‘the strategy with cunning shows’:

The Aesthetics of Spectacle in the Plays of Robert Greene

A thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

at the University of Oxford

Jenny Sager

Michaelmas Term, 2011

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Abstract

This is the first full-scale study of Robert Greene's drama, offering a new interpretation of the dramatic oeuvre of one Shakespeare's most neglected literary predecessors. Recent criticism has emphasised Greene's pioneering role as an author of Elizabethan romance. Yet, in contrast to the numerous prose works which were printed during his life time, his drama, which was printed posthumously, has received little attention.

Greene's plays are visually magnificent: madmen wander on stage waving the severed limbs of their victims (*Orlando Furioso*, c. 1591), the dead are resurrected (*James IV*, c. 1590), tyrants gruesomely mutilate their subjects (*Selimus*, c. 1591-4), extravagant stage properties such as the mysterious brazen head prophesy to the audience (*Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay,* c. 1589), and sinners are swallowed into hell accompanied by fireworks (*A Looking Glass for London and England*, c. 1588). This thesis will examine the way in which these stage images evoke astonishment, which in turn encourages the audience to contemplate their symbolic significance. The triumph of Greene's drama is not one of effects over affect; it lies in the interaction between effect and affect.

My principal objective in this thesis is to develop a methodological strategy which will allow critics of non-Shakespearean plays, which frequently lack a substantial performance tradition, to study drama through the lens of performance. Engaging

purposively with anachronism as an enabling mode of linking old and new, this thesis will draw analogies between the early modern stage and modern cinema in order to emphasise the relevance of early modern drama to today's ocularcentric world, a relevance that more historical theoretical approaches would seek to deny.

My opening chapter will try to establish Greene's dramatic canon and assess the critical reception of Greene's plays. Drawing on material from Greene's entire oeuvre, Chapter Two will outline my methodological and conceptual approach. This chapter will include an extended analysis of Friar Bacon's discussion of the 'strategy with cunning shows' in *John of Bordeaux* (*JB.* 735). Launching into detailed studies of specific spectacles, Chapter Three focuses on Thomas Lodge and Robert Greene's collaborative effort, the biblical drama *A Looking Glass for London and England*. During the play, Prophet Jonah is *'cast out of the whale's belly upon the stage'* (*LG.* IV.i.1460-1). Focusing on this stage spectacle, this chapter seeks to emphasise the commercial appeal of this biblical drama. Examining another stage property, Chapter Four will explore the melodramatic and sensational potential of the tomb stage property in Greene's *James IV*. Examining the apparent tension between the play's two presenters, I will demonstrate that Bohan, a cynical Scot, and Oberon, the King of the Fairies, proffer two distinct, but not mutually exclusive, ways of conceiving of and interpreting theatrical spectacle. Completing my study of spectacular stage properties, Chapter Five examines the symbolic significance of the brazen head, which appears in two of Greene's plays: *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* and *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. In both plays, the brazen head becomes an object of excessive or supreme devotion as either a religious idol or a secular deity. The brazen head is perceived as monstrous not simply because it is a source of horror or astonishment but because it represents the misplaced veneration or worship of something other than God.

Turning away from stage properties, my final two chapters look at how Greene exploited specific stage conventions. Directing my attention towards Greene's *Orlando Furioso* (c. 1591), I will argue that the figure of Orlando Furioso bequeathed an enduring legacy to early modern theatrical discourse, contributing to the convention of the mad poet, which would be replicated and parodied by a new generation of dramatists. Orlando's behaviour, which rapidly alternates between that of a madman and that of a poet, forces the audience to contemplate the link between the mania of the mentally ill and the melancholia of the creative genius. Ridiculing the concept of *furor poeticus,* Greene's play interrogates the belief that great writers are divinely inspired by God through ecstatic revelation.

My final chapter will explore the aesthetics of violence in *Selimus.* A relatively recent addition to the Greene canon, *Selimus* depicts the rise of an anti-hero amidst a cycle of brutal violence. My reading of this play posits Selimus as a surrogate playwright, arguing that the semiotics of dismemberment allows Greene to interrogate the concept of artistic autonomy.

Widespread indifference to Greene's work has facilitated critical blindness to the powerful aesthetic appeal of spectacle in early modern drama. This reassessment of Robert Greene's dramatic oeuvre offers a new perspective on the aesthetics of spectacle in early modern drama.

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Long term thanks are owed to my undergraduate tutors at St. Andrews, Eric Langley and Neil Rhodes, who first got me hooked on all things early modern. This thesis is dedicated to RB.

Abbreviations

Greene's works and works attributed to Greene:

Alp.	*Alphonsus, King of Aragon* (c.1587)
FB.	*Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (c. 1589)
JB.	*John of Bordeaux* (c. 1590-4?)
JIV.	*James IV* (c.1590)
LG.	*A Looking Glasse for London and England* (c. 1588)
OF.	*Orlando Furioso* (c.1591)
Sel.	*Selimus* (c. 1591-4)

Shakespeare's works:

MND	*A Midsummer Night's Dream*
AW	*All's Well that Ends Well*
AYL	*As You Like It*
Cym	*Cymbeline*
Ham	*Hamlet*
2H4	*Henry IV, part 2*
1H6	*Henry VI, part 1*
H5	*Henry V*
JC	*Julius Caesar*
KJ	*King John*
R2	*King Richard II*
Mac	*Macbeth*
RJ	*Romeo and Juliet*

TS	*The Taming of the Shrew*
WT	*The Winter's Tale*
Tit	*Titus Andronicus*
TN	*Twelfth Night*

Conventions

There is no reliable modern edition of Greene's dramatic oeuvre. Alexander B. Grosart's *The Life and Complete Works in Prose and Verse of Robert Greene* (1881-86) and J. Churton Collins's *The Plays and Poems of Robert Greene* (1905) make various substantive emendations, consistently over-punctuate and contain several major transcription errors. To avoid confusion, my quotations from Greene's plays are taken from the following editions:

Alp.	*Alphonsus King of Aragon,* ed. W. W. Greg (London: Oxford University Press, 1926)
FB.	*Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay,* ed. J. A. Lavin (London: The New Mermaids, 1969)
JB.	*John of Bordeaux,* ed. W. L. Renwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935)
JIV.	*James the Fourth,* ed. J. A. Lavin (London: The New Mermaids, 1967)
LG.	*A Looking Glasse for London and England,* ed. Tetsumaro Hayashi (Metuchen, N. J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1970)
OF.	*A Textual Study of Robert Greene's Orlando Furioso, with an Elizabethan Text* (Muncie, Ind: Ball State University Press, 1973)
Sel.	*Selimus, Emperor of the Turks,* in *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England,* ed. Daniel J. Vitkus (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), pp. 55-152

In the interest of readability, I have modernised the spelling and punctuation of all early modern texts, with the exception of the titles of primary texts listed in the bibliography and

footnotes. I have also retained the original spelling of the quotations in my table of textual parallels in Chapter 1, because to modernise would interfere with the process of comparison. Those exceptions withstanding, the letters ‘u’, ‘v’, ‘i’ and ‘j’ have been silently normalised in accordance with modern usage. The use of capitalisation has also been silently normalised. Contractions such as the tittle have been silently expanded. The use of italic within the text has also been silently removed to provide clarity for the modern reader, with the exception of words in Latin or Italian and stage directions.

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Introduction

In the midst of a discussion about the theatrical tradition of dumb-shows in *The Shakespearean Stage* (1982), Andrew Gurr observes that as 'a general rule the better the playwright the less spectacle there was likely to be in his plays'. According to Gurr, whilst Shakespeare's predecessors contented themselves with 'affairs of pure spectacle', the majority of Shakespeare's work could have been performed on 'a completely bare stage platform'.[1] Gurr's cursory observations expose a wider assumption prevalent throughout early modern literary criticism that while Shakespeare was a poetic genius who only needed language to ignite his audience's imagination, less gifted playwrights had to rely on garish visual effects to entertain their spectators. As Gurr's comments demonstrate, this widespread disdain for spectacle, as an indicator of poor artistry, has fuelled one of the biggest misapprehensions of early modern theatre criticism, that the Shakespearean stage was bare.[2] Certainly, it is difficult not to detect a taint of Puritanism and anti-theatricalism in this maxim, which appears in a book that is still recognised as an essential introduction to the early modern stage. For surely if we dismiss spectacle, we dismiss the theatre in its entirety because, ultimately, theatre is spectacle. The purpose of this thesis, in short, is to use Greene's drama to prove Gurr's supposition wrong.

This overriding contempt for spectacle - as mere decorative artifice evoking little more than intellectual quiescence - is not a new phenomenon. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle poured scorn on the use of spectacle in drama, describing it as 'emotionally potent' but

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[1] Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage, 1574-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 175.
[2] For further discussion of the myth of the bare stage see Chapter Two of this thesis; Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda, 'Introduction: towards a materialist account of stage properties', in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, ed. Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 2-7.

stressing that it 'falls quite outside [...] art'.[3] Aristotle's attitude has had a palpable effect on theatre criticism; even those critics who do discuss the significance of spectacle are forced to do so under the cover of darkness. Rather than talk about spectacle, they talk about the 'materiality of religion', 'the "idolatry" of theatre', 'the circulation of social energy', and 'the cultural project of things'; as if delving into social, economic or religious history is the only way to imbue their work with meaning, purpose or intellectual gravitas. By contrast, this thesis aims to instigate a radical change of attitude towards spectacle, by emphasising the powerful visual dimension of the early modern stage and demonstrating how spectacle, rather than being devoid of meaning, simultaneously provokes both aesthetic delight and intellectual contemplation.

Robert Greene's importance to an understanding of early modern stage spectacle has long been underestimated. Indeed, the prevalence of spectacle is the single most distinguishing feature of Greene's drama. Glynne Wickham has even argued that 'Robert Greene's plays are uniformly more "spectacular" than those of any of his predecessors or contemporaries'.[4] Greene's plays are visually magnificent: in *Alphonsus King of Aragon* (c. 1587) gods and prophets descend from the heavens, in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (c. 1589) extravagant stage properties such as the mysterious brazen head prophesy to the audience, in *Orlando Furioso* (c. 1591) madmen wander on stage waving the severed limbs of their victims and in *A Looking Glass for London and England* (c. 1588) sinners are swallowed into hell accompanied by fireworks and dancing devils. Previous commentators have been dismissive of Greene's drama, implying that his visual effects are merely a substitute for a good script. Observing that '[p]art of [Greene's] mastery' lies in his use of

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[3] Aristotle *Poetics*, trans. Stephen Halliwell (London: Harvard University Press, 1995), VII.16-20, p. 55.
[4] Glynne Wickham, 'Heavens, Machinery, and Pillars in the Early Theatre and Other Early Playhouse', in *The First Public Playhouse: The Theatre in Shoreditch, 1576-1598*, ed. Herbert Berry (Montreal, 1979), p. 6.

'spectacular expedients', Thomas H. Dickson contends that 'the use of a visible magic to transport Burden and Helen, to raise Hercules and the tree, and to present the downfall of the Brazen Head' in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* 'reveals an ability to adapt the properties and expedients of the stage of the time to the purposes of the plot'. But, he concludes, these numerous 'palpable tricks of stage craft' are little more than vulgar 'sensations', which account for the 'unbalanced and unorganised' nature of Greene's dramaturgy.[5] Taking a similar line, Kenneth Muir has noted that Greene 'obtains some powerful dramatic effects [...] [b]ut in spite of the variety of incident'; the plays 'will hardly stand up to serious critical examination'.[6]

Persistently, Greene's palpable dramatic achievements have been dismissed by various literary critics, who prioritise the written word and disregard the intellectual complexity inherent in stage spectacle. For Greene, spectacle is not merely a frivolous way of entertaining an uneducated populace with a few cheap thrills; it encourages the audience to contemplate the more demanding implications of his drama. Greene's spectacles are eidetic stage images: they assault the senses, which encourages the audience to contemplate their symbolic significance. The triumph of spectacle is not one of effects over affect; it lies in the interaction between effect and affect. As Friar Bacon explains in *John of Bordeaux* (c. 1590-4), a play frequently attributed to Greene, there is often a 'strategy' behind 'cunning shows', whereby 'the eye transfers unto the heart the strange idea of so rare a being, then begins the mind to work of things divine' (*JB*. 735, 737-9). In Greene's drama, spectacle provokes sensory delight and intellectual contemplation in equal measure. This alone makes a persuasive case for the reassessment of Robert Greene's dramatic oeuvre.

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[5] Thomas Dickson, ed., *Robert Greene* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1911), pp. lix-Ixi.
[6] Kenneth Muir, *Robert Greene as Dramatist,* in *Essays on Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama, in Honor of Hardin Craig*, ed. Richard Hosley (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), p. 48; Charles W. Crupi, *Robert Greene* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986), p. 115; Charles Mills Gayley, *Representative English Comedies* (London: Macmillan, 1903), p. 419.

My principle objective in this thesis is to advocate the rejection of purely text-based interpretation of drama and to emphasise the powerful visual dimension of the early modern stage. Theatre historians, including Walter Hodges, Bernard Beckerman, G. E. Bentley, T. J. King, Andrew Gurr, S.P. Cerasano, and John Astington, have used stage directions to reconstruct the use of spectacle in early modern theatres.[7] Expanding on the theories of W. W. Greg and other New Bibliographers, Richard Hosley made a distinction between theatrical directions and literary or fictional directions.[8] Alan Dessen has suggested that 'the difficulty of distinguishing today between fictional and theatrical signals is one major source of confusion in recovering Shakespeare's theatrical vocabulary'.[9] More recently, Alan Dessen and Leslie Thomson's *A Dictionary of Stage Directions* (1999) has greatly aided comparative work and undoubtedly instigated a renewed interest in this area.[10] Perhaps inevitably, given the arduousness of the task, the dictionary is not without certain limitations. The volume excludes references to academic drama, boys' company drama, court masques and pageants. The dictionary also omits dialogue evidence; hence the volume excludes those stage properties whose presence is not acknowledged in stage directions but can be inferred from the text's dialogue. As various reviewers have also pointed out, a number of the entries contain transcription errors and demonstrate 'a slight inconsistency in the authors' treatment

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[7] Bernard Beckerman, *Shakespeare at the Globe, 1599-1609* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), Gerald Eades Bentley, *The Professions of Dramatist and Player in Shakespeare's Time, 1590-1642* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), T. J. King, *Shakespearean Staging, 1599-1642* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2005), S. P. Cerasano, 'Editing the Theatre, Translating the Stage', *Analytic and Enumerative Bibliography*, no. 4 (1990), pp. 21-34, John H. Astington, 'Descent Machinery in the Playhouses', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 2 (1985), pp. 119-33, 'The London Stage in the 1580s', in *The Elizabethan Theatre XI*, eds. Augusta Lynne Magnusson and C. E. McGee (Port Credit, Ont.: Meany, 1990), pp. 1-18.
[8] Richard Hosley, 'Shakespeare's Use of a Gallery Over the Stage', *Shakespeare Survey* 10 (1957), p. 78.
[9] Alan C. Dessen, *Recovering Shakespeare's Theatrical Vocabulary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 59, *Elizabethan Drama and the Viewer's Eye* (Chapel Hill: University of University Press, 1977), *Elizabethan Stage Conventions and Modern Interpreters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).
[10] Alan C. Dessen and Leslie Thomson, *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

of terms whose current meanings differ from their early modern connotations'.[11] Exploring the linguistic aspects of stage directions, Linda McJannet has analyzed directions from a wide range of early modern plays, exploring their textual origins and transmission.[12] Greene's stage directions have provoked a fair amount of critical interest. Examining the stage directions in *Alphonsus*, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, *A Looking Glass*, *Orlando Furioso* and *Selimus*, Michela Calore has commented on the 'spectacular effect[s]' of Greene's stage illusions.[13] Meanwhile, in *Writing Robert Greene* (2008), Alan Dessen has tried to trace the increasing sophistication of Greene's dramaturgy through his stage directions from *Alphonsus*, which Dessen claims demonstrates only a 'tenuous familiarity with professional theatrical culture', to *James IV*, which demonstrates Greene's theatrical expertise and experience.[14] Greene's stage directions will also play a significant role in this thesis, providing indirect evidence of how Greene's drama might have originally been staged.

As well as using his stage directions to reimagine the spectacular aspects of Greene's drama, this thesis will also aim to reconstruct the performance history of Greene's plays. Unfortunately, Greene's plays are scarcely performed today. An early discovery in Bristol University's archives, a black and white production photograph of Glynne Wickham's 1958 production of *James IV,* seemed to encapsulate a further obstacle.[15] Performed by members

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[11] Michael D. Friedman, *'A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580-1642'*, *Comparative Drama* 35 (2001), p. 229; Franklin J. Hildy, *'A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580-1642'*, *Theatre Survey* 42 (2001), pp. 91-94; Barry Gaines, *'A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580-1642', Shakespeare Studies* 29 (2001), pp. 196-199; Linda McJannet, 'Book Review*: Alan Dessen and Leslie Thompson (eds.). Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama', Early Theatre* 5 (2002), pp. 89-94; Heather Hirschfeld, *'A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580-1642', Shakespeare Quarterly* 54 (2003), pp. 186-188.
[12] Linda McJannet, *The Voice of Elizabethan Stage Directions: The Evolution of a Theatrical Code* (London: Associated University Press, 1999).
[13] Michela Calore, 'Enter out: Perplexing Signals in Some Elizabethan Stage Directions', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 13 (2001), pp. 117-35.
[14] Alan C. Dessen, 'Robert Greene and the Theatrical Vocabulary of the Early 1590s', *Writing Robert Greene*, eds. Kirk Melnikoff and Edward Gieskes (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 43; Bruce R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1999).
[15] Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, Archive Catalogue: <http://calm.shakespeare.org.uk/dserve/dserveexe?dsq Cmd=index.tcl&dsqDb=Catalog&dsqApp=Archive> [accessed 18th May 2011].

of Bristol University's Drama department in Stratford-upon-Avon's Avonbank Gardens under the auspices of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, the play apparently included various 'spectacular effects, including a game of golf in its original form, a scene on horseback, and a serenade from a barge'.[16]

Fig. 1: Performance photograph of *James IV*, directed by Glynne Wickham, performed by members of Bristol University's Drama Department in Stratford-upon-Avon's Avonbank Gardens from 4th - 9th August, 1958.

Complete with silly hats and felt-tip beards, this awkwardly posed publicity shot looks quaint and outdated, almost comical. This image encapsulates the present condition and status of "Greene studies" as a whole. Robbed of all sense of relevance, both in terms of performance and criticism, Greene had become the dramatist time forgot. While recent Shakespearean scholarship has endorsed a presentist focus, examining how Shakespeare's plays are relevant to today's world, non-Shakespearean drama is still resides under the enduring influence of historicism.[17] Forever fated to be pigeonholed as just another one of the 'University Wits', it

[16] Norman Sanders, ed., *The Scottish History of James the Fourth* (London: Methuen, 1970), p. lv.
[17] Sarah Werner, 'Introduction', in *New Directions in Renaissance Drama and Performance Studies*, ed. Sarah Werner (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2010), p. 8; Hugh Grady and Terence Hawkes, eds., *Presentist Shakespeares* (London: Routledge, 2007); Hugh Grady, 'Shakespeare Studies, 2005: A Situated Overview', *Shakespeare: A Journal* 1.1 (2005), 102-20.

is perhaps fitting that Greene is now almost entirely the preserve of university intellectuals.[18] The 'University Wits' consisted of six university educated writers - Christopher Marlowe, Robert Greene, John Lyly, Thomas Lodge and George Peele – who travelled to London seeking fame and fortune in the early 1580s. Much of their literary output reveals a profound tension between their desire to fulfil their lofty intellectual ambitions and their need to appeal to commercial audiences. Almost without exception, modern productions of Greene's plays have been directed by academics for academic audiences. These productions have placed a firm emphasis on scholarly enquiry and have tended to envisage performance largely in terms of historical reconstruction.

Taking inspiration from Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean's book *The Queen's Men and Their Plays* (1998), which resolutely declared that 'Shakespeare is not our contemporary', the Shakespeare and the Queen's Men Project in association with the University of Toronto has revived a series of early modern plays, including *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, *King Leir* and Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. Describing their approach to producing the plays as 'original practice' production, their theatrical methodology is not dissimilar to that of Shakespeare's Globe in London. On their website, the company readily admits that 'original practice' productions can be 'contentious' because 'evidence is so scanty on the period that it is hard to establish exactly how Elizabethans originally rehearsed and performed their plays, in addition to the obvious but sometimes overlooked fact that it is not possible to turn back time and recreate the past'.[19] The anxiety surrounding historical accuracy, however, is not the most fundamental problem posed by 'original practice' productions. Indeed, as Joe Falocco has outlined, 'many critics' have

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[18] Kirk Melnikoff's recent volume *Robert Greene* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011) is one of a series from Ashgate, which sets out to reassess the work of the 'University Wits'.

[19] The Shakespeare and the Queen's Men Project (SQM): <http://tapor.mcmaster.ca/~thequeensmen/> [accessed 7th June 2011]

sought to criticise the desire to recreate the staging conditions of the early modern period for trying 'to avoid contact with the material circumstances of contemporary culture' and for being 'artistically and politically regressive'.[20]

My own methodology is designed to provide an antidote to this artistically conservative agenda. This thesis will focus instead on the points of contact between early modern plays and modern audiences. Taking inspiration from much of the recent presentist work on Shakespeare, this thesis will examine how Greene's plays articulate and interrogate ideas still relevant to our experience now. Ewan Fernie has defined the methodological stance of presentism as a 'strategy of interpreting texts in relation to current affairs which challenges the dominant fashion of reading Shakespeare historically'.[21] In their recent edited essay collection *Presentist Shakespeares* (2007), Hugh Grady and Terence Hawkes have also outlined the principal aims of presentism, arguing that criticism must 'acknowledge that the questions we ask of any literary text will inevitably be shaped by our own concerns'.[22] Frustrated by the way in which contemporary criticism has 'largely ignored the aesthetic quality' of the early modern period, 'treating' plays 'as documents not fundamentally dissimilar from religious tracts, acts of parliament, royal or Privy Council decrees, and the like', Hugh Grady and Terence Hawkes have gone about '[r]eversing, to some degree, the stratagems of new historicism', by allowing present anxieties and concerns to 'set' their 'interrogative agenda'.[23] According to Hugh Grady, we must accept that there can be 'no historicism without a latent presentism'.[24] It would be misleading, however, to consider the

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[20] Joe Falocco, *Reimagining Shakespeare's Playhouse: Early Modern Staging Conventions in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2010), p. 2.
[21] Ewan Fernie, 'Shakespeare and the Prospect of Presentism', *Shakespeare Survey* 58 (2005), p. 169; Terence Hawkes, *Shakespeare in the Present* (London: Routledge, 2002).
[22] Hugh Grady and Terence Hawkes, 'Introduction: Presenting Presentism', in *Present Shakespeares,* ed. Hugh Grady and Terence Hawkes (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 5.
[23] *Ibid*, p. 4.
[24] Hugh Grady, 'Shakespeare Studies, 2005: A Overview', *Shakespeare: A Journal* 1.1 (2005), p. 115.

relationship between historicism and presentism in purely oppositional terms; as Ewan Fernie is quick to point out, ‘new historicism is a complex practice and so – already – is presentism’. Indeed, Fernie goes on to advocate ‘a deliberate synthesis of presentism’s commitment to ‘the new’ and historicism’s orientation to what is ‘other’; this ‘alternative presentism’ would be ‘focused on, and concerned to maximize, the difference literature makes to the present’.[25]

We live today in an ocularcentric world; the transformation wrought in our interpretation of images and visual experience by television and cinema has been remarkable. Visual spectacle is all around us; it is an inescapable part of our everyday experience. Aiming to establish a critical visual methodology, Rose Gillian has placed ‘the visual’ in the context of ‘the cultural significance, social practices and power relations in which it is embedded’, by ‘thinking about the power relations that produce, are articulated through; and can be challenged by, ways of seeing’.[26] In *Neo-Baroque Aesthetics and Contemporary Entertainment* (2005), Angela Ndalianis has demonstrated how modern visual media – film, computer games, comic books and theme-park attractions – can be understood within a wider aesthetic-historical context and has used the baroque or neo-baroque as a conceptual framework to contemplate the power of contemporary media.[27] Frequently drawing parallels between early-twenty-first-century media and seventeenth century art forms, Ndalianis explores how [t]he neo-baroque shares a baroque delight in spectacle and sensory experiences’.[28] Indeed, throughout Ndalianis’s book, the term ‘baroque’ is

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[25] Fernie, p. 169

[26] Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies* (London: Sage, 2007), p. xv; W.J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Mitchell, W.J.T., ‘Interdisciplinary and Visual Culture’, *Art Bulletin* 77 (1995).

[27] Angela Ndalianis, *Neo-Baroque Aesthetics and Contemporary Entertainment* (London: The MIT Press, 2005); Albert A. Hopkins, *Magic, Stage Illusions, Special Effects and Trick Photography* (New York: Dover Publications, 1976); Andrew Darley, *Visual Digital Culture: Surface, Play and Spectacle in New Media Genres* (London: Routledge, 2000).

[28] Ndalianis, p. 5.

> considered not only as a phenomenon of the seventeenth century (an era traditionally associated with the baroque), but also, more broadly, as a transhistorical state that has had wider historical repercussions.[29]

Crucially Ndalianis's transhistorical stance does not necessitate a critical blindness to historical specificity:

> The neo-baroque combines the visual, the auditory, and the textual in ways that parallel the dynamism of seventeenth-century baroque form, but that dynamism is expressed in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries in technologically and culturally different ways. Importantly, underlying the emergence of the neo-baroque are transformed economic and social factors.[30]

Ndalianis's methodology provides a useful analogy for my own work. This thesis will seek to establish points of contact between the modern media's fascination with the visual and Greene's spectacular drama. Greene's use of spectacle makes his drama feel recognisably modern; Greene is our contemporary.[31]

Principally this thesis hopes to revitalise Greene's plays by giving them a contemporary relevance. The most conspicuous manifestation of this strategy comes in the form of a series of analogies between Elizabethan and Jacobean audiences and today's cinema audiences.[32] Like modern cinema with its army of directors, scriptwriters, producers and cinematographers, early modern theatre was an intrinsically collaborative endeavour, with companies, playwrights, actors, prompters and printers all having a hand in the compositional process. According to Harold Love, in the early modern period the word

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[29] Ndalianis, p. 5.

[30] *Ibid,* p. 5.

[31] Wendy Griswold offers a detailed discussion of why a society revives certain cultural objects at specific times in *Renaissance Revivals: City Comedy and Revenge Tragedy in the London Theatre, 1576-1980* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986).

[32] Michael Hattaway, *Elizabethan Popular Theatre: Plays in Performance* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), p. 3; Stevie Simkin, *Early Modern Tragedy and Cinema of Violence* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Pascale Aebischer, 'Vampires, Cannibals and Victim-Revengers: Watching Shakespearean Tragedy Through Horror Film', *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* 143 (2007), pp. 119-131; Emma Smith, 'Performing Relevance/Relevant Performances: Shakespeare, Jonson, Hitchcock', in *New Directions in Renaissance Drama and Performance Studies*, ed. Sarah Werner (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 147-161.

'authorship' denoted 'not the condition of being an originator of works but a set of linked activities (*authemes*) which [...] will often be performed collaboratively or by several persons in succession'.[33] Analysing the post-modern cinematic experience, Peter Brooker argues that:

> re-makes, cross-genre films, blockbuster series, and the migration of stars and actors from picture to picture [...] has arguably made the experience of variegated intertextuality, and not authorship, the more immediate one for viewers.[34]

Just as the scriptwriter can sometimes be overlooked in modern cinema, with much of the media attention going instead to the director or to leading actors, the rise of repertory studies has downplayed the role of the playwright in early modern theatre.[35] With the realisation that early modern audiences might not have known or cared about the identity of the playwright, a great deal of critical interest is now being placed on how actors, plot devices, stage properties and pieces of spectacle moved from play to play. Tiffany Stern has observed that 'playwrights of the early modern period were frequently known as 'play-patchers' because of the common perception that a play was pieced together out of a collection of odds and ends'.[36] Meanwhile, in *Elizabethan Popular Theatre* (1982), Michael Hattaway has rejected the wide spread assumption 'that the popular theatre of this period was poor or primitive', arguing that '[l]avishness and visual delighted both courtier and groundling', by appealing to 'both the emotions and intellect'.[37] Furthermore, Michael Hattaway has demonstrated that early modern dramatists such as Kyd, Marlowe and Shakespeare reused 'specific dramatic

[33] Harold Love, *Attributing Authorship: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 39.
[34] Peter Brooker, 'Postmodern Adaptation: Pastiche, Intertextuality and Re-Functioning', in *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen*, ed. Deborah Cartnell and Imelda Wheleham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 108.
[35] On the status of the playwright in early modern theatre, see Jeffrey Masten, 'Playwriting: Authorship and Collaboration', in *A New History of Early English Drama,* eds. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 357-382;
[36] Tiffany Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 1.
[37] Hattaway, *Elizabethan Popular Theatre*, p. 4.

emblems or speaking pictures', 'that had caught the imagination of the audiences'.[38] Drawing analogies between 'Elizabethan audiences' and 'audiences at horror films today' , Hattaway has argued that 'the Elizabethans did not see the play only through the eyes of the hero' but that '[r]ather it was for them a sequence of performed actions', spectacles or special effects.[39] In his chapter on *The Spanish Tragedy*, Hattaway explores how Kyd created 'a strong visual pattern of repeated theatrical images' and how, as a consequence, the play 'occupied the collective consciousness of the Elizabethans in the way that the James Bond films did for a much later generation'.[40] Building on the work of Hattaway, this thesis will frequently compare early modern 'theatrical techniques' to modern cinema's 'montage techniques'.[41]

Experience has trained modern cinema audiences how to interpret visual codes; audiences are now so familiar with the process of interpreting these visual devices – crosscutting, flashback, jump cut, close up - that the act of interpretation frequently goes unacknowledged. The Elizabethan theatre relied on a similar set of visual codes. About half way through Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, two scholars watch their respective fathers, Lambert and Serlsby *'fight and kill each other'* in Bacon's 'glass prospective' (*FB*. xiii.27). Unable to intervene, the two scholars turn on each other, fight and eventually *'stab one another'* (*FB*. xiii). This sequence is reminiscent of the stage convention of a play-within-a-play. In his essay on the staging of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Iain Wright has gone further, arguing that:

> Greene, whose theatrical creativity and whose influence on Shakespeare have both been underestimated, was doing something remarkable here, without, as far as I can

[38] *Ibid*, pp. 110, 106.
[39] *Ibid*, p. 106.
[40] *Ibid,* pp. 101-2.
[41] *Ibid,* p. 95.

> see, any obvious dramatic precedent. He was creating not a play-within-a-play but a play-beside-a-play.[42]

Considering the question of staging, J.A. Lavin has suggested that for this scene the discovery-space at the back of the stage would have been used for Bacon's study, with the voyeurs remaining upstage during the acting of the inset scenes.[43] Carrying profound metatheatrical implications, this scene seems to be drawing an analogy between looking through Bacon's prospective glass and watching a play. As Brian Walsh has recently commented, this 'split stage device [...] allows audiences to entertain the fiction that they are able to see actions occurring in two different locales at once, in Oxford and in Fressingfield'. This 'aesthetic construct' in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* demands a similar interpretative leap from its sixteenth century audience to that expected of a modern cinema audience.[44] Both mediums rely on the audience's collusion or complicity, on their familiarity with a specific set of theatrical or cinematic conventions.

By interpreting early modern drama through the lens of film, I hope to suggest that the "key" to understanding these exciting plays is not necessarily to be found buried deep within the historical archives but rather that the ability to interpret visual codes lies innate within us, just it did for Elizabethan playgoers. Film studies has a lot to teach students of early modern culture, not only does it provide us with a basis on which to construct our own visual methodology, it also encourages us to break away from a purely-text based interpretation of drama. Furthermore, contemporary theoretical discourse on cinema, specifically that pertaining to special effects, provides an exciting interpretative model for work on early modern dramatic spectacle. In their recent work, Michele Pierson and Angela Ndalianis have

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[42] Iain Wright, "Come like shadowes, so depart': The Ghostly Kings in *Macbeth*', in *The Shakespeare International Yearbook* 6, ed. Peter Holbrook (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 216.

[43] Lavin, ed., *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, sig. xvii; G. E. Bentley, *The Development of English Drama* (New York, 1950), pp. 61-2.

[44] Brian Walsh, "Deep Prescience': Succession and the Politics of Prophecy in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay'*, *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 23 (2010), p. 73.

contemplated the spectacular nature of film, arguing that 'the pursuit of novelty, innovation, and invention that ideally characterizes visual effects production [...] answers a cultural demand for the aesthetic experience of wonder'.[45] Building on the work of Michele Pierson and Angela Ndalianis, this thesis will use film to set the interrogative agenda for my exploration of the early modern aesthetic experience of wonder.

Finally, a word about structure. It should be made clear from the outset that this is not a chronological reassessment of Greene's plays. This is partly for practical reasons. The composition dates of Greene's plays are uncertain and as a consequence the order of composition is profoundly unstable. But this is also a question of methodological stance. Adherence to chronology can frequently encourage commentators to make sweeping generalisations regarding the progression of a dramatist's career. This thesis will prioritise thematic links over chronological order, moving from play to play, in order to consider the intertextual resonances of the various stage properties and visual effects.

My opening chapter will try to establish Greene's dramatic canon and assess the critical reception of Greene's plays. Drawing on material from Greene's entire oeuvre, Chapter Two will outline my methodological and conceptual approach. Launching into my detailed studies of specific spectacles, Chapter Three focuses on Thomas Lodge and Robert Greene's collaborative effort, the biblical drama *A Looking Glass for London and England* (c. 1588), which depicts the Prophet Jonah's struggle to encourage the inhabitants of Nineveh to repent their sins. Half way through the play, a hell mouth stage property is used to represent a whale when the Prophet Jonah is *'cast out of the whale's belly upon the stage'* (*LG*.

[45] Michele Pierson, *Special Effects: Still in Search of Wonder* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 168; Angela Ndalianis, *Neo-Baroque Aesthetics and Contemporary Entertainment* (London: The MIT Press, 2005). For further theoretical discourse on film special effects, see Leger Grindon, 'The Role of Spectacle and Excess in the Critique of Illusion', *PostScript* 13.2 (1994), pp. 35-43; John Brosnan, Movie Magic: The Story of Special Effects in the Cinema (New York: Plume, 1976).

IV.i.1460-1). Focusing on this remarkable stage property, this chapter seeks to emphasise the commercial appeal of this biblical drama.

Focusing on another stage property, Chapter Four will explore the melodramatic and sensational potential of the tomb stage property in Greene's *James IV* (c. 1590). Despite being described as a *'Scottish Historie'* on the title-page of the 1598 edition, the play frequently reverts to the world of Romance; hence rather than depicting James's death 'at Flodden', the play is resolved with festivity.[46] Examining the apparent tension between the play's two presenters, I want to propose that Bohan, a cynical Scot, and Oberon, the King of the Fairies, proffer two distinct, but not mutually exclusive, ways of conceiving of and interpreting theatrical spectacle.

Completing my study of spectacular stage properties, Chapter Five examines the symbolic significance of the brazen head, which appears in two of Greene's plays: *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* (c. 1587) and *Friar Bacon and Friar Bacon* (c. 1589). In *Alphonsus*, the Prophet Mohammed speaks from within the brazen head and prophesies the future to the Turkish court, while in *Friar Bacon* we are told that the head 'shall unfold strange doubts', 'read a lecture in philosophy' and function as an aid to scholarship (ii.25-6). In both plays, the brazen head becomes an object of excessive or supreme devotion as either a religious idol or a secular deity. The brazen head is perceived as 'monstrous' not simply because it is a source of horror or astonishment but because it represents the misplaced veneration or worship of something other than God.

Turning away from stage properties, my final two chapters look at how Greene exploited specific stage conventions. Turning my attention towards Greene's *Orlando Furioso* (c. 1591), I will argue that the figure of Orlando Furioso bequeathed an enduring legacy to early modern theatrical discourse, contributing to the convention of the mad poet,

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[46] *The Scottish historie of James the fourth [...]* (London, 1598), sig. A2.

which would be replicated and parodied by a new generation of dramatists. Orlando's behaviour, which rapidly alternates between that of a madman and that of a poet, forces the audience to contemplate the link between the mania of the mentally ill and the melancholia of the creative genius. Ridiculing the concept of *furor poeticus,* Greene's play interrogates the belief that great writers are divinely inspired by God, through ecstatic revelation.

My final chapter will explore the aesthetics of violence in *Selimus.* A relatively recent addition to the Greene canon, *Selimus* depicts the rise of an anti-hero, amidst a cycle of brutal violence. In 1881, Grosart attributed *Selimus* to Robert Greene, an attribution externally supported by Robert Allot's *England's Parnassus*.[47] I have chosen to conclude my study with *Selimus* because this play seems to draw together many of the concerns addressed in previous chapters and, as I argue, it is one of Greene's most intensely self-reflexive plays. My reading of this play posits Selimus as a surrogate playwright. Indeed, the semiotics of dismemberment carry profound meta-theatrical implications for the play as a whole; the trope of mutilation allows Greene to interrogate the concept of artistic autonomy.

As well as addressing practical staging considerations, each chapter will trace the literary origins of Greene's use of a specific spectacle or stage convention, examine the way in which the visual device interacts thematically with the metaphors and motifs in the play and explore the afterlife of the stage spectacle. Engaging purposefully with anachronism as an enabling mode of linking old and new, this thesis will seek to emphasise the relevance of Greene's drama to today's world, a relevance that more stridently historical theoretical approaches would seek to deny it. Just as historicist criticism frequently begins with a historical anecdote, each individual play study will begin with a film analogy, which will set

[47] For further discussion of the authorial attribution of *Selimus*: Daniel J. Vitkus ed., *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); Kenneth Muir, 'Who wrote *Selimus*?, in *Proceeding of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society,* Vol. VI, Part 6, (1946) pp. 373-76; Nadia Mohamed Riad, ed., *A Critical Old-Spelling Edition of The Tragicall Raigne of Selimus*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis (Ontario, 1994); Irving Ribner, 'Greene's Attack on Marlowe: some light on *Alphonsus* and *Selimus*', in *Studies in Philology*, 52, (1955), pp. 162-71.

the interrogative agenda for the chapter. The anecdote, as Joel Fineman has outlined, offers 'the narration of a singular event', which 'uniquely refers to the real'.[48] For new historicists, anecdotes offer a method for bridging the apparent gap between history and literature; demonstrating a directly Foucaultian influence, new historicist essays frequently begin with real-life parables, short anecdotes embedded with far-reaching significance. Contemplating the reception of new historicism's seminal text *Renaissance Self-fashioning* (1980), Catherine Belsey argues that:

> [t]he pleasure of Greenblatt's anecdotes lies in the ingenuity with which he coaxes these apparently tangential materials to reveal aspects of works so familiar in another light that we virtually stopped seeing them.[49]

While Greenblatt's historical anecdotes are designed to liberate readers from their over-familiarity with Shakespearean drama, so that they can contemplate the plays afresh, my own modern cinematic anecdotes are designed to offer readers a common point of reference, so that they can contemplate this unfamiliar historical writer. Envisaging Greene as our contemporary, this thesis will seek to emphasise the relevance of Greene's spectacular drama to today's ocularcentric world.

A reappraisal of Greene's drama is long overdue. Robert Greene is an important Elizabethan dramatist whose powerful influence on early modern drama is still yet to be recognised. This is the first full-scale study of Greene's drama, offering a new perspective on one of Shakespeare's most exciting but most neglected literary predecessors – and it is to Greene's dramatic canon that we shall now turn.

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[48] Joel Fineman, 'The History of the Anecdote: Fiction and Fiction', in *The New Historicism*, ed. H. Aram Vesser (New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 56.
[49] Catherine Belsey, 'Historicizing new historicism', in *Presentist Shakespeares*, eds. Hugh Grady and Terence Hawkes (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 35.

1.

Robert Greene's Authorial Identity and Dramatic Canon

invidiam namque altera invidum, altera invidiosum facit

(Envy; one way it creates the envier, the other way the envied)

Marcus Fabius Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*.[1]

In the opening scenes of *Shakespeare in Love* (John Madden, 1998), a young William Shakespeare, short on cash and low on inspiration, swindles Philip Henslowe and Richard Burbage, selling his new comedy *Romeo and Ethel, the Pirate's Daughter* to both the Admiral's Men and the Chamberlain's Men.[2] Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard's story of fraud and deception does have some basis in fact; they have merely changed the name of the playwright involved. It was Robert Greene, not William Shakespeare, who sold a play to two rival companies. So why do the film's scriptwriters reassign this act of '[c]onny-catching' to Shakespeare?[3]

Shakespeare in Love presents us with two ways of envisaging Shakespeare's authorial identity. Early on in the film, Shakespeare is depicted as behaving like the notorious hack Robert Greene; incapable of original thought, Shakespeare is engrossed in commercial transactions and overshadowed by Marlowe. But after discovering his inspiration, in the form of his muse Viola de Lesseps, Shakespeare starts to transform into the great Bard, the cultural icon we all recognise. Locking himself away in his study, his compositional strategy becomes increasingly less collaborative. His reply to the question: 'Are you the author of the

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[1] *The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian*, trans. H.E. Butler, (London: W. Heinemann, 1939), Vol. IV, lines 21-3, p. 429.

[2] *Shakespeare in Love* (John Madden, 1998); Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard, *Shakespeare in Love: A Screenplay* (London: Faber, 1999).

[3] *The defence of Conny-catching* (London, 1592), sig. C3-C3ᵛ.

plays of William Shakespeare?' is now a self-assured 'I am'.[4] Ultimately Robert Greene provides Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard with an account of literary authorship, one marked with murky financial dealing, petty jealousies and collaboration, a model of literary authorship, which they show Shakespeare rejecting.

Shakespeare and Greene have come to be representative of two different ways of conceiving of authorship. In film and in various popular biographies, Shakespeare is frequently envisaged in romantic terms as a solitary genius, whose work is truly original, while Greene has come to represent the exact opposite; he is always envisaged a 'money-driven hack', not as an individual but as member of a group, whose work is intrinsically collaborative, rife with plagiarism and besmirched with the taint of commerciality.[5] Apparently unable to resist the temptation of 'reading Shakespeare's life as one of allegory and finding comments on it in his work', Jonathan Bate describes how Shakespeare learnt a valuable lesson from Greene's 'death in poverty'. Concluding that '[o]ne could not sustain a living as a full-time writer', Bate's Shakespeare refuses to repeat Greene's mistakes and turns his back on the grim commerciality of writing for the stage - if only momentarily - to pursue his lofty poetic ambitions and 'gain aristocratic or court patronage'.[6]

In *Foure letters* (1592), Harvey concluded that Greene was blighted by his 'greene wits' and that 'envy obviously deface[d]' his writing.[7] Greene's reputation, as Shakespeare's envious rival, has had a profound effect on the critical reception of both Shakespeare and Greene. Indeed, Greene's envious attack on Shakespeare in *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit* has

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[4] Richard Burt, '*Shakespeare in Love* and the End of the Shakespearean Academic and Mass Culture Constructions of Literary Authorship', in *Shakespeare, Film, Fin de Siècle*, eds. Mark Thornton Burnett and Romana Wray (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), pp. 203-231; Courtney Lehmann, '*Shakespeare in Love:* Romancing the Author, Mastering the Body', in *Spectacular Shakespeare: Critical Theory and Popular Cinema*, ed. Courtney Lehmann and Lisa S. Starks (Madison, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickenson University Press, 2002), p. 141.

[5] John Clark Jordan, *Robert Greene* (New York: Octagon Books, 1965), pp. 201-2; Kirk Melnikoff and Edward Gieskes, 'Reimagining Robert Greene', in *Writing Robert Greene*, eds. Kirk Melnikoff and Edward Gieskes (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 3.

[6] Jonathan Bate, *The Genius of Shakespeare* (London: Picador, 2008), pp. 14-20.

[7] Gabriel Harvey, *Foure letters and certaine sonnets* (London, 1592), sig. A2.

had a profound effect on his literary reputation.[8] In his popular biography of Shakespeare, Stephen Greenblatt argues that this anecdote points to an ongoing feud between Greene and Shakespeare; he even suggests that Shakespeare modelled the character Falstaff on Greene, in an act of private revenge. Nevertheless Greenblatt's biography overlooks one important detail - recent criticism now suggests that Greene might not have actually written the pamphlet in question - which casts more than a shadow of doubt over fanciful tales of envy and revenge.[9] The question of whether Greene did, or did not, insult Shakespeare is ultimately a distraction; it distracts critics from discussing Greene's plays on their own terms and on their own merits.

In this chapter, I want to argue that this story of envy functions as an allegory of authorial identity for literary critics. This anecdote, which appears in numerous literary critical introductions to Shakespeare's works, has cemented Shakespeare's reputation as a genius, while for Greene this spiteful reference to the great bard has ensured that he will only ever be regarded as Shakespeare's ignoble rival.[10] Greene and Shakespeare are trapped in a reciprocal relationship, with each figure relying on the other to formulate their identity. In Derridean terms, Greene is supplementary to Shakespeare; he is a prop – a supplement - to Shakespeare's identity and simultaneously a threat to that identity.[11] Ultimately this

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[8] *Greenes, groats-vvorth of witte [...]* (London, 1592), F1ˇ. For examples of how Greene's reference to 'an upstart crow' has been interpreted, see Andrew S. Cairncross, ed., *Henry VI, part 3* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1982), pp. xli-xliii; Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Shakespeare: Upstart Crow to Sweet Swan, 1592-1623* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2011), pp. 27-54.

[9] For recent work on the authorial attribution of *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit,* see D. Allen Carroll, ed., *Greenes Groatsworth of Wit, Brought with a Million of Repentance (1592)* (Binghampton, N.Y.: State University of New York, 1994); John Jowett, 'Johannes Factotum: Henry Chettle and *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit*', *Publications of the Bibliographical Society of America* 87:4 (1993), pp. 453-86.

[10] Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson and David Scott, eds., *The Arden Shakespeare: Complete Works* (Walton-on-Thames: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1998), p. 3; Jonathan Bate, and Eric Rasmussen, eds., *The RSC Shakespeare: William Shakespeare, Complete Works* (Basinstoke: Macmillan, 2007), pp. 13-18; Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett and William Montgomery, eds., *The Complete Works* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), p. xviii.

[11] Jacques Derrida, *Of grammatology*, trans. G. C. Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), pp. 144-45; Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: Athlone Press, 1981); Matthew Gumpert, *Grafting Helen: The Abduction of the Classical Past* (Wisconsin: the University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), pp. 43-57.

reciprocal relationship demonstrates the way in which authorial identity is never truly autonomous, rather it is a narrative construction which is always reliant on external forces.

Although this thesis is evidently an author-based study; it should be made clear from the outset that my primary focus of this chapter is reception not attribution. When I speak of “Greene”, I am not referring to the historical personage called “Robert Greene” but to a body of work which has come to be associated with a spectral figure formerly known as “Greene”. Adopting a seemingly paradoxical stance, particularly for a study with such a broadly authorial focus, the principal purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that the figure of “Greene the playwright” is not a fixed entity; it is a construct of critical response. Greene’s authorial identity was the product of a series of narratives, some generated by Greene himself as part of his strategy of self-presentation, and others imposed upon him after his death.[12] As a consequence, when we attempt to reconstruct the figure of Robert Greene ‘an author of plays’ all we find are a series of guises.[13] First there is Greene, Shakespeare’s envious rival, the man who was so eaten up with envy that he failed to recognise the emergence of one of the most gifted playwrights of all time. In quick succession, we become acquainted with Greene, London’s chief debauchee; we hear the tale of the nice university intellectual turned bad boy who, seduced by the bright lights of London, turned to wine, women and song. Then, we encounter the insecure hack, the literary drudge, who prostituted his art to the highest bidder. Finally, turning to Greene’s posthumous reputation, we meet Greene’s ghost, who continued to haunt London’s literary scene long after his death. The constantly shifting and insubstantial nature of Greene’s authorial identity, I want to argue, ensures not only his enduring appeal but also his ability to resist attempts to incorporate him into any specific canon of literature.

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[12] For a similar methodological approach to authorship, see Gillian Austen, *George Gascoigne* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008), pp. 6-21.
[13] Robert Greene, *The repentance of Robert Greene [...]* (London, 1592), sig. Cˇ.

This chapter will trace two different ways of conceiving of authorship: one which reads drama as an expression of a playwright's own individuality, the other as the product of collaborative social forces. While Jeffrey Masten argues that the process of playwriting was an intrinsically collaborative process and that the concept of the single, all-powerful author is an anachronism in this period, MacDonald P. Jackson has tried to resurrect the figure of the author, defiantly declaring that 'Renaissance writers were real people too'.[14] But rather than being mutually exclusive, I want to argue that these models of authorship are inseparably intertwined.

In Greene's prose romance *Penelope's Web* (pr. 1601) the narrator voices a moralistic attitude towards envy, instructing readers: 'envy not others state, / [t]he fruits of envy is envy and hate'.[15] Similarly in Thomas Dekker's court masque, *The Magnificent Entertainment* (1604), envy is represented as the mythological figure of Medusa with snakes for hair and a deadly gaze:

> Envy's infectious eyes have lost their sight,
> Her snakes (not daring to shoot-forth their strings
> Against such a glorious object) down she stings
> Their forks of venom into her own mouth[16]

Thus Dekker condemns envy as being self-destructive. The early modern attitude towards envy, however, could be very ambivalent. In his essay *Of Envy,* Francis Bacon makes a distinction between 'public' and 'private envy':

> There is yet some good in public envy, whereas in private, there is none. For public envy, is as an ostracism, that eclipseth men, when they grow too great. And therefore it is a bridle also to great ones, to keep them within bounds.[17]

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[14] MacDonald P. Jackson, 'Early Modern Authorship: Canons and Chronologies', in *Thomas Middleton and Early Modern Textual Culture: A Companion to the Collected Works,* eds. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 80.
[15] Robert Greene, *Penelopes vveb [...]* (London, 1601), sig. E1.
[16] Thomas Dekker, *The magnificent entertainment giuen to King Iames [...]* (London, 1604), sig. H4ˇ.
[17] Francis Bacon, *The essays, or councils, civil and moral [...]* (London, 1696), p. 22.

Hence, for Francis Bacon at least, envy could occasionally be a force for good in society.[18]

Envy propels the plot of Greene's play *Orlando Furioso* (c.1591). At the beginning of Act Two, a love-struck Orlando wanders through the forest, musing on the beauty of his paramour Angelica. But a wicked plot has been laid: the villain Sacripant has littered the forest with incriminating roundelays, which purport to be written by Medor, Orlando's rival for Angelica's affections. Assuming the worse, Orlando concludes that 'Angelica doth none but Medor love' and flies into a jealous rage (*OF*. II.i.704). But his envy inspires his creative faculties; incensed by Medor's poetry, Orlando composes a series of verses, which reflect on the 'base female sex' (*OF*.II.i.721). In this scene, Orlando's envy functions as a trope for literary creativity. Later in the play, however, Orlando contradicts this idea. He suddenly claims that his poetry is divinely inspired, suggesting that Mnemosyne, the Goddess of memory and mother of the muses has 'entertained a feast with' his 'brains' and 'tunes conceits' in his mind (*OF*. IV.ii.1266-69). Hence as he 'sits, / [m]aking of verses for Angelica', Orlando claims that he is wearing the 'badges of a poet laureate' (*OF*. IV.i.1177-8; MS. 242). Thus *Orlando Furioso* provides us with two different ways of conceiving of literary creativity, as either an earthly skill provoked by petty jealousies or alternatively as a divine gift bestowed upon us from above.[19]

This juxtaposition of individuals who experience feelings of rivalry such as envy (*phthonos*), emulation (*zelos*) and indignation (*nemesis*) and those who were devoid of such emotions can be traced back to Ancient Greek philosophy. Aristotle and Plato both wrote

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[18] For further discussions of envy in the early modern period, see Lynn S. Meskill, *Ben Jonson and Envy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[19] For further discussion of the function of jealousy and envy in literature, see Rosemary Lloyd, *Closer and Closer Apart: Jealousy in Literature in Literature* (London: Cornell University Press, 1995); Michel Schneider, *Voleurs de Mots: Essai sur la plagiat, la pyschanalyse et la pensée* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985); Masha Belenky, *The Anxiety of Dispossession: Jealousy in Nineteenth-century French Culture* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2008); Steven Wagschal, *The Literature of Jealousy in the Age of Cervantes* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 2006); Malcolm Bowie, *Proust, Jealousy, Knowledge* (London: University of London, 1978); Helmut Schoeck, *Envy: A Theory of Social Behaviour* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1969).

about envy; pivotally they both addressed the question of whether or not envy was ethically or indeed morally justifiable. Their conclusions differed wildly. For Aristotle, envy could be good or bad depending on the individual. In *Rhetoric*, in the chapter on emulation, Aristotle condemns envy as morally reprehensible (2.11, 1388a 35-36), despite having claimed earlier that envy and indignation are sometimes justifiable when they incite individuals to succeed (2.9, 1387b 8-9).[20] As Christopher Gill explains, in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* '[r]ivalrous responses are seen as potentially virtuous even if they may also take a defective form'.[21] While for Plato, and indeed for Christian thinkers, rivalry could never be ethically justifiable. This divergence is the consequence of an important dichotomy, relating to what Plato and Aristotle thought constituted human happiness. Aristotle believed that human contentment demanded a combination of goods of soul (psyche) – moral, intellectual or mental virtues - and goods external to the soul – beauty, wealth, recognition or social status. By contrast Plato believed that happiness was reliant purely on the attainment of goods of the soul. A. W. H. Adkins and J. M. Bryant have suggested that Plato's ultimate rejection of Aristotelian thinking on rivalry provoked some pivotal socio-political changes in Greece. They document a shift away from the polis system, which actively encouraged competition between individuals, towards a more 'pervasive individualism or interiorisation' as 'people turned towards 'internal values' rather than engaging in competitive rivalry for political power, status and material wealth within the community'.[22]

Aristotle and Plato's differing attitudes toward rivalry, as Christopher Gill explains, are symptomatic of their divergent ideas regarding human happiness.[23] For Aristotle, human

[20] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, trans. George A. Kennedy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 161, 157.
[21] Christopher Gill, 'Is Rivalry a Virtue or a Vice?', in *Envy, Spite and Jealousy: The Rivalrous Emotions in Ancient Greece* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2003), p. 35.
[22] Gill, 'Is Rivalry a Virtue or a Vice?', p. 37; David Konstan, *Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2006).
[23] Gill, 'Is Rivalry a Virtue or a Vice?', pp. 32, 47; Peter Walcott, *Envy and the Greeks: A Study of Human Behaviour* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1978).

happiness is limited, hence rivalry between individuals is seen as distinctly worthwhile; while for Plato, because happiness is a divine gift, it is unlimited, hence competition is pointless. Thus it is only when Orlando decides that his creative gift comes from the Gods that he can forget about his pretty rivalries and stop comparing his poetry with that of Medor.

The pivotal thing about envy is that it always involves more than one person. As William L. Davidson explains, envy 'is aimed at persons, and implies dislike of one who possesses what the envious man himself covets or desires, and a wish to harm him'.[24] Hence, as the sociologist Helmet Schoeck outlines, '[e]nvy is a drive which lies at the core of man's life as a social being', it only occurs when 'two individuals become capable of mutual comparison'.[25] In A *Theatre of Envy* (1991), the literary critic and anthropologist Rene Girard coined the phrase 'mimetic desire', in order to describe the way in which human desire is never truly autonomous but is always formulated by the desires of others, through a process of 'envious emulation':

> Like mimetic desire, envy subordinates a desired *something* to the *someone* who enjoys a privileged relationship with it. Envy covets the superior *being* neither the someone nor something alone, but the conjunction of the two, seems to possess. Envy involuntarily testifies to a lack of *being* that puts the envious to shame[26]

Rather than difference being the cause of conflict, as is commonly assumed, Girard argues the exact opposite, suggesting that 'imitation' paradoxically draws people together while simultaneously pulling them apart.[27] Envy is a cultural construct, which functions as a tool of self-identification through negation. Thus in Sir Philip Sidney's sonnet sequence *Astrophil and Stella* (pr. 1591), the narrator's description of the diligence of his envious rivals serves to bolster his own claim to process supreme 'eloquence':

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[24] W. L. Davidson, 'Envy and Emulation', in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings, Vol. V (New York: T & T. Clark, 1912), pp. 321-323, quoted in Helmet Schoeck, *Envy: A Theory of Social Behaviour* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1969), p. 15.
[25] Schoeck, *Envy: A Theory of Social Behaviour*, p. 1.
[26] René Girard, *A Theatre of Envy* (New Malden: Inigo, 2000), p. 4.
[27] *Ibid,* p. 3.

> Envious wits what hath been mine offence,
> That with such poisoned care my wits you mark,
> That to each word, nay sigh of mine you hark,
> As grudging me my sorrows eloquence?[28]

The envier and envied are in a reciprocal relationship; they depend on one another to formulate their identity. Shakespeare is Shakespeare because he is not Greene, while Greene is Greene because he is not Shakespeare. Furthermore, envy always entails some kind of moral or value judgement, 'a consciousness of inferiority to the person envied'.[29] Therefore, if Greene was envious of Shakespeare, we are necessarily implying that Greene is inferior to Shakespeare. The accusation and identification of envy is a central mechanism by which critics designate literary value.

A similar dichotomy, concerning the origins of artistic creativity, is presented in Pushkin's second of his four little tragedies, *Mozart and Salieri* (c.1830).[30] Like Robert Greene, the only reason anyone remembers Salieri is by way of his association with a far greater artist. Salieri's phrase 'jealous love' encapsulates his feelings towards his rival; Salieri despises Mozart and adores him in equal measure. Salieri's envy constructs not only his conception of himself as envier but also our own conception of Mozart as a genius. Mozart is a genius because he is not envious; he has no one to envy because his work is beyond comparison. Unlike Salieri, whose work is always evaluated in relation to someone else's creativity, Mozart stands alone, he is autonomous. Mozart and Salieri represent two different ways of conceiving of artistic creativity. Pushkin's Mozart is a Romantic genius,

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[28] Sir Philip Sidney, *Astrophel and Stella* (London, 1591), p. 43.
[29] Davidson, 'Envy and Emulation', pp. 321-323, quoted in Helmet Schoeck, *Envy: A Theory of Social Behaviour* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1969), p. 15.
[30] Alexander Pushkin, *The Complete Works of Alexander Pushkin: Boris Godunov and Other Dramatic Works,* trans. James Falen (Norfolk: Milner and Company Ltd., 1999), pp. 215-227; Alexander Pushkin, *Pushkin on Literature*, ed. Tatiana Wolff (London: Athlone, 1986); Robert Reid, *Pushkin's Mozart and Salieri: Themes, Character, Sociology* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995); Andrew Kahn, 'Pushkin's Lyric Identities', in *The Cambridge Companion to Pushkin,* ed. Andrew Kahn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 26-4.

individual, autonomous and divinely inspired, while Salieri is an envious emulator, he is one of community of artists and his creative output is defined by social forces. The imagined relationship between Shakespeare and Greene works in precisely the same way.

In *Four letters and Certain Sonnets* (1592), Gabriel Harvey sourly refers to Greene as 'him that sought fame by defamation of other[s] but hath utterly discredited himself'.[31] In a perverse twist of fate, Greene, the man who made his name by criticising the work of others, has been subjected to a stream of vicious criticism from modern literary critics. In *Rival Playwrights* (1991), James Shapiro wryly comments on the 'irony' 'that Greene', who he believes borrowed more than his fair share of Marlowe's 'feathers', 'would warn Marlowe to watch out for the intrusive emulation of that 'upstart crow'.[32] As this example suggests, Greene's supposed criticism of Shakespeare has frequently come back to haunt his own literary reputation.

When Greene is not being overshadowed by Shakespeare he is generally being unfavourably compared to Marlowe. In Anthony Burgess's *A Dead Man in Deptford* (1994), a fictional account of the events which led up to Marlowe's murder in the infamous tavern brawl, Greene, as usual, is cast as the villain of the piece. Compared with the dashing spy and part-time poet Marlowe, Burgess's Greene is portrayed as 'profane', 'drunken', malicious and overwhelmingly bitter. Wearing a cloak of 'pitiful green, much spotted, of a duck's turd', Burgess's Greene lives up to his name; as Kit suggests, Greene is suffering from a vicious case of "green-eyed jealousy":

> Jealousy makes for poor writing. There was a sob of self-pity on every page. Poor Greene that lacks the gift. You stole too much from my *Tamburlaine*, a foul fault.[33]

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[31] Harvey, *Foure letters and Certaine Sonnets [...]*, p. 5.
[32] James Shapiro, *Rival Playwrights* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), p. 33; Richard Helgerson, *The Elizabethan Prodigals* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).
[33] Anthony Burgess, *A Dead Man in Deptford* (London: Vintage, 1994), pp. 121, 147.

Melodramatic though it might be, this sequence is not without a literary basis. It comes directly from Greene's pamphlet *Perimedes the Blacksmith* (1588), in which the narrator (supposedly Greene) not only viciously criticises Marlowe but also threatens to outdo him. The text alludes to Greene being mocked onstage for having written a play – which most critics, including J. Churton Collins, Thomas H. Dickson and Kenneth Muir, tentatively identify as *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* (c.1587) - featuring a protagonist similar to 'that Atheist Tamburlaine', whose language was guilty of 'daring God out of heaven'.[34]

This anecdote from pamphlet literature has had far-reaching consequences, with critics frequently reading Greene's plays alongside those of Marlowe in an attempt to find traces of the private antagonism between the two men. Arguing that *Alphonsus* is a poor imitation of *Tamburlaine*, James Shapiro endorses 'the subjugation of Greene's genius to Marlowe', suggesting that the complexities of *Tamburlaine* 'seems to have confused Greene', that he 'failed to grasp' the play and concluding that Greene 'entered Marlowe's dramatic universe without quite having his bearings'.[35] By painting Greene as an envious rival of Marlowe, Shapiro is able to make value statements by directly comparing Greene's plays with those of Marlowe. Thus, Shapiro assumes, if Greene is envious of Marlowe, Greene's plays are not as good Marlowe's plays.

Just as Greene's reputation as Shakespeare's embittered rival can encourage critics to search for evidence of this private antagonism in Greene's writing, the notorious tales of Greene's immoral behaviour incite us to draw correspondences between Greene's life and his work. Never generous with his compliments, Gabriel Harvey paints a vivid picture of Greene's debauched lifestyle:

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[34] J. Churton Collins, ed., *The Plays and Poems of Robert Greene* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), p. 74; Thomas H. Dickson, ed., Robert Greene (London, 1911), p. xxxiv-xxxv; Kenneth Muir, 'Robert Greene as Dramatist', *Essays on Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama*, ed. Richard Hosley (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), p. 45; Greene, *Perimedes the blacke-smith [...]* (London, 1588), sig. A3.

[35] Shapiro, *Rival Playwrights*, pp. 32-3; Una Ellis-Fermor, *Christopher Marlowe* (London, 1926).

> who in London hath not heard of his dissolute, and licentious living [...]; his fine cozening of jugglers, and finer juggling with cozeners; his monstrous swearing, and horrible forswearing; [...] his other scandalous, and blasphemous raving; his riotous and outrageous surfeiting; [...] his infamous resorting to the Bankside, Shoreditch, Southwark, and other filthy haunts; his obscure lurking in basest corners;[36]

Harvey's account of Greene, with the hyperbole, alliteration and repetition characteristic of the euphuistic style, transforms Greene into a literary device, into a character straight out of the conny-catching pamphlets. Greene's reputation as a debauchee and subsequent repentant sinner serves a pivotal function in modern literary criticism. It invites more conservative critics to read Greene within the archetypal narrative of the reformed prodigal and, consequently, to read Greene's work in purely moralistic terms.

This penchant for trying to draw correspondences between Greene's life and his work stems, more often than not, from Greene's pamphlet literature, which is usually categorised as autobiography. Greene's name might adorn his pamphlets and the narrator of *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit* might encourage his readers to 'suppose' that Greene is 'the said Roberto' but we would be foolish to assume that the pamphlets are truly autobiographical.[37] Roberto and Robert are not the same person. Just like his predecessor George Gascoigne, Greene assumed the persona of the reformed prodigal, in a hasty reworking of the story of the prodigal son, in order to attract potential patrons.[38]

Typically this biographical approach to the pamphlets is then projected onto the plays. Reading the 'belated morality drama' *A Looking Glass for London and England* in the context of Greene's repentance pamphlets, Waldo F. McNeir assumes that both the play and the pamphlets are expressions of Greene's own desire for spiritual atonement and of his desire to reject his debauched life style. Thus, he concludes, *A Looking Glass* must represent

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[36] Harvey, *Foure letters, and certaine sonnets [...]*, pp. 9-10.
[37] Greene, *Greenes, groats-vvorth of witte [...]*, sig. E3.
[38] Austen, *George Gascoigne*, pp. 14-17.

'the beginnings of Greene's "reformed" work'.[39] But Greene's repentance, like Chaucer's centuries earlier, is just another rhetorical posture.

More recently, Kirk Melnikoff and Edward Gieskes's recent essay collection *Writing Robert Greene* (2008), has considered 'Greene's writing for the pamphlet market and the theatrical market as a continuum'.[40] These essays focus on how Greene's drama contributed to the emergent ideas of authorship. Thus much of the volume concerns itself with Greene's 'self-awareness' and with his 'sense of himself as a writer'.[41] Hence Bryan Reynolds and Henry S. Turner argue that 'the figure of Friar Bacon in Greene's play should be understood as an avatar for Greene's own transitional position among several overlapping social fields'.[42] While it would be foolhardy to deny that *Friar Bacon* contains elements of the meta-theatrical, the practice of interpreting plays purely as an expression of the playwright's own authorial identity risks divorcing drama from its theatrical context. This anxiety ultimately marks my point of deviation from the work of Kirk Melnikoff and Edward Gieskes; it is only when we start to read his drama as drama, and judge it on its own merits, that we be able to resurrect Robert Greene's dramatic oeuvre from the obscurity in which it currently languishes.

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[39] Waldo F. McNeir, 'The Date of *A Looking Glass for London'*, in *Notes and Queries* CC (1955), pp. 282-3.

[40] *Writing Robert Greene*, ed. Kirk Melnikoff and Edward Gieskes (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008). For further discussion of this critical volume, see John Blakely, 'Review of Kirk Melnikoff and Edward Gieskes, (eds.), *Writing Robert Greene* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008)', *Notes and Queries* 57 (2010), pp. 253-4; Frank Ardolino, 'Review of Kirk Melnikoff and Edward Gieskes, (eds.), *Writing Robert Greene* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008)', in MSAN 28:2/29:1 (2009), pp. 11-12; Jeremy Dimmick, 'Review of Kirk Melnikoff and Edward Gieskes, (eds.), *Writing Robert Greene* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008)', Review of English Studies 60 (2009), pp. 488-90; Rosemary Kegl, 'Review of Kirk Melnikoff and Edward Gieskes, (eds.), *Writing Robert Greene* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008)', Renaissance Quarterly 62 (2009), pp. 304-6; Andrew Hadfield, 'Review of Kirk Melnikoff and Edward Gieskes, (eds.), *Writing Robert Greene* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008)', *Times Literary Supplement*, 14th November, 2008.

[41] Kirk Melnikoff and Edward Gieskes, 'Introduction: Re-imagining Robert Greene', in *Writing Robert Greene*, eds. Kirk Melnikoff and Edward Gieskes (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 13.

[42] Bryan Reynolds and Henry S. Turner, 'From *Homo Academicus* to *Poeta Publicus*: Celebrity and Tranversal Knowledge in Robert Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (c. 1589)', in *Writing Robert Greene*, eds. Kirk Melnikoff and Edward Gieskes (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 77.

The taint of commerciality has also had a resounding impact on Greene's literary legacy. Rather than testifying to his success, the popularity of Greene's work has encouraged critics to type-cast Greene as a money-driven hack, who tailored his literary output to the demands of the public.[43] In his book-length study of Greene, John Clark Jordan dismisses Greene's work specifically on the grounds of its commerciality:

> Whenever he saw an opportunity, in season or out, he was ready in a moment with something for the market. Hasty in publication, and desiring nothing beyond the immediate sale, Greene took no thought to finishing his work to a degree of perfection, or for removing from it flaws that might easily have been removed [...] Much of it, consequently is slip-shod.[44]

Despite the fact that all playwrights in this period were forced to work quickly and to respond to the demands of the public, Greene is singled out for criticism and is frequently and derogatively labelled a hack and a plagiarist. Significantly these criticisms arise not from a contextualised account of Greene's work but from the various attacks made on Greene by his enemies after his death in 1592. In *Four Letters and Certain Sonnets* (1592), Gabriel Harvey condemned Greene for stealing material from other writers:

> Even Guicciardini's silver history and Ariosto's golden cantos grow out of request, and the Countess of Pembrooke's *Arcadia* is not greene enough for queasy stomachs but they must have Greene's *Arcadia* and I believe most eagerly longed for Greene's *Faerie Queene*. Oh strange fancies. Oh monstrous newfangledness.[45]

While Guicciardini and Ariosto are likened to silver and gold - to precious metals which stand the test of time - Harvey puns on Greene's name to suggest that his work is somehow immature, undeveloped or unrefined, and like organic material it can 'grow' according to demand. It is this, the conspicuous commerciality of Greene's work, which vexes Harvey most of all. But if Greene was a plagiarist he was not the only one. Ironically, Harvey was

[43] Lori Humphrey Newcomb, *Reading Popular Romance in Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).
[44] John Clark Jordan, *Robert Greene* (New York: Octagon Book, 1965), pp. 201-2.
[45] Harvey, *Foure letters and certaine sonnets [...]*, p. 29.

himself frequently criticised for mimicking Lyly's Euphuistic style. The same can be said of "Greene's" famous attack on Shakespeare. In *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit* (1592), Greene berated Shakespeare as a plagiarist, for being 'an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers'.[46] In his pamphlet *The Mirror of Modesty* (1584), Greene himself fears that his patron 'may think' that he 'play[s] like Aesop's crow, which decked himself with other's feathers'.[47] Like the proverbial pot calling the kettle black, Greene's supposed attack on Shakespeare amounts to unconscious hypocrisy.

Greene's reputation as a hack and a plagiarist, cultivated by contemporary critics, has had a long lasting appeal for both writers and critics. In Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, the mysterious Nick Greene, who is based partly on Robert Greene, makes a fleeting appearance. In Chapter Two, Orlando decides to abandon his literary ambitions after Greene plagiarises passages from his aristocratic tragedy 'The Death of Hercules' in one of his satires.[48] Greene's notoriety for plagiarism has important consequences for those trying to establish Greene's canon. Ironically, one of Greene's distinguishing characteristics - his habit of borrowing other people's feathers - is precisely what ensures we are ultimately unable to distinguish his writing from that of other playwrights.

Greene is generally credited with writing six plays: *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* (c. 1587), the lost play *Job* (c. 1586-1592), *A Looking Glass for London and England* (c. 1588), which he wrote with Thomas Lodge, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (c. 1589), *James IV* (c. 1590) and *Orlando Furioso* (c. 1591). Unfortunately none of these dates are certain and as a consequence any attempt to establish an order of composition is profoundly problematic.

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[46] *Greenes, groats-vvorth of witte [...]*, F1ᵛ.
[47] Robert Greene, *The myrrour of modestie [...]* (London, 1584), sig. *3.
[48] Virginia Woolf, *Orlando: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 56.

It is generally agreed, however, that *Alphonsus* is the earliest of Greene's surviving plays. J. A. Lavin suggests a composition date of 1587.[49] Alan C. Dessen agrees, arguing that the play's stage directions are 'couched in a vocabulary' 'typical of the 1580s and early 1590s'.[50] J. Churton Collins, however, suggests a date of 1591 because the play appears to be heavily indebted to Spenser's *Complaints* (1591).[51] However, it is possible that Greene could have seen Spenser's poem in an earlier manuscript form. Attributed to 'R.G.' on the title-page of the 1599 edition, the play was printed by Thomas Creede, who printed a large number of Greene's prose and plays, including *A Looking Glass* (1592), *Gwydonius* and *Mamilla* (1593), *Selimus* (1594), *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit* (1596), *James IV* (1598) and *Pandosto* (1614).[52] Described as a *'comical history',* the play traces the rivalry between Alphonsus, the disinherited heir of Aragon, and Belinus, the king of Naples. The play is not mentioned in the Stationers' Register, nor is it known whether an earlier edition may have perished.[53] In *Perimedes the Blacksmith* (1588), Greene alludes to having been mocked onstage for having written a play featuring a protagonist similar to 'that Atheist Tamburlan'; critics have generally identified this unsuccessful play as *Alphonsus, King of Aragon*.

Kirk Melnikoff and Edward Gieskes's *Writing Robert Greene* (2008) list *Job* in their apocrypha of Greene's works.[54] W. Carew Hazlitt and J. Churton Collins mistakenly claim that the lost play *The History of Job* was entered in the Stationers' Register in 1594.[55] No reference to the play appears in the Register. It seems likely that this error originated in

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[49] Lavin, ed., *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, p. xii.
[50] Alan C. Dessen, 'Robert Greene and the Theatrical Vocabulary of the Early 1590s', in *Writing Robert Greene*, eds. Kirk Melnikoff and Edward Gieskes (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 30.
[51] J. Churton Collins, ed., *The Plays and Poems of Robert Greene* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), p. 70.
[52] For further discussion of a possible link between Greene and Creede, see G. M. Pinciss, 'Thomas Creede and the Repertory of the Queen's Men, 1583-1592', *Modern Philology* 67 (1970), pp. 321-330.
[53] *The comicall historie of Alphonsus King of Aragon* (London, 1599)
[54] Kirk Melnikoff and Edward Gieskes, eds., *Writing Robert Greene: Essays on England's First Notorious Professional Writer* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 225; Alfred Harbage, ed. *Annals of English Drama, 975-1700* (London: Routledge, 1964), pp. 54-5.
[55] W. Carew Hazlitt, *A Manual for the Collector and Amateur of Old English Plays* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1966), p. 121; J. Churton Collins, ed., *The Plays and Poems of Robert Greene* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), Vol. I, pp. 43-44.

Stephen Jones's *Biographia Dramatica* (1812).[56] John Warburton's list of lost manuscripts is the sole authority for this play's existence. The Lansdowne manuscript (Mss. 807) catalogues the play as: 'His t. of Jobe by Rob. Green'. There is only one reference to the story of Job in Greene's other works; in *Greenes Vision* (1592), the narrator makes a passing reference to the 'devil that grudged at the sincerity of Job' .[57] W. W. Greg dismissed the attribution of the play to Greene. In his article of 1911 'The Bakings of Betsy', Greg argued that Warburton's reference to 'Rob. Green' was most likely an abbreviated version of 'S r Rob. le Green', an author who is listed earlier in the inventory ('Nothing Imposeble to love T. C. Sr. Rob. le Green') and whom Greg identifies as 'Le Grys'.[58] W. W. Greg also observes that *The History of Job* is frequently confused with a piece called *Job's Afflictions* written by R. Radcliffe, a biblical interlude of 1547 called *Jube the Sane* (ie. *Job the Saint*) and Daniel Baker's sacred poem of 1706, *The History of Job.* [59]

Combining sermon with drama, Robert Greene and Thomas Lodge's *A Looking Glass for London and England* dramatises the Prophet Jonah's struggle to incite the inhabitants of Nineveh to repent their sins. Along with George Peele's *David and Bethsabe* (c. 1593-4), *A Looking Glass* constitutes one of the final attempts to revive the tradition of biblical drama in England. Between 1590 and 1602 contemporary records show that at least thirteen biblical plays were commissioned. Only *A Looking Glass* and *David and Bethsabe* remain extant. [60] Alexander B. Grosart argues that the play was composed between 1588 and 1589, while

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[56] Stephen Jones, com., *Biographia Dramatica; or, a Companion to the Playhouse* (London: Longman, 1812), Vol. II, p. 346.
[57] Greene, *Greenes Vision* (London, 1592), sig. E2
[58] W. W. Greg, 'The Bakings of Betsy', *The Library*, 3rd series, 7.11 (1911), pp. 252, 230.
[59] *Ibid,* p. 259. For further discussion of Greene's lost play see my entry in the Lost Plays Database: Jenny Sager, 'Robert Greene (?), *The History of Job* (1586-93?): <http://www.lostplays.org/index.php/Job,_The_History_of> [accessed 28th June 2011]
[60] Annaliese Connolly, 'Peele's *David and Bethsabe*: Reconsidering Biblical Drama of the Long 1590s', *Early Modern Literary Studies* 16 (2007), pp. 1-20.

W.W. Greg suggests 1588-1590 as a likely date of composition.[61] It is unclear which theatre company was first to perform *A Looking Glass*. Henslowe's diary records four performances of the play by Lord Strange's Men at the Rose Theatre from 8th March to 7th June 1592. But Henslowe's diary does not mark *A Looking Glass to London and England* as a new play and there is some evidence to suggest that the play might have originally been part of the repertory of the Queen's Men. This assertion is supported by the fact Thomas Creede was the first printer of *A Looking Glass*. Creede printed a number of the Queen's Men's plays commonly attributed to Greene, including *Alphonsus, King of Aragon*, *James IV* and *Selimus*. There is also some internal evidence for this theory. In *A Looking Glass*, the clown is occasionally referred to by the name of Adam, which could possibly be a reference to an actor called John Adam, who was a member of the Queen's Men in 1588. But nevertheless, the claim that *A Looking Glass* was originally a Queen's Men play is still far from certain. The play was evidently successful; it was printed five times between 1594 and 1617. In *Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England* (2000), Ian Green includes the play in his list of 'steady sellers'.[62] The play was entered into the Stationers' Register by Thomas Creede on 5th March 1594. The 1594 and 1598 editions of the play were printed by Creede and sold by William Barley. On 14th August 1600, Creede transferred his rights the play to Thomas Pavier and in 1602 the third edition was printed by Creede and sold by Pavier. Only one copy of the fourth edition survives and unfortunately its title-page is missing. Laurie Maguire has used internal evidence to argue that this edition was printed in 1605 by William Jaggard.[63] The final quarto edition of the play was printed in 1617 by Bernard Alsop who had been in partnership with Creede and had inherited his stock. Robert Allot's anthology of

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[61] Alexander B. Grosart, ed., *The Life and Complete Works in Prose and Verse of Robert Greene* (London: Privately printed, 1881-83), Vol. I, p. 177; W. W. Greg, ed., *A Looking-Glass* (London: Malone Society, 1932), p. viii.
[62] Ian Green, *Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2000), appendix I.
[63] Laurie Maguire, 'The Printer and Date of Q4 *A Looking Glass for London and England*', *Studies in Bibliography* 52 (1999), pp. 155-60.

verse quotations, *England's Parnassus* (1600), includes five passages from the play, which further testifies to its popularity.[64]

Widely regarded as Greene's most significant play, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* has attracted the most critical attention. Described as an *'honorable history'* on the 1589 title page, *Friar Bacon* offers a mixture of comedy, romance and magic, which satirises the supercilious nature of contemporary academia. The play is accredited to Greene on the title pages of all of the three editions and two passages from the play are also attributed to Greene in Robert Allot's *England's Parnassus*. The play was printed by Adam Islip in 1594 and Elizabeth Allde in 1630. The patriotic atmosphere of the play suggests a date after the defeat of the Spanish Armada in July 1588. F. G. Fleay has argued that the play was composed in 1589, based on Prince Edward's comment that 'next Friday is Saint James [Day]'. In 1589, St. James's Day did fall on a Friday.[65] As Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean have clarified, the play was definitely part of the repertory of the Queen's Men.[66]

Greene's *James IV* (c. 1590) is also frequently linked to the repertory of the Queen's Men.[67] Despite being described as a *'Scottish history'*, the play frequently reverts to romance; rather than concluding with James's death *'at Flodden'* at the title page promises, the play is resolved with festivity.[68] The play can be confidently attributed to Greene; he is clearly named as the play's author on the title-page of the 1598 edition. Thomas Whitfield Baldwin dates the play at 'not later than 1590, hardly later than the summer'.[69]

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[64] Allot, *Englands parnassus [...]* (London, 1600), pp. 155, 164, 240, 242, 361-2.
[65] Frederick Gard Fleay, *A Biographical Chronicle of the English Drama 1559-1642* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1891), Vol. I, pp. 264-5.
[66] Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen's Men and their Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 90.
[67] Ibid, p. 92.
[68] *The Scottish historie of Iames the fourth [...]* (London, 1598), sig. A2.
[69] Thomas Whitfield Baldwin, *On the Literary Genetics of Shakespeare's Plays 1592-1594* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1959), p. 66.

Published in 1594 'as it was played before the Queen's Majesty', Greene's *Orlando Furioso,* a romantic comedy, is loosely based on Ludovico Ariosto's epic poem. *Orlando Furioso* was first printed by Cuthbert Burbie for John Danter in 1594 and it was reprinted in 1599. The play dramatises the romance between Orlando, the nephew of Charlemagne, and Angelica, the Emperor of Africa's daughter. Critics generally conclude that the play was written between 1588 and 1591.[70] *Orlando Furioso* contains an allusion to the Armada and includes lines which also appear in George Peele's *Old Wives Tale* (1591). It is, however, difficult to establish the direction of the influence. As the *Defence of Conny-catching* (1592) testifies, *Orlando Furioso* was sold to both the Queen's Men and the Admiral's Men. Records show that Lord Strange's Men also performed *Orlando Furioso* at the Rose on 22nd February 1592.[71] Edward Alleyn's part for the role of Orlando is still in existence, preserved at Dulwich College.[72] Although the manuscript is incomplete, it consists of about two thirds of the actor's part of Orlando.[73] Written on strips of paper pasted together to form a continuous roll, the part was evidently copied out by a scribe who was experiencing some difficulties reading the manuscript from which he was copying. He made several transcription mistakes and occasionally left gaps in the text when he was unable to decipher the manuscript. Alleyn later filled in these gaps, where possible, and added a number of stage directions. As Tiffany Stern has demonstrated, this manuscript is of unique importance

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[70] L. H. Newcomb, 'Greene, Robert (*bap.* 1558, *d.* 1592)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11418, accessed 13 March 2012]

[71] Foakes, ed., *Henslowe's Diary*, p. 16.

[72] Dulwich MSS 1, Article 138, folio 8r.

[73] W.W. Greg, *Two Elizabethan Stage Abridgements: The Battle of Alcazar and Orlando Furioso* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1922); Michael Warren, 'Greene's *Orlando*: W.W. Greg *Furioso*, in *Textual Formations and Reformations*, ed. Laurie E. Maguire and Thomas L. Berger (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1998), pp. 67-91; B. A. P. Van Dam, 'Alleyn's Player's Part of Greene's *Orlando Furioso*, and the Text of the Q of 1594', *English Studies* 11 (1929) pp. 182-203, pp. 209-20.

to the study of early modern theatre history because it 'gives some idea about just how much (and how little) a Renaissance actor had to go on'.[74]

In contrast to these six plays, the attribution of *John of Bordeaux* (c.1590-94)*, Selimus* (c. 1591-4) and *George a Greene* (1587-93) will always be more tentative. The MS. of *John of Bordeaux or the Second Part of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* at Alnwick Castle has been attributed to Greene primarily because it appears to be a sequel to *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*.[75] Although the manuscript's provenance is unknown, *John of Bordeaux* is now bound with the anonymous seventeenth century play, *The Wasp*.[76] In 1936, W. L. Renwick produced a transcript of the manuscript, which he called *John of Bordeaux* 'for the sake of distinction'.[77] The text is an annotated playbook, with insertions in another hand and revisions by at least three hands, including a passage written by Henry Chettle. The text is in a fragmentary state; the play is missing two scenes, includes two substantial lacunae (one filled in by Chettle the other left blank) and the final page of the manuscript is so badly mutilated that play's finale is virtually unreadable.[78] In 1946, Harry Hoppe argued that the manuscript was an example of memorial reconstruction, a claim which Laurie E. Maguire has since disputed.[79] As Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean have observed the 'manuscript records the name of John Holland, an actor known to have been with Strange's Men'; thus they conclude that while Friar Bacon was performed by the Queen's Men, *John of Bordeaux*

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[74] Tiffany Stern, *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 61.
[75] Waldo F. McNeir, 'Robert Greene and *John Bordeaux'*, *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 44 (1949), pp. 781-801.
[76] MS. 507 *The Waspe*, and *John of Bordeaux or the Second Part of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, Alnwick Castle Library.
[77] W. L. Renwick, ed., *John of Bordeaux* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935), p. viii.
[78] Waldo F. McNeir, 'Reconstructing the conclusion of *John of Bordeaux'*, *Modern Language Association* 66 (1951), pp. 540-543.
[79] Harry R. Hoppe, '*John of Bordeaux*: A Bad Quarto that Never Reached Print', in *Studies in Honor of A. H. R. Fairchild, University of Missouri Studies* 21 (1946), pp. 119-32; Laurie E. Maguire, '(Mis)diagnosing Memorial Reconstruction in *John of Bordeaux*', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 11 (1999), pp. 114-128.

was performed by Lord Strange's Men.[80] *John of Bordeaux* depicts events at the court of Emperor Frederick II of Germany, who is hosting a visit from Friar Bacon. The more serious action of the play is occasionally interrupted by the comic scenes of alehouse banter. Picking up on the events of Friar Bacon and Friar, Vandermast and Friar Bacon continue to battle for supremacy. Frederick's amorous son, Ferdinand, falls in love with the wife of John of Bordeaux and attempts to win her with the aid of Vandermast's magic. Fortunately for Bordeaux, Bacon ultimately puts a stop to their evil plan and comes to the aid of the banished Rossalin. The authorship of *John of Bordeaux* has long been a matter of dispute. In the Malone Society Reprint Edition of 1936, W. L. Renwick concludes that 'Greene's authorship is on the whole probable'.[81] Waldo F. McNeir later corroborated this view, on the basis that 'it seems to have been customary for Elizabethan dramatists to write continuations or sequels, if any, of plays they had begun' and that 'Greene was in the habit of exploiting his successes for all they were worth'.[82] To further this argument, Waldo F. McNeir explored a number of verbal parallels in order to demonstrate 'the dependence of *John of Bordeaux* on its forerunner is close and suggestive'.[83] But despite their 'suggestive' nature, verbal parallels are insufficient ground to mount a case for authorship. Waldo McNeir's argument also fails to take account of the fragmentary nature of the play text. Ruling out the possibility of memorial reconstruction, Laurie Maguire offers another explanation for the fragmentary nature of the manuscript, possibly:

> [t]he scribe's exemplar was collaborative. If we suppose that two authors (say Greene and "young Juvenal, that biting satirist, that lastly with me together writ a comedy") had composed their designated scenes or plot strands – consecutively – on their own folio pages or scraps, then it could be a complicated task for a scribe to fit them together coherently.

[80] McMillin and MacLean, *The Queen's Men and their Plays*, p. 90.
[81] W. L. Renwick, p. xii.
[82] Waldo F. McNeir, 'Robert Greene and *John Bordeaux'*, pp. 781-2.
[83] Waldo F. McNeir, 'Robert Greene and *John Bordeaux'*, p. 782.

Maguire also goes on to suggest that collaborative authorship might explain the presence of the two lacunae in the manuscript:

> Perhaps other authors had promised to provide this material and blanks were left accordingly. Chettle filled in one (a plangent piece); was it someone else's task to fill in the other (perhaps in a different tone)?[84]

For my own part, while I adhere to the argument that *John of Bordeaux* is clearly an attempt to capitalise on the success of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, it seems more than likely that the play text was the result of a collaborative effort. Either Greene worked alongside a number of collaborators (perhaps in an attempt to speed up the process of composition and capitalise on the success of *Friar Bacon* before interest waned?), or perhaps after Greene's death Chettle came across a draft of *John of Bordeaux* and, after some substantial additions and corrections, sold the manuscript on (a moneymaking strategy that we suspect Chettle also deployed in regard to *Greenes Groatsworth of Wit*).[85] While I maintain that *John of Bordeaux* should be included in Greene's canon, the problematic nature of the play's attribution has led me to restrict my exploration of the play to my conceptual and methodological discussion of the aesthetics of spectacle in Chapter Two.

Although no entry for *Selimus* has been found in the Stationers' Register, we know that *Selimus* was first printed in 1594 by Thomas Creede. We can, therefore, be sure that *Selimus* was written no later than 1594. The textual parallels between *Tamburlaine* (per. 1587, pub. 1590) and *Selimus* suggest that the author of *Selimus* was influenced by Marlowe's play. Kenneth Muir has also argued that the play's author was acquainted with

[84] Laurie Maguire, p. 124.
[85] For further discussion of the substantial role played by Chettle in the composition of *Greenes Groatsworth*, see John Jowett, 'Johannes Factotum: Henry Chettle and *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit*', *Papers of the Bibliographic Society of America* 87 (1993), pp. 453-86.

another of Marlowe's plays, *Massacre at Paris* (1592).[86] At any rate, the connections with *Tamburlaine* seem to suggest a date later than 1587. Thus the influence of Marlowe and the date of printing affirm that the play was written between 1587 and 1594. The next piece of evidence comes from the title-page of the 1594 issue, which states that the play appears '[a]s it was played by the Queen's Majesties Players'.[87] If *Selimus* was performed by the Queen's Men, we can narrow the range of the composition dates substantially. Between 23th June 1592 and August 1594 the theatres were closed in London due to an outbreak of the plague. Although the Queen's Men proceeded to tour the provinces after the outbreak of plague in the city, their London career essentially ended in 1592.[88] This evidence would suggest that the play was written before 1592, although it is possible that *Selimus* was part of the company's touring repertory.[89] The attribution of the play to Greene also supports the hypothesis that *Selimus* was written before 1592 because Greene died in 1592.[90] There is also a large amount of internal evidence, which could assist us in narrowing the range of possible composition dates. The play's indebtedness to Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590) and Sidney's *Arcadia* (1590) would suggest a date later than 1590. But such an assertion could easily be discredited by the possibility that the playwright had access to these works in their manuscript form, previous to this date. The same argument could also discredit the use of the play's borrowings from Spenser's *The Ruins of Rome* (1591) to suggest a date of composition.[91] The playwright does, however, seem to have appropriated a sequence from Kyd's *Cornelia* (1594), so unless the playwright either copied this sequence from a performance or somehow got hold of the manuscript, this could push the date of composition back as far as 1594. If

[86] Kenneth Muir, 'Who wrote *Selimus*?', in *Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society: Literary and Historical Section* 6 (1949), pp. 373-4.
[87] *The First part of the Tragicall raigne of Selimus [...]* (London, 1594).
[88] Pinciss, p. 321.
[89] Nadia Mohamed Riad, *A Critical Old-Spelling Edition of The Tragicall Raigne of Selimus*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis (Queen's University, Ontario, 1994), p. 19.
[90] Gabriel Harvey, *Foure Letters, and Certaine Sonnets* (London, 1592), p. 5.
[91] Riad, p. 19.

this assertion is correct, the play must have been written by someone other than Greene, or alternatively, the play's manuscript was altered after his death. T. W. Baldwin and John Leo Murphy have attempted to use the reference on the title-page to the *'Tragical reign of Selimus, Sometime Emperor of the Turks, and grandfather to him that now reigns'* to assert that *Selimus* is an older play of around 1591 that has been revised.[92] But, as Nadia Mohamed Riad suggests, this would be to ignore the 'characteristic Elizabethan looseness regarding such terms of kinship (hence, writing 'grandfather' instead of 'great grandfather')'.[93] The play's relevance to Elizabethan politics suggests a later date. Paulina Kewes has argued that the poisoning of Bajazet by Abraham the Jew is 'an episode reminiscent of the supposed attempt on Elizabeth's life by her "Jewish" physician, Dr. Lopez'. Since the Lopez affair occurred during 1594, this would suggest that *Selimus* was written in the same year as it was printed. But Paulina Kewes also states that Greene's use of a Jewish poisoner could have been 'fortuitous' and could alternatively have been a catalyst for the play's printing in 1594.[94] A best estimate then, would suggest a date of between 1591-4.

The play depicts the life and achievements of Yavuz Sultan Selim, who reigned over the Ottoman Empire (1512-1520). Selim usurped his father Bayezid's throne and, it is supposed, had him murdered shortly afterwards. Like the Selimus of Greene's play, Selim put both his brothers and nephews to death after his accession. Selim's behaviour was in part motivated by the antagonisms between his predecessor Bayezid and his uncle Cem, and between Selim himself and his brother Ahmed. Greene's main historical sources were Paolo

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[92] John Leo Murphy, *Some Problems in the Anonymous Drama of the Elizabethan Stage* (Oklahoma: Ann Arbor, 1964), p. 78.
[93] Riad, p. 20.
[94] Paulina Kewes, 'The Elizabethan History Play: A True Genre?', in *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works, Vol. II: The Histories*, ed. Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard (Oxford: Blackwells, 2003), pp. 175-6.

Giovio's *A Short Treatise Upon the Turks Chronicles* (1546), which had been translated into English by Peter Ashton, and Thomas Newton's *A Notable History of the Saracens* (1575).[95]

There is only one edition of *Selimus*. The original 1594 edition, which was printed by Thomas Creede, was reissued some forty-four years later in 1638 by the booksellers John Crooke and Richard Serger with a new title-page, printed by John Okes. It seems most likely that Creede bought *Selimus* as part of a 'job-lot' from the Queen's Men. Creede printed *Selimus* during his second year of printing. Unfortunately, *Selimus* does not appear anywhere in the Stationers' Register, so we can only conjecture when he purchased it. Creede does not attribute the play to a specific playwright, but this is hardly unusual. Of the nine Queen's Men plays printed by Creede only three named an author.[96] During his first year, Creede had printed only two prose works, both of which were by Robert Greene: *Gwydonius* and *Mamilla* (1593). The title-pages for both these works are quite decorative and bear the attribution: 'By Robert Greene Master of Arts, in Cambridge'. The flowery border used on both of these title pages is the same ornament that appears on the first and last page of his edition of *Selimus*. But such similarities cannot be used to support the case for Greene's authorship of *Selimus,* as Creede had only just completed his training as a journeyman in 1593, so was unlikely to have many ornaments to choose from at this point in his career. Creede, however, must have had access to Greene's plays because he printed *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* (1599), which he attributed to 'R.G'. Creede also printed Greene's *Groats-worth of Witte* (1596), *The Scottish History of James the Fourth* (1598) and *Pandosto* (1614) as well as Greene's collaborative effort with Lodge: *A Looking Glass for London and England* (1592).

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[95] Thomas Newton's *A Notable Historie of the Saracens* (London, 1575) is a translation of Augustino Celio Curione's *Sarracenicae Historiae* (Basel, 1567), while Peter Ashton's *A Shorte treatise upon the Turkes Chronicles* (London, 1546) is a translation of Paolo Giovio's *Comentarii della cose de Turchi* (Florence, 1531).
[96] Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen's Men and their plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 94.

Creede's edition of *Selimus* is a testament to his relatively high standards as a printer. He was essentially a law-abiding printer, although in 1599 he is listed as being one of fourteen printers who were warned not to print a number of banned satires.[97] Such high standards, no doubt proved useful to Crooke, Serger and Okes when they succeeded in passing off the old play as a new one. In 1638, Crooke and Serger reissued the unsold stock of the 1594 edition with a new title-page. This title-page featured the initials 'T.G.' which were intended to fool the public into believing that the play was by Thomas Goffe (1591-1629), whose Turkish tragedies included titles such as *The Courageous Turke* (1618, pub. 1632) and *The Raging Turke* (1618, pub. 1631). The work of Goffe was popular around this time. This misattribution was deliberately fraudulent because even if Crooke and Serger had no knowledge of *England's Parnassus*, they would have known that Goffe could not possibly have been the author, as he would have been only four in 1594, when the play was first printed.

We now turn to the question of how the unsold copies of *Selimus* came to be reissued some forty-four years later. The most likely source of these unsold copies is via the printer of the new title-page, John Okes. John Okes's father was the notorious printer, Nicholas Okes. Peter Blayney documents that Thomas Creede frequently shared the printing of various books, with about twenty printers, one of whom was Nicholas Okes.[98] Nicholas Okes collaborated with Creede on Thomas Gibson's *The Blessing of a Good King,* STC 11841 (1614). The book was printed for Arthur Johnson and an entry in the Stationers' Catalogue, dated 31st May 1613, states: 'Okes pr[inted]. quires Aa-Hh'. Although there is no clear evidence to link Creede's printing of *Selimus* with Nicholas Okes, this is the only way of explaining the reappearance of *Selimus* some forty-four years later.

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[97] David L. Gants, 'Creede, Thomas', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography,* Oxford University Press, Sept 2004: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6666 > [accessed 8th September 2011]

[98] Peter Blayney, *The Texts of King Lear and Their Origins*, Vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 50.

The text itself does not carry any mark of the book-keeper or prompter's hand, as there are no anticipatory stage directions or references to doubling. [99] Instead there is evidence that suggests that an authorial copy may have been used. The stage directions are often descriptive or indefinite in nature and are often missing. In Scene Twenty Seven, there is no accompanying stage direction for Selimus's command to Hali 'Strangle her Hali'; whereas in Scene Twenty Two, the stage direction '*strangle him*' indicates the execution of Corcut. Another stage direction, again in Scene Twenty Two, also suggests that an authorial copy was being used as the basis for the printed text. In his edition, Vitkus gives two possible explanations for the stage direction '*Suppose the temple of Mahomet*' (*Sel.* 22):

> It was common in English texts describing Islamic culture to represent a mosque as a pagan temple, imagined as a shrine to the worship of the idol, Mahomet. The stage direction, 'Suppose,' indicates that the actors should be placed before a backdrop depicting such a 'temple,' or that the audience should imagine such a setting – perhaps both.[100]

Unfortunately, his first hypothesis is unsupported by the lists of stage properties in Henslowe's diary, although this clearly does not completely preclude such an explanation. Yet the majority of the texts to which he refers generally denote the setting of a temple through the use of stage properties, rather than by using a backdrop. Vitkus's second suggestion that the word *'Suppose'* is an indication that the audience should imagine such a setting is unconvincing, as a member of the audience would have no contact with the stage directions. The word *'Suppose'* might instead indicate that this text originates from an authorial text which was possibly not intended for the stage. There is after all no evidence to suggest that *Selimus* was performed. Another possible explanation is that this stage direction was added either by the compositor or the author to aid its readers. This is the only example

17 Linda McJannet, *The Voice of Elizabethan Stage Directions* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1999), p.111

[100] *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England*, ed. Daniel J. Vitkus (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), p. 146.

of '*Suppose'* being used as an imperative verb as part of a stage direction in early modern drama.[101]

The authorship of *Selimus* has long been open to question and is likely to remain so. In *Momus Triumphans* (1688), Gerard Langbaine accepted the 1638 attribution to Thomas Goffe and ironically assigned the play to Goffe on the same page that he deals with the work of Robert Greene.[102] Yet contrary to Grosart's suggestion that Langbaine was the first cataloguer to attribute *Selimus* to Goffe, one of the four sources of *Momus Triumphans*, Edward Phillips's *Theatrum Poetarum* (1675) also attributes *Selimus* to Thomas Goffe.[103] Both Phillips and Langbaine had been duped by the 1638 reissue, a suggestion supported by Langbaine's comment that he had seen an edition 'printed 4° *Lond.* 1638'.[104] Edmund Malone was the first to question the attribution of *Selimus* to Thomas Goffe, as the annotations in Bodleian copies suggest. Malone put a line through the attribution to '*T.G'* which appears on the 1638 title-page. He also chose to bind Mal. 226 (3) (1594) with Greene's *The Honourable History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bongay* (1630).

In 1881, Grosart attributed *Selimus* to Robert Greene, an attribution externally supported by Robert Allot's anthology of English poetry: *England's Parnassus* (1600). Although Grosart only notes two quotations from *Selimus* in Allot's catalogue, there are actually six references to the play in the anthology:

Selimus	***England's Parnassus***
He that will stop the brook must then begin, When summer's heat hath dried up his spring,	*Delay* He that will stop the brook must then begin, When summer's heat hath dried up the spring:

[101] Alan C. Dessen and Leslie Thomson, *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580 – 1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 222.
[102] Langbaine, *Momus Triumphans* (University of California, Los Angeles: The Augustan Reprint Society, 1971), p. 10.
[103] Edward Phillips, *Theatrum Poetarum* (London, 1675), p. 36.
[104] Langbaine, *An Account of the English Dramatick Poets* (Oxford: L.L for George West and Henry Clements, 1691), p. 235.

And when his pittering streams are low and thin; For let the winter aid unto him bring, He grows to be of watery floods the king; And though you dam him up with lofty ranks, Yet will he quickly overflow his banks. (3.56-62)	And when his pittering streams are low and thin For let the winter aid not them bring He grows to be of watery floods the king: And though you dam him up with lofty ranks Yet will he quickly overflow his banks. *R. Greene*. (p. 55)
Whom fear constrains to praise their prince's deeds, That fear eternal hatred in them feeds. (14.46-7)	*Fear* Whom fear constrains to praise their Prince's deeds That fear eternal, hatred in them feeds. *R. Greene.* (p.89-90)
Hate is peculiar to a prince's state. (14.53)	*Hate* Hate hits the hie, and winds force tallest towers Hate is peculiar to a Prince's state. *R. Greene.* (p. 129)
He knows not what it is to be a king That thinks a scepter is a pleasant thing. (1.30-31)	*Kings* He knows not what it is to be a king, That thinks a sceptre is a pleasant thing. *R. Greene.* (p. 157)
Too true that tyrant Dionysus Did picture out the image of a king When Damocles was placed in his throne And o'er his head a threatening sword did hang, Fastened up only by a horse's hair. (9.18-22)	*Kings* Too true that tyrant Dionysus, Did picture out the image of a king: When Damocles was placed in his throne, And ore his head a threatening sword did hang Fastened up only by a horse's hair. *R. Greene.* (p. 158)
The phoenix gazeth on the suns bright beams; The echinaeis swims against the streams. (3.11-2)	*Phoenix* The Phoenix gazeth on the suns bright beams, The echinaeis swims against the streams. *R. Greene*. (p. 506)

It has not previously been noticed that only the second line of the third entry appears in *Selimus*. Word searches on LION and EEBO have suggested that the only possible source of the first line is Thomas Lodge's *Wits Misery* (1596): 'Hate clime unto the head: winds force

the tallest towers'.[105] This quotation originally came from Lodge's translation of Seneca, which was to be published in 1614. Perhaps the line was borrowed from Lodge by Greene and did originally appear in the play, in manuscript form, and was subsequently removed or missed out by the compositor. If Allot's quotations came from an original manuscript, such a manuscript may have been more informative about the play's authorship. This theory could explain Allot's insider information regarding the authorship of *Selimus*.

Although many editors of *England's Parnassus*, notably Charles Crawford, have pointed out a number of mistakes and misattributions which occur in the catalogue, the large number of quotations from *Selimus* attributed to Greene seems to exclude the mere accidental.[106] It should be remembered that *England's Parnassus* contains over two thousand extracts, with an overwhelming proportion of its attributions being correct. Allot's primary interest, however, was in poetic themes rather than on authorship attribution.

The relationship between *Selimus* and *Locrine* is not only complex but also pivotal to any consideration of the authorship of *Selimus*. During his attempt to discredit Grosart's assertion that *Selimus* was written by Robert Greene, J. Churton Collins stated that *Locrine* and *Selimus* must have been written by the same person and that therefore regarding the question of Greene's authorship: 'the two plays must stand or fall together.[107] For this reason, Collins decided to exclude *Selimus* from his *Complete Plays and Poems of Robert Greene*. W.W. Greg, however, disagreed and proceeded to destroy the credibility of many of Collins's arguments. He pointed out that Collins had not proved 'Greene's authorship' of *Selimus* to be

[105] Lodge, *Wits miserie [...]* (London, 1596), p. 61.
[106] Charles Crawford, ed., *England's Parnassus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), p. xxxvi-xxxvii; Franklin B. Williams, Jr. 'Notes on *England's Parnassus*', *Modern Language Notes* 52 (1937), pp. 402-5.
[107] Collins, pp. 60-67.

'in any way unlikely' and asserted that Collins had not managed to 'disprove' Grosart's original 'contention'.[108]

Although most critics have argued that *Locrine* is the earlier play, the direction of the borrowing is difficult to ascertain.[109] Both *Locrine* (1595) and *Selimus* (1594) were printed by Thomas Creede; it also appears that both plays were owned by the Queen's Men.[110] It is, however, only through internal evidence that a persuasive case for common authorship can be made. Both plays borrow extensively from Spenser's *The Ruins of Rome* (1591) and other parallels can be found between the clown scenes in both plays. The action of Act Four Scene Three in *Locrine* and Scene Nineteen in *Selimus* is very similar. Both scenes involve an individual complaining of hunger and both clowns describe their troubled married lives. The use and style of the stage directions is also very similar. In *Selimus,* Bullithrumble 'spies them, and puts up his meat', whereas in *Locrine* we find the stage direction: 'Strumbo hearing his voice shall start vp and put meat in his pocket, seeking to hide himself'.

These comic scenes also use similar dialogue. In both plays, there is a confusion regarding the identity of the clown. In *Locrine*, Strumbo says 'O alas sir, ye are deceived, I am not Mercury, I am Strumbo'; and in *Selimus,* Bullithrumble comments to Corcut 'you are deceived, my names master Bullithrumble' (*Loc.* IV.iii.61; *Sel.* 19.65). In *Locrine*, however, this case of mistaken identity also involves an allusion to a play by Robert Wilson *Cobbler's Prophecy* (1594), where Ralph the cobbler questions his mysterious visitor, who turns out to be 'Mercury the messenger of the gods'.[111] This allusion suggests that Robert Wilson, who was also an actor famous for his slap-stick humour, may have performed the role of Strumbo.

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[108] W.W. Greg, 'Review of *The Plays and Poems of Robert Greene*, ed. Churton Collins', *The Modern Language Review* 1 (1906), p. 243.
[109] Peter Berek, '*Locrine* Revised, *Selimus*, and Early Responses to *Tamburlaine*', *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama* 23, (1980), p. 33-54; Muir, pp. 373-376.
[110] Pinciss, p. 323.
[111] Robert Wilson, *The coblers prophesie* (London, 1594), sig. B.

Another parallel can be seen in the demands for food. In *Locrine,* we hear 'Give me some meat villain, give me some meat'; and in *Selimus,* we find the line: 'Give some meat to poor hunger-starved men' (*Loc*. IV.iii.60; *Sel.* 19.82). Both wives threaten or use violence. Strumbo recalls that his wife 'snatched up a fagot stick', whereas Bullithrumble's wife comes at him 'with a holly wand' (*Loc*. IV.iii.26; *Sel.* 19.21-22). Both of the wives reportedly call their husbands a 'knave' and inquire 'where' they have 'bin' (*Loc.* IV.iii.28; *Sel*. 19.13). Both scenes refer to the game of trumps, either 'knave's trumps' or 'clubs trump' (*Loc.* IV.iii.29; *Sel.* 19.5). Both clowns also mention that they fear the 'ten commandments' or 'ten-commandments' of their wives (*Loc*. IV.iii.29-30; *Sel*. 19.3).

There are, however, a number of differences between these two scenes. In *Selimus,* the clown is the first to enter, whereas in *Locrine,* Humber enters first. In *Locrine*, it is the appearance of the ghost which brings the scene to its conclusion, with Strumbo never appearing again onstage. But in *Selimus,* the scene furthers the plot far more, leading to the discovery of Corcut by Selimus. Although Peter Berek concludes that *Selimus* must have copied *Locrine,* it is noticeable, however, that the comic scenes in *Locrine* do not further the plot as much as they do in *Selimus.*[112] The comic scenes in *Locrine* are also a complete departure from the play's source, Paolo Giovio's *A Short Treatise Upon the Turks Chronicles* (1546), whereas in *Selimus,* the comic scenes serve to dramatise the betrayal of Corcut by his servant, which does occur in the play's historical source.

Both scenes demonstrate parallels with the work of Robert Greene. Greene's prose work *Pandosto* (1588) could be a possible source for the episode with Strumbo and his wife. This prose work, like *Locrine*, documents the problems faced by a 'mercenary shepherd' from 'Sicilia', whose wife also threatens that 'she would make clubs trumps'. Both wives are pacified by their husbands, until they begin 'to simper something sweetly' and call them

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[112] Berek, p. 53.

'sweet husband' (*Loc.* IV.iii.30).[113] The following table should clarify the parallels between *The Ruins of Rome*, *Locrine* and *Selimus*:[114]

The Ruins of Rome	*Locrine*	*Selimus*
Mow'd downe themselues with slaughter merciless; (10.12)		And mow their hartlesse squadrons to the ground. (2.184)
Which whilom did those earthborn brethrē (10.14)		As those old earth-bred brethren, which once (27.30)
To dart abroad the thunder bolts of warre, (11.10)	Darteth abroad the thunderbolts of warre, (II.vi.2)	Ide dart abroad the thunderbolts of warre, (2.183)
And beating downe these walls with furious mood (11.11)	Beating downe millions with his furious moode; (II.vi.3)	
Heapt hils on hils, to scale the starrie skie, (12.2)	Heape hills on hills, to scale the starrie skie, (II.vi.6)	Heape hill on hill to scale the starrie skie (27.31)
The furious squadrons downe to ground did fall, (12.6)	Mouing the massie squadrants of the ground; (II.vi.5)	And mow their hartlesse squadrons to the ground. (2.184)
	When *Briareus* armed with an hundreth hands (II.vi.7)	When *Briareus* arm'd with a hundreth hands, (27.32)
	Floong forth an hundreth mountains at great *Ioue*, (II.vi.8)	Flung foorth a hundreth mountains at great *Ioue*, (27.33)
	And when the monstrous giant *Monichus* (II.vi.9)	And when the monstrous giant *Monichus* (27.34)
	Hurld mount *Olimpus* at great *Mars* his targe, (II.vi.10)	Hurld mount *Olimpus* at great *Mars* his targe, (27.35)
	And shot huge cædars at *Mineruas* shield; (II.vi.11)	And darted cedars at *Mineruas* shield. (27.35)

The last three rows in this table show that *Selimus* is copying sequences from *Locrine*. There is also evidence that *Selimus* is copying the changes that *Locrine* makes to lines originally from Spenser. Both *Locrine* and *Selimus* spell the word 'hill' with two 'll', whereas *The Ruins of Rome* only uses one 'l'. Similarly, both *Locrine* and *Selimus* seem to have mistaken

[113] Greene, *Pandosto [...]* (London, 1588), sig. H2.
[114] Edmund Spenser, *Complaints, containing sundrie small poems of the worlds vanitie* (London, 1591), sig. R3-R3ˇ; *The lamentable tragedie of Locrine [...]* (London, 1595), sig. D4ˇ-E2ˇ; *The tragedy of Selimus [...]* (London, 1638), sig. B4ˇ, I4ˇ-K.

or changed Spenser's 'Heapt' for 'Heape'. Both *Locrine* and *Selimus* place the word 'ground' at the end of the line, whereas Spenser's original did not. Finally, *Locrine* and *Selimus* both make Spenser's 'thunder bolts' into one word. It should be remembered, however, that such changes to orthography could be the result of a compositor's changes.

Yet these textual parallels point to the possibility that whoever wrote *Selimus* also had independent knowledge of Spenser, other than the version he found in *Locrine*. This could explain the strange spelling of the word 'brethren' with the extra 'r' in *Selimus*, which is suggested by Spenser. It would also explain why both Spenser's poem and *Selimus* use various forms of the word 'mow' which does not appear in *Locrine*.

The inconsistencies between these borrowings could be explained if whoever revised *Locrine* also wrote *Selimus,* or if one author worked simultaneously on both plays. Perhaps Greene, at the beginning of his career in London, revised an earlier version of *Locrine* called *Estrild* by Charles Tilney.[115] This earlier attribution to Charles Tilney is made on the basis of Sir Charles Buck's marginal note in an early copy of *Locrine*, that states 'Char. Tilney wrote [a] Tragedy of this matt[e]r hee named Estrild: I think is this. It was l[ost] by his death' in 1586 when he was executed.[116]

But perhaps, instead of asking who is borrowing from who, we should concentrate on why the direction of the borrowing so difficult to ascertain. One possible answer is that the playwright wrote *Selimus*, while he was simultaneously revising *Locrine*. This would explain why the borrowings seem to move in both directions. Greene is by far the mostly likely candidate for being the author of both of these plays. But, as Brain Vickers has warned, it is dangerous to rely on 'verbal parallels' between texts to prove 'authorship attributions'.[117]

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[115] W.W. Greg, 'Three Manuscript Notes by Sir George Buc', *The Library* 12 (1931), pp. 307-321.
[116] Benjamin Griffin, '*Locrine* and the Babington Plot', *Notes and Queries*, (1997), pp. 37-40.
[117] Brian Vickers, *Shakespeare, Co-Author: A Historical Study of Five Collaborative Plays* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2002), p. 60.

Another possible explanation is that two different authors could have used quotations from Spenser which appeared in the same commonplace book.

Problems of authorship attribution and the corresponding lack of a fully annotated edition of the text have led to *Selimus* being deemed unworthy of serious study. There are very few texts reliable editions of *Selimus.* Alexander B. Grosart's 1881 edition abounds with mistakes and Daniel J. Vitkus's recent modernised edition provides only brief annotations.[118] *Selimus* offers numerous opportunities for new and original scholarship. The play is pivotal in assessing the impact of Marlowe's work on early modern drama. *Selimus* also has strong political resonances, as the play provides an oblique commentary on the Elizabethan succession crisis. *Selimus* should also be considered from within the context of the early modern stage, particularly as the play is known to have been part of the repertory of the Queen's Men. Like many early modern plays dealing with foreign history, *Selimus* has yet to be considered as part of the genre of the Elizabethan history play. The play's possible attribution to Robert Greene could also open up another field of inquiry, as *Selimus* could thereby be examined among other plays written by the 'University Wits'.[119]

George a Greene (1599) was one of the first anonymous plays to be attributed to Greene.[120] Categorised as a *'pleasant conceited comedy'*, the play was entered into the Stationers' Register by Cuthbert Burbie on 1st April 1593 and Henslowe's diary records five performances of the play by the Earl of Sussex's Men.[121] Inscriptions on the title page of a copy, now in the Folger Library, show that Sir George Buc, who became the Master of the

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[118] Alexander B. Grosart, ed., *The Tragical Reign of Selimus, Sometime Emperor of the Turks* (J.M. Dent: London, 1881); Daniel J. Vitkus, ed., *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England* (Columbia University Press: New York, 2000).

[119] G.K. Hunter, *English Drama, 1586-1642: The Age of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 45.

[120] On the attribution of the play, see *George a Greene* (London: Malone Society, 1911), p. v-vii; Alan H. Nelson, 'George Buc, William Shakespeare, and the Folger *George a Greene'*, *Notes and Queries* 49 (1998), pp. 74-83; R. E. S., 'Robert Greene and *George a Greene, the Pinner of Wakefield'*, *The Review of English Studies* 9 (1933), pp. 189-190.

[121] H. Dugdale Sykes, 'Robert Greene and *George a Greene*, *the Pinner of Wakefield'*, *The Review of English Studies* 7 (1931), p. 129.

Revels in 1610, tried to ascertain the identity of the author.[122] Intrigued by the mystery, Buc apparently sought the opinion of Shakespeare, who could only recall that it was 'written by ... a minster who ac[ted] the pinners part in it himself', and of the actor Edward Juby, who thought that the play 'was made by Ro. Gree[ne]'. Regrettably, these testimonies seem to contradict one another, as there is no evidence to suggest that Robert Greene was a minister. Edward Juby's suggestion could have been little more than an educated guess, prompted by the title. In some desperate bid to attribute the play to an author - any author - Edward Juby seems have to be drawing a dubious line of correspondence between George a Greene, a legendary hero who appears in an anonymous play, and a dead playwright called Robert Greene. The ascriptions demonstrate how Greene has come to be perceived more as a character than as an author and how in the desire to attribute authorship, the theatre world and the real world can become decidedly blurred.

Locrine (c. 1594)*, A Knack to Know a Knave* (c. 1592)*, Mucedorus* (c. 1588-98) and *Fair Em* (c. 1589-91) have also previously been attributed to Greene. As Waldo F. McNeir has observed '[p]ractically every play of the period 1587-92 that cannot be definitely credited to someone else has at one time or another been attributed to Greene'.[123] The plays to which McNeir refers all share one particular characteristic; they are not highly regarded by critics. In a way, the word 'Greene' seems to function more as a derogative adjective and less as a proper noun; his name serves as a proverbial categorisation for plays that no one – or no one with any sense - would ever want to study.

Recent studies of authorship attribution by Brian Vickers and MacDonald P. Jackson have attempted to prove the validity of verbal parallels as evidence of authorship by using

[122] W. W. Greg, 'Three Manuscript Notes by Sir George Buc', *The Library* 12 (1931-32), pp. 307-21.
[123] Waldo F. McNeir 'Robert Greene and *John of Bordeaux*', *Publications of the Modern Language Association,* 64 (1949), p. 781.

computer software to compare vast numbers of play-texts.[124] But in order to accept the validity of stylometric tests we have to disregard a lot of what we know about early modern compositional strategies. After all, if Greene tended to imitate and appropriate material from other dramatists, how can we hope to distinguish his work from other dramatists? Verbal parallels between texts could merely be evidence of imitation, rather than of authorship. It becomes impossible to distinguish between plagiarism and self-plagiarism.

But, besides these more obvious concerns, stylometric studies underestimates drama as an art form. With its graphs and tables, it transforms what was literature into a sequence of letters, into little more than a fingerprint or DNA code, ready for statistical analysis. Ultimately, stylometric tests serve only to divert critics from more important aesthetic concerns; they distract us from reading plays as plays.

Attempting to right this wrong, the ultimate aim of repertory studies was to combine theatre history with literary criticism, two disciplines which until relatively recently barely acknowledged each other's existence. In the last couple of decades, there has been a flurry of single-company studies, Michael Shapiro's *Children of the Revels: the Boy Companies of Shakespeare's time and their Plays* (1979), Andrew Gurr's *The Shakespeare Company* (1982), Reavley Gair's *The Children of St Paul's* (also 1982), in the nineties Roslyn Knutson's *The Repertory of Shakespeare's Company* (1991), then in the last decade Scott McMillin and Sally Beth McLean's *The Queen's Men and their Plays* (2000), Lucy Munro's *Children of the Queen's Revels* (2005) and Brian Walsh's *Shakespeare, the Queen's Men, and the Elizabethan Performance of History* (2009).[125] All concentrate on the company

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[124] Brian Vickers, *Shakespeare, Co-Author* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Brian Vickers 'Thomas Kyd, secret sharer', *Times Literary Supplement* April 18, 2008; MacDonald P. Jackson, *Defining Shakespeare: Pericles as Test Case* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); *Words that Count: Early Modern Authorship: Essays in Honor of MacDonald P. Jackson*, ed. Brian Boyd (Newark: University of Delaware, 2004).

[125] Michael Shapiro, *Children of the Revels: the Boy Companies of Shakespeare's time and their Plays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979); Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespeare Company 1594-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Reavley Gair, *The Children of St Paul's: The Story of a Theatre Company,*

which produced the plays, rather than on the authors who wrote them. Freed from the need to focus exclusively on authorship, critics have started formulating new canons of drama, organised by company rather than by playwright. This methodology has had practical implications too; there has been a noticeable shift away from more canonical texts towards less well-known drama. The focus on repertories has also involved accepting the intrinsically commercial nature of drama and has led to the rejection of the notion that plays were solely the product of some solitary genius. In *Locating the Queen's Men* (2009), Helen Ostovich, Holger Syme and Andrew Griffin have argued that 'Greene probably comes as close as anyone to being the [Queen's Men's] signature playwright' because:

> Unlike those of Marlowe, Shakespeare, or Middleton, none of his plays were published in his lifetime. However successful they may have been on stage, they were received as performances, not as a writer's works, and Greene spilt much ink lamenting his invisibility as an author in the theatre. For that very reason, however, the Queen's Men's plays lend themselves particularly well to the repertory approach.[126]

Unfortunately there are several problems with this line of argument. Firstly, Greene had a reputation as a hack; he had a reputation for double dealing, not for staying loyal to one particular theatre company.[127] As Joseph Loewenstein has argued, Greene's 'double-dealing' suggests that his association with the various companies was 'non-contractual'; he was forced to resort to 'piece-work'.[128] More often than not, the attribution of plays to specific companies can often be just as arduous as attributing plays to specific authors. Evidence suggests that Greene's plays were actually performed by a number of different companies.

1553-1608 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Roslyn Knutson, *The Repertory of Shakespeare's Company* (Fayetteville: University of Arkanas, 1991), McMillin and McLean, *The Queen's men and their Plays*; Lucy Munro, *Children of the Queen's Revels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Brian Walsh, *Shakespeare, the Queen's Men, and the Elizabethan Performance of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[126] Helen Ostovich, Holger Schott Syme and Andrew Griffin, 'Locating the Queen's Men: An Introduction', in *Locating the Queen's Men, 1583-1603: Material Practices and Conditions of Playing,* eds. Helen Ostovich, Holger Schott Syme and Andrew Griffin (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p. 4.

[127] *The defence of Conny-catching* (London, 1592), sig. C3-C3ˇ

[128] Joseph Loewenstein, *Ben Jonson and Possessive Authorship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 53, 55.

Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay and *Selimus* are the only Greene plays which name the Queen's Men on their title pages. The attribution of *A Looking Glass*, *James IV, Alphonsus* and *Orlando Furioso* to the Queen's Men is based on circumstantial evidence.[129] Henslowe's diary also records performances of *Friar Bacon* and *A Looking Glass* by Lord Strange's Men and refers to performances of *George a Greene* and *Friar Bacon* by the Earl of Sussex's Men.[130] Greene's canon marks a point where repertory studies fail. In her contribution to *Locating the Queen's Men* (2009), Roslyn L. Knutson's argument about the repertory of the Queen's Men is analogous to the debates about what Greene wrote.[131]

In his essay *What is an Author?*, Michael Foucault warned that if the 'author-function' disappears a new 'system of constraint' will emerge.[132] Theatrical repertories are that 'new system of constraint' but, I want to argue, this 'new system of constraint' looks and sounds a lot like the old system. Critics who use theatrical repertories to formulate canons of drama have a tendency to give theatre companies characteristics which we previously attributed to authors.[133] Andrew Gurr's recent book *Shakespeare's Opposites* (2009) is an example in point.[134] The book gives a full account of the characteristics which gave the Admiral's Men their identity; their likes and dislikes, their acting style, their staging methods, their touring patterns and their petty rivalries. *Shakespeare's Opposites* is a study of a repertory company, written in the format of a biography. The prominence given to Shakespeare's name on the front of the book suggests the enduring power of the figure of the author; *Shakespeare's Opposites* might well be a repertory study but it's the name of a

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[129] McMillin and MacLean, *The Queen's Men and Their Plays*, pp. 88-93.
[130] Foakes, ed., *Henslowe's Diary*, pp. 16-21.
[131] Roslyn L. Knutson, 'The Start of Something Big', in *Locating the Queen's Men, 1583-1603: Material Practices and Conditions of Playing*, pp. 99-108.
[132] Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author?', in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Structuralist Criticism*, ed. José V. Harari (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 160.
[133] Andrew Gurr, *Shakespeare's Opposites: The Admiral's Company 1594-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 1-48; McMillin and McLean, *The Queen's men and their Plays*, p. xii.
[134] Gurr, *Shakespeare's Opposites*.

dramatist, and a well-known dramatist at that, which will doubtless ensure the book's commercial appeal.

Turning away from this discussion of relative merits of repertory and author-based studies, I now want to contemplate Greene's posthumous reputation. At the end of their influential essay, 'The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text', Margreta De Grazia and Peter Stallybrass try to situate themselves on the fence of the 'great bibliographical divide'. Rather than opting to resurrect the figure of the author or to kill him off entirely, they conclude that: This [authorial] genius is, after all, an impoverished, ghostly thing'.[135] Like a ghost, the author is dead but his presence still haunts the text.

After his death in 1592, Greene's authorial identity was appropriated by a number of ghost writers, including John Dickenson, Nicholas Breton, Henry Chettle, Barnabe Rich and Samuel Rowlands.[136] In *Greene in Conceit* (1598), John Dickenson claims that the ghost of Robert Greene appeared to him one night and dictated the story of Valeria of London to him. Dickenson's title-page envisages a figure, 'suited in death's livery' writing at a desk (64).[137] This image bequeaths us a paradoxical account of authorship; Greene is both dead and alive. On the one hand, Greene is depicted as an autonomous individual, writing in his cell, brought to life through the act of writing.

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[135] Margreta De Grazia and Peter Stallybrass, 'The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 44 (1993), p. 282. For further discussions of the author's spectral presence, see Marjorie B Garber, *Shakespeare's Ghost Writers: Literature as Uncanny Causality* (New York: Routledge, 1987); *Haunting Presences: Ghosts in French Literature and Culture*, eds. Kate Griffiths and David Evans (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009); Stephen Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* (Princeton: Oxford University Press, 2001); Lee Kovas, *The Haunted Screen: Ghosts in Literature and Film* (London: McFarland, 1999).

[136] John Dickenson, *Greene in Conceipt [...]* (London, 1598); Nicholas Breton, *Greenes funeralls* (London, 1594), Henry Chettle, *Kind-harts dreame [...]* (London, 1593) ; Barnabe Rich, *Greenes news both from heaven and hell [...]* (London, 1593); Samuel Rowlands, *Greenes ghost haunting conie-catchers [...]* (London, 1602); Lori Humphrey Newcomb, *Reading Popular Romance in Early Modern England*, pp. 70-77; Melnikoff and Gieskes, 'Re-imagining Robert Greene', in *Writing Robert Greene*, pp. 22-3.

[137] All quotations are taken from Donald Beecher's edition: John Dickenson, *Greene in Conceit (1598),* ed. Donald Beecher (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2008).

Fig. 2: Woodcut from the title page of John Dickenson's *Greene in Conceipt [...]* (London, 1598), sig. A1.

On the other, as this image was produced after Greene's death, it can hardly be regarded as a life-like impression, and it adorns someone else's pamphlet, like an empty marketing ploy.

Throughout Dickenson's framing device there is a manifest tension surrounding the authorship of the pamphlet. In his opening address 'advertisement to the reader', Dickenson worries that 'none will believe' his tenuous tale of ghostly visitations and that readers will assume that he trying 'to pick up some crumbs of credit from another's table' (64, 68). Indeed, it uncertain as to whom the pamphlet should be attributed; it seems entirely unclear where Robert Greene ends and John Dickenson begins. Playing on this tension, Dickenson imagines his own 'weather beaten vessel [...] safely shrouded from the tempest of disgrace' (70). Dickenson's description of himself so closely resembles that of Greene's ghost, who appeared to Dickenson 'suited in death's livery', that it seems call into question the identity of the figure in the woodcut (64). The title of Dickenson's pamphlet - *Greene in conceit* - also reveals a certain irony. Initially, we assume, the title refers to the figure of Robert

Greene, as depicted in woodcut, sitting deep thought or *'conceit'*. But in the preface, Dickenson hints at a certain irony; he takes some pains to emphasise that he is 'in the springtime of' his 'life's year', he is enjoying 'my youth's follies', he has only 'received the first grounds of learning' (62-3). In a sense then, it is Dickenson who is *'Greene in conceit'*. This strange tension is symptomatic of the uncanny presence of Robert Greene; the author "formerly known as Robert Greene" both is - and is not - a figure of our own creation. To paraphrase John Dickenson, the author Robert Greene is a *'conceit'*. His persona is constructed out of a series of conceits or narratives, which have little if anything to do with the historical personage called Robert Greene who died in 1592. The figure of the author allows critics to impose an essential unity on a series of texts; the author allows us to construct our own narrative.[138]

Over recent years there has been a conspicuous trend in early modern studies, as apprentice scholars cut their teeth on minor literary figures before making the transition to more consecrated ground. Greenblatt's fascination with self-fashioning first found root in the work of Sir Walter Raleigh.[139] Indeed, it could be argued that Greenblatt's own academic biography sheds considerable light on his biography of Shakespeare. Just as Greenblatt imagines Shakespeare's early life as a tale of triumph over adversity, Greenblatt likens his rise to fame as an archetypal tale of rags to riches. Apparently claiming a form of kinship with Shakespeare, Greenblatt describes his 'inexplicable craving for language' as a young man; Greenblatt's press interviews are full of stories of little 'Stevie' 'straining' his eyes in to read *The Arabian Nights* as his parents watched TV.[140] Greenblatt uses the famous anecdote from the *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit* (1592), the story of Greene's envy towards

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[138] Foucault, 'What is an Author?', p. 160.
[139] Greenblatt, *Sir Walter Ralegh: The Renaissance Man and His Roles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973).
[140] Mitchell Stephens, 'Profile of Stephen Greenblatt: The Professor of Dischantment, Stephen Greenblatt and the New Historicism', *West Magazine* (1st March 1992); Lucasta Miller, 'The Human Factor', *The Guardian* (Saturday 26th February 2005).

Shakespeare, as an allegory for his own predicament, as a way of fashioning his own authorial identity as autonomous, as free from the petty jealousy which plagues his academic rivals.[141] Greenblatt revives the romantic figure of the canonical bard and the stereotype of Greene as the embittered second-rater, in order to establish his own legacy as a founder of canons and to consign his critics to mediocrity.

Trapped forever by the intellectual hindsight prescribed by a canon that has been built around the belief in a Shakespeare-centred universe, Greene's oeuvre has never been read on its own merits. Greene cannot, and should not, be type-cast as a greenhorn playwright and hence held in reserve for scholars still green in years. Above all else, this present study is determined to demonstrate that Greene's drama is worthy of study on his own terms; this is the story of a Robert Greene who is not merely the supplement for someone else. It is to spectacle, the distinguishing feature of Greene's drama, that I now turn.

[141] For some sense of the critical reaction to *Will in the World*, see Jonathan Bate, 'The Sweet Swan and the Porcupine, Jonathan Bate reviews *Will in the World* by Stephen Greenblatt', *The Telegraph* (17th October 2004); Colin Burrow, 'Who Wouldn't Buy It?', Review of *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare* by Stephen Greenblatt, *The London Review of Books* 27 (20th January 2005).

2.

‘work such shows and wondering in the world’:

The Aesthetics of Spectacle

> [A]mazement is the foundation of all philosophy: inquiry, its way of advancing; and ignorance is its end. Yes indeed: there is a kind of ignorance, strong and magnanimous, which in honour and courage is in no wise inferior to knowledge; you need no less knowledge to beget such ignorance than to beget knowledge itself.
>
> Michel de Montaigne, *On the Lame* (Chapter 11)[1]

It all starts in Oxford; in the middle of Greene’s most famous play *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (c.1589). In Brasenose College, an academic disputation is taking place between an Englishman, Friar Bacon and an arrogant German called Vandermast. But these men are not just academics, they are also magicians. Ironically, for a disputation, not a lot of disputing takes place; the emphasis of this scene is on the visual not the verbal. The magicians try to outdo each other by conjuring up a series of increasingly impressive spectacles: people vanish, a *‘tree appears’* with a *‘dragon shooting fire’* and *‘Hercules’* materialises *‘in his lion’s skin’* (*FB*. ix). With his royal ‘audience’ looking on ‘amazed’, Bacon wins the day with his ‘strange necromantic spells’ which ‘work such shows and wondering in the world’ (*FB*. ix.155,118,47-8). In a way, that final quotation: ‘work such shows and wondering in the world’ encapsulates the focus of this thesis. I am going to examine the way in which ‘shows’ - theatrical spectacle - provoke both ‘wonder’ and ‘wondering’; in short how, and for what purpose, early modern spectacle astonished and intrigued audiences.

Needless to say, I am not the first to declare an interest in early modern special effects. If a modern theatre practitioner wanted to reconstruct these various spectacles, they

[1] Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Essays*, trans. M. A. Screech (London: Penguin Classics, 2003), pp. 1165-6.

need look no further than Philip Butterworth's scrupulously researched *Theatre of Fire* (1998), where they could find out precisely how Bacon's 'dragon' might have been made to 'shoot fire'.[2] By contrast this thesis is less preoccupied with the "how?" than with the "why?" Why did early modern playwrights use spectacle? As the Records of Early English Drama (REED) testify, these "cheap thrills" were in fact far from cheap. REED documents substantial payments for the construction, decoration and maintenance of various dramatic special effects. For instance, the early sixteenth-century records of guild dramas at Coventry record various payments for the construction and repairs to a hell mouth.[3] *Documents Relating to the Office of the Revels in the Time of Queen Elizabeth* also record substantial payments made for stage tricks involving a fake sword or 'a hollow knife of plate'.[4] Similarly, the City Chamberlain's Accounts at Canterbury for the years 1528-30 catalogue the purchase of 'a new leather bag for the blood, vj d', to assist with their gory special effects.[5] Meanwhile in London, Henslowe records the payment 'for pulleys and workmanship for to hang Absolom... xiiijd' for a production of George Peele's *The Love of King David and Fair Bethsabe* (1599).[6] Given the expense of theatrical special effects, it seems more than a little naive to assume that spectacle was merely a frivolous way of entertaining the groundlings. Spectacle was not just a decorative bauble designed to dazzle the ignorant, there was also an intellectual 'strategy' behind these 'cunning shows' (*JB*. 735).

Spectacle was in high demand in early modern theatres. In 1602, Richard Vennar advertised a spectacular public performance at the Swan theatre of a play called *England's*

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[2] Philip Butterworth, *Theatre of Fire: Special Effects in Early English and Scottish Theatre* (London: Society for Theatre Research, 1998); Tiffany Stern, '*Theatre of Fire*', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 13 (2001), pp. 247-251; Elizabeth M. S. Balwin, 'Review of Philip Butterworth, *Theatre of Fire: Special Effects in Early English and Scottish Theatre.* Foreword by Glynne Wickham', *Comparative Drama* 33: 4 (1999/2000), pp. 519-22.
[3] REED: York, I, p. 55; REED: Coventry, p. 478.
[4] *Documents Relating to the Office of the Revels in the Time of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. Albert Feuillerat (Louvain: A. Uystpruyst, 1908), p. 327.
[5] REED: Kent, I, p. 137.
[6] *Henslowe's Diary,* ed. R. A. Foakes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 217.

Joy.[7] Printed by John Windet, the plot or argument details the action of the play's nine spectacular scenes. Depicting Queen Elizabeth's rise to power, the play is reminiscent of a public theatre masque. The plot promises everything from lurid sexual titillation as a 'beautiful lady' has her 'garments and jewels' torn from her, 'music', sword fights between 'twelve Gentlemen at barriers' and a spectacular finale as Elizabeth herself is:

> taken up into heaven, when presently appears a throne of blessed souls, and beneath under the stage set forth with strange fireworks, divers black and damned souls, wonderfully described in their several torments.[8]

But when the expectant crowd gathered at the Swan, the performance turned out to be a hoax. Vennar gave a rather brief prologue, before beating a hasty retreat, taking the money with him. He was later arrested and, as a consequence of the public outcry, forced to publish an apology.[9] The episode lived on the public's imagination for some time. As Tiffany Stern has documented, both Chamberlain and Manningham record 'the cozening prank of one Vennar' in letters and diary entries.[10] Twenty years later, in Jonson's *Masque of Augurs* (1622), a sarcastic reference is made to 'three of those Gentlewomen, that should have acted in that famous matter of *England's Joy'*.[11] The story of *England's Joy* testifies to the public's fervent desire for visual spectacle. The crowd had been prepared to pay twice the normal entrance price to see this theatrical extravaganza.[12] Spectacular drama was evidently a money spinner.

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[7] Herbert Berry, 'Richard Vennar, *England's Joy'*, *English Literary Renaissance* 31 (2001), pp. 240-65; Tiffany Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 37, 47, 71-2.

[8] *The Plot of the Play, called Englands Joy. To be Played at the Swan this 6 of November. 1602* (1602), reproduced in W. W. Greg, *Dramatic Documents from the Elizabethan Playhouses* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), Vol. II, p. viii.

[9] Richard Vennar[d], *An Apology* (London, 1614).

[10] Stern, *Documents of Performance*, p. 71; John Chamberlain, *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. Norman Egbert McClure (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1939), I, p. 172; John Manningham, November 1602, in *The Diary of John Manningham of the Middle Temple, 1602-3*, eds. Robert Parker Sorlien (Hanover, NH: The University of New England Press, 1976), p. 123.

[11] Ben Jonson, *Masque of Augures* (London, 1621), sig. A3b-A4a.

[12] Stern, *Documents of Performance,* p. 71

Before I outline my own argument, I need to debunk one or two myths. The assumption that spectacle is an indicator of poor artistry, an attitude which we have established is Aristotelian in origin, has fuelled one of the biggest misapprehensions of early modern theatre criticism, that the Shakespearean stage 'was essentially bare'.[13] Historical evidence, however, seems to contradict this assumption; Philip Henslowe's inventory, compiled in 1598, lists an intriguing array of spectacular stage properties and costumes, such as the 'tomb of Dido', a 'rainbow' and a 'frame for the beheading in Black Joan'.[14] The myth of bare stage was concocted by Romantic critics who reviled the illusionistic proscenium arch theatre, whose spectacular nature they believed only distracted audiences from truly appreciating Shakespeare's poetic genius. Revelling in a misconceived nostalgia, Samuel Coleridge contended that the early modern stage 'had no artificial, extraneous inducements – few scenes, little music'. According to Coleridge, this state of affairs meant that Shakespeare had 'to rely on his own imagination', and was encouraged to 'speak not to the sense, as was now done, but to the mind'.[15] Demonstrating an even more explicit anti-theatricalism, Charles Lamb expressed a bitter hatred of performances of Shakespeare, concluding that the stage's visual spectacles could only appeal to 'the weaker sort of minds'.[16] The genius of Shakespeare lay in his words, not his images; according to Coleridge and Lamb, Shakespeare needed to be heard and not seen. But even the most cursory glance at Shakespeare's plays demonstrates precisely the opposite. In *Titus Andronicus* (per. 1588-93), a messenger presents Titus with the gruesome spectacle of the 'heads' of his 'two noble sons' and his own 'hand' (*Tit.* III.i.237-8). In *Julius Caesar* (per.

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[13] Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage*, p. 175.
[14] Foakes, ed., *Henslowe's Diary*, pp. 291-4.
[15] Samuel Coleridge, *Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism,* ed. Thomas Middleton Raysor (London: Constable, 1930), Vol. II, pp. 85, 97; *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, eds. Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 2-11.
[16] Charles Lamb, 'On the Tragedies of Shakespeare, considered with reference to their fitness for stage representation (1811)', in *The Romantics on Shakespeare*, ed. Jonathan Bate (London: Penguin Classics, 1992), p. 112.

1599), Mark Anthony mourns over the 'savage spectacle' of Caesar's corpse (*JC.* III.i.223). In *Cymbeline* (per. 1611)*,* the god Jupiter *'descends in thunder and lightning, sitting upon an eagle',* throwing *'a thunderbolt'* (*Cym.* V.iii). Spectacle is crucial to Shakespeare's dramaturgy.

This leads me to yet another myth: it is still widely believed that while Shakespeare was a poetic genius who only needed language to ignite his audience's imagination, less gifted playwrights had to rely on garish visual effects to entertain their spectators. Andrew Gurr's dismissive attitude towards spectacle is a direct consequence of his belief that playwrights divided playgoers 'according to the priority of eye or ear', hence:

> 'Audience' harks back to its judicial sense of giving a case a hearing. 'Spectators' belong at football matches where the eye takes in more information than the ear.[17]

Thus, according to Gurr's argument, the 'audience' - those who hear - are imagined as wise judicial intellectuals, while the 'spectators' – those who see – are demoted to the status of the mob who react only as members of the collective mass. This intellectual snobbery can be traced back to Ben Jonson who, embroiled in his debate with Inigo Jones, vehemently maintained that the power of his masques lay in his poetry not in Jones's scenic design.[18] Consequently, Jonson had a vested interest in valuing '[w]ords, above action' and in deriding spectacle, which he claimed excited the eyes and not the mind.[19] According to Jonson, drama should be:

> offered, as a rite,
> To scholars, that can judge, and fair report
> The sense they hear, above the vulgar sort
> Of nut-crackers, that only come for sight.[20]

[17] Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 86.
[18] For further reflection on the famous debate between Jonson and Jones, see Stephen Orgel, 'The Poetics of Spectacle', *New Literary History* 2:3 (1971), pp. 367-389.
[19] Ben Jonson, *The fountain of selfe-loue. Or Cynthias reuels* (London, 1601), pro. 20, sig. B.
[20] Jonson, *The Staple of Newes* (1625), in *Works*, eds. C. H. Herford, Percy Simpson and Evelyn Simpson, Volume VI (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938), p. 283.

It is Jonson then who bequeathed us the pervading assumption that early modern audiences went to 'hear, not to see a play'.[21]

This is simply not the case; there are arguably just as many references to 'spectators' as there are to 'audiences' in early modern drama. Indeed, as Gurr's own footnotes demonstrate, the term 'auditor' seems to have run parallel to 'spectator' up to the closure in 1642'.[22] Most of the references to 'spectators' in the plays Gurr lists appear in prologues and are on the whole not pejorative.[23] Numerous early modern plays venerate spectators, emphasising their 'genius', their ability to 'judge and censure' drama and describing them as 'gracious', 'heroic and benevolent'.[24] In his short religious poem *On the Life of Man,* Sir Walter Ralegh states:

> Heaven the judicious sharp spectator is,
> That sits and marks still who doth act amiss[25]

While in *The Fair Maid of the West* (1631), Thomas Heywood goes so far as to claim that even the 'Gods themselves' act as 'spectators'.[26]

This brings me to my final myth: the wide spread assumption that early modern audiences were made up of an uneducated rabble of pickpockets, thieves and whores. In 1941, Alfred Harbage produced a book length study on the estimated size and social composition of early modern theatre audiences. He concluded that 'Shakespeare's audience' represented a 'cross section of the London population of his day' but that 'it was

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[21] *Ibid,* p. 282; Gabriel Egan, "Hearing or Seeing a Play?: Evidence of Early Modern Theatrical Terminology", *Ben Jonson Journal* 8 (2001), pp. 327-47.
[22] Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, p. 110, n. 15.
[23] Anon, *A vvarning for fair vvomen [...]* (London,1599); Francis Beaumont, *The maid's tragedy [...]* (London, 1650), Richard Brome, *The antipodes [...]* (London, 1640), George Chapman, *Eastvvard hoe* (London, 1605), Thomas Dekker, *Satiro—mastix [...]* (London, 1602), Thomas Middleton, *The Spanish gypsie [...]* (London, 1653), Thomas Goffe, *The careles shepherdess [...]* (London, 1656), Thomas Heywood, *The golden age [...]* (London, 1611), John Marston, *Histrio-mastrix [...]* (London, 1610), William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale* (London, 1623).
[24] Thomas Heywood, *The fayre mayde of the Exchange* (London, 1607), sig. G2; Samuel Daniel, *The ciuile wars [...]* (London, 1609), sig. A3; Barnabe Barnes, *The Diuils Charter* (London, 1607), sig. A2, M3ˇ.
[25] *The Poems of Sir Walter Ralegh*, ed. Agnes M. C. Latham (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951), p. 51.
[26] Thomas Heywood, *The fair maid of the vvest [...]* (London, 1631), p. 52, sig. H2ˇ.

predominantly a working-class audience because of the great numerical superiority of the working classes in the London area and because theatrical tariffs had been designed largely for them'.[27] Harbage also made a distinction between the citizens and artisans who frequented the outdoor amphitheatres and the coterie audiences at the indoor playhouses. But, as Ann Jennalie Cook argues, Harbage's perspective on audience demographics was somewhat clouded 'by a sentimental faith in the common man'.[28] Determined to prove why 'the private theatres begat no second Shakespeare', Harbage had a vested interest in distinguishing between the public theatres, which supposedly produced crowd pleasing masterpieces, and the private theatres, which were apparently forced to produce elaborate but ultimately second rate drama in order to pander to the elite.[29] Taking a different stance, Ann Jennalie Cook has argued that theatre spectators came predominately 'from the upper levels of the social order'.[30] More recently in his book *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (2005), Andrew Gurr has sought to occupy the middle ground, arguing that while the 'gentry' were the 'most conspicuous' playgoers, the social composition of the amphitheatres ranged from 'earls and even a Queen to penniless rogues [...] and the unemployed'.[31] Examining all of the references to playgoers between the years 1567-1642, Gurr concludes that 'citizens were the standard kind of playgoer in the 1590s, but that they were a distinctly less normal feature of the later indoor playhouse audiences'.[32] But, by Gurr's own admission, this is 'a fairly loose calculation', given the limited number of references to audience members in this period, which provide only 'a very small sample for statistical purposes'.[33] Another important

[27] Alfred Harbage, *Shakespeare's Audiences* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), p. 90.
[28] Ann Jennalie Cook, *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London, 1575-1642* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 4.
[29] Harbage, p. 65.
[30] Ann Jennalie Cook, p. 8.
[31] Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 70, 58.
[32] Gurr, p. 70.
[33] Gurr, pp. 69-70.

factor, which must be taken into account when examining these audience accounts, is the bias or underlying agenda at work in these various contemporary references. Determined to deride the theatre, Stephen Gosson referred to 'the common people' who 'resort to theatres' as little more than 'an assembly of tailors, tinkers, cordwainers, sailors, [...] and such like'.[34] By contrast, playwrights clearly had a vested interest in painting flattering portraits of their audiences. In *The Roaring Girl* (c. 1607-10), Dekker and Middleton offer a detailed account of the spectators:

> Nay, when you look into my galleries,
> How bravely they're trimmed up, you shall swear
> You're highly pleased to see what's set down there:
> Storeys of men and women, mixed together
> Fair ones with foul, like sunshine in wet weather; [...]
> And here and there, whilst with obsequious ears
> Thronged heaps do listen, a cut-purse thrusts and leers
> With hawk's eyes for his prey;[35]

This account seems to suggest that audiences were made up of a cross-section of society, the majority of whom were attentive to the action on stage.[36] More objective accounts seem to corroborate this view. In 1602, the Privy Council ordered press gangs to enter the 'playhouses, bowling-alleys, and dicing-houses' in order to recruit men for the army; to their surprise, 'they did not only press gentlemen and serving-men, but lawyers, clerks, countrymen that had law-causes, aye the Queen's men, knights, and, as it was reported, one earl'.[37] In *Pierce Penniless* (1592), Thomas Nashe adds further support to this theory:

> For whereas the afternoon being the idlest time of the day; wherein men that are their own masters (as Gentlemen of the Court, the Inns of the Court, and the number of captains and soldiers about London) do wholly bestow themselves upon pleasure, and

[34] Stephen Gosson, *Plays confuted in fiue actions [...]* (London, 1582), sig. D.
[35] Thomas Middleton, *The roaring girle [...]* (London, 1611), sig. B3.
[36] Michael Hattaway, *Elizabethan Popular Theatre: Plays in Performance* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), pp. 44-50.
[37] Cited in Harbage, p. 91; 'Dramatic Records of the City of London: the Repertories, Journals, and Letter Books', in *Malone Society Collections*, ed. E. K. Chambers, Vol. II, Part III (1931), p. 318.

> that pleasure they divide [...] either into gaming, following of harlots, drinking or seeing a play:[38]

Crucially, as Michael Hattaway has pointed out, plays were performed in the afternoons 'at a time when wage-earners, the self-employed, apprentices, and purveyors of goods and services would have been labouring at their vocations'.[39] Taking this into consideration, it seems rational to conclude that the majority of playgoers came not from the lower illiterate classes but from the educated classes - men that were 'their own masters' and who, with some money to spare, spent 'the idlest time of the day' at the playhouse.

This chapter is going to tackle three principal topics. First, I am going to define precisely what I mean by 'spectacle'. Then I will situate my discussion alongside early modern anxieties regarding visual representation. Finally, turning my attention to the role of the spectator, I want to think about how an early modern audience might have reacted to spectacle.

We are predisposed to think of 'wonder' and 'wondering', or the sensory and the logical, as being in opposition, as being mutually exclusive.[40] Thus critics usually conclude either that theatrical spectacles constitute low culture and hence merely provide aesthetic pleasure for the ignorant, or that they are indicative of high culture and that spectacles are impassive, detached symbols designed to be interpreted by intellectuals. Thus Paul Yachnin has argued that we need to be able to distinguish 'between the spectacular marvels staged in the culturally lowbrow Shakespearean theatre and the visionary wonder produced in the highbrow province of Shakespeare as literature'.[41] Seeking to avoid such sweeping distinctions between high and low culture, I am going to argue that sensory delight and

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[38] Thomas Nashe, *Pierce Penilesse [...]* (London, 1592), sig. F3.
[39] Hattaway, p. 48.
[40] Caroline Walker Bynam, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York: Zone Books, 2001), p. 43.
[41] Paul Yachnin, 'Wonder-effects: Othello's Handkerchief', in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, eds. Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 324.

intellectual contemplation are not mutually exclusive, they are inextricably linked: spectacle provokes 'wonder', which in turn induces 'wondering'.

In his book *Poetics, Speculation and Judgement* (1993), Jacques Taminiaux emphasises the etymological link between theatre and spectacle:

> The Greek for theatre, *theatron*, means a place for seeing. The word for seeing is *theorein*. Prior to Plato, *theoria* meant beholding a spectacle, and the theorists par excellence were the spectators in the theatre.[42]

The classicist Andrea Wilson Nightingale believes that this etymological link stems from the 'traditional practice of *theoria*' in Ancient Greek society, whereby 'an individual (called *theoros*) made a journey or pilgrimage abroad for the purpose of witnessing certain events and spectacles'.[43]

During the early modern period, theologians, polemicists, poets and playwrights used the term 'spectacle' to refer to person or object capable of inciting both horror, contempt or admiration. In an anonymous pamphlet of 1558, the speaker describes Queen Elizabeth's progress through the streets of London on the day before of her coronation. Likening 'the city of London' to a 'stage', Elizabeth's appearance is described as 'a wonderful spectacle', which drew 'rejoicing of all the lookers on'.[44] In the Catholic polemical tract of 1582 *A True Report of the Death of and Martyrdom of Mr. Campion, Jesuit Priest*, Thomas Alfield records Edmund Campion's last words before his execution at Tyburn. Alluding to 1 Corinthians 9, Campion acknowledges that his death constitutes a public spectacle:

> *Spectaculum facti sumus Deo, angeli, & hominibus*. These are the words of Saint Paul, Englished thus: We are made a spectacle, or a sight unto God, unto his angels,

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[42] Jacques Taminiaux, *Poetics, Speculation, and Judgement: The Shadow of the Work of Art from Kant to Phenomenology*, trans. and ed. Michael Gendre (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), p. 4; Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, com., *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 787.

[43] Andrea Wilson Nightingale, *Spectacles of Truth in Classical Greek Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 3.

[44] Anon, *The passage of our most drad Soueregne Lady Quene Elyzabeth [...]* (London, 1558), sig. Aiiˇ.

> and unto men, verified this day in me, who am here a spectacle unto my Lord God, a spectacle unto his angels and unto you men.[45]

This appetite for bloody spectacle also crossed over into the world of the commercial theatre. At the end of Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (c. 1587), Hieronimo reveals the gruesome 'spectacle' of his dead son 'hanging on a tree [...] / [t]hrough-girt with wounds' (IV.iv.111-3).[46] Similarly in John Marston's *Antonio's Revenge* (c. 1599-1600), a senator contemplates Piero's bloody corpse and exclaims: 'Whose hand presents this gory spectacle?'.[47]

For my own purposes, a spectacle is the sight of a strange or unfamiliar thing or person, which incites speculation.[48] Hence my definition of theatrical spectacle includes special effects, stage properties, scenery, gesture, acting conventions, lighting and costume; in short, all visual aspects of drama. I will demonstrate my definition by way of example. During the course of the pastoral scenes that constitute much of Act Five of Greene's *James IV*, the Queen of Scotland, Dorothea, is forced to flee the court disguised 'in breeches like a squire' (*JIV.* III.iii.103). But she is not alone, Nano her loyal dwarf and confidant, nobly resolves to act as her protector during her exile in the forest.

In the early modern period, dwarfs frequently appeared on the public stage and were commonly employed as jesters or buffoni at court, being regarded as aesthetic novelties, rather than as human beings.[49] Dwarfs appear in numerous early modern plays and masques, including Francis Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1613), Thomas Goffe's *The*

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[45] Thomas Alfield, *A true reporte of the death & martydome of M. Campion Iesuite* (London, 1582), sig. B4ˇ-C1.
[46] J. R. Mulryne, ed., *The Spanish Tragedy* (London: Methuen, 1989), p. 117.
[47] John Marston, *Antonios reuenge [...]* (London, 1602), sig. K3.
[48] For further definitions and discussions of spectacle in the early modern period, see Karen-edis Barzman, 'Early Modern Spectacle and the Performance of Images', in *Perspectives on Early Modern and Modern Intellectual History: Essays in Honor of Nancy S. Struever,* ed. Joseph Marino and Melinda W. Schlitt (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2000), pp. 282-302; Pascale Drouet, ed., *The Spectacular in and Around Shakespeare* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2009).
[49] Francis Beaumont, *The knight of the burning pestle* (London, 1613), Thomas Goffe, *The raging Turke* (London, 1631), William Habington, *The Queene of Aragon* (London, 1640), Ben Jonson, *Chlorida* (London, 1640), Ben Jonson, *Ben: Ionson his Volpone or The foxe* (London, 1616), Philip Massinger, *The Duke of Millaine [...]* (London, 1623), Philip Massinger, *The maid of honour* (London, 1632).

Raging Turk (1631), William Habington's *The Queen of Aragon* (1640), Ben Jonson's *Chloridia* (1640), *Volpone* (1606), Philip Massinger's *The Duke of Milan* (1623) and *The Maid of Honour* (1632). Sir Jeffrey Hudson, Queen Henrietta Maria's dwarf, was frequently involved in the masques designed by Inigo Jones; Ben Jonson sardonically alludes to Hudson as 'Tom Thumb' in his poem 'To Inigo Marquis would be a Corollary'.[50] In her book *Freakery* (1996), which explores society's enduring fascination with the spectacle of the extraordinary body, Rosemarie Thomson has observed that in early modern portraits dwarfs are frequently depicted alongside their 'more banal brethen', such as in Van Dyck's portrait of *Queen Henrietta Maria with Sir Jeffrey Hudson* (1633), as if to demonstrate that 'anomalous human body' as 'at once familiar and alien'.[51] Thomson goes on to argue that 'the spectacle of the extraordinary body' has always 'stimulated curiosity, ignited speculation, provoked titillation [and] furnished novelty'.[52]

Functioning more like a visual symbol than as an protagonist, Nano is used to symbolise the commonplace truth that we should not judge by appearances: his limbs are 'small' but his 'heart is good' (*JIV*. II.ii.6-7).

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[50] Gregory Lubkin, *A Renaissance Court: Milan under Galeazzo Maria Sforza* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 115; *Ben Jonson,* eds. C. H. Herford and Evelyn Simpson, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947), Vol. 8, p. 407.

[51] Rosemarie Garland Thomson, *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), p.1.

[52] *Ibid,* p. 3.

Fig. 3: Anthony Van Dyck, *Queen Henrietta Maria with Sir Jeffrey Hudson*, 1633, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington DC.

Demonstrating a remarkable awareness of his own status as a visual spectacle, Nano reassures his mistress that he will not 'bewray' her true identity:

> You are a man, and like a man you go.
> But I that am in speculation seen,
> Know you would change your state to be a Queen. (*JIV.* V.v.22-5)

In this brief and fleeting moment, the tables are turned; Nano, the object of 'speculation', is himself transformed into a curious spectator. Just as the dwarf Sebastián, in Velázquez's famous portrait, is both an object of speculation and a spectator, subjecting the viewer to his

own curious and perhaps contemptuous gaze, Nano becomes simultaneously the subject and object of inquiry.[53]

Fig. 4: Diego Velázquez, *The Dwarf Don Sebastian de Morra*, 1643-4, oil on canvas, Museo del Prado, Madrid.

This paradox, what Foucault labelled the 'empirico-transcendental doublet' is encapsulated by the complex connotations of the word 'speculation'.[54] According to Foucault, man 'in the analytic of finitude, is a strange empirico-transcendental doublet, since he is a being such that knowledge will be attained in him of what renders all knowledge possible'.[55] Foucault's 'empirico-transcendental doublet' is derived in part from theory of the Cartesian subject, who

[53] Making a similar argument, Gail Marshall has suggested that Victorian actresses were frequently 'implicated' in, or demonstrated an awareness of, their status as spectacles, as objects of male speculation, see *Actresses on the Victorian Stage: Feminine Performance and the Galatea Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 75.

[54] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of Human Sciences* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 347.

[55] *Ibid*, p. 347.

is simultaneously both the object and the subject of man's contemplation.[56] The word 'speculation' - which comes from the Latin *speculati,* to watch, examine and observe - can refer to both to the object and subject of the gaze – meaning both spectacle or sight and observer or watcher.[57] But the word speculation also has a less literal meaning, more common in modern usage, which alludes to the contemplative state that spectacle can ignite in the spectator. Thus 'speculation' encompasses all three terms: the object 'spectacle', the subject 'spectator' and the verb 'speculate'. Seen in this light, Nano's statement that he is 'in speculation seen' takes on a remarkable ambiguity. As with all spectacles, Nano provokes wonder and intellectual 'speculation'; he is an aesthetic wonder, which promises to both 'content thine eye' and to 'allure thy mind'.[58]

Inconsistency characterises early modern attitudes towards spectacle. In his *An Apology for Poetry* (1595), Sir Philip Sidney rails against stage illusions:

> By and by, we hear news of shipwreck, in the same place, and then we are to blame if we accept it not for a rock. Upon the back of that comes out a hideous monster, with fire and smoke, and then the miserable beholders are bound to take it for a cave.[59]

Such spectacles, Sidney concludes, break with 'Aristotle's precept' of unity in drama and, bemoaning 'the difference betwixt reporting and representing' in theatre, he calls these spectacles 'absurd'.[60] But only a few pages earlier, Sidney celebrates the way in which theatre can stir 'the affects of admiration and commiseration'.[61] As J. V. Cunningham has observed, the 'literal meaning of *admiration* in the Renaissance – it is the meaning of the

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[56] John Coveney, *Food, Morals and Meaning: The Pleasure and Anxiety of Eating* (New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 5.
[57] Oxford English Dictionary Online: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/186113?redirectedFrom= speculation#eid 'Speculation'> [accessed 23th July 2011].
[58] *Greenes never too late* (London, 1590), p. 48.
[59] Sir Philip Sidney, *An apologie for poetrie [...]* (London, 1595), sig. K.
[60] *Ibid,* sig. K-Kˇ.
[61] *Ibid,* sig. F3ˇ.

Latin word *admiratio* – is "wonder".[62] Paradoxically then, Sidney condemns the use of theatrical spectacle, while simultaneously celebrating the effect it has on an audience. This inconsistency is Aristotelian in origin.

Despite his profound aversion to spectacle, Aristotle fully endorses the effect of wonder and the marvellous in tragedy (*Poetics* 1460a 11-17). In his *Metaphysics,* Aristotle states that '[i]t is through wonder that men now begin to philosophize'; for Aristotle, wonder (*thaumaston*) inspires men to seek truth and knowledge (982b11-19).[63] Apparently building on these Aristotelian concepts in a brief digression in *John of Bordeaux*, Bacon explains that there is often a 'strategy' behind 'cunning shows', whereby 'the eye transfers unto the heart the strange idea of so rare a being, then begins the mind to work of things divine' (*JB*. 735-739). This explanation is a classic schoolbook account of pseudo-Aristotelian psychology (albeit with a hint of NeoPlatonism), which explains the role played by sight in cognition.[64] In *Vanities of the Eye* (2007), Stuart Clark explains how:

> It was common in Greek, medieval, and early modern psychology to think of perception as a visual process [...]. What eventually found its way into the memory, according to an authoritative modern account, was a mental picture or 'phantasm' [...] and this phantasm was something that could be 'seen' by the 'eye' of the mind.[65]

According to Aristotle, all objects give off 'sense images' or *species* which are transmitted to the eye and then processed by the brain's various faculties - memory, imagination, fantasy, estimation, and the common sense. Fantasy was responsible for creating *phantasmata* – '"representations" or [in Aristotle's works] a "kind of *eikón*"' - constructed from old and new

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[62] Sir Philip Sidney, *An apologie for poetrie* (London, 1595), sig. F3ˇ; J.V. Cunningham, *Woe or Wonder: The Emotional Effect of Shakespearean Tragedy* (Denver: University of Denver Press, 1951), p. 62.
[63] Aristotle, *The Metaphysics*, Books I-IX, trans. Hugh Tredennick (London: Harvard University Press, 1956), I.ii. 9, p. 13.
[64] Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 14.
[65] *Ibid,* pp. 10-11; Mary J. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 17, 27.

images pulled together by the imagination, which were then stored in the memory.[66] As Walter S. Melion emphasises, this transmission from the senses to the intellect, or from the eye to the mind's eye, was 'conceived of in terms of the soul's ascent from divinely created nature to its source in God'.[67]

In *John of Bordeaux*, Bacon implies that different spectators will react to the same spectacle in different ways. According to Bacon, the 'bonus genius' - the intellectual – will see the spectacle and 'let loose the reins of reason and conceive of things past belief', while for the 'carl[...]', or churl, the 'subtle essence floats and flies away', its symbolic significance lost forever (*JB*. 736-741). Here Bacon's hypothesis seems to echo the commentaries on the effect of *admiratio* by the Italian critics Robortello and Castelvetro. Writing his commentary on Aristotle in 1548, Robortello argued that *admiratio,* or wonder, was a pivotal source of pleasure in drama and that spectacle or *apparatus* was 'in a sense the end of tragedy' because it 'contains all the other parts [of drama] inherent within itself'.[68] Castelvetro, in contrast, took a more cynical view; he agreed that spectacle provoked wonder, which was a source of pleasure, but he believed that it only provided pleasure for the *'moltitudine ignorante'*.[69] Bacon's hypothesis seems to hover somewhere between these two arguments. For Bacon, the 'carl[...]' would only be able to appreciate the spectacle on a sensory level (*JB.* 736). He would be astonished by the 'cunning show[...]', revelling contentedly in what was a purely aesthetic pleasure, not asking how the spectacle was achieved or why (*JB*. 735). Meanwhile, the 'bonus genius' would also be struck with wonder but this aesthetic pleasure would only

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[66] Clark, *Vanities of the Eye,* p. 11.

[67] Walter S. Melion, 'Introduction: Meditative Images and the psychology of soul', in *Image and Imagination of Religious Self in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. Reindert Falkburg, Walter S. Melion and Todd M. Richardson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. 2-3.

[68] *Critics and Criticism,* ed. R. S. Crane (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), p. 329; Francesco Robortello, *In Librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes* (Florence, 1548), p. 57; Stephen Orgel, 'The Poetics of Spectacle', *New Literary History* 2:3 (1971), p. 367; T.G. Bishop, *Shakespeare and the theatre of wonder* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 36-41.

[69] *Poetica d'Aristotele vulgarizzata et sposta* (Vienna, 1570), 679. 35; Bernard Weinburg, 'Castelvetro's Theory of Poetics', in *Critics and Criticism*, ed. R. S. Crane (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 351.

be transitory, soon wonder would be transformed into wondering, into cognitive contemplation (*JB.* 740). For the more educated members of the audience, spectacle was designed to give both aesthetic pleasure and 'true wisdom' (*JB.* 745). Thereby theatrical spectacle subscribes to Greene's favourite Horatian motto: *omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci* (he has gained every point who has mixed the useful and the agreeable), the implication being that if a given spectacle failed to deliver both pleasure and instruction, this was not the fault of the poet, it was due entirely to the ignorance of spectator.[70]

There is a certain disparity, however, between Bacon's 'strategy' and the effect of his 'cunning shows' in practice (*JB.* 735). After his long monologue, Bacon magically transports the student to see 'the ruin of Ravenna wall's three hundred leagues from Habsburg plains', where he conjures up a series of 'wondrous sights' (*JB.* 749-50, 782). John of Bordeaux wanders on stage grief stricken, only to have his spirits eventually restored by Bacon's pastoral remedy of 'friendly fauns and satyrs' and 'music of sweet instruments' (*JB.* 766-8). Evidently awe-struck, the scholar sits 'musing in a dump' but rather than achieving 'true wisdom', the scholar still seems dumb-founded (*JB.* 781-745). While the shows certainly incite 'speculation' and contemplation, the scholar admits that he still finds Bacon's 'workings' to be 'strange' and ultimately still mysterious (*JB.* 785, 788).

According to the Aristotelian tradition, wonder ignites the desire to philosophise, to seek some higher truth, but once that knowledge is achieved, wonder is dispelled:

[70] Horace, *Ars Poetica,* in *Satires, Epistles and Ars Poetica*, trans. H. Ruston Fairclough (London: William Heinemann, 1961), 343, pp. 478-9. This motto appears on the title pages of a number of Greene's works, including: *Alcida Greenes metamorphosis [...]* (London,1617), *Arbasto [...]* (London, 1589), *Ciceronis amor [...]* (London, 1589), *Greenes Arcadia [...]* (London, 1599), *Greenes neuer too late [...]* (London, 1590), *Greenes Orpharion [...]* (London, 1599), *Menaphon [...]* (London, 1589), *Pandosto [...]* (London, 1588), *Perimedes the blacke-smith [...]* (London, 1588), *The pleasant historie of Dorastus and Fawnia [...]* (London, 1636) and *The Scottish historie of Iames the fourth [...]* (London, 1598). The motto also appears on the final pages of both the 1594 and 1630 editions of *The honorable historie of Frier Bacon*.

> Learning things and wondering at things are also pleasant as a rule; wondering implies the desire of learning, so that the object of wonder is an object of desire; while in learning one is brought into one's natural condition.[71]

For Aristotle, reason eventually ousts wonder. In his book *Shakespeare and the Marvelous*, Peter G. Platt has identified 'a counter-tradition of wonder', one in which 'wonder is ongoing and its own end', where wonder and reason are not mutually exclusive but inexplicably linked.[72] But while Platt credits the Renaissance theorist Francesco Patrizi with much of this 'alternative tradition', I would argue that this counter-tradition is derived ultimately from Plato.[73] As Andrea Wilson Nightingale explains, Aristotle and Plato had quite different conceptions of *theoria*. For an Aristotelian philosopher, the journey from *theoria* to theorising starts with ignorance and concludes with knowledge, while according to Plato *theoria* 'is grounded in a peculiar paradox: when the philosopher achieves a vision of true being, he experiences knowledge and wonder simultaneously'.[74] In his *Symposium*, Plato states that when a philosopher sees something spectacular or 'something of unbelievable beauty [...] [w]hat he'll see is, in the first place, eternal; it doesn't come to be or cease to be, and it doesn't increase or diminish'.[75] Thus, Plato argues, *theoria* leads the philosopher towards reason but it also simultaneously generates an intense sensation of wonder, an experience not dissimilar to *aporia*.[76]

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[71] Aristotle, *The Works of Aristotle: Volume XI, Rhetorica*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), I, ii.1371[a], 30.
[72] Peter G. Platt, *Reason Diminished: Shakespeare and the Marvelous* (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), pp.xii-xiii.
[73] Platt, *Reason Diminished*, p. 2; Francesco Patrizi, *Della Poetica*, ed. Danilo Aguzzi-Babagli (Firenze: Nella Sede Dell'istituto Palazzo Strozzi, 1975); Peter G. Platt, "Not Before Known or Dreamt Of': Francesco Patrizi and the Power of Wonder in Renaissance Poetics', *Review of English Studies* 43 (1992), pp. 387-94.
[74] Nightingale, *Spectacles of Truth*, p. 12.
[75] Plato, *Symposium*, trans. Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 210e-211a, p. 54.
[76] Nightingale, *Spectacles of Truth*, pp. 237-8. For further discussion of the reception of Plato's *Symposium* in the Renaissance, see Marsilio Ficino, *Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love*, trans. Sears Jayne (Dallas: Texas, 2000); *Plato's Symposium: Issues in Interpretation and Reception,* eds. J. H. Lesher, Debra Nails and Frisbee C. C. Sheffield (Washington: DC, 2006); Christopher S. Celenza, 'The Revival of Platonic Philosophy', in *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. James Hankins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 72-96.

There are then two ways of thinking about spectacle and its relationship to wonder and knowledge. For Aristotle, wonder and *theoria* are separate; spectacle incites a linear progression from wonder to knowledge, while for Plato wonder and *theoria* are inseparable; spectacle incites a continual cycle of wonder and wondering.

This tension between these two ways of conceiving of wonder can be traced throughout many of the religious anxieties in the early modern period. In Greene's drama there is a manifest tension between celebrating the power of stage spectacle and adhering to the Protestant rejection of visual representation. Stephen Gosson, the failed playwright and anti-theatrical pamphleteer, frequently condemned the 'idolatrous spectacles' of the stage, as a 'waste of expenses', which appealed only to the 'eyes'.[77] After the Reformation, Protestant theologians condemned sacred images; they believed they were idolatrous because they promoted the belief that an image or icon could bring the viewer into direct contact with the divine. As Stuart Clark explains, Catholicism actively endorsed the devotional power of visible signs:

> Images wept, hosts bled, souls or saints or angels appeared in physical form, while holy men and women saw visions or were seen performing miracles by others. Since Protestant theology no longer allowed for such experiences, or miracles in general, they had to be discredited as visually deceptive [...] In other words, both Catholicism's success and also its failure had eventually to be explained in terms of something very like the concept of virtuality.[78]

But this did not mean the Protestants chose to entirely reject drama as a means of representation. Eradicating the devotional aspects of drama, Protestant playwrights such as John Bale adapted the stage conventions of Catholic drama, in order to promote their own

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[77] Stephen Gosson, *Playes confuted in fiue actions [...]* (London, 1582), sigs. C1, E7ˇ.
[78] Clark, *Vanities of the Eye*, p. 162.

dogma.[79] Early Tudor dramatists wrote plays that condemned Catholic worship as theatrical and idolatrous.[80]

From the 1580s onwards, drama faced mounting opposition from antitheatrical moralists, such as Stephen Gosson and Philip Stubbes who condemned the stage as idolatrous.[81] According to Philip Stubbes in his *Anatomy of Abuses* (1583), plays were 'quite contrary to the word of grace, and sucked out of the Devil's teats to nourish us in idolatry, heathenry and sin'.[82] Hence Protestant drama became tarred with its own brush; anti-theatrical writers condemned the stage with precisely the same rhetoric as the stage had employed to reproach the Catholic faith.[83] Thus, in his sermon of 1607, William Crashaw reasoned that 'plays and interludes' were 'the bastard of Babylon', 'a hellish device' delivered by 'the Papists' to Protestant England.[84] As Greg Walker has documented, the end of the Mystery cycles 'came in the late sixteenth century'; in 1576 attempts were made to suppress the Wakefield Cycle and the final performance of the Chester play came in 1575.[85] Despite the suppression of the Mystery Cycles, visual spectacle still had a huge appeal for early modern audiences. Offering the example of Queen Elizabeth's triumph, Ruth Lunney observes that for Protestants 'the visual was too effective an element of rhetoric to discard'.[86]

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[79] Michael O'Connell, *The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm and Theater in Early-Modern England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 92-7.

[80] Paul Whitfield White, 'Theater and Religious Culture', in *A New History of Early English Drama*, eds. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 139; *The Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge*, in *Medieval Drama: An Anthology*, ed. Greg Walker (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 196-200; Greg Walker, 'Radical Drama? John Bale's *King Johan'*, in *Plays of Persuasion: Drama and Politics at the Court of Henry VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 169-221.

[81] Gosson, *Playes confuted in five actions [...]*; Philip Stubbes, *The anatomy of abuses (*London, 1585). For further discussion of Protestant anti-theatricality, see Huston Diehl, *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage: Protestantism and Popular Theater in Early Modern England* (London: Cornell, 1997), p. 4; Whitfield White, 'Theater and Religious Culture', p. 140; Jonas Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), pp. 80-131; O'Connell, *The Idolatrous Eye*, pp. 282-7, 297-9.

[82] Philip Stubbes, *Anatomy of the Abuses in England in Shakespeare's Youth*, ed. Frederick J. Furnivall (London: New Shakespeare Society, 1877-79), part 1, p. 142.

[83] Whitfield White, 'Theater and Religious Culture', p. 140.

[84] William Crashaw, *The Sermon preached at the Crosse, Feb. xiiii. 1607* (London, 1609), p. 169.

[85] Greg Walker, ed., *Medieval Drama: An Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 4-5.

[86] Ruth Lunney, *Marlowe and the Popular Tradition* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 38.

At first glance, Greene's plays seem resoundingly anti-Catholic, playing as they do upon the Protestant analogy between the supernatural power of magicians and the religious practices of Catholic clergymen. Most critics have assumed that Greene was committed to the new religion because of his apparent involvement in the anti-Martinist campaign and his frequent criticism of Papal authority in his early prose pamphlets, such as *An Oration or Funeral Sermon Uttered at Rome* (1585).[87] N. Burton Paradise has also commented on the strong anti-Catholic sentiment in Lodge and Greene's *A Looking Glass for London and England*, which he finds inexplicable given Lodge's conversion to Catholicism.[88] Reviving the tradition of Protestant biblical drama, *A Looking Glass* ridicules aspects of Catholic worship. The appearance on stage of the *'Priests of the sun with mitres on their heads, carrying fire in their hands'* alludes to the Protestant castigations of idolatrous Catholic practices (*LG*. IV.iii.1617-8). Likewise, God's divine vengeance on Nineveh takes an undeniably iconoclastic form; the priests complain that:

> The statues of our Gods are thrown down,
> And streams of blood our altars do distain. (*LG*. IV.iii.1626-7)

However, throughout the play, there is a clear tension between the desire to preach '[a]gainst the storms of Romish Antichrist' and the need to entertain the audience with theatrical spectacle (*LG.* V.v.2407). *A Looking Glass* is literarily crammed with spectacle: sinners are incinerated, the Prophet Jonah is vomited out of a whale, angels deliver God's messages and hands appear from clouds threatening divine justice. Similarly, in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, we are warned that the 'eyes are dissemblers', while being encouraged to enjoy 'such shows' and 'strange necromantic spells' (*FB*. x.129, ix.47-8). Greene's plays simultaneously critique and celebrate spectacle. Thus Greene's seemingly paradoxical

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[87] Robert Greene, *An Oration or Funerall Sermon Vttered at Roome* (London, 1585).
[88] N. Burton Paradise, *Thomas Lodge, The History of an Elizabethan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931), p. 155.

attitude towards spectacle might be usefully compared to the postmodern strategy of 'complicitous critique', what Linda Hutcheon has described as a 'deliberate refusal to resolve contradictions', which makes post-modernity 'politically ambivalent, doubly encoded as both complicity and critique'.[89] Greene's drama offers a critique of spectacle, which is bound up in the very terms it is destabilising and calling into question. Greene's drama is a critique of spectacle that is, ironically enough, one long series of spectacles.

Greene's own vocabulary provides us with numerous suggestions as to how best to contemplate the phenomenon of spectacle. Throughout *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, Bacon is uncharitably compared to 'jugglers, witches and vile sorcerers', while his illusions are branded as 'strange and uncouth miracles', 'magic spells' and 'science' (*FB*. ix.69, xiii.10, iv.61, ix.123) This confusing assortment of expressions is symptomatic of the instability of certain cultural terms – such as miracle, magic and science - in early modern England. Far from being restricted to the world of theatre, this blurring of terminology was a common rhetorical practice, as Cornelius Agrippa eloquently demonstrates in *The Vanity of Arts and Sciences* (c.1527, trans. 1569), where he likens 'witchcraft' to:

> 'the phantasms and miracles daily wrought by common jugglers; which is not so much performed by goetic enchantments [...] and fallacies of spirits, but by [...] lights, [...] images, glasses, and like devices [...] as we see done by players'.

For Agrippa miracles, juggling tricks, magical illusions and stage spectacles all have one pivotal thing in common: they are 'done by deception of the sight'. Thus, Agrippa resolves that all such phenomena are 'a mixture of idolatry, astrology, and superstitious physic'.[90]

This conflation of miracle, magic, theatrical spectacle and science has a long history. As Peter G. Platt has observed, Saint Augustine '[c]hristianised the marvellous by connecting

[89] Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (New York: Routledge, 1988), p. 188; Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 168.
[90] Cornelius Agrippa, *The vanity of arts and sciences [...]* (London, 1676), pp. 126-7.

it to miracles'. This connection between miracles and marvels 'is expressed etymologically in the embedding of *miror* (Latin for "to wonder") and *admiratio* in *miraculum'*.[91] This explicit link between spectacle and religious belief has led Guy Debord to conclude that modern 'spectacle is the material reconstruction of religious illusion and its heir'.[92] After the Reformation, Protestant polemists used juggling and conjuring as rhetorical tropes to condemn Catholic ritual as idolatry. In his pamphlet of 1624, J. Gee rails against Jesuit Priests, who like 'exorcists' use 'tricks and juggling shifts'.[93]

This phenomenon is not restricted to the early modern period. The popular scientific lectures of the nineteenth century – the so called phantasmagoria or magic lantern shows - frequently flirted with the theatrical, suspended somewhere between the realms of magic and science.[94] Fast-forward several centuries and we find pioneers of early cinema such as George Méliès (1861-1938) who used his skills as a theatrical magician to create an assortment of film special effects.[95] Angela Ndalianis has documented how '[t]he magical properties of the cinema have been acknowledged from its beginnings' and 'reveal the cinema's reliance on and remediation of the rich audiovisual heritage that preceded it'.[96] This association between magic and cinema persists into the twentieth century; describing film's enduring ability to produce "movie magic", Martin Scorsese has argued that:

> There has always been a magic to the movies. We all know, of course, that movies are the product of science and technology. But the aura of magic has enveloped them right from the beginning. The men who invented movies – Edison, Lumière, and

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[91] Platt, *Reason Diminished*, p. 8; John L. Klause, 'Donne and the Wonderful', *English Literary Renaissance* 17 (1987), pp. 41-66.

[92] Guy Debord, *Society of Spectacle* (Sussex: Soul Bay Press, 2009), p. 28.

[93] John Gee, *The foote out of the snare [...]* (London, 1624), p. 51; Rob Illiffe, 'Lying Wonders and Juggling Tricks: Religion, Nature and Imposture in Early Modern England', in *Everything Connects: in Conference with Richard H. Popkin: Essays in his Honor*, eds., James E. Force and David S. Katz (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 183-210; Butterworth, *Magic on the Early English Stage*, pp. 7-25.

[94] Michele Pierson, *Special Effects: Still in Search of Wonder* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 14; Angela Ndalianis, *Neo-Baroque Aesthetics and Contemporary Entertainment* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2004), pp. 21-22.

[95] Richard Rickett, *Special Effects* (London: Aurum, 2006), p. 14.

[96] Angela Ndalianis, *Neo-Baroque Aesthetics and Contemporary Entertainment* (London: The MIT press, 2005), p. 227.

> Méliès – were scientists with the spirit of showmen: rather than simply analyse motion, they transferred it into a spectacle. In their own way, they were visionaries who attempted to convert science into a magical form of entertainment.[97]

As this passage demonstrates, cinema has retained 'an ambivalent relationship between the magical manifestations of fantastic visions and the scientific'.[98] According to Michele Pierson, modern film special effects demand both 'intellectual and affective engagement'; their effects offer both affect and effect.[99] Film special effects provide an affective experience of wonder and magic, a moment of 'childlike enchantment', and for the film connoisseur an effective challenge, an opportunity to explore the ideas and techniques of visual effects production.[100]

From one perspective, the history of spectacle is one of intellectual progress, where the apparent superstitions are gradually dismissed by scientific scepticism, as the sensory experience of wonder is eventually displaced by intellectual inquiry. But there is more than one way to interpret the history of spectacle. In his book *Reason Diminished: Shakespeare and the Marvelous* (1997), Peter G. Platt identified a 'counter-tradition of wonder' in 'many aspects of Renaissance culture'. Contradicting the belief that 'reason wonder may diminish', Platt argues that in many of Shakespeare's plays 'wonder is ongoing and its own end' (*AYL*. V.iii.139).[101] In Shakespeare's *All's Well That Ends Well* (c. 1604-5), Lafew provides us with an alternative account of wonder:

> They say miracles are past, and we have our philosophical persons, to make modern and familiar, things supernatural and causeless. Hence is it that we make trifles of terrors, ensconcing ourselves into seeming knowledge, when we should submit ourselves to an unknown fear. (*AW*. II.iii.1-6)

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[97] Cited in David Robinson, *From Peep Show to Palace: The Birth of American Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. xi
[98] Ndalianis, p. 227
[99] Pierson, p. 3.
[100] Pierson, pp. 41, 165.
[101] Platt, p. xiii.

According to Lafew's 'argument of wonder', no amount of intellectual inquiry – no amount of wondering – ever annihilates wonder.

Turning my attention towards the role of the spectator, I now want to explore some audience accounts, which still survive from the early modern period, in order to contemplate how spectators might have reacted to specific spectacles. As Platt argues in the majority of audience accounts 'spectators were far more likely to be made marvelers than understanders'.[102] Hence, Jacques Petit, a spectator at an early performance of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, commented that: 'la monster a plus valeu q[ue] le suiect'.[103] Describing Inigo Jones's spectacular additions to *Love's Mistress: or, The Queen's Masque* (1636), Thomas Heywood recounts how 'his excellent inventions', provoked 'the admiration of all the spectators' and, he is forced to confess, that the workings of these wonders were 'above' his 'apprehension to conceive'.[104] In 1547, John Dee was involved in a production of Aristophanes' *Pax* at Trinity College Cambridge, for which he devised a marvellous spectacle of 'Scarabaeus [...] flying up to Jupiter's palace, with a man and his basket of victuals on her back'. Dee describes this wonder as a 'thaumaturgic', 'that art mathematical, which giveth certain order to make strange works, of the sense to be perceived, and of men greatly to be wondered at'. According to Dee's own account in *The Compendious Rehearsal* (c. 1592, pr. 1597), the special effect provoked 'great wondering' and 'many vain reports spread abroad of the means how that was affected'.[105] This curiosity on the part of an audience to discover 'how' spectacles were 'affected' is also apparent in contemporary

[102] Platt, p. 116.

[103] Cited in Gustav Ungerer, 'An Unrecorded Elizabethan Performance of *Titus Andronicus'*, *Shakespeare Survey* 14 (1961), p. 102.

[104] Thomas Heywood, *Loves Maistresse: or, The Queens Masque* (London, 1636), sig. A2-A2ᵛ.

[105] John Dee, '*The Compendious Rehearsal*', in *Autobiographical Tracts*, ed. Crossley (Manchester, 1851), pp. 5-6; J. Peter Zetterberg, 'The Mistaking of 'the Mathematicks' for Magic in Tudor and Stuart England', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 11 (1980), pp. 83-97.

descriptions of early modern pageants. In *The Art of English Poetry* (1589), George Puttenham describes a midsummer show in London, which featured:

> great and ugly giants marching as if they were still alive, and armed at all points, but within they are stuffed full of brown paper and tow, which the shrewd boys under peering, do guilefully discover and turn to a great derision.[106]

In *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1607), Francis Beaumont burlesqued the mechanics of stage illusion, pocking fun at 'the craggy cliff', the 'enchanted chair' and the 'ugly giant', the mainstays of romantic heroics (III.230, 229, 245, 234).[107] Just like the spectacles to be found at fairs and pageants, special effects on the early modern stage were sometimes far from convincing or illusionistic. By the end of the 1590s, the limited special effects of the 1580s and early 1590s– the 'creaking throne[s]' descending from the heavens, the overtly fake 'giants, monsters, furies, beasts and bugbears' and the 'pasteboard march panes and our wooden pies' – were beginning to be regarded as a ready source of comedy rather than of wonder.[108]

So how might the rudimentary nature of stage spectacle impact on the audience's reaction? When faced with the problem of trying to reconstruct early modern audience response, many commentators have turned automatically to Brechtian aesthetic theory. In his seminal text *Radical Tragedy*, Jonathan Dollimore has proposed 'Brecht as the missing link between Jacobean drama and the contemporary criticism'.[109] Reading *King Lear* as a Brechtian radical tragedy, Dollimore argues that the play offers 'a decentring of the tragic subject, whose consciousness is revealed as the construction of the material conditions that

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[106] George Puttenham, *The arte of English poesie* (Teddington: Echo Library, 2007), p. 107.

[107] All quotations are taken from Sheldon P. Zitner's edition of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

[108] Ben Jonson, *Every Man in His Humour,* ed. Martin Seymour-Smith (London: Ernest Benn, 1966), pro. 16, p. 7; Richard Brome, *The antipodes [...]* (London, 1640), III.v.7-9, sig. G1ˇ.

[109] Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries,* third edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 53.

govern his plight'.[110] Taking a similar methodological stance, Michael Hattaway has argued that Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* proclaims 'a crisis for aristocracy, a triumph of absolutism over constitutionalism, the destruction of hereditary monarchy, and the destabilising of a stratified order of privilege'.[111] Reading Marlowe in terms of ideological criticism, as a politically motivated dramatist, Hattaway utilises specifically Brechtian terminology, such as 'Gestus', to explore how Tamburlaine's behaviour subverts the normal status-system'.[112]

Brechtian theory also provides a model, with which to contemplate the rudimentary nature of early modern stage spectacle. Operating under the misguided belief that Shakespeare's plays were originally performed on 'an empty stage', Brecht utterly rejected the premises of realistic or illusionistic theatre:

> Too much heightening of the illusion in the setting [...] create[s] such an impression of naturalness that one can no longer interpose one's judgement, imaginations or reactions, and must simply conform by sharing in the experience [...] The illusion created by the theatre must be a partial one, in order that it may always be recognised as an illusion. Reality, however complete, has to be altered by being turned into art, so that it can be seen to be alterable and be treated as such.[113]

In accordance with *Verfremdungseffect*, stage properties in Brechtian theatre have to look rudimentary and function emblematically.[114] They are stage properties and the audience needs to be made aware that they are stage properties. Epic theatre involves 'stripping the event of its self-evident, familiar, obvious quality and creating a sense of astonishment and curiosity about them'.[115] Brecht believed that if a stage spectacle was illusionistic, it would

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[110] Dollimore, p. 202.
[111] Michael Hattaway, 'Christopher Marlowe: Ideology and Subversion', in *Marlowe: Contemporary Critical Essays*, ed. Avraham Oz (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 39.
[112] *Ibid,* p. 39.
[113] Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre*, trans. John Willett (London: Eyre Methuen, 1964), pp. 218-9.
[114] Peter Brooker, 'Key words in Brecht's Theory and Practice', in *A Cambridge Companion to Brecht*, eds. Peter Thomas and Glendys Sacks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 189-90.
[115] Bertolt Brecht, *Gesammelte Werke* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1967), xv, p. 301. This translation appears in Keith Dickson's *Towards Utopia*: *A Study of Brecht* (Oxford, 1978) p. 241.

provoke an emotional response from the audience - be that horror, 'empathy', or even wonder – which could impede the spectator from adopting 'an attitude of inquiry and criticism'.[116]

Problems start to arise when critics project this Brechtian theory back onto early modern drama.[117] To demonstrate my point I am going turn briefly to a short episode in *Selimus*.[118] In Scene Thirteen, Bajazet, the Emperor of the Turks is presented with a '[p]itiful spectacle of dismal death', when his homicidal son sends him the bodies of his nephews (*Sel.* 13.45). The spectacle is like a tableau: two soldiers carry on '*Beylerbey of Natolia in a chair, and the bodies of Mahomet and Zonara in two coffins'*. Bajazet's first reaction is in itself revealing. He *'falls into a swound'* – this is an entirely sensory reaction; he has fainted as a consequence of shock or horror – all those emotional reactions Brecht thinks audiences should avoid. Recovering for a moment, Bajazet exclaims wildly:

> Oh, you dispensers of our hapless breath,
> Why do you glut your eyes and take delight
> To see sad pageants of men's miseries? (*Sel.* 13.26-8)

This episode is laced with meta-drama; his accusation is just as applicable to the theatre audience as it is to the awe-struck protagonists. Symptomatic of his mental collapse, his syntax becomes fragmented and his verse becomes increasingly dependent on *anaphora*:

> And so preventedst this sad spectacle;
> Pitiful spectacle of sad dreariment,
> Pitiful spectacle of dismal death. (*Sel.* 13.43-5)

But then he suddenly becomes quite rational as he coldly interprets the meaning of his son's grim 'message' and weighs up the possible consequences of this appalling violence. Only then, as if suddenly realising that such horrors cannot be rationalised, he breaks out again into

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[116] Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre*, p. 136.
[117] Dollimore, pp. 63-9.
[118] All quotations are taken from Daniel J. Vitkus, ed. *Three Turk Plays in Early Modern England*: *Selimus, A Christian Turned Turk and The Renegado* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

repetitions and emotional exclamations against 'Jove!', 'the pitiless Erinyes' and 'the damned monsters of black hell' (*Sel.* 13.81,70-1). Staring at the spectacle, Bajazet reacts emotionally and intellectually; he is both viscerally engaged and critically detached. Bajazet pivots between moments of numb dissociation, frequently associated with post-traumatic shock, and over-whelming feelings of empathy for Aga's loss; one moment he is 'silent', the next he is seen to 'weep' and 'pour forth tears' (*Sel.* 15.22, 33).[119] The dead bodies both incite pity and contemplation.

Enclosed by watching actors, who mirror for the audience their own spectatorial involvement, Bajazet's reaction to the '[p]itiful spectacle of dismal death' can be usefully compared to Marcus's reaction to the mutilated Lavinia in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* (*TA*. II.iii). In his recent book *Laughing and Weeping in Early Modern Theatres* (2007), Matthew Steggle has argued that Lavinia functions as 'a sad stimulus', which causes 'infectious weeping' both onstage and offstage.[120] Analysing this specific scene, Michael Hattaway has argued that Marcus is in effect "distancing" himself from his niece 'anaesthetising himself by attempting to see her as an emblem'.[121] Utilising Brechtian terminology, Hattaway refers to the spectacle of Lavinia as a 'gest', a word he defines elsewhere as:

> what Brecht was later to call *Gestus* [...] a word that means both 'gist' and 'gesture', moments when the visual elements of the scene combine with the dialogue in a significant form that reveals the condition of life in the play.[122]

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[119] For a further discussion of how the concept of post-traumatic shock has influenced recent interpretations of *Titus Andronicus*, see David McCandless, 'A Tale of Two Tituses: Julie Taymor's Vision on Stage and Screen', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 53 (2002), pp. 486-512; Deborah Willis, ''The gnawing vulture': Revenge, Trauma Theory, and *Titus Andronicus*', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 53 (2002), pp. 21-52.

[120] Matthew Steggle, *Laughing and Weeping in Early Modern Theatres* (Burlington, VT.: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 128-9.

[121] Emily Detmer-Goebel, 'The need for Lavinia's Voice: *Titus Andronicus* and the Telling of Rape', *Shakespeare Studies* 29 (2001), pp. 75-92; Mary Laughlin Fawett, 'Arms/words/tears: Language and the Body in *Titus Andronicus'*, *English Literary History* 50 (1983), pp. 261-77; Katherine Rowe, 'Dismemberment and Forgetting in *Titus Andronicus'*, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 45 (1994), pp. 294-303.

[122]Hattaway, *Elizabethan Popular Theatre*, p. 57; Willett defines *Gestus* as a combination of 'gist and gesture; an attitude or a single aspect of an attitude, expressible in words and actions'. He chooses the obsolete English

Hattaway goes as far as to argue that '[b]ecause of the play's concern with perception [...] naturalism of presentation is quite inappropriate'.[123]

The discovery of Lavinia has always presented directors with a seemingly inescapable dilemma: 'To stylise or not to stylise'.[124] As Pascale Aebischer is quick to point out '[p]ure emblematisation is no less offensive than the opposite 'excessive violence'; the former risks trivialising or obscuring us from Lavinia's suffering, while the latter 'borders on sadistic pornography' implicating the audience in the acts of cruelty.[125] In 1971, a Guardian reviewer drew a direct contrast between Peter Brook's *Titus Andronicus*, which 'presented the violence symbolically' and Trevor Nunn's production, which revelled in 'crude sensationalism'.[126] But, I would argue, this is ultimately a false dichotomy – it is not a question of choosing stylisation or illusionism, or empathy or objectivity, of interpreting Lavinia as a mere emblem or as a real person. All of these elements can coexist simultaneously in a modern production because, as Pascale Aebisher convincingly asserts, 'Shakespeare's playtext itself is subject to a double reading in which emblematic and naturalistic modes of interpretation co-exist'.[127]

Hattaway's interpretation, however, wilfully ignores the fact that Marcus does react to the scene on a sensory level; he does express empathy towards Lavinia. Just like Bajazet, Marcus's use of exclamations and apostrophe – 'Alas', 'Ah' and 'O' - suggests a sudden emotional impetus (*TA*. II.iii.22, 28, 34). Likewise, his verse is punctuated with *anaphora*, such as 'If I do', mournful alliteration - 'would all my wealth would wake me' and 'thy body

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word "gest", meaning "bearing, carriage, mein" to translate *Gestus* and along with the adjectival form "gestic" this has become established usage, see *Brecht on Theatre*, p. 42.

[123] Hattaway, *Elizabethan Popular Theatre*, p. 190.

[124] Alan C. Dessen, *Titus Andronicus: Shakespeare in Performance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), p. 24.

[125] Pascale Aebischer, *Shakespeare's Violated Bodies: Stage and Screen Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 29.

[126] *Guardian* 13th October 1972.

[127] Aebischer, *Shakespeare's Violated Bodies*, p. 36.

bare / Of her two branches' – and the amplification of the imagery of violence through *hendiadys* – 'looped and hewed' (*TA*. II.iii.13-4, 17-8). It is only later in the speech that the verse become more indicative of emotional detachment, as Marcus starts to draw classical allusions to 'Tereus', 'Titian's face', '[f]air Philomela' and 'the Thracian poet's feet' (*TA*. II.iii.26, 31, 38, 51). But even when he does try to distance himself from the spectacle, when he tries to "read" Lavinia, interpretation fails him. Comparing his niece to '[f]air Philomela', he suddenly realises that such a comparison is futile because 'she but lost her tongue' (*TA*. II.iii.38). Lavinia's suffering is different to that of Philomela. For Marcus, the spectacle of Lavinia defies interpretation.

In both *Selimus* and *Titus Andronicus*, the reactions of the on-stage spectator move in a spiral. The spectator is firstly awe-struck, their reaction is one of empathy and they are entirely engaged in the spectacle. Then they contemplate what they are seeing, their reaction becomes cognitive and they are distanced from the spectacle. Finally, realising that the spectacle defies explanation – they have never seen anything like it – they are awe-struck once more and the whole sequence starts again. For Brecht visceral or emotional engagement and intellectual contemplation are incompatible; while in these early modern plays they seem mutually dependent.

The effect of early modern spectacle actually seems to have more in common with what the modern theatre practitioner and film director Julie Taymor has described as an ideograph:

> an essence, an abstraction. It's boiling it right down to the most essential two, three brush strokes.[128]

[128] Richard Schechner 'Julie Taymor: From Jacques Lecoq to *The Lion King*', *The Drama Review* 43 (1999), p. 38.

The 'ideograph' may sound remarkably similar to Brecht's *gestus* but Taymor is actually problematising and even contradicting many of Brecht's theories. Brecht believed that by exposing the artifice of a spectacle, sentiment would be extinguished and spectacle could be objectively deciphered. Veering away from this strictly Brechtian approach, Taymor's film *Titus* (Julie Taymor, 1999) mixes realistic portrayals of violence with more stylised presentations, in order to position the audience 'both inside and outside the events', leaving them 'reeling with the horror in their bellies and challenged with the dilemmas in their minds'.[129] Thus in her portrayal of the mutilated Lavinia, Taymor combines realistic images of violence, provoking shock and perhaps empathy, with sequences of Brechtian montage, what Taymor has dubbed '[p]enny arcade nightmares' to provoke contemplation:[130]

This duality, whereby a spectacle engages an audience on both a sensory and intellectual level, is clearly perceptible in the short scene from *Selimus*. Bajazet is fully aware that this spectacle is mere artifice, a mere 'pageant[...]' but it is still a '[p]itful spectacle' (*Sel.* 13.28, 45). Early modern spectacle is both 'strange' and 'ruthful', audiences are both critically detached and viscerally engaged (*OF*. IV.ii.1320).[131] This duality, according to Taymor, is what makes 'the whole effect [...] more magical' because it demands a series of imaginative leaps from the audience – from wonder, to wondering and back again to wonder.[132]

After having explored various issues relating to audience-response, I now want to briefly think about Greene's role as the 'skilful artificer [...]' of these miraculous spectacles.[133] A pivotal word that appears persistently in Greene's drama and comes

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[129] Eileen Blumenthal and Julie Taymor, *Julie Taymor: Playing with Fire* (New York: Abrams, 1999), p. 184.
[130] *Ibid,* p. 184.
[131] *The historie of Orlando Furioso* (London, 1594), sig. G2ˇ.
[132] Schechner, 'Julie Taymor: From Jacques Lecoq to *The Lion King'*, p. 42.
[133] Robert Greene, *Planetomachia [...]* (London, 1585), sig. B4ˇ.

burdened with an unwieldy yoke of theory is 'art'.[134] On the most rudimentary level, the word 'art' can be used to denote a skill, craft or trade but in the medieval and early modern period it could also refer more specifically to a branch of study at a university. Thus during Bacon's disputation with Vandermast, King Henry describes Oxford 'scholars' as being '[l]earned in searching principles of art' (*FB.* ix.6-7). Later, the term has another connotation, when Bacon is described as one of Oxford's 'men of art'; here the word also alludes to his use of cunning or magic (*FB*. iv.51).[135] A similar association materialises in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (c. 1610-11), where Prospero's magic 'art' seems to owe a certain debt to NeoPlatonist thinkers such as Marsilio Ficino. But definitions of 'art' in Greene's drama wander further still, frequently being associated with deception, as the phrase 'men of art' is projected onto various Machiavellian villains who 'rise by indirection' and 'a smoothing tongue' (*JIV*. I.ii.48; I.i.234). Throughout Greene's oeuvre a great deal of ambiguity surrounds the term 'art'. Furthermore, Greene's use of the term conjures up strange resonances with Greene's own project of self-promotion. The phrase 'Robert Greene, Master of Arts' was plastered across an endless number of Greene's pamphlets, plays and romances.[136] This arrogant gesture, either by Greene or by a commercially astute printer, famously infuriated Gabriel Harvey. Indeed his irritation is clearly detectable in one of the humorous poems, which was printed in *Four Letters and Certain Sonnets* (1592). Directly addressing the recently deceased Greene, the speaker declares:

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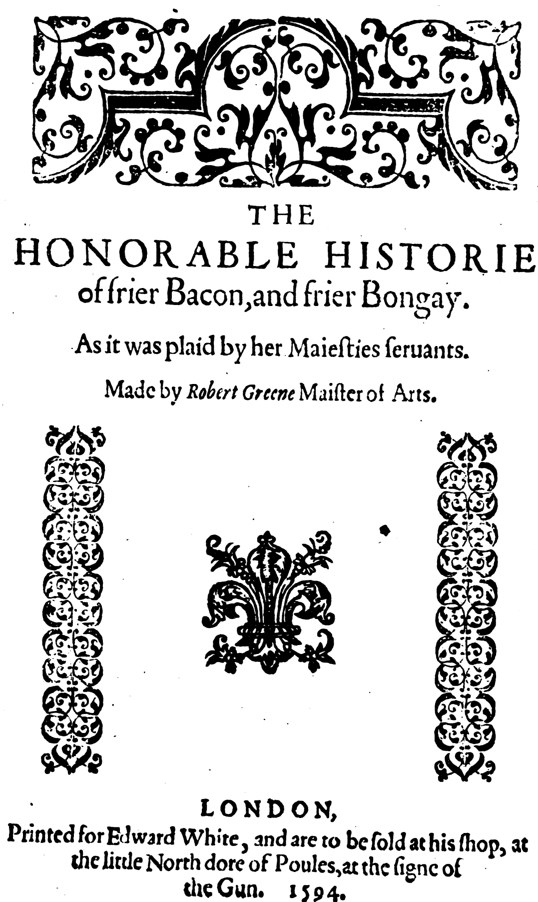
[134] For further discussion of early modern definitions of art and its antithetical relationship to nature, see C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936), pp. 326-7; Millar MacLure, 'Nature and Art in *The Faerie Queene'*, *English Literary History* 28 (1961), pp. 1-20.

[135] On the relationship between 'art' and magic, see Vaughan Hart, *Art and Magic in the Court of the Stuarts* (London: Routledge, 1994).

[136] This phrase appears on two of Robert Greene's plays: *The honourable historie of Frier Bacon* (London, 1594, 1630) and *The Scottish historie of Iames the fourth* (London, 1598). It also appears on eleven of his prose works: *Arbasto [...]* (London, 1594), *Greenes carde of fancie [...]* (London, 1587), *Gvvydonius [...]* (London, 1584), *A maidens dreame [...]* (London, 1591), *Mamillia* (London, 1593), *Morando* (London, 1584), *Pandosto [...]* (London, 1588), *Penelopes vveb [...]* (London, 1587), *Planetomachia [...]* (London, 1585), *The pleasant historie of Dorastus and Fawnia [...]* (London, 1636) and *The repentance of Robert Greene [...]* (London, 1592).

> Sir Reverence, a scurvy Master of Art,
> Answered enough with a Doctor's fart. [137]

It is worth bearing in mind that anyone who bought the 1594 or the 1630 edition of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* would have been greeted by Robert Greene 'Master of Arts', a self-styled university intellectual, on the title page, only to then be greeted by Friar Bacon another 'man of art' and learning on the inside pages.



THE
HONORABLE HISTORIE
of frier Bacon, and frier Bongay.
As it was plaid by her Maieſties ſeruants.
Made by *Robert Greene* Maiſter of Arts.

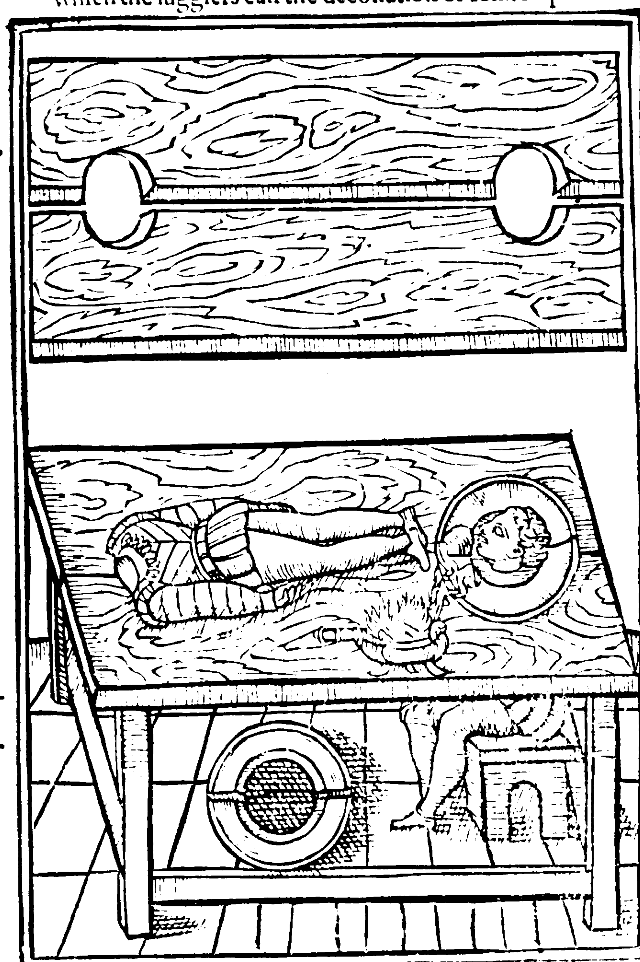
LONDON,
Printed for Edward White, and are to be ſold at his ſhop, at
the little North dore of Poules, at the ſigne of
the Gun. 1594.

Fig. 5: The title page of Robert Greene's *The honorable historie of Frier Bacon, and Frier Bongay* (London, 1594), sig. A2.

This parallel, however, does come with a caution: Friar Bacon is not a veiled persona for Greene; Bacon is not another R.G. or Roberto, another character in Greene's industry of self-promotion. But rather like Prospero in *The Tempest*, the character of Friar Bacon appears to

[137] Harvey, *Foure letters, and certaine sonnets [...]*, p. 4.

have a metatheatrical purpose. Friar Bacon's 'art' is comparable to that of a playwright; Greene and Bacon are both great artificers. They both create ostentatious spectacles and both, as a consequence, expect due homage from their spectators. When like Prospero, Bacon finally decides to 'abjure' his 'rough magic' he admits that he had been using 'art' and 'devils to countervail his God'; he - the artificer - once deemed his art to be equivalent to that of God. In Book Thirteen of *The Discovery of Witchcraft* (pr. 1584), Reginald Scot goes to some lengths to emphasise the danger of such overt arrogance.



13.Booke. The diſcouerie

To cut off ones head, and to laie it in a platter, which the iugglers call the decollation of Iohn Baptiſt.

The forme of ẏ planks, &c.

The order of the acti-on, as it is to be shew-ed.

What order is to be obſerued for the practiſing hereof with great admiration, read page 349, 350.

¶ The

Fig. 6: A woodcut from Reginald Scot's *The discoverie of witchcraft [...]* (London, 1584), p. 352.

Revealing the secrets behind 'desperate or dangerous juggling knacks', Scot meticulously lists his instructions for how '[t]o cut off one's head and to lay it in a platter, and etc: which the jugglers call the decollation of John Baptist'.[138] Assuring his readers that 'this art' is 'greatly commendable', Reginald Scot does, however, issue one important proviso:

> And so long as the power of Almighty God is not transposed to the juggler [...] but the action performed in pastime, to the delight of the beholders, so as always the juggler confess in the end that these are no supernatural actions, but devises of men.[139]

Evidently then, magicians, jugglers and playwrights walk a very fine line. On the one hand, just as a miracle might incite the faithful to revere the power of God, marvellous spectacles provoke audiences to venerate the all-powerful artificer. But all this credit and fame could come at a heavy price: there is always a danger that the artificer could overstep the mark and end up being accused of 'supernatural natural actions', or of 'transpos[ing]' God's power.

Horace declared '*ut pictura poesis'*, Sidney called poetry 'a speaking picture' and Bacon believed that words were '[i]mages of matter'; pictures and poetry have often been deemed to be inseparable.[140] New Historicist criticism has from its foundation attempted to bridge the gap between the history of images and literature. This interdisciplinary approach, which was first forged by Historicists such as Frances Yates and, more recently, by New Historicist critics such as Stephen Orgel and Stephen Greenblatt, has sought to combine literary criticism with the study of early modern visual culture.[141] This movement has had a

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[138] Reginald Scot, *The discoverie of witchcraft [...]* (London, 1584), p. 349.
[139] *Ibid,* p. 351.
[140] Horace, *Ars Poetica*, in *Satires, Epistles, Ars Poetica*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough (London: William Heinemann, 1961), 361, p. 481; Sir Philip Sidney, *An apologie for poetrie [...]* (London, 1595), C3ˇ; Francis Bacon, *The tvvo Bookes of Francis Bacon [...]* (London, 1605), p. 18.
[141] Peter Erickson and Clark Hulse, eds., *Early Modern Visual Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), pp. 1,4-7; *Visual Culture: Images and Interpretations*, eds. Norman Bryson, Michael Ann Holly and Keith Moxey (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1994), p. 2; W.J.T. Mitchell, 'Interdisciplinary and Visual Culture', Art Bulletin 77 (1995), p. 540; Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977); Stephen Orgel, *Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart* Court (London: University of California, 1973), vols. 2; Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-fashioning* (Chicago: University

palpable effect on the study of drama, with critical introductions to early modern plays in new editions starting to include an increasing number of images, portraits, emblems, maps and woodcuts.[142]

This begs a question about methodology; what are we doing when we place images side by side with drama? In his recent contribution to *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theatre* (2009), Thomas Postlewait has offered a survey of 'the scholarly uses of visual sources as historical evidence on the London theatre of the early modern era'.[143] As well as criticising 'the pervasive disregard of visual sources by many scholars', Postlewait acknowledges some of the difficulties incurred by those wishing to translate 'visual signs and codes into reliable verbal descriptions for historical study'.[144] In his book *1599*, James Shapiro wistfully imagines Shakespeare's creative output being directly influenced by the paintings in the Royal Palace at Whitehall. But while this fanciful argument might appeal to the readers of popular biographies of Shakespeare, it is more difficult to prove.[145] Rejecting what he calls the 'elephants' graveyard of source study', Stephen Greenblatt has offered a materialist account of stage spectacle, describing how, after the Reformation, 'Catholic clerical garments [...] were sold to the players' and argued that these 'exchanges' demonstrate 'the circulation of social energy'.[146] Using a similar phraseology, social-anthropologist Deborah Poole has coined the expression 'visual economy', in order to discuss the

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of Chicago Press, 1984); Frances Yates, *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975).

[142] Juliet Dusinberre, ed., *As You Like It* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006); Jonathan Bate, ed., *Titus Andronicus* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2004); Martin Butler, ed., *Cymbeline* (Cambridge: New Cambridge Shakespeare, 2005).

[143] Thomas Postlewait, 'Eyewitnesses to History: Visual Evidence for Theatre in Early Modern England', in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theatre,* ed. Richard Dutton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 577.

[144] *Ibid,* p. 577.

[145] James Shapiro, *1599* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2005), pp. 29-31.

[146] Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), p. 112; Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda, 'Introduction: Towards a Materialist Account of Staged Properties', in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama,* pp. 1-31.

'production, circulation, consumption, and possession of images'.[147] More recent work on the visual aspects of drama, such as Andrew Sofer's *The Stage Life of Props* (2003) has described 'the power of stage properties to haunt the imagination of characters and audiences'.[148] Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass have also argued that theatrical costume is 'a form of material memory'.[149] More recently, Lina Perkins Wilder has stated that '[t]he materials of theatre are, for Shakespeare, the materials of memory'.[150] Developing this line of inquiry to include not just stage properties, but spectacle more generally, I want to argue that Greene's spectacles are eidetic stage images; they ignite the spectator's imagination and imprint themselves upon their memory. Stage spectacles function like mnemonic devices.

Frances Yates was one of the first critics to demonstrate the link between Renaissance memory systems and the early modern theatre, although Yates's grandiose assertion that Robert Fludd's memory system is based on the Globe theatre has been largely dismissed by later commentators.[151] Intriguingly, in her book on the NeoPlatonist and Occult philosopher Giordano Bruno (1548-1600), Frances Yates makes a passing reference in one of her footnotes to Robert Greene, who she suggests may have had Bruno in mind when he was composing *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*.[152] During the disputation, the German Magus's speech is full of references to the NeoPlatonist philosophers 'Hermes' Trismegistus and

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[147] Deborah Poole, *Vision, Race and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 9; Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies* (London: Sage, 2001), p. 224.
[148] Andrew Sofer, *The Stage Life of Props* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2003), p. 19; Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001).
[149] Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 200.
[150] Lina Perkins Wilder, *Shakespeare's Memory Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 1.
[151] I. A. Shapiro, 'Robert's Fludd's Stage-Illustration', *Shakespeare Studies* 2 (1966), pp. 192-209; *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance*, ed. Brian Vickers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).
[152] Frances Amelia Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1964), pp. 210-11.

'Melchie' or Malchus Porphyrius (*FB*. ix.29).[153] In fact, a number of critics have commented on the parallel between the magical disputation of Vandermast and Friar Bacon in the play, and Bruno's visit to Oxford early in 1582 and his public disputation with Oxford academics.[154]

In her book *The Art of Memory* (1969), Frances Yates outlines the Renaissance concept of *Ars Memorativa*, which was based on a series of classical mnemonic principles or techniques, designed to allow an individual to remember a complex sequence of ideas.[155] More recently in his book *Death and Drama* (2002), William E. Engel has demonstrated the effectiveness of using the classical technique of *ars memorativa* as an interpretative tool for examining early modern drama.[156] The technique involved imagining a structure that consisted of a number of places in which the individual might then imagine placing the objects or symbols, which he wanted to remember.[157] I want to argue that the early modern stage worked just like a memory theatre. Spectacles or visual symbols were positioned in specific places on the stage; this allowed the audience to remember these images and to contemplate the more complex concepts that lay behind them.

Spectacle relies on the unfamiliar to create 'wonder' (the shock of the new) but in order to start 'wondering', in order to interpret the spectacle, the audience needs to make what was strange familiar. While the human eye is naturally drawn and excited by novelty;

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[153] Yates is incorrect in saying that Vandermast quotes directly from Bruno's treatise *Cena de la Ceneri*, she also incorrectly references A. W. Ward to support her claim in *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, pp. 210-11, n. 2; A. W. Ward, ed., Marlowe, *Tragical History of Dr Faustus and Greene, Honourable History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1887), p. 268; Attilio Favorini, *Memory in Play: From Aeschylus to Sam Shepard* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 21; For a more general discussion of the link between Bruno and Greene, see *Writing Robert Greene*, pp. 77-8.
[154] J. D. McCallum, 'Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay'*, *Modern Language Notes* 35 (1920), pp. 212-17.
[155] Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969).
[156] William Engel, *Death and Drama in Renaissance England: Shades of Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
[157] I. A. Shapiro, 'Robert Fludd's Stage-Illustration', *Shakespeare Studies* 2 (1966), p. 192.

the eye of the mind attempts to make sense of these images through process of recognition and memory.[158]

From the murals on church walls, to portraiture, to the images and devices in emblems books, to the burgeoning fascination with hieroglyphs, to the street pageants and Mayoral shows – every image in early modern England contained symbols which could be deciphered and remembered.[159] So, when faced with an aesthetic novelty, spectators were able to ransack their memories, searching for a similar image from the past, which resembled the new image. This old image could provide the spectator with a key, or code - a model of interpretation - with which to tackle the new image. Thus, through recognition and comparison, what had been strange and unfamiliar to the audience is transformed into what Philip Fisher has termed 'a varied form of the familiar'.[160]

In order to interpret theatrical spectacle, audiences could draw not only on their wide cultural memory – on emblem books and paintings – but also more specifically on their theatrical memory. Just as a modern film director like Quentin Tarantino might recycle the images of Hollywood cinema, Robert Greene sought to capitalise on his audience's latent theatrical memory by reusing specific dramatic images from the early modern stage. In an interview with Michel Ciment and Hubert Niogret (1995), Tarantino goes some way towards explaining his use of visual allusion:

> I don't consider myself just as a director, but as a movie man who has the whole treasure of the movies to choose from and can take whatever gems I like, twist them around, give them new form, bring things together that have never been watched before.[161]

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[158] Philip Fisher, *Wonder, the Rainbow, and the Aesthetics of Rare Experiences* (London: Harvard University Press, 1998).

[159] For a discussion of the impact of 'pictorial tradition' tradition on *Doctor Faustus*, see David Bevington, 'One Hell of an Ending: Staging the Last Judgement in the Towneley Plays and in *Doctor Faustus* A and B', in *'Bring furth the pagants': Essays in Early English Drama Presented to Alexandra F. Johnson*, ed. David N. Klausner and Karen Sawyer Marsalek (Toronto, Ont.: University of Toronto, 2007), p. 294.

[160] Fisher, *Wonder, the Rainbow, and the Aesthetics of Rare Experiences*, p. 48.

[161] 'Interview with Quentin Tarantino: Michel Ciment and Hubert Niogret / 1994', in *Quentin Tarantino: Interviews*, ed. Gerald Peary (Jackson: University of Mississippi, 1995), pp. 87-88; Paul Woods, *Quentin*

Indeed, I would argue that the 'strategy' behind Greene's 'cunning shows' is not dissimilar. Taking the popular set-piece involving the arbour from Kyd's highly influential play *The Spanish Tragedy* (com. 1582-92, pr. 1592), Greene reworks this eidetic image in his play *A Looking Glass for London and England*. This stage property, the arbour illustrates 'art playing second nature's part' because the magi are seen to 'frame' nature through their art, by supposedly beating the gourd into the shape of an arbour (*LG*. II.i.529).[162] In *The Spanish Tragedy,* Balthazar murders Horatio during his assignation with Bel-imperia and then hangs *'him in the arbour'* (*ST*. II.v). When Horatio's mother discovers her son's body, she *'cuts down the arbour'* and, driven insane, commits suicide (*ST*. IV.ii). As the woodcut on the title page of the fourth edition of the play suggests, the arbour seems to have consisted of a vine or gourd trained on a trellis.

Fig. 7: Woodcut on the title-page of Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (1615)

Tarantino: the Filmgeek Files (London: Plexus, 2000); Wensley Clarkson, *Quentin Tarantino: Shooting from the Hip* (London: Piatkus, 1995); Edward Gallafent, *Quentin Tarantino* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2006).

[162] Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* (London, 1590), IV.xxi.190-3; Frank Ardolino, 'Staging Spenser: The Influence of Spenser's Bower Scenes on Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy'*, *The Spenser Review* 38 (2007), pp. 13-21.

Andrew Sofer has argued that the arbour stage property, which may have been 'designed to resemble a tree, may well have suggested the Crucifixion on the "tree" dramatized by the Corpus Christi Passion Plays'.[163] According to the early church, the cross on which Christ was crucified was supposed to have been made from the wood of the Tree of Knowledge and thereby was emblematic of humanity's malign ability to use knowledge to transform nature through art. There is also the possibility that the arbour was a reference to the hanging gardens of Babylon, which were destroyed by God because of wicked excesses of the population.[164] Either way, the arbour, which carried with it associations from Kyd's play, demonstrates how human agency can transform nature into something artificial. Thus, in order to interpret a spectacle fully, the audience are reliant on their visual memory.

Each of my chapters will explore ways in which specific spectacles can carry the burden of their theatrical past from play to play, actively encouraging audiences to recognise intertextual resonances between plays. *James IV* opens with a striking spectacle at the beginning of the play, where a mad Scotsman leaps out of a tomb and startles the audience.[165] The moment is melodramatic and sensational – something the audience hasn't seen before. But how unfamiliar would this spectacle really have been to an early modern audience? After all, it could be argued that all resurrections on the early modern stage were effectively just a secular reworking of the *visitatio sepulchri* motif from medieval drama. Once again, what was strange suddenly feels familiar; the spectacle has suddenly become interpretable. But my phraseology here is revealing: "resurrections on the early modern stage were effectively just a secular reworking of the *visitatio sepulchri* motif from medieval drama".

[163] Andrew Sofer, 'Absorbing interests: Kyd's bloody handkerchief as palimpest', *Comparative Drama* 34 (2000), pp. 127-53; Jeffrey Kahan, 'Tree or Trellis? Jacobean Displays of Death in *The Duchess of Malfi'*, *English Language Notes* 37 (2000), p. 35.
[164] S. F. Johnson, '*The Spanish Tragedy* or Babylon Revisited', in *Essays on Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama in Honour of Hardin Craig*, ed. Richard Hosley (London, 1963), pp. 23-36.
[165] *James the Fourth*, ed. J. A. Lavin (London: New Mermaids, 1967).

The resurrection in Greene's play is certainly similar to a resurrection in a medieval play but, at the same time, it is also quite different. Greene's use of the motif is secular whereas in the medieval play the device had a devotional purpose. Although the resurrection is clearly exploiting the audience's nostalgia for the old religious spectacles of the medieval theatre, Greene has emptied the spectacle of its religious meaning. Jean Baudrillard has already analysed just such a scenario:

> When the real is no longer what it was, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. There is a plethora of myths of origin and signs of reality.[166]

Greene's plays are full of these 'myths of origin' – images which seem reassuringly familiar, inviting us to draw lines of comparison, promising to dispel wonder and awe. But this is an empty promise. There is, I would suggest, something simplistic about Philip Fisher's conclusion that:

> Once the unexpected is questioned and found to be a varied form of the familiar, then wonder is over in this individual case.[167]

In Greene's drama wondering never entirely dispels wonder, because spectacle is never entirely familiar, it is always paradoxically: 'a varied form of the familiar'. Spectacle sits somewhere in the no-man's-land between the unexplainable and the explainable, between the strange and the familiar – this is why it provokes, not just wonder or wondering, but a continual cycle of wonder and wondering.

Let us return to where I began and think again about the dispute between Friar Bacon and Vandermast. Behind this disputation, I would like to suggest, lies the intellectual dynamic of Greene's drama. Attilo Favorini has also identified a 'conflict between

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[166] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), p. 6.
[167] Fisher, *Wonder, the Rainbow, and the Aesthetics of Rare Experiences*, p. 48.

Humanism and Neo-Platonic Occultism' in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*.[168] By pitting Friar Bacon against Vandermast, Greene is ultimately setting Friar Bacon's Aristotelianism (or its medieval derivative Scholasticism) in opposition to Vandermast's NeoPlatonism, Occultism and Cabbalism.[169] Most pivotally, this conflict is symptomatic of the tension between the two different ways of conceiving of spectacle and its relationship to 'wonder' and 'wondering'. The humanist Bacon maintains that his spectacles and 'wonders' are only a means to an end. He fervently believes his brazen head will 'unfold strange doubts and aphorisms'; this spectacle will advance knowledge (*FB*. ii.25). For Vandermast, who tends to 'speak mystically', no amount of 'wondering' ever dispels wonder; his art consists of 'many secrets [...] [y]et to think' (*FB*. ii.31, 79). Although Friar Bacon ultimately rejects magic at the end of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, in *John of Bordeaux* he reneges on his promise. It seems theatre requires - or rather depends on - spectacle and the constant cycle of 'wonder' and 'wondering', which spectacle supplies.

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[168] Favorini, *Memory in Play: From Aeschylus to Sam Shepard*, pp. 21-22.

[169] Warren Boutcher, "Rationall Knowledges' and 'Knowledges...drenched in flesh and blood': Fulke Greville, Francis Bacon and Institutions of Humane Learning in Tudor and Stuart England', *Sidney Journal* 19 (2001), pp. 11-40. For a discussion of the apparent rivalry between Aristotelianism and Platonism, see Christopher S. Celenza, 'The Revival of Platonic Philosophy', in *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. James Hankins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 72-96.

Stage Properties

3.

'The proud leviathan that scours the seas' in Thomas Lodge and Robert Greene's *A Looking Glass for London and England* (c. 1589)

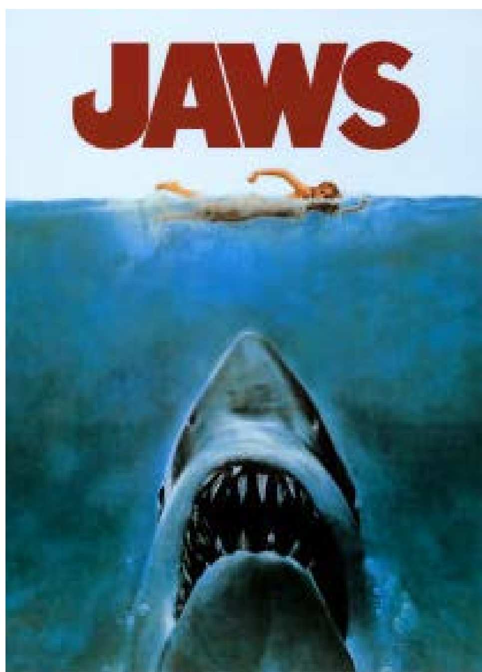

Fig. 8: Movie poster of *Jaws* (Steven Spielberg, 1975)

In the movie poster for Steven Spielberg's 1975 film *Jaws,* a naked girl swims along the surface oblivious to the presence of the shark below.[1] Inspiring the film's succinct title, the gaping jaws of the shark is an eidietic image, which has etched itself into the minds of generations of movie-goers. A hellmouth for a secular age, this image capitalises on the archetypal human fear of being consumed, of being devoured by an unseen predator which lies in wait just below the surface. Another leviathan stalks the waters of Thomas Lodge and Robert Greene's biblical drama *A Looking Glass for London and England* (c. 1589). The play dramatises the Prophet Jonah's struggle to encourage the inhabitants of Nineveh to

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[1] *Jaws* (Steven Spielberg, 1975); Nigel Andrews, *Jaws* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999); Carl Gottlieb, *The Jaws Log* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975); Lester D. Friedman, *Citizen Spielberg* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2006); Stephen Heath, '*Jaws*, Ideology and Film Theory', *Framework* 4 (Autumn), pp. 25-7; Nigel Morris, *The Cinema of Steven Spielberg: Empire of Light* (London: Wallflower, 2007); Antonia Quirke, *Jaws* (London: BFI, 2002); Stephen Heath, *Questions of Cinema* (London: Macmillan, 1981).

repent their sins. Half way through the play a hell mouth stage property is used to represent a whale when the Prophet Jonah is swallowed by '[t]he proud Leviathan that scours the seas' and then *'cast out of the whale's belly upon the stage'* (*LG*. IV.ii.1467, 1460-1). Bemoaning his time in the 'hideous bowels of' the fish, Jonah compares the whale's 'belly' to 'deepest hell' (*LG*. IV.ii.1464, 1478).

Although both are ultimately redemptive tales, *Jaws* and *A Looking Glass* present us with a struggle against adversity, whose outcome feels uncertain up to the very end. Death is omnipresent in *Jaws* and *A Looking Glass*. *A Looking Glass* depicts the corrupt court of Rasni, a king, who, surrounded by flatterers, is blind to the possible repercussions of his sinful behaviour. Although the primary source of *A Looking Glass* is the Old Testament book of Jonah, Lodge and Greene also incorporated material from Flavius Josephus's *The Antiquities of the Jews,* which Lodge would later translate into English.[2] By amalgamating episodes from the ninth chapter of Josephus's history, Greene and Lodge concoct the story of King Rasni and his corrupt court. Rasni is the definitive tyrant. Capitalising on the story's latent eroticism, Lodge and Greene revel in depicting Rasni's insatiable sexual appetite. Spurred on by his parasitical advisor Radagon, Rasni begins an incestuous relationship with his sister Remilia and, taking a fancy to 'Alvida, the fair wife to the King of Paphlagonia', dabbles in adultery (*LG*. I.i.139,147). His behaviour towards the city of Nineveh is equally deplorable. Literally stepping over bodies in the street, he ignores the increasingly riotous behaviour of his subjects. Condoning murder, he congratulates his latest mistress for poisoning her husband and showers her with gifts of 'Pearle and India Diamond' (*LG*. II.iii.933). Guilty of extreme hubris, he surrounds himself with flatterers who recite his arrogant motto: 'Rasni is God on earth, and none but he' (*LG*. I.i.30, 38, 47). Assuming a

[2] Joseph Flavius, *The Famous and memorable works of Iosephus*, trans. Thomas Lodge (London, 1602).

God-like status, Rasni even boasts: *'Divisum imperium cum ioue nunc teneo'* (I share a kingdom now with Jove) (*LG*. I.i.157).

During the play, 'many strange apparitions' appear: a mysterious *'hand'* appears from a cloud waving *'a burning sword'*, women are incinerated by bolts of lightning and men descend into hell fires (*LG.* IV.iv.1671-2; IV.iii.1636). Just as in *Jaws*, where the death of the shark's first victim is dismissed by the town's Mayor as a boating accident, the soothsayers of Nineveh convince Rasni that the bolts of lightning are not signs of God's displeasure but merely 'clammy exhalations' or 'conjunctions of the stars' and that the fiery gulfs are some unusual form of volcanic activity (*LG.* IV.iii.1641-2).

Previous criticism of *A Looking Glass for London and England* has tended to interpret the play as a piece of devotional literature. Some more traditional critics have tried to read *A Looking Glass* in terms of biographical criticism, in the misguided belief that the play must be indicative of the religious attitudes of the two dramatists who wrote it. This approach has led to the play being categorised as anything from crypto-Catholic to vehemently Protestant or even as stridently Protestant. In 1905 J. Churton Collins argued that the themes of the play are indicative of 'those of the Puritan persuasion'.[3] In 1931, Hermann Ulrici declared the exact opposite suggesting that the play is 'an answer to the attacks on the stage by the Puritans'.[4] This supposition was later contested by N. Burton Paradise, who believed the play's bawdy humour could 'hardly have been designed to elevate the stage'. Mystified as to the playwrights' intentions, Paradise admitted that the play's anti-Catholic sentiment seemed inexplicable given Lodge's conversion to Catholicism.[5]

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[3] Collins, ed., *The Plays and Poems of Robert Greene*, Vol. I, p. 139.
[4] Hermann Ulrici, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Art* (London, 1846), p. 38.
[5] N. Burton Paradise, *Thomas Lodge, The History of an Elizabethan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931), p. 155.

This methodology is problematic for three reasons. Firstly, we know very little about Lodge and Greene's religious beliefs. Recent biographers have argued that Thomas Lodge's conversion to Catholicism occurred as early as 1581 when his supplication for his MA at Oxford was mysteriously denied.[6] But this theory is still reliant primarily on conjecture. Even less is known regarding Greene. Most critics have assumed that Greene was committed to the new religion because of his apparent involvement in the anti-Martinist campaign and his frequent criticism of Papal authority. Secondly, Lodge and Greene's attitudes towards biblical drama were far from consistent. In his pamphlet of 1596 *Wits Misery*, Thomas Lodge wrote that 'in stage plays to make use of Historical Scripture, I hold it with the Legists odious' and, after directly quoting from the Council of Trent's judgements on drama, he firmly denounced biblical drama.[7] Thus, it would seem that Lodge's conversion to Catholicism prompted him to completely reject and scorn biblical drama.[8] But Lodge's attitude towards biblical drama was not always so dismissive. In 1579, he commended drama for its pedagogical value and suggested that 'playing' could 'incite the people to virtues, when they might hear no preaching'.[9] Robert Greene, likewise, filled numerous pamphlets extolling the value of the old moralities in 'teaching education' and there is also some evidence to suggest that Greene had written a biblical play on the subject of Job.[10] Yet in his epistle to *Farewell to Folly* (1591), he berates the author of *Fair Em* for writing a play which 'was but simple abusing of the Scripture'.[11] Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, the question of precisely what Lodge and Greene thought about religion or about its place in

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[6] Alexandra Halasz, 'Lodge, Thomas (1558-1625)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography,* Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008: <http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2117/view/article/16923> [accessed 13th Feb 2009].
[7] *Wits miserie, and the vvorlds madness* (London, 1596), sig. Fivˇ.
[8] Halasz, 'Lodge, Thomas (1558-1625)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.*
[9] Thomas Lodge, *Reply to Gosson's schoole of abuse* (London, 1579), p. 42. The tract survives in only two copies, both lacking title-pages. The pamphlet has been variously titled by others, including *Honest Excuses, A Defence of Poetry* and *Reply to Gosson.*
[10] *Greenes, groats-vvorth of witte* (London, 1592), sig. E.
[11] *Greenes farewell to folly [...]* (London, 1591), sig. A4ˇ.

literature is inconsequential. To assume that Lodge and Greene used their drama merely to voice their own opinions is naive in the extreme. The overwhelming majority of the play is concerned with portraying the sinful licentiousness and corruption of the city of Nineveh, while the story of the city's repentance is crammed into a few short scenes. As Lodge and Greene are evidently aware, penance and repentance do not make good theatre, whereas sex and violence have an enduring appeal.

More recently, Lori Humphrey Newcomb has read the play in conjunction with Greene's *Vision* (1592), describing both the play and the pamphlet as vehicles of 'popular devotion'.[12] But by reading *A Looking Glass* alongside sermons and other religious tracts Newcomb assigns the play a certain moral seriousness, which seems somewhat at odds with its predilection for bawdy sex and fart jokes. Taking a similar methodological approach, Peter Lake and Michael Questier have noticed that Hosea's hell-fire rhetoric recalls the providential language of the St. Paul's Cross sermons and have argued that in *A Looking Glass* 'many of the central themes of the Paul's Cross jeremiads' are 'literally being acted out'.[13] But *A Looking Glass* is a play not a sermon. The play was written to entertain as well as to offer moral instruction.[14] By drawing an analogy between Lodge and Greene's *A Looking Glass* and Spielberg's movie blockbuster, I wish to emphasise the way in which the play is designed to thrill a commercial audience.

Judging on the available evidence, *A Looking Glass* was the most popular of Greene's plays. The play was performed four times in 1592 and printed five times between 1594 and 1617. Henslowe's diary records performances by Lord Strange's Men at the Rose on the 8th

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[12] Lori Humphrey Newcomb, 'A Looking Glass for Readers: Cheap Print and the Senses of Repentance', in *Writing Robert Greene,* eds. Kirk Melnikoff and Edward Gieskes (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 134.
[13] Peter Lake and Michael Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 367.
[14] For further discussion of devotional drama and its ability to instruct and delight, see Janette Dillon, 'Instruction and Spectacle', in *The Cambridge Introduction to Early English Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 171-212.

March, 27th March, 19th April and 7th April 1592.[15] Like Spielberg's Hollywood blockbuster *Jaws*, *A Looking Glass's* mixture of suspense and spectacle had a large commercial appeal. But just as *Jaws* frequently attracts the condescension of film critics, who prefer to dwell on the avant-garde practices of art house cinema, the commercial popularity of *A Looking Glass* has led some literary critics to dismiss the play as unsophisticated or vacuous. It is a mistake to assume that just because a play or film is popular it cannot embrace challenging intellectual concepts. *A Looking Glass* is a sophisticated play, which provokes a profound affective and intellectual audience response.[16]

The purpose of this chapter is threefold. First, I am going to demonstrate the way in which *A Looking Glass* pivots between moments of suspense and surprise. Turning to Jonah's escape from 'out of the belly of the deepest hell', I will then discuss the symbolic significance of the stage property of the hell mouth (*LG*. IV.ii.1478). Finally, I will examine the way in which the play meditates on the limits of human knowledge by reflecting on notions of the unseen and unforeseeable.

Preoccupied with questions of autonomy and divine providence, in a way which anticipates Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, Nathaniel Woodes's morality drama *The Conflict of Conscience* (1581) offers not one but two possible endings - one describing the protagonist's damnation, the other celebrating his salvation.[17] Written several years later, *A Looking Glass* presents us with a similar spiritual struggle whose outcome also feels uncertain up to the very end. The plot of *A Looking Glass* pivots on an open paradigm: will Nineveh suffer the same fate as the city of Jerusalem, or will the Ninevites repent and escape damnation? Indeed,

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[15] Foakes, ed., *Henslowe's Diary*, pp. 16-19.

[16] For further discussion of the medieval tradition of affective piety, see Laurelle LeVert, "Crucifye hem, crucifye hem': The Subject and Affective Response in Stories of the Passion', *Essays in Medieval Studies* 14 (1997), pp. 73-87.

[17] Nathaniel Woodes, *The Conflict of Conscience*, ed. Herbert Davis and F. P. Wilson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952).

Lodge and Greene's *A Looking Glass* deploys similar narrative strategies to those described by Roland Bathes in *Image-Music-Text* (1977):

> Suspense is clearly only a privileged [...], it offers the threat of an uncompleted sequence, of an open paradigm [...], that is to say, of a logical disturbance, it being this disturbance which is consumed with anxiety and pleasure [...]. "Suspense," therefore, is a game with structure, designed to endanger and glorify it, constituting a veritable "thrilling" of intelligibility.[18]

Embodied in Barthes's phrase 'a veritable "thrilling" of intelligibility' is an acknowledgement that suspense provokes both an affective and intellectual response.[19] A great advocate of suspense, Alfred Hitchcock also recognised that 'suspense is essentially an emotional process', which is created by giving the audience privileged information, in order to create dramatic irony.[20] Susan Smith has observed the way in which 'the intellectual and emotional strands inherent in all suspense' can 'become separated, resulting in an ambivalent viewing position consisting of both distance from, and involvement with, the character(s) concerned'; an 'ambivalent viewing position', comparable to that effected by the 'sad spectacle' in Scene Thirteen of *Selimus*, described in Chapter Two.[21]

The opening shots of *Jaws* demonstrate the principles of suspense succinctly. During a drunken beach party, a young girl goes skinny dipping. We cut to an underwater shot as the camera moves slowly upwards towards the girl's legs. The tension builds. After another jump cut, we return to the surface. We watch the girl's reactions as she is suddenly grabbed from below. Struggling and screaming, she is pulled under the surface. Spielberg has placed his audience in 'an ambivalent viewing position'; we are both underwater looking up at the girl from the shark's eye-view and above the surface empathising with the girl's plight.[22] We

[18] Roland Barthes, 'Structural Analysis of Narratives', in *Image-Music-Text* (London: Fontana, 1977), p. 119.
[19] Susan Smith, *Hitchcock, Suspense, Humour and Tone* (London: BFI, 2000), p. 16.
[20] Alfred Hitchcock quoted in Donald Spoto's *The Dark Side of Genius: The Life of Alfred Hitchcock* (London: Muller, 1983), p. 504.
[21] Smith, *Hitchcock, Suspense, Humour and Tone*, p. 19.
[22] *Ibid,* p. 19.

react to the sequence on both an intellectual and emotional level. We have privileged knowledge; we know something is going to attack her.

The establishing shots of *Jaws* offer a grim prophecy of what is to come. Unlike the majority of the island's inhabitants the audience knows that a man-eating shark is attacking swimmers. The audience has privileged knowledge but that knowledge has limits. We know what might happen but we have no way of predicting when or to whom. These gaps in our knowledge ensure we will react with shock and terror when more swimmers are attacked. Throughout the rest of the film Spielberg plays with the audience's anxieties, frequently puncturing the mounting tension with moments of bathos. At one point in the film, thousands of bathers flee the water after a suspected sighting of the shark, only for it to be subsequently revealed that it was merely two children playing a practical joke with a rubber model fin. This moment gives a wry self-reflexive nod to Spielberg's own directorial strategy, as he attempts to terrify audiences with his very own rubber shark.

A Looking Glass deploys a similar form of narrative suspense. As seasoned sermon-goers, the majority of the audience would have been well aware that in the Book of Jonah the Ninevites escape destruction by repenting their sins. The appearance of the prophet Hosea, however, puts an immediate dampener on this reassuring piece of foreknowledge. Indeed, the opening scenes of the play demonstrate 'the formal similarities between narrative knowledge and prophetic persuasion'; both lead an audience to expect a specific future outcome.[23] In the Old Testament Hosea's homilies are directed primarily at the sinful city of Jerusalem. Unlike the Ninevites the Jews did not repent and the city of Jerusalem was destroyed. Throughout the play, Lodge and Greene attempt to keep the fate of Jerusalem very much in the forefront of the audience's mind. When Hosea first appears on stage, the

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[23] Caroline Levine, *The Serious Pleasures of Suspense: Victorian Realism and Narrative Doubt* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2003), p. 140.

angel states that he has brought the prophet 'from Jewry unto Nineveh' and recalls how Hosea has 'preached long to the stubborn Jews' with little success (*LG*. I.ii.162-5). After his forty-day expedition to Nineveh is concluded Hosea returns 'to great Jerusalem', no doubt presuming that Nineveh's fate is sealed and that God will send 'mighty plagues, / To punish all that live in Nineveh' (*LG*. IV.v.1838,1832-3). Like Spielberg, Lodge and Greene place their audience in an ambivalent viewing position. On the one hand, the audience are in a privileged position. They watch the Ninevites with an air of moral detachment; like God, they judge and evaluate their behaviour from a distance. While *Jaws* is frequently read as an allegory of the Vietnam War - when US troops were 'powerless against guerrilla attacks (the shark)' – *A Looking Glass* is also frequently interpreted allegorically, with the court of Nineveh commonly being read as a microcosm of the sinful depravity of contemporary London.[24] At the end of the play, Jonah addresses the audience, warning them 'awake, for fear' and to '[r]epent' their sins before it is too late:

> O London, maiden of the mistress isle,
> Wrapt in the folds and swathing clouts of shame:
> In thee more sins then Nineveh contains,
> Contempt of, despite of reverend age,
> Neglect of law, desire to wrong the poor,
> Corruption, whoredom, drunkenness, and pride,
> Swollen are thy brows with impudence and shame. (*LG.* V.v.2388-94)

As a result of this comparison, the audience are made to empathise with the plight of the Ninevites, as a mirror image of their own moral predicament.

Suspense plays a prominent role in the sub-plot featuring the vindictive Usurer, who inflicts suffering on his poverty stricken debtors. In the opening scenes of Act Five, the guilt-ridden Usurer appears onstage *'with a halter in one hand'* and *'a dagger in the other'* (*LG.*

[24] Lester D. Friedman, *Citizen Spielberg* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), p. 163; Robert Torry, 'Therapeutic Narrative: *The Wild Bunch*, *Jaws* and Vietnam', The *Velvet Light Trap* 31 (Spring), pp. 27-38; Stephen Heath, '*Jaws,* Ideology and Film Theory', *Framework* 4 (Autumn), pp. 25-7.

V.ii). His grim monologue prepares the audience for his impending doom. In his despair, he cries out that '[t]he hell of sorrow haunts' him 'up and down' (*LG.* V.ii.2044). Convinced that 'each murmuring that' he hears is 'the sentence of damnation', he declares:

> Thus am I made a monster of the world,
> Hell gapes for me, heaven will not hold my soul. (*LG.* V.ii.2062, 2053-4)

But if the audience were expecting the trapdoor to suddenly open and swallow this sinner, their expectations are disappointed. Instead the Usurer ignores the temptations of the *'evil angel'* who beckons him 'hence to hell' and throws himself on God's mercy, declaring that '[i]n sackcloth' he will 'sigh, and fasting pray' in the hope that 'Lord in rigor look not on' his 'sins' (*LG.* V.ii.2063, 2076-7). His prayers are answered and, in the play's closing scenes, the 'penitent' Usurer 'restore[s] into' the 'poor men's hands / [t]heir goods which' he 'unjustly [...] detained' (*LG.* V.v.2361, 2357-8). By contrast with the Usurer who seeks atonement with God, Adam the clown refuses to repent and fast. But, despite having survived any number of scrapes throughout the play, the clown cannot escape justice. Thus, in a surprising twist, the clown is dragged away to be hanged, after being discovered with 'beef', 'bread' and 'beer' (*LG.* V.iv.2284).

In both *Jaws* and *A Looking Glass* suspense and surprise are interrelated rather than mutually exclusive. Both the film and the play oscillate between moments of suspense (when our privileged knowledge leads us to expect a certain course of events) and moments of surprise (when the unexpected happens and our privileged knowledge is called into question). This relationship between suspense and surprise stems from the inextricable link between knowledge and wonder, which I outlined in my introduction. According to Plato no amount of knowledge ever entirely dispels wonder. Thus it is that most suspense narratives throw doubt on the readers' or audiences' belief in their own omniscience; their privileged

knowledge is almost always discredited or found to be deficient. In a world where knowledge is finite, wonder is infinite.

Broadening out the scope of this chapter to explore the wider significance of whales in early modern culture as monsters, prodigies or portents, it is interesting to notice how accounts of whale sightings later in the period frequently emphasise the limits of human knowledge. In her recent book exploring early modern curiosity, Barbara M. Benedict has documented how the experience of wonder or 'the marvellous makes otherness a sign of God'.[25] Recalling the 'strange and wonderful' arrival of a whale in the Thames in 1686, Sarah Bradmore expresses irritation that 'some men have had the impudence to pretend [...] that they know the will and pleasure of the Almighty' and have 'put it publicly in print' that they can interpret the meaning of this prophetic event.[26] In the anonymous *Strange News from Gravesend and Greenwich* (1680), the narrator begins by emphasising '[t]hat the wonders of the deep are infinite, and that the wonder doth afford more various and sundry kinds of monsters then the earth, is undeniable'.[27] Offering a definition of the word 'monster', Mark Thornton Burnett explains how the term derives from the Latin words *'montro'* meaning 'to show, demonstrate and reveal', *'monstrum'* meaning 'portent, prodigy or sign' and *'moneo'* meaning 'to give warning of our presage'.[28] In his pamphlet of 1572, Lewes Lavater argued that 'monsters' manifested 'showing[s] or warning[s]' of 'something to happen afterward', emphasising the status of 'monsters' as prodigies or portents.[29] In an

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[25] Barbara M. Benedict, *Curiosity: A Cultural History of Early Modern Inquiry* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 5.
[26] Sarah Bradmore, *Mrs. Sarah Bradmores prophecy [...]* (London, 1686), sig. A1.
[27] Anon, *Strange news from Gravesend and Greenwich [...]* (London, 1680), p. 1, sig. A3.
[28] Mark Thornton Burnett, *Constructing 'Monsters' in Shakespearean Drama and Early Modern Culture* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 2. For further discussion of early modern attitudes towards monsters, see Peter G. Platt, *Wonders, Marvels, and Monsters in Early Modern Culture* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1999), Wes Williams, *Monsters and their Meanings in Early Modern Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), Dudley Butler Wilson, *Signs and Portents: Monstrous Births from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment* (London: Routledge, 1993).
[29] Lewes Lavater, *Of Ghostes and Spirites Walking by Nyght*, eds. J. Dover Wilson and Mary Yardley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929), p. 8.

anonymous pamphlet *A True and Wonderful Relation of a Whale* (1645), the narrator tells a fanciful story of a whale beaching itself near Weymouth. When the 'belly of the whale' was 'opened [...] there was discovered in the bowels of it' a priest who was carrying 'pardons from the Pope for divers Papists now in England'.[30] The woodcut on the pamphlet's title page depicts the Priest as a modern day Jonah.

Fig. 9: Woodcut from the title page of the anomymous pamphlet *A True and Wonderfull Relation of a Whale [...]* (London, 1645), sig. A1.

On the title page of another anonymous pamphlet, *A True Report and Exact Description of a Mighty Sea-monsteror Whale* (1617), a woodcut depicts the whale's huge gaping jaws in a manner which seems evocative of a hell mouth.

[30] Anon, *A True and Wonderfull Relation of a Whale [...]* (London, 1645), p. 7.

Fig. 10: Woodcut from the title page of the anomymous pamphlet, *A True Report and Exact Description of a Mighty Sea-monster, or Whale* (1617), sig. A2.

Some accounts also emphasise the whale's status 'as a monument of remembrance' or novelty. One report describes how spectators 'brought pieces' of the whale and that 'some took lesser pieces to show to their neighbours, friends and acquaintance', while others:

> do both safely and securely lock it up, esteeming more rarely of it, than a dish of anchovies, salmon, or lobsters, that is a present for a lady, for although a whale be not good to eat, it is novelty, and very strange and much more stranger to be catched in the River of Thames so near to London Bridge.[31]

This anonymous pamphlet goes on to tell of how some entrepreneurial fishermen 'made a prize of her; for, they took two-pence a piece of all the spectators', transforming the whale into a profitable tourist attraction on the 'gallant day of Jubilee'.[32] Almost all accounts describe the whale as one of God's 'great wonder[s]', the sight of which provokes both

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[31] Anon, *Londons wonder [...]* (London, 1658), sig. A6.
[32] *Ibid*, sig. A5ᵛ.

intellectual contemplation - 'pious cognitions' - and astonishment - 'gaping for the event'.[33] In a similar way, the spectacle of Jonah being *'cast out of the whale's belly upon the stage'* in *A Looking Glass,* which is pre-empted by the sailor's 'tidings of wonder and awe', is envisaged in terms of a miracle, as one of God's 'wondrous works' (*LG.* IV.ii.1460-1; IV.i.1375, 1433).

In an early annotated edition of the *A Looking Glass*, which appears to have been used as a prompt book, the annotator or annotators generally note the impending appearance of a stage property in the right margin of the text, directly opposite the appropriate stage direction.[34] This quarto of *A Looking-Glasse for London and England* (London, 1605), missing its title page, survives in only one copy. Laurie Maguire has identified the printer of this quarto as William Jaggard and the date of publication as 1605.[35] Now in the Joseph Regenstein Library of the University of Chicago, the quarto contains numerous alterations and annotations in several different hands. It would seem that the text functioned as a prompt book during the first half of the seventeenth century. One of the annotations refers to an actor called 'Mr Reason', as playing the part of the Priest of the Sun. Gilbert Reason was a member of Prince Charles's company from 1610 until 1625, when the company was disbanded. Reason was, for a time, the leader of the company during its tours of the provinces and that he was involved in performances in both Norwich and Coventry.[36] On the recto of page F2, an annotation appears opposite the first line of the stage direction - *'Jonah the Prophet cast out of the whale's belly upon the stage'* – which reads 'whale', with a line

[33] Anon, *Strange news from the deep being a full and account of a large prodigious whale [...]* (London, 1677), p. 5.
[34] Charles Read Baskerville, 'A Prompt Copy of *A Looking Glass for London and England'*, *Modern Philology,* 30 (1932), pp. 29-51.
[35] Laurie Maguire, 'The Printer and Date of Q4 *A Looking Glass for London and England'*, *Studies in Bibliography,* 52 (1999), pp. 155-60; Berta Sturman, 'A Date and a Printer for *A Looking Glass for London and England*, Q4', *Studies in Bibliography* 21 (1968), pp. 248-253.
[36] Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Playing Companies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 406; E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, Vol. II (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 241-46.

drawn below and above the word. In her work on the prompt book of *A Looking Glass*, Berta Sturman has argued that '[t]he whale was very possibly represented by a variation of a hell mouth', and that it may have been 'arranged behind the drawn curtains of the inner stage during the preceding scene and revealed at the opening of this scene'.[37] This hypothesis is supported by Jonah's description of his ordeal inside the whale. Jonah likens the experience of being swallowed to being 'drawn [...] down to death', and suggests that his escape demonstrates God's 'mercy' which 'hath restored' him 'to life' (*LG.* IV.ii.1473-4). There are strong typological connections between the whale that swallowed Jonah and hell in Scripture and it seems reasonable to assume that this association would have been visualised on stage. The Old Testament story of Jonah's escape from the whale was frequently compared to the New Testament story of Christ's harrowing of hell: 'For Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth' (Matthew, 12.40). Many contemporary sermons explore this typolological connection. Some emphasise how 'by the sign of Jonah in the whale's belly, Jesus foreshowed his own descent into hell'.[38] Others draw wider implications from the story of Jonah, comparing Jonah's struggle against the overwhelming might of 'that sea-monster the whale' to a pious individual's day to day spiritual struggles against 'that Hell-monster the devil'.[39]

Included in Henslowe's inventory of the stage properties belonging to the Admiral's Men, the hell mouth probably consisted of a wooden frame in the shape of a mouth, which

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[37] Berta Sturman, *Renaissance Prompt copies: A Looking Glasse for London and England,* Unpublished Doctoral Thesis (University of Chicago, 1947), p. 36.

[38] John Higins, *An ansvvere to master William Perkins [...]* (London, 1602), p. 19; Thomas Fuller, *A sermon intended for Paul's Cross [...]* (London, 1626), p. 38.

[39] Joseph Caryl, *An exposition with practical observations upon the first three chapters of the book of Iob [...]* (London, 1643), p. 380; George Abbot, *An exposition vpon the prophet Ionah [...]* (London, 1600), p. 197; Timothy Armitage, *A tryall of faith [...]* (London, 1661), p. 323; Lewis Bayley, *The practise of pietie [...]* (London, 1613), p. 728.

belched smoke, fire and fireworks.[40] The Records of Early Modern Drama (REED) detail payments made by the Drapers and Cappers Guilds for the 'making', 'painting' and general maintenance of the hell mouth for their productions of the Resurrection, the Descent into Hell and their pageant of Doomsday.[41]

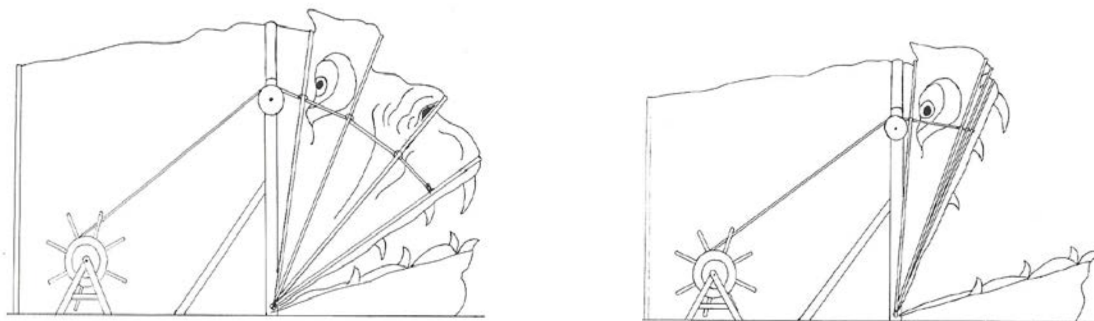

Fig. 11: An illustrated reconstruction of the working of a hell mouth, based on a sketch (c.1700) for a dragon in the National Museum, Stockholm, Tessin Coll., S7, fol. 218. Reproduced in Bamber Gascoigne's *World Theatre: An Illustrated History* (London: Ebury, 1968), p. 207.

French performance records indicate that the mouth could be opened and shut; an account of a theatrical production in Metz in 1474 tells how:

> The gateway and mouth of Hell in this play was very well made, by a device it opened and closed of its own accord when the devils wanted to go in or come out of it. And this great head had two great steel eyes which glittered wonderfully.[42]

The hell mouth also called for a series of special effects. The Coventry Drapers' accounts detail payments made for 'keeping of hell mouth' and for 'keeping of fire at hell mouth'.[43] The Midsummer Shows in London in 1541 seem to have demanded more elaborate

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[40] Foakes, ed., *Henslowe's Diary*, pp. 291-4; Gary D. Schmidt, *The Iconography of the Mouth of Hell: Eighth-Century Britain to the Fifteenth Century* (London: Associated University Press, 1995), p. 167.

[41] *Coventry: Records of Early English Drama*, ed. R. W. Ingram (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), pp. 167, 242, 245, 256, 469, 472; *York: Records of Early English Drama*, ed. Alexandra F. Johnston and Margaret Rogerson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), pp. 55, 242. For further descriptions of the staging of hell in Medieval Drama, see *The Staging of Religious Drama in Europe in the Later Middle Age*, eds. Peter Meredith and John E. Tailby (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications), pp. 90-92; Philip Butterworth, *Hellfire: Flame as Special Effect*, in *The Iconography of Hell*, ed. Clifford Davidson and Thomas H. Seiler (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 1992), pp. 67-101.

[42] Meredith and Tailby, eds., *The Staging of Religious Drama in Europe in the Later Middle Ages*, p. 90.

[43] *Coventry,* ed. Ingram, p. 478.

pyrotechnics; the Drapers' Repertory records payments for 'for a gallon of 'aqua vita' to burn in the 'mouth'.[44] The appearance of the hell mouth was also frequently accompanied by 'cannon-fire, thunder and other fearful sounds'.[45]

Theatre historians have indentified two concurrent methods for staging damnation. The first imagines hell in terms as an open pit or trapdoor through which protagonists descend. So for example, in *A Looking Glass*, Rasni's spoilt courtier Radagon is *'swallowed'* into the 'concave of the earth' after *'a flame of fire appears from beneath'* (*LG*. III.ii.1230-1, 1237). The other staging method, however, envisages hell as a stage mansion at the back of the stage, from where, as in the B-text of Doctor Faustus, *'[h]ell is discovered'*. In both Jean Fouquet's 1460 miniature of the *Livre d'Heures pour Mâitre Etienne Chevalier*, which depicts a theatrical performance of the martyrdom of St. Apollonia, and Hubert Cailleau's 1547 miniature of the staging design for the *Valenciennes Passion* in Paris, the hell mouth emerges from beneath a scaffold.

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[44] *A Calendar of Dramatic Records in the Books of the Livery Companies of London, 1485-1640*, ed. Jean Robertson and D. J. Gordon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 34.
[45] Meredith and Tailby, eds., *Staging of Religious Drama in Europe in the Later Middle Ages*, pp. 157, 90, 191.

Fig. 12: Detail of a hell mouth from Jean Fouquet's "The Martyrdom of St. Apollonia", 1451-1456, taken from *Livre d'Heures pour Mâitre Etienne*, Musée Condé, Chantilly. Reproduced in Gary D. Schmidt, *The Iconography of the Mouth of Hell: Eighth-Century Britain to the Fifteenth Century* (London: Associated Presses, 1995), p. 173.

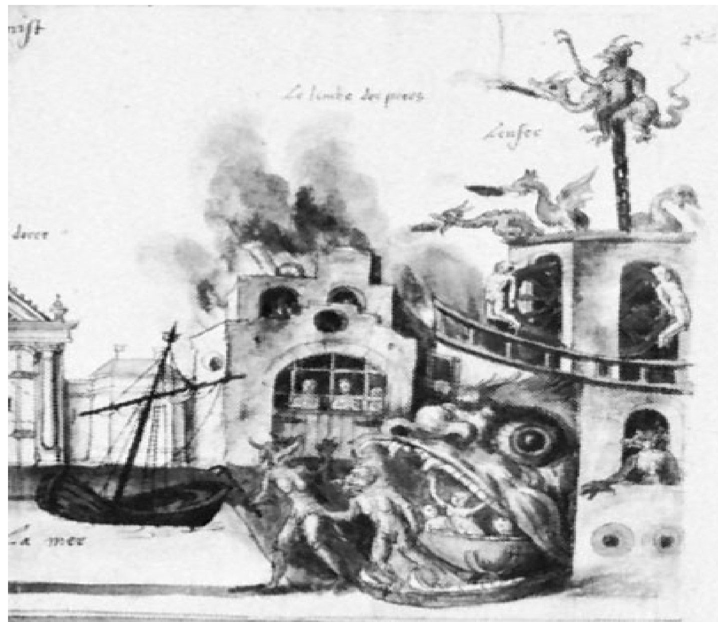

Fig. 13: Detail of Staging Design for the *Valenciennes Passion*, Paris, miniature by Hubert Cailleau, 1547, *Bibliothèque Nationale,* MS. Fr. 12536, fols. 239ˇ-240.

Whitewashed during the reformation, the mid-sixteenth century fresco in the Chapel of the Holy Cross at Stratford-upon-Avon also imagines the hell mouth thrusting forward from the

bottom of a castle or mansion structure, as devils torment sinners with a variety of implements. In his essay assessing the significance of the porter scene in *Macbeth*, Glynne Wickham has demonstrated how '[o]n the medieval stage hell was represented as a castle, more particularly as a dragon or cesspit within a castle, one entrance to which was often depicted as a dragon's mouth'.[46]

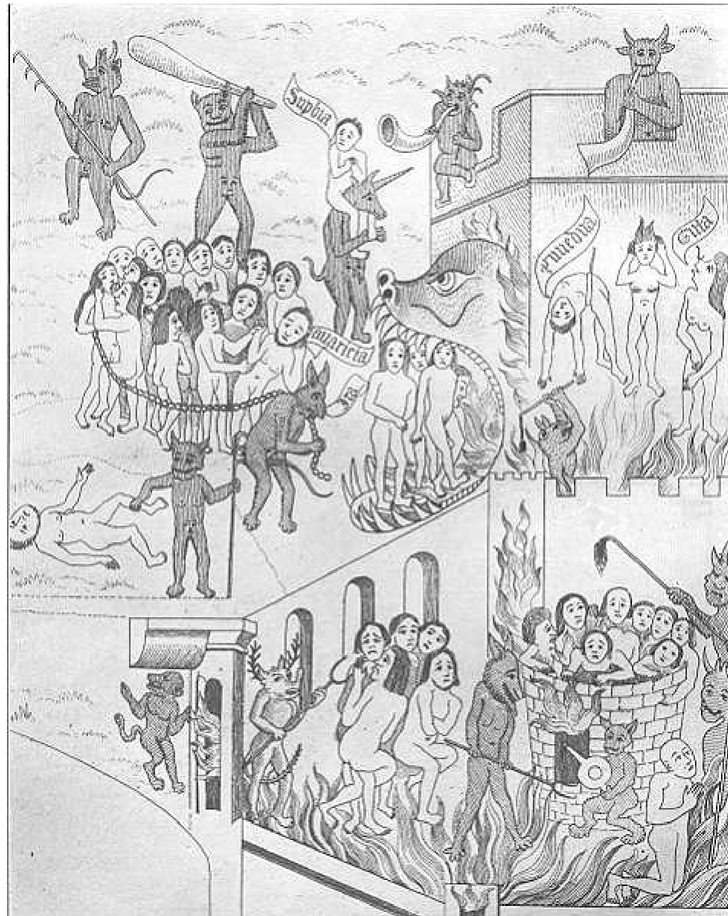

Fig. 14: Medieval fresco of the Last Judgement in the Guild Chapel of the Holy Trinity Church, Stratford, Warwickshire.

In Medieval drama, the hell mouth was a very versatile stage property. It could be used for exits or entrances; it could depict damnation or salvation. Its use was not fixed; protagonists were just as likely to be dragged through it, as to emerge from it. In the Chester pageant of *The Fall of Lucifer*, Lucifer and his companion Lightborne fall 'deep into the pit

[46] Glynne Wickham, 'Hell-Castle and its Door-Keeper', *Shakespeare Survey* 19 (1966), p. 68.

of Hell', while in the York pageant *The Harrowing of Hell*, the action is reversed, when Christ breaks open the gates of Limbo to rescue Adam, Eve and several Old Testament prophets.[47]

In both *A Looking Glass* and Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, the hell mouth has a dual function; it demonstrates its ability to tell two antithetical stories. As Fredson Bowers has suggested, the textual relationship between the A and B texts of Doctor Faustus may well be 'the most complex and obscure textual problem in Elizabethan dramatic literature'.[48] In his *Parallel Texts* edition of 1950, W. W. Greg argued that the B-text was the closest to what Marlowe originally wrote and that the A-text was a memorial reconstruction of that play.[49] Surveying the evidence for memorial reconstruction, Eric Rasmussen has concluded that:

> all we can say is that the differences that exist between the A-text and the B-text might have resulted from some sort of memorial contamination, but these same textual variants can just as easily be understood as having resulted from revision.[50]

However, the majority of Marlowe scholars, including David Bevington, now believe that the 1616 B-text is the result of the Admiral's Men commissioning a revival of *Doctor Faustus* in 1602 and that the textual variants are the result of William Birde (or Borne) and Samuel Rowley's additions.[51] As David Bevington argues, Bird and Rowley added more comedy and visual spectacle to Marlowe's play, including additions to the horse-courser episode, the

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[47] Chester (The Tanners), *The Fall of Lucifier*, 229; York (The Saddlers), *The Harrowing of Hell,* in *Medieval Drama: An Anthology*, ed. Greg Walker (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000).
[48] Fredson Bowers, 'The Text of Marlowe's *Faustus*', *Modern Philology* 49 (1952), p. 195.
[49] W. W. Greg, ed., *Marlowe's Doctor Faustus 1604-1616: Parallel Texts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950).
[50] Eric Rasmussen, *A Textual Companion to Doctor Faustus* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), p. 6.
[51] David Bevington, 'One Hell of an Ending: Staging Last Judgement in the Towneley Plays and in *Doctor Faustus* A and B', in *'Bring furth the pagants': Essays in Early English Drama Presented to Alexander F. Johnston*, ed. David N. Klausner and Karen Sawyer Marsalek (Toronto, Ont.: University of Toronto, 2007), p. 293; Rasmussen, p. 41.

sequence at the papal court and Faustus's descent into hell.[52] The implication is that by 1602 theatrical spectacle, rather than being on the decline, was in high demand.

Although there is a certain amount of uncertainty surrounding the dates of performance, there is about a ten year gap between *A Looking Glass* and the B-text of *Doctor Faustus*. It is important to stress that I am not arguing that there is a direct line of influence; rather I want to briefly examine the intertexual resonances, the interplay, between *A Looking Glass* and *Doctor Faustus*. Play scripts in this period were far from fixed, if a phrase, a character or even a stage property, proved popular it was often reused in another play. As well as sharing a stage property, these plays also share lines. Indeed, Adam's boast in *A Looking Glass* is very similar to that of the Clown in the A-text of *Doctor Faustus*:

> Then I may count myself I think a tall man that am able to kill a devil. Now who dare deal with me in the parish, or what wench in Nineveh will not love me, when they say, there goes he that beat the devil' (*LG.* IV.iv.1732-6)
>
> Say I should kill one of them, what would folks say? Do ye yonder tall fellow in the round slop, he has killed the devil! So I should be called 'Killdevil' all the parish over' (*DF*. A. iv.46-48)[53]

These verbal parallels in the comic scenes have led Roma Gill to suggest that the actor John Adams, who played the clown in *A Looking Glass*, also performed the role of Robin the clown in *Doctor Faustus*.[54] The texts of the A-text of *Doctor Faustus* (c.1588-89), *A Looking Glass* (c.1589) and the B-text of *Doctor Faustus* (c. 1602) are intrinsically linked; hence, rather than prioritizing one version of the *Faustus* text over the other, this chapter will explore lines of correspondence between all three plays.

While Jonah ultimately expresses remorse and seeks reconciliation with God, in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* B-text (c. 1602), Faustus turns his back on God and continues to

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[52] *Ibid,* p. 41.
[53] This quotation is taken for Roma Gill's edition of the A-text: *Doctor Faustus* (London: New Mermaids, 1989), p. xv.
[54] Gill, ed., *Doctor Faustus*, p. xv.

pursue his intellectual ambitions. As a consequence *Doctor Faustus* ends in tragedy, as *'[h]ell is discovered'* and Faustus is 'receive[d]' into 'the jaws of hell'; whereas in *A Looking Glass* there is a sudden *peripeteia* in the middle of the play, as Jonah is *'cast out of the whale's belly upon the stage'* (*DF.* B. V.ii.120; *LG.* IV.i.1460-1). In *Doctor Faustus* the hell mouth is used to stage Faustus's damnation, in an allusion to the Last Judgement; in *A Looking Glass* the hell mouth is used to stage Jonah's salvation, in an allusion to the Harrowing of Hell.

The stage property also interacts thematically with the descriptions of hell in both plays. Throughout the play, we are presented with two ways of conceiving of hell: *poena sensus* (the punishment of the sense) the actual physical experience of damnation and *poena damni* (the punishment of loss) the condition of being separated from God.[55] As Marlowe's Mephistopheles explains hell is both a place where sinners are 'tortured and remain for ever' and an abstract idea: 'Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscribed / [i]n one self place, but where we are is hell' (*DF.* B. II.i.122-6). A similar dialectic is at work in *A Looking Glass,* where hell is both a place of torment as hot as a 'Smith's forge' and an abstract concept (*LG.* IV.iv.1715). Rasni, the tyrannical king, declares himself to be 'buried in the hell of thoughts' and the Prophet Hosea argues that 'the commonwealth' itself 'may be accounted hell' (*LG.* V.i.2010; IV.i.1361).

For an early modern audience, a hell mouth harked back to medieval drama, where it had fulfilled a didactic purpose, teaching the audience to fear hell and repent their sins. But on the commercial and increasingly secular stage these spectacles lost their devotional impact while retaining their power to captivate an audience's imagination. The hell mouth had stopped being an iconic image and had become a mnemotechnic device; while it reminded

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[55] Richard Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms* (Michigan: Baker Book House, 1985), p. 229.

the audience of the innate physical reality of hell, it also provided a visual stimulus with which they might contemplate more abstract conceptions of damnation and salvation.

In his survey of Protestant biblical theatre, Michael O'Connell has demonstrated that during the 1580s and 1590s 'playwrights hoped to evade the iconoclast issue of portraying the divine by resorting to Old Testament and Apocryphal texts'.[56] By using a hell mouth to represent the whale, Lodge and Greene were able to exploit the typological links between the Old and New Testaments. This significant staging decision allowed them to covertly allude to stories from the New Testament, while avoiding the danger of portraying Christ onstage.

Given the Protestant distrust of visual images and the anxieties surrounding the legitimacy of religious drama, one might think that representing hell on stage was a daunting task. As Murray Roston is quick to point out, there was no law which prohibited biblical drama but only a 'universal assumption in Protestant England that such dramatization would constitute sacrilege'.[57] But if we are being strictly accurate, no early modern play ever actually depicts hell - hell is always located off stage. As Thomas Heywood informs us, 'the coverings of the stage', the roof, symbolised 'the heavens (where any occasion [...] Gods descended', while hell was located under the stage, with devils rising from the trapdoors.[58] Heaven and hell imposed a vertical axis onto the stage, providing the audience with a simple visual allegory with which to contemplate the eternal struggle between God and the devil. In his wide-ranging study of representations of heaven and hell, Edward J. Ingebretsen has pointed out how, more often than not, a conception of heaven can 'only be constructed, as it were, by inversion, beginning with hell'.[59]

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[56] Michael O'Connell, *The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm and Theater in Early-Modern England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 114.
[57] Murray Roston, *Biblical Drama in England from the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (London: Faber, 1968), p. 120.
[58] Thomas Heywood, *An apology for actors* (London, 1612), sig. D2ˇ.
[59] Edward J. Ingebretsen, *Maps of Heaven, Maps of Hell: Religious Terror as Memory from the Puritans to Stephen King* (London: Sharpe, 1996), p. ix.

However, the hell mouth is not a representation of hell itself; it is a portal not a place. Hell is a place of unimaginable horror. As a consequence both *Doctor Faustus* and *A Looking Glass* demonstrate the limitations of the hell mouth, emphasising that the hell mouth is merely a visual reminder of what can never be adequately represented. When *'[h]ell is discovered'* in *Doctor Faustus*, the Bad Angel invites Faustus to 'let' his 'eyes with horror stare / [i]nto that vast perpetual torture-house'; the audience, however, cannot see this hellish vision, all they can see is a rudimentary stage property belching smoke (*DF.* B. V.ii.121-2). Similarly in *A Looking Glass,* Jonah's *ekphrasis,* the speaking picture he conjures up, allows us to contemplate the unimaginable horrors inside the 'broad opened chaps' of the whale that the stage is visually unable to represent (*LG.* IV.ii.1471). Both *Doctor Faustus* and *A Looking Glass* constantly remind the audience that these stage images of damnation 'are nothing', compared with the '[t]en thousand tortures that more horrid be' in hell (*DF.* B. V.ii.131-2).

In his short essay on *Jaws*, Stephen Heath argues that '*Jaws* is reflexive with its play on the unseen and unforeseeable'.[60] After killing the monstrous shark, the two survivors find themselves alone, miles away from land. The film's closing shots, as the two men paddle away on their make-shift raft towards an endless horizon, reemphasises the awesome power of nature. In *Jaws,* the human capacity for wonder is finite.

[60] Heath, *Questions of Cinema* (London: Macmillan, 1981), p. 204; Heath, '*Jaws,* Ideology and Film Theory', pp. 25-7.

Fig. 15: A Still from the closing scenes of *Jaws* (Spielberg, 1975)

The same is true of *A Looking Glass*. Towards the end of *A Looking Glass*, Jonah waits expectantly for God to destroy 'the cursed Ninevites', only to express a real disappointment when his 'Prophecy [is] brought to nought' (*LG.* V.iii.2155, 2186). Having been berated by the angel for not having demonstrated compassion towards Nineveh, Jonah is ordered to go and witness the 'true contrition' of the city and to proclaim that God has granted them mercy (*LG*. V.iii.2214). Left alone on stage, Jonah voices his renewed sense of wonder and awe, as he concludes that that God's greatness is, by definition, beyond human understanding: 'Oh who can tell the wonders of my God /[o]r talk his praises with a servant tongue?' (*LG.* V.iii.2220-1). The final scenes of *A Looking Glass* validate the central supposition of Chapter Two, the contention that in Greene's drama no amount of intellectual contemplation ever entirely dispels wonder; *A Looking Glass* acknowledges that there are limits to humanity's knowledge of God and that as a consequence the universal condition of humanity is one of perpetual wonder. Further developing ideas articulated in this chapter on *A Looking Glass*, Greene's only surviving biblical drama, we will now turn the historical romance of *James IV*, a play which reworks a stage spectacle from Medieval religious drama, the spectacle of resurrection.

4.

‘When dead ones are revived’:

Resurrecting the Body in Robert Greene’s *James IV* (c. 1590).

Fig. 16: A still from *Pulp Fiction* (Quentin Tarantino, 1994).

At about three o’clock in the morning, Vincent bursts into the home of his dealer, desperately seeking help, after Mia’s accidental overdose. Amidst much panic and confusion, Vincent plunges a massive needle into Mia’s chest, injecting adrenalin straight into her heart. To the astonishment of onlookers, Mia suddenly leaps across the room, as if raised from the dead. Provoking horror and humour in equal measure, this bizarre resurrection constitutes one of the most memorable scenes in Tarantino’s 1994 cult classic *Pulp Fiction*.[1] While some critics have suggested that this episode is merely symptomatic of Tarantino’s need to shock and disturb, of his preference for ‘style over substance, or perhaps, spectacle over message’; others have argued that this visual device ‘addresses the theme of the film’, which ‘for all its well deserved kudos for unique visual style [is] a simple tale about the redemption of

[1] *Pulp Fiction* (Quentin Tarantino, 1994). For further discussion of this scene, see Peter and Will Brooker, ‘Pulp Modernism: Tarantino’s Affirmative Action’, *Postmodern After Images*, eds. Peter and Will Brooker (New York, 1997), pp. 23-35; Dana Polan, *Pulp Fiction* (London: BFI), pp. 22-3.

hoodlums'.[2] However, Mia's resurrection contributes both style and substance to *Pulp Fiction*. The triumph of this cinematic spectacle is not one of effect over affect; it lies in a synthesis of affect and effect.

Injecting a similarly powerful shot of adrenalin into another story about redemption, Robert Greene's *James IV* (c. 1590, pr. 1598) opens with a bang. The opening stage direction of the play reads:

> *Music playing within. Enter OBERON, King of the Fairies, an antic, who dance about a tomb, placed conveniently on the stage, out of which, suddenly starts up as they dance, BOHAN, a Scot, attired like a Redesdale man, from whom the antic flies.* (*JIV*. I.i)

Before any words are spoken or any actors appear, the audience is confronted with the ominous spectacle of a *'tomb placed conveniently on the stage'* (*JIV*. I.i). But if the audience were expecting a sombre funeral, Greene disappoints them. Without warning, a group of actors surge onto the stage. They dance wildly; music plays. Suddenly, the tomb bursts open and Bohan, one of the play's presenters, leaps out. The atmosphere of the play has transformed from ominous melancholy to delight and elation. Dressed *'like a Redesdale man'* with a 'wild and ferocious appearance', Bohan's apparent resurrection provides more than mere aesthetic delight.[3] Like the corpse-crowded *Pulp Fiction*, Greene's play depicts a veritable pageant of fatalities. Offering an antidote to the scenes of slaughter, which emphasise the transient nature of life and the finality of death, this comic resurrection

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[2] Glynne White, 'Quentin Tarantino', in *Fifty Contemporary Film Directors*, ed. Yvonne Tasker (New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 396; David Kufoff, *Vault Guide to Screenwriting Careers* (New York: Vault, 2005), p. 62. For more criticism of Tarantino's aesthetics and apparent lack of morality, see Chris Willman, 'Celluloid Heroes (1995)', *Quentin Tarantino: Interviews*, ed. Gerald Peary (Jackson: Mississippi, 1998), p. 147.

[3] J. A. Lavin, ed. *James the Fourth* (London: The New Mermaids, 1967), p. 5. The emendation of 'Ridstall man' was suggested by W. L. Renwick, 'Greene's Ridstall Man', *Modern Language Review* 29 (1934), p. 434; H. G. Wright, 'Greene's Ridstall Man', *Modern Language Review* 30 (1935), p. 437, and J. C. Maxwell, 'Greene's Ridstall Man', *Modern Language Review* 44 (1949), pp. 88-9, who quotes from Thomas Wilson's *The Arte of Rhetorique [...]* (London, 1553), p. 51: 'his soil also (where he was borne) giveth him to be an evil man: considering he was bred and brought up among a den of thieves, among the men of Tyndale and Riddesdale, where pillage is good purchase, and murdering is counted manhood'.

expresses a fervent desire for human transcendence and the need for the dead to return in order to redeem the present.

Just as in *Pulp Fiction*, a strange tension between comedy and tragedy reverberates throughout Greene's *James IV*. Although the play begins with the marriage of James IV to Dorothea, the daughter of the King of England, all is not as it seems. James's affections are otherwise engaged; and, with the help of his power-crazed favourite Ateukin, James plots adultery and murder. Hearing that Dorothea has been murdered, the King of England attacks Scotland. At the end of the play, somehow, all is forgiven when Dorothea reappears, and the situation is finally resolved with festivity. The play is presented by Bohan, a Scottish nobleman, while Oberon, the King of the Fairies, presents the play's various emblematic dumb shows, spectacular interludes and comic jigs.

Concentrating on the opening sequence of Greene's play, I want to contemplate the scene's affective power - its ability to provoke shock - and its effective power - its ability to convey symbolic meaning. Previous commentators have argued that the apparent tension between the play's two presenters is indicative of a generic conflict in *James IV*; the prevailing view being that the 'satiric, moralising' Bohan 'presides over the play as history and tragedy, while the 'festive, comic, life-affirming' Oberon 'presides over the play as comedy'.[4] Offering an alternative argument, I want to propose that Bohan and Oberon proffer two distinct, but not mutually exclusive, ways of conceiving of and interpreting theatrical spectacle. For the sober rationalist Bohan drama must have a didactic purpose;

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[4] Alexander Leggatt, 'Bohan and Oberon: Internal Debate of Greene's *James IV*', *The Elizabethan Theatre* XI (1990), p. 98. On the question of the play's genre and on the relationship between Bohan and Oberon, see J. Clinton Crumley, 'Anachronism and Historical Romance in Renaissance Drama: *James IV*', *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 24 (1998), pp. 75-90; Edward Gieskes, *Staging Professionalism in Greene's James IV*, in *Writing Robert Greene: Essays on England's First Notorious Professional Writer*, eds., Kirk Melnikoff and Edward Gieskes (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 53-72; A. R. Braunmuller, 'The Serious Comedy of Greene's *James IV*', *English Literary Renaissance* 3 (1973), pp. 335-350; Dermot Cavanagh, *Language and Politics in the Sixteenth-Century History Play* (New York, 2003), pp. 58-79; Verna A. Foster, *The Name and Nature of Tragicomedy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 42-5; Catherine Lekhal, 'The Historical Background of Robert Greene's *James IV*', *Cahiers Elisabethains* 35 (1989), pp. 27-46; Benjamin Griffin, *Playing the Past: Approaches to English Historical Drama, 1385-1600* (Suffolk, 2001), p. 20.

drama's "usefulness" lies in its cognitive effects, in its ability to provoke intellectual contemplation. Oberon, by contrast, demonstrates a disregard for the "usefulness" of drama; instead he advocates the affective power of spectacle, its aesthetic power to elicit an emotional response from an audience. Between them, Bohan, who emphasises the power of spectacle to provoke intellectual contemplation, and Oberon, who emphasises the power of spectacle to provoke aesthetic pleasure, subscribe to the dialectic proffered by Greene's favourite motto, which, as we established earlier, appears on the play's title page: *'Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci'* (He has won every vote who has blended profit and pleasure, at once delighting and instructing the reader).[5]

In her recent book, Rita Felski has argued that literary critics have failed to appreciate literature's power to shock and surprise.[6] Shock, it seems, has always unnerved literary critics, who pride themselves on their rational analytical intellects. As a consequence, the presence of shock is generally dismissed out of hand. In a recent essay, Patrick Cheney has read *Edward II* 'in the register of [...] the sublime', in order to contemplate the '*theatrical, awakened, elevated* condition' of Marlowe's verse.[7] In a short introduction, Cheney cites Philip Shaw's definition of the term:

> Sublimity... refers to the moment when the ability to apprehend, to know, and to express a thought or sensation is defeated. Yet through this very defeat, the mind gets a feeling for that which lies beyond thought and language.[8]

Crucially, Shaw's definition of '[s]ublimity' is very similar to Montaigne's definition of amazement, quoted at the opening of Chapter Two. As Cheney summarises, 'the sublime is a

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[5] Greene's motto derives from Horace's *Ars Poetica,* see *Satires, Epistles and Ars Poetica*, trans. H. Ruston Fairclough (London: William Heinemann, 1961), 343, pp. 478-9.

[6] Rita Felski, *Uses of Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), p. 105.

[7] Patrick Cheney, '*Edward II*: Marlowe, tragedy and the sublime', in *English Renaissance Tragedy,* eds. Emma Smith and Garrett A. Sullivan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 174-5; David L. Sedley, *Sublimity and Skepticism in Montaigne and Milton (*Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2005), p. 153.

[8] Philip Shaw, *The Sublime* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 3.

form of literary experience that breaks the barrier of human consciousness to enter the condition of the eternal'.[9]

Nevertheless, literary critics still continue to disregard the aesthetics of shock in literature. Artaud offers a blunt corrective for such reductive thinking; to his mind the power of theatre lay in its visceral impact, in its power to shock an audience into a new state of understanding:

> One cannot separate body and mind nor the senses from the intellect, particularly in a field where the unendingly repeated jading of our organs calls for sudden shocks to revive our understanding.[10]

The opening sequence of *James IV* provides revivification, both literarily and metaphorically; the shock it provokes not only wakes Bohan from his slumber, it also grabs the audience's attention. Bohan's resurrection provokes a visceral reaction, encouraging the audience to reflect on the metaphorical significance of this spectacle. The ability of spectacle to appeal both to the audience's emotions and to their intellect is evident in the constant interplay between the aesthetic of shock and the aesthetic of recognition, which runs throughout the play.

Crucially Greene's opening is unique; no other early modern drama begins in this way. Purporting to be a history play, *James IV* toys with the audience's generic assumptions. The sight of the tomb on stage at the beginning of the play draws the audience into an intertextual maze; they assume they know how the play will begin based on how other history plays begin. The audience are expecting a funeral; Shakespeare's *1 Henry VI* (c. 1592) begins with just such a morbid spectacle, as the English court gathers around Henry V's 'wooden coffin' and struggles to come to terms with the fact that their hero 'is dead, and

[9] Cheney, p. 174.
[10] Antonin Artaud, *Artaud on Theatre*, ed. Claude Schumacher (London: Methuen, 1989), p. 122.

never shall revive' (*1H6.* I.i.18-19).[11] But this is not what happens in *James IV*. Greene evokes the audience's memory of a familiar genre, encourages them to assume generic invariability, only to then provoke shock when he deviates from their expectations.

Shock tactics are deployed throughout *James IV*. Punctuating the play, the morbid dumb shows depicting the death of kings lead us to expect a tragic denouement, instead the play ends on a high, with the jovial invitation to 'feast it' and 'frolic it like friends' (*JIV*. V.vi.235). In the 1598 Quarto of the play, the three dumb shows are printed between Act One and Act Two. It seems highly unlikely that this is where they originally would have appeared in the play. Tiffany Stern has recently demonstrated that, like prologues and epilogues, interim entertainments were written on 'separate documents' from the play-text, therefore interim entertainments were frequently 'misplaced because separately acquired' by the printer.[12] In the Quarto two interludes follow the first Act. The first stage direction states that 'Bohan and the Fairy King' enter *'after the first act'* and that they then perform a *'pretty dance'* (*JIV*. I.C). This is followed by the three dumb shows, which precede the heading *'After the first act'*. B. A. P. Van Dam has suggested that Greene wanted his dumb shows to follow the final Act but that an adapter 'for some reason or other preferred to have the three dumb shows not at the end of the performance but between the acts' and the compositor arranged the dumb shows 'according to the adapter's instructions'.[13] If Van Dam's supposition is correct, Oberon's dumb shows would have occurred after Bohan had finished presenting the story of *James IV*. But the suggestion that Greene wanted the dumb shows to be tacked on, consecutively, at end of the play seems unconvincing. After all, dumb shows were designed to reemphasise the themes of the play in a different theatrical mode and

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[11] For further discussion of funeral pageantry on the early modern stage, see Michael Neill, "Exeunt with a Dead March', Funeral Pageantry on the Shakespeare Stage', in *Pageantry in the Shakespeare Theater*, ed. David M. Bergeron (Athens, 1985), pp. 153-193.
[12] Tiffany Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 108.
[13] B. A. P. Van Dam, 'R. Greene's *James IV*', *English Studies* XIV (1932), pp. 118-9.

usually appeared between the acts of a play. A more credible argument has been put forward by Norman Sanders, who tried to reconstruct the original positions of the dumb shows by looking for appropriate moments in the text.[14] He has argued that the first dumb show occurred at the end of Act One Scene One, the second at the end of Act One Scene Two and third at the end of Act Three Scene Two. There is, however, another possibility. In the Quarto text, the dumb shows follow the line *'After the first act'* and then the second and third dumb shows are numbered 2 and 3. Perhaps this indicates that the first dumb show would have appeared at the end of Act One, the second at the end of Act Two and the third at the end of Act Three. This theory is also supported by the text; the dumb shows seem to complement Bohan and Oberon's discussions in the corresponding choruses.

By adding these silent shows full of 'mirk and baleful harm', Greene is once again playing with the audience's expectations. Theatrical tradition dictates that a dumb show 'import[...] the argument of the play' (*Ham.* III.ii.136). Thus in Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville's *Gorboduc* (1563) and George Gascoigne's *Jocasta* (1572), the dumb shows foreshadow events which will later be represented through dialogue.[15] Greene encourages the audience to assume that like Semiramis, Cyrus and Sesostris, James's failure both as a king and as a man will result in his death, which heightens their sense of relief when James redeems himself. Directly contravening the title page's guarantee that we will see James *'slain at Flodden'*, James escapes his fate; that is his fate as dictated by history; he does not die. Similarly we are led to expect that Dorothea will die of her wounds after she is brutally attacked by an evil French henchman and yet, still disguised as a boy, she is nursed back to health by a Scottish noblewoman who promptly falls in love with her. In the blink of an eye, we are transported to the joyfully comic world of *Twelfth Night* (c.1600-1).

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[14] Norman Sanders, ed., *The Scottish History of James the Fourth* (London: Methuen, 1970), pp. 128-32.
[15] For further discussion of significance of dumb shows in early modern drama, see B. R. Pearn, 'Dumb-Show in Elizabethan Drama', *The Review of English Studies* 11 (1935), pp. 385-405; Dieter Mehl, *The Elizabethan Dumb Show: The History of a Dramatic Convention* (London, 1965).

Like a Dadaist work of art which, as Richard Sheppard explains, aims to ‘shock’ and ‘sharpen our perceptions of the everyday’ and to ‘replace static and detached contemplation’ with reinvigorated thought, Greene’s play relies on the aesthetic of shock to prompt the audience towards a renewed contemplation of apparently familiar stage devices.[16] As Philip Fisher emphasises, only a new experience, an aesthetic novelty, can provoke amazement: ‘[f]or wonder there must be no element of memory in the experience’.[17] Demonstrating a clear awareness of the power of aesthetic novelties on the inexperienced, Ateukin reminds his royal master that the beautiful Ida will be vulnerable to flattery and gifts precisely because she is young:

> ’Tis Ida is the mistress of your heart,
> Whose youth must take impression of affects,
> For tender twigs will bowe and minds
> Will yield to fancy be they followed well. (*JIV.* I.i.212-5)

Ateukin predicts that Ida will be overwhelmed by the ‘impression of affects’; her mind ‘will yield to fancy’ because she has not experienced such flattery before. She has no experience, no memories of similar situations, on which to model her behaviour. To Ateukin’s dismay, however, Ida turns out to be far from impressionable. Just as the audience are encouraged to seek moral instruction from the dumb shows which recall past tragedies, Ida has a wide collective memory on which to draw. From the Bible to the allegorical embroidery she is creating, to her mother’s commonplace sayings, Ida is surrounded by images and words, which carry didactic messages, imbuing her with the wisdom to reject James’s advances. Through a process of memory and recognition, she is able to rationalise and interpret her experiences. Indeed Ida appears to demonstrate a self-referential awareness; it is as if she

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[16] Richard Sheppard, *Modernism-Dada-Postmodernism* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2000), p. 201.
[17] Philip Fisher, *Wonder, the Rainbow, and the Aesthetics of Rare Experiences* (London: Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 18.

realises that in order to survive the play she must conform to the Patient Griselda archetype, like her literary predecessors.

In the same way, an audience is reliant on their visual memory in order to interpret the various spectacles in *James IV*; meaning is once again referential. The opening of *James IV* is melodramatic and sensational – something the audience hasn't seen before. But how unfamiliar would this spectacle really have been to an early modern audience? After all, as we have established, critics frequently argue that all resurrections on the early modern stage were either a secular modification of the *visitatio sepulchri* motif from medieval drama or that they derive from the revivifications of prose romance.[18] Spectacles carry the burden of their theatrical or literary past from play to play, actively encouraging audiences to recognize intertextual resonances between plays. Discussing the practice of recycling costumes on the early modern stage, Peter Stallybrass has described 'theatrical paraphernalia as a memory system'.[19] Andrew Sofer has suggested that stage properties are 'retrospective'; they encourage the audience to recall their 'previous stage incarnations'.[20] More recently, Lina Perkins Wilder has argued that '[t]he physical properties of the theatre [...] become the materials for a mnemonic dramaturgy'.[21] Greene's spectacle combines new and old. It breaks with generic tradition and conforms to it; it is shockingly unfamiliar and recognisably familiar. Engaging the audience's emotions and their intellect, spectacle provokes both subjective and objective judgement.

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[18] Michael Neill, *Issues of Death* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 309; Karen Sawyer Marsalek, 'Awake your faith': English Resurrection Drama and *The Winter's Tale'*, in '*Bring furth the pagants': Essays in Early Drama Presented to Alexandra F. Johnson* (London: University of Toronto Press, 2007), pp. 271-291; Sarah Beckwith, 'Shakespeare's Resurrections', in *Shakespeare and the Middle Ages*, eds. Curtis Perry and John Watkins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 45-67; Elizabeth Williamson, *The Materiality of Religion in Early Modern English Drama* (Farnham: Surrey, 2009), pp. 33-70.

[19] Peter Stallybrass, *Worn Worlds: Clothes and Identity on the Renaissance Stage*, in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture,* eds. Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan and Peter Stallybrass (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 308.

[20] Andrew Sofer, *The Stage Life of Props* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2003), p. viii.

[21] Lina Perkins Wilder, *Shakespeare's Memory Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 1.

Bemused, or perhaps just simply confused, Bohan watches Oberon's visual excesses from a discreet distance; Oberon's jigs, 'this din of mirk and baleful harm', 'these crafts' elicit only one response from Bohan: 'What meaneth this?' (*JIV*. DS.i.4; DS.ii.6). Bohan's question belies his primary anxiety: what if these 'fond actions' are merely frivolous diversions, devoid of meaning? But Bohan's anxieties are unfounded; the play's spectacles are eidetic stage images: they assault the senses, provoking wonder and astonishment, which in turn encourages the audience to contemplate the symbolic significance of these spectacles.[22]

Greene's opening spectacle might have been based on a similar device used by Anthony Munday in his play *Fedele and Fortunio; or; The Two Italian Gentlemen* (c. 1584), which was an adaptation of Luigi Pasquàligo's *Commedia Erudite, Il Fedele* (c. 1572). In *Fedele and Fortunio*, a woman hires a sorceress to perform a magic spell, which will make her lover more devoted to her. But the rite is interrupted by a character called Crackstone, who *'riseth out of the tomb'* he has been hiding in *'with one candle in his mouth, and in each hand one'*, after the sorceress throws candles into it. Terrified, the women run away, screaming *'[t]he Devil, the Devil'* (II.ii).[23] By contrast to Munday, Greene puts his comic resurrection in the induction of his play so that he can startle the audience and grab their attention at the beginning of the play.

This device must have been popular because Robert Armin chose to rework it in his play *The Valiant Welshman* (c.1615). With accompanying music and dancing, the figure of Fortune *'descends down from heaven to the stage'* to wake *'the ancient Bard [...] who long ago was there entombed'* (I.i). Described as a 'poet laureate', the Bard agrees to tell the story of the valiant Welshman, in order to 'encourage' the youths in the audience 'to follow the

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[22] Hattaway, *Elizabethan Popular Theatre*, p. 111.

[23] All quotations are derived from Richard Hosley's edition: *A Critical Edition of Anthony Munday's Fedele and Fortunio* (New York: Galand Publishing, 1981).

steps of their ancestors' (I.i.25; FM.3-4).[24] The majority of stage resurrections, however, occur towards the end, rather than at the beginning, of a play. In the closing scenes of John Marston's *Antonio and Mellida* (c. 1599), the audience are treated to a 'tragic spectacle', as a coffin is carried onstage to the sound of '*mournful sennet*' (V.ii.187).[25] '*Arising from the coffin*', Antonio reassures his dumbstuck 'spectators', telling them to: '[s]tand not amazed' (V.ii.229, 223). Similarly in Thomas Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (c. 1613), *'Touchwood Junior and Moll rise out of their coffins'* providing an atmosphere of 'joy and wonder' with which to close the play (V.iv).[26] Similar resurrection devices are also used in Anthony Munday's mayoral pageants. In *Chruso-thriambos* (1611), the allegorical figure of Time awakes Nicholas Faringdon, the long dead Lord Mayor of London, from his 'quiet slumber' in his tomb (243).[27] Daryl W. Palmer has argued that this spectacle of resurrection 'infuses the civil ritual with Christian significance'.[28]

Like Greene's *James IV*, these various plays and pageants all use the motif of resurrection to allude to the way in which drama, or pageantry, can metaphorically bring the dead back to life.[29] In *James IV*, no sooner than Oberon resurrects Bohan, Bohan resurrects James IV. By telling the story of James IV, Bohan has effectively brought the monarch, who was *'slain at Flodden'* over seventy years ago, back to life. Early modern writers frequently used the metaphor of resurrection as a way to articulate ideas concerning the relationship

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[24] Robert Armin, *The valiant vvelshman* (London, 1615), sig. A3-B1.
[25] All quotations are taken from W. Reavley Gair's edition of *Antonio and Mellida* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).
[26] All quotations are taken from R. B. Parker's edition of *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (London: Methuen and Co, 1969).
[27] Anthony Munday, '*Chruso-thriambos*', in *Pageants and Entertainments of Anthony Munday*, ed. David M. Bergeron (New York: Garland Pub, 1985), p. 56.
[28] Daryl W. Palmer, 'Metropolitan Resurrection in Anthony Munday's Lord Mayor Shows', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 46 (2008), p. 377.
[29] For other examples of stage resurrections, see Francis Beaumont, *The knight of the burning pestle* (London, 1613), Thomas Heywood, *A pleasant conceited comedie, wherein is shewed, how a man may chuse a good wife [...]* (London, 1602), John Day, *Lavv-trickes [...]* (pr. 1608); John Fletcher, Nathan Field and Philip Massinger's *The knight of malta,* in *Comedies and tragedies* (London, 1647) Vol. VI, pp. 160-231, John Mason, *The Turke [...]* (London, 1610); John Ford, *Loues Sacrifice* (London, 1633).

between history and drama. In *Pierce Penniless* (1592), Thomas Nashe alludes to the success of Shakespeare's *1 Henry VI* (c. 1591). The play, Nashe argued allowed 'our forefathers valiant acts' to be 'revived, and they themselves raised from the grave of oblivion'. According to Nashe, 'there is no immortality can be given a man on earth like unto plays'; Talbot might be dead but he will not be forgotten:

> How would it have joyed brave Talbot [...] to think that after he had laid two hundred years in his tomb, he should triumph again on the stage, and have his bones new embalmed with the tears of ten thousand spectators [...] who in the tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding.[30]

In his recent book on the Elizabethan history play, Brian Walsh demonstrates that '[h]istory is defined by its inalienable absence' and argues that 'performance alone supplies a pretence of sensual contact with the vanished past through the bodies that move and speak on stage'.[31] The corporal presence of the actor on stage has a visceral effect on the emotions of the audience; history is experienced on both a sensory and intellectual level. Despite the 'succeeding ages', the story of Talbot is still relevant now, the past and the present have a point of contact. Nashe's description envisages a moment of recursive temporality; although Talbot is dead, his fame 'triumph[s]' over death through a dramatic re-enactment of his life.

The power of spectacle lies in its ability to connect the physical world with the spiritual world, just as the concept of resurrection insists on the presence of the body to validate spiritual reality, confirming the crucial link between materiality and spirituality. In the final moments of the play, Queen Dorothea makes a heroic return to court. This episode, which is directly derived from Giraldi Cinthio's *Hecatomithi,* is also envisaged as a form of revivification, stage directions indicate that Sir Cuthbert *'discovereth her'* – unveil or reveal

[30] Thomas Nashe, *Pierce Penilesse [...]* (London, 1592), sig. F3.
[31] Brian Walsh, *Shakespeare, the Queen's Men, and the Elizabethan Performance of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 1.

Dorothea – at the end of his long allegorical speech in Act Five Scene Six.[32] The newly resurrected Dorothea offers redemption through her corporal reality; she invites James to take her 'hand', to 'clasp' her 'arms' and to 'embrace[...]' her (*JIV.* V.vi.166-7). In the end, it is a sensory experience which justifies belief; '[t]ouch' confirms faith (*JIV.* V.vi.171). This emphasis on touch as proof of a resurrection can also be traced in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* (per. 1611), when Paulina revives the 'old tale' of the resurrection (*WT.* V.iii.117). Instructed to 'present' his 'hand' to Hermione, Leontes first reaction is purely visceral: 'O, she's warm!' (*WT.* V.iii.107, 109).[33] Both of these revivifications emphasise the power of affect, of corporal sensation, to convey a complex conceptual idea. The word made flesh is reliant on the flesh to convey the word.[34]

Bohan, the play's resident misanthropist, consistently pours scorn on the joyful revelry of those around him. As opposed to the antic Oberon who advocates spectacle as a powerful source of delight and 'pleasure', Bohan vehemently rejects emotional excess and argues that the principal function of spectacle is to incite 'learning' through intellectual contemplation (*JIV.* Ind. 92-3).

Discussing *James IV* in 1963, Kenneth Muir described 'the induction and the choric interludes between the acts', which feature the two presenters Bohan and Oberon, as 'tedious and unnecessary'.[35] Adopting a similarly dismissive attitude, Steven C. Young reflected that 'the play achieves its success in spite of the frame'.[36] Directly challenging these reductive responses to the play, this section will argue that *James IV* is a successful play, not 'in spite

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[32] P. A. Daniel, 'Greene and Cinthio', *Athenaeum* 8th October 1881, p. 465.
[33] Darryll Grantley, '*The Winter's Tale* and Early Religious Drama', *Comparative Drama* 20 (1986), pp. 17-37; Christopher J. Cobb, *The Staging of Romance in Late Shakespeare: Text and Theatrical Technique* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), pp. 117-155.
[34] Charles Altieri, *The Particulars of Rapture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), pp. 39-42.
[35] Kenneth Muir, 'Robert Greene as Dramatist', in *Essays on Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama, in Honor of Hardin Craig,* ed. Richard Hosley (London: Routledge, 1963), p. 50.
[36] Steven C. Young, *The Frame Structure in Tudor and Stuart Drama* (Salzburg: University of Salzburg Press, 1974), p. 27.

of the frame', but because of the frame. As the presenters of the play, Bohan and Oberon are surrogate playwrights. During the induction, Bohan offers to 'show' Oberon 'that story' he has 'set down' and Oberon obediently follows Bohan 'to the gallery' of the theatre to watch an 'action by guild fellows of our countrymen' (*JIV.* Ind.105-7). Unable to sit idly by for long, Oberon routinely scuppers Bohan's plans for the play, interlacing Bohan's tragic tale of 'a king, overruled with parasites', with 'jest' and 'fond actions' (*JIV.* Ind.103; II.C.13; DS.i.1). Oberon and Bohan's attitudes to theatre are shaped by their generic origins; the figure of Oberon descends from the French romance tradition, whereas Bohan is the stuff of historical chronicles. Oberon is ultimately derived from the thirteen century French epic romance *Les Prouesses et faitz du noble Huon de Bordeaux,* which was translated into English by Lord John Bourchier Berners in 1601.[37] Henslowe's diary records a performance of the now lost play, *Huon of Bordeaux,* on 28th December 1593.[38] Greene's Oberon could also have been influenced by Spenser's various references to the fairy king in *The Faerie Queene* (II.i.6; II.x.75-6).[39] Furthermore, an 'Earle of Bohan' is mentioned in the 1587 edition of Holinshed's *Chronicles* and in *The Mirror of Magistrates* (pr. 1559).

Throughout *James IV,* various characters struggle between the desire to reject the world, as proposed by the stoical Bohan and a need to embrace life's pleasures, as recommended by the antic Oberon. In *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit* (1592), Greene often adopted an air of condescension towards comic actors, referring to them as 'those antics garnish[ed] in our colours'.[40] Only a year before Greene composed *James IV*, Thomas Nashe also poked fun at comic actors who had 'antic'd it until this time, up and down the country

[37] Diane Purkiss, *Troublesome Things: A History of Fairies and Fairy Stories* (London: Allen Lane, 2000), p. 175.
[38] Foakes, ed., *Henslowe's Diary*, p. 20.
[39] Matthew Woodcock, *Fairy in the Faerie Queene: Renaissance Elf-Fashioning and Elizabethan Myth-Making* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p. 37.
[40] *Greenes, groats-vvorth of Witte [...]* (London, 1592), p. 45.

with the King of Fairies'.[41] Oberon states that he has 'brought' the 'antics' to 'show' Bohan 'some sport in dancing' and, true to his word, Oberon and the antics provide comic relief throughout the play (*JIV*. Ind.74-5). The word 'antic', however, also carries darker connotations. In *1 Henry VI*, Talbot invokes the 'antic death which laugh'st us here to scorn' as his son lies dying (*1H6.* IV.iv.130-1). In *Richard II* (c. 1595), death is envisaged as an antic King, who rules in direct opposition to Richard. Richard imagines death '[s]coffing' and 'grinning at' his 'pomp'; even the life of a King is essentially trivial when compared to eternity (*R2*. III.ii.162-170). Michael Neill has demonstrated that death was frequently envisaged as the 'orchestrator of a black carnival' in early modern drama, a motif which seems to ultimately originate from *la danse macabre*.[42] *La danse macabre,* or the dance of death, was a late medieval allegory which emphasised the universality of death; it involved the allegorical figure of death escorting a series of dancing figures, usually a king, a youth and a beautiful woman, to the grave. Unlike the *Memento mori* or *Ars moriendi* motifs which depict the dead as passive lifeless corpses, the dance of death depicts the dead as joyful and animated, portraying their final desire for amusement and pleasure before climbing into the grave.

While the antic Oberon seems determined to spend almost all his time 'at pleasure'; Bohan constantly refuses to indulge in what he terms 'fond actions', stonily declaring that he 'hatest the world' (*JIV.* Ind.93; DS.i.1; Ind.73-4). Struck by Bohan's strange attitude towards the world, the play's other protagonists scold him, referring to him as the 'stoical Scot' and 'the old stoic[...]' (*JIV.* Ind.23; I.ii.114). In this context, Bohan's retreat *'into the tomb'* becomes reminiscent of one of the founders of stoicism, Diogenes of Sinope who lived in a tub (*JIV.* V.C).

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[41] Greene, *Menaphon* (London, 1589), sig. A2ˇ.
[42] Neill, *Issues of Death* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 63.

While the overriding influence of Seneca on early modern drama meant that plays often employed stoic aphorisms, actual depictions of stoic wise men or philosophers were comparatively rare.[43] In the academic drama *Stoicus Vapulans* (The Stoic Scourged), which was performed for Christmas at St. John's College Cambridge in 1618, a debate is staged between a Stoic and a follower of Aristotle.[44] This allegorical play dramatises Book Four of Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations.* While Stoicus complains that the *'Affectus patrocinantur scelus'* (Passions are crime's patrons), Peripatatic argues that the passions can be beneficial if they are kept under control by the Golden Mean: *dominos agnosco pessimos, at servos optimos* (I acknowledge that they are the worst of masters, but they are the best of servants) (1135). Occasionally stoic philosophers also found their way onto the popular stage. In John Marston's *Antonio's Revenge* (pr. 1602) Pandulpho is liken to a 'doting stoic' (II.ii.70).[45] Similarly at the beginning of Philip Massinger's *Believe As You List* (1631), Antiochus and his stoic counsellor enter wearing *'philosophers habits'* (I.i). Directing Antiochus to maintain the 'constancy of a stoic', the Stoic advises him to control 'the torrent' of his 'passion' (I.i.34).[46] This didactic imperative also materialises in *James IV*, when the stoical Dorothea advises her irate father to 'govern' his 'affects' (*JIV.* V.vi.165). Often described as 'malcontent[s]' or 'cynic[s]', stoics were usually the subject of some derision in early modern drama. In Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* (1592), Tranio mocks Lucentio's plan to 'study, /Virtue and [...] philosophy'. He jokingly comments that:

> while we do admire
> This virtue and this moral discipline,
> Let's be no stoics nor no stocks, I pray,
> Or so devote to Aristotle's checks

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[43] Gilles D. Monsarrat, *Light from the Porch: Stoicism and English Renaissance Literature* (Paris: Didier-Erudition, 1984); Amelia Zurcher, 'Untimely Monuments: Stoicism, History, and the Problem of Utility in *The Winter's Tale* and *Pericles*', *English Literary History* 70.4 (2003), pp. 903-928.
[44] *Loiola scena est Amsterodami* (London, 1648), pp. 161-248.
[45] All quotations are taken from W. Reavley Gair's edition, see John Marston, *Antonio's Revenge* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1978), p. 88.
[46] All quotations are taken from Philip Massinger, *Believe as You List* (London: Malone Society, 1927).

As Ovid be an outcast quite abjured. (*TS*. I.i.29-3).

Here Tranio puns on the words ‘stocks’ and ‘stoic’; he implies that stoics behave like blocks of wood because they are untouched by the passions. This sequence prepares the audience for the rest of the play, which will be preoccupied with the Ovidian subject matter of love, rather than with imparting stoic wisdom. Making a similar juxtaposition between the stoical desire for ‘virtue’ and ‘moral discipline’ and the need for comic entertainment, Greene’s two presenters offer two different visions for the outcome of the play; the stoical Bohan envisages the play as moral tale, which preaches virtue of emotional restraint, while the antic Oberon envisages a jovial romantic romp, with a few comic interludes thrown in for good measure.

Throughout *James IV,* the juxtaposition between the antic and the stoic is crucial to any understanding of the play’s attitude regarding visual spectacle. One of the most famous dictums of stoicism was Horace’s phrase *‘nil admirari’* (nothing is to be wondered at).[47] As Philip Fisher argues, stoicism ‘insisted on the reality of repetition within experience, thus ruling out unique or “first” experiences’.[48] As opposed to Oberon who delights in new experiences and ‘[r]are wit’, Bohan believes that the human condition is universally corrupt and false (*JIV*. I.i.128). According to Bohan, and as the dumb shows demonstrate, history is one long series of tragedies, which humanity is doomed to repeat.

Rather than endorse either one of these viewpoints, the play demonstrates that the philosophies of Oberon and Bohan are equally valid. Indeed, as the play develops, Oberon and Bohan become less competitive and more tolerant of one another. At one point, Bohan offers some relief from the sombre ‘humour’ of the play and attempts to cheer Oberon up by getting his son to perform ‘a jest’, in order to transform his ‘thoughts [...] from sad to better

[47] Horace, *Epistles*, in *Satires, Epistles, Ars Poetica,* trans. H. Rushton Fairclough (London: William Heinemann, 1961), VI, 1, pp. 286-7.
[48] Fisher, *Wonder, the Rainbow, and the Aesthetics of Rare Experiences*, pp. 58-9.

glee' (*JIV*. II.C.13-15). In the three dumb shows, Oberon combines aesthetic wonders, spectacles of 'mirk and baleful harm' with *ecphrasis,* intellectual explanations of the visual devices, which emphasise 'the world's inconstant ways' and thus satisfy Bohan's fervent need for theatre to have didactic purpose (*JIV*. DS.i.2, 4). Intriguingly, Bohan and Oberon's dramatic endeavours seem to be most successful when they condescend to collaborate; if *James IV* tells us anything, it is that sensory delight and intellectual contemplation are not mutually exclusive, they are inextricably linked.

Furthermore, I would like to tentatively suggest that the debate between Bohan and Oberon could be read as an allegory of a wider dilemma facing critics of early modern drama. In her recent book discussing the significance of emotion on the Shakespearean stage, Gail Kern Paster has tempered the historicist preoccupation with causality and sought to 'refute Neo-stoicism's attack on the utility of the passions'.[49] Meanwhile Keir Elam has identified 'an elegant paradox' in criticism of early modern literature by which 'drama critics' come 'to ally with drama-haters'.[50] Observing 'a return of a Puritan aesthetic, or anti-aesthetic' in recent critical discourse, Elam has persuasively argued that historicist critics share many of the anxieties voiced by early modern anti-theatricalists, concerning the visual and sensory nature of drama.[51] Lamenting historicism's apparent rejection of semiotic interpretation, Elam calls for a '[r]evised –which is to say historicized and materialized – post-semiotics of Shakespearean drama' that 'might offer an analogous space where social history, dramatic history and stage history interrogate each other'.[52] It is difficult not to have some sympathy with this view. As this examination of Greene's *James IV* has demonstrated, in order to understand spectacle, we need to engage with drama both ideologically and aesthetically

[49] Gail Kern Paster, *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004), p. 1.
[50] Keir Elam, 'In What Chapter Of His Bosom?': Reading Shakespeare's Bodies', in *Alternative Shakespeares*, Vol. 2, ed. Terence Hawkes (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 154.
[51] *Ibid,* p. 153.
[52] *Ibid,* p. 163.

because spectacle appeals simultaneously to the audience's emotions and to their intellect. Spectacle is both useful and pleasurable; we need to listen to Bohan and Oberon in equal measure.

5.

‘a monstrous head of brass’ in *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* (c. 1587)

and *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (c. 1589).

Fig. 17: A still from George Méliès’s film *L’Homme à Tête en Caoutchouc* (1902).

In George Méliès’s silent French fantasy film of 1902 *L’Homme à Tête en Caoutchouc* (*The Man with the Rubber Head*), a scientist, played by Méliès, removes a severed head from a box and places it on a table.[1] The head is alive; it speaks and looks around the room anxiously. The scientist removes his head scarf: it is George Méliès. Through a series of gestures, he demonstrates that his head is identical to that on the table. Using a pair of bellows, the scientist inflates and then shrinks the head, to the head’s apparent horror. Assuming control of the experiment, Méliès’s assistant gets carried away and over-inflates

[1] *L’Homme à tête en caoutchouc* (George Méliès, 1902); Elizabeth Ezra, *George Méliès: The Birth of the Auteur* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); Ian Christie, *The Last Machine: Early Cinema and the Birth of the Modern World* (London: BFI, 1984); John Frazer, *Artificially Arranged Scenes* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1979); Pierre Jenn, *George Méliès Cinéaste* (Paris: Albatros, 1984).

the head until it explodes in a puff of smoke. Furious, Méliès kicks his incompetent assistant out of the room before bursting into tears.

George Méliès is regarded as the father of film special effects.[2] In contrast to the Lumière brothers who were preoccupied with documenting reality, George Méliès was a stage magician who incorporated film trick shots into his theatrical performances. In *L'Homme à Tête en Caoutchouc,* Méliès employed an innovative trick shot, a trompe l'oeil. Using a tracking shot, Méliès filmed himself moving towards a stationary camera, to give the impression that his head was expanding and contracting; he then superimposed this image onto a static shot of the laboratory.

Audience responses to early cinema were frequently imbued with what Noël Burgh has termed a 'Frankensteinian complex'.[3] The early films were often referred to as 'animated pictures' or 'living pictures'; early spectators reacted with a mixture of wonder and terror as 'motionless photographs' were transformed into 'animated portraits' that could 'be brought to life at the turn of a handle'.[4] In some accounts the life-giving power of cinema even takes on a religious significance; enthusiasts dubbed the cinema the 'miracle of miracles', while dissenters described the popular craze for moving pictures as a modern 'idol[atry]' and the cinema itself as the 'temple of mass-produced goods'.[5]

In the background of Méliès's *L'Homme à tête en caoutchouc* (1902), the signs *'Laboratoire'* and 'star films Paris' hint at the film's metatheatrical significance. Like Frankenstein's monster, Méliès's rubber head is brought to life through the power of cinema. The talking head is a technological marvel; it incites the audience's curiosity and engages

[2] Richard Rickitt, *Special Effects* (London: Aurum, 2006), p. 14.
[3] Noël Burch, *The Life to those Shadows,* trans. Ben Brewster (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 26.
[4] George Demenÿ, *'Les Photographie parlantes'*, *La Nature*, 20ème année no. 985, April 16th 1892, p. 315, cited in George Sadoul, *L'Invention du Cinéma 1832-1897* (Paris, 1973), pp. 169-70.
[5] George Pearson, *Flashback: Autobiography of a British Film-maker* (London, 1957), p. 14; Jean Renoir, *My Life and My Films* (London, 1974), pp. 17-18.

their imagination. But as well as revelling in the increasing sophistication of cinematic trickery, the film offers a wry acknowledgement of Méliès's own hubris. The film carries metacinematic implications. Like the automaton, Méliès is suffering from a swollen head. Méliès's behaviour seems remarkably arrogant, as he struts around the laboratory demonstrating his own creative genius. The destruction of the head, however, undermines the excessive arrogance of its inventor. The film implies that the head's creator is fallible, that he does not exercise complete control over his creation. The rubber head is a false idol.

Another talking head, a brazen head, proffers a similar level of theatrical sensation in two of Robert Greene's plays, *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* (c. 1587) and *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (c. 1589). In *Alphonsus*, the Prophet Mohammed speaks from within the brazen head and prophesies the future to the Turkish court, while in *Friar Bacon* we are told that the head 'shall unfold strange doubts', 'read a lecture in philosophy' and function as an aid to scholarship (*FB*. ii.25-6). Both plays were performed by Lord Strange's Men as well as by the Queen's Men, and by 1598 the head is listed amongst the properties belonging to the Lord Admiral's Men.[6] The head was evidently an expensive prop, so Greene may well have decided to capitalise on it to make the company's investment worthwhile. In *Farewell to Sir John Norris,* George Peele makes an allusion to Greene's brazen head 'Mahomet's Poo', alongside references to popular stage protagonists:

> Bid theatres and proud tragedians,
> Bid Mahomet's Poo and mighty Tamburlaine
> King Charlemagne, Tom Stukeley and the rest.[7]

It also seems that other playwrights tried to cash in on the popularity of this stage property. A speaking head appears from a well in George Peele's *The Wives' Tale* (c.1590), while in

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[6] Foakes, ed., *Henslowe's Diary*, pp. 291-4.
[7] George Peele, *Farewell to Sir John Norris and Sir Francis Drake [...]*, in *The Works of George Peele*, ed. Alexander Dyce (London: William Pickering, 1829), pp. 165-190.

Thomas Dekker's *If This be not a Good Play, the Devil is in it* (1611) *'a golden head ascends'* and then *'descendit'* (II.iii.63-83).[8]

Kevin LaGrandeur has argued that the brazen head in *Friar Bacon* and *Alphonsus* is a 'lampoon of [...] scientists and science'.[9] Although this reading is convincing enough in respect of *Friar Bacon*, LaGrandeur's attempt to project this interpretation back on to *Alphonsus* is unconvincing. The brazen head in *Alphonsus* does not lampoon scholarly knowledge. Rather the intertexual resonance between these two plays originates from the brazen head's associations with idolatry. In both plays, the brazen head becomes an object of excessive or supreme devotion as a either a religious idol or a secular deity. The brazen head is perceived as 'monstrous' not simply because it is a source of horror or astonishment but because it represents the misplaced veneration or worship of something other than God (*FB*. xi.17). In *De Idololatria*, Tertullian explained that:

> Idolatry is the chief crime of mankind, the supreme guilt of the world, the entire case put before judgement. For even if every sin retains its own identity and even if each is destined for judgement under its own name, each is still committed within idolatry [...] all sins are found idolatry and idolatry in all sin.[10]

As David Hawkes has demonstrated, Tertullian's ideas about the seriousness and scope of idolatry had a palpable effect on the contemporary debates about the legitimacy of theatrical entertainment.[11] In his anti-theatrical pamphlet *Plays Confuted in Five Actions* (1582), Stephen Gosson frequently cites:

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[8] George Peele, *The Old Wifes' Tale*, ed. Patricia Binnie (Manchester, 1980), lines 663-674, pp. 74-5; Thomas Dekker, *If this be not a good play, the devil is in it* (1611), in *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, ed. Fredson Bowers, vol. III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), p. 161.

[9] Kevin LaGrandeur, 'The Talking Brass Head as a Symbol of Dangerous Knowledge in *Friar Bacon* and in *Alphonsus, King of Aragon'*, *English Studies*, 80 (1999), p. 408.

[10] Tertullian, *De Idololatria*, trans. J. H. Waszink and J. C. M. Van Winden (New York: E. J. Brill, 1987), pp. 23, 25.

[11] David Hawkes, *Idols of the Marketplace: Idolatry and Commodity Fetishism in English Literature, 1580-1680* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), p. 85.

> Tertullian, who noteth very well that the Devil foreseeing the ruin of his Kingdom, both invented these shows, and inspired men with devises to set them out the better to enlarge his dominion and pull us from God.[12]

Both *Alphonsus* and *Friar Bacon* allude, however obliquely, to the Protestant castigations of idolatrous Catholic practices, only to complicate this discussion by equating the worship of icons with theatrical spectacle. Both plays also conclude with the adulation of a monarch, which takes the form of secular or 'civil idolatry'.[13] Occasionally idolatry takes an even more abstract form, with protagonists declaring that their desire for knowledge, status or even for another person overshadows their love for God. The aim of this chapter is to examine the metatheatrical significance of the brazen head and to explore how this spectacle enables Greene to negotiate the ideological confrontation between religious and secular idolatry.

After years of ceaseless labour, Friar Bacon tells his fellow Oxford academics that he has built a magical brazen head which, he claims, will read a lecture in philosophy and surround England with a protective wall of brass. During the course of the play, Friar Bacon comes to the assistance of a fellow magician Friar Bungay and outwits a German Magician, Vandermast. In a scene, which seems strangely prefigurative of Méliès's film *L'Homme à la Tête en Caoutchouc*, Friar Bacon gives in to exhaustion and entrusts his servant Miles, the clown, with the task of watching the head and instructs Miles to wake him immediately if the head starts to speak. The incompetent Miles fails to wake his master and all is lost. The brazen head speaks three times, saying 'Time is,' 'Time was,' and 'Time is past' — only for a hand with a hammer to appear and shatter it (*FB*. xi.53, 64, 73).

[12] Stephen Gosson, *Playes confuted in fiue actions [...]* (London, 1582), sig. B4-B4ᵛ.
[13] Richard F. Hardin, *Civil Idolatry: Desacralizing and Monarchy in Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1992).

In 2006, *The Shakespeare and Queen's Men Project* (SQM) organised a company of professional actors in Toronto to perform three Queen's Men plays: *The Famous Victories of Henry V, King Leir* and *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay.*

Fig. 18: Performance photograph from The Shakespeare and Queen's Men Project's production of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* in Toronto, Canada, 2006. From left to right: Alon Nashman as Miles and Jason Gray as Friar Bacon.

In their production of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, the actor who played the role of Miles, Alon Nashman, extemporised a great deal during Scene Eleven, adding a series of slap-stick gags and bawdy innuendo. This performance strategy was designed to give some sense of how the role 'might have been played by Richard Tarlton', the Elizabethan clown famed for his improvisational skills.[14] Perhaps more crucially, this performance emphasised the significance of this pivotal scene, which provides a great comic anti-climax to Bacon's academic prowess. In the DVD recording of this scene, the camera makes a series of jump cuts between the face of Miles who is rapidly descending into a deep slumber and the brazen

[14] *The Shakespeare and Queen's Men Project* (SQM): <http://tapor.mcmaster.ca/~thequeensmen/resources/vids_downloads/friarbacon/brazenhead.htm> (accessed 7th June 2011); Richard Levin, 'Tarlton in *The Famous History of Friar Bacon* and *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay'*, *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England,* 12 (1999), pp. 84-98.

head affixed to the wall. This juxtaposition serves to emphasise the satirical content of the scene; the brazen head, which Bacon promised would 'read a lecture in philosophy', is now comparable to Miles's clown's 'pate', which is full of nothing but 'fooleries' (*FB.* ii.26; xi.50; ii.77).

This satirical stance towards academia in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* might well have stemmed from Greene's literary skirmish with Gabriel Harvey. Interestingly many of these pamphlets make passing allusions to the 'brazen [...] impudency' of the various combatants.[15] In Edmund Spenser's pamphlet of 1580, *Three Proper, and Witty, Familiar Letters,* the speaker berates an unnamed literary assailant – possibly either Greene or Nashe - for being a 'busy and dizzy head, a brazen forehead: a leaden brain: a wooden wit: a copperface: a stony beast: a factious and elfish heart: a founder of novelties'.[16] Equally irate, Gabriel Harvey alludes to an arrogant opponent who 'purposed – to set a good brazen face on the matter'.[17] In a pamphlet of 1592, Greene admits that faced with 'bad company' he 'carried a brazen face and was shameless'.[18] Emerging from this world of academic bitterness and petty backstabbing, Greene's stage property mocks the imprudent arrogance of the scholarly community, poking fun at the 'Master Brazen-head[s]' of the academic world with their aggrandised notions of their own greatness (*FB.* xi.54).

This satirical stance is sustained throughout the play. In Scene Seven, Rafe makes an allusion to the *Ship of Fools,* joking that he:

> will make a ship that shall hold all your colleges, and so carry away the Niniversity with a fair wind to the Bankside in Southwark. (*FB.* vii.69-71)

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[15] Gabriel Harvey, *Pierces supererogation [...]* (London, 1593), p. 150.
[16] Edmund Spenser, *The proper, and wittie, familiar letters: lately passed betvveene tvvo universitie men* (London, 1580), p. 29.
[17] Harvey, *Letter-Book of Gabriel Harvey, A.D. 1573-1580,* ed. Edward John Long Scott (London: Camden Society, 1884), To John Young, Master of Pembroke Hall, p. 26
[18] Greene, *A disputation, between a hee conny-catcher, and a shee conny-catcher* (London, 1592), sig. F2.

Rafe's comment seems paradigmatic of Greene's own project as one of the 'University Wits' taking the "high" literature of the universities to the Rose and Swan theatres on the south side of the Thames and giving it the popular appeal of "low" culture.[19] Later in the same scene, Miles interrupts a dull academic debate with lines that parody Skeltonic verse:

> And I with *scientia* and great *diligentia*
> Will conjure and charm to keep you from harm;
> That *utrum horum mavis*, your very great *navis*,
> Like Bartlet's ship, from Oxford do skip,
> With colleges and schools full loaden with fools.
> *Quid dices ad hoc*, worship *domine* Dawcock? (*FB*. vii.80-85)

Here 'Bartlet's ship' is a reference to Barclay's translation of *The Ship of Fools* (1509).[20] Brant's original work *Das Narrenschiff* (1494) had been inspired by a frequent motif in medieval art and literature that revolved around a pun on the Latin word 'navis' which can mean a boat, or the nave of a church, as well as a fool.[21] This pun is also picked up in Miles's description of the ship which will carry away all of Oxford. John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* (1583) includes a woodcut showing Catholics loading themselves and their 'paltry' onto a ship of fools destined for foreign shores, with the statement – 'Ship over your trinkets and be packing you papists'.[22] But whereas Brant filled the ship of fools with Catholics, Greene fills it with academics.

The primary source of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* is the anonymous *The Famous History of Friar Bacon.*[23] This prose romance was probably written in the middle of the sixteenth century; however the earliest surviving edition was printed in 1627. Given the close correspondences between the play and the prose romance, most commentators believe that *The Famous History* is the play's primary source and that Greene must have had access

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[19] G. K. Hunter, *English Drama, 1586-1642: The Age of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 25.
[20] Alexander Barclay, *The Ship of Fools* (Edinburgh: W. Paterson, 1874).
[21] Sebastian Brant, *Das Narrenschiff* (Basel, 1494); Jeff Morris, *The Ship of Fools to 1500* (CT: Martino, 2005).
[22] John Foxe, *Actes of Monuments*, London, 1583, p. 1178. Available from: http://www.hrionline.shef.ac.uk /foxe/. [accessed: 03.06.08].
[23] *The famous historie of Fryer Bacon [...]* (London, 1627).

to a much earlier edition, which has not survived.[24] The title page of the 1627 edition of *The Famous History* includes a woodcut which depicts the events of the prose romance. Elizabeth Allde reused the woodcut for the title page of *The Famous History* (1627) for the 1630 edition of Greene's *Friar Bacon*.

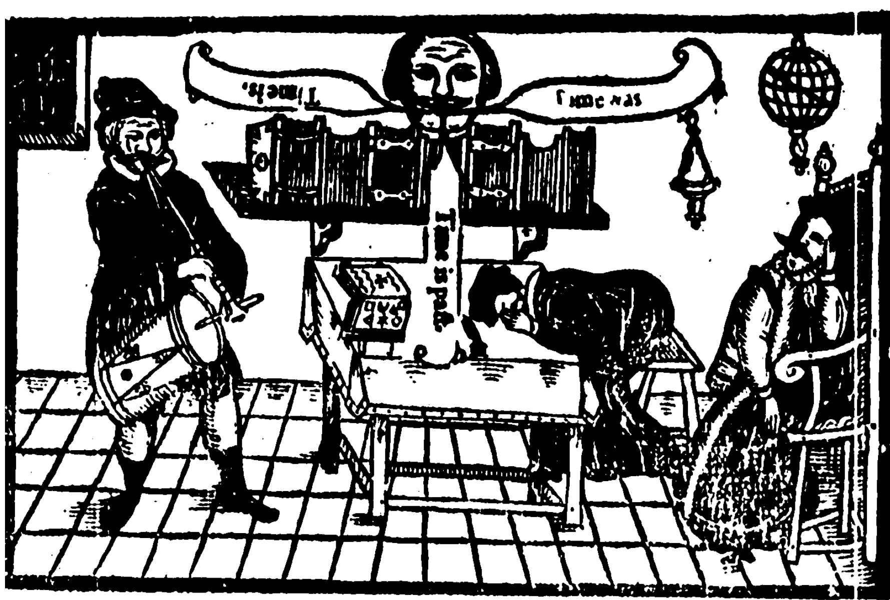

Fig. 19: Woodcut on the title page of Robert Greene's *The honourable historie of Frier Bacon, and Frier Bongay* (London, 1630), sig. A.

The image is also highly reminiscent of the title-page illustration on the 1616 edition of *Doctor Faustus*.[25] The prose pamphlet gives an account of the necromantic activities of Roger Bacon, a thirteenth century philosopher and Franciscan friar. The early modern fascination with natural science had renewed popular interest in Roger Bacon, whose reputation John Dee defended from charges of magic. In one of his tracts on Bacon, Dee goes to some lengths to separate the Bacon of legend, the 'heretical phantasm', from the real Bacon who was far 'from loving Necromancy'. Instead Dee paints Pope Nicholas IV as 'the antichrist' who 'envying' Bacon's 'too prying head' imprisoned him and threatened to have

[24] J. A. Lavin, ed., *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (London: Ernest Benn, 1969), p. xiv; Waldo F. McNeir, 'Traditional Elements in the Character of Greene's *Friar Bacon'*, *Studies in Philology* 45 (1948), p. 172, n. 1.
[25] Christopher Marlowe, *The tragicall history of the life and death of Doctor Faustus* (London, 1616), sig. A1.

his ‘over-topping head [...] lopped shorter’.[26] In *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, Greene does not merely document details of Roger Bacon’s life. His presentation of Bacon is also in part an oblique allusion to John Dee himself, whose scholarly reputation was similarly dogged by associations with occult philosophy and magic. One of the Renaissance’s great polymaths, Dee also expressed an interest in theatrical spectacle; he even discussed ‘the brazen head, made by Albertus Magus’ and describes having seen various stage spectacles in France including ‘a brazen Serpent’ which ‘hisseth’.[27] The tale of the brazen head was also associated with various medieval philosophers such as Gerbert of Aurillac and Robert Grosseteste. Thus the Church of England clergyman Francis Fullwood was correct in his observation that ‘I behold of Bacon in Oxford, not as of an individual man, but a twisted cable of many together’. Similarly, the setting of the play in ‘Brazen-Nose college’ which was ‘[f]ounded more than one hundred years after’ the death of Roger Bacon is just one of the anachronisms which suggest that Greene’s play is alluding to a series of historical events rather than a single one.[28]

The first time we meet Friar Bacon he is in Brasenose College, Oxford. The figure of Friar Bacon emphasises the similarity between academic study and religious devotion. Miles’s line *‘Ecce quam bonum at quam jocundum, habitares libros in unum’* parodies Psalm 133 by substituting *‘libros’* for *‘fratres’* and thus turns a biblical reference into a secular epigram (*FB*. ii.4). Bacon’s academic admirers are described as his ‘flock’, and his college room is referred to as his ‘secret cell’ (*FB*. ii.9). Similarly, Miles concludes the scene by parodying the Catholic liturgy with the words ‘So be it, *et nunc et simper*. Amen’ (*FB*. ii.171). Warren Boutcher has suggested that Greene’s *Friar Bacon* depicts ‘popular anxieties

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[26] *Frier Bacon his discovery of the miracles of art, nature, and magick [...]* (London, 1659), pp. 3-4.
[27] Euclid, *The elements of geometrie of the most auncient philosopher Euclide of Megara [...]* (London, 1570), sigs. Aj- Aij; William H. Sherman, *John Dee, The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1995).
[28] Francis Fullwood, *The Church-history of Britain [...]* (London, 1655), p. 96.

about new learning' and 'makes a comedy out of the pretensions of the intellectual visionary and the influx of lay people with secular motives into the cells of college scholars'.[29] Instead of focusing on teaching his poor scholars grammar and theology, Friar Bacon ambitiously displays his knowledge in front of heads of state. As J. A. Lavin has explained in the introduction of his edition of the play, it is widely 'assumed that Friar Bacon was Greene's attempt to capitalise on the success of Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*, which was thought to belong to 1587'. Unfortunately, as neither of the plays can be dated firmly, it is difficult to ascertain the direction of the influence. In 1901 A. W. Ward cautiously argued that with 'such evidence as we possess with regard to priority of date will be found to corroborate, viz. that *Friar Bacon* was written after *Doctor Faustus,* to which it was in some sense intended to be a rival play'.[30] However, J. A. Lavin assumes that 'Greene's play led the way, and that Marlowe's play was written about 1592, the main reason being that there is no edition or specific mention of Marlowe's source, the English *Faust Book*, before that date'.[31] Despite the uncertainty over the direction of the influence, there are numerous correspondences between Greene's *Friar Bacon* and Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. David Coleman has argued that in Marlowe's *Faustus* 'scholarship' is seen as 'an alternative means of achieving grace'.[32] Like Marlowe, Greene repeatedly highlights the metaphorical links between the 'profits in divinity' and 'the fruitful plot of scholarism' through a series of puns.[33] The first of these puns occurs on the word 'grace' which carries the connotation of divine mercy, as in God's grace, but it can also refer to a dispensation granted by the congregation of a

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[29] Warren Boutcher, "Rationall Knowledges" and "Knowledges...drenched in flesh and blood": Fulke Greville, Francis Bacon and Institutions of Humane Learning in Tudor and Stuart England', *Sidney Journal* 19 (2001), p. 15.

[30] A. W. Ward, ed., Marlowe: *Tragical History of Dr. Faustus*; Greene: *Honourable History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901), p. xxi.

[31] J. A. Lavin, ed., *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (London: Ernest Benn, 1969), p. xii.

[32] *Drama and the Sacraments in Sixteenth-Century England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 96.

[33] Marlowe, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, in *Oxford English Drama: Christopher Marlowe,* eds. David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), A-Text, Prologue, lines 15-16.

university, or by one of its faculties, from some of the conditions required for a degree. Therefore when Vandermast alludes to the fate of ‘Lucifer’ and the rest of the ‘spirits and angels’ who fell from heaven, he describes them as having ‘lesser grace’ not merely because they are without God’s grace and therefore have ‘greater sin’ but because they have ‘less understanding than the rest’ of the angels (*FB*. ix.58-67). The word ‘grace’ has assumed a secular as well as a religious connotation.

Throughout *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, there is an unspoken tension between the secular and religious motivations of the protagonists. Although Bacon’s learning and magic are often metaphorically associated with religious devotion and the quest for ‘grace’, it must be remembered that Bacon does not build the brazen head to glorify God. During the disputation with Vandermast, Bungay and Bacon behave like *terrae filii*, the humorous orators who displayed their wit and eloquence at Oxford disputations.[34] Both Bungay and Bacon attempt to prove that ‘necromantic’ magicians, like playwrights, can produce ‘shows and wondering in the world’ (*FB*. ix.47-8). Just as Bungay argues that geomancy, or divination by earth, is the most powerful form of magic, Bacon’s magic ‘haunts the grounds’ of earthly ambition rather than reaching to the heights of ‘the pyromantic genii’ (*FB*. ix.70). Bacon’s motives are secular. He claims patriotically that he ‘will strengthen England’ because the brazen head will ‘girt fair England with a wall of brass’ (*FB*. ii.57; xi.20). As *Friar Bacon* was most likely composed in 1589, this patriotic statement could be an allusion to the defeat of the first Spanish Armada in July 1588 by the combined forces of Elizabeth’s navy and the weather.[35] Bacon likens his role to that of a monarch, describing the academic community as ‘rulers of our academic state’ who must defeat the foreign magician (*FB*. ii.163). Similarly, in Scene Five Edward refers to Brasenose as Bacon’s ‘college state’ (*FB*.

[34] *The History of Oxford University, Vol. IV, Seventeenth-Century Oxford*, ed. Nicholas Tyacke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 303.
[35] John Guy, *Tudor England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 343.

v.87). Bryan Reynolds and Henry Turner have argued that these repeated references to the 'academic state' signify a 'homological correspondence' between Bacon's position in Oxford and King Henry's power over England. Furthermore, they suggest that this correspondence demonstrates a tension which must 'inevitably exist between social fields with different and often conflicting currencies of value'.[36] Throughout the play, the authority of the state always supersedes the authority of scholars. Thus Bacon's authority as a scholar is dependent on gaining the support and recognition of the King. His position within Oxford is built on the fame which royal recognition provides. Bacon's desire for worldly fame is alluded to by Clement, a fellow academic, who assures Bacon that he will become 'the wonder of the world' if he succeeds in building the brazen head:

> For if thy cunning work these miracles,
> England and Europe shall admire thy fame,
> And Oxford shall in characters of brass
> And statues such as were built up in Rome
> Eternize Friar Bacon for his art. (*FB*. ii.37-42)

It is by displaying his great knowledge to the world, not through seeking the knowledge of God, that Bacon will '[e]ternise' his fame. Like a Roman god or monarch, Bacon hopes to be 'admire[d]' by all. Thus the brazen head becomes a synecdoche for Friar Bacon himself. It not only provides the means by which Bacon will achieve his fame, it is also a visual embodiment of Bacon's ambition. The head is the literalisation of Clement's promise that Bacon will become a 'character[...] of brass'. Yet the most important function of this sequence is to emphasise that what drives Bacon is a desire to achieve immortality.

The idea of academic fame as a source of immortality is also hinted at in another episode in the play. In Scene Nine, as part of the contest with Vandermast, Bungay conjures

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[36] Bryan Reynolds and Henry Turner, 'Performative Transversations: Collaborations Through and Beyond Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay'*, in *Transversal Enterprises in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries,* ed. Bryan Reynolds, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 245.

up a ‘tree leaved with refined gold’ (*FB*. ix.79). This tree is identified as the tree from the Garden of the Hesperides. But here Greene misapplies the name of the three guardian sisters to the garden itself. In Greek mythology, the Garden of the Hesperides was where either a single tree or a grove of immortality-giving golden apples grew. The Hesperides were charged with the task of tending to the grove, but occasionally plucked from it themselves. Not trusting them, Hera also placed in the garden a never-sleeping, hundred-headed dragon named Ladon as an additional safeguard. But Hercules completed his eleventh labour by stealing the apples. In the Renaissance, this classical myth merged with the Christian interpretation of the Fall from Genesis. Thus the dragon became interchangeable with the serpent, while the tree with the golden apples became associated with the tree of knowledge. By choosing this spectacle rather than any other, Greene was trying to emphasise once again that Bacon is seeking knowledge in order to attain immortality.

But it is not until Scene Eleven that we finally see the result of Bacon’s ‘seven years’ task’ (*FB*. xi.34). Closely modelled on the parallel episode in the prose romance *The Famous History of Friar Bacon,* this scene forms a spectacular climax to the magic plot. Critics have puzzled over the meaning of the head’s prophecy. Alan C. Dessen has suggested that the head’s prophecy emphasises the limitations of Bacon’s magic, whereas Deanne Williams has argued that it ‘expresses the enigma of history’.[37] Yet Miles alludes to the similarity between the brazen head and the skulls which bore the inscription *memento mori* and were kept by the pious as a constant reminder of death (*FB.* xi. 49). The head’s prophecy ‘Time is’ ‘Time was’ and ‘Time is past’ emphasises human mortality (*FB.* xi.53, 64, 73). When the head falls down after being struck by the hammer, Bacon tellingly does not mourn what England has lost but rather what he has lost. This moment of realisation instigates a series of *epistrophes*:

[37] Alan C. Dessen, ‘Robert Greene and the Theatrical Vocabulary of the Early 1590s’, in *Writing Robert Greene*, ed. Kirk Melnikoff and Edward Gieskes (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 34; Deanne Williams, ‘*Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* and the rhetoric of temporality’, in *Reading the Medieval in Early Modern England*, ed. Gordon McMullan and David Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 32.

> But now the braves of Bacon hath an end;
> Europe's conceit of Bacon hath an end;
> His seven years' practice sorteth to ill end;
> And, villain, sith my glory hath an end,
> I will appoint thee fatal to some end. (*FB*. xi.110-114)

In an ironic twist, the brazen head which promised to provide Bacon with eternal fame now emphasises that Bacon is merely 'a mortal man' (*FB.* xi.106).

As Mark Dahlquist has demonstrated, 'Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (1589) presents [...] a rare instance of on stage iconoclasm'; the hammer that smashes the brazen head is an iconoclastic hammer.[38] Yet the destruction of the brazen head at the end of this scene seems at odds with the admiration and excitement that originally surrounded it. The brazen head sequence was clearly designed to impress the audience with its use of *'lightning'* that *'flasheth forth'* and the *'great noise'* which accompanies its arrival onstage (*FB*. xi). The brazen head is celebrated and condemned in equal measure. The theatrical spectacle of the brazen head problematises the criticism of idolatry in the play. The audience's engagement with the spectacle of the brazen head seems to clash with the 'orthodox Elizabethan view of sorcery as disruptive and evil'.[39] Furthermore, the brazen head's prophecy of 'Time is', 'Time was' and 'Time is past' is ironically proved correct at the very moment of the head's destruction (*FB*. xi.53, 64, 73). This theatrical act of iconoclasm parallels the counter-intuitive behaviour of early modern iconoclasts. Instead of proving that an icon is devoid of symbolism or meaning, the act of destruction proves the exact opposite. Commenting on the 'spectacular aspect of image-breaking', Margaret Aston has demonstrated how the 'defacing (or maiming) of a representation itself becomes a

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[38] Mark Dahlquist, 'Love and Technological Iconoclasm in Robert Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*', *English Literary History* 78 (2011), p. 52.
[39] Lavin, ed., *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, p. xxix.

representative act: the damage to the seen is a way of hurting the unseen'.[40] Thus, she explains, the desire to destroy and burn is 'a powerful primitive force' offering a 'magnetic delight', which is 'perhaps the necessary inversion of the urge to create'.[41] Even Luther disdainfully described the iconoclasts as 'our new prophets' because their zealous belief in the need to destroy religious icons only served to reinforce the emotive power of icons.[42] Indeed, it is possible to argue that 'the destruction of images was just as materialist as their veneration'.[43] Thus, as John Donne's third Satire seems to suggest that: '[t]o adore, or scorn an image, or protest, / [m]ay all be bad'.[44] Far from being contradictory processes, the worship of icons and iconoclasm are in fact mutually reinforcing ones. Rather like that of an icon or statue, the brazen head's significance is affirmed through the act of destruction.

Greene's earlier play, *Alphonsus King of Aragon* expresses a similar anxiety regarding the power of visual representation and the Protestant rejection of religious icons. Described as a *'comicall historie'* on the title-page of the 1599 edition, the play traces the rivalry between Alphonsus, the disinherited heir of Aragon, and Belinus, the king of Naples.[45] After vowing to his father, Carinus, that he will revenge his family's suffering, Alphonsus manipulates Belinus in order to win back his kingdom. Belinus is then driven out of Naples and goes to seek the aid of the Turk, Amurack, in Constantinople. In Act Four of the play, the Turks are shown to be idolaters, as they worship Muhammad, or *'Mahomet'*, who speaks through the brazen head (Alp. IV.i.1275). The idol's appearance on stage is spectacular. It is accompanied by the sounds of rumbling drums; and fireworks are cast from its mouth. Yet

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[40] Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclast's* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 10, 4.
[41] Aston, p. 5.
[42] Martin Luther, *Lectures on Deuteronomy*, in *Works*, ed. Conrad Bergendoff (Philadelphia: Fortess Press, 1958), Vol. ix, pp. 80-1.
[43] Ellen Spolsky, *Word vs. Image: Cognitive Hunger in Shakespeare's England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 58
[44] John Donne, *Satyre III*, in *John Donne: Complete English Poems*, ed. C. A. Patrides (London: Everyman, 2001), lines 76-7, p. 162.
[45] *The comicall historie of Alphonsus King of Aragon* (London, 1599).

the brazen head's deliberately misleading prophecy demanding that the Ottomans attack Naples ensures the deaths of many Turkish soldiers.

In Act Four we finally see the brazen head or, rather, the prophet 'Mahomet' whose voice speaks from within it, and who has 'prophesied unto' Amurack's 'ancestors' for 'many a hundred year' (*Alp.* III.ii.897-8). This scene pokes fun at 'poor Belinus' who falls for the Prophet's 'forged tale', while the audience is actively encouraged to 'laugh for sport' at the head's 'crafty' prophecy (*Alp*. IV.c.1238-1240). Stage directions indicate that the 'brazen head' was revealed *'in the middle of the place behind the Stage'* (*Alp*. IV.i). Indeed it is generally assumed that the brazen head appeared in what Andrew Gurr terms a 'discovery' scene. Gurr argues that ''the brazen head' that was revealed 'in the middle of the place behind the stage' in *Alphonsus of Aragon*, just as Barabas is revealed in his *'counting-house'* in *The Jew of Malta* and Volpone unveils his gold in the opening scene of Jonson's comedy.[46] Further stage directions instruct the actor providing the voice of Mahomet to *'[s]peak out of the brazen head'* (*Alp*. IV.i). Perhaps, as Margaret Cavendish, a dubious source of theatrical expertise, suggested in 1664, 'the Brazen-head' was 'performed' by an actor 'speaking through a pipe conveyed into the said head'.[47] In *Inventions or Devises* (1583), William Bourne offers a slight variation on this theory:

> And as the brazen head, that seem for to speak, might be made by such wheel work, to go either by plummets or by springs, and might have time given unto it, that at so many hours end, then the wheels and other engines should be set to work: and the voice that they did hear may go with bellows in some trunk or trunks of brass or other metal, with stops to alter the sound, may be made to seem to speak some words, according unto the fancy of the inventor, so that the simple people will marvel at it.[48]

[46] T. W. Craik, ed., *The Jew of Malta* (London: Ernest Benn, 1966), I.i, p. 11; Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage, 1574-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 137-8.
[47] Margaret Cavendish, *Philosophical Letters [...]* (London, 1664), p. 299.
[48] William Bourne, *Inuentions or Deuises [...]* (London, 1578), pp. 98-9.

While the workings of the head might well remain a matter for conjecture, almost all accounts emphasise its power as an aesthetic wonder or 'marvel'. The anonymous writer of a satirical pamphlet of 1685 *To the brazen-head*, describes how the sight of the brazen head provokes 'such a [b]old [s]urprize', which 'attacks' the '[s]ense' of spectators.[49] Thus, as we established in Chapter One, intellectual curiosity and the aesthetic of wonder can coexist simultaneously.

The apparent visual appeal of the brazen head in *Alphonsus* undermines the play's overall condemnation of idolatry. Although Mohammed's prophecy is ultimately proved to be inaccurate; the appearance of the brazen head is the visual climax of the play. The priests who worship the brazen head repeatedly call on us, the audience, to delight in the spectacle, urging us to '[s]ee flakes of fire proceeding from the mouth' of the head (*Alp.* IV.i.1253). This direct engagement between the audience and the actors makes us conscious of the irony of condemning religious idolatry while at the same time revelling in the power of theatrical spectacle.[50] Greene's play presents us with a spectacular idol and then forces us, in a moment of metadrama, to consider our own complex reactions to it.[51]

In 1587, William Rankins, an anti-theatrical polemicist, declared that 'Impudence' was the presiding Goddess of Catholics and playwrights alike. According to Rankins, they were both disrespectful, shameless and brazen in their irreverence towards God. Comparing the players' ungodliness to 'the sixt masker [...] whose brazen face shameth the beholders', Rankins argued that it was only through their 'face[s] of brass' that players were able to pass themselves off as 'audacious' men. He went on to accuse actors of taking:

> upon them the persons of heathen men, imagining themselves (to vainglory in the wrath of God) to be the men whose persons they present, wherein, by calling on

[49] Anon, *To the brazen-head* (London, 1685), sig. A1.
[50] For further discussion of Hermione's statue in *The Winter's Tale*, see Michael O'Connell *The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm and Theatre in Early Modern England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 142.
[51] James Simeon, *Shakespearean Iconoclasm* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 19-20.

> Mahomet, by swearing by the temples of idolatry, dedicate the idols, [...] they do most wickedly rob God of his honour, and blaspheme the virtue of his heavenly power. [52]

Jonathan Crewe has argued that Rankins must be referring to Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*.[53] Yet the reference to actors presenting 'heathen men' who 'dedicate to the idols' is arguably more reminiscent of the appearance of the brazen head in Robert Greene's *Alphonsus, King of Aragon*.

In *A Mirror of Monsters* Rankins expresses an anxiety shared by most, if not all anti-theatrical polemicists, that actors might forget themselves and imagine they had become what they acted. For Rankins, the boundary between reality and theatre was liminal.[54] To act, Rankins believed, was to pretend to be what you were not and to confound your true identity. Theatrical impersonation was equivalent to falsifying God's act of creation or truth. Moreover this idolatry did not merely defile the actors themselves but also their audience. By actively enjoying and engaging with a performance the audience were also implicated in the sin of idolatry. As Jonas Barish points out, according to the anti-theatricals, it was this 'element of spectator complicity' which made theatrical spectacle 'perilous'.[55] According to Moshe Halbertal and Avishai Margalit, the Bible defines idolatry as 'strange worship', a definition which refers to two 'concepts of strangeness', one 'the strangeness of the object of ritual' and the other 'the strangeness of the ritual' itself.[56] Hence the term idolatry alludes to both sides of Foucault's 'empirico-transcendental doublet'; it refers to both the object of the gaze (the stage spectacle) and the subject of the gaze (the spectator).[57]

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[52] William Rankins, *A mirrour of monsters [...]* (London, 1587), pp. 21-2.
[53] Jonathan V. Crewe, 'The Theatre of the Idols', in *Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama*, ed. David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 53.
[54] *Ibid,* p. 53.
[55] Jonas Barish, *The Anti-Theatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley: University of California, 1981), p. 80.
[56] Moshe Halbertal and Avishai Margalit, *Idolatry*, trans. Naomi Goldblum (London: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 3.
[57] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of Human Sciences* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 347.

The attacks on the theatre had a close affinity with the denunciations of Catholic worship as idolatrous. Protestant polemicists specifically chose to use the term 'idolatry' when attacking the theatre because it carried with it vivid associations of their own hatred of Catholic worship. Thus anti-theatrical writers constantly revived tropes which had been commonly used against Catholics. The anti-theatrical tracts sought to highlight a parallel between an audience's supposedly misguided veneration of the theatre and its secular rituals and the Catholic worship of images. Just as Rankins feared that theatre audiences would be infected by the idolatrous behaviour of actors, iconoclastic acts were instigated by the fear that Catholic idols were not merely 'defiling God's churches' but also 'infecting people's thoughts'.[58] In 1599, the respected Oxford theologian, John Rainolds argued that 'Popish priests' had 'transformed the celebrating of the Sacrament of the Lord's supper into a Mass-game, and all other parts of Ecclesiastical service into theatrical sights'.[59] Both the theatre and Catholic worship demonstrated a misplaced reverence towards images or visual representation. Thus, as Jonas Barish suggests, after the Reformation - after religious 'statues and stained glass had been smashed with iconoclastic fury' -it would have seemed like 'a logical next step to destroy an even more potent competitor for men's imaginations, the secular stage'.[60] Further confirming Barish's supposition, Jean Howard has documented how 'anti-Catholic and antitheatrical polemic' converged 'in this period', as the 'strongly Protestant discourse' argued that 'the theatre, like the Catholic Church' was 'constructed as committing its patrons to the worship of hollow idols'.[61] By attacking the theatre as the Pope's 'playhouse', Protestant polemicists seem to be drawing a comparison between the

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[58] Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclasts: Laws Against Images* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 2.
[59] Rainolds, *Th'overthrow of stage-playes* (London, 1599), p. 161; Michael O'Connell, 'The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm, Anti-theatricalism and the Image of the Elizabethan Theatre', *English Literary History* 52 (1985), p. 279.
[60] Barish, *The Anti-theatrical Prejudice*, p. 88.
[61] Jean Elizabeth Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 28; Alison Shell, *Shakespeare and Religion* (London: Methuen Drama, 2010), p. 40.

imaginative leap that occurs in the theatre, whereby an actor playing a king becomes synonymous with a real monarch, and the leap of faith that occurred as part of Catholic worship, whereby a statue or icon portraying God becomes synonymous with God.[62] Idolatry originated from the 'very imagining power of the mind' the idols themselves were merely the vehicles for it.[63] No doubt in consequence of these ubiquitous attacks on the theatre, Greene's drama is overtly self-conscious in its use of spectacle. As Mark Dahlquist argues, much of Greene's work:

> expresses a tension between his sympathy with the rhetoric of Protestant iconoclasm and a simultaneous attachment to the communal forms of meaning associated with the lost Catholic England that his play fondly remembers.[64]

The brazen head is the subject of much criticism throughout both *Alphonsus* and *Friar Bacon*; and yet at the same time its function as a stage property specifically emphasises the visual status of theatre. In both *Alphonsus* and *Friar Bacon* the relationship between visual representations or symbols and what they symbolise is seen as unstable. In *Alphonsus*, the priests in Mahomet's temple complain of not being able to interpret the 'wondrous sights' and 'signs' that the Gods are sending them (*Alp*. IV.i.1265-6). Similarly in *Friar Bacon*, we are told that '[e]yes are but dissemblers' and protagonists complain of being unable to 'cipher out' truth 'by signs' (*FB*. x.129; viii.45).

The possible reference to Greene's *Alphonsus* in Rankins's tract serves to emphasise the extent to which the playwrights and the theatre in general had become embroiled in religious controversy surrounding idolatry. Greene's complex presentation of the brazen head in both plays provides the audience with a moment of metadrama, which forces them to reflect on the idolatrous nature of theatrical experience. Ultimately, Greene's response to the

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[62] Samuel Harsnett, *A discouery of the fraudulent practices of Iohn Darrel [...]* (London, 1599), sig. A3.
[63] Ernest B. Gilman, *Iconoclasm and Poetry in the English Reformation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 1.
[64] Dahlquist, 'Love and Technological Iconoclasm in Robert Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*', p. 73.

accusations of the anti-theatricalists, who declared that the theatre was idolatrous, seems strangely prefigurative of the rhetorical strategy of the puppet Dionysius in Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* (1614). In response to Busy's allegation that the acting profession is 'profane' and the theatre is an 'idol', the puppet demonstrates the elasticity of the term 'idol', showing how the activities of 'Friars', 'confection makers' and the 'French fashioner' all might be considered to be idolatrous (V.v.97,106,107).[65] Similarly, Greene dismisses the accusation of idolatry not by asserting that the theatre is innocent of such allegations but by demonstrating the ludicrous nature of the term 'idolatry' itself, insinuating that virtually anyone - the clergy, lovers, scholars, even monarchs - might be readily be accused of the same crime.

As well as alluding to anti-theatrical controversies, the supposedly idolatrous activities of Muslims in *Alphonsus* also provide a vehicle for a critique of the Catholic veneration of relics and idols. The criticisms of the medieval church which had labelled Muslims as heretics were now redirected by the Protestants against Rome. For Protestants, the chasm between Islam and Catholicism was easily circumvented. Thus Luther declared that the 'Antichrist is at the same time the Pope and the Turk'; and John Foxe, who was greatly influenced by Luther, compared the 'Turk with the Pope' and wondered which of 'them is the truer [...] Antichrist'.[66] As Stephen Schmuck has argued, the early modern period saw the figures of the 'Turk and Pope become interchangeable under the common denominator of Antichrist'.[67] Thus the Turk became 'the trope' through which Protestant writers could criticise the Catholic Church's 'spiritual health' but also to reemphasise the

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[65] Martin Butler, ed., *The Selected Plays of Ben Jonson*, vol. 2. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 286-90; Clifford Davidson, 'Judgement, Iconoclasm, and Anti-Theatricalism in Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair'*, *Papers on Language and Literature* 25 (1989), pp. 349-63.
[66] Martin Luther, *Table Talk*, cited in Kenneth M. Setton, 'Lutheranism and the Turkish Peril', *Balkan Studies* 3 (1945), p. 151; John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (London, 1583), p. 773. Available from: http://www.hrionline .shef.ac.uk/foxe/. [Accessed: 03.06.08].
[67] 'The "Turk", Antichrist and Elizabeth I: Reformation Politics and "The Turkes Storye" from John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* (1570)', *Reformation* 10 (2005), p. 23.

Protestant 'ruler's obligations to further the truthful religion'.[68] Indeed much, if not all, of the literary attacks on Muslims during the early modern period must be considered from the perspective of Protestant criticisms of Papal authority and Catholic idolatry. Both Protestants and Catholics sought to compare one another to the Turk; accusing one another of idolatry, both sides attempted to vindicate their own faith through a process of negation.

During a scene set in the palace of Amurath in Constantinople, a stage direction states: '*Rise Calchas up, in the white surplice and a cardinal's mitre*' (*Alp*. III.ii). Calchas's costume seems to 'take a curious precedence over the actor' and his presence serves as little more than a critique of England's Catholic history as superstitious. [69] Here Greene embeds elements of the epic tradition within anti-Catholic discourse. Calchas, Cressida's father, was the 'unlucky Prophet' of Homer's *Iliad.* [70] His name Calchas, or Kalchas, means bronze-man; and thus both his name and his prophetic powers link him with the idol of the brazen head. Just like the traitorous '*Duke of Millain*' who appears in '*Pilgrim's apparel*' merely in order to avoid the revenge of Alphonsus, Calchas's '*white surplice*' and '*Cardinal's mitre*' serve to parody Catholic corruption (*Alp*. III.ii). These theatrical devices and costumes are emblematic of the Protestant polemic against Catholicism. Similar thematic overlaps also occur in the brazen head sequence. The '[p]riests' of the 'God Mahomet' are described as 'Legats' and as such are associated with ecclesiastics who were deputed to represent the Pope and his authority (*Alp.* IV.i.1270, 1275; IV.c.1237). Similarly, the presence of the witch Medea and the theme of magic in the play articulate another criticism of Catholicism, whereby Protestants mocked the Mass as a species of conjuring and sorcery. In Act Three, Amurack rails against Mohammed as a 'proud injurious God':

I escape this bondage, down go all thy groves,

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[68] *Ibid,* p. 3.
[69] Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, p. 177.
[70] Homer, *Ten books of Homers Iliades [...]* (London, 1581), Book I, p. 4.

> Thy alters tumble round about the streets,
> And whereas erst we sacrificed to thee,
> Now all the *Turks* thy mortal foes shall be. (*Alp*. III.ii.1003-6)

By Act Four such prophecies become reality. Not only does Amurack 'exclaim against high Mahomet' but he also promises that he 'means this very day / Proud Mahomet with weapons to assay' (*Alp*. IV.iii.1536, 1550-1). Amurack's behaviour is stimulated by anger once Mohammed's false prophecy turns his kingdom into a 'mirror of mishap' (*Alp*. IV.iii.1521).

Unlike the eponymous protagonist of Greene's play *Selimus* (1591-4, pub. 1594) which follows the murderous campaign of a Turkish tyrant, Alphonsus is a Christian prince. Despite Matthew Dimmock's contention that Greene's play is 'devoid of explicit reference to Rome'.[71] Alphonsus, '*King of Aragon'* is undeniably Catholic. The play is loosely based on the life of Alfonso V of Aragon (1396-1458) who conquered Naples. A prominent figure of the early Renaissance and a knight of the Order of the Dragon, Alfonso was dedicated to fighting the enemies of Christianity, mainly Turks. Choosing a Catholic prince as his hero, Greene complicates the usual antithesis between Christianity and Islam. By surrounding the brazen head with Catholic as well as Islamic motifs, Robert Greene does not merely complicate the antithesis between the Turks and Catholicism; he makes the task of distinguishing between the two all but impossible. In *Alphonsus,* the cruelty displayed by a Catholic prince supersedes the villainous machinations of the 'cruel tyrant the great Turk'.[72]

When critics do discuss *Alphonsus*, they generally comment on the play's similarity to Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* (1587) or they examine its use of a mythological framework. Rather than being merely a feeble imitation of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine,* I would like to argue that *Alphonsus* is actually a burlesque comedy that responds, albeit mockingly, to Marlowe's

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[71] Matthew Dimmock, *New Turkes: Dramatizing Islam and the Ottomans in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), p. 180.
[72] Thomas Becon, *The Flour of Godly Praiers* (London, 1550), sig. Aiii.

remarkably successful play in which 'that Atheist Tamburlaine' dared 'God out of heaven' with his 'blaspheming'.[73] Thus with a series of hyperboles, Greene essentially attempts to "out-Tamburlaine" *Tamburlaine.* If Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* declares that he holds 'the fates fast in iron chains', Greene's Alphonsus boasts that he has 'Fortune in a cage of gold' (*Tam 1*. I.ii.173; *Alp*. IV.iii.1614).[74] If Marlowe's Tamburlaine sits under a canopy decorated with 'diamonds, sapphires and rubies', Greene's Alphonsus has a canopy decorated with the 'traitorous heads' of his defeated enemies (*Tam 2*. III.ii.120; *Alp*. IV.iii.1593). As the opening framing device with Venus and the Muses suggests, Greene's intention seems to be not simply to outdo Marlowe but also to mock what he sees as the failings of *Tamburlaine*. Typical of the drama of the 1580s, the opening sequence emphasises the connection between the heroic and comic elements of the play.[75] Thus Greene, masquerading as a new 'Virgil', allows the powers of Venus to supersede the works of 'bloody Mars', as the subject matter of the play moves from epic heroism to romantic comedy (*Alp*. I.pro.32, 42).

Indeed both plays feature quite substantial romantic plot lines. The final sequence of *Alphonsus* details the romance and eventual marriage between Alphonsus and Iphigina, the daughter of Amurack. This unlikely pairing provides a great deal of comedy in the closing scenes, as Alphonsus is forced to admit that even he is 'prone to Cupid's snares' (*Alp.* V.iii.1964). Indeed if Tamburlaine's amorous feelings towards Zenocrate seem at odds with his warrior temperament, Alphonsus is transformed from a murderous tyrant to a 'sweet mouse' by his love for Iphigina, who he worships as a 'goddess' (*Alp.* V.ii.1744, 1741).

As well as documenting the career of Bacon, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* also tells the story of a love triangle set during the reign of Henry III (1207-1272). In this romantic

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[73] Greene, *Perimedes the Blacke-smith [...]* (London, 1588), sig. A3-A3ᵛ.
[74] All quotations are derived from J. S. Cunningham's edition: Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine the Great,* ed. J. S. Cunningham (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981).
[75] Alan C. Dessen, 'Robert Greene and the Theatrical Vocabulary of the Early 1590s', in *Writing Robert Greene: Essays*, p. 30.

subplot, Prince Edward becomes infatuated with Margaret 'the lovely maid of Fressingfield' and sends his friend Ned Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, to secure her as his mistress (*FB*. i.86). But after meeting the beautiful Margaret, Lacy falls in love and decides to marry her himself. Meanwhile, suspecting foul play, Edward appeals to Friar Bacon whose magical prospective glass reveals Lacy's betrayal. Bacon prevents Margaret and Lacy from marrying by striking Friar Bungay dumb and having a devil carry him to Oxford. After confronting the lovers, Edward eventually resigns his claims on Margaret and forgives his friend. Later in the play, Lacy tests Margaret's constancy by pretending to abandon her. Margaret enters a convent, only to cast off the nun's habit once Lacy returns to her.

The depiction of Margaret throughout the play abounds in puns which connect the romance plot with the plot of Friar Bacon and the brazen head. When Lacy woos Margaret, he explains that he 'pleaded first to get your grace for' Edward (*FB*. vi.77). Here 'grace' takes on a third meaning which is again secular: that of a manifestation of favour from the future king. Another important pun occurs on the word 'art' which alludes both to Bacon's 'making of a brazen head by art' and to the various 'charms of art' through which Edward hopes to 'enchain her love' (*FB*. ii.24; i.123). Critics have emphasised the play's metaphorical links between love and magic.[76] Yet our understanding of the love plot's relationship to the plot involving Friar Bacon is still limited. No one has noticed the way in which numerous men effectively worship Margaret. Her various suitors frequently compare her to goddesses such as 'Venus' and 'Pallas' (*FB*. i.72, 76). Thus she becomes 'the god' of the men's 'idolatry' (*RJ*. II.i.156). Using a Petrarchan metaphor, Lacy describes how when they first met, her image 'straight dived into my heart/[a]nd there did shrine the idea' of her (*FB*. vi.79-80). But these love conventions also serve to define political relationships, as

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[76] William Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1935), p. 31; Barbara Traister, *Heavenly Necromancers: The Magician in English Renaissance Drama* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1984), pp. 67-87.

Eleanor, the daughter of the King of Castile, courts Edward after admitting to having worshipped his 'lovely counterfeit' before she actually met him (*FB*. iv.22).[77] Bungay, who uses Platonic imagery, is at pains to emphasise that the relationship between Lacy and Margaret, in contrast to Edward's less than honourable intentions towards her, has put them closer to God: '*Deus hic'* (*FB*. vi.87).[78] When Lacy decides to 'try sweet Peggy's constancy' by pretending to abandon her, she withdraws to 'the abbey' deciding that instead of loving Lacy she will 'yield' her 'loves and liberty to God' (*FB*. xiv.73; x.160-1). It is only when she has been abandoned that she realises how her love for Lacy could be conceived of as idolatrous:

> And now I hate myself for that I loved,
> And doted more on him than on my God. (*FB*. xiv.13-14)

But when Lacy returns to her, longing for reconciliation, she reconsiders her options:

> Is not heaven's joy before earth's fading bliss,
> And life above sweeter than life in love? (*FB*. xiv.75-6)

Given the choice of loving 'God or Lord Lacy', she all too quickly throws off 'the habit' and 'all the show of holy nuns' (*FB*. xiv.83, 91). Thus she discards the promise of God's eternal love and returns to the earthly world with its 'pricks of death' to love Lacy and thereby accept her own mortality (*FB*. xiv.21).

In the final scene of *Friar Bacon*, the '[g]reat potentates' are declared 'earth's' true 'miracles' and are worshipped accordingly (*FB*. xvi.1). Bryan Reynolds and Henry S. Turner have argued that at this point in the play Greene moves 'beyond the competing genres of the history play or court romance' and towards a 'mythological romance'.[79] They read the end of

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[77] Catherine Bates, *The Rhetoric of Courtship in Elizabethan Language and Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 1-2.
[78] *Deus hic* – 'The Lord is here' (from the Vulgate version of Genesis, xxvii: 16).
[79] Bryan Reynolds and Henry S. Turner, 'From *Homo Academicus* to *Poeta Publicus:* Celebrity and Transversal Knowledge in Robert Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (c. 1589)', in *Writing Robert Greene*, p. 90.

the play as a celebration of 'an idealized concept of love' whereby 'the magic of love "out magics" the respective authority of both scholarly and Christian discourse'.[80] Yet Reynolds and Turner's essay underestimates the strongly patriotic and nationalistic sentiment in the closing sequence of the play. The final scene of *Friar Bacon* is not so much a celebration of love as a celebration of the English monarchy. After referring to the pseudo-historical legend that London was founded by 'Brute', the great-grandson of Aeneas, thus making Englishmen the descendants of the Trojans, Bacon 'vows perpetual homage' to 'Diana's rose' or to the Virgin Queen (*FB*. xvi.44, 4, 62). This political prophecy had a long history in England and originated with Geoffrey of Monmouth's *The Book of Merlin* (1135). Yet the myth of London as the new Troy or Troynovant was a double edged sword as the uncertainty of the late Elizabethan era led to 'a considerable anxiety over the logical implications of the Troy/London parallel: if Troy fell, so must London'.[81] Earlier in the play, the brazen head offered the only way to 'strengthen England'; and there were various oblique allusions to its ability to protect England from the threat of the second Armada:

> That if ten Caesars lived and reigned in Rome,
> With all the legions Europe doth contain,
> They should not touch a grass of English ground, (*FB*. ii.57-60)

Yet at the end of the play, the brazen head's power to protect England from invasion becomes obsolete; it is instead replaced by 'those gorgeous images' of Elizabeth as the protectress of England who will save the country from 'the stormy threats of war' (*FB*. xvi.15, 50).

Thus *Friar Bacon* concludes with the adulation of the monarch, as the various protagonists of the play return to vow 'perpetual homage' to the head of state (*FB.* xvi.4). The scene opens with a re-enactment of the coronation ceremony. The Emperor of Germany

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[80] *Ibid*, p. 19.

[81] Douglas Bruster, *Drama and the Market in the Age of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 99; Heather James, *Shakespeare's Troy: Drama, Politics, and the Translation of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 13-30.

enters with the *'pointless sword'* of Edward the Confessor; the King of Castile enters *'carrying a sword with a point'* which signifies justice; Lacy carries *'the globe'* which symbolises the earthly power of the monarch (*FB*. xvi). Edward and Warren carry *'a rod of gold with a dove on it'* which as the wand of office signifies equity; and, finally, Ermsby enters carrying the *'crown and sceptre'* to complete the regalia (*FB*. xvi). Yet even if this scene is designed to flatter Elizabeth, it would seem that the praise is not completely free from criticism. Although the happy future that Bacon predicts alludes to Elizabeth as the descendant of 'Edward and his queen', the sequence also emphasises the obligation of England's monarchs to marry in order to provide the country with an heir (FB. xvi.41). Elizabeth might have defeated the Armada, but she had not married. Indeed, as Brian Walsh is quick to point out:

> The speech notes the nation's dependence on Elizabeth for peace and prosperity, but also implicitly suggests that England has no future beyond her, a backhanded compliment to the Queen that recognises her impressive tenure and points out her inability to secure long-term stability for her people.[82]

In contrast to the fruitful union of Edward and Eleanor, Elizabeth's refusal to marry has endangered the dynastic succession.

Similarly in *Alphonsus*, the Turkish Emperor Amurack ultimately rejects 'mighty *Mahomet'* and is instead forced to worship '[m]ighty Alphonsus' (*Alp.* III.ii.1310; V.iii.1892). In Act Four, Alphonsus enters *'with a canopy carried over him by three Lords, having over each corner a King's head crowned'* (*Alp*. IV.iii). In Henslowe's inventory of stage properties '1 wooden canopy' appears alongside the entry for 'old Mahomet's head'.[83] This spectacular tableau is a symbolic replacement for the brazen head whose power has now

[82] Brian Walsh, ''Deep Prescience': Succession and the Politics of Prophecy in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay'*, *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 23 (2010), p. 64; Ian McAdam, 'Masculinity and Magic in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay'*, *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama* 37 (1998), pp. 42-3, 57-8; Frank Ardolino, ''Thus Glories England Over All the West': Setting as National Encomium in Robert Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*', *Journal of Evolutionary Psychology* 9 (1988), pp. 218-22.
[83] Foakes, ed., *Henslowe's Diary*, pp. 291-4.

been superseded. Just as the priests of Mohammed instructed us to gaze at the spectacle of the brazen head, now Alphonsus's 'canopy' provides a 'gallant show' which strikes 'terror' into 'the viewer's hearts' (*Alp*. IV.ii.1366, 1369-70). When Carinus imagines such a scene, he compares his son's canopy to 'Hyperion's coach' which 'glittered all so bright' (*Alp*. IV.ii.1364). Hyperion, whose name means 'sun high-one', was one of the Titans in Greek mythology and was the son of Gaia and Helios Hyperion. After likening his son to a God, Carinus also imagines kings who '[u]nder his feet lay grovelling on the ground' offering 'homage unto him' (*FB*. IV.ii.1255, 1261). Carinus further describes how:

> Me thought I saw Alphonsus, my dear son,
> Placed in a throne all glittering clear with gold, (*Alp*. IV.ii.1361-2)

This image seems to associate Alphonsus himself with an icon or religious statue. But it is not merely the appearance of a new stage property that marks a transition of power from a God to a monarch. Alphonsus, as an embodiment of sacred kingship, provides a similar sense of spectacle. He also becomes increasingly associated with 'Medusa's head' or the 'Gorgon's hoary hue' (*Alp*. III.ii.1019). One glance at Alphonsus, it seems, is enough to change the allegiance of any number of soldiers. In Act One, there is a long sequence which details the moment when Albinius recognises Alphonsus. Albinius is struck by the stranger's 'face' which he realises 'resembles much Alphonsus's hue' (*Alp*. I.i.204). After Albinius's 'dazzling eyes' finally recognise Alphonsus, he immediately 'cast[s]' himself 'down at his grace's feet' (*Alp*. I.i.198, 217). Similarly in Act Two, Laelius, who has just watched Alphonsus slay his king, is also converted to Alphonsus's side. A stage direction instructs Laelius to '*gaze upon Alphonsus*' after which Laelius suddenly begs for Alphonsus's 'pardon' and just as Albinius before him, he is seen to *'[k]neel down'* before Alphonsus (*Alp*. II.i.430).

When Alphonsus appears victorious with his canopy in Act Four, he has already assumed the regal power that Belinus and Amurack once wielded. Thus just as Belinus threatened to '*strike off*' the 'traitorous head[...]' of Albinius for what he termed 'heresy', now Alphonsus assumes the God-like power of life and death over those he has defeated (*Alp*. IV.iii.1592; II.i.620). He even offers Amurack the chance to complete the decoration of his canopy by allowing his severed head to fill 'a place' still 'left vacant' on the 'highest seat' (*Alp.* IV.iii.1594-5). As we have established, this canopy seems to be an attempt on Greene's part to outdo Tamburlaine's canopy '[e]nchased with diamonds, sapphires' (*Tam* 2. III.ii. 120). But it should be remembered that both canopies could allude to a canopy over a shrine as much as to one suspended over a throne. Like Marlowe, Greene emphasises his hero's status as a secular deity. Greene's Alphonsus has brazenly assumed the God-like authority to sever heads from bodies and to set crowns on heads. Thus *Alphonsus* traces the movement from the worship of the brazen head to the veneration of Alphonsus as the new head of the Turkish State. At the end of the play, Greene moves away from the play's complex meditation on idolatry, replacing it with the secular belief in the monarch as the ultimate source of power.

In different ways both *Alphonsus* and *Friar Bacon* conclude with the Protestant aversion to idolatry being superseded by the veneration of the monarch. As Ernst Kantorowicz has argued, the theory of the king's two bodies asserts the immortality of sacred kingship, with the body politic living on through dynastic succession.[84] The English reformation instigated what John Bossy terms 'a migration of the holy' as the rituals of religious worship were replaced by the rituals of monarchy.[85] Richard C. McCoy has argued

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[84] Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 206; Marie Axton, *The Queen's Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977); Albert Rolls, *The Theory of the King's Two Bodies in the Age of Shakespeare* (Lewiston, N.Y.: E. Mellen Press, 2000).
[85] John Bossy, *Christianity in the West: 1400-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 145.

that as the reformation advanced '[m]ore zealous Protestants found the veneration of the monarchy as idolatrous as adoration of the host'.[86] By concluding two plays concerned with critiquing idolatry with sequences which glorify a monarch, Greene draws attention to this ideological irony. Just as the audience is feeling smugly contemptuous of the misguided worship of religious idols, Greene asserts an oblique continuity between the Catholic idolatry and the 'perpetual homage' to the '[g]reat potentates' (*FB.* xvi.4, 1). Suddenly idolatry becomes disconcertingly visible in a secular world; and we are forced to recognise the thematic parallel between the Protestant fears of idolatry and the iconographic spectacles which glorify the power of the monarch.

In the early 1980s, André Gaudreault and Tom Gunning coined the phrase 'cinema of attractions'; this terminology was designed to challenge the traditional assumption that early cinema was unsophisticated or primitive.[87] Dismissing the seminal hypothesis of Christian Metz that 'cinema only truly appeared when it discovered the mission of telling stories', they argue that early cinema demonstrated a 'fascination with novelty' and 'curiosity-arousing devices'.[88] Indeed, Tom Gunning argues that the major priority of early cinema was not the development of a linear plot or narrative but rather the establishment of 'one basic temporality, that of the alternation of presence/absence that is embodied in the act of display' and visual spectacle. John Frazer has identified just such a narrative temporality in the films of Méliès:

> The causal narrative links in Méliès films are relatively insignificant compared to the discrete events. We experience his films as rapidly juxtaposed jolts of activity. We focus on successions of pictorial surprises which run roughshod over the conventional

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[86] Richard C. McCoy, *Alterations of State: Sacred Kingship in the English Reformation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. x.

[87] Tom Gunning, ''Now You See It, Now You Don't': The Temporality of the Cinema of Attractions', in *Silent Film,* ed. Richard Abel (London: Athlone, 1996), p. 72.

[88] Christian Metz, *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 44-5; Gunning, ''Now You See It, Now You Don't': The Temporality of the Cinema of Attractions', p. 73; Tom Gunning, *The Cinema of Attractions: Early Cinema, Its Spectator and the Avant Garde*, in Thomas Elsaesser, ed., *Early Cinema: Space Frame Narrative* (London: BFI, 1990), pp. 56-62.

> niceties of linear plotting. Méliès' films are a collage of immediate experiences which coincidently require the passage of time to become complete.[89]

Méliès films rely, not on narrative development, but on 'successions of pictorial surprises', such as the explosion of the rubber head (*L'Homme à Tête en Caoutchouc*, 1902), or when a spaceship hits the eye of the man in the moon (*Le Voyage dans la Lune,* 1902), or when a woman is mysteriously transformed into a skeleton (*Escamotage d' une Dame Chez Robert-Houdin,* 1896).

If Méliès films are symptomatic of the 'cinema of attractions', Greene's plays are symptomatic of the theatre of attractions. Just like a Méliès film, *Alphonsus* and *Friar Bacon* rely on 'successions of pictorial surprises', such as the brazen head, the dragon shooting fire, the tree with golden apples, Alphonsus's canopy decorated with severed heads and Bacon's prospective glass.[90] Venerating Greene's 'skill in plotting', more conservative commentators frequently observe that Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* 'is historically [...] significant' as 'the first English play in which a true double-plot (as opposed to a comic sub-plot) was employed'.[91] I would like to offer a corrective to this traditional reading of Greene's drama. The primary strength of Greene's drama does not lie in his 'skilful [...] plotting', his narrative organisation. Rather Greene's theatre of attractions revels in the temporality of spectacle, a temporality acknowledged by the brazen head's own dictum: 'Time is', 'Time was', Time is past' (*FB.* xi.53, 64, 73).

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[89] Frazer, *Artificially Arranged Scenes: The Films of George Méliès*, p. 124.
[90] Williams, '*Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* and the Rhetoric of Temporality', pp. 31-48.
[91] J. A. Lavin, ed., *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, pp. xvi, xxi; Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral*, pp. 31-4.

Stage Conventions

6.

Furor Poeticus:

Madness and Poetic Inspiration in Robert Greene's *Orlando Furioso* (c.1591)

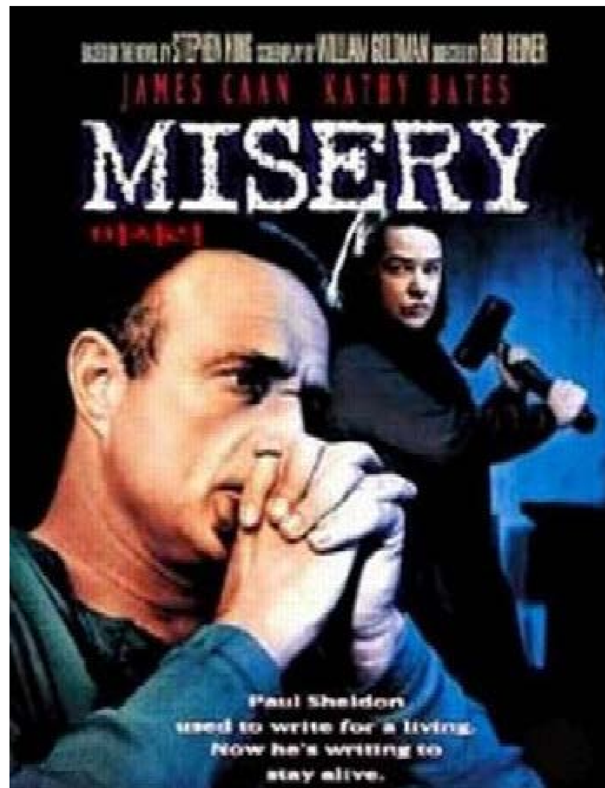

Fig. 20: Movie poster for *Misery* (Rob Reiner, 1990).

Individuals who demonstrate a remarkable creative propensity are often described as being on the periphery of sanity. The 1990 American thriller *Misery* (Rob Reiner, 1990), based on Stephen King's novel of the same name, envisages creativity and madness at the opposite ends of the same axis.[1] The film's accompanying poster depicts James Caan, who plays the best-selling novelist Paul Sheldon, sitting in a contemplative pose, while Kathy Bates, who won much critical acclaim for her protrayal of the insane fan Annie Wilkes, is seen wielding

[1] Stephen King, *Misery* (London: BCA, 2007). For further discussion of King's novel and the film adaptation, see Mark Browning, *Stephen King on the Big Screen* (Bristol: Intellect, 2009); Tony Magistrale, *Hollywood's Stephen King* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Kathleen Margaret Lant, 'The Rape of Constant Reader: Stephen King's Construction of the Female Reader and the Violation of the Female Body in *Misery*', in *Stephen King*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2007), pp. 141-166.

a sledge hammer in the background. Holding the injured Paul captive after rescuing him from a car wreck, Annie's behaviour becomes increasingly demented as she resorts to drugs, intimidation and torture in order to compel Paul to resurrect her favourite literary heroine. In one of the film's most horrific and, it has to be said, most memorable sequences, Annie breaks Paul's ankles with a sledge hammer, in an act of "hobbling". Like Annie, who oscillates between depression and manic violence, Paul suffers from mood swings, which correspond to the ebb and flow of his creativity and which make him question his own sanity. Both King's novel and Reiner's movie draw lines of correspondence between the melancholy writer and his crazy fan, forcing readers and audiences alike to contemplate the metaphorical link between creativity and madness.[2]

While *Misery* conceptualises the metaphorical link between creativity and insanity through the antagonistic relationship between two separate protagonists – Paul and Annie – in Robert Greene's play *Orlando Furioso*, the melancholy writer and the maniac merge into one individual – the figure of Orlando. Driven mad with jealousy, Orlando roams the forest *'like a madman'*, raving wildly and indulging in mindless acts of violence (*OF*. III.i). But soon his furor takes a melancholic turn; he reappears on stage dressed *'like a poet'* and '[s]its sadly' composing poetry 'in contemplation of Angelica', like 'the son of Saturn' (*OF*. II.i.458; I.i.320; I.ii.435).[3] Ranting that 'frenzies scares' have 'ripened' poetic 'conceits' within his 'brains', Orlando's behaviour is parallel to that of *Furor Poeticus* in the university drama *The Second Part of the Return from Parnassus* (pr. 1606) who, despite his lack of talent, boasts

[2] Carol A. Senf, 'Stephen King's *Misery*: Manic Depression and Creativity', in *Dionysus in Literature*, ed. Branimir M. Rieger (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1994), pp. 209-219; Mary Findley, 'The Prisoner, the Pen, and the Number One Fan: Misery as a Prison Film', in *The Films of Stephen King*, ed. Tony Magistrale (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 91-100.

[3] For further discussion of Saturn as a personification of melancholy, see Margot and Rudolf Wittkower, *Born Under Saturn* (New York: New York Review of Books, 2007); Erwin Panofsky, Raymond Klibansky and Fritz Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy* (London: Nelson, 1964); Adam H. Kitzes, *The Politics of Melancholy from Spenser to Milton* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Bridget Gellert Lyons, *Voices of Melancholy: Studies in Literary Treatments of Melancholy in Renaissance England* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971).

that the 'celestial fire within his brain [...] gives a living genius to' his poetry (*OF*. IV.ii.1267-71). [4] Taking a similarly satirical approach towards the Platonic concept of *furor poeticus*, Greene's play takes literally what to others was merely a metaphor, with Orlando being simultaneously represented as both a poet and a madman. While in other Greene's plays spectacle is created through the material conditions of the stage (through special effects and stage properties), in *Orlando Furisoso* the object of spectacle is the actor playing the part of Orlando, whose erratic gestures, disarrayed costume and incoherent ramblings provide the audience with an iconographic image of madness.

Given that the play is so rarely studied, it would be as well to offer a short plot summary. *Orlando Furioso* dramatises the romance between Orlando, the nephew of Charlemagne, and Angelica, the Soldan of Egypt's daughter. The play opens with Angelica's various suitors bidding for her hand in marriage. But Angelica's choice of Orlando, as her future husband, incites her rejected suitors to seek revenge. Rodamant, the King of Cuba, and Brandimart, the King of the Isles, determine to ensconce nearby, while Mandricard, the King of Mexico, returns home to raise an army. Meanwhile, Sacripant, a Machiavellian villain clearly modelled on Marlowe's Tamburlaine, tells his servant of his lust for power and his desire to steal the affections of the Angelica. Sacripant decides to provoke Orlando to jealousy, by spreading base gossip amongst the shepherds, and by hanging roundelays on trees, which assert that Angelica has betrayed Orlando, with his rival Medor. Orlando successfully lays seize to the castle of Rodamant; defeated, Rodamant and Brandimart fly the scene. Discovering the roundelays, Orlando begins his descent into madness. Delusional, Orlando attacks a supporter of Medor, dragging him off stage by his leg. He later returns carrying the servant's severed leg, and likens it to Hercules' club. Angelica's father soon

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[4] *The Return from Parnassus* (London, 1606), III.iv.1301-2; J. B. Leishman, *The Second Part of the Return from Parnassus* (London, 1606), in *The Three Parnassus Plays (1598-1601)*, ed. J. B. Leishman (London: Nicholson & Watson, 1949), p. 82.

hears of her alleged adultery and sentences her to exile and vows to tear Medor's heart from his chest. Mandricard returns from Mexico and appears before Marsilius, disguised as a servant. After being treated with mercy by Marsilius, Mandricard decides to abandon his plan of revenge and makes peace with Marsilius. Angelica, disguised as a poor woman, is discovered wandering in the woods by Rodamant and Brandimart. The two men threaten to rape her but Orlando and his soldiers come to her rescue and kill Brandimart. Meanwhile, concerned for their fellow Frenchman, the twelve peers of France arrive in India, Marsilius and Mandricard meet them disguised as palmers. After revealing their true identities, Marsilius and Mandricard agree to help the peers find Angelica and exact their revenge on her. Orlando, oblivious to all of this, is saved from madness by Melissa, a mysterious woman who, along with her satyrs, uses a combination of music and Latin and Italian poetry to nurse Orlando back to sanity. With his wits restored, Orlando kills Sacripant, who it seems has usurped the throne of Africa, while everyone was so distracted. Orlando then appears before the court, disguised, and challenges the various peers of France to a duel, in order to preserve Angelica's honour and thus save her from a death sentence. Finally, revealing his true identity, Orlando regales the court with tales of his adventures and is at last reunited with Angelica. The play ends with the promise of a wedding and a feast when the couple appear victorious before Charlemagne on Orlando's return to France. This plot summary does less than justice to Greene's play, where priority is placed not on plot but on spectacle.

Greene's play is loosely based on Ludovico Ariosto's epic poem *Orlando Furioso*.[5] Both Charles W. Lemmi and Morris Robert Morrison have argued that Greene's dependence on Ariosto runs far deeper than simply exporting the Orlando-Angelica episode. Charles

[5] A large number of Italian editions of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* would have been available to Greene, including: *Orlando Fvrioso [...] tvtto di nvovo con figvre adornato* (Venice: F. Rampezzato, 1562); *Orlando Fvrioso [...] tvtto ricorretto, et di nvove figvre adornato* (Venice: Vincenzo Valgrisi, 1565); *Orlando Fvrioso [...] con cinque nvovi canti del medesimo* (Venice: G.A. Valvassori, 1566); *Orlando Fvrioso [...] nuouamente adonato di figure di rame da Girolamo Pomo* (Venice: F. De Franceschi, 1584).

Lemmi goes as far as to suggest that 'every situation in Greene's *Orlando Furioso* had its analogue in Ariosto's'.[6] In Act Two Scene One of Greene's play Orlando quotes directly from Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (canto XXXVII, stanzas 117, 121).[7] Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* was first published in 1516, and after being expanded to a total of forty-six cantos, was reprinted in 1532. Greene demonstrates his familiarity with Ariosto in a number of his prose works.[8] He quotes directly from the Italian in *The Spanish Masquerado* (1589).[9] Greene also uses the story of Lydia from canto XXXIV of Ariosto's poem in *Greenes Orpharion* (1590).[10] Likewise he also alludes to canto XIX in *Alcida Greenes Metamorphosis* (1617) and quotes three stanzas, which he has translated into English, in *Penelopes Web* (1587).[11]

During the early modern period, Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* was regarded as 'the most popular narrative poem in Renaissance Europe'.[12] Sir John Harington's English translation of *Orlando Furioso* was not published until 1591 but this did not prevent English poets from alluding to the poem before this date.[13] As Colin Burrow has illustrated, Book Three of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (pr. 1590) was intended not merely to allude to Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, but to surpass it.[14] Spenser, it seems, was acquainted with either the Italian original or one of numerous French translations, or quite possibly both. Ariosto's influence on English poetry can be traced back as far as 1575, when Peter Beverley wrote and

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[6] Charles W. Lemmi, 'The Sources of Greene's *Orlando Furioso'*, *Modern Language Notes*, 31 (1916), p. 440.
[7] Lodovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso,* trans. William Steward Rose (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968), p. 294.
[8] T.W. Baldwin, *On the Literary Genetics of Shakespeare's Plays, 1592-1594* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1959), p. 77; Charles W. Lemmi 'The Source of Greene's *Orlando Furioso'*, *Modern Language Notes*, 31 (1916), pp. 440-441.
[9] *The Spanish Masquerado* (London, 1589), B2-B2ˇ (XXXVI).
[10] *Greenes Orpharion* (London, 1599), pp. 13-57.
[11] *Alcida Greenes Metamorphosis* (London, 1617); *Penelopes Web* (London, 1587).
[12] *Ludovico Ariosto's 'Orlando Furioso'*, trans. Sir John Harington, ed. Robert McNulty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. ix.
[13] Jason Scott-Warren, *Sir John Harington and the Book as Gift* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
[14] Colin Burrow, *Edmund Spenser* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1996), p. 31; Daniel Javitch, *Proclaiming a Classic: The Canonization of Orlando Furioso* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991), pp. 134-157.

published the *History of Ariodanto and Jeneura*, a paraphrased retelling of Book Five of *Orlando Furioso*.[15]

Greene's *Orlando Furioso* reworks the shepherd's story from Ariosto's poem (XXIII, cxviii-cxx). In Greene's version the shepherd's tale of infidelity is untrue; the villain Sacripant has decided to provoke Orlando to jealousy by hanging slanderous roundelays on trees asserting that Angelica has betrayed Orlando with his rival Medor. M. Hale Shackford has suggested that Shakespeare took this idea from Greene's play, rather than directly from Ariosto's poem.[16]

Composed sometime between 1588 and 1592, Greene's play survives as both a printed quarto play-text and in manuscript. As we have established in Chapter One, although the manuscript is incomplete, it consists of about two thirds of the actor's part of Orlando, which was found amongst the documents that Edward Alleyn, the Elizabethan actor and theatre entrepreneur, left to Dulwich College.[17] The textual variations between the 1594 edition of *Orlando Furioso* and the manuscript part of Orlando have encouraged many critics to focus exclusively on the relationship between the two versions of the play.[18] Even those commentators who do attempt to give a critical account of the play have been preoccupied with linking the portrayal of Angelica as an innocent and faithful ingénue with Greene's various prose heroines.[19] Yet these comparisons between Angelica and figures such as

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[15] Peter Beverly, *The historie of Ariodanto and Ieneura* (London, 1575).
[16] M. Hale Shackford, 'Shakespeare and Greene's *Orlando Furioso'*, *Modern Language Notes* 39 (1924), pp. 54-6.
[17] Dulwich College Library: MS, I, Item 138.
[18] W.W. Greg, *Two Elizabethan Stage Abridgements: The Battle of Alcazar and Orlando Furioso* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1922); Michael Warren, 'Greene's *Orlando*: W.W. Greg *Furioso'*, in *Textual Formations and Reformations*, ed. Laurie E. Maguire and Thomas L. Berger (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1998), pp. 67-91; B. A. P. Van Dam, 'Alleyn's Player's Part of Greene's *Orlando Furioso*, and the Text of the Q of 1594', *English Studies*, 11 (1929) pp. 182-203, pp. 209-20.
[19] Charles W. Crupi, *Robert Greene* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986), pp. 107-114; Norman Gebler, 'Robert Greene's *Orlando Furioso*: A Study of Thematic Ambiguity', *The Modern Language Review*, 64 (1969), pp. 264-266.

Rosamond in *Greenes Mourning Garment* (1590) or Terentia in *Ciceronis Amor* (1589) divert attention away from the important visual aspects of the play.

Drawing on Michel Foucault's seminal text *Madness and Civilisation: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (1964), current theoretical approaches towards madness in early modern literature frequently explore the interplay between history, culture and literature.[20] In *Distracted Subjects* (2004), Carol Thomas Neely has argued that plays do not 'exist in quite the same historical register' as other texts and has demonstrated that madness frequently serves a satirical purpose, allowing playwrights to ridicule members of society: 'women, ethnic others (Welsh madmen), and, predominantly, early modern professionals'.[21] In Greene's *Orlando Furioso,* however, madness operates as a metaphor for poetic inspiration; Orlando's behaviour does not mock the mad but rather satirises the egotism of poets and playwrights who claim to have been divinely inspired by God. While Greene's play might tell us little about contemporary attitudes towards the insane, it tells us a great deal about the contemporary attitudes towards playwriting.

The purpose of this chapter is threefold. First I want explore the ways in which Orlando's behaviour, which rapidly alternates between the mania of a madman and the melancholy of a poet, forces the audience to contemplate the unstable nature of poetic inspiration. It should be made clear from the outset that I am not claiming that Greene's *Orlando Furioso* single-handedly established the stage tradition of the mad poet; rather I am trying to demonstrate that Greene's play enjoyed a significant afterlife in the verbal and visual conventions that were to become part of the theatrical discourse of the early modern period of the late 1580s and 1590s. Secondly, concentrating on the relationship between the play and Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, I want to demonstrate that Greene is using the trope of

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[20] Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilisation: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (London: Routledge, 2001).
[21] Carol Thomas Neely, *Distracted Subjects* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), pp. 67, 189.

madness to articulate anxieties surrounding influence and textual authority. Finally, I will argue that *Orlando Furioso* offers a sophisticated satire of the contemporary stage by ridiculing the belief that writers are divinely inspired through ecstatic revelation.

In Act Three of James Shirley's play *The School of Compliment* (1631), a gentleman wanders on stage, demanding instruction in the art of compliments and 'phrases of rhetoric'. Demonstrating his skills, he proceeds to rant in a most 'scholar-like' manner, to the amazement of the other protagonists. Strutting about the stage, he invokes 'brave Mars', threatens extreme violence, declares his 'passion in blank verse', sings a 'pastoral' roundelay, plays a pipe and boasts that he will 'out-labour love-born Hercules'. Astonished, the rich gull Bubulcus inquires of a servant 'What's he?' and is informed that the mysterious gentleman is none other than 'Orlando Furioso'.[22] Robert Stanley Forsythe has argued that this brief scene is 'a parody on the tearing of a passion to tatters, which is commonly met with in early Elizabethan tragedies', while Teresa Grant has suggested that Shirley could be specifically targeting Robert Greene's *Orlando Furioso*.[23] While it may seem tenuous to categorically conclude that Shirley was alluding to Greene's play some forty years after it was first performed, it is clear is that the figure of Orlando Furioso was a widely recognisable literary and theatrical convention, which lived on in the public's imagination for several decades after the first publication of Ariosto's poem in English and the first performance of Greene's play.

Like Kyd's Hieronimo, the figure of Orlando Furioso bequeathed an enduring legacy to early modern theatrical discourse, providing an eidetic spectacle of madness, which would be replicated and parodied by a new generation of dramatists.[24] Indeed, as Tiffany Stern has demonstrated, Greene's play – and Ariosto's poem - 'provided a number of verbal and visual

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[22] James Shirley, *The schoole of complement [...]* (London, 1931), III.i.335-475, pp. 34-9.

[23] Robert Stanley Forsythe, *The Relations of Shirley's plays to the Elizabethan Drama* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1914), p. 127; Private correspondence with Teresa Grant. Grant will be editing *The School of Compliment* for the forthcoming Oxford University Press edition of *The Complete Works of James Shirley.*

[24] For a discussion of Hieronimo's madness as an iconic stage spectacle, which was frequently parodied, see Hattaway, *Elizabethan Popular Theatre*, pp. 101-129.

clichés that were to become part of the theatrical discourse of the early modern period'.[25] But while Hieronimo became synonymous with the heroic *furor* which incites revenge, Greene's Orlando epitomises a different theatrical tradition, that of the mad poet or *furor poeticus*. While Hieronimo and the majority of his successors reside in the tragic sphere, traces of the *furor poeticus* tradition, in which '[t]he lunatic, the lover, and the poet / [a]re of imagination all compact' can be found in Shakespeare's comedies (*MND*. V.i.3-8). Just as in Greene's play, in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* a protagonist called Orlando 'haunts the forest', hanging his 'tedious' and 'lame' verses on trees (*AYL*. III.ii.350, 152, 165). M. Hale Shackford has suggested that Shakespeare took this idea from Greene's play, rather than directly from Ariosto's poem.[26] Indeed, as Michele Marrapodi has suggested, Greene's play 'may be, for Shakespeare, an intermediary between an Italian source [Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*] and his own work'.[27] Ridiculing Orlando's behaviour, Rosalind likens 'his humour of love to a living humour of madness'; Orlando's creativity is dismissed as 'merely a madness' (*AYL*. III.ii. 406-7, 388). Like Greene's mad protagonist, who rants and raves like a mad poet, Shakespeare's Orlando emphasises the metaphorical link between madness and creativity for the purpose of comedy.

My argument centres around two stage directions. Orlando's entrance *'attired like a madman'* and his reappearance, moments later, dressed *'like a Poet'* draws a clear correlation between the 'painful cogitations' of a diseased mind and the 'pensive cogitations' of a

[25] Tiffany Stern, 'The 'Parts' for Greene's *Orlando Furioso*: A Source for the 'Mock Trial' in Shakespeare's *Lear*?', *Notes and Queries* 47 (2002), p. 229. Stern provides an extensive catalogue of early modern plays, which allude to *Orlando Furioso*, including: *Club Law* (pr. 1599-1600), Thomas Randolph, *A pleasant comedie, entituled Hey for honesty, down with knavery [...]* (London, 1651), *The Faithful Friends* (per. 1620-8), *The Thracian Wonder* (per. 1590-1601), Thomas Dekker and John Webster's *Westward Ho* (per. 1604), Thomas Middleton and William Rowley's *The changeling* (per. 1622), Thomas Rawlins, *The Rebellion* (per. 1637-9), John Webster, *The deuils law-case* (per. 1617-21), Thomas Dekker, *Second Part of the Honest Whore* (per. 1604-5).

[26] M. Hale Shackford, 'Shakespeare and Greene's *Orlando Furioso*', *Modern Language Notes* 39 (1924), pp. 54-6.

[27] Michele Marrapodi, *Shakespeare, Italy and Intertextuality* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2004), pp. 96-8; M. Hale Shackford, 'Shakespeare and Greene's *Orlando Furioso*', *Modern Language Notes* 39 (1924), pp. 54-6.

'malcontent' (*OF.* III.i; IV.ii; V.ii.1472).[28] Writing about the various manifestations of madness on the early modern stage, Carol Neely has emphasised that, as well as being 'dramatised through a peculiar language, madness was also represented visually through a series of 'stereotyped behaviours, or iconographic conventions'.[29] Just as the mad were easily recognisable by their disarrayed attired, violent tendencies and, on occasion, by their carrying a staff or club, the malcontent or melancholic was a recognisable theatrical stock character of the late 1580s onwards. In Edward Guilpin's *Skialetheia* (Shadow of Truth), a collection of satires and epigrams printed in 1598 but composed some eighteen months earlier, the figure of the malcontent is characterised by his affected manner; he 'walks in dark silence, and vast silence', burdened by 'black fancies' and a 'troubled breast' like a disaffected scholar.[30] Emphasising that 'folly, melancholy, madness are but all one disease', the frontispiece of Robert Burton's 1628 edition of *The Anatomy of Melancholy* draws a similar line of correspondence between the figure of the Greek philosopher Democritus who sits 'busy at his study' and the figure of *manicus*, the violent lunatic, who wrestles with his chains in the lower right hand corner.[31] With a hint of self-satire, the portrait of Burton, imagined as 'Democritus Junior', seems to combine both iconographical traditions, depicted as he is in scholarly contemplation and flanked on either side by the armillary sphere and the cross staff, a visual parody of the fool's staff and bladder.[32]

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[28] Robert Greene, *Gvvydonius* (London, 1584), p. 32.
[29] Neely, pp. 49-50.
[30] Edward Guilpin, *Skialetheia* (London, 1598), sig. D6; Sander L. Gilman, *Seeing the Insane* (New York: Brunner/Mazel Publishers, 1982), p. 12; Jane Kromm, *The Art of Frenzy: Public Madness in the Visual Culture of Europe, 1500-1850* (London: Continuum, 2002).
[31] Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (New York: New York Review of Books, 2001), p. 39.
[32] Gilman, p. 17.

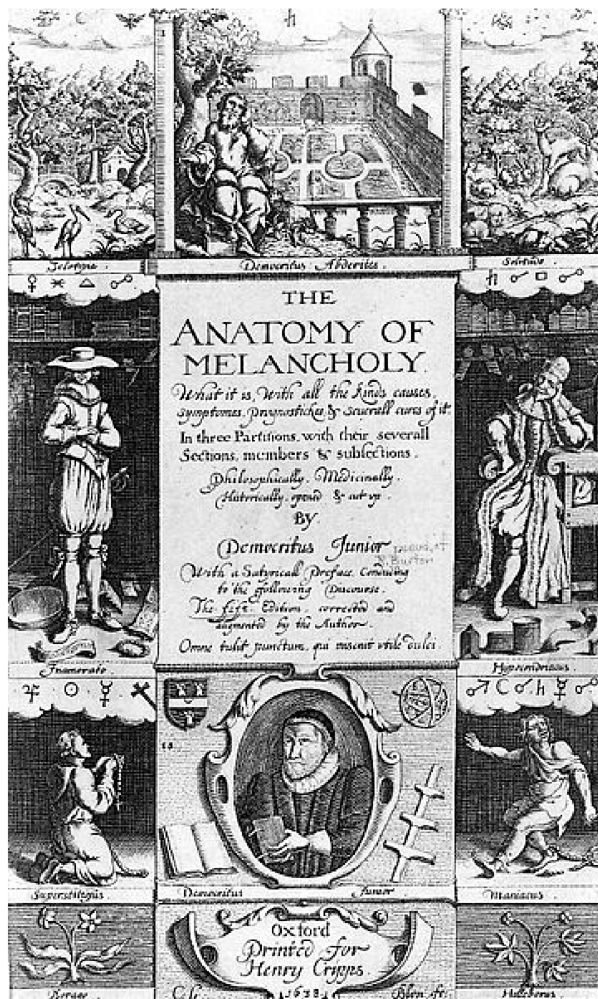

Fig. 21: The frontispiece of Robert Burton's *The anatomy of melancholy [...]* (London, 1638), sig. A1.

The link between melancholy and madness derives from a number of different classical sources. In *Phaedrus*, Plato differentiates the mania of fools and madmen from the divine ecstasies experienced by prophets, poets and lovers.[33] Later, this Platonic concept became associated with Aristotle's *Problems* XXX, which asked:

> Why is it that all those who have become eminent in philosophy or politics or poetry or the arts are clearly of an atrabilious temperament, and some of them to such an extent as to be affected by diseases caused by black bile, as is said to have happened to Heracles among the heroes?[34]

[33] Plato, *Phaedrus*, trans. Harold North Fowler (London: Havard University Press, 2005), 244A, p. 465.
[34] Aristotle, *Problems* in *The Works of Aristotle,* trans. E. S. Forster (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), Volume VII: *Problemata*, Book XXX, I, 10-14, 953ª.

Reprioritising *furor poeticus* as the first of Plato's divine frenzies, the Renaissance philosopher and commentator Marsilio Ficino linked Plato's concept of the *furors* with Aristotle's writing on melancholy, writing that great poetry was the result of '*est autem furor divinus illustration rationalis animae'* (a divine madness of the illuminated spirit of reason).[35] Taking some pains to differentiate between Homer's 'divine rapture' and insanity, George Chapman described the Hill of the Muses:

> And the two points of it, parting at the Top; are *Insania*, and *divinus furor*. *Insania*, is that which every rack-brained writer; and judge of poetical writing, is rapt withal; when he presumes either to write or censure the height of poetry; and that transports him humor, vainglory and pride, most profane and sacrilegious: when *divinus furor*, makes gentle, and noble, the never so truly inspired writer. [36]

Chapman's description emphasises that rapture might lead to madness or genius but he refrains from any suggestion as to how we might distinguish between the ecstasies of the mad 'rack-brained writer' and the melancholia of the 'truly inspired writer'.

In his seminal work *Montaigne and Melancholy* (2000), M. A. Screech explains that the link between creativity and madness 'derives from the ancient belief that both madmen and geniuses have souls and bodies more loosely knit together than other men do'.[37] 'The lunatic, the lover, and the poet /[a]re of imagination all compact' because they have souls which are striving to depart their body but there are good and bad forms of ecstasy; departing from the body, the soul might strive upwards reaching towards divinity like an angel, or plunge down towards bestiality and madness (*MND.* V.i.10-11). Michel de Montaigne criticised those who:

> want to be besides themselves, want to escape from their humanity. That is *madness*: instead of changing their Form into an angel's they change it into a beast's; they crash

[35] Marsilio Ficino, *Commentarium in Convivium Platonis, De Amore* (Florence, 1489), in Ekbert Faas, *Shakespeare's Poetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 139.
[36] George Chapman, *The memorable masque of the two honorable houses [...]* (London, 1613), sig. a3ˇ.
[37] M.A. Screech, *Montaigne and Melancholy* (New York: Duckworth, 2000), p. 37.

> down instead of winding high. Those humours soaring to transcendency terrify me as do great unapproachable heights; and for me nothing in the life of Socrates is so awkward to digest as his ecstasies and his daemonizings, and nothing about Plato so human as what is alleged for calling him divine.[38]

As John Huntington suggests '[m]ost Renaissance poets [...] do not take the archaic trope of the inspired poet very seriously'.[39] Indeed, the concept of ascetic contemplation provoked a certain amount of scepticism.[40] Discussing the 'proofs which doctors say they owe to revelations from some *daemon* or other', Montaigne stated 'I am content just to accept' but wryly added '(I never touch miracles)'.[41] Even theatre audiences were becoming more sceptical, as Richard Helgerson argues, '[t]he claim to divine inspiration could not survive the new astringent realism of the 1590s', 'such stilt-walking stuff' he suggests had by then 'become the exclusive prop of fools'.[42] Indeed, the Platonic concept of *furor poeticus* was becoming double-edged. Rather than setting poets above the rest of humanity, the association between madness and creativity could at times be used to deride a poet's compositions as 'merely a madness' (*AYL.* III.iii.388). In Ben Jonson's *Every Man Out of his Humor* (per. 1599) the concept of '*Furor Poeticus'* functions as a vehicle for satire when Asper promises to ridicule the inventions of unqualified writers who with 'neither art, nor brain' are forced to steal other 'men's lines' (Pro.155, 188, 190).

Orlando's schizophrenic personality, as he rapidly alternates between melancholy contemplation and habitual acts of madness, is further emphasised through his association with the mythological figure of Hercules. In Act Two Scene One, Orlando wanders around the forest ranting and begging the Muses to sympathise with his suffering. In his delusional

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[38] Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Essays*, trans. M. A. Screech (London: Penguin Books, 2003), III, 13, On experience, p. 1268. Shakespeare's Hamlet voices a similar sentiment: *Ham.* II.ii.308-10.
[39] John Huntington, "Furious Insolence': The Social Meaning of Poetic Inspiration in the 1590s', *Modern Philology* 94 (1997), p. 306; T. F. Wharton, '*Furor Poeticus*: Marston and his Contemporaries', *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 19 (1993), pp. 73-84.
[40] Screech, *Montaigne and Melancholy*, p. 42.
[41] Montaigne, II.37, On the resemblance of children to their fathers, p. 883.
[42] Richard Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), p. 117.

state, Orlando attacks a servant *'draw[ing] him in by the leg'* and dragging him off stage, where we are told, 'he rends him as one would tear a [l]ark' (*OF.* II.i.756). Moments later, Orlando re-enters waving the servant's severed 'leg':

> Villain, provide me straight a Lion's skin,
> Thou seest I now am mighty Hercules:
> Look where is my massy club upon my neck. (*OF.* II.i.759-61)

In an awesome piece of stage violence, the audience is directed to '[s]ee' and '[l]ook' at the gory spectacle. The severed leg, which Orlando waves above his head, was evidently a popular stage property; Henslowe listed 'Kent's wooden leg' in his inventory of the stage properties of the Admiral's Men.[43] The property's comic potential had already been demonstrated in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (pr. 1604), when Faustus's leg is mysteriously pulled off by a Horse-courser, only for it to be instantly replaced by Mephistopheles.[44] Orlando's allusion to Hercules' 'lion skin' also appears frequently in early modern plays, usually in order to mock pointless bravado. In Shakespeare's *King John* (c. 1595-6), the Bastard mocks Austria for wearing a 'lion's skin', which he declares is the equivalent of putting 'Alcides' shoes upon an ass' (*KJ.* II.i.144). Mocking the heroic extremes of drama in his *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit* (1592), Greene's arrogant player boasts of having 'thundered' the 'twelve labours of Hercules'.[45] Similarly, in *Orlando Furioso*, Orlando's appearance waving a severed leg – a humorous substitute for Hercules's 'massy club' - satirises the vogue for Herculean role-playing on the early modern stage (*OF.* II.i.761). Despite this burlesque allusion to the madness of Hercules, in other moments of the play Orlando's behaviour is frequently compared to Hercules's 'chivalry' (*OF.* I.i.127). In her work on the reception of Euripides' Herakles in the early modern period, Kathleen Riley has

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[43] Foakes, ed., *Henslowe's Diary*, pp. 316-25.
[44] Roma Gill, ed., *Dr Faustus* (London: A & C Black, 2003), Scene x, pp. 54-57.
[45] *Greenes, groats-vvorth of witte [...]* (London, 1592), sig. E1.

identified two distinct traditions: one focusing on Hercules's 'heroic virtue, the other on his madness'.[46] Greene's Orlando, I want to argue, is a synthesis of these two rival traditions. In the scene we have just discussed, Orlando is clearly represented as *Hercules furens*, the raving madman and murderer. But, later in the play, when he 'sits / [m]aking of verses for Angelica', Orlando transforms into *morbus Herculanus*, who focuses on intellectual pursuits rather than on physical feats (*OF.* IV.ii.1177-8). As Kathleen Riley has emphasised, this latter persona, this melancholic Hercules, was 'perceived as a model of Christian asceticism, his choice serving as a parable for the rejection of the body in favour of the spirit'.[47] Thus the two aspects of Hercules's persona - *virtus heroica* and *furor* - served as an ideal satirical figure, combining both the best and worst of human behaviour.

As well as conforming to a specific set of visual stage conventions, insane protagonists frequently deploy a peculiar language. Indulging in highflown hyperbole, mad characters tend to quote fragments of songs and verse. As Carol Thomas Neely explains, the verse and prose Shakespeare uses in 'mad speech' frequently involves 'embedded songs and rhymes' (in the case of Ophelia and Lady Macbeth) and sermons (such as in Edgar's invented narrative of demonic possession in *Lear*), which 'contributes to its colloquial, "quoted" character.[48] Ophelia alludes to popular folk-tales, Lady Macbeth to rhymes, while Edgar, disguised as Poor Tom, paraphrases fragments from Samuel Harsnett's *Declaration of Popish Impostures* (1603) (*Ham.* IV.v.42-3; *Mac.* V.i.44-5). Indeed, one of the most recognisable traits of the insane in early modern drama is their tendency to speak in voices other than their own. Highlighting the similarities between this stage language and the narratives found in early modern pamphlets discussing demonic possession, Steven Connor has argued that both

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[46] Kathleen Riley, *The Reception and Performance of Euripides' Herakles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 92.
[47] *Ibid*, p. 94.
[48] Neely, *Distracted Subjects*, p. 50; Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); Marion Gibson, *Possession, Puritanism and Print* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2006).

stage madmen and victims of possession 'battle over and with their own and each other's voices'.[49] In both cases, speech descends into a 'ventriloquy chaos', which seems to query who precisely is speaking.[50]

Despite claiming to be divinely inspired - describing himself 'a poet laureate' and declaring he has 'pull[ed] the harp from out the minstrel's hands' - Orlando's poetry consists of little more than Latin tags, such as the commonplace piece of misogyny: *'Fœmineum seruile genus, crudele, superbum'* (To be born feminine is to be born a slave, inhuman and haughty) and large passages of verse taken directly from Ariosto (*OF.* MS. 242; *OF.* IV.i.1184; *OF.* II.i.718, 732-739).[51] Railing against 'false Angelica', Orlando delivers an extended meditation on the evils of womankind (*OF.* II.i.652):

> *O Femmenelle in genio de toute malle sede,*
> *Comete, vulge, mute, fachilmente,*
> *Contrario, zeto, propria de la fede;*
> *O infelice, miserate, crede,*
> *Importuna, superbia, dispetoze:*
> *Preua de more, de fede, de consilia,*
> *Timmorare, crudele, ineque, ingrate,*
> *Par pestelenze eternal mondo nate.* (*OF.* II.i.718-739) [52]
>
> (O female mind! How lightly ebbs and flows
> Your fickle mood, the seat of all evils, aye prone to turn!
> Object most opposite to kindly faith!
> Lost, wretched man, who trusts you to his scathe!
> Despiteful, proud, importunate, and lorn
> Of love, of faith, of counsel, rash indeed,
> With that, ungrateful, cruel and perverse,
> And born to be the world's eternal curse!)

[49] Steven Connor, *Dumbstruck: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 148.
[50] Gibson, *Possession, Puritanism and Print*, p. 158.
[51] Mantuan's *Eclogues,* IV, 110-1; Rolf Soellner, 'The Madness of Hercules and the Elizabethans', *Comparative Literature*, 10 (1958), pp. 309-324. The phrase appears in Robert Hayman's book of epigrams (1628).
[52] Lodovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, trans. William Stewart Rose, eds., Stewart A. Baker and A. Bartlett Giamatti, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968), p. 294.

These eight lines in Italian come from Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (xxxvii.117-121). By giving the mad Orlando passages from Ariosto to recite virtually verbatim, Greene, like Thomas Nashe, seeks to mock the 'present orators', the 'ink-horn men', who 'intermeddle with Italian translations' and 'must borrow invention of Ariosto' to aggrandise their status of their own work.[53] Ariosto, it seems, has been speaking through Orlando; poetic influence is conceived in terms of a possession or ventriloquism and consequently Orlando's textual authority is seen as entirely derivative.[54]

In a similar way, the claim of divine inspiration confers authority on the poet by reference to another displaced source.[55] Hence, as Hobbes emphasised, the concept of the poet as *vates* - as the mouth-piece of God - could also prove problematic:

> Why a Christian should think it an ornament to his poem, either to profane the true God, or invoke a false one, I can imagine no cause, but a reasonless imitation of Custom, of a foolish custom; by which a man enabled to speak wisely from the principles of nature, and his own meditation, loves rather to be thought to speak by inspiration, like a bagpipe.[56]

Thus Orlando's claim to having been divinely inspired – his declaration that the Goddess 'Cynthia tunes conceits' 'within' his 'brains' – only goes to emphasise that his authority is derivative rather than innate (*OF.* IV.ii.1267-9). This is a central facet of Plato's notion of ecstasis, Orlando's own identity as a speaker is effaced, as he defers authority to a being "beside" or "outside" himself.

After having seen how *Orlando Furioso* can contribute to our understanding of the influence of classical literature in early modern drama, I now want to contextualise Greene's

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[53] *Menaphon, Camillas alarum to slumbering Euphues* (London, 1589), sig. **ˇ.

[54] Connor, *Dumbstruck: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism*; Stephen A. Diamond, *Anger, Madness and the Daimonic: The Psychological Genesis of Violence, Evil and Creativity* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996).

[55] Jane Griffiths, *John Skelton and Poetic Authority: Defining the Right to Speak* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 10.

[56] Thomas Hobbes, *The Answer to the Preface to Gondibert*, in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, ed. Sir William Molesworth, Vol. IV (London: John Bohn, 1840), p. 448.

play by placing it alongside the plays of his contemporaries. *Orlando Furioso* is a satirical comedy, which operates within several registers. In 1610, when Sir John Harington was compiling a catalogue of the plays in his library, he came across a copy of Robert Greene's *Orlando Furioso* but rather than cataloguing the play by its proper title, he refers to it as 'Orlando Foolioso'.[57] In 1911 Thomas H. Dickinson argued that *Orlando Furioso* was '*Tamburlaine* by perversions, and purposely so'.[58] To support his argument, Dickinson documented the way in which Greene criticised Marlowe in his pamphlets. In the preface to *Perimedes the Blacksmith* (1588), the narrator vehemently criticises *Tamburlaine*, with its 'intollerable poetrie' and 'blaspheming' in 'an English blank verse', which dares 'God out of heaven'. Describing 'Tamburlaine' as an 'Atheist' and, likening the play's leading protagonist to its author, the narrator brands Marlowe as 'mad and scoffing'.[59] After reading these various pamphlets, both Thomas Dickinson and Charles W. Crupi conclude that Robert Greene was immensely jealous of Marlowe's success and popularity, and that, therefore, he took the opportunity to mock *Tamburlaine* in *Orlando Furioso*.[60]

In Act One Scene Two Orgalio, Orlando's loyal page, expresses his contempt for the villain of the piece, Sacripant, who is a 'pseudo-Tamburlaine'.[61] Comparing him to the boastful or 'thrasonical' soldier from Terence's comedy *Eunuchus*, Orgalio mocks Sacripant for his bragging and vainglorious behaviour (*OF*. I.i.335). Orgalio also describes Sacripant as ambitious, with eyes 'that gazeth so high at the stars', as being as parasitical as 'a gnathonical companion' and for being a 'madcap' or a maniac (*OF*. I.i.335-8). In Act One Sacripant's madness is accentuated through his ridiculous use of '[h]yperboles', 'salutations'

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[57] British Library, London, MS. Add. 27632, fol. 43a.
[58] Thomas H. Dickinson, *Robert Greene* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1911), p. xxxvi.
[59] Greene, *Perimedes The blacke-smith [...]* (London, 1588), sig. A3-A3ᵛ.
[60] Charles W. Crupi, *Robert Greene* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986), pp. 107-8.
[61] Tetsumaro Hayashi, ed., *A Textual Study of Robert Greene's Orlando Furioso with an Elizabethan Text* (Muncie, Ind: Ball State University, 1969), p. 9.

and his excessive use of parataxis and alliteration: 'mighty and magnificent' and 'proud and pontifical' (*OF*. I.i.278, 361, 328-9, 329-330).

Arguing that *Orlando Furioso* was most likely written for the Queen's Men, the company who were in direct competition with the Admiral's Men, Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean have supported the contention that Orlando Furioso was an anti-Marlovian play.[62] Crucially, Edward Alleyn played the roles of both Tamburlaine and Orlando.[63] Alleyn made his name with his 'stalking-stamping' performances of Marlovian anti-heroes. Conceivably then, the role of Orlando would have allowed Alleyn to capitalise on this fame, self-referentially lampooning his ability raise 'a tempest with his tongue, and thunder with his heels'.[64] Andrew Gurr has argued that the Admiral's Men developed a sophisticated form of disguise play to cope with the audience's familiarity with actors. While the Admiral's Men can by no means claim to have invented the theatrical device of disguise, the case can be made that they were using the device in a unique way. In *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria* (c. 1592), Alleyn appears in three distinctive disguises, as a blind beggar, as a usurer, and lastly as a heroic general. This final role conforms to the audience's expectations of Alleyn, while the first two roles self-referentially undercut those expectations for humorous purposes.[65]

It could also be argued that *Orlando Furioso* is designed to ridicule the increasing popularity of heroic drama on the early modern stage. During the 1580s and 1590s, as Helen Moore has observed, a huge number of continental epic poems and prose romances were being hurriedly adapted into drama for the public stage.[66] In his anti-theatrical pamphlet

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[62] McMillin and MacLean, *The Queen's Men and Their Plays*, p. 155.
[63] S. P. Cerasano, 'Allen, Edward (1566-1626)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008: <http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2117/view/article/398> [accessed 20 Nov 2008].
[64] *The Puritan* (London, 1607), Act III, Scene V, line 75, in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, eds. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 532.
[65] Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage, 1574-1642*, p. 90; Gurr, *Shakespeare's Opposites: The Admiral's Company, 1594-1625*.
[66] *Amadis De Gaule*, trans. Anthony Munday, ed. Helen Moore (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p. xxi.

Playes confuted in five actions (1582), Stephen Gosson complained that these epic poems had been 'thoroughly ransack[ed], to furnish the playhouses in London'.[67]

Throughout *Orlando Furioso*, the main targets for derision are 'foolish conceits'.[68] Berating him for his over-active imagination and hyperbolic rhetoric, a soldier compares Orlando's 'conceits' to breathing 'bootless in the air' or building '[c]astles in the sky' (*OF.* I.ii.416-8). According to the soldier, Orlando's language has become insubstantial or meaningless and as such is associated with his increasingly 'madding mood' (*OF.* I.ii.416-8; II.i.565). With his 'thoughts' taking a similar turn towards the 'heroical', Sacripant indulges in a series of ridiculous conceits (*OF.* I.i.361-2):

> Sweet are the thoughts that smother from conceit:
> For when I come and set me down to rest,
> My chair presents a throne of Majesty: [...]
> I, these, my glorious genius, sound within my mouth:
> These please the ear, and with the sweet applause,
> Make me in terms co-equal with the Gods. (*OF.* I.i.257-69)

Basking in his own creativity, he imagines himself to be divine, to be a 'coequal with the Gods'. Ironically, Sacripant's claim to have been divinely inspired only serves as a symptom of his humanity, his own base brand of egoism. Mocking the artifice of theatre, where bonnets assume the role of crowns, Sacripant's language is 'smother[ed]' with 'conceit' or metaphor; it has become superfluously ornamental, losing all sense of proportion (*OF.* I.i.257).

In his *Poetics*, Aristotle argued that 'to use metaphor well is to discern similarities', which, he believed, was a sign of genius.[69] As Johnson argues in his discussion of Metaphysical wit, a metaphor or conceit is 'a kind of *discordia concors*; a combination of

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[67] Gosson, *Playes confuted in five actions* (London, 1582), sigs. C6ᵛ, D5ᵛ.
[68] Greene, *Greenes carde of fancie* (London, 1608), sig. C3.
[69] Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Stephen Halliwell (London: Harvard University Press, 1995), 22, 1459b, p. 115.

dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike'.[70] Conceits involve a leap of perception, whereby the vehicle, the material or bodily form of the metaphor, serves as a means of transmission for the tenor, the abstract or spiritual concept.[71] This leap of faith between two seemingly incompatible concepts produces a 'shock of recognition', comparable to an ecstasy.[72] Conceits become far-fetched or hyperbolic when the gap between the vehicle and tenor becomes too wide. Like the body and soul, the vehicle and tenor of a conceit are loosely knit together, if they ever become entirely 'loosened asunder' the conceit becomes ridiculous, a kind of madness.[73]

Orlando's arrogance is always described in terms of "self-conceit"; he 'stands', we are told, 'highest in his own conceit' (*OF*. I.i.196). Becoming delusional, Orlando's "self-conceit" becomes completely ridiculous; no longer merely 'haughty', he entirely forgets his true identity as the 'nephew of mighty Charlemagne', believing instead that he is Hercules (*OF*. V.i.1361; I.i.103). A similar metaphorical link between heroic bravado, rhetorical hyperbole and madness occurs in Act One, Scene Three, of Shakespeare's *Henry IV, part 2,* when Lord Bardolph criticises Hotspur for:

> Eating the air and promise of supply,
> Flatt'ring himself in project of a power
> Much smaller than the smallest of his thoughts,
> And so, with great imagination
> Proper to mad men, led his powers to death,
> And winking leap'd into destruction. (*2H4.* I.iii.28-33)

Here Lord Bardolph suggests there is little difference between heroic daring and foolhardiness, or between self-flattery and self-deception. Hotspur is self-conceited; his

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[70] Samuel Johnson, *The Lives of the Eminent English Poets* (London, 1781), Vol. I, *Life of Cowley*, Qˇ, quoted in John Cuddon and Claire Preston, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), p. 228.

[71] I.A. Richards coined the terms 'vehicle' and 'tenor' to describe the two parts of a metaphor, see *Philosophy of Rhetoric* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1936), chapters 5-6.

[72] K. K. Ruthven, *The Conceit: The Critical Idiom* (London: Methuen, 1969), p. 7.

[73] Saint Paul wrote that he 'wanted to be loosened asunder and to be with Christ' (Philippians 1:23).

conception of himself and the base reality of his bodily form are now poles apart. The gap between the tenor and the vehicle has become so wide that Hotspur's 'great imagination', has over 'leap'd' the bounds of reality; his rhetoric is no longer merely imaginative: it is mad. As Shakespeare's Theseus explains the 'imagination bodies forth / [t]he forms of things unknown', giving 'to airy nothing / A local habitation and a name (*MND*. V.i.15-17). But if the gap between 'airy nothing' and that which is 'bodied forth' becomes too great, madness ensues and thus '[h]ow easy is a bush suppos'd a bear' (*MND.* V.i.14, 16, 22).

Through a combination of visual and rhetorical conventions, Greene's presentation of Orlando encourages the audience to contemplate, and often ridicule, the belief that writers are divinely inspired through ecstatic revelation. While the literary elite such as Sir Philip Sidney might playfully allude to the belief that the poets 'are so beloved of the gods that whatsoever they write proceeds of a divine fury', impoverished playwrights could not make such grandiose claims without being accused of a misplaced egotism.[74] Rather than being deified, such writers become the subject of mockery; their compositions likened to the incoherent ravings of madmen. Despite having been largely neglected by contemporary criticism, *Orlando Furioso* is a sophisticated Elizabethan play, whose depiction of stage madness left a palpable mark on early modern drama.

By way of conclusion, I would like to return to the analogy with which I began this chapter. Of all the modern films used in this thesis, Rob Reiner's film *Misery*, an adaptation of King's novel of the same name, has received the least critical acclaim and the least serious critical attention. One possible explanation for this unfortunate set of circumstances is the film's faithful correspondence to King's novel and, as a consequence, its close association with the "Stephen King brand". A popular purveyor of horror, Stephen King has always

[74] Sir Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry*, ed. Forrest G. Robinson (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970), p. 88. For further discussion of the emerging opposition between elite and popular literature, see John Huntington, "Furious Insolence': The Social Meaning of Poetic Inspiration in the 1590s', pp. 305-326; Lori Humphrey Newcomb, *Reading Popular Romance in Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002)

struggled to reconcile his commercial success with critical approval. When he received a writing award in 2003, the conservative critic Harold Bloom launched an extended attack on King:

> The decision to give the National Book Foundation's annual award for 'distinguished contribution' to Stephen King is extraordinary, another low in the shocking process of dumbing down our cultural life. I've described King in the past as a writer of penny dreadfuls, but perhaps even that is too kind. [...] The publishing industry has stooped terribly low to bestow on King a lifetime award that has previously gone to novelists Saul Bellow and Philip Roth and to playwright Arthur Miller. By awarding it to King they recognise nothing but the commercial value of his books, which sell in the millions but do little more for humanity than keep the publishing world afloat.[75]

As Mark Browning has argued, Stephen King's status 'as a bestselling author has been seen as fundamentally incompatible with notions of what constitutes 'art'; in other words, commercial success is seen by some critics as anathema to aesthetic value'.[76] Indeed, it is tempting to see a correspondence between Stephen King, 'a writer of penny dreadfuls', and Robert Greene, a writer who supposely only processed a '*Groatsworth of Wit'*. To some extent, Greene was the Stephen King of his day; he was a popular writer who enjoyed huge commerical success but who still sought acknowledgement from the literary establishment. This tension, between the desire to pander to public demand and the desire to seek critical acclaim, is more than evident in both King and Greene's literary output. In *Misery*, King consciously mocks his own literary career, when Paul wryly describes himself as 'the literary Zeus from whose brow sprang Misery Chastain, darling of the dump-bins and sweetheart of the supermarket'.[77] The Misery novels, it turns out, are little more than trashy romances, consequently any suggestion that they spring from divine inspiration or some 'secular version

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[75] Harold Bloom cited in Ken Gelder, *Popular Fiction: The Logics and Practices of a Literary Fiction* (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 160.
[76] Mark Browning, *Stephen King on the Big Screen* (Bristol: Intellect, 2009), p. 8.
[77] King, p. 63.

of the Pentecostal fire' is utterly discredited, deemed mere madness.[78] Writing a review of *Misery* for the *Wall Street Journal*, David Brooks argued that 'Mr. King is taking a not-too-subtle slam at his audience, which only wants lightweight output'; a not dissimilar satirical stance can be detected in Greene's play.[79] Adapting Ariosto's epic poem, Greene flaunts his impressive learning but his narcissism comes with a substantial portion of self-pity; his carefully translated verse goes unrecognised, merely providing material for the ranting of a madman. As Steve Mentz has observed, 'Greene, and Nashe defined themselves as university humanists who preferred elite to popular venues'; Greene 'distained the theater even while writing for it'.[80] In *Orlando Furioso,* Greene offers a profound contemplation on the potential price of commercial success, which verges on the anti-theatrical.

Turning now from comedy to tragedy, the final chapter marks a significant shift in tone as the severed limbs, which in *Orlando Furioso* had provoked only laughter, acquire a far more sinister significance in the gruesome blood-fest that is *Selimus*.

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[78] Ibid, p. 179.

[79] David Brooks, 'Bookshorts: Numbing, Chilling, Thrilling', Review of *Misery* by Stephen King', *Wall Street Journal* 23 June 1987, p. 28.

[80] Steve Mentz, 'A Note Beyond Your Reach': Prose Romance's Rivalry with Elizabethan Drama', in *Staging Early Modern Romance: Prose Fiction, Dramatic Romance, and Shakespeare*, ed. Mary Ellen Lamb and Valerie Wayne (New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 76.

7.

‘by strong hand achieve eternal glory’:

The Aesthetics of Violence in *Selimus* (c. 1591-4).

The logo of Francis Coppola’s massively successful 1972 American mob film *The Godfather* depicts a disembodied hand holding the strings of a marionette.[1]

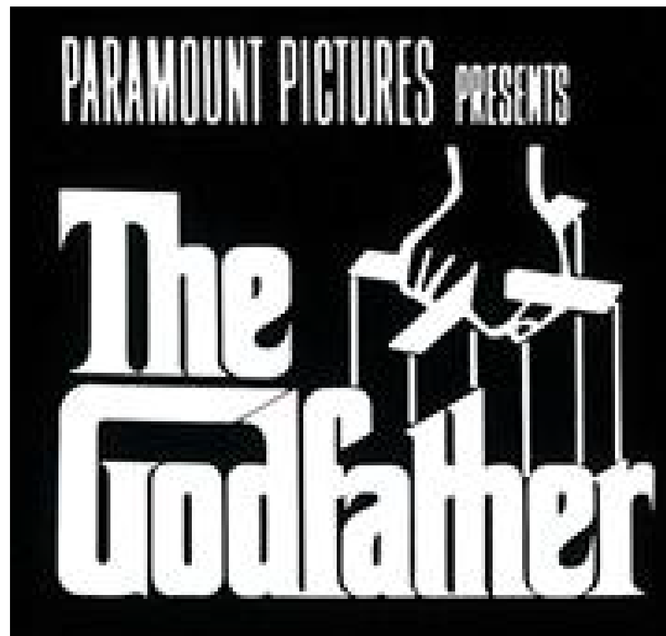

Fig. 22: The logo of *The Godfather* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1972)

The Godfather offers a grim meditation on the transition of power from father to son. Refusing, like his father before him, ‘to be a fool, dancing on a string held by all those big shots’, Michael Corleone demonstrates a ruthless autonomy as the film’s master-puppeteer. The film’s title carries crucial significance; being the Godfather is about playing God. This association is made all the more explicit in Mario Puzo’s novel, where Vito assumes a God-like omnipotence:

[1] *The Godfather* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1972); Jon Lewis, *The Godfather* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); *Francis Ford Coppola: Interviews*, ed. Gene D. Phillips and Rodney Hill (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2004).

> My old man. The Godfather. If a bolt of lightning hit a friend of his the old man would take it personal. [...] That's what makes him great. The great Don. He takes everything personal. Like God. He knows every feather that falls from the tail of a sparrow or however the hell it goes.[2]

Like a modern gangster movie, *Selimus* depicts the rise of an anti-hero in a predominately masculine world intermixed with excessive violence.[3] Violating all natural and political law, Selimus usurps the throne and, shortly after his accession, has his father, his two brothers, his sister, his brother-in-law, and several nephews murdered. In his bloody quest to eliminate all his rivals for the throne, Selimus's behaviour recalls the characteristics of gangsterism; violence functions as a form of communication, as a means to re-enforce power.[4]

Like *Selimus*, *The Godfather* is structured around a cycle of reciprocal violence. The film's eidetic images of violence - the horse's head, the garrotting of Luca Brasi, Sonny's death in a hail of bullets at the toll-booth – have passed into cinematic folk lore. Throughout the film, violence is envisaged as an aesthetic experience, as the mobsters compete to see who can devise the most violent spectacle. At the end of *The Godfather*, we come to admire two forms of authorial power; we admire the film's surrogate author, Michael Corleone, who orchestrates the final sequence of brutal murders, but we also admire Francis Ford Coppola, the author of the film's spectacles of violence. Hence the significance of the film's logo is twofold; both Michael Corleone and Francis Coppola are master-puppeteers.

Like Michael Corleone, Selimus is a surrogate author. The prologue promises the audience that they 'will behold' Selimus 'character' – inscribe – 'in blood / [t]he image of an unplacable king' (*Sel.* pro. 9-10). Selimus's power over his subjects is seen to be analogous with the playwright's power over his protagonists and ultimately with God's power over

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[2] Quoted in John G. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery and Romance* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1976), p. 64.

[3] For further discussion of the analogy between the 'overreaching Machiavellian anti-hero' and the archetypal gangster, see James N. Loehlin, *'Top of the World, MA': Richard III and Cinematic Convention*, in *Shakespeare the Movie,* eds., Lynda E. Boose and Richard Burt (London: Routledge, 1997) p. 75.

[4] Andrew Calabrese, 'Sending a Message: Violence as Political Communication', *International Journal of Media and Cultural Studies* 6 (2010), pp. 109-14.

humanity. Thus the 'tyrant's hand' becomes synonymous with that of the hand of the author who 'never handled but his pen' and ultimately with that of 'the great Creator' who 'hath the spirits of all men in his hands' (*Sel*. 12.44; 9.93, 167-8).

Generally regarded as a cheap spin-off of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* (per. 1587), *Selimus* has, as a result, been largely overlooked by recent criticism. Although Daniel J. Vitkus's modern edition has gone some way towards salvaging *Selimus* from obscurity, his decision to print the play alongside *A Christian Turned Turk* (c. 1609-12) and *The Renegado* (c. 1623-4) has privileged the play's participation in contemporary religious politics, rather than exploring its aesthetics of violence.[5] The purpose of this chapter is to examine the aesthetic and symbolic significance of violence in *Selimus*. This chapter will argue that the semiotics of dismemberment carry profound meta-theatrical implications for the play as a whole; the trope of mutilation invariably allows playwrights and filmmakers to interrogate the concept of artistic autonomy.

Contemplating the impact of Francis Coppola's battle for creative freedom during the making of *The Godfather*, in the face of the overwhelming pressure exerted on him by the studio system, John Milius the American screenwriter and director commented:

> None of those other guys – Lucas, Spielberg, all of them – could have existed without Francis's help. And his was a much more interesting influence than theirs. Francis was going to become the emperor of a new order, but it wasn't going to be like the old order. It was going to be the rule of the artist.[6]

Milius imagines Coppola's struggle for artistic autonomy in terms that seem to have been lifted straight from *The Godfather,* equating Coppola's emergence as one of the first Hollywood auteurs with Michael Corleone's rise to power in the world of organised crime.

[5] Daniel J. Vitkus, ed., *Three Turk Plays: From Early Modern England* (New York, 2000).
[6] John Milius as cited by Michael Sragow in 'Godfather', *New Yorker,* 24 March 1997, p. 43.

Commenting on her brother's transformation during the filming of *The Godfather*, Talia Shire, who played the role of Michael Corleone's sister Connie in the film, describes how:

> When you play a role of force, a king or queen, and you have not been by casting or nature that size yet, it suffuses you. You saw Francis emerge ... not just from people applauding but from some-thing of the epic size of the project and of the central character – a Machiavellian character, but a man also appealing.[7]

Here Shire draws a potent analogy between Michael Corleone's final triumph against New York's underworld and Coppola's war against the all powerful studio system. The accusation that in his dealings with the studios Coppola was forced to play the Machiavel repeatedly crops up in the details of the feud between him and Paramount Studio's Robert Evans, who worked as the Production chief on *The Godfather*. In a series of vicious squabbles over casting, music and editing, insults were thrown in both directions, with Coppola accusing Evans of 'ridiculous pomposity' and Evans condemning Coppola's 'venomous' and 'Machiavellian' behaviour.[8] According to Shire, neither the film's leading protagonist nor its director were content 'to be a fool, dancing on a string held by all those big shots'.[9]

Just as Coppola's desire for artistic autonomy provoked analogies between film and reality, Greene's desperate appeals for intellectual recognition in his pamphlet literature encouraged his critics to see his behaviour as synonymous with that of his literary creations. In *Four Letters and Certain Sonnets* (1592), Gabriel Harvey likens Greene to a 'mighty tyrant' who brandishes a 'pen' rather than 'mace'. Like Christopher Marlowe before him, Greene is categorised as 'an inventor of monstrous oaths: a derider of all religions: a condemner of God'.[10]

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[7] Michael Sragow, 'Godfatherhood', in *Francis Ford Coppola: Interviews*, p. 169.
[8] Francis Coppola, a telegram sent to Robert Evans, 1983, and Robert Evans's reply, 1983, quoted in Lewis, *The Godfather*, p. 56.
[9] *The Godfather* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1972).
[10] Harvey, *Foure letters and Certaine Sonnets*, pp. 81, 40.

Emma Smith has drawn attention to 'potential points of comparison' between 'the development of cinema in twentieth-century Hollywood' and the emergence of the commercial theatres in 'London in the late 1560s'. Drawing an analogy between Ben Jonson's construction of his own authorial persona and Alfred Hitchcock's presentation of himself as a cinematic *auteur*, Smith demonstrates how both men sought to establish their own artistic autonomy in opposition to 'a highly organised commercial organisation'.[11] More interestingly, Coppola and Greene also seem to share a similarly disparaging attitude towards actors. Coppola was frequently criticised for adopting a system of direction which he termed 'electronic cinema'. Sequestered in his director's van, in an isolated control booth, Coppola would issue instructions to his actors via a loud speaker. Commenting on this system, Gene D. Philips likens Coppola's behaviour to that of 'Jupiter on Mount Olympus or the Wizard of Oz'; Coppola's 'electronic cinema' is perhaps the epitome of director as God. Forced to comply with Coppola's disembodied voice, one actor complained that: 'We couldn't talk back to him. We just listened and took direction. We felt like puppets'.[12]

Greene also frequently likens the author/actor relationship to that of puppeteer/puppet. Demonstrating a disregard for the acting profession, Greene famously refers to actors as 'those puppets [...] that spoke from our mouths, those antics garnished in our colours'.[13] Furthermore, in the induction of Greene's *James IV*, Bohan scornfully dismisses the efforts of Oberon's antics: 'Ha, ha, ha, thinkest thou those puppets can please me?' (*JIV.* Ind.77). Equating actors with puppets with inanimate objects or instruments, Greene emphasises the power of the author who controls the actions of the actors. Brutally dismissing the 'insolency' of the actor Roscius, in a possible allusion to Edward Alleyn, the narrator of

[11] Smith, 'Performing Relevance/Relevant Performances: Shakespeare, Jonson, Hitchcock', p. 158.
[12] Gene D. Phillips, *The Godfather: The Intimate Francis Ford Coppola* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004), p. 189.
[13] Greene, *Greenes, groats-vvorth of witte [...]* (London, 1592), sig. Fˇ.

Greene's Never Too Late (1590) argues that audiences should 'applaud' the 'invention' of the author, rather than the 'mechanical labour' of the company of actors.[14] In a long poem, which appears under the subheading *Prosopopoia* in *Complaints*, Spenser also imagines the role of an actor as being '[l]ike a puppet placed in a play'.[15] Like Greene, Spenser emphasises the inferiority of actors, who, devoid of agency, are brought to life by means of *prosopopoia*.

About half way through *The Godfather* the eldest of Vito Corleone's three sons, Sonny, receives a package. He opens the parcel to reveal several fish wrapped up in Luca Brasi's bloodstained bulletproof vest. Perplexed, Sonny exclaims 'What the hell is this?', only for the older and more experienced Clemenza to explain: 'It's a Sicilian message. It means Luca Brasi sleeps with the fishes'. This eidetic image functions on both an aesthetic and symbolic level. This aesthetic novelty, this gift, assaults the senses of both Sonny and the audience but, as soon as the shock subsides, the metaphorical significance of the package is revealed: Vito's loyal bodyguard is dead.

In Scene Fourteen of *Selimus,* Acomat decides to send a similar "message" to his father Bajazet, the hapless Turkish Emperor. Bajazet has just decided to bestow his crown upon his youngest son Selimus. Concerned that his spontaneous decision might ignite civil war, he sends Aga, his loyal confidant, to smooth things over with Acomat, Selimus's homicidal elder brother. Acomat, it turns out, is not in the forgiving mood and, incensed, threatens to murder his father and assume the throne. Remaining defiant, the old man retorts that he hopes to 'never live to see that day' (*Sel.* 14.70). Giving Aga's verbal commonplace a corporal reality, Acomat *'pulls out'* the old man's *'eyes'* (*Sel.* 14). Examining this scene, Margaret Ellen Owens argued that '[u]nder the aegis of the tyrant, rhetorical figures are

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[14] *Greenes neuer too late [...]* (London, 1590), sigs. B5ˇ-C1.
[15] Edmund Spenser, *Complaints* (London, 1591), sig. P1ˇ.

translated into disfiguring violence'.[16] Audacious to the last, the old man threatens revenge: '[y]et are my hands left on to murder thee' (*Sel.* 14.86). Acomat's response is horrifying; he has Aga's hands cut off, and then, most perversely, he *'opens'* Aga's *'bosom and puts them in'* and sends him back to Bajazet (*Sel.* 14). Aga's mutilation signifies his loss of agency; he grievously mourns the loss of his hands, which once did 'toss the spear and in a warlike gyre [...] hurtle' a 'sharp sword' in the service of Bajazet (*Sel.* 15.18-9).

Crucially 'Aga' is not actually a name, it is a title, which was traditionally given to the commander of the Janissaries; Aga is defined by his function. As Bajazet's servant or instrument, Aga is 'used' as a scapegoat for the animosity of Acomat towards his father:

> Now in that sort go tell thy Emperor
> That if himself had but been in thy place,
> I would have used him crueller then thee (*Sel.* 14.88-90)

The symbolism of Acomat's actions is not lost on Aga, who later explains to Bajazet that Acomat has ordered him back to return: '[w]ith purpose to cut thy hands from thee' (*Sel.* 15.21). By cutting off Aga's hands, Acomat is implying Bajazet's own loss of agency.

In his work on Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* (c. 1593), Albert H. Tricomi suggested that severed hands might signify 'helplessness'.[17] More recently, Katherine A. Rowe has advanced a reading of early modern drama which sees 'the dead hand' as 'representing a specific set of ideas about human agency', suggesting that dismembered hands 'symbolise the loss, theft, or withering of an individual's capacity to act with real political or personal effect'.[18] Unfortunately, however, these methodological innovations

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[16] Margaret Ellen Owens, *Dismemberment and Decapitation on the English Renaissance Stage: Towards a Cultural Semiotics of Violent Spectacle* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), p. 144.

[17] Albert H. Tricomi, 'The Aesthetics of Mutilation in *Titus Andronicus*', *Shakespeare Survey* 27 (1972), p. 12.

[18] Katherine Rowe, *Dead Hands: Fictions of Agency, Renaissance to Modern* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 4. For further discussions of the symbolism of hands/severed hands in early modern literature, see Michael Neill, *'Amphitheaters in the Body': Playing with Hands on the Shakespearean Stage*, in *Putting History to the Question: Power, Politics, and Society in English Renaissance Drama* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), pp. 167-203; Gillian Murray Kendall, "Lend me thy hand': Metaphor and

seem to have passed *Selimus* by; it is still widely believed that the play's fascination with dismemberment is merely an attempt on the part of the playwright, or playwrights, to out-do Marlowe's 'drama of sensationalism.[19] Indeed, Aga's mutilation has only ever been discussed by those hunting for a source for the blinding of Gloucester in *Lear*.[20] Offering a new interpretation of this scene, I want to argue that the semiotics of dismemberment in *Selimus* emphasise the liminality of the subject / object barrier. If Selimus's 'strong revenging hand' signifies his autonomy as an animate subject, Aga's severed hands represent his loss of autonomy as his body is transformed into an inanimate object (*Sel.* 6.18).[21]

After cutting off Aga's hands, Acomat *'opens'* Aga's *'bosom and puts them in'* (*Sel.* 14). The scene plays on the idea of the Emperor as benefactor. Bajazet has refused to give Acomat the throne, so Acomat will take the throne and usurp the role of the benefactor. Thus, Bajazet will become the recipient of a grim 'present' (*Sel.* 15.15). The sequence also perverts the normal etiquette between a sovereign and an envoy. Revelling in a perverse humour reminiscent of *Titus Andronicus*, instead of inviting Aga to 'take his hands', by way of greeting, Acomat returns his severed hands to him, with the words 'take thy hands' (*Sel.* 14.91).

When Aga eventually returns to his master, Bajazet '*opens his bosom'* unveils the bloody spectacle *'and takes out his hands'* (*Sel.* 15). Aga's mutilation incites both pity and

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Mayhem in *Titus Andronicus'*, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40 (1989), pp. 299-316; Kathryn L. Lynch, 'What hands are here?' The Hand as Generative Symbol in *Macbeth*, *Review of English Studies* 153 (1988), pp. 29-38; Jonathan Goldberg, *Shakespeare's Hand* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

[19] Malcolm Kelsall, *Christopher Marlowe* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), p. 97; David Bevington, *From "Mankind" to Marlowe: Growth of Structure in the Popular Drama of Tudor England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962); Simon Shepherd, *Marlowe and the Politics of Elizabethan Theatre* (Brighton: Harvester, 1986); Peter Berek, '*Locrine* Revised, *Selimus*, and Early Responses to *Tamburlaine', Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama* 23 (1980), pp. 33-54; Peter Berek, '*Tamburlaine*'s Weak Sons: Imitation as Interpretation Before 1593', *Renaissance Drama* 13 (1982), pp. 55-82.

[20] Inga-Stinga Ekeblad, '*King Lear* and *Selimus*', *Notes and Queries* CCII (1957), pp. 193-4; Clifford J. Ronan, '*Selimus* and the Blinding of Gloster', *Notes and Queries* 33 (1986), pp. 360-1.

[21] Julie Park, *The Self and It: Novel Objects in Eighteenth-Century England* (Stanford, 2010); Herbert Sussman and Gerhard Joseph, 'Prefiguring the Posthuman: Dickens and Prosthesis', *Victorian Literature and Culture* 32 (2004), pp. 617-629.

contemplation. Staring at the spectacle, Bajazet reacts emotionally and intellectually; he is both viscerally engaged and critically detached.[22] As we have established in Chapter Two, Bajazet pivots between numb dissociation and overwhelming feelings of empathy for Aga's loss; one moment he is 'silent', the next he is seen to 'weep' and 'pour forth tears' (*Sel.* 15.33).[23] As well as encouraging us to empathise with Aga's plight, the text invites the audience to interpret Aga's mutilation from an aesthetic perspective. In a series of *anaphora*, Aga instructs us to:

> Witness these empty lodges of mine eyes;
> Witness the gods that from the highest heaven (*Sel.* 15.7-8)

Similarly, Acomat likens Aga's curses and cries of agony to 'music' (*Sel.* 14.110). Devoid of eyes and hands, Aga is a grotesque spectacle; he is an aesthetic novelty.

As discussed in regard to *Orlando Furioso*, Henslowe's inventory of stage properties belonging to the Admiral's Men indicates that early modern theatre companies had access to various rudimentary prosthetic limbs.[24] Indeed, Scene Fourteen of *Selimus* draws attention to the process of *antiprosopopeia*, the representation of a person or human body part as an inanimate object or prosthetic stage property. As the Emperor stands holding Aga's detached limbs, Aga's severed hands seem to resemble those of a marionette. Mutilated and abused, Aga's body displays vulnerable materiality; he is half man, half stage property. Interrogating a similar idea, Julie Taymor's film adaption of *Titus Andronicus* imagines young Lucius visiting a woodcarver's shop to buy a set of wooden hands, which he then presents to Lavinia.[25]

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[22] Aebischer, *Shakespeare's Violated Bodies*, pp. 24-63.
[23] David McCandless, 'A Tale of Two Tituses: Julie Taymor's Vision on Stage and Screen', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 53 (2002), pp. 486-512.
[24] Foakes, ed., *Henslowe's Diary*, pp. 291-4.
[25] Elsie Walker, "Now is a time to storm': Julie Taymor's *Titus* (2000)', *Literature/Film Quarterly* 30 (2002), pp. 194-208; Richard Schechner, 'Julie Taymor: From Jacques Lecoq to *The Lion King*', *The Drama Review* 43 (1999), pp. 36-55.

Fig. 23: Two stills from *Titus* (Julie Taymor, 2000)

Like Aga, Lavinia is now half human, half stage property; on the one hand, the audience are encouraged to empathise with her suffering as a fellow human being, on the other, to contemplate her as an aesthetic artefact.

The intriguing stage properties in John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613) explore a similar tension. Trying to terrify his sister into submission, Ferdinand creeps into her room under the cover of darkness and tricks her into kissing *'a dead man's hand'*

(IV.i.55).[26] Revealing the 'sad spectacle' of *'the artificial figures of Antonio and his Children, appearing as if they were dead'* with the words 'here's the piece from which 'twas ta'en', Bosola convinces the Duchess that she has kissed her dead husband's severed hand (IV.i.55). But this explanation is later revealed to be false when Ferdinand explains the logistics of his scheme to Bosola:

> she's plagued in art.
> These presentations are but framed in wax
> By the curious master in that quality,
> Vincentio Lauriola, and she takes them
> For true substantial bodies. (IV.i.109-113)

As the scene progresses, the audience's interpretation of hands changes; when we believe the 'bodies' are real, we react with horror like the Duchess, but when we realise that they are stage 'propert[ies]', we start to contemplate them on an aesthetic level, as a form of 'art' (VI.i.113, 64, 109). This passage carries a profound meta-theatrical significance; by acknowledging that the 'hand' and the 'bodies' are *'artificial'*, Ferdinand is drawing attention to the artificial or deceptive quality of theatre (IV.i.54, 113).

If self-reflexive theatricality in the *Duchess of Malfi* aestheticises the horror of violence by representing human body parts as inanimate objects, Scene Twenty of *Selimus* stages the opposite process. The scene opens with the *'funeral pomp'*, as *'corses of Bajazet and Aga'* are carried on stage (*Sel.* 20). Feigning weeping, Selimus admits that he has stage-managed the funeral in order to convince the population of his innocence. Selimus mourns only 'in show'; 'mourning' is envisaged as performance (*Sel.* 20.9, 29). In the middle of his monologue, a stage direction indicates that Selimus must address his words directly '*to the corses'* (*Sel.* 20). Like Shakespeare's Anthony whose famous eulogy in *Julius Caesar* (c.

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[26] All quotations are derived from Leah S. Marcus, ed., *The Duchess of Malfi* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2009).

1599) gives 'Caesar's wounds, poor poor dumb mouths', Selimus apostrophizes his dead father (*JC.* III.ii.218):

> Long didst thou live triumphant, Bajazet,
> A fear unto thy greatest enemies;
> And now that Death, the conqueror of kings,
> Dislodged hath thy never-dying soul, (*Sel.* 20.15-18)

Alluding to the 'sacred phoenix', the mythical bird which could rise from death, it is as if Selimus is trying to re-invigorate his father's corpse through his rhetoric (*Sel.* 20.11). Like a surrogate playwright, Selimus is engrossed in the process of *prosopopoeia*, giving life to the inanimate corpses.

Throughout *The Godfather*, the gesture of hand-kissing represents the respect and devotion of family members, friends and various vassals towards the Don. For both Vito and Michael Corleone, the ritual of hand-kissing symbolises their absolute control over the family business. Like Michael, Selimus also relies on a ritual hand gesture to authorise his power.

Fig. 24: Two stills from *The Godfather* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1972).

For Selimus, the charade of a coronation is crucial; he needs Bajazet to *'set'* the crown *'on his head'* in order that the court should believe that his father has bestowed the 'crown as willingly to' him '[a]s e'ver' his 'father gave it unto him' (*Sel.* 17.76-7). Selimus's reliance on the ritual of coronation can be usefully compared to the deposition in Shakespeare's *Richard II* (c. 1591). Despite having already seized power, Bolingbroke's power is not truly sanctioned until Richard 'takes up' the 'sceptre' with his 'own hands' and 'gives' it to Bolingbroke (*R2.* IV.i.205-208). In both of these contrived depositions and coronations, it is a hand gesture which ultimately legitimatises the successor's divine right to rule.

Throughout *Selimus*, the iconography and rhetoric of hands is used to emphasise that Selimus has assumed a quasi-divine status. This symbolism is apt because, as Galen tells us, it was by having hands, as opposed to claws, that man was distinguished from other animals and came to be regarded as 'godlike'.[27]

[27] *Galen: On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body,* trans. Margaret Tallmadge May (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968), I, 2, p. 68; Michael Neill, 'Amphitheaters in the Body': Playing with Hands on the Shakespearean Stage', pp. 169-70.

Throughout literature hands, in particular the hands of God, function as a universal symbol of power. Allusions to the hand of God in scripture are used to emphasis God's omnipotence: 'by strength of hand Jehovah brought you out from this place' (Exodus 13:3), 'for the hand of the Lord was with him' (Luke 1:66). This synecdoche is probably derived from the Hebrew word '*jad*', which means both 'hand' and 'power'. This etymological link between hands and power is also demonstrated by the Roman Law *manus*, whereby a wife is placed in the power of - in the hands of - her husband through marriage. In early religious iconography, the hand of God, which was usually depicted as emerging from a cloud, was used to represent divine invention in earthly affairs:

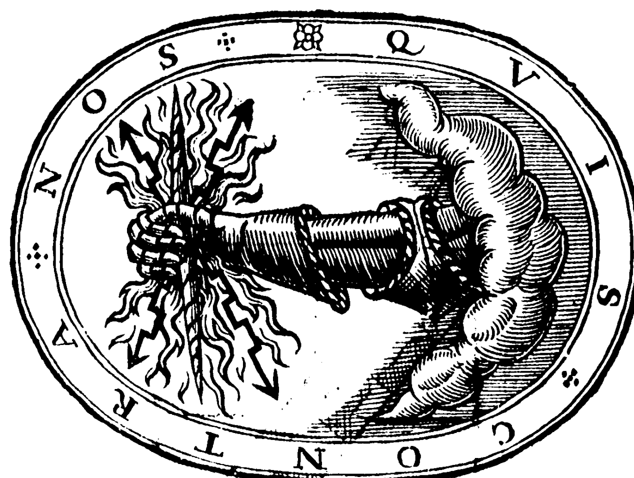

Fig. 25: Detail of woodcut from emblem no. 16, taken from *The mirror of maiestie [...]* (London, 1618), p. 37.

Throughout early modern drama, the hands of usurpers appear to emulate the 'hand of God', when they seize the crown from the 'lawful king', when they bestow gifts on their followers and when they punish their enemies (*R2* III.iii.77, 74).

Allusions to Selimus's 'strong hand', 'forward hand', or 'tyrant's hand' denote his martial authority (*Sel.* 11.24; 8.22; 12.44). Crucially Selimus is always denoted in relation to his actions; throughout the play, we watch Selimus 'pull', 'snatch', 'stab', 'rend' and 'thrust'

with his ‘strong hand’, as he attempts to usurp power (*Sel*. 2.33, 136, 167; 6.23; 14.113; 8.22). Bajazet is all too aware of his son’s ambition:

> For Selimus’ hands do itch to have the crown,
> And he will have it – or else pull me down. (*Sel.* 1.177-8)

By repeating the verb ‘have’, this rhyming couplet emphasises the defining feature of hands: their ability to possess. Itchy hands are supposed to portend the impending acquisition of money; here it seems deeply foreboding, suggesting the highly destructive potential of Selimus’s ambition.

In a long monologue in Scene Two, Selimus illustrates the malign nature of his ambition, describing the corruptive power of ‘great possessions’ on their ‘possessors’ (*Sel.* 2.82, 92). Intriguingly, as Jean Jacquot explains, this monologue was attributed to Sir Walter Raleigh in a manuscript version, which circulated in 1603, during the time that the great discoverer was accused of high treason. Jean Jacquot concludes that the most credible explanation is that some enemy of Raleigh’s took the monologue from the virtually forgotten play, tweaked the wording and tried to pass it off as Raleigh’s own opinions, as part of an attempt to smear his reputation.[28] Full of ‘ambitious fire’, Selimus wants to possess the entire ‘empire’ (*Sel.* 2.5-6). By attempting to process ‘whole kingdoms’, or even whole worlds, Selimus is audaciously appropriating God’s mandate (*Sel*. 2.11).

[28] MS. of the Marquis of Bath at Longleat (Wilts), vol. II, pp. 52-3; Jean Jacquot, ‘Ralegh’s Hellish Verses and *The Tragicall Raigne of Selimus’*, *The Modern Language Review* 48 (1953), pp. 1-9.

Fig. 26: A woodcut from George Wither's *A collection of emblemes [...]* (London, 1635), Book IV, illustration ii, p. 210. The motto reads: '*In manu domini omnes sunt fines terræ'* (The earth is God's and in his hands / Are all the corners of the lands).

According to Selimus's Machiavellian philosophical outlook, the desire to possess is precisely what instigates tyranny.

Faced with Selimus's homicidal outrages and an escalating body count, the Turkish courtiers beg God to wreak his vengeance. Addressing the 'all-beholding heavens', they demand that God should inflict his divine retribution upon Selimus and '[d]art down on him' a 'piercing lighting brand, / [e]nrolled in sulphur and consuming flames' (*Sel*. 13.78-80). In *A Looking Glass for London and England*, the Ninevites make a similar appeal to the 'eternal powers, / [t]hat sway the sword of justice in [their] hands' and beg God to sends down 'direful plagues,/ [u]pon the head of cursed Radagon' (*LG.* III.ii.1224-5; 1228-9). Right on cue, the play's resident Machiavellian Radagon *'is swallowed'* by *'a flame of fire'* which *'appeareth from beneath'* (*LG.* III.ii.1530-1). But in *Selimus*, God's hand of justice fails to appear. Instead the courtiers are delivered 'into a madman's hands', as Selimus wreaks his

vengeance on all who oppose him (*Sel.* 3.41). So rather than having God's 'threatening sword' hanging 'o'er his head', the 'tyrant' Selimus's martial power, his power to decide who will live and who will die, starts to recall God's divine justice (*Sel.* 9.21; 14.76).

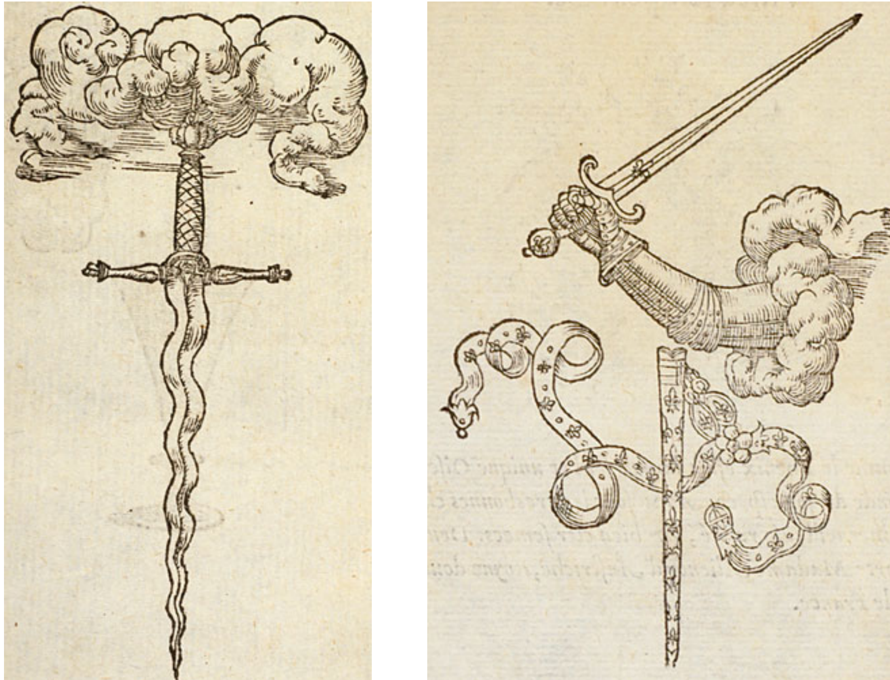

Fig. 27: Two emblems from Claude Paradin's *Devises heroiques [...]* (Lyons, 1551). Left: The motto reads: '*Coelitus Impendet*' (It hangs from heaven), p. 134. Right: The motto reads: 'Without all falsehood or deceit', p. 90.

In *Selimus*, it is the hand of a usurper, not the hand of God, which wields omnipotent authority.

Drawing an analogy between Elizabethan and Jacobean tragedy and American gangster movies, Robert Warshow suggests that violence in both drama and film offers 'an experience of art'.[29] Further exploring this link between art and violence, Joel Black argues that 'if murder can be experienced aesthetically, the murderer can in turn be regarded as a kind of artist – a performance artist or anti-artist whose speciality is not creation but destruction'.[30] Throughout *Selimus* spectators - both on and off stage - are struck with awe

[29] Robert Warshow, *The Gangster as Tragic Hero*, in *The Immediate Experience* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 130.
[30] Joel Black, *The Aesthetics of Murder* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), p. 14.

and horror at the sight of such '[p]itiful spectacle[s]' (*Sel.* 13.45). Violence is envisaged as an aesthetic experience and the play's anti-hero Selimus is posited as the play's most successful 'anti-artist'.

The play's fascination with mutilation and dismemberment testifies to perverse aesthetic pleasure: that of treating a living body as a prosthesis or puppet – as an 'object and target of power' - that can be rendered into pieces, reassembled or manipulated at will.[31] The semiotics of dismemberment reveal the inverse correlation between the craft of the artist, who transforms inanimate objects into living bodies (*prosopopoeia*), and that of a murderer who transforms living bodies into inanimate objects (*antiprospopoeia*). Both the artist and murderer assume a God-like authority when they ignite or extinguish life.

Selimus is an important Elizabethan play, which has been allowed to slide into obscurity. Problems of authorship attribution and the corresponding lack of a fully annotated edition of the text have led to the play being deemed unworthy of serious study. It is hoped that this chapter on the aesthetics of violence of *Selimus* will demonstrate the complexity and sophistication of this play, encourage further revisionist readings and thereby ensure a wider appreciation of Greene's oeuvre as a whole.

[31] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), p. 136.

Conclusion

> As Achilles tortured the dead body of Hector, and as Antonius and his wife Fulvia tormented the lifeless corps of Cicero, so Gabriel Harvey hath showed the same inhumanity to Greene that lies full low in his grave.
>
> Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia* (1598)[1]

Positively revelling over the demeaning circumstances of Greene's death 'of a surfeit of pickled herring and Rhenish wine' in 1592, Gabriel Harvey seized the opportunity to ridicule the work of a man who could no longer retaliate. Punning on the name of his dead adversary in *Four Letters* (1592), Harvey mocked Greene's 'greene head' and 'greene wits', which he observed had been 'greene in experience, and as the manner is, somewhat overweening in conceit' and 'wedded to the wantonness of' his 'own fancy'.[2] As Lesel Dawson explains in her work on early modern poetry, the 'green sickness is invoked in dedicatory verse as a means of disparaging bad poetry for its immaturity, or to criticize the reading public's desire to consume the 'trash' such poets produce'. Gabriel Harvey's pronouncement is clear: Greene's work is immature, raw and unsophisticated.[3]

Harvey's lame diatribe has left a substantial legacy. In 1905, a less than generous J. Churton Collins concluded that the majority of 'Greene's plays have all the appearance of having been composed carelessly, and with great rapidity' and that if *Alphonsus*, *Orlando Furioso* and *A Looking Glass* had 'perished' over the centuries 'it would have been no loss to our literature'.[4] In 1915, John Clark Jordan characterised Greene as little more than a money grabbing hack, whose work was '[h]asty in publication' and as a consequence '[m]uch of it'

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[1] Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia* (London, 1598), p. 286
[2] Harvey, *Foure letters, and certain sonnets* (London: 1592), pp. 12, 1, 17, 1.
[3] In *The Penguin Book of Renaissance Drama* (1992), David Norbrook and H. R. Woudhuysen define 'green' as 'young, youthful, raw, inexperienced, fresh, tender, immature, unripe', p. 475.
[4] J. Churton Collins, ed., *The Plays and Poems of Robert Greene* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), pp. 56-7.

was ‘slip-shod’.[5] Several decades on, Tetsumaro Hayashi commented that ‘it is definitely Greene’s weakness and / or immaturity as an artist that he fails to create the illusion of plausibility’.[6] After caricaturing Greene as the pantomime villain of the “upstart crow furore”, Greenblatt observes disparagingly that amongst the university wits ‘Greene was by no means the most accomplished’.[7] Launching into a tirade of abuse, Kenneth Muir concluded that his plays were ‘feeble in the extreme’, ‘both boring and incredible’ and that Greene’s style was both ‘careless’, ‘clumsy’ and ‘immature’.[8] Like Gabriel Harvey, modern literary criticism has shown little respect for the man buried, we are told, somewhere in the ‘[n]ew-churchyard near Bedlam’.[9]

Greene’s drama has been consistently underrated because he continues to be read retrospectively, as Shakespeare’s unsuccessful predecessor. As Alexander Leggatt’s tongue in cheek retrospection reminds us ‘if Shakespeare had been run down by an ox-cart in 1580’ critics might now be ‘more inclined to see’ Greene’s work on its ‘own terms’.[10] Examining the critical reception of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, Anthony B. Dawson has demonstrated the way in which ‘the chronology of Shakespeare’s plays has enabled a brand of evaluative interpretation based on the place of a particular play in the canon’. Hence *The Tempest*, one of the so-called “late plays”, has come to be regarded as one of pinnacles of Shakespeare’s career, as the accumulation of his literary genius. Conversely, Greene’s dramatic oeuvre, predating that of Shakespeare, has consciously or unconsciously been categorized as “early”, and, as a consequence, has always been perceived as somehow primitive or unsophisticated,

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[5] John Clark Jordan, *Robert Greene* (New York: Octagon Books, 1965), pp. 201-2.
[6] Tetsumaro Hayashi, ed., *A Textual Study of Robert Greene’s Orlando Furioso* (Muncie, Indiana: Ball State University Press, 1973), p. 11.
[7] Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2004), p. 203.
[8] Kenneth Muir, ‘Robert Greene as Dramatist’, in *Essays on Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama*, ed. Richard Hosley (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), pp. 45-7.
[9] Harvey, *Foure letters*, p. 12.
[10] Alexander Leggatt, ‘Bohan and Oberon: The Internal Debate of Greene’s *James IV*’, in *The Elizabethan Theatre XI*, eds. A. L. Magnusson and C. E. McGee (Port Credit, ON: P. N. Meany, 1990), p. 115.

compared to maturity of Shakespeare's drama. This dichotomy, seductively convenient to theatre historians, has had a hugely detrimental effect on attitudes towards pre-Shakespearean drama.

Quoting the example of *Alphonsus* for which Greene was supposedly 'pilloried on the public stage', Greene's editors frequently give their readers the misguided impression that Greene was a rather unsuccessful playwright, those talents were far better suited to pamphlet literature.[11] There is, however, a great deal of evidence to suggest that during the late 1580s and early 1590s Greene was genuinely regarded as a 'famous arch-playmaking poet'.[12] After his death in 1592 Cuthbert Burbie commented that Greene's 'pen in his life pleased you as well on the stage, as in the stationer's shops'.[13]

Historical accounts also suggest that Greene's plays were hugely popular, continuing to be performed long after Greene's death. Sometime between 1611 and 1615, the Venetian ambassador, Antonio Foscarini, visited the Curtain playhouse. At the end of the play, a Florentine diplomat reliably informs us, the actor speaking the epilogue encouraged the audience to shout out suggestions for a play they would like to see the following day. The riotous crowd began:

> to shout *'Friars, Friars'* because they wanted one that usually took its name from the friars, meaning "frati". Whereupon our blockhead turned to his interpreter [who] explained that this was the name of a comedy about friars. So loosening his cloak, he began to clap his hands just as the mob did and to shout 'frati, frati'.[14]

Unfortunately for Foscarini, the crowd mistook his Italian accent for Spanish and immediately turned on him with jeers and insults. Besides his disdainful reference to the

[11] Norman Sanders, ed., *The Scottish History of James the Fourth* (London: Methuen, 1970), p. xxi.
[12] *Greenes, groats-vvorth of witte* (London, 1592), sig. E1ˇ.
[13] *The repentance of Robert Greene* (London, 1592), sig. A2.
[14] Glynne Wickham, Herbert Berry and William Ingram, eds., *English Professional Theatre, 1530-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 415-416.

xenophobia of the crowd, the most overriding preoccupation of the Florentine correspondent is one of class. Why, he wonders, would a high-ranking ambassador want to visit the Curtain theatre 'a place as dubious as they come, where you would never see the face of a gentleman, let alone a nobleman'.[15] As James J. Marino has established, the play which provoked this 'diplomatic discomfiture is most likely Robert Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*'.[16] Indeed, this amusing story testifies to the immense popularity of Greene's play; *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* was already over twenty years old and yet it still retained a palpable grip on the audience's imagination. Not only did they want to see the play again, they insisted on paying to see the play again.

Friar Bacon had proved to be a long term money spinner both in the commercial theatres and at court. On 14th December 1602, Philip Henslowe's diary records a loan of five shillings to Thomas Downton to pay Thomas Middleton for a prologue and epilogue to *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* for performance at court.[17] Greene's play appealed both to the rowdy audiences at the Curtain and to the erudite elite at court, by providing affective delight and entertainment and by presenting the audience with a series of complex concepts and propositions for consideration.

As this thesis has demonstrated, Greene's popularity was due almost entirely to his captivating use of stage spectacle. Greene's theatrical spectacles captured the popular imagination. Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* had a lasting influence on the young Middleton, whose own play *The Roaring Girl* (c. 1607-10) contains an allusion to Oxford's brazen head in Act Four Scene Two. Contemporary allusions to Bacon's brazen head are common in this period; references appear in a series of plays such as *The Ambitious*

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[15] *Ibid,* p. 416.
[16] James J. Marino, 'Adult Playing Companies, 1613-1625', in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theatre*, ed. Richard Dutton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 90-91.
[17] Foakes, ed., *Henslowe's Diary,* p. 207.

Statesman (1670), *Duplicity* (1781), *The Blind Lady* (1660), *The Miser* (1672) and *The Queen* (1653). Thanks to the prevalence of spectacle in his drama, Greene's plays left a significant mark on early modern drama.

The distinguishing feature of Greene's drama - his propensity for aesthetic extravagance - make his plays feel recognisably modern. However, the powerful visual dimension of Greene's drama continues to be largely neglected, as criticism of non-Shakespearean drama continues to insist on a historicist approach, which frequently prioritises text over performance.[18] The ephemeral nature of spectacle has provided yet another hindrance to those trying to re-evaluate Greene's dramatic legacy. While Shakespeare's literary achievements survive for all to read, Greene's visual spectacles appear only scarcely intelligible on the printed page.

Faced with the task of recreating from the text the visual aspects of an early modern play, theatre history can only provide some of the answers; such a task also demands an imaginative leap. My decision to read Greene's plays and modern cinema analogically serves to reinforce the relevance of Greene's drama in today's world.[19] Challenging, to some degree, the methodology of new historicism, this thesis has taken account of the on-going dialogue between the past and present, using significant aspects of the present as a catalyst to produce a more nuanced account of Greene's dramatic legacy.

In *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (1987), Andrew Gurr identified an increased 'emotionalism' in the drama of the late 1580s and 1590s. As a consequence of Marlowe's 'mighty line' and powerful 'personation', Gurr claims, this period of drama directly appealed

[18] Sarah Werner, 'Introduction', in *New Directions in Renaissance Drama and Performance Studies*, ed. Sarah Werner (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 8.
[19] Hugh Grady and Terence Hawkes, 'Introduction: Presenting Presentism', in *Presentist Shakespeares*, eds. Hugh Grady and Terence Hawkes (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 5.

to the 'affections', emotions or passions of audiences.[20] Writing more recently, Ruth Lunney has modified Gurr's argument, suggesting that '[w]hat was [more] significant' - than the impact of Marlowe's use of language or method of characterisation – 'was the impact of performance on the audience's perspectives, a process that encompasses perception as well as interpretation'.[21] Like the drama of his contemporary Marlowe, Greene's theatrical work is symptomatic of this heightened emotionalism, a direct consequence of the spectacular nature of his drama, which demanded both affective and effective response from audiences.

With this factor in mind, I like to offer an alternative definition of 'Greene', one which directly opposes the implication that Greene's work is somehow immature, raw and unsophisticated. In his recent book *The Key of Green: Passion and Perception in Renaissance Culture* (2009), Bruce Smith has emphasised that the word 'green' can operate as a verb, as well as a noun or adverb; 'to green' meant 'to desire earnestly, to yearn, long after, for or to do' (OED, "green", v²). According to Smith, throughout the early modern period 'green' was frequently used to describe a 'passionate desire'.[22] Hence, as Smith explains in reference to Othello's 'green-eyed monster', 'to perceive the world through green spectacles is to perceive the world with passion – passion that is not limited to jealousy' (*Oth.* III.iii.168).[23] Writing in 1604, Thomas Wright declared:

> [t]he passions not unfitly may be compared to green spectacles, which make all things resemble the colour of green; even so, he that loveth, hateth, or by any other passion is vehemently possessed, judgeth all things that occur in favour of that passion, to be good and agreeable with reason.[24]

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[20] Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 166.
[21] Ruth Lunney, *Marlowe and the Popular Tradition* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 5.
[22] Bruce R. Smith, *The Key of Green: Passion and Perception in Renaissance Culture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), p. 37. According to the OED the association between green and envy (or jealousy) did not enter common usage until 1863.
[23] Smith, p. 36.
[24] Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Mind in Generall* (London, 1604), sig. E1.

Rather than seeing spectacle only as a means to something contemplative and non-spectacular, Greene's plays do not prioritise intellectual contemplation over aesthetic experience. The triumph of Greene's drama is not one of effects over affect; it lies in the interaction between affect and effect. Greene's spectacular plays acknowledge that audiences 'judgeth all things' through 'green spectacles' and that 'that passion' is perfectly 'good and agreeable with reason'.

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