The Form and Function of Character lists in Plays Printed before the Closing of the Theatres

ABSTRACT: this article traces some of the trends and anomalies in early modern play-book character-lists, from the earliest printed plays up until the closing of the London theatres in 1642. It stresses the heterogeneity of these practices to provide a basis for further work. It draws out some of the influences in the development of this paratext, suggesting in particular where authors, theatres, genres, and printers have a particular guiding role in their form and function.

Amid his acknowledgements in his Arden 3 edition of *The Merchant of Venice* (2010), John Drakakis thanks his general editor Ann Thompson, 'for reminding me that there is a male chauvinist method of setting out a List of Roles that, despite my desire to observe a modicum of political correctness, I had overlooked'.[1] Lists of play characters still carry meaning in all kinds of ways: this article attempts to trace some of the trends and anomalies in early modern play-book character-lists, from the earliest printed plays up until the closing of the London theatres in 1642. In doing so, we do not uncover a single argument about the development of one or more aspect of the development of the character list. Rather, we offer the following discussion as a survey of the available data. The diversity of the data points to an extended range of competing logics that informed the practices adopted by authors, printers, and publishers involved in the print production of dramatic literature in the period.

Despite the increasing interest in the early modern phenomenon of play-book printing, and in the development of drama as a literary, as well as a theatrical form, this analysis is work that has not previously been attempted on this scale. Bernard Beckerman, writing in 1980, reviewed printed character-lists to clarify the use of the word 'actor' to signal both character *and* player in the Shakespeare First Folio of 1623. [2] Beckerman noted the importance of the term 'player' or 'playing' in lists of the 1560s-1580s, and suggested that the shift in terms was linked 'to a changing concept of the actor-role relationship' which did not divide actor from role until well into the seventeenth century.[3] Beckerman's interest is in what the character-lists might indicate about performance practice: our interest here is both wider – what might this tell us about readers of early modern plays – and more empirical, using the full range of available texts. More recently, Gary Taylor has discussed character-lists within a broader category he calls 'identification tables', arguing that they draw on classical models where initial lists of speakers did duty for speech prefixes within the text. Taylor suggests that character-lists in early modern play-books are largely 'author-generated' – and directs his analyses towards the edition of *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works.*[4] Our aim here is to interrogate different agents involved in the production of early modern plays, and to read across author boundaries to investigate the various commercial, theatrical, aesthetic, and ideological meanings of character-lists across the period.

Our method has involved using the Database of Early English Play-books (DEEP) to establish, supplement, and cross-check a full table of the occurrence of character-lists in single-text play-books published between 1515 and 1642.[5] Play-book texts were consulted in the Bodleian and British Libraries and on Early English Books Online (EEBO). We have excluded collections of plays since they evolve other paratextual conventions; nor have we systematically considered manuscript plays, although we sometimes draw on evidence of associated manuscript conventions. Our aims have been: to understand the history of this now-familiar part of a printed play-text; to begin to see how character-lists might help us understand the overlapping, discontinuous relation between drama in performance and in print; and to identify anomalous examples. Tracing the work of two printers working at either end of our period, Edward Allde and Nicholas Okes, has helped us to suggest some of the potential roles of a range of different agents in the generation and presentation of character-lists. Initially we anticipated a series of neat graphs describing historical changes in the presentation of early modern play-books, but in the event, many of the formatting, organizational and hierarchical features of the lists were too individual, or too interestingly specific to their plays, to be susceptible to these forms of visualization. Figure 1 shows the broad contours of the argument, but the rest of the article follows a more narrative course. Nevertheless, some trends do emerge within the broad outlines of this print practice: character-lists divided between actors for putative performance were a common part of pre-commercial theatre play-

texts and lists of speakers preceded the majority of printed closet dramas; early plays for the London theatres did not tend to include character-lists, but these, and their methods of organization, became more standard by the last decade before the closing of the theatres.

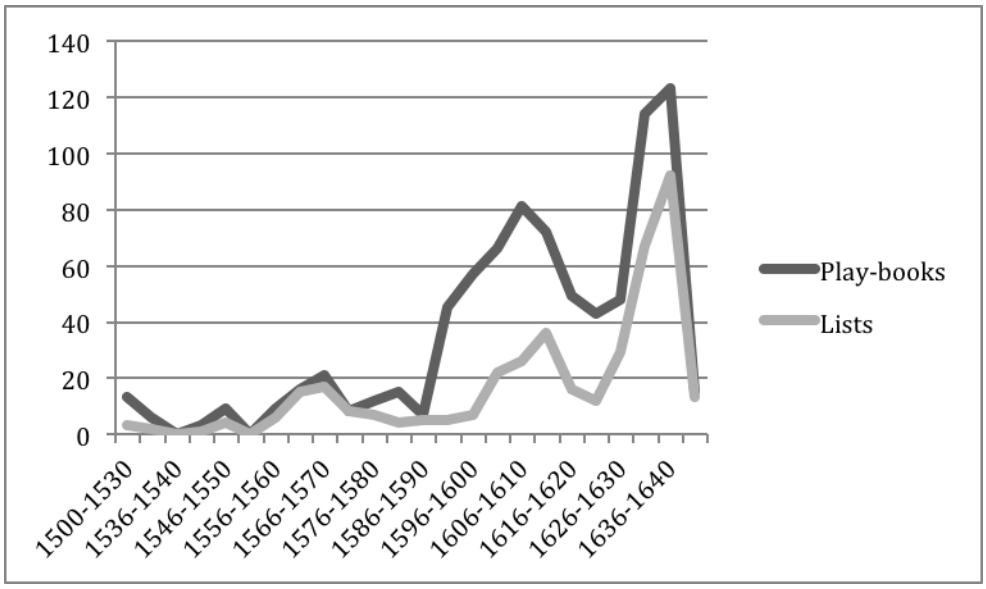

Figure 1: Play-books including character-lists, 1500-1645

Ubiquity

According to DEEP, around half of all plays printed before the closing of the theatres in 1642 were printed with a list of characters. Before 1550 around forty percent of surviving printed play-books have character-lists intact. But for the period between 1550 and 1576, immediately prior to the establishment of commercial playhouses in London, this percentage rises to around ninety percent. Only two play-books printed after 1550 and before the opening of The Theatre in 1576 were printed without character-lists, and these – John King for John Waley's edition of *The Interlude of Youth* ([1557]; STC 14111a)

and William Copland's 1565? edition of the same play (STC 14112) – are the second and third edition of a play first printed in 1530 (STC 14111). After the opening of the London theatres in the 1570s, the practice fell out of favour for a time; in the period between 1590 and 1619 just a third of printed plays feature character lists. By way of contrast, in the decade before the closing of the theatres over two-thirds of single-play play-books were printed with character-lists. We might map this onto Alan Farmer and Zachary Lesser's analysis of printed drama in six distinct periods. Our figures show that during their first 'boom' period, from 1598-1613, printed play-texts were unlikely to carry character-lists; the opposite is true during the second boom (1629-40) where more plays were printed with than without these lists (see Figure 1).[6] Although it is beyond the scope of our argument here, it is worth noting the continuing popularity of character-lists after the closure of the theatres. During the decade 1650-1660, four-fifths of printed plays included character-lists, suggesting that, while they might serve as records of past performance, by this point their primary function was to aid the reader in recreating the world of the play. In sum, in the period before the opening of the commercial theatres, character-lists were gradually adopted as a standard paratext; by the 1590s, character-lists were included far less regularly. In the sections that follow, at least one of our intentions is to map onto these trends some of the reasons for the inclusion and/or exclusion of character-lists in all single-play printed play-books printed across the period in question.

Position

In the earliest printed plays, the title page is the favoured position for the character-list; over sixty percent of plays with character-lists printed before the opening of successful commercial theatres in London in the 1570s feature lists in this position. This may suggest that a significant proportion of the book's readers would be interested in this information (not available to browsers at a bookstall where books were sold with uncut pages).[7] Of those with lists elsewhere, the two earliest, John Skelton's *Magnificence* ([Peter Treveris for John Rastell], [1530?]; STC 22607), and Henry Medwall's *Nature* ([William Rastell], [1530-34]; STC 17779), position the character-list on the final page, after the text of the play. Though these early experiments never took hold – the practice is only replicated in a handful of plays through 1642 – it is clearly apiece with contemporary scribal conventions. Both the Digby *Killing of the Children* (Bodleian Libary, MS Digby 133) copied in 1512, and the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* (Trinity College Dublin, MS F.4.20) copied after 1523, feature character-lists on their final pages (fol. 157^{v} and fol. 356 respectively). Marston's *Jack Drum's Entertainment (Katherine and Pasquil*) (Thomas Creede for Richard Olive, 1601; STC 7243) has its list of 'The names of all the men and Women that Act in this play' on the final leaf after the play (fig.2), an arrangement repeated in two subsequent editions (1616: William Stansby for Philip Knight; STC 7244, and 1618: for Nathanaell Fosbrook; STC 7245). No other single-play text in the professional theatre period has its character-list at the end of the play.

For much of the period, the verso of the title page is the most common position for the character-list: just under a third of plays with character-lists printed before the closing of the theatres feature them in this position, clearly to utilize otherwise blank space. When they appear elsewhere, it is almost always before the main body of the play, but after any number of additional paratexts. These might include a dedication, commendatory verses, an address to the reader and an argument; their number and nature is often determined by the play type, with Latin or closet plays more likely to incorporate a greater number of paratexts. Maurice Kyffin's translation of Terence's first comedy, *Andria* (Thomas East for Thomas Woodcock, 1588; STC 23895), is typical. After the title-page there follows: a woodcut of the Kyffin coat of arms (sig. ¶1^{v}); a series of commendatory verses (sigs ¶2-¶2^{v}); dedications to 'THE RIGHT/ WOORSHIPFVLL, AND/ woorthy gentleman, Maister *VVilliam/ Sackeuille*' (sigs ¶3-¶3^{v}) and 'THE RIGHT WOOSHIPFVL GENTLE/ men, maister *Henry*, and maister *Thomas/ Sackeuille*' (sigs ¶4-¶4v); 'A Preface to the cur-/ *teous Reader*.' (sigs A1-A2); an address 'To all young Students/ of THE LATIN TONG' (sifs A3-A4^{v}); and 'The Argument of the/COMOEDIE' (sigs B1-B3). Only after all this other prefatory material does the character-list appear on sig. B3^{v} under the heading 'The speakers in the Comoedie'.

Almost all character-lists occupy part or all of a single leaf. In a few exceptions, the character-list is presented as a descriptive prose passage

spread over one or more pages (a mere eleven plays printed during the period do this; Ben Jonson's *The New Inn* (London: Thomas Harper for Thomas Alchorne, 1631; STC 14780) is one example). In the period before the opening of commercial theatres, character-lists rarely occupy a discrete leaf, and often appear on the title-page, or the verso of the title-page accompanied by a range of other paratexts. The earliest character-list to be printed on its own page is the one that appears in Alexander Neville's translation of Seneca's *Oedipus* (Thomas Colwell, 1563; STC 22225). This decision to print the character-list on a separate page, undiluted by other paratexts, can be explained in one of two ways. The first is pragmatic; it represents the printer's estimation of the best (i.e. most economic) use of space. Thomas Colwell's edition of Thomas Ingelend's *The Disobedient Child* (Thomas Colwell, [1570?]; STC 14085) seems to offer an example of this logic; with the play proper commencing on sig. A2^{r}, the character-list that appears on A1^{v} makes good use of an otherwise redundant page. The second reason is probably strategic, signaling luxury and literary status: it is no coincidence that *Oedipus* is a closet drama, never intended for public performance. In short, the position of the character-list affords some useful insights into printers' early experiments, which were almost certainly determined by two competing instincts – for economy or luxury – in the presentation of drama for consumption by readers.

Arrangement

Related to the imperatives of luxurious versus economical presentation are developing display techniques. Of the forty or so plays printed between 1577 and 1642 in which the character-list shares a page with other paratextual material, around sixty percent appear in two or more columns, and those that are printed as a single column are relatively short, typically featuring fifteen or fewer entries. Conversely, of the 250-odd character-lists printed between 1577 and 1642 that occupy a whole page, almost eighty percent are arranged in a single column. That the arrangement of such lists may be one way of signaling the literary status of a text is born out by a closer inspection of the sixteen play-books (eleven plays in sixteen editions) that were published as Red Bull productions between 1605 and the closing of the theatres in 1642. Marta Straznicky has recently argued that unlike Red Bull audiences who were often presented as unsophisticated and uneducated, the printers of Red Bull plays treated them as having literary status (because of the relatively high number of Red Bull attributions).[8] Though some Red Bull plays do not contain character-lists, those that do adopt the single column, single page model, which when considered alongside the presence of other high-status features such as title-page attributions (just one Red Bull play was printed anonymously), Latin on title-pages, prefatory epistles and dedicatory verses, confirms Straznicky's argument that the Red Bull repertory was marketed to appeal to an audience who would recognize such features as a mark of the texts' claims to literary status.

By the end of the period, single column, single page lists are topped and tailed by decorative woodcut borders or ruled lines with increasing regularity. In other respects, the pages on which they appear remain uncluttered. While the earliest multiple column lists rely on little more than space to delineate each column, by the end of the period the practice of printing lines, or less commonly curly braces or decorative woodcut borders between each column seems to have been adopted as standard. The earliest play-book to incorporate this practice is again Colwell's 1563 edition of *Oedipus*, where three lines delineate a list that is arranged, with the exception of the name of the final character that is centred, over two columns. However, by around 1606, the incorporation of lines to delineate columns has been adopted as the norm; of the 56 or so plays printed between 1606 and 1642 with multiple column character lists, around seventy-five percent print lines, curly braces or decorative woodcut borders as a way of separating individual columns. So as with the position of the list, not only do clear conventions emerge across the period in question, but the ways that different printers decided to arrange the character lists that appeared in plays they printed offered one, coherent way of signalling to readers important information about the kind of text.

Typeface

Trevor Howard-Hill has noted black-letter remained the dominant style in which plays were presented to readers until the 1590s.[9] However, from c.1530, when Phillipe le Noir printed an anonymous English translation of Terence's

Andria (STC 23894), roman or italic fonts begin to appear alongside black letter. Initially their use was reserved for printing Latin text, but by the mid 1560s, black letter, roman and italic were being used and mixed less systematically, both on the title-page, for the character list and in the text itself. The earliest example of roman or italic type in a character-list appears in Derick van der Straten's [1547?] edition of John Bale's *The Temptation of Our Lord and Savior Christ by Satan*, where its use echoes the Latinization of the speakers' names: 'Interlocutores,/ Iesus Christus. Satan tentator./Angelus primus. Angelus alter./ Baleus Prolocutor' (sig. A1).[10] The earliest non-Latinate use of roman or italic is in William Griffith's 1565 edition of Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville's play *Ferrex and Porrex (Gorboduc)* (STC 18684), where the characters' names are given in italic. Since Gorboduc was a legendary king whose reign is described at some length in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*, the use of italic can hardly have been to signal the speakers' Roman identities, but it might reflect the authors' debt to Roman drama in general and Senecan tragedy in particular. Although the characters' names are printed in italic, *Gorboduc* retains black letter for descriptions of characters and as such is the first play to mix fonts as a way of organizing information. This practice became extremely common later in the period with roughly three quarters of all descriptive character-lists printed before 1642 using a combination of two or more fonts. Black letter makes its last appearance in the character list on sig. A2 of Robert Wilson's *The Three Lords and Ladies of London* (1590; STC 25783) where it is used for the character

descriptions; thereafter a combination of roman, italic and roman capital fonts are used. Italic seems to have been the preferred font for characters' names, accounting for roughly half of all such lists through 1642; conversely, roman is used most frequently for character descriptions. For instance, in Dekker's *The Whore of Babylon* (1607; STC 6532), '*Titania*' is described as 'the Fairie Queene: vnder whom is figured our late/ Queene *Elizabeth*' and '*Fideli*./ *Florimell*./ *Parthenophil*./ *Elfiron*.' as 'Councellors to *Titania*' (sig. A1^{v}). Roman capitals first appear in the three editions of Jonson's *Every Man Out of His Humour* printed in 1600 (STC 14767, 14768 and 14769) where they are used for the list of named characters; unnamed characters, 'Taylor', 'Haberdasher', 'Shomaker' and so on, are printed in roman type. By the end of the period, character lists frequently deploy all three fonts in a number of different configurations to communicate a rich range of information. So, in John Beale's edition of John Ford's *The Broken Heart* (1633; STC 11156), names are given in roman capitals, allegorical descriptions in italic and relationships between characters in roman: 'AMYCLAS *Common to the Kings of Laconia*/ ITHOCLES, *Honour of lonelinesse*, A fauourite./ ORGILVS, *Angry*, Sonne to Crotolon./ BASSANES, *Vexation*, A iealous Nobleman./ ARMOSTES, *An appeaser*, A Counsellor of State./ CROTOLON, *Noyse*, Another Counsellor./ PROPHILVS, *Deare*, Friend to Ithocles./NEARCHVS, *Young Prince*, Prince of Argos./ TECHNICVS, *Artist*, A Philosopher./ LEMOPHIL, *Glutton*,/ GRONEAS, *Tauernhaunter*,/ } Two Courtiers./ AMELVS, *Trusty*, Friend to Nearchus./ PHVLAS, *Watchfull*, Seruant to Bassanes.//CALANTHA, *Flower of beauty*, The

Kings daughter./ PENTHEA, *Complaint*, Sister to Ithocles./ EVPHRANEA, *Ioy*, A maid of Honor./ CHRISTALLA, *Christall*,/ PHILEMA, *A kisse*,/ } Maids of Honour./ GRANSIS *Old Beldam*. Ouerseer of Penthea/*Person's included*./ THRASVS, *Fiercenesse*, Father of Ithocles./ APLOTES, *Simplicity*, Orgilvs so disguis'd' (sig. A4). While it would be reductive to conclude that character-lists offer a neat illustration of some kind of hierarchy of fonts, it is clear that in the early part of our period italic is reserved to signpost a debt to the classical world, and that later in the period different fonts are used in a variety of ways to distinguish between the different formal features of individual lists.

Punctuation

A number of different punctuation marks are used in innovative ways to organize information. For instance, the character-list at sig. A2 in Thomas Purfoot's 1623 edition of *Wily Beguiled* (STC 25820) prints a colon to distinguish the characters' names from their descriptions, as follows: '*Gripe*: an Vsurer./ *Ploddall*: a Farmer./ *Sophos*: a Scoller' and so on. The use of a colon in this way is unusual for the period and is not replicated in any of the other five editions of the play printed before 1642.[11] However, there is one mark that deserves particular attention since it seems to have been developed in the first instance to serve the particular demands of the character-list.[12] In the character list that appears on the title-page of Ulpian Fulwell' *Like Will to*

Like (London: John Allde, 1568; STC 11473), the parts are arranged to show how 'fiue may easely play this enterlude':

The Prologue		Chance,	
Tom Tospot	|for	Vertous life	|for
Hankin hangman	|one	Gods promises	|one
Tom Colier		Curbert cutpurse	
Lucifer		Philip fleming	
Ralfe Roister	|for	Pierce Pickpurs	|for
Good fame	|one	Honour	|another

Nicholnewfangle the vice

As the above transcription demonstrates, two short vertical lines are used to illustrate the delegation of roles. Two years later, in another play printed by Allde, *Cambises* (STC 20287), curly braces are used for the same purpose. Though not the first instance of the curly bracket in an early printed play text – it is used for decorative purposes on the title-page of *Jacob and Esau* (London: Henry Bynneman, 1568; STC 14327) – it is one of the first times that it is used with any representational meaning. Curly braces are used to indicate doubling in this way in just twenty-three character-lists throughout the period, but from 1571 they are used in another way, to join two or more

characters with a single description, with far greater frequency; they function in this way in around a third of all surviving character-lists and over half of all descriptive character-lists. For instance, in all five editions of Thomas Heywood's *Rape of Lucrece* (1608, 1609, 1614, 1630 and 1638; STCs 13360, 13361, 13361a, 13362, 13363) the characters Arnus and Sextus are joined to a single description, 'the two Sonnes of/Tarquin', by way of a curly bracket (sig. A1^{v}). Whilst this use of the curly bracket is by far the most common in character-lists across the period, there are some isolated cases of more innovative uses. Combining the conventions for doubling instructions with a list of the actors associated with the original performance, the character-list that appears on sig. A1^{v} of all three editions of Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* printed before 1642, uses curly braces to indicate which parts were performed by a single actor; although it is unlikely that a single actor could have performed the parts of more than one officer, a single curly bracket is used to ascribe the roles of '*The* Doctor', 'Cariola', and 'Court Officers' to '*R. Pallant*' (fig.3). In Jasper Fisher's *Fuimus Troes* (London: John Legat, 1633; STC 10886), curly braces are used for both descriptive purposes and to indicate the literary sources used for different groups of characters (fig.4). The characters Cingetorix, Carvilius, Taximagulus and Segonax share the single description '4. Petty/ Kings/ in Kent', but their characters, along with Iulius Cesar, C. Volnsenus, Q. Eaberius, alias Labienses, Q. Atrius, Comius Atrebas, Cassibellannus Imperator Britannorum and Mandubrasius, princeps Trinobantum are shown to derive from '*Cesar com./ de bell. Gall./ lib.4.&5.*' (sig. A2^{v}) or books four and five of

Julius Cæsar's *Commentarii de bello Gallico*. Dual usage is also observed in Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turk (The Two Famous Pirates)* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1612; STC 6184), where curly braces are used to describe both the characters' ranks and their religions; Ward, Dansiker, Francisco, Fredericke and Gismund are all described as '*Captaines*', but along with Ferdinand, Albert, Carolo and Sismund they are also described as '*Christians*' (sig. A4^{v}). If the innovative use of the curly bracket in *The Duchess of Malfi* is a development of its use in doubling schemes and in *Fuimus Troes* and *A Christian Turned Turk* an extension of its use for descriptive purposes, the use testified by the three editions of Jonson's *Every Man Out of His Humour* that appeared in 1600 (STCs 14767, 14768 and 14769) is completely original. In all three of these editions, curly braces serve to indicate the relationship between named characters and their unnamed dependents. So Puntarvolo's comic mastery over 'His Ladie./ Waiting Gent/ Huntsman./ Seruingmen.2./ Dog and Cat.' is signalled by way of a curly bracket, as is Fastidius Brisk's over '*Cinedo* his Page' (STC 14767, sig. A2^{v}; STCs 14768 and 14769, sig. A1^{v}). As with the position, the arrangement and the fonts of character-lists, the development of new or innovative uses for punctuation points to the remarkable dexterity of those printers who chose to print play-books, on the one hand demonstrating an appreciation for the usefulness of emerging conventions, and on the other revealing a kind of playfulness in terms of experimentation that suggests a willingness to market these texts in ever more inventive ways.

Headings

Nicholas Rowe's adoption of the Latin term 'dramatis personae' for his landmark eighteenth-century edition of Shakespeare was to become the standard title for a character-list, but this had not emerged as the preferred heading the early modern period.[13] A minority of the lists found in printed play-books from the period have no title at all. Otherwise, there are more than a dozen variant forms that cluster around specific words. The earliest play-texts prefer to head the list of characters with 'The names of the players' or 'The players names': this occurs in around a third of play-texts with character lists published before 1577. The term 'players' is never used after this date. Instead, presumably alongside the development of the professional theatre, it is superseded by the word 'actors' (the first OED citation for its theatrical sense is 1566; first use in a character list in George Gascoigne's *The Glass of Government* (1575; STC 11643a). 'Actors' becomes a preferred term for dramatic characters for the rest of the period;[14] around fifteen percent of character lists have a heading that is a variant of 'The Actors names', or 'The persons that act'. There is often some ambiguity – perhaps deliberate – around the ontology of 'acting', as in, for example, 'The names of all the men and women that act in this play' (*Jack Drum's Entertainment* (Thomas Creede for Richard Oliffe, 1601; STC 7243)), where 'men and women' are the categories acted rather than their all-male players, or 'the actors and their characters' (signaling the names and pen portraits of the roles in Thomas

Newman's translations of Terence (George Miller, 1627; STC 23897) advertised on their title page as 'fitted for scoller Private action in their Schooles'.

During a brief period in the 1620s, the term 'actor' comes temporarily to be used to distinguish the proper names of the professional actors from the names of the characters, as in Massinger's *The Roman Actor* (Thomas Fawcet for Robert Allott, 1629; STC 17642), which divides its list into two columns headed 'the persons presented' and 'the Principall Actors' (although the play's own insistent metatheatricality suggests that this distinction is less clear than it might be). This quarto is at the centre of a brief interest in the proper names of the actors, perhaps drawn from the convention in printed masque texts of listing the performers, usually at the end rather than in front of the volume. Middleton's *The Inner-Temple Masque, or The Masque of Heroes* ([William Stansby] for John Browne, 1619; STC 17887) is the first example of a masque printed with the names of professional actors. The first play for the public theatre to include the names of the professional players was the 1623 quarto of Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (Nicholas Okes for John Waterson; STC 25176), which indicates two generations of King's Men personnel next to their parts under the heading 'The Actors names'. Ford's *The Lover's Melancholy* ([Felix Kingston] for Henry Seile, 1629; STC 11163) gives us 'The names of such as acted' but no list of character names, and in the same year Lodowick Carlell's *The Deserving Favorite* ([William Stansby] for Matthew

Rhodes; STC 4628) gives 'The Names of the Actors' alongside their roles, including an instance of doubling. There are six further examples before 1632 and none thereafter, in plays by Massinger, Shirley, Heywood, and Marmion. After this date the term 'actor' is reallocated to refer to play characters, and there is no further attempt to record those who performed the roles.

Alternative headings include variations on 'speakers' or 'persons that speak'. While this formula is found from the Tudor period onwards, it comes by the early seventeenth century to be particularly associated with closet drama such as Cary's *Mariam, the Fair Queen of Jewry* (Thomas Creede for Richard Hawkins, 1613; STC 4613). Not entirely, though: *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (second edition, 1635, Nicholas Okes for John Spencer; STC 1675) uses the sober formula 'The Speakers Names', perhaps, given its travestying of a number of genres and generic conventions, as a joke (fig.5). The largest single heading is associated with the word 'persons' or 'personages', sometimes in the form of 'speaking persons' and occasionally in the Latinate 'interlocutors' (particularly favoured by Marston) often associated with the formula 'of the comedy/tragedy/play'. This heading is particularly popular for plays by Jonson and Shirley, and is also dominant in the 1630s. Perhaps it attests to the popularity of ideas of personation – stressed in the heading to Beaumont and Fletcher's *A King and No King* (Augustine Mathewes for Richard Hawkins, 1631; STC 1672)): 'The Personated Persons' (there is no character-list in the earlier editions of 1619 and 1625). 'Dramatis personae', the term that has since

become standard, is first used in the edition of Dekker's *Satiromastix, or The Untrussing of the Humorous Poet* (Edward Allde for Edward White, 1602; STC 6520.7) and is prevalent in Dekker texts, perhaps suggesting an authorial preference. It is also relatively popular in the first decade of the seventeenth century and again in the period from the late 1620s, accounting for about fifteen percent of the total but a much higher proportion of titles published in those particular decades. 'Actorum nomina' has five occurrences only, 'sceanorum Personae' has a couple of outings, and other unusual designations include 'a dialogue betweene these persons following' (Dabridgecourt Belchier's *Hans Beer-Pot (See Me and See Me Not)* (Bernard Alsop, 1618; STC 1803)) and the descriptive 'the names and qualities of the Actors' (Cyril Tourneur's *The Atheist's Tragedy, or The Honest Man's Revenge* ([Thomas Snodham] for John Stepneth, 1611; STC 24146). In short, while it might be possible to trace some trend across the period, and identify something akin to authorial preference in some later cases, for the most part, the headings used for character lists are remarkably varied and suggest a lack of standardization along the lines of genre, printer or any other identifiable category.

Organisation

The general assumption adopted by modern readers is that character-lists tend to be organized by status and gender. In fact, as has been shown, the earliest printed play-texts tend to have their character-lists ordered around

the possibilities of doubling, often with an encouraging heading about the size of troupe necessary for performance. 'Foure men may well and easelye playe thys interlude', boasts the title-page of *Impatient Poverty* (1560; STC 14112.5), the first printed text to provide a complete doubling scheme, and it continues in narrative style: 'Peace and Coll hassarde and Conscyence, for one man. Haboundaunce and myrule for another man. Impaciente poverte, Prosperyte , and poverte, for one man. Envye and the sommoer for another man' (sig. A1). Thereafter around a quarter of all plays printed over the next twenty years present their character-list in a form directed towards acting, grouping together those roles to be played by a single player. Nathaniel Woodes' *The Conflict of Conscience* (1581; STC 25966) marks the end of this early convention with a list headed 'The Actors names, deuided into six partes, most conuenient for such as be disposed, either to shew this Comedie in priuate houses, or otherwise.' (sig. A1). After 1581 only two plays, the perennial King's Men favourite *Mucedorus (and Amadine)* (thirteen editions to 1639) and Thomas Heywood's *The Fair Maid of the Exchange* (three editions to 1637) are published with character-lists indicating the cast size necessary for performance (or, perhaps, for some kind of group reading), although it may be that the expanded cast of ten stated for the revised edition of *Mucedorus* (from 1610 onwards) does not trouble to redraw the play's doubling scheme with particular economy. The three editions of *Jack Drum's Entertainment* (*Jack* Thomas Creede for Richard Olive, 1601 (STC 7244); William Stansby for Philip Knight, 1616 (STC 7244) and for Nathanaell Fosbrook, 1618 (STC 7245).

are also anomalous: the title-page for this boys' company play describes 'The Actors 12 men and 4 women', taken from the numbered list of roles which is on the play's last page. But this list includes speaking Page roles alongside their masters ('2. Brabant Signior, and his Page./ 3. Brabant Junior, and his Page'). Andrew Gurr writes that 'boys did not normally practice doubling of roles' and clearly it is not possible that these characters, who appear on stage together, could in any case have been doubled. Thus the numerical list initially purports to be but is not an accurate depiction of the personnel required for performance.[15] On occasion the arrangement of characters seems decidedly anti-theatrical: Chapman's *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois* (Thomas Snodham, 1613; STC 4989) unexpectedly re-lists as separate characters the ghosts of people who die in the play, presumably in contradiction to stage practice where the ghosts would have been played by the same actors. (The same is true of John Stephens' closet drama *Cynthia's Revenge, or Maenander's Ecstasy* (Roger Barnes, 1613; STC 23248)). At the bottom of the list of 'The Speakers names, fitted to their Qualities' in John Ford's *The Broken Heart* (John Beale, 1633; STC 11156) is an interesting category of 'Persons included'. This lists Thrasus, the father of Ithocles, who never appears in the play as he is dead before it begins, and the figure of Aplotes, the disguised alias of Orgilus who is already listed. These are narrativisations rather than aids to readers (Orgilus retains his speech prefix 'Org' in his disguise, so there is little chance he would be taken for a new character). In Barton Holyday's university play *Technogamia, or The Marriages of the Arts* (William Stansby for John Parker,

1618: STC 13617), acted by Oxford students, there is a similar category headed 'persons only mentioned'.

In other printed plays, performance appears to shape the organisation of some of the character-lists. Character-lists may register the roles in order of dramatic importance, as in the 1575 edition of *Gammer Gurton's Needle* (STC 23263): 'Diccon the Bedlem./Hodge Gammer Gurtons seruante./Tyb Gammer Gurtons mayde./Gammer Gurton./Docke Gammer Gurtons boyde./Dame Chatte,/Doctor Rat the Curate./Master Baylye./Doll Dame Chattes mayde./Scapethryft mayst Beylies seruante.' (sig. A1^{v}). The dramatic logic of the list means that the subordinate, relational positions of servant and maid come before their securing signifier 'Gammer Gurton'. Something similar happens in the list to James Shirley's *The Wedding* (1629 and 1633; STC 22460 and 22461) where men are described as 'a passionate lover of' women who have not yet been named. The opposite is more usual: those characters higher up the list are the figures against whom lower characters are defined, as in Tourneur's *The Atheist's Tragedy* (1611; STC 24146): '*Montferrers*, A Baron. *Belforest*, a Baron. *D'amville*, brother to *Montferrers*. *Leuiduleia*, Lady to *Belforest*. *Castabella*, Daughter to *Belforest*. *Charlemont*, sonne to *Montferrers*. *Ronsard*, elder Sonne to *D'amville*. *Languebean Snuffe*, a Puritaine; Chaplaine to *Belforest*. *Borachio, D'amvilles* instrument. *Cataplasma*, a maker of Periwigges and Attires. *Soquette*, a seeming Gentlewoman to *Cataplasma*. *Fresco*, servant to *Cataplasma*.' (sig. A1^{v}) In bringing out the social connectedness of the playworld, the

character-list here acts as network analysis, interweaving the characters in a microcosm of the play's own structure, even as that structure reflects real-world hierarchies.

Some examples appear to be organized to construct a particular view of the play they precede. The title character Francischina heads the list before Marston's *The Dutch Courtesan (Cockle de Moye)* (1605, STC 17475). The prominence of the role of Bosola, at the head of the list of characters in *The Duchess of Malfi* (1623; STC 25176) suggests something about his dramatic importance rather than his social status. (The opposite is true of the character-list included in the 1637 edition of *The Merchant of Venice* (STC22298), the only single-play play-book of a play by Shakespeare to be printed with a character-list, which begins with '*The Duke of Venice./Morochus,* a Prince, and a Sutor to *Portia./The Prince of Aragon,* Sutor also to *Portia./Bassanio, an Italian Lord, Sutor likewise to Portia./Anthonia, a Merchant of Venice./Salarino,/Salanio,/ Gratiano,/Lorenso,/ } Gentlemen of Venice, and Compa-/nions with Bassanio.*'. This clearly adheres to social etiquette but gives a highly distorted view of the play's structure in the process.) Elsewhere, arrangements speak more closely to the particular concerns of the play itself. The careful use of extended braces and subheadings to divide social status and religious affiliation in the list of 'Drammatis Personae' in *A Christian Turned Turk* (1612; STC 6184) seems consciously to impose the organisational syntax of the character list onto a play which, as its title suggests, undermines the fixity of these categories.

Organization by gender also accounts for around a quarter of character-lists to be printed before 1642, with the practice becoming more common after 1630. Typically, as in James Shirley's *The Bird in a Cage (The Beauties)* (1633; STC 22436) a space is left between the male and female parts, so that 'EVGENIA the Dukes daughter./ DONELLA,/ CATHERINE,/ MARDONA,/ FIDELTA,/ CASSIANA./ } Ladyes Attendant on the/ Princesse' appear at the bottom of the page beneath the male parts (sig. A1^{v}). The consequence of such an arrangement is that Philenzo, rather like Beauford in *The Wedding*, is described as a 'Lover' of a character who has not yet been listed. Adherence to this organizational principle similarly results in a number of lists where the title character does not appear until the bottom of the page; 'Eudora the widdow Countesse' of George Chapman's *The Widow's Tears* (1612; STC 4994), is listed towards the bottom of the character-list after the full list of named and unnamed male parts. At least one play, *The Queen of Aragon (Cleodora)* by William Habington (1640; STC 12587), attempts to resolve this problem by printing the name of the female title character at the top of the list, followed by the male parts, the female parts and finally, indented, the unnamed male parts: 'The Queene of *Arragon*./*Decastro* Generall of the Forces of *Arragon* in love with/ the Queene./*Ossana* Friend to *Decastro*./*Florentio* Generall of the Forces of *Castile* enamor'd on/the Queene./ *Velasco* a great Commander under *Florentio*./ *Ascanio*, the King of *Castile* disguisd./*Lerma* a Noble man Privie to his disguise./*Oniate* a sober Courtier./ *Sanmartino*, a halfe witted

Lorde. *Browfilldora*, Dwarfe to *Sanmartino*.// *Floriana*, wife to *Sanmartino*./ *Cleantha*, a wittie Court Lady.// Captaine./ Servants,/ Severall Souldiers.' (sig. A1^{v}). Elsewhere, the subordinated position of female roles is indicated by way of a printed line separating male from female parts as in Shirley's *The Wedding* and *The Traitor* (1635; STC 22458), or subheadings as in *Swetnam the Woman-Hater Arraigned by Women* (1620; STC 23544), where the subheading 'Womens Parts' precedes a list of the female roles and Thomas Goffe's *The Courageous Turk, or Amurath the First* (1632; STC 11977), where the list of female parts is headed by the title 'Women Actors'. In John Beale's 1633 edition of John Ford's *Love's Sacrifice* (STC 11164), these organizational principles are combined with the female parts appearing under a printed line and the subheading 'Women'. At least one play, Shirley's *The Contention for Honour and Riches (Honoria and Mammon)* (1633; STC 22439), contains further subheadings, with female parts listed under the subheading 'Women.' followed by the characters '*Honesty./ No-pay./ Long-vacaction./Foule-weather-in-harvest.*' (sig. A4^{v}) under the subheading 'Mutes.'. This development is connected to the increasing practice, common by the end of the period, of listing non-speaking as well as speaking parts. In addition to the twenty-one speaking parts listed in Thomas Nabbes' *The Bride* (1640; STC 18338), the character-list also calls for the following '*Mutes*.': 'Maydes attending the Bride./ Three or foure Wenches./ Servants.' (sig. A4).

Elsewhere characters are listed by family or plot-grouping, rather than segregated by sex, such as in the map of *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (1630; STC 17877): 'The Names of the principall *Persons*./ MR YELLOWHAMMER, *A Gold-Smith.*/MAUDLINE, *His Wife*./TIM, *Their Sonne*./ MOLL, *Their Daughter*. TUTOR *to* TIM./ SIR WALTER WHOREHOUND, *a Suter to* MOLL./ SIR OLIVER KIXE, *and his* Wife, *Kin to* SIR WALT./ MR ALLWIT, *and his* Wife, *Whom* Sir WALT. *keepes*./ WELCH GENTLEWOMAN, SIR WALT. *Whore*. /WAT and NICKE, *His Bastards*. /DAVY DAHUMMA, His Man. /TUCHWOOD SENIOR, and his Wife, *A decayed Gentleman.* /TUCHWOOD JUNIOR, *Another Suter to* MOLL. /2 PROMOTERS./ SERVANTS./ WATERMEN.' (sig. A2^{v}). A small number of character-lists exist in which the order is demonstrably that of appearance in the play. The 1613 edition of Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* does not have a list; the second edition in 1635 does, listing the characters as they enter the playworld with revealing sequencing: 'The Prologue./ Then a Cittizen./ The Cittizens wife, and/*Raph* her man, sitting be-/low the Spectators./ A rich Marchant.' (STC 1675), suggesting a list generated – perhaps in the printing shop - by flicking through the play it precedes.

Organising by non-gendered social hierarchy is also common, although not ubiquitous. Norton and Sackville's *Gorboduc* (1565; STC 18684), for example, begins with '*Gorboduc*, kynge of great *Brittayne*', with his queen listed next above their sons: '*Videna,* Queene and wife to kynge *Gorboduc*./ *Ferrex*, Elder Sonne to kynge *Gorboduc.*/*Porrex*, Yonger Sonne to kynge *Gorboduc.*' (sig. A2).

Jonson echoes this convention in a mocking list for *The Devil is an Ass* (1641, WING J1011) by creating a list in which Satan is figured as the highest ranking character, with his inferiors, including the play's human characters, descending below him: 'SATAN. *The great divell*./ PUG. *The lesse divell*./INIQUITY. *The vice*./ FITZ-DOTTREL. *A squire of* Norfolk./ Mistresse FRANCES. *His wife*./MEERE-CRAFT. *The Projector*.' (sig. A2)

Most character-lists describe the status of their persons as the play begins. Character-lists that significantly anticipate the plot dénouement are unusual. Ben Jonson's *coup de theatre* with which his *Epicene, or The Silent Woman* concludes – that Epicene is male - is decisively preempted in print, where the character list of the play in Jonson's 1616 Folio, and in the quarto of 1620 (STC, 14763), gives away 'Epicoene, A yong Gent suppos'd the silent Woman.' Shirley's *The Grateful Servant* (1630; STC 22444) also anticipates its plot, introducing the 'Duke of Savoy, lover of Leonora, and in her supposed losse of Cleona' along with 'Leonora the princesse of Millan but disguisd as a page to Foscari and cald Dulcino' before the play begins. Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster, or Love Lies a-Bleeding* (four editions between 1620 and 1639) and Jonson's *The New Inn, or The Light Heart* (STC 14780) are among a small group of plays, particularly the pastoral romances of the 1630s, in which characters' disguises or true parentage are pre-emptively clarified in the character-list. Other character-lists give particular narrative pleasure to readers: for example, nowhere in the text of George Chapman's *All Fools* (George Eld for Thomas

Thorpe, 1605; STC 4963) is the surgeon Pock given the forename Fraunces, but in the character list the syphilitic pun on 'French pox' is amplified.

Jonson *The New Inn* and his earlier *Every Man Out of His Humour* (three separate editions in 1600) are the only printed plays of the period to develop extended prose descriptions of their characters, advertised on the title-page of *Every Man Out* as 'the severall Character of every Person' and in *The New Inn* under the headings 'The Persons of the Play with some short characterisme of the chiefe Actors'. Elsewhere, lists with no description or elaboration beyond the characters' names are common, particularly in the early Jacobean period: indicative examples include *Satiromastix* (1602; STC 6520.7), *Ram Alley, or Merry Tricks* (printed twice in 1611), *The Roaring Girl* (1611; STC 17908) and *A Woman is a Weathercock* (1612; STC 10854). Where there are descriptions the most common function is to designate relationships within the extended household. Some lists have more adjectival descriptions or work to align characters with recognisable types. In Marston's *Parasitaster, or The Fawn* (two editions in 1606) the Duke of Urbin is described as 'a weake Lord of a selfe admiring wisedome' and Puttotta as 'a poore laundresse of the court that washeth and diets footemen'; Bordello in Mason's *The Turk (Muleasses the Turk)* (1610; STC 17617) is 'an humerous travellour'; Cleon in Massinger's *The Bondman (The Noble Bondman)* (1624; STC 17632) is 'a fat impotent Lord'. These descriptions establish the characters of their speakers before the play has

begun, marking a distinctly different experience for readers used to deriving information about characters from the play itself.

The Work of Individual Printers I: John Allde[16]

So far, we have traced a range of representational practices about how character-lists looked and how they signified to readers. In some cases we have been able to suggest that a particular feature may be authorial in derivation. Here we explore the idea that individual printers may have developed or elaborated print-shop conventions for the presentation of character-lists. The career of John Allde provides some insight into what we might describe as the development of a house style for the printing of character-lists. Allde, who was active in the third quarter of the sixteenth century, printed around sixty-five books, largely of popular texts, of which just seven were plays. They include: an edition of *Nice Wanton* ([1565?]; STC 25017); two editions of Ulpian Fulwel's *Like Will to Like* (1568; STC 11473, [after 1568?]; STC 11473.5); the third and final edition of John Heywood's *The Four Ps* (569; STC 13302); the third and final edition of the unattributed *Jack Juggler* ([c. 1570]; STC 14837a.5); the first edition of Thomas Preston's *Cambises* ([1570?]; STC 20287); and the only extant edition of William Wager's *Enough is as Good as a Feast* ([1570?]; STC 24933). As this list illustrates, his printed plays cover both texts that had never been printed before and those with a print history going back, in the case of *The Four Ps*, to 1544. The title-page of his first play-book, *Nice Wanton*, replicates, almost exactly, the title-page of the first

edition, printed by John King in 1560 (STC 25016); both feature character-lists with the speakers names arranged in two columns. Though there is rather less uniformity in the mise en page of the three editions of Heywood's *The Four Ps*, Allde's edition does reproduce the short character-list found on the title-page of the two earlier editions. The same point can be made about the character-list that appears on the title-page of his edition of *Jack Juggler*. However, the character-lists that survive in his remaining four play-books show Allde developing a style uniquely his own. Though the design is most nuanced in what we might take to be the latest of his play-books, *Cambises*, the basic components survive across all four books. Common features include a heading that identifies the character-list as a doubling scheme (e.g. 'x may easely play this enterlude'), followed by a list of the names of the characters, grouped to indicate the division of parts, arranged in double columns. In the case of *Cambises*, the design has been further refined to incorporate rules to separate each group of parts and curly braces to join each group to the instruction 'for one'. The success of Allde's visually coherent design is indicated by its reuse by subsequent printers of plays first printed by him, perhaps most notably his son, Edward Allde, who went on to produce editions of *Like Will to Like* (1587; STC 11474) and *Cambises* (c. 1585; STC 20287.5, c. 1595; STC 20288), all of which adopt John Allde's house-style in its most sophisticated form.

The Work of Individual Printers II: Nicholas Okes

We can trace some of the discontinuities in the second half of the period through the career of Nicholas Okes, who printed seventy-four play-book titles in the period 1607-40, of which over a third (twenty-nine editions) included character-lists and three included lists of the actors' names. What emerges from this long career is variety. Briefly, something approaching a print-shop style stabilizes in a run of five plays printed between 1611 and 1613 and again after 1620:[17] the Okes texts have the character-list on its own verso page, facing the recto that is the first scene of the play. Each page has an ornament or repeat border of flowers identified by Blayney as in use by the Okes press.[18] The two Heywood texts printed in 1613, *The Brazen Age* (STC 13310) and *The Silver Age* (STC 13365), are presented identically, with matching ornaments and layout, and a distinctive double column of italic names divided by two central vertical rules. But aside from this, Okes's output varies considerably. Printing *Mucedorus*, for instance, in 1615 (STC 18235), the aim seems to have been to echo previous editions as precisely as the choice of ornaments and flowers would allow, and thus the look of his edition closely resembles that of William White for William Jones in 1611 (STC 18233). Okes' editions of the Cambridge playwright Thomas Tomkis' astrological satire *Albumazar* (1615; STC 24100, 24101) and *Lingua* (1615; STC 24105, 1617; STC 24106, 1622; STC 24107) make use of the roman capitals which tend to be associated with classical plays (as does his edition of Jonson's *Catiline His Conspiracy* (1635; STC 14760), and of Daniel's closet drama (1623: STC 6238)). Elsewhere the Okes lists use italic for characters'

names (as in Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, 1633, which is unique among Okes' publications in having two headings 'The Actors Names' and 'Woemen': STC 11165). Perhaps most interesting is the list in order of appearance in the 1635 edition of Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (STC 1675), which, as we have already suggested, appears to have been generated in the print-shop. Okes' publications show a marked preference for the spelling 'Drammatis', thus offering an orthographic as well as a lexical house-style: his texts, by Dekker, Daborne, Heywood, Tomkis and Shirley account for half of that occurrence in plays printed before 1640.

Plays in Multiple Editions

If focusing on the printed dramatic works of individual printers offers insight into the development and formal features of distinct house styles, by attending to those plays in multiple editions, other patterns and idiosyncrasies emerge. When plays run to two or more editions, overwhelmingly the printers of later editions replicate the content and often the form of the character-list as it appears in the earliest edition. However, there are a number of texts for which different printers adopt different practices, which deserve further attention.

1) *A King and No King*

   Beaumont and Fletcher's *A King and No King* was first printed without a character-list by John Beale for Thomas Walkley in 1619 (STC 1670), some eight years after its first performance at The Globe by the King's

Men; the second edition (1625; STC 1671), also printed for Walkley, but by Thomas Snodham, similarly omits a character-list. However, the third edition, printed in 1631 by Augustine Mathewes for Richard Hawkins (STC 1672), does include a character-list on the verso to the title page. It adopts many of the features common to character-lists of the period: different fonts to distinguish characters' names from their descriptions; curly braces to indicate two or more characters that share the same description; and male parts listed separately before the female parts. The final edition to appear in our period was printed by Edward Griffin for William Leake in 1639 (STC 1673). It is almost identical to the list that appears in the third edition; the only notable differences are clearly attempts to rationalize the design. For instance, the character-list in the third edition erroneously uses a curly bracket to join the names '*Arbaces*' and '*Tigranes*' to the descriptions 'King of Iberea' and 'King of Armenia'. In the fourth edition this unnecessary mark is omitted so that the list reads: '*Abraces*, King of Iberia./*Tigranes*, King of Armenia' (sig. A1^{v}).

2) *The Merchant of Venice*

Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* was printed five times before 1642, but only the final edition (1637; STC 22298) features a character-list. As such and as already noted, it represents the only single-play play-book of a play by Shakespeare in the period to include a character list. One of only three plays printed by Marmaduke Parsons, all of which

feature character lists, the final edition of *The Merchant of Venice* is, notwithstanding some small differences in terms of the design of the title page, virtually identical to the earlier editions. Almost eighty percent of plays printed in 1637 were printed with character-lists, compared with just fifty percent two years earlier; the inclusion of a character list in Parsons' edition may therefore not only indicate something about his personal preferences, but also something about prevailing fashions.

3) *The Scornful Lady*

Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Scornful Lady* was printed five times between 1616 and 1639. There is no character-list in the first edition, which was printed by John Beale for Miles Patrich (STC 1686); it is the only play printed by him that does not feature a character-list. All four subsequent editions (1625; STC 1687, 1630; STC 1688, 1635; STC 1689, and 1639; STC 1690) include a character-list under the heading 'The Actors' at either sig. A1^{v} or A2^{v}. Editions three through five follow the mise en page of the character-list first printed by Augustine Mathewes in his 1625 edition. Mathewes printed some 44 single-play play-books between 1623 and 1636, of which just over half include character-lists. The form adopted in *The Scornful Lady* is not unlike that found in some of his other early character-lists. For instance, like the character-list found in his edition of *Philaster* (1628; STC 1683), which in turn replicates the character-list that appears in Nicholas Okes's first edition

of the same play (1620; STC 1681), the character-list on sig. A2^{v} of Mathewes's edition of *The Scornful Lady* adopts roman capitals for the characters' names and makes full use of curly braces to indicate those characters that share a single description as in 'LADY, *and*/ MARTHA,/} *two sisters*'.

4) *Mucedorus*

Mucedorus is the most reprinted play in the period, running to fifteen editions between 1598 and 1639. The two earliest editions (1598; STC 18230 and 1606; STC 18231) include character-lists with instructions for the doubling of parts among eight actors. All subsequent editions, with the exception of DEEP 264.05, which is imperfect, feature similar lists but revised with instructions for the doubling of parts among ten actors; these alterations are discussed in the subsection 'Arrangement', above.[19]

Conclusions

In the first chapter of her book about the relationship between play-books and performance, Julie Stone Peters writes of the character-list that it 'simultaneously served those who wished to put on a play and those who wished to imagine the characters in the stage'.[20] In this article we have shown the extraordinary variety in form and content of the character-lists deployed by the majority of printers of dramatic texts in the period before the closing of the theatres. One way of understanding this variety is to consider the

different audiences printers wished to attract not just in the simple terms of Peters's binary – would-be actors/would-be readers – but as evolving alongside and in response to printed play-book conventions of growing sophistication. Marta Straznicky observes that 'the fact of a *play* being a *book* […] enables early modern consumers of printed drama both to be positioned and to position themselves in two overlapping and mutually constitutive public spheres': playgoing and reading.[21] The character-lists considered in this article offer one illustration of the developing relationship between printers and readers of drama during the period in question, as well as the cultural interplay between reading and playgoing as registered by early modern play-books.

Our survey has stressed variety over teleology, but in conclusion we can propose that two representational conventions converge in printed play-texts in the period. The first, from vernacular drama, provides character lists alongside instructions for doubling, to suggest that the play-book records past performance and/or enables future ones. The second, the habitual provision of lists in closet drama, establishes the character list as a function of – indeed, almost the synecdoche for – reading rather than performance. The convergence of these distinct traditions in a period of increased publication of public theatre plays creates a functional uncertainty about the material form of the character list. Increasingly, however, play readers were encouraged to expect a character list in printed play-books, and there is evidence that they

developed a clear sense of how it should be constructed. The Boston Public Library copy of Middleton's *The Revenger's Tragedy* offers a good summary (fig.6): a mid-seventeenth century reader has derived from his or her reading a list of characters (the play's only edition does not have such a list), organized it by social hierarchy with the Duke at the head, indicated some of the characters' inter-relationships, used manuscript versions of familiar print protocols such as the curly bracket to link together the three sons of the Duchess and the two sons of Gratiana, and placed the list in the approved place on the verso of the title-page opposite the first scene.

If character lists increasingly represent their plays in a shorthand that advertises, amongst other things, pleasurable plot or character types, their sheer variety in terms of both form and content attests to the dynamic plurality of dramatic literature throughout the period in question. Our initial intention in writing this article was to produce a statistical analysis of the development of the character list as a paratext. That the material has resisted this kind of analysis points to the fact that while some conventions were quick to standardize – the position in the play-book, for example - for the most part printers and readers were able to adapt their expectations to accommodate a wide range of more nuanced typographical, organizational, and descriptive markers. As an increasingly significant part of the architecture of early modern play-books, character lists stage print drama's negotiation of its dual

antecedents in the theatre and in print, and occupy a significant and largely unnoticed place in the uneven development of plays for readers.

[1] John Drakakis (ed.), *The Arden Shakespeare: The Merchant of Venice* (London, 2010), p.xvii.

[2] We have chosen the term 'character-lists' for this particular play paratext, since it does not, as, for example, *dramatis personae* would, privilege any one of the many designations available in the period (see 'Headings').

[3] Bernard Beckerman, 'The Persons Personated: Character Lists in English Renaissance Play Texts', *Poetry and Drama in the English Renaissance: In Honour of Professor Jiro Ozu* (Tokyo, 1980), 61-70, p.67.

[4] Gary Taylor, assisted by Celia R. Daileader and Alexandra G. Bennett, 'The Order of Persons', *Thomas Middleton and Early Modern Textual Culture: A Companion to the Collected Works*, eds Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 31-79, p.51; p.60.

[5] *DEEP: Database of Early English Playbooks*, ed. by Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser (2007) http://deep.sas.upenn.edu [Accessed 11 June 2013].

[6] Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser, 'The Popularity of Playbooks Revisited', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 56 (2005), 1-32, p.7.

[7] Taylor, p.56.

[8] Marta Straznicky, 'The Red Bull Repertory in Print', *Early Theatre*, 9 (2006), 144-56.

[9] Trevor Howard-Hill, 'The Evolution of the Form of Plays in English During the Renaissance', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 43 (1990), 112-45, p. 138. See also M. B.

Bland, 'The Appearance of the Text in Early Modern England', *TEXT*, 11 (1998), 91-154.

[10] *The Temptation*, is one of three extant plays by Bale to be printed in Wesel towards the end of his first period of exile at the end of King Henry VIII's reign. As such, it is at least plausible that continental conventions might have influenced the choice of type. That said, black type is retained for the list that appears in *The Three Laws of Nature, Moses, and Christ, Corrupted by the Sodomites, Pharisees, and Papists* (Derick van der Straten, [1548?]; STC 1287), while the sole extant copy of *The Chief Promises of God unto Man (God's Promises)* (Derick van der Straten, [1547?]; STC 1305) lacks sigs. A1 and A1^{v}, where one might most obviously expect to find a character list.

[11] For a fuller account of the development of the use of the colon in printed books of the period see Vivian Salmon, 'Orthography and Punctuation', in *The Cambridge History of the English Language: Volume III, 1476-1776*, ed. Roger Lass (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 13-54. Other editions of *Wily Beguiled* appeared in 1606 (Humphrey Lownes; STC 25818), 1614 (William White; STC 25819), 1630 (Elizabeth Allde; STC 25821,)1635 (Thomas Haviland?; STC 25822) and 1638 (John Beale; STC 25823).

[12] The curly bracket or brace as a mark used to join two or more items has a history that is quite distinct to that of the more common round bracket, which Malcolm Parkes has traced to Gasparino Barizza's (1359-1431) *Doctrina punctandi*. It may be a development of the square bracket used by scribes in late medieval manuscripts to join rhyming lines of verse, but its appearance in

print seems to originate in early play-books and not in mathematical or musical notation as might more obviously be expected. The brace first appears in a printed mathematical text in 1593 (Francois Viete's *Zetetica*) and in printed musical scores around the same time. Although the double stave appears in print as early as 1523, in Marcantonio da Bologna, *Recerchari Motetti, Canzoni* (Venice), there is no brace joining the staves. At the same time, the fact that 'the English, in their notation of keyboard music as well as in many other respects, clung to older traditions', suggests that the Continental innovation of the brace to join two staves was not adopted by English printers of music until a later date. In short, the appearance of the curly bracket in early printed play-books predates its appearance in mathematical or musical printed books. See Malcolm Parkes, *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West* (Aldershot: Scolar, 1992), p. 49; Florian Cajori, *A History of Mathematical Notations*, 2 vols ([S. I.]: La Salle Open Court, 1928), I: *Notations in Elementary Mathematics*, p. 391; Willi Apel, *The Notation if Polyphonic Music, 900-1600*, 4th edn (Cambridge, MA: The Medieval Academy of America, 1942), pp. 6, 8.

[13] Though this Latin term seems to suggest a debt to Roman comedy, it is striking that lists of roles and characters (with or without titles) are absent from all surviving manuscripts of plays by Terence and Plautus. The same is true of the earliest printed editions of their works (the first edition of Terence's six comedies was printed in Strasbourg in 1470; Plautus's twenty comedies appeared just two years later in an edition published in Venice).

However, it might be the case that some prefatory illustration in manuscript and printed versions of these plays are akin to those character lists that attempt to offer a summary of the whole play. One such example is the large opening miniature for Plautus's *Amphitruo* found in Paris, BNF, Lat. 16234, copied in 1469. For a discussion of this and other illustrations see Beatrice Radden Keefe, 'The Manuscripts and Illustration of Plautus and Terence', in *The Cambridge Companion to Roman Comedy*, ed. by Emma Buckley and Martin Dinter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming). It may be that the indebtedness of vernacular playbooks to their classical antecedents has been overstated. In any case, it is a subject that would repay further investigation.

[14] Though there are other imprints that have been given lower numbers by the STC, this issue of Henry Middleton for Christopher Barker's edition of *The glasse of gouernment* is reckoned by the STC to be earlier than the lower STC 11643. See STC II, p. 515.

[15] Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Playing Companies* (Oxford, 1996), p. 340.

[16] In focusing on the dramatic works printed by individual printers, these case studies seek to explore one aspect of non-authorial agency in the production of paratextual materials such as the character list. However, by the end of the sixteenth century, publishers had come to play a far greater role in determining the physical attributes of a given printed text. As such, a fruitful avenue for future research might involve further consideration of the relationship between the publishers who hired the printers of early modern

play-books with a view to uncovering the extent of their involvement in the arrangement of these texts on a presentational level. In this context, Okes, who often acted as both printer and publisher, obviously offers an interesting case. For a consideration of this and the issue of intersecting forms of agency more generally, see *Shakespeare's Stationers: Studies on Cultural Bibliography*, ed. by Marta Straznicky (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), esp. the Introduction, 'What is a Stationer?' by Marta Straznicky, and Chapter 2, 'Thomas Creed, William Barley, and the Venture of Printing Plays', by Holger Schott Syme.

[17] *The Works of John Webster*, ed. D.C. Gunby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), vol 1, p 457.

[18] Peter W. Blayney, *The Texts of "King Lear" and Their Origins*. Volume 1, Nicholas Okes and the First Quarto (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 451-3.

[19] DEEP 264.05 is not in Greg or the ESTC. Richard Proudfoot found its five leaves inserted into a copy of a later edition of the same text (1556; WING G1829) held at the Folger Shakespeare Library. See Proudfoot, '"Modernizing" the Printed Play-Text in Jacobean London: Some Early Reprints of *Mucedorus*', in *"A Certain Text": Close Readings and Textual Studies on Shakespeare and Others in Honor of Thomas Clayton*, ed. by Linda Anderson and Janis Lull (Newark: University of Delaware, 2002), 18-28.

[20] Julie Stone Peters, *The Theatre of the Book, 1480-1880: Print, Text and Performance in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 26.

[21] Marta Straznicky, 'Introduction: Plays, Books, and the Public Sphere' in Straznicky (ed.), *The Book of the Play: Playwrights, Stationers and Readers in Early Modern England* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts, 2006), 1-22, p. 4.