to accept. In this way they allayed feelings of anxiety, anger, rejection or guilt (Goodey and Stainton, p. 224; Eberly, pp. 61-62; Haffter, p. 55).

The association between supernatural origins and physical and/or mental defect was apparently so marked that at some point in the seventeenth century the word "changeling" became interchangeable with "idiot".[3] In the earlier period, roughly from

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2   Latham cited examples from the following mainly dramatic works (pp. 20, 157): *Misogonus* (anon.), *Diana* (a sonnet sequence by Henry Constable), *The Bugbears* (anon.), *Common Conditions* (anon.), *The Muses of Elizium* (a poem by Michael Drayton), *Gallathea* (John Lyly), *Promos and Cassandra* (George Whetstone), *The Changeling* (Thomas Middleton and William Rowley), *Anything for a Quiet Life* (Thomas Middleton and John Webster) and *The Sad Shepherd* (Ben Jonson).

3   See *OED*, s.v. "changeling", def. 3.

the mid-fifteenth century, when the word "changeling" is first attested, it could indicate either a substitute child or someone whose will and opinions were very changeable (Goodey, p. 267), but not necessarily a natural fool: the assimilation to a condition comparable to intellectual disability occurred only later and gradually.

The earliest extant historical documentation of the child substitution story itself in Europe dates to the thirteenth century, when the theologian William of Auvergne noted how *cambiones* (the Latin word for changelings) were believed to be

> children of demon incubi, substituted by female demons so that they are fed by them as if they are their own and are … swapped and substituted to female parents for their own children. They say these are thin, always wailing, drinking so much milk that it takes four wet-nurses to feed one. They are seen to stay with their wet-nurses for many years, after which they fly away, or rather vanish.[4]

Similarly, the Paris theologian Jacques De Vitry wrote that "children whom the French call *chamium* … suck dry many wet-nurses but nevertheless do not benefit or grow, but have a hard, distended belly".[5] Other texts in the fifteenth century revived stories of *cambiones*, but the most authoritative for later writers were the *Malleus Malleficarum* (1486), by Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger, which, however, added little to the earlier French descriptions, and above all Luther's *Tischreden* (*Table Talk*)*,* a compilation (by Johannes Mathesius and others) published in German in 1566. Luther, to whom the idea that changelings should be killed because they are the Devil's offspring is attributed, told the story of a "changed child" of twelve years of age who

> did nothing but feed, and would eat as much as two clowns or threshers were able to eat. When one touched it, then it cried out. When any evil happened in the house, then it laughed and was joyful; but when all went well, then it cried and was very sad. (Goodey and Stainton, p. 229 [citing Luther, p. 397])

He also spoke of a "Killcrop" who "sucked the Mother and five other Women dry; and besides, devoured very much" (Goodey and Stainton, p. 229 [citing Luther, p. 397]). Goodey and Stainton have shown how the focus in these records is on the tangibility of the devil and the physical or behavioural subnormality of the children: very little is said about their intellectual performance. Using these and other examples, Goodey and Stainton have sought to demonstrate how the fairy-demoniac substitution story initially had no relation to the notion of intellectual disability, that the link between the two

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4   William of Auvergne, *De Universo*, as cited and translated by Goodey and Stainton, p. 227.

5   Jacques de Vitry, *Sermones Vulgares,* as cited and translated by Goodey and Stainton, p. 228.

meanings of "changeling" as elf and "idiot" was merely "incidental" (p. 223), and that the union between the two concepts is the result of the superimposition of later (late seventeenth- to twentieth-century) medical definitions of mental retardation upon medieval and Renaissance accounts: instances of this type started appearing with the work of scientific writers Thomas Willis (*Cerebri Anatomie*, 1664) and John Locke (*Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 1690).

In my view, Goodey and Stainton appear unnecessarily dismissive. I am not, in particular, convinced of the irrelevance of some examples which they term "exceptional" or "isolated". Already in the late fifteenth century, the Dominican friar Johannes Nider referred to the changeling children later described in the *Malleus* as having no speech (Nider, *praeceptum* I, *capitulum* 11, *quaestio* 12), so presumably suffering from mutism, aphasia or some other type of impairment that impeded their ability to use language effectively. These are disorders that even nowadays can be related to intellectual disability.[6] The apparent rarity of explicit references to the intellectual characteristics of changelings in accounts of substitution may in fact be a consequence of the general inability to distinguish between mental and physical impairment in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. A flawed body almost certainly bespoke mental defects, so that a fool and a cripple were inherently linked figures.

In this light, an early seventeenth-century account is definitely too intriguing to be overlooked. In the fairy epic *Nymphidia*, Michael Drayton exposed the early modern belief that:

> When a child haps to be got,
> Which after proves an idiot,
> When folk perceive it thriveth not,
> The fault therein [d]o smother:
> Some silly doting brainless calf,
> That understands things by the half,
> Say, that the Fairy left this elf,
> And took away the other. (ll. 83-90)[7]

Though Drayton does not share his contemporaries' belief, he interestingly marks the connection between a child's inability to "thrive"—probably in a physical sense, as

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6   See, e.g., Kliegman, pp. 210-11, and Schwartz, pp. 52-81.

7   *Nymphidia* was first published in 1627, but it might not be so late. Some critics have argued that it was written before Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Others have supposed that, because of internal evidence pointing to *Don Quixote*, the poem cannot be earlier than 1605 (see Malone, ed., p. 460n.). Drayton, however, might have been expressing a view that was common already in the late sixteenth century.

that would be the first thing "folk" would notice—and his being taken for an "idiot": lack of growth thus entails intellectual disability. This also illuminates earlier accounts of *cambiones*, where failure to grow or to perform any meaningful activity was a common characteristic,[8] and where, therefore, the idea of idiocy might be deemed implicit. The twelve-year-old Dessau changeling Luther had mentioned

> devoured as much as four farmers did, and he did nothing else than eat and excrete. Luther suggested that he be suffocated. Someone asked, "for what reason?" He replied, "Because I think he's simply a mass of flesh without a soul. Couldn't the devil have done this, inasmuch as he gives such shape to the body and mind even of those who have reason that in their obsession they hear, see, and feel nothing? The devil is himself in their soul. The power of the devil is great when in this way he holds the minds of men captive. (Goodey and Stainton, p. 230 [citing Luther, p. 396])

While being soulless hints at sin, there can also be a psycho-physiological meaning to soul. "Soul" or "animal" spirits, or the "soul substance", in medieval and early modern science and philosophy was the matter filling the brain and fuelling the faculties of the mind (Harvey, p. 2; Metzler, pp. 60, 63, 85). A brain devoid of soul spirits was therefore the brain of a fool. Let us now turn to the dramatic discourse of idiocy in connection with the changeling myth.

Middleton and Rowley's *The Changeling*, performed in 1622, is the obvious example that comes to mind when we think of changelings in early modern drama. Yet the word "changeling" is never present within the play text, nor is there any fairy offspring as such in the plot. The character list ties the epithet incontrovertibly to Antonio, and as such it points, in the second decade of the seventeenth century, to the notion of a changeling as "an idiot, an imbecile" (*OED*, def. 3), but also more generally as a "substitute", in that, pretending to be an inmate of the hospital, Antonio stands as the surrogate of a fool.[9] Though Antonio is not a real fool—and occasionally his intellectual acuity shines through his pretended foolishness—his performance as one is good enough to link him to early modern views of idiocy as a clinical and legal state. In this way, he is ironically at odds with the supernatural resonances his epithet might have evoked. Even before Antonio appears for the first time in the play, his condition is described as partly distinct

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8   See also Cameron, pp. 36, 114.
9   Neill, ed., adds other possible interpretations: the "substitute" points to Diaphanta as a stand-in for Beatrice in the bed trick; because "changeling" hints at the idea of "changing", it represents Beatrice-Joanna's transformation and her inconsancy or fickleness, as well as Alsemero's "conversion from fearless traveller to abject lover" (p. 398, note to the title,). Here I will concentrate on the meaning of "changeling" as idiot.

from that of the violent ranting inmates of the madhouse. The keeper Lollius states how there are "but two sorts of people in the house … that's fools and madmen; the one has not wit enough to be knaves, and the other not knavery enough to be fools" (I.ii.45-48).[10] As a fool, Antonio is *not* a madman: Lollio here makes explicit the legal separation that English authorities had been advocating since the thirteenth century between "idiocy" as mental impairment from birth and "lunacy" as mental illness arising during the course of one's life, a condition that allowed for lucid intervals (Neugebauer, p. 25). Idiocy, as an ailment of the soul rather than of the body, was regarded as incurable by earthly medicine (Jackson, p. 287). This is the reason why it was rare for idiots to be admitted into Bedlam (Stainton, "Medieval Charitable Institutions", p. 23). Therefore, on the one hand, it is somewhat unrealistic that Alibius should be dealing in fools as well as madmen, though this might be due to the keeper's greedy desire to lay his hands on the inheritance of as many inmates' as possible.[11] On the other, Pedro makes clear that he does not expect Antonio to recover fully, but merely that the doctor should give "some little strength to his sick and weak part of nature in him" (I.ii.88-89).

Antonio's interactions with Lollio encapsulate what was at stake in early modern legal discussions and examinations of idiocy. Lollio's asking for Antonio's name not only serves as a dramatic device to introduce a new character to the audience, but also evokes the practices of authorities at early modern incompetency examinations—held by the Court of Wards and Liveries—where idiots were asked easy questions about themselves to prove their capacity.[12] Personal names vehiculate the individual's social identity (Cohen, pp. 71-79; Hough and Izdebska, p. 387), so by asking for Antonio's name, Lollio implicitly carries out an inspection to validate his belonging to society. Antonio does have a name, but when he is asked for it, he does not give an answer. This inability is already enough to declare him an idiot in a double way—legally, because for Lollius this is a practical clue to determine whether Antonio is actually disabled or not, and socially, because it hints at the idiot as an individual lacking a clear civic identity. In this light, Lollio's interrogation stands for a parodic reversal of the baptismal ritual: rather than incorporating the individual into the community, it ratifies his exclusion.[13]

Concerning Antonio's name, Pedro specifies that "we use but half for him, only Tony" (I.ii.100-1), which, Lollio comments, is "enough, and a very good name for a fool" (102-3).[14] The shortening of the fool's given name hints at the early modern social

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10   Middleton and Rowley, ed. Thomson (my text of reference).

11   On Alibius's greed, see Drouet, pp. 144-45.

12   See Neugebauer, esp. pp. 28-33.

13   For the function of baptism and name-giving in the early modern period see Muir, pp. 24-25.

14   This might be a reference to Thony, the royal fool at the French court between 1547 and 1559, for whom Brantôme and Ronsard wrote epitaphs. (Thanks to Richard Hillman for this suggestion.)

practice of using common address for disabled people (Postles, pp. 105-6). "Tony" points to the intellectually disabled individual's social assimilation to a child; it registers a diminishing of a social status which, moreover, Antonio supposedly does not know the value of. Not only is he unable to state his own name, but he also cannot locate himself clearly within a family, which, as Michael MacDonald notes, was the "basic garment of social identity" (p. 126). Antonio cannot tell the difference between Pedro and Lollio—to him they are both "cousin"—and on first seeing Isabella he calls out, "is it not my *aunt*?" (III.iii.105; italics mine), with a double entendre on the word's slang sense of "prostitute" (as with Dol Common in *The Alchemist*, to be mentioned below). Just as authorities tested idiots' numeracy skills to make sure they could not manage property, Lollio also frequently asks for mathematical calculations ("Tony, how many is five times six?" [III.iii.162-63]) and rejoices at Antonio's improvements.

Though Antonio's intellectual defect is permanent, Pedro's eagerness to raise his cousin to "any degree of wit" (I.ii.110) is tied to insistence that the "idiot" "is a gentleman" (I.ii.117). Pedro voices the early modern anxiety that an abnormal individual might be born to the noble classes, which considered themselves also the intellectual elite. For example, Giovanni Battista Nenna's influential tract on nobility, translated into English in 1595 as *Nennio*, maintained that children "who in their swadling cloutes descended of a noble stocke … yet are neither capable of vertue nor reason" lacked the nobility of mind to be regarded as truly noble, and were therefore to be seen as people "of the vulgar sort", as degenerate as descendants of noble families who became "robbers in the high way, murtherers, theeues, slaunderers" (Nenna, p. 76). When Antonio steps momentarily out of his performance of folly, he shows connivance with the outlook that gentlemantliness and foolishness are incompatible concepts, and he refuses to be connected with the latter:

> Take no acquaintance
> Of these outward follies; there is within
> A gentleman that loves you. (III.iii.145-47)

And he does so also invoking early modern humoral theories of folly:

> *Isabella.* … You become not your tongue
> When you speak from your clothes.
> *Antonio.* How can he freeze,
> Lives near so sweet a warmth? (178-80)

While warmth represents the beauty, gentleness and supposed sensuality of Isabella, it also points to the opposite humoral tag of the fool, who was normally cold and moist (Metzler, p. 84). Antonio acknowledges this with his image of one who could "freeze", but, in his subtle attempt to seduce Isabella, he pretends he sees the love of a woman as a

spiritual cure for his soul, the part of man that idiocy taints. To Antonio, however, idiocy is also displayed in more visible terms of bodily disability:

> Look you but cheerfully, and in your eyes
> I shall behold mine own deformity,
> And dress myself up fairer; I know this shape
> Becomes me not. (III.iii.193-96)

 He thereby confirms his connection not only to iconographic fools (deformed, cripples) but also to monstrous changeling births.

The changeling and the fool identities in Antonio are additionally linked via childish attributes. Just as changeling stories were usually about babies and young children, natural fools also represented a permanent lingering in the early phase of human development, both intellectually and socially (McDonagh, p. 85). Lollio suggests that Antonio will be able to "go play" (I.ii.184) soon, and presents the madmen as "school-fellows" (227) of the idiot. Also, Antonio's occasional sounds, such as "he, he" or "oh, oh", voice the inarticulate ways a child requests attention or expresses frustration, as does his admission—which elicits Lollio's reassurance—that he is scared of madmen: "I would see the madmen, cousin, if they would not bite me" (230-31). When Lollio warns him, "you must not cry, child" (151), Antonio reminds us of the always "ailing" substituted children of the records and folklore narratives, such as the "wee kiddie" Johnnie in the Cradle, who "was always crying and never satisfied" (Briggs, *British Folk Tales*, p. 188).

This vision of the changeling fool as someone unable to express him or herself in a meaningful, assertive way is dramatised also in Peter Hausted's *The Rival Friends*, performed nine years after *The Changeling*, which features two simple-minded young women: Mistress Ursely and Merda. The author describes them in "The Praeface to the Reader" as "two Changelings", who "spoke no strong lines but plaid at Chackstones" (p. 4).[15] The first is the "supposed Daughter" of the "Simoniacall Patrone" Sacriledge Hooke (*Dramatis Personae*, p. 1). We know from the list of characters that she is "deformed and foolish" (p. 1), and her unspecified disability, which involves at the very least "a crooked back" (I.viii [p. 34]), makes people think she

> without all question
> Was Kitlin to Nib o'th Queene of Faries Kitchin,
> Sent to [her father] for a Newyeeres gift
> Vpon exchange by the Elf. (I.viii [p. 34])

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15   I cite the transcription of the 1632 London edition available in the *Early Print* digital anthology derived from the *Shakespeare His Contemporaries* project; page numbers refer to the PDF document.

Ursely is apparently such an abominable creature that she does not even deserve to be a descendant of the queen of fairies: she is instead the daughter of her kitchen maid, Nib (possibly a contraction of "Isabella"). The allusion to Ursely as a kitten is also possibly tied to the traditional role of cats as evil fairies in animal form.[16] In both senses, Ursely is seen as a magical creature. At the end of the play, we find out that Ursely is indeed special, as she was given away by her real mother when the latter saw that the baby was "deformed and distort" (V.viii [p. 130]), and was adopted by a lady, for whom, there-fore, Ursely was indeed a substitute child. Merda, on the contrary, is the eighteen-year-old real daughter of her parents yet is called by her mother "fayrie brat", "changeling", "[d]aughter to Madam Pusse the kitchin mayd" (II.vi [p. 52]). Though only Ursely is also physically disabled, the two girls display intellectual disability is analogous ways. Both of them are termed children of kitchen maids, and both are linked to the myth of fairy cats. Childishness, however, is the quality that specifically marks them as foolish.

Irina Metzler has discussed the connection among children, animals and the intel-lectually disabled; since antiquity, these categories had been used for beings whose emo-tions, instincts and physical movements could not be channelled through judgment or rationality (Metzler, pp. 122-30). Merda's unwillingness to wake up in the morning in Act Two, Scene One, attests to such immaturity, and also substantiates the early modern conception of natural folly as somehow related to lethargy (Metzler, p. 84) and excessive somnolence, as opposed to the association of madness with frenzy. Ursely walks up to Merda singing, and she also sings later on in the play. Her repetitive empty tune, "Fa la la la" (II.i. [p. 39]), which she utters at unexpected or inappropriate moments, is remin-iscent of the way Antonio in *The Changeling* entertains himself, and is paralleled by Merda's inability to express herself and her anxiety in an intelligible way. Merda often repeats what others say to her, and her "Mother Mother Mother what shall I doe?" becomes inarticulate sound in "Vm vm vm" (II.vi. [p. 52]).

It is, however, the two women's attitude to play, already signalled by the author's pre-fatory comment, that gets stigmatised as subnormal. Bartholomeus Anglicus had in fact remarked that because children "think only on things that be, and reck not of things that shall be, they love plays, game, and vanity" (p. 51). In Act Two, Scene One, Ursely wakes Merda up because she has "found six Checkstones in [her] / Father's yard" (p. 39) and she wants to play, while the latter, in Act Two, Scene Five, ironically counterpoints her father's serious business by playing "*with babes clouts*" (p. 48, SD), that is, dolls, something which her father resents and which he wishes to punish by the customary method of pun-ishing fools: "Making of Puppets one of your age and breeding? / You haue an Husband

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16 See Briggs, *The Fairies in Tradition*, pp. 85-88.

Minion you a rodde" (p. 49); "I le breake you of this trade of making children / Before your time if I can find a willow / Within a mile of an Oake" (p. 51). The dialogue between Merda and Ursely reaches the apex of insignificance insofar as it focuses merely on play, making large use of the typical bickering language of children. Here is a case in point:

> *Ursely.* well well the next time
> That you eate any Cheesecakes at our house
> You shall haue better luck shall you.
> *Merda.* Your Cheesecakes we haue as good of our owne. (II.ii [p. 41])

Ursely's more serious subnormality, however, becomes manifest as Merda gets the upper hand in the amical relationship. The latter asks her friend to give her anything interesting she has on her— bracelets, gloves. Ursely's unquestioning compliance with Merda's request not only marks her naïveté but links her with an economical definition of idiocy as lack of property and financial status. Taking away property from individuals "begged for fools" by their relatives corresponded, in the early modern English legal system, to the official declaration of the idiocy of the person. Hausted echoes this by getting Ursely to give up some of her most personal belongings. The girl's easy pliability, however, confirms her inability to attribute a special value to those items.

The two girls' immaturity is represented, finally, in the way they project their sexuality. McDonagh has noted how intellectually disabled women were usually seen as "threatening" creatures, whose excessive sexual and physical appetites were frequently represented in literature, as in John Fletcher's *The Pilgrim* (1621) (McDonagh, pp. 105-6). Both Merda's and Ursely's desire is directed at someone they cannot have: Merda falls in love at once with a female disguised as a man, and is nicknamed "Maukin" by her mother, who thus gestures towards her licentiousness.[17] Ursely intends to marry nobody but Anteros, a love-hater who despises not only her but any living woman.

In Richard Brome's play *The English Moor, or The Mock-Marriage* (performed in 1637), we again find the theme of the intellectually disabled son, but, as in *The Changeling*, intellectual disability is craftily simulated. John Buzzard, a dismissed servant of the old usurer Quicksand, is involved by some of his master's debtors in a plot to cancel all the payments owing. Quicksand has a secret "idiot" child in Norfolk, whom he abandoned in infancy, and Buzzard impersonates the idiot to bribe his former master into an unprofitable deal. In mentioning the secret for the first time, Buzzard declares himself sure of the fairy origins of Quicksand's child:

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17   The *OED* lists the word as a variant of "malkin", whose first meaning is "a lower-class, untidy, or sluttish woman, *esp.* a servant or country girl" (def. 1.a).

> *Buzzard.* … But it is the arsy-versiest oaf that ever crept into the world. Sure, some goblin got it for him; or changed it in the nest, that's certain.
> *Nathaniel.* I vow thou utterest brave things. Is't a boy?
> *Buzzard.* It has gone for a boy in short coats and long coats this seven and twenty years.
> *Edmund.* An idiot, is it?
> *Buzzard.* Yes, a very natural; and goes a thissen; and looks as old as I do too. And I think if my beard were off, I could be like him: I have taken great pains to practise his speech and action to make myself merry with him in the country. (III.ii.523-27)[18]

Traditionally seen as mischievous variants of fairies, goblins were creatures straddling folklore, magic and demonology (Gibson and Esra, p. 106; Briggs, *Encyclopedia*, p. 194). Ostling and Forest's extensive corpus-based research has, however, revealed the ambiguity in the taxonomy of praeternatural beings and shown how, in early modern literary, theological and demonological texts and pamphlets, "a *goblin* is presented as being the same thing as a *fairy* or a *devil*", as well as a spirit: the equivalence of such figures is often reflected explicitly in collocations (Ostling and Forest, pp. 559-60). As Buzzard's conjecture clearly demonstrates, goblins, like fairies, were often associated with the taking away of children (Ostling and Forest, p. 557), but here the common ground between goblins and demons—*incubi*, in particular—comes into full view, encompassing the belief in devils' procreating power and their defective offspring set out by earlier theologians.

Buzzard's second line stresses the congruence of idiocy and infancy, defining the natural fool as an adult who will never grow, as the children's rhymes he sings in Act Five testify. Long coats or petticoats, in particular, were the tunics usually worn by children and both natural and artificial fools, on stage and off.[19] The audience later finds out that the fool's name is "Timsy", a diminutive of Timothy, the stage clown playing the part,[20] and, again, as in *The Changeling*, it is a childlike nickname encapsulating the social subordination the fool is relegated to. Buzzard's third line then exposes some of the physiological manifestations of idiocy. Buzzard imitates what seems like Timsy's strange way of walking. As in Drayton's *Nymphidia*, physical disability is here taken as the chief sign of mental disability, thereby underlining the substantial congruence between the two. Facial deformity is also part of this physical disability, as is suggested by Buzzard's hint that the natural fool is a boy with an adult's face, as well as disrupted speech and actions.

The most interesting piece of information—also because it gives Buzzard's listeners the idea of dressing him up as a fool—is that removing one's beard is enough to make him

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18   References are to the edition by Steggle for the *Richard Brome Online* collection, which numbers acts, scenes and speeches.
19   For a lengthy discussion of the issue see Hotson, pp. 53-70.
20   The comic actor Timothy Read; see Brome, ed. Steggle, "Introduction".

look like a fool. We have many indications that fools in the early modern period were associated with beardlessness and, more generally, hairlessness.[21] This has psychological and physiognomical explanations. Lethargy, whose symptoms were occasionally mapped out on intellectually disabled individuals, was connected with coldness and moistness of temperament, which, in turn, were associated with beardlessness and hairlessness. Since Galen, this characteristic had been connected with diminished perspiration of the brain and an inferior overall state of that organ. Early modern doctors, such as Juan Huarte, were more explicit in drawing a connection between hairlessness and lack of wit (Siegel, pp. 178-83).[22] It is in this light, I believe, that we should interpret Buzzard's remarks that "My beard's my honour" and that "Hair is an ornament of honour upon man—or woman" (III.ii.532). Buzzard's equation implies the existence of a third term, standing in opposition to the other two: foolishness. Honour, symbolised by hair, was indeed opposed to foolishness, because a fool, having no social position or authority, could not possess it.[23] So it is not by chance that the first thing the gang does to turn Buzzard into a fool is to cut off his beard. Even before that, though, his transformation into the foolish changeling starts with booze, which makes him sleepy. When he declares, "Hey ho! I am very sleepy" (534), Buzzard combines lack of reason with sleep, thus embracing lethargy.

When the time comes for Buzzard to start his performance and enter "*like a changeling*" (IV.v.814 SD), we realise how this relies on an extreme disruption of language, such as we have seen in the other changelings so far. Aside from the first two lines, where he seemingly praises the music, the rest of his utterances merely repeat the nonsense "Ha, ha, ha" and "Hey toodle loodle loodle loo". These might imitate the sound of pipes, or be "an instruction to make noise rather than a set of words to be spoken", as Steggle suggests (Brome, ed. Steggle, n. to IV.v.819), and as such they recall Antonio's and Ursely's empty statements, pronounced at unexpected or inopportune moments. Or they might form a continuous background to the dialogue between the other characters,

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[21]   In psalters, the fool was usually bald; see Gifford, p. 338. Rosenberg reports Douce's comment that fools in Shakespeare's time had their heads shaved so that the cockscomb could stand out (p. 103n.). Wiles explains that some fools had their heads shaved to prevent lice: one example is Jane the Fool, Mary I's jester (p. 190).

[22]   Huarte wrote that "another sort of baldnesse groweth from hauing the haire hard & earthily, and of a grosse composition, but that betokeneth a man void of vnderstanding, imagination and memory" (p. 213). Besides stating that having a beard "is the first token of a temperat man" (p. 261), Huarte connects the beardlessness of women with their natural cold and moist temperament, which, when extreme, works "an impairement in the reasonable part" (pp. 272-74).

[23]   Goodey discusses the link between folly and lack of honour. Nobility was usually associated with the possession of honour: a nobly born fool, being unable to understand, was fundamentally disqualified from his social rank. On the other hand, anyone who was not born into a noble family was inherently a fool, though not really impaired (pp. 125-26).

as is suggested by the stage direction "*Etcetera*" at the end of Buzzard's lines (Brome, ed. Steggle, n. to IV.v.840).

At several points, the play offers consideration of the issue of foolish births in early modern England, the keeping of a natural, and idiocy in relation to parenthood. The gang broods over the birth of the natural fool, or "changeling bastard" (III.iii.561), and considers it the consequence of the sins of "this rascal Quicksands": evidently "lechery", as well as "greedy avarice and cozenage" (557). "That his base offspring proves a natural idiot" is regarded as one of the "punishments / That haunt the miscreant for his black misdeeds" (558). This explanation reflects what Haffer has seen as a crucial change in the attitude to the substitution story after the Christian appropriation of an essentially heathen myth in the post-Reformation era: the blame was not projected solely on the spirits, but internalised by parents, who saw it as punishment for their sins. The seventeenth-century German author Praetorius, for instance, reinforced the *Malleus Malleficarum*'s theory that changelings were the punishment for cursing fathers by affirming that God especially punishes unchaste fathers who, like Quicksands, beget children outside marriage (Haffer, pp. 58-59).[24] When Arnold, a member of the gang, shows Buzzard-changeling to Quicksands, he claims he came to "[put] off a child natural to the natural father" (IV.v.836), arguing that the latter is "not the first grave and wise citizen that has got an idiot" (838). Intelligence and idiocy are here put in dangerous proximity, as Arnold utters a piece of folk wisdom concerning the incapacity of wise men to give birth to children like themselves in wit. In fact, Renaissance psychology also endorsed this view. Huarte is most explicit in this respect:

> men verie wise, euen in the copulation go imagining vpon matters nothing pertinent to that they haue in hand, and therethrough, weaken the seed, and make their children defectiue, as well in the powers reasonall, as in the naturall. (p. 286)

Contrarily to what his unnatural birth and his abominable linguistic performance suggest, the fool has achieved quite something in his life: "he has learned to thrip among the mawthers" (IV.v.857), that is, he has learnt some spinning and, more intererstingly, he has got sixteen women with child. Such an imputation owes much to the early modern European medico-legal debate on fools' sexual capacity. On the one hand, fools' sexual prowess was suggested by theories, such as Huarte's, that unlike wise men, "sottish persons apply themselues affectionatly to the carnall act" (p. 286). On the other hand, one of the characters' bewildered question, "Is't possible?" (IV.v.861), registers the Renaissance bias against fools' fertility—which is apparent in the words of an early sixteenth-century

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24   For the passage in *Malleus*, see Kramer and Sprenger, ed. and trans. Summers, p. 105.

legal dictionary that stated that if a man could "begette a childe then he was noe Ideot naturallye" (Rastell, sig. 117ᵛ)—or even, as Paromita Chakravarti argues, "eugenic anxieties about generational transmission of physical and mental disabilities" (p. 224). For example, in 1621 the papal physician Paul Zacchias wrote about the congenital deaf that they had "a rude and gross understanding" and were akin to animals; thus they should not be allowed to marry, not only because their mental capacity prevented the full comprehension of the sacrament, but also because "there is evidence that they beget children like themselves" (cited by Cranefield and Federn, p. 17).

The intellectually disabled person's alleged physical immaturity is what informs the representation of another dramatic "changeling", whom, though chronologically belonging to the earliest play in the group, I have left for last because he is not really a fool, although he is in various ways turned into one by other characters. This is Dapper, the clerk of Jonson's *The Alchemist* (1610), who wants Subtle to provide him with a familiar spirit in order to win at gambling. The conmen convince him that "a rare star / Reigned at [his] birth" (I.ii.123-24), that therefore he is "allied to the Queen of Fairy" (126) and that he was "born with a caul o' [his] head" (128). This was an especially good omen in the period, as, when a baby was born with part of the amnion around its head, it was supposed to be endowed with visionary powers and a special affinity with the spirits. The caul itself was seen as an external soul or a guardian spirit (Muir, pp. 27-28). Though changeling stories do not often involve details about the caul, and no actual "substitution" is mentioned in relation to Dapper, the magical token of the caul suggests the identity of Dapper as an elf himself and supports the motherly role of the Fairy Queen. Dapper's foolishness shines in being easily gulled by Subtle and Face into engaging in special rituals for his "aunt", the Fairy Queen, who "kissed him, in the cradle" (I.ii.150) and apparently loves him very much. As Buccola notes (p. 122), Dapper is called "quodling" (I.i.189), which hints at his unripenness and sexual immaturity in interacting with his "fairy" aunt while being cozened by an actual "aunt", the prostitute Dol disguised as the Fairy Queen. Other exhibits of intellectual disability are thrust upon Dapper, as he accepts the instructions of Subtle and Face. Linguistic inarticulacy is part of the ritual he must perform in honour of the Fairy Queen:

> *Subtle.* Is he [Dapper] fasting?
> *Face.*   Yes.
> *Subtle.*   And hath cried *hum*?
> *Face.* Thrice, you must answer.
> *Dapper.*   Thrice.
> *Subtle.*   And as oft *buz*?
> *Face.* If you have, say.
> *Dapper.*   I have. (III.v.2-4)

Not only is Dapper forced to pronounce nonsense words repeatedly, but his need of an intermediary to be able to respond to Subtle's commands is another signal of his linguistic incapacity, which is reinforced by the insinuation that Dapper is able to answer only by exact imitation of Face's cues, and not by independent reasoning.

The next steps of the cozeners' plan are first to have him don a "robe" that perilously recalls real fools' cassocks, and then to rob Dapper of all his valuables, intimidatingly suggesting that the Fairy Queen wants him to "throw away all wordly pelf" (III.v.17), namely purse, handkerchiefs, rings, money, anything "that is transitory" (30). Dapper's "idiotification" is complete, as he witnesses his own dispossession of property, in a dramatic enactment of early modern English legal appropriation of idiots' wealth once they were examined and found disabled. Face underscores such an implication by exhorting Dapper to be totally honest and by playing on the double meaning of "innocent" as blameless and fool: "Deal plainly, sir, and shame the fairies. Show / You are an innocent" (39-40). The false elves, who detect further riches on Dapper's body and force him to give them up, set up a sort of a mock trial of the poor fool and thereby enact an ironical representation of authorities stripping fools of their belongings. The "idiot" thus becomes a destitute person, carrying to an extreme the implications of the Greek word *idiotes*, someone lacking public office or a peasant. This also occurs later, when Dol as Fairy Queen encounters her beloved nephew and implies the impossibility of a fool's keeping money for himself: "Much, nephew, shalt thou win; much shalt thou spend; / Much shalt thou give away; much shalt thou lend" (V.iv.30-31). Jonson contrives the show of the supernatural on stage so as to dramatise a very "natural" reality in protocapitalist London, when idiocy grants were very rewarding strategies used not only by the monarchy to swell its coffers but also by guardians to garner attractive revenues from the idiot's property.[25] The greed of Jonson's conmen, vehiculated through a praeternatural disguise, is not so far from the greedy mischief of many relatives of early modern idiots, who, instead of looking after the welfare of their wards, were "carelesse" and "committed wastes and spoyles upon their Lands".[26]

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25 In the Middle Ages and until the mid-sixteenth century, when someone was declared an idiot, their property would be permanently acquired by the king: guardians could receive surplus revenue from the idiot's property if they paid an annual rent to the king. This policy was, of course, very profitable for the monarchy and the fool's relatives, but unfair to the finances of the individual. This is the reason why the policy gradually changed in Elizabeth's and James's reigns to provide for a fairer treatment of the fool's finance and welfare. This did not imply, however, that fines and rents were not reintroduced in periods of financial necessity. See Neugebauer, esp. pp. 33-37.

26 This criticism was directed by James I to Court-of-Wards-appointed guardians of all kinds of wards, not just fools (cited by Hunter and Macalpine, p. 92).

This discussion has attempted to reconsider the folkloric belief in the changeling, focusing on its privileged position at the crossroads between the magical/demonic/praternatural and the real. An investigation into cultural instances of idiocy and fairy origin has also shown that a combination of the two concepts is perceivable in early modern English drama, especially after the turn of the seventeenth century. This chronological specificity should perhaps be viewed in relation to the fact that the balance between the magical and the real in the portrait of the changelings in the plays is—in general—distinctly shifted towards the latter. Ultimately, none of the changeling-fools are actually children of the fairies; they are only believed or pretended to be such, just as no actual fairies or goblins appear in these plays. Correspondingly, allusions to the supernatural identity of the changelings are definitely exceeded by suggestions that their idiocy is a tangible human condition, measurable in early modern social, medical and legal terms—terms which, in many cases, the modern reader can even accept. Besides an increasing interest in issues of natural—rather than just moral or allegorical—folly in the period,[27] such a shift might be to some extent related to the progressive disenchantment of the era and the diminishing belief in the occult: this thesis was famously argued by Keith Thomas in his *Religion and the Decline of Magic* and has been revived in literary studies by, among others, Barbara Traister, who shows how, especially after the 1590s, English drama registered a "decline in belief in spiritual and demonic magic" and how the *topos* of demonic intervention was treated less and less seriously by playwrights, with the magician figure becoming "a stock character on the order of the clown" and stage demons appearing definitely "weaker and less effective" than before (Traister, pp. 19, 21, 22).

It is perhaps not by chance that all of the changelings in the plays discussed here are inherently comic characters. Whether their folly is real or merely simulated, the staging of changeling goblin-fools in ways that largely rationalised their disabilities enabled playwrights to downplay and satirise the implications of popular belief in magic, while at the same time providing material for the clowns in those plays. Thus the changeling fool, on the one hand adapting to early seventeenth-century disenchantment and, on the other—as a demonic child—ironically recalling the comedy of devils and vices of the old religious drama, proves a truly chameleon-like figure.

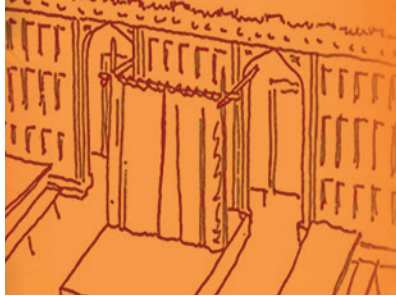27   See Stainton, "Reason's Other", pp. 230-31.

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Theta XIII
Forms of the Supernatural on Stage: Evolution, Mutations

Textes réunis par
Richard Hillman

Contributors/Les auteurs

Sarah CARPENTER has taught in the English Literature Department of the University of Edinburgh for the last forty years. She is the author, with Meg Twycross, of *Masks and Masking in Medieval and Tudor England* (Ashgate, 2002) and has published widely on early drama, most often on issues of performance. She is an editor of the journal *Medieval English Theatre*, and is currently working on the volume on the Royal Court for the *Records of Early Drama: Scotland*.

Jean-Paul DÉBAX is an alumnus of Saint Edmund Hall College (Oxford) and Professor Emeritus of English Language and Literature at the Université Toulouse–Jean Jaurès. He has centred his research on Medieval and Renaissance drama. After writing a dissertation on the functions of the character known as the Vice, he extended his interests to the different types of dramatic creation: moralities, cyclic mysteries, romantic and popular plays, and city comedies. He is a member of the CESR Research Centre in Tours.

Elisabeth DUTTON is Professor of Medieval English at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. She is the author of *Julian of Norwich: The Influence of Late Medieval Devotional Compilations* (D. S. Brewer, 2008) and editor of an edition of Julian (Yale UP, 2008) and (with John Hines and R. F. Yeager) of John Gower (D. S. Brewer, 2010). She has published articles on the dramaturgy and performance of early English plays inspired by her experience of directing them: she has staged, among other plays, the N-Town Plays, *The Croxton Play of the Sacrament*, John Bale's *Three Laws* and Skelton's *Magnyfycence*. She currently heads two research projects: EDOX (Early Drama at Oxford), which collaboratively examines plays written and performed in Oxford colleges, and the Medieval Convent Drama project.

Alice EQUESTRI is a Marie Curie postdoctoral researcher at the University of Sussex. She previously held fellowships in early modern English literature at the University of Venice Ca' Foscari and at the University of Padua, where she received her Ph.D. in 2014 and was appointed adjunct professor in 2015. Her doctoral thesis, entitled "'Armine... thou art a foole and knaue': The Fools of Shakespeare's Romances", was awarded the AIA Ph.D. Dissertation Prize 2015 and was published by Carocci in 2016. She has published in *Renaissance Studies* and has edited and written for the proceedings of the Iasems Graduate Conference at the British Institute of Florence. She has written several book chapters and presented papers at conferences in Italy, UK, France and Poland; she was awarded a research internship at Shakespeare's Globe in 2014. Her research interests include folly

in early modern English literature, Robert Armin's works, Shakespeare's last plays, English verse translations of Italian novellas and the connections between medieval and early modern English literature. She is also the webmaster of IASEMS (Italian Association of Shakespearean and Early Modern Studies).

Peter HAPPÉ read English at Cambridge, and wrote M.A. and Ph.D. theses on early Tudor drama at London University. He has taught and published widely on theatrical and bibliographical subjects ranging from mystery and morality plays to the work of Ben Jonson and James Shirley. He is a co-editor of the Ludus series (Brill), and at present a Visiting Fellow in the English Department of Southampton University.

Richard HILLMAN is Professor Emeritus at the Université de Tours (Department of English and Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance/CNRS). His monographs include *Self-Speaking in Medieval and Early Modern English Drama: Subjectivity, Discourse and the Stage* (Macmillan, 1997) and three books focussing on links between early modern English theatre and France: *Shakespeare, Marlowe and the Politics of France* (Palgrave, 2002), *French Origins of English Tragedy*, and *French Reflections in the Shakespearean Tragic: Three Case Studies* (Manchester UP, 2010 and 2012). He has also produced translations/editions of a number of early modern French plays, including the *Tragique comédie françoise de l'homme justifié par Foy*, by Henri de Barran (1554).

Pierre KAPITANIAK is Professor of early modern British civilisation at the University Paul-Valéry–Montpellier 3. He works on Elizabethan drama, as well as on the conception, perception and representation of supernatural phenomena from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. He has published *Spectres, Ombres et fantômes : Discours et représentations dramatiques en Angleterre* (H. Champion, 2008), and coedited *Fictions du diable : démonologie et littérature* (Droz, 2007). He has translated into French and edited Thomas Middleton's play *The Witch/La sorcière* (Classiques Garnier, 2012). He is also engaged with Jean Migrenne in a long-term project of translating early modern demonological treatises, and has already published James VI's *Démonologie* (Jérôme Millon, 2010) and Reginald Scot's *La sorcellerie démystifiée* (Millon, 2015). He is currently working on the trilogy of demonological treatises by Daniel Defoe.

Pádraic LAMB, a doctoral student at the CESR, Université de Tours/CNRS, is currently writing a thesis on the poetics of inspiration in English poetry and poetic translations in the Renaissance. Several of his conference papers, dealing with the

influence of Ronsard on James VI and I, with Ronsard and the English sonnet, and with the "inspired" translation of sonnet sequences by Edmund Spenser and Josiah Sylvester, will be appearing in print shortly.

Olena Lilova is a Lecturer in English Language and Literature at the Mediteran University (Podgorica, Montenegro). Her research interests include medieval and early modern drama. Her doctoral thesis (Kyiv, 2003) was devoted to the poetics of George Gascoigne's works. She is a member of the Laboratory for Renaissance Studies (Ukraine).

John J. McGavin is Emeritus Professor of Medieval Literature and Culture at the University of Southampton, and currently chair of the Executive Board of the Records of Early English Drama research project at the University of Toronto. He has written monographs on *Chaucer and Dissimilarity* (Associated University Presses, 2000) and *Theatricality and Narrative in Medieval and Early-Modern Scotland* (Ashgate, 2007), which won the Frank Watson Book Prize for Scottish History (2009). With Greg Walker, he has recently published *Imagining Spectatorship from the Mysteries to the Shakespearean Stage* (Oxford UP, 2016). He is currently writing on the Scottish reformation minister David Calderwood as an analyst of political performativity, and is co-editing the pre-1642 drama records of South-East Scotland with Dr Eila Williamson of the University of Glasgow.

Roberta Mullini, formerly Professor of English Literature at the Università di Urbino Carlo Bo, has published widely on English medieval and Shakespearean drama. She is also interested in theoretical issues connected to theatrical reception and to Shakespeare on screen. She has written volumes on Shakespeare's fools (1983 and 1997), on early modern plays (1992), on John Heywood (1997) and on the material culture of the theatre (2003). She is now working on the aside in Shakespeare's plays. She has also directed students' performances of English interludes. Her book *Healing Words. The Printed Handbills of Early Modern London Quacks* was published in 2015 by Peter Lang. She is chief editor of *Linguæ &*, a journal devoted to modern languages and cultures.

Jan Tasker is a Ph.D. student at the Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham, under the supervision of Dr Martin Wiggins and Dr Jonathan Willis. She is investigating the changing representation of the supernatural in English drama following the Reformation. She is supported by funding from the Midland3Cities Consortium and the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

Greg WALKER is Regius Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature at the University of Edinburgh. He has published widely on the drama and history of the early Tudor period in works including *Medieval Drama: An Anthology* (Blackwell, 2000); *Writing Under Tyranny: English Literature and The Henrician Reformation* (Oxford UP, 2005); *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama*, co-edited with Thomas Betteridge (Oxford UP, 2012); *The Oxford Anthology of Tudor Drama* (Oxford UP, 2015); and *Imagining Spectatorship from the Mysteries to the Shakespearean Stage* (Oxford UP, 2016). He is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, The English Association, The Agder Academy of Letters and Sciences, Norway, and The Royal Society of Edinburgh. He is currently working on a study of John Heywood funded by a Major Research Fellowship from the Leverhulme Trust.