Performing the Audience: Constructing Playgoing in Early Modern Drama

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by

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ABSTRACT
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This dissertation argues that early modern playwrights used metadrama to construct the experience and concept of playgoing for their audiences. By staging playgoing in front of playgoers, playwrights sought to teach their audiences how to attend a play and how to react to a performance. This type of instruction was possible, and perhaps necessary, because in early modern London attending a professionally produced play with thousands of other playgoers was a genuinely new cultural activity, so no established tradition of playgoing existed. Thus, playwrights throughout the era from John Lyly to Richard Brome attempted to invent playgoing through their performances.

The first chapter argues that this construction of playgoing was heavily influenced by the politics and economics of the London playhouses. Throughout the early modern era, London magistrates and puritan antitheatrical writers viewed performances as producing the immoral, unruly and often riotous actions of the audiences. And they used these reactions to performances as an excuse to close the playhouses and punish the playwrights. In order to keep the playhouses open and their livelihoods intact, playwrights had to keep their audiences from reacting to drama. Each subsequent chapter traces a method playwrights employed to limit audience reaction. The second chapter demonstrates that playwrights tried to limit the effect performances had on their audiences by dramatizing playgoers who were not affected by drama, thereby discouraging audiences from seeing themselves as the object of performance. The third chapter shows how playwrights often satirized playgoers who reacted to performances in order to stigmatize audience reaction. The final two chapters challenge the commonly held critical opinion that playwrights were working within a humanist interpretive tradition, which linked reading, imitation and praxis. Instead, I suggest that playwrights attempted to keep audiences from actively interpreting their performances in order to limit audience reaction. The study concludes by comparing *Hamlet* with *The Duchess of Malfi* and argues that Webster's play (and not as commonly thought *Hamlet*) is a representative and comprehensive example of the early modern construction of playgoing.

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Like many early modern plays, this text is a collaborative effort, even though it is only attributed to one person. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge those who made key contributions, while also acknowledging that there are many who will remain unacknowledged. Though I fully acknowledge the many hands that went into this text, any faults that it contains are, of course, my own.

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Introduction:

New, Unruly Playgoers and Metadrama

In 2008, I attended a production of *Titus Andronicus* that was billed as an authentic rendition of the play. The idea was to put on a performance that recreated the experience of attending an early modern production of Shakespeare's play. To accomplish this goal, the actors did not thoroughly rehearse their parts or memorize their lines, but rather read from scrolls that only contained their lines and the line directly before theirs. The audience was also asked to help contribute to the authenticity of the performance. Before the show began, we were asked by the director to actively participate in the performance by booing the villain, cheering the hero, verbally denouncing bad acting, and in general behaving like rowdy, unruly early modern playgoers.

Surprisingly, our role as unruly playgoers was difficult to pull off and our attempt to play that part was perhaps the most uncomfortable aspect of the experience (which is saying a lot given we were watching *Titus Andronicus*). It was a small production and most of the audience members knew each other, and the cast and director knew most of the audience. And yet, everybody seemed unwilling to interrupt the performance with catcalls, hisses, or cheers, and any attempt on the part of the audience to do what the director asked felt uncomfortable and forced. So for the most part, we sat silently and watched the production like polite, quiet twenty-first century playgoers.

What this attempt at recreating the early modern playgoing experience brought home to me is that attending a play is not a natural activity; playgoing does not exist as a universal idea. It has a history, and different cultures construct playgoing differently. The

twenty-first century audience of *Titus Andronicus* could not easily slip into the role of early modern playgoers because our notion of playgoing was vastly different from the early modern notion. We have been trained through some set of unacknowledged, and perhaps undiagnosed, processes to sit quietly in the dark and watch performers perform. Any activity that departs from that training felt rude, crass and unnatural. Early modern audiences, apparently, did not have this training, and so for them, sitting silently would have probably felt unnatural, perhaps even rude or maybe it simply wouldn't have occurred to them.

The present study grew out of that experience. It attempts to discover how early modern audiences were trained at playgoing. That is, how was the concept and activity of playgoing constructed in early modern London? Who constructed playgoing and why? What were the methods used in this construction? Where did this construction take place? This is a more ambitious project than it might seem at first glance because playgoing as a concept is more complex than the binary opposition between silent and unruly playgoer that I discovered while trying to play the part of an early modern audience member. I conceive playgoing rather broadly as encompassing not just the behavior of the audience, but the entire conceptual experience of attending a play. That is, playgoing includes not just the physical conditions of attending a play, but the idea of that activity – the theoretical and conceptual assumptions that enabled playgoing to function. Defined this way, playgoing includes the concept of performance as well as the role of audience within that performance. So in order to understand playgoing, a host of interconnected questions need to be addressed: How did performance affect the audience? How was the audience expected to respond to the performance? How were

they expected to interpret the performance? Were there interpretive processes audiences were expected to use? Were these interpretive strategies different from reading strategies? Did the presence of flesh and blood actors affect the representational and ontological category of performance? Were stage performances thought of as more "real" than other fictional representations?

Some of these questions may seem to have obvious or natural answers from a twenty-first century perspective, in part because they have already been thoroughly explored and answered by generations of playwrights, actors, critics and drama theorists. However, in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, there were no August Strindbergs or Bertolt Brechts or William Archers to answer these questions. It is not just that these thinkers came after early modern drama, but that early modern dramatic culture never really produced anybody like them. There is really no such thing as an early modern playwright/critic who left us critical or theoretical treatises on playgoing. Shakespeare never wrote anything like Brecht's "The Modern Theater is the Epic Theater" in order to explain to the public what he was trying to accomplish through his drama, what the role of the audience was in his project and how he imagined performance to work. Nor did Marlowe give interviews in which he explained his own theory of performance. Ben Jonson's "Discoveries" probably comes closest, but it is at best a partial and fairly un-ambitious exploration of the kinds of questions I have in mind.[1] This project can be thought of, in part, as an attempt to imagine what a theoretical treatment of playgoing would have looked like if Shakespeare, Marlowe, Middleton et al. had collaborated and produced one.

This is not to say that the culture did not try to come to grips with playgoing. Indeed, this study will argue that metadrama represents the dramatic space where playwrights struggled to understand playgoing and consequently metadrama will be the dominant object of this study. I will look to metadrama for evidence of how early modern playwrights thought about playgoing and will argue that it provided the means through which playwrights constructed playgoing. Metadrama, like playgoing, can be broadly conceived. It includes any play or scene that takes as its subject playgoing and which often attempts to dramatize the basic conditions of the playhouse. Thus, metadrama includes inset plays (or plays within plays) and explicit discussions about playgoing (as in Hamlet's advise to his players). I will also be suggesting that overtly theatrical events (as in coronations and weddings) and quasi-dramatic performances (such as dumb shows, puppet shows and performed songs) also constitute metadrama. These latter two categories can be considered metadramatic because they recreate the basic conditions of the theater – they involve a performance and an audience. Thus, they provide the playwright with an opportunity to reflect on playgoing as well as construct the concept and activity of playgoing for his or her audience.

This construction was possible, and perhaps necessary, because playgoing in early modern London was a genuinely new cultural activity, so no established tradition of playgoing existed. Attending a play performed by professional players in a permanent theater was simply not an activity that was available to the average London citizen before the 1570's, and so no one, not the playwrights, theater owners, actors nor the audiences, seemed to quite know what to make of playgoing. There were of course plays produced before the 1570's, but it has long been recognized that playgoing in that context was

radically different in kind from early modern playgoing. Before the first permanent, commercial and lasting theater was built in 1576, the only way to view a play in sixteenth century England was either to attend an "interlude" (short performances preformed at court, private residences and universities) or catch a mystery cycle performance during the Corpus Christi festival.[2] Neither of these types of performances drew the kind of large heterogeneous crowds that attended the public performances throughout the era of early modern drama. The private interludes could only be attended by an elite and homogeneous few. And while the mystery cycles could be viewed by anyone, they were only produced during special occasions, and because they were staged on moving wagons that moved in a procession throughout the city, these performances probably only drew around 100 people at a time.[3] These types of audiences were a far cry from the large, heterogeneous playhouse audiences of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. By the late 1570's, any London citizen with a penny to spend on entertainment could watch a play on almost any given day and be surrounded by as many as three thousand other playgoers.[4] This crowd would have been highly diverse, made up of women, men, the aristocracy and merchants. These basic conditions of playgoing are, more or less, familiar to twenty-first century playgoers; however, for the early modern London citizen, this form of playgoing was a genuinely new activity. In fact, from a broad historical view, by 1642 when the playhouses closed, playgoing was still a relatively new activity.

Beyond providing a reason for why playwrights constructed the experience of playgoing (because they were establishing a new cultural tradition), the newness of drama also helps explain why metadrama was such a popular early modern stage and literary device; playwrights continued to return to the topic of playgoing because they did

not fully understand it. They wrote about playgoing within their plays to come to grips with what playgoing meant – to construct it. To take an example from our own era, all of the books, articles, conferences, and documentaries produced in recent decades on the significance and impact of the internet do not suggest that we fully understand its significance or impact. Rather, the mass of discourse about the internet suggests our struggle (and perhaps inability) to understand this nascent cultural phenomenon. Likewise, metadrama and its ubiquity suggests early modern culture's struggle to understand the nascent cultural phenomenon of playgoing.

The newness of early modern drama also means that the art form was almost necessarily experimental. As readers of the drama have long noted, early modern playwrights experimented with new poetic forms (blank verse), genres (tragic-comedy) and narrative rules (the abandonment of classical unities). And I will be suggesting that playwrights were also experimenting with new ideas about audience and performance. I will argue that playwrights asserted new ideas about playgoing that were different, and sometimes radically different, from the traditional or classical notions of the efficacy, representational nature and interpretive possibilities of drama. In fact, some of these ideas are different from anything that came after early modern drama because the playwrights were responding to an almost unique social, political and economic situation. This study will attempt to highlight the nascent and experimental nature of early modern drama as it appears within metadrama.

Apart from providing a space where playwrights could explore the concept of playgoing, metadrama also represents an attempt to construct playgoing for the playhouse audiences. By staging playgoing in front of audiences, playwrights were attempting to

influence the audience's understanding of playgoing. For instance, in chapter two, I will suggest that some metadramatic plays tried to convince the audience of their role in the playhouse. And in chapter three, I will argue that some metadramatic plays attempted to show the audience how to behave – what kinds of actions were acceptable and what kinds were not. Thus, metadrama was intended to have a real effect on the notion of playgoing. In fact, sometimes metadrama was intended to have a material effect on playgoing; by trying to influence audience behavior, metadrama was attempting to control their physical activity. Metadrama then can be understood as producing a theory of playgoing and praxis – a true attempt at constructing the experience of playgoing for playgoers.

After examining and analyzing a number of plays, I've come to the general, and perhaps contentious, conclusion that within this attempt at constructing playgoing, playwrights sought to construct a non-reactive playgoer. Because the concept of the non-reactive playgoer is defined negatively (the non-reactive playgoer is defined by what the playwrights did not want) and because the concept is never fully articulated within the drama but culled and pieced together from dozens of plays and playwrights, it is necessarily vague. But in general, the non-reactive playgoer can be thought of as the playwrights' attempt to construct a playgoing experience that limited the range of audience reactions within the playhouse. It seems the playwrights' ideal audience member was one who sat quietly, did not interrupt the performance and, most importantly, did not use the performance as the basis for action. They seemed to want a more pensive or stoic audience than the unruly ones that seemed to have populated the early modern playhouses. Put another way, the non-reactive playgoer is the polar opposite of the ideal Brechtian playgoer; Brecht wanted to produce a visceral and

emotional reaction in his audience that would lead to political action. Conversely, early modern playwrights wanted to produce a playgoer that did not respond to performance with action – political or otherwise.

By arguing that playwrights wanted to produce a non-reactive audience, I am contradicting probably hundreds of drama and performance critics who assume that performance always works in conjunction with audience response.[5] This assumption, as it pertains to early modern drama, often seems rest on the belief that playwrights of the period were working within a classical and/or humanist rhetorical tradition. Since most playwrights were taught within the humanist tradition – a tradition which valued rhetoric and Aristotelian dramatic and poetic theory – we tend to assume that they implemented humanist ideas about language, poetry and rhetoric within their drama.[6] In other words, we tend to think of drama rhetorically, as affecting the audience and producing an action (praxis) within the audience. Indeed, the humanist tradition (discussed most thoroughly in Chapters two and four) valued audiences who used literature as the basis for action. But I will argue that numerous playwrights throughout the period were experimenting with a different approach to drama and a different theory of performance, an approach and theory that tried to limit (and not encourage or produce) audience reaction.

There are historical, political and economic reasons why playwrights would want to create a non-reactive audience. These reasons will be fully discussed in the first chapter, but in short, playwrights tried to create a non-reactive audience because a highly reactive, unruly early modern audience actually posed a threat to the playwright, and so playwrights seemed to have constructed the idea of a non-reactive playgoer in opposition to the actual unruly ones they confronted. For instance, periodically playgoers' unruly

activity would translate into a riot, and the playwrights and the theaters were then punished for the activity of their audiences. A fairly famous example of a playhouse riot occurred during the 1597 production of *The Isle of Dogs*. As a result of the riot, warrants were issued for the authors of the play, Ben Jonson and Thomas Nashe, and the theaters were ordered to be destroyed. The playhouses avoided this fate, but the message was clear: if the audience misbehaved, the playwrights and the theaters would pay the price. The playwrights seemed to have responded to this threat by staging metadrama that constructed the idea of a non-reactive playgoer in an attempt to change the actual experience of playgoing. They attempted to turn the unruly playgoer into a non-reactive one.

This is not to say that the playwrights' attempts to create the non-reactive playgoer worked. By all accounts, audiences remained active, reactive and unruly throughout the early modern era. The inability to produce a truly non-reactive playgoer makes the concept of this type of playgoer all the more significant. In fact, because the non-reactive playgoer never really existed, it should not be thought of as the *result* of playwrights' construction of playgoing; it is better thought of as the *cause* of their construction. For complex reasons that will be discussed more thoroughly in the first chapter, the attempt at creating a non-reactive playgoer allowed and sometimes forced playwrights to confront most, if not all, of the issues related to playgoing discussed above. That is, once the non-reactive playgoer was conceived, a whole network of theoretical ideas concerning playgoing had to be created in order to account for that type of playgoer.

For instance, in order to avoid playgoers' reactions, playwrights attempted to limit the effect their performances had on their audiences. So in order to construct the non-reactive playgoer, playwrights had to conceptualize and dramatize the efficacy of their performances. In chapters two and three, I describe what I see as the complex network of theoretical ideas concerning performance, staging techniques and audience that needed to be created in order to ensure that the audience was not affected by the performance. Similarly, in order to keep the audience from reacting to their plays, playwrights had to keep the audience from actively interpreting performances. Because humanist reading strategies often encouraged the audience to actively read and then act on the basis of their interpretation, playwrights sought to interrupt this reading process in order to interrupt audience reaction. In chapters four and five, I trace several techniques that the playwrights implemented to limit the interpretive agency of the audience. This study then is not simply about the playwrights' attempt to control the unruly audience; it is about the complex construction of playgoing that this attempt produced.

Chapter One:

The Social Formation of Playgoing and Its Absent Cause

"And none knows the hidden causes of those strange effects" – George Chapman, *All Fools*[7]

The majority of this study is made up of an analysis of individual metadramatic scenes. The goal of this analysis is to show how playwrights contributed to the construction of playgoing. These plays – that is, the evidence for the construction of playgoing – are spread across the entire early modern era from the opening of the first theaters in the mid-1580's to the closing of the theaters in 1642. Some of these playwrights knew each other personally or at least knew each other's work, but some probably did not, so some playwrights were probably producing ideas about playgoing without the direct influence of other earlier playwrights. Thus, as I suggested in the introduction, the evidence for the construction of playgoing is scattered, fragmented and seemingly unconnected; it is found in dozens of plays over the course of sixty odd years with no discernable pattern or narrative of development. One could assume because of the fragmented nature of the construction of playgoing that the result of this construction would also be fragmented: it would be incoherent, uneven and sometimes contradictory. However, I will be arguing the opposite: all these different playwrights and plays produced a fairly coherent construction of playgoing. There are outliers, plays that seem to produce ideas about playgoing that are atypical or counter to the trend that this study traces. But by and large, the entire era constructed playgoing in a remarkably similar way.

This chapter is dedicated to explaining how this could be the case. In order to do so, I will suggest that the construction of playgoing occurred within a set of historical and

economic conditions that made it imperative for playwrights to produce a concept of playgoing. The reaction to this imperative is why playwrights produced a metadramatic construction of playgoing and, incidentally, is why my analysis of metadrama differs from previous analyses and theories of it. Once this is established it is necessary to describe a historical model that can adequately explain how the historical conditions could produce a unified and relatively coherent construction of playgoing. The particular theory of history that I will be employing was developed by Louis Althusser and his student Alan Badiou and adapted to literary critical uses by Fredric Jameson. These theorists' ideas about history can help grasp the fragmented yet coherent construction of playgoing because they are dedicated to respecting, in Althusser's terms, the semi-autonomous nature of the different aspects of society, while simultaneously paying attention to how they work as a whole or structure. Their ideas then can help describe what I will be calling, following Althusser, the social formation of playgoing – the structure of early modern playhouse culture that produced a coherent construction of playgoing.

I: The Unruly Playgoer: Riots, Immorality and Punishment in the Playhouses

In the introduction, I suggested that early modern playwrights created the concept of the non-reactive playgoer in reaction to the unruly playgoer that constituted early modern audiences. And much of this study works under the theory that playwrights were concerned and maybe even obsessively concerned with the unruly actions of their audiences. However, it must first be established why early modern playwrights were so concerned with audiences. After all, there is nothing unique or historically specific about

performers being concerned with their audiences; performers in any medium or time period are always going to be interested in their audiences, and these audiences often behave in an unruly manner. However, the historical context of early modern drama seemed to have made early modern playwrights particularly anxious about their audiences, which, as we will see, ultimately led them to construct the concept of the non-reactive playgoer.

Scholars of the theater have long noted the unruliness of London playgoers. Ann Jennalie Cook, Andrew Gurr and S.P. Cerasano have all pointed out the disruptive activities that audience members were accused of engaging in.[8] For instance, playgoers would routinely talk (to one another and to the performers), loudly crack nuts, obtrusively open beer bottles, and gamble during a performance. Furthermore, it wasn't unusual for pickpockets and prostitutes to frequent the playhouses; the combination of crowds and liquor no doubt provided a lucrative business opportunity for both professions. And Steven Mullaney has argued that the very location of most of playhouses suggests a kind of lawlessness. Most playhouses were located in the liberties, the suburbs of London; Mullaney describes these "outskirts of the premodern city" as places "of complex and contradictory sort of freedom, ambivalent zones of transition between one realm of authority and another" and as "a borderland whose legal parameters and privileges were open-ended and equivocally defined."[9] The location of the theaters then permitted, if not encouraged, the kind of unruly activity of the early modern playgoer.

It is difficult to know exactly what the playwrights thought about their audience's activity. However, it seems reasonable to assume that playwrights would be understandably annoyed at playgoers who interrupted their plays and distracted their

players. In fact, some of the evidence we have for audience behavior comes from playwrights complaining about playgoers.[10] And Cersano suggests "perhaps some of the well-known on-stage audiences represent the players' impressions of their spectators; and perhaps when these representations are unlikable, this was the players' (and dramatists') way of getting back at the audience."[11] For instance, the citizen couple in Francis Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* is an unflattering representation of playgoers who interrupt performances. On a superficial level, the playwrights' preoccupation with audience behavior can be understood as a concern that playgoers (like the citizen couple) would disrupt their performances.

Disruptive behavior may have been annoying, but the audience's unruliness produced a much more dangerous and significant behavior: playgoers would periodically riot in the theaters. These riotous playgoers posed a serious threat to playwrights because playwrights were often held legally and politically responsible for the riots that occurred within their playhouses. For instance, in 1597 a warrant was issued for Ben Jonson and Thomas Nashe after their play *The Isle of Dogs* incited a small scale riot at the Swan. The Privy Council describes the disturbance as "very great disorders committed in the common playhouses both by lewd matters that are handled on the stage and by resort and confluence of bad people."[12] Here the council is making a distinction between the actions of the "bad people," and the "lewd matters that are handled on the stage," but the implication of the Privy Council's ruling is that if these "bad people" create a disturbance, it is playwrights' and playhouses' fault because they staged "lewd matters." This connection between the actions on stage and the actions in the audience created the premise that allowed the Privy Council to punish the theaters for the actions of their

audiences. In fact, the state didn't just attempt to punish the playwrights; in reaction to the riot, the Privy Council also ordered that all theatrical productions be halted and that all the playhouses be torn down. For reasons that are unclear, the latter order was, thankfully, never carried out, but the Privy Council's reaction (or overreaction) to the playhouse riot illustrates the danger that riotous playgoers posed to the playwrights and playing companies: if their audience's rioted, their profession, livelihood and, one might even say, their way of life could come to an end.

This reaction seems to have been extreme in degree but was not unique in kind. Five years earlier, the Privy Council had closed the theaters after a riot near the Rose. This riot actually had very little to do with playgoing. It began on the other side of the Thames after a feltmonger was arrested. The city's feltmongers and other sympathetic merchants felt the arrest unwarranted and started a riot, which eventually migrated to the Rose. Even though the riot really had nothing to do with playhouses, all the playhouses were closed from Midsummer Day to Michaelmas (June 21, 1592- September 29, 1592).[13]

Beyond providing more evidence of the unruly and riotous activity of playgoers, this anecdote suggests that the London citizens seem to have associated playgoing with riotous activity. The rioters gravitated towards the theater presumably because they believed playhouses were a place where unruly activity occurred and/or they could use it as an excuse to assemble and protest.[14] An incident in 1618 also suggests this connection: allegedly, a group of sailors were planning to riot outside the Globe, though the riot was stopped before it began.[15] It seems early modern theaters, like today's town squares or capital buildings, were a good place to gather if you wished to protest. This of

course made London magistrates nervous. They too made connection between riots (or even just assemblies) and the theaters, and so punished the theaters probably because they already suspected them of fostering unruliness and this just confirmed their suspicions and/or these incidents gave them an excuse to close the playhouses.

Influencing the perception that riots and the theaters were connected was the long shadow cast by the 1549 riot led by Robert Kett during the reign of Edward VI, which was supposedly started during a play. Fifty-four years later, the anti-theatrical writer Henry Crosse uses the Kett rebellion as evidence to argue that playgoing was a dangerous activity.

> For what more fitter occasion to summon all the discontented people together, then Playes? to attempt some execrable action, commotions, mutinies, rebellions, as it hapned at *Wyndham* in *Norff*. in the time of *Ed*. the 6. where at a Stage Play … the horrible rebellion of *Ket* and his complices, by a watch-word given, brake out, to the trouble of the whole kingdome.[16]

In early modern England, there seems to have been a long tradition of associating playgoing with riotous activity. This association seems to have produced the opinion that playhouses always had the potential to produce a riot even if a riot wasn't actually produced. According to Crosse, plays simply attract "discontented people," so a playhouse is a natural place for a riot to begin. Cook notes that "The lord mayor and aldermen routinely shut down playhouses whenever disorder *threatened*, as in the uprising of 1595."[17] Indeed, as the feltmongers' riot at The Rose demonstrates, playhouses and playing companies were punished even when the theaters had nothing to do with the riot.

Scholars have tended to downplay the significance of these riots or disturbances. Cook remarks that despite the association of playgoing and public disorder, "in actuality,

only two major disturbances took place inside the theaters;" she points to a Shove Tuesday riot in 1617 and another "brawl" at the Fortune in 1626; she also cites "lesser incidents … in 1611 and in 1614 and at the Red Bull in 1610, 1622 and 1638."[18] The careful reader will note that Cook does not mention the 1592 incident at the Rose or the 1597 riot at the Swan discussed above. So there were at least four major disturbances in or around the theaters in addition to the lesser incidents she cites, and there may have been more that have not been documented or have not yet been uncovered by scholars.[19] Still, Cook maintains, "In view of the volatile nature of any crowd, it is amazing that so few incidents are recorded for sizable gatherings, often taking place virtually ever day, during a period that spans seven decades."[20] Similarly, Gurr remarks, "But considering the alarm so regularly voiced by the civil authorities, particularly in the 1580s and 1590s, the number of affrays that actually engaged audiences inside the playhouse was almost nil."[21] Downplaying these incidents seems warranted if we are viewing them within the context of the overblown rhetoric of the antitheatrical writers. That is, these scholars are attempting to correct the impression of an always dangerous, riotous early modern audience that was created by the anti-theatrical tracts. As Cook notes, "the evidence shows plenty of disruptive behavior, but audiences scarcely merited their detractors' characterization."[22]

However, if we read this evidence of disruptive behavior in *conjunction* with the anti-theatrical writers' portrayal of audiences, then, I believe, the importance of audience behavior almost can't be overstated, because even if the audiences weren't as bad as the playhouses' enemies would have us believe, the perception that playgoers had the potential to riot and that their behavior was the fault of the playwright's plays meant that

playwrights and playing companies were held responsible for the actions (imagined or otherwise) of their audiences. Thus, the playwrights had a clear incentive to control their unruly audiences.

Furthermore, the state's fear of riots in the early modern era was acute. Without a police force, the large London crowds (large than anything previous generations had encountered) posed a serious threat to the state.[23] As Andy Wood, David Underdown, Tim Harris and more recently John Walter have shown, riots, uprising, and popular protests were quite common throughout the period and were taken very seriously by government officials. So seriously that even the representation of uprisings (or any other treasonous activity that could lead to insurrection) was more or less forbidden.[24] For instance, the state censor seemed to have banned the staging of riots. Edmund Tilney's suppression of the riot scene in the play *The Book of Sir Thomas More,* discussed in more detail below, is a famous example of such censorship.[25] Given the state's (almost paranoid) worry about riots, even a few playhouse riots would have posed a threat to the playhouses. And perhaps more importantly, the perception that a riot could always break out in the theaters or, worse, that the playhouse produced riots, meant that the playing companies were constantly threatened with closer because of the actions or potential actions of their unruly audiences.

And even when playwrights were not held legally responsible for the riotous actions of their audiences, they were almost always held politically responsible for the immoral actions of playgoers. As Jean Howard and others have shown, the playhouse was a politically contested public space – there were powerful groups that wanted the playhouses closed (the Puritans and London magistrates) and others that wanted them

open (the playgoing public and aristocratic patrons).[26] Writers who expressed the antitheatrical position, such as Anthony Munday, Steven Gosson and John Northbrooke, often linked the audience's behavior to the content of playhouse performances just as the Privy Council did during *The Isle of Dogs* incident. For instance, Munday describes the players' actions as "intermixed with knauerie, drunken merie-ments, craftie coosenings, undecent juglings, clownish conceites, and such other cursed mirth, as is both odious in the sight of God, & offensive to honest eares."[27] He then follows up with an attack on the actions of the audience: "Whosoever shall visit the chappel of Satan, I mean the Theater, shal finde there no want of young ruffins, nor lacke of harlots."[28] Like the Privy Council ruling concerning the *Isle of Dogs* riot, Munday is doing more than saying that immoral, unruly individuals attend the theater; he is suggesting that the performance in some way causes the audience's behavior. Robert Ormsby, drawing on the research of Laura Levine and Jonas Barish, describes this anti-theatrical argument as "pathological." He argues that "Antitheatrical rhetoric of the era is 'pathological' not simply to the degree that it portrays the actor's body infected by unclean performance, but also in its depictions of audiences diseased by the spectacles they witness."[29] For instance, John Northbrooke says of plays, "what other thing doe they teache than wanton pleasure, and stirring up of fleshly lustes, unlawfull appetites and desires? with their bawdie and filthie sayings and counterfert doings."[30] Here the "stirring up of fleshly lustes" explicitly refers to a belief that viewing a performance can affect and infect the actions of the audience. Likewise, Munday makes the claim, "at theaters none of these [the mind, ears and eyes] but sinneth, for both the mind there with lust; and the eyes with showes, and the ears with hearing be polluted."[31] Stephen Gosson is also clearly drawing on and contributing to this

pathological model when he argues, "that which entereth into us by the eyes and eares, muste bee digested by the spirite, which is chiefly reserved to honor God."[32] This model is so common that Cynthia Marshall, echoing Ormsby, claims, "Virtually all the antitheatircalists refer to the effects of the stage as 'infectious.'"[33]

It should be noted here that although the playhouses were sometimes closed because of riots and public disturbance, the major reason that government officials shut down the theaters was because of plague, but the threat that the plague posed to the playhouse was perhaps not unconnected to audience behavior. The antitheatrical writers' use of a viral metaphor to describe the playhouse can be understood as linked to the threat plague posed to the playhouses. They understood that the public and the state thought that plague was spread in the playhouses and so used the metaphor of infection to link the moral and physical affects of playgoing. However, the opposite is perhaps also true. That is, antithetical writers' use of the viral metaphor influenced the belief that plague was spread in the theaters. Given early moderns' relatively weak understanding of how infections were spread, it is not unreasonable to assume that the antitheatrical writers were able to partially convince the public and government that stage performances spread, not just moral, but physical disease. Or put another way, the difference between the physical and the moral effect of performance was collapsed in the public's mind as a result of antitheatrical arguments. After all, since the middle ages, plague was often understood as a scourge sent by God to punish the wicked, so plague was already understood to function according to moral laws. Thus, closing the playhouse because of plague was not just a neutral and rational sanitation act done on the behalf of public

health; it was also a political act motivated by the immoral activities of the playhouse audiences.

But even without this tentative link between plague and playgoing, from the playwrights' perspective, the audience's unruly behavior was almost certainly a political liability. When the audience behaved poorly, it reflected poorly on the theater. This poor reflection did more than simply injure the theater's reputation; it could result in the closing of the theaters. This threat to the theaters seemed to have continued throughout the early modern era as the playgoing publics' behavior continued to be unruly. And although theater historians debate the major causes of the closing of the theaters, most scholars agree that antitheatrical sentiment and antitheatrical writers' efforts to link the theater to audience behavior at least contributed to the closing of the theaters in 1642.[34] In the final analysis, antitheatrical writers' attacks on the theater contributed to the end of early modern playgoing. Thus, most if not all early modern playwrights would have had to confront the danger that unruly audiences posed to the theater.

II: Metadrama's Importance to the Construction of Playgoing and Its Critical Uses

Playwrights seemed to have responded to this threat to their livelihood not only by writing their own pamphlets defending the theater, but by writing scenes of metadrama that commented upon the activities of their audience. In fact, many metadramatic scenes can be read as a direct challenge to the "pathological" depiction of playgoing put forth by antitheatrical writers, which were themselves based on the unruly activities of the early modern audience. Thus, metadrama represented an important site in

the struggle to keep the theaters open. It was a place where the playwrights could counter the political challenges that the unruly playgoer posed to the theaters.

I am not the first to make the argument that playwrights used metadrama to counter the claims of antitheatrical writers. Tanya Pollard for one makes a similar pronouncement in her introduction to a collection of antitheatrical documents. She argues, "Beyond playwrights' involvement in penning defenses, complaints, or general portraits of the theater, however, is the larger more interesting question of how the drama of the time responds, either directly or indirectly, to these debates."[35] Pollard goes on to point out that inset plays (or plays within plays) and explicit statements within plays that reflect on the nature of performance tend to challenge anti-theatrical depictions of the role of audience and the morality or utility of drama. However, Pollard is merely suggesting the uses the documents in her collection can be put to, rather than actually engaging in that type of analysis. The fullest treatment of playwrights' response to anti-theatrical discourse is still Laura Levine's *Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-theatricality and Effeminization*. Levine argues that playwrights internalized the antitheatrical position within their plays in order to render it absurd through a process she calls "anti-antitheatricality."[36]

However, my own position and argument are somewhat different and perhaps go further than either Pollard or Levine. I will argue that playwrights were not only using metadrama to enter into the discourse of antitheatricality in order to debate the antitheatrical writers and counter their arguments; they were attempting to construct the experience of playgoing in order to influence the actual behavior of their audiences. In other words, metadrama didn't just discuss playgoing, it constructed it. And by

constructing a non-reactive playgoer, the playwrights could negate the antitheatrical position since it, in part, rested on the unruliness of the audience. In other words, metadrama was not only debating with the antitheatrical writers in order to change the publics minds, metadrama was attempting to change the behavior of their audience to put the public's minds at ease.

The Knight of the Burning Pestle, again, provides us with a clear example of playwrights using metadrama to comment on and construct audience behavior. It utilizes a play within a play structure and depicts the audience of the inset play as behaving poorly. The citizen and his wife routinely interrupt the performance by complaining about its content and often suggest changes to the play's script. As I will show more thoroughly in the third chapter, this activity is satirized within the play to discourage the practice within the playhouse. The play is constructing playgoing through metadrama by discouraging the type of unruly behavior that the playwrights want to exclude from playgoing. Of course, not all examples are this straightforward, but this example should demonstrate the process through which audience is constructed within metadrama.

My analysis of metadrama, while differing in degree from Pollard's and Levine's, is a fundamental departure from the way that critics have traditionally analyzed and interpreted metadrama. Apart from Pollard's and Levine's useful insight regarding metadrama, critics have generally analyzed metadrama in three somewhat separate but also interconnected ways: they have viewed metadrama 1) as a self-reflective in-joke between audience and actor 2) as a metaphor for larger or more universal ideas or 3) as evidence of playwrights' challenge to essentialist thought. The first two critical uses of metadrama identify a type of self-reflexivity that is obviously present in early modern

drama, but is only tangentially related to this project. However, the third critical use, generally associated with new historicism, is directly relevant to this discussion, and while probably the most influential, does not seem to describe accurately metadrama or explain its purpose. Furthermore, I will argue that my own take on metadrama offers a corrective to the new historicist position. Before addressing the anti-essentialist argument, it is perhaps useful to briefly describe the first two treatments of metadrama because they trace effects of metadrama that will be tangentially related to this study.

Gurr provides perhaps the best example of the first type of analysis of metadrama. He argues that metadrama provides an in-joke between audience and players which then undermines the illusion of the drama. Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* is a clear example of this type of joke; Shakespeare has Cleopatra, who of course is played by a young boy, declare that some day, "I shall see / Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness / I'th' posture of a whore."[37] On a basic level, Cleopatra's speech is a metadramatic wink at the audience. Gurr argues that this type of joke was common throughout early modern drama and particularly popular with Shakespeare and Jonson. Indeed, Gurr points out that these jokes were not just made explicitly through speech, but were inherent to the practice of early modern playing. For instance Gurr notes:

> Shakespeare clearly expected his audiences at the Globe in 1600 for *Hamlet* to know that the same player who played Polonius, probably John Heminges, playing Hamlet, had played Brutus. For Shakespeare, Brutus killing Caesar in *Julius Caesar* prophesied the killing by the same player of his fellow in the new play. It made a neat theatrical in-joke for the regular playgoers.[38]

In short, metadrama, in so far as it is self-reflective, could destroy the illusion of the performance, which as Gurr points out was never that illusory to begin with, and at the same time get a laugh from the audience.[39] Metadrama's self-reflexivity and the non-

illusionistic aspects of early modern drama will play a role in this study (especially in chapter three), but I will be less interested in the aesthetic or comic aspects of metadrama, which are present within these self-reflective moments, than I am in the extended metadramatic meditations on playing and playgoing, which Pollard describes, and what effects these meditations had on the construction of playgoing.[40]

The second major way that critics have analyzed and interpreted metadrama is by locating the ways in which playwrights use the stage as a metaphor for the larger world. Again, Shakespeare provides a representative example of this type of use of metadrama. Jaques' famous "All the world's a stage" speech in *As You Like It* clearly uses the stage as a metaphor for human development. Robert Crossmen gives the fullest and latest exploration of this trope. He argues that "by mentioning, discussing, and above all *staging* drama upon his stage, Shakespeare invites his audience to think of their own lives in theatrical terms."[41] Of course, Shakespeare did not invent this trope, nor is it unique to early modern drama. Crossmen points out that "the world-stage comparison was old when Epictetus used it" in the second century.[42]

Other critics have read the world-stage metaphor as more than just a conventional trope. They see this type of metadrama as producing what Sidney Homan has called the "Aesthetic Metaphor." In this analysis, critics interpret the metaphor of the stage to cut both ways: the stage is a metaphor for the world and the world is a metaphor for the stage. This approach to metadrama is closest to my own; however, where critics such as Homan, James L. Calderwood, Robert Egan, Judd D. Hubert and Lionel Abel have argued that metadrama was reflecting on the aesthetic and formal aspects of dramatic poetry, I will focus on how metadrama reflects on performance's own theoretical

assumptions and rhetorical purposes.[43] Furthermore, all of these critics focus almost exclusively on Shakespeare and explore how he used metadrama to depict his own ideas about aesthetics and the challenges of creating art. This study is interested in the broader construction of playgoing, not just Shakespeare's, and it is focused not on how the playwright thought about his or her own struggles with the medium, but on how the playwrights sought to construct that medium for the audience. That is, this study moves away from the individual construction of aesthetic ideas, and towards the collective construction of the activity of playgoing.

The third type of analysis of metadrama is perhaps the most influential and my own analysis of metadrama offers a partial replacement or corrective of it. Consequently, I will spend the most space on this critical approach to metadrama. I refer to this type of analysis as the new historicist anti-essentialist argument because it is generally argued by new historicists (and so is often overtly political) and because it argues that early modern drama (and often metadrama) puts forth a view of the individual that, in Jonathan Dollimore's words, "challenges the idea that 'man' possesses some given, unalterable essence which is what makes 'him' human, which is the source and *essential* determinant of 'his' culture and its priority over conditions of existence."[44] According to this view of metadrama, self-reflective performances are able to challenge essentialism by revealing individuals to be nothing but performance; by performing the individual and showing that individual to be engaging in a performance, metadrama demonstrates to the audience that individuals are nothing but performance. Or to phrase it in its most radical iteration, individuals are performance all the way down. More broadly this use of metadrama is said to be used by early moderns to demythologize power. Political power is nothing but

a performance of power, and so is not an essential part of society. It is contingent rather than necessary.

The issue gets decidedly more complicated when concepts such as gender and sexual orientation are included within a discussion of anti-essentialism because of the period's complex relationships with both these issues. But because the new historicist anti-essentialist position is put forth most forcefully within a discussion of power and the individual, and because this present study is largely disengaged from a discussion of gender and sexuality, the following discussion will be restricted to anti-essentialism as it is related to power and the individual.

Greenblatt's argument in his influential essay "Invisible Bullets" is perhaps the most well known expression of this anti-essentialist position.[45] Here, Greenblatt is not overly concerned with metadrama; however, he does argue that the nature of drama itself reveals the anti-essentialist nature of political authority and so in his famous formulation both subverts and contains that form of power by simultaneously demystifying it and producing it. By calling attention to its own theatricality through metadrama, drama is able to bring this subversion and containment to the surface of the audience's consciousness. Specifically, Greenblatt argues that Queen Elizabeth's power was predicated on "theatrical celebrations of royal glory and theatrical violence visited upon the enemies of that glory" because she was a "ruler without a standing army, without a highly developed bureaucracy, without an extensive police force."[46] The self-reflectivity of Shakespeare's stage helps to sublimate this historically specific brand of political authority; thus, "the form itself, as a primary expression of Renaissance power, helps to contain the radical doubts it continually provokes."[47] By arguing that the Queen's power

was not essential, Greenblatt is positioning himself as an anti-essentialist, or more specifically, he is arguing that early modern drama is inherently anti-essentialist and that by self-consciously referring to this inherent quality, early modern dramatists were attempting to challenge the essentialist assumptions of their society.

This argument gets picked up and reformulated by a number of critics. For instance, David Scott Kastan, in response to Greenblatt's essay, argues that stage representations of political figures are unable to contain their own subversions because "The theater … works to expose the mystifications of power. Its counterfeit of royalty raises the possibility that royalty is a counterfeit."[48] In other words, the theater is necessarily subversive whenever it performs power. Thus, metadrama constitutes a self-awareness of this subversive quality and a reflection on drama's own subversive power. Jonathan Goldberg thoroughly explores this argument in *James I and the Politics of Literature*. After reflecting on James's depiction of himself as an actor, Goldberg argues, "from the King's imagined stage, one can move to real ones, and I consider Chapman's *Bussy d'Ambois* as a mirror of Jacobean absolutism and Shakespeare's *Henry V* as a realization of the royal trope that declares the inherent theatricality of power and the power of the stage."[49] He then goes on to link the metadrama-as-anti-essentialist argument to the metadrama-as-metaphor argument by stating that the metaphor of the stage is reversible so that "the stage of history" is also "the stage as history."[50] And Matthew H. Wikander makes a similar argument in *Princes to Act*: "So dressed in the metaphor of the stage is the idea of kingship that there is always the possibility of the metaphor literalizing itself, of the kingdom becoming a stage."[51] To this list of works that draw or expand on Greenblatt's insight could be added, Dollimore's influential

introduction to the equally influential *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism* and his book *Radical Tragedy*, Roy Strong's *Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals*, and Louis Montrose's *The Purpose of Playing*.[52] I'm not suggesting these works are wholly indebted to Greenblatt, nor do I want to suggest that these critics are only concerned with metadrama (their arguments are much more ambitious). However, I am claiming that embedded within these critics' description and analysis of early modern metadrama is the anti-essentialist position.

The sheer number and caliber of critics who make, in one form or another, the anti-essentialist argument as well as the evidence they use to support their position seem to suggest its validity. However, the breadth of their evidence actually seems to undermine their position at least as it bears on metadrama, that is, on metadrama's ability to demystify essentialist assumptions about the individual and political power. The anti-essentialist position, which these critics argue is subversively revealed and challenged through drama, seems to have been largely accepted by early modern culture and is often publically articulated, hence the wealth of evidence available to new historicist critics.[53] However, this wealth of evidence suggests that early modern society seems to have been rather transparently anti-essentialist. And since anti-essentialism was publicly (and rather explicitly) expressed, there seems to have been little need to subtlety expose the myth of essentialism through metadrama.

Take for instance Wikander's analysis of the representation of rulers in *Princes to Act*: he argues for the impossibility of safely playing monarchs because such representations reveal the anti-essentialism of the monarchy; monarchs are merely playing a part and are not essentially kings. This would seem to be, on its surface, a

radically subversive idea because early modern drama, according to Wikander, called into question the legitimacy of monarchs and the essential (and necessary) nature of their power. However, Wikander's evidence seems to undermine his argument. For instance, Wikander quotes Elizabeth and James I, who each compare their own performance as monarchs to the performance of stage actors. Elizabeth in 1586 in front of parliament declares, "we Princes, I tell you, are set on stages, in the sight and view of the world duly observed. The eyes of many behold our actions."[54] And James, in an even more public forum, writes in *Basilikon Doron*, "For Kings being publike persons, by reason of their office and authority, are as it were set (as it was said of old) upon a publike stage, in the sight of all the people; where all the beholders eyes are attentively bent to looke and pry in the least circumstance of their secretest drifts."[55] Wikander highlights the apparent discomfort these monarchs felt under the public gaze; however, what strikes me about these passages is not their discomfort, but their candor. Both monarchs openly admit in a public venue that they behave like actors. Indeed, James even mentions that this is an old trope, almost a cliché ("as it was said of old"). Thus, the conclusion Wikander draws from these comments seems odd. He argues, "as Elizabeth and James pointed out, theater embarrasses royalty through its process of demystification."[56] But the monarchs who would benefit from this myth are not attempting to propagate it. They openly admit that they are actors and so would seem to be contributing to the process of demystification that Wikander (and many of the new historicist critics cited above) attribute to early modern drama. It's hard to imagine that Elizabeth or James would be shocked by the kind of anti-essentialist arguments that new historicist critics find in metadrama since they

seem to be expressing it themselves. One imagines the monarchs would respond to such challenges with an apathetic shrug rather than with embarrassment or fear.

Furthermore, as Dollimore points out, (even though he engages in the anti-essential argument) essentialism, as we know it, did not become a dominant ideology until the eighteenth century; it was largely a product of enlightenment rather than early modern thought.[57] If essentialism was not a dominant mode of thought in early modern culture, then it makes little sense to challenge it within metadrama. Early modern drama, according to this strain of new historicism, seems to be challenging an idea that did not exist, or at least was not widely accepted. And as the quotations from James I and Elizabeth suggest, within pre-essentialist and pre-enlightenment England, what we now refer to as anti-essentialism was more or less accepted. That is, we can tentatively equate pre-essentialist and anti-essentialist thought in so far as they are both comfortable with the idea that power and the individual do not exist as essential phenomenon but are largely made up of performance.

This is not to say that early modern drama is never expressing an anti-essentialist (or perhaps more precisely a pre-essentialist) position. Rather I mean to suggest that early modern drama was probably not self-consciously challenging essentialist thought in the Brechtian tradition, which Dollimore suggests shares some affinities with early modern metadrama.[58] What seems more likely is that playwrights were merely expressing and perhaps reifying a widely held view of the individual and political power within their plays instead of providing a radical challenge to these concepts. Thus, explaining metadrama's existence and primary purpose as expressing this radical challenge seems unlikely.

What seems more likely is that early modern drama's preoccupation with metadrama was not a preoccupation with essentialism, but a preoccupation with drama itself. As I suggested in the introduction and will argue throughout this study, playwrights continued to return to the subject of playgoing within their plays in an attempt to come to grips with the concept. The numerous playwrights who produced metadrama were engaging in this discussion and construction of playgoing. Metadrama, then, is primarily interested in playgoing and only secondarily or incidentally (or even accidently) interested in anti-essentialist ideas about the individual and political power.

Of course, this is not to say that early modern drama was completely disengaged from politics. Criticism of the last thirty years has thoroughly shown that early modern drama intervened in numerous political debates throughout the early modern era. I am simply suggesting that metadrama, as a technique, was not used primarily to make the specific interventions cited above. In fact, I am not even suggesting that metadrama was completely disengaged from *all* politics. As I previously suggested and will continue to argue below, early modern playwrights' construction of playgoing, which took place largely within metadrama, was influenced by the political and economic situation of the theater and was seeking to intervene in this situation. So the period's metadrama, looked at from this perspective, was intervening in the politics of the stage, not the politics of the state.

III: Outlining the Social Formation of Playgoing: Structural Causality and Progressive Epistemology

This view of metadrama also helps explain why most metadramatic plays construct playgoing similarly. The politics of the playhouse that produced the economic need to control the unruly audiences influenced all playwrights who worked within that political situation, so producing a non-reactive playgoer was in the interests of most early playwrights; consequently, most early modern playwrights constructed playgoing similarly.

The economic imperative of metadrama may demonstrate why the playwrights produced similar ideas about playgoing, but it does not explain how this construction took place. That is, the historical situation of playgoing may provide a reason why playwrights constructed playgoing the way they did, but it does not provide the historical process through which this construction was formed. To explain the historical process, I will be employing a Marxist concept of history developed by Louis Althusser, adapted to literary critical uses by Fredric Jameson, and expanded (as well as critiqued) by Alain Badiou. Although I do not claim to follow strictly the analytical programs of any of these major theorists, their theoretical insights influence much of this study (including the above description of metadrama) and so a description of their ideas – specifically their concepts of structural causality (Althusser and Jameson) and progressive epistemology (Badiou) – should help establish the theoretical foundations of my analysis of early modern drama. Furthermore, by using their techniques and theories, I will avoid some of the pitfalls and weaknesses of previous studies that touch on the same questions and concerns of the present one, namely those studies that fall under the general category of

performance criticism and new historicism. Although I am not, strictly speaking, producing either a new historicist or performance criticism of early modern drama, this study is involved in the basic questions that both critical schools seek to answer: how does performance work and what is its relationship to the larger culture (performance criticism), and how does literature affect the culture that it inhabits (new historicism)? In addition, these still seem to be the most influential schools of criticism within early modern studies. For instance, Hugh Grady has argued that, within Shakespeare criticism, new historicism has moved past its insurgence phase and has become the "new orthodoxy."[59] And Edward Pechter suggests that the term performance as it is used by performance critics represents "one of the most powerful words in the current critical lexicon."[60] So, it seems, any study of early modern drama that is not consciously taking part in their critical programs and accepting their theoretical assumptions should attempt to demonstrate how it is different from, while still being influenced by them in order to help situate the study within current critical discourse.

Structural causality is perhaps best understood as a theory of historical causality that Althusser believed Marx developed in reaction to Hegel's theories. Althusser argues that when Marx was writing, he only had two models of historical causality to work within: the Cartesian concept of mechanical causality and the Leibnizian notion of expressive causality, which Hegel adopted and Marx more or less inherited. Althusser argues that Marx quickly dismissed mechanical causality as useless but suggests that Marx was more or less forced to employ expressive causality within his critique of capitalism. Althusser argues that expressive causality "presupposed that the whole had a certain nature, precisely the nature of a 'spiritual' whole in which each element was

expressive of the entire totality as a 'pars totalis.'"[61] In other words, society is made up of several different parts or layers. The list of these layers various from thinker to thinker, but generally includes, but is not limited to: ideology, culture, politics and economics.[62]

Althusser calls the entirety of this structure, the social formation. In terms of this study, the social formation of playgoing is made up of all the elements or "levels" of playgoing. So obviously the social formation includes the audience, playwrights, playhouses, and the texts of the plays themselves. However, as we will see, the social formation also includes the economic conditions of the performance, the Master of Revels' office, the Privy Council, and (after Badiou's theories of progressive epistemology are employed) the concept or theory of performance.

According to Hegel and Leibniz this social formation is really just a manifestation or expression of an underlying totality, and the analyst's job is to find these manifestations in order to locate the expressed connection between the parts of the social formation and their underlying cause. The famous "base-superstructure" account of history can be thought of as the result of this theory of causality. The superstructure (all the parts of the social formation) is simply the expression of the economic base.

As Jameson points out, Althusser's problem with this historical model is that it relies on "homologies" or "unreflective unities" in order to function. Jameson offers the example of Lucien Goldmann's *Hidden God*, which claims to find "homologies between class situations, world views, and artistic forms."[63] Jameson explains why he finds this type of analysis troubling:

> What is unsatisfactory about this work of Goldmann's is not the establishment of a historical relationship among these three zones or sectors, but rather the simplistic and mechanical model which is constructed in order to articulate that relationship, and in which it is affirmed that at some level of abstraction the

> "structure" of the three quite different realties of social situation, philosophical or ideological position, and verbal and theatrical practice are "the same." [64]

Jameson is suggesting here that Althusser's critique of homologies and expressive causality is still relevant because this practice of relying on homologies to link disparate parts of society through a generalized concept is widely used in literary and social criticism.

Indeed, despite Jameson's and Althusser's critique, expressive causality and its reliance on homologies seem to be still widely used in early modern studies. Performance criticism and new historicism both seem to rely on these concepts. In fact, both are often criticized for their use of homologies (though this term is rarely used). For instance, Edward Pechter has recently argued that performance criticism relies on "totalization" in order to function.[65] That is, performance criticism claims that almost any aspect of society can be shown to be a form of performance. Pechter, drawing on the work of Thomas Postlewait and Tracy C. Davis, argues that

> our "ideas of national identity and imagined history" are now … regularly "constructed" in terms of "performed identity," part of a process by which "the idea of performance" has been "expanded to embrace" a variety of concepts, institutions, and practices, including myth, play, role-playing, ceremony, carnival, everyday life, conventional behavior, religious and social rituals.[66]

Pechter complains that the result of performance criticism is "unlimited interpretive power, but one hard to localize within any particular context" and asserts that "it fixes an impression of *unity*, but only for the moment before itself dissolving into the amorphous expanse it was meant to define."[67] If we place Pechter's complaints in the context of Althusser and Jameson's discussion of historical models, it seems clear that Pechter is accusing performance criticism of relying on homologies and expressive causality.

Performance critics take individual aspects of society and analyze them as an expression of a totalized "culture of performance."

Likewise, new historicism has also been indirectly, and sometimes directly, accused of relying on expressive causality (which is a bit puzzling given its theoretical debt to Althusser). For instance Alan Liu offers an early, enduring and (according to some) largely unaddressed criticism of new historicism; he accuses its practitioners of searching for "*any* subject able to tell us what *it* is (authority, author, identity, ideology, consciousness, humanity) that connects the plural to the dominant, historical context to literary text, and so creates a single movement of culture."[68] Leeds Barrol, Jean E. Howard and Jameson himself have made similar pronouncements.[69] More recently, Zachary Lesser and Luke Wilson, both drawing on Liu, have observed that new historicism often resorts, or is said to resort, to what Wilson calls "voodoo of resemblance" when forced to make "difficult connections between historical phenomena."[70] Is this not the same complaint that Althusser has of Hegel and Jameson of Goldmann? That is, new historicists are attempting to find the underlying concept or force that is expressed in the various aspects of society. In other words, what Wilson calls "voodoo of resemblance," Jameson calls "homologies." Since performance criticism and new historicism seem to be falling into the same theoretical pitfalls of expressive causality, Althusser's alternative, structural causality, should help this study avoid those traps.

For Althusser, the key difference between expressive causality and structural causality is that within expressive causality the parts of society are merely expressions of the whole, or "expressive causality," as Robert Paul Resch suggests, "reduces the

effectivity of the elements to reflections of an essence (X, Y, and Z are all really manifestations of A, the single, independent, and omnipresent variable)."[71] Althusser insists that within structural causality, "*the whole existence of the structure consists of its effects*, in short that the structure, which is merely a specific combination of its peculiar elements, is nothing outside its effects."[72] What ultimately causes these effects is Althusser's "absent cause." He coincidentally uses the metaphor of drama to explain the absence or non-existence of the cause of the structure:

> the mode of existence of the stage direction (*mise en scene*) of the theatre which is simultaneously its own stage, its own script, its own actors, the theater whose spectators can, on occasion, be spectators only because they are first of all forced to be its actors, caught by the constraints of a script and parts whose authors they cannot be, since it is in essence *an authorless theatre*.[73]

This cause then should not be thought of as a real occurrence. Alex Callinicos helpfully explains Althusser's purpose in calling the cause "absent":

> What Althusser is trying to hammer home to us is the shift from treating a cause as a thing ... from something that can be immediately or ultimately pointed to, grasped hold of, to treating it as the displacements effected by the structure of a whole upon its elements …. Reality is not something underlying these appearances, it is the structured relation of these appearances.[74]

Or to phrase it in more philosophical language, the absent cause is not a material agent of change, but rather is a condition of possibility; by locating or inserting the absent cause, the possibility of the entire structure emerges. I will be arguing that the absent cause in the social formation of playgoing is the empty concept of the playgoer and the playwrights' attempt to construct a non-reactive playgoer to fill that empty concept.

It needs to be mentioned that even though Althusser understands the ultimate cause of history as absent, he still insists that "in the last instance," the structure of history is determined through economic forces, thereby asserting the classic Marxist

notion of economic determinism. This assertion of economic determinism has puzzled some social theorists who draw on Althusser.[75] Indeed the economic determinism of the absent cause seems counterintuitive; how can an absent thing or idea be determined through material forces? Resch helps resolve this apparent conflict by reminding us,

> By the term mode of production Althusser and Balibar mean not only the forces and relations of production but also their social conditions of existence and the reproduction of these social conditions. Thus the concept of a mode of production refers not simply to the economic instance … but also to the level of the social formation itself, insofar as other, non-economic instances are essential to the reproduction of the forces and relations of production.[76]

By focusing his historical analysis on "the reproduction of the modes of production," Althusser can assert economic determinism, while still asserting the complexity of the overall structure, including non-economic aspects of the structure.

Indeed, the concept of economic determinism in the last instance can help make sense of how the historical conditions of playgoing (outlined above) and the social formation of playgoing are connected. The concept of the playgoer (the absent cause) was constructed by the playwrights in such a way as to ensure that the theaters would not be shut down; they attempted to create a non-reactive playgoer to control the unruly audiences, whose activities could result in the closing of the theaters and the non-reproduction of the modes of production. The absent cause of the social formation of playgoing is in fact economically determined, "in the last instance."

Althusser's student Badiou seems to pick up on this idea of absent cause but applies it not to the structures of society but to the evolution of knowledge in order to form what he calls a progressive epistemology. Badiou's link between the ontology of history and epistemology is significant to this study because it links the absent cause to both the production of new knowledge and the structure of the social formation. This is a

link that I will be relying upon as I argue that by attempting to produce the concept of the playgoer through metadrama, early modern drama was also able to produce the entire structure of the social formation of playgoing (ontological history), which included a theory of performance (epistemology).

Badiou imports Althusser's concept of the absent cause (as well as Lacan's concept of the transcendental signifier) into an epistemological discussion and theorizes that new knowledge and new disciplines are produced not by progressively asking and answering questions, but by finding unanswerable questions. In other words, new knowledge is produced not through the accumulation of knowledge, but through the absence of knowledge.[77] Badiou uses an example from the history of mathematics, the creation of imaginary numbers, to explain this process. To vastly simply this history: imaginary numbers were created to solve the problem of the impossibility of the formula $x^2 +1=0$. Once imaginary numbers were created, a whole new domain of mathematics was made possible. This process was only possible through what Badiou calls "the void" – a lack or absence. Something had to be put in its place, "the vanishing term," which then enabled new discussions, ideas, solutions and even disciplines. As Badiou declares, "The void is casual."[78] Badiou broadens this example to suggest that this is always how all new knowledge is produced.[79]

If we combine Althusser's structural causality and Badiou's progressive epistemology through the concept of the absent cause and apply it to early modern dramatic culture, we can begin to see how the construction of playgoing took place, while also avoiding the homologies often relied upon by performance criticism and new historicism.[80] Simply put, this process works as follows (see the diagram at the end of

the chapter for a representation of this process): early moderns experienced a phenomenon, playgoing, for which they did not have an adequate concept.

To fill this absence or void, early modern playwrights created an imaginary concept of playgoers. The concept they produced was that of the non-reactive playgoer. The non-reactive playgoer as a material thing never really existed – by all accounts unruly audiences existed throughout the period – but once this concept was asserted, its effects can be noticed throughout the social formation of playgoing because the effects are what make up the social formation. At the same time, this concept of the non-reactive playgoer produced new ideas about performance; it allowed or even forced the playwrights to construct a coherent theory of performance. Furthermore, both these processes, "in the last instance," are economically determined since the concept of the non-reactive playgoer was created in order to save the playhouses from being shut down and so was an effort to reproduce the modes of production – the playhouses themselves. Of course none of this is that simple. The purpose of this study is to trace the complexity of the process more carefully by analyzing texts which demonstrate the effects of the social formation.

Beyond producing what I believe is an accurate representation of how the concept of playgoing was constructed in early modern drama, the process above also should help this study avoid the use of homologies, which, as shown above, are produced through a reliance on expressive causality. I won't be employing homologies or expressive causality because I will not be suggesting that each text and level of the social formation is an expression or reflection of the concept of the non-reactive playgoer and the economic imperative that produces that concept. Rather, I will be arguing that the concept of the non-reactive playgoer has certain effects on the social formation and the

theory of early modern drama (and in fact both are constitutive of those effects). Each level of the social formation and each aspect of the theory remain independent, or in Althusserian language, each level or aspect remains "relatively autonomous." The whole of the social formation is only recognizable once the entire structure is grasped, at which point the relative autonomy is overcome. So for instance, I will be arguing below that the effects of the non-reactive playgoer can be seen in early modern censorship practices, but early modern censorship practices are not, in and of themselves, expressions of the non-reactive playgoer. The effects are only recognizable by inserting the concept of the non-reactive playgoer and tracing its effect within censorship practices. And as we will see throughout this study, these effects are often surprising and not intuitively connected to the construction of playgoing.

IV: Early Modern Drama as Event: The Blind Spots of Structural Causality

At this point one may object that the above process is reflexive or circular: in order to determine the structure of the social formation and the theory of playgoing the absent cause must be located, but the absent cause can only be found through an analysis of the structure. This circularity is explored by Badiou when he attempts to account for structural change within Althusser's theory of structural casualty. This theory of change is necessary (and considered unfinished in Althusser's work) because, after all, a social formation is not created *ex nihilo,* but is formed out of a previous social formation.[81] Indeed, the social formation of early modern playgoing, as many theater historians have shown (but without using these terms) was formed out of the social formation of

medieval drama.[82] To account for historical change or periodization, Badiou explores the concepts of the event and the situation. For Badiou the event is that which is produced through change; the event is relatively equivalent to a new social formation (e.g. early modern playgoing); the situation is the conditions in which that event takes place (e.g. unruly audiences and their political and economic consequences). Feltham describes Badiou's theory of event and situation as follows:

> The first characteristic of the event is that it is local and does not take place across an entire situation, but occurs at a particular point in the situation: the eventual site. The second characteristic is its absolute contingency: nothing prescribes the occurrence of an event; the existence of an eventual site is a necessary but non-sufficient condition. Here Badiou places the error of deterministic theories of change; they confuse the existence of an eventual site with the existence of change. The third characteristic of the event is that it is undecidable whether it belongs to the situation or not. … This [leads to] the fourth characteristic of the event, its reflexivity. In order to identify an event and decide its belonging – by investigating its elements – one must thus have already have identified it, because it is one of its elements.[83]

Badiou develops a complex truth procedure to determine how accurate the connection is between a particular event and situation, but what is of particular interest here is how Badiou identifies the consequences of the historical models he and Althusser advocate.[84] These consequences represent an abandonment of some of the ambition of Althusser and Jameson and jettison some of the orthodox Marxism of both thinkers. By doing so, Badiou's analysis will define some of this study's shortcomings. That is, when early modern playgoing is treated as a relatively static event and not as a fluid diachronic process, certain aspects of playgoing cannot be accounted for.

For instance, the project is necessarily reflexive or circular (as Badiou's third and fourth characteristics assert) and somewhat arbitrary (as his second characteristic asserts). Thus, there is no logical guarantee that my description of how early modern playgoing

was constructed is correct – that the situation had anything to do with the event. All I can do is demonstrate that the effects of the non-reactive playgoer are present in the texts and material condition of playgoing, which suggests that the non-reactive playgoer is actually an absent cause of the structure of playgoing. Badiou puts it this way, "verify, via the excedentary choice of a proper name [of the absent cause or void], the unpresentable alone as existent; on its basis the Ideas will subsequently cause all admissible forms of presentation to proceed."[85] Feltham phrases the circularity of the process in less idiosyncratic language: "In order to know what kind of multiple the event is, one already needs to know what it is, then the identity of the event is suspended from the acquisition of a knowledge that one evidently does not yet posses. However, when one does come to possess this knowledge, one will have already possessed it."[86]

Furthermore, according to Badiou's second and third characteristics, there is nothing necessary about the connection between the event and situation. That is, an unruly audience does not guarantee the social formation of early modern drama. After all and as previously pointed out, unruly audiences exist throughout history, and these unruly audiences did not produce similar social formations. This means that no universal lessons can be gleaned from this study. Its conclusions only apply to the event of early modern drama.

This leads to another consequence, an abandonment of an orthodox Marxist (and Hegelian) theory of history. For the traditional Marxist, history can be viewed through the interpretive lens of the material dialectic as one long narrative of class struggle. But according to Badiou's analysis of the event and situation, there is no single narrative, or what Lyotard calls a "master narrative," only a serious of localized events.[87] This leads

Badiou to state "There is no History, only histories."[88] This is in direct conflict with Jameson's, more traditionally Marxist, assertion at the beginning of *The Political Unconscious*:

> only a genuine philosophy of history is capable of respecting the specificity and radical difference of the social and cultural past while disclosing the solidarity of its polemics and passions, its forms, structures, experiences, and struggles, with those of the present day.[89]

For Jameson, the "philosophy of history" is, in large part, Althusser's structural causality, which he adapts in order to maintain an orthodox Marxist notion of history. Of course Althusser did not want to give up on a grand narrative theory of history either. Indeed, *The Political Unconscious* can be read as Jameson's attempt to save Althusser from producing exactly the type of conclusions that Badiou, probably unwillingly, comes to.[90]

But Badiou's insights points out the shortcomings of analyzing a social construction in the Althusserian tradition. This study, while perhaps avoiding homologies, cannot produce grand narratives of history, or plug the early modern narrative into this larger history. Early modern drama, drama from the mid 1570s to 1642, will be treated as one synchronic event that may have nothing to do with other synchronic events. Indeed, treating this period as one event and not as a diachronic narrative is somewhat problematic. There are aspects of drama that changed throughout the era. For instance, there are probably some differences between John Lyly's theories of performance and those of Shakespeare, or between Shakespeare's theories and John Ford's. And there are historical situations throughout the period that may have changed the social formation of drama: for instance, the construction of the second Blackfriars Theater in the late 1590s or the publication of Jonson's folio in 1616. Indeed, by finding a

different absent cause within those other situations, a whole different social formation would emerge (Badiou's second characteristic).

Despite the possible circularity and arbitrariness of the above process, this study will attempt to argue that the absent cause of the concept of the non-reactive playgoer within the situation of the unruly playgoer produces a structure of the social formation of playgoing and that this particular process is recognizable within numerous early modern texts. The truth procedure for the accuracy of this description can only really be the readers' acceptance of my readings of these texts. That is, this process of identifying the absent cause of the social formation in order to describe the social formation will only be circular if my readings of individual texts, which are the effects of this absent cause, are unconvincing.

V: Describing the Social Formation of Playgoing: Transcoding with Speech Acts

Beyond supplying the absent cause in order to locate the structure of the social formation of playgoing, it is also necessary to find a way to describe that social formation and demonstrate how the different levels of the structure are related. Jameson supplies the analytical tool that can be used to describe the relationship between the levels. He calls this technique transcoding. Transcoding is Jameson's take on the classical Marxist analytical technique of mediation. According to Jameson, mediation is a technique for locating "connections among seemingly disparate phenomena of social life generally."[91] Transcoding provides a linguistic basis for this process since transcoding involves,

> the invention of a set of terms, the strategic choice of a particular code or language, such that the same terminology can be used to analyze and articulate

> two quite distinct types of objects or "texts," or two very different structural levels of reality. Mediations are thus a device of the analyst, whereby the fragmentation and autonomization, the compartmentalization and specialization of the various regions of social life … is at least locally overcome, on the occasion of a particular analysis.[92]

Thus, by transcoding between the different levels of the social formation of playgoing, the relationship between the levels can be described as can the entire social formation. Furthermore, transcoding can be used to compare the relationship between the various specialized languages found within the early modern metadramatic plays. For instance, if we think that Webster's use of the language of marriage law in *The Duchess of Malfi* and Jonson's use of the language of reputation in *Epicene* are the effects of the same absent cause (the non-reactive playgoer), then a set of terms needs to be found that can accurately describe what both plays are doing. The actual languages of the plays remain distinctly different, but this difference is overcome through the transcoding process. In short, where the absent cause is used to locate the structure and its effects, the transcoding process is used to describe that structure. However, these two processes (locating the absent cause and transcoding) should probably not be thought of has completely separate activities. In order to locate the absent cause, the structure has to be described though transcoding, but in order to describe the structure, the absent cause must be found. This produces the kind of recursive analytical process that Badiou describes and I reproduce above.

For reasons that will (only) become clear through the transcoding process, speech act theory's terms will provide this "particular code" which is able to unite "at least locally" these plays, subjects and languages (or more simply texts). Specifically, J.L. Austin's distinction between constatives and performatives and Searle's concept of

institutional (as opposed to brute) reality will be employed in the transcoding process, a process that will start with a partial analysis of early modern censorship practices.

Before starting this process, the terms of speech act theory need to be briefly defined since I will be using them in a fairly specific (and maybe simplistic) way. In the first lecture of Austin's *How to do Things with Words,* Austin makes the rather obvious, but previously unarticulated, distinction between language that describes things and language which does things. The former he calls constatives; the latter he calls performatives. While constatives simply describe preexisting reality, performatives are able to create reality through their articulation. Performative utterances are able to say something at the same time that they are able to do something. Austin gives the example of betting and marrying. To say "I bet" is not to describe reality, but is what constitutes the act of betting, just as saying "I do" or "I now pronounce you man and wife" creates the reality of the marriage.[93] For Austin, the significance of the performative is that performative utterances are neither true nor false and so cannot be subject to truth tests.

This rather simple distinction between performative and constative utterances has been significantly complicated both within Austin's text and within the debate surrounding that text. Most notably, this distinction has been challenged on philosophical grounds in the now famous debate between Austin's champion John Searle and Jacques Derrida.[94] However, I am not interested in the philosophical validity of the distinction. I am interested in their utilitarian value as transcoding terms. Indeed, this initial insight by Austin minus the later complications will provide the key to my analysis of early modern playgoing because, as I will be arguing throughout the study, but particularly in chapters two and three, early modern playwrights seem to have tried to construct stage utterances

as performative utterances. Obviously, playwrights did not have speech act theory's terminology; nevertheless, Austin's terms seem to accurately describe how playwrights throughout the period thought and wrote about their own performances within metadramatic texts. Because these metadramatic texts seem to be hinting at this distinction between performative and constative utterances, the terms provide a useful tool to transcode between the various levels of the social formation of playgoing.

This is not the first study that uses speech act theory to analyze early modern drama; however, my use of the theory is distinctly different from most critics' uses. When speech act theory is used to analyze early modern drama, it is usually used to describe how language works within a play.[95] I will be using speech act terminology to describe how performance works within the playhouse. This is perhaps a subtle but, I believe, crucial distinction. I will be arguing that playwrights constructed stage utterances to work according to speech act theory's distinction between constative and performative utterances. I will, in a sense, be historicizing speech acts. The early modern critics that use speech act theory tend to take a universal view of the theory and use it as a way of describing how language always works; however, as Stanley Fish has shown in his critique of the use of speech act theory in early modern drama, this technique really only works when the play is actually about speech acts.[96] Otherwise, the application of speech act theory is relatively arbitrary. One can simply choose any text and run it through a speech act analysis, so there is nothing specifically useful about its application to early modern drama since it doesn't demonstrate anything about early modern drama; it simply shows how language always works. Early modern drama becomes a kind of test case to see if speech act theory is correct. In other words, Fish is suggesting that unless a

dramatic text is about speech acts, then using the theory to describe early modern drama produces a study that is actually about speech acts and not about early modern drama. However, I will be arguing, in effect, that plays, or at least metadramatic plays, are almost always about speech acts because they are constructing stage utterances to work as speech acts. This is why speech act terminology can be used to transcode between the different texts and levels of the social formation. Furthermore, this construction tells us something significant about early modern playgoing. Speech act theories terms are not merely a means towards describing how playgoing was constructed; they are not an end in and of themselves.

Indeed, beyond providing the transcoding terms, this insight – that playwrights constructed stage utterances to act like performative utterances – also has a profound effect on the construction of the non-reactive playgoer. As I will argue more thoroughly in the second chapter, this construction of performative stage utterances meant that the performance's object was not the audience but reality itself. In other words, early modern performance (as imagined within the play and constructed within the culture) was not designed to impact or affect the audience. This construction makes perfect sense if we consider the audience's political, legal and economic predicament outline above. That is, the theaters were always working under the threat of being shut down, in part, because the audiences behaved in an unruly way and because the theater's political opponents linked the behavior of the audience with the content of the performance. Thus, by positioning the audience as the non-object of the performance, the playwrights were able to deny the anti-theatrical position. The connection between the actions of the audience and the content of the performances, a link the antitheatrical writers insisted upon, is

theoretically severed. Furthermore, the audience itself was being constructed through this process. They were being encouraged to not see themselves as the object of the performance and so were being trained not to be affected by the performance. And if they were unaffected they would be less likely to react to the performance. Of course at the same time this training process was underway, they were being affected by the performance in so far as their reactions were being shaped by that performance. In a strange reversal, they were being affected by the performance to become unaffected by performance.

This construction, if it worked, would have helped solve the playwrights' legal problems. The less unruly the audience's behavior, the less likely it would be for the playwrights to be punished for the actions of their audience. Indeed, even if the audience did react to the performance, the playwrights would have constructed a theory of performance which could give them deniability since, according to them, performances do not work by affecting the audience, so the audience must have been acting independently of the performance.

Indeed, this construction of stage utterances offers a rather elegant solution to the legal and political problems posed by unruly audiences. By constructing stage utterances as performative, the playwrights could, in a sense, have their cake and eat it too. They could contain the unruly audiences that posed political and legal problems while still allowing themselves room to explore controversial or even subversive ideas. Under this construction of playgoing, the content of the performance was immaterial, giving the playwrights the freedom to write about anything they wished, and it is clear that their subject matter was often controversial. Although metadrama, in so far as it attempted to

control the unruly audience, was, as I suggest above, a conservative attempt at maintaining the *status quo,* this construction also allowed the playwrights to explore subversive and possibly radical ideas. The medium may have been conservative, but the message did not have to be.

But even while this construction of stage utterances solves some of the practical problems the playwrights faced, it also raised philosophical or theoretical problems: if the object of stage performance was reality, what was the nature of this reality; that is, what is the ontology of stage performances; if the stage utterances did not affect the audience, what was drama's efficacy or what was its purpose? Was it, just like the audiences, quarantined – locked in a self-referential world where its content did not matter? By saving stage performance from political and legal repercussions, did the playwrights drain their own performances of any efficacy?

To answer these questions it is useful to import another speech act term coined by another speech act theorist – John Searle's institutional reality, a concept that helps explain the ontology of performative speech acts and so of early modern stage utterances. In his early work, *Speech Acts*, and in his later text, *The Social Creation of Reality*, Searle maintains a strict distinction between forms of reality that are constituted by language and those that are not.[97] To make this distinction he argues that some features of reality can only be described through brute facts and others through institutional facts. He describes this distinction as follows:

> We need to distinguish between *brute facts* such as the fact that the sun is ninety-three million miles from the earth and *institutional* facts such as the fact that Clinton is president. Brute facts exist independently of any human institutions; institutional facts can exist only within human institutions. Brute facts require the institution of language in order that we can *state* the facts, but the brute facts *themselves* exist quite independently of language or of any other institution. …

> Institutional facts, on the other hand, require special human institutions for their very existence. Language is one such institution; indeed, it is a whole set of such institutions.[98]

Searle goes on to point out that institutional facts are largely governed by language, and most of this linguistic governing is done by performative utterances.

> One of the most fascinating features of institutional facts is that a very larger [sic] number, though by no means all of them, can be created by explicit performative utterances … Institutional facts can be created with the performative utterance of such sentences as "the meeting is adjourned," "I give and bequeath my entire fortune to my nephew," "I appoint you chairman," "War is hereby declared," etc. These utterances create the very state of affairs that they represent; and in each case, the state of affairs is an institutional fact. [99]

Even though institutional reality is not completely constitutive of performative utterances, performative utterances always create institutional reality because they always construct a reality that is dependent on language.[100]

Searle's bifurcation of reality can be usefully applied to early modern dramatic stage utterances in order to explain the efficacy of performance and the way in which performative stage utterances work to produce a non-reactive playgoer. If stage utterances were constructed as performative, then those utterances' primary object was institutional reality and not the audience, as it is within a humanist/rhetorical model of performance. In other words, by constructing stage utterances as performative and not as rhetorical, playwrights were able to shift the object of performance away from the audience and towards institutional reality. And if the audience was not the object of performance, then they would be less likely to react to a performance. Indeed, as previously suggested, within a rhetorical model of performance, the purpose of the performance is to produce action within the audience. Performative stage utterances counter this model of performance by making the audience the non-object of

performance. And since audiences already were reacting to performances (as previously argued), this model attempted to convince the audience that they should not react since they were not performance's rhetorical object.

And far from draining the performances of efficacy, this construction may be understood as heightening performance's impact by redirecting its efficacy. Early modern stage utterances did not have to be filtered through the audience to gain efficacy; their content directly affected institutional reality. For instance, as we will see in chapter two, when the concept of marriage is performed on stage, it does not have to be submitted to the judgment of the audience because, as Austin shows, performative utterances are not subject to truth tests – they are neither true nor false, correct nor incorrect, they simply are. The performance creates institutional reality, and the audience simply has to accept that reality. By constructing stage utterances as performative, playwrights were able, at least theoretically, to produce a non-reactive audience and grant their performances ontological efficacy.

By arguing that playwrights constructed stage utterances as performative, I do not mean to suggest that they created this construction out of thin air or in some way anticipated Searle and Austin. Like most concepts, the performative utterance has a history. Tracing this history is well beyond the scope of this project, but it is useful (and relatively easy) to speculate on what it might be in order to demonstrate that assigning speech act terms to early modern drama needn't be an anachronism. For instance, performative stage utterances can be easily traced to Catholic religious rites. Communion and confession both assume the power of utterances to perform real actions. There are of course important differences between performative stage utterances and these two rites:

communion was (and is) supposed to affect, quite literally, brute reality (i.e. bread), not institutional reality; and confession, by its nature, does not have an audience. However, these sacraments provide historical examples of performative utterances that had currency in early modern London. Catholic thought did not completely disappear after the Act of Supremacy and the Act of Unity in the late 1550's, nor did performative utterances disappear from the protestant church – transubstantiation still existed as a concept within protestant discourse. Magical speech provides another historical example of performative utterances. Again, magic tends to affect brute and not institutional reality, but it too shows that early modern dramatic culture did not have to invent performative utterances out of thin air. Indeed, Stuart Clark has shown that magic was very much a part of the culture well into the Enlightenment period; prominent and influential intellectuals, and not just the "superstitious masses" seemed to have taken magic very seriously throughout the early modern era.[101] Perhaps most significantly, we can look to theatrical shows of state for historical precedents of performative utterances. New historicist critics, without using speech act terms, have long pointed out the importance of coronations, processions, and other shows of state in the creation of the institutional reality of the monarchy.[102] As argued above, these critics usually use this insight to illustrate the anti-essentialism of drama. However, my take on how performative utterances were constructed suggests that drama did not attempt to undermine the performative nature of these shows of state, but drew on their assumptions to construct stage utterances as performative – as accomplishing the same feat as shows of state.

This shows, again, how my take on metadrama differs from the anti-essentialist position described above. New historicists sometimes argue that metadrama challenges

an essentialist position, but I am arguing that early modern dramatists drew on the anit- or pre-essentialism of their culture to claim that their performances were able to create institutional reality. That is, since the culture tended to see institutions, like the monarchy, as constitutive of performance, playwrights claimed that their performances were constructing those institutions or in other words, their stage utterances were performative.

One more, though by no means a final, example: marriage ceremonies and other legal performances also work because of a reliance on performative utterances. Marriage ceremonies were understood, just as they are today, as verbal acts that produced an institution. Indeed, in the next chapter I will demonstrate that Webster drew explicit parallels between the way that marriages work and the way that stage performances work in order to construct stage utterances as performance.

Apart from the final example, I can offer very little proof that any of these ideas made their way into theatrical culture. Indeed, it would probably take a full length study of the social history of the concept of speech acts to illustrate the above claims – a study that to my knowledge has not yet been written. However, scholars of early modern drama have argued that some of these cultural phenomena did influence the theater. For instance, David Hawkes has argued that magical thinking was very much a part of dramatic culture and argues that performative language is something that links these two discourses.[103] And numerous critics have argued that playwrights used the Catholic mass as a model for their own performances either to replace Catholicism with a secular art form or to show sympathy with Catholics.[104] The goal of this project, however, is not to trace the genealogy of performative utterances, but to locate it within social formation of

playgoing and to describe its impact on that formation, while keeping in mind that early modern dramatic culture probably did not invent the concept even if it did used it for its own purposes.

VI: The Transcoding Process: Speech Acts and Censorship Practices

Before looking at the individual texts that, in large part, make up this social formation of playgoing, I would first like to ground the construction of stage utterances as performative in an extra-textual layer of the social formation – censorship as practiced by the Master of Revels. Richard Burt has effectively argued, without using these terms, that the Master of Revels was very much a part of the social formation of playgoing in that he was intimately involved in the operation of early modern drama and not merely its antagonist or blocking figure.[105] Indeed, since the Master of Revels was paid by the playwrights to censor their plays, he was not immune to the economic imperative of the playhouse I describe above; if the playhouses were closed, his income would be severally reduced.[106] Thus, the censor's office fits nicely into the social formation. If the Master of Revels was a part of the social formation of playgoing, then the effects of the absent cause of the non-reactive playgoer will be present in this level of the social formation. By describing that effect, I hope to offer proof that the social formation of playgoing really did construct stage utterances as performative and further describe how these concepts fit within early modern drama – a description that will carry into the next chapter but will be relied upon throughout the project.

The manuscript of *Sir Thomas More* provides the best evidence of early modern censorship in existence. Indeed, it represents one of only a handful of manuscripts with the Master of Revels' signature and the only one with extensive notes detailing how the play was censored. Because of the dearth of evidence, we can't know if Tilney's censorship method is representative of all censorship throughout the period, so I will not be suggesting that all of early modern censorship operated according to the performative/constative distinction.[107] But what I will suggest is that the censorship of *Sir Thomas More* demonstrates that Tilney understood stage utterances to be performative and that the basic techniques of censorship found in *Sir Thomas More* can plausibly be indentified in other texts, which suggest that this view of stage utterances was more widely accepted than this one isolated incident.

At the start of the play, Tilney warns the author(s) that the insurrection scene needs to be amended.[108] Tilney has written in the margins, "Leave out the insurrection wholy and the Cause ther off and begin with Sir Thomas Moore att the mayors session with a reportt afterwards off his good service don … only by A short reportt and nott otherwise att your own perilles."[109] As previously observed, and as scholars of censorship have noted, there was good reason for Tilney to be anxious about riots; riots were common in sixteenth century England and not unknown to occur within the playhouse itself.[110] So it is not surprising that the riot scene drew the attention of the censor. What does seem surprising is that he allowed it to make it into the play at all. That is, although he doesn't let the scene be performed, he does allow it to be discussed on stage. This technique of cutting scenes and having them replaced by a "reportt" does not seem to be isolated to *Sir Thomas More* although the manuscript of the play does provide the best

direct evidence of such a technique. As Dorthy Auchter notes, Tilney "was known to object to the *enactment* of controversial scenes on stage. He was generally willing to permit controversial actions to occur off stage, with the events being *recounted* on stage by secondary characters."[111] Clare reaches a conclusion similar to Auchter: "Tilney was anxious to have the portrayal of seditious events abridged, or reported rather than enacted."[112] Why would Tilney believe that recounting dangerous content was acceptable and enacting that same content was unacceptable?

This question can be answered by applying Austin's distinction between constatives and performatives and by transcoding between Tilney's censorship practices and early modern playwrights' attempt within metadrama to control the unruly audiences through the construction of performative stage utterances. As Clare notes, Tilney's strategy was to allow recounting of certain incidents, but to not allow them to be enacted. To enact a scene means to present or perform a series of actions (in the above example a riot) in front of an audience. To recount means to refer through narration to a prior series of actions. Tilney's distinction between recounting and enacting is very similar to the constative/performative distinction. Constatives are utterances that describe prior actions, and performatives are utterances that create the action as they are describing it. In other words, whereas performatives enact real actions, constatives recount actions. Thus, when Tilney is demanding a recounting, he is demanding a constative speech act, an utterance that is describing and referring to a prior action. His anxiety then over a performance of a riot seems to be an anxiety over performative language since the enactment of a scene would be a performative, in that it would describe the riot at the same time that it is producing a riot.

It is now perhaps clear why Tilney was so keen on having the production of a riot moved off stage. If he had allowed the performance to be staged, the performed riot would have produced the real actions of a riot. This is not to say that the audience would have confused the fictional riot on stage for a real flesh and blood riot (more on this distinction in the third chapter). As Searle reminds us, performative utterances don't create brute reality, but construct institutional reality. Thus, if the riot would had been performed, the riot would have been institutionally real. By institutionally real, I mean that it would have all of the institutional effects of a real riot with none of the material or, in Searle's terms, brute effects. Riots, of course, have numerous effects beyond their brute destruction of material; they express displeasure, voice dissent or solidify opposition. But perhaps a riot's most obvious and central object is the institution of the state. Riots destabilize state institutions. Moving, and thereby quarantining, the riot off stage was enough to make the play acceptable because it no longer contained an institutionally real riot, which had the power to destabilize the state. Tilney's scene, a constative recounting of a riot, would not have had the ability to produce these institutionally real effects.

Tilney's manuscript is the only direct evidence of a censor moving a riot off stage in order to make the play acceptable; however, there is circumstantial evidence that this practice was more wide spread that just this single occurrence, for as Clare reminds us, "behind some of the … dramatic texts of the period, there may lie a censored document."[113] Indeed, the extant forms of *The Life and Depth of Jack Straw* and Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* suggest they too were censored or self-censored in accordance

with Tilney's anxiety over staged riots, which further suggests that these two plays also understood stage utterances as performative.

Several critics have dealt with the seemingly harsh treatment that *Sir Thomas More* receives as opposed to the supposedly lenient treatment that *Jack Straw* and *Coriolanus* received. The plays were written within ten years of one another and each contains a "riot scene," yet only *Sir Thomas More* seems to have been censored. Clare uses this discrepancy to propose that "in the early Jacobean period there was some relaxation of censorship."[114] Taking a different approach, Dutton observes that the riots in *Sir Thomas More* may reference or echo the anti-alien riots that occurred in London throughout the 1590's. The riots in *Coriolanus*, on the other hand, mirror the corn riots that occurred in Midland in 1607. Dutton believes that Tilney was more concerned with London proper than he was with any rural uprising; thus, he was only concerned with *Sir Thomas More*.[115] However, I am not convinced that *Coriolanus* was not censored. Indeed, internal evidence seems to suggest that Shakespeare's play was censored (either by Tilney, his successor Buc or Shakespeare himself) and was censored in the same way that Tilney censored *Sir Thomas More*: the performance of a riot was moved off stage.[116] The narrative of *Coriolanus* does, in a broad sense, depict a riot; however this riot is actually made up of the representation of a recounting of a riot, not a representation of an enactment. The riot occurs in the first scene and critics often refer to it as "the initial riot scene." Indeed, the opening stage directions clearly set the stage for a riot: "Enter a company of mutinous Citizens with staves, clubs, and other weapons." However, what follows is not the enactment of riot, but the makings of a riot, discourse concerning riots and a description of a separate riot. The "mutinous Citizens" described in the stage

direction never actually mutiny – the adjective never becomes a verb. Menenius and Coriolanus stop the mob before they actually start to riot. Beyond the "mutinous Citizens" potential riot, there is another riot occurring, but it is occurring off stage. The Citizens describe this riot as they plan their own: "What shouts are these? The other side o'th' city is risen. Why / stay we prating here? To th' Capitol!" (1.1.39-40) What is found in the text of *Coriolanus* is not an enactment of a riot, but the recounting of a riot. [117]

As with most early modern dramatic texts, we do not have the original manuscript of *Coriolanus* barring the signature and comments of the Master of Revels, so we can't know if he told Shakespeare to, "Leave out the insurrection wholly" and replace it with a "reportt afterwards," as Tilney instructed Munday. And we can't know if there ever was an enactment of a riot; it is entirely possible that Shakespeare only wrote the recounting of the riot that we get in the folio version of the play – the only early modern edition. But either way, the fact that the folio edition contains a recounting and not an enactment suggests that Tilney's injunction against staging riots was observed by Shakespeare. That is, either Shakespeare was censored or he anticipated the censorship and wrote his play in such a way that avoided the Master of Revels' censor. In fact, Shakespeare was well positioned to understand how riots were censored. Shakespeare more than likely worked on the *Sir Thomas More* manuscript about a decade before he wrote *Coriolanus* and so would have known better than to stage a riot.[118]

In any case, it is not necessary to explain the Master of Revels' actions in regards to *Coriolanus* through a narrative of increasing leniency (Clare) or by pointing out the differing content of the plays (Dutton). Each play contains the same technique of censorship which relies on a distinction between enactment and recounting, which points

towards an understanding of stage utterances as performative. Riots are contained by turning performative enactments into constative recounting.

The Life and Death of Jack Straw holds to a similar pattern. There are no riots on stage, merely discourse describing riots. For instance at the beginning of the third act, the Lord Mayor describes to the King the insurrection: "Burning up Bookes and matters of records, / Defacing houses of hostilltie, / Saint *Iones* in Smithfield, the *Savoy* and such like" (3.10.524-527).[119] However, these actions are never represented on stage. It is usually assumed that the printed edition of *Jack Straw* has been cut by the censor; the play's unusually short length and structural inconsistency both point to the censor's intervention.[120] It is impossible to know for sure what was cut by the Revel's office, but I would assume, as does Clare, that much of the rebellion has been cut. Indeed, Clare suggests that the "original version would have included the acts of violence and victimization described by Holinshed.[121] In *Jack Straw*, like *Sir Thomas More* and *Coriolanus*, the riot is described but not performed. There is a recounting but not an enacting.

This is not to say that all riots were recounted and not enacted. Some staged riots clearly did make their way past the censor for reasons that can only be speculated upon. For instance, The Jake Cade scene in *2 Henry VI* is also often compared with *Sir Thomas More* as an example of a representation of an early modern insurrection that was left uncensored. For instance, Clare suggests that *2 Henry VI* was not censored because "the Cade scenes represent more of a parody than a real rebellion."[122] A similar argument might be made to account for the riots in *Julius Caesar*. The play itself is anti-mob, and

so the scenes of rioting are placed within an acceptable context and so drained of their institutional effects.

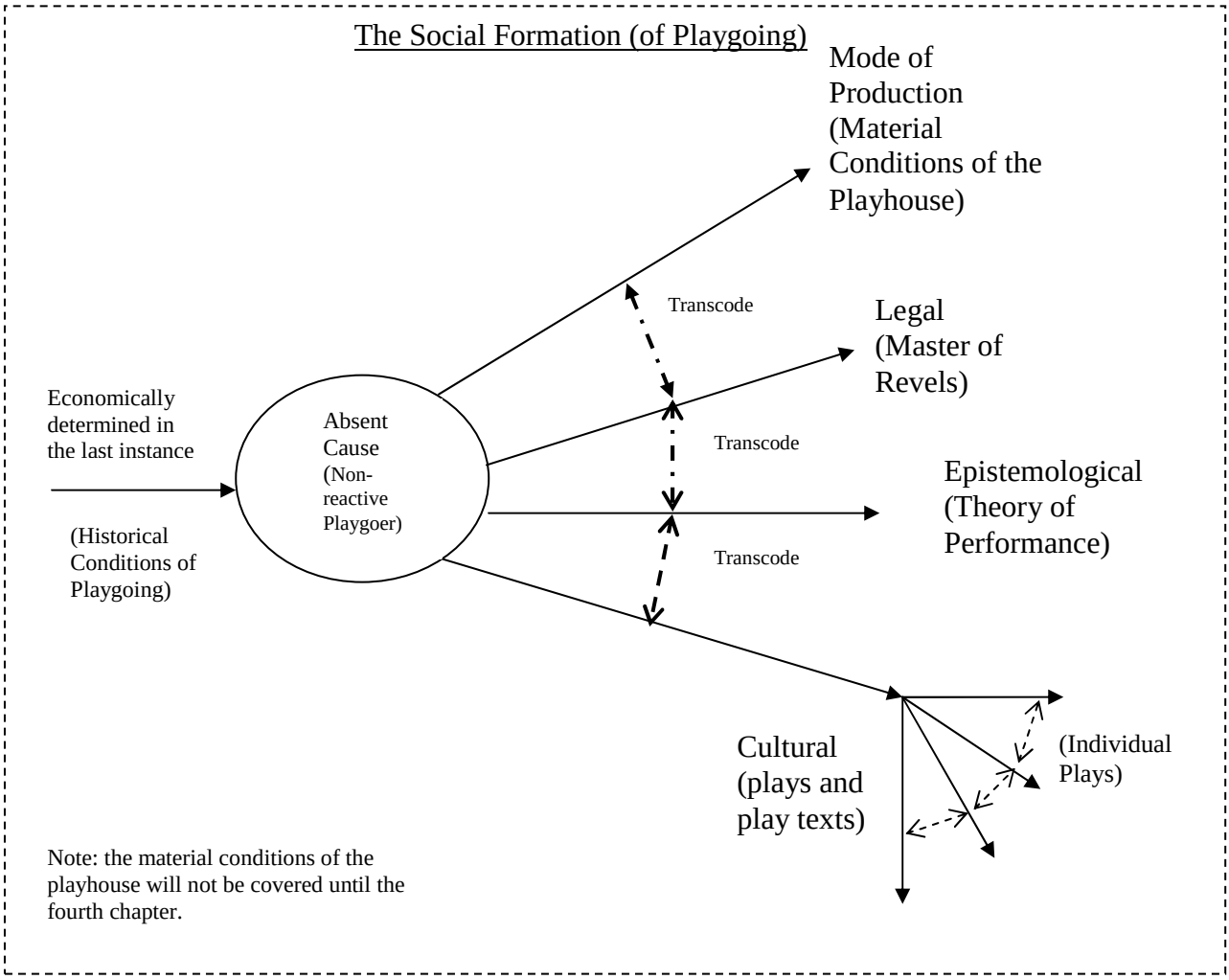
Nevertheless, what the censorship practices of *Sir Thomas More*, *Coriolanus* and *Jack Straw* suggest is that the construction of stage utterances as performative made its way into the censor's office, that is, into the legal level of the social formation of playgoing. Thus, we can trace the effect of the non-reactive playgoer through the construction of performative utterances onto this level of the social formation. Of course, this in and of itself is not enough to prove that stage utterances were constructed as performative; however, by transcoding between censorship practices and the other levels of the social formation of playgoing, this construction will become clearer as will the entire structure of the social formation and its reliance on the absent cause of the non-reactive playgoer.

Of course, I do not mean to suggest that Tilney and the playwrights conspired together to create this construction anymore than I would argue that the playwrights as a group conspired to produce this construction. They all produced the same construction because they all existed within the social formation of playgoing. And it is the economic imperative of the social formation that produced this construction. As Althusser's metaphor of the agentless theater suggests, the construction of playgoing itself is agentless. No one consciously produced it; it arose from the social formation of playgoing. Again, this helps explain why playgoing is constructed similarly throughout the period. The individual playwrights did not need to know what they were constructing or how their construction built on another playwright's construction since, ultimately, they were not the ones doing the constructing.

But of course, locating or denying agency is not that simple: just because the playwrights were not the ultimate agent of this construction because the construction was economically determined "in the last instance," does not mean that the playwrights were not in some ways conscious of the construction or even that they were not the willing agent of that construction. It simply means that the individual playwrights were not ultimately responsible for the entire social formation of playgoing, nor did they need to grasp the entirety of it to produce their individual plays. This is because they did not grasp the ultimate absent cause of the social formation even while they were participating in its effects. As Badiou suggests, "What makes the thing that I [playwright] have to come to know [the effects of the absent cause] enter into the field of knowledge [the social formation] remains itself unknown [the absent cause] to the knowing" [123] Or as the prologue to George Chapman's *All Fools* (used as an epigraph for this chapter) observes, "And none knows the hidden causes of those strange effects" (Pro. 2-3).

In the end, because the questions surrounding agency and intentionality are fraught with difficulties that cannot be addressed by a single study, I will largely avoid discussions of agency and intention.[124] However, in the interest of brevity and syntactic simplicity, I will usually refer to the playwrights or the plays themselves as the grammatical if not philosophical agent of this construction instead of constantly stating that the social formation of playgoing produced this particular concept in order to control the unruly audience and therefore insure its own survival. It is simpler to say that the playwrights and plays constructed playgoing. And in the end, the pages that follow are dedicated to analyzing the object of the previous sentence not the subject. That is, this

study attempts to describe the construction of playgoing, not determine who did the constructing.



Chapter Two

Performance's Response to Audience: The Relationship between Audience, Performance and Reality

"The act is nothing without a witness." – Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew Fair*[125]

My analysis of early modern censorship practices has suggested that the Master of Revels understood and constructed stage utterances as performative. Because the primary object of performative stage utterances is institutional reality and not the audience, this construction of stage utterances positions the audience as the non-object of the performance thereby constructing the audience as non-reactive. Of course, an analysis of a handful of censored texts is not enough proof to demonstrate this claim. If stage utterances really were constructed as performative, then the effects of that construction should be noticeable in other levels of the social formation of playgoing. Perhaps most noticeably this construction should be visible in the play texts themselves, the cultural level of the social formation.

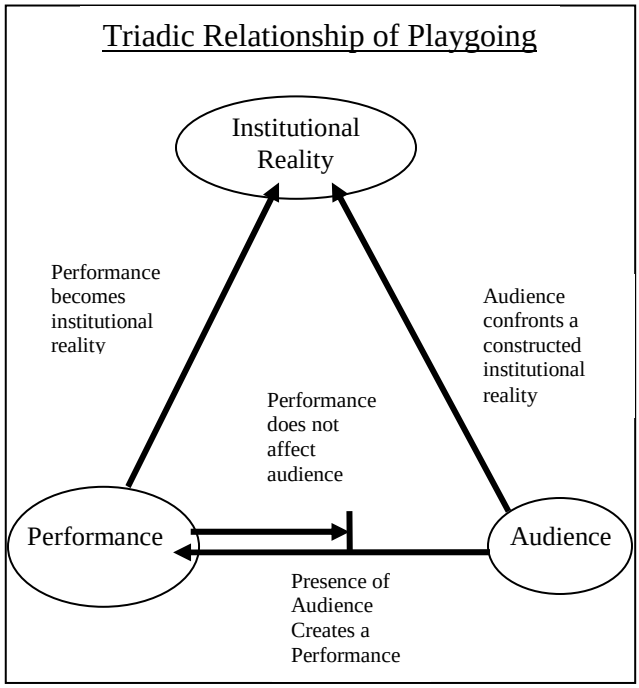
The plays that clearly demonstrate the construction of stage utterances as performative are those that go out of their way to create inset audiences. These inset audiences often have no narrative function. They seem to be created for purely metadramatic reasons – at least in part, to construct playgoing. Furthermore, these plays are easily compared to Tilney's censorship practices because they seem to be utilizing Tilney's technique only in reverse: where Tilney's suppression of riot scenes works by moving the performance of a riot off stage and turning the performative riot into a constative recounting of a riot, metadrama often works by changing a constative recounting into a performative enactment by supplying or constructing an audience.

These plays go out of their way to place a character in a position to watch other characters' actions thereby turning those actions into a *de facto* performance – so constructing an inset audience also constructs an inset performance. The reason for this construction is often the exact inverse of Tilney's reason for forcing the riot off stage; where Tilney did not want the riot to be institutionally real, this type of metadrama wants the performance to be institutionally real, at least within the fictive reality of the play. By dramatizing how the performance becomes institutionally real, these plays are demonstrating how performance responds to the presence of an audience.

Speech act terms, then, can be used to transcode between the censorship practices (the legal level of the social formation) and the texts (the cultural level of the social formation) since both can be shown to be depicting stage utterances as performative. Furthermore, speech act theory's terms can be used to transcode between the various texts that make up the cultural level of the social formation thereby demonstrating how the culture of playgoing attempted to construct stage performances as performative.

But this creation of inset audiences is doing more than just constructing stage utterances as performative. Performance is existentially dependent on audience, so a construction of performance is necessarily bound up with a construction of audience. By reflecting on the nature of stage utterances within a performance, these plays are also reflecting on the efficacy of performance and its relationship to audience. By depicting stage utterances as performative, these plays make institutional reality, and not the audience, the object of the performance. Thus constructed audiences form what I will refer to as the triadic relationship of playgoing: the relationship among audience, reality and performance. This relationship can be described as follows: the presence of the

audience creates a performance, and that performance then constructs institutional reality. However, the chain of effects ends there; the performance is not meant to directly affect the audience because performative utterances are not designed to produce an effect in the audience. The audience is necessary, but only in so far as they are a necessary condition for a performance. Audience, in a sense, affects the performance; the performance does not affect the audience. Consequently, the audience is the non-object of the performance; they are placed in a position where they are asked not to react.



This construction of playgoing may come as a shock to some readers; the idea that performance was not meant to affect the audience may seem particularly counterintuitive. After all, drama, and more broadly art, has been understood, at least since Aristotle, as designed to produce an effect within the audience. Aristotle's concept of catharsis clearly locates the object of performance within the audience and the playgoer's consciousness. And more broadly, the rhetorical tradition, which of course was influenced by Aristotle, also locates the object of language in the audience. Indeed, one of the major purposes and goals of rhetoric is to convince the audience to act. For instance, Thomas Wilson's popular rhetorical manual, *The Art of Rhetoric*, describes the goal of deliberative (as opposed to judicial or ceremonial) rhetoric:

> An oration deliberative is a mean whereby we do persuade or dissuade, entreat or rebuke, exhort or deport, commend or comfort any man … the whole compass of this cause is either to advise our neighbor to that thing which we think most needful for him, or else to call him back from that folly which hindereth much his estimation.[126]

And Wayne A. Rebhorn argues that the primary goal of most early modern rhetoric was to get the audience to do what the rhetor wanted: "The treatises and handbooks themselves see the student engaged in what is essentially a one-sided argument in which he does the speaking and his audience, overwhelmed by his eloquence, agrees to do what he wants them to do.[127] But by constructing stage utterances as performative, playwrights were moving away from this rhetorical and classical tradition by asserting that the purpose of their drama was not to get the audience to act, but was to construct the institutions that the audience lived within. In short, performative language offers an alternative to rhetorical language, an alternative that early modern playwrights seemed to have embraced.

Furthermore, the triadic relationship is a different model of performance from the one described by the early modern trope of performance-as-mirror. Throughout the early modern period, writers used the metaphor of a mirror to describe the effect art has on the audience. Art, according to writers such as Philip Sidney, Thomas Nashe and George Puttenham, is able to affect the audience by holding a mirror up to the audience, so they can see a representation of their vices, which would then lead them to reform.[128] The incredibly popular *Mirror of Magistrates* uses this principle to show rulers how not to rule. Indeed, one of the most famous metadramatic scenes in early modern drama describes performance as functioning like a mirror. When Hamlet gives advice to his players, he tells them "the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was

and is to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her own feature" (3.2.18-21). And when Hamlet puts this theory to the test by staging *The Murder of Gonzaga*, the theory is shown to be correct – the play succeeds in affecting the audience by catching "the conscience of the king" (2.2.582).

Because of *Hamlet*'s popularity and because of the popularity of the performance-as-mirror trope in early modern literature, critics tend to see *Hamlet* as normative. William B. Worthen goes as far to say that *Hamlet* "nearly becomes the kind of theoretical investigation of performance that the Renaissance theater otherwise failed to produce."[129] Worthen seems to be suggesting *Hamlet*'s representation of performance is the period's understanding of performance. However, as this chapter will demonstrate, the metadrama of *Hamlet* is actually atypical. Metadrama, in so far as it constructs playgoing, more often then not works against this model by staging the triadic relationship.

Philip Massinger's *The Roman Actor*, for one, seems to be disagreeing with precisely the view of performance expressed in *Hamlet.* Like Shakespeare's play, *The Roman Actor* stages a test of the mirror theory of performance, but unlike *Hamlet*, Massinger dramatizes the failure of this theory and consequently the failure of performance to affect the audience. The actor Paris stages a performance specifically designed to redeem a playgoer by holding a mirror up to his sins. Paris expresses his belief in the redemptive power of performance when he defends the theater against Caesar's claims that the theater is immoral:

> Do we teach,
> By the success of wicked undertakings,
> Others to tread in their forbidden steps?
> We show no arts of Lydian pandarism

> Corinthian poisons, Persian flatteries,
> But mulcted so in the conclusion that
> Even those spectators that were so inclined
> Go home changed men (1.3.99-106).[130]

What follows is a list of various vices (adultery, greed, corruption) that Paris believes can be cured through performance. As Charles Pastoor points out, Paris's description of the effect performance has on the audience relies on the theory that art should function like a mirror and is similar to the view of performance expressed by Hamlet.[131]

This view of performance, however, is ultimately shown to be faulty, for when Paris attempts to implement this theory, his performance fails to produce the desired result; it fails to redeem the audience. Paris tells Parthenius that he can cure his father, Philargus, of avarice by staging a performance that will hold a mirror up to his sin. He explains this process to Parthenius in terms reminiscent of his argument to Caesar and Hamlet's advice to his players:

> Your father, looking on a covetous man
> Presented on the stage as in a mirror,
> May see his own deformity and loathe it.
> Now, could you but persuade the emperor
> To see a comedy we have that's styled
> *The Cure of Avarice*, and to command
> Your father to be a spectator of it,
> He shall be so anatomised in the scene,
> And see himself so personated, the baseness
> Of a self-torturing miserable wretch
> Truly described, that I much hope the object
> Will work compunction in him (2.1.97-108).

Despite Paris's claim, the play that he produces, as many critics have noticed, does not work; after seeing the play Philargus remains unrepentant.[132] Although Philargus does identify with his dramatic doppelganger, Philargus disowns him when he repents: "An old fool to be gull'd thus! Had he died / As I resolve to do, not to be alter'd, / It had gone

off twanging" (2.1.407-409). Philargus remains unaffected (not "alter'd") by the performance; instead, in a reversal that frustrates everybody involved, he wishes to influence the content of the play.

The failure of Paris's performance seems to be largely dismissed by critics. Joanne Rochester suggests that while the performance fails, "Paris's faith in the power of his theatre is established, regardless of the failure of the play" because Philargus at least recognized himself in the mirror of the performance.[133] And Edward L. Rocklin dismisses Massinger's whole play as an anomaly: "There is a sense in which *The Roman Actor* is more pessimistic about the power of art to correct and inform its audience than any other play written between 1580 and 1642."[134] Rocklin doesn't provide examples to support his claim, but even within Massinger's canon this "pessimistic" view of performance is not unique. Massinger repeats this view of performance six years later in *The City Madam*. Again, performances (a musical performance and a dumb show) are staged to reform a miser (Luke) and again the play fails to affect its intended object. Luke remains unrepentant and claims:

> This move me to compassion, or raise
> One sign of seeming pity in my face?
> You are deciev'd. It rather renders me
> More flinty, and obdurate (5.3.61-64).[135]

This inset performance is more complicated than the performance within *The Roman Actor* because Luke, unlike Philargus, does eventually reform; however, the play makes clear it is not the fictional performances that affect Luke, but real-life examples. After the performances fail to affect him, Luke asks John (the individual directing the performances) to show him "Some other object, if / your art can show it" (5.3.75-76). Instead of staging another fictional performance, John tells him that he will show him

"one thing real" (3.3.77). John then has Luke watch, not a fictional performance, but two real characters (Anne and Mary) ask for forgiveness from their husbands. This display of repentance convinces Luke to reform. The play's conclusion about the efficacy of performance seems clear – fictional stage performances cannot affect the audience, even though real life examples can.

Rochester, in her analysis of this play, again seems to dismiss the importance of the failure of the inset performance. She believes that Luke is simply an "incompetent spectator."[136] But perhaps Massinger is not depicting the spectator as incompetent, but constructing performance as incompetent, or more precisely, as impotent. That is, Massinger is depicting performance as unable to affect the audience because he does not want performance to be affective. He doesn't want the audience to see themselves as the object of performance because he doesn't want the audience to actively respond to his play. He, like many early modern playwrights, did not want the audience to see themselves as active participants in the performance, but wanted them to be non-reactive observers of drama. As will be shown, by dramatizing the triadic relationship between audience, performance and reality, playwrights throughout the period (Marlowe, Jonson, Brome, and sometimes even Shakespeare) seem to concur with the view of performance expressed in *The Roman Actor* and *The City Madam.* In the final analysis, Massinger's view of drama's efficacy is normative and *Hamlet*'s is the anomaly.

The wedding scene in John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* provides perhaps the best example of this triadic relationship because the scene depicts a wedding ceremony as a figure for a stage performance, and a wedding ceremony, as suggested in the previous chapter, is a perfect example of performative actions. Webster seems to go out of his way

to describe the Duchess's marriage as a stage performance by creating an audience for her marriage. The scene then becomes metadramatic in that it attempts to recreate the basic conditions of the stage: an audience and a performance. By depicting the scene as metadramatic, Webster equates wedding vows, a clear example of performative utterances, with stage utterances. Once stage utterances are depicted as performative utterances, the full construction of the triadic relationship can be dramatized and explored. Indeed, *The Duchess of Malfi* provides one of the fullest treatments of not only the triadic relationship, but as we will see throughout this study, the whole of the social formation of playgoing.

The marriage scene is clearly exploring performative utterance because marriages in general are one of the clearest examples of how speech acts function. Indeed, one of Austin's favorite examples of the performative speech act is the marriage ceremony (the other is wagers) because all marriages utilize performative utterances; the words uttered during a legitimate marriage always do the work of marrying the couple, thereby creating an institutional reality – a marriage. However, what counts as a legitimate marriage is not universal. It varies from culture to culture. When Austin gives the example of a marriage vow as a speech act, he is describing a marriage as it is defined by twentieth century western society; he is not giving a universal or transhistorical exploration of speech acts. The specificity of the example is apparent in his description: "It is always necessary that the *circumstances* in which the words are uttered should be in some way, or ways, *appropriate*, and it is very commonly necessary that either the speaker himself or other persons should *also* perform certain *other* actions."[137] In other words, the social, legal and cultural context of the utterance has to be just right for the utterance to work and perform

an action. To demonstrate this point, Austin gives a short list of such requirements: "it is essential that I should not be already married with a wife living, sane and undivorced, and so on."[138] To this list could be added: the marriage is performed in front of witnesses and overseen by someone legally able to perform marriages (clergy, justice of the peace, ship captain).

In early modern England, however, the context that was necessary for a marriage to work was quite different than it was in Austin's time and place. For instance, B.J. and Mary Sokol observe that "today it is almost unbelievable that a valid marriage could have been created as informally as it was seen to be in John Webster's play *The Duchess of Malfi*."[139] We find the Duchess's marriage unbelievable because she is clearly employing a particular type of marriage – a spousal, which is no longer considered legitimate by most western societies. A spousal is a marriage that is performed by the two parties entering into a marriage contract without a clergy or other authority figure (clergy or state official) present.[140] Within the marriage scene, the Duchess overtly announces her intent to perform this type of marriage: "I have heard lawyers say, a contract in a chamber *per verba de presenti* is absolute marriage" (1.1.478-479).[141] Not only does the Duchess's legal language signal the deployment of a spousal, it also demonstrates an understanding of marriage as ultimately performed by and constitutive of language – *per verba*, by means of words. Austin's understanding of marriage as constructed through performative utterances is mirrored in the language of early modern marriage law (which the Duchess employs), but the necessary circumstances for a *per verba* marriage to work do not reflect Austin's understanding of marriage. Significantly in early modern England, the social position of the speaker had nothing to do with the performance of a *per verba*

marriage.[142] The marrying couple could perform the marriage themselves without witnesses or state officials.[143]

Given the rather broad range of social contexts that would support the performative utterances of an early modern marriage, the Duchess's inclusion of a witness, even though she doesn't need one, seems conspicuous. That is, Cariola's presence at the wedding cannot be explained through legal requirements. That being said, many couples used a witness even though they didn't need one. Witnesses were used for a fairly obvious reason: they could confirm that a wedding actually took place in the event that the legitimacy of the marriage was challenged by interested parties.[144] For instance, family members who opposed the marriage, a husband who regretted his decision to marry after consummation or a jilted fiancé from a previously arranged marriage might have wanted to deny that the wedding ever took place. However, the Duchess makes it explicitly clear that this is not the reason she wishes Cariola to witness the marriage. Before Antonio comes on stage, the Duchess tells Cariola that she needs her to keep the marriage a secret: "Cariola, / To thy known secrecy I have given up / More than my life, my fame:" (1.1.349-351). Cariola then promises that she will indeed keep the secret: "For I'll conceal this secret from the world" (1.1.352). Still, the Duchess is not content merely to inform Cariola of the secret; she must also be present when the secret marriage is performed. She instructs Cariola to hide and listen to her discussion with Antonio, "place thyself behind the arras, / Where thou mayst overhear us" (1.1.358-359). When the actual marriage ceremony is taking place, the Duchess does not want Cariola to only overhear the ceremony, she also must see it, and so she asks her to come forward to watch the proceedings (1.1.475). In short, the Duchess demands that Cariola witness the

marriage but at the same time demands that it remain a secret. Brian Corrigan accurately describes Cariola's role as a "secret witness to the secret vows."[145] However, Corrigan never reflects on what it means to be a secret witness. Indeed, a "secret witness" is oxymoronic. Witnesses do not keep secrets; they report on the event they witnessed to inform other individuals, who are not present at the event. Huston Diehl's reading of Cariola's presence at the marriage also reflects an understanding of Cariola as a witness: "[Cariola] witnesses the private marriage of the couple and can therefore testify to its existence."[146] But the Duchess does not want Cariola to testify to its existence – she has been sworn to secrecy. Cariola's presence at the wedding is conspicuous in that she is clearly present for a reason, but the reason is not explicitly supplied by the narrative. There is no practical or legal reason for her to witness the marriage.

There could, however, be an emotional reason for her presence. Cariola is the Duchess's friend and confidant, and so the she may be including Cariola in the wedding simply because she wants a friend present. Indeed, before her marriage to Antonio, one gets the sense that she is an isolated figure, who cannot honestly communicate with her brothers or her court. Thus, she relies on Cariola for support and friendship. And, of course, the Duchess would have a hard time keeping a secret from her own waiting woman and bed fellow, so Webster had to let Cariola in on the secret to avoid awkward scenes latter in the play. One the other hand, Webster could have easily written the play without giving the Duchess a waiting woman.

However, if we view Cariola's presence at the wedding within the broader social formation of playgoing and through a metadramatic interpretive lens, a clear reason for her presences (as opposed to an emotional, practical or legal reason) emerges.

Specifically, if Cariola's conspicuous presence at the Duchess's marriage is compared to Tilney's censorship of *Sir Thomas More* by transcoding between the two via speech act terminology, Cariola's purpose at the wedding can be better understood; she is not a witness to the wedding, but an audience member of the performance of a marriage. In fact, the Duchess (and Webster) seems to be drawing on the same understanding of performance that Tilney is only the Duchess is utilizing performance to create the opposite effect of Tilney's censorship technique. Where Tilney hides the audience from the performance to negate the performance's ability to become institutional reality, the Duchess includes an audience in order to lend her marriage the power of performance. Without an audience, the Duchess's marriage would not be a performance and so would not be able to produce an institutionally real marriage. So the Duchess constructs an audience to turn her marriage into a performance.

That being said, the Duchess could have had a legal and therefore institutionally real marriage without Cariola's presence since spousals were considered legitimate even without an audience, and so the Duchess could have created a real marriage without a performance. Nevertheless, the legality of the marriage reinforces the ability of the performance to become institutionally real. By dramatizing a marriage that is based on performance and on legal principles, Webster is able to demonstrate how both processes are able to construct an institution (a marriage) out of language. He seems to be equating marriage ceremony to performance and showing them both to work through performative language.

By creating a conspicuous audience, the Duchess is also creating a conspicuous performance. Again, there is no narrative reason why the Duchess's marriage should be

depicted as a performance. This depiction of her marriage as performance makes sense, however, if it is analyzed metadramatically. The Duchess's marriage is depicted as a performance to reflect on playgoing, and so the scene dramatizes not only a fictional marriage but an inset performance with an inset audience that metadramatically reflects on the nature of performance and on the audience's role within the performance. Indeed, critics often note Webster's penchant for metadrama, though this marriage scene has not to my knowledge been considered a piece of metadrama.[147] But when her marriage is understood as metadramatic (because of the conspicuousness of the audience), then the triadic relationship of playgoing is clearly visible within this scene: the Duchess places Cariola at the wedding in order to construct a marriage; the audience then gives her marriage the ability to create institutional reality (the marriage). The marriage, however, has no discernable effect on Cariola (it is not rhetorical); she is simply present to lend the actions she watches the ability to produce institutional reality.

The ability of the audience to lend the actions they watch the quality of a performance is also evident in Ferdinand's response to the Duchess's marriage, but instead of giving the marriage the quality of a performance, he refuses to be an audience to the marriage. When she attempts to introduce her brother to Antonio, she significantly highlights Ferdinand's position as observer. She does not ask, will you meet my husband, but rather asks, "Will you *see* my husband?" (3.2.86 emphasis mine).[148] She wants Ferdinand to be an observer of the couple rather than an interlocutor or active participant in the scene; in other words, she wants to construct another (non-reactive) audience. Now that her secret marriage is made public, the Duchess wants to recreate or re-perform the marriage thereby creating the "echo" that she demanded from the church

during her first performance of marriage: "We are now man and wife, and 'tis the church / That must but echo this" (1.1.492-493). Given Ferdinand's disapproval of the marriage, it is not surprising that he does exactly the opposite of what the Duchess asks by denying her this second performance.

Indeed, where the Duchess simply wants Ferdinand to see her husband, and not necessarily interact with him, Ferdinand talks with (or rather at) Antonio but refuses to see him (3.2.87-109). At one point in this one way conversation, he explicitly states his desire not to see his new brother-in-law: "I would not for ten millions / I had beheld thee" (3.2.95-96). Ferdinand states that he does not wish to see Antonio because he is afraid that if he does, he will do something which "would damn us both" (3.2.95). However, embedded in Ferdinand's refusal to see the couple is an understanding that viewing a performance will in some way legitimize it by granting it the quality of a performance and therefore providing an echo of the first performance and marriage.[149] Thus, Ferdinand is self-consciously denying his role as an audience member by refusing to be a witness to the couple, and true to his word, exits before Antonio comes back on stage. This desire to deny the Duchess an audience is also evident in Ferdinand's response to the Duchess's question, "Will you see my husband?" He replies, "Yes, if I could change / eyes with a basilisk" (3.2.86-87). He agrees to witness the two only if his eyes were able to kill the couple rather than merely observe them. The image of the basilisk becomes a kind of anti-audience, one that does not produce reality out of the actions it witnesses, but destroys what it sees. Since this role as an anti-audience member is not possible (audiences always grant the actions they watch the quality of a performance), Ferdinand

denies the two an audience. Indeed, throughout the rest of the play, Ferdinand will not be present when the two are together on stage.

Another (simpler) example of a constructed or inset audience exists within *The Duchess of Malfi* that corroborates or reinforces the triadic relationship between audience, performance and institutional reality found in the Duchess's metadramatic wedding. When the Duchess, Antonio and her children are banished, their banishment is accomplished through a performance – a dumb show or an inset performance. And this performance is viewed by an audience – two pilgrims. Like Cariola's conspicuous presence at the Duchess's marriage, the pilgrims' presence at the dumb show is not fully explained through the narrative. Indeed, they seem to stumble upon the dumb show, and after they witness it, are never heard from again. Unlike Cariola, they comment upon the performance they watch and their comments confirm the ability of the performance to become institutional reality.[150] For instance, the Second Pilgrim verifies that what they just watched produced a change in institutional reality by simply stating, "they are banished" (3.4.27). Although they do question where the authority to accomplish this banishment comes from – "what power hath this state / of Ancona to determine of a free prince?" and "But by what justice" (3.4.28-39; 34) – they do not question the effectiveness of the dumb show, which accomplishes the banishment. Like the Duchess's marriage, this banishment is produced through a performance, and the performative nature of the banishment is highlighted through a constructed audience, whose presence is conspicuous. Furthermore, the pilgrims are not the object of the performance they watch. The proceedings do not rhetorically affect them. Even though they express sympathy for Antonio and the Duchess, they move on with a dismissive air: "Come, lets

hence. / Fortune makes this conclusion general: / *All things do help th'unhappy man to fall*" (3.4.42-44 emphasis his). And of course, they are not being banished; they are simply commenting upon Antonio's unlucky narrative and then moving along largely unaffected by the performance.

Indeed, their knowledge of Antonio's narrative further sets them up as a figure for the playhouse audience who is watching the performance. It is not clear how they know so much about the couple's affairs. Although there are a lot of rumors about Antonio and the Duchess, this is the first time they (or at least the First Pilgrim) have been to this chapel: "I have not seen a goodlier shrine than this, / Yet I have visited many" (3.4.1-2). They seem to be wandering pilgrims, but can accurately summarize and comment on the couple's narrative. Their knowledge makes sense if we view their position within the narrative metadramatically: they know about the couple because the playhouse audience they represent knows about the couple. Or to put it another way, their knowledge, like their presence, is conspicuous but can be understood if we view them as a figure for the playhouse audience.

By depicting inset performances as impacting institutional reality, the play positions the inset audience (the Pilgrims and Cariola) as non-reactive playgoers. They are not rhetorically affected by the performance but become unaffected observers to performative actions. Simultaneously, the stage audience that the inset audience represents is also positioned as the non-object of the playhouse performance and constructed as non-reactive playgoers. In fact, as I will argue in the next chapter, *The Duchess of Malfi* goes out of its way to link the inset audience with the playhouse audience in an attempt to influence the playhouse audience's thoughts about their own

role in the playhouse. That is, by watching representations of themselves, the audience's position within the playhouse is being constructed for them. To appropriate Hamlet's description of performance as a mirror, the inset audiences of *The Duchess of Malfi* show the audience images of themselves to influence their thoughts about their role within the playhouse. But while Hamlet describes the mirror as reflecting nature and the audience's morality, the metadramatic mirror within *The Duchess of Malfi* reflects the playgoer *qua* playgoer. That is, Webster does not dramatize moral behavior to show playgoers how to act within a moral universe and to affect their conscience, but depicts playgoing behavior to show playgoers how to behave within the playhouse and to affect their playhouse behavior. This construction process, of course, creates a paradox: playwrights use metadrama to position the audience as the non-object of the performance and so paradoxically convince the audience through performance not to be convinced by performance. In other words, *The Duchess of Malfi* affects the audience to not affect the audience.

This same basic technique of constructing audiences to create institutional reality that is deployed by the Duchess is also present in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* and *Edward II*. Both title characters use this process to affect the transfer of authority and so to produce the institutional reality of the monarchy. However, Tamburlaine and Edward II use the triadic relationship for different ends: Tamburlaine uses it to insure his victory over Cosroe, and Edward II uses it to destabilize his enemies' victory over himself. Despite their differences, in both plays the triadic relationship is asserted/constructed and then used in order to manipulate the transfer of authority. And in both plays, Marlowe uses the subject and language of the transfer of authority not just to reflect on the nature of power

and how power is transferred, but to reflect on the relationship among performance, audience and institutional reality.[151] Similarly, *The Duchess of Malfi* uses the subject and language of marriage to reflect on the triadic relationship. By using speech act terms to transcode between Marlowe's plays and the *Duchess of Malfi*, and between both plays and Tilney's censorship practices, we can see how all of these texts are contributing to the same social formation of playgoing which seeks to construct stage utterances as performative.

In *Tamburlaine*, the triadic relationship is deployed by Tamburlaine to effectively depose Mycetes. When Tamburlaine encounters Mycetes alone on the battlefield, he has the opportunity to steal his crown; Mycetes gives the crown to Tamburlaine (without knowing who he is) and is unable to get it back. However, Tamburlaine chooses not to steal the crown. Instead, Tamburlaine seems to forgo theft in favor of performance. He tells Mycetes as much when he gives him back his crown: "Here, take it for a while, I lend it thee, / Till I may see thee hemmed with armed men. / Then shalt thou see me pull it from thy head" (2.4.38-40).[152] In her commentary of this scene, Kateryna Schray argues that Tamburlaine is simply being dismissive here: "Ultimately, Mycetes is so ineffectual that he is not even worth defeating on stage."[153] However, Schray seems to be missing the reason why Tamburlaine does not take the crown. Tamburlaine does not defeat Mycetes because they are on a (playhouse) stage but because Tamburlaine does not have a (inset) stage. That is, he does not have an audience and therefore does not have a performance, and without a performance, his actions will not have institutional effects. The taking of the crown will not produce an institutionally real deposition. For a deposition to occur, Tamburlaine needs an audience a group of "armed men" who will

"see [Tamburlaine] pull it from [Mycetes'] head." Tamburlaine, who as Marjorie Garber has shown, clearly understands the power of performative speech acts, has manipulated the situation so that the taking of the crown will have institutional force.[154]

In fact, the next scene deploys the triadic relationship to effect the institution of the monarchy. The triadic relationship is used in order to transfer authority to Cosroe: there is an audience, a performance (the crowning of Cosroe) and the creation of institutional reality (Cosroe is the new monarch), which is confirmed by the narrative; no one questions that Cosroe is king. What does not occur is the actual deposition of Mycetes. Although the playhouse audience gets to see the coronation of Cosroe take place, the actual deposition of Mycetes never takes place on stage. The playhouse audience is left to assume that Tamburlaine has made good on his word and performed the deposition in front of an inset audience. Of course, throughout the play, Tamburlaine always does what he says he is going to do, so this assumption is well grounded.

Nevertheless, the absence of the deposition from the stage performance seems significant and even conspicuous given Tilney's censorship technique of moving controversial scenes off stage to limit the institutional effect of performances, and Marlowe's grasp of the triadic relationship (he dramatized this relationship on either side of the absent deposition). It is possible that Marlowe or Tinley moved the scene off stage in order to keep the deposition from becoming institutionally real. To stage the deposition of Mycetes in front of the stage audience would have had the institutional effects of a real deposition, just as staging the riot in *Sir Thomas More* would have had the institutional effects of a real riot. What those supposed institutionally real effects would have been is difficult to discern. Obviously, the real and long dead Mycetes was in no position to be

deposed through a fictional performance, nor was Queen Elizabeth going to be dethroned because of a fictional deposition. The effects that either Marlowe or Tilney feared would probably have been more subtle and vague than that. Enacting a deposition affects the institution of the monarchy by destabilizing it. That the specific monarch is still the monarch is beside the point; the actual institution of the monarchy would have been destabilized through the performance of a deposition.

That staged depositions destabilized the institution of the monarch can only be conjectured; however, there is some evidence that suggests that deposition scenes were censored, even if we don't exactly know why. The possible censorship or self-censorship of the deposition scene in *Tamburlaine* recalls the more famous deposition scene in *Richard II.* Critics and editors generally assume that at some point the scene depicting the deposition of Richard II was omitted; however, scholars have not come to a consensus on whether or not this omission constitutes censorship.[155] Dutton describes the impossibility of knowing for sure when and why the scene was cut: "The plethora of possibilities – no censorship at all but revision, censorship for the press but not for the stage (though later rescinded), censorship for both stage and press, though both were later rescinded – make rational discussion of the subject almost impossible."[156] Despite Dutton's assertion, it seems likely, as Clare suggests, that the play was censored before the original performance by Tilney in accordance with his policy of not allowing controversial scenes to be staged only recounted.[157] Thus, *Richard II* suggests that depositions were in fact censored. Indeed, if we read *Richard II*'s omission of the deposition scene in light of the non-staging of the deposition of Mycetes in *Tamburlaine*, the censorship of Richard II seems all the more likely. This is not to say that all

depositions were pushed off stage, just as not all riots were pushed off stage. The deposition of Richard II eventually made its way (back?) into the performance, and other plays from the period staged depositions (like *Edward II* discussed below). But the censorship of depositions further suggests that the Master of Revels' office understood stage utterances as affecting institutional reality and provides a reason why Marlowe does not stage the deposition of Mycetes. Marlowe understood stage utterances as performative and was anxious about the institutional force of a staged deposition.

The scene after the absent deposition scene also seems to suggest that depositions would destabilize the monarchy because what follows the absent scene is a coronation, which would seem to stabilize the monarchy rather than destabilizing it. Coronations assure the nation's subjects that someone is on the throne and that power is consolidated. In fact, as new historicist critics like Greenblatt have suggested, the stabilization effect of coronations is exactly why real coronations were staged in such a public and theatrical way.[158] If staged coronations are understood as stabilizing the monarchy, then staged depositions can reasonably be supposed to destabilize it. In fact, the staging of Cosroe's coronation can be considered doubly stabilizing because Cosroe was already king before the coronation. This coronation is simply affirming and enlarging that preexisting condition. Hence, when Tamburlaine gives him the crown, his first words are "Hold thee, Cosroe, wear two imperial crowns" (2.5.1). By giving Cosroe *another* crown, Tamburlaine is reaffirming the institution of the monarchy and Cosroe's position within that institution. Indeed, by not staging the deposition, the Marlowe creates a moment in the play were Myectes'/Cosroe's kingdom does not have a king. The play moves (somewhat conspicuously) directly from Mycetes being king to Cosroe being king. The

liminal and destabilizing space between those two kingships is glossed over by not staging the deposition.

A fear of destabilizing the crown may have been the reason why the deposition scene occurs off stage, but it's somewhat unclear who placed the scene off stage. In other words, there is no proof that *Tamburlaine* actually was censored. The manuscript (like most early modern manuscripts) is lost and none of the extant versions of the play contains a performed deposition. Indeed, no major scholar of early modern censorship includes a discussion of *Tamburlaine*.[159] Thus, we are left to assume that Marlowe wrote the play with the deposition scene occurring off stage either because he feared censorship and so self-censored (as I argue Shakespeare did in *Coriolanus*) or he did not want to destabilize the monarchy. Neither of these possible reasons conforms to our understanding of Marlowe as a troublemaker and agent of subversion. Of course, he could have left out the deposition scene for purely aesthetic or practical reasons: perhaps staging the deposition would ruin the pacing, or perhaps the actor who played Mycetes had to play another part in the next scene.[160] However, if one accepts the triadic relationship I am arguing for and accepts my argument for why Tamburlaine does not dethrone Mycetes when they are alone, than it seems unlikely that Marlowe would have shifted the deposition scene off stage for reasons unrelated to the triadic relationship since he had just staged a scene that dramatizes that relationship. In other words, the non-staging of the deposition seems purposeful and seems to suggest Marlowe's grasp and construction of the triadic relationship.[161]

In fact, Marlowe utilizes the triadic relationship again in his dramatizing of the transfer of power in *Edward II*. However, in this scene it is the deposed (Edward II) and

not the deposer (Tamburlaine) who manipulates the relationship, and consequently the motive of the manipulating agent is inverted. Where Tamburlaine waits for an audience in order to give his (off-stage) performance the ability to affect the institutional reality of the monarchy, Edward denies his actions an audience in order to limit the institutional effect his actions have, thereby destabilizing the transfer of authority. Furthermore, while Tamburlaine is only manipulating the role of the audience within the triadic relationship, Edward is also manipulating the role of the performer and of the nature of the performance.

Edward's acknowledgement of the triadic relationship is actually quite clear in the deposition scene because he, unlike Mycetes (but more like Shakespeare's Richard II), clearly understands that he has to give up his crown and expresses this understanding by complaining to Leicester. During his dialogue with Leicester, Edward seems to realize that while he must give up the crown, he does have control over *how* he gives up the crown. Through this description of how he will give up his the crown, Edward displays a grasp of the triadic relationship and a cunning and complex manipulation of it.

Indeed, Edward seems to revel in his ability to control the performance of his own deposition: he takes off the crown, puts it back on, starts to give it back, keeps it, and then finally gives it to Leicester.[162] As he is moving through these series of feints, he seems to be contemplating aloud the best way to give up the crown. He sometimes thinks it best to give up the crown willingly, "Here, take my crown – the life of Edward too" (5.1.57). Other times he seems to think that defiance will be a better strategy and that he should force his enemies to take it from him, "I'll not resign, but whilst I live, be king!" (5.1.86). Ultimately, he seems to understand that he has no choice but to give up the crown; he

admits, “what the heavens appoint I must obey” (5.1.56), but he can’t decide if he wants to force them to take it from him, or if he should of his own agency give it up.

Edward is eventually moved past his indecision by an argument from Leicester, who reminds him that if he doesn’t willingly give up the crown, his son will lose the monarchy and his dynasty will end. Although Edward seems to accept Leicester’s argument, he feints one more time, and it is this last move that is of particular interest as it demonstrates an awareness on the part of Edward of the triadic relationship of playgoing and the institutional force of performance.

> Here, receive my crown.
> Receive it? No, these innocent hands of mine
> Shall not be guilty of so foul a crime.
> He of you all that most desires my blood
> And will be called the murderer of a king,
> Take it. What, are you moved? Pity you me?
> Then send for unrelenting Mortimer
> And Isabel, whose eyes, being turned to steel,
> Will sooner sparkle fire than shed a tear.
> Yet stay, for rather than I will look on them,
> Here, here! [He resigns the crown] (5.1.97-107).

The beginning of this speech follows the same pattern of thought that has been going on throughout the scene. He moves from willfully giving up the crown to demanding that they take it from him. This pattern starts to alter when he notes that his audience is moved to pity by his own inner turmoil and sarcastically tells them to go fetch Mortimer and Isabel. At this point, the pattern shifts. Edward’s language is no longer focused on his own action, but on who will watch and take part in this action – who will take part in the performance. At first he wants Mortimer and Isabel to watch him give up the crown, but after contemplating that scenario, he quickly changes his mind. The reason he states for not wanting them present is that he does not want to see them, “for rather than I will look

on them" (5.1.106). By denying them the position of observer, he is controlling who is a part of the performance and so is denying the force of his own performance. In other words, he is reversing Tamburlaine's strategy. Whereas Tamburlaine delayed the taking of the crown so that he could wait for an audience and a performance, Edward's decision to give up the crown is sped up because he realizes that he does not want an audience. And of course, Edward is reversing Tamburlaine's strategy because Edward has the opposite goal of Tamburlaine; whereas Tamburlaine wants a smooth transition of power, Edward does not.

However, Edward's strategy is more complex than a mere inversion of Tamburlaine's strategy because Edward is not alone when he gives up his crown; Leicester, Winchester, Trussell and others are present at the deposition, and so he cannot or does not simply deny his actions an audience. What Edward seems to do is not only control who is in the audience but who is in the performance and so controls what the performance does – how it affects institutional reality. The individuals present when he gives up the crown are not the individuals who will ultimately receive the crown. Winchester has to report to Isabel, Mortimer and the prince that Edward has abdicated. Although the prince will hold the crown, it is made clear throughout that Mortimer and the Queen will receive the power of the crown through his role as Protector and her position as Queen, or they will simply kill the prince and (somehow) inherit the crown. Edward understands that his son is only a means through which Mortimer will secure the crown. For instance, when Winchester tries to assure Edward that the only reason he wants the crown is so they can give it to Prince Edward, King Edward responds, "No, 'tis for Mortimer, not Edward's head, / For he's a lamb, encompassed by wolves, / Which in

a moment will abridge his life" (5.1.40-42). Thus, Mortimer and the Queen are not only audience members, they are also participants in the performance because they (as far as Edward is concerned) will ultimately receive the crown. By denying Mortimer and the Queen the position of observers of the performance, Edward not only limits the audience but also denies them the position where they could receive the crown – inside the performance.

Because those who will receive the crown are not part of the performance, the transfer of authority does not work through performance and performative utterances but is reliant on constative utterances. The crown and the power the crown symbolizes must go through a mediating messenger, in this case Winchester. But constative utterances do not become institutional reality. Furthermore, constative utterances are unreliable. The recounting witness has to be trusted by those that hear the utterance. The dual instability of the constative transfer of authority is reflected in Edward III's reaction to the news that he will be king. He at first tells Isabel that he does not want to be king because he is too young (5.2.92). When Isabel insists, telling Edward that it is "His Highness' pleasure" (5.2.93), Edward responds by asking to see to his father: "Let me but *see* him first, and then I will" (5.2.94 my emphasis). On one level, this line shows that he simply does not seem to trust his mother. He, like Othello, demands "ocular proof" because he does not believe what others are telling him – he does not trust the recounting witness. On another (more embedded) level, Edward is demanding a performance of abdication. Indeed at this point, he would have the crown, the kind of "ocular proof" that would have satisfied Othello. Thus, he does not merely demand material proof of the abdication, he wants to

see his father. If he gets to see his father, then his father can effectively transfer authority to him via a performance.

Because Edward II's deposition does not clearly transfer authority, Edward III needs to participate in another performance, the coronation, in order to become king. And like the coronation in Tamburlaine, this coronation deploys the triadic relationship. It clearly has an audience and the performance of the coronation is dramatized, like most coronations, in a highly theatrical way; it involves a Champion's challenge, trumpets and a toast (5.4.70-79). However, Edward II is not present at the performance and does not take part in the transfer of authority. Thus, the coronation does not involve a transfer of power between two generations through a performance, but simply anoints one king, while the previous king is absent. And although the previous King has already given up the crown, that deposition can only be accessed by Edward III through constative utterance. In other words, there is no political performance that transfers control of the crown to Edward III. Instead, the play narrates two separate performances, one which performs the deposition and the other the coronation.

What these two separate performances produce is an unstable crown. Kent notes the instability of the crown immediately after the coronation, "Either my brother or his son is king" (5.5.103). This instability does not last long; shortly after the coronation, Edward III finds out that his father is murdered, which automatically (via primogeniture, not performance) makes him king. Indeed, between the deposition/coronation and the discovery of murder, no real king emerges. The lack of a true king is partially symbolized by the absence of the crown. After the deposition, the crown seems to completely disappear from the proceedings. Presumably, Edward II gives the crown to Winchester,

and although Winchester delivers the message that Edward has abdicated, he never mentions the crown again, and the crown does not seem to be involved in the coronation scene (though of course the lack of original stage directions makes this difficult to prove). It is as if once Edward II gives it up, the crown never finds another person to possess it.

This instability does not occur in *Tamburlaine*; there is a clear performance of the transfer of authority and the crown's position is never in doubt. In fact, in *Tamburlaine,* Marlowe manipulates the triadic relationship to make sure there is always a king, but in *Edward II,* Marlowe uses the triadic relationship to dwell on the lack of a king. What this difference signifies is difficult to say, and not of much significant to this study.[163] What is significant to this study is Marlowe's grasp of the triadic relationship and his efforts to dramatize and so construct it within *Tamburlaine* and *Edward II*.

In *The Duchess of Malfi*, *Tamburlaine*, and *Edward II*, performance was used to create societal, public institutions – marriage and the monarchy. However, Ben Jonson's *Epicene* shows that performance can also be used to produce a more private institution, individual reputations. In *Epicene*, Jonson has his character Truewit construct audiences and manipulate the triadic relationship in order to affect the reputations of the gulls, Daw and La Foole.

Their reputations are produced through a complex trick that Truewit plays on the two towards the end of the play. Truewit has convinced Daw and La Foole that they are angry with one other (when in fact neither is angry but both are scared of the other's wrath) and persuaded them that the only way to dissipate the anger is for one to subjugate and humiliate the other. So Truewit sets up a *scene* where La Foole will kick Daw and Daw will tweak La Foole's nose. In other words, each must perform penance in front of

the other. The performance-like nature of this penance is highlighted in the highly theatrical, metaphorical and probably anachronistic surrendering of the sword; in addition to being beaten, each character will give up his sword in a chivalric display of emasculation and submission. What neither character knows is that Dauphine will be assaulting both characters. In order to convince the two that they shouldn't witness the event (so that Dauphine can do the kicking and tweaking), Truewit has to convince them to be blindfolded. To get them to assent to the blindfold, he makes a rather odd argument: "That's for your good, sir: because if he should grow / insolent upon this and publish it hereafter to your dis-/grace (which I hope he will not do) you might swear / safely and protest he never beat you, to your knowledge" (4.5.316-319).[164]

Truewit is essentially giving La Foole deniability but is doing so in a way that explicitly links performance's ability to produce institutionally real events to the existence of an observing audience. La Foole seems to believe that by not seeing himself get beaten, he can deny that the action took place. But of course, he will know that the action took place because he will be able to feel the beating. However, by not seeing the beating, he will be denying the action the status of performance and so produce an institutionally real event. The beating will be real (it will physically happen), but it will not be institutionally real (it will not affect his reputation). Thus, Truewit can truthfully say that if La Foole does not see the action, Daw cannot "publish it hereafter to your disgrace." The action will not affect La Foole's reputation because it is not a performance since it will not have an audience. Thus, he can satisfy Daw without his reputation being affected.

In the end, La Foole is being mocked for believing Truewit, but La Foole is essentially relying on the same notion of audience and performance that Ferdinand does when he refuses to view the Duchess and Antonio, or when Tilney forces the production of a riot off stage to deny it an audience. That is, La Foole, at Truewit's behest, is denying his actions an audience in order to negate its ability to become institutionally real; he is attempting to manipulate the triadic relationship.

Part of what makes this scene comic is that La Foole is unaware that he is not the audience of the performance; he is actually the actor or performer within a performance he doesn't know exists. La Foole is taking place in a performance that Truewit has engineered without La Foole's knowledge. Thus, he cannot deny the event an audience (as Ferdinand and Tilney are able to do) because he never was in a position to be an audience member and doesn't know who is in the audience. And of course, La Foole should know that Truewit will be watching the whole event, thereby providing an additional audience, making his attempt to deny the actions an audience futile. In short, La Foole's understanding of the deniability that Truewit is offering him is absurd because he only partially grasps his own role in the performance.

The total performance that La Foole (and Daw) do not grasp also deploys the triadic relationship. In this performance, Dauphine is the actor since he plays the part of both La Foole and Daw. This performance also has a constructed audience. Truewit has positioned Clerimont, Epicene and others to watch Dauphine humiliate La Foole and Daw. And like the constructed audiences in *The Duchess of Malfi*, it is not immediately clear why these individuals are present to watch the action. Dauphine ventures a guess as to why Truewit would want an audience to watch his actions – he accuses Truewit of

vanity: “This is thy extreme vanity now; thou think’st thou / wert undone if every jest thou mak’st were not published” (4.5.237-238). [165] The first part of Dauphine’s claim seems wrong; Truewit is not indulging in a vanity by desiring an audience to watch his performance. Truewit makes sure that Dauphine understands that his desire for an audience is not related to his pride by giving the credit for the performance to Dauphine by insisting, “Thou shalt see how unjust thou art presently. / Clerimont, say it was Dauphine’s plot (4.5.239-240). The second half of Dauphine’s claim, however, seems right; Truewit and Truewit’s project of humiliation would not be finished (“undone”) until an audience was constructed to watch what he had created because he needs an audience to give the actions the status of a performance and so become institutional reality. In this case, the institutional reality that is being created is Daw and La Foole’s reputation. He is turning them into cowards and fools through a performance, even though they believe that they are performing for one another and impacting their relationship with one another.

However, this inset audience is slightly different from the inset audience in the *Duchess of Malfi*, *Tamburlaine*, *Edward II* and Massinger’s plays because the inset audience seems to have been affected by the performance they wanted. That is, this performance seems rhetorical instead of, or perhaps in addition to, its being performative. The audience (excluding Clerimont and Epicene) were under the impression that Daw and La Foole were fashionable wits, and not the gulls that they become as a result of the performance. Haughty, a member of the inset audience, remarks on the value of the inset performance: “how our judgments were imposed on by / these adulterate knights!” (4.6.1-

2). In this performance and within this triadic relationship, the audience does seem to be, at least partially, the object of the performance.

Nevertheless, the knowledge they receive is based on the institutional reality (Daw and La Foole's reputation) that is created by the performance. Thus, they are not the individuals who are directly being affected by the performance. In fact, we can locate anti-essentialist thought, as described in the first chapter, in this scene and its connection to the triadic relationship. If we view, with the anti-essentialists, Daw and La Foole's character as constitutive of performance, then this performance is constructing them as gulls, and overwriting their previous performances as fashionable wits. They are then the object of the performance. The audience simply has to confront this new reality that is being constructed for them through the performance. They are interacting with institutional reality, not the performance. Furthermore, Daw and La Foole's reputation are only part of what gets produced through the performance; in a way, the main beneficiary or object of the performance is Dauphine (another actor in the performance), who gets credit for the performance and whose reputation is made through it. After the performance, Haughty and the other audience members praise his looks and cleverness, and Truewit asserts, "See how they eye thee, man! They are / taken, I warrant thee" (4.6.42-43). In other words, his reputation with these women has been made through the performance that he took part in.

Still, the fact remains that the audience of this performance (Haughty and company) do act on the basis of the performance. They cast aside Daw and La Foole from their "college" and take in Dauphine. So this version of the triadic relationship is not as strict as the version expressed in *The Duchess of Malfi* or Marlowe's plays.

Nevertheless, the basic structure of this relationship is expressed and constructed within this inset performance.

Moreover, this inset performance is able to show the breadth of possible results produced by the triadic relationship. Indeed, each of the characters in the four plays discussed in this chapter utilizes performance and the triadic relationship to achieve different results: the Duchess produces a marriage, Tamburlaine transfers power, Edward destabilizes power, and Truewit creates reputation. What remains relatively constant in all of these plays is the basic relationship between audience, performance and institutional reality. The audience is not the direct object of the performance, but is necessary to give the performance the ability to directly affect institutional reality. Although these four plays hopefully provide enough evidence to demonstrate how widespread the construction of the triadic relationship was, this basic relationship is produced in many of the plays throughout the period. For instance, one can read the deposition scene of Shakespeare's *Richard II* as an example of the deposed manipulating the triadic relationship. There are also scenes similar to Truewit's trick in other plays such as the anonymous *The Second Maids Tragedy* (see 5.1) and in Middleton's *A Mad World My Master* (see 5.2). In the interest of space, I will not analyze all of these plays. However, I will be relying on the triadic relationship throughout the rest of the study, so most of the plays I discuss will also participate in the construction of this relationship at the same time they are participating in the larger construction of early modern playgoing.

Chapter Three

Mirrors in the Playhouse: The Praxis of Constructing Playgoing

"Sit, and sit civilly, till the play be done" Richard Brome, *The Antipodes*[166]

In the previous chapter, I suggested that by dramatizing and then reflecting on the relationship among audience, performance and reality, the plays are also constructing that relationship in the playhouse. Indeed, throughout this study I will be arguing that metadrama almost always constructs playgoing at the same time that it reflects on playgoing. That is, by discussing playgoing in front of playgoers, the plays are attempting to influence the audience's understanding of playgoing. This construction/reflection process, of course, creates a paradox: playwrights use metadrama to position the audience as the non-object of the performance and so paradoxically convince the audience through performance not to be convinced by performance. In other words, metadrama affects the audience not to affect the audience. In the scenes discussed thus far, this paradoxical process has remained implicit; however, early modern plays often make this process explicit by showing the audience their position within the performance – the non-object of the performance – and by showing them how to act, that is not act, within that construction.

Hamlet uses the metaphor of a mirror to describe how performances impact the audience: "The pur/pose of playing … was and is to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her / own feature" (3.2.18-21). This metaphor can be fruitfully used to help describe the practical process of audience construction. However, and as briefly mentioned in the last chapter, Hamlet describes the mirror as reflecting nature and the audience's morality; the metadrama discussed in this chapter reflects performance

itself and the role of audience within that performance. The mirror then is held up not to the playgoer to show the playgoer his or her own reflection as a moral individual, but to reflect the playgoer *qua* playgoer. That is, these plays do not dramatize moral behavior to show playgoers how to act within a moral universe, but depict playgoing behavior to show playgoers how to behave within the playhouse.

I: The Mirror of Performance: Doubling the Triadic Relationship

Early modern drama often shows the audience what their position is within the performance by doubling the performance the audience is watching; plays depict the inset performance as a mirror image of the playhouse performance, which the inset performance is occurring within. The doubling of performance in these plays further illustrates the triadic relationship detailed in the previous chapter and also highlights the purpose of this relationship – to construct playgoing as a non-reactive experience for the playhouse audience. By doubling the performance, the playwrights are able to tell the audience what the play is doing, so their experience of playgoing is being shaped by the performance they are watching. Thus, the doubling of a performance is not just the representation of the concept of playgoing, but the praxis of that concept.

The doubling of the performance occurs in *The Duchess of Malfi* when characters within the play reflect on the impact the Duchess's marriage has on the fictive reality of the dramatic narrative. Because the Duchess's marriage is depicted as an inset performance, which then metadramatically reflects on playhouse performance, her marriage becomes a figure for playhouse performances, including the performance of *The*

Duchess of Malfi. As her performance of a marriage is constructed as performative, the performance of *The Duchess of Malfi* is also constructed as performative (as are all other stage performances), so when characters reflect on the Duchess's marriage, they are also reflecting on *The Duchess of Malfi*. In short, the inset performance is a double of the stage performance of *The Duchess of Malfi*. Webster's play demonstrates this doubling process particularly well because so much of the narrative is concerned with the fallout of the Duchess's marriage. The marriage takes place within the first act and much of the rest of the play traces the effects of that marriage. In a general sense, the play *The Duchess of Malfi* is "about" the Duchess's marriage, so when the characters within the play discuss the institutional impact of the Duchess's marriage on the fictive reality of the play, they are also discussing the impact the play they inhabit is supposed to have on the institutional reality outside the playhouse.

For instance, when the Duchess tells Bosola that she married Antonio, he immediately starts to describe to her the impact he thinks her marriage will have on the larger culture.

> Fortunate lady!
> For you have made your private nuptial bed
> The humble and fair seminary of peace:
> No question but many an unbenefic'd scholar
> Shall pray for you for this deed, and rejoice
> That some preferment in the world can yet
> Arise from merit. The virgins of your land
> That have no dowries, shall hope your example
> Will raise them to rich husbands: should you want
> Soldiers, 'twould make the very Turks and Moors
> Turn Christians, and serve you for this act.
> Last, the negated poets of your time,
> In honor of this trophy of a man,
> Rais'd by that curious engine, your white hand,
> Shall thank you, in your grave for't; and make that
> More reverend than all the cabinets

> Of living princes. For Antonio,
> His fame shall likewise flow from many a pen,
> When heralds shall want coats to sell to men (3.2.279-297).

The rhetorical situation that Bosola is speaking within complicates this speech and makes it difficult to read as a straightforward description and analysis of the Duchess's marriage. After all, Bosola is spying on the Duchess, and so his role as "intelligencer" means that he must praise her decision to marry (or any of her decisions), so that he can gain her confidence and extract information.[167] So when read rhetorically and within the narrative of the play, this speech is Bosola's way of flattering his mark. However, this speech can also be read metadramatically, as a comment on the efficacy of the Duchess's marriage both within and outside the playhouse. Read this way, Bosola is telling not only the Duchess but also the playhouse audience how the marriage will affect the broader culture. That is, he is interpreting her marriage as doing more than simply creating a single marriage; he sees it as fundamentally changing the institution of marriage.

Specifically, he asserts that the taboo of marrying outside of one's class will dissolve because of her mixed class marriage.[168] He tells the Duchess, "Virgins of your land / that have no dowries shall hope your example / will raise them to rich husbands." That is, her marriage will become an example for other marriages, and because of that example, the institution of marriage itself will change. In fact, he seems to go even further than asserting that the nature of marriage and claims that the institution of class distinctions (status through birth) will be transformed in favor of a system of merit because of her marriage. He suggests, "many an unbeneficed scholar shall … rejoice / that some preferment in the world can yet / arise from merit."[169] He is expanding the scope of the institutional reality that the Duchess's marriage impacts. By doing so,

Bosola is reflecting on the ability of *The Duchess of Malfi* to produce a wider institutional reality (an early modern reality) than exists within her narrative (the fictive reality of the play). Although the wider institutional reality that Bosola cites still takes place within the fictive reality of the play, this broader view of how the performance of her marriage will affect the fictive institution of marriage mirrors the way that the stage performance (*The Duchess of Malfi*) will affect the real institution of marriage. The Duchess's marriage is doubled: her stage performance and her inset performance mirror one another. The audience looks into this mirror and witnesses a representation of their own experience of watching the play, thus shaping their understanding of their role within that experience. And the role that is being constructed within this doubled performance is that of the non-reactive playgoer, where institutional reality, and not themselves, are the object.

Indeed, critics have argued that Webster's play probably impacted early modern institutional reality in the same way that Bosola asserts the Duchess's marriage is impacting the fictive institutional reality of the play. For instance, Mary Beth Rose argues, "the heroics of [the Duchess's] marriage is associated with the bourgeois recognition of merit in determining status, rather than the aristocratic reliance on birth."[170] This is not to say that this is the only way of reading the Duchess's marriage; it can also be seen as an unwelcome and dangerous challenge to the institution of marriage and status. In fact, Rose explores the tension between these two interpretations of the play. Likewise, Bosola's speech can also be read somewhat ironically: he is not straightforwardly praising the Duchess's decision to marry, but is asserting the dangerous challenge the Duchess's marriage poses to "the aristocratic reliance on birth" and is subtly reminding the Duchess of the danger this challenge poses to her and her family.

Indeed, Sara Jayne Steen has convincingly argued that this would have been the early modern response to the Duchess's marriage: a split between support for and fear of its revolutionary implications.[171] Regardless of whether early modern culture would have supported or feared the implications of the play they watched, these conflicting interpretations do not negate the institutional impact of the performance. The performance of the play becomes institutional reality and so directly affects the institution of marriage and class. Whether one supports or fears that impact is beside the point. The important point for this study is that Webster highlights these institutional effects by describing the effects of the inset performance of the Duchess's marriage.

This may seem like an impossibly ambitious model of performance: one fictional performance of a subversive or dangerous marriage changes or has the potential to change the entire real institution of marriage. However, it is not entirely unreasonable, especially within a speech act model of institutions and language. As Fish, drawing on Austin and Searle, points out, this is simply how speech acts work and perhaps how institutions function. In his essay on *Coriolanus*, Fish argues that Coriolanus uses speech acts, specifically declaratives, to create his own state, where the laws of Rome do not apply to him. Fish concludes by suggesting the play dramatizes the radical potential of speech acts. I quote at length because Fish aptly describes what happens when the logic of speech acts is carried to its logical conclusion and because Fish's analysis influences and shares affinities with my own analysis of *The Duchess of Malfi*:

> The moral of this [Coriolanus' attempt to create his own state through language] is chastening, even disturbing: institutions are no more than the (temporary) effects of speech act agreements … This becomes obvious if one reflects a bit on the ontological status of declaratives …: if declarative utterances, when they have their intended force, alter states of affairs, what brings about the state of affairs in which a declarative utterance is endowed with its intended force? The answer is,

> another declarative utterance, and it is an answer one would have to give no matter how far back the inquiry was pushed. The conclusion is inescapable: declarative (and other) utterances do not merely mirror or reflect the state; they are the state …
>
> It might be objected that to reason in this way is to imply that one can constitute a state simply by declaring it to exist. That of course is exactly what happens: a single man plants a flag on a barren shore and claims everything his eye can see in the name of a distant monarch or for himself; another man, hunted by the police and soldiers, seeks refuge in a cave, where, alone or in the company of one or two fellows, he proclaims the birth of a revolutionary government.[172]

In other words, as I suggested in the first chapter, if institutions are constitutive of speech acts, then speech acts have the ability to alter institutions. This is as true of states as it is of marriages, at least according to the logic of speech act theory and, as I argue, the logic of the early modern construction of playgoing. The Duchess is claiming for herself the ability to create a marriage that transgresses class and gender boundaries, which then effects the institution of marriage, and Bosola is reminding her, perhaps as a veiled threat, of these effects. And by framing the Duchess's marriage as a double of the play, Webster is also claiming for himself and his play (and perhaps all plays) this ability: his representation of a transgressive marriage is changing the institution of marriage.[173] One can argue the extent of these effects: how influential can one semi-secret marriage be or how powerful of an effect can one play make? Just as one can question how revolutionary an effect a government can have if it is made up of one individual. In fact, as I will argue in the Coda, *The Duchess of Malfi* explores these very questions. But if stage utterances did behave like performative utterances, then, to use Fish's language, "the conclusion is inescapable." Performances affect the institutions that they describe.

But of course, as I have already suggested but want to make clear, this does not mean that these effects actually took place within the reality of early modern society. Just because the playwrights *constructed* their stage utterances as performative does not mean

that they actually *behaved* as performatives – affecting institutions. In fact, the present study argues against this speech act model of institutions. As I argued in the first chapter, the institution of the playhouse is constitutive of its economic and political situation. Or in other words, the playhouse was created, not through speech acts, but through the material forces of early modern society. But obviously this does not mean that early modern playwrights recognized or accepted my (or Althusser's) version of institutions. They seem to have put forth a model similar to Fish's. And by constructing this model, that is claiming that their stage utterances were performatives, playwrights could, simultaneously, claim for themselves an ambitious and powerful model of performance, and place the audience within a position where they were not directly affected by performances. Bosola's speech, if we read it metadramatically, seems to be making these claims.

That being said, Bosola does seem to understand the Duchess's wedding/performance as influencing flesh and blood individuals and not just the abstract institution of marriage. But the individuals who are influenced by her performance (the Virgins, Scholars and Soldiers) are not those present at her performance; they are not her audience. Indeed, her original audience, Cariola, is poised to benefit from the Duchess's marriage in much the same way Bosola describes the benefits of the marriage; she is a unmarried woman. But Bosola does not cite her as the beneficiary of the Duchess's marriage, nor does the narrative of the play since Cariola maintains that she will not get married (3.2.23). Instead, those who are affected by her marriage are those who merely hear of her marriage. They are influenced not by her performance, but by the institutional reality that the performance creates. Performance is being constructed within this play in

a way that does not affect the audience, and because this performance is being doubled, the stage audience, like Cariola, finds themselves within a position where they will not be affected by the performance of *The Duchess of Malfi*.

Bosola's metaphor of a "seminary" or seed bed further explores the institutional effect of the Duchess's marriage: "For you have made your private nuptial bed / The humble and fair seminary of peace" (3.3.281-282). The term "seminary" in the seventeenth century referred to a piece of land that was used to grow plants that were later transplanted, or in a more general sense, "a place of origin and early development; a place or thing in which something (e.g. an art or science, a virtue or vice) is developed or cultivated, or from which it is propagated abundantly."[174] The seeds in a seminary do not stay where they are, but are moved to other locations to finish growing. Likewise, the Duchess's marriage does not stay confined to the "private nuptial bed," but can be transplanted to other locations, where the Virgins, Scholars and Soldiers will benefit from her performance. This iteration is possible because the marriage/performance first impacts the institution of marriage, and once that institution is changed, the full consequences of the performance can be accessed by anyone interacting with the institution. In short, the Duchess's performance of marriage does not affect Cariola (the audience of the performance), but the institution of marriage (the institutional reality that the performance addresses). And this is the process of *The Duchess of Malfi*'s efficacy; it impacts the institution of marriage.

When the Duchess reflects on the impact of her marriage, she expresses an ambivalence about its implication – an ambivalence that perhaps mirrors Webster's (and perhaps many playwrights') ambivalence about the influence of stage performance. The

Duchess expresses this ambivalence when she responds to Bosola's speech which, as argued above, describes the institutional impact of her marriage. She tells Bosola, "As I taste comfort in this friendly speech, / So would I find concealment" (3.3.299-300). She seems to like that the performance of her marriage (both inside the play and inside the playhouse) will become institutional reality and therefore impact the institutions of marriage and status, but she also fears it and so opts for secrecy – for "concealment." In other words, she finds comfort in the idea that her marriage will impact institutional reality therefore become public, but she also wants to deny others knowledge of her marriage. Of course, it is clear why she would want to keep her marriage a secret. Her brothers have forbidden her to marry and threatened to harm her if she did, but at this point in the narrative, her brothers already know that she is married (Ferdinand discovers the marriage earlier in the scene). What she seems to fear is the revolutionary potential of her marriage because of its ability to become institutionally real.

This tension between wanting to keep her marriage a secret and allowing it to affect institutional reality is also expressed through the Duchess's conflicting descriptions of her own marriage. When the Duchess is alone with Antonio and Cariola (the only characters present at her marriage), she tells Antonio, in response to his request for sex, "I hope in time 'twill grow into a custom / that noblemen shall come with cap and knee, / To purchase a night's lodging of their wives" (3.2.4-6). Here she seems to be suggesting, even if it is in jest, that she does want her marriage to impact the institution of marriage. She wants the gender relations in her marriage to become the "custom." However, when she is speaking to her brother, she denies this desire: "I have not gone about, in this [her marriage to Antonio], to create / Any new world, or custom" (3.2.110-111).

As I will argue in the coda, this tension between an acknowledgment of the public nature of performance and a desire to keep the performance a secret mirrors a tension within the playhouse over the potential impact of its own performances.[175] However, for now, it is enough to notice the way that *The Duchess of Malfi* calls attention to the institutional impact of the Duchess's marriage and how that impact mirrors the impact of the performance of *The Duchess of Malfi*.

In Webster's play, the object of performance (the institution of marriage) is doubled; the play holds up a mirror to the institution of marriage to show how the play is actually impacting that institution. In *Epicene*, the audience's role within the triadic relationship is actually the aspect of playgoing that is doubled; the play holds a mirror up to the audience to show the audience what their role is within the performance. Jonson accomplishes this doubling by essentially telling the audience that their role in the performance of *Epicene* is the same as that of the inset audiences within *Epicene*. In the final scene of the play, the stage audience is actually used within the performance as an inset audience, thereby forcing the stage audience to equate the inset audience with themselves because, at the end of the play, they are, quite literally, the same thing. When the stage audience and the inset audience are collapsed into one audience, this audience takes part in the triadic relationship the play is dramatizing. The performance is then doubled when the stage audience finds itself within the triadic relationship. The relationship is now within the play and within the playhouse.

This doubling process begins with the formation of the triadic relationship in the last scene of the play. Morose signs the contract that completes the main plot of the story – Dauphine's attempts to get Morose's wealth. However, signing the contract is not

enough; he also needs an audience to witness the signing. The signing of the contract recreates the basic conditions of the stage; it is metadramatic. Morose's comments about his signing seem to both suggest metadrama and an effort to double the performance. He tells those who are watching (his audience), "Here, I deliver it thee as my deed. / If there be a word in it lacking or writ with false ortho/ graphy, I protest before – I will not take the advantage" (5.4.195-197). Editors often assume that the dash here is a substitute for the word "God," a word that could not be spoken on stage.[176] However, another possibility exists: at other moments in the play a dash indicates a gesture, as when Morose demands that his interlocutor make a gesture instead of verbally replying to his question. The gesture that he would make after "I protest before" would seem to be a gesture towards those who are watching him sign the contract. He is asking those present to watch or witness his signing of the contract, thereby constructing an audience. This then forms the triadic relationship: the constructed audience watches his actions (signing the document); the audience's presence turns the action into a performance; the performance then has the ability to impact institutional reality, in this case legal reality.[177]

The doubling process occurs within this scene because at the same time that the dash in the text signifies a gesture to the onstage characters, the dash can also signify a gesture to the playhouse audience, which then transforms the entire playhouse audience into a witness to his performance. He is not just asking the characters on stage to be his audience, he is also asking the playhouse audience to be his witness. Thus, the audience is put into the exact position of the inset audience, and the triadic relationship is formed onstage between the inset audience, inset performance and fictive reality and between the stage audience (who is the inset audience), the stage performance and reality. Since the

inset audience and the stage audience take on the same role within Morose's performance, the inset audience becomes a mirror of the stage audience, thus informing the stage audience of their role within the performance.

This interpretation of the dash is supported by Truewit's last speech which explicitly addresses the playhouse audience in the same way that Morose seems to be addressing the onstage audience through his gesture. In these last lines of the play, Truewit directly addresses the audience by declaring, "Spectators, if you like this comedy, rise cheerfully, and / now Morose is gone in, clap your hands. It may be that / noise will cure him, at least please him" (5.4.248-250). Truewit here is making an appeal to the audience for applause as well as integrating that applause into the plot of the play by urging the audience to annoy Morose, who can not tolerate loud noises like applause.[178] What is interesting about this scene is that Truewit is not really breaking character; he is not addressing the audience as an actor – Truewit is still Truewit and Morose is still Morose. Instead, Truewit seems to be constructing an audience for his fictional performance out of the real audience watching *Epicene*. He is turning the stage audience into an inset audience.

The epilogue to Richard Brome's *The Antipodes* also uses this metatheatrical technique to call attention to the role of audience within a performance, thereby forming the triadic relationship out of the playhouse performance and the playhouse audience. The epilogue is spoken by the Doctor and Peregrine, who both, like Truewit, do not break character, and also like Truewit, address the playhouse audience. The Doctor's address to the audience is particularly significant because it explicitly pulls the audience into the plot of the play and into the triadic relationship.

> Whether my cure be perfect yet or no,
> It lies not in my doctorship to know.
> Your approbation may more raise the man,
> Than all the College of Physicians can;
> And more health from your fair hands may be won,
> Than by the strokings of the seventh son (5.7.34-39).

Again, like Truewit, the Doctor is giving the audience's applause curative powers. However, Truewit is clearly being ironic when he tells the audience that they can cure Morose since the audience's applause will not alleviate Morose's suffering but will aggravate it. The Doctor, on the other hand, is being more forthright in that he is attempting to cure his patient Peregrine. In other words, in *Epicene* it is clear how the audience's applause will affect the performance (it will annoy Morose); however, the curative power of the audience's applause in *The Antipodes* is a bit of a mystery. Indeed, the Doctor's speech seems to only make sense once the triadic relationship is located within the plot of *The Antipodes* and once the Doctor's speech to the audience is interpreted as an attempt to double this relationship.

Most of the plot of *The Antipodes* involves the Doctor's attempt to cure Peregrine's addiction to travel narratives, an addiction that has made him impotent. He is so obsessed with travel that he neglects to sleep with his wife. To cure Peregrine, the Doctor has his friend Letoy stage a play that dramatizes Peregrine's trip to the Antipodes. Originally, this dramatized trip was supposed to cure Peregrine of his wanderlust and his addiction to travel narratives by satisfying his desire for travel. However, when Peregrine takes control of the plot by claiming the throne of Antipodal London, the players of the inset performance improvise and cast Peregrine's wife, Diana, as the queen of Antipodal London and convince Peregrine that he must marry and sleep with Diana to fully take control of the realm. He does and is cured. The play that the Doctor and Letoy

stage becomes, in essence, one extended bed trick. The play tricks Peregrine into sleeping with his own wife.

The bed trick is depicted within the play as an inset performance, a performance that forms a triadic relationship. Throughout the inset play (the Doctor's bed trick) an audience is in attendance. Indeed, like Cariola in the *Duchess of Malfi*, this audience is not only superfluous but seemingly counterproductive. Having an audience watching should reveal to Peregrine that he is being tricked; a physically present audience should reveal that he is in a performance and not actually in the Antipodes. One would think that the ploy would work much better if all the characters of Brome's play played characters in Letoy's inset play, thereby creating a kind of virtual reality, where Peregrine could both indulge his travel fantasy and sleep with his wife (the virtual queen of the Antipodes). Indeed, it is difficult to understand why Peregrine does not notice the audience since the audience talks among themselves and comments on what they are seeing throughout the performance. At one point in the inset performance, Peregrine does seem to be made aware of the inset audience (how could he not?) when he asks the Doctor, "And what are those?" To which the Doctor replies, "All Antipodeans." (2.8.69-70). The play then moves on with Peregrine supposedly satisfied that the audience watching him is in fact an Antipodean audience, but he never questions why others are observing his every move. In other words, having an audience present to watch Peregrine's performance creates a large plot problem that never seems to be fully resolved; it is a conspicuously constructed audience. However, to structure the plot without an audience would negate the ontological value of the fictive play – its ability to become institutionally real. The audience allows the performance to create the institution

of Antipodal London with all of its antipodal institutions: for example, marriage, professions, monarchy. The institution of the monarchy is particularly important since it is within this institution that Peregrine sleeps with his wife. Because the institution demands that he sleep with the previous queen, he does and is cured of impotence. The cure works because somebody is watching the performance, just as the Duchess's marriage works because Cariola is watching it, and Truewit's tricks work because his friends are watching them.

The Doctor's call for applause within the epilogue can now be understood as an attempt to place the playhouse audience in the same position as the inset audience watching Letoy's inset play, thereby pulling the playhouse audience into the triadic relationship and doubling the performance. The audience's presence within this triadic relationship is able to cure Peregrine for the same reason that the inset audience is necessary to cure Peregrine, because their presence allows the performance to create an institutional reality that enables the bed trick. Indeed, the Doctor's language within the epilogue suggests the audience's role in this process. The Doctor states, "Your *approbation* may more raise the man, / Than all the College of Physicians can" (5.7.36-37, my emphasis). On one hand, approbation refers to the audience's ability to give approval, so the Doctor is simply making a blatant appeal for applause. On the other hand, approbation can also refer to the action of proving or declaring something true.[179] The "something" in this case is the performance that they just witnessed. Thus, the Doctor is asking the audience to applaud the play thereby making it true. By announcing their presence through applause and by being integrated into the plot, the audience is put into a position where they take on the role of a constructed audience of the fictional

performance, which gives that performance the ability to be performative, which in turn makes the performance institutionally real. The applause approbates the performance. Since the performance is approbated, Peregrine must work within the real institution of the monarchy which demands that he sleep with his wife, thus curing him of his impotence. The performance is then doubled since the stage audience and the inset audience are performing the same function. The audience is watching a mirror image of itself, and the function that is being created within this mirror is essentially a non-reactive one. Each audience (the inset audience and its double, the stage audience) is constructed as unaffected observers of performative actions.

Not only is the audience's role within the triadic relationship doubled within *The Antipodes*, but the role of performance within this relationship is also doubled. *The Antipodes* doubles the role of performance by dramatizing a fictional performance becoming institutionally real. The inset performance (Letoy's play) is used as a bed trick to get Peregrine to sleep with his wife, but according to early modern marriage law, under certain circumstances marriages were not legally (institutionally) real until they were consummated.[180] In fact, the specifics of Peregrine's marriage suggest that his marriage was not fully legitimate until after he slept with Martha because Peregrine seems to have been forced into his marriage (1.2.47-49). And enforced marriages were often not considered fully legitimate until after consummation.[181] Indeed, while the marriage is being consummated, Letoy refers to Peregrine and Martha as a "new married pair" even though they were married three years before the consummation (4.8.42). Letoy may be referring to their fictional marriage as "new," but within the context of the play and early modern marriage law, there is no distinction between the fictional marriage of the king

and queen of the Antipodes that was produced through Letoy's play and the marriage of Peregrine and Martha. That is, their marriage is only institutionally real after consummation and the fictional marriage is what consummates the marriage. Thus, the fictional marriage is, in a sense, the institutionally real marriage. Whichever marriage Letoy is calling new, the fictional one or the real one, he is right.

Thus, the inset performance within *The Antipodes* is able to demonstrate how the triadic relationship works within the playhouse. The fictional performance of a play produces institutional reality. Of course within the playhouse, sex is not required for this process to work, but the basic conditions of the stage are repeated within the inset performance: the fictional performance is able to produce an institutional reality. By recreating this process, the performance is doubled and the triadic relationship is constructed and the audience's position within this relationship is made clear to the audience. The audience sees that it is not the object of the performance and consequently they should not be affected by the performance or react to it.

II: The Mirror of Playgoers: Satirizing Unruly Playgoers

A more aggressive way that playwrights worked to control the audience was by satirizing fictional and unruly playgoers. Occasionally, playwrights would dramatize and then mock fictional inset playgoers in an attempt to convince the actual playhouse playgoers to stop actively responding to the performance. In other words, playwrights held up a mirror to the audience to show them their own unruly activity. And while mirroring the role of performance seems to have been the playwright's attempt to

influence audience's *thoughts* about their role within the playhouse, mirroring playgoers seems to have been the playwright's attempt to influence audience's *actions* within the playhouse. That is, satirizing active playgoers is an explicit attempt by playwrights to influence the material actions of the audience – the way they actually behaved.

This attempt at audience to control the unruly audience takes a number of forms. Thomas Dekker's "How a Gallant Should Behave Himself in a Play" is a straightforward, albeit non-dramatic, example of how playwrights satirized their audiences to affect their behavior within the playhouse. In this work, Decker describes the distracting and interruptive behavior of playgoers in order to satirize and stigmatize those activities. Jonson's character Fitzdottrell in *The Devil is an Ass* likewise parodies gallants' behavior within the playhouse. Similar accounts of playwrights mocking their audiences have been chronicled by theater historians such as Cook and Gurr.[182] Critics generally use these accounts of unruly playgoers as evidence for how early modern audiences actually behaved without fully taking into account that satire also attempts to stop that behavior and replace it with ideal (in this case non-reactive) behavior, but this effect seems to be, at least in part, what the satire was meant to accomplish.

In the interest of brevity and to avoid repetition, I will not investigate each case of audience satire; instead, I will focus on one particular type of satire which produces complex (and surprising) effects within the social formation of playgoing other than constructing non-responsive playgoers. That is, just as playwrights' desire to place the audience as the non-object of performance worked in conjunction with their desire to construct stage utterances as performative, their desire to stop unruly behavior in the playhouse occasionally led them to construct or perhaps reify other aspects of the

playgoing experience, namely the naturalism of the stage and the differences between male and female playgoers. When playwrights satirized their audience to construct the non-reactive playgoer, they also contributed to the non-naturalism of the early modern stage – a stage that made little effort to create a believable depiction of reality through illusionistic stage devices (for instance, realistic costumes, authentic looking props or sound effects). This construction also contributed to the assumption that female playgoers were more likely to respond to performances as if they were real and consequently were less adept at playgoing.

The first effect of the construction of playgoing (the non-naturalism of the stage) occurred because early modern audience reaction was in part predicated on how realistic the performance appeared. Performances that were deemed realistic were often thought to be more likely to produce an audience reaction. Thus, satirizing audience behavior is connected to playwrights' discussion within metadrama, about questions relating to the naturalism of the playhouse. By discussing audience behavior, playwrights also discussed how realistic they wanted their stage to look. In fact, playwrights' tendency to limit the naturalism of the stage is often also an attempt to limit audience reaction. The second effect of the construction of playgoing (the gendering of audience response) is connected to the first effect because in the early modern era, women were often portrayed as more likely to be affected by performances because they were more likely to confuse reality with fiction. Likewise, the satire of fictional audience behavior was also often gendered. The active playgoer who was satirized within metadrama was often a woman. Thus, when playwrights mocked audiences who reacted to performances in order to construct a non-reactive playgoer, they were also forced to construct a theory of

performance that dealt with the naturalism of the stage and gender differences among playgoers.

III: Cultural Assumptions about the Link between Naturalism, Gender and Audience Response

It seems that playwrights did not invent the link between naturalism and audience reaction nor the belief that female playgoers were more likely to be affected by illusionistic drama; rather they were probably responding to a prior cultural assumption, an assumption that can be found in recorded responses to early modern drama and antitheatrical documents. Before tracing their responses, it is first useful to locate and describe this assumption.

For instance, the link between naturalism and audience reaction can be found in several first hand descriptions of audience behavior. Of the handful of eye-witness accounts of early modern performances, a few of them record playgoers' confusion of fictional performances for real actions and suggest that this confusion led to (unruly) action. An anonymous elegy for Richard Burbage narrates playgoers' reaction to Burbage's performances.

> Oft have I seen him leap into a grave
> Suiting the person, (which he us'd to have)
> Of a mad lover, with so true an eye
> That there I would have sworn he meant to die
> Oft have I seen him play his part in jest,
> So lively, that spectators, and the rest
> Of his crews, whilst he did but seem to bleed
> Amazed, thought he had been dead indeed.[183]

The elegist seems to be proposing that Burbage's verisimilitudinous acting was so convincing that it led the audience to engage the performance as real. This effect of performance could be seen as elegiac hyperbole and as a conventional way of praising acting, but other early modern accounts of audience behavior suggest that audiences did in fact interrupt performances because they thought they were real. Edmund Gayton tells the story of a butcher who was so overcome by a battle scene that he "got upon the stage, and with his good baton took the true Trojan's part so stoutly, that he routed the Greeks, and railed upon them loudly for a company of cowardly slaves to assault on em with so much odds."[184] Thomas Palmer in a dedicatory verse to Beaumont and Fletcher recalls a similar playhouse experience.

> How didst thou sway the theatre ! make us feele
> The players wounds were true, and their swords, steele!
> Nay, stranger yet, how often did I know
> When the spectators ran to save the blow?[185]

These anecdotes suggest that naturalism occasionally led playgoers to confuse performance with reality, and this confusion led them to react to the action on stage. And even if these events never actually occurred (that is, they were simply conventional forms of flattery), they still suggest a conceptual link between naturalism and audience reaction. Early moderns seemed to have believed that the more realistic a performance, the more likely it was to produce a reaction from the audience.

And there is certain commonsense to this connection: the more realistic a representation is, the more likely the brain is to temporarily forget it is watching a representation and so is more likely to respond and react. Think of audiences' responses to 3-D as opposed to conventional movies. Moreover, the newness of professional drama may have contributed to the audience's tendency to react to naturalistic performances.

Early modern audiences, not used to watching flesh and blood actors, were not fully comfortable with the phenomenon. They were not yet condition to always be able to tell the difference between stage representation and reality and so were likely to temporarily forget the difference. One can imagine that early moderns responded to performances similarly to the way that the first audiences of film were said to respond. A widely circulated story (which like the anecdotes discussed above, may in fact be untrue) holds that one of the very first audiences of one of the first films, the Lumière brothers' *L'Arrivée d'un train à La Ciotat*, leaped out of the way of the approaching train. They allegedly forgot they were watching a representation of a train and so responded as if a real train was about to run them over.[186]

This type of reaction is exactly what, as I have argued, playwrights were trying to avoid because it represented a potential threat to the theaters. Creating naturalistic stage performances that could unleash these types of audience responses would not only interrupt the performance (making it difficult to produce a play), but could also lead to more politically dangerous audience behavior – insurrection and riot. If playgoers were unable to help themselves from taking the side of the Trojans against the Greeks, would they be unable to help themselves from aiding Jack Cade against Henry VI, Bolingbrook against Richard II or Jack Straw against the aristocracy? In short, naturalism led to a type of audience reaction that playwrights would have been uncomfortable with.

Not surprisingly, antitheatrical writers were also uncomfortable with naturalism on the stage because of its potential effect on playgoers. Critics have long noted that antitheatrical writers were anxious about drama's reliance on pretense; by pretending to be something they were not, actors offended Puritan religious principles and destabilized

gender and class hierarchies.[187] However, these critics have not noticed the way in which antitheatrical writers linked pretense and naturalism with performance's efficacy and audience reaction. The antitheatrical writers, like the authors of the anecdotes described above, seemed to believe that the more real a performance appears, the more likely it is to affect the audience.

For instance, Stephen Gosson points out that it is necessary "in stage playes for a boy to put one [sic] the attyre, the gesture, the passions of a woman; for a meane person to take upon him the title of a Prince, with counterfeit port, and traine, is by outwarde signes to shewe them selves otherwise then they are, and so within the compasse of a lye."[188] Although Gosson is making a general argument about all acting, he is also specifically attacking naturalistic drama – verisimilitudinous acting and illusionistic stage devises. Gosson is particularly worried about actors trying to look like the individuals they are representing by mimicking the "port, and traine" of others.[189] Later in the argument Gosson seems to connect the naturalism of the stage with its ability to affect the actions of the audience: "these outward spectacles effeminate, and soften the hearts of men, vice is learned with beholding, sense is tickled, desire pricked, and those impressions of mind are secretly conveyed over to the gazers, which the players do counterfeit on the stage."[190] Gosson is not explicitly connecting realism on the stage with actions of the audience, but there is the suggestion that when the audience is transported by the illusion of the stage, the "outward spectacle," they are more likely to be affected by the performance, to have their "desire pricked."

William Gager, who tries to defend drama, makes the connection between the illusion of naturalism and drama's efficacy more explicit. He argues that academic drama

is moral while professionally produced drama is immoral precisely because academic drama does not make an attempt at naturalism. In Gager's reply to John Rainolds, who argues that drama is immoral because men act like women, Gager points out that his student-actors do such a bad job that no one would confuse the men for women and that this bad acting negates the immorality of academic performances. I quote at length because Gager's argument clearly connects realistic acting with performance's effect on the audience:

> As for the danger to the spectators in heeringe and seeinge thinges lyvely expressed, and to the actors in the earnest meditation and studye to represent them; I grant that bad effectes doe fall owte in thos Playes, agaynst the which suche arguments are iustly to be amplyfyde; but there is no such myscheefe to be feared to enswe of owres. wherin for owre penninge, we are base and meane as you see; and specialy for womanly behavior, we weare so careless, that when one of owre actors should have made a *Conge* like a woman, he made a legg like a man. in summ; owre spectators could not gretely charge owre actors with any such diligence in medytation and care to imprynt any passions; and so neyther of them coulde receyve any hurt therby.[191]

Gager, a successful and prolific academic dramatist, admits that "lyvely" or lifelike dramatic productions are a danger to the audience but points out that his actors are so unconvincing that there is no danger to the audience. His unrealistic actors do not try to "imprynt any passions" in the audience, and so they are not "hurt" by the unrealistic performances. Compare this portrayal of acting to the elegits' portrayal cited above: for the elegist, Burbage's performances were so convincing that the audience often reacted to his performance as real; for Gager, his actors' performances were so unconvincing that no audience member would react to the performances as real. In early modern England, at least according to the antitheatrical writers, what we might consider bad acting was moral and allowed and good acting was immoral and dangerous because it could impact the audience. In fact, it has been suggested that boy companies were popular with the

educated class because these audiences were anxious about the power of illusionistic drama. Educated and literate playgoers accepted the antitheatrical argument that illusionistic drama was dangerous and believed that boy-actors, like student-actors, were less likely to trick them into believing that they were watching real events.[192]

To limit the impact of the performance on the audience, playwrights constructed an experience of playgoing that highlighted the line between performance and fiction by foregrounding the non-illusionistic aspects of the early modern stage. In other words, they attempted to craft their plays to be more like Gager's than Burbage's. Playwrights also attempted to limit the effect that their drama could have on the audience by satirizing those playgoers who actually did respond to performances as if they were real. This satire was produced by creating and then mocking fictional playgoers or inset audiences who did respond to the performance. By satirizing those playgoers, the playwrights were simultaneously able to discourage audiences from responding to the performance and encourage them to view the performance as purely fictional. The efficacy of performance and the representational nature of the stage, then, can be traced to the construction of the non-reactive playgoer. In other words, the non-naturalism and non-illusionistic nature of the stage are at least partially the result or effect of the construction of the non-reactive playgoer.

Critics have long noted the non-illusionistic nature of the early modern stage. However, many scholars tend to view this non-naturalism as a hindrance that needed to be overcome by the playwrights, actors and audiences. Critics such as Michael Shapiro, Jeremy Lopez and Anthony B. Dawson have relied on the concept of dual consciousness, which can be traced to Samuel Johnson and Coleridge, to explain how playwrights and

audiences confronted non-naturalistic early modern production techniques.[193] The theory suggests that early modern audiences were always aware that what they were watching was a stage representation, but at the same time audiences were encouraged to imagine that what they were watching was real. For evidence of this theory, one needs only think of the chorus in Shakespeare's *Henry V*, which asks the audience to forgive the unrealistic London stage and imagine that they are watching battles being waged throughout England and France. The Chorus asks,

> Can this cock-pit hold
> The vastly fields of France? Or may we cram
> Within this wooden O the very casques
> That did affright the air at Agincourt?
> O pardon: since a crooked figure may
> Attest in little place a million,
> And let us, ciphers to this great account,
> On your imaginary forces work.
> Suppose within the girdle of these walls
> Are now confined two mightily monarchies (12-20).

Shakespeare's chorus, however, provides us with a fairly atypical example of how early modern plays asked their audience to respond to drama. More often than not, early modern playwrights actively dissuade audiences from willfully suspending their disbelief and cultivating a dual consciousness.

Indeed, Gurr notes that early modern playwrights routinely shattered the illusion of the stage through metadrama. For Gurr, metadrama "reflects in the writers' knowledge that their audiences were fully aware of their environs, and that the fictions were to be seen as overt mimicry whose pretence at creating illusions had to be obvious."[194] Gurr states, as I suggest above, that this shattering of illusion was a reaction to "Puritan objections to playing [which] largely stemmed from the evident dishonesty of the players, who pretended to be what they were not."[195] And Huston Diehl argues that the non-

illusionistic stage can be traced to an ethos of Protestant iconoclasm, which was hostile towards realistic imagery.[196] However, in light of the evidence from eyewitness accounts and antitheatrical documents that link naturalism to audience response, playwrights' attempts to highlight the artificiality of the stage were probably aimed at more than countering Puritan objections and satisfying Protestant ideology; they were also designed to stifle audience reaction. Indeed, as I will argue below, plays sometimes link the naturalism of the stage to audience reaction, and conversely their satire of audience reaction is also often linked to a rejection of naturalism.

The second effect of the construction of playgoing through metadramatic satire, the gendering of audience reaction, can also be traced to antitheatrical discourse.[197] Antitheatrical writers seemed to have believed that women were more susceptible to performance than men; as Gurr and Karoline Szatek point out, "A great deal throughout the period was written by men about how plays could so easily corrupt women."[198] To take just one example, an early antitheatrical writer, John Northbrooke, asserts that plays teach "unlawfull appetites and desires? with their bawdie and filthie sayings and counterfeit doings."[199] But he singles out women as particularly susceptible to the corrupting force of performance: "women (especiallye) shoulde absent themselves from such playes" because "the nature of women is muche infected with this vice."[200] Playwrights seemed to pick up on this hierarchical view of gender and tend to represent women as particularly susceptible to performance, especially illusionistic or naturalistic performances. So women are portrayed as more likely to confuse fiction for reality; this confusion then becomes the reason for women's unruly responses to performance and the reason why female playgoers are satirized.[201]

Focusing their satire on female playgoers does not necessarily mean that playwrights were only worried about female playgoers' reaction or that the satire was only intended to work on women. Indeed, it's likely the satire was not only directed at female audience members; it would also resonate with the men. Anxious men would not want to appear feminine and so would avoid responding to performance in a feminine manner. Indeed, scholars have long noted that early modern men were worried about behaving like women. And although this fear is not exactly culturally bound (men throughout history and in different cultures tend to stigmatize feminine behavior), the widely accepted one-sex model of biological gender within the early modern era produced a cultural fear that if men acted like women, they could physically become women.[202] Thus, men almost obsessively organized their identity and behavior in opposition to female identity and behavior. So by gendering audience response, playwrights could, at the same time, satirize female responses to drama in an attempt to dissuade women from acting on the impulses created through performance and stigmatize that same behavior for men. But by focusing their satire on women, playwrights were constructing, reifying and reinforcing the cultural assumption that women were more likely than men to confuse fiction for reality and more susceptible than male playgoers to the effects of performance. Thus, satirizing playgoers in order to rein in their unruly behavior had the effect of gendering audience reaction.

IV: Dramatic Representations of Female Playgoers and Naturalism

Both the belief that women were more likely to respond to performance and the belief that confusing reality with fiction led to audience response are present in the inset performance and the preparation for that inset performance within *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The mechanicals' description of their future performance demonstrates that limiting female playgoers' reaction was the reason why performers might want to highlight the artificiality of the stage. While preparing for their performance, the mechanicals go out of their way to make sure that the audience will have no choice but to view the performance as purely fictional – to respond to the performance with a single consciousness. They do so because they are worried that the women in the audience will be unable to tell the difference between performance and reality, and this confusion will lead to audience reaction.

After hearing Bottom describe how accurately he would portray a lion, Quince tells his company what would happen if Bottom did produce a naturalistic roar: "An you should do it too terribly you would fright the / Duchess and the ladies that they would shriek, and that were / enough to hang us all" (1.2.61-63). Similarly, when they start their rehearsal, Bottom expresses his fear that when Pyramus draws "a sword to kill himself," the female audience members will be offended because "the ladies cannot abide" that type of violence (3.1.9, 10). To avoid this type of audience reaction, which they believe could result in punishment, Bottom proposes a piece of metadrama that will assuage the women's fear that Pyramus might actually kill himself.

> I have a device to make all well. Write me
> a prologue, and let the prologue seem to say we will do no

> harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not killed indeed; and for the more better assurance, tell them that I, Pyramus, am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver. This will put them out of fear (3.1.15-20).

In order to combat the women's inability to tell the difference between performance and reality, Bottom resolves to bring the fictionality of the performance to the absolute surface of the production, so the women in the audience will have no choice but to respond to the performance as purely fictional, that is, respond to it with a single consciousness. Throughout the rest of the scene, Bottom continues to think of more schemes that highlight the fictional nature of the stage. For instance, he has Snug speak through the lion's mouth and announce himself as an actor (3.1.32-40). This is done to limit the effect the performance will have on the audience. As William Walshe argues, the mechanicals' "anxiety about the power of their art drives them to highlight its artificiality, to de-fang it.[203] There is, within *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* a connection between naturalism and performance's effect on the audience and an assumption that women are more likely to be tricked by the illusion of naturalistic performances. And, significantly, the mechanicals' desire to limit female playgoers' reaction through non-naturalistic stage devices seems driven by a fear of punishment; it's the drive towards self-preservation that leads them to "de-fang" their performance.

Of course, Shakespeare, as Walshe goes on to argue, is making fun of the mechanicals for their crude dramaturgy. Performance, according to Shakespeare, should not seek to "de-fang" itself perhaps because this worry that (female) audiences cannot tell the difference between reality and performance is overblown or ridiculous. Indeed, when the mechanicals put on their production in front of Theseus's court, the audience seems to

mock their blatant efforts at non-naturalism (5.1.168-345). And Snug's warning to the female playgoers comes across as unwarranted and patronizing:

> You, ladies, you whose gentle hearts do fear
> The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,
> May now perchance both quake and tremble here
> When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar (5.1.214-217).

By mocking non-naturalism and the premises that underlie the need for non-naturalism, Shakespeare might be suggesting that playwrights should feel free to create naturalistic stage performances.

In fact, this view of performance is similar to the theory of performance expressed in Shakespeare's chorus in *Henry V*. In the chorus, Shakespeare seems to want his audience to use their imaginations and forget they are watching a play in order to increase the efficacy of the production on the audience. And in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Theseus suggests something similar while watching the Mechanicals' production: "The best in this kind [actors] are but shadows, and the worst / are no worse if imagination amend them" (5.1.208-209). And Hippolyta responds, "It must be your imagination, then, and not theirs" (5.1.210). Like the Chorus in *Henry V*, Theseus and Hippolyta suggest that the shortcomings of the stage, including its non-naturalism, can be overcome through the audience's imagination. Thus, non-naturalism seems not to be prized as technique that can limit audience reaction, but an obstacle to be overcome. However, Shakespeare, at least in these two plays, seems to be the outlier.[204] Most early modern drama, as Gurr points out, seeks to undermine the realism of the stage.[205] One might say, early modern playwrights often crafted their works like the mechanicals crafted their production.

In fact, the inset performances in Philip Massinger's *The Roman Actor* suggest that playwrights did not want playgoers to respond to illusionistic performances. For

instance, the fear that the female audience members might mistake performance for reality, which is mocked in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, is taken seriously in *The Roman Actor*. Indeed, there is a clear parallel between the mechanicals' "absurd" fear that the women in the audience will think that Pyramus will actually kill himself, and Domitia's reaction, in *The Roman Actor*, to Paris acting the part of a suicide within the second inset play – *Iphis and Anaxarete*. When Paris, while playing the part of Iphis, prepares to kill himself because Anaxarete refuses his advances, Domitia interrupts the performance by exclaiming, "Not for the world! / Restrain him, as you love your lives!" (3.2.281-282). Her interruption seems to catch everybody by surprise. Her husband Caesar is particularly confused and chides her for her outburst:

> Why are you
> Transported thus, Domitia? 'Tis a play;
> Or grant it serious, it at no part merits
> This passion in you" (3.2.282-285).

Caesar's diction is instructive. He believes that Domitia has been "transported" or excited beyond the point of self-control, and it is this lack of self-control that causes her to "grant it [the performance] serious" – to take it as real. Her belief that the play is real is not portrayed in a romantic or Coleridgian light. She is not applauded for her love of the theater or for her ability to willfully suspend her unbelief. Instead, she is scolded for lacking the willpower to clearly perceive the difference between reality and fiction. In response to the admonishment, Domitia apologizes for losing control: "Let me, sir, / Entreat your pardon. What I saw presented / Carried me beyond myself" (3.2.287-289). Furthermore, Paris is not flattered at the confused outburst. Instead, he seems as puzzled as her husband; he remarks, "I ne'er purpos'd, madam, / To do the deed in earnest, though I bow / To your care and tenderness of me" (3.2.285-287).

The word "earnest" in Paris' response has a particular resonance within early modern drama. One of the oldest definitions of earnest is "seriousness as opposed to jest or play" and comes from the old English word for "in reality."[206] For instance, the words "earnest" and "jest" are set against one another in *Richard III* when Buckingham realizes that he will actually receive what he pretended to ask for: "That high all-seer which I dallied with / Hath turned my feigned prayer on my head, / and given in earnest what I begged in jest" (5.1.20-22). And in the fourth act of *The Roman Actor*, Caesar responds to a character's attempt to change his sword with a stage sword by stating, "In jest or earnest this [sword] parts never from me" (4.2.232). Caesar's point is that either within a performance or outside of performance (the fictive reality outside the inset play that Caesar is playing a part in), he will keep the same sword. In *Richard III*, "feigned" action is linked with jest, and in *The Roman Actor*, stage performance is linked with jest, and both are set in opposition to earnest.[207] Caesar's and Buckingham's diction demonstrate that earnest here signifies reality as opposed to fiction, and Caesar's comment produces a special emphasis on the difference between reality and stage performance. Thus, when Paris says that he did not intend "to do the deed in earnest," he is making a fairly explicit reference to the bright line between reality and stage performance; a line that Domitia seems to have transgressed by suspending her disbelief and becoming too immersed in the performance.

The way that he reminds her that he is not "in earnest" is also significant. He breaks character to tell her that he is just acting. Like the mechanicals, he is forced to deconstruct his own performance in order to (in Walshe's words) "stress [his] own reality as enactor."[208] And like the mechanicals, he does it in deference to a woman. However, in

this scene, Paris, who behaves like the mechanicals, is not portrayed as absurd; Domitia is the one being mocked. Furthermore, Caesar's apprehension of performance is privileged; he never forgets that the play is not "in earnest." And of course, Caesar does not interrupt the performance or get carried away by it. The effect of the performance on Caesar is minimal because he doesn't view the performance as real.

Domitia is again chastised for responding to performance as real when she asserts her love for Paris. She tells Paris that because he has played parts "noble, wise, / Faithful, and gamesome," he "must be really, in some degree, / The thing thou dost present" (4.2.32-34; 38-39). Here she is not being tricked into believing the reality of the play, but she is still confusing reality with fiction – mixing up the actor with the part.[209] And again, Paris feels like he must set her straight:

> The argument
> Is the same, great Augusta, that I, acting
> A fool, a coward, a traitor or cold cynic,
> Or any other weak and vicious person,
> Of force I must be such. O gracious madam,
> How glorious soever, or deformed,
> I do appear in the scene, my part being ended
> And all my borrowed ornaments put off,
> I am no more nor less than what I was
> Before I entered (4.2. 43-52).

However, Domitia's response suggests that she is not actually confused, or that if confused, it is a willful confusion:

> Come, you would put on
> A willful ignorance, and not understand
> What 'tis we point at. Must we in plain language
> Against the decent modesty of our sex,
> Say that we love thee (4.2.52-56).

Pastoor contends that Domitia thinks Paris is being coy.[210] However, it seems clear that Domitia doesn't think Paris is being coy, but rather that Domitia is signaling to Paris that

she is done being coy with him and so is shedding "the decent modesty of our sex." In other words, Paris simply doesn't seem to understand that Domitia is flirting with him. However, in light of Domitia's reaction to his initial performance, Paris' anxiety and his misinterpretation of her flirtations are understandable (just as the mechanicals' anxiety about a female audience's reaction to their performance, while ridiculed in Shakespeare, is also understandable); the patriarchy seems to assume that women may actually mistake performance for reality, or character for actor, and Paris (and the mechanicals) seem to be working within this assumption. By mocking women's supposed propensity towards this confusion, the play is holding a mirror up to audience behavior in an effort to teach them what not to do. In Hamlet's words, which somewhat coincidentally are also gendered, the audience can "scorn her own image" when they look into the mirror image of themselves that the play is producing (3.2.21).[211]

A more sustained representation and mockery of female reaction to performance occurs in Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*. In this highly metadramatic play, Beaumont scripts two playgoers into the performance; he has two actors play the part of unruly playgoers, Nell and George. Throughout the play these characters continually interrupt the performance and, significantly, confuse the performance for reality. Although several critics have attempted to defend the citizen couple by arguing for their good natured vitality and agency, critics almost universally acknowledge that, at its center, the play attempts to satirize the citizens' behavior.[212] For instance, Laurie E. Osborne, who argues for Nell's agency and exploration of female authority within the patriarchy, still suggests, "[George and Nell] are undoubtedly satirized in the context of Beaumont's play."[213] However, what is being satirized is not just their boorish citizen

behavior, but their behavior as playgoers. This play is clearly holding up a mirror to unruly playgoing in order to show the audience how not to act.

Specifically, the play is satirizing playgoers who confuse the performance for reality and who respond to the performance as real. As Alexander Leggatt observes, "they [Nell and George] frequently get so involved in the illusion that they forget they are watching a play."[214] Although Leggatt's point is well taken, it is unclear if George is actually a part of this satire. That is, George seems to be humoring his wife, who does clearly get seduced by the illusion of the drama, while he seems to understand that what he is watching is fictional. Thus, the satire is directed at Nell, not George. In fact, most of the couple's actions start with Nell; she is the play's agent, and consequently she is the play's primary object of ridicule. Osborne calculates that "three-quarters of the suggestions originate with Nell."[215] Indeed, when the couple seems to get completely lost in the performance, Nell speaks first and George follows his wife's lead, for as Osborne argues, the way that Nell influences the action of the play is to "demand or suggest to her husband that such and such an action take place; he then tells the actors to do it."[216] For instance, when Jasper pretends to threaten Luce, Nell gets so worried that she urges George to call in the authorities: "Away, George, away! raise the watch at Ludgate, and bring / a mittimus from the justice for this desperate villain" (3.1.92-93). [217] George simply responds by saying, "I warrant thee, sweetheart, we'll have him hampered" (3.1.97). It seems clear that George is simply following his wife's instructions, but it is unclear whether George is really offering to call the authorities or merely indulging his wife. Although much depends on how the actor chooses to play

George, the next scene suggests an accommodating George rather than a George so enraptured by the performance that he forgets he is watching a play.

When Rafe and the Tapster fight over the bill, Nell asks her husband, "George, I pray thee, tell me, must Rafe pay twelve shillings / now?" (3.162-163). George responds by assuring her "No, Nell, no; nothing but the old knight is merry with Rafe" (3.164). George seems to be telling his wife that the whole thing is in jest; Rafe is not seriously being asked to give the Host money because the interaction between the two is not really happening. Indeed, and again depending on how the actor wants to play his part, George seems to be patronizing Nell by telling her, as one would tell a child, "don't worry, none of this is real." Nell seems to take George at his word until the Host threatens to jail Rafe. At that point, she is no longer sure that the Host (who she calls The Knight of the Bell) is just joking and being merry. "Look, George, did not I tell thee as much; the Knight of the / Bell is in *earnest*" (3.174-175, emphasis mine). Nell's use of the word "earnest" suggests that she has no longer believes in the fictionality of the performance. Like Domitia, she no longer knows what is in "jest" and what is in "earnest." And after she is no longer convinced of the fiction of the scene, she convinces George to also treat the performance as real and tells him to give the Host money (3.176-179). Although the man hands over the money, it seems it is the woman who has completely lost track of reality.[218]

Although George does not seem to be the primary object of ridicule within Beaumont's play, the satire, as I suggest above, still works through him. He is being mocked for following his wife's lead and for not correcting his wife's mistakes the way that Caesar and Paris correct Domitia's mistakes. Thus, the play is holding a mirror up to

male playgoers as well as female playgoers, showing men that they should not behave like women and should not follow women's examples within the playhouse.

At the same time that these characters' reaction to performance is satirized to limit audience reaction within the playhouse, their reaction works to highlight the artificiality of the stage, which also works to limit audience reaction. That is, audience satire and the non-naturalism of the stage are linked because inset audience's reactions constitute a metatheatrical stage device which reminds the audience that they are watching a fictional performance. By staging playgoing, the playwrights are highlighting the playhouse audience's role as playgoers watching a performance. Like the mechanicals' metadramatic devices, Domitia's, Nell's (and George's) reactions can be interpreted as an attempt to keep the audience from becoming too engrossed in the performance. Thus, playgoers' satirized reactions control the unruly audience twice: they stigmatize audience reaction for the playhouse audience and contribute to a non-naturalistic stage, which works to limit audience response.

Chapter Four

Unstable Texts, Active Readers; Stable Performances, Non-Reactive Playgoers

"Are you acquainted with the difference" – Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*[219]

In the last chapter, I argued that Morose's gesture at the end of Jonson's *Epicene* constructs playgoing by turning the playhouse audience into a stage audience and positioning them within the play as non-reactive observers of performative actions. Besides constructing stage utterances as performative and showing the audience their position within the playhouse, this scene also constructs performance's relationship to texts. Like the Duchess's performance/wedding, Morose's performance/signing seems unnecessary. He does not need an audience or a performance to make Dauphine the legal heir to his wealth. He could have signed the contract in isolation, and that contract would have been enough to create the legal reality that makes Dauphine his heir. Just like the Duchess's *per verba* wedding, a contract is already performative on its own; it doesn't need a performance to make the action performative. Why then does he insist on a performance and an audience? One answer is that Jonson, like Webster, wants to be metadramatic here; he uses this performative action (the signing of a contract) as a figure for a playhouse performance, thus constructing stage utterances as performative and forming the triadic relationship between performance, audience and reality discussed in the previous chapters. However, Morose supplies another reason for why he needs an audience and a performance to accompany his signing of the contract, and his answer suggests that he understands performance to operate fundamentally differently from texts. When he signs the document, he tells Dauphine,

> Come, nephew, give me the pen. I will subscribe to
> anything, and seal to what thou wilt, for my deliverance.

> Thou art my restorer. Here, I deliver it thee as my deed.
> If there be a word in it lacking or writ with false ortho-
> graphy, I protest before – I will not take the advantage (5.4.193-197).

Morose asserts that the contract is simply not enough to ensure that Dauphine will be made his heir, because he could later invalidate the contract if it contained misspelled words. The text in and of itself cannot guarantee the transfer of wealth, so Morose overlays the signing of the contract with a performance – an oath. This oath seems to do what the text could not, unequivocally make Dauphine Morose's heir.

Within the scene, there is a sense that the text Morose signs is unstable. Its content is unpredictable, and it cannot guarantee that the meaning the author intended will remain unchanged. The oath, on the other hand, is stable. The content of the oath will not change; in fact, the oath stabilizes the text. It makes the text do what it was supposed to do (create an heir) but could not do because of its instability. The instability of the contract and the stability of the oath within this scene may seem completely counterintuitive from a twenty-first century perspective. We tend to think of written contracts as ironclad and oral agreements as weak. One might be able to get out of an oral agreement or an oath, but once that agreement is put on paper, it becomes legally binding. In fact, within early modern contract law, written contracts, though contestable, were probably viewed as more binding and stable than oral agreements.[220] The scene then doesn't seem to be necessarily referencing a cultural anxiety over contracts, or even privileging an oral contract over a written contract; rather, what this scene seems to be suggesting is a more general insight into the instability of texts and the stability of performance – an insight that is repeated within several early modern plays.[221]

The instability of early modern texts will not come as a surprise to readers familiar with early modern reading strategies. As will be shown, scholars of early modern print and reading culture have suggested that the material state of texts, printing practices, pedagogical theory and reading habits resulted in a remarkably unstable early modern text. By unstable, I mean texts were open to a wide variety of interpretive possibilities because the reader was often and this openness to interpretation meant that texts did not carry with them inherent, unchanging or authoritative meanings.

However, the second half of the above claim – playwrights constructed performances as stable – may be more surprising. The idea that a performance could contain inherent, unchanging and authoritative content may seem counterintuitive or even impossible since we tend to think of a stage performances as more ephemeral than texts and so more likely to change. And as David Scott Kastan observes,

> Print is a more conservative medium [than performance]. I mean that literally, not morally or politically; it *conserves* in a way that performance can not. Whatever else print does, it provides a durable image of the text, one that avoids the necessary evanescence of performance; indeed its ability to conserve is, in large part, what has made continued performance possible. The text lasts on the page in a way it cannot in the theater, its endurance at once the sign and the foundation of its greater resistance to appropriation. The printed text remains before our eyes, demanding to be respected.[222]

However, within the early modern era, Kastan's initial insight into the difference between print and performance (an insight he later complicates) seems to have been reversed: performance, not texts, resisted appropriation and demanded to be respected as they were. Performance's stability, unlike texts' instability, was not produced through pedagogical theory, but was constructed within the playhouse by playwrights and the larger theatrical culture. In fact, as I will argue, the playgoing companies seemed to have constructed performance as stable in opposition to texts.

Playwrights may have wanted to produce this construction because the instability of texts assumed and produced active reading habits that, if appropriated by playgoers, would have worked against the playwrights' interests. Early modern texts were understood as unstable not only because of "false orthography" as Morose suggests, but because many readers were often trained to take an active role in the creation of the meaning of texts. Given that many readers were trained to actively engage texts, it is reasonable to assume that these readers would actively engage performances. That is, playgoers, at least the educated and literate ones, would take the active reading strategies inherited from print culture and apply it to playgoing. Playwrights, however, did not seem to want their performances interpreted in the same way as texts were interpreted, so they constructed aspects of their performances in opposition to texts.[223] What the playwrights seemed to have been worried about is not interpretation as such, but the praxis of interpretation – the action that results from interpretation. As will be discussed more thoroughly below, early modern readers were often trained to read and interpret texts and then use that interpretation as the basis for action. In order to create a truly non-reactive audience, the playwrights needed to interrupt the interpretative ability of the audience as a way of limiting their response to performance. To do so, they constructed their performances as stable in opposition to unstable texts by dramatizing the difference between texts and performance. That is, texts are often used within early modern drama as a foil to performance, as they are in *Epicene*.

The texts that are used to describe this contrasting relationship vary. I will argue, books, letters, contracts, bonds, warrants are all used to explore the instability of texts in relation to the stability of performance. But of course, all of these texts are not identically

unstable. A handwritten contract, which Morose's contract almost certainly was, would not have gone through the same destabilizing process of printed book because, as we will see, the printing and publishing process itself destabilized texts. Handwritten texts were unstable for different but sometimes overlapping reasons: for instance, non-standardized spelling and punctuation as well as idiosyncratic legal shorthand. Nevertheless, while keeping in mind the differences between written texts or manuscripts and printed or published texts, this chapter will treat them more or less the same because, as I will suggest below, a major cause of early modern textual destabilization was reading practices, which all texts were subject to. And in any case, early modern drama seemed to have used individual types of texts as a figure or synecdoche for texts in general (both written and published). In other words, texts were used not only to explore the specificity of the kind of text being portrayed, but to explore the general instability of texts in order to contrast this instability with performance. And by contrasting unstable texts with performance, playwrights could construct a stable performance that limited the audience's interpretative agency and interrupted the praxis of interpretation.

One may object to the above claims, arguing that it is impossible to create stable performances that bypass or limit the interpretive agency of the audience because audiences always interpret performances. In order to make a performance intelligible, the audience must first interpret what they see, and this interpretation will necessarily destabilize the performance. In post-structuralist terms, every encoding is another decoding, so performing entails interpretation. However, I am not arguing that playwrights were successful in stabilizing their performances, anymore than I am arguing that playwrights actually succeeded in controlling their audiences. Rather, I will argue

playwrights created a concept or theory of playgoing that produced the idea of a stable performance in order to influence playgoers' understanding of performance, thereby constructing the playgoing experience for their audiences. Their ideas about performance may run contrary to our understanding of communication in general and performance in particular, but it is, in part, this historical difference that I am trying to describe.

And although the stability of performance may seem unworkable to modern literary, performance or communication theorists, this concept is, in fact, related to and consistent with the construction of stage utterances as performative and so produces a relatively coherent early modern theory of performance. Since stage utterances were constructed as performative, performance was designed to impact institutional reality and not the audience; the audience's presence was needed to turn the actions into a performance, but their interpretation or active participation in the performance was not needed. In other words, performative stage utterances do not take the audiences as their object, but this also means that the audience does not take the performance as the object of its interpretive gaze. The triadic relationship discussed in the previous two chapters creates a playgoing experience, in which both the audience and the performance are interacting with institutional reality and not each other. In short, performative utterances bypass the audience and directly generate institutional reality without the destabilizing effect of audience interpretation. This means that performative stage utterances, at least theoretically, create stable playhouse performances.

Furthermore, constructing a stable performance can be understood as part of the larger trend of audience construction that this study has been tracing. That is, the construction of stable performances is one effect of the construction of the non-reactive

playgoer. By constructing performances as stable and as different from the instability of print, playwrights were showing the audience that the way they interpret, read and consume texts does not work within the theater. In other words, readers' active responses to texts should not be recreated in the theater by playgoers. How the playwrights understood performance's relationship to print is an effect of their overall project of audience construction. In fact as will be shown, the effects of the non-reactive playgoer are not only traceable within the plays, but can be found within the economic structure and marketing strategies of the playhouse. Just as the plays organized the concept of performance in opposition to the concept of print, the playhouse organized itself in opposition to the printing house by differentiating itself from the economic structure and marketing strategies of the printing house. And this organization through difference also worked to stabilize performance and, ultimately, construct a non-reactive playgoing experience.

I: Early Modern Reading Strategies: Active Readers and Readers' Actions

Before investigating these representations of texts and performance, it is first necessary to historicize reading and texts because it may be tempting, from a twenty-first century perspective, to say that all texts are necessarily unstable. That is, in an "after theory" environment, as Terry Eagleton has termed our contemporary critical perspective, texts are often understood to lack inherent, authoritative or unchanging meaning, and the reading process is often understood as part of the text.[224] However, the instability of the post-structuralist text and the instability of the early modern texts have different roots,

purposes and effects. And because playwrights seemed to have been anxious about the effects that unstable texts had on the reader and the potential effects an unstable performance could have on the playgoer, the early modern understanding of the instability of texts is crucial towards understanding how playwrights constructed playgoing's relationship to reading.

In fact, many early moderns would have understood texts as unstable and open to multiple interpretations, not because early modern readers anticipated post-structuralist literary theory, but because most early modern English readers were educated under a protestant/humanist educational rubric that tended to privilege individual interpretations of texts, and this version of the reading process necessarily destabilized texts. Indeed, scholars of reading have long noted the early modern reader's inclination towards active interpretation. Lisa Jardinee and Anthony Grafton assert that a consensus has been reached about early modern reading practices. "All historians of early modern culture now acknowledge that early modern readers did not passively receive but rather actively reinterpreted their texts, and so do we."[225] In other words, early modern readers read like today's reader-response theorists understand reading to work: readers actively co-create meaning through interpretation instead of attempting to locate and extract a meaning inherent in the text. But as Victoria Kahn reminds us, writing in the mid-90s, "reader response criticism could only be seen as new and fashionable when the assumptions of a humanist rhetorical tradition had been forgotten."[226] And Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker have shown how this "humanist rhetorical tradition," which contributed to the instability of early modern texts, was connected to strains of protestant and reformation ideology:

> Protestant self-identity, we might say, was formed through a progression of readings and rereading of the texts of Scripture, sermon and self.
>
> Such stress on individual readers and personal reading carried important hermeneutic implications. The obligation of the godly reader and exegete was ever to unfold the personal meaning of Scripture, to apply the sacred texts to the self. The logic, indeed the historical outcome, of such a self-centered hermeneutic, as the enemies of Protestantism had warned, was an assertion of each believer as determinant of meaning.[227]

In short, groups of literate early moderns, who were taught according to this educational and spiritual philosophy, were trained to view texts as unstable and to destabilize texts through active interpretation.

This active method of reading was not only produced through the reader's education but was embedded in the materiality of the text – in the editing and printing of texts. Steven Orgel reminds us that the lack of standardized spelling and punctuation in the early modern era produced a text that was necessarily and inherently unstable. Orgel gives this example: "There is no way of modernizing the notorious crux is Shakespeare's Sonnet 129, 'A blisse in proofe and proud and very wo,' not because there is no way of knowing whether the crucial letter in 'proud' is a u or a v but because for a Renaissance reader it can only be both."[228] The u and the v exist in the same place at the same time; the undecidability of the letter, word and concept create a vacillating instability within the sentence, through which no single authoritative or unchanging meaning can be produced. This inherent instability of early modern texts adds another level to Morose's anxiety about the validity of his contract in *Epicene*. Not only could the contract be nullified through "false orthography," but (if Orgel is right) there is no "true orthography" within early modern textual culture. The very act of writing (or printing) created the kind of instability that could make the contract useless since the written text had to contain unchanging (that is stable) language which would make Dauphine Morose's heir, and the

instability of early modern texts meant that texts could not contain unchanging content. The text became changing when it was printed.

Furthermore, the instability of early modern spelling and punctuations not only creates an unstable text, but also constructs a reader who is able to recognize and play with these instabilities. Thus, the instability of texts is the result of reading strategies and produces those reading strategies. Texts were understood to be unstable prior to reading, and so those texts demanded an active reading strategy that could establish meaning or recognize the multiple meanings of the text. At the same time, those strategies (aided by humanist and Protestant training) that helped make sense of the unstable texts also destabilized them by producing multiple meanings. In short, careful and intense reading habits in conjunction with (what we would now consider) sloppy writing and printing habits produced a remarkably unstable text. The early modern writer Godfrey Goodman nicely captures the various ways that an early modern text could be destabilized. After noticing the "corrupt" state of the printed version of his book, *The Fall of Man*, he remarks "that [the corruption] should first begin in the author, then in the pen, then in the presse, and now I feare nothing so much as the evill and corrupt exposition of the Reader, for thus there is a generall corruption."[229]

For the purposes of this study, what is most significant about these early modern reading habits is how the active reading process produced action. Jardinee and Grafton's study of early modern reading practices demonstrates that reading (particularly scholarly reading) "was always goal-orientated."[230] Through their analysis of Gabriel Harvey's and others' reading habits, they establish that "Renaissance readers (and annotators) persistently envisage action as the *outcome* of reading – not simply reading as active, but

reading as trigger for action."[231] Jardinee and Grafton focus on scholarly and aristocratic readers, but Heidi Brayman Hackel has found that "goal-orientated" reading strategies were common throughout the early modern literate population. By studying early modern commonplace books and marginalia, she finds that "from these records emerge scenes of individual readers engaging texts, personalizing their books, *making them useful*, and, on occasion, rendering them nearly unrecognizable."[232] Indeed, the popularity of commonplace books, a practice encouraged by humanist educators, suggests that many early modern readers used interpretation as the basis for action. Hackel argues that commonplace books were not only used to record maxims and examples of rhetorical flourishes, they were used to organize the "reader's knowledge, judgment, and understanding."[233] Similarly, Steven N. Zwicker describes the active reading habits of the early modern era in terms of imitation:

> The detailed portraits we possess of Renaissance humanists argue not simply the active and applied agency of the intellect, but an overarching model of exemplarity that guided the reading of courtiers, aristocrats and connoisseurs, and of their professional servants and protégés. Exemplary reading – the careful study of texts for patterns of virtue, the imbibing of classical wisdom, and the exportation of models of conduct and expression – was reinforced by a culture of imitation which spread far beyond the study or the diplomatic and courtly conference.[234]

The instability of texts then does not only mean that the audience could affect the meaning of the texts through their interpretation, but that they were affected by those texts because of their interpretation. In other words, early modern texts were affected by and affected readers, so active readers often produced readers' actions.

This notion of the active reader then is in direct opposition to the way that I have been arguing plays constructed their audiences – as non-reactive observers of performative actions. That is, while texts were often constructed to produce actions,

playwrights attempted to construct performance not to produce actions. This conflict is often overlooked; instead, critics tend to focus on the way that text and performance overlap and complement one another. For instance, Marta Strazincky confidently asserts,

> From the earliest appearance of printed plays in England, the relationship between text and performance is constructed more often in terms of interchange, complementarity, and congruence than of opposition or competition, and readership thereby straddles *both* the theatrical and the reading publics.[235]

In Shakespeare studies, critics such as Patrick Cheney and Lucas Erne tend to agree with Straznicky's general principle that early modern reading strategies and playgoing are overlapping activities; they argue that Shakespeare would have been just as comfortable on the page as he would have been on the stage and in fact wrote for both mediums simultaneously.[236] While I don't disagree that some aspects of print culture and playhouse culture were in congruence, I want to focus on aspects of print and performance that worked in opposition to each other. I therefore am following Robert Weimann and Douglas Bruster who "address stage/page relations through the issue of difference – that is, from how in the theatre the specific form and force of each medium defines, and is defined by, the other."[237]

In fact, by dramatizing the instability of texts, playwrights did not seem to be particularly worried about unstable texts; texts were simply used as a contrasting medium to performance. From a historical/political perspective (as described in the first chapter), playwrights' indifferent attitude towards the instability of texts makes sense because the broader early modern culture did not seem to be as concerned about reading plays as they were with viewing plays. Kastan has convincingly argued that while playgoing was considered a dangerous activity by government and religious authorities, reading play texts probably was not. Kastan notes that after the closing of the theaters in 1642, play

texts were still allowed to be printed, and "in spite of the fact that allusions to plays became a significant part of the rhetoric of Civil War propaganda, the government seemed unconcerned about play publication."[238] In short, unstable play texts were not considered dangerous. Consequently, early modern dramatic culture does not seem to have been anxious about the texts it produced because it was under no political or cultural pressure to change the way that audiences consumed their play texts. On the other hand, playgoers who viewed their drama actively and then used that drama as a basis for action threatened the playwright's professional position. Thus, while playwrights seemed to have made a concerted effort to stabilize performances, they generally embraced the instability of texts. Consequently, the fictional construction of reading on the stage is generally not different from the way that early moderns seemed to have read, so the dramatic construction of reading is really a reification of early modern reading strategies and not an active reimagining of the concept and activity.

The construction of texts and reading then is unlike the construction of performance and playgoing since the latter effort constructs playgoing in opposition to the way that early modern playgoing actually functioned, and the former reinforces and reifies the way early moderns read. But by combining the reification of unstable texts with the construction of stable performances, playwrights furthered the construction of the non-reactive playgoer by exploring the contrasting relationship between the two mediums; because active reading habits were antithetical to playwrights' desire for a non-reactive playgoer, playwrights constructed aspects of performance as the antithesis to texts.

II: Constructing Readers and Playgoers in *The Antipodes* and *Eastward Ho*

In the previous chapter, I argued that *The Antipodes* goes out of its way to construct playgoing by equating the inset audiences within the play with the playhouse audience watching the play. But the play does not only dramatize performance and playgoing; it also stages texts and reading. While the play does not dramatize the *act* of reading as it dramatizes the act of playgoing (after all reading is not a very compelling dramatic activity), it does thoroughly *discuss* texts and reading. And as Douglas Brooks observes, these discussions of texts are set in opposition to the play's discussion of performance; the play pits "book against play, reading against playing, the closet against the stage."[239] For Brooks, this oppositional structure thematizes a battle over cultural authority, which he argues took place directly before the closing of the theaters. However, the cultural conflict between text and performance or page and stage is not important for this study; what is important is the way the structure of the play constructs performance in opposition to texts. Specifically, by dramatizing the efficacy of texts and contrasting it with the efficacy of performance, this play illustrates that unstable texts produce actions within the audience and stable performances do not. This contrast indicates that the efficacy of texts works through their instability – texts function by soliciting their readers' active interpretation, which then inspires behavior – and performance functions through its stability working with or without the audience's active interpretation.

For instance, when the Doctor is attempting to find the root of Peregrine's addiction to travel, his father Joyless responds by describing the young Peregrine's

reading habits. Hughball asks "What has he in his younger years been most / Addicted to? What study or what practice" (1.1.126-128). Joyless responds:

> You have now, sir, found the question which, I think,
> Will lead you to the ground of his distemper.
> …
> In tender years he always lov'd to read
> Reports of travels and of voyages;
> And when young boys like him would tire themselves
> With sports and pastimes, and restore their spirits
> Again by meat and sleep, he would whole days
> And nights (sometimes by stealth) be on such book
> As might convey his fancy round the world.
> …
> When he grew up towards twenty,
> His mind was all on fire to be abroad;
> Nothing but travel still was all his aim (1.2.31-32,34-40,41-42).

According to his father, Peregrine seems to be reading as scholars of reading practices think that many early moderns read. He reads actively, so much so that his reading takes the place of other activities like "sports and pastimes." In fact, his texts of choice, travel narratives, provide an ideal genre through which the play can explore the instability of texts and active reading habits because early modern travel narratives seems to have been an exceptionally unstable type of text. David McInnis, in his study of the genre of travel narratives, early modern reading habits and *The Antipodes*, suggests the "episodic nature of travel narratives invites readers to supply their own bridging details to sustain a narrative."[240] Partially because travel narratives demanded active reading habits and partially because Peregrine reads actively, the texts move Peregrine to action; his reading is, in Jardine's and Grafton's words, "goal-orientated." His reading of travel narratives leads him to desire travel. Again, early modern travel narratives seem particularly prone to producing this effect in the reading subject. McInnis argues, "whilst some texts actively encouraged vicarious pleasure at the expense of real travel, mind-travelling

[McInnis' term for travelling within the imagination] need not be the ultimate end of reading, nor …was it intended to be for Peregrine."[241] Indeed, Peregrine does not read to escape from reality; his reading is the first step towards an engagement with reality through travel. However, he is not allowed to travel because his parents refuse to let him (no reason is given as to why his parents object to his traveling). The reading process (active reading produces actions) is interrupted, and this interruption is what causes his sickness – his intense preoccupation with travel.[242] Hence, the Doctor cures Peregrine by tricking him into thinking he has traveled, so he can finish, or think he has finished, the reading process.

While Peregrine's illness was partially caused through the instability of texts, the Doctor cures Peregrine through a stable performance, which does not work through audience interpretation and is not meant to affect the audience. In other words, unlike the texts Peregrine reads, the Doctor's play is not destabilized through the active interpretations of the playgoers. In fact, the audience's interpretation of the performance is beside the point since its purpose is to trick Peregrine into sleeping with his own wife by creating the institutions of the Antipodes. The performance is not for the audience's benefit but for the performer's. This is not to say that the audience does not attempt to interact with or interpret the performance; it is just that their comments and interpretations are inconsequential. Throughout Letoy's play, the audience (Joyless, Letoy, and Diana) provide a running commentary about the performance (much like the Citizens' commentary in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*). For instance, Joyless judges the play's quality, "'Tis very good; the play begins to please me" (3.4.9), Letoy offers a didactic interpretation, "The moral is, the lawyers here prove beggars, / And beggars only

thrive by going to law" (3.1.76-77), and Diana periodically summarizes and comments upon the actions she sees on stage. However, their active engagement with the performance does not influence the meaning of the performance, affect the playgoers or help to further the purpose of the performance – to get Peregrine to sleep with his wife. The institutional reality that the performance creates remains stable regardless of the audience's interpretations. Indeed, the reason, it seems, that Brome provides the audience's dialogue is to narrate the separate bed-trick plot: Letoy's seduction of Diana, which is designed to cure her husband of his jealousy. In other words, the action taking place in the audience has its own purpose (curing Joyless of his jealousy) and object (Diana), which is separate from the purpose (curing Peregrine) and object (constructing the Antipodes) of the performance. Furthermore, while Peregrine desires to travel after reading travel narratives, the playgoers do not desire travel after viewing a dramatization of the Antipodes. The playgoers do not affect the performance nor does the performance affect the playgoers.

By contrasting Peregrine's reading strategies with the inset playgoers' experience, Brome can show his audience that early modern reading habits are not applicable in the playhouse. And one can understand why Brome, and other playwrights, would not want those strategies practiced in the playhouse: if playgoers responded to performance in the same way that Peregrine responded to texts, the playwrights could, and did, get into legal and political trouble. *The Antipodes* is not a particularly subversive or politically dangerous play, but other early modern plays that stage armed rebellion (*Henry V*) or females taking male or non-traditional roles (*The Roaring Girl*, *The Duchess of Malfi*) or the murder of a king (*Richard II*) or the disruption of class boundaries (*The Shoemaker's*

Holiday) could be accused of inspiring those activities in their audiences if playgoers were encouraged to respond to the performances by using the performance as the basis for action or by imitating the performance. Worse yet, the playgoers could *actually* respond to those performances, and the playwrights would then be held accountable for the actions of their audiences. In response to this anxiety about the actions of their audiences, playwrights such as Brome discouraged their audiences from actively interpreting their performances in order to limit the actions of playgoers.

George Chapman, Ben Jonson and John Marston's *Eastward Ho* offers a more thorough and complex reflection on the stability of performance and the instability of texts and clearly demonstrates how unstable texts can influence reader's actions; the play contrasts the instability of texts with the stability of performance, which does not influence the actions of the audience. By the end of *Eastward Ho*, much of the play's action is already complete: Sir Petronel is exposed as a fraud, Beatrice is punished for her greed, Quicksilver learns the error of his ways, and Golding is clearly shown to be the most successful and moral individual of the group. All that is left to fulfill the conventions of a comedy is for all to be forgiven; in the words of Touchstone, "to / make our harmony full" (5.5.184-185).[243] However, this harmonious ending is delayed for an entire act, while Touchstone attempts to fend off those who would have him forgive Quicksilver and Petronel. This delay allows the characters to reflect on their plight while they wait to give or receive forgiveness. These reflections, somewhat surprisingly, involve a reflection on texts and performance and the efficacy and stability of both mediums.[244]

For instance, at the beginning of act five, Gertrude reflects on how texts contributed to her downfall, and this reflection suggests both the efficacy of texts and how this efficacy is related to text's instability. While contemplating her situation, she remarks to her waiting women Sindefy, whom she calls Sin, "Ah, Sin! hast thou ever read i' the chronicle of any / lady and her waiting-woman driven to that ex / tremity that we are, Sin?" (5.1.1-3). At this point in the narrative, Gertrude has been abandoned by her husband and family and seems to be looking for a textual precedent for her position. Gertrude is attempting to read (or remember reading) texts in order to find comfort and personal guidance. In other words, her reading is "goal orientated." In fact, Gertrude's and Sindefy's discussion of texts is part of a longer conversation in which they are attempting to figure out what they should do to get out of their miserable situation. Later in this conversation, she again looks to texts for an answer; she asks Sindefy, "Would the Knight o' the Sun, or Pal / merin of England, have used their ladies so, Sin? / Or Sir Lancelot, or Sir Tristram?" (5.1.32-34). Although Gertrude seems to be referring to the historical past, "the knighthood of old time" (5.1.38), she is presumably getting these stories through texts, *Mirror of Princely Deeds and Knighthood*, *Palmerin of England* and the various accounts of the knights of the round table. She is, again, looking to texts to provide a solution to her problem.

Unfortunately, the texts she relies upon and the reading strategy she uses often leads her to make poor decisions. For instance, the play makes clear that the chivalric romances that she is attempting to imitate are no longer applicable to her situation. As Theodora A. Janowksi argues, the play criticizes the notion that noble birth entails noble actions or even wealth.[245] Rather, the play demonstrates that in proto-capitalist London,

landed gentry, like Sir Petronel and Quicksilver, are often financially dependent on the merchant class and are often less moral and trustworthy than the merchants they are dependent on. So Gertrude's belief that Petronel is necessarily good and wealthy seems to be produced through the texts she read and not through a reading of her social situation. She, like Don Quixote, believes that she should attempt to imitate chivalric romances, and so uses them as the basis for action, in this case, marrying Petronel.[246] Although she reads actively, in the sense that she acts based on her reading, she does not actively interpret the text to account fully for its instability. A contemporary critic might say that she failed to read historically; that is, she failed to recognize the historical, economic, and cultural differences between the chivalric tales and her own proto-capitalist reality. But this is the consequence of unstable texts. Because they do not carry inherent meaning, they need to be interpreted in order to produce meaning, but they can also be misread, and because early modern reading strategies were goal-orientated, misreading can produce mis-decisions. In the case of Gertrude, her misreading led her to marry Petronel.

The effect of unstable texts on the reader is further explored through Touchstone's narrative, but while Gertrude is shown to be too reliant on texts and too affected by them, Touchstone refuses to rely on texts because he fears their instability and the efficacy produced through that instability. Specifically, Touchstone is worried that texts do not provide an authoritative message that remains unchanged after reading. The resolution of the play, in part, hinges on Touchstone forgiving Quicksilver. And Quicksilver attempts to win forgiveness through a text; he writes a letter to Touchstone asking for forgiveness. However, Touchstone refuses to read the letter because he maintains,

> Son Golding, I will not be tempted. I find mine
> own easy nature, and know not what a well-

> penned subtle letter may work upon it; There may
> be tricks, packing, do you see? (5.2.4-7).

On a basic level, this scene demonstrates the truism that texts need a reader to work. The letter cannot convince Touchstone if he refuses to read it. (The need for an active reader will be contrasted with non-necessity of an active playgoer later in the play.) On a more complex level, this scene demonstrates the profound instability of texts. Touchstone will not read the letter because he knows, or thinks he knows, that the letter will contain "tricks" or false information about Quicksilver's reformed character. The letter then will not contain an authoritative description of Quicksilver. Furthermore, once the letter is read and interpreted by Touchstone, its message changes. Touchstone believes that his "easy nature" will not be able to see the letter for the trick he thinks it is. He will interpret it in accordance with his forgiving nature, and this interpretation will produce a letter that says Quicksilver is legitimately sorry for his crimes. The letter then is neither authoritative nor unchanging, which makes it essentially useless as a description of Touchstone's character. Like Morose's contract in *Epicene*, it cannot do what it was intended to do, give an account of Quicksilver's repentance. Despite the letter's instability (or rather because of its instability), Quicksilver believes that the letter will still produce an effect on the reader. Because Touchstone believes he will interpret the letter according to his easy nature, he will be lead to forgive Quicksilver. The letter demands that it be read actively (in part because of its "tricks"), but once the letter is read actively, it will produce actions in the reader. And because Touchstone does not wish to forgive Quicksilver, he refuses to read the letter. In short, Touchstone does not read the letter because it is both unstable and affective – it cannot guarantee that Quicksilver is repentant, but it will lead Touchstone to forgive him.

There is a sense then that the letter is so unstable that its content is inconsequential. No matter what it says, Touchstone will interpret it as "tricks" that will lead him to forgive Quicksilver. In fact, Wolf, Golding and the playhouse audience know that Touchstone's belief about the content of the letter is wrong. Quicksilver is actually telling the truth; he has reformed and does feel sorry for his crimes. Although Touchstone is wrong about the content of the letter, he seems not to be wrong about his own interpretation of that letter. If he reads it, he will find tricks in it, not because they are in the text (the audience knows they are not), but because they exist within the reader. Touchstone believes there are tricks in the letter and so will find them because the unstable text is constative of, not its content, but Touchstone's interpretation of it. Reading takes place within the reading subject, not within the read object. And in this case, the reading takes place prior to the subject (Touchstone) physically interacting with the object (the letter). Hence, Touchstone refuses to read the letter because, in a sense, he has already read and interpreted it and foreseen the consequences of his interpretation – forgiving Quicksilver.

Indeed, the refusal to read a physical text becomes a kind of hyperbolic figure for the instability of texts. Texts are so unstable within *Eastward Ho* that they can be read without even looking at them. Because texts really only exist within the action of reading, the physical text is insignificant. The play's depiction of Gertrude's reading habits explore this extreme version of unstable texts. She, like Touchstone, reads absent texts. The texts she is looking for to find comfort and a plan of action do not exist. As she points out to Sindefy, there are no texts that describe her situation (5.1.1-2). Nevertheless, she continues to read those absent texts and relies on them for comfort: "Why, good faith,

Sin, I could dine with a lamen / table story now" (5.1.6-7). Gertrud is imagining a text and then interpreting it as being able to help them out of their situation or at least provide guidance and comfort. Texts are being constructed within *Eastward Ho* as so unstable that their meaning only really exists within the reader and so can be read *in absentia.*

This depiction of unstable texts is contrasted with the representation of performance, which is dramatized within the play as an authoritative and unchanging description or expression of character. And although performance is portrayed within the narrative as affective, the effect it produces within the audience works through its stability and not its instability.

Because Touchstone refuses to read the letter, those who are trying to convince him to forgive Quicksilver (Wolf, the jailer and Golding, his son-in-law) switch tactics and try to convince him through performance. After it is clear that Touchstone will not accept Quicksilver's textual account, Wolf suggests that Touchstone see for himself how sorry and reformed Quicksilver has become: "were your worship an eye / witness of it, you would say so" (5.2.45-46). Since Touchstone refuses to be a reader, Wolf wants him to be an audience to a performance, an "eyewitness." Indeed, Wolf himself believes that Quicksilver is repentant because he was an audience to one of Quicksilver's performances. He believes Quicksilver after he seems him sings psalms (5.2.49-52). But more significantly, Wolf believes in Quicksilver's redemption because "he can tell / you almost all the stories of the *Book of Martyrs*, / and speak you all the *Sick-Man's Salve* without / book" (5.2.61-64). On the one hand, Wolf believes in Quicksilver's redemption because Quicksilver has memorized and internalized the content of these texts. His reading strategy again suggests the instability and efficacy of texts. Quicksilver has

actively read these texts and imitated them. But Wolf's language also emphasizes Quicksilver's ability to perform these texts. Indeed, his phrasing provides a fairly direct reference to stage performance. Quicksilver can perform these texts "without book," a possible reference to stage performances; performers read lines that are based on a book, the play text, but without the physical text in front of them. They read without book. And Wolf seems to believe that Quicksilver's (stage) performance produces an authoritative account of Quicksilver's character. Texts may have led Quicksilver to reform, but in order to express his reformed character, he needs a performance. This performance then creates another text, the letter, but as Touchstone's refusal to read the letter illustrates, the text will not be an authoritative account of Quicksilver's character because of its instability.

However, Wolf's report of Quicksilver's performance of redemption still does not convince Touchstone. As we saw in chapters one and two, a constative recounting of a performance does not have the same efficacy as a performative enactment of a performance. One of the reasons why Touchstone is not convinced through Quicksilver's performance is he was not present at the performance; he must accept the word of a recounting witness – Wolf. Wolf's account of Quicksilver's performance is similar to Quicksilver's letter that Touchstone refuses to read: it is a record of a performance. Because Touchstone is not convinced by Wolf's recounting of Quicksilver's performance, Golding manufactures a situation in which Touchstone will see firsthand the enactment of the performance. In other words, Golding constructs an audience for Quicksilver. This strategy recalls other early modern scenes such as the wedding in *The Duchess of Malfi*, the coronation in *Tamburlaine*, and closely resembles Truewit's trick

in *Epicene*. Golding creates a situation that allows Touchstone to directly access Quicksilver's performance and the performative utterances that construct his reformed character. Thus, a performance is created that will, in Golding's words, "bring him [Touchstone] to be a spectator of their [Quicksilver's and Petronel's] / miseries" (5.3.117-118). While Touchstone is watching, Quicksilver is asked by another prisoner to perform a song that he has written, which expresses his repentance. Quicksilver responds to this request by stating,

> Sir, with all my heart; and, as I told Master
> Toby, I shall be glad to have any man a witness of
> it. And the more openly I profess it, I hope it will
> appear the heartier, and the more unfeigned (5.5.33-36).

As soon as Touchstone sees the song performed, he forgives Quicksilver and says to himself, "This cannot be feigned" (5.5.76). Touchstone seems not to be actively interpreting the performance, but simply accepts as true what he saw performed. Unlike his reaction to the text, he is not skeptical about his ability to actively read the performance. He simply believes it to be true.

In fact, what makes Quicksilver's redemption believable seems to be the presence of an audience. Quicksilver suggests that the more people present at his performance, the "more unfeigned" it will appear. Thus, he is happy to perform it as often as possible in front of as many people as possible. This statement appears counterintuitive. Having an audience present, one would think, should make his performance seem feigned since he would be acting for the benefit of an audience; he would be pretending he is something he is not, that is, reformed. However, this does not seem to be the case; Quicksilver and his audience understand his performance as performative and stable. By performing his repentance, he is constructing an institutional reality that cannot be challenged or

interpreted as other than it is. In a sense, his performance cannot be feigned because his performance of repentance constitutes his repentance, and the people who see that performance will have to accept that reality.[247]

Indeed, Touchstone understands the performance as working, not through his active participation, but by overcoming his resistance and by circumventing his active interpretation. When Touchstone thanks Golding for tricking him into becoming an audience member to Quicksilver's performance, he describes the way that the performance worked: "Listen. I am ravished with his *Repentance,* and could stand here a whole prenticeship to hear him." The sexual metaphor of "ravished" suggest that he was not an active participant in the performance. He was figuratively raped by the performance.[248] He was placed in the audience against his will and was convinced of Quicksilver's repentance against his will. This is in direct opposition to the way that texts are understood to work in *Eastward Ho* and within early modern print culture. In the early modern theory described above, texts work by soliciting the reader's active interpretation, which can then move the reader to act. The audience of a performance then is being constructed within the play as acting in opposition to readers of texts. The audience is depicted as accepting the content of the performance and that content is produced through the performance and not through the interpretation of the performance.

Although Touchstone's sexual metaphor suggests that he was not an active participant in the performance, it does seem to suggest that he was the object of the performance and that the performance led him to act, that is, forgive Quicksilver. Indeed, Wolf, another audience to Quicksilver's performance, also acted after seeing the performance; he tried to convince Touchstone of Quicksilver's redemption. Thus, it

seems that within *Eastward Ho*, performance is being constructed as producing effects in the audience and producing actions in the audience, and this view of performance is in opposition to the construction of playgoing that I have been arguing for. However, this contradiction between the construction of playgoing in *Eastward Ho* and the broader construction of playgoing that I have been tracing is somewhat resolved by the odd position of Touchstone within Quicksilver's performance. That is, Quicksilver does not know that Touchstone is in the audience. He is not performing for Touchstone. As Quicksilver states, the reason that he performs *Repentance* is because he will "be glad to have any man a witness of / it" (5.5.34-35). In other words, he doesn't care who is in the audience. He doesn't care who is in the audience because the audience is not really the object of his performance. There is a sense in which he is performing *Repentance* in order to repent because his repentance is constitutive of his performance. He is becoming repentant by performing *Repentance*. Thus, when looked at from Touchstone's perspective (the audience), the performance is working upon the audience, but when looked at from Quicksilver's perspective (the performer), the audience is not the object of the performance; the intended object of the performance is Quicksilver's own character.

Despite this complication, Quicksilver's perspective on his own performance helps establish the difference between performance and text. Because Quicksilver performs not to convince others of his change of heart but to become repentant within institutional reality, the authority of the performance cannot effectively be challenged or interpreted in any other way than the expression of repentance. On the other hand, his letter is a record of his performative repentance and as such is not performative but constative. Thus, Touchstone can interpret that letter to judge how accurately he believes

it corresponds to the truth of the situation by employing his own interpretive methods of discovering "tricks" and bringing to the text his own "easy nature." This interpretive ability is not available to him when he watches the performance. He simply has to accept the performative utterances as an unchanging, authoritative account of Touchstone's character because the performance is where his character is being constructed; the meaning of the performance is inherent within the performance, not in the interpretation of it. In other words, while Touchstone is worried that Quicksilver's letter will not be an authoritative and unchanging recounting of reality, Touchstone believes Quicksilver's performance because his performance is reality.

III: Constructing Stable Plays and Unstable Play Texts by Dramatizing Legal Texts

The Antipodes and *Eastward Ho* suggest that texts in general (letters and books) were understood as unstable, and playwrights represented them in their plays to help construct performance as stable. So texts provided a foil for playwrights: texts were a contrasting medium through which they could construct stable performances and non-reactive playgoers. However, playwrights would have also been professionally interested in texts for their own sake. After all, playwrights produced play texts as well as playhouse performances and so would have been interested in texts not just as a contrasting medium, but as one of *their* mediums. Indeed, Quicksilver's redemption narrative seems to dramatize texts not only to contrast them with performance, but also to reflect on play texts and the performance's relationship to texts. That is, Quicksilver's use of texts and performances mirrors playwrights' use of these two mediums. His repentance

starts by reading texts, *Book of Martyrs* and *Sick-Man's Salve*; he then turns these texts into two separate performances; he next recites or performs the texts "without book," and finally creates a new performance, *Repentance*. Those performances are then turned into another text, his letter to Touchstone. This process mirrors the process through which plays and play texts are produced: a play starts with a text, a script and the source material that make up that text (chronicles, romances, poems, classical texts); the text is then turned into a performance by an individual reading that text with "without book" within the playhouse, and then the performance is sometimes turned back into a text by another individual publishing a play text. By showing how Quicksilver starts with an unstable text that produces a stable performance and ends with another unstable text, *Eastward Ho* seems to be suggesting that play texts, like most text, should be considered unstable even though the performance, which produced the unstable text (play text) and was a product of an unstable text (play script), is stable.

Apart from the reference to play texts in *Eastward Ho*, the relationship playwrights had with the instability of their play texts can also be read within the dramatizations of legal texts because of the ontological significance of legal texts. Legal texts (contracts, bonds, laws) are performative because they create an institutional (legal) reality, and so they share with play texts a similar conceptual and ontological space – they are a textual representation of performative actions.[249] A legal document is a record of a performance – for instance, the writing of a law or the signing of a contract – and at the same time, it is, in and of itself, performative: as long as it exists, it produces or has the potential to produce the institutional reality that it records. Likewise, a play text is the record of the performative utterances that make up a performance, and a play text also

has the potential to produce more performances and more performative utterances. Thus, legal texts offer playwrights an opportunity to reflect upon the texts that their own performative drama generates – play texts. This is not to say plays that feature and dramatize legal texts are always self-consciously reflecting on play texts. Rather, the representations of legal texts provide a trace of how playwrights understood performative documents to work and how performative documents should be read. And an analysis of these legal texts reveals that while they are depicted as performative, they are not depicted, within early modern drama, as stable. Because they are not immune to the destabilizing reading practices of early modern print culture, they too are depicted as almost inherently unstable.

The example from *Epicene*, discussed at the start of this chapter, provides a clear example of a text that can be both performative and unstable, while the performance of that text is stable. Morose's insistence that his contract involve a performance suggests the contract (by itself) is not stable. He needs to include a performance in order to stabilize the contract, so it cannot be later interpreted and nullified. The contract is unstable, but the performance of the signing of that contract is stable.

The depiction of unstable legal texts is not unique to *Epicene*. Throughout early modern drama, legal texts, particularly contracts, are similarly depicted as unstable. For instance, in Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, Quarlous employs a pickpocket to steal a marriage license that was written for Cokes and Grace so that he can marry Grace (3.5.239-265). He claims, "Tis but scraping out Cokes his name, and 'tis done" (4.3.102). Documents are so unstable in this play that they are all but useless. They carry no inherent meaning and can be changed at will by whoever happens to posses them. Indeed,

the character Troubleall, a fool who absentmindedly runs in and out of scenes asking for warrants and will not even urinate or change his shirt unless he has a warrant to tell him he can, is a comic fool, whose presence suggests that texts are so unstable, they are all but useless (4.1.52-57). That is, only a fool like Troubleall would take legal documents seriously, as a stable arbiter of information. And in Middleton's *Michaelmas Term*, property is transferred between con-artists through falsified contracts and documents so often that Quomodo (one of the con-artists who is conned and gets conned through documents) equates scriveners who create legal documents with prostitutes and declares neither to be trustworthy: "keep his hand from a quean and / a scrivener" (4.1.102-103).[250] The implication seems to be that both professions pretend to be something they are not.

However, not all plays express a frustration with unstable legal texts. Middleton, Rowley and Heywood's *The Old Law* shows the usefulness of unstable legal texts by positing a dystopian world where documents are actually stable. In the fictional land of Epire, a law condemns elderly citizens to death. The play explores the immorality and tyranny of the law, but also dramatizes the stability of the law; no one can find a way to interpret the law in such a way that would nullify it.[251] Unlike Morose's contract in *Epicene*, this law is airtight. The play narrates the negative consequences of its stability and even conflates the tyranny of the law with its stability because the stability of the texts is the vehicle of the law's tyranny.[252] To this list of plays that explore the instability of legal texts could be added Webster's *The Devil's Law-Case*, Middleton's *A Game at Chess* and Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debt*s.

Beyond further demonstrating the instability of texts in general and legal texts in particular, these plays may offer interesting insights into the vexed relationship playwrights had with their own play texts, a relationship that has been explored by several critics.[253] That is, the somewhat negative portrayal of legal texts hints at playwrights' anxiety over how their play texts would be re-appropriated, interpreted and destabilized once they were put into print and subject to the destabilizing forces of early modern print culture. However, these plays have little to say about the stability of their performances in relationship to the instability of texts. And since the stability of performance is a facet of the construction of playgoing, which is the focus of this argument, a full discussion of these plays is beyond the scope of this study.

However, there are (at least) two notable examples of plays that do discuss both the instability of legal texts and the stability of performance: *Epicene*, discussed above, and, somewhat surprisingly, Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. As we have seen in plays such as *Hamlet*, *Henry V* and *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, Shakespeare seems not to have participated in the construction of the non-reactive playgoer but actively sought to engage his audience; however, he uses *this* play to thoroughly contrast the instability of print with the stability of performance, thereby constructing the non-reactive playgoer. Like *The Old Law*, the play depicts the instability of legal performative texts as positive.

Shylock's bond is initially portrayed as so stable that it seems iron-clad (again, like texts in *The Old Law*), but its stability is ultimately undermined by Portia's imaginative interpretation. Before Portia undermines the contract, she points out that the contract cannot be changed. "There is no power in Venice / Can alter a decree established" (4.1.213-214). And later she asserts, "For the intent and purpose of the law /

Hath full relation to the penalty / Which here appeareth due upon the bond" (4.1.242-244). In other words, if any text (legal or otherwise) were stable, the bond would be it. However, Portia is able to overcome this apparent stability through a close reading of the text, her famous interpretive quibble. She points out that within the text, "the words expressly are 'a pound of flesh'" (4.1.302). And so, she is able to trap Shylock by destabilizing the text through active interpretation.

This scene has been thoroughly discussed by both legal and literary scholars; in fact, R.S. White believes that the fourth act of *The Merchant of Venice* is "the most famous trial scene in imaginative literature."[254] These critics generally tend to see the interpretability of the bond as central to Portia's success. However, their discussion of interpretability is generally framed around the issue not of unstable texts but of equity: the early modern legal practice of loosely interpreting a law to achieve justice instead of strictly following the letter of the law.[255] No critic has, to my knowledge, seen the bond as a reflection on texts themselves and interpreted the instability of the bond as an assertion of the instability of texts.[256]

But the treatment of other texts within the play seems to explore further the theme of the instability of texts. Throughout the play, non-legal texts echo the role the bond plays in the fourth act, and these texts, like the bond, are portrayed as unstable and are contrasted with the stability of performance. For instance, Portia (disguised as Balthasar) is introduced to the Duke's court through Bellario's letter. This letter actually announces itself as unstable and so destabilizes its own content, even as it hints at the stability of the performance that the text is meant to produce. After stating that "his lack of years" (4.1.158) should not be counted against Balthasar, the letter provides this caveat: "I leave

him to your gracious acceptance, / whose trial shall better publish his commendation" (4.1.160-161). This final sentence of the letter seems to be simply saying that Balthasar's performance at the trial will attest to his ability. In other words, the letter is saying, "don't take my word for it." This caveat destabilizes the entire letter because it claims that the trial can "better publish [Balthasar's] commendation" than the letter and so is suggesting that the letter will not be a stable and authoritative guarantee of Balthasar's character; only his performance at court will do that. One could even say that this letter is not a meaningful construction of Balthasar's character but is merely a prompt for his performance at court, which will ultimately be the true construction of his character. The performance that the letter enables is what produces the stable reality that everyone present will have to confront; the letter itself contains no such guarantee. The connection to play texts here is fairly clear: the letter, like play texts, is unstable, but it offers the chance at a performance, which can then stabilize the content of the text – performance can "better publish" the text.

It is interesting to note that the instability of the meaning of the final line of the letter also captures the instability of texts and the stability of performance. Although the sentence "I leave him to your gracious acceptance, / whose trial shall better publish his commendation" (4.1.160-161) seems to be simply saying, let the trial speak for his character, the sentence's exact signification cannot be established because the pronoun "whose" does not have a clear referent. It could refer to the "you" in "your gracious acceptance" (the Duke), so the word "trial" could be referring to the Duke's trial of Balthasar, that is, the Duke's test of Balthasar's character and legal acumen. On the other hand, "whose" could be referring to the previous pronoun "him" found in the previous

clause, so "trial" refers to the court proceedings against Antonio and Balthasar's performance within them. So Balthasar either is *on* trial (his competency is being tried by the Duke) or *in* a trial (he is taking part in the court proceedings against Antonio, which will ultimately prove his worth). By looking at the print form of this sentence, the reader cannot know which character "whose" is referring to. In Orgel's words, "it can only be both."[257] However, this instability can be defused through performance. By looking at or pointing to either the Duke or Balthasar while pronouncing "whose," the actor reading the letter can, if he or she chooses, stabilize the instability of the line. The performer's gaze can establish a referent for "whose."

Of course in the final analysis, there is no compelling reason to stabilize this instability within a performance since both readings of the line – Balthasar is on trial, Balthasar is in a trial – are compatible. Allowing for both meanings actually helps explain what is at stake in the trial, both Antonio's life and Portia's ability. Nevertheless, by producing an unstable sentence that destabilizes the text it is a part of and stabilizes the performance that it produces (as argued above), the sentence is able to suggest the stability of performance and the instability of texts twice, at the same time.

This letter then seems to be announcing what Touchstone's forgiveness narrative dramatizes – that performance constructs a more stable version of institutional reality than texts. In *Eastward Ho*, Touchstone refuses to read Quicksilver's letter because he does not trust its ability to accurately construct a stable and trustworthy social identity. He had to wait for Quicksilver's performance, which did ultimately demonstrate to him that Quicksilver was redeemed. Similarly, Bellario's letter asks its reader not to believe

its own unstable message, but to wait for the performance that will create a stable construction.

This same contrast between the instability of the printed word and the stability of a performance is again suggested by the final scene of the play. After Portia has revealed to Antonio and Bassanio that she was actually the "young doctor of Rome," she offers, as proof of her story, letters from Bellario:

> You are all amazed.
> Here is a letter. Read it at your leisure.
> It comes from Padua, from Bellario.
> There you shall find that Portia was the doctor,
> Nerissa there her clerk (5.1.265-269).

The men seem to accept her story, but she seems to sense that they are not convinced of her version of reality, and so she offers more proof in the form of a formal question and answer session:

> And yet I am sure you are not satisfied
> Of these events at full. Let us go in,
> And charge us there upon inter'gatories,
> And we will answer all things faithfully (5.1.295-298).

The "inter'gatories" seem to reference a mock-court session, in which Portia and Nerissa will answer any questions concerning their story. That is, just like Bellario's letter urges, the real and more stable version of reality will be constructed in the performance of the events and not within the letter that would seem to confirm their tale. And although these "inter'gatories" are not a clear reference or figure of stage performance, they do recall Morose's gesture to the audience at the end of *Epicene*, which creates a performance that stabilizes his document. In other words, the women agree to stage a mock-court session in order to stabilize the narrative that is found in the unstable documents they provide as evidence of their claims.

These representations of unstable documents (Bellario's letters) reflect on the legal document (the bond) that is at the center of the play, and the play's central characters' acceptance of the instability of texts stands in contrast to Shylock's refusal to see texts (specifically his bond) as unstable. The majority of the fourth act is dominated by characters attempting to convince Shylock that he should be merciful. However, embedded in their pleas for mercy is an attempt to get Shylock and Portia to reinterpret or nullify his contract – to see the contract and the law as something that can be changed, in other words, to view the contract as unstable.[258] Thus, within the play, the vehicle of mercy is the instability of texts.[259] For instance, Bassanio begs Portia not to merely dismiss the case, but to interpret the bond in Antonio's favor (something she, of course, eventually does); he asks her to "Wrest once the law to your authority" (4.1.210). And Portia urges Shylock to accept a more radical solution: "bid me tear the bond" (4.1.229). Here Portia is pretending that she cannot find a way to nullify the bond through interpretation and so is proposing to Shylock that he simply destroy it, which assumes that it is something that can be simply discarded, and in turn, that it can be discarded suggests that the text (like most early modern texts) is not stable, authoritative and unchanging, but unstable and ephemeral. Shylock refuses to accept this understanding of texts; instead, he insists that the stability of texts is necessary in order to ensure the cohesion of the legal and political structure of Venice. For instance, he responds to the Duke's plea for mercy with, "If you deny it [his bond], let the danger light / Upon your charter and your city's freedom" (4.1.37-38), and later, "If you deny me, fie upon your law: / There is no force in the decrees of Venice" (4.1.100-101). Thus, Shylock insists on

the stability of the text, and this insistence, along with his lack of mercy, proves to be his undoing.

In the end, *The Merchant of Venice* does not portray the instability of performative texts as negative. It is the instability of the texts that saves Antonio's life and enables Shylock's punishment. The play then encourages the readers of performative texts to actively read and interpret those texts, which contributes to the instability of texts. And although these representations of legal texts do not provide a direct reference to play texts, they do provide a meditation on performative texts. And this meditation suggests that playwrights understood performative texts as constructing an unstable institutional reality through the interpretative ability of the reading audience. This unstable reality, however, can be stabilized through a performance. Again, the link to play texts seems clear. Play texts work through a reading audience, who can change, sometimes drastically change the content or intent of the text. Conversely, the performance of those texts stabilizes the instability of the texts. That is, it produces an institutional reality independent of interpretation.

VI: The Playhouse's Effort to Stabilize Performance: The Effects of the Non-Reactive Playgoer on the Modes of Dramatic Production

While this study has tended to trace the effects of the non-reactive playgoer and the construction of playgoing through the play texts or the cultural level of the social formation of playgoing, these effects can also be seen within the actual modes of production of the social formation. Specifically, the effects of the effort to differentiate

print from performance can be traced to the playhouse's production techniques – the way that the playhouse organized, marketed and sold their product. In other words, the mode of production of the social formation of playgoing is determined by the effects of the non-reactive playgoer in that these techniques are designed to stabilize performance and so control the unruly early modern audience. In fact, just as early modern plays tended to construct performance in opposition to texts, the playing companies organized their production techniques in opposition to the techniques of the printing house because the printing house's production techniques had the potential to contribute to the destabilization of texts and the construction of the active reader. By organizing itself in opposition to the printing house, the playhouse was able to produce performances that were stable. The playhouse seems to have produced stable performances mainly by limiting the number of times a particular play could be seen and by marketing plays to a broad audience. This was in opposition to the way that the printing house produced its texts. Texts were printed as many times as possible and marketed to a specific audience. As will be shown, the printing house techniques might have helped produce unstable texts and active readers, and the playhouse helped contribute to stable performances and non-reactive playgoers.

By arguing that the playhouse organized itself in opposition to the printing house, I am not attempting to assign a conscious agency to the playhouse. That is, the playhouse or the individuals who made up the playhouse (owners, playwrights, actors, audiences) seem not to have collaborated together to produce stable performances. Rather, the playhouse's production techniques were influenced by the absent cause of the non-responsive playgoer, just as playwrights' metadramatic construction of playgoing was

also determined by the same absent cause and not produced through the collaborative efforts of the playwrights. In fact, some of the production techniques discussed below may seem not to have been consciously produced at all, but were simply the natural or necessary way that plays would have had to have been produced given the physical and economic constraints of the early modern playhouse. However, as I will try to demonstrate, what looks like natural and necessary elements of the production of early modern plays may have been produced by the absent cause of the non-reactive playgoer.[260]

One aspect of the production of early modern plays that may seem necessary (and even obvious) but actually works to stabilize the performance is the un-repeatability of performance. That is, performance is not as repeatable as a text; a performance can only be viewed a finite number of times, but a text can be read an infinite number of times, and each reading of the text allows for (or even demands) a new interpretation of the text, and each interpretation produces or potentially produces a new meaning of the text; with each new meaning, the text becomes more and more unstable. In other words, there is an instability built into repetition, or as Roland Barthes reminds us, rereading "multiplies [the text] in its variety and its plurality."[261] Performance, on the other hand, cannot be viewed as often. The play is only available to the viewer at certain times (it has to be produced) and the number of productions is finite. This contrast brackets for a moment the impact of memory on performance (a subject that will be returned to in the final section of this study); by remembering a performance, the remembering subject can conceptually re-perform (and then reinterpret) the original performance an infinite number of times, and remembering in and of itself is a notoriously unstable activity; the

memory of an object is often substantially different from the object that produced the memory.[262] Despite the complication of memory, this contrast between performance and print still involves a fairly simple and straightforward arithmetic – the more viewings or readings that a text or performance undergoes, the more unstable that text or performance becomes.

This arithmetic may seem ahistorical and natural; however, the early modern repertory system magnifies this difference between texts and performance because of the short run of most plays. Henslowe's diary, which contains the best available evidence of play scheduling, demonstrates that an individual play was not available for many repeat viewings. Roslyn Lander Knutson, in her study of the early modern repertory system and Henslowe's diary, cites September 1594 as a representative sample of a playing schedule. From the 2nd to the 30th of September, "Fifteen different titles are offered in this schedule of twenty-seven playing days. The pace, though rigorous, is normal."[263] During this month, only one play (Henslowe calls it the "the venesyon comedy") was played three times, ten plays were performed twice and six plays were only staged once. Of course, the plays that were only performed once in September would have been produced in August and October. For instance, even though *The Jew of Malta* was only produced once in September of 1594, Marlowe's play was by that time already old; it debuted in 1591 and was performed 19 times before September of 1594, including twice in August of that year.[264] However, *The Jew of Malta* seems to have been a fairly popular play, enjoying a particularly long run. Knutson points to the 1594 run of *Philipo and Hippolito* as normative:

> Its initial performance had taken place two months before (July 9). Counting that debut, it had received eight performances by September 4; it received two more in

> September, and it was retired on October 7. In all, *Philipo and Hippolito* received twelve performances in a four-month run. The pattern of its scheduling – performances within a week of one another at the beginning of the run, stretched to separations of two or three weeks toward the end – is a standard one for new plays.[265]

Gurr finds an even more diverse offering of plays and shorter play run in the repertory of the Admiral's Men: "In January 1596, when they put on 26 performances, the Admiral's Men staged 14 different plays in one month. Six of these plays were given only once. The shortest interval between two performances of the same play was three days." [266] On a very basic level, then, any one play was not available to a large number of viewings. And their short runs, on a theoretical level, stabilized the performance because they would not have been subject to the destabilizing force of multiple viewings.

It is perhaps useful to briefly compare the early modern repertory system with twenty-first century playgoers' experiences with performance runs to highlight how different the early moderns' playgoing experience was. From April 7, 2010 to June 6, 2010, the Chicago Shakespeare Theater performed *The Taming of the Shrew* sixty four times. Even very popular plays like *The Jew of Malta*, *Tamburlaine* or *The Spanish Tragedy* would have to run for decades to accumulate sixty four performances in the sixteenth or seventeenth century. As noted above, *The Jew of Malta* had to run for almost three years before it was performed nineteen times, and there is no record of any play accumulating sixty four performances before the close of the theaters in 1642. And of course, *The Taming of the Shrew* will continue to be produced after June 6th by the Chicago Theater or some other area theater group. Indeed, it has been said that *Hamlet* is being produced somewhere in America everyday. An avid theatergoer and *Hamlet* fan can see literally hundreds of performances of *Hamlet* in a life time, and each time she

sees the play, she may interpret the performance differently or have the performance interpreted differently by the theater group staging the play. These multiple experiences simply were not available to an early modern playgoer.[267] The repertory system of Broadway productions draws out this difference even further. On June 19, 1997, *Cats* became the longest running show in the history of Broadway with 7,485 performances over 18 years. It was then performed for another 3 years. In short, there is a reproducibility to modern performances that would not have been available to early modern audiences, and the early modern lack of reproduction created a more stable performance than we are used to.

Of course, there are demographic differences that explain the disparity between early modern and modern stage runs: modern day Chicago and New York are simply much bigger and wealthier cities than early modern London and so can support more performances. As Tiffany Stern notes, "Tiny London of the early modern period could not sustain a long run of the same play as it would be unable to produce the audience for it."[268] Nevertheless, there is reason to believe that some plays were pulled from the repertory not for economic reasons, but for the reasons cited above – to limit the amount of possible viewings and interpretations.

Although it is often assumed that the breakneck pace of the early modern repertory system was obligatory because early modern audiences demanded novelty, the pace of production does not seem to have been necessary.[269] In fact, Gurr argues that the audience's tastes probably did not drive the production of new plays. He notes that early modern audience's tastes

> by their nature remained passively receptive. With some companies they allowed the attractions of *Faustus* and *The Spanish Tragedy* to stay constant for fifty years

> in the northern amphitheaters. Using that kind of evidence to identify what audiences liked in the mass and as passive tasters of what was set before them is, allowing for the patchy nature of all the testimonies, a fairly straightforward exercise. On the other hand the poets by their nature had more active appetites, always on edge to provide novelty.[270]

He goes on to point out that the individuals who complain about the old fashioned plays in circulation on the London stage were always playwrights and not playgoers. Gurr is in effect arguing that the playwrights, and not the audience, were responsible for the short run of plays. Furthermore, the economics of the playhouse may have favored the repetition of old plays, not the creation of new ones. Knutson calculates that after eight performances, the playhouse would have made back its initial investment and started to turn a profit.[271] To stage a new play was to take the risk that the play would not reach that eighth performance, but the staging of old plays all but guaranteed profits.[272] In short, novelty on the early modern stage was fiscally risky. And aside from the economic disincentive towards novelty, the staging of new plays every week or so must have been an enormous amount of work, so it would have been simpler and more cost effective to simply keep repeating the old plays. Of course, the strategy of staging old plays to maximize profit can only be taken so far: a playhouse can not produce a half dozen plays for fifty years and expect to keep attracting customers. Eventually new plays would need to be found. But if one is going create, produce and fund new plays in the hopes of finding cash cows like *Doctor Faustus* or *The Spanish Tragedy*, the sheer number of new plays produced seems to make this search ineffective.

In fact, sometimes plays seem to have been retired even though they continued to draw crowds. For instance, Henslowe references a play (now lost) called *A Toye to Please Chaste Ladeys* which debuted on November 14, 1595 and ran for five

performances. The début brought in 51 shillings (a solid take for a new play), and its final performance on April 13, 1596 brought in 39 shillings, which made it the fourth highest take for a play that month.[273] Nevertheless, the play seems to have been pulled from the repertory after its April 13th performance.[274] The five performance run probably netted Henslowe seven pounds, ten shillings, and Henslowe most likely paid 5 pounds for the play script.[275] Although we can't know how much he spent on other expenses, it seems likely that he made his money back and some profit from this short run and decided to pull the plug even though he was still making money from the play. It should be noted that the run of *A Toye to Please Chaste Ladeys* does not seem to be normal; most runs follow a more fiscally reasonable path; that is, they start with big profits and the profits fall steadily until they are dropped from the repertory. Nevertheless, the run of *A Toye to Please Chaste Ladeys* and Gurr's insight that old plays could continue to draw crowds and make money suggest that novelty and the short run of plays was not necessarily driven by a desire for profit.

And although Gurr may be right that the drive for novelty on the stage was powered by the playwrights' and actors' desire for new plays and new challenges, it is also possible that the number of new plays produced and the short run of individual plays were the result of a (un)conscious desire to limit the number of times that the plays could be seen in order to limit the amount of possible interpretations that an individual play was subject to. This in turn would lead to a more stable performance – one that did not undergo the destabilizing effect of numerous interpretations. In other words, the early modern repertory system was not only produced by the demand for novelty and the creative impulses of the actors and playwrights, but may have been determined by the

structure of the social formation of playgoing: the repertory system could have been designed to stabilize performances which was an effect of the construction of the non-reactive playgoer. And in the end, even if the playhouse's desire to stabilize the performance was not the cause of the limited play runs, the effect almost certainly was a more stable performance that did not get destabilized through numerous interpretations.

In order to accept that the short run of early modern performances and the demand for novelty were an effect of the non-reactive playgoer, one has to accept the fairly deterministic and Marxist view of history I described in the first chapter, since under this reading, the repertory system was not produced through individual agents trying to maximize profit and satisfy customers. Instead, individual agents' decisions were proscribed, determined or (less radically) influenced by the historical conditions of the playhouse. And although this deterministic reading of the playhouse's production methods may seem unconvincing from a post-Marxist or non-Marxist perspective, this reading demonstrates that determinism need not be reductive or limiting. By attempting to control the audience, the playing companies shortened the run of plays, which contributed to the rich diversity and experiential nature of the early modern stage and, as previously argued, the non-naturalism of the theater and an ambitious model of performance that claimed to produce institutional reality. In the end, it is difficult to prove that none of this would have happened if the historical conditions of the theater were different. Nevertheless, if the absent cause of the non-reactive playgoer was in fact the ultimate cause in the last instance of the repertory system, then the social formation of playgoing seems to have benefited from the playing companies' desire to stabilize its performances.

Beyond merely limiting the amount of viewings and interpretations, the early modern repertory system also influenced how plays were marketed. Because of the short run of plays – a different play every day and a new play every two to three weeks – it would have been logistically difficult to effectively market a play to a specific audience.[276] Instead, playing companies seem to have attempted to attract a rather general audience. On the other hand, texts seemed to have been marketed to a very specific audience. This contrast between a general playhouse audience and a specific reading audience, as I will argue, suggests an understanding of the texts as unstable in contrast to stable performances. Indeed, this difference is particularly pronounced between performances and the play texts that the performances helped produce.

As Zachary Lesser has shown, play texts seem to have been marketed to a fairly specific audience. By investigating the economics of the publication of play texts, Lesser convincingly argues that the market for play texts was speculative "not only because they were an uncertain investment, but also because a publisher needed to *speculate* on their meanings in order to invest wisely."[277] Lesser then suggests that a publisher had to "understand the text's position within all the relevant discourses, institutions, and practices, in order to speculate on the meanings his imagined customers might make of it."[278] A particular publisher might even specialize in a particular type of play text (or any other text for that matter) because he knew that there was a particular niche market for that particular type of text.[279] The publishers would then market the play texts to that niche market. Thus Lesser argues:

> Publishers … developed techniques of presentation and marketing to ensure that their imagined customers became real ones. But because they specialized, publishers also constructed their customers' reading simply by the act of publication itself, leading customers to consider a play within its publisher's

> specialty. For this reason, the same play may carry radically different meanings and politics not only between its printed and its performed versions, but even between two otherwise-identical printed editions brought out by two different publishers.[280]

I quote Lesser at length here because the above quotation demonstrates the connection between the marketing strategy of printing houses and the instability of early modern texts. Because a publisher would attempt to assign a particular meaning to a play text and then market that text to a specific audience on the basis of that interpretation, a play text could take on multiple meanings if different publishers marketed that same text differently, or if a single publisher marketed one play text to two or more different audiences.

Individual productions of plays, on the other hand, did not seem to have been marketed to a specific audience. Instead, they attempted to attract the largest and broadest audience they could get. For instance, Tiffany Stern has assembled the best evidence for determining how plays were marketed and concludes that early modern playhouses seemed to have marketed their product in three different ways. 1) The players would announce to their audience what play was being shown the next day (almost certainly a different play than was just performed).[281] 2) A potential playgoer would have heard about a specific production from the actors who, according to Stern, would "parade through the city 'crying the play', which is to say broadcasting the title of the play to be performed accompanied by drums and trumpets."[282] Both these techniques amount to little more than announcing the play to as many people as possible. These advertising techniques sought to create a general audience; indeed, they attempted to make all of London a potential audience.

Beyond these one time announcements, playing companies advertized individual performances by printing and distributing playbills. Unfortunately, not a single playbill from the early modern era has been discovered, so it is difficult to know what they looked like or what their exact function was (unlike title-pages, which advertised texts and will be discussed below). Nevertheless, Stern has reconstructed how playbills functioned as advertisements by examining advertisements for other types of performances – such as bills for bear-beating and sword fights – and by investigating the production of printing playbills. Her findings suggest playbills, like the other advertizing methods, appealed to a general rather than specific audience. Stern finds that throughout the early modern era the right to print playbills was controlled by a handful of printing houses and so opines that "all bills must have looked similar up to a point, no matter which company, play or theatre they were printed for."[283] Also, because the license to print playbills was inherited, playbills "would have looked similar not just to each other but also over time" because "presses, types and ornaments were also all inherited through the four printing establishments."[284] Thus, there did not seem to be an effort, or even ability, to differentiate one play from another or one playhouse from another playhouse.[285] Furthermore, the printing house probably produced stock bills: playbills that gave a general boilerplate description of a play but left the title, place, and time blank so that it could be later filled in once these details were known.[286] In short, the producers of playbills (the printers of playbills and the theater companies that bought and distributed them) did not seem to use playbills as a way of targeting a specific audience because early modern playbills would have looked more or less the same. The effect of these non-differentiated playbills would have been similar to the effect of the players "crying the

play" or the announcement at the end of a performance: they would have drawn as many people into the performance as possible without trying to market a particular performance for a particular audience.

The distribution of these playbills also suggests that the plays were marketed to a diverse and general audience. In fact, London seems to have been blanketed with playbills. Although no evidence exists for the exact number of bills produced for a performance, Stern proposes, "If bills for every production in every theatre for each day of the coming week were all to be found in London at the same time, then playbills must have been a significant feature of the city."[287] Contemporary references to playbills lead her to conclude, playbills "were so present and so numerous that it was hard for the casual observer not to read them."[288] These bills would have been pinned to the posts that separated the horse paths from the pedestrian paths, on residential doorposts, "pissing posts," and on the columns of St. Paul's cathedral.[289] In short, playbills were posted anywhere people might see them.

Play texts on the other hand seemed to have been advertised through a more narrow marketing strategy. Just as playbills were the primary way that playhouses marketed their product, title-pages seems to have been the primary method printing houses used to advertise their texts. In other words, playbills are to performance, as title-pages are to play texts. Lesser and Alan B. Farmer describe the importance of the title page as a marketing tool:

> Title-pages were the major mode of book advertising in early modern London, for not until the 1650s did stationers begin to print catalogues of their stock as their Continental counterparts had been doing since the sixteenth century … Title-pages were designed … not only to inform customers of the contents of a book but also to entice them to buy it. For this reason, extra copies of title-pages were often printed for hanging on walls and in 'cleft-sticks,' as Jonson wrote. Not only

> would title-pages have papered the walls of a bookshop, they would also have been laid out on the shop's "stall," or exterior counter.[290]

Title-pages, unlike playbills, did not seem to be posted throughout the city, but were hung in and around the bookshops that sold play books. One would almost have to already be in the market for a play text in order to be subject to the marketing of a play text because one would have to be physically in a bookshop to see that a particular play was in print.

That being said, Stern and others do find some evidence that title-pages were distributed outside the bookshops and argue that they functioned much like playbills would have functioned; however, her argument (and the arguments she follows) needs to be challenged. For instance, she states, "Advertisements for books consisted of title-pages separately printed and hung up on the posts of the city."[291] Here she is following Marjory Plant (who, Stern admits, does not offer proof that playbills were ever distributed throughout the city) and R.B McKerrow, who, in Stern's words, argues

> the information on any book title-page of the period, informing the reader where the book in question is to be bought, is hardly of relevance to the owner of a book: it is only of relevance to someone who might wish to purchase that book; relevant, that is to say, as an advertisement." [292]

However, Peter W.M. Blayney has shown that the imprint on the title page (that is, the statement on the title page that offers publication information) always refers to the printer or wholesaler of the play text and not to the bookseller. "The primary purpose of an imprint was the same in early modern England as it is today: to inform *retailers* where a book could be purchased *wholesale*."[293] Therefore, the title page would not actually give an individual interested in buying a play text the information he or she would need to find out where to buy the book, anymore than the imprint of a modern day volume would tell us where to purchase the text. Thus, it seems unlikely that title-pages were distributed

throughout the city in an attempt to lure potential buyers into the bookshops since title-pages never named the bookshops where the texts could be bought. Rather, the title-pages were used to get customers to buy a specific text once they were in the bookshops.

Stern does point to some early modern commentary that suggests title-pages were distributed throughout the city; however, her evidence does not establish that this practice was widespread; instead, it demonstrates that the wide distribution of title-pages was an aberration and tellingly frowned upon by authors because this marketing technique was similar to the way performance was marketed. Ben Jonson, Henry Parrot, and Thomas Nashe separately complained that the title-pages of their books were being posted throughout the city (though only Jonson references his play texts).[294] So it does seem that sometimes title-pages were distributed throughout London. However, these individuals' complaints suggest this was a practice that could be challenged because it was not the common practice. To my knowledge, playwrights and players did not make the same complaints about playbills being posted throughout London probably because it was *de rigueur*.[295] Furthermore, these authors complained because this marketing technique appealed to too broad of an audience. For instance, Jonson (not surprisingly) does not want his title-pages spread throughout the city, where "termers, or some clerk-like serving-man, / Who scarce can spell th'hard names'" can read them.[296] The always discriminating Jonson doesn't like the posting of title-pages because it is too broad of a marketing technique appealing to too large of an audience; in other words, he is attempting to differentiate the readers of his plays from those who attended the performance of his plays. Likewise, Robert Heath, the author of a book of poems called *Clarastella*, asks his publisher not to market his text by posting title-pages around the city

because such a marketing technique will overlap with the marketing of performances. He asks that the publisher not

> show it barefac'd on the open stall
> To tempt the buyer: nor poast it on each wall
> And corner poast close underneath the Play
> That must be acted at Black-Friers that day. [297]

Heath's implication is clear: he does not want his text marketed the same way that performances were marketed; that is, to a broad audience. Instead, he, like Jonson, seems to want his text marketed to a smaller, more discriminating audience.

These remarks by Heath and Jonson suggest what the overall economics and marketing strategy of early modern drama suggest: the playhouse and printing house operated under two different modes of production. The printing house attempted to appeal to a small group of readers by presupposing a particular interpretation of the texts they were attempting to market, and the playhouse attempted to appeal to a general audience by not targeting a specific audience. These two methods constructed two separate understandings of their respective mediums. On the one hand, the printing house constructed an unstable text that was able to be interpreted, appropriated and marketed to a specific audience. On the other hand, the playhouse constructed a stable performance that was not able to be marketed to a specific audience.

That being said, the simple physical differences between the printing market and the performance market no doubt contributed to the differences between the marketing strategy of the printing house and the playhouse. A playhouse has a finite number of seats available. The Rose, for instance, had a capacity of around two thousand, and the Swan and the Globe around three thousand.[298] However, Gurr estimates that, except for holidays, the playhouse average audience probably only occupied about half the available

space.[299] In other words, a playhouse probably always had, and knew they would have, an available product – that is, empty seats. So there would be no need to focus on a specific audience. Indeed, such a focus would be counterproductive since by focusing on a specific audience one might exclude possible customers. However, a publisher needed to determine *before* printing how much of the product to make available. Blayney calculates that a publisher would have had to sell about sixty percent of his run in order to turn a profit.[300] So the publisher would have had to imagine an audience that would buy sixty percent of his texts, or the printing house would loose money. Thus, the publisher would have to create an audience for his text through a marketing strategy that would guarantee a profit. Furthermore, the different profit margins of the playhouse and printing house also determined these different marketing strategies. Lesser establishes the significantly different profit margins of the different modes of production:

> But while the cost to the consumer of an indoor stage play and a printed play are about the same, an utter disaster in the theatre – a play, for example, that sold out its first night but then failed ever to attract another spectator – would be a fair success if the same number of people bought the play as saw it. While the company must target a rather broad range of people to fill the theatre night after night, the publisher can afford to cater to a smaller, "niche" audience.[301]

However, there is nothing necessary about these physical differences. Theater owners did not have to create playhouses that were too big to fill on a regular basis. In fact, the existence of these big playhouses is somewhat puzzling: why build playhouses that were rarely full? The desire to build big playhouses can be seen as the desire for big, diverse and broad audiences. One builds big playhouses because one wants the biggest audience one can get, which means a broad audience and, not only coincidentally, stable performances. In other words, the size of the playhouses is not the cause of the marketing

strategies, which then causes stable performances; rather, the big playhouses and the marketing strategies are both the effects of the desire for stable performances.

Furthermore, the big playhouses and the marketing strategies these big playhouses demanded were organized in opposition to the printing house because the printing house produced unstable texts, and this difference between the printing house and the playhouse can itself be understood as an effect of a larger construction. The playhouse organized itself in opposition to the printing house because it was attempting to construct a non-reactive audience. In order to differentiate playgoers from active readers, the playhouse sought to create a stable medium unlike the unstable medium of the printing house. The same effect is of course visible within the play texts themselves: the plays constructed performance as stable in opposition to the instability of texts. These two effects (which are in fact identical, even though they occur in different locations) can be understood as reinforcing one another. That is, the representations of stable performances were influenced by the production techniques of the playhouse, and these techniques were influenced by the representations. But in the final analysis, both effects are caused by the construction of the non-reactive playgoer. They are both attempts to stabilize performances in order to interrupt the interpretation and activity of the playgoers. And as the next chapter will demonstrate, this desire to interrupt the interpretive agency of the audience can also be traced to the playwrights' thoughts about the mimetic nature of their plays.

Chapter Five

Anti-Mimetic Drama: Performance's Relationship to Reality and the Playgoer's Interpretive Agency

"Things that ne're were, nor are, nor ne're will be." John Suckling, *The Goblins*[302]

The early modern dramatic depiction of the stability of performance and the instability of texts has (at least) one clear exception. Alice, in *Arden of Faversham*, inverts this depiction of performance and texts by making an appeal to the instability of performance and the stability of texts. When her lover Mosby refuses to touch her because he has made an oath to her husband promising he would not, Alice responds by dismissing the importance of oaths and arguing that performative utterances are unstable:

> What? Shall an oath make thee forsake my love?
> As if I have not sworn as much myself,
> And given my hand unto him in the church!
> Tush, Mosby! Oaths are words, and words is wind,
> And wind is mutable. Then, I conclude,
> 'Tis childishness to stand upon an oath (1.433-438).[303]

The performance of a marriage (which Webster exploits for its metadramatic possibilities in *The Duchess of Malfi*) is here depicted as unstable or as "mutable" as the wind. By arguing that performative utterances and performances are unstable, she is putting forth a conception of performance that opposes the theory of performance that playwrights throughout the era exerted so much dramatic energy constructing. Then, later in the scene, she describes texts as stable. When Greene asks if it is true that "letters of patents from the King" have given her husband, Arden, ownership of Greene's land (1.461), Alice seems to pity Greene's plight, but she asserts that the land is irreversibly Arden's:

> The lands are his in state,
> And whatsoever leases were before
> Are void for term of Master Arden's life.
> He hath the grant under the Chancery seal (1.465-468).

Since Arden has the lands for the rest of his life, Alice's solution is to end Arden's life and then give the lands back to Greene. The finality and stability of the "letters of patents" recall the dystopian world of *The Old Law*, where legal texts cannot be disputed or quibbled with. There is no attempt on the part of Alice or Greene to dispute the claim by reading the text carefully in order to find a way out of their textually produced situation, as happens in *The Merchant of Venice*. Instead, the text is portrayed as perfectly stable, and so another more diabolical approach is needed.

Of course just because Alice asserts the stability of texts and the instability of performance does not mean that the play validates her claims. Since she is, more or less, the villain of the play, her claims could be the playwright's way of arguing for the stability of performance. As in, only an unchaste murderer such as Alice would argue that performances and performative utterances are as mutable as the wind.

However, the play asserts something else about the status of performance, which reinforces Alice's ideas about the stability performance; the play claims to be a representation of historical events. In the final lines of the play, Franklin briefly recaps the narrative and then asks the audience to forgive the play's lack of polish.

> Gentlemen, we hope you'll pardon this naked tragedy
> Wherein no filed points are foisted in
> To make it gracious to the ear or eye;
> For simple truth is gracious enough
> And needs no other points of glozing stuff (Epi. 14-18).

Franklin's description of the play as a "naked tragedy" and a "simple truth" suggests that the play is simply retelling the real story of Arden without embellishment. Franklin is claiming that the play is mimetic – not necessarily mimetic in the Aristotelian sense of

probability, but mimetic in the sense of facticity and historical veracity. In other words, Franklin is claiming that the play is a representation of real events.

The play's calibration of the audience's interpretive agency is what links Franklin's description of the play as a "naked tragedy" and Alice's depiction of performance as unstable. As I argued in the pervious chapter, the playwrights and the larger theatrical culture depicted and constructed performance as stable in order to discourage the audience from actively interpreting performances, so Alice's construction of performance as unstable has the opposite effect – she is encouraging the audience to interpret the performance. The play's depiction of itself as a "naked tragedy" and so as a purely mimetic artifact produces a similar effect. As this chapter will attempt to demonstrate, mimetic texts are more amendable to interpretation and more likely to produce audience reaction than texts that do not attempt to represent reality. Consequently, Franklin's claims of mimesis invite the audience to interpret and destabilize the performance. However, most early modern plays go out of their way to create the opposite construction; they depict themselves as non-mimetic (or more precisely, anti-mimetic) in an effort to limit the interpretive agency of their audience. In the final analysis, early modern drama's description of itself as non-mimetic then constitutes an attempt to produce a non-reactive playgoer because, as I argued in the previous chapter, by interrupting the interpretive agency of the audience, playwrights were seeking to limit the audience's reactions to stage performances.

I: Mimesis, Interpretation and the Self-referentiality of Metadrama

The concept of mimesis, like the concept of reality that mimesis is said to represent, has been shown by post-structuralist thinkers such as Jacques Derrida and Philippe Locoue-Labarthe to be a slippery and complex term. Nevertheless, the fullest exploration of the connection between mimesis and interpretation seems still to be Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*.[304] Auerbach explores in unusual detail how the interpretive agency of the audience is connected to the mimetic quality of the object of that interpretation.[305] And even though theorists have shown that Auerbach's ideas about mimesis often oversimplify or under-theorize the concept, his ideas are perhaps more useful in relation to early modern conceptions of mimesis than those that come after him because, as Jonathan Holmes and Adrian Streete suggest, early modern thinkers never fully theorized (according to a post-modern rubric) the term either. Instead they often use it interchangeably with "imitation" and "representation."[306] And in any case, the playwrights discussed below do not seem to be working within a conventional tradition of mimesis – a tradition that starts with Plato and Aristotle in the classical age, is reasserted, at least theoretically, by writers such as Philip Sidney in the early modern era and is deconstructed by post-moderns like Derrida and Locoue-Labarthe. Rather, as in the similar case of their rejection of the classical unities, some early modern playwrights seem to work against this classical tradition, as the title to this chapter suggests.[307] That is, playwrights used metadrama to assert an anti-mimetic conception of their art – a conception that has much more in common with Auerbach's

understanding of mimesis than it does with Sidney's or Aristotle's, in that mimesis allows for more interpretive space than texts that are not explicitly mimetic.

In the opening chapters of *Mimesis,* Auerbach shows how a work's mimetic status can affect the audience's interpretive ability. He contrasts the different relations Homer and the Old Testament have to reality, arguing that while the Old Testament claims to be representing historical truth, Homer does not:

> The claim of the Old Testament stories to represent universal history, their insistent relation – a relation constantly redefined by conflicts – to a single and hidden God, who yet shows himself and who guides universal history by promise and exaction, gives these stories an entirely different perspective from any the Homeric poems can possess.[308]

Auerbach goes on describe the three mimetic elements of the Old Testament: "legend, historical reporting and interpretative historical theology."[309] Legend is the mystification of historical figures and events, historical reporting is the synthesis of historical events into a narrative, and interpretive historical theology is the interpretation (by the author) of these historical events along theological lines, that is, how historical narratives reflect the will of god. Auerbach maintains that disentangling and locating these three aspects of the text necessitate complex interpretive procedures: "It is a difficult matter, requiring careful historical and philological training, to distinguish the true from the synthetic or the biased in a historical presentation, but it is easy to separate the historical from the legendary in general."[310]

The precise way that Auerbach interprets the Old Testament is not important for this study. In fact, because of the highly self-reflective nature of early modern drama, we do not have to use the complex analytical tools that Auerbach develops in order to uncover a text's relationship to reality – its mimetic qualities. Instead, we just have to

notice the way that plays announce and construct their own relationship to reality. And as we will see, this announcement/construction is particularly pronounced within stage-orations since they comment directly on the play they are a part of.

What is important for my purposes about Auerbach's analytical scheme is how he contrasts the mimetic qualities of the Old Testament with the mimetic qualities of Homer and shows how these qualities affect the interpretive possibilities of each text. He argues that Homer does not make claims of historical truth, but tries to create his own "reality" (a fictive reality) that draws the reader into the text. For Auerbach, Homer's texts

> bewitch us and ingratiate themselves to us until we live with them in the reality of their lives; so long as we are reading or hearing the poems, it does not matter whether we know that all this is only legend, "make-believe." The oft-repeated reproach that Homer is a liar takes nothing from his effectiveness, he does not need to base his story on historical reality, his reality is powerful enough in itself; it ensnares us, weaving its web around us, and that suffices him. And this "real" world into which we are lured, exists for itself, contains nothing but itself; the Homeric poems conceal nothing, they contain no teaching and no secret second meaning. Homer can be analyzed, as we have assayed to do here, but he cannot be interpreted.[311]

Auerbach may be going too far when he asserts that no meaning or teaching can be found in Homer, but his overall analysis of the effect the two different texts have on their readers can be usefully applied to early modern drama. While the Old Testament attempts to link itself to historical reality and so directs readers out by attempting to connect the text to a larger historical truth, Homer attempts to draw readers in, away from historical reality and into the fictive reality of the poem, where any meaning or truth that the poem conveys is controlled by Homer and only really applicable to the fictive universe that Homer has created. The same can be said of early modern drama. *Arden of Faversham* depicts itself as mimetic and so invites its audience to compare it to history and link the story within a larger historical narrative. But as I will attempt to show, many early

modern plays do the opposite; they attempt to show that drama is not purely mimetic in an attempt to draw the viewer into the fictive reality of the play. Thus, looked at from this perspective and according to Auerbach's system, most early modern drama has more in common with Homer than it does with the Old Testament.

The above is, admittedly, a fairly idiosyncratic reading of Auerbach. After all, Auerbach is generally interested in describing the different types of mimesis and the different ways various cultures and writers represented reality. He is not explicitly describing Homer's poetry as non-mimetic in opposition to the mimesis of the Old Testament, but describing the different ways that each text gestures towards mimesis. Still, Auerbach contrasting description of Homer and the Old Testament can help us make sense of the way that early modern drama seems to connect mimesis with interpretation.

In fact, early modern interpretive or textual culture can perhaps solidify the link between mimesis and interpretation found in Auerbach's analysis. Or put another way, we can historicize this link by situating it within early modern interpretive practices. As discussed in the previous chapter, early modern readers were often trained to imitate what they read according to their active interpretations. Zwicker calls this type of reading "exemplary reading – the careful study of texts for patterns of virtue, the imbibing of classical wisdom, and the exportation of models of conduct and expression."[312] Thus, texts did not just imitate reality, but readers imitated texts. A mimetic text (which made it clear that it was imitating historical reality) would seem to be more emendable to this type of interpretive strategy. If a text is claiming to be a faithful representation of reality, then the reader (or viewer) can easily apply the "models of conduct and expression"

found in that textual reality to his or her own reality. *The Mirror of Magistrates* (and the broader *De Casibus* tradition) is perhaps a good example of how mimesis and exemplary reading work together. The text is a mirror or imitation of past events, and its purpose is to influence the current reality by explicitly encouraging its readers to imitate or avoid imitating the narratives of the text. It seems, early modern mimetic texts encouraged active reading and readers' actions. But as we will see, early modern drama often tries to sever the link between the fictive reality of the stage and the reality of the playgoers in an attempt to limit this type of imitation and active reading. That is, they try to deny that their plays are mimetic.

This is not to say that there is a perfect and clear demarcation between mimetic plays (or any cultural artifact) and non-mimetic plays. All early modern plays, like any fictional work, have some connection to reality or represent reality on some level.[313] Thus, I use the term anti-mimetic instead of non-mimetic; early modern plays are not non-mimetic in so far as "non" signifies an absence of mimesis. Instead, the plays contain anti-mimetic tendencies; they deploy techniques that exert an energy which opposes drama's mimetic qualities. Thus, these early modern plays attempt to limit their connection to reality and so limit their audience's interpretive ability. This chapter will chart these anti-mimetic tendencies by analyzing early modern stage-orations that announce their own relationship to reality and determine how this relationship constructs playgoers' response to performances.

Furthermore, playwrights' attempts at limiting the interpretive agency of the audience through anti-mimesis should probably not be thought of as an attempt at blocking or completely stopping the audience's interpretive ability. As discussed in the

previous chapter, (literate) early modern audiences were thoroughly trained to actively interpret texts, and it seems likely that they would bring this training to the playhouse. By interrupting the interpretive agency of the audience, the playwrights were pushing against playgoers' tendency to interpret. Like their efforts at anti-mimesis, playwrights were exerting an anti-interruptive energy, which opposed the audience's tendency to actively interpret the performances without completely stopping them from interpreting it. In fact, because (as my reading of Auerbach suggests) mimesis is connected to interpretation, the anti-mimetic energy of early modern plays also produces anti-interruptive energy. As the plays distance themselves from reality, they also make it difficult for audiences to interpret and imitate the performances of these plays.

Early modern drama's constructing of this relationship of difference with reality is significant because it theoretically follows from and reinforces the construction of stage utterances as performative (chapter two), the non-naturalism of the stage (chapter three) and the stability of performance (chapter four) and so coheres with the theory of performance that I have been arguing was constructed by playwrights throughout the early modern era. For starters, if a play is not attempting to link itself to reality, it would have little reason to create a realistic or naturalistic portrayal of itself, and non-naturalistic stage devices contribute to (but do not ensure) the anti-mimetic quality of the early modern stage because these techniques remind the audience that they are watching purely fictional events – which in turn suggests that events are unconnected to the reality outside the playhouse. Also, as I argued in the previous chapter, since stage utterances were constructed as performative and having the ability to create institutional reality, they produced stable performances, which were difficult to actively interpret. One cannot, at

least on a theoretical level, disagree with a performative, choose to believe it or not or develop a meaning that is contrary or different from what the performance purports to signify. For instance, a guest or audience member of a wedding cannot interpret the wedding. They may judge it to be a good marriage or a bad one, with an elegant sermon or a crass one, but they cannot deny that it exists or interpret it in any other way than a marriage – an institution constructed through performative language. Likewise, an early modern play which is viewed as performative is difficult to interpret; it must be confronted as one would confront any other form of institutional reality, as necessarily real. The audience may judge the performance; they may consider the play to be boring or poorly performed, but (in so far as it is performative) it cannot be interpreted.[314] And as Auerbach suggests, anti-mimetic texts also limit interpretation. In fact, Auerbach's description of Homer and the Old Testament can be described in speech act terms. In other words, we can use speech act terms to transcode between Auerbach's project and this one. When he argues that the Old Testament makes a claim of historical veracity, he is essentially demonstrating that the Old Testament is made up of constative utterances, utterances that report (or claim to report) on a prior reality. Conversely, Homer is decidedly not crafting constative utterances because he is not making claims at historical veracity and so is not reporting on a prior reality; he is creating his own reality. One could say that Auerbach reads Homer as constructing his own text as performative because his texts are not mimetic. This is not to say that anti-mimetic texts are always performative. However, the opposite is true: performative utterances are always anti-mimetic because they are not representing reality but constructing their own reality.[315]

Thus, performative stage utterances, which contribute to the stability of performance, also contribute to the anti-mimetic quality of the early modern stage.

Furthermore, by distancing the play from historical reality, playwrights opened up an ontological space for performances to create institutional reality. That is, the plays attempted to construct themselves as anti-mimetic in order to deny that their works represented a reality outside the playhouse, so they could create a reality inside the playhouse. So anti-mimesis is not only produced through performative utterances, but it also contributes to or allows for the construction of stage utterances as performative, which, in turn, helps contribute to the stability of performance. In short, the anti-mimetic stage, non-naturalistic productions, performative stage utterances and stable performances are all mutually reinforcing.

In the final analysis, all of these elements of playgoing, including anti-mimesis, can be understood as attempts to control the unruly early modern audience or as an effect of the construction of the non-reactive playgoer. Anti-mimesis, as Auerbach suggests, limits the interpretive agency of the audience, and as I argued in the previous chapter, by interrupting the interpretive agency of the audience, the playwrights were, in effect, attempting to control audience reaction in so far as early modern audiences were trained to view interpretations as a path towards action. Thus, early modern playwrights' construction of their plays' relationship to reality was an effect of their desire to construct a non-reactive playgoer.

Before investigating plays that reveal their own relationship to reality, I want to point out that early modern drama's self-reflexivity is not just a path through which we can discover a play's relationship to reality or a medium through which playwrights

could construct this relationship; it is also, in and of itself, a technique designed to construct drama's relationship with reality. That is, metadrama *qua* metadrama calls attention to a play's fictional status (it announces the play as a fictive artifact) and so works against the mimetic qualities of the play. In other words, metadrama is anti-mimetic because metadrama, in so far as it is also self-referential, keeps the play from referencing the reality outside the playhouse; it brackets reality from the play. By doing so, metadrama is keeping the audience from comparing the fictive actions on the stage to real actions. Self-reflexivity does not give the audience a referent through which to understand the play in terms other than that which is produced by the play itself. Metadrama then has the same affect on the audience's interpretive agency that Auerbach understands Homer's effect to be on his audience; it traps the audience inside the work itself and the fictive world that the work creates, and so in Auerbach's terms, metadrama creates a play that "exists for itself, contains nothing but itself."[316] Thus, metadrama is not only saying something –playwrights' thoughts about drama's relationship to reality – but is also doing something – creating anti-mimetic energy and so constructing drama's relationship with reality.

II: Stage-Orations: Constructing the Play's Relationship with Reality through Prologues, Inductions and Epilogues

The dramatic spaces where playwrights clearly attempt to construct their plays' mimetic status exist at the beginning and end of performances, within the prologues, inductions and epilogues. Stage-orations are able to do this because they exist in a liminal

space between the outside and inside of a play. As Douglas Bruster and Robert Weimann point out in their study of prologues (and the same could be said of epilogues and inductions), "from this crucial position, prologues were able to function as interactive, liminal, boundary-breaking entities that negotiated charged thresholds between and among, variously, playwrights, actors, characters, audience members, playworlds, and the world outside the playhouse."[317] I agree with Bruster and Weimann that stage-orations negotiate the thresholds between "playworlds and the world outside the playhouse;" indeed, this chapter will highlight the techniques or tropes that stage-orations use to describe the relationship between the world of the playhouse and the world outside the playhouse – the dramatic representation of reality and the reality that is being represented. However, I disagree with their labeling of stage-orations as "boundary-breaking." Rather than eroding the boundary between reality and play, early modern stage-orations are often interested in *establishing* this boundary in order to create a relationship of difference between "playworlds and the world outside the playhouse." In other words, they seek to frame the play as anti-mimetic by highlighting the differences between reality and the play.[318]

This is not to say that the only purpose of early modern stage-orations is to establish drama's relationship to reality. In fact, the vast majority of stage-orations do not comment on a play's mimetic status. They either make an appeal to the audience for kind judgment or describe the theme or plot of the play (similar to an epic argument).[319] Nevertheless, when stage-orations do comment upon their mimetic status, they offer explicit and easily recognizable evidence of a play's relationship to reality because their liminal position within a play allows them to comment directly upon the play the stage-

oration is a part of. Furthermore, these stage-orations offer clear examples of audience construction since they speak directly to the audience and so are attempting to influence the audience's understanding of the play they are about to or just finished watching. That is, they are not just constructing their play's relationship to reality; they are constructing that relationship for the audience in an attempt to influence the playgoing experience.

By my count, from 1575 to1642, 309 extent plays include a prologue, epilogue or induction (excluding Latin plays).[320] Of these 309 plays, only three make what I would consider explicit claims of mimesis – an imitation of historical reality. Of course, these stage-orations are highly interpretable, as my own analysis will show, so a different critic using a different interpretive lens and a different definition of mimesis would probably come up with a different number of stage-orations that make claims of mimesis. Still, I think most would agree that these three plays, *Arden of Faversham* (already discussed), *The Merry Devil of Edmonton* and William Sampson's *The Vow Breaker*, make fairly clear and explicit claims that the plays they frame are a faithful representation of historical events.

For instance, *The Merry Devil of Edmonton* offers proof that the play is based on real events by dispelling the audience's doubt that the main character, Peter Fabell, is fictional.

> If any heere make doubt of such a name,
> In Edmonton yet fresh vnto this day,
> Fixt in the wall of that old antient Church,
> His monument remayneth to be seen;
> His memory yet in the mouths of men,
> That whilst he liued he could deceiue the Deuill (Pro. 16-21).[321]

Here the prologue is clearly inviting the audience to compare the play to the reality outside the playhouse. In fact, the audience can even go to Edmonton, which, the

prologue reminds them, is "not seven miles from [London]," and still hear the story being told by its citizens. Likewise, *The Vow Breaker*'s prologue assures the audience that the play is a true representation of historical events and historical people.[322]

> And yet me thinkes I here some Criticke say
> That they are much abus'd in this our Play.
> Their Magistracy laught at ! as if now
> What Ninety yeeres since dy'd, afresh did grow:
> To those wee answer, that ere they were borne,
> The story that we glaunse at, then was worne
> And held authentick: and the men wee name
> Grounded in Honours Prowesse, Vertues Fame (Pro. 9-16).[323]

While *The Merry Devil of Edmonton* offers testimony and physical proof (the townspeople and the monument) to demonstrate that the play is a true representation of actual events, *The Vow Breaker*'s prologue simply assures the audience that the story has always been known as "authentick" or historically true. In effect, its historical position, (the story has been told for over ninety years) guarantees its authenticity. The play promises to reproduce that authentic story.

These kinds of claims of mimesis are, as I have suggested, rare. By my count and my interpretation, twenty-eight stage-orations attempt to distance themselves from reality, thereby minimizing the mimetic effect of the play and limiting the interpretive agency of the audience. Each one of these stage-orations will not be discussed in detail; instead, I will focus on three distinct but related tropes within stage-orations, which are commonly used to accomplish this anti-mimetic effect. Each one of the following tropes will be treated separately below even though they sometimes overlap: 1) The stage-oration attempts to deny completely that the play has any connection to reality and so should be treated by the audience as pure fantasy or a dream. 2) The stage-oration discourages the audience from comparing the characters in the play to real life characters

and assures the audience that the characters are purely fictional and not mimetic representations of real figures. 3) The stage-oration calls into question the ability of the play to represent reality accurately or faithfully.

But as we will see, these tropes are not deployed in isolation within the stage-orations. Often they are embedded within more conventional or obvious rhetorical appeals. The first two tropes are often found within stage-orations (particularly prologues) which are attempting to avoid censorship and/or topical readings.[324] That is, the stage-oration is attempting to create a relationship of difference with reality so that their audience won't think that the play is attacking or satirizing real public figures. Or these types of stage-orations are designed to allow the playwright to deny that these kinds of attacks took place, even though they did. This relationship of difference gives the playwrights political cover. And the third trope is often placed within stage-orations that are taking part in a larger conversation about the nature of history and practice of historiography. However, these other elements or purposes of stage-orations do not, I think, negate their ability to construction drama's relationship with reality. In fact, these other elements often dovetail with the broad early modern trend of anti-mimesis (and the even broader early modern construction of playgoing), and when these elements are in tension or conflict with anti-mimesis or the construction of playgoing, they provide interesting insights into the dilemma playwrights faced when trying to balance their need to control their unruly audiences and other desires, such as producing dramatic representations of topical events, that is, timely and relevant art.

1) Denying any Connection to Reality: Lyly's Play-as-Dream Trope

Although some of the anti-mimetic tendencies of early modern stage-orations are quite subtle, some prologues are explicit about their desire to have plays understood as disconnected from reality. John Lyly seems to have been particularly fond of denying that his plays were connected to reality. In three of his plays, *Sappho and Phao*, *Endymion* and *The Woman in the Moon*, the prologues encourage the audience to view the play as pure fantasy or as a dream, thereby framing the play as something other than reality. And as we will see, this is ostensibly done to avoid any explicit reference to the court, but it also works to create a relationship of difference with reality.

Sappho and Phao's prologue to the court exhorts the queen to imagine the play is a dream: "in all humbleness we all, and I on knee for all, entreat that / your highness imagine yourself to be in a deep dream that, / staying the conclusion, in your rising your Majesty vouchsafe / but to say, *'And so you awaked.'*" (Pro. 15-18 emphasis mine).[325] *The Woman and the Moon* repeats this trope, the prologue reminding the audience (which is again the court) that the play is nothing but a dream – "remember all is but a poet's dream" (Pro. 17).[326] By framing the plays as dreams, these prologues are drawing a fairly bright line between reality and the play. They are, in a sense, drawing an ontological circle around the performances and suggesting that what occurs within the plays are like dreams that have nothing to do with the world that exists outside the dream world of the playhouse. Once the play is over, the audience should imagine themselves awaking to a reality that is disconnected from the fictive world of the play.

However, even this fairly straightforward attempt at anti-mimesis becomes complicated because, as suggested above, all fictional works are somewhat connected to reality, and interpretation can never be fully blocked, and Lyly's prologues seem to be aware of both of these caveats. So even though the prologues use anti-mimesis to keep the audience from interpreting the performance, they still leave room for mimesis and interpretation. Indeed, by describing the play as a dream, the prologues are able to link the mimetic status of the play and the interpretive agency of the audience to early modern dream theory, and through this link they can explore the complex connections between drama, reality and interpretation.

Although framing the play as a dream seems to distance the play from reality, this type of prologue does not necessarily inhibit the interpretive agency of the audience since dreams themselves can and often are interpreted. So framing the play as a dream may in fact be both an effort at anti-mimesis and an invitation to interpret. However, dreams in pre-Freudian early modern England were understood and represented in different terms than they are in a post-Freudian era, and these terms suggest that dreams would not necessarily have been understood by Lyly's audience as an invitation to interpret. The differences between early modern and post-Freudian dream theory are complex (too complex to treat fully here) in part because the early modern era did not produce a coherent and hegemonic theory of dreams.[327] However, two aspects of the early modern attitude towards dream interpretation are relevant here: 1) the English tended to dismiss the significance of dreams by describing them as the residue of lived experience, and 2) when the importance of dreams were recognized, they were not represented as a rich interpretive field, but as a phenomenon to be decoded.

Peter Holland's study of early modern English dream interpretations finds that while pan-European culture maintained a robust if often contradictory tradition of dream interpretation, early modern English dream theory was "extremely thin," and English writers were often quite dismissive of the possibility that meaning could be found through the interpretation of dreams.[328] Holland cites Thomas Hill's *The most pleasuante Arte of the Interpretacion of Dreams* and Thomas Nashe's *The Terrors of the Night* as two representative examples of English dream theory. The latter vehemently dismisses the relevance of dreams and the wisdom of dream interpretation, and the former simplifies dream interpretation into a simple decoding. Nashe, like Antigonus in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*, who claims that "dreams are but toys" (3.3.38), largely dismisses the importance and interpretive possibility of dreams. For instance, he states that "a dream is nothing else but a bubbling scum or froth of the fancy, which the day hath left undigested; or an after-feast made of the fragments of idle imagination."[329] Nashe's description of dreams as the product of food was not just a metaphor. It was (and still is) commonly believed that particular foods produced certain types of dreams.[330] Thus, dreams were not significant pathways to the subject's unconscious, open to fertile interpretation (as Freud would have it), but the meaningless residue of digested meals and lived experiences. On the other hand, Hill's highly influential treatise on dream interpretation does seem to take dreams and the interpretation of dreams seriously, but according to Hill, one does not interpret a dream the same way one might interpret a text – as open to multiple meanings produced through imaginative interpretations by the reader.[331] Instead, Hill seems to maintain that although a particular dream could be interpreted, each dream could only be interpreted in one way. Thus, Hill provides a list of

possible dreams and their meanings. For instance, "Hee which seeth his image in the moone, not having children, doth foreshew the birth of a sonne to ensue: but to the women like dreaming, to have a daughter." Dreams, under Hill's theory, are not to be interpreted as much as they are to be decoded. Furthermore, the dream is not being interpreted by the audience of the dream (the dreamer), but by an expert (Hill) who provides the significance of an individual dream. The dreamer merely has to locate his or her dream on Hill's list and determine its significance. In short, the interpretive agency of the dreamer is fairly narrow within prominent examples of early modern dream theory. Thus, when Lyly's prologues frame plays as dreams, they seem not to be inviting the audience to tease out the subtle and complex significances of the dream/play's symbols, metaphors and themes; rather, they are seeking to limit the interpretive possibilities of those symbols, metaphors and themes.

Indeed, internal evidence within Lyly's works suggests that when Lyly references dreams in his prologues, he seems to be working within this early modern English tradition of dream theory. For instance, in the fourth act of *Sapho and Phao*, Sapho and her ladies in waiting discuss the meaning of dreams. One of the women, Ismena, attempts to interpret the symbols of the dreams and comments on their significance, but the other women mock her efforts: Mileta tells her "You are no interpreter, but an interprater" (4.3.39-40). And Eugenua asserts, in terms reminiscent of Nashe's dismissal of dreams, "Dreams are but dotings, which come either by / things we see in the day or meats that we eat, and so the / common sense preferring it to be the imaginative" (4.3.49-51).[332] Mileta and Eugenua's comments on dreams reinforce the prologue's anti-mimetic effects

by linking the play's perspective on dreams to an English tradition of dreams and dream interpretation that minimizes interpretive capability.

That being said, although the play-as-dream trope may interrupt the interpretive possibilities of the play, it does not completely detach the play from reality. If dreams are thought of as the residue of lived experience, as Nashe's and Mileta's comments suggest, then they are, at least partially, representations of reality – they are mimetic. Thus, by linking the play to dreams and the early modern understanding of dreams, the prologues are claiming that the plays are also, at least partially, mimetic. Indeed, dreams, or dreams as many early moderns understood them, become a suggestive image for the constructed mimetic status of early modern drama: dreams, like plays, are perceived as detached from reality but can never be held completely separate from reality. The line between reality and plays (or dreams) is always permeable. Both will always contain the residue of lived, that is real, experience. The play-as-dream trope then seems meant not to frame the play as non-mimetic, but is meant to produce anti-mimesis. It distances the play from the world outside the play, thereby producing a relationship of difference with reality; dreams contain elements of reality, but are not pure imitations of reality. The anti-mimesis of the play-as-dream trope is then able to oppose (while allowing for) the play's mimetic tendency in order to limit the interpretive capabilities of the audience. Furthermore, just as the play is unable to keep reality from entering the fictive world of the play, it is unable to fully stop the interpretive agency of the audience; dreams can be interpreted, but the interpretive possibilities are fairly constrained.

Understanding Lyly's play-as-dream trope as an attempt at anti-mimesis and to limit the interpretations of the audience is reinforced if we read it along side the prologue

to *Endymion*. This prologue, like the prologues discussed above, attempts to distance the play from reality, but unlike the play-as-dream trope, this stage-oration explicitly connects the play's anti-mimetic efforts to interpretation.

> It was forbidden in old time to dispute of Chimera, because it was a fiction. We hope in our times none will apply pastimes, because they are fancies; for there liveth none under the sun that knows what to make of the Man in the Moon. We present neither comedy, nor tragedy, nor story, nor anything, but that whosoever heareth may say this: "Why, here is a tale of the Man in the Moon" (Pro. 6-12).[333]

Here the play is categorized not as a dream, but as a "Chimera," a "fiction," a fancy, and a "Man in the Moon." That is, the play has little connection to reality. The prologue also connects the non-mimetic nature of the play with an inability to interpret. It tells the audience that one cannot "dispute" with such non-mimetic representations, nor can anyone "make" anything of it. In other words, the prologue claims that the audience cannot disagree with the play they are about to see (they cannot dispute it) nor construct any meaning out of it (they can not make anything of it) because it is a fiction with no connection to reality. Since this prologue is both distancing the play from reality and limiting interpretive agency, it seems likely that Lyly's other prologues are attempting to make the same connection between anti-mimesis and interpretation.

However, the prologue to *Endymion*, like the prologues to *Sapho and Phao* and *The Woman on the Moon*, does not completely detach the play it introduces from reality, nor does it completely stop audience interpretation, because the play it frames is still, despite the prologue's efforts, highly interpretable and rather obviously mimetic. That is, Cynthia, the virginal female monarch of the play, is a fairly clear figure for Queen Elizabeth, and Endymion, Cynthia's hopeless suitor, is a fairly clear figure for

Elizabeth's various suitors and courtly lovers. In other words, the play is partially an analogy of Elizabeth's court and so is a fictional representation of reality. Therefore, the play can (easily) be interpreted as a comment on Elizabeth's monarchy. So it seems unlikely that the prologue could achieve what it seems meant to do: detach from reality the play it introduces in order to stop the audience from interpreting the play since the play itself seems designed to be interpreted as mimetic. What the prologue does seem to accomplish is anti-mimesis: the prologue works against the mimetic aspects of the play and limits its interpretive possibilities. Or put another way, the prologue's anti-mimetic tendencies are in tension with the mimetic tendencies of the play.

In fact, there was a good reason why Lyly, or whatever member of Lyly's company wrote the prologue, would want to keep the audience from interpreting the play as mimetic, that is, as an analogy of Elizabeth's court. All three of the prologues discussed above seem only to have been spoken during a performance at court. In fact, the 1584 quarto of *Sapho and Phao* provides two prologues and claims that one was performed at the court (the prologue discussed above) and the other was performed at the Blackfriars. The latter does not include any real attempt to distance the play from reality. This difference between prologues perhaps suggests that whoever wrote the prologue was more worried about the queen's and court's interpretations than he was about the public's.[334] After all, if the queen or the court interpreted the play as a comment or satire about themselves (as some modern commentators have suggested), then Lyly and Lyly's company could have been punished in any number of ways: financially and professionally (disallowed from performing at court) or even physically (legally punished for offending the aristocratic audience).[335]

Although Lyly seemed particularly fond of this trope, it was not limited to his plays. Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for one, also uses a stage-oration, this time an epilogue, to frame the play as a dream. And of course, the title also helps contribute to this frame. Robin ends the play by telling the audience:

> If we shadows have offended,
> Think but this, and all is mended:
> That you have but slumbered here,
> While these visions did appear;
> And this weak and idle theme,
> No more yielding but a dream,
> Gentles, do not reprehend. (Epi. 1-7).

Like Lyly's prologues, this epilogue tries to convince the audience that the play is not a representation of reality, but a vision or dream produced by "shadows." And Like *Sapho and Phao*, dreams are portrayed within this play as inscrutable narratives that resist interpretation. When Bottom wakes up, thinking that his time as Titania's lover was only a dream, he remarks, "Man is but an ass if he go about t'expound this / dream" (4.1.201-202). Depicting the play as a dream seems to be used by Shakespeare to keep the audience from actively interpreting the play. And like Lyly's prologues to the court, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which may also have been performed at court, seems to be using the play-as-dream trope to avoid offending the audience. Robin seems worried that the play will offend the "gentles." And by convincing them that the play is a dream and so not connected to the reality of the audience, the epilogue seeks to convince the audience not to be offended. Anti-mimesis is again used to avoid censorship or possible punishment. In fact, the play references, hyperbolically, the danger of playing at court. When the Mechanicals are practicing their play, they contemplate what would happen if

they offend their audience; they all agree that the audience "would hang us, every mother's son" (1.2.64).

Whatever the immediate reason for the anti-mimesis of the stage-orations, Lyly's, Shakespeare's and their companies' apparent belief/hope that this technique could work is significant. They seem to believe that a play framed as anti-mimetic could minimize (though not negate) the mimetic effects of the performance and interrupt (though not stop) the interpretive agency of the audience. And, as we shall see, this effort or technique is picked up by other playwrights who address their stage-orations to the non-courtly audiences of the London playhouses.

2) Dislocating Real People from Fictional Characters: Early Modern Legal Boilerplate

I suggested above that Lyly may have wanted to interrupt the interpretive agency of the audience because his courtly audiences might have been offended if they had interpreted the fictional characters as representations of themselves, an interpretation that his plays seem to have encouraged. This effort to differentiate real individuals from fictional characters is similar to the legal boilerplate phrase found at the beginning and ending of films: "All characters appearing in this work are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental." Indeed, representing a living monarch or any prominent individual on the early modern stage was technically forbidden and was subject to the censor of the Master of Revels.[336] So not surprisingly, many early modern stage-orations deny that the fictional characters of the play are representations of real characters. Although these stage-orations may have been, like the

Hollywood boilerplate, meant to keep playwrights and playing companies out of legal trouble, they still represents an effort at anti-mimesis and so are, as previously suggested, connected to the broader early modern trend of anti-mimesis. Furthermore, this type of early modern legal boilerplate goes beyond a simple denial of mimesis; it is often linked to the interpretive ability of the audience.

For instance, the induction to Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* explicitly discourages (indeed it forbids) the audience from connecting the fictional characters to real characters. Within the induction, a scrivener describes a contract between the author of the play and the playgoers. Part of this contract forbids the audience from interpreting fictional characters as real:

> In consideration of which, it is finally agreed, by the foresaid hearers and spectators, that they neither in themselves conceal, nor suffer by them to be concealed, any state-decipherer, or politic picklock of the scene, so solemnly ridiculous as to search out who was meant by the Ginger-bread-woman, who by the Hobby-horse-man, who by the Costermonger, nay, who by their wares; or that will pretend to affirm, on his own inspired ignorance, what Mirror of Magistrates is meant by the justice, what great lady by the pig-woman, what conceal'd statesman by the Seller of Mousetraps (136-146).

If we read this section of the induction literally or un-ironically, it is explicitly prohibiting the audience from interpreting the play as a representation of reality by forbidding them from reading the fictional characters as representations of real characters. This injunction is cast in political terms. Those who would try to ascertain the real identity of the fictional characters are called "state decipherers" and "politic picklocks," and these picklocks and decipherers are asked not to interpret the fictional characters of the play as public figures: magistrates, great ladies or statesmen. Jonson is essentially trying to keep

the audience from interpreting the play politically – he is interrupting or attempting to interrupt the interpretive agency of the audience – and he is doing so by dislocating the play from reality. He is telling the audience that the fictional characters are not mimetic; they are not representations of real public figures.

Of course, Jonson's injunction against reading the play politically is so obvious that the induction could actually be read as an invitation to interpret politically. That is, the induction could be deploying paralipsis; it tells the audience not to read the play politically in order to plant the idea of this interpretation in their minds. The possibility of paralipsis within the prologue demonstrates the difficulty or even impossibility of completely stopping the audience from interpreting. That is, even an attempt to interrupt interpretation can itself be interpreted as an invitation to interpret. However, even if this is the intent of the induction and/or its effect on the audience, it still works to interrupt the interpretive agency of the audience. A paraliptical induction would be essentially telling the audience how to interpret the performance (in this case politically) and would still be closing down the interpretive space for the audience.

However, I don't believe that this was the *only* intent behind the prologue (even if it was its effect) because in Jonson's prologue to the court for the same play, he makes a similar appeal, albeit in a less authoritative and commanding tone. "These [the characters' of the play] for your sport, without particular wrong / Or just complaint of any private man" (Pro. 8-9). In this case, paralipsis seems unlikely. Jonson would not want to explicitly encourage the court to interpret his comedy politically, that is, as a satire against the figures he is performing in front of. Like Lyly's prologues to the court, Jonson would want to limit, or at least deny, the audience's topical interpretation not encourage

and highlight it. This is not to say that Jonson was unwilling to criticize or satirize the court. He was famous, or infamous, for his willingness and desire to attack public figures. Rather, I mean to suggest that it's unlikely that he would want to call attention to the topicality of his own work in front of the topics of his work. So even if he was representing the court, he could appear as if he wasn't in order to limit the reactions of his audience. In other words, Jonson wants to be political, but doesn't necessarily want a political interpretation and a political reaction. And the possibility of paralipsis within this prologue registers this tension.

In fact, Jonson was perfectly positioned to understand the danger such interpretations held for playwrights and the broader theatrical business. As discussed in the first chapter, in 1614, seventeen years before the first production of *Bartholomew Fair*, his play *The Isle of Dogs* incurred the wrath of the Privy Council for satirizing public officials. The play is now lost and little is known about its content, but most scholars agree that it was probably "a thinly veiled assault on the reputation of a high-ranking court official [and] contained either a satire of a prominent individual or policies of the government."[337] We can't know how "thinly veiled" the assault was and so cannot know how much interpretation was necessary to discover the object of the satire nor do we know what the audience's reaction was to this interpretation. But we do know the political/legal results of this particular interpretation: the Privy Council ban on all theatrical performance and an order to tear down all the theaters. Thus, Jonson had a personal and professional incentive to keep the plays from being interpreted politically. Or at least, he had an incentive to keep his political satire veiled. Anti-mimesis, in this example, becomes the technique through which Jonson can veil his satire. By creating a

relationship of difference with reality, he can deny that his work is connected to reality and so deny that it is a satire against public figures. But more than a simple denial, anti-mimesis limits or attempts to limit the interpretive possibilities of the performance in order to limit the political damage this type of interpretation could do and the political actions that could be produced through these interpretations. This technique is not just designed to provide cover *after* his audience interprets the play, it is designed to interrupt political or topical interpretation *before* the audience gets a chance to interpret. After all, his injunction not to interpret is placed at the beginning not the end of the play.

But of course, Jonson was not the only playwright to understand the consequences of playgoers' interpretations. This technique of distancing the fictional characters from the real characters in order to interrupt interpretations is utilized in several early modern plays: William Cartwright's *The Ordinary*, Richard Brome's *The Weeding of the Covent Garden*, Smith W[entworth?]'s *The Hector of Germany* and John Fletcher's *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife.*

To avoid tedious repetition, I won't discuss each of these plays, but I will single out the prologue to *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife* because it doesn't just attempt to circumvent readings of the play that focus on political or public figures; it attempts to distance its fictional characters from everyday real individuals. The prologue seems particularly worried that the playgoers it addresses will interpret the fictional characters as representations of themselves. To keep the audience from enacting this interpretation, the prologue attempts to bracket not only political reality from the play, but all of reality thereby enclosing the play in its own fictive universe (self-referentiality), which is separate from the playgoers' reality. The full prologue reads,

> Pleasure attend yee, and about yee sit
> The springs of mirth fancy delight and wit
> To stirre you up, do not your looks let fall,
> Nor to remembrance our late errors call,
> Because this day w'are *Spaniards* all againe,
> The story of our Play, and our Sceane *Spaine*:
> The errors too, doe not for this cause hate,
> Now we present their wit and not their state.
> Nor Ladies be not angry if you see,
> A young fresh beauty, wanton and too free,
> Seeke to abuse your Husband, still tis *Spain*,
> No such grosse errors in your Kingdome raigne,
> W'are *Vestalls* all, and though we blow the fire,
> We seldome make it flame up to desire,
> Take no example neither to beginne,
> Nor some by president delight to sin:
> Nor blame the Poet if he slip aside,
> Sometimes lasciviously if not too wide.
> But hold your Fannes close, and then smile at ease,
> A cruell Sceane did never Lady please.
> Nor Gentlemen, pray be not you displeas'd,
> Though we present some men fool'd, some diseas'd,
> Some drunke, some madde: we meane not you, you'r free,
> We taxe no farther then our Comedie,
> You are our friends, sit noble then and see (Pro. 1-25 emphasis his).[338]

The prologue goes out of its way to assure the audience that what they are about to see is not a representation of England and themselves, but of Spain and Spaniards. "This day w'are *Spaniards* all againe, / The story of our Play, and our Sceane *Spaine*" (5-6). However, setting a play in another country is not necessarily an effort to distance the play from reality. Indeed, many early modern playwrights set their plays in another time or country, but still put forth a representation of early modern London.[339] For instance, *The Duchess of Malfi* is set in Malfi but still offers an account of Lady Arbelle's life, dramatizes English marriage law, and represents and critiques English social classes.[340] Thus, *The Duchess of Malfi* is and is not a representation of England. The prologue to

Phineas Fletcher's *Sicelides* makes this trope explicit by telling the audience that although the play's subject is Sicily, the play is also very much about England:

> Then let me here intreate your minds to see,
> In this our England, fruitfull Sicely,
> Their two twinne Iles; so like in soyle and frame,
> That as two twines they'r but another same (Pro. 9-12).

Here Sicily is described as an analogue of England; the tacit connection between the exotic setting of early modern plays and England is made explicit.[341] However, unlike the prologue to *Sicelides*, John Fletcher's prologue seems not to invite a comparison between two countries, but seeks to avoid comparison in order to distance the play from the audience's reality.

The effort to avoid comparison between the two countries is made clear by the prologue when it twice tells the audience that because the play is about Spain, the on-stage characters have no relationship to the audience. In other words, the characters are not representations of London playgoers. The men are told, "Gentlemen, pray be not you displeas'd,/ Though we present some men fool'd, some diseas'd/ Some drunke, some madde: we mean not you, you're free" (Pro. 21-23). And the women are told,

> Nor Ladies be not angry if you see,
> A young fresh beauty, wanton and too free,
> Seeke to abuse your Husband, still 'tis *Spaine*,
> No such grosse errors in your Kingdome raigne,
> W'are *Vestalls* all, and though we blow the fire,
> We seldome make it flame up to desire (Pro. 9-14).

Here the prologue is (at least on the surface) discouraging the women in the audience from viewing the representations of women on the stage as a representation of real (English) women either because the characters' "wanton and too free" attitudes may encourage that behavior in the playgoers or because if the women see the characters as a

reflection of real English women, then they may believe that such women are out to "abuse" their husbands.[342] The prologue seems worried that the women will become jealous because they will believe that the female characters' actions are representations of real actions, so the prologue assures the female playgoers that no such women exist in England; they can only be found in Spain. Thus, the women should not interpret the characters as a reflection of the reality that they are a part of. Setting the play in Spain then is portrayed within the prologue as an attempt to discourage the audience from viewing the play as a representation of their immediate or local reality ("your Kingdome"). It distances the reality the play represents from the reality of the playgoers.

The penultimate line of the prologue pushes this distance between the play and reality further than the distance between Spain and England by telling the audience, in effect, that the object of the play's satire has no relationship to reality at all. The prologue tells the audience, "We taxe no farther then our Comedie." Despite the prologue's earlier claims that the play is about Spain, this line seems to suggest that the only characters that are being satirized or censured (taxed) are the fictional characters that exist within the fictive reality of the play. The object of the satire goes "no farther" than the boundaries of the fictive universe that exists on the stage. Thus, the audience cannot interpret the play as a comment on anything "real." This line's effect on the audience's interpretive agency is similar to Homer's effect on his reader; the prologue frames the play as existing within a fictive world that, in Auerbach's words, "exits for itself, contains nothing but itself … [it] contains no teaching and no secret second meaning. [It] can be analyzed … but [it] cannot be interpreted." [343]

Furthermore, the desire to control the audience, which, as I have argued, is the purpose of this attempt at anti-mimesis, is connected within the prologue to its effort at anti-mimesis. After assuring the women in the audience that the female characters of the play are not representations of English women, the prologue tells the audience,

> W'are Vestalls all, and though we blow the fire,
> We seldom make it flame up to desire,
> Take no example neither to beginne,
> For some by president delight to sinne (Pro. 13-16).

Somewhat like the non-naturalistic stage devices described in the third chapter, this section of the prologue reminds the audience that they will not be watching real "young fresh beaut[ies], wanton and too free," who might tempt the audience. However, unlike the non-naturalism of the stage, this line is not revealing the actors as actors. The actors are not connected to what they represent, "wanton and too free" women, nor are they being connected to what they are, young boys playing the part of women. They are being associated with "Vestalls," virgin characters from the distant and perhaps mythical past (and as we will see connecting the play to the past can also be read, in and of itself, as an effort at anti-mimesis). By making this association, the prologue disconnects the female characters from playgoers' reality. Furthermore, this effort at anti-mimesis seems designed to keep the audience from reacting to the performance. Because these representations are not actually "wanton" women, they should not affect the audience or cause playgoers to act on the basis of what they see. Indeed, the prologue also tells the audience that they should not view the play as an "example" or "precedent." The play does not narrate real characters participating in real activities, so the play should not be interpreted as a representation of real actions, which could be used by the audience to

justify (immoral) actions. Thus, by discouraging the audience from viewing the play as a mimetic work, the prologue is trying to limit the actions of the audience.

However, somewhat like the other stage-orations discussed in this chapter, this prologue is unable or perhaps *unwilling* to detach the play completely from reality, block the audience from interpreting the performance and keep them from reacting to the performance. Like the induction to *Bartholomew Fair,* it could be deploying paralipsis. At the same time that the prologue discourages the audience from using the performance as a basis for action or from having their passions inflamed, the prologue could also be *encouraging* that behavior. That is, the prologue could be coyly suggesting to the audience that the play will contain racy material and hinting that although they shouldn't delight in the representation of sin, they probably will thereby giving the audience tacit permission to respond to the performance. Furthermore, the prologue could be attempting to plant the idea of a specific interpretation in the minds of the audience even as it attempts to distance itself from that interpretation. And even though the prologue assures the audience that the play will not mimetically narrate representations of English individuals, it could be expressing this assurance with a wink, thereby suggesting to the audience that they will see themselves in the characters on the stage. In fact, by addressing the male and female playgoers separately, the prologue could be read or acted as comically playing one gender off the other. The actor playing the prologue could be assuring the men that they are not really being portrayed on the stage, while quietly encouraging the women to interpret the satire against male characters as a satire against real men; then when the prologue addresses the women, the actor could reverse the irony: assuring the women and encouraging the men.

However, if the actor played these lines coyly, his performance would work against his company's interests. As I have argued, the playwrights and players could be punished for inciting immoral activity. So even if the actors and playwrights wanted to encourage the audience to see the play as a precedent that would encourage them to "delight in sin," realizing that desire (that is, producing this effect in their audience) could result in political and economic punishment. Thus, there exists a tension between the playwrights desire to excite and titillate their audience and their need to keep their enemies at bay. The two possible interpretations of the prologue – creating a relationship of difference with reality or connecting the play with reality through paralipsis – perhaps captures this tension between the playing companies' desires and their needs. One can imagine an almost schizophrenic actor trying to accomplish both effects within his performance at the same time.

3) Complicating the Play's Relationship to Reality: Anti-Mimesis within Mimesis

A more subtle way that stage-orations distance the play from reality is by calling into question the play's ability to represent reality. This type of stage-oration seems concentrated in plays that, because of their genre, are explicitly connected to history and reality. City comedies, domestic tragedies and, of course, historical dramas trade in representations of reality. They are constitutive of a representation of history and reality and so are necessarily mimetic. Thus, the stage-orations cannot explicitly disconnect the play from reality since they are always already connected to reality. Instead of overtly attempting to produce anti-mimetic plays, stage-orations within these genres tend to

complicate or undermine the play's connection to reality and so create a tension between reality and its dramatic representation.

Because this technique is rather general (complicating a play's relationship to reality is much less specific than framing a play as a dream), numerous early modern plays can be said to employ this trope. Thomas Decker's *The Whore of Babylon,* John Day, William Rowley and George Wilken's *The Travels of the Three English Brothers,* Thomas Hayward's *Four Prentices of London,* Markham Gervase's *Herod and Antipater,* Phillip Massinger's *The Emperor of the East,* Thomas Middleton and Thomas Decker's *The Roaring Girl,* Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* and John Ford's *Perkin Warbeck* all, to a greater or lesser extent, use the prologue to question and undermine drama's relationship to reality. Again, I won't discuss each of these plays. Instead, I will focus on *The Roaring Girl*, *Henry VIII* and *Perkin Warbeck* because they are clear (and canonical) examples of plays that while intrinsically mimetic, try to undermine their own mimetic qualities through prologues.

The Roaring Girl is clearly mimetic in that it represents a real character, Mary Firth. In fact, the play makes a fairly explicit connection between the fictional character, Moll Cutpurse, and her real life counterpart. Moll Cutpurse was the nickname of Mary Firth, and so the play is essentially claiming to be a biography. Furthermore, the prologue ends by declaring, "her [presumably Mary Firth's] life, our acts proclaim" (Pro. 30).[344] And it begins by suggesting that the audience knows what and who the play is about; it tells the audience that the play has been "(expected long)" (Pro. 1). Furthermore, as the epilogue hints, Mary Firth may have taken part in some of the performances of *The Roaring Girl* (maybe even speaking the prologue), so an early modern audience clearly

would have known that the character Moll Cutpurse was a representation of a real individual.[345]

However, the prologue also seems to undermine this clear connection between the dramatic character and the real life individual by questioning the mimetic ability of drama.[346] After describing all the different types of "roaring girls," the prologue states:

> None of these roaring girls is ours: she flies
> With wings more lofty. Thus her character lies –
> Yet what need characters, when to give a guess,
> Is better than the person to express? (Pro. 25-28)

On one level, the prologue seems to be merely suggesting that Moll Cutpurse (or Mary Firth) is simply a better subject for poetic drama than all the roaring girls of London. Hence, the prologue uses a traditional image of poetry to describe her; she "flies with wings/ more lofty." In other words, Mary Firth (our roaring girl) is exceptional. However, the prologue also seems to be making a contradictory claim about the play's central character; even while it defends its decision to represent on stage the real life Mary Firth, it also denies that its fictional character has anything to do with the real Mary Firth by 1) suggesting that Moll Cutpurse is not a representation of a real character, but is a purely fictional character that only exists within the play and 2) questioning drama's ability to represent real characters. Indeed, it is able to do both at the same time. On the one hand, when the prologue claims "Thus her character lies," it is telling the audience where Mary Firth's character can be located – within the poetry of the play. The play, and not reality, is where "her character lies." Therefore, the audience should not view her as a representation of reality because her character only really exists within the fictive world of the play and is constitutive of the performance of the play. On the other hand, the phrase states that because her character is fictional and "flies with wings / more lofty" it

cannot tell the truth – it lies.[347] While the former reading assures the audience that her character is not to be found in reality and so is claiming that she is anti-mimetic, the latter reading suggests that by creating a representation of Mary Firth, the play necessarily cannot tell the truth; it will lie about her life and so will not be a representation of reality.[348]

The prologue goes on to question the usefulness of fictional characters that represent contemporary individuals, which further destabilizes the play's ability to tell the truth or create a true representation of reality. The prologue asks, "Yet what need characters" (Pro. 27). In other words, why not let the real Mary Firth tell her story? Again, this distances the play from reality by suggesting that if the audience desires to know the real story, they simply ask the real individual Mary Firth, who may have been in the audience while the prologue was being performed or may have actually performed the prologue herself. The prologue then is juxtaposing reality and the play and suggesting that the play is just a "guess" at what actually happened; it is not an actual representation of those events.

Unlike the stage-orations to *Bartholomew Fair* and *Rule a Wife Have a Wife*, the prologue to *The Roaring Girl* does not simply deny that its characters are a representation of real characters because such a denial would be implausible given its subject matter. Instead, the play complicates and undermines its own mimetic qualities through a prologue that calls into question the play's ability to represent real characters. Thus, the prologue is able to exert anti-mimetic energy on a play that is necessarily mimetic, minimizing the mimetic effect of the play.

Like the topical play *The Roaring Girl*, historical drama cannot convincingly claim to be completely dissociated from reality. So instead of denying mimesis, prologues to historical drama sometimes seek to complicate the audience's notion of historically mimetic drama. Two famous examples of this complication via stage-oration are Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* and Ford's *Perkin Warbeck*. The prologues to both plays seem to complicate their respective play's relationship to reality by questioning historical drama's ability to represent history accurately. As critics have noted, each play draws on theories of history and historiography that were current during their production, and in the mid-sixteenth and early seventeenth century, these theories began to question historians' ability to represent history un-problematically. The prologues to *Henry VIII* and *Perkin Warbeck* seem to reference this new historiography as a way of distancing the history in the play from the history that the play is ostensibly representing. In other words, the prologues and the plays they frame seem to reference and then dramatize theories of historiography that call into question drama's mimetic ability. This dramatization is done not only to explore history and historiography, but to interrupt the interpretive agency of the audience by creating an anti-mimetic play.

Henry VIII's prologue (reinforced by the play's subtitle, *All is True*) seems to connect the play to historical reality by asserting that the play will be a "true" and faithful representation of history; however, the prologue and subtitle have long been recognized by critics as at least somewhat ironic. The prologue suggests the audience "may here find truth" (Pro. 9) and asserts that the players only want to present what is true: "To make that only true we now intend" (Pro. 21). Taylor suggests that "true" in this context has several connotations, including "an ideal of strict reliance on facts, uncolored by the

historian's suppressed judgment."[349] The prologue then seems to be making a claim that it will stay faithful to the actual historical events – that it will be mimetic. However, as Howard Felperin has suggested,

> *Henry VIII* departs from history, that is, from Holinshed, more radically than any of the earlier dramas – so much so, that the subtitle of the play, "All Is True," makes one wonder whether Shakespeare is not ironically hinting that we revise our conventional notions of historical truth, even of mimetic truth itself.[350]

Indeed, it's not only the mimetic claims of the prologue that cannot be taken seriously; the prologue's claims of genre classification (telling the audience what kind of play to expect) also seem to be misleading. Matthew H. Wikander points out, following E.M.W. Tillyard's analysis, that the prologue amounts to a "deliberate misdirection of the audience's expectations."[351] Wikander argues,

> From its first admonition – "I come no more to make you laugh" – to its final challenge – "and if you can be merry then, I'll say / A man may weep upon his wedding day" – the prologue disavows comedy. But *Henry VIII* is a joyful celebratory play. The "noble scenes" which will "draw the eye to flow" – presumably the falls of Buckingham, Katherine, and Wolsey from "mightiness" to "misery" – are all subsumed into the larger affirmative rhythms of the play, which leads triumphantly to the birth of Elizabeth and Cranmer's rapturous prophecy.[352]

In short, the prologue's claims are ironic. Consequently, its claims at mimesis are actually subverting the play's mimetic qualities; the play is distancing itself from reality by ironically claiming to be mimetic.

The irony of *Henry VIII*'s prologue and its questioning of the possibility of mimesis are often attributed to the changing attitudes towards history and historiography in early modern England. Phyllis Rackin describes this new historiography as lacking "a direct, unequivocal relation with historical truth. Alternative accounts of historical events and opposed interpretations of their causes and significance now threatened each other's credibility."[353] All historical representations, whether they are dramatic or otherwise,

were understood by some early modern writers and thinkers as distanced from reality. *Henry VIII* thematizes this understanding of history.[354] Thus, the prologue distances the play from reality by suggesting (through irony) that the history it represents is different from the representation of history, which constitutes the drama.

Ford's *Perkin Warbeck* also uses the prologue to problematize the play's relationship to history; it does so by questioning the compatibility of history and drama, an incompatibility that owes much to the new historiography of the mid sixteenth and early seventeenth century. Like the prologue to *Henry VIII*, the prologue to Ford's play initially seems as if it is making a claim of mimesis. After pointing out that historical drama is "out of fashion" (Pro. 2) and dismissing the more popular satiric plays, the prologue asserts what type of play the audience will see:

> From him to clearer judgments we can say
> He [the author] shows a history couched in a play,
> A history of noble mention, known,
> Famous, and true: most noble 'cause our own;
> Not forged from Italy, from France, from Spain,
> But chronicled at home (Pro. 13-18).

On the surface, the prologue seems to be making a straightforward claim of mimesis. The play will provide a "chronicle" of a "true" history. However, critics have repeatedly pointed out that the prologue and the play that the prologue introduces complicates its own claims of mimesis. For instance Miles Taylor argues,

> the prologue immediately controverts its own justification by declaring that *Perkin Warbeck* "shows a history couch'd in a play" (Pro. 14). History and drama, the prologue suggests, are manifestly separate, so that the play's depiction of English history …. entails couching, literally, placing gently, one inside the other (Pro. 16-18). Historical drama is now an uneasy and discordant hybrid, an unstable and ephemeral synthesis of antithetical modes of inquiry.[355]

These modes of inquiry are antithetical because of the new historiography which views as separate history and what we might call literature. Like Taylor, Wikander (whom Taylor draws on) asserts the prologue "acknowledges, backhandedly, the wide gulf that opened up, early in the seventeenth century, between historian and playwright."[356] Under the new historiography, "historical fact was now open to question, and historical truth was now debatable."[357] This meant that history could no longer be written as poetry by poets, who often were uninterested in producing a factual account of events but sought to impose morals, themes and political or religious narratives on the historical record. Indeed, prior to the beginning of the sixteenth century, English writers did not make a distinction between poetry and history.[358] As history began seeing itself as a discipline based on amoral facts and not on morality, poetry and history drifted apart.[359] Taylor goes as far as to say that by the middle of the seventeenth century, "the science of history and the art of drama, then, begin to define themselves in contradistinction to one another."[360] By referencing this newly drawn line between drama and history, the prologue to *Perkin Warbeck* is able to question the play's (or any literary representation's) ability to represent historical events.

Indeed, the play itself, as critics note, is not just a representation of the history found in the chronicles; it is a radical dramatic reimagining of the chronicle – a "history couched in a play." Perkin's confession is the play's most glaring departure from the received chronicle. Jonas Barish observes, "All of Ford's sources conclude the tale of Perkin with an account of his confession."[361] But Ford's Perkin does not confess he is an imposter. This reversal of history creates, in Barish's words, "a conflict with history" in that "we are not to equate the Perkin of the play with the vulgar upstart of the

historians."[362] By separating the historical Perkin with the literary representation of Perkin, the play is creating an anti-mimetic characterization of Perkin which exerts anti-mimetic energy on the entire play. Because the representation of Perkin is unrelated to the historical Perkin (which, in turn, may be unrelated to the actual Perkin), the audience cannot be sure that any part of the play is connected to the history it pretends to dramatize.

And by distancing the play from the historical reality that it is ostensibly claiming to represent, *Perkin Warbeck* is interrupting the interpretive agency of the audience so that the audience is left in a position where they cannot effectively interpret Perkin's identity. Or as Barish insists, "Perkin has been removed from the hands of the omniscient historian and vested entirely in the hands of his fallible foes. Ford himself studiously refuses to declare for either party in the dispute."[363] By doing so, the play is not simply leaving it to the audience to judge Perkin and Perkin's identity because no such knowledge is possible. The audience cannot interpret his identity because it is not related to anything real or historical; his identity only exists within the fictional performance of the play (like Moll Cutpurse's character), and the performance does not put forth an identity. In other words, one cannot say that since the historical Perkin was an imposter, the representation of Perkin is also an imposter, because the prologue has conditioned the audience to view the two as unrelated.

Furthermore, because so much of the play depends upon the identity of Perkin, it is not only difficult to interpret his character; it is difficult to interpret the entire play. Because Perkin's true identity is unknowable within the confines of the play, interpreting the play becomes difficult: is the play casting doubt on the legitimacy of Henry VII's

monarchy and the Tudor dynasty or is it legitimizing both? In short, because the audience doesn't have any interpretive ground to view Perkin, they don't have interpretive ground to view *Perkin Warbeck.*

Although critics like Barish, Wikander, Taylor, Felperin and Rackin have all shown how *Perkin Warbeck* and *Henry VIII* complicate their own relationship with reality, these scholars tend to see this complication as an exploration of history and historiography. But as I have been suggesting, Ford, Shakespeare and the other playwrights who use this trope were not only interested in history; they were interested in their audience's playgoing experience. In other words, complicating the play's relationship to reality was not done only for its own sake; it was also done to interrupt the interpretive agency of the audience.

Likewise, most of the stage-orations discussed in this chapter frame the play they are apart of as anti-mimetic in order to limit audience interpretations even if they are ostensibly doing other things, such as avoiding censor. By creating a relationship of difference with reality, playwrights could limit the possible interpretations of their plays. And because, as we saw in the last chapter, audience interpretation often resulted in audience action, interrupting audience interpretation worked to limit audience reaction. In other words, just as stable performances worked to stifle audience reaction, stage-orations that produced anti-mimetic texts had a similar effect.

Coda

Return to Malfi: The Secrecy of Performance and the Consequences of Constructing Playgoing

"To memory hath lent / A lasting fame" John Ford, Commendatory to *The Duchess of Malfi*

Throughout the study I have been arguing that numerous early modern plays used metadrama to construct playgoing with the intent of limiting audience reaction in order to counter anti-theatrical attacks against the theater and satisfy London magistrates concerns about the unruliness of playgoers. And although this was the cause, in the last instance, of this construction, it had other effects that, I believe, benefited the art form: the non-naturalism of the stage, the short run of plays, performative stage utterances and metadrama itself all contributed to the richness and variety of the early modern stage.

However, this construction was not a win-win situation, in which all the parties involved (playwrights, owners, audiences, magistrates, antitheatrical writers) got what they wanted. This construction no doubt had what many might consider negative consequences. One such consequence could have been audience disengagement. By repeatedly telling playgoers that they were not the object of performance, the playwrights were risking alienating their audiences and producing non-responsive playgoers as well as non-reactive ones. Similarly, by making it difficult to interpret performances through the construction of stable, anti-mimetic drama, playwrights may have created a less interesting playgoing experience, in which the audience was less likely to actively engage in the performance. For the most part, we are left to speculate on what these negative consequences of the early modern construction of playgoing could have been since (for reasons that will be suggested below) few plays seem to offer commentary on their own construction. Or perhaps an exploration of these negative consequences has to wait for

another study that looks at other types of evidence besides metadrama to discern what these consequences were and what the playwrights and/or audiences thought about these consequences.

Still, *The Duchess of Malfi* deserves mention here because its metadramatic construction of playgoing seems to include a self-reflective critique of that construction. That is, its metadrama explores at least one of the consequences of the early modern construction of playgoing. The play seems to suggest that this construction limits or has the potential to limit the influence drama has on the larger culture. And it is able to do so because it explores almost all the aspects of playgoing that this study has traced. As a result, the play is more self-aware than others from the period, which seems to give it the ability to critique itself and its own construction of playgoing.

Indeed, we have already seen a hint at the prodigious extent of *The Duchess of Malfi*'s contribution to the construction of playgoing. Chapters Two and Three describe how *The Duchess of Malfi* constructs stage utterances as performative and uses its inset audiences to position the stage audience as the non-object of the performance. But what has been left unexplored is the play's contribution to the stability of performance and the anti-mimesis of drama – not because the play neglects these aspects of the construction of playgoing but because the play explores stability and anti-mimesis through different avenues from the plays discussed in the proceeding two chapters. Webster's play does not construct performance in opposition to the instability of texts, nor does it use stage-orations to frame the play as anti-mimetic. Rather, the play uses the concept of secrecy within the inset performance of the Duchess's marriage and within a metadramatic finale to construct itself as distanced from the reality outside the playhouse and as stable. That

is, the last scene of the play describes the narrative of the play as a secret between the stage audience and performers, and, as I argued earlier, the Duchess's metadramatic wedding is dramatized as a secret between the audience (Cariola) and the performers (the Duchess and Antonio).

By depicting performance as a secret, *The Duchess of Malfi* is able to simultaneously construct itself as both stable and anti-mimetic. Its stability is produced through its non-repeatability. If a play is a secret between audience and performers, then its content cannot be repeated outside the confines of the playhouse. Think of a secret as the opposite of the game telephone. During the game, a story is shared between several individuals and each time the story is retold, it changes. The process of repeating or retelling destabilizes the original story. On the other hand, a secret does not go through this destabilizing process. In so far as it is only told once, it remains stable. A secret is also anti-mimetic in so far as it is distanced from reality. That is, a secret only really exists between the teller and hearer. If a secret is kept (not repeated), no one outside the secret will know it exists, and so the content of the secret cannot take part in the larger reality. Or looked at another way, if mimetic performances reflect reality, a secret performance does not allow reality to reflect it. The reality outside of a secret performance cannot repeat, reenact or re-present the contents of the performance because it has no knowledge of the performance. Or put yet another way, a secret performance cannot influence anything outside of itself because it only really exists to the individuals within the performance, and they cannot repeat what they know. So a secret performance shares a similar ontological status with anti-mimetic performances because of its stability (its non-repeatability). Thus, *The Duchess of Malfi* is able to connect early modern

drama's effort at stabilizing performances and its attempt to construct performance as anti-mimetic even though it does so in a slightly different way from the plays discussed in the preceding two chapters.

In fact, the play is able to connect these two elements of the construction of playgoing to the construction of stage utterances as performative – the other major aspect of playgoing discussed in this study. As illustrated in the second and third chapter, the Duchess's marriage is depicted within the play both as performative and as a figure for stage performance. And by describing this same marriage as a secret (stable and anti-mimetic), the play is able to dramatize a performative, stable and anti-mimetic performance. And as I have tried to show throughout this study, these three aspects of performance do not function autonomously, but form a coherent whole: a performative is not mimetic because it creates rather than reflects reality and is stable because it is difficult to interpret (it cannot be challenged) and cannot be repeated (a repeated performative is a constative). So perhaps more than any other play from the period, *The Duchess of Malfi* represents and constructs the most coherent theory of performance and the most comprehensive construction of the playgoing experience – or at least, more than any other play within this study, *The Duchess of Malfi* is the fullest exploration of the construction of playgoing that this study traces.

However, the totality of *The Duchess of Malfi*'s contribution to the construction of playgoing is only really recognizable after the broader construction of playgoing is clear. That is, once it is understood that early modern stage-orations made a concerted effort to distance drama from reality and that playwrights contrasted performance with texts to stabilize performance, then the finale of the play and the Duchess's secret

marriage can be understood as contributing to and drawing on these broader early modern trends. In other words, the previous two chapters of this study allow us to explore the totality of Webster's construction of playgoing.

By producing this totality, *The Duchess of Malfi* is able to reflect on itself and explore its own construction's consequences. The play seems to suggest that this construction limits or minimizes drama's influence on the larger culture. If performance is able to create institutional reality but this reality only exists as a non-repeatable secret within the confines of the theater, then it cannot (at least theoretically) influence the reality outside the theater. Within this construction, performance becomes self-reflectively influential – it can only influence or affect itself. A kept secret, then, is a suggestive figure for this form of influence; a secret may be powerful (like a play that creates institutions), but it is only powerful to those that know it (like an audience watching an anti-mimetic, stable play). Casting the play as a secret allows the play to fully explore the coherence of the early modern construction of playgoing and its limitations.

I: The Metadramatic Finale

The Duchess of Malfi does not contain a stage-oration, but because the final scene of the play is highly metadramatic, it functions like an epilogue – it frames the play for the audience. Because the finale of the play consistently refers to itself, the scene is describing to the audience what they just saw. And this metadramatic pseudo-epilogue encourages the audience to forget what they just saw so that they will not repeat the

content of the performance. The play is, then, framed as a secret (though this is not the term the finale uses) in so far as the scene is asking the audience to not repeat what they just saw and heard.

For instance, the play's complex final speech seems to encourage the audience to wipe away any memory of the story of the play. Delio ends the play by declaring,

> Let us make noble use
> Of this great ruin; and join all our force
> To establish this young, hopeful gentleman
> In's mother's right. These wretched eminent things
> Leave no more fame behind 'em than should one
> Fall in a frost, and leave his print in snow;
> As soon as the sun shines, it ever melts,
> Both form, and matter: – I have ever thought
> Nature doth nothing so great, for great men,
> As when she's pleas'd to make them lords of truth:
> Integrity of life is fame's best friend,
> Which nobly, beyond death, shall crown the end (5.5.110-121).[364]

On one level, Delio seeks to put the whole affair of the play behind him by establishing the Duchess's son, "this hopeful gentleman," as the next duke, but he goes further than merely producing an heir and providing a tidy end to the play; he also wants to erase any trace of the story. When Delio asserts that "These wretched eminent things / Leave no more fame behind 'em than … [a] print in snow," he may be referring to the Cardinal, Ferdinand, Bosola and Antonio, who all lie dead on the stage, and so he is simply asserting that these individuals did nothing to deserve "fame" or lasting recognition. However, the line is ambiguous, strategically vague and, I argue, metadramatic. Because the word "things" in the sentence can refer to persons, the subject of the sentence could be the dead characters, but the vagueness of "things" encompasses more than persons; it also suggests events and deeds. Thus, the subject of the sentence is not just the "wretched eminent" characters, but the events of the entire narrative the characters inhabited and

produced – the play itself. Furthermore, the object of the sentence, "fame," does not just refer to lasting recognition of good deeds; in the seventeenth century "fame" could also mean public knowledge without the connotation of favorable public knowledge or positive reputation.[365] This definition of fame helps explain why Antonio's body is on the stage during this speech. If "fame" only signified a positive reputation, then Delio's speech would seem to be linking Antonio with Bosola and the brothers and asserting that none of these individuals did anything that merits a positive reputation. This would be an unlikely indictment of Antonio by his best friend. But since "fame" is neutral here, Delio is suggesting that all the characters' actions, good or bad, should be forgotten. In other words, the line is not only saying that the evil deeds committed by the characters should be forgotten, but that all the events of the play ("these wretched eminent things") should leave no trace and should not become public knowledge ("leave no more fame behind"). In short, Delio is asking his audience (both the inset and playhouse audience) to not repeat the story outside the playhouse.

And by describing the plot of the story as footsteps in frost, Delio provides a rationale for why the story will not produce public knowledge. A story told through a performance is ephemeral; it only really exists within the confines of the playhouse when it is being told. After the performance is completed – after the speech Delio is giving is finished – the story fades away like footsteps in frost. In other words, Delio is commenting on the ontological status of performance. It is real, but only real within the immediacy of its production. Once the production is over, the reality fades away. The ontological status Delio is giving to performance within this speech brackets the performance from the reality outside the playhouse. Because the reality of the production

only exists within the playhouse, it is always separate from the reality outside the playhouse. The effect of this bracketing is similar to the anti-mimetic stage-orations discussed in the previous chapter. The reality of the play is being distanced from the reality outside the play, and he is accomplishing this anti-mimetic effect by encouraging the audience to keep the play a secret.

The last sentence of Delio's speech furthers this bracketing by describing the play as a self-enclosed entity that does not refer or interact with any reality outside itself. Delio ends the play by stating, "Integrity of life is fame's best friend, / which nobly, beyond death, shall crown the end" (5.5.120-121). Again, the line is partially referring to the reputation of the characters. Fame is produced through integrity or moral soundness, and since some of the characters' lives lacked integrity, their lives did not produce fame. However, since this is the final sentence of the play, integrity also seems to imply the completeness or wholeness of the play itself. That is, the sentence is ending the play (hence, the last phrase of the sentence is "the end") by describing what the end of the play is doing to the play. It gives the play integrity or wholeness. Furthermore, this sentence seems to suggest that this integrity or wholeness does not produce anything beyond itself. Indeed, the phrase "integrity of life is fame's best friend" can be read somewhat ironically given that Delio just stated his desire for the actions of the play to produce no fame – no public knowledge. It is precisely because life has integrity that it is fame's best friend. The wholeness of life is best friends with fame because fame or public knowledge is not desirable, and when life is complete and self-enclosed, knowledge of that life does not become public. Indeed, Delio asserts that even "after death" the completeness of life stops fame. Likewise, the end of the play, which is marked by this last sentence, also

gives the play integrity by completing it. So after the end of the play (the play's death), public knowledge of the play will not be produced. The final sentence of the play seems to be ending more than just the play. It attempts to end any repetitions of the play, and it does so by enclosing the play within its own completeness, thereby bracketing the play from the reality outside the playhouse.

Delio's desire to wipe away any trace of the characters' lives is reinforced by Bosola's death speech, which also expresses a desire to limit public knowledge of the characters' deeds. Indeed, the metadramatic quality of Delio's speech is emplaced by Bosola's explicitly metadramatic final speech, which is spoken moments before Delio's. Bosola describes Antoino's death to Malateste in terms that would be self-reflectively comic (a metadramatic wink at the audience) if they occurred in a different context. He responds to Malateste's query about Antonio's death by stating, "In a mist: I know not how – / Such a mistake as I have often seen / In a play:" (5.5.94-96). Bosola's self-referentiality is reminding the audience they are watching a play and so closing the play off from the rest of reality – creating the integrity that Delio seeks in his final speech. Bosola's next lines associate the effects of this self-referentiality with a lack of public knowledge and secrecy: "We are only like dead walls, or vaulted graves, / That, ruin'd, yields no echo:" (5.5.97-98). He claims that the characters' lives will not produce an echo; they will not be repeated. In other words, their story will not be retold. Like Delio, Bosola is attempting to keep the events of the play a secret.

The Cardinal's last words similarly ask his audience to not repeat his story. "And now, I pray, let me / Be laid by, and never thought of" (5.5.89-90). The Cardinal here is trying to keep his actions a secret by asking those who know him not to think of him after

he is dead. He doesn't want his life repeated through memory. Of course, the Cardinal has good reason to ask those present at his death to forget him; his actions are almost always reprehensible, and so his final words could be read as a deathbed conversion: the Cardinal simply does not want his evil actions to be remembered because he now sees the folly of his ways. However, the phrasing of this deathbed conversion recalls and reinforces Delio's and Bosola's speeches; the Cardinal is depicting his own life as an event that should be forgotten so that it will not be repeated and will not produce public knowledge.

By framing the play this way, these characters' final speeches attempt to construct the play as a stable and anti-mimetic performance, a performance that should not be repeated and is disconnected from the reality outside the playhouse. And as we will see, the play is able to achieve a similar effect within the Duchess's secret metadramatic marriage.

II: The Finale's Double

The Duchess's marriage is described in similar terms as the play itself is described within the metadramatic finale. The ideas of echo, reputation and fame are used within the description of the metadramatic marriage to reflect the stable and anti-mimetic nature of performance. Thus, the metadramatic finale of the play doubles the performance of the Duchess's marriage. Both are portrayed as secrets and both are described in similar terms. This doubling retroactively constructs the marriage as metadramatic; since the finale describes the play as a secret, the secrecy of the marriage within the play takes on

metadramatic qualities. Conversely, the doubling sets up the finale as able to construct the play's audience; because the marriage is a secret between the performers (the Duchess and Antonio) and witness (Cariola), the marriage's double, the finale, can depict the play as a secret between the performers (actors) and witnesses (stage audience). In other words, each piece of metadrama reinforces the other.

Beyond providing the play with a metadramatic construction of playgoing, the Duchess's secret marriage also enables the play to explore some of the problems with this construction. That is, the problems associated with Duchess's secret are also, as we will see, problems with the construction of performance as secret. And as previously suggested, this construction is connected to the construction of playgoing traced throughout this study, so the Duchess's problems reflect problems with that broader early modern construction of playgoing.

For instance, one of the most difficult problems the Duchess faces is how to maintain the secrecy of her marriage while also maintaining her reputation as a chaste female; her marriage must remain a secret, but it must also be made public, or she will be considered unchaste. Her reputation or fame becomes increasingly important as rumors start to circulate about her relationship with Antonio and the existence of her children. Ferdinand asserts that the Duchess has become "a notorious strumpet" and that "Rogues do not whisper't now, but seek to publish't" (2.5.4; 2.5.5). And Antonio admits, "The common rabble do directly say / she is a strumpet" (3.1.25-26). Public knowledge of the Duchess already exists, but exists outside the reality that was constructed through her marriage. Within the secret reality she constructed through her performance/marriage, she is a married widow, but outside that secret reality, she is an unmarried "strumpet." In

order to save her reputation, she needs to change her secret reality into a public reality by allowing knowledge of her secret reality to become public. In short, she needs to tell her secret. But she cannot do so because of her brothers' injunction not to marry. Thus, there exists a contradiction between her desire for a secret and her desire for a positive reputation. The Duchess's comment after the marriage describe this problem: "We now are man and wife, and 'tis the church / That must but echo this" (1.1.492-493). Here the Duchess seems to want an echo, a repetition of her performance, but this is exactly what she can't have. To create an echo would destroy the secrecy of her marriage. A repetition of her marriage would publish it to the world outside the confines of the performance.

Indeed, the Duchess's desire for an echo is the exact opposite of the desire for an echoless performance expressed by Bosola when he describes himself and the other characters as "dead walls" that "yields no echo" (5.5.97; 98). But because the Duchess can't have this echo, her marriage is actually being portrayed in the same way the finale constructs the performance of the play, as an echoless or non-repeatable performance. Thus, the performance of the play is subject to the same dilemma that the Duchess faces: because the performance only exists as a non-repeatable secret within the playhouse, its content cannot become public knowledge; it remains a complete whole (it has integrity) that cannot influence anything outside itself.

The problems associated with a secret performance are further explored within her conversation with Ferdinand. After he discovers her marriage, she tries to reassure Ferdinand that her "reputation / is safe" (3.2.118-119). Ferdinand then rightly points out that she cannot have her cake and eat it too; she cannot have a secret marriage and a safe reputation since reputation relies on a public recounting and a public reality, not a secret

performance and a secret reality. He explicates her situation by allegorically declaring, "and so, for you: / You have shook hands with Reputation, / And made him invisible" (3.2.133-135). On the one hand, he merely asserts that she has said goodbye to reputation and so can no longer see him. However, invisible does not quite mean that Reputation is gone; it implies that Reputation cannot be seen, and of course a handshake does not always signify a departure; it often designates an agreement. Furthermore, the coordinating conjunction "and" does not necessarily denote a causal relationship between the two events. So the lines can also be read as "you shook hands with Reputation (you are linking yourself with Reputation) and made it invisible (tried to keep your reputation a secret)." Ferdinand's allegory describes the impossibility of the Duchess's situation – she cannot have a secret marriage and have that marriage be the basis of her reputation because a reputation built on nothing but a secret performance is not really a reputation; a reputation needs a repetition of the performance in order to move that performance outside of itself. This is very thing that the Duchess cannot afford to do. Note also, Ferdinand does not disagree with the Duchess's claim that she is married. When she tells him that she has married, he simply says, "so" (3.2.82). The secretly performed marriage did indeed produce reality (a real institution), but the marriage's secret reality is the problem because a secret reality cannot produce a reputation.

This tension between reputation and secrecy is also present when the Duchess ponders the possible influence that her performance/marriage might have on others outside the confines of the performance. As described in the third chapter, the Duchess seems uncomfortable with the potential power and influence of her marriage. On the one hand, she seems to find comfort in Bosola's description of her marriage as a model for

others; she likes the idea that her marriage will influence the institution of marriage. On the other hand, she still wants to keep her marriage a secret. So she tells Bosola, "As I taste comfort in this friendly speech, / So would I find concealment" (3.3.299-300). The Duchess's conflicting descriptions of her own marriage also reflect this dilemma. She responds to Antonio's request for sex with "I hope in time 'twill grow into a custom / That noblemen shall come with cap and knee, / To purchase a night's lodging of their wives" (3.2.4-6). But she later tells her brother that she does not want to create a new custom, "I have not gone about, in this [her marriage to Antonio], to create / Any new world, or custom (3.2.110-111). She seems to understand that keeping her marriage a secret will deny it a certain power, but she also understands that allowing it to become public may have a radical effect on the institution of marriage.

In the end, the Duchess's problem, which stems from her inability to produce a reputation through an anti-mimetic (secret) and stable (non-repeatable) performance, is also a problem of early modern drama's self construction of performance and playgoing. Throughout the study I have attempted to show that the plays, playwrights and playing companies worked hard to construct performance as performative, stable, and anti-mimetic in order to control unruly playgoers by putting the audience in a position where they were not the object of the performance and where they could not fully and freely interpret the performance and act on the basis of that interpretation. However, as the Duchess finds out through her own performance, this theoretical understanding of performance has consequences and drawbacks. If performance is performative and produces a stable institutional reality, which is separate from the reality outside the playhouse and cannot be repeated or recounted outside the playhouse, then the content of

that performance cannot move outside the playhouse and so will have limited influence. It may be able to construct an institutional reality, but this reality remains a secret between performers and audience because only the audience has access to the constructed reality.

This may seem like a fairly serious drawback, but apparently for some early modern playwrights, it was worth sacrificing widespread fame and influence for a chance to control the playgoers and ensure that the playhouses remained open and their livelihood remained intact. Just like the Duchess, the playwrights were apparently willing to sacrifice fame for survival.

III: Malfi v. Denmark: The Cohesion of Difference

The Duchess of Malfi's ability to grasp the consequences and contradictions of the early modern construction of playgoing are perhaps the result of its grasp on the totality of this construction. As I argued in the first chapter, most early modern plays only dramatize some of the effects of the non-responsive playgoer and rarely explore the relationship between these effects, which suggest that they don't fully grasp the cause. Thus, they are not in a position to comment upon the consequences of the non-reactive playgoer because the totality of that construction is not fully realized in their plays. To my knowledge, Webster's play is unique in its ability both to dramatize the effects and the relationship between the effects, which in turn may suggest a grasp the cause. The only other play that I am aware of that comes close is *Hamlet*. But as previously suggested, Shakespeare's play posits an active playgoer, not a non-reactive one, so

Hamlet dramatizes the effects of this active playgoer. Significantly, the effects of the active playgoer are the inverse of the effects of the non-reactive playgoer. While *The Duchess of Malfi* attempts to produce a non-reactive playgoer by constructing performance as performative, stable and anti-mimetic, *Hamlet* attempts to produce an active playgoer by constructing performance as rhetorical, unstable and mimetic. The coherence of the differences between these two plays brings into focus the purpose (or cause) of these different theories of performance – to produce a non-reactive or active playgoing experience. In fact, these plays are so cohesively different that it is likely Webster is, at least partially, reacting to Shakespeare's view of performance and playgoing, which was produced over a decade before *The Duchess of Malfi*. In other words, Webster is countering Shakespeare's coherent attempt to produce an active playgoer with his own coherent attempt to produce a non-reactive playgoer.

For instance, the Cardinal's final words, "I pray, let me / Be laid by, and never thought of" (5.5.89-90) invert Hamlet's more famous death speech:

> If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
> Absent thee from felicity a while,
> And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain
> To tell my story (5.2.288-291).

While the Cardinal doesn't want his story to live on after him, Hamlet attempts to assure his story's survival. And although these speeches seek to achieve opposite ends, they are both metadramatic and so have similar subjects. The Cardinal's last words, when read alongside Delio's and Bosola's speeches, seem to refer to the entirety of the narrative of the play and not only to his own life. Likewise, Hamlet's death speech seems metadramatic when read alongside Fortinbras's and Horatio's instructions for how Hamlet's request is to be carried out. Fortinbras asks for an audience to hear the story,

"Let us haste to hear it, / And call the noblest to the audience" (5.2.330-331). And Horatio asks that Hamlet's body be brought "like a soldier to the stage" (5.5.340) and that the other bodies "High on a stage be placed to the view; / And let me speak to th'yet unknowing world/ How these things came about" (5.2.322-324). Horatio then describes what the "unknowing world" will learn by essentially summarizing the plot of the play in generalized terms (5.2.325-329). Thus, Fortinbras and Horatio are essentially promising to repeat (with dead bodies) the performance that the audience just saw in order to make the story public. While Webster's characters seek to keep the story a secret and wipe away any trace of it, Shakespeare's characters pledge to repeat the performance to tell as many people as possible what happened. While *Hamlet* moves outward beyond the confines of the play into the "unknowing world," *The Duchess of Malfi* moves inward: it closes off the play from the outside world, thereby keeping that world unknowing and creating a stable, anti-mimetic performance.

It is perhaps not coincidental that both plays seem to have got their wish: Hamlet's story has been told much more often than the Duchess's. At least in relation to *Hamlet*, *The Duchess of Malfi* has remained a secret and left "no more fame behind." Conversely, Hamlet's story is so famous that the "unknowing world" that Horatio references almost doesn't exist anymore; the world knows Hamlet's story. In other words, both constructions of playgoing seem to have succeeded. Of course it would be folly to argue that these two plays' self-constructions are the only reason for their different levels of fame. However, this apparent correlation (even if it is only a coincidence) between each play's self-construction and its historical reputation suggests the consequences of the early modern construction of playgoing that Webster's play

highlights: if plays construct themselves as performative, stable and anti-mimetic, then they run the risk of limiting their own influence.

In any case, *Hamlet*'s inset performance, *The Murder of Gonzago*, furthers the construction of playgoing produced through the metadramatic finale. Like *The Duchess of Malfi*, the finale of *Hamlet* is doubled within its inset performance, but unlike the Duchess's marriage, the play Hamlet stages is meant not to keep a secret, but to expose a secret – Claudius's murder of Hamlet's father. That is, the inset play is meant to tell and make public Claudius's story, just as the play *Hamlet* is meant to tell and make public Hamlet's story. Both of these two metadramatic scenes are attempting to create public knowledge out of their performances, and both are decidedly not keeping their own performances secret.

Furthermore, in opposition to *The Duchess of Malfi*'s inset performance and the larger construction of drama's relationship to reality discussed in the previous chapter, Hamlet's inset performance is mimetic. It is a representation of real events (at least real in the fictive reality of the play) – the murder of Hamlet's father. If this inset performance is a double of the stage performance of *Hamlet*, then *Hamlet* too is being constructed as mimetic. Just as *The Duchess of Malfi* is portrayed as anti-mimetic through its construction of itself as a secret, *Hamlet* is portrayed as mimetic within an inset performance that is not a secret; by mimicking a real event, the performance creates public knowledge of that event.

Significantly, this mimetic, non-secretive inset performance affects the audience and elicits a response from them. As pointed out in the second chapter, the purpose of *Hamlet*'s inset performance is to influence the audience. The play is designed to "catch

the conscience of the king" (2.2.582). The play is rhetorical rather than performative in that its object is the audience and not institutional reality. And as we saw in the last two chapters, the play's ability to affect the audience (Claudius) is not unrelated to its mimetic and non-secretive (or repeatable and therefore unstable) nature. Because the inset play is mimetic and unstable, it can be interpreted by Claudius as a comment on himself (which is its intent), and because Claudius actively interprets the performance, he reacts to the performance: he rises and is, in Hamlet's words, "frighted with false fire." (3.2.244). On the other hand, because *The Duchess of Malfi* is portrayed as a secret and therefore as stable and anti-mimetic, it is not intended to be interpreted by the audience or lead the audience to act on the basis of that interpretation. Indeed, as shown in the second and third chapter, Cariola (the inset audience in Webster's play), unlike Claudius, does not act or react on the basis of the inset performance she watches.

In sum, there is an oppositional coherence between the two plays' construction of audience and performance: while *Hamlet* depicts performance as rhetorical, unstable and mimetic and the audience as active and affected, *The Duchess of Malfi* depicts performance as performative, stable and anti-mimetic and the audience as non-reactive and unaffected. The contrast between these two plays then suggests what I have been suggesting throughout, that there is a causal relationship between performative stage utterances, stable performances, anti-mimetic drama and the non-reaction of the audience. And because, as I have been arguing, *The Duchess of Malfi*'s construction of playgoing (and not *Hamlet*'s) is representative of the broader early modern construction of playgoing, this broader construction is also participating in this causal relationship.

Early modern playwrights' construction of playgoing is designed to keep the audience from reacting to stage performances.

IV: Concluding Remarks: The Creativity of Economic Determinism

Despite the complications, consequences and drawbacks of the construction of playgoing that *The Duchess of Malfi* explores, this construction of the non-reactive playgoer was surprisingly productive, surprising because its productivity springs from political and economic restrictions. The non-reactive playgoer was produced by the economic and political pressure that the playwrights faced, and by constructing the non-reactive playgoer, playwrights were able to produce innovated, creative and experimental ideas about dramatic production and performance.

As I argued in chapters two and three, by trying to make the audience the non-object of performance, they were forced to reorient the efficacy of their performances away from the audience and towards institutional reality. This is in some ways a more ambitious model than the affective theory of performance that thinkers from Aristotle on down posited. Playwrights produced a theory of performance that could directly affect the broader culture, so they could work for social change (or conversely social stasis) without worrying about how their ideas were going to be disseminated or appropriated by the audience. In the end, this may have been an unworkable model since the audience is always a part of the construction of meaning; nevertheless, the model served the playwrights well in that it encouraged them to engage in an ambitious project of institutional construction. Their plays attempted to redefine marriage, the monarchy,

social classes and the state, while reworking the efficacy of performance. In other words, by redefining the stage, they were able to redefine early modern institutions. And in chapter three, I argued that the non-naturalism of the stage was also caused by this need to control the audience. They experimented with the representational nature of the stage to keep the audience from becoming too immersed in their performances. This type of experimentation would not really continue until the twentieth century with playwrights like Brecht and Ionesco. In fact, Brecht was highly influenced by early modern playwrights' non-naturalism, so his epic theater may not have been possible without the early modern construction of playgoing. Furthermore, as I argued in the fourth chapter, playwrights' attempt to stabilize performance led the playwrights and playing companies to limit the run of their plays. And the short run of plays contributed to the novelty and diversity of early modern drama. Finally, playwrights' construction of drama as anti-mimetic contributed to playwrights' exploration of their plays' use of history and inquiries into the ability of representational art to fully imitate reality.

Of course, it is difficult to argue that none of these aspects of early modern drama would have been possible without the economic need of the non-reactive playgoer, but if I am right, they do seem to have been at least partially determined in the last instance by the economic conditions of the early modern stage.

That these restraints actually benefited playwrights' art seems to be at odds with our own twenty-first century perspective on freedom and creativity. That is, within the modern liberal tradition, we have a tendency to understand personal freedom and productivity as causally linked. The less economic, cultural or governmental restraints that are placed on the individual, the more likely he or she is to produce. The political

right tends to frame this issue in terms of government restriction on the free market: the less government interferes with the individual's economic freedom (through taxes or government regulations), the more likely individuals are to innovate. But the left is just as likely to rely on this premise when speaking of artistic freedom or personal expression: the individual should not be censored by the government or by societal conventions because these types of restraints impede individual creativity.

However, as I have attempted to show, the restraints placed on early modern dramatists did not impede their creativity. These playwrights had to contend, by twenty-first century western standards, with some fairly serious restraints to their artistic freedom, and yet they produced some of the most creative and innovative pieces of literary art in western history. And as I have been suggesting throughout, *pace* the modern liberal tradition which connects freedom to productivity, the innovations and creativity of early modern drama are not unrelated to the restraints placed on the playwrights. Playwrights didn't produce in spite of these restraints; they produced because of these restraints.

Of course, I don't mean to suggest that we should start imprisoning artists and commissioning censorship bureaucrats like the Master of Revels in the hopes that twenty-first century literature could become as creative as early modern drama, as if there is anything wrong with contemporary literature or as if we enjoy too much freedom. Rather, I am suggesting, somewhat like Stanley Fish's argument in *There's No Such Thing as Free Speech: And It's a Good Thing, Too*, that restraints on freedom always and everywhere exist.[366] But while Fish locates these restraints within the rules that govern language, interpretation and culture, I am suggesting that these restraints are embedded

within the material world. In the case of early modern literature, the playwrights' relationship to their economic situation determined or, less radically, influenced much of their art.[367] Without the unruly audiences and the economic need to control them, it's likely that (what we have come to know as) early modern drama would have looked quite different.

Notes

[1] George Puttenham's *The Art of English Poesy* and Thomas Heywood's *An Apology for Actors* are two more exceptions; however, they too are only partial in that they focus almost exclusively on defending the theater against antitheatrical writers' attacks on playgoing. So they are more polemical than theoretical. The debate between antitheatrical writers and playwrights will be discussed more fully in the first chapter.

[2] The Theater was built in 1576 and is generally considered to be the first true early modern playhouse. The Red Lion actually predates The Theater by eight years, but was only in service for one year and may have only staged one play. For the early development of the London theaters, see Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 3rd ed. (New York: Cambridge UP, 2004), 14-19 and Herbert Berry, "Playhouses," in *A Companion to Renaissance Drama*, ed. Arthur F. Kinney (Malden MA: Blackwell, 2002), 147-162.

[3] Raphael Falco, "Medieval and Reformation Roots," in *A Companion to Renaissance Drama*, 245.

[4] For this estimate, see Zachary Lesser, *Renaissance Drama and the Politics of Publication: Readings in the English Book Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004), 20.

[5] As the above sentence suggests, there are many critics who would disagree with my assertion that playwrights attempted to turn their audiences into non-reactive consumers of performances – too many to list here. However, Robert Weimann's work is worth mentioning as it forcefully argues that audience participation was central to the success of early modern drama. And Joanne Rochester's recent work on Philip Massinger's metadramatic representations of playgoing is also noteworthy since it looks at some of the same evidence I use, but comes to the opposite conclusion: Massinger encouraged and welcomed audience activity. I will address these arguments, particularly Rochester's, more fully in later chapters. Robert Weimann and Douglas Bruster, *Shakespeare and the Power of Performance: Stage and Page in Elizabethan Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008); Robert Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater: Studies in the Social Dimension of Dramatic Form and Function*, ed. Robert Schwatrz (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978); Joanne Rochester, *Staging Spectatorship in the Plays of Philip Massinger* (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2010).

[6] As the above sentence suggests, the influence of humanism and rhetoric on early modern drama is often an assumption rather than an explicit claim or argument. A glaring exception is Kent Cartwright, *Theatre and Humanism: English Drama in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999). He argues that humanism is even more important than critics generally allow. For the overall importance of humanism and rhetoric on early modern literature, including drama, see Wayne A. Rebhorn, *The Emperor of Men's Minds: Literature and Renaissance Discourse of Rhetoric* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1995), 1-22; Mike Pincombe, *Elizabethan Humanism: Literature and Learning in the Later Sixteenth Century* (London: Pearson, 2001), especially 160-188 and Carla Mazzio, *The Inarticulate Renaissance: Language Trouble in an Age of Eloquence* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania UP, 2009) 1-18. Mazzio's book shares some similarities with the present study in so far as she finds ideas and characters within early modern literature which challenge humanistic ideas and ideals.

[7] George Chapman, *All Fools*, ed. Frank Manley (Lincoln: Nebraska UP, 1968), Pro. 2-3. All subsequent quotations are from this Regents edition and citied in the text.

[8] Ann Jennalie Cook, "Audiences," in *A New History of Early English Drama*, eds. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York: Columbia UP, 1997), 312-313; Cook, *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1981), 249-259; Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 3rd ed. (New York: Cambridge UP, 2004), 51-57; S.P. Cerasano, "Audiences, Actors, Stage Business," in *A Companion to Renaissance Drama*, ed. Arthur F. Kinney (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), 198. For foundational studies of audience and audience behavior, see Alfred Harbage, *Shakespeare's Audience* (New York: Columbia UP, 1941) and Gerald Eades Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968). Much of the evidence the later scholars use comes from these early studies. For a list of other works that contain evidence of audience behavior, see Cook, "Audiences," 305.

[9] Steve Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1988), 21.

[10] For an extensive set of examples of playwrights complaining about their audiences, see Cook, *The Privileged Playgoer*, 259-268. See also Gurr's description of audience behavior taken from playwrights' prologues: Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 51-57.
[11] Cerasano, "Audiences, Actors, Stage Business," 198. This suggestion will be taken seriously in the third chapter, where I argue that on-stage audiences were satirized to control the unruly playhouse audiences.
[12] Qtd. in Auchter, *A Dictionary*, 172.
[13] This description of the riot is taken from Eccles, *The Rose Theatre*, 29-30.
[14] The Privy Counsel preferred the latter reason. They claimed, the rioters "assembled themselves by occasion & pretence of their meeting at a play." Qtd. in Christine Eccles, *The Rose Theatre* (Routledge: New York, 1990), 29.
[15] Gurr, *Playgoing*, 56.
[16] Henry Crosse, *Virtues Commonwealth* (London, 1603), Q1v.
[17] Cook, "Audiences," 312, emphasis mine.
[18] Cook. Audiences," 312.
[19] Gurr opines that there were probably more "affrays" then are documented since not all disturbances at the playhouse would have drawn the attention of local authorities. Gurr, *Playgoing*, 56.
[20] Cook, Audiences," 313.
[21] Gurr, *Playgoing*, 56.
[22] Cook, "Audiences," 313.
[23] For the size and rapid growth of London, see Gurr, *Playgoing*, 59 and Roger Finlay, *Population and Metropolis: The Demography of London 1580-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981), 6.
[24] For a discussion of the laws governing the representation of treasonous activity, see Rebecca Lemon, *Treason by Words: Literature, Law, and Rebellion* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2006) and Karen Cunningham, *Imaginary Betrayals: Subjectivity and the Discourses of Treason in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania UP, 2002).
[25] For some of the accounts of the censorship of *The Book of Sir Thomas More*, see Dorothy Auchter, *A Dictionary of Literary and Dramatic Censorship* (London: Greenwood Press, 2001), 320-323; Richard Dutton, *Mastering the Revels: The Regulation and Censorship of English Renaissance Drama* (Iowa City: Iowa UP, 1991), 81-86 and Janet Clare, *'Art made tongue-tied by authority' Elizabethan and Jacobean Dramatic Censorship* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1990), 30-37.
[26] Jean Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (New York: Routledge, 1994). There are of course numerous studies interested in the political aspects of early modern drama, too many to cite here.
[27] Anthony Munday, *A Second and Third Blast of Retreat from Plays and Theaters.* (London, 1580), 88.
[28] Munday, *A Second and Third Blast of Retreat*, 89.
[29] Robert Ormsby, "*Coriolanus*, Antitheatricalism, and Audience Response," *Shakespeare Bulletin* 26, no.1 (2008): 47. Ormsby is drawing on Jonas Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley: California UP, 1981), especially 66-155 and Laura Levine, *Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-theatricality and Effeminizaiton* 1579-1642 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994). See also, Louis Montrose's *The Purpose of Playing* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1996), 48-49.
[30] John Northbrooke, *A Treatise Against Dicing, Dancing, Plays, and Interludes with Other Idle Pastimes* (London, 1577), 65.
[31] Munday, *A Second and Third Blast of Retreat*, 1.
[32] Stephen Gosson, *Plays Confuted in Five Actions* (London, 1582), B8v.
[33] Cynthia Marshall, *Shattering of the Self : Violence, Subjectivity and Early Modern Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2002), 17.
[34] Most theater historians now reject the simplistic view that Puritans hated the theater and closed them as soon as they could. Margot Heinemann and Martin Butler have both shown how Puritanism and playgoing were not necessarily mutually exclusive, nor were Puritanism and antitheatrical beliefs necessarily connected. So just because the Puritans closed the theaters doesn't necessarily mean they did so for the same reasons as the antitheatrical writers wanted them closed. However, Susan Wiseman and Christopher Hodgkins have effectively argued that while the theaters were probably closed for practical reasons (a politically charged theater that drew large crowds was simply not a good idea during a war), they remained closed until the Restoration because of antitheatrical sentiment within the Puritan government. Thus, the antitheatrical writers' depiction of playgoing certainly played a role in closing the theaters by portraying it

as a dangerous activity. Margot Heinemann, *Puritanism and Theater: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama Under the Early Stuarts* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1980); Martin Butler, *Theater and Crisis 1632-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984), 84-100; Christopher Hodgkins, "Plays Out of Season: Puritanism, Antitheatricalism, and the Closing of the Theaters," in *Centered on the Word*, eds. Daniel W. Doerksen and Christopher Hodgkins (Newark: Delaware UP, 2004), 298-318; Susan Wiseman, *Drama and Politics in the English Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), 1-10.

[35] Tanya Pollard, *Shakespeare's Theater: A Sourcebook* (Maldan, MA: Blackwell, 2004), xviii.

[36] Levin, *Men In Women's Clothing*, especially 1-3. See also, Ormsby, "*Coriolanus*, Antitheatricalism, and Audience Response."

[37] William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Antony and Cleopatra* in *The Norton Shakespeare*, eds. Stephen Greenblatt et al. 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2008), 5.2.215-217. All subsequent Shakespeare quotations are from this edition and citied in the text.

[38] Gurr, *Playgoing*, 126.

[39] Gurr, *Playgoing*, 124-125. For the non-illusionary aspects of early modern drama, see also Alan C. Dessen, *Elizabethan Drama and the Viewer's Eye* (Chapel Hill: North Caroline Press, 1977).

[40] It should be briefly pointed out that Gurr's analysis of metadrama is not unrelated to Pollard and Levine's suggestions that dramatists countered the antitheatrical arguments within their plays. Gurr suggests that these metatheatrical games often countered the antitheatrical claims that playing was a form of lying; metadrama allowed players and playwrights to expose the lie themselves. Gurr, *Playgoing*, 124-125.

[41] Robert Crossmen, *The World's a Stage: Shakespeare and the Dramatic View of Life* (Bethesda MD: Acedemica Press), x, emphasis his.

[42] Crossmen, *The World's a Stage*, x. For a history of this trope, see Richard Hornby, *Drama, Metadrama and Perception* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell UP, 1986).

[43] Sidney Homan, *When the Theater Turns to Itself: The Aesthetic Metaphor in Shakespeare* (Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1981); James L. Calderwood, *Shakespearean Metadrama* (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1971); Calderwood, *Metadrama in Shakespeare's Henriad* (Berkeley: California UP, 1979); Robert Egan, *Drama within Drama: Shakespeare's Sense of his Art* (New York: Columbia UP, 1975); Judd D. Hubert, *Metadrama: the Example of Shakespeare* (Lincoln: Nebraska UP, 1991); Lionel Abel, *Metatheater: A New View of Dramatic Form* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1963).

[44] Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology, and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare* 3rd ed. (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 250, emphasis his.

[45] This essay appears in three different forms: *Glyph* 8 (1981): 40-61; *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism*, eds. Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1985), 18-47 and *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley: California UP, 1988), 21-65. All references are from the *Shakespearean Negotiations*' version.

[46] Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*, 64.

[47] Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*, 65.

[48] David Scott Kastan, *Shakespeare after Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 115-116.

[49] Jonathan Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature: Jonson, Shakespeare, Donne, and Their Contemporaries* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1983), xiii.

[50] Goldberg, *James I*, xiii.

[51] Wikander, *Princes to Act: Royal Audience and Royal Performance, 1578-1792* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1993), 2.

[52] Dollimore, "Introduction: Shakespeare, cultural materialism and the new historicism." *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism*, 2-17; Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy*; Louis Montrose, *The Purpose of Playing*, especially 39-40 and 60-62; Roy Strong, *Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals 1450-1650* (Berkley: California UP, 1984).

[53] For a work that does challenge the notion that early moderns were anti-essentialist, see Robin Headlam Wells, *Shakespeare's Humanism* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2005). Wells argues that humanism's focus on discovering the nature of humanity implies a kind of essentialism.

[54] Wikander, *Princes to Act*, 44.

[55] Qtd. in Wikander, *Princes to Act*, 45.

[56] Qtd. in Wikander, *Princes to Act*, 50.

[57] Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy*, 249-271.

[58] Throughout *Radical Tragedy*, Dollimore argues that early modern metadrama and Brechtian epic theater share similarities. He does not necessarily argue that they are both interested in achieving the same goals, but he does seem to suggest that *Verfremdungseffekt* or estrangement is present in early modern drama, particularly within Webster's plays. And because Brecht's theater was specifically designed as a Marxist challenge to capitalist ideology, Dollimore's suggestion raises the question: can drama within a proto-capitalist culture (that is London) produce a Marxist attack against capitalism in this Brechtian tradition? Again, this take on metadrama seems to be suggesting that early modern dramatists were challenging an idea that did not yet exist or was not broadly accepted. For Dollimore's argument that early modern drama is attempting to produce something like Brechtian estrangement, see *Radical Tragedy*, especially 64-66.
[59] Hugh Grady, "Shakespeare Studies 2005: A Situated Overview," *Shakespeare* 1, no.1 (2005): 110.
[60] Edward Pechter, "Afterword: 'Performance,' 'Culture,' 'History,'" in *Shakespeare and the Cultures of Performance*, eds. Paul Yachnin and Patricia Badir (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2008), 169.
[61] Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, *Reading Capital*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Verso, 2006), 187.
[62] For Jameson's list, see his diagram in *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1981), 36. For Althusser's list of the levels of the social formation, see Steven B. Smith, *Reading Althusser: An Essay on Structural Marxism* (Ithica: Cornell UP, 1984), 180.
[63] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 43.
[64] Jameson. *Political Unconscious*, 43-44. Jameson's use of the word "mechanical model" in this quotation seems strategic. Jameson wants to downplay the difference between structural causality and expressive causality, so even though Jameson is more or less accusing Goldmann of relying on expressive causality, I believe he is using the term "mechanical" to link him to mechanical causality, thus directing his and Althusser's critique towards mechanical causality and away from expressive causality.
[65] Pechter, "Afterword," 172.
[66] Pechter, "Afterword," 169.
[67] Pechter, "Afterword," 174, emphasis mine.
[68] Alan Liu, "The Power of Formalism: The New Historicism," *ELH* 56, no.4 (1989): 732.
For how Liu's challenge to new historicism has never been fully answered, see Lesser, *Renaissance Drama and the Politics of Publication*, 22.
[69] Jean E. Howard, "The New Historicism in Renaissance Studies," *English Literary Renaissance* 16 (1986):13-43; Leeds Barroll, "A New History for Shakespeare and His Time," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39 (1988): 441-464 and Jameson, *Postmodernism: Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1991), 181-217.
[70] Luke Wilson, *Theater of Intention*: *Drama and the Law in Early Modern England* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2000), 25-26; Lesser, *Politics of Publication*, 22. Wilson does not necessarily agree with Liu. He seems to argue that while some new historicist arguments may rely on a "voodoo of resemblance," the new historicist project does not necessarily have to. He then proceeds to give his own solution to the problem (27-31).
[71] Robert Paul Resch, *Althusser and the Renewal of Marxist Social Theory* (Berkley: California UP, 1992), 54
[72] Althusser and Balibar, *Reading Capital*, 189.
[73] Althusser and Balibar, *Reading Capital*, 193.
[74] Alex Callinicos, *Althusser's Marxism* (London: Pluto Press, 1976), 52.
[75] For instance, Anthony Giddens asserts that economic determinism in the last instance "surely remains obscure in Althusser." Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure, and Contradiction in Social Analysis* (Berkeley: California UP, 1979), 159.
[76] Resch, *Althusser*, 39. For Althusser's description of how social conditions are reproduced, see Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus (Notes towards an Investigation)" in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 108-127.
[77] Lacan of course also influenced Althusser, so the idea of the transcendental signifier could be understood as the source for both Althusser's structural causality and Badiou's progressive epistemology. For Badiou's theories of the void within his ontological system, see Badiou, *Being and Event* (New York: Continuum, 2005), 49-59.
[78] Badiou, *Theory of the Subject* (New York: Continuum, 2009), 56.

[79] This summery of Badiou's progressive epistemology is largely taken from Oliver Feltham, *Alain Badiou Live Theory* (New York: Continuum, 2008), especially 14-16. As Feltham points out these ideas are spread throughout Badiou's work, so I rely heavily on Feltham's synthesis of those texts to summarize Badiou's theories. For the origin of this idea, see "Marque et Manque: a propos du Zero," *Cahiers pour l'analyse* 10 (1969): 150-173. For a description of this idea within a conversation about ontology, see Badiou, *Theory of the Subject*, 58-64 and 202-204.

[80] This combination of Badiou and Althusser (and to a lesser extent Jameson) is by necessity a simplification. A full synthesis of these thinkers would require its own book length study. But I hope this is a productive simplification which produces coherent and useable theories of historical causality, historical change, and the production of knowledge.

[81] For a critique of Althusser's inability to account for transhistorical change, see Ted Benton, *The Rise and Fall of Structural Marxism: Althusser and his Influence* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1984), 76-81.

[82] For an overview of the evolution of early modern drama from medieval drama, see Raphael Falco, "Medieval and Reformation Roots," in *A Companion to Renaissance Drama*, 239-256. For a comprehensive study of this evolution or transition, see Robert Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater: Studies in the Social Dimension of Dramatic Form and Function* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1978). For a more specific study tracing the development of one phenomenon (the devil) from the medieval to the early modern era, see John D. Cox, *The Devil and the Sacred in English Drama 1350-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000).

[83] Feltham, *Alain Badiou*, 100. Feltham usefully condenses these four characteristics of the event and the situation. For Badiou's full treatment of these ideas, see *Being and Event* Part IV and V, especially 173-178 (Meditation Sixteen).

[84] For an account of this truth procedure, see Feltham, *Alain Badiou*, 103-119.

[85] Badiou, *Being and Event*, 67.

[86] Feltham, *Alain Badiou*, 102.

[87] This depiction of post-modern thought has become more or less become axiomatic, but for its original context, see Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Post-Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: Minnesota, UP,1984), especially 37-41.

[88] Qtd in. Feltham, *Alain Badiou*, 98. Feltham does not provide a citation for this aphorism, which probably did not originate with Badiou anyway. Feltham's point in referencing this phrase is to suggest that this idea represents "within Badiou's oeuvre … the *epitaph* to the Marxist dialect of history" (98, emphasis his).

[89] Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 18.

[90] For instance, Warren Montag argues that despite Jameson reliance on and admiration of Althusser, he ultimately accuses him of being a "crypto-postmodernists or irrationalists, who, whatever [his] stated commitment to Marxism, had contributed to the 'randomization' of history.'" Warren Montag, *Louis Althusser* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 1.

[91] Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 40.

[92] Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 40.

[93] J.L. Austin, *How to do Things with Words*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1975), especially 1-11.

[94] For this debate, see John Searle, "Reiterating the Differences: A Reply to Derrida," *Glyph* 1 (1977):198-208 and Jacques Derrida, "Limited Inc a b c …," in *Limited Inc*, trans. Samuel Webster, Jeffrey Mehlman and Alan Bass (Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 1993), 29-110. For a discussion of how this debate impacted performance criticism, see Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Introduction: Performativity and Performance," in *Performativity and Performance*, eds. Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (New York: Routledge, 1995), 1-19. For a useful explanation of the philosophical impact of this debate on late 20th century and early 21st centuries thinking as well as an interesting discussion of how this debate plays out within an analysis of early modern culture, see David Hawkes, *The Faust Myth: Religion and the Rise of Representation* (Palgrave: New York, 2007), 1-18.

[95] For two notable examples of this use of speech act theory, see Joseph A. Porter, *The Drama of Speech Acts: Shakespeare's Lancastrian Tetralogy* (Berkeley: California UP, 1979) and Keir Elam, *Shakespeare's Universe of Discourse: Language-Games in the Comedies* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984).

[96] Stanley Fish, "How to do Things with Austin and Searle: Speech Act Theory and Literary Criticism," *MLN* 91, no. 5 (1976): 983-1025.

[97] John Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay into the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1969), 50-53; Searle, *The Social Creation of Reality* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 27-29.

[98] Searle, *The Social Creation of Reality*, 27, emphasis his.
[99] Searle, *The Social Creation of Reality*, 34.
[100] Like Austin's initial distinction between performative and constative speech acts, Searle's distinction between institutional and brute reality is eventually eclipsed by a more complex set of terms. However, I will still rely on the initial distinction. For a diagram of this set of terms, see Searle, *The Social Creation of Reality*, 121.
[101] Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997).
[102] Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*, 21-65 and Strong, *Art and Power*.
[103] Hawks, *The Faust Myth.* See also Alvin B. Kernan, *The Playwright as Magician: Shakespeare's Image of the Poet in the English Public Theater* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1979).
[104] Because of critics continued interest in the secularization of art and literature in the early modern era, and their intense interest in Shakespeare's supposed Catholicism, there are too many texts related to Catholicism's influence on the theater to list here. For a discussion of the former issue and a partial discussion of its critical history, see Regina Mara Schwartz, *Sacramental Poetics at the Dawn of Secularism: When God Left the World* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2008), 39-58. For a recent discussion of Shakespeare's supposed Catholicism and its impact on the theater, see David Bevington, *Shakespeare's Ideas: More Things in Heaven and Earth* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), 106-142.
[105] Richard Burt, *Licensed by Authority: Ben Jonson and the Discourses of Censorship* (Ithica: Cornell, 1993).
[106] For a description of how the Master of Revels was paid by the theater companies, see Janet Clare, *'Art made tongue-tied by authority,'* 11-13.
[107] Indeed, there were four different Masters of Revels, operating under three different monarchs from 1581 (the year Elizabeth I turned the Master of Revel's office into the official censor of dramatic performances) until the closing of the theaters in 1642. And as Janet Clare suggests in her study of censorship practices, "the censorship of texts is governed by the vagaries of the political climate." Clare, *'Art made tongue-tied,'* 199.
[108] Although Anthony Munday seems to have been the author of the original manuscript, alterations seem to have been made by Henry Chettle, Thomas Dekker, Thomas Heywood and William Shakespeare. For a detailed description of the various hands involved in altering the manuscript as well as the controversy involving the authorship, see The Revels edition: *Sir Thomas More: A Play by Anthony Munday and others revised by Henry Chettle et al.* eds. Vitorio Gabrieli and Giorgio Melchiori (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1990), 20-24.
[109] This slightly modernized version of Tilney's marginalia is taken from Clare, *'Art made tongue-tied,'* 32. For a transcript of Tilney's comments which retain the original spelling and shorthand, see the Revels edition of *Sir Thomas More*, 17 and *The Book of Sir Thomas More*, ed. W.W. Greg (Oxford: The Malone Society Reprints, 1911), 1.
[110] See for instance, Clare, *'Art made tongue-tied,'* 30-33 and Dutton, *Mastering the Revels: The Regulation and Censorship of English Renaissance Drama* (Iowa City: Iowa UP, 1991), 84-86.
[111] Dorothy Auchter, *Dictionary of Literary and Dramatic Censorship in Tudor and Stuart England* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 298, emphasis mine.
[112] Clare, *'Art made tongue-tied,'* 49.
[113] Clare, '*Art made tongue tied,'* 214.
[114] Janet Clare, "'Greater Themes for Insurrection's Arguing': Political Censorship of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Stage," *Review of English Studies* 38, no. 150 (1987): 181-182.
[115] Dutton, *Mastering the Revels*, 155.
[116] There is some uncertainty about who would have licensed *Coriolanus* – Buc or Tilney. For an explanation of this uncertainty, see Dutton, *Mastering the Revels*, 148-154.
[117] There is another scene that could possibly be described as a riot; however, I leave it out from the above discussion because it is less like a riot and more like an intergovernmental conflict or civil war. At 3.1 Coriolanus is attacked by, what the stage directions call, "a rabble of Plebeians" and when Coriolanus confronts his enemies (the Plebeians, the Aediles, and several Tribunes), the stage directions label it as a mutiny: "In this mutiny the Tribunes, the Aediles, and the People are beat in [and] exeunt."(after 3.1.228). However, this scene is not a riot in the sense of a group of citizens rebelling against authority through violence and/or destruction since the Aediles (an authority figure himself) is present to carry out the will of

the people, as are the Tribunes. The scene would better be described as a civil war, a conflict between two officially recognized factions: one representing the Citizens (the Aediles and the Tribunes) and one representing Coriolanus (Menenius and Coriolanus himself).

[118] Most scholars seem to agree that Shakespeare wrote at least part of *Sir Thomas More***,** probably as part of the revision process after the initial censorship by the Master of Revels. For a discussion of Shakespeare's role in the composition, see the introduction to the Revels edition of *Sir Thomas More*, 21-28.

[119] *The Life and Death of Jack Straw*, ed. Stephen Longstaffe (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2002), emphasis original.

[120] Clare, *'Art made tongue-tied,'* 37-39.

[121] Clare, *'Art made tongue-tied,'* 38.

[122] Clare, "Greater themes," 173.

[123] Badiou, *The Theory of the Subject*, 198.

[124] How much agency the individual subject has within an Althusserian social formation is a complex issue. While Althusser seems to deny any subjective agency, Badiou seems to assert it, while maintaining Althusser's overall theory of society and history. And notably, Anthony Giddens has argued that structuralism in general is not incompatible with agency and suggests that Althusser does not fully account for the role of the individual agent in history. To complicate matters further, since Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, critics have debated how to think about subjects and subjectivity in a pre-Cartesian world. So it is difficult to discern how playwrights would have thought about their own ability to construct this notion of playgoing. Furthermore, all of these issues revolve around the question of authorial intention: is it possible or desirable to find the intention of the playwright in the play? The answers to these questions are beyond the scope of this project. For Althusser's denial of agency within the social formation, see *For Marx* trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Verso, 2005), 221-247. Badiou's assertion of the subject occupies much of *Theory of the Subject.* For Gidden's critique of Althusser, see Giddens, *The Constitution of Society* (Berkeley: California UP, 1984), 217-218 and *Central Problems in Social Theory,* 157-160. For Gidden's account of agency, see *The Constitution of Society*, 1-93. For notable works which react to Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1980) and that raise the related questions of agency, subjectivity and intention within early modern drama and early modern culture, see Cynthia Marshall, *The Shattering of the Self: Violence, Subjectivity, and Early Modern Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2002); Luke Wilson, *Theaters of Intention* and Frank Whigham, *Seizers of the Will in Early Modern English Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996). Wilson and Whigham both explicitly rely on Gidden's theories to explain agency within the early modern period.

[125] Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew Fair*, ed. E.A. Horsman (London: Methuen & CO LTD, 1960). All subsequent quotations are from this Revels edition and citied in the text.

[126] Thomas Wilson, *The Art of Rhetoric*, ed. Peter E. Medine (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania UP, 1994), 70.

[127] Wayne A. Rebhorn, *The Emperor of Men's Minds,* 15. The claim that rhetoric was designed to influence the actions of the audience is fairly basic and perhaps axiomatic, but for more on the connection between rhetoric and audience action, see Brain Vickers, "The Power of Persuasion," in *Renaissance Eloquence: Studies in Theory and Practice of Renaissance Rhetoric*, ed. James J. Murphy (Berkeley: California UP, 1983) 411-435.

[128] *An Apology for Poetry*, *Pierce Penniless* and *The Art of English Poesy*, respectively.

[129] William B. Worthen, *The Idea of the Actor*, 26. For more on how *Hamlet* is conventional, see Dawson and Yachnin, *The Culture of Playgoing in Shakespeare's England*: *A Collaborative Debate* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001), 16.

[130] Philip Massinger, *The Roman Actor*, ed. Martin White (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2007). All subsequent quotations are from this Revels edition and citied in the text.

[131] Charles Pastoor, "Metadramatic Performances in *Hamlet* and *The Roman Actor*," *The Philological Review* 32, no. 1 (2006): 3. Werner Habicht also notes the similarities between Hamlet's and Paris's speeches. Werner Habicht, "Traps of Illusion in Massinger's *The Roman Acto*r," in *The Show Within: Dramatic and other Insets*, ed. Franquis Laroque (Montpellier: University Paul-Valery UP, 1992), 359. Pastoor rightly points out that there is a slight difference between the two theories since Hamlet sees drama as holding up a mirror to the whole of civilization and Paris is focusing the reflective lens of drama on the

individual. Pastoor, "Metadramatic Performances, 3-4." However, for our purposes, it is enough to notice that both characters see drama as affecting the audience.

[132] See Habicht for a comprehensive discussion of the critical interpretation of this scene; he illustrates that early scholarship saw the play as a defense against antitheatrical puritan attacks, but critics later started to understand the disjunction between Paris's speech and the effectiveness of the inset plays, which suggests a suspicion of the power of the stage to reform the audience. Habicht, "Traps of Illusion," 360. Jonas Barish pushes the "misunderstanding" of Paris's speech back to seventeenth century responses to the play. Barish, "Three Caroline 'Defenses' of the Stage," in *Comedy from Shakespeare to Sheridan: Change and Continuity in the English and European Dramatic Tradition* (Newark: Delaware UP, 1986), 195-196.

[133] Joanne Rochester, *Staging Spectatorship in the Plays of Philip Massinger* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 28.

[134] Edward L. Rocklin, "Placing the Audience at Risk: Realizing the Design of Massinger's *The Roman Actor*," in *Acts of Criticism: Performance Matters in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*, eds. Paul Nelsen and June Schlueter (Madison: Fairleigh Dickenson UP, 2006), 144.

[135] Philip Massinger, *The City Madam*, ed. Cryus Hoy (Lincoln: Nebraska UP, 1964). All subsequent quotations are from this Regents edition and citied in the text.

[136] Rochester, *Staging Spectatorship*, 89.

[137] Austin, *How to do Things with Words*, 8, emphasis his.

[138] Austin, *How to do Things with Words*, 8-9.

[139] B.J. Sokol and Mary Sokol, *Shakespeare, Law and Marriage* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP., 2006), 13.

[140] For this definition of marriage, see Sokol and Sokol, *Shakespeare, Law and Marriage*, 13-14.

[141] John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*, ed. John Russell Brown (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2009). All subsequent quotations are from this Revels edition and citied in the text.

[142] Richard Adair, *Courtship, Illegitimacy and Marriage in Early Modern England (*Manchester: Manchester UP, 1996), 142; Sokol and Sokol, *Shakespeare, Law and Marriage*, 95; Lawrence Stone, *Uncertain Unions: Marriage in England 1660-1753* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992), 22-23; R.B. Outhwaite, *Clandestine Marriages in England, 1500-1850* (London: Hambledon Press, 1995), 19-50. Though the latter two do not explicitly define spousals, they do explore the broad range of utterances that could constitute a marriage in early modern England.

[143] Adair, *Courtship, Illegitimacy and Marriage*, 144-145; Ralph Houlbrooke, "The Making of Marriage in Mid-Tudor England: Evidence from the Records of Matrimonial Contract Litigation," *Journal of Family History* 10, no. 4 (1985): 344.

[144] For instance, Sara Jayne Steen notes that the Duchess's anagogical partner Arbelle Stuart also made sure to include a witnessing audience "to ensure the legitimacy of the marriage could not be challenged" (64). However, Stuart probably did not keep her marriage a secret, but merely married in secret. Unlike the Duchess, Stuart wanted her married to be made public. Sara Jayne Steen, "The Crime of Marriage: Arbella Stuart and *The Duchess of Malfi*," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 22, no. 1 (1991): 61-76.

[145] Brian Corrigan, *Playhouse Law in Shakespeare's World* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson, 2004), 179.

[146] Huston Diehl, *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage* (Ithaca, Cornell UP), 195.

[147] For studies that note Webster's interest in metadrama, see Worthen, *The Idea of the Actor*, 55; J.R. Mulryne, "Webster and the Uses of Tragicomedy," in *John Webster*, ed. Brian Morris (London: Ernest Benn, 1970), especially 142; Howard Felperin, *Shakespearean Representation: Mimesis and Modernity in Elizabethan Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1977), 188-191; Arthur C. Kirsch, *Jacobean Dramatic Perspectives* (Charlottesville: Virgin UP, 1972), 106-110; Andrea Henderson, "Death on Stage, Death of the Stage: The Antitheatricality of the *Duchess of Malfi*," *Theater Journal* 42, no.2 (1990): 194-207; Diehl, *Staging Reform*, 195 and Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy*, 231-246.

[148] On the other hand, "see" could also mean meet or converse with. However, by using "see" instead of "meet," Webster seems to want to draw out or suggest the visual connotations of the word and consequently highlight the Cardinal's role as witness. See, V12a, The Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd ed, 1989. *OED Online*, Oxford UP. 22, March 2011 <http://www.oed.com:80/Entry/174749>

[149] Indeed, Ferdinand does not deny that the first marriage did not take place. When the Duchess tells him that she is married, he simply responds with "so" (3.2.82). Instead, he seems to be denying the Duchess the opportunity to re-perform the marriage.

[150] Banishment, like marriage, is a fairly clear example of institutional reality in that it is a form of reality that is completely produced through and constitutive of language. Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* also uses the

phenomenon of banishment to explore performative utterances and stage utterances. Stanley Fish details the performative nature of banishment in *Coriolanus* in "How to do Things with Austin and Searle: Speech Act Theory and Literary Criticism," and Robert Ormsby traces the metatheatrical quality of the play in "*Coriolanus*, Antitheatricalism, and Audience Response." However, neither critic links metadrama and speech acts.

[151] For a discussion of Marlowe's interest in issues related to succession and why he might have a personal stake in this issue, see Lisa Hopkins, "Christopher Marlowe and the Succession of English Crowns," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 38, no.1-2 (2008): 183-198.

[152] Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine the Great*, ed. J.S. Cunningham (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1981). All subsequent quotations are from this Revels edition and citied in the text.

[153] Kateryna Schray, "'Is This Your Crown?' Conquest and Coronation in *Tamburlaine I*, Act II Scene 4," *Cahiers Elisabethians* 68 (2005): 68.

[154] Garber, "'Here's Nothing Writ': Scribe, Script, and Circumscription in Marlowe's Plays," *Theatre Journal* 36, no.3 (1984): 301-320. For more on Tamburlaine's grasp of the performative power of language, see Richard W. Schoch, "Tamburlaine and the Control of Performative Playing," *Essays in Theatre* 17, no.1 (1998): 3-14. Schoch and Garber detail the way that Tamburlaine's rhetoric produces real effects within the listening subject; whereas, I am exclusively interested in the way Tamburlaine uses metadramatic performance to produce real effects within institutional reality.

[155] For a comprehensive discussion of this debate, see Janet Clare, "The Censorship of the Deposition Scene in *Richard II*," *Review of English Studies* 41.161 (1990): 89-94 and Charles R. Forker's Appendix to the Arden edition of *Richard II* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2005), 506-515.

[156] Dutton, *Mastering the Revels*, 125.

[157] Clare bases her argument on Tilney's censorship of *Sir Thomas More* and finds that *Richard II* seems to have been censored along the same lines as *Sir Thomas More*. Clare, *'Art made tongue-tied by authority,'* 49.

[158] Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*, 21-65. See also Roy Strong, *Art and Power*.

[159] To my knowledge, no one has raised the possibility that *Tamburlaine* was censored probably because there is no extant evidence other than the contextual and theoretical evidence I offer. Clare, Dutton and Auchter make no mention of *Tamburlaine*.

[160] For the practice of using one actor to play multiple parts, see Gurr and Mariko Ichikawa, *Staging in Shakespeare's Theatres* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000), 12-13 and Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 106.

[161] There is another possible agent who may have pushed the scene off stage – Marlowe's publisher, Richard Jones. In his address to the reader of the 1590 edition of Tamburlaine, Richard Jones tells his audience that he has "purposely omitted and left out / some fond and frivolous gestures" (8-9). Jones seems to be saying that he left out comic material he thought would be beneath the educated readers he was trying to sell the play to. However, his admission that he did cut scenes from the play leaves open the possibility that he could have been the one that forced the deposition scene off stage. This possibility raises a host of questions regarding the role of the editor in publishing, of early modern texts and textual censorship; questions that are beyond the purview of this study because, in the end, whoever moved the deposition scene off stage is immaterial. The fact that at some point it was decided by someone not to stage the scene suggests the triadic relationship; the same relationship between performance, audience and reality found in the censorship of riots and the wedding scene in *The Duchess of Malfi*. For studies that show the important role of the editor in the production of play texts, see Lesser, *The Politics of Publication* and Sonia Massai, *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007).

[162] There are no original stage directions concerning these feints in the original text. I am following Charles R. Forker's stage directions in his Revels edition of *Edward II*, which seem to accurately reflect the dialogue. Christopher Marlowe, *Edward the Second*, ed. Charles R. Forker (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1994). All quotations are from this Revels edition and citied in the text.

[163] Perhaps as Marlowe's career progressed, he became more radical or at least more willing to destabilize the monarchy. Or if we suppose that Tilney censored *Tamburlaine*, perhaps Tilney became more lenient during the ten years that lapsed between *Tamburlaine* and *Edward II*. However, *Edward II* was written in 1598 and Tilney probably censored the deposition scene of *Richard II* in 1595, and nothing seems to have occurred within the three years that would have made Tilney less anxious about the institutional effect of depositions. Then again, the historical Edward II was not overtly associated with Elizabeth the way that the

historical Richard II was, so perhaps staging the deposition of Edward II was not understood to be as subversive as the deposition of Richard II. Because the possibility that *Tamburlaine* was censured has not been explored by scholars of early modern censorship, the question of why *Tamburlaine* was censured but not *Edward II* or why *Richard II* but not *Edward II* has been neglected. Dutton does broach the issue but focus on *Richard II* not *Edward II* and completely neglects *Tamburlaine*. For this discussion, see Dutton, *Mastering the Revels*, 125.

[164] Ben Jonson, *Epicene, or The Silent Woman*, ed. Richard Dutton (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2003). All subsequent quotations are from this Revels edition and citied in the text.

[165] In Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, Edgeworth makes a similar pronouncement when he admits, "The act is nothing without a witness" (4.3.110-111).

[166] Richard Brome, *The Antipodes*, ed. Ann Haaker (Lincoln: Nebraska UP, 1966), 3.5.59. All subsequent quotations are from this Regents edition and citied in the text.

[167] For instance, earlier in the scene (before he finds out they are married), Bosola defends Antonio after a group of officers speak poorly of him probably because he senses the Duchess's feelings for Antonio. As a result, the Duchess tells him that she has married Antonio (3.2.214-275). However, the fact that he continues to praise the Duchess's marriage even after he gets his information may suggest that his praise is not only flattery.

[168] Her use of a spousal itself could have been seen as a class transgression since spousals and clandestine marriages were most often used by the middle and lower classes. Ralph Houlbrooke, "The Making of Marriage in Mid-Tudor England," 341-342.

[169] Of course, the question of class in this play, and in the entire period, is fraught with difficulties. For instance, it is difficult to know just how transgressive the Duchess's marriage would have been since she is marrying her steward and the steward occupied a privileged position within the household and was often a member of the aristocracy (a younger son of an aristocratic family). And in a general sense, class distinctions at this time were not nearly as ridged as they would later become; as Mary Lamb Ellen observes, within early modern England, "the social distance between mistress and servant of the nineteenth century was not yet firmly established" (5). However, what is important for this study is not the exact level of the transgression, but that the Duchess's wedding would have been seen, on some level, as a challenge to the notion that birth determined social status. For a discussion of how the Duchess's marriage would have transgressed class, see Mary Lamb Ellen, "Tracing a Heterosexual Erotics of Service in *Twelfth Night* and the Autobiographical Writings of Thomas Whythorne and Anne Clifford," *Criticism* 40, no.1 (1998): 1-25. For information on the role of the steward in the early modern household, see D.R. Hainsworth, *Stewards, Lords and People: The Estate Steward and His World in Later Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1992). For the general conflict between classes, see Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1965). For how Stone's thesis applies to Webster's play, see Frank Whigham, "Sexual and Social Mobility in the *Duchess of Malfi*," *PMLA* 100, no.2 (1985): 167-186.

[170] Mary Beth Rose, "The Heroics of Marriage in Renaissance Tragedy," in *The Duchess of Malfi* (New York: St, Martins, 1998), 131. See also Whigham, "Sexual and Social Mobility in *The Duchess of Malfi.*"

[171] Sara Jayne Steen, "The Crime of Marriage," 61-76. Steen traces the responses to Stuart's marriage (the model for the Duchess's marriage) and argues that Webster's audience would have probably responded in kind.

[172] Fish, "How to do Things with Austin and Searle," 997.

[173] As I pointed out in the first chapter, this is where my analysis and Fish's diverge. Fish is suggesting that *Coriolanus* is anticipating Austin and Searle, and that this makes the play uniquely emendable to a speech act analysis, but I am arguing that a host of early modern plays claim that performance itself is performative, and so these plays are not simply exploring the logic and efficacy of language, but are claiming to be speech acts.

[174] Seminary, N1, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, *OED Online*, Oxford UP. 13 Sept. 2010 < dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50219485>.

[175] Another way of framing this issue is as a conflict between the Duchess's public and private life; a conflict that has been explored by several scholars. See for example Rose, "The Heroics of Marriage," especially 128-129 and Theodora A. Jankowski, "Defining/Confining the Duchess: Negotiating the Female Body in John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*," *Studies in Philology* 87, no.2 (1990): 221-245. However, essentially what is public about her life is her performance both on the stage and in the fictive reality of the

play, and the difficulty she has in keeping that performance a secret is what creates this tension between the public and private.

[176] The Regents edition retains the dash but notes that most editors assume it is a substitute for god. For instance, Robert M. Adams in an early critical Norton edition of Jonson's Plays (*Ben Jonson's Plays and Masques*) omits the dash and inserts God. The 1616 folio and the 1620 quarto both use the dash. Richard Dutton, in his notes in the Regents edition, finds the argument that the dash is a placeholder for the word god unconvincing, pointing out that "blasphemies are frequent" within printed play texts. However, he does not offer an interpretation of the dash. *Ben Jonson's Plays and Masques*, ed. Robert M. Adams (New York: Norton, 1979); Ben Jonson, *Epicoene, or the silent woman*, in *The workes of Beniamin Ionson* (London, 1616); Ben Jonson, *Epicoene, or the silent woman A comedie. Acted in the yeare 1609* (London, 1620).

[177] This construction of audience is, much like the Duchess's construction, somewhat conspicuous. That is, Morose could have signed the document in isolation, and it still would have been performative – it would have produced an institutional or legal reality. Thus, the construction of audience seems meant to produce a metadramatic reflection on the ability of performance to produce institutional reality. That being said, in early modern England oral agreements were just as important as textual agreements, hence Morose's insistence that he was not merely signing a textual agreement but also completing an oral contract. The way this play seems to privilege performance over text will be discussed more fully in chapter 4. For the importance of oral contracts, see Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), especially 124-157. Also for Jonson's use and knowledge of contact law, see Luke Wilson *Theaters of Intention*, 68-114. Wilson, somewhat surprisingly, does not discuss this scene in depth.

[178] Such blatant appeals for applause are common in early modern drama. Jeremy Lopez opines, with some hesitation, that "more than any other drama, early modern drama talks about and openly solicits applause." Jeremy Lopez, *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), 33. See for instance the end of Paris's speech in *The Roman Actor*, "Censure us, or free us with applause" (1.2.142) and the epilogue to *The Antipodes* discussed below.

[179] Approbation 1 and 3, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, *OED Online*, Oxford UP.13 Sept. 2010 <dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50010936>.

[180] For a brief description of when intercourse was necessary for a marriage to be considered institutionally real, see Sokol and Sokol, *Shakespeare, Law and Marriage* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2006), 17 and Richard Adair, *Courtship, Illegitimacy and Marriage*, 143-144.

[181]For the importance of consummation within enforced marriages, see Sokol and Sokol, *Shakespeare, Law and Marriage*, 32 and R.H. Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1974), 91.

[182] Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, especially 51-57 and Cook, *The Privileged Playgoers*, especially 259-268. See also Michael Neill, "'Wits most accomplished Senate': The Audience of the Caroline Private Theaters," *SEL* 18 (1978): 341-360. For an argument closer to my own, see Allison P. Hobgood, "*Twelfth Night*'s 'Notorious Abuse' of Malvolio: Shame, Humorality, and Early Modern Spectatorship," *Shakespeare Bulletin* 24, no.3 (2006): 1-22. Here, Hobgood argues that Malvolio is a figure for performers and the other characters who mock his performance are figures for playgoers. By showing how psychologically damaging being mocked by audiences could be, Shakespeare is forcing the audience to reflect on their own role as judgmental playgoers. However, Hobgood does not, as I do, explicitly connect this process of shaming with a desire by Shakespeare to limit audience reaction.

[183] This elegy appears in two different forms: one printed in *Gentleman's Magazine* in June 1826 and the other in J.P. Collier's *Annals of the Stage* in 1831. Both are reprinted in Gamini Salgado, *Eye-Witnesses of Shakespeare* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 38-39. The above text is taken from the 1826 copy as transcribed by Salagdo. The original documents seem to be lost, but both Colliers and Salgado believe that the original was probably written in the seventieth century near the time of Burgbage's death in 1618.

[184] Edmund Gayton, *Pleasant Notes upon Don Quixot* (London, 1654), 3. Cited by Alan C. Dessen, *Elizabethan Drama and the Viewer's Eye*, 8 and Gerald Eades Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, vol. 5 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 1345-1346.

[185] Thomas Palmer, "Master John Fletcher his Dramaticall Workes Now at Last Printed," in *Comedies and Tragedies Written by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher* (London, 1647).

[186] For a version of this anecdote, see Babak A. Ebrahimian, *The Cinematic Theater* (Lanham, MD, The Scarecrow Press, 2004), 1.

[187] For how acting destabilized gender hierarchies, see Laura Levine, *Men in Women's Clothing*. For how acting upset puritan religious sensibilities, see Huston Diehl, *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage*; Margot Heinemann, *Puritanism and Theater*; Jonas Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice*, 80-131 and Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 125. For how the two anxieties are related, see Jean E. Howard, "'Sathan's Synagogue' The Theater as Constructed by its Enemies," in *The Stage and Social Struggle*, 22-46.

[188] Stephen Gosson, *Plays Confuted in Five Acts* (London, 1582), E5r.

[189] The complaint that actors tried to mimic the appearance of the upper class is also apparent in the reactions to the portrayal of Conde de Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador to James's court, in Middleton's *A Game at Chess*. The actor playing the part of Gondomar, probably William Rowley, may have been wearing the ambassador's actual clothes and was carried on a replica of Gondomar's sedan chair that had been customized to accommodate his fistula. John Chamberlain and a member of the Spanish court (Don Carlos Coloma) both complained about this too realistic portrayal of Gondomar. Of course, they were anxious about more than just realism, but their focus on realism does suggest a concern similar to the antitheatrical writers. For Chamberlain and Coloma's reaction to the 1624 performances of *A Game at Chess*, see Thomas Middleton, *A Game at Chess*, ed. T.H. Howard-Hill (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1993), 195, 202-203.

[190] Gosson, *Plays Confuted in Five Acts*, G4r.

[191] William Gager, "Letter to Dr. John Rainolds of July 31, 1592," in *William Gager: The Complete Works*, vol 4, ed. Dana F. Sutton (New York: Garland Publishing, 1994), 271.

[192] Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 127.

[193] For descriptions of dual consciousness as applied to early modern audiences, see Michael Shapiro, *Gender in Play on the Shakespearean Stage: Boy Heroines and Female Pages* (Ann Arbor: Michigan UP, 1994), 46; Jeremy Lopez, *Theatrical Convention and Audience*, 2; Anthony B. Dawson, "Performance and Participation," in *The Culture of Playgoing in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001), 11-37. For the early development of this concept, see Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, vol. 2, eds. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate (Princeton.: Princeton UP, 1983), 6,134, and Samuel Johnson, "Preface [to Shakespeare], 1765," in *Johnson on Shakespeare*, ed. A. Sherbo (New Haven, Con.: Yale UP, 1958), 77. Dawson cites William Archer as the originator of the term dual consciousness. However, Archer uses the term to describe the actor's consciousness, not the audience's. Archer's ideas can be found in William Archer, *"The Paradox of Acting" and "Masks or Faces,"* ed. Lee Strasberg (New York: Hill and Wang, 1957), 184-200. Archer uses the term to describe the actor's consciousness not the audience's.

[194] Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 126.

[195] Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 126.

[196] Diehl, *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage.*

[197] Unlike the link between naturalism and audience reaction, the depiction of women's responses to drama cannot be compared to eyewitness accounts of performance because, as Charles Whitney has pointed out, "Aside from queens there is still not a single unimpeachable example of an individual, identifiable woman's response to particular dramatic material before the Restoration." *Early Responses to Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006), 201.

[198] Andrew Gurr and Karoline Szatek, "Women and Crowds at the Theater," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England: An Annual Gathering of Research, Criticism and Reviews* 21 (2008): 157.

[199] John Northbrooke, *A Treatise Against Dicing, Dancing, Plays, and Interludes, with Other Idle Pastimes* (London, 1577), 65.

[200] Northbrooke, *Treatise Against Dicing, Dancing, Plays*, 68.

[201] Indeed, this gendered inability goes beyond performance. Women were also depicted as unable to tell the difference between printed fiction and reality within early modern drama. In Massinger's *The Guardian*, Calipso openly declares that she believes in romances, and Gertrude is mocked throughout *Eastward Hoe* for believing in the reality of these same romances. This is not to say that men were not also satirized for confusing reality and printed fiction. Peregrine in *The Antipodes* clearly believes that his travel narratives are true, and of course, Don Quixote provides the example *par excellence* of an inability to tell fact from fiction, albeit an example from a different culture. And as pointed out above, eye-witness accounts of early modern performance suggest that men too were seduced by the illusion of drama.

[202] For studies of male anxiety as it is related to the one-sex model, see Mark Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996) and Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500-1800* (New Haven, Con.: Yale UP, 1995). For a broad historical study of the one-sex model and how this produced the fear that men could become women, see Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1990). For how antitheatrical writers drew on this cultural anxiety to attack the theater, see Levin, *Men in Women's Clothing*.
[203] William Walshe, Shakespeare's Lion and Ha Jin's Tiger: The Interplay of Imagination and Reality," *Papers on Language and Literature* 42, no.4 (2006): 347.
[204] We could also add *Hamlet* to this list of outliers. Although the inset play within *Hamlet* is not necessarily interested in the naturalism of the stage, or lack thereof, it does propose, as argued in the previous chapter, that performance should affect the audience. Thus, the view of performance expressed in *Hamlet* is relatively consistent with the view of performance expressed in *Henry V* and *A Midsummer's Night Dream* in so far as none of these three plays are attempting to produce a non-reactive playgoer. But as we will see, not all of Shakespeare's plays express this view; *The Merchant of Venice*, discussed in the fourth chapter, seems to be constructing a non-reactive playgoer.
[205] Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 126.
[206] Earnest, N1, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, *OED Online*, Oxford UP. 16, Nov, 2010. <dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50071564>
[207] See also Burbage's elegy discussed above, which also links performance with "jest:" "Oft have I seen him play his part in jest."
[208] Walshe, "Shakespeare's Lion and Ha Jin's Tiger," 348.
[209] The fear that women will be seduced by actors is also present in *The Antipodes*. Letoy, the jealous husband, tries to keep his wife from viewing the play because he is afraid "She'll fall in love with the actor and undo me" (2.2.229).
[210] Pastoor, "Metadramatic Performances,"10.
[211] The gender of Hamlet's phrasing is somewhat of a coincidence because the "her" refers to nature not female playgoers. Still, Hamlet nicely expresses what the satire of female playgoers is supposed accomplish.
[212] For an argument that sees pure mockery of the couple, see David A. Samuelson, "The Order of Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*," *English Literary Renaissance* 9 (1979): 302-318. For an argument that defends the couple, see Barbara Knight Degyansky, "A Reconsideration: George and Nell of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*," *English Language Notes* 3 (1986): 27-32. For a partial defense of the citizens, see Ronald Miller, "Dramatic Form and Dramatic Imagination in Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*," *English Literary Renaissance* 8 (1978): 67-84.
[213] Laurie E. Osborn, "Female Audiences and Female Authority," *Exemplaria* 3, no.2 (1991): 497-510.
[214] Alexander Leggatt, "The Audience as Patron," in *Shakespeare and Theatrical Patronage in Early Modern England* eds. Paul Whitfield White and Suzanne R. Westfall (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 306.
[215] Osborn, "Female Audiences, 497.
[216] Osborn, "Female Audiences, 505.
[217] Francis Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, eds. John Doebler (Lincoln: Nebraska UP, 1967). All subsequent quotations are from this Regents edition and citied in the text.
[218] It is worth pointing out that this scene seems to be directly influenced by several scenes from *Don Quixote*, most notably Volume 1, Chapter 17, in which Quixote mistakes an inn for a castle (something he does more than once) and refuses to pay the fee. And of course, *Don Quixote* is also interested in mocking those that confuse fiction with reality. For a discussion of how Cervantes probably influenced Beaumont, see Steven H. Gale, "The Relationship between Beaumont's *Knight of the Burning Pestle* and Cervantes' *Don Quixote*" *Anales Cervantinos* 11 (1972): 87-96, especially 94-95.
[219] Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, 4.1.166.
[220] For a description of oral and written contracts and how both types of contracts were often contested within the early modern legal system, see Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation*, especially 199-255.
[221] Indeed, the early modern theater was highly concerned with the written word and the medium of print. For instance, Eve Rachele Sanders asserts that letters are the "single most widely used property in Tudor-Stuart plays" (49). According to Alan C. Dessen and Leslie Thomson, 400 early modern plays reference

letters in their stage directions, and 130 plays reference books. Jonas Barish notes Shakespeare only has one play (*The Two Noble Kinsmen*) that does not dramatize a text. Obviously, I will not discuss each of these plays. Instead, I will focus on those plays that overtly contrast texts with performance. Nevertheless, playwrights' preoccupation with texts, like their preoccupation with performance and metadrama, can be understood as an anxiety over the medium. Specifically, they seemed worried about what would happen if the strategies of reading were appropriated by playgoers. The previous information is taken from Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender, and Literacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005), 19. For individual references, see Sanders, "Interiority and the Letter in *Cymbeline*," *Critical Survey* 12, no.2 (2000): 47-70; Dessen and Thomas, *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama,1580-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999); and Jonas Barish, "'Soft, Here Follows Prose': Shakespeare's Stage Documents," in *The Arts of Performance in Elizabethan and Early Stuart Drama: Essays for G.K.Hunter*, eds. Murray Briggs et. al (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1991), 32-49.

[222] David Scott Kastan, *Shakespeare and the Book* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001), 7, emphasis his.

[223] It is difficult to know how literate the early modern playgoing population was because determining the literacy rate of the any early modern population is a notoriously difficult task. Scholars have suggested that anywhere from 33% to 75% of the English population was literate in the early modern era. But it is clear that the population of London would have been significantly more literate than the non-Londoners, so London playhouses would have been filled with a highly literate audience in relationship to the literacy rates of the age. For the difficulties of determining literacy and a summary of critical arguments about the literacy rates in early modern England, see Frederick Kiefer, "Appendix 1: Elizabethan Literacy," in *Writing on the Renaissance Stage: Written Words, Printed Pages, Metaphoric Books* (Newark: Delaware UP, 1996) 268-274). Despite the title of Kiefer's appendix, it covers the era up to the civil war.

[224] Terry Eagleton, *After Theory* (Basic Books: London, 2003).

[225] Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, "'Studied for Action': How Gabriel Harvey Read his Livy," *Past and Present* 129 (1990): 30.

[226]Victoria Khan, *Rhetoric, Prudence and Skepticism in the Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985), 19. For a description of the humanistic education as it was established by Desiderius Erasumus and Juan Luis Vives, see Eugene R. Kintgen, *Reading in Tudor England* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh UP, 1996), 18-57.

[227] Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker, "Introduction: Discovering the Renaissance Reader," in *Reading, Society and Politics in Early Modern England*, eds. Sharpe and Zwicker (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), 11. For how protestant reading strategies impacted political debates, see Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (New Haven: Yale, 2000), and Sharpe, "Reading Revelations: Prophecy, Hermeneutics and Politics in Early Modern Britain," in *Reading Society and Politics*, 122-166.

[228] Steven Orgel, *The Authentic Shakespeare: and Other Problems of the Early Modern Stage* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 16. See also Seth Lerer, "Errata: Print, Politics and Poetry in Early Modern England," in *Reading Society and Politics*, 41-65. Lerer traces the increasingly popular use of errata sheets in the early to mid sixteenth century and suggests that authors struggled to correct their own work, but they did so, not simply to stabilize unstable printing practices, but to intentionally play with the instability of early modern spelling and print practices.

[229] Godfrey Goodman, *The Fall of Man*, qtd. in Keifer, *Writing on the Renaissance Stage*, 63. Keifer rightly points out that for Goodman the instability of his book was a nice illustration of the themes of his book. Since he was writing about the fall of man, the corruption that is prevalent in a post-lapsarian world was embedded in the materiality of his text. So Goodman, like many early moderns, partially embraced the instability of the printed word.

[230] Jardine and Grafton, "'Studied for Action,'"30.

[231] Jardine and Grafton, "'Studied for Action,'" 40, emphasis theirs. For similar studies of scholarly reading habits, see William H. Sherman, *John Dee: The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance* (Amherst: Massachusetts UP, 1995) and Robert C. Evans's essays on Ben Jonson's reading habits: "Ben Jonson's Library and Marginalia: New Evidence from the Folger Collections," *Philological Quarterly* 66 (1987): 521-528; "Ben Jonson's Chaucer," *English Literary Renaissance* 19 (1989): 324-345; "Ben Jonson Reads Daphnis and Chloe," *English Language Notes* 27, no.4 (1990): 28-32 and "Jonson's Copy of Seneca," *Comparative Drama* 25 (1991): 257-292.

[232] Hackel, *Reading Material*, 10-11, emphasis mine.

[233] Hackel, *Reading Material*, 146. For foundational studies on commonplace books, see Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structure of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) and Mary Thomas Crane, *Framing Authority: Sayings, Self, and Society in Sixteenth-Century England* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1992).
[234] Steven N. Zwicker, "The Constitution of Opinion and the Pacification of Reading," in *Reading, Society and Politics*, 299-300.
[235] Marta Straznicky, "Introduction: Plays, Books, and the Public Sphere," in *The Book of the Play: Playwrights, Stationers, and Readers in Early Modern England*, ed. Marta Straznicky (Amherst: Massachusetts UP, 2006), 4, emphasis hers.
[236] Patrick Cheney, *Shakespeare's Literary Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008); Cheney, *Shakespeare, National Poet-Playwright* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004); and Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003).
[237] Robert Weimann and Douglas Bruster, *Shakespeare and The Power of Performance: Stage and Page in the Elizabethan Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008), 3. See also, Weimann, *Author's Pen and Actor's Voice: Playing and Writing in Shakespeare's Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000). While Wienmann's work is interested in questions of authority and in how the stage and page produced conflicting modes of authority, my argument centers on the different effect on the audience that each medium constructs. Julia Stone Peters also finds evidence for this relationship of difference in early modern treatises and playbooks: "Playbooks could, like treatises, identify the nature of the theatre by contrasting it with the book, expressing the differences through the conceptual amplifications of metaphor." Julia Stone Peters, *Theatre of the Book 1480-1880: Print, Text and Performance in Europe* (Oxford: UP, 2000), 108.
[238] David Scott Kastan, "Performance and Playbooks: The Closing of the Theatres and the Politics of Drama," *Reading, Society and Politics*, 178.
[239] Douglas A. Brooks, "Inky Kin: Reading in the Age of Gutenberg Paternity," in *The Book of the Play*, 205.
[240] David McInnis, "Mind-Travelling, Ideal Presence and the Imagination in Early Modern England," *Early Modern Literary Studies* 19 (2009): 9.
[241] David McInnis, "Mind-Travelling," 20.
[242] Brooks assumes that "Peregrine's bookish interests" are responsible for his illness; however, McInnis concludes, as I do, that Peregrine's sickness is caused not by travel narratives, but by his inability to travel. McInnis, "Mind-Travelling," 21-22; Brooks, "Inky Kin," 204.
[243] George Chapman, Ben Jonson, John Marston, *Eastward Ho*, ed. R.W.Van Fossen (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1979). All subsequent quotations are from this Revels edition and citied in the text.
[244] Percy Simpson attributes almost the entirety of this last act to Jonson. Given Jonson's intense interest in print and texts, his authorship of this fifth act may account for the mediations on texts within this section. Still, as I suggest above, Jonson was not the only playwright interested in texts, so the attribution of this act to Jonson is not crucial to this argument. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the immediate turn to texts in act five may coincide with Jonson's authorial interaction with the play. Percy Simpson, "The Problem of Authorship in *Eastward Ho*," *PMLA* 59, no.3 (1944): 715-725.
[245] Theodora A. Jankowski, "Class Categorization, Capitalism, and the Problem of 'Gentle' Identity in *The Royal King and the Loyall Subject* and *Eastward Ho!*," *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England* 19 (2006): 144-174.
[246] Jonson, who probably wrote this scene, almost certainly read *Don Quixote*; however, it is unclear if he would have been able to read the novel before writing *Eastward Ho*. Thomas Shelton's English translation did not appear until 1612, about seven years after *Eastward Ho* was first published and Yumiko Yamada has shown that Jonson probably did not read Spanish. For the influence of Cervantes on Jonson, see Yumiko Yamada, "Ben Jonson: A Neoclassical Response to Cervantes: *Cervantes in the English Speaking World: New Essays* (Kassel, Germany: Reichenberger, 2005): 3-23 and Yamada, *Ben Jonson and Cervantes: Titling against Chivalric Romances* (Tokyo: Maruzen, 2000). For Jonson's troubles with Spanish, see Yamada, *Ben Jonson and Cervantes*, 16-17.
[247] Besides contributing to the construction of stable performances, this scene also expresses an early modern perspective on anti-essentialism. As I argued in the first chapter, early modern culture seems not to have put forth an anti-essentialist version of identity because essentialism was not a dominate ideology. In this scene, Quicksilver, Touchstone and the rest of the characters involved in Quicksilver's redemption narrative seem to be expressing what we might call the anti-essentialist position: all the characters see

personality as constitutive of performance. None of the characters seem to be expressing an essentialist position. Indeed, one would think that Touchstone should see Quicksilver's performance as "feigned," as other than his true or essential personality since he was already skeptical of his reformed nature, but he takes Quicksilver's performance as his personality. In other words, essentialism doesn't seem to be a concern even when it should be.

[248] The OED cites rape as a synonym for ravished since 1500. Ravished, N1, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 3rd ed. 2010, *OED Online*, Oxford UP. 15 Dec. 2010 <www.oed.com/view/Entry/158685>.

[249] For a theoretical exploration of how the law works as a form of performative discourse, see Pierre Bourdieu, "The Force of Law: Towards a Sociology of the Juridical Field," *Hastings Law Journal* 38 (1987): 837-839. For instance, Bourdieu asserts, "The law is the quintessential form of "active" discourse, able by its own operation to produce its effects. It would not be excessive to say that it *creates* the social world (839, emphasis his).

[250] Thomas Middleton, *Michaelmas Term*, ed. Theodore B. Leinwand, in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, eds. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007).

[251] Indeed, the play goes out of its way to show the stability of the law and the legal document that the law is printed on. The first scene dramatizes two lawyers demonstrating that the law cannot be nullified or softened through imaginative interpretation. And the first line of the play asks, "Is the law firm, sir?" Thomas Middleton, *The Old Law*, in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, 1.1.1.

[252] *The Old Law* provides a particularly instructive example of the instability of early modern texts because the play narratives how texts are and should be unstable, and the play text of *The Old Law* is, in fact unstable: the play appears in several different printed forms, the play has several different titles (all which carry different connotations) and some of the texts contain early modern marginal, which suggest that the early readers of the text read in an active and goal-orientated way. In other words, the play narrates a representation of the instability of texts and is, in and of itself, unstable. For a description of the play's instability, see Gary Taylor, "'The Old Law' or 'An Old Law,'" *Notes and Queries* 49, no.2 (2002): 256-258; Jeffrey Masten, "Family Values: Euthanasia, Editing, and *The Old Law*," *Textual Practice* 9, no.3 (1995): 445-458; and Masten's introduction to *The Old Law* in *Thomas Middleton: Collected Works*, 1331-1334.

[253] For a comprehensive discussion of playwrights' complex and often conflicted relationship with their own play texts, see Douglas A. Brooks, *From Playhouse To Printing House: Drama and Authorship in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000) and Kiefer, *Writing on the Renaissance Stage*. For a summary of this relationship, see Cyndia Susan Clegg, "Renaissance Play-Readers, Ordinary and Extraordinary," in *The Book of the Play*, 23-38.

[254] R.S. White, *Natural Law in English Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), 159.

[255] For a summery of the early modern concept of equity and how it applies to *The Merchant of Venice*, see Kieren Dolin, *A Critical Introduction to Law and Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), 93-95 and Theodore Ziolkowski, *The Mirror of Justice: Literary Reflections of Legal Crises* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997), 163-186. For a summary of the critical conversation about equity and the play, see R.S. White, *Natural Law in English Renaissance Literature*, 159-161.

[256]Paul Gaudet and John F. Andrews do argue that the text of *The Merchant of Venice* contains textual gaps and indeterminacy, which can be registered within a performance but are often glossed over by modern day readers and playgoers not used to listening for the indeterminacy of early modern words. However, neither critic argues that the play reflects on its own indeterminacy by staging the instability of texts. Alan Stewart explores the use of letters in *The Merchant of Venice* (and the rest of Shakespeare's cannon), but instead of viewing the letters as a reflection on texts in general, as I do, he reads the letters as a reflection of the role letters and letter writing played in early modern London. Paul Gaudet, "Lorenzo's 'Infidel': The Staging of Difference in *The Merchant of Venice*," *Theatre Journal* 38, no.3 (1986): 275-290; John F. Andrews, "Textual Deviancy in *The Merchant of Venice*," *The Merchant of Venice: New Critical Essays*, eds. John W. Mahon and Ellen Macleod Mahon (London: Routledge, 2002), 165-178; Alan Stewart, *Shakespeare's Letters* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008), especially 155-192.

[257] Steven Orgel, *The Authentic Shakespeare*, 16.

[258] Again, critics have long noted that Portia's interpretive strategy relies on a reading of the law that accounts for mercy and Shylock insists on the letter of the law, but these readings generally center on the conflict between equity and the law; they do not see Shylock's instance of the law as an unwillingness to embrace the instability of texts.

[259] In *The Old Law*, on the other hand, the stability of texts is the vehicle for the law's tyranny.
[260] In this way, the mode of production of early modern plays is similar to the naturalism of the theater discussed in the previous chapter: the early modern stage seems to have been non-naturalistic because of lack of technology and primitive stage techniques; however, I argued that the theater's non-naturalism is, at least partially, an effect of the non-reactive playgoer.
[261] Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974), 16. For a more philosophical and thorough discussion of the connection between instability and repetition see, Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia UP, 1994), especially 1-27.
[262] For playgoers' use of memory, see Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 82.
[263] Roslyn Lander Knutson, "The Repertory," in *A New History of Early English Drama*, eds. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York: Columbia UP, 1997), 465.
[264] R.A. Foakes, ed. *Henslowe's Diary*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge UP, 2002), 24.
[265] Knutson, "The Repertory," 466.
[266] Gurr, *The Shakespearean Playing Companies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 84.
[267] The proliferation of theater critics and play reviews also contributes to the instability of contemporary performances. Before twenty-first playgoers even sees a performance, they have had it interpreted for them by critics and reviewers, so it has already undergone an interpretation before consumption by the audience. Conversely, the professional theater critic did not exist in early modern England, so seeing an early modern play for the first time meant that the playgoers present at that moment were the only individuals who interpreted it.
[268] Tiffany Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009), 36.
[269] See for instance, Roslyn Lander Knutson, *The Repertory of Shakespeare's Company 1594-1613* (Fayetteville: Arkansas UP, 1991), 34-35.
[270] Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 129.
[271] Knutson, "The Repertory," 468.
[272] Knutson notes that when a play carried over from one year to the next, Henslowe never records extra costs for the play when he tallied the year's expenses. This suggests that old plays were virtually free to produce. Knutson, *The Repertory of Shakespeare's Company*, 38.
[273] R.A. Foakes, ed. *Henslowe's Diary*, 33-36.
[274] There is another play called *The Toye*, which was produced on November 3, 1596 and December 3, 1596 (it only brought in 13 and 11 shillings, respectively). *The Toye* could be the same play as A *Toye to Please Chaste Ladeys*, but it seems unlikely that a play that did so well would be taken off the stage for six and a half months. If the two plays are the same, the run would have been an anomaly. And although it is not unusual for Henslowe to change, shorten, or alter the title of plays in his diary, it was also not unusual for successful plays to inspire spin-offs with similar names, like *Tamar Cham* after *Tamburlaine*, or *Eastward Ho* after *Western Ho* or *Knack to Know an Honest Man* after *Knack to Know a Knave*. In other words, while it is possible that *A Toye to Please Chaste Ladeys* and *The Toye* are the same play, it is equally, if not more, likely that *A Toye* was a spinoff from the more successful *A Toye to Please Chaste Ladeys*, a spinoff that did not do well. For the practice of producing spin-offs, see Roslyn Lander Knutson, *Playing Company and Commerce in Shakespeare's Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001), 57-58.
[275] The figure for how much play scripts cost is taken from Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980), 21.
[276] For this estimate, see Knutson "Repertory," 466.
[277] Lesser, *Renaissance Drama and the Politics of Publication*, 36, emphasis his.
[278] Lesser, *Renaissance Drama and the Politics of Publication*, 36.
[279] For a description of the specialization of early modern publishers, see Lesser, *Renaissance Drama and the Politics of Publication*, 42-48.
[280] Lesser, *Renaissance Drama and the Politics of Publication*, 21.
[281] Stern, *Documents of Performance*, 36.
[282] Stern, *Documents of Performance*, 36-37. It is possible that these actors attempted to market their plays to a specific class of consumers by "crying the play" in a specific neighborhood or crafting their message to particular groups. However, no evidence exists for this practice that I know of, and even if this was the case, this type of advertising still would have been a more general technique than used by the printing houses.

[283] Stern, *Documents of Performance*, 41.
[284] Stern, *Documents of Performance*, 42.
[285] Stern does think that playhouses must have found some way to differentiate the playbills since playhouses were in competition with one another and so would have wanted to give their audiences a clear choice, or would have tried to out-advertise their competition. However, even this, seemingly common sense, assertion may be flawed since it relies on the notion that the playhouses were actually in competition. Knutson has convincingly argued that individual playhouses and theater companies probably collaborated with one another more often than competed against one another. Knutson argues that the theater companies functioned like a feudal guild system, in which the individual companies relied on and helped one another to stay in business. Knutson, *Playing Companies and Commerce*.
[286] Stern finds evidence for these stock bills in "cognate bills" for ropedancers. For a description of a stock ropedancer bill, see *Documents of Performance* 43-44.
[287] Stern, *Documents of Performance*, 47; Stern does cite two documents that give hard numbers for how many bills were produced for non-theatrical performances: In 1599, a fencer printed 100 to 120 bills for a match, and in 1614, John Taylor claimed to have printed 1000 bills for his debate with William Fennor. Obviously, these two figures are not enough evidence to draw any reasonable conclusions about the number of playbills that would have circulated for a given play. Stern, *Documents of Performance*, 49.
[288] Stern, *Documents of Performance*, 48.
[289] Stern, *Documents of Performance*, 51.
[290] Zachary Lesser and Alan B. Farmer, "Vile Arts: The Marketing of English Printed Drama, 1512-1660," *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama: The Report of the Modern Language Association Conference*, 39 (2000): 78. For more on how title-pages were used to advertise play texts, see Peter W.M. Blayney, "The Publication of Playbooks," in *A New History of Early English Drama*, 413; Stern, *Documents of Performance*, 55 and Marjorie Plant, *English Book Trade: An Economic History of the Making and Sale of Book*, 3rd ed. (London: Allen and Unwin, 1974), 248.
[291] Stern, *Documents of Performance*, 55.
[292] Stern, *Documents of Performance*, 55-56. For Plant's argument, see *The English Book Trade*, 248. For McKerrow's, see "Booksellers, Printers, and the Stationers' Trade," in *Shakespeare's England*, vol 2. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916), 231.
[293] Peter W.M. Blayney, "The Publication of Playbooks," 390, emphasis his. Gabriel Egan also uses Blayney's insight to counter McKerrow's argument; Gabriel Egan, "'As it was, is, or will be played': Title-pages and the Theatre Industry to 1610," in *From Performance to Print in Shakespeare's England*, eds. Peter Holland and Stephen Orgel (New York: Palgrave, 2006), 95.
[294] Stern, *Documents of Performance*, 55-56.
[295] Complaints were made about playbills, but the complaints were made by Londoners bothered or annoyed by all the playbills scattered around the city. To my knowledge there is no evidence of playwrights complaining about how their plays were marketed. After all, the playwrights may have been among the players who "cried the play," an advertizing technique similar to playbills, so playwrights could have contributed to the broad marketing strategies of their own plays. For an account of those that complained about the ubiquity of playbills, see Stern, *Documents of Performance*, 51-52.
[296] Qtd in. Stern, *Documents of Performance*, 55.
[297] Qtd in Stern, *Documents of Performance*, 56.
[298] For this estimate, see Christine Eccles, *The Rose Theatre*, 131-137. And Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage*, 114.
[299] Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage*, 196.
[300] Blayney, "The Publication of Playbooks," 389. Kastan, drawing on Blayney and Lesser, estimates that it would take 500 copies to turn a profit. Kastan, *Shakespeare and the Book*, 23.
[301] Lesser, *Politics of Publication*, 20.
[302] John Suckling, *The Goblins* (London, 1646), epi. 8.
[303] Arden of Faversham, ed. M.L. Wine (London, Methuen & CO LTD: 1973). All subsequent quotations are from this Revels edition and citied in the text.
[304] Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1974).
[305] Both Derrida and Locoue-Labarthe (the latter heavily relying on the former) are interested in mimesis's philosophical rather than its interpretive impact. To vastly simplify their argument, they use the concept of

difference to show that mimesis is never able to represent reality but can only start a chain of signification that aims at, but never reaches, reality. Thus according to these writers, claims that texts are mimetic ignore the complex process of signification that enables/destabilizes meaning and reality itself. Both these writers are drawing on Martin Heidegger's "The Origin of the Work of Art," which also destabilizes the connection between the representation of reality and the reality that is being represented. Rene Girard and Jean Baudrillard are two other major post-Auerbach writers who have theorized about mimesis. However, Girard's concept of mimetic desire is of very little use for this study and Baudrillard's analysis of the way that simulations have replaced mimesis are only really applicable, according to his formulation, in a post-modern and hyper-real society. Jacques Derrida, *Disseminations*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1981), especially 173-227; Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics*, trans. Christopher Fynsk (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1989); Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Basic Writings*, trans. David Farrell Krell (HarperCollins: London, 2008),139-212; Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: Michigan UP, 1994), especially 1-7. Girard's work on mimetic desire is spread across numerous works; however, one key text is "Mimesis and Violence," in *The Girard Reader*, ed. James G. Williams (London: Crossroads, 1996), 9-19. For Girard's analysis of early modern drama, see *A Theater of Envy: William Shakespeare* (New York: Oxford UP, 1991). For a works that attempts to theorize about early modern conceptions of mimesis, see *Refiguring Mimesis: Representation in Early Modern Literature*, ed. Jonathan Holmes and Adrian Streete (Hatfield: Hertfordshire UP, 2005) and A.D. Nuttall, *A New Mimesis: Shakespeare and the Representation of Reality* (New York: Methuen, 1983). Neither the essays in *Refiguring Mimesis* nor Nuttall's book explores the connection between mimesis and interpretation even though both works cite Auerbach as a point of departure.

[306] Jonathan Holmes and Adrian Streete, "Introduction," *Refiguring Mimesis*, 4.

[307] In fact, playwrights' rejection of the classical unities and their rejection of traditional versions of mimesis are perhaps not unrelated. As I will argue, early modern playwrights attempted to distance their plays from reality rather than seeking to create imitations of reality. Likewise, their plays did not attempt to imitate time and space. Since their plays were not constructed as imitations of reality, they did not choose to play by the spatial and chronological rules of reality, and by not playing by these rules, the playwrights were producing anti-mimetic works of art, so the rejection of classical unities and anti-mimesis are mutually reinforcing.

[308] Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 16-17.

[309] Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 21.

[310] Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 19.

[311] Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 13.

[312] Zwicker, "The Constitution of Opinion," 209-300.

[313] For a methodical description of how reality can never be fully divorced from fiction, see John Searle, "The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse," *New Literary History* 6, no.2 (1975): 319-332.

[314] This function of performative utterances is clearly dramatized within *Eastward Ho*. As I argued in the previous chapter, Touchstone cannot disagree with Quicksilver's performance or interpret it as anything other than it is (an expression of his reformed character) because his repentance is constitutive of the performance of his repentance.

[315] Judd D. Hubert should be credited with recognizing that performative utterances or texts are incompatible with mimesis. Hubert, *Metatheater: The Example of Shakespeare* (Lincoln: Nebraska UP, 1991), 1-3.

[316] Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 13.

[317]Douglas Bruster and Robert Weimann, *Prologues to Shakespeare's Theatre: Performance and Liminality in Early Modern Drama* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 2. For a shorter version of Weimann and Bruster's argument, see Weimann, "Authority and Representation in the Pre-Shakespearean Prologue," in *Telling Stories: Studies in Honour of Ulrich Broich on the Occasion of his 60th Birthday*, eds. Elmar Lehmann and Bernd Lenz (Philadelphia: B.R. Gruner, 1992), 34-47. Although Bruster and Weimann recognize that stage-orations comment on the play's mimetic status, their work does not focus on mimesis or audience interpretation. Rather, they are interested in how the prologue legitimizes and grants authority to the playwrights and actors. Dougles L. Peterson also recognizes the link between stage-orations and mimesis, but does not connect mimesis to interpretation. He is concerned with how Shakespeare's beginnings and endings (but not necessarily prologues and epilogues) explore two different theories of

comedy, which rely on two different conceptions of mimesis. Douglas L. Peterson, "Beginnings and Endings: Structure and Mimesis in Shakespeare's Comedies," in *Entering the Maze: Shakespeare's Art of Beginning*, ed. Robert F. Wilson, Jr. (New York: Peter Lang, 1995), 37-54. For other works that explore early modern prologues and epilogues (but not their connection to mimesis), see G.S. Bower, *A Study of the Prologue and Epilogue in English Literature from Shakespeare to Dryden* (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, 1884); Autrey Nell Wiley, "The English Vogue of Prologues and Epilogues," *Modern Language Notes* 47, no.4 (1932): 255-257; Wiley, "Female Prologues and Epilogues in English Plays," *PMLA* 48, no.4 (1933): 1060-1079 and A.D. Nuttall, "Epilogue," in *Openings: Narrative Beginnings from the Epic to the Novel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 233-250.

[318] For the most part, I will investigate these stage-orations in isolation from the plays they frame mostly because I am uninterested in the stage-orations relationship with the text it is a part of. Instead, I am interested in the broad trend of early modern anti-mimesis that can be located in prologues. So the context of the prologues is not of great importance. Still, it should be pointed out that studying prologues in isolation from the works they frame is historically justified because the early modern stage-orations were often dislocated entities that were not always connected to the content of the play. Tiffany Stern has established that prologues were not always written by the playwright; they were often written by a member of the theater company who specialized in writing prologues. Furthermore, some prologues would only appear on opening night or would be taken from one play and used in another. Also, when stage-orations would appear in print, the epilogues and prologues would appear together either at the beginning or end of the text. And within some collections of plays, all the stage-orations for all the plays would be printed at the beginning or end of the collection and not directly after or before the play they are connected to. In short, early modern stage-orations were free-floating entities and so can be studied as such. See Tiffany Stern, "A Small-Beer Health to His Second Day": Playwrights, Prologues, and First Performances in the Early Modern Theater," *Studies in Philology* 101, no.2 (2004): 172-199.

[319] There are too many of these to cite here. For a representative example of a stage-oration that asks for kind judgment, see the prologue to Thomas Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday*. For an example of a stage-oration that sets up the plot, see the prologue to Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*.

[320] I arrived at this number by locating all the prologues and epilogues between these dates listed in Thomas L. Berger, William C. Bradford and Sidney L. Sondergrad, *An Index of Characters in Early Modern English Drama: Printed Plays, 1500-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998). I was unable to locate all of the stage-orations listed in this text either because the editors made mistakes, they were working from different editions or because they included speeches by characters that take the form of stage-orations but are not labeled as epilogues, prologues or inductions. To locate the stage-orations, I referenced all the early modern editions of the plays listed in *An Index of Characters* via EBBO and whenever possible consulted the physical text. It should be noted that although *An Index of Characters* does not contain a listing for inductions, it seems to include inductions with prologues. I assume this means that the authors conflate inductions and prologues; however, if this is not the case, then I may have overlooked some early modern inductions within my analysis. It should also be noted that although other scholars have arrived at different numbers of stage-orations, the difference is minimal, which suggests that my list of stage-orations is fairly complete. For instance, Wiley calculates that from 1558 to 1642 forty-eight percent of extent plays included a stage-oration. *An Index of Characters* lists 671 plays produced between 1560-1639 (including lost plays and Latin plays), so presumably Wiley found somewhere around 322 stage-orations. Bruster and Weimann, who also rely on *An Index of Characters*, find that 268 plays from 1560-1639 that contain prologues, but they do not include epilogues. Wiley, "The English Vogue of Prologues and Epilogues," 255. Bruster and Weimann, *Prologues to Shakespeare's Theatre*, 4.

[321] *Merry Devil of Edmonton*, ed. William Amos Abrams (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1942).

[322]One of the purposes of this prologue is to limit the satirical effect on the audience. As we will see, this same effect is produced by other plays through anti-mimesis. The playwrights tell the audience that the play does not correspond with reality in order to assure the audience that they are not being satirized. Thus, in the special case of *The Vow Breaker*, mimesis has the same superficial purpose as anti-mimesis.

[323] William Sampson, *The Vow Breaker or The Faire Maide of Clifton* (London, 1636).

[324] Annabel M. Patterson famously argues that these types of rhetorical gestures are used throughout the early modern era in order to both convey political messages to appropriate parties and avoid censorship. Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (Madison: Wisconsin UP, 1984).

[325] John Lyly, *Sappho and Phao*, ed. David Bevington (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1991). All subsequent quotations are from this Revels edition and citied in the text.
[326] John Lyly, *The Woman in the Moon*, ed. Leah Scragg (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2006).
[327] For the lack of a coherent early modern theory of dreams, see Peter Holland, "The Interpretation of Dreams in the Renaissance," in *Reading Dreams: The Interpretation of Dreams from Chaucer to Shakespeare*, ed. Peter Brown (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999), 125-146. For some of the differences between early modern dream theory and post-Freudian dream theory, see S.J. Wiseman, "Introduction," *Reading the Early Modern Dream: The Terrors of the Night* (New York: Routledge, 2008) 1-14 and Jeffery Maston, "*The Interpretation of Dreams*, circa 1610," in *Historicism, Psychoanalysis, and Early Modern Culture*, ed. Carlo Mazzio and Douglas Trevor (New York: Routledge, 2000), 157-185.
[328] Holland, "The Interpretation of Dreams in the Renaissance," 142-146.
[329] Qtd. in Holland, "The Interpretation of Dreams in the Renaissance," 145.
[330] For more on early moderns' ideas about the material causes of dreams, see Thomas Tryon, *Of the General Cause of Dreams* (London, 1691).
[331] For the popularity of Hill's treatise, see Holland, "The Interpretation of Dreams in the Renaissance," 144.
[332] Bevington also notes that this type of dismissal of dreams is common, citing Kyd's Cornelia, "We dream by night what we by day have thought" (3.1.66) and the proverbial expression, "Dreams are but lies." He also points out that this trope goes as far back as Chaucer's *Hous of Fame* and "the Nun's Priest's Tale." Bevington, *Sappho and Phao*, 281. For a summary of the early modern debate about the significance or insignificance of dreams, see Carole Levine, Dreaming the English Renaissance: Politics and Desire in Court and Culture (New York: Palgrave, 2008), especially 2-5.
[333] John Lyly, *Endymion*, ed. David Bevington (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1996).
[334] The early date of the performance is perhaps also significant. The play would have been produced before the playhouse riots discussed in the first chapter. So perhaps in the early 1580s playhouse audiences did not pose as significant a threat as they did later. However, by 1584 writers like John Northbrooke, Stephen Gosson, Anthony Munday and Philip Stubbes had already published several anti-theatrical tracts, so even at this early date, the public playhouses were under political pressure to control their audiences.
[335] Derek B. Alwes, "'I would faine serve': John Lyly's Career at Court," *Comparative Drama* 34, no. 4 (2000): 399-421; Michael Pincombe, *The Plays of John Lyly: Eros and Eliza* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1996).
[336] Auchter, *Dictionary of Literary and Dramatic Censorship*, xxi.
[337] Auchter, *Dictionary of Literary and Dramatic Censorship*, 171.
[338] John Fletcher, *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife*, ed. George Walton Williams, in *The Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon*, ed. Fredson Bowers, vol. 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1966).
[339] This is not to say that this was the only reason to set a play in another locale. Early modern drama was interested in exotic or foreign places for many reasons, and foreign cities were not always and only understood by the audience or playwrights as an analogue for London or England. For examples of critics who explore the complex inter-relationships between the foreign setting of a play and England, see the collection of essays in *Shakespeare, Italy and Intertextuality*, ed. Michele Marrapodi (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2004) and John Gilles, *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994). And of course, there are numerous works on early modern drama and post-colonialism that show how playwrights and audiences were interested in places other than England.
[340] Indeed, critics generally do not account for the differences between Italian Catholic and English Protestant marriage law when exploring the Duchess's marriage; the assumption seems to be that neither Webster nor his audience would be overly familiar with foreign legal traditions, so any law dramatized on the London stage would be thought of and should be treated as a representation of English law. For an account of this difference between the two state's laws as it applies to *Measure for Measure*, see Margaret Scott, "'Our City's Institutions': Some Further Reflections on the Marriage Contracts in *Measure for Measure*," *ELH* 49, no.4 (1982): 790-804. For a discussion of how the Duchess's story is also a narration of Arbelle Stuart, see Sara Jayne Steen, "The Crime of Marriage." For a discussion of how *The Duchess of Malfi* narrates English class conflict, see Frank Whigham, "Sexual and Social Mobility."
[341] The prologue is also asking the audience to imagine that although they are in England, they should think of themselves as watching Spain. Thus, like the chorus to *Henry V* discussed in the third chapter, this prologue is attempting to produce a double-consciousness in the audience.

[342] This anxiety about female playgoers' response to mimetic performance echoes the anxiety, described in the third chapter, about female playgoers' response to naturalistic or illusionary performances. However, there is an important difference: here the prologue is not concerned that the women in the audience won't understand they are watching a fictional representation. The prologue assumes that the female playgoers know that the play is a representation. The prologue is concerned about what the playgoers' believe the representation is representing – England's reality or Spain's.
[343] Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 13.
[344] Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker, *The Roaring Girl*, in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*. All subsequent quotations are from this Oxford edition and citied in the text.
[345] For a description of the evidence that suggests Mary Firth's participation in the performance, see Mark Hutchings, "Mary Firth at the Fortune," *Early Theatre* 10, no.1 (2007): 89-108. For a description of how closely Mary Firth's character and actions are represented on stage, see Gustav Ungerer, "Mary Frith, alias Moll Cutpurse, in life and literature," *Shakespeare Studies* 28 (2000): 42-84.
[346] Critics, such as Valerie Forman and Tracey Sedinger, have noted how the play itself explores questions concerning representation through the language of counterfeiting and cross-dressing; however, these studies suggest that the play explores these questions not as reflections on performance and playgoing, but to represent and comment on the economic and social conditions of early modern London. Valerie Forman, "Marked angels: counterfeits, commodities, and *The Roaring Girl*," *Renaissance Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (2001): 1531-1560; Tracey Sedinger, "'If sight and shape be true': the epistemology of cross-dressing on the London stage," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48, no.1 (1997): 63-79.
[347] And, of course, by asserting that her character lies, the prologue is participating in the long association of fiction with lies that starts with Plato and would have been familiar to the audience through antitheatrical arguments.
[348] The epistle to the reader in 1611 edition of the play also seems to question the reliability of the representation of Mary Firth by suggesting that the play represents her as better than she really was and claims that "'tis the excellency of a writer to leave things better than he finds 'em"(21-22).
[349] Miles Taylor, "The End of the English History Play in *Perkin Warbeck*," *SEL* 48, no.2 (2008) 398.
[350] Howard Felperin, "Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*: History as Myth," *SEL* 6, no. 2 (1966): 227. Irving Ribner disagrees and argues that *Henry VIII* actually follows Holinshed more faithfully than his early history plays. Matthew H. Wikander convincingly argues that both Ribner and Felperin are correct because "in *Henry VIII* the chronicles are extensively used, but radically rearranged." (199). Irving Ribner, *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1957); Matthew H. Wikander, "Strange Truths: English Historical Drama in the Seventeenth Century," *Genre* 9 (1976): 193-214.
[351] Wikander, "Strange Truths," 197; E.M.W. Tillyard, "Why did Shakespeare Write *Henry VIII*?," *Critical Quarterly* 3 (1961): 22-27.
[352] Wikander, "Strange Truths," 196-197.
[353] Phyllis Rackin, *Stages of History: Shakespeare's English Chronicles* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1990), 13.
[354] Indeed, Rackin finds that Shakespeare's early history plays are also interested in early modern theories of history. She maintains that the "historical story [that Shakespeare's history plays] tell is also a story of historiographic production." Rackin, *Stages of History*, 61. Thus, Shakespeare's problematizing of mimesis through irony in the prologue to *Henry VIII* can be seen as part of a larger trend of early modern historiography.
[355] Taylor, "The End of the English History Play," 400.
[356] Matthew H. Wikander, *The Play of Truth and State: Historical Drama from Shakespeare to Brecht* (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1986), 1. Note that Wikander points to the beginning of the seventeenth century as the time when the new historiography began to impact the stage, and Rackin finds evidence that the new early modern theories of history are influencing Shakespeare's history plays at the end of the sixteenth century. The precise time that plays began responding to the new historiography is not that important for this study since, as pointed out above, this trend seems to dovetail with the larger trend of anti-mimesis. That is, the new historiography did not cause anti-mimetic tendencies on the stage, rather anti-mimetic tendencies always existed on the early modern stage and the new historiography corresponds with this already established trend.
[357] Rackin, *Stages of History*,12.
[358] Rackin *Stages of History*, 19; see also Taylor, "The End of the English History Play," 397-398.

[359] For a full treatment of this separation, see Taylor, "The End of the English History Play," 396-399.
[360] Taylor, "The End of the English History Play," 399.
[361] Jonas Barish, "*Perkin Warbeck* as Anti-History," *Essays in Criticism* 20, no.2 (1970): 154.
[362] Barish, "*Perkin Warbeck*," 154. The other major departure from the received chronicle is Katherine's refusal to remarry.
[363] Barish "*Perkin Warbeck*," 159.
[364] The Revels 2nd edition, which this study has relied on throughout, pluralizes "end," so the last line reads, "shall crown the ends." This appears to be a typo or mistake. Clive Hart's Oliver and Boyd edition and Leah S. Marcus's Arden edition both use "end," and neither edition cite any textual variants of this word. Indeed, the first quarto of 1623 and the third quarto of 1678 do not pluralize "end." Thus, I have changed "ends" to "end," even though I continue to rely on the Revels edition. This slight difference will become fairly significant later in the argument. Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*, ed. Clive Hart (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1972); Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*, ed. Leah S. Marcus (London: Arden, 2009).
[365] fame, n.1a Second edition, 1989; online version November 2010. <http://www.oed.com:80/Entry/67941>; 23 February 2011.
[366] Stanley Fish, *There's No Such Thing as Free Speech: And it's a Good Thing Too* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994).
[367] Patterson comes to a similar conclusion within her discussion of censorship. She also finds that censorship can in fact produce creativity. Though I am arguing, more broadly, that material and economic forces, not just state censorship, is also productive. Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation*, 3-31.