

“Covetous to parley with so sweet a frontis-peece”:
Illustration in Early Modern English Play-Texts

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

This dissertation studies visual artifacts associated with early modern theatre and book culture, and through them examines acts of communication in the marketplace. These artifacts, illustrated play-text title pages from the period 1600 to 1660, provide scholars with an opportunity to better understand the discursive power of theatre and subjects associated with drama in seventeenth-century London. This work offers a set of case studies that demonstrate how title page imagery and its circulation can contribute to our understanding of contemporary theatre culture, and addresses questions of intention, production and distribution. As well, it offers insights into early modern modes of constructing visualization. These artifacts served not only as visual reminders or interpretations of the dramatic works they represented, but were also used as powerful marketing tools that enhanced the cultural capital of the plays throughout London. The title pages were used as posters, tacked to the walls of the booksellers' shops; the woodcuts were also repurposed, and incorporated into other popular publications such as broadside ballads, which retold the plots of the plays in musical form and were sold on city street corners. These connections raise questions about early modern forms of marketing used by publishers, and challenge the widely accepted belief that images held little value in the society and in the culture of print of the period. In addition, the distribution of these illustrations challenges the widespread conviction that early modern English culture was iconophobic, and suggests that seventeenth-century English society embraced rather than spurned visual media.

Methodologically, this study is built on the foundations laid by scholars of English theatre and print culture. Within those fields, however, it has been customary to view these title page illustrations as inferior forms of representation, especially in comparison to their continental counterparts. By using tools from visual rhetoric to expand on how and what these

images communicate, I am able to show the important functions they performed, and the distinct and playful way they represent complex relationships between stage and page, audience and performance, reading and spectating. These readings, in turn, enrich our historical understanding of the cultures of print and theatre, and build upon our knowledge of the interactions between these rich and important fields.

Each chapter explores theoretical and contextual questions that pertain to some aspect of each illustration, as well as examining whether individual illustrations can inform us further about early modern theatrical performance practices. The introduction surveys the relevant field and introduces the theoretical resources that will be used in the subsequent chapters. Chapter Two examines the 1633 edition of *Arden of Faversham* and the question of whether the action in the illustration pertains to the play or to a broadside ballad that appeared in the same year. The third chapter provides a theoretical analysis of the performance of violence in the woodcut for *The Spanish Tragedy*, and how emphatic elements in the image may demonstrate the influence of theatrical performance upon the artist. Chapter Four explores the relationship between the title page of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* and the concept of celebrity in relation to the Tarltonesque clown character who dominates the action of the image. Chapter Five considers the problematic relationship between theatre, politics and satire in the competing engraved title pages for *A Game at Chess*. The conclusion draws together the findings, and points to other aspects of early modern print and theatre cultures to which they pertain.

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Opportunities to undertake research at the Newberry and Folger libraries profoundly improved my understanding of the material relationship between these play-texts and images.

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Dedication

To my mother, Robert, Lynne, Peg, Rand, Kate, Emily and Scott: I am grateful and humbled beyond words for the unfailing love and unstinting support that you have given me throughout this long, strange journey.

And to my father: *ne plus ultra*.

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List of Abbreviations

DEEP. Database of Early English Playbooks (online database).

EBBA. English Broadside Ballad Archive (online database).

EEBO. Early English Books Online (online database).

ESTC. English Short Title Catalogue (online database).

KVL. Kress and Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*.

NPG. National Portrait Gallery (online database).

ODNB. Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (online edition).

OED. Oxford English Dictionary (online edition).

SCETI. Schoenberg Center for Electronic Text & Image (online database).

Chapter One: Introduction

“With New Additions of the Painters’ Part:” Illustrated Play-Text Title Pages in

Early Modern England

It is appropriate to begin an examination of early modern illustrated play-text title pages with one of the best-recognized woodcuts associated with early English drama. The title page of Christopher Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* [Figure 1], which included this woodcut scene on seven out of ten editions between 1604 and 1663,¹ provides a helpful example of the benefits and challenges inherent in analyzing such artifacts for clues about early modern theatrical performance practices and publication trends. One must look at the title page as a work of blended media, a communication of textual and paratextual information as well as the composition and content of the scene. In this case, we learn that *The Tragicall Historie of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* has been published “with new Additions.” An abbreviated version of the author’s name – Ch. Mar. – has been included (not a common factor in play-texts of this period). We also learn where the play has been printed – at London, for the publisher John Wright (about whom more will be learned in chapter two) and its date, 1631. The viewer is also directed where to purchase the play – at Wright’s shop “without Newgate.” The woodcut scene is well designed, with a strong sense of perspective and attention to detail. It is also provocative, presenting a figure engaging in occult practices and accompanied by an anthropomorphic demon. The engraver has taken care to incorporate tools and accoutrements associated with alchemists, such as the armillary sphere at top left and the picture of the phoenix at top right. He has also

¹ The last edition actually featured a new woodcut that was a very close copy of its predecessor, necessitated probably by excessive wear or breakage of the original woodblock.

The Tragical Historie of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus.

With new Additions.

Written by C. H. M. A. R.

Christopher Marlowe



Printed at London for *John Wright*, and are to be sold at his
shop without Newgate. 1631.

Figure 1: *Doctor Faustus*, 1631 edition

articulated astrological symbols in the circle within which the human figure stands. The man's clothes identify him as an academic, but the fabrics and patterns of which they are made suggest he is successful and wealthy. The incorporation of thick clasped books on a shelf as well as one in his hand reinforces the man's connection to learning. The demon is presented in a subordinate pose, bowing or crouching before the man and gesturing with his winged, clawed arm in what appears to be a sign of supplication. The presence of a cross seems somewhat discordant to the modern viewer who may "read" this picture as involving some sort of devil worship, but is actually representative of a much more complicated relationship between astrology and theology during the sixteenth century.²

By extending the close reading of the title page to include the text of the play, and by including contextual historical research into the seventeenth-century English understanding of the Faust myth as well as perspectives on science and alchemy, we can introduce greater complexity to the scene as concerns the relationship between science and magic, as well as morality and mortality. We can pinpoint the moment in the text that is represented in the woodcut as the lines 1-23 in 1.3 when Faustus takes his book of spells and his white stick, and calls upon Mephistopheles to appear.³ The demon appears in his true bestial form, which Faustus finds repugnant. Mephistopheles disappears and reappears in the garb of a friar. We are thus able to identify a precise correlation between image and text; in performance, such a presentation

² John Dee, for example, was trained in theology at Cambridge and was known as a practitioner with interests in science and English nationalism as well as astrology and the occult. For a helpful analysis of the interrelationship between magic, science, imperial ambition and how they were reflected in Elizabethan drama and literature, see John S. Mebane's *Renaissance Magic and the Return of the Golden Age: The Occult Tradition and Marlowe, Jonson, and Shakespeare*, particularly chapter five: "Magic, Science and Witchcraft in Renaissance England" 73-112.

³The speech links together religious, astrological and occult references: "Within this circle is Jehovah's name/Forward and backward annagrammatized,/Th'breuiated names of holy saints,/Figures of every adjunct to the heavens,/And characters of signs and erring stars,/By which the spirits are enforced to rise." (1.3.8-13)

would presumably have been accompanied by some sort of special effect on stage⁴ and therefore been both memorable to a customer at a bookstall who had seen the play and evocative to one who had not but knew some form of the myth. But what can we learn of contemporary theatrical practice from this image? Certainly the setting is suggestive of a scholar's study, but not commensurate with our understanding of contemporary set design,⁵ and the small demon-figure crouched beside Faustus does not appear to represent an actor playing the role of Mephistopheles.⁶ Moreover, while the illustration captures a precise moment from the play, the Faustus figure appears static or posed. There is no sense of action or movement. What clues, if any, has the engraver provided that will assist in expanding our understanding of how such a scene might have been performed on the public stage during the early decades of the seventeenth century?

In recent years we have seen a surge in scholarship devoted to early modern print images. In disciplines such as the histories of science and architecture, this attention has provided valuable insights. Popular publications including illustrations, such as pamphlets and broadsides,

⁴ In *Astrolagaster* (1620), John Melton dismisses the power of astrology and those who subscribe to it by comparing it to the special effects displayed at a performance of *Faustus* at the Fortune Theatre, "There indeed a man may behold shagge-hayr'd deuills runne roaring ouer the Stage with Squibs in their mouthes, while Drummers make thunder in the Tying-house, and the twelue-penny Hirelings make artificial Lightning in the Heuens," 31.

⁵ See Andrew Gurr's *The Shakespearean Stage*, in particular chapter five, "The Staging" for an examination of period stage design and practice 172-211.

⁶ By comparison, the devil figure in *The World Tossed at Tennis* [Figure 13] is almost certainly meant to represent an actor in a devil costume. Henslowe's diary lists an "owld Mahemetes head" and an "Argosse head" but not a devil's suit or mask. (Henslowe Papers, Appendix I 116-7). In *Histrion-Mastix*, William Prynne reported that "the visible apparition of the devil on the stage at the Bel Savage playhouse in Queen Elizabeth's days (to the great amazement both of the actors and spectators), whiles they were there profanely playing the *History of Faustus*, the truth of which I have heard from many now alive who well remember it, there being some distracted with that fearful sight" (as qtd. in *English Professional Theatre: 1530-1660*, 303). Whether the demon was performed by a man in a mask and costume or represented by a stuffed dummy, the scene clearly called for stage business that would startle and unsettle the audience.

have been used by scholars of Renaissance print culture as new resources for understanding contemporary public discourse. Theatre historians have been less inclined to incorporate images into their research about early modern theatre, and have been historically hesitant to identify woodcut and copperplate-engravings⁷ attached to printed play-texts as documentary evidence of theatrical performance or practice. The example of the *Doctor Faustus* woodcut speaks to this hesitation; while it reveals much about a moment in the play, it does not offer much suggestion of what the scene looked like on stage.

Project Scope

At the same time that theatre historians hesitate to rely on play-text illustrations as indicators of theatre practice, scholars continue to search for a methodology that would enable them to better situate these images in the study of early modern drama. My dissertation aims to assist in this project, concentrating on the illustrated title pages (and front matter, as with *Arden of Faversham*) of printed English drama from 1600 to 1660. It offers a set of four case studies – *Arden of Faversham*, *The Spanish Tragedy*, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, and *A Game at Chess* – demonstrating how title page imagery and its circulation can contribute to our understanding of theatre culture in early modern London. It also addresses questions of intention, production and distribution and offers insights into early modern modes of constructing visuality. This sixty-year period provides evidence of significant change in the areas of theatre production and publishing. While popular plays were printed in the sixteenth century, engraved scenes and depictions of characters associated with the plays were not incorporated into the printed texts

⁷ I use the term engraving in its broad sense, to encompass both woodcut and copperplate engravings employed for the purposes of producing such play-text illustrations. This is in keeping with the OED definition for “engrave” that refers generally to carving in use in the sixteenth century. The specific reference to engraving on metal plates (def. 4) does not come into use until the second half of the seventeenth century.

with any regularity until after 1600. And although the London theatres were officially closed after 1642, a number of plays that had been performed on stage were printed in new editions with these illustrations attached throughout the eighteen years until the Restoration, and beyond. A thorough examination of these illustrations leads to a better understanding of this significant period in the history of English drama and book publishing. At a time when London's public theatres were often inaccessible to audiences due to health issues and political restrictions,⁸ the increasing availability of printed popular drama,⁹ combined with the marked expansion of literacy in London, offered a new means of presenting drama to the public.

These illustrations provide us with valuable information about the early modern imagination and powers of visualization. The act of reading a play, a skill we now take for granted, would have been an intellectual challenge to readers of popular publications in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries: aside from the classic-inspired dramas and comedies that were written to assist university students in developing their powers of logic, the reading public had little experience with the format of written drama.¹⁰ By presenting a recognizable or provocative scene from a play on its title page, publishers not only appealed to theatregoers to experience a familiar play in a new medium, they provided readers with visual cues to aid in decoding the play-text. The case studies presented in this project all represent different

⁸ Andrew Gurr suggests that Parliament's order to have the playhouses closed in September 1642 may not have been meant as a long-term measure; however, the "order explicitly offered the judgement that the times were too seriously disturbed for such frivolities as plays to be tolerable. It was in its macabre way a repetition of the lengthy closures ordered because of the plague epidemics when Elizabeth and James died" *Playgoing* 10.

⁹ I distinguish here between popular drama, written to be performed on the public stage, and closet or Senecan drama, which was composed primarily for non-theatrical consumption.

¹⁰ In *The Tudor Play of Mind*, Joel B. Altman examines at length how Elizabethan playwrights received intensive rhetorical training in grammar school and university, and how this affected the way they wrote plays and how the educated reader would have read them. Altman's thesis does not take into account the many readers who were not so thoroughly educated in the traditional curriculum.

approaches that would have helped to connect the potential reader shopping for books at St. Paul's Churchyard or Smithfield Market with the drama enthusiast in the galleries of the Globe or Swan. These illustrated title pages served as valuable marketing materials in three ways: play-texts were sold unbound, so these title pages served as the early modern equivalent of richly designed dust jackets; printers produced extra quantities of title pages that were tacked to the walls and posts of booksellers' shops; and the woodcut inserts from the title pages were repurposed for use in other popular publications such as ballads, and perhaps even as advertisements for the plays in performance.

Objects of Study

Plays were printed in England during the mid- to late-sixteenth century, although most of these were court interludes such as *Fulgens and Lucrece* and *The Four PPs*, or university dramas such as *Gammer Gurton's Needle* and *Ralph Roister Doister*. These plays were often printed by Oxford-based publishers; title page illustrations consisted mainly – if at all – of decorative borders and printers' marks. The London-based publication of popular plays began in earnest in the early 1590s. If surviving play-texts are representative, the incorporation of engraved illustrations addressing some aspect of the play – whether scene or portrait – came years later. Aside from the allegorical scene on the 1590 edition of Robert Wilson's *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*, the next instance of an illustrated play-text title page occurred in 1605 with Thomas Heywood's *If You Know Not Me You Know Nobody*.¹¹ Not until the later years of James I's reign did publishers begin to incorporate theatrical scenes into the title pages of these plays with any type of regularity. Considering the ambiguous role of public theatres in London life in the first half of the seventeenth century, the publishers' commitment to identifying the

¹¹ This biographical play about Elizabeth I appeared in two parts, in twelve editions between 1605 and 1639, ten of which featured a woodcut portrait of the queen.

theatrical foundation of print drama is particularly intriguing, and these illustrations expand our understanding of the relationship between London's theatrical spectators and reading public during this period.

Forming conclusions about the relationship between printed plays and illustration in the first half of the seventeenth century is difficult because publishing data does not reveal easily recognizable patterns.¹² Of 738 extant editions of play-texts published between 1605 and 1660, only ninety-two feature a title page illustration meant to invoke the play. Of these, fifty-seven are unique plays, and only eleven of the rest show reuse of an illustration from one edition to the next. But of these eleven, all but two were published in an edition with the same illustration more than fifteen years later.¹³ The number of illustrated editions represents approximately 8%¹⁴ of all extant individual play-texts printed during these fifty-five years.¹⁵ This relatively small corpus of illustrated texts raises significant questions about why publishers chose to commission illustrations for some plays and only in certain editions.

The fact that the majority of play-texts appeared with text-only or non-specific decorative engraving may have been an indication of publishers' caution in investing extra capital in the risk-filled production of a relatively new print category. Peter Blayney argues that, compared with other mainstream publications such as sermons and political pamphlets, early modern printed drama did not always provide the return on investment that modern scholars have assumed ("Publication of Playbooks" 412). While Alan Farmer and Zachary Lesser have

¹² Much, however, can be learned through cross-referencing Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser's *DEEP: Database of Early English Playbooks* with W.W. Greg's *Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration*.

¹³ Or, as in the case of the previously cited *Doctor Faustus*, a copy of the original woodcut.

¹⁴ This number includes only scenes or portraits related to the plays. Many more plays included decorative borders, coats of arms (especially in the cases of guild-sponsored civic plays) or printers' marks that have nothing to do with the plays to which they were affixed.

¹⁵ This data was extrapolated from *DEEP*.

demonstrated that a reexamination of the publishing data for this period reveals that publishers were more inclined to invest in second and even third editions of individual plays than Blayney determined (“Popularity of Playbooks” 6), this reevaluation does not extend to illustrated editions. Some play-texts, such as Beaumont and Fletcher’s *A King and No King*, featured a scene in the first edition but not in any of the subsequent four editions through 1655. On the other hand, Thomas Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy* saw six editions between 1592 and 1610 before the woodcut that will be examined in chapter three was affixed to the title page in 1615 (and included in the three succeeding editions through 1633). The Stationers’ Company registers do not document the inclusion of engravings in editions, and the lack of documents providing information about how publishers commissioned these engravings and why or when they chose to include them makes any kind of survey conducted along these lines impossible. Genre also gives little guidance: there does not appear to be a particular trend in what types of plays were illustrated, although one may observe that ten of the illustrations feature scenes of violence. Most interesting is the revelation of which playwrights’ plays were - or were not - illustrated. None of Shakespeare or Jonson’s individual play-texts featured a title page engraving.¹⁶ However, in the same period seven of Middleton’s plays (25%), eight of Beaumont’s plays (26%), and twenty of Thomas Heywood’s plays (40%) featured such illustrations.¹⁷ This preference of certain playwrights’ work over others is puzzling, but cannot be used as a gauge of popularity, style, or customer-base. As tempting as it is to surmise a reason for these tendencies, without proper documentary evidence demonstrating why Shakespeare’s editions were undecorated while Heywood’s were overwhelmingly so, the question must remain an unresolved curiosity.

¹⁶ The first illustrated edition of Shakespeare’s works was published by Nicholas Rowe in 1709, but the engravings appeared within the text rather than on the cover.

¹⁷ Some of these plays were co-written with other playwrights.

The decision to add to the expense of publishing a play-text by incorporating a custom designed engraving could not have been made lightly, and publishers apparently sought out ways to maximize the return on their investment in such engravings by applying them to other publications as well. This study focuses on the engravings featured in play-texts, but also takes into account other forms of popular illustrated publications, including broadside ballads and religio-political pamphlets, in cases where the woodblocks were repurposed or copperplate- engravings show distinct influence in composition or style. While many critics believe that the Renaissance print tradition of reusing woodcuts for a variety of publications in several genres undermines the possibility that they might have been purpose-carved for a particular play, I believe that this reuse reveals a powerful connection between theatre and popular discourse. Tessa Watt emphasizes the importance of the image to broadside ballads as part of what she calls “marketing strategy” (*Cheap Print and Popular Piety* 32). At the same time that a small percentage of printed plays were accompanied by illustrations, Watt demonstrates that an overwhelming majority of ballads were accompanied by illustrations, many of them with specific relationship to the text.¹⁸ The relationship between contemporary plays and ballads during this period, both in terms of illustration usage and perpetuation of narrative and theme to the general public, should not be underestimated. In the last years of James’s reign, as his international policy of non-intervention failed and his negotiations for a marriage between Prince Charles and the Catholic Spanish Infanta dragged out and then collapsed, pamphleteers became more bold in their criticism of English policies and the influence Spanish diplomats seemed to have over James and his court. Helen Pierce analyzes how satirical and often scatological images of

¹⁸ Watt states that in the period 1600-40, thirty-eight of forty-five broadsides feature illustrations, and the majority of these were specific to the text. See *Cheap Print and Popular Piety* 78-9 and 149.

Catholic and Spanish figures were incorporated into many of these pamphlets, and how they became the focal point of complaints to the king by offended diplomats such as Conde Gondomar (*Unseemly Pictures* 35-6).

The repeated use of title page woodcuts in other publications as well as marketing materials would have served the playhouse as well as the printing house. Tiffany Stern believes such title pages also provide a missing link to playbills promoting the plays in performance. As play-text covers in the bookseller's shop¹⁹ and as single-sheet flyers nailed to available posts and beams around London, these were advertisements imbued with significant cultural capital. They promoted the same work, only in different forms. And ballad or prose versions of the plots, such as those involving characters from *Arden of Feversham* and *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, further reinforced plots and themes. Stern suggests that the promotional pages were more resonant for Londoners than the plays in performance or print: "For many the bills were the nearest they would get to a play or a book, and the grounds on which they would build all their theories about what was going on inside the theater or inside the text" ("On each Wall" 80). The title page becomes the nexus of information: viewers bring to it their conceptions of the dramatic work (from ballads or word of mouth) and take away an important marketing message (where they can buy a copy).

The question of which members of the early modern publishing industry were involved in commissioning, printing, and making available these engraved editions to the public is important to this study. There is no way to easily differentiate contemporary publishers from printers and booksellers.²⁰ While some, such as Augustine Mathewes, seem rooted to one aspect of the

¹⁹ In "The Publication of Playbooks" Peter Blayney argues that "books as slim as most play quartos would usually be sold without bindings" 414.

²⁰ Blayney defines the job descriptions of each in "The Publication of Playbooks" 389-91, but does not go so far as to categorize particular members of the trade too narrowly.

publishing process (Mathewes was one of the more prolific printers of his time), others – including Edward Allde and Nicholas Okes – functioned in at least two of these capacities. Furthermore, while these names appear repeatedly in association with the publication of play-texts, there was also a connection with other forms of popular publication: for example, Allde was one of a group of six publisher-printers who negotiated a monopoly of the distribution of broadside ballads after 1626, a partnership his wife Elizabeth sustained after his death (Gadd *ODNB*). Nicholas Okes was also known for producing political pamphlets and civic-oriented publications and published Thomas Middleton’s pamphlets as well as his plays and pageants.²¹ These overlaps suggest that various genres of drama could be aligned with larger categories of printed works: different publishers recognized the revenge tragedy of Kyd or the political satire of Middleton as having significant appeal for their particular customer-bases.

While analysis of aggregate data reflecting the cultures of play-text printing during the sixty-year span of this study produces some insights and starting-points, this dissertation focuses on individual illustrations and concentrates on examining the unique aspects of each engraving in relation to the play it accompanies. Close, contextualized reading of the images also allows comparison of specific aspects of the illustrations with those in other forms of popular publication. The case studies that form the basis of this dissertation are grounded in a visual analysis of a specific illustration that examines the question of whether traces of early modern theatrical performance can be elicited from the representations. Each chapter also explores theoretical and contextual questions that pertain to some aspect of each illustration. Ultimately, this analysis provides insight into the nexus that formed during this period between the audiences at the theatres and the customers at the booksellers’ shops.

²¹ This information was extrapolated by cross-referencing Okes and Middleton in the *ESTC*.

Theoretical Framework

This study is primarily historical in nature and dependent on the context of contemporary play-going and play-text publication and circulation established by such scholars as John Astington, Peter Blayney, Andrew Gurr and Gary Taylor. However, application of certain tools from the field of visual rhetoric, in particular those developed by Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen, are useful in the analysis of isolated images, and the function of the images as a group. Specifically, I employ those tools that emphasize a comprehensive analysis of visual media through semiotics, modality and composition, and draw from theories of hypermedia, which consider the relationship between text and image to be dialogic (Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation* 19). Because analysis of images in printed texts in this period has normally been thematic and iconographic, the formal approaches used in visual rhetoric expand upon what we already know about how and what these images communicate, and enlarge our understanding of them and their importance. Theatre and book historians have tended to look at these illustrations, primarily the woodcuts, as primitive and crude. Edward Hodnett points out that “passing remarks by literary scholars about illustrations sometimes betray unbecoming ignorance of technical processes and the conditions attending their use” (*Image and Text* 19). He makes a case for attempting to assess the value of such woodcuts without imposing modern prejudices upon early modern drafting practices. Scholars also presume a lack of technical skill in English engravings, in comparison to contemporary works from the Continent, as well as in contrast to more recent engravings that are more in line with modern aesthetic judgments. Analysis of these images using the tools of visual rhetoric can help us better understand their importance and function within contemporary dramatic and print cultures.

The continued incorporation of illustrations into play-text title pages and front matter during this period suggests that publishers recognized the marketing value inherent in presenting a hypermedial message to their customers. The placement of such an illustration would have drawn the purchaser's attention and enhanced the play-text's communication value, especially when one considers the number of competing volumes on display in the bookselling centers at St. Paul's and Smithfield.²² In visual rhetoric, illustrations such as these are understood to construct relationships between viewers and the subject matter. Kress and Van Leeuwen identify two types of participants in images: *represented participants*, the people, the places, and things depicted in images; and *interactive participants*, the people who communicate with each other *through* images, namely the producers and the viewers of images (KVL 114). The represented participants will be examined in depth in the case studies below, but I stress here that the interactive participants in this exchange included not only the bookseller and the potential buyer, but also the publishers, printers and artists involved in the design and production of these illustrations, and other purchasers. The illustrations construct relationships between potential purchasers and the network of relationships upon which the burgeoning print culture of early modern England depended. They are therefore nodal points in the broader web of communication that depended on, and shaped, social, intellectual, and commercial relations of the time.

Social semiotics, on which the theories of visual rhetoric employed in this dissertation are based, considers all acts of communication to be interactive. One of the most important concepts

²² Peter Blayney samples the publication of plays in comparison with all titles catalogued in the *Short Title Catalogue*, on an average annual basis over three periods: 1583-1602, 1603-1622, and 1623-1642. The average number of plays published per annum in the first period was 4.8; in the second, 5.75; and in the third, 8. For the same three periods the average of all titles was 300, 480, and a little over 600. See "The Publication of Playbooks" 384-5.

within social semiotics is “modality,” which “ refers to the truth value or credibility of...statements about the world” (KVL 155). The assessment of modality is social, “dependent on what is considered real (or true, or sacred) in the social group for which the representation is primarily intended” (KVL 156). Within social contexts and within genres, however, we can list the criteria by which higher or lower levels of modality are established. Kress and Van Leeuwen have identified eight modality markers that can be applied to images. Five of them are related to color and more intricate forms of illustration that are more relevant to printed images from later periods than that with which this study is concerned. But three do offer assistance in interpreting early modern play-text illustrations. By analyzing levels of *contextualization* (absence, presence, and/or degree of detailed background), *representation* (the scale from maximum abstraction to maximum realism) and *depth* (absence of depth to maximally deep perspective) we can assess the truth-value or credibility these illustrations might have for viewers (KVL 161-2), and use that information to judge the nature of the act of communication performed by these images. For example, the *Arden of Faversham* woodcut [Figure 2] has a high level of contextualization and representation – there is a great amount of fabric detail (pattern, adornment and draping), as well as hatching beneath several characters to suggest shadow and movement. The artist has integrated many physical elements of the scene as described in the text to enhance its credibility, including the backgammon board, the candle on the table, and the blacked out windows to indicate night. Moreover, the artist has demonstrated great attention to the depiction of the actions and intentions of the figures. However, the perspective is off-kilter – while we can identify a central point in the action of the picture (the armed man standing over Arden with a knife), the lines of the door at left, the difference between the height of the floor at left and right, and the angle of the table are all discordant. In the terms offered by Kress and Van Leeuwen, the

Arden illustration has mixed modality markers that evoke the real, while at the same time relying on non-naturalistic conventions of the representation of theatrical space – conventions we can establish by examining other illustrations of the time.

Kress and Van Leeuwen also identify composition as the way by which the representational and interactive meanings of the image identified are deployed. They identify three ways to measure the impact of composition on communication. *Information value* affects how the placement of elements in ‘zones’ – left and right, top and bottom, center and margin – determines our reading of their importance to the visual narrative. *Saliency* indicates how these elements attract the viewer’s attention due to placement, size, and tonal contrast. *Framing* signifies how the use of devices to connect or disconnect elements in relationship with each can determine our interpretation (KVL 177). While these systems are also considered interrelated, it is possible to apply the compositional features individually to the analysis of an illustration. For example, the information in the *Spanish Tragedy* illustration [Figure 9] is presented in a “center/margin” layout that reinforces the importance of the protagonist, Hieronimo, whose story of vengeance is central to the plot of the play. He is placed in the middle of the composition, with sword and torch, discovering his son’s body (at left margin) while Lorenzo drags off Bel-Imperia (at right margin). By looking at the *Game at Chess* engravings [Figures 18 and 19], we see how saliency can be applied to a visual analysis. The viewer’s attention is drawn first to the large figures engaged in some sort of communication. This communication is affected by the inclusion of the smaller figures in the chess bag (especially in the Q3 version) that appear below and between the large figures. It is impossible to determine whether they are to be seen as from a distance or as miniature versions of the large figures, but in either case they reinforce the chess allegory presented by the oversized chessboard and provide a sense of foreshadowing about the

fate of the prominent figures. In the Q1 version of the engraving, the middle panel featuring the grouped Black and White Houses surrounding a chessboard also serves to reinforce the allegory. In addition, the Q1 version provides an example of framing with its bordered panels. The *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* illustration [Figure 14] presents a more integrated example of framing, in which the jesting clown at left is effectively isolated from the sleeping friars at right by the table placed between them. And yet the composition is unified by the banderoles or speech balloons emitting from the Brazen Head in the upper center of the illustration: one unfurls to the left, toward the clown; one scroll hangs straight down over the table; and the third spreads out over Bacon and Bungay and encompasses their alchemical tools. While Kress and Van Leeuwen have focused their analytical energies mainly on modern art, film, and advertising, these tools afford the scholar of theatre and book history a valuable approach to examination of these title page illustrations.

Summary

To summarize, early modern play-text illustrations are significant sources of information about how people read play-texts, why they purchased them, and what they made of what they had read. Despite the fact that our information about the publication and circulation of these works is fragmentary, the surviving examples have much to tell us about how visual materials were used to negotiate the relationships between reading a play-text and seeing a performance, between play-texts and works in other genres, and between reading words and reading images. This dissertation offers new readings of these illustrations, and establishes contexts – both historical and theoretical – for them that allow us to better understand why they were made and what value they had to the reading public. While it may be true that they are “crude” or “inept” – and I will argue that they are not always so – their value as sites of interaction and forms of communication

should not be under-estimated. Indeed they provide, as I hope the remainder of this dissertation will show, a distinct and even unique perspective on the cultures of print, and of theatre, in early modern England.

Chapter Abstracts

Chapter Two: “‘Ah, Master Arden, Now I can take you’: Analyzing Composition in the *Arden of Faversham* Illustration”

Chapter two provides an example of the challenges these engravings pose to theatre scholars. The woodcut attached to the reverse of the title page of the play’s 1633 edition presents a complex sequence of the climactic murder scene, in which Master Arden is killed by his wife, her lover, and a group of hired murderers. This domestic and homiletic tragedy, based on an actual murder in Kent in the mid-sixteenth century, provided provocative subject matter for writers – it was documented at length in Holinshed’s *Chronicles*, and was the subject of a confessional ballad as well as the play.

Arden of Faversham was printed at least twice after its 1592 registration with the Stationers’ Company. The woodcut was added for the 1633 edition, within months of an edition of a ballad told from the viewpoint of the condemned Mistress Arden as she prepares for her execution. Scholars have struggled with the fact that this image was shared between two published works in different genres; the near simultaneous publication by two different publishers complicates the illustration’s relationship to both texts. In consequence, it has been customary to set the illustration aside when evaluating it in terms of its relevance to contemporary theatre practice. Certainly, as with the *Doctor Faustus* illustration examined above, the setting is not easily identified as a stage; rather, the scene is set in an interior space. Nevertheless, a close reading of the play and the ballad reveal that the action in the engraved

sequence is much more closely related to the text of the play than the ballad, suggesting that the artist relied more closely on the play as his source material for the illustration.

In addition to offering insights into how dramatic performance might be represented in printed illustrations, the relationship between the 1633 editions of play and ballad gives us the opportunity to begin to examine at least some aspects of the nature of the publication and marketing of popular works in London at this time. As mentioned above, the group of publishers and printers involved with play-texts was also responsible for many other general-interest publications such as ballads and pamphlets. The print history of *Arden of Faversham*, as well as the traffic in its woodblock, allows us to trace the ongoing business relationships, often involving family members, of this cross-section of the Stationers' Company.

Chapter Three: ““What age hath ever heard such monstrous deed’: *The Spanish Tragedy* and the Performance of Violence”

In chapter three I examine the woodcut illustration featured on the title pages of four editions (1615, 1618, 1623, and 1633) of *The Spanish Tragedy* in terms of the resonance of its depicted brutality and the clues it gives us about how this climactic scene might have been performed on a Jacobean stage. Kyd's seminal revenge tragedy remained a popular component of the London theatre repertoire throughout this period. As with *Arden*, it was also the subject of a ballad, published in 1620 (which also incorporated the woodcut).

The scene on stage and as represented in the illustration powerfully captures the father's anguish for his murdered son and would have therefore been memorable to a customer in a bookseller's shop. Modern scholars point out that the composition of this woodcut does not accurately capture the action of Horatio's murder, which in modern editions takes place across two scenes. However, seventeenth-century editions of play-texts (including *The Spanish*

Tragedy) did not, as a rule, include scene divisions, and the sequence as represented occurs over a very brief span of dialogue. More interestingly, the illustration presents complex dialogic communication involving a lot of action and key phrases from the play within speech balloons. Perhaps most important to this study, the illustration incorporates some elements that link it more closely to the theatre than written drama. Specifically, the incorporation of a type of trellis to represent the arbor from which Horatio is hanged suggests some sort of stage property rather than a naturalistic tree. Scholars including Martin White and J.R. Mulryne believe this picture of a trellis reveals a suggestion of how Horatio's hanging – as well as other business with scaffolds and the arbor in the play – may have been staged. This chapter, therefore, provides a valuable opportunity to more closely examine why the performance of such a violent act would have been chosen to represent the play and how an engraver would have developed such a dialogic composition. In the process it poses questions about the relationship between the engraver and production of the play.

Chapter Four: “‘He could undumpish her at his pleasure’: Richard Tarlton and the Power of Wit”

This chapter approaches questions of the influence of visual images in the early modern London marketplace from a different perspective. It examines the life and legacy of the famous Elizabethan clown Richard Tarlton in terms of his influence on theatre, publishing, and society from the late sixteenth century well into the seventeenth century. Tarlton's image and reputation is at the heart of the examination of the illustration of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, which features a clown-figure similar to contemporary images of the famous clown. Tarlton was a liminal figure who had unequaled access to a remarkably broad cross-section of Englishmen and women. Trained as a haberdasher and a vintner, he rose to fame as a comic performer – first with

the earl of Sussex's troupe, then with the Queen's Men. His distinctive jests were a high point of performances in London and throughout the provinces as the Queen's Men toured the country. His signature "theams," in which an audience member suggested a topic about which he would then create an extemporized piece of doggerel, were remarked upon not only for their swift composition and wit, but also for the opportunity they gave Tarlton to hurl biting insults at various spectators. In addition to his skill as what today might be described as a stand-up comedian, Tarlton was an extremely talented and versatile actor, and a prominent member of the ensemble. Queen Elizabeth called upon him regularly as a solo performer to entertain her at court, and Tarlton appears to have been uniquely able to raise her spirits when she was feeling out of sorts.

Tarlton flourished in the early days of popular professional English theatre. Anecdotes about his performance style and comic antics – both on and off stage – come down to us through printed pamphlets such as *Tarlton's Jestes* and *Kind Hartes Dreame*. These pieces constitute the closest thing to documentary evidence that we have about Tarlton as a performer, and although they were printed (and were available in subsequent editions for some fifty years) after his premature death in 1588, they allow for some understanding of Tarlton's skill, versatility, and temperament. What they do not confirm is what roles Tarlton might have performed. Scholars including Scott McMillin, Sally-Beth MacLean and Andrew Gurr can only surmise from in-depth analysis of the plays performed by the Queen's Men and the acting specialties of its various members that Tarlton probably performed the part of Dericke in *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*. But the evidence does not definitively answer the question of whether or not Tarlton played the role of Miles in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. While this clown character

was well suited for Tarlton's style, the dating of the play is too close to the time of his death to state with any conviction that Tarlton ever performed the role.

Images reminiscent of Tarlton's clowning, jesting figure appeared in a variety of printed materials such as *Scottowe's Alphabet* and *Tarlton's Jestes* from the time of his death throughout the seventeenth century. Contemporary witnesses recount numerous London taverns named the Tarlton's Arms bearing signs incorporating a jigging clown. It is these visual references that have led scholars such as Richard Levin to identify the clown figure at the center of the *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* title page illustration published in 1630 as a memorial portrait of Tarlton. However, in addition to the question of whether or not Tarlton actually ever performed in a production of *Friar Bacon*, such an identification is further complicated by the clowning legacy Tarlton left behind. Generations of comic actors from the late 1580s through the late 1620s continued to incorporate elements of Tarlton's jig and style into their own performances. While the woodcut of *Friar Bacon* may not provide us with a biographical portrait of Tarlton, it demonstrates how influential the clown character that was so closely tied to him continued to be over forty years after his death. The illustration also raises questions about the subversive nature of the clown figure. In the early years of London professional theatre the extemporizing clown was a valued member of the ensemble. As playwrights such as Shakespeare and Middleton developed more performative comic structures in their plays, Tarlton's style of "personality performance" (Barbara Hodgdon, "Shakespearean Stars" 48) became problematic to comedy as it was tied more directly to the play's narrative – an issue that had become increasingly significant by the time the 1630 edition of *Friar Bacon* was published.

Chapter Five: “‘I’m now about a masterpiece of play’: Theatre, Politics, and the Spread of News
in *A Game at Chess*”

Chapter five presents yet another approach to examining and assessing the value of these illustrations. Thomas Middleton’s *A Game at Chess* was, until the twentieth century, noted more for its unprecedented nine-day performance run at the Globe than for its dramatic composition. The political situation in England that triggered the play’s production and contributed to its popularity – as well as its notoriety – provides an intriguing foundation for an analysis of the distinct copperplate engraved title pages that accompanied near simultaneous editions of the play in 1625. The play was framed as a political allegory emphasizing burgeoning English nationalism in the face of Spain’s imperialistic aspirations in the last years of King James’s reign. While the culminating events of the failed Spanish match provided the impetus for Middleton to write the play, the marriage negotiations do not figure in the plot. Rather, chess is used as an extended metaphor to represent the complex and often devious political and religious maneuverings of the White House (England and the Anglican Church) and the Black House (Spain and the Jesuits). The play consists of several plots, but the characters providing the focal points of the conflict – and those most easily recognizable to audiences – were the White Knight (Prince Charles), the Black Knight (Gondomar, one-time Spanish ambassador to England), and the Fat Bishop (Marcus Antonius de Dominis, Bishop of Spalato). These characters figure prominently in the engraved scenes designed for the title pages.

Several aspects of the printing of these editions are valuable to this study. The play was published in three quarto, two of which featured copperplate-engraved title pages, and all are

believed to have been printed in 1625.²³ Not only is *A Game at Chess* the first early English play to include a copperplate engraving, it is – to the best of my knowledge – the first play to appear with separate engraved title pages in competing editions. Whereas *Arden of Faversham* and *The Spanish Tragedy* were written and first published in the late sixteenth century, only gaining illustrations several decades and many productions after they first appeared, the illustrated versions of *A Game at Chess* appeared in booksellers' shops within nine months of its historic premiere. As intriguing is the fact that the play saw no further editions after 1625. The play's puzzlingly brief appearance in the marketplace provides a significant opportunity to examine the increasing value of political satire as a mode of popular discourse at the end of the Jacobean era, as well as the publishing risks involved in responding to the public's interest in this form of entertainment. At least two separate publishers invested in printing this play, but the play did not possess the staying power to allow for publication past its initial popularity.

The illustrations to *A Game at Chess* also provide a unique occasion to examine the importance of modality and composition in such engravings. The publishers commissioned title pages that not only used the chess allegory as a foundational element: they explicitly incorporated identifiable portraits of the key figures in the play. *A Game at Chess* was the first play to make use of the fine nature of copperplate engraving (and one of the very few play-texts from this period to do so). This type of engraving allowed the artists to copy from printed portraits of Gondomar and de Dominis and adapt them into a scene representing an exchange in the play. Curiously, the heroic figure of the White Knight is not so closely related to contemporary portraits of Prince Charles. The fact that the representation of the Black Knight is remarkably similar in clothes and bearing to the engraving drawn by one of the de Passe family

²³ While none of the title pages includes a date, scholars widely accept W.W. Greg's estimation of 1625 for all three editions.

for Thomas Scott's *The Second Part of Vox Populi* (identified by T.H. Howard-Hill and James Hogg as one of Middleton's major sources for the play) offers another level of exploration into the close relationship between publishers, printers, and engravers of popular publications at this time.

Chapter five concludes with a reexamination of the Q1 and Q3 versions of the composition of the title-page illustrations. Traditionally, scholars including Greg and Howard-Hill have adhered to a chronology whereby the Q1 engraving appeared first and acted as the model for the Q3 version. Close analysis of these two images suggests that the timeline could just as easily be reversed. The composition of the Q3 engraving is more coherent and more logically derivative of its source materials (the prints of Gondomar and de Dominis). There is also more attention to detail and better use of available space. The Q1 engraving involves more elements (the White Knight is included in and thus alters the exchange, and a panel featuring both houses seated around a chess board has been added) but this rhetorical complexity is not in itself an indication of priority. Through reexaminations such as this, in application of the tools of close visual analysis, we can continue to expand the dialogue about how such illustrations functioned in relation to the play-texts they accompanied.

Conclusion: "Look here, upon this picture, and on this"

Theatre scholars have examined frontispiece illustrations attached to printed play-texts in order to offer us some information about early modern drama, although many remain skeptical about how closely they can be related to performance. John Astington has identified the need for further analysis of these images, more from the standpoint of context than specific theatrical practice: "we need more systematically organized information which will allow us to read the contextual sense of pictures more intelligently" ("Rereading" 168). In the case of the play-text

engravings, what we see does not and cannot provide quantifiable documentary evidence about theatrical conditions of the time, nor necessarily reveal perceptions of theatre among the populace. If, however, these illustrations were designed to attract book buyers who were already familiar with the plays in performance, they offer an interesting perspective on the importance of visual cues in marketing a relatively new print genre. The illustrations may very well provide valuable evidence that assists theatre and book historians in understanding how early moderns “saw” and communicated events, and how their imaginations and memories worked. Through close examination of these illustrations we can address questions pertaining to the power of the press through blended media and add to our understanding of early modern popular discourse and the dialogic relationship between text and image in early modern print. Most importantly, these illustrations can give us a better understanding of how the cultures of reading and performance intersected. Knowledge of that interaction contributes distinctively to the ways in which we imagine information was circulated and knowledge was made in early modern England.

Chapter Two

“Ah, Master Arden, Now I can take you”: Analyzing Composition in the

Arden of Faversham Illustration

In 1551, in a Kentish town southeast of London called Faversham, a prominent merchant named Thomas Arden was brutally murdered by his wife, her lover, and a group of flunkies hired to assassinate him. The torrid domestic event struck a chord with people far beyond the environs of Faversham and long after the murderers had been tortured and executed for their crime. The murder was the stuff of legend, chock full of adulterous scheming and failed attempts at attacking the victim as he made his way back and forth to London on business, and featuring the spectacle of the final gruesome stabbing in his own home over a game of backgammon. The murder was first documented in the *Wardmote Book of Faversham*. Raphael Holinshed found it compelling enough to include the story at remarkable length some twenty years later in his 1577 *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (as well as in the revised 1587 edition). Considering the early modern appetite for homiletic tragedy and excessive violence, it should not come as a surprise that the situation was dramatized as *The Tragedy of Arden of Faversham*.¹ The printed version of the play was published in at least three editions: in 1592, 1599 and 1633. The subject also continued to reverberate with authors in other genres for many years, appearing in John Stowe’s *Annals of England* (1592, 1631) and Thomas Heywood’s *Troia Britannica* (1609), and is even mentioned by John Taylor, the Water Poet.² Simultaneous with the 1633

¹ The play was registered with the Stationers’ Company in 1592, suggesting that it had been performed at some point during the preceding decade. The title is also written variously as *Arden of Feversham*, but the town is known as Faversham so I will adopt this spelling.

² These references are documented in R. A. Foakes’ entry about the play in his *Illustrations of the English Stage, 1580-1642*, 136.

edition of the play, an anonymously penned ballad entitled *The Complaint and Lamentation of Mistresse Arden*³ was also published.

The multi-genre fascination with the case should be recognizable to us, in light of our society's clamoring for salacious details about and endless appropriation of murderous tales in multiple media. The Arden case offers an examination of early modern attempts at such multimodal representation and an opportunity to pursue the elusive question of the connection between visual elements in various genres. The 1633 editions of the play and the ballad both include the same woodcut illustration of the murder sequence – striking in its depiction of violence and unsettling in its challenge to modern modes of narrative presentation. The fact that the same woodcut appeared in editions of a play and a broadside ballad within months of one another also offers a chance to better understand the benefits of incorporation of illustrations in popular publication at the time. The connection between printed drama and broadside ballads has not to date been fully examined, and this link may shed light on the relationship between publishers and printers of both genres. There is, however, an inherent difficulty in differentiating between woodcuts originating with plays and those with broadside ballads. While several contemporary publishers and printers included both genres in their stock, there are few extant documents pertaining to the traffic in woodblocks among London printers. At the time in question, both plays and ballads were produced for quick consumption rather than collection.⁴

³ The full title is *[the] Complaint and Lamentation of Mistresse Arden of [Fev]Ersham in Kent Who for the Loue of One Mosbie, Hired Certaine Ruffians and Villaines Most Cruelly to Murder Her Husband; with the Fatall End of Her and Her Associats. To the Tune of, Fortune My Foe.*

⁴ Samuel Pepys, however, was one avid collector of ballads, and carefully pasted them into books that are now part of his collection at Cambridge University. His collection has also been archived by *EBBA*.

The bonds between the ballad and drama were surprisingly close, and characters from popular drama often found further fame in broadside versions of these stories.⁵

The *Arden* woodcut provides a valuable example of how we can tease out information from an illustration, thereby helping us to better understand its origin. While it has traditionally been assumed that the woodcut must have originated with the ballad,⁶ if for no other reason than that ballads were more likely to incorporate visual components than play texts, the sheer dramatic nature of the scene lends itself to further compositional examination. This is further complicated by the fact that both this edition of the play and the ballad appeared in 1633. By undertaking a close visual critical analysis of this scene and examining the design and composition of the image using visual rhetoric tools, we can, I believe, determine the illustration's relationship to a particular textual source. This approach allows us to overcome the problem that has caused scholars to hesitate in making connections between visual elements in published play texts and performed theatre, namely the absence of complete publication records or other forms of documentary evidence regarding the process of designing and producing the woodcuts. In other words, by focusing on the composition of the illustration rather than its primacy, we can reveal important clues about whether or not the artist (and the publisher who commissioned the work) used the text of the play or the ballad as inspiration for the woodcut.

⁵ This is demonstrated in the metatheatrical representation of Richard Tarlton in *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*, to be examined at length later in the chapter. Other examples include a ballad featuring Hieronimo (to be discussed in chapter three) and another retelling the tale of *The Vow Breaker*.

⁶ This theory has been put forward by W.W. Greg and endorsed by others, including R.A. Foakes.

“I haue thought good to set it forth somewhat at large”: *Arden* in history

The woodcut is included in the third edition, printed by Elizabeth Allde – and appears on the reverse side of the title page.⁷ The author of the play is unknown, although it has been associated stylistically since the eighteenth century with Shakespeare and Kyd. The play is strikingly complex, with a large cast of characters and action that moves frequently between Faversham and London and a variety of locales in between. Arden is an upwardly mobile, greedy landowner who marries Alice in large part because of her rank. Alice takes up with Mosby, a tailor who also has pretensions of rising above his social station. Together, the lovers decide to do away with Master Arden and live off his wealth. There is a sub-plot involving Arden’s servants Michael and Susan (who is also Mosby’s sister), in which Michael makes a deal with Alice for Susan’s hand in marriage in exchange for his silence about Arden’s murder, only to be trumped by a local painter/apothecary who also has designs on Susan and may be able to provide assistance with the murder. A series of bumbling assassins, including Black Will and Shakebag,⁸ try repeatedly to kill Arden as he manages his business dealings on a series of trips to London. Arden remains blissfully unaware of his wife’s infidelity and the attempts on his life (which are thwarted throughout the play until its denouement, when he is finally, brutally, killed in his own house). There is only one character in the play that even approaches decency: Franklin, a friend of Arden’s who attempts to keep him out of harm’s way. Despite the sordidness of the plot and

⁷ The *ESTC* notes two variants for this edition: one with the imprint “Printed by Eliz. Allde dwelling neere Christs-Church, 1633” and the other “printed by Eliz. Allde, and are to be sold by Stephen Pemel at the signe of the Black Bull on London Bridge, 1633.” Both include the woodcut.

⁸ Various scholars have suggested that Shakebag and Black Will are theatrical allusions to William Shakespeare, which in turn has led to supposition that Shakespeare either wrote the play or performed in an early production, and that these names provide evidence of some sort of theatrical in-joke. This hypothesis does not seem credible, however, as Black Will is included in the *Chronicle* reference, which pre-dates the play, and is named as a sort of stock wicked character in other unrelated plays. See the introduction to M.L. Wine’s edition of the play.

the extreme violence of the on-stage murder, there are also surprising moments of comedy in the play, stemming mainly from the series of failed assassination attempts but also from the pathetic efforts of various lovers struggling to win the affections of people completely uninterested in them.

Whether it was the early modern obsession with crime and punishment or the prurient nature of the conspiracy, the murder sustained popular interest well into the seventeenth century. This popularity was reinforced through a remarkable variety of retellings of the story in various genres. It is important to examine these retellings here, as there are significant differences in the narratives that may provide clues as to which version or versions provided the source for the woodcut illustration under scrutiny in this chapter. The account covers four single-spaced, double-columned pages in Holinshed's *Chronicle*, an uncommon length for the murder of a local merchant. Holinshed writes in exquisite detail of "[t]he which murther, for the horribleness thereof, although otherwise it may seeme to be but a priuate matter, and therefore as it were impertinent to this historie, I haue thought good to set it foorth somewhat at large, hauing the instructions deliuered to me by them, that haue vsed some diligence to gather the true vnderstanding of the circumstances" (Holinshed 1062).⁹ According to Holinshed's version of events, Arden had full knowledge of the affair between Alice and Mosby, "he was contented to winke at hir filthie disorder, and both permitted, and also inuited Mosbie verie often to lodge in his house" (1062-3). In Holinshed's account, it took eight attempts by various villains to enact Arden's murder; remarkably, despite the fact that Alice approached or employed many people in the town who knew Arden, he seems never to have been aware of any danger to his life. The

⁹ All page citations for Holinshed's *Chronicle* identified in this chapter are from the electronic facsimile of the 1587 edition available via the University of Pennsylvania's SCETI project.

group finally succeeded in their dastardly deed when Arden arrived home one evening to find Mosby – comfortably attired in a dressing gown – greeting him at his own front door and inviting him to play a game of tables (backgammon) [Appendix 1]. At an opportune moment, Mosby called out “Now maie I take you sir if I will” (1064), which was the watchword for Black Will to emerge from his hiding place and throw a towel around Arden’s face, effectively preventing him from defending himself as Mosby struck him on the head with a fourteen-pound pressing iron (which was conveniently hanging from his girdle). The group carried his body into the counting house, but Arden was not yet dead, and Black Will stabbed him in the face. After she paid off the murderers, Alice returned to the counting house and “gaue him seuen or eight p[r]icks into the brest” (1065). The story ends with Arden’s body – and the conspiracy – being discovered. While Black Will and several others escape, never to be heard from again, Mosby is hanged in London and Alice is burned in Canterbury.

It is clear that the play draws strongly from the *Chronicle* as a source, but there are significant differences in this adaptation, most importantly in the set-up and manner of the murder scene itself. While the scene in the *Chronicle* begins with Arden returning home to find Mosby waiting for him, obviously comfortable playing master of the house, in the play [Appendix 2] Arden invites Mosby over for dinner and the two enter together. By prearrangement among the conspirators, Shakebag hides in the counting house awaiting the signal from Mosby. The sequence with the backgammon game here incorporates a bizarre spat between Alice and Mosby (that is not referred to in the other sources), in which Alice makes a show of telling Arden that she does not care for Mosby and does not want him in her house: “I had rather die than bid him welcome./His company hath purchased me ill friends,/And therefore

will I ne'er frequent it more" (14.181-3).¹⁰ The whole point of this strange exchange seems to be to prevent Arden from suspecting that there is some sort of plot between them. It works, since Arden insists that his friend and his wife reconcile over a glass of wine. The two men then sit down to play backgammon, and after a few moves Mosby calls out the watchword, "Ah, Master Arden, 'Now I can take you.'" Black Will leaps out from the shadows and throws the towel around Arden's head. At this point the murder becomes a group activity with Mosby stabbing (not striking) Arden first, followed by Shakebag, then Alice. Alice and Susan, the serving-maid, are left to clean up the bloody mess after Arden's body has been removed to the counting house. Alice's guilt overcomes her: the blood will not wash away but "[t]he more I strike, the more the blood appears! ... Because I blush not at my husband's death" (14.257-9). Despite an elaborate ruse to convince the civil authorities that Arden has been waylaid on the road from London, the plot and body are discovered, and the conspirators are herded on stage where the Mayor of Faversham condemns Mosby and Susan to be executed in Smithfield, Alice to be burned at Canterbury, and all the rest to be executed in some fashion or other. The Epilogue features Franklin, Arden's friend, confirming their fate and relating a legend derived from the *Chronicle*, that in the spot where Arden's body had been placed after the murder, "in the grass his body's print was seen/Two years and more after the deed was done" (14.12-13).

The ballad version was entered in the Stationers' register by Cuthbert Wright.¹¹ The ballad [Appendix 3] follows quite closely to the action of the play, using the popular trope of a

¹⁰ All scene and line citations from *Arden of Faversham* as identified in this chapter come from M. L. Wine's 1973 edition of the play.

¹¹ We should not be surprised by the popularity of the story. Tessa Watt identifies sin and repentance as particularly resonant themes. "The largest group of ballads for social reform formed a diatribe against the wickedness of the age; a straightforward catalogue of social ills" *Cheap Print and Popular Piety* 96. It is no wonder, then, that the crime-and-punishment nature of the *Arden* play, as well as the deathbed confession nature of the ballad, should strike such a

confession in the voice of Alice as she awaits execution. While the ballad is thoroughly detailed in terms of Alice's plans and guilt, the specifics of the murder are left vague:

With swords and knives they stab'd him to the heart[;]

Mosby and I did likewise act our part,

And then his body straight we did conuey

Behind the Abbey in the field he lay. (ll. 161-4)

Scholars have traditionally identified the ballad as the precursor to the 1633 play-text edition.¹² While it is plausible that a popular production of the play in late 1632 or early 1633 prompted both a new edition of the play and the publication of a ballad, we have no documentation of such a performance; the 1633 edition has no troupe attribution, nor are there any records testifying to such a production. It is all but impossible to confirm the exact origin of the woodcut, considering that there is no publishing record for the 1633 edition of the play, nor are there documents relating to the commission of the woodcut. Nevertheless, a close reading of the illustration, in conjunction with the ballad and the play, reveals a complex relationship between woodcut and text that, in turn, offers us important information about what source materials the artist may have used to create the scene.

chord in seventeenth-century England. "Stories of crimes were a source of gruesome amusement and collective disapprobation; at the same time the emphasis on last-minute conversion and salvation for even the lowest dregs of society may have been comforting" 108.

¹² In a footnote in Appendix IV of his edition of the play, M.L. Wine states that, "it [the ballad] was printed separately that year as a broadside, in black letter, for Cuthbert Wright ... T.S.R. Boase has observed (in "Illustrations of Shakespeare's Plays in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. x [1947], p. 85) that the woodcut is typical of broadside illustrations, 'and that is likely enough its origin' 164.

“Can he not take him yet?”: Identifying a narrative pattern

Kress and Van Leeuwen explain that “[t]he hallmark of a narrative visual ‘proposition’ is the presence of a vector: narrative structures always have one, conceptual structures never do. In pictures, these vectors are formed by depicted elements that form an oblique line ... The vectors may be formed by bodies or limbs or tools ‘in action’” (59). Kress and Van Leeuwen define a vector thus: “[w]hat in language is realized by words of the category ‘action verbs’ is visually realized by elements that can be formally defined as *vectors*” (46). The woodcut [Figure 2] provides us with a powerful example of such a vector, where the framing of the floor, the placement of the furniture, and the movement of the bodies in action create the oblique lines. The illustration, which is attached to both the play-text and ballad, represents an interior scene, with floorboards, doorjamb, draped table, and bench, played out at nighttime, as signaled by the dark sky outside the window, and the lit candle on the table. R.A. Foakes identifies this as “a conventional representation of a room, and may be compared with that on the title-page of *A Maidenhead Well Lost or Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*” (*Illustrations of the English Stage* 136). While there is a good amount of detail, the features of the room have been drawn without much attention to perspective. While the window frames are level, the edge of the floor on the right side of the image does not match with the edge of the doorjamb on the left side, suggesting that the artist was not overly concerned with establishing a horizon for the picture. More disconcerting to the viewer, the table and the backgammon board upon it are out of perspective. The attempt to create a realistic viewpoint for the action on the right side of the image appears, from a modern point of view, to have failed. Because this approach to drafting is at odds with modern aesthetics, many modern literary scholars dismiss the entire illustration as poor or crude; yet it is important to reconsider our own prejudices by placing the seventeenth-century woodcut



Figure 2: *Arden of Faversham*, 1633 edition

illustration into a contemporary context. Edward Hodnett, the renowned critic of British literary illustration, points out that we must suspend our own presumptions about quality when examining the work of another era.¹³ Despite its technical shortcomings, if that is what they are, this woodcut has much to tell us about the intent of the artist to convey messages about the story and setting.

We must also take note of the fact that this is a representation of a room, and not a stage. The few contemporary drawings we have of stages, both public and private, suggest that action was played out against an all-purpose tiring house façade with two or three major entranceways.¹⁴ Considering that plays were performed in repertory, and were rarely mounted for more than a few days at a time, it would have been unsupportable for a theatre company to maintain set pieces for many specific plays.¹⁵ Also, the action of *Arden* constantly shifts from interiors such as the one examined (as well as other rooms and houses) to exteriors played out along the road as Arden makes his way between Faversham and London. None of our evidence suggests that crewmembers would be hauling on and off flats to indicate interiors and exteriors. At most they might bring on crucial props, such as the table and bench. Actors would then

¹³ Hodnett explains that “Perhaps the commonest example [of literary scholars’ presumption] is the automatic use of the adjective ‘crude’ whenever a woodcut in an early English book is mentioned. In the first place we cannot know how good or bad the drawing was. It has disappeared ... The cutting is open to inspection. Cutting which can properly be called crude, the work of a completely inexperienced hand, is marked by ‘chewed’ lines and knife nicks at intersections” *Image and Text: Studies in the Illustrations of English Literature* 19.

¹⁴ Among these drawings are Johannes de Witt’s sketch of the Swan Theatre and the engraving from the 1662 edition of Francis Kirkman’s *The Wits*.

¹⁵ Andrew Gurr notes that unlike the elaborate scenic apparatus built for Court masques and plays, the “commercial playhouses could not have afforded the loss of playing-time involved in setting up such non-traditional devices. Still less could they have spent time and money making their own scenery. There are occasional references to pieces of scenery being employed in the private playhouses from the earliest days, but they cannot have been a prominent feature of the staging, or they would have drawn more comment” *Shakespearean Stage* 200-202.

supply the indication of evening, if necessary, by means of candles, torches, and lanterns.¹⁶ We must assume, therefore, that this artist was working at least in part from imagination; he was playing to the viewer's recognition of what an interior space constituted, rather than trying to replicate the physical space of a theatre stage.

The illustration portrays the climax of the story, the point at which Arden is finally murdered. In the 1633 edition of the play the woodcut appears not on the title-page, the usual location for such illustrations, but on the verso page facing the beginning of the play's text.¹⁷ The title page [Figure 3] is filled primarily with text summarizing the play's action,¹⁸ as well as a colophon for Elizabeth Alde, widow of Edward.¹⁹ The scene is a particularly strong demonstration of what Kress and Van Leeuwen would call a "narrative pattern" (46). They differentiate narrative images from conceptual ones, which are diagrammatic in orientation. Kress and Van Leeuwen's understanding of visual narrative serves very well in the examination of illustrations associated with printed drama. In the case of *Arden*, the victim is being pulled backward on his bench while four other characters move toward him to stab him with swords and daggers. All of the action is focused on a central triangle [Figure 4], with characters A and B forming the base, and character C the apex. The sides of the triangle are formed by the inner edge of the table (extended by the under side of character D's arm) and the rear leg and back side of character A's coat.

¹⁶ A more thorough discussion of how nighttime would have been presented at an afternoon amphitheatre performance will be undertaken in chapter three.

¹⁷ The dimensions of the woodcut, being horizontal in nature, would not fit on the vertically-oriented title page and this may have been the reason for its placement.

¹⁸ "The lamentable and true tragedy of Master Arden of Feversham in Kent vvho was most wickedly murdered by the meanes of his disloyall and wanton wife, who, for the love she bare to one Mosby, hired two desperate ruffins, Blacke-Will, and Shakebag, to kill him. Wherein is shewed the great malice and dissimulation of a wicked woman, the unsatiabie desire of filthy lust, and the shamefull end of all murderers."

¹⁹ Both Alldes were active in publication of popular works, including plays and ballads.

THE
LAMENTABLE
AND TRUE TRAGEDY
OF MASTER ARDEN OF
FEVERSHAM IN KENT:

Who was most wickedly murdered
by the meanes of his disloyall and wanton
wife, who, for the love she bare to one *Mosby*,
hired two desperate Ruffins, *Blacke-Will*,
and *Shakebag*, to kill him.

Wherein is shewed the great malice and
dissimulation of a wicked woman, the unsatiable
desire of filthy lust, and the shamefull end
of all murderers.



LONDON,
Printed by ELIZ. ALLDE dwelling neere
Christs-Church. 1633.

Figure 3: *Arden of Faversham* title page, 1633 edition



Figure 4: *Arden of Faversham*, image excerpt 1



Figure 5: *Arden of Faversham*, image excerpt 2

The other four characters are all moving toward or facing the triangle. This forward momentum is particularly strong in characters E and F [Figure 5], both of which are entering the room from the left (F is stepping into the room through the door while E, her skirts shifting behind her as she moves, is pointing at the central male character C). Character G is a curious counter-figure to the action of the scene [Figure 6]. Both in terms of his position and posture he is isolated from the narrative, sitting across the table in a clear space and apparently not actively involved in the murder. A barrier is drawn in the form of the imposing table, and he sits back appearing to observe what transpires. This relaxed observation, however, serves to make him complicit in the attack. Two-thirds of the woodcut, from the table to the left side, is fraught with action and clutter. The placement of two characters at top center (C and D) suggests an effort to represent a sequence of attacks that is difficult to discern without a more powerful depth-of-field.

There are at least two interpretations available to the viewer in terms of what is going on and who is involved in the scene. There are seven characters present in the room: figure B is evidently Arden. In all three sources – the play, the ballad, and the *Chronicle* – Arden’s murder begins with a towel (or napkin) thrown around his head, his body then yanked backward, rendering him powerless while the first of his murderers attacks him and “so to stop his breath and strangle him.” The fact that his clothing is very dark and most of his face is covered with the towel suggests that while his murder is the focus of this scene, his person is of less consequence to the visual narrative than the characters committing the crime. Character A, leaning in toward Arden and holding the towel, is identified in the *Chronicle* and the play as Black Will, one of the ne’er-do-wells hired by Alice who repeatedly attempt (and fail until this point) to murder Arden throughout the story. The ballad is ambiguous on this identification: “Blacke-will and



Figure 6: *Arden of Faversham*, image excerpt 3

S[h]akebag out the corner broke,/And with a towel backwards pull'd him downe" (ll. 158-9). All three sources support the identification of male figure G at the right, behind the table, as Mosby. The plot hinges on Mosby challenging Arden to a game of tables and calling out a signal when the trap is to be sprung. The watchword itself varies slightly from source to source but the action is, on the whole, consistent. This identification certainly presents character G/Mosby as the director of the sequence. His body language is confident and authoritative. His left hand rests on his hip while with his right hand he gestures toward the murder in progress, and keeps him linked to the backgammon game. His physical isolation, barred as he is from the murder itself, creates more emphasis on his character and causes the viewer to differentiate him from the other characters that are more in the fray. Perhaps it also encourages an interpretation of Mosby as the mastermind of Arden's murder, since he is so clearly uninvolved in the actual killing. And yet, all three of the text sources also include Mosby as an active participant in the murder. Reading this narrative from center (Arden being pulled backward by means of the towel and the first sword wound being administered) and comparing it to the text of the play, we realize that the action as identified in the image comes slightly later in the sequence (at ll. 231, when Mosby stabs Arden). By this time Mosby should have already stepped out from behind the table to take his part. Where should Mosby be in this visual sequence? The *Chronicle* and the play indicate that once Will has pulled Arden backward, Mosby should step forward and stand over the victim, effectively placing Mosby where character C stands. Is the artist trying to pinpoint a moment in time, or is he glossing a number of possibilities by placing Mosby in two places simultaneously? Is this hypothesis reasonable, considering that the two figures are dressed in distinctly different costumes?

The male and female figures at top center (C and D) focus the attention on the murder in progress. They form what Kress and Van Leeuwen call a “reactional process.” This occurs “[w]hen the vector is formed by an eyeline, by the direction of the glance of one or more of the represented participants ... The Reactor, the participant who does the looking, must necessarily be human, or a human-like animal – a creature with visible eyes that have distinct pupils, and capable of facial expression. The Phenomenon may be formed either by another participant, the participant at whom or which the Reactor is looking, or by a whole visual proposition” (67). Recognizing that the limitations of woodcarving prevent some of the specificity identified by Kress and Van Leeuwen (distinct pupils, facial expressions), the *Arden* woodcut offers a clear example of a reactional process. Male character C and female character E, above and to the left of the central action, draw our eyes always back to the center with his posture and her gesture. To a lesser extent, male character G at right, opposite the table, does the same thing. The central male figure stands with his sword pointing downward, the tip already disappearing into Arden’s chest. Female character D, who stands behind him and to his left, raises her dagger and points it downward to stab Arden again. Confirming the identity of these two figures is a complicated endeavor. The scene as presented in the play-text suggests that they are Mosby and Alice, but the illustration does not necessarily support this identification. The ballad says that after Black Will and Shakebag, “With swords and knives they stab’d him to the heart[:] / Mosby and I [Alice] did likewise act our part” (ll. 161-2). The action of the play directs that Mosby stabs Arden first, followed by Shakebag, and then Alice. The ballad suggests that the attack follows from Black Will to Shakebag, and then Mosby and Alice. In this case, the *Chronicle* does not support the illustration, as Mosby is identified as killing Arden with a “pressing iron of fourteene pounds weight” (Holinshed 1064) with which he strikes him on the head.

The identity of figure F is likewise ambiguous. The fact that this male figure enters through a door with sword raised suggests that he is one of the assassins. It may be Shakebag. He is not mentioned in the *Chronicle*, and his participation is linked irrevocably with Will's in the ballad; only in the play are the roles of Black Will and Shakebag more clearly differentiated. At the beginning of scene fourteen, the conspirators discuss how the murder will be enacted. Mosby explains that "Black will and Shakebag, locked within the countinghouse,/Shall, at a certain watchword given, rush forth" (14.101-2). Several lines later, after Mosby has left the stage, Will assures Alice that they are committed to the murder:

Place Mosby, being a stranger, in a chair,
And let your husband sit upon a stool,
That I may come behind him cunningly
And with a towel pull him to the ground,
Then stab him till his flesh be as a sieve. (14.118-22)

This speech leaves the question of who is to do the stabbing uncertain. It can be read that Will shall manage both the waylaying and stabbing of Arden. It can also be interpreted that Will shall hold Arden down in order for the other conspirators to stab him. The absence of pronouns creates confusion. Nevertheless, Will takes full responsibility for the murder, and in fact Shakebag is identified mainly through modern textual editing (he is included in stage directions that are not part of the original edition). During the entire sequence, Shakebag speaks only twice; the second time constitutes his declaration as he stabs Arden, "And there's for the ten pound in my sleeve" (14.236).²⁰ In fact, despite Will's pronouncement that he will manage the murder, Will remains holding the towel while Shakebag stabs Arden. It is possible, therefore, to identify Character C

²⁰ Shakebag is also identified as the speaker of these lines in the 1633 edition.

as a second iteration of Shakebag, although this identification gives him significantly more prominence than he is awarded in any of the sources. The main reason to identify him thus would be if the artist relied on his own memory of a performance, in which the two assassins would be more centrally involved in the murder and physically responsible for the removal of the murder victim from the stage. The only other possible identification for character C or F is Michael. In the *Chronicle* and play, but not the ballad, Michael is present during the murder. In the *Chronicle* he abets the scheme by standing with a candle in such a way that his master cannot see Black Will coming forward. In the play he fetches a cup of wine for Master Arden but takes no active part in the attack. Afterward, Alice commands the group to hide Arden's body in the counting house, and it would make sense that the actor playing Michael would assist in carrying the body of the actor playing Arden off stage. However, in order to assign Michael to either representation, his role would have to be significantly altered. There is no suggestion in any of the sources that it might have been done.

It is also important to identify the second female character in the scene. Neither the *Chronicle* nor the ballad refers to another woman in this sequence. And in the play, the only other female referred to in scene fourteen is Susan, who enters after the murder to alert her mistress that other guests have arrived. Alice then commands her to "fetch water and wash away this blood" (14.254), a task made impossible by the turpitude of Arden's murder. Later in the scene, Michael and Susan become aware that they will be made accomplices to the murder whatever they do. Michael, in an aside, tells Susan that he won't mind dying if he will be married to her first, but that he will buy some ratsbane and poison Alice with it, as he expects she will blame them to save herself. Nevertheless, at the point portrayed in the illustration, both Michael and Susan are at most witnesses – passive participants at best – and neither carries a

weapon or takes a turn stabbing their employer in any version of the story. Again, the artist would have had to add Susan to the list of armed murderers without any textual basis for such an artistic decision.

It would be convenient to hypothesize that the artist watched a production of *Arden of Faversham*, and that this informed his vision for the scene. But we have no idea what access artists had to play scripts or theatres, nor do we fully understand the process of commissioning a work like this: would the publisher have provided a copy of a text to the artist, or provided some sort of verbal or written abstract? How much time would the artist have to complete the commission? Might he even have seen the play at some point in the process, or recalled seeing a production in the past? Would a production have introduced more active participants into the murder sequence, for example, involving Susan and Michael as armed accomplices? Or is it possible that the artist misremembered which of those on stage was armed and involved in the murder, thereby creating the quality of the group-assassination sequence in *Julius Caesar*? John Astington advocates the need for further examination of popular print practices: “We should find out all we can about the work of artists and craftsmen who produced these images, with the aim of understanding their visual style and modes of representation” (“Rereading” 169). But until we find documentary evidence of the process by which these illustrations were produced and published, we can only speculate. That speculation must include the suspicion that there was not much time given to the artist during the publication cycle, and that he must have drawn liberally from a variety of cultural influences to create these images. Nevertheless, we should not assume that this illustration was drawn in a vacuum of understanding, the presentation some sort of random *mêlée* where a gang charges haphazardly at their target. In every other way there is purpose to this visual narrative, so it would be illogical to assume that character identification is

arbitrary. Marcia Allentuck has written about the eighteenth-century relationship between publisher and illustrator, using the correspondence between Sir Thomas Hanmer and Francis Hayman regarding a contract to illustrate Hanmer's collected works of Shakespeare.²¹ Her examination of Hanmer's instructions to Hayman suggests that a publisher was comfortable dictating creative elements to an artist under contract. We also know that this type of direction was not new in the eighteenth century; Zachary Lesser identifies Thomas Walkley, a seventeenth-century publisher with a long-term interest in politically oriented pieces, as such a publisher who had a very clear vision about the visual aspects of the books he printed, and was very specific with hired artists about the content of attendant illustrations.²² While there are no remaining documents pertaining to the commission of seventeenth-century play-text illustrations, it seems logical that the publishers involved in these ventures would have had a similar voice in the creative process.

Rather than imposing the constraints of an imaginary production that alters the text of the play, I propose an alternative: that this illustration represents an early modern attempt to capture motion within a static frame. Such a concept is certainly not outside the realm of possibility. An examination of contemporary ballads suggests that this form of representation was used to good effect. A particularly interesting example – albeit unusual – is the engraved broadside “The description of Giles Mompesson” (1621) [Figure 7], which presents the downfall of the corrupt official in a multimodal construct. The broadside is laid out in three panels. Each panel shows Mompesson prominently; the panel at the right incorporates not only a dominant Mompesson

²¹ Allentuck has reproduced this correspondence in “Sir Thomas Hanmer Instructs Francis Hayman: An Editor's Notes to his Illustrator (1744)” 288-315.

²² Lesser squarely identifies the responsibility of the visual direction of illustrated editions as lying with the publisher throughout his book *Renaissance Drama and the Politics of Publication*. His chapter on “‘Courtier's merchandise’: Thomas Walkley and the paradoxes of domestic policy” is of particular interest in this regard.

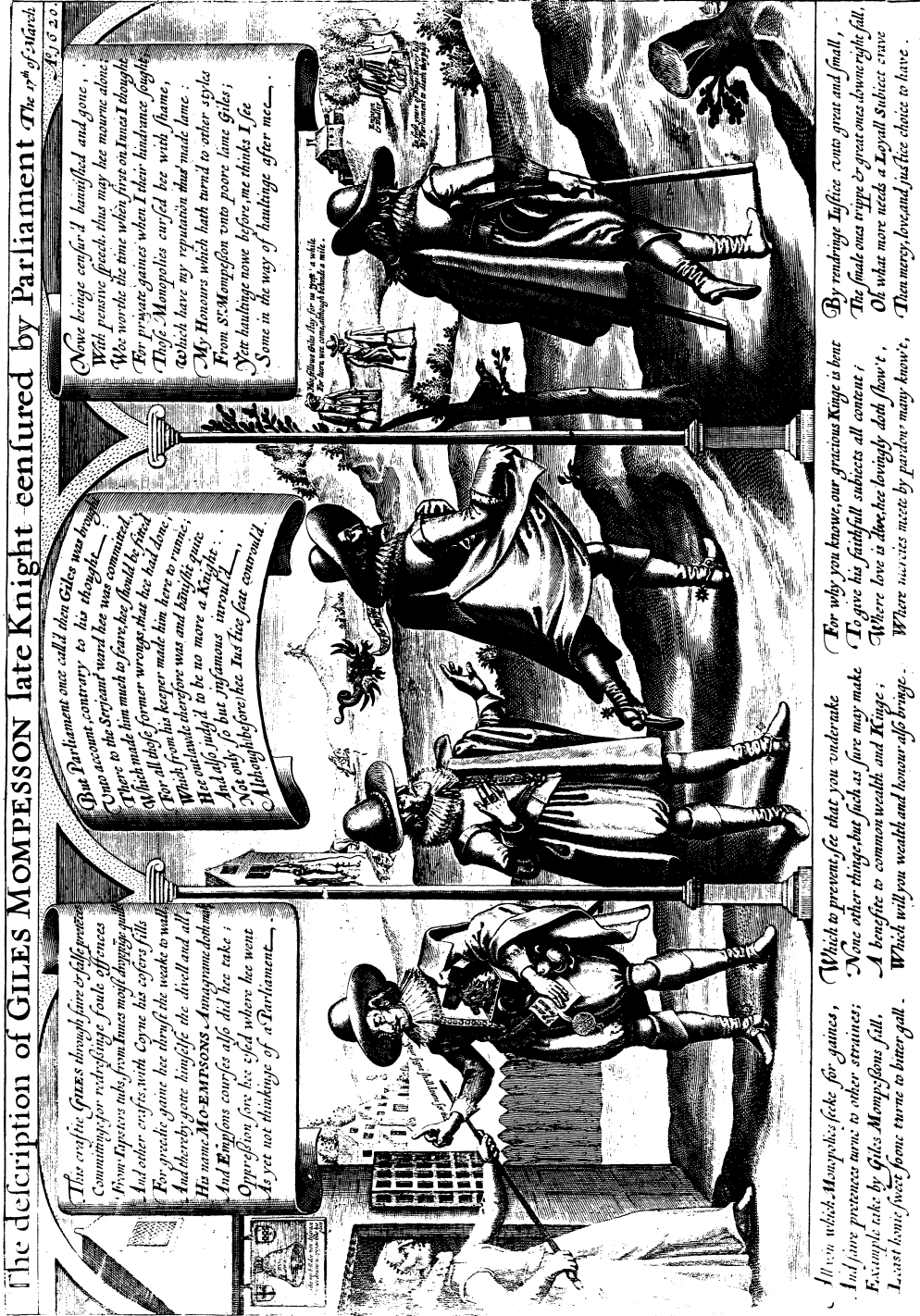


Figure 7: The description of Giles Mompesson, 1621

figure on crutches, but three more lame characters as well. A close reading of the panel suggests that at least two of these are iterations of Mompesson.²³ The lame figure in the foreground is the downfallen Mompesson, banished as “poore lame Miles” hobbled and using crutches. This figure is repeated in the upper left (identified by his hat, cloak, and crutches). Another fallen figure behind him calls out for him to wait, while the two figures in the upper right invite Mompesson to join them. It is this replication of figure in two separate planes that invites comparison with the *Arden* woodcut.

There are other woodcut illustrations attached to seventeenth-century plays that in some way conflate action and time. Thomas Heywood’s *The Iron Age* (Part 2) offers a fantastical representation of Simonides and Thersites plotting in the foreground, while the Greeks emerge from the Trojan horse and Troy burns. His *A Maidenhead Well Lost* presents the climactic moment of the play along with a happy ending image of the two lovers kissing, but the sequence is separated by a thick border. William Sampson’s *The Vow Breaker*, William Lower’s *The Enchanted Lovers* and Rowley, Dekker and Ford’s *The Witch of Edmonton* all compartmentalize episodic action using various spaces of the page, connected by means of reactional process; in each case the vector is formed by a character’s gesture, motion, or gaze. In no other case of which I am aware, however, has the action been collapsed into a single frame as in the *Arden* woodcut.

Considered in light of the technique used in the *Mompesson* broadside, the narrative of the scene from *Arden* becomes much clearer: while the combined unit of Arden and Black Will remains the anchor of the scene, as Will pulls Arden backwards, the actions of Mosby and Alice create a timeline. Mosby begins the sequence sitting across from Arden, but upon calling out his

²³ See Pierce for an analysis of the Mompesson broadside 69-77.

command he “moves” from behind the table to the position above Arden (from G to C). Once there, he is the dominant murderer, his body facing the viewer directly and his sword at the exact center of the image, pointing downward into Arden’s chest. Alice, the only female character identified in all three versions as taking part in the murder, moves from the upper left corner to a position directly behind Mosby (from E to D). Note that figure E is pointing at the action of the murder, and character D has her dagger ready to plunge into Arden’s chest. Characters A and F are Black Will and Shakebag. In both the *Chronicle* and the play it is Will who pulls the towel over Arden’s head, while the ballad suggests that both Will and Shakebag step forward to do this together. In the ballad they both participate in the stabbing, but in the play Shakebag alone administers the second stab wound. Either the characters Black Will and Shakebag are misrepresented or they are simplified to the point where one manages one task while the other completes the murderous intent of both. Now we have accounted for all seven characters in the illustration. From the play, only Michael and Susan are unaccounted for, and since their participation in the murder is a supporting one, their absence may be considered unimportant. It might be useful to consider this an example of “visual structuring.” Kress and Van Leeuwen explain that, “visual structures do not simply reproduce the structure of ‘reality.’ On the contrary, they produce images of reality that are bound up with the interests of the social institutions within which the images are produced, circulated and read” (47). In other words, the overlapping forms of representation in this illustration – print and theatre – are also overlapping social institutions, and the representation of more than one point of time in the illustration is responsive to the combined needs of both.

This approach is not without its difficulties, however. In particular, a closer examination of the clothes worn by the characters produces contradictions. While female character D cannot be fully described, as she is mostly hidden behind the table, it is clear that she wears an open ruff collar and the top of her bodice and sleeve of her dress are light in color; her hair is coiled high on either side of a center part. The outfit worn by female character E, on the other hand, can be seen in great detail. Her gown is elaborately decorated and we can see that her dress is dark in color and that she wears a more traditional closed ruff. By clothing description alone, we cannot deduce that these two figures represent the same character. An examination of the clothing worn by male characters C, F, and G is even more revealing. The character identified as Mosby (G) is dressed as a gentleman, wearing a broad-brimmed hat with plume, a closed ruff, and a dark jerkin with slashes on the breast and upper sleeves, gathered into a V at the waist. His beard is short and pointed. Character C, standing over Arden, wears a completely different style of clothes. His cap is round and brimless; his jerkin is light in color and plainer in design, buttoned down the front and held together at the waist with a belt, with a pointed collar instead of a ruff. He wears wide, puffy breeches and boots with spurs. He sports a mustache, but not a beard. Overall, the impression given by this character is not only that he is dressed differently, but that his clothing identifies him as being of lower status than the one sitting to the right. Now examine character F, seen in mid-entrance from the door at left. His sword is similar in shape and length to the one held by character C; he also wears a collared jerkin buttoned down the front and wide breeches. He also sports a mustache but no beard. And while we see just the front of his boot, there is an indication that he wears spurs. Could this suggest that we are seeing two iterations of the same character, one as he hurries into the room upon Mosby's command, and the second as he stands over Arden ready to begin the killing? If so, then this character, in both iterations, must

be identified as Shakebag as he is the only one to figure in both instances. R. A. Foakes also struggles with this issue of identification; he states that, “the woodcut is crude, and possibly attempts to show more than one moment of action” (*Illustrations of the English Stage* 136). However, he ultimately dismisses this possibility because of the difference in clothing, and settles on the belief that it “is simply inaccurate” (136). Therefore, if we look at this scene as an experiment *in medias res*, we are left with an impression of confusion. Characters A, B, D, and G are identifiable (Black Will, Arden, Alice, and Mosby) but the remaining three figures (C, E and F) are left to be ambiguous participants that testify to the conspiratorial nature of the murder but ultimately undermine the narrative value of the illustration. However, if we cannot identify characters D and E as Alice in two moments of action, how do we account for them? In none of the sources is there a second armed female character. To identify character E as Susan requires that we assume the artist worked not from the texts but from (faulty) personal memory or misinformation. Of course, we could dismiss the attempt as deriving from the artist’s imagination – not necessarily tied to any particular source or remembrance and stemming from a need to convey a sense of chaos. But the other elements of the image are too closely tied to the information available in the sources to reject this supposition so easily. Whether the artist was working from memory of performance or from instructions given by his publisher, it is certainly possible to imagine that extra characters were introduced into the sequence. A cursory list of characters to be included in the action would have included Michael and Susan, and could therefore have created an alternate version of events.

If the woodcut suggests that the artist has imagined the interior space, is it still possible to deduce that the action represented is taken from memory of a witnessed performance? I propose that we can do so. One way to re-phrase this question is to ask whether we can assume that an

early modern book buyer, looking at this woodcut in 1633, would make a connection between the scene (or scenes) represented in the woodcut and action on a stage. This is a question to which we will return throughout this dissertation. We, as audience members, are often required to supply physical detail when we attend the theatre, easily filling in set, prop, and costume elements when the actors inform us of the need. An early modern spectator might be even more adept at this mental transference (for example, an audience member's reaction to the lines spoken by the Chorus in *Henry V*, when he asks, "Can this cock-pit hold / The vasty fields of France?" Prologue.11-12).²⁴ While the costumes create confusion about the exact moment portrayed in the illustration (if Character C is a second iteration of Character F and therefore Shakebag rather than Mosby, the timeline of the murder as represented becomes more problematic), I believe it is possible to read the *Arden* illustration as a narrative process, using both the space dictated by the textual description in all sources and the time element indicated in the play, either through a reading of the text, commission from the publisher, or observation of a performance. Later in this dissertation, I will examine how other artists chose to portray scenes of theatrical action by incorporating stage elements rather than realistic settings. However, I believe we can presume that professional seventeenth-century illustrators, commissioned to present such a scene, were able to fill in those same imaginative gaps as the audience.

'To be sung to the tune of "Fortune, my Foe"': the nexus between the popular drama
and the broadside ballad

The production and distribution of broadside ballads during the early seventeenth century may provide some illumination not only about the origins of the *Arden* woodcut, but also about the publication of playbooks. Both engaged audiences with popular materials, and contributed to the expansion of the market for printed works. The plays originated in the theatres, and were then

²⁴ Line citations for *Henry V* are from Gary Taylor's 1982 edition.

transformed through print to private and semi-public reading. The ballads evolved from folk songs, and were then transformed through print to the public performances of the street-corner ballad-hawkers and the more intimate group sing-alongs in alehouses and inns – amateur performances in their own right. If we consider the possibility that theatrical performances might also have been announced via single-sheet playbills and street-corner criers, the possibility of competition for market-share, not to mention attention on the busy, noisy streets of London, seems a distinct possibility. A closer examination of these two genres reveals a complementary nature to their production and to public affinity for them.

In the late Elizabethan period, the publishers of ballads, jest books, chapbooks and other popular pieces were associated, as were most other London publishers, through the Stationers' Company. Many of these publications were moralistic or allegorical in tone, but separated from the more formal religious publications (bibles, tracts, sermons, etc.) in terms of geography as well as audience. Tessa Watt identifies two manufacturing and sales centers for these fringe works: Smithfield and London Bridge (and their environs). In contrast, the more established publishing center was St. Paul's Churchyard, which Peter Blayney has researched in fine detail.²⁵ Watt suggests that this separation had more to do with proximity to audience than any formal bias or hierarchy of print shops (Watt 76). In the late sixteenth century, most publishers dabbled to some degree in ballad printing. But between the early Elizabethan and late Jacobean years, publishers of ballads became more specialized; by 1624 six booksellers organized themselves into an acknowledged partnership that thereafter in effect monopolized ballad publication. These men were Thomas Pavier, Henry Gosson, John Grismond, and the Wright brothers (John, Cuthbert, and Edward). These partners focused on the selling of ballads, leaving the actual printing to an equally small group of trusted associates. It should be noted that of the six, at least four of the men were also heavily invested in the publication of plays. The ballad-publishers group was remarkably nepotistic (Pavier's three daughters married Gosson, Grismond, and

²⁵ See, in particular, Blayney, *Bookshops in Paul's Cross Churchyard*, as well as "The Site of the Sign of the Sun."

Cuthbert Wright).²⁶ John Astington notes that the “possibly significant intersection of interests of publishers and booksellers who consistently dealt in both ballads and playbooks ... seems worth further thought and research” (“Rereading” 156). This close relationship among the partners could be of immense value to scholars in terms of tracking publishing rights and the mechanical elements of printing, such as woodblocks, across time, edition, and even genre. In fact, the relationship between ballad printing and play-text printing provides revealing information about the curious placement of the woodcut illustration in the 1633 editions of *Arden of Faversham* and *Mistress Arden’s Complaint*.

If we are to accept W.W. Greg’s conclusion²⁷ that the two publications appeared within months of one another, then we must look more closely at the presence of woodcuts in both. Tessa Watt explains that the consolidation of the ballad publication business by the formation of the 1624 partnership led to “a new emphasis on what we would call ‘marketing strategy’ . The most striking change was the institution of woodcut pictures as a standard feature [...] For the period 1600-40, more than five-sixths of extant religious ballads are illustrated” (Watt 78). By comparison, the number of extant illustrated play texts for the same period, not counting those in collections, is more along the lines of one in eight. We should heed Watt’s caution that we not allow our preconception of seventeenth-century iconophobia to cloud our understanding of the role illustration played in the popular print trade. There was a general trend in many print genres toward an integration of images and words during this period, and this included ballads with moral themes. Religious-themed woodcuts, which included emblems, morals and allegories, continued to prove popular, “[t]he early seventeenth century saw the proliferation of print shops in London, and there is no evidence to exclude the ‘godly sort’ from among the buyers of

²⁶ Watt includes a detailed genealogical table of several generations of ballad printers. *Cheap Print and Popular Piety* 276-7.

²⁷ Greg postulated this proximity of dates in *Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration*.

portraits and allegorical themes” (137-9). Elizabeth Allde, widow of Edward Allde,²⁸ printed the play while the ballad was published for Cuthbert Wright.²⁹ *The Complaint and Lamentation of Mistresse Arden* [Figure 8] includes the woodcut printed horizontally at the top of the left side of the page. The only publishing information included in the ballad is an imprint line at the bottom of the right side of the page, “Printed at London for C.W.”³⁰ Although they have not been identified as partners, Allde and Wright appear to have both included ballads among their offerings for sale, and the ESTC reveals that Elizabeth Allde and the Wright brothers had worked together before: a 1630 book of riddles by Thomas Johnson entitled *A New Book of New Conceits* is imprinted with the phrase, “Printed by E. A. for Edward Wright and Cuthbert Wright.”³¹ Allde focused, as did her husband Edward before her, on essays, plays and poems as well as ballads,³² while Wright and his brothers John and Edward pursued the market for ballads during the 1620s. John Wright was also involved in play publication and Elizabeth Allde is, several times, identified as his printer. Cooperation between printers appears to have been the norm, with large print-runs being shared among multiple printers simultaneously.³³ We can surmise that there was trade among printers when it came to woodblocks as well (this can be

²⁸ Edward Allde is identified as having published or printed some fifty-two plays between 1585 and 1625. Elizabeth is identified as having published seven between 1630 and 1633. She appears to have sold her business to her son-in-law Richard Oulton in 1640. The ESTC identifies Elizabeth as printer of more than twenty ballads and other popular publications.

²⁹ R. B. McKerrow’s biographical entry for Cuthbert Wright (302-3) in *A Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers in England, Scotland and Ireland, and of Foreign Printers of English Books 1557-1640*, identifies him as a major publisher of ballads throughout the 1620s and until his death in 1638/9.

³⁰ ESTC identifies C.W. as Cuthbert Wright.

³¹ ESTC identifies E.A. as E[lizabeth] A[lldde].

³² ODNB’s entry for Edward Allde explains that “Between 1612 and 1620 he was one of five appointed printers responsible for the printing of all ballads; in the earlier year he was also granted a twenty-one-year patent over the production and importation of all printed songs other than ballads, and of ruled music paper.”

³³ See Peter Blayney, “Prevalence of Shared Printing.” Blayney makes a convincing argument that it was common for printers such as Nicholas Okes to share large jobs with other printers, but his examination has more to do with multiple printers taking on sections of a work and then collating them, rather than several printers printing full runs of a whole piece.

easily noted when examining distinct ornamental borders that appear in unrelated published books), yet it is still striking to note that two independent publishers would choose to incorporate the same woodcut scene into their stock, distinct in genres but consistent in content.

What circumstance might have allowed for this sharing of valuable woodblocks? Geography and shared purpose may again provide a clue. The Allde and Wright establishments were located in adjoining wards, just streets apart, both outside the city walls: Elizabeth Allde was located at Christ-Church, Cripplegate,³⁴ while Cuthbert Wright was in Smithfield, near the hospital by St. Bartholomew the Less.³⁵ We can further examine the symbiotic relationship between printed plays and broadside ballads, as well as the participation of the Wright family and Elizabeth Allde in their production, through the ongoing publication history of *Doctor Faustus*. We do not know when the play was first performed, but there are several references to costumes and properties for “Faustus” in the 1598 Admiral’s Men inventory in Henslowe’s diary³⁶ The play did not appear in print until 1604. The first edition to incorporate the woodcut scene of Faustus in his study was published in 1616, with the imprint “Printed for Iohn Wright, and are to be sold at his shop without Newgate, at the sig[ne] of the Bibl[e].” John Wright

³⁴ McKerrow 6. Allde’s Fore Street address was outside the City wall near Cripplegate, in the Christ Church parish. ODNB identifies the progression of Edward Allde’s establishment thus: “For the first four years of his career Allde was based at his parents’ establishment, the Long Shop in the Poultry, but, perhaps in consequence of his [first] marriage to Rose Mason in St Giles Cripplegate parish, on 1 December 1588, he moved to the Golden Cup in Fore Street, outside Cripplegate, and remained there probably until 1596. During that time the parish register notes the christening of five children, along with the burial of one child whose baptism was otherwise not recorded; five servants were also buried. In 1597 Allde was recorded as dwelling in Aldersgate; between 1604 and 1612 he was resident on Lambeth Hill, near Old Fish Street; and from probably 1612 onwards he was based in Christchurch parish.”

³⁵ Cuthbert Wright’s location is identified in the imprint for two publications listed in the ESTC, once in 1626 and once in 1630. While the geographical mobility of Edward Allde is testimony to the transience of publishing establishments, it is probable that Wright was located at or near the Smithfield location when he published the *Mistress Arden* ballad in 1633.

³⁶ The following items are identified by W.W. Greg as being associated with *Dr. Faustus* in his edition of *Henslowe’s Papers*: “faustus Jerkin his clok” (54), “the sittie of Rome” (116), “j dragon in fostes” (118) and “poopes miter” (118).

(Cuthbert's brother) went on to publish five more editions before 1631, all with the woodcut intact. A ballad version of the Faust story was first registered in 1589, to be sung to "Fortune, my Foe" – the same tune as the *Mistress Arden* ballad.³⁷ A separate prose account of the Faustus story was printed several times during the same period, starting in 1592. By 1648 Cuthbert Wright's brother Edward had purchased the rights and was publishing this version – now with the same woodcut as the play and for sale at the same shop. Elizabeth Allde is also identified as the printer of a 1628 ballad, entitled *The Tragedy of Doctor Lambe,/ The great supposed Coniurer, who was wounded to death by Saylers/ and other Lads, on Fryday the 14. of Iune, 1628. And dyed in the/ Poultry Counter, neere Cheap-side, on the Saturday morning following.* This ballad also featured the Faust woodcut. While the registration entry for the *Mistress Arden* ballad does not identify a printer, we can postulate that Allde, having a prior working relationship with the Wright family, and accustomed to sharing wood blocks with them across projects, might have been contracted to print the ballad for Cuthbert. The inclusion of the *Arden* woodcut in both ballad and play thus becomes a much more feasible endeavor, with the woodblock remaining in one print house for the production of both publications.

As demonstrated above, the issue of source has less to do with which publication appeared first in 1633, than with what most influenced the content of the woodcut – the play or the ballad. The ongoing public fascination with this story, as testified to by references in Holinshed, Stowe, Heywood and Taylor, provides confirmation that there was a profitable market for many versions of the story. The question remains, however, why two editions – both with the woodcut incorporated – appeared in 1633. M.L. Wine not only believes the ballad was based on the play, he argues that the play was performed continuously throughout this period and

³⁷ According to Tessa Watt this tune was "the most often-used seventeenth-century melody for ballads of murders, disasters and death-bed repentance. Its association with the story of Doctor Faustus, damned and 'plung'd in pain,' led to the naming of 'Doctor Faustus' as the tune for other ballads" 64.

that this provided the resonance required for the near-simultaneous 1633 publications.³⁸

Although the 1633 edition of the play does not include an acting troupe attribution, this does not mean it was not connected in some way to a recent production of the play at one of London's playhouses. As noted before, the ballad was registered in 1633, which is as close as we can get to dating its origin. Since none of the other references appeared in 1633 (the most compatible would have been the 1631 edition of John Stow's *Annals*) it is possible that a production of the play between that date and early 1633 prompted the publication of both the play-text and the ballad.

What does this suggest about the value of illustration to publication at this time? Not, as has been previously asserted, that woodcuts were almost wholly unnecessary to the publication of a printed work. In fact, the appropriate image, used judiciously, provided an opportunity to build upon sales of a popular piece. Watt identifies a shift from generic images in Elizabethan pamphlets to more original woodcuts in this period, made to order for specific publications: "in the seventeenth century a trend toward a closer relationship between image and text meant that woodcuts were now commissioned for each occasion" (Watt 148). In the case of the 1633 *Arden* publications, one image could efficiently be designed for both projects, but still required specificity in terms of artistic source. Certainly, a seventeenth-century customer would have

³⁸ In the introduction to his edition of *Arden of Faversham*, Wine writes, "[t]here are several indications ... that the play enjoyed an active stage history before its publication in 1592 and continuously thereafter. Foremost among these is, of course, the evidence itself of a memorially reported text; and the 'inter-play borrowings' or parallelisms with known Pembroke plays at least associates *Arden* with that group of actors who organized themselves at one point under the aegis of the Earl of Pembroke. Furthermore, Edward White's strange entry of 'the tragedie of Arden of Feuersham & blackwill' in the Stationers' Register on 3 April 1592 attests to the popularity of the important but secondary role of the braggart comic villain, as does the introduction of Black Will's name into a passage in *The True Tragedy of Richard the Third* (a 'bad quarto', registered and printed in 1594, and suffering severe memorial contamination) for no reason, apparently, other than to recall this popular figure. Samuel Rowley's *When You See Me, You Know Me* (registered and printed in 1605) has as one of its villainous characters a Black Will ... Finally, the successive publications of the play in 1599 and again in 1633, along with the ballad of Mistress Arden's 'complaint and lamentation', based on the play, in that same year, testify to a continuing early interest in *Arden*" lxxv-i. Considering the lack of evidentiary performance records for this period, there is no way to know for certain when, where, or how often *Arden of Faversham* was actually performed during this period.

known the difference between a play and a ballad both in terms of form and content. But he or she also would have been attracted to a popular tale. A captivating scene from the story would have been of great value to book- and ballad-sellers throughout London. That Elizabeth Allde and Cuthbert Wright recognized the marketing value of incorporating the scene of Arden's murder into their editions demonstrates their business acumen and suggests an interesting trend in the industry in which the publication of plays and the publication of ballads were seen as mutually supporting enterprises.

'What lack ye what would ye have bought': ballads on stage, theatre in ballads

We can pursue the interactive relationship between popular theatre and broadside ballads in depth in *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*. This play, written by Robert Wilson, performed first by the Queen's Men in 1589, and published in 1590, offers remarkable awareness of the ways in which the two media complemented one another while they vied for public attention. The play, an allegorical critique of the City's morals, begins with this stage direction:

Enter the three Lordes and their pages: First, Pollicie with his page Wit before him, bearing a shield: the ympreze, a Tortoys, the word, Prouidens securus. Next Pompe with his page Wealth bearing his shield, the word Glorie sauns peere: the ympreze a Lillie. Last, Pleasure, his page Wil, his ympreze, a Faulcon, the word, Pour temps: Pol. attired in blacke, Pompe in rich roabes, and Pleasure in colours. (B1)³⁹

This procession, similar in structure and function to a court masque or to a city or guild pageant, immediately establishes the importance of iconography in identifying character, class, and intent. Pollicie's first line embeds a further stage direction, as he directs his page Wit to "aduance my shield and hang it vp, / To challenge him who euer dare denie, / That one of those three London Ladies rare / Ought not of right be matcht with Pollicie" (B1). The other lords follow suit, hanging their shields about the stage. This nod to the semiotics of chivalry is a cue to the

³⁹ Citations for *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London* are from the 1590 edition as examined on *EEBO*.

audience, the signifying shields remaining on stage long after the three lords have departed, leaving the young pages to engage in an expository dialogue. Some one hundred lines later, this visual mark of established order is deconstructed as Simplicity, a “poore Citizen” enters. Simplicity’s attention is immediately drawn to the shields, as the pages point out by noting the fool’s “gaping.” Simplicity performs the role of Clown, engaging in word play and riddles, as he explains to the pages that he is a ballad-seller, and then demands to know “whose wares are these that are vp already? I paid rent for my standing, and other folks wares shall be placed afore mine” (B4). This assumption that the shields are wares for sale subtly undermines the privileged status that the aristocracy would presume to impose on society.⁴⁰ By reducing the chivalric symbols of the shields to mercantile elements (Simplicity asks, “They are fine indeed, who sels them, can ye tell? Is he free?” (B4) the play provides a destabilizing and humorous moment for the public theatre audience, dismissing the aristocracy as being no better than a group of street merchants.

After an extensive verbal sparring match in which Simplicity plays with the names and situations of the three pages, he takes out his six ballads (priced at a groat apiece) in hopes of making a sale.

Marie child, I have chipping Norton a mile from Chappell othe heath, A lamentable ballad of burning the Pope’s dog: the sweet Ballade of the Lincoln shire bagpipes, And Peggy and Willy, But now he is dead and gone. Mine own sweet Willy is laid in his graue
la, la, la, lan ti dan derry, dan dad an, lan ti dan, dan tan derry, dan do. (C1)

At least some of the ballads identified were actually in circulation, and the incorporation of some reference to singing (presuming that ‘la la la’ would have been matched to a recognizable melody) reinforces the communication value they would have had to the audience. The pages wager that they can sing better than Simplicity can, and after another witty exchange the ballad-

⁴⁰ And, in fact, by the end of the scene, Simplicity has uncovered the Lords’ true origins: “Citizens borne and Courtiers brought vp, I thinke so, for they that be borne in London are halfe Courtiers before they see the Court” (C3).

seller takes out his *pièce de resistance*: a broadside featuring a memorial image of Richard Tarlton.

If the production were performed as it reads – with actual props used for the escutcheons and the broadside sheets – then the image to which *Simplicity* and the pages refer must have been identifiable to the audience. Tarlton’s reputation and legacy are the subject of chapter four, but it is important to note here that the famous comic actor had died two years before this edition was printed, meaning a performance would have occurred almost immediately after his death. Tarlton’s iconic jiggling figure was recognizable to fans of his theatrical work as well as the ballads associated with him. It is almost certain that a London theatre-going audience in the late 1580s would have recognized his semblance immediately and that the common citizens, with whom Tarlton had forged a significant rapport, would have experienced a particularly visceral response to the appearance of his countenance onstage.

The business of ballad-selling continues when *Simplicity*’s wife *Penury* enters, and he quickly shifts gears to reassure her of his industriousness.

be mannerly boies that she knocke ye not with her staffe: keepe your own counsel, and
Ile make ye laugh. What doo yee lacke, what lacke ye. Stand away these boies from my
wares, Get ye from my stall, or Ile wring you by the eares. Let my customers see the
wares: what lack ye what would ye have bought. (C3)

This speech suggests that a ballad-seller might have sold his wares from a stall just as any other bookseller would; that he hawked his wares with a general call (“What do yee lacke”) as well as with snippets of the ballads themselves; and that he would have expected harassment in his endeavors (such as other salespeople taking his stall, or small boys distracting potential customers). In the aggregate, this scene accomplishes much: it demonstrates the fluidity of the City and the porous connection between City and Court. It praises a celebrity in both theatrical and extratheatrical terms, thereby reinforcing his importance to the audience. And it deconstructs the privilege of publication – metaphorically, through the replacement of the Lords’ physical presence by the character of the ballad-seller figure, and more specifically by the identification

of the broadside ballads as the means of effectively communicating with the citizens of London. This remarkable piece of early modern intertextuality does more than acknowledge the variety of modes of communication at the time. It also indicates a switch in the demography of iconography from the abstract visual language of heraldry (and aristocratic spectacle) to the theatre of the marketplace. If the original production were performed using a facsimile of a broadside ballad incorporating a recognizable image of Tarlton this production element becomes a piece of metatheatre that effectively and seamlessly links the theatre and the ballad in a mutually beneficial relationship rather than a confrontational one. John Astington believes this was the case, and extends the performance relationship between play and ballad to include a merchandising opportunity:

This stage property is likely to have been the real thing, and the ballads were probably for sale outside the playhouse after the performance. The image held up on a London stage late in the 1580s is probably the same one Scottowe [John Scottowe, the author of an illustrated *Alphabet*, which featured an icon of Tarlton in the “T”] copied from a ballad bought from a traveling vendor. (“Rereading” 163)

It is possible to see, through this example, that the London audience accepted both forms as complementary to one another.

Conclusion

The close visual and textual reading employed here in the examination of *Arden of Faversham* above provides a fresh new approach to determining the relationship between the illustration and the text of a play, especially as it relates to various sources. While many scholars have been content to link this illustration to the publication of the 1633 ballad, examination of narrative elements in the ballad and the play-text reveal that the scene displayed in the woodcut is much more closely aligned with the play than the ballad – or, in fact, any other possible source. It even supports the compelling suggestion that publication of the ballad might have been

inspired by a production of the play. There are still unanswered questions regarding specific elements of the illustration, particularly in terms of character identification. However, this image is in keeping with other early modern creative attempts, in drama as well as in other popular modes of print such as broadside ballads, to capture action as it happened and in the process demonstrate motion over time. The close relationship within the publishing community between those who engaged in play- and ballad-production suggests more than convenience when it comes to incorporation of woodcut illustrations. These publishers recognized the communication value of including an image that spoke directly to the viewer in a way that text-only publications could not provide. In the case of the 1633 *Arden of Faversham*, the inclusion of the visualized murder scene, so closely related to the action in the play, demonstrates the value of performance to the artist in the process of completing his commission.

Chapter Three

‘What age hath ever heard such monstrous deeds?’: *The Spanish Tragedy* and the

Performance of Violence

*The Spanish Tragedy*¹ was one of the first and most successful dramas to cross over from staged performance to printed text in early modern England. Between 1592² and 1597 it was performed twenty-nine times, third behind *The Jew of Malta* and *The Wise Man of West Chester* (Rowan 113). *The Spanish Tragedy* also ran through twelve editions between 1592 and 1633; its constant availability in print throughout this period would have made it an attractive and well-known mainstay for acting companies in their touring repertoires as well as their London offerings (Mulryne, *Spanish Tragedy* Introduction xxxi). The continuing popularity of *The Spanish Tragedy* on stage and in print may have been due in part to a series of textual updates and emendations that kept it fresh for audiences and readers. In 1601 and 1602, for example, Philip Henslowe paid for four additions to the text that were designed for performance but which made their way into ensuing print editions.³ Beginning with the seventh edition in 1615, the title page was also augmented with a woodcut scene from the play [Figure 9]. The woodcut illustration

¹ All quotations from the play except where indicated are taken from Andrew Gurr’s 2009 Methuen Drama edition. In special instances, references are made to the introduction of J.R. Mulryne’s 1989 W.W. Norton edition; some quotations are from *The Spanish tragedie: or, Hieronimo is mad againe Containing the lamentable end of Don Horatio, and Belimperia; with the pittifull death of Hieronimo*, (London, 1623) EEBO.

² The dating of the play has not been confirmed, but most scholars place the first performances at some point in the 1580s. Chambers tentatively dates it at 1589 (3:396), while J.R. Mulryne cites Tom McAlindon and Arthur Freeman as proposing a date around the middle of the decade to reflect what Freeman calls its “pre-Armada tone.” See J.R. Mulryne’s 1989 edition, in particular, the section on “Authorship and Date” for more information xiii-xiv.

³ These were prominently announced on the title page beginning with the 1602 edition: “Newly Corrected, Amended, and Enlarged with new Additions, as it hath of late been diuers times Acted.”

The Spanish Tragedy.

Or,

HIERONIMO is mad againe.

Containing the lamentable end of *Don Horatio*,
and *Belimperia*; With the pittifull Death
of HIERONIMO.

*Newly Corrected, Amended, and Enlarged with new
Additions, as it hath of late been diuers
times Acted.*



LONDON,

Printed by *Augustine Mathewes*, and are to bee sold by
Iohn Grismand, at his Shop in Pauls Alley, at the Signe
of the Gunne. 1623.

Figure 9: *The Spanish Tragedy*, 1623 edition

was affixed to the next three editions.⁴ This illustration has been the source of much debate among theatre historians about its relationship to the play. Three elements form the crux of the discussion about whether or not it provides documentary evidence of performance: the artistic quality of the woodcut, the composition of the visual sequence, and the design of the device from which Horatio is hanging in the image. All three of these elements raise important questions about the power of the illustration as an emblem for the play in the early modern English marketplace.

While theatre historians have expressed general hesitation about identifying woodcuts and engravings as documentary evidence of theatre practice, the controversy regarding the *Spanish Tragedy* illustration derives more specifically from comparison of the woodcut illustration to modern editions of the play, in which the imposition of scene breaks weakens the connection between text and visual interpretation. However, the multimodal nature of the illustrations provides a singular opportunity for scholars to examine the representational value of such title page woodcut illustrations. In this chapter, I will approach this artifact in two ways: first, in its relation to the sequence of action in the 1623 edition that it appears to represent; second, as an example of visual rhetoric, which is intentional, persuasive, and important. The *Spanish Tragedy* woodcut offers us a case study demonstrating how title page imagery and its circulation can contribute to our understanding of theatre culture in early modern London, and addresses questions of intention, production and distribution. Through presentation of a moment of spectacular stage violence, the title page woodcut offers an intriguing perspective on how the

⁴ These editions appeared in 1618, 1623 (in two issues) and 1633. The version of the title page examined for this essay was printed by Augustine Mathewes for the third edition in 1623; while imprint information changed, the title, performance reference and illustration remained the same on all editions from 1615 until 1633. I refer to this edition in particular because I was able to examine a copy of it at length during a research trip to the Newberry Library in February 2009.

relatively new genre of printed drama could sustain the attention of the early modern book-buying public. In the process we may reveal valuable information about how such a published artifact could have served to symbolize the play as a marketing tool in circulation for almost twenty years.

Scholars have been ambivalent about the quality and usefulness of the *Spanish Tragedy* illustration. Alfred W. Pollard called it “mealy” and exclaimed that “the design has not many artistic merits; but in point of faithfulness it is probably all that could be desired” (73). Edward Hodnett singled out the title pages of *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Doctor Faustus* as “primitive” but valuable visual resources in the history of book illustration: “[t]hese woodcuts are technically naive, but they are penetrating illustrations, for they get at the heart of the plays” (*Five Centuries* 46).⁵ For Hodnett, the ability of these illustrations to capture central themes and moments from the plays appears to place them in a class apart from many contemporary English woodcuts. As cited in my introduction, Hodnett also criticizes the tendency of modern critics to label such works as “crude” and calls for a reassessment of early modern English woodcuts based on an analysis of contemporary drafting practices (*Image and Text*, 19). If we are to properly examine illustrations such as that on the *Spanish Tragedy* title page, we must put modern aesthetic preconceptions aside and focus on the promotional, memorial, representational, narrative, and rhetorical functions of the image.

The relationship between interactive participants involved in the presentation and distribution of images as presented by Kress and Van Leeuwen (114) can reveal much about the incorporation of illustrations in early modern play-texts. The continued use of the *Spanish*

⁵ Hodnett’s loaded statement offers a left-handed compliment to *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Doctor Faustus*. They may offer the modern critic the best examples of the form, but in his opinion they confirm yet again that English draftsmen and woodcarvers were technically deficient in comparison with those on the Continent.

Tragedy woodcut suggests that the relationship between the customer and the image was a successful one. If it had not been, the publishers would not have continued to include the illustration in subsequent editions. Other publishers apparently recognized the value of the illustration as well: Henry Gosson attached it to a broadside ballad in 1620 that appears to have derived from the play.⁶ The initial success of this relationship seems to have also had long-range implications for publishers and printers, who would have had to make arrangements to store, reuse and transfer the woodblock among printers.⁷ Not only was it leant out for Gosson's ballad, but the publication arrangements changed as of the 1623 edition – Francis Grove bought the publishing rights from John White and Thomas Langley, and Augustine Mathewes took over as printer from William White – which might have had implications for the ownership of the woodblock, as well.⁸

⁶ The ballad is entitled *The Spanish tragedy, containing the lamentable murders of Horatio and Bellimperia: with the pitifull death of old Hieronimo. To the tune of Queene Dido*. It includes the woodcut in the upper left corner of the sheet. Narrated by (a dead) Hieronimo, the ballad is faithful to the narrative of the play, with only a glancing reference to Andrea as Bel-Imperia's former lover and with no mention of the Portuguese subplot. Interestingly, while Hieronimo tells of the love between Horatio and Bel-Imperia and their meeting in the bower, there is no specific description of Horatio's murder.

⁷ These woodblocks were unique; they could be copied (as in the case of the worn out *Doctor Faustus* block) but the copies were never exact. I have not found any examples of two versions of a woodblock being used on simultaneous print runs of a play-text during this period.

⁸ Gosson was one of the six publishers who formed the ballad monopoly in 1624. Unlike the Wright brothers and Thomas Pavier, he does not appear to have invested heavily in play publication and had no connection with *The Spanish Tragedy*. According to the DEEP database, Edward White (who also published the 1592 edition of *Arden of Faversham*) printed *The Spanish Tragedy* in 1592; William White printed it from 1599 through 1615; and John White printed the 1618 edition, after which it was transferred to Augustine Mathewes. There are no references to *The Spanish Tragedy* in the Stationers Company register between 1600 and 1626, when publication rights were transferred from Thomas Pavier's widow to Edward Brewster and Robert Bird. If the three Whites were related, and they maintained a print shop as the Allde family did, Gosson would have had to negotiate with one of them for the loan of the *Spanish Tragedy* woodblock.

‘Canst paint a doleful cry?’: Traces of Performance in *The Spanish Tragedy*

The scene in the woodcut, featuring the murder of Horatio and Hieronimo’s discovery of his dead son, would have resonated especially with two types of viewers: those who had seen a performance of the play and those who had heard about it. Whether they had first-hand experience of *The Spanish Tragedy* or were aware of its themes and narrative threads, these viewers – or interactive participants, to use Kress and Van Leeuwen’s labels – would have been familiar with the dramatic action in the woodcut. The 1623 title page of *The Spanish Tragedy* not only offers the viewer direction about where they can buy the play-text, it also presents a clear understanding of how they should connect with this complex play. The subtitle refers to Hieronimo’s frustrated revenge – “Hieronimo is mad againe” – completely ignoring the framing device with Don Andrea and Revenge. It also underscores that madness with a visual rationale that is not otherwise offered on the title page: Horatio’s murder is seen, but not referred to in the subtitle. Without some form of experience with the play’s characters and themes, the interactive relationship between those who had created the title page and the viewer would fail. The fact that the illustration was included in four successive editions suggests that the number of viewers who could negotiate the complex messages of the multimodal title page outweighed those who could not. The ongoing popularity of *The Spanish Tragedy* with early modern audiences, in theatres and as cultural reference point, extended to its artistic representation in bookstalls.

Theatre historians have raised questions related to the composition of the illustration, struggling with the fact that in modern editions the action of the sequence in the image – Horatio’s hanging, Bel-Imperia’s kidnap, and Hieronimo’s discovery of the body – takes place across two scenes, 2.4 and 2.5. Holger Schott Syme describes the sequence as “two distinct but contiguous moments” (55). For some, the two-scene structure presented in one visual frame

weakens the image as a potential artifact of performance. In addition, the nonlinear representation of the characters, wherein the action unfolds from the margins to the center rather than from left to right, requires a more focused approach to reading the action in the scene. In fact, the “contiguous moments” from the play are actually sequential, a fact that is more in keeping with the speed of the unfurling of the action. As well, the “center/margin”⁹ layout of the illustration reveals significant information about early modern modes of visualization.

During the seventeenth century, editorial convention did not include breaks between scenes. The action that is now identified as scenes 2.4 and 2.5 would have read as one ongoing sequence, beginning with the lovers Horatio and Bel-Imperia meeting in the arbor below Hieronimo’s house. Bel-Imperia’s brother Lorenzo, her would-be suitor Balthazar, and the servants Pedringano and Serberine interrupt the lovers. The marauders are masked and move swiftly to separate the heroic Horatio from the virtuous Bel-Imperia. The attack comes so quickly and is carried out so savagely that Horatio cannot defend himself. His one line comes after the stage direction “they hang him in the arbour” when he asks incredulously, “What, will ye murder me?”¹⁰ After they have hanged him, the villains stab him repeatedly. Bel-Imperia calls out, “Murder, murder, helpe Hieronimo, helpe.” Lorenzo orders his accomplices to “stop her mouth: away with her” and Bel-Imperia is dragged offstage. Hieronimo, awakened by the commotion, enters after the murderers have scattered into the night. In the darkness he does not, at first, recognize the body. When he cuts him down he realizes, “Alasse it is Horatio my sweete Sonne.” The entire sequence in the text, from the appearance of the masked men to Hieronimo’s

⁹ Kress and Van Leeuwen provide a thorough analysis of the meaning of composition as regards multimodal text in chapter 6 of *Reading Images*. They distinguish the information value of left and right (Given and New), top and bottom (Ideal and Real), and center and margin, which can combine both Given and New with Ideal and Real values, in particular by means of a triptych layout where the center position ‘mediates’ the information in the margins, 175-200.

¹⁰ The quotations from this sequence occur on sig. D2 of the 1623 edition of the play.

identification of his dead son, occurs within a span of twenty-eight lines. The focus throughout is on four men brutally overpowering one, murdering him and then mutilating his body. These actions are punctuated with Bel-Imperia's begging for Horatio's life and her cries for help. Only after Hieronimo enters is there anything like a pause as he expresses his feeling of dread at hearing a woman's cries in the middle of the night.

While characters do exit and enter, the arc of the action is in realistic time and within a single setting. By returning to the early textual version and evoking the implications it has for performance, we can consider how an early modern viewer would likely have read this illustration. Kress and Van Leeuwen argue that reading visual narrative as if it were a version of verbal narrative replaced earlier forms of visual apprehension in the sixteenth century. They assert that the mode of visual reading that was replaced was that engendered by the triptych, in which reading proceeded from the centre to the margins of the image (197-8). While this may be the case with the elite sort of images that Kress and Van Leeuwen focus on, a brief examination of popular print images such as those used in ballads reveals that artists of these images continued to employ the triptych composition, and in the early seventeenth century both forms can be said to apply to play-text title page woodcuts. While narrative-based illustrations such as that for *Philaster* clearly moves from left to right, others including *Doctor Faustus*, *Arden of Faversham* and *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* maintain a center/margin composition, where the most important information is presented at the center and the surrounding information is subservient or supportive of the center, all within a single frame. It is the central element that makes sense of the elements on either side of it, thus giving them their meaning and coherence.¹¹ The *Spanish Tragedy* illustration, upon first examination, appears to be a frenzy of disorganized

¹¹ See KVL, 194-9; also Machin, 147.

action, with Horatio's murder, Bel-Imperia's kidnapping, and Hieronimo's discovery of his dead son all collapsed into one crowded frame. The characters even overlap in a manner that does not make sense if one compares the illustration solely to a textual analysis of the sequence.

Hieronimo's left leg overlaps with Bel-Imperia's skirt, and the smoke from his torch curls over the trellis from which Horatio hangs. Bel-Imperia and Hieronimo do not share the stage at this moment as stipulated in the play-text, and the light from Hieronimo's torch does not reveal Horatio while he is hanging in the arbor. Nevertheless, the image's details impose a link among the characters that reestablishes the centre-margin triptych means of presenting information. By placing Hieronimo at the center of the composition, as the mediator of everything happening around him, the artist reiterates the main theme of the play and reminds the viewer of a pivotal moment in the action.¹²

A visual analysis of this illustration should also take into account the relative salience of the composition's elements. Hieronimo is given the highest degree of salience in the illustration. David Machin defines salience as when "certain features in compositions are made to stand out, to draw our attention. Such figures will have the central symbolic value in the composition. These are the ones that credit more attention than others" (130). With his wide stance, flaming torch and sword at the ready, Hieronimo possesses more salience than his dead son, the captive Bel-Imperia, or Lorenzo, who is only partially in the frame. The revenge invoked by Hieronimo is predicated on Horatio's death, and ultimately involves Bel-Imperia and Lorenzo when they act in *Soliman and Perseda*. Furthermore, the arrangement of figures and actions creates a sort of "high sensory modality", in which the sensory truth criterion is "based on the effect of pleasure

¹² As noted in chapter two, the woodcut for *Arden of Faversham* also includes this central area of mediation, reiterating the importance of the murder and its consequences as the play's main theme.

(or un-pleasure) created by the visuals: the more the visual qualities of an image (or other form of visual) stir our feelings, the higher its sensory modality” (61). This “truth” of feeling offers information to two types of viewers: those who know the play are automatically drawn into the memory of its enactment, while those who do not know the play are compelled by the horrific, violent scene. For many viewers, the emotions raised in response to the hanging and kidnapping would be those of upset and anguish. In this composition, it is Hieronimo’s discovery – the light he brings to nefarious dealings – that defines the structure of the rest of the play. His body and face are turned toward the hanged figure of his son at the very moment of recognition. His back is to Bel-Imperia and Lorenzo, whose crime Hieronimo spends the rest of the play striving to reveal. Hieronimo’s central position also gives emphasis to Lorenzo’s attempt to sneak away, dragging Bel-Imperia with him. It is the very density and the shocking nature of the scene that make it a perfect candidate for reproduction as a promotional illustration of the printed play. In contrast, the more grisly culmination of the play, in which Hieronimo exacts his revenge, takes well over two hundred lines and the participation of most of the cast to complete. The denouement is much more complex in terms of exposition and resolution, making the sequence a less valuable choice for an artist in terms of visual narrative composition.

Another element of the *Spanish Tragedy* composition that has provoked much discussion among scholars concerns the speech ribbons unfolding from the mouths of Hieronimo, Bel-Imperia and Lorenzo. There are several surviving examples of speech ribbons, or banderoles, associated with seventeenth-century printed drama. These range from the prophecies of the Brazen Head in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* to the mournful protestations of the forsaken lover in *The Vow Breaker*. While banderoles may have gradually disappeared from many painting genres, they continued to be incorporated in printed drama through new editions of

plays as well as freshly drawn illustrations. The title page woodcut for *The Witch of Edmonton* was first published in 1658, and includes speech ribbons emanating from the mouths of Mother Sawyer and Dog, her familiar. In the case of *The Spanish Tragedy*, scholars debate the relationship of these speech ribbons to the text of the play and to performance, but also as an indicator of the illustration's artistic value in relation to other forms of drawing and painting at the time. The differences in *The Spanish Tragedy* are primarily a matter of condensing the speeches:

Hieronimo (text):	‘Alasse it is Horatio my sweete Sonne’
Hieronimo (woodcut):	‘Alas it is my son Horatio’
Bel-Imperia (text):	‘Murder, murder : helpe Hieronimo, helpe’
Bel-Imperia (woodcut):	‘Murder helpe Hieronimo’
Lorenzo (text):	‘Come, stop her mouth : away with her’
Lorenzo (woodcut):	‘Stop her mouth’ ¹³

For critics of book illustration such as Edward Hodnett, these ribbons are yet another demonstration of English woodcarvers' technical naïveté and suggests a sort of sloppiness on the part of the artist or the publisher who commissioned the work (*Five Centuries* 7). While it is possible that concessions were made to fit text into available space, or that the artists worked from incomplete or faulty textual source material that resulted in errors, it is also possible that the differences are a result of the artist relying on the dynamic nature of the play in performance. Holger Schott Syme defines the relationship between speech as spoken and written in the *Spanish Tragedy* illustration as much closer than has previously been assumed. He argues that the physical events of sight and sound in performance make sense of the speech ribbon text. Syme argues that the text in the banderoles serve as both “originary text” and as an artistic

¹³ To best demonstrate the state of these three lines in text and image, I have cited the 1623 edition of the play.

facsimile of drama. As an originary text the lines here are “render[ed] faithfully, *or as faithfully as an actor might*” (56, emphasis added). The dramatic quality of the banderoles is shown in the way they are placed in the illustration, “broken up into parts, freed from the constraints of the orderly progression of the printed page, the characters’ lines intermingle [and] demand space” (56). Paul Yachnin suggests that this representation of the human voice shifting from the stage to the page begins to make more sense when we distance ourselves from the modern separation of seeing and hearing as two distinct sensory processes – one based on the refraction of light and the other reliant on vibrations of air – and try to understand the two senses as a seventeenth-century English person would have done: “People in Shakespeare’s time tended to think of both as events that were physical in the same way and to the same degree. In both cases, some *thing* entered the portals of the body; writers in Shakespeare’s time commonly took for granted the physicality or quasi-physicality of good or, more commonly, bad influences” (Yachnin, *Culture of Playgoing* 73, emphasis in original). By positioning the effects of seeing and hearing more closely together in a way reminiscent of the time in question, the incorporation of what to us appear artificially imposed notations of speech becomes less problematic.

In *Words, Script, and Pictures: Semiotics of Visual Language*, Meyer Schapiro examines the relationship between image and text in medieval and Renaissance painting and the ways in which artists and illustrators attempted to integrate action and speech in the visual plane. Schapiro sees the text within banderoles not as labels representing text, but as simulated speech acts. He argues that, “[s]peech belongs to the speaker in a way different from the words on the adjoining text.”¹⁴ The incorporation of performative speech linked to the character gives it a

¹⁴ Meyer Schapiro, *Words, Script, and Pictures: Semiotics of Visual Language* 118. While Schapiro’s work focuses primarily on medieval and early Renaissance religious art rather than

primacy and an urgency that serves to enact the scene for the viewer in a way not provided by the text alone. Social semioticians further differentiate the speech act from the “image act”. The image act creates a distinct demand upon the viewer and establishes a relation between the viewer and the image. The type of relation is then signified by means other than speech – facial expressions, gestures, etc. The image “wants” something from the viewer, “to form a pseudo-social bond of a particular kind with the represented participant” (KVL 118). In the case of *The Spanish Tragedy*, the speech balloons reinforce the visual elements of the illustration and the themes of the play-text. The condensed dialogue teaches the viewer how to respond. The ribbons can be read left to right or from center to margin, as with the image itself. Hieronimo’s grief at his devastating discovery is either way the primary message. Bel-Imperia’s cry for help is secondary; in the context of the play as written this plea is a result of the attack upon Horatio, but in the illustration it also aligns with her personal plight as her brother kidnaps her. Lorenzo’s line, which in the play is a command to his accomplices early in the sequence, here loses its place and power. It is too late to keep Bel-Imperia quiet. Hieronimo has heard her, and Lorenzo’s plot to ruin his rival and thus marry off his sister to the Portuguese prince is destroyed.

The representation of the speech and image acts using the convention of the banderole is also found in an unusual and affecting painting genre unique to the Elizabethan period, known as the “revenge painting.” According to Marguerite Tassi, revenge paintings were particularly fashionable in Scotland (171-3). The most famous of these, and one which offers an intriguing thematic parallel to *The Spanish Tragedy*, is *The Memorial of Lord Darnley* [Figure 10].

illustrations associated with printed drama, it does provide a forum for examining the speech ribbon as used in play-text illustrations.

Commissioned by the murdered Darnley's father, Lord Lennox, and painted in 1567/8, the painting presents a multimodal visualization of Lennox's campaign to avenge his son's murder through manipulation of his grandson, the infant King James VI of Scotland. Darnley, estranged husband of Mary, Queen of Scots, died under mysterious circumstances¹⁵ and Lennox demanded that the queen and the cabal of Scottish lords suspected of his son's murder be brought to justice. The setting of the painting is a family chapel: Darnley's funeral effigy is at the center, with the infant James praying at an altar below. To the left stands Christ leaning against the cross, and to the right kneel Darnley's father, mother, and brother. In addition to several pictorial and textual arguments presenting the case for revenge, speech ribbons unfurl from the mouths of the four living subjects. The most powerful of these emits from James's lips, "Arise, O Lord, and avenge the innocent blood of the king my father and, I beseech you, defend me with your right hand" (Tassi 172-3). Lennox was a kingmaker who had spent years cultivating his son as a favorite of Elizabeth and later as a suitable consort for Mary. His ambition to ensure his family's place in the line of succession, and more importantly to cement his role as the power behind the Scottish throne, was finally achieved after Mary was deposed and thirteen month-old James was crowned. Lennox even served briefly as James's regent before he himself was murdered. The connection between this painting and *The Spanish Tragedy* lies in the employment of complex tropes of visual rhetoric to record personal tragedy and provide justification for the anticipated violent acts

¹⁵ Darnley was staying in Edinburgh at separate lodgings from the queen; a massive explosion in the house during the middle of the night appeared to be the cause of his death (along with that of his valet), but closer examination of the bodies revealed that they had been strangled. It was suspected by Lennox and others that the explosion was in reality a cover-up for the murder. See Alan Stewart, *The Cradle King: the Life of James VI & I, the First Monarch of a United Great Britain* for more on the machinations of Mary's reign in Scotland, the upshot of Darnley's murder, and the tumultuous upbringing of James.

required to obtain justice. The use of banderoles in *The Memorial of Lord Darnley* emphasizes the importance of what Tassi calls a *memento vindicta*, “whose purpose is to incite the viewer and the patron-commissioner to action” (171). In the case of *The Spanish Tragedy* the woodcut illustration, with its speech ribbons, offers the viewer the moment of personal tragedy.

By tying the visualization of Horatio’s murder to a scene later in the play, the Fourth Addition – also known as the Painter’s Part – the play provides a full-blown *memento vindicta*. *The Spanish Tragedy* offers the spectator and reader a particularly powerful example of the sensory complexities of Elizabethan theatre. The visual and the performative are woven closely together, and this is borne out in the multimodal nature of the woodcut illustration. This illustration may also be linked to the Painter’s Part, in which Hieronimo commissions the painter Bazardo to produce a sound- and speech-filled allegorical family portrait reminiscent of the revenge painting for Lord Darnley. As Hieronimo conveys what he wants Bazardo to paint, he effectively girds himself for the actions to come. As with Lennox and his commission of *The Memorial of Lord Darnley*, Hieronimo expects this painting not only to articulate the grief he suffers at the loss of his son, but also to act as a public proclamation of his campaign of vengeance. The Fourth Addition is rife with distinctive synesthetic descriptions that enhance the rhetorical power of Hieronimo’s commission. The painting he envisions, which will celebrate his family while justifying his revenge, incorporates motion as well as sound, and even transcends time. As he instructs Bazardo about what should be included in the painting, Hieronimo begins with a traditional family portrait but quickly veers into terrain that is artistically problematic, if not impossible. As he recalls the night of Horatio’s murder, Hieronimo invokes Nature at her most ominous, “Let the clouds scowl, make the moon dark, the stars extinct, the winds blowing, the bells tolling, the owl shrieking, the toads croaking, the minutes jarring, and the clock striking

twelve” (144-50). Furthermore, Hieronimo describes Horatio’s hanging body as “tottering, and tottering as you know wind will weave a man” (148-9), a description that may drive the audience immediately back to the action of act two where the desperate father also attempts to visualize his devastating emotions. His command to “Draw me like old Priam” (153) is a reasonable directive: Renaissance art is replete with early modern subjects posing as classical figures. However, Hieronimo’s identification with the King of Troy once again crosses the line from conventional artistic reproduction to externalized emotion, “Make me curse, make me rave, make me cry, make me mad, make me well again, make me curse hell, invoke heaven, and in the end leave me in a trance” (154-7). Hieronimo’s commission invokes powerful empathy in the modern reader and presumably would have done the same for a seventeenth-century reader or audience member. The actor portraying Hieronimo would have to employ significant physicality – the speech all but dictates Hieronimo’s frantic movement about the stage as he tries to communicate what he envisions. The sequence begins calmly, with the stage direction “The PAINTER and he [Hieronimo] sits down.”¹⁶ But soon Hieronimo is demonstrating the pose he wishes Bazardo to capture, with his wife and son standing by him and “my hand leaning upon his head, thus, sir, do you see?” (121-2). Then Hieronimo moves to the tree where Horatio was hanged: “Nay, I pray mark me sir. Then sir, would I have you paint me this tree, this very tree” (124-5). After describing how he wants Bazardo to paint Horatio’s murder and those who committed it, Hieronimo directs him to “bring me forth in my shin, and my gown under mine arm, with my torch in my hand, and my sword reared up thus” (135-6). The directions continue for another twenty lines as Hieronimo becomes more agitated and caught up in the sense-related experience of finding his son, insisting that the painter tie the discovery to a striking range of

¹⁶ This stage direction is evident in the 1623 edition.

emotional responses. The speech signifies the influence the actor can have upon the audience, providing the trigger for the spectator to “see” and “hear” what is described. In this moment Hieronimo has recreated and overwritten that murder scene, simultaneously destabilizing the play’s narrative and reinforcing his sympathetic connection with the audience.

The painting that Hieronimo commissions is rhetorically powerful, but technically improbable. His evocation of the genre of the revenge painting provides a possible artistic connection. In *The Memorial of Lord Darnley*, the family chapel provides the focal point for the father’s revenge, offering the viewer heraldic proof of the dead man’s abused honor and the righteous claim to Christian vengeance. There is even evidence that Lennox’s campaign is effective: a scene is inset at bottom left of James leading his troops into battle with a banner invoking his father’s murder, while Mary surrenders at Carberry Hill. In *The Spanish Tragedy* the revenge painting is never produced. In fact, there is no further mention of either Bazardo or the painting. Hieronimo will, rather, present a piece of performance art, turning his creative abilities to more effective use in writing and producing *Soliman and Perseda*, the play presented for the Spanish Court that provides the instrument for achieving his revenge. The woodcut illustration accompanying the printed version of the play is not designed to replicate the rich appeal of a revenge painting, yet it does provide some of the elements in miniature. It represents how immoral a state Spain has become, where petty jealousy leads to murder and men of honor are left to obtain justice through violence rather than the law. The title page illustration, for readers as well as viewers of the play, forges a powerful link between the murder sequence in act two and the Fourth Addition. The viewer is reminded yet again of the sensory elements of the scenes: Horatio tottering in the wind, Bel-Imperia crying for help, and Hieronimo discovering his

son's dead body in the dark. The composition and incorporation of speech depiction in the woodcut make it, if not a revenge painting, certainly a powerful *memento vindicta*.

An opportunity to examine the *Spanish Tragedy* illustration in terms of its relationship to contemporary performance practice comes through identification of properties and dress in the woodcut. While the woodcut does not provide a straightforward documentation of stage elements, it may offer hints about how the play was staged at the time. It is important to note that, as with other extant illustrated title pages of the period, the frame offered in the *Spanish Tragedy* illustration does not represent a theatrical space. Illustrations from *Arden of Faversham*, *Doctor Faustus*, and *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* depict interior spaces. Scenes from *Philaster*, *The Maid's Tragedy*, and *A King and No King* depict more naturalistic exterior spaces. None of these is meant to suggest the scene on stage. *The Spanish Tragedy* illustration does not attempt to set the action outdoors, but rather includes a unique, artificial element that may connect the illustration more closely with stage practice. This is the embellished screen from which Horatio is hanged – rather than a more naturalistic tree or arbor one might expect from reading the text. The screen is a flimsy-looking arched frame garnished with jagged leaf-like protuberances. If the artist had used the play text as his source, the powerful emphasis on the words “tree,” “arbour” and “bower” throughout the play in both dialogue and stage direction would have influenced his vision. By the same argument, if the artist had first-hand experience of a production of the play, the use of a prop or set piece used to represent the arbor might equally have influenced him. An examination of the list of “The Enventary tacken of all the properties for my Lord Admeralles men, the 10 of Marche 1598” catalogued by Philip Henslowe

in his *Diary* reveals a variety of set pieces and props including “j baye tree.”¹⁷ There is no description in the play that suggests a bay tree, and it cannot be determined if such a property would have been capable of such strenuous use in performance, considering that there are two onstage hangings in the play.¹⁸ Nevertheless, the fact that prop trees were available to the Admiral’s Men is significant. The play was associated with the troupe from at least 1597, when they performed two successful revivals. The inclusion of the bay tree in Henslowe’s inventory also suggests that the playing company was accustomed to employing specific and elaborate set decoration when performing in London.¹⁹

It is unclear how this scene might have been portrayed on an early modern stage, but several scholars have contemplated the possibilities at length. J.R. Mulryne, in his edition of the play, writes in a footnote regarding the stage direction in 2.4 “They hang him in the arbour”:

[w]hether a stage-tree was used for this purpose remains unclear; Isabella (IV, ii, 60 ff.) seems to refer to a tree; Hieronimo says (IV, iv, 111) he found Horatio ‘hanging on a tree’; the author of the Fourth Addition thinks very specifically of a tree (see ll. 60 ff.).

But editors may well be right in arguing that the arbour illustrated on the title-page of the 1615 edition (a trellis-work arch with a seat incorporated in it) may have been decorated with leaves and branches, and so have served as both arbour and tree (Mulryne 43).

In a later footnote regarding the hanging of Pedringano in 3.6, Mulryne writes, “[t]he property which has already done duty as an arbour may have again been used here (stripped, perhaps, of its leaves and branches) to effect this second hanging” (69). The trellis appears once more in 4.2,

¹⁷ See ‘Playhouse Inventories Now Lost’ from *Henslowe’s Diary*, 316-25. The reference to the bay tree is on page 319.

¹⁸ Pedringano’s hanging in 3.6 also takes place in full view of the audience.

¹⁹ We know that in 1598 the Admiral’s Men were performing at Henslowe’s Rose Theatre, so the ‘baye tree’ in his inventory would have been available to them if they required it.

when Isabella tears the arbour apart in her final act of mad grief before stabbing herself. The stress on the set piece, as well as this violent stage destruction, would require a prefabricated and restorable property ready for the next performance. In this case, Mulryne suggests two alternatives: “Isabella may merely strip the leaves and branches from the arbour, or she may topple a property tree if one was used” (110). If the woodcut illustration were patterned after a performance, the artist observed something akin to the former, an arched trellis rather than a property tree.

D.F. Rowan believes a contemporary staging of *The Spanish Tragedy* would have made maximum use of a free standing structure to identify a place of love and death in much the way modern productions do. He suggests that the trellis/arbours might have done triple duty as the gallows for Pedringano’s execution and the discovery of Horatio’s body at the play’s climax. Rowan goes so far as to argue that the trellis was a major set piece remaining onstage throughout the play, citing the woodcut as evidence, “There was a property arbour on stage, and the pertinent questions are whether it remained on stage throughout the play, and where it was located on the stage ... Probably placed against the back wall when not in use, it was brought forward to the forestage when needed” (120). An ever-present set piece reinforces the crucial nature of the scaffold/tree, as all of the major characters in the play interact with it in some way. In fact, all of the characters that die violently in the course of the play, with the possible exception of the Duke of Castile, interact in some way with this trellis. It is here that Horatio and Bel-Imperia hold their tryst; that Lorenzo, Balthazar, Pedringano and Serberine murder Horatio; and that Pedringano is executed. Also, both Hieronimo and Isabella attack the tree – he verbally, and she physically. If we accept Rowan’s conclusion, there is a further and particularly profound irony in Hieronimo’s relationship to the double gallows. The tree in his private orchard is the

scene of his son's murder – an act that even the Knight Marshal of Spain is helpless to prevent. And yet Hieronimo is not unaware of the paradox inherent in Pedringano's execution by hanging, and his own role in sentencing the villain to this form of execution. Still, he cannot bear to remain and watch the death penalty carried out. "God forbid/A fault so foul should 'scape unpunished./Despatch and see this execution done -/This makes me to remember thee, my son" (3.6.95-8).

The riveting nature of Horatio's death is not as strong on the page, primarily because it takes place between the lines. On stage, however, it would have been engrossing for the sheer spectacle it afforded and for the emotional associations it created for the audience. As Molly Smith argues, the constant reminders of Horatio's violent murder in both text and stage business throughout the play make it a much more resonant event than the framing device of Don Andrea's wrongful death. In fact, without Don Andrea's pointed interruptions in the main action, he would be quickly forgotten. "Horatio's body, hanged and mutilated before a full house, thus takes precedence over Don Andrea, whose death has been narrated rather than witnessed" (225). The powerful stage business of the hanging and desecration of Horatio's body leads me to question Alfred W. Pollard's conclusion that the hanged Horatio would have been represented by a dummy. Referring to the woodcut, Pollard assumed that the actor-victim would have been replaced at some point, "I cannot resist remarking on how admirably he [the artist] has caught the pose of the straw dummy, which must have been left hanging to personate Horatio, in place of the actor, who had doubtless slipped behind the arbour during the scuffle and was now resting after his exertions" (75). If the arbour/bower property were prominently visible on the stage, such a switch would clearly have undermined the shock value of watching the murder and discovery enacted. It is not so difficult to perform the hanging of a character with harness and

hook; an actor could easily have remained dangling from the set piece for the length of time required for Hieronimo to enter, recognize him, and haul him down. Andrew Gurr states that this type of business was a “standard shock device” at this time, wherein a hook attached to a band tied under the actor’s armpits would have satisfied the illusion (Gurr, *Spanish Tragedy* Introduction xvii).²⁰ It is this visceral quality of the scene as staged that makes it so powerful for the illustration in the printed play.

The appearance of Hieronimo in the illustration offers a second, smaller but equally interesting, connection between the play-text and stage performance. Upon hearing Bel-Imperia’s cries for help he enters “in his shirt.”²¹ In the woodcut, he wears a loose-fitting, rumpled shirt and ballooning trousers, plus some sort of cap and soft shoes – perhaps a nightcap and slippers. The addition of hastily thrown on trousers and slippers would support the representation of the poor old man being summoned from bed, as the other three characters are fully dressed. More significantly in terms of symbolism, Hieronimo carries both a sword and a lighted torch. The stage directions for act two do not specify that he carry these items. As a homeowner awakened in the middle of the night by fearful cries, it makes sense that he would thus arm himself and light his way. A useful confirmation of these items comes in the Fourth Addition, when Hieronimo dictates the discovery of his son to the painter, “after some violent noise, bring me forth in my shirt, and my gown under mine arm, with my torch in my hand, and my sword reared up thus: and with these words: What noise is this? who calls Hieronimo?” (135-39). This elaboration on his appearance and slight reworking of his line from Act Two may well provide the source for the woodcut artist’s interpretation of his appearance. The torch also

²⁰ Gurr also cites the play *David and Bathsebe* as an example of such onstage hanging, where “Absalom has to hang by his hair for 120 lines of dialogue” xvii.

²¹ Gurr identifies the shirt as a nightshirt, citing Hieronimo’s description of his attire in the Fourth Addition ll. 135-9 as basis for probable stage practice 43.

provides an indication of contemporary public theatre stage practice, in which torches, lanterns and candles were used to suggest night scenes.²² In the Fourth Addition there are repeated references in the dialogue to torches lighting up the night, culminating in this ironic exchange between Hieronimo and his servant Pedro:

Hieronimo: What make you with your torches in the dark?

Pedro: You bid us light them, and attend you here.

Hieronimo: No, no, you are deceived, not I, you are deceived:

 Was I so mad to bid you light your torches now?

 Light me your torches at the mid of noon,

 Whenas the sun-god rides in all his glory:

 Light me your torches then.

Pedro: Then we burn daylight.

Hieronimo: Let it be burnt: night is a murderous slut,

 That would not have her treasons to be seen. (24-32)

Considering that the first edition to which the woodcut was attached was printed in 1615, some thirteen years after the Painter's scene was added, it is possible that the artist who drew the scene for the title page illustration incorporated Hieronimo's description of his actions from the Fourth Addition into the action of the woodcut. It is also possible, and within the realm of our understanding of contemporary stage practices, that the inclusion of the lighted torch represents

²² See Hugh M. Richmond's *Shakespeare's Theatre: a Dictionary of his Stage Context* in the entry for "night" 314: "Despite the lack of appropriate lighting effects in producing plays on an open-air stage in the afternoon, there are many night scenes in Shakespeare, usually carefully signposted by allusions to the time of day, by mention of torches and torch-bearers, candles, lanterns, moon and stars. Darkness is also indicated by costume through the wearing of nightgowns and nightcaps." Hieronimo's loose shirt and cap in the illustration could be construed as a nightgown hastily tucked into his breeches and a nightcap.

the performed moment of Hieronimo's discovery of Horatio's dead body. Michael Hattaway emphasizes the double meaning of the torch in this context, "[e]ntrances in particular often established an informing image for the ensuing scene. Stock properties such as torches had two functions when carried on to the stage: to reveal to the audience that the action is taking place by night, but also to suggest that the bearer is in the dark, uncognizant of his fate" (*Elizabethan Popular Theatre* 65). Martin White pins the double meaning of a torch to an earlier point in the scene, when the mood is still romantic, "An Elizabethan audience would undoubtedly have noted the irony of invoking darkness, invariably associated with danger and evil, at the beginning of what promises to be a love scene" (*Renaissance Drama in Action* 135).²³

Further examination of the clothing worn by the other figures in the illustration yields more clues about performance. Bel-Imperia wears an intricately decorated lady's gown, defining her station. On top of her head is some sort of headpiece or mantilla, perhaps suggestive of Spanish style. The clothing of Lorenzo and Horatio is most interesting and, to the best of my knowledge, has not been considered in terms of characterization. Horatio is booted and spurred, wearing a military-style jerkin. Overall his clothes are simple and functional, suitable for a warrior. Lorenzo, on the other hand, is reminiscent of a louche Jacobean court figure, resplendent in a tall brimmed hat with plume, finely decorated sleeves, gartered breeches and shoes topped with rosettes. He also wears a full-faced black mask.²⁴ R.A. Foakes glosses over the difference between the costumes.²⁵ However, there is no reason not to think of these details as efforts on the part of the artist to capture identifying traits that clarify the difference between these two young

²³ White uses *ST* 2.4 as a compelling case study for the performance of outdoor space 109-43.

²⁴ Although dictated in the script, this mask seems pointless, as Bel-Imperia immediately recognizes her brother and Balthazar.

²⁵ In *Illustrations of the English Stage, 1580-1642*, Foakes does express surprise at Horatio wearing boots and spurs and is puzzled by the rosettes on Lorenzo's shoes. The author does not elaborate as to why this footwear confuses him. See Foakes's examination of *ST* 104-6.

men on stage. David Machin calls this “categorisation,” wherein “[p]eople can be represented with attributes that connote stereotyped characteristics. These attributes can be cultural . . . But over time they become a kind of ‘common sense,’ which still lives on, especially in apparently innocent entertainment media” (122). This contrast in costume style belies the extreme opposite positions defined by these two characters. Horatio, as Don Andrea’s friend and “second,” is a brave and upstanding military hero, whereas Lorenzo is a dissipated, self-serving manipulator who craves the power and materialistic rewards of Court. Despite Horatio’s decency and heroism, in the world of Spain he can never be equal to the amoral, aristocratic Lorenzo. While the King does acknowledge Horatio’s bravery in the victory over Portugal, he clearly favors Lorenzo. A perusal of the inventories in Henslowe’s diary reveals a wide array of costume pieces that would have been appropriate for both characters: a “Spanerd gyrcken” or a “read Spanes dublett styched” and many richly embroidered “satten dublets”²⁶ would have assisted in defining both characters in the eyes of audience members. These two modes of dress – the simplicity of the soldier and the foppery of the courtier – serve to further instantiate in a viewer’s mind the waste of Horatio’s death and the upside-down nature of Spain.

Conclusion

The Spanish Tragedy was a particularly popular dramatic work with a long history of success in the over fifty years from its first performances to the closing of the theatres in 1642. During that period the play saw untold productions in London and on tour, and at least eleven print editions. The woodcut illustration featured on the play’s title page beginning in 1615 offers the modern scholar an interesting perspective on how publishers communicated with their

²⁶ See list of costume pieces in ‘Playhouse Inventories Now Lost’ from *Henslowe’s Diary* 317-23.

customers. Such title pages provided the basis for a complex interaction that extended beyond the immediate exchange between bookseller and book buyer to include the theatergoing public and potentially a much wider swath of the London population. Illustrated title pages such as that for *The Spanish Tragedy* offered a compelling distillation of the play's action and themes that served as a powerful marketing tool, whether at the point of sale as the visible cover of the quarto or nailed to a post as a promotional one-sheet. The *Spanish Tragedy* illustration is especially valuable, as it presents an artistic interpretation of the climactic sequence in the play that would have been especially resonant for an early modern viewer, whether that viewer had seen the play on stage, read the text, or was familiar with the story by means of peripheral materials such as ballads. The fact that the composition of the illustration veers from the action as strictly delineated in the play-text should not deter us from evaluating it in terms of its relationship to the play. Rather, we need to seek out new means of analyzing the material in hopes of making better sense of the illustration, both in conjunction with the title page and as a multimodal message in its own right with significant value to an early modern viewer.

Social semiotics provides one such means for reexamination. By employing the tools of visual rhetoric we can unpack the illustration for the *Spanish Tragedy* title page and begin to reclaim it in terms of its significance as a valid representation of the play. It is then possible to examine the elements of the composition and make more informed determinations about what the illustration is communicating. Rather than a haphazard and crudely drawn sketch, we begin to see the scene as an artifact of the play. Certainly Hieronimo, in his central position with his illuminating torch, provides the key to understanding the play, in terms of the link between image and the text in the title. He is the character identified as central to the audience. The artist has taken care to compose the illustration in such a way that the viewer's eye is always drawn

back to Hieronimo. The information presented on the left and right margins support and reinforce the tragedy and the root of Hieronimo's quest for vengeance. The condensed dialogue in the speech balloons also serves to reinforce the bond between viewer and image. These banderoles create a demand upon the viewer that encourages an emotional reaction, instilling a feeling of compassion and sympathy for the protagonist.

The approach also allows us to reconsider the question of the illustration's connection to early modern theatrical practice. This scene is not meant to provide a snapshot of the play on stage. However, the fluid action of the sequence connects the woodcut more closely to performance than to the text. Specifically, the incorporation of what appear to be set pieces and props, as well as the suggestion of costumes, strengthens the relationship between the illustration and the play as it might have been performed. The artist took care to identify the four characters by their distinct clothing styles, some of which is indicated in dialogue but most of which would have been worked out by the acting companies relying upon their costume stores. The torch and sword are also mentioned in the text, but the torch would have held particular resonance for a contemporary theatrical audience – encoded with the signifiers for a night scene played in the afternoon, but also providing cues to the viewer about the ominous nature of the scene and the moment of revelation for Hieronimo. Most intriguing is the presence of a trellis-type structure that bears the hanging body of Horatio. The significant detail afforded this element suggests its importance to the artist. Again, composition drawn solely from the text would more likely result in a naturalistic tree, arbor, or bower – the words used to describe the site in the text. This piece is not meant to represent a tree, and suggests that the artist drew, at least in part, from an experience of watching the play performed.

By expanding from a thematic and iconographic approach to include an analysis that

incorporates visual rhetoric, we may begin to discover new pathways of understanding why and when such illustrations were employed by publishers to sell plays. While neither an illustration nor a play-text provide us with documentary evidence of performance, the illustration may well indicate some clues about theatrical practice. In fact, it may supplement or contradict what we know by other means. Either way, illustrations such as the title-page image for *The Spanish Tragedy* have the potential to enrich our understanding of both print and theatrical cultures, and their interaction. It may even be possible to reveal hitherto unrecognized clues about early modern theatre practice.

Chapter Four

“he could undumpish her at his pleasure”: Richard Tarlton and the Resonance of Wit

On 3 September, 1588, Richard Tarlton died. James Haliwell-Philipps believed he succumbed to the plague because he made his will, died, and was buried at St. Leonard's, Shoreditch on the same day (*Tarlton's Jestes* Introduction xii). In his will he was described as “one of the Gromes of the Quenes Men” (xii), an elite troupe of actors that performed in London and on tour throughout the country as well as at Court. Tarlton was the leading comic actor in the Queen's Men, and perhaps the most famous theatrical figure of his time (Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen's Men and their Plays* 197). His fame extended beyond the walls of the theatre. Andrew Gurr identifies him as a nationalistic phenomenon: “as much as the Virgin Queen herself, he became the chief emblem of the emerging national consciousness toward the end of the sixteenth century” (*Playgoing* 151). He was also emblematic of the class mobility offered by London in the late 1500s: born of low station, he worked his way up through trade and his unique comic talent provided him access to the widest possible audience, from apprentices and tavern habitués to the Queen and her court. David Wiles suggests that Tarlton's immense popularity was a response to post-medieval social conditions. “As a surrogate Lord of Misrule, Tarlton the theatrical clown helped to foster in Londoners a new sense of community, shared values, and active participation in the making of a culture” (23). Both a sign and a symptom of the spectacular culture of late sixteenth-century London, Tarlton was a celebrity *avant la lettre*, an exceptional figure created by the intermixture of media and audiences in early modern England.

Tarlton was not only an adept comic actor, he was also a virtuoso performer of the extratheatrical jig or jest, returning to the stage after the play had ended wearing rustic garb¹ and playing upon a pipe and drum. The audience would then call out “theams” to him – topics or references to people – about which he would create raucous extemporized bits of doggerel (*Playgoing* 154-5). No one was safe from Tarlton’s barbs, but few seemed to mind being the butt of his jokes.² He was so funny that even the most imperious figures in England, including Queen Elizabeth, could not help but laugh at him: “Indeed the self same words, spoken by another, would hardly move a merry man to smile, which uttered by him, would force a sad soul to laugh” (Thomas Fuller, *Worthies* 47).

By many accounts, both contemporary and posthumous,³ Tarlton was a fascinating and memorable character. It is remarkable, considering the ephemeral nature of Elizabethan theatre, that Tarlton remained so long in the memories of Londoners. This was due in great part to the fact that while the theatre provided the foundation of Tarlton’s celebrity, popular print cemented his textual and visual legacy. Tarlton was recognized in his lifetime and well into the seventeenth century as a published wit with a series of ballads and chapbooks ascribed to him, most notably *Tarlton’s Jestes*, which was printed at least three times, the latter editions with woodcut

¹ From illustrations alleged to represent Tarlton, as well as contemporary textual descriptions, Tarlton’s clown costume consisted of a rough-woven, russet-colored jacket, a button cap, long pants, ankle-high boots, some sort of purse or pouch hanging from his belt, and a pipe and tabor drum upon which he played while he danced (see Figure 12, the engraving from Scottowe’s *Alphabet* for an example). This “Country Clown” outfit was also worn by other comic actors who gained fame after Tarlton, including Will Kempe and William Rowley (see Figure 13 for a Country Clown supposed to represent Rowley in *The World Tossed at Tennis*).

² Andrew Gurr examines the psychology of the crowd and Tarlton’s ability to unite them as a “single unit through the cohesion of shared laughter.” Examining descriptions of various jests recounted in the compilation *Tarlton’s Jestes*, Gurr points out that, “If Tarlton picked on an individual it became a contest of wit where the crowd cheered the winner and jeered the loser, as they might in a physical struggle” *Playgoing* 156.

³ See the categorical listing of references to Tarlton compiled by Edwin Nunzeger in the entry on Tarlton in his *Dictionary of Actors*, especially 356-65.

illustrations of Tarlton on the title page. He mastered popular contemporary media to such a degree that long after his death Tarlton was memorialized on stage, in print and image, his name and iconic jesting stance appearing throughout the city. Unlike previous chapters, which began with examination of the play-text title page, this chapter will open with a discussion of Tarlton and a survey of representations of him. I will begin by reviewing a series of posthumous multimodal representations that invoked Tarlton in a variety of ways, and appear to have created a cultural echo that resonated well into the seventeenth century. This survey includes the woodcut illustration on the 1630 edition of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, which presents us with a complex and puzzling composition featuring a clown character that scholars including Richard Levin believe was meant as a portrait of Tarlton performing the character Miles. While there is no proof that Richard Tarlton ever played Miles in a production of *Friar Bacon*, the ties linking him to the play are strong. Tarlton offers us a rare opportunity to examine the intersection of early modern performance and celebrity through the nexus of staged theatre and the printed page, through the conjunction of words and images. As we will see in this chapter, a seventeenth-century reader would have had a variety of illustrations of the clown figure upon which to draw that would reinforce a particular mental image of Tarlton in performance, even though that reader might never have seen Tarlton on stage. Such associations between text and image raise the question of how closely Tarlton would have been linked to the idea of clowning – as a sort of metonymic for all comic actors. A sustained analysis of the visual identity of Tarlton in early modern theatrical and print culture shifts our focus from the question of whether or not Tarlton actually played Miles in *Friar Bacon* towards how Tarlton – as jester, performer, author and ultimately as *style* – came to symbolize the comic through decades and within multiple genres of early modern English culture.

“Of all the jesters in the lande he bare the praise awaie”: The Making of Tarlton’s Legacy

Tarlton’s death was a loss to his fellow players as well as to the wide array of audiences that had loved him. After his untimely death a series of memorial verses began to appear, including this one by Charles Fitzgeoffrey in *Cenotaphia* (1601, translated from the Latin by Alexander Grosart):

Oft in the theatre as Tarlton’s face
Was seen, instinct with keenness as with grace,
A thunderous roar of laughter straight arose
From all who saw, and shook the sky’s repose;
The heavens were all astonished and the host
Of native deities who crown heaven’s coast.
To enjoy the pleasantries they all prepare,
Tarlton, to quit the earth for the elysian air.
Jove, fearing lest his halls being vacant made,
His lonesome days should pass in lowering shade,
A cruel crime he wreaks upon they head:
The treacherous Fury bids thee join the Dead.
But if thou hadst not sought the gods on high,
The gods to seek they would have left the sky,
Circling thy gracious jocularit!

(Qtd. in Nunzeger 360)

This high-flown rhetoric is indicative of one type of testimonial written in memory of Tarlton. As we will see below, the tone of these works ranged widely, from the elegiac to the scatological.

Tarlton penned plays for the Queen's Men, including the now lost *The Seven Deadly Sins*. He also published several ballads. The Stationers' Company lists several pieces registered after his death that are ascribed to him, but which were actually written by other authors attempting to capitalize on Tarlton's wit and character. Two of the earliest of these undertakings are important to this study due to their multimodal invocation of Tarlton as well as their emphasis on the nature of performativity in the print world. The earliest metatheatrical reference to Tarlton after his death, Robert Wilson's *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*, provides an intriguing incorporation of Tarlton as a signifier for wit. The play was first published in 1590, and since it makes clear reference to Tarlton's death it must have been composed and performed after September 1588.⁴ The pages question the marketability of Simplicity's ballads after he has sung for them, asking, "How will you sel the ballad you sang, for Ile not buy the voice."⁵ Simplicity presents one of the ballads for the page's perusal, "Read and thou shalt see." When it becomes clear that the page cannot read, Simplicity identifies the image on the broadside, "if thou cannot read Ile tel thee, this is *Tarltons* picture: didst thou neuer know *Tarlton*?" Wit and Will confess that they lived with Tarlton as boys – a double reference to Tarlton's fabled attributes (his wit and willfulness) and to his position as a freeman, which entitled him to take apprentices. The page Wealth attempts to put Simplicity in his place while he

⁴ As examined in chapter one, this play offers a fascinating interaction between theatrical performance and ballad distribution. The play features a clown figure named Simplicity, a ballad-seller who trades witticisms with the three young pages who serve the allegorical lords of the title.

⁵ All line notations are from the 1590 edition, sig C2v.

challenges Tarlton's reputation, "He might haue some, but thou showest small wit, there is no such finenes in the picture that I see", to which Simplicity retorts, "The finenes was within, for without he was plaine,/But it was the merriest fellow and had such iestes in store,/that if thou hadst seene him, thou wouldst haue laughed thy hart sore." This description gives value to Tarlton's printed image, and Wealth asks the price of the picture. After a lengthy interview in which the pages identify their lords to Simplicity (Will serves Pleasure, Wit serves Pollicie, and Wealth serves Pompe), Simplicity presents the picture of Tarlton, asking, "Welth, will you buy this for your Lord?" The 1590 edition includes the stage direction "Shews Tarltons picture", which suggests that not only would the actors on stage see a broadside sheet meant to refer to an image of Tarlton, but also that those in the audience would see an identifiable illustration of Tarlton's likeness, such as the one printed on the title page of *Tarlton's Jestes* [Figure 11].

The play was performed by the Queen's Men; the tenor of the references to Tarlton is reminiscent of a wake where friends share fond stories about the departed. The integrated references in dialogue as well as stage property would have been a powerful memorial in the theatre, where the audience would have been equally moved by the references to the clown. In the printed play, however, the early modern reader would have had to rely on some other cue to summon the image of Tarlton exhibited by Simplicity. Some early readers would have seen Tarlton perform and might conjure a memory of him jigging as they read Simplicity's tribute. But the scene clearly calls for a printed image. How would a reader envision this icon? The answer begins to become clear when we examine sixteenth- and seventeenth-century publications ascribed to and associated with Tarlton. The earliest surviving example of these is John Scottowe's *Alphabet*, published after 1588. Each letter is presented with an intricate engraved illustration that incorporates an item or person meant to remind the reader of that letter.

Tarltons Iests.

Drawne into these three parts.

- 1 *His Court-wittie Iests*
- 2 *His sound Cittie Iests.*
- 3 *His Country prettie Iests.*

Full of Delight, Wit, and honest Myrth.



LONDON,
Printed for Iohn Budge, and are to be sold at his shop, at the
great South doore of Paules. 1613.

Figure 11: *Tarlton's Jests*, 1613 edition

For the letter “T”, Scottowe engraved a dancing clown figure wearing a rustic costume and playing on the pipe and tabor [Figure 12]. Richard Levin believes this is a biographical portrait of Tarlton, citing the figure’s wide-set eyes and flat, broad nose (“Tarlton in the Famous History” 85). John Astington, on the other hand, feels strongly that this likeness is at best coincidental, and that the image is a poor copy of a character in an allegorical print dated 1566 by the Flemish artist Maarten van Heemskerck (“Tarlton and the Sanguine Temperament” 2-7). In this article Astington makes a strong case for English engravers using pattern books based on European works of art. But his argument that the clowning figure in Scottowe’s book bears no relation to theatrical tradition (and by extension all visual representations in printed works associated with Tarlton) does not bear up under closer examination of the “T” page. By reading the verse placed at the right side of the engraving, we realize that the author intended for Tarlton to act as a mnemonic device for “T”, both in text and image:

The picture here set down

Within this letter T:

A-right doth shewe the forme and shape

Of Tharlton unto the

When hee in pleasant wise

The counterfet expreste

Of clowne, with cote of russet hew

And sturtups, with the reste.

Whoe merry many made.
When he appeared in sight;
The grave and wise, as well as rude,
At him did take delight.

The partie now is gone
And closlie clad in claye;
Of all the jesters in the lande
He bare the praise awaie.

Now hath he plaid his parte,
And sure he is of this,
If he in Christe did die to live
With him in lasting bliss.

(Qtd. in Nunzeger 354-5)



Figure 12: Page featuring the letter “T” in John Scottowe’s *Alphabet*, after 1588

Not only does the author assure the reader that the engraving “doth shewe the forme and shape/Of Tharlton,” we are provided with a description of the clown’s costume that he wore when performing his jests (a “cote of russet hew”). Tarlton’s ability to entertain a wide variety of citizens is remarked upon: “The grave and wise, as well as rude,/At him did take delight”. It is also implied that Tarlton was superior to his fellow comedians, “Of all the jesters in the lande/He bare the praise awaie.” The references to Tarlton in the poem are in the past tense and the final stanza confirms that this verse was meant to eulogize the dead man. There is, however, no way to confirm when after Tarlton’s death the piece was written. It may have been composed very soon after Tarlton’s death, or later, as in the case of Fitzgeoffrey’s *Cenotaphia*. What is most important to our study, with the references in both *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London* and Scottowe’s *Alphabet*, is that Richard Tarlton was an icon for superior wit that transcended the stage and could not be constrained by text. This status as a multimodal icon will be crucial to our analysis of the *Friar Bacon* illustration and will figure into our determination of what role this Tarlton image might have had in the artist’s incorporation of the clown figure in the scene. Before that, however, it is important that we look more closely at how Tarlton became such a metonymic figure for early modern comic performance, the extent of his influence, and how such an ephemeral performance style as jesting could become codified in print.

“There will neuer come his like while the earth can come”: Richard Tarlton in Life

Richard Tarlton was a distinctly charismatic actor, both in his assigned roles, such as Dericke in *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, and in his guise as the extemporizing solo performer on stage or at Court. While theatre historians have long been fascinated with how such

a character influenced early modern society,⁶ until recently his significance in terms of the broader study of early modern theatre and performance has not been so fully recognized. This may be due to two factors: the period during which Tarlton thrived as an actor and our lack of documentary evidence about him. Tarlton flourished in the late 1570s and 1580s, when London professional theatre was still evolving. The Theatre was built in 1576, and the only other public London amphitheatre structure in use during Tarlton's lifetime was the Curtain theatre. When the Queen's Men performed in London, they were likely to play at inns such as the Bull in Bishop's Gate.⁷ It was only at the end of Tarlton's life that popular plays were beginning to be printed, and documentation of his performances is extremely limited. Compiling a biography of Tarlton is also challenging due to the paucity of biographical information available to us. Relatively few pieces of documentary evidence have survived (or resurfaced) about the man. Andrew Gurr notes that Tarlton "became famous in the 1570s, [was] a byword in the 1580s, and [had become] a popular legend a century after his death" (*Shakespearean Stage* 86). It is difficult to determine which anecdotes can help us fill in the gaps about Tarlton's life, and which are part of the making of that legend.

Tarlton's origins are uncertain. He may have been born in Shropshire, and was perhaps the son of a pig farmer. According to a reference in *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of*

⁶ John Orchard Philipps-Haliwell's 1844 edition of *Tarlton's Jestes* includes some forty pages of contemporary references; Edwin Nunzeger's *Dictionary* entry on Tarlton amounts to a sort of miscellany about the comic that refers only tangentially to his profession as an actor.

⁷ Herbert Berry's research into inns that functioned as playhouses in London during the latter part of the sixteenth century demonstrates that the licensed companies used these performance spaces when they were not on tour. Unlike inns in the provinces, where it is believed the companies were likely to perform in the yard, the London inns provided more formal performance spaces indoors. See especially "The Bel Savage Inn and Playhouse in London" and "The First Public Playhouses, Especially the Red Lion."

London, he was in his youth a water-carrier.⁸ There is documentary evidence from a church register of a marriage between Tarlton and a “Thamsyn” or “Thomasyn” who died in 1585. At the time of his death he left a six-year-old son named Phillip, as well as a mother and sister (Thomson, *ODNB*). David Kathman has recently uncovered documents that indicate Tarlton was apprenticed to the Haberdashers Company and was made a freeman of that guild in 1582. He then appeared before the wardens and requested to be transferred to the Vintners Company (“Tarlton and the Haberdashers” 440-1). Tarlton oversaw at least one apprentice as a freeman of the Vintners, a boy named Richard Haywarde; Kathman suspects that the Queen’s Men may also have trained this young man as a boy actor (441). Tarlton may have kept or been associated with inns or taverns in Gracechurch Street and Paternoster Row, as well as in Colchester. Several of the jests related in *Tarlton’s Jest*s take place in or are a result of altercations in taverns. David Wiles believes that Tarlton’s relationship with or even ownership of taverns reinforced his style of extempore wit; when he wasn’t performing in a play at the Bull or on tour, he was entertaining his own customers with “less formal entertainments” (15).

We do not know when or where Richard Tarlton began performing. Thomas Fuller claims that one of the earl of Leicester’s servants came across him in Shropshire tending his father’s pigs and “was so highly pleased with his *happy unhappy* answers, that he brought him to Court, where he became the most famous Jester to Queen Elizabeth” (Qtd. in Nunzeger 347). However Tarlton got his start as a performer, by the late 1570s he was a member of the earl of Sussex’s troupe and playing at Court. According to several accounts he was physically unattractive. In *The Three Lords and Three Ladies*, Simplicity says of him, “without he was

⁸ The character Simplicity, recalling Tarlton, describes him as an apprentice: “when he was yong he was leaning to the trade that my wife vseth nowe, and I haue vsed, *vide lice shirt*, water-bearing” (C1v).

plaine,” (C2v). In “Tarlton’s jest of a red face,” his excellent mirth is explained as a compensation for his “squint eye, as custome made him hare eyed” (B1); in “Tarlton’s answer in defence of his flat nose”, Tarlton responds to a question about his appearance from a member of the audience, “Though my nose be flat,/My credit to save,/Yet very well, I can by the smell,/Scent an honest man from a knave.” (C2v) Peter Cockett suggests he emphasized his plainness as a “mask of simplicity” that enhanced his clowning, and perhaps even squinted as part of his act (*Early English Comic Figures* 228). His physical agility and athletic skill, as well as his ability to extemporize, were highlighted in the roles he performed and the post-play jigs that became his trademark (Roger Clegg, “He’s for a jig” 70-1). He was also a skilled swordsman. In 1587 he was made Master of Fence⁹ – a skill that may have served him well in the inn yards where the players often performed on tour.¹⁰ In 1583 Tarlton, along with eleven of the other best players and playwrights in England, formed an all-star troupe under the patronage of Queen Elizabeth.¹¹ Wearing the Queen’s livery¹² this troupe performed at Court, in London, and on a series of tours around the country. The Queen’s Men had a very strong following outside of London – another benefit to Tarlton, whose rustic clown persona likely resonated

⁹ In the introduction to Haliwell-Philipps’s edition of *Tarlton’s Jestes: and News Out of Purgatory*, he states that, “In the British Museum is preserved a fragment of a register belonging to a School of Defence, a species of college fashionable and important in Tarlton’s time. Tarlton was admitted a Master of Fence, the highest degree, in 1587” xi.

¹⁰ On its first tour in June 1583 the Queen’s Men stopped in Norwich and played at the Red Lion Inn. A theatregoer refused to pay admission. Tarlton and two other actors, John Singer and John Bentley, exited the stage, rapiers drawn, and struggled with the customer. Tarlton may have tried to play the peacemaker in this battle, but an innocent bystander was killed in the mêlée, and Singer and Bentley were jailed for two days until they could be called before the court. Tarlton acted as guarantor for his fellow players, allowing the tour to continue. McMillin and MacLean 41-3.

¹¹ The original Queen’s Men were John Adams, John Bentley, Lionel Cooke, John Dutton, John Garland, William Johnson, John Lanham, Tobias Mills, John Singer, Richard Tarlton, John Towne, and the playwright Robert Wilson. McMillin and MacLean, Appendix C 194-7.

¹² Thomas Nashe refers to the Queen’s Men performing on tour in the Queen’s “cloth”. As cited in Nunzeger 357.

powerfully outside the city.¹³ The Queen's Men were a significant part of Elizabeth's propaganda mechanism to spread the idea of English nationalism through such plays as *The Famous Victories*. They were "something of an arm of propaganda in their performances in London and the provinces, announcing the alliance between royal munificence and theatrical skill, and prominently advertising official approval of players and playing, which the widespread popular affection for Tarlton no doubt helped advance" (John Astington, *English Court Theatre* 23). Sir Francis Walsingham – among other things reputed to be Elizabeth's master spy – organized the tours, and this has led to speculation about what the Queen's Men were actually doing in the provinces.¹⁴ McMillin and MacLean argue that the actors were part of a much more complex, and in some ways devious initiative than spying:

The formation of the Queen's Men in 1583 should be regarded particularly in connection with the intelligence system – not because the Queen's Men were spies, but because Walsingham used licensed travelers of various kinds to give the impression of an extensive court influence within which the actual size and constitution of the spy system could not be detected. (*Queen's Men* 27)

¹³ In *Pierce Penilesse* (1592), Thomas Nashe relates the following anecdote about a performance by the Queen's Men on tour, and the reaction of an over-anxious magistrate: "Amongst other cholericke wise Iustices, he was one, that hauing a play presented before him and his Towneship by *Tarlton* and the rest of his fellowes, her Maiesties seruants, and they were now entering into their first merriment (as they call it), the people began exceedingly to laugh, when *Tarlton* first peept out his head. Whereat the Iustice, not a little moued, and seeing with his becke and nods hee could not make them cease, he went with his staffe, and beat them round about vnmercifully on the bare pates, in that they, being but Farmers & poore countrey Hyndes, would presume to laugh at the Queenes men, and make no more account of her cloath in his presence". As quoted in Nunzeger 356-7.

¹⁴ See Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen's Men and their Plays*, particularly the section on Walsingham's relationship to the troupe 24-32.

The Queen's Men on tour likely contributed to Walsingham's courier service, picking up and delivering messages.¹⁵ The actors maintained personal relationships with Walsingham as well. On his deathbed Tarlton wrote to Walsingham asking that he protect Tarlton's young son Phillip (25).

Tarlton was crass, aggressive, and often got himself into trouble. He was "not infrequently violent, and almost always combative" (Peter Thomson, *ODNB*). His comic style, invariably acerbic, often scatological¹⁶ and offensive, grew out of the knockabout atmosphere of London's taverns. Tarlton was an immigrant from the provinces. He played upon his working-class, provincial origins, and specialized in characters that set him apart – the servant or assistant who disrespects his betters and avoids comeuppance by means of his wits (Gurr, *Playgoing* 154-5). Cockett suggests that he was able to maximize "the comic interplay between the man and the characters he played" (50). His mastery of the jest or jig further distinguished Tarlton from his fellow actors and reinforced his fame (Clegg 70). Most jests were comprised of a few comic actors singing and dancing. Tarlton's version was a bravura one-man show incorporating extemporized doggerel based on audience suggestions or "theams," and withering mockery of the people who had paid to see him perform. Apparently Tarlton was not content to leave his abrasive humor on the stage. *Tarlton's Jestes* documents a series of encounters where Tarlton baits his betters but invariably gets himself out of trouble by means of his stinging wit. This printed compilation, which provides many anecdotal references to his encounters at court as well

¹⁵ There is no evidence of Tarlton performing any espionage services, but his relationship with Walsingham reinforces the impression of his connection to Elizabeth's Court, as well as the overall role players took on in this nation-building campaign.

¹⁶ Thomson describes his jesting as "inclined to draw attention to the functions and appurtenances of the human body's lower half" *ODNB*.

as in London and throughout the country, is a valuable resource to learn about how Tarlton often provoked these conflicts, such as this one with a dandified gentleman:

As Tarlton & others passed along Fleet Street, hee espied a spruce yong gallant, blacke of complexion, with long haire hanging downe ouer his eares, and his beard of the Italian cut, in white Satten, very quaintly cut, and his body so stiffe starcht, that he could not bend himselfe any way for no gold: Tarlton, seeing such a wonder comming, trips before him, and meeting this gallant tooke the wall of him, knowing that one so proud, at least looked for the prerogative. The gallant scorning that a Player should take the wall, or so much indignittie him, turnes himselfe, and presently drew his Rapier, Tarlton drew likewise: The Gentleman fell to it roundly, but Tarlton in his own defence, compassing and traversing his ground, gaped with a wide mouth, whereat the people laughed: the Gentleman pausing, enquired why he gaped so: O Sir saies he, in hope to swallow you, for by my troth, you seeme to me like a prune in a Messe of White Broth: at this the people parted them, the Gentleman noting his mad humour, went his way well contented, for he knew not how to amend it. (*Tarlton's Jestes* B2^r)

In this instance Tarlton takes aim at the dandy, purposely insulting him (by not stepping aside to let one of superior rank pass). The gallant draws his sword, but Tarlton takes advantage of the situation by making funny faces and poking fun at the gentleman's appearance (his black hair and beard, in contrast with his starched white satin suit, reminds Tarlton of a prune in a cream soup). Observers step in to separate them and the gentleman goes away, outwitted by Tarlton. The presence of spectators is important, as is the location. Tarlton requires an audience for his jests to be truly successful; he is also unafraid of getting into an armed encounter (although he deftly avoids doing so) in a busy public place like Fleet Street.

Tarlton's personal experience as a working-class migrant newly arrived in London may have provided the basis for his rustic clown persona. Tarlton perfected the trope of the Clown being first humiliated by, then overcoming, his urban persecutors. "Tarlton ... had a persona, the innocent abroad whose guileless front makes him the butt who always wins in the end ... He made the stereotype of the guileless rustic so popular that several commentators [including Samuel Rowlands] after his death claimed that real countrymen were imitating Tarlton" (Gurr, *Playgoing* 157). That Tarlton's impersonation of country ways should cause some to suspect that country folk acted the way they did in imitation of *him* indicates the extent of the influence of his style, if not the narrow-mindedness of certain commentators in observing regional behavior. His "reputation rests on his speech performance, specifically his quick wit, and [his] potency as a figure emerges from his dual class positioning – at once of the people and part of the elite" (Alexandra Halasz, "Celebrity" 19). It was this ability to speak to – while he performed for – the widest range of audience members that made him a hero to the common Londoners who filled the pit and the townspeople who packed the inn yards when the Queen's Men were on tour. In addition, Tarlton's particular adeptness at shifting between scripted roles, such as Dericke in *The Famous Victories*, and his virtuoso jigs at the end of the plays, may have affected the perception audience members had of Tarlton. This flexibility "fed into his stage personality to the point where Tarlton and his Clown became inseparable in the public mind" (Clegg 70).

Tarlton also enjoyed a unique relationship with Queen Elizabeth, who called upon him frequently to entertain her at Court. Many of these command performances appear to have been solo in nature (references to Tarlton making his way to and from appearances before Elizabeth in *Tarlton's Jest*s invariably indicate that he was performing on his own, without the rest of the ensemble). Apparently, Tarlton could singularly raise her Majesty's spirits when she had

descended into a brooding state. According to Thomas Fuller in his 1662 *History of the Worthies of England*:

Our Tarlton was Master of his *Faculty*. When Queen *Elizabeth* was *serious* (I dare not say *sullen*) and out of *good humour*, he could *un-dumpish* her at his pleasure. Her highest *Favourites*, would in some Cases, go to *Tarlton*, before they would go to the *Queen*, and he was their *Vsher* to prepare their advantagious access unto Her. *He told the Queen more of her faults*, than most of her *Chaplains*, and *cured her Melancholy better* than all of her *Physicians*. (47, emphasis in original)¹⁷

This description, published over seventy years after Tarlton's death, offers a unique insight not only into the relationship between the brooding Queen and her court and retainers, but also gives us intriguing evidence of Tarlton's talent, influence, and charisma. It is noteworthy that Elizabeth's powerful courtiers could be so cowed by her that they would call upon a player to intercede with her on their behalf. Tarlton seems better equipped to minister to the Queen's emotional and spiritual needs than her physicians and religious advisors. Tarlton's frankness in asserting Elizabeth's faults to her face suggests not only boldness on his part but a sort of trust between the clown and the queen that was unusual. How did this comic actor attain such personal distinction that his service to the Queen identified him as one of England's most admirable citizens in Fuller's dictionary? What amusements did this "Master of his Faculty" perform for her majesty that so distinguished him from the other entertainers at her command

¹⁷ Thomas Fuller was a Puritan minister and author who sided with the Royalist cause during the Civil War. Through the efforts of Parliamentarian friends he was able to continue to publish throughout the Interregnum. Most of his works were theological in nature, but his last book, the *History of the Worthies in England*, is considered the first English biographical dictionary. It is organized by county and includes short biographies of notable persons who originated from each place. The lives are "marked by pungent, telling details that effectively bring his subjects to life" (Patterson, *ODNB*). Fuller's biography of Tarlton is full of admiration and appreciation for his talents.

(including his own troupe)? Andrew Gurr suggests that Tarlton's comedy "was rumbustious by degrees, which varied according to his venue. At court and in his extemporizing in the playhouses his act seems to have been more witty than knockabout" (*Playgoing* 153). It would seem that Tarlton was required to adjust his style depending on his audience, and perhaps even to censor himself when he gave command performances for the Queen.

More insight into the relationship between Elizabeth and Tarlton is to be found in Edmund Bohun's description of how the Queen expected to be entertained:

At supper the Queen would call upon Tarlton to divert her with stories of the town, and the common jests, or accidents; but so that they kept within the bounds of modesty and chastity. In the winter-time, after supper, she would some time hear a song, or a lesson or two plaid upon the lute; but she would be much offended if there was any rudeness to any person, any reproach or licentious reflections used. Tarlton, who was then the best comedian in England, had made a pleasant play, and when it was acting before the Queen, he pointed at Sir Walter Rawleigh, and said: See, the Knave commands the Queen; for which he was corrected by a frown from the Queen; yet he had the confidence to add that he was of too much and too intolerable a power; and going on with the same liberty, he reflected on the over-great power and riches of the earl of Leicester, which was so universally applauded by all that were present, that she thought fit for the present to bear these reflections with a seeming unconcernedness. But yet she was offended, that she forbad Tarleton, and all her jesters from coming near her table, being inwardly displeased with this impudent and unseasonable liberty.

(Qtd. in Philipps-Haliwell, *Tarlton's Jestes* Introduction xxix)

This anecdote reveals a number of interesting clues about the clown and the queen: Tarlton did perform his jests before Elizabeth, but in a sanitized fashion. He also recounted stories to her about the goings-on in London, evidently providing her with a perspective she could not achieve from her aristocratic circle. But we also learn that while Tarlton could mock the likes of Raleigh and Leicester to the appreciation of their peers, he could go too far and anger the Queen. And when he did this, she punished him with a frown or a cold shoulder.

Tarlton was part of a long line of comic actors that stretched back to the Roman actors who portrayed unruly servants and included the Vice character of medieval morality plays and the Lord of Misrule figure in court interludes (David Wiles, *Shakespeare's Clown* 1-23). He also served as a powerful model for the comic actors who were his peers and protégés. John Astington explores the apocryphal tale in *Tarlton's Jest* that Tarlton met the teenage Robert Armin, tested him, and determined to 'adopt' him as his comic son (Astington, "Succession" 225). Robert Weimann identifies Will Kempe as Tarlton's stylistic heir, known as "Jestmonger and Viceregentgenerall to the Ghost of Dick Tarlton" (*Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition* 191). Astington identifies a quasi-genealogical link starting with Tarlton and progressing to Will Kempe, Robert Armin, Andrew Cane, William Rowley, John Shank, and Thomas Pollard – a clowning tradition that continued until the public theatres closed in 1642. William Rowley also was identified by his physicality and costume – as when he played the rustic Simplicity in the Astington suggests that the Elizabethan clown's form of jesting encouraged imitation and masque he co-wrote with Thomas Middleton, *The World Tossed at Tennis* [Figure 13].¹⁸

¹⁸ David Nichol identifies the figure at the extreme right of the 1620 title page woodcut as Simplicity, portrayed, he believes, by Rowley. The allegorical masque features representative characters from different walks of English life. Simplicity is a country ranger 158-9.

A Courtly Masque:
The Deuice called, **The VVorld** tost at Tennis.

*As it hath beene diuers times Presented to the
Contentment of many Noble and Worthy
Spectators:*

By the PRINCE his Seruants.

Inuented and set
downe, By $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{Tho: Middleton} \\ \text{\&} \\ \text{William Rowley} \end{array} \right\}$ Gent.



London printed by *George Purslowe*, and are to be sold by at Christ
Church Gate, 1620.

Figure 13: *The World Tossed at Tennis*, 1620 edition

elaboration, and that the individual clown adapted the style of his predecessor and added unique or distinctive elements (“Succession” 232). Astington’s recognition of the clowning heritage allows us to consider that Tarlton’s clowning style might have been passed down through the generations of professional comic actors who performed with various troupes during the forty years from his death to the publication of the 1630 edition of *Friar Bacon* and beyond. In the process it would have been transformed but might still bear some of the markers of Tarlton’s style – the sort of family resemblance that resonates in the *Friar Bacon* illustration.

Tarlton and the clown actors who followed in his footsteps were larger-than-life and, as such, they posed challenges to their collaborators. Their disruptions were so remarkable and memorable – and distracting – that playwrights began taming them by writing structured comic pieces into plays to prevent such distractions. According to Joseph Bryant, Shakespeare determined to capture clowning in a series of comic roles, finally stoppering the extemporizing jesters by creating “a character who not only took over the best tricks in the clown’s repertory but also formed an essential part of the fundamental design of the play in which he appeared.” The ultimate manifestation of this comic character was Falstaff (“Shakespeare’s Falstaff” 151). Simon Palfrey and Tiffany Stern point out that while Shakespeare wanted the overwhelmingly popular clown actors to charm his audiences, he also “wanted clowns, like the rest of his players, to subserve the larger fiction” (*Shakespeare in Parts* 173). This suggests that an older play like *Friar Bacon*, with its significant opportunities for improvisation, would have seemed different from the newer comedies being written in the 1620s. Diana Henderson argues that Will Kempe and Robert Armin were probably the first to perform the Shakespearean roles of Falstaff, Bottom, Dogberry, and Feste, applying their training as clowns to roles that remained within the hermetic construct of the plays as written (“From Popular Entertainment” 11). Shakespeare’s

ambivalence towards clownish antics – which we may take as shared with other playwrights, and perhaps audiences – did not prevent him from writing one of the most disruptive clown characters in Shakespeare’s canon appears: the Grave-digger, who has dominion over the earthly remains of Denmark’s most vaunted citizens. He holds them, literally and figuratively, in low regard as he cracks joke after joke at their expense. Still, when the Grave-digger tosses up Yorrick’s skull, Hamlet eulogizes the jester in a speech thought by scholars such as Martin Banham and David Wiles to be a fond remembrance of Tarlton,¹⁹ “Where be your gives now, your gambols, your songs, your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar?” (5.1.183-5). The clown, though a valuable dramatic device for later Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights, was restructured to fit more neatly into the framework of the play. By thus defining and restricting the role played by the comic actor, the work of the playwright contained that of the show-stopping performer. To put it another way, the public now went to see Armin playing Falstaff, not Tarlton playing Tarlton.

Time and again and in all manner of situations, we read of Tarlton as an exceptional individual with the ability to overshadow his fellow players and outwit a variety of opponents. It is important now to deconstruct Tarlton’s brand of celebrity in order to better understand how those performers who came after him would have tried to incorporate his skills into their comic performances, as well as to recognize the role print played in sustaining Tarlton’s legend through the seventeenth century and how this might have resulted in the curious figure in the *Friar Bacon* illustration.

¹⁹ Nunzeger, *A Dictionary of Actors and of Other Persons Associated with the Public Representation of Plays in England before 1642*, 355; Banham, *The Cambridge Guide to Theatre* 1058.

“I knew him to be either the body or the resemblance”: Richard Tarlton and
Early Modern Celebrity

Our conception of the early modern repertory companies such as the Queen’s Men relies on the cohesiveness of the troupe, where each play that was performed required a diversity of talents and the combined energies of the company. An actor might take a standout role in one play and a supporting role in the next: “In the early modern universe, a performer’s success depended on his status as a sharer, a player who shared the proceeds equally with his fellows” (Barbara Hodgdon, “Shakespearean Stars” 48). Richard Tarlton was one of the first individual popular actors with a following in his own right (another was Edward Alleyn, who specialized in tragic roles for the Admiral’s Men). These early stars negotiated the cohesiveness of the troupe and the idol status they achieved. Many more star-actors, such as Richard Burbage and Nathan Field, would emerge in the ensuing decades. But the clown characters developed by Tarlton, with his specialization in extemporaneous extratheatrical business, became more troublesome in relation to the plays in which they appeared as the roles of actor and playwright became more established. Richard Tarlton was a master of the “personality performance,” where “the actor’s persona and idiosyncratic performing style overwhelm the role” (48). As we shall see below, this type of personality-driven performance contributed to seventeenth-century playwrights’ attempts to contain their clown characters in carefully scripted comic bits to sustain the momentum and coherence of the play.

Another anecdote in *Tarlton’s Jestes* indicates Tarlton’s remarkable flexibility as an actor as well as his comfort manipulating the theatrical structure in which he and his fellow actors work:

At the Bull at Bishops-gate was a play of Henry the fift, wherein the Judge was to take a boxe on the eare, and because he was absent that should take the blow: Tarlton himselfe (euer forward to please) tooke upon him to play the same Judge, besides his owne part of the Clowne: and Knell then playing Henry the fift, hit Tarlton a sound boxe indeed, which made the people laugh the more, because it was he: but anone the Judge goes in, & immediatly Tarlton (in his Clown's clothes) comes out, and askes the Actors what newes: O saith-one, hadst thou beene here, thou shouldst haue seene Prince Henry hit the Judge a terribly boxe on the eare: What man, said Tarlton, strike a Judge? It is true yfaith, said the other: no other like, said Tarlton and it could not be but terrible to the Judge, when the report so terrifies me, that me thinkes the blow remaines still on my cheeke, that it burns againe. The people laught at this mightily, and to this day I have heard it commended for rare: but no maruaile, for he had many of these. But I would see our Clownes in these dayes doe the like, no I warrant ye, and yet they thinke well of themselves soo. (C2^v-C3^r)

This anecdote reveals several elements that are important to the current examination. First, we see Tarlton demonstrate his virtuosity – in a repertory-based system where multiple plays were performed in rotation it would be expected that all ensemble players would be able to pick up a part when needed, but Tarlton is noted for his ability to do so at a moment's notice. We also learn that actors performing in the play would be dressed in characteristic costume (it is not stated explicitly, but Tarlton changes from whatever identified him as the Judge into his Clown's clothes as soon as he leaves the stage). A comparison between the description and the printed play (1598 edition) suggests that Tarlton performing the roles of both Dericke and the Judge

would require remarkable dexterity²⁰ as well as forbearance on the part of the audience. Both characters appear in the same scene, and several times the lines of one character follow immediately after those of the other. The Judge is clearly a man of distinction – he is identified upon his entrance as the “Lord chiefe Justice” (B2).²¹ Dericke, on the other hand, is a workingman identified as “Dericke Goodman, Hobling’s man of Kent,” who has been robbed by one of Prince Henry’s entourage. Dericke comes before the Judge pleading for justice. Prince Henry is summoned and gets into an argument with the Judge, who has sentenced his man to death by hanging. Henry is insulted by what he sees as the Judge’s impertinence and boxes his ears. The Judge then remands Henry to the Fleet jail until his father can be consulted. At this point the play-text is unclear, because a stage direction calls for Dericke and John the Cobbler to enter (when there is no indication that they have exited) and perform a mock version of the trial where Dericke takes on the role of the Prince and John plays the Judge.

The mirrored trial scene is clever as written, with Dericke the country mechanical imitating the Prince. But in the production in question, the idea of Tarlton shifting between characters is intriguing. Did he wear his clown garb as Dericke? How did he differentiate himself as the Judge (was there a robe ready for him to don when he changed roles, or did he take the time to exit and re-enter)? Where did the extemporized piece fit into the subsequent scene? In the play as written, Dericke delivers the blow (to the Cobbler) rather than receiving it. Might this double-slap have been incorporated into the sequence, so that Tarlton both receives *and* gives a blow? The *Jests* anecdote specifies that he return *in his Clown’s clothes*, which suggests that there was some identifying costume piece for the Judge. It also suggests that Tarlton interacts

²⁰ The other solution would be to edit the playbook significantly prior to the performance to allow for Tarlton playing both characters without their overlap on stage, but if time was as short as is suggested in the anecdote, this might be impossible.

²¹ All references to the play are from the 1598 edition examined on *EEBO*.

with a group of actors (not just the one playing the Cobbler). Of course this is a tale retold years after his death, so perhaps we should blame some parts of the description on faulty memory, embellishment, or opportunistic fabrication. But the distinctiveness of the reference to Tarlton's actions, words and dress speaks to something remembered, whether through direct contact with the performance or through participation in a remarkably vivid cultural memory. Tarlton brings his clown persona into the body of the play – effectively collapsing the distinction between scripted drama and extra-dramatic performance. The audience would likely have been fully aware of the duality; as Robert Weimann says, the audience for Renaissance drama “was quite capable of distinguishing between the famous clown and his double part” (191). Apparently it was equally at ease with Tarlton's disregard for the distinction between scripted play and extemporaneous jest, his unique mode of “personality performance.” This issue has great significance for our examination of the *Friar Bacon* illustration.

The Bull example highlights how complex the relationship between audience, actor, and character could be, and how the interrelationship might have enhanced Tarlton's reputation and celebrity not only on stage but in print media as well. Bruce McConachie²² suggests that audiences project empathy onto the actors portraying characters, with little differentiation between the two. This empathy is at the root of the adoration expressed by fans for modern celebrities, but may also support our examination of the iconic clowning figure superimposed on the scene from *Friar Bacon*. McConachie locates the moments in realist drama when the spectator most strongly identifies with the figure on stage. At these moments the actor becomes the fictitious character in the mind of the spectator – these moments provide opportunities for the spectator to project his or her subjectivity onto the role being performed. However, in “modes of

²² See “Doing Things with Image Schema” for an examination of the different types of connection between audience members and the characters they watch on stage.

theatre that encourage the audience to separate the actor from the character [...] spectators may mix their projections between actors and characters” (581). This doubled projection is applicable to the performance described above: when, in the spectator’s mind, is Tarlton a character (Dericke or the Judge in *The Famous Victories*) and when is he the clown persona the audience identifies as Tarlton? When Tarlton, dressed *in his Clown’s clothes*, appears in a scene from *The Famous Victories*, who do they think is speaking to them? Tarlton as Dericke, or Tarlton as Clown? Cockett suggests that, “even if [Tarlton] was not always clowning, he was always expected to be funny” (267). As we saw above, anecdotal evidence suggests that audiences identified with the figure they recognized as Tarlton, and that identification may have outweighed any particular role he played as a member of the Queen’s Men. This identification may well have influenced memorial pictorial representations of Tarlton in his clown garb.

Anthony Dawson argues that reception of drama by early modern audiences involved a complex layering of association with performers and the roles being performed.²³ Dawson uses the term “personation,” reflecting the early modern use of the word, to describe the process in which a state of “double consciousness” was achieved by the actor and the audience. Dawson cites the experience of Henry Jackson, who witnessed a performance of *Othello* by the King’s Men at Oxford in 1610. Jackson was so affected by the performance of the young actor portraying Desdemona in the death scene that he identified completely with “her.”²⁴ Dawson analyzes the process in this way: “First, the creation of ‘character’ leaves the actor behind but

²³ See the first chapter of Anthony Dawson and Paul Yachnin’s *The Culture of Playgoing in Shakespeare’s England* for an analysis of the relationship between the player and the performance he embodied, as well as a demonstration of the response of the audience in embracing both actor and character.

²⁴ Dawson translates this early instance of eyewitness theatrical observation and criticism (the original letter is in Latin) thus: “Desdemona, killed in front of us by her husband, although she acted her part excellently throughout, in her death moved us especially when, as she lay in her bed, with her face alone she implored the pity of the audience.”

retains his (her) body as the sign of an internal life; and second, the *audience* is encouraged into double consciousness by being led to respond to the represented person [...] and simultaneously being made aware of the very process [...] by which the player constructs the fictional character” (22-3, emphasis in original). We can thereby contrast Tarlton and his peer Edward Alleyn, who was identified with the dramatic roles he performed on stage (such as Tamburlaine and Faustus) and was also recognized as a celebrity actor in public. Alleyn’s talent aligns itself with McConachie’s description of the projection of subjectivity and Dawson’s definition of personation. An audience would have been readily able to distinguish Alleyn from the character with whom they identified. In the case of Tarlton, however, it seems doubtful that an audience member would have experienced this personation watching Tarlton perform Dericke, especially in a performance such as the one at the Bull.

As we saw in the example of the performance at the Bull, Tarlton was adept at stepping into a role when the actor who was scheduled to perform it did not appear. This suggests that Tarlton understood the repertory system and was particularly proficient at making it work for him, sometimes at the expense of his fellow actors. As soon as his performance as the Judge was complete, he shifted into metatheatrical commentary designed to draw attention away from the play’s structure and the ensemble, and focus the audience’s attention instead on Tarlton’s skill. This raises the issue of the early modern clown’s ability or willingness to truly integrate into an ensemble of performers. Michael Quinn maps the acting relationship between actor, stage figure, and audience into an equilateral triangle that is important to our understanding of the identification of the audience with the celebrity as opposed to a part he plays. According to Quinn, the Stage Figure, Actor and Audience are ineluctably tied together in a way that works for the star, but not for the company. This relationship involves, in addition to the star actor’s

reputation for superlative acting on stage, the transmission of information about the star's life through reputable (critics' reports, news) and disreputable (gossip) channels. A star actor's reputation can be elevated in this way, but the company's cannot ("Celebrity and the Semiotics of Acting" 156).²⁵ The powerful presence of the celebrity causes him to stand out from his fellow actors, effectively thwarting the concept of an ensemble and the authority of the author. As Quinn writes, "celebrity has the power, as both sign object and producer, to subvert or pre-empt the efforts of other artists to authenticate themselves" (157). In the case of Tarlton, his personal magnetism, lightning-fast wit and often-vicious social commentary combined to make him a hero to audiences while destabilizing the authority and believability of his acting peers and contributing playwrights.

McConachie and Dawson provide a basis for our understanding of the early modern suspension of disbelief that is invoked in experiences such as that of Henry Jackson. Quinn assists in interpreting the converse, when an actor evoked such a powerful sense of identity that the suspension of disbelief was interrupted or prevented. Tarlton specialized in comic roles such as Dericke, which provided opportunities for him to emphasize his wit rather than to elicit feelings of pity or compassion from the audience. Even in the scene in *Famous Victories* where he tells of being robbed by Henry's man, the resolution comes in the form of mimicry of his betters rather than a demand for sympathy for the money that has been stolen for him. At the same time, his formidable stage personality invited the audience to expect Tarlton to fulfill a self-contained blended representation in whatever role(s) he performed. This type of conflation (in which Tarlton played the primary role of Dericke, while at the same time taking on the secondary role of the Judge in the same scene, and returning to the stage in his clown guise,

²⁵ Quinn identifies Meryl Streep and Sam Shepherd as modern examples of this type of individualized stardom that displaces the authority of the repertory company.

standing alone before the curtain, making up rude poems, insulting members of the audience, dancing and singing) would certainly serve an iconic image of Tarlton.

Alexandra Halasz shows that Tarlton remained a signifier of wit to people well after he had ceased to perform (“Celebrity” 19). Not surprising, considering his relationship with the Vintners Company and popular association with taverns, pubs named the Tarlton’s Arms sprang up around the city (Thomson *ODNB*), and, according to a reference in Joseph Hall’s 1599 *Satires*, the figure of a Tarltonesque clown began appearing on “ale-post signs” (Qtd. in Nunzeger 356). As late as 1798 Henry Ellis noted an alehouse in Shoreditch where “His portrait, with tabor and pipe, still serves as a sign” (Qtd. in Nunzeger 356). Perhaps in keeping with Tarlton’s penchant for scatological humor, John Oldham, in his *Remains* (1703) suggests that his image was placed in less public places as well, “One would take him for the Picture of Scoggin or Tarleton on a Privy-house Door” (Qtd. in Nunzeger 356). It was print culture, however, that most powerfully sustained the image and function of Tarlton in early modern English culture.

After his theatrical successes, Tarlton was best known as an author and subject of plays, ballads, and chapbooks that were reprinted long after his death. He wrote *The Seven Deadly Sins* in 1585 for the Queen’s Men, a play in two parts that was apparently a popular piece in their repertoire. Unfortunately, only a partial plot outline remains. A series of ballads and jests ascribed to him were registered with the Stationers’ Company throughout the 1570s, including *Tarlton’s Toys* and *Tarlton’s Tragical Treatises* (both now lost). Tarlton’s early printed works concentrated on natural disaster: he wrote about a great snowstorm in 1579 (*Tarltons devise upon this unlooked for great snowe*) and an earthquake that struck London in 1580 (*A true Reporte vpon the great Earthquake*). In addition to posthumous references to him in chronicles such as Stowe’s *Annales* 1592, 1600, 1601 and 1605) and Fuller’s *Worthies*, Tarlton appeared as a

character in a series of ballads including *Tarltons Newes out of Purgatory* and *The Cobler of Canterbury* (both printed in 1590). In Henry Chettle's²⁶ pamphlet *Kind Hartes Dreame* (1592), Kind Harte has a dream in which he sees a figure dressed in his clown garb, and immediately recognizes him as Tarlton. By linking Tarlton with his stage persona in this way, Chettle reinforces Tarlton's iconic status in a manner similar to Scottowe's multimodal identification in the *Alphabet*. Alexandra Halasz emphasizes the importance of the relationship between Tarlton's image and the social memory of him. "Embodied in a printed text, the 'resemblance of Tarlton' signifies not only a specific dramatic practice but also a general social one ... Detached from a spatiotemporal locus of his practice, the name and the persona it implies become an icon ... not bound by work or necessity" ("Celebrity" 26).²⁷

Perhaps the most powerful textual representation of Tarlton to capitalize on his character rather than his identity as an actor (or haberdasher or vintner, although those professions do have a place in the narrative) is the aforementioned *Tarlton's Jestes*. The first elements of this compilation began appearing in the 1590s, but two full surviving editions (1613, 1638) suggest that the public continued to be fascinated with Tarlton fifty years after his death. Both of these editions include title page woodcuts of Tarlton in his rustic clown garb [the 1613 woodcut is provided in Figure 11]. Bordering on the hagiographic, *Tarlton's Jestes* catalogues his invariably entertaining interactions with members of all classes of society. The narrative is loose and anecdotal in nature, broken into three sections: "Tarltons Court Wittie Iests," "Tarltons sound Cittie Iests," and "Tarltons prettie Countrie Iests." Most are tales about Tarlton *between* performances. The Jestes represent Tarlton confronting and besting foolish representatives of all

²⁶ Chettle, a playwright who wrote for the Admiral's Men, was also an author of pamphlets.

²⁷ Halasz cites G.B. Harrison's 1966 edition of Chettle's *Kind-Hartes Dream*.

classes and across England; many of the butts of his jokes are wealthy aristocrats, landowners and businessmen, but no one is safe from his barbs.

The persistence of Tarlton's iconic status raises a number of questions about cultural memory and its role in early modern theatrical culture. What would the image of Tarlton-as-clown have conveyed to an observer some forty years after he had ceased to perform? How long would a specific performance reference to Tarlton have resonated with the London public? Had this figure become synonymous with clown-play? Did the comic actors who followed Tarlton adhere to his style of performance to such a degree that this figure became less important as a symbol of the man than it was a signifier for comic performance? The fact that in 1638 Tarlton's visual and textual representations still resonated so powerfully with the public lends additional credence to some sort of association between Tarlton the clown and the clown figure in general. He was still a hero and icon, and the cultural capital he possessed so long after his departure from the stage resonated powerfully across the country.

“A wide-sleeved gown on my back, and a crowned cap on my head”: Traces of Richard Tarlton
in the woodcut for *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*

So far in this chapter I have examined a variety of posthumous representations of Richard Tarlton, both visual and textual, in order to achieve a better understanding of the power of his legacy in seventeenth-century culture. It is difficult to determine how many of these references can be considered – in any way – biographical, as we have relatively little documentary evidence about Tarlton's life. Taken as a group, however, the references in works such as *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*, Scottowe's *Alphabet*, *Kind Hartes Dream*, a large number of elegiac verses, and the plethora of tales in *Tarlton's Jestes*, substantiate the staying power of

Tarlton's legacy. His semblance, as well as stories about his brash and outstanding comic abilities, remained with the English people long after any of them could claim to have watched him perform. The image of Tarlton in his clown costume, whether it was incorporated into an engraving such as the *Alphabet*, described in the episode at the Bull inn, or hanging from a tavern sign, exemplifies how the mention of "Tarlton" may have been more likely to summon the idea of the jigging clown than it would present a more elusive idea of a comic actor performing a role in a play some forty years previously. This, then, brings us to the question of the composition of the woodcut illustration used on the title page for the 1630 edition of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* [Figure 14] and what – if any – connection can be made between the dancing, jigging figure that dominates it and Richard Tarlton.

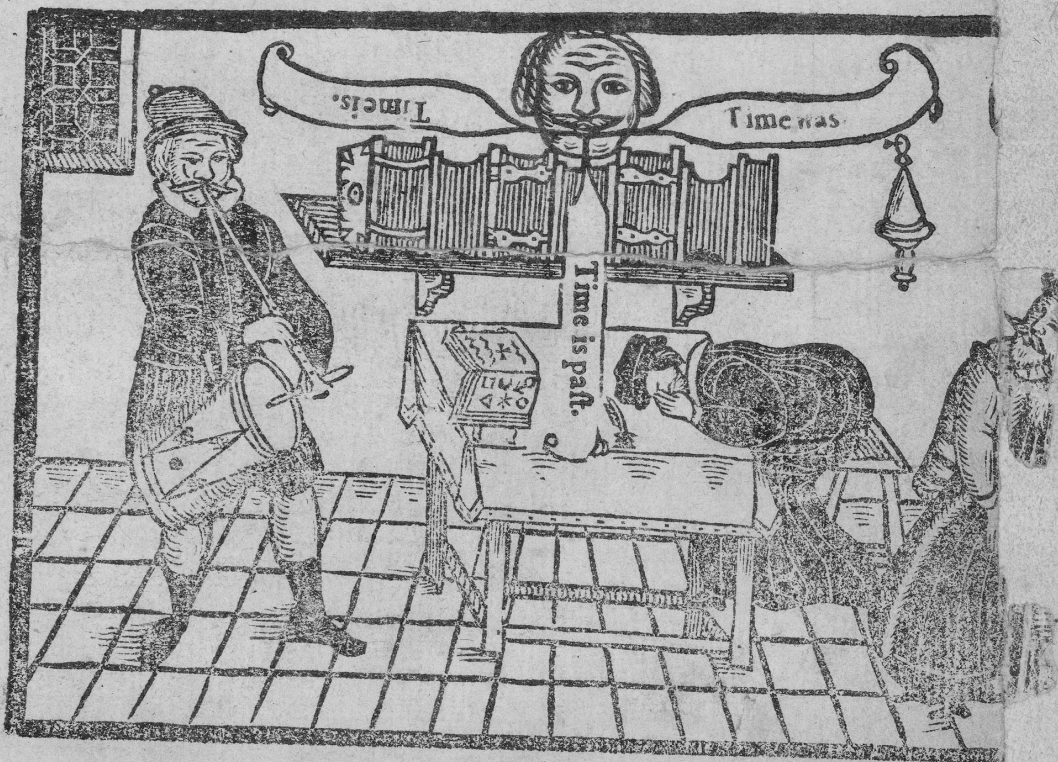
The illustration is not original to the play. It appeared at least once before, a year earlier, in the 1629 edition of *The Famous Historie of Fryer Bacon*²⁸ [Figure 15]. This non-dramatic version of the Friar Bacon story focuses on Bacon's alchemical experiments and only a few other plot elements from the play appear (including the double duel between the country fathers and their student sons, which leads Bacon to give up magic). Bacon was an historical figure who lived in the twelfth century; in legend, he was a benign English Faust figure. In the prose version of the story, as in the play, Bacon has a servant – a ne'er-do-well student named Miles who aggravates Bacon with his laziness and his desire to use magic for personal gain rather than the good of his fellows. Friar Bungay also features in the story, although he serves more as an assistant to the great friar than a nemesis, as he is through much of the play. The prose version also features as its climax the building of the Brazen Head, by which Bacon hopes to assist the

²⁸ The *ESTC* records the first edition of this work as being published in 1625, but it is possible that an earlier edition is now lost to us.

THE
HONORABLE
HISTORIE OF
FRIER BACON, AND
FRIER BONGAY.

As it was lately plaid by the Prince *Palatine* his Serua

E. Barrett Made by *Robert Greene*, Master of Arts.



LONDON,
Printed by ELIZABETH ALDE dwelling
neere Christ-Church. 1630.

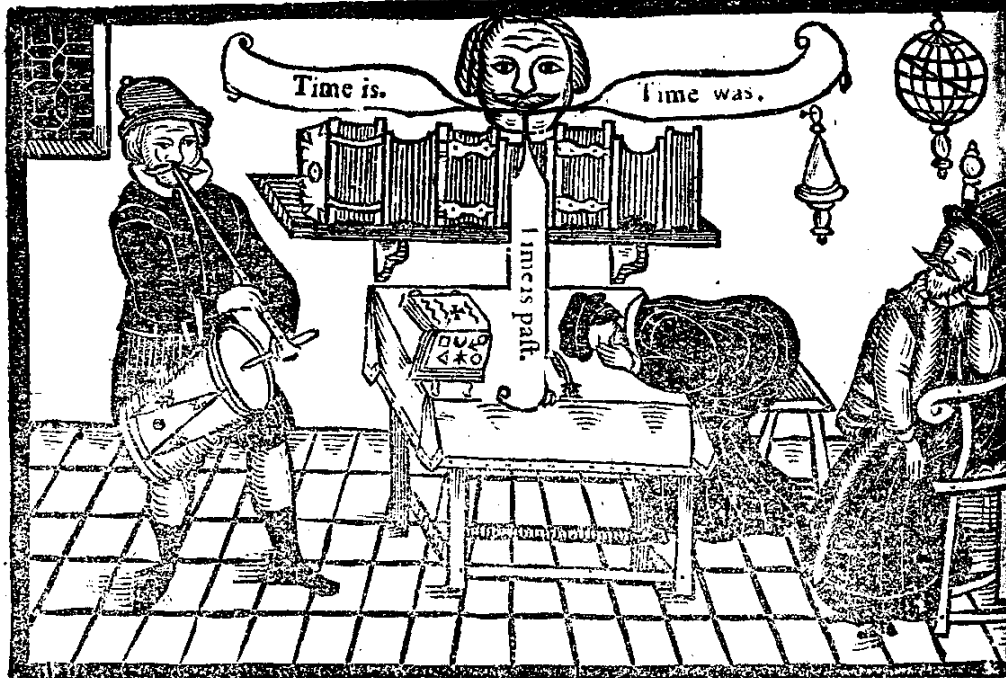
Figure 14: *The Honorable Historie of Frier Bacon and Frier Bongay*, 1630 edition

THE
Famous Historie
of Fryer B A C O N.

Containing the wonderfull things that he
did in his Life: Also the manner of his Death;
With the Liues and Deaths of the two Coniurers,
Bungye and Vandermaff.

Very pleasant and delightfull to be read.

Blijfschap doet, het leuen yet Langhen.



Printed at London by E.A. for Francis Groue, and are to be sold at his
Shop, at the vpper-end of Snow-Hill, against the Sarazens head
without Newgare. 1629.

Figure 15: *The Famous Historie of Fryer Bacon*, 1629 edition

king in his efforts to defend England from enemies by encasing it in a wall of brass. In both versions Bacon exhausts himself with his exertions and asks Miles to keep watch while he sleeps, commanding that Miles awaken him if the Brazen Head should speak. In both the prose and play versions of this sequence, Miles fails to follow orders and is fired by Bacon. The manner in which Miles struggles to stay awake on duty in both cases is rooted in clowning and jiggling. It is curious, however, to find such a performative character as Miles in a text not based in performance. A comparative reading of the texts of the prose and play versions [Appendix 4 and 5] suggests that the author of *Famous History* envisioned a clown-figure much like those at which Tarlton excelled. While there are a number of similarities in the episodes, the section in the *Famous History* in which Miles stands guard and interacts with the Brazen Head is significantly longer and includes three tunes that Miles sings to keep himself awake. In the *Friar Bacon* version, Miles has amusing lines, but most of the clowning business appears to be left for the actor to insert his own comic bits. Another important distinction is that in the *Famous History*, Miles enters with a pipe and tabor and accompanies himself while he sings – he is not discomfited by the supernatural nature of the Brazen Head. In *Friar Bacon* Miles has weapons, and is clearly afraid of the Head.

We do not know if Robert Greene relied on *The Famous History* as a source for his play. We also do not know if Greene wrote the part of Miles with Tarlton in mind, or if he did, whether Tarlton was alive to perform the role. Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean believe there is a thematic connection between *Friar Bacon* and Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. For them, the failure of the Brazen Head leading to “a necromancer learning what damage he can do and undergoing a change of heart” (*Queen's Men* 185) is a direct comic response to Faustus's damnation in Marlowe's play (c. 1588); they therefore argue that *Friar Bacon* appeared after

Marlowe's play.²⁹ While these dates are educated guesses at best, we must move *Faustus* to at least 1587 in order for Tarlton to be alive to take part in a first production of *Friar Bacon*. Certainly, the role of Miles seems tailor-made for Tarlton, with its mockery of the elite, doggerel rhymes, and the character's final nose-thumbing scene with a devil. If he weren't alive to play the part, it is at least possible that Greene wrote the part for him or with him in mind, but that Tarlton died before he was able to play the part. But herein lies the conundrum: how can Tarlton be linked in any sort of memorial way to a play in which he never performed? There are no anecdotes available to us, as there are of his masterful performance of Dericke and the Judge. Nor is there a posthumous reference to him in the play, as there is in *The Three Lords and Three Ladies*. Is there enough visual residue from representations like that in Scottowe's "T" to stake a claim that the character in the woodcut, blowing on a pipe and beating on a drum, is meant to represent Tarlton?

Richard Levin believes there is. In "Tarlton in *The Famous History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*,"³⁰ Levin attempts to forge a link between the clown character performed by Tarlton and the figure drawn in the woodcut, tracing Tarlton's presence through the prose work, which he believes served as Robert Greene's source material for the play. Levin examines a variety of print images associated with Tarlton. He concludes that not only was Tarlton's face and form distinctly recognized by English viewers in the late 1620s, but that this recognition could conjure in the mind of the viewer a link between Tarlton and a character in a play – specifically, Miles. Levin bases his identification on three points: first, a comparison to the

²⁹ E.K. Chambers dates *Doctor Faustus* at approximately 1588 and *Friar Bacon* in 1589 vol. III, 422-4; 328-9.

³⁰ It appears that in the article title and the article itself, Levin has conflated the title of the play with that of the prose material, making specific identification of his references difficult. To avoid confusion, I will refer to the play as *Friar Bacon* and the prose work as *Famous History*.

physique and pose in images purported to be of Tarlton; second, on the assumption that Tarlton would have played Miles in the original production of *Friar Bacon*; and third, that Tarlton's fame was such that forty years after his death a Londoner would have easily identified a clown figure in any context as being Tarlton, and that fact would have increased the value of a play-text to be purchased. I question the soundness of his first two hypotheses, but by concentrating on a visual analysis of the woodcut as well as Tarlton's powerful influence over the comic performers who inherited his mantle, I believe it is possible to demonstrate that this illustration would have invoked the essence of Tarlton's style of comedy and, as with other publications associated with him printed well into the seventeenth century, would have possessed significant cultural value to potential buyers of the 1630 edition of *Friar Bacon*.

Several contemporary textual descriptions about Tarlton have been included in this study, suggesting that Tarlton possessed certain distinct and unusual features (a flat nose, wide-set "hare eyes", etc.). However, Levin's insistence upon the "striking ... similarity in their features" (85), that Tarlton's flat face, broad nose, and wide-set eyes (one with a cast) are evident in the woodcut can be immediately discounted: the process of transferring a drawing to woodblock necessarily introduces alterations in design that makes the replication of such fine facial details impossible to guarantee. Comparison to other woodcuts of the time – even those of well-known and recognizable figures such as Henry VIII [Figure 16] – shows that facial features were difficult to replicate and often reduced to generic indications of eyes, nose, and mouth.³¹ Woodcut engravers relied, rather, on recognizable attributes, such as clothing and posture, as in the title page for Samuel Rowley's play *When You See Me You Know Me*, which captures the

³¹ Recognizable facial features could be achieved in cases where copperplate engravings were employed. This will be examined in chapter four.

VVHEN YOVS SEE ME.

You know mee.

Or the famous Chronicle Historie of King
HENRY the Eight, with the birth and vertuous
Life of EDVVARD Prince of Wales. 7/159

*As it was played by the High and Mighty Prince of Wales his
Servants.*

By SAMVHL ROVVLY, Servant to the Prince.



LONDON

Printed by B. A. and T. F. for Nath: Butter, and are to be sold at his
shop in St. Pauls Church-yard, neare St. Austins Gate.

Figure 16: *When You See Me You Know Me*, 1632 edition

iconic stance of Hans Holbein's image of Henry VIII.³² We also cannot know when or from what source the artist drew the face in the *Friar Bacon* woodcut; there is no surviving portrait of Tarlton drawn from life, as there are of Edward Alleyn and Richard Burbage.

An examination of the clown's pose makes the connection between the image and Tarlton's physical appearance even more uncertain. While the figure holds pipe and tabor, signifiers for the early modern clown, these were not unique to Tarlton. Other comic actors employed these musical instruments to identify themselves as stock clowns to audiences, as does Thomas Slye in the illustration for *Kemps' Nine Days Wonder*³³ [Figure 17]. If, as Levin hopes, the artist drew from contemporary images of Tarlton such as that in the *Alphabet* or *Tarlton's Jestes*, he ignored the distinctive position of the legs, with left crossed in front of right. In terms of the play itself, the figure's apparel also confuses matters: he is not dressed in the robes of an academic's assistant, nor is he dressed as a rustic clown. As we have seen in the anecdote about the performance at the Bull, Tarlton changed costumes depending on whether he wanted the audience to see him as performing a role or stepping into his clown character. At several points in the text of *Friar Bacon*, Miles makes specific reference to his shabby robes. Only when he rides off to Hell at the end of the play does he cast them aside. The other jester character in the play, Ralph Simnell, wears motley at times, but he is a fool character and is associated solely with Prince Edward's entourage.

³² See the ink and watercolor "cartoon" Hans Holbein the Younger sketched in preparation for the dynastic Tudor family painting that hung in Whitehall Palace but was destroyed by fire. *NPG* website, 18 May 2010.

<http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait.php?search=ss&firstRun=true&sText=Henry+VIII&LinkID=mp02145&page=1&rNo=3&role=sit>

³³ Thomas Slye is the figure on the left wearing a rustic clown's costume reminiscent of that worn by Tarlton. Will Kempe is the figure on the right, dancing in motley.

Kemps nine daies vvonder.

Performed in a daunce from
London to Norwich.

*Containing the pleasure, paines and kinde entertainment
of William Kemp betweene London and that City
in his late Morrice.*

Wherein is somewhat set downe worth note; to reprocue
the flanders spred of him: many things merry,
nothing hurtfull.

Written by himselfe to satisfie his friends.



LONDON

Printed by E. A. for Nicholas Ling, and are to be
solde at his shop at the west doore of Saint
Paules Church, 1600.

Figure 17: *Kemp's Nine Daies Wonder*, 1600 edition

Levin's position regarding Tarlton's association with the role of Miles is confusing. He proposes two theories about the relationship between the illustration and the play. The first is that the source material upon which Greene based his play incorporated an homage to Tarlton by the unknown author. In this theory, Miles's Skeltonic spouting and devil baiting were based upon Tarlton's famous jests, which the author had seen in an early performance of some other play by the comic actor. This characterization was then incorporated into the illustration for the title page of the now lost first edition "since the man who cut it would merely be illustrating the already Tarltonized episode that he found in the text" (88). Greene, then, apparently seeing the "Tarltonized" figure on the title page of the source he was using for *Friar Bacon*, incorporated the character traits into the version of Miles he was creating. This hypothesis also assumes that Greene was writing *Friar Bacon* before September 1588 and so expected Tarlton to perform the role of Miles. Greene "therefore adopted all the Tarltonian aspects of this role that he found in the *History* and even expanded them ... [thus] maximizing Tarlton's effect in the play and encouraging the audience to view him from a dual perspective, both as the character he was impersonating and as 'himself'" (88-9). The lack of early editions prevents us from endorsing (or fully refuting) this version. The ESTC identifies the first extant edition of *The Famous History* as having been published in 1625.³⁴ If Greene had used *Famous History* as his source, he edited out a significant portion of Miles's lines in the scene, including all of the songs and his appearance with instruments, which would seem to detract from the performative nature of Miles's clown character.

³⁴ Of course, we cannot conclude that this was the first edition, nor must we assume that *The Famous History* was the – or the only – source for the play. Bacon was a well-known historical figure who lived in the thirteenth century. *EEBO* cites dozens of references to Bacon in texts as early as 1567 and surely elements of the story must have been included in earlier chronicles. A reference to "Frier Bacon the Coniurer" appears in John Jewel's 1567 tract *A defense of the Apologie of the Church of England*.

By rooting this examination in visual analysis of the illustration, however, we may approach the question of theatrical value in a different way. The scene in the image is well-designed and detailed: the panes of the window, clasps on the books, textures and draping of the friar's gown – not only are fabrics and textures articulated, much use is made of hatching to suggest movement and depth of field. The composition is balanced and provides a distinct visual narrative pattern.³⁵ Here the Brazen Head, with its three speech ribbons, bridging the two fields of action, determines the vectors. On the right side of the image Friar Bacon and the second robed figure are asleep and stationary. At the left of the illustration stands a figure in motion, playing his instruments; he is the focus of the scene. This attention upon the clown figure is borne out in the scene in the play as written, where the focus is on the interplay between Miles and the Brazen Head. Bacon acts as a bracket for the main action of this comedy; his dialogue begins and ends the scene, but he is absent from the stage during Miles's interaction with the Brazen Head. In the scene Bacon enters and instructs Miles to awaken him if the Brazen Head should speak, and then goes off stage to rest. After the Head has broken Miles does awaken Bacon but it is too late and the friar fires the foolish assistant.

The illustration may seem to represent a collapsed version of the action sequence in the middle of scene eleven: Friar Bacon remains asleep while the Brazen Head speaks all three of his prophecies. A closer look at the woodcut immediately unravels this connection to the plot – the relationship between illustration and play do not mesh: scene eleven features only two characters, Bacon and Miles, while here there are three. In the play, Miles is armed with weapons, not instruments; there is no reference in the play to a jig. The clown figure is neither of

³⁵ See chapter two for a definition of narrative pattern according to Kress and Van Leeuwen's guidelines, as well as a demonstration of its application to *Arden of Faversham*.

the scene nor superimposed upon it via some sort of alteration of the woodblock.³⁶ The stage directions included for scene eleven of the 1630 edition are specific, “Enter Fryer Bacon draing the courtaines with a white sticke, a booke in his hand, and a lampe lighted by him, And the brazen head, and Miles, with weapons by him” (F4^r). After the friar has fallen asleep, Miles identifies one of his weapons as a “browne bill” or halberd.

The figure’s attire is at odds with the play. At the end of the scene Miles says, “I’ll take but a book in my hand, a wide-sleeved gown on my back, and a crowned cap on my head . . .” (ll. 125-7),³⁷ suggesting that Miles will continue to wear the accoutrements of his employment, no matter whether he is employed or not. When Miles enters in scene thirteen for his final encounter with the devil, the stage direction reads, “Enter Miles *with* a gown and a cornercap” (emphasis added) which could be interpreted as a costume change: having left Bacon’s service, he is now carrying the clothes rather than wearing them. Indeed, throughout the play Miles has, in speech and action, been intricately connected to the world of academia. Would a playing company undermine this relationship by imposing the distinctive stock clown costume and accessories upon the character of Miles?

It is difficult for us at this remove, and without documentary evidence of how the clown characters would have been clothed within the performance, to determine whether Miles as performed in a production in the late 1620s would wear academic attire or rustic clown garb, although the references in Miles’s dialogue to his attire would suggest that he was costumed as an academic. As examined above, Tarlton could pop in and out of character, taking on additional roles and then commenting upon them in his clown persona. But the anecdote about *The Famous*

³⁶ It was common practice throughout this period to scrape or rework a woodblock to make it usable for a different publication.

³⁷ All line notations for *Friar Bacon* are from Daniel Seltzer’s 1963 edition of the play. Original stage directions from the 1630 edition were confirmed using the EEBO facsimile.

Victories suggests that Tarlton changed from his Dericke costume into the borrowed Judge's costume, and then into his clown outfit in order to maximize his ability to comment upon the scene. Would an audience in the late 1620s expect to see Miles in shabby robes or country garb? To what extent can we infer relationship between the *Friar Bacon* illustration and a record of how the character of Miles would have been portrayed on stage? It appears from the woodcut that the idea of the Rustic Clown persona overwhelmed the relationship between the character and the play.

Costume aside, this illustration demonstrates that the clown was a visual figure, rooted in performance. While he was invoked repeatedly in non-dramatic texts, he was in essence a player. While it is possible to suggest that an illustrator (as with any spectator) might collapse the action of the scene with an extratheatrical post-play performance of the clown to emphasize that actor's influence over the audience, we cannot presume, as Levin does, that the engraved figure is therefore Richard Tarlton. There were simply too many intervening generations of clowning actors who, to some degree, incorporated bits of Tarlton's act into their own. The emphasis on jesting makes more sense if the illustrator blended the action of a performance of the play, including extratheatrical extemporizing before or after the show proper, with that of the prose work to form a compelling visual narrative.

As mentioned above, the illustration is not unique to the 1630 edition of the play. It appeared at least once, a year earlier, in the 1629 edition of *The Famous History*. Overlaying the illustration on top of the text of *The Famous History* clears up many of the incongruities regarding character and action. An examination of this source reveals that the second sleeping

figure as Friar Bungay, who is a (slightly) more active participant in this version of events.³⁸ In *The Famous History* Miles is identified as Bacon's "man." He constantly foils Bacon's attempts to gain supernatural power through his own botched attempts to use and control magic.³⁹ The text of *The Famous History* explains that in order "to kepe himself from sleeping, [he] got a Tabor and Pipe, and being merry disposed, sung this Song to a Northern tune" (C2^v). Still, this should not dictate Miles's clothing, and it seems logical that he is dressed as a scholar's assistant unless something else is going on, and nothing of such note is articulated in this version of the story. While we cannot determine the date of authorship for the prose *Famous History*, the appearance of the woodcut in 1629 may suggest that this illustration, at least, was inspired in part by a performance of the play, and that the performing clown derives from that.

One indication that the artist may have seen a performance and used that experience to inform his work comes from the properties and set pieces described in the illustration. While the lamp and the Brazen Head are identified specifically in the text of the play, the other elements – the table, the bookshelf, and the armillary sphere⁴⁰ hanging from the wall – are not. Of course, the artist might have had access to other prints with similar themes (the woodcut on the title page of *Doctor Faustus* [Figure 1] shows his study likewise appointed) and the tools of celestial and global calculation were frequently incorporated into title pages of works of the period on science and alchemy. But the presence of these elements does not explain Bacon sitting asleep in a chair. The play does not specify where or on what piece of furniture Bacon falls asleep, or even if he

³⁸ Friar Bungay shares titular billing in the play but not in *The Famous History*; for a while he acts as Bacon's challenger in matters necromantic but by play's end Bungay has become a collaborator and something of a confessor for Bacon after the grand failed experiment with the Brazen Head.

³⁹ In the play Miles is able to control magic (or rather magical beings) by his wits rather than through serious learning.

⁴⁰ The statue of Roger Bacon at Oxford University Museum of Natural History shows him holding such a sphere between his hands.

remains onstage. It is curious that the artist chose the one moment in either the source material or the play when the title character is least interesting to the spectator – in fact, his agency has been completely usurped by his servant, and yet in the illustration he remains in plain view. McMillin and MacLean, along with Daniel Seltzer in his 1963 edition of the play, struggle with how Bacon’s sleeping would have been staged.⁴¹ Bacon directs Miles to “Draw close the curtains, Miles.” Would he have exited behind a curtain or would there have been a space-consuming bed?

In 2005 *Friar Bacon* was performed in Toronto as part of the Shakespeare and the Queen’s Men (SQM) research experiment, designed to examine early modern rehearsal and performance methods, particularly as undertaken by the Queen’s Men in touring conditions. The play was performed on a small booth stage, allowing very little room for set pieces and cumbersome props. While the production could not replicate all details of early modern performance, it does offer an interesting opportunity to examine the staging of scene eleven. Bacon exits offstage left at the line “Draw close the curtains, Miles” with only a foot showing beneath a curtain to indicate his continued presence behind the drape. The audience remains connected to him through this foot, although the focus of their attention is with Miles. The friar’s desk was a set piece with the Brazen Head hanging over it, pushed on-stage left directly downstage from Bacon. The combination of Bacon moving off stage and the set piece provides Miles the maximum amount of stage space (on a very small stage) with which to perform his subsequent clowning.⁴² The scene as drawn for the woodcut offers a performance alternative,

⁴¹ For an examination of this question, see Appendix I of Seltzer’s edition of *Friar Bacon*, 98-100; and McMillin and MacLean, 139-40.

⁴² The research project’s objectives and findings can be reviewed at their website, *Performing the Queen’s Men*, <http://tapor.mcmaster.ca/~thequeensmen/index.htm>. Video of the scene as

with Bacon on stage sleeping in a large chair, one arm propping up his head while the other hangs limp at his side. Keeping in mind that a traveling troupe such as the Queen's Men would have been limited as to the number of stage properties they could bring on the road and would have encountered all manner of performance spaces, they would have been prepared to be as economical as possible in staging such a scene. For staging purposes, a chair would be far easier to move on and off than a bed or cot. It would also provide the actor playing Miles with more room to maneuver on a small booth stage. While the title page of the 1630 edition refers to a recent production by the Prince Palatine (or Palgrave's) Men, we do not know where or when it was performed. If we discount the possibility that the artist based his drawing in some way on performance and relied solely on text for inspiration, why would he place the friar in a chair and not a bed? In his introduction to the 1969 edition of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, J.A. Lavin addresses the question of Bacon's position in this scene at length, examining contemporary stage directions for clues:

The brazen head scene (xi) raises three main problems: the location of the curtains mentioned in the initial s.d. and line 37; the placing of the head itself; and the relative positioning of Bacon and Miles. Most editors think the curtains those of a bed, and [Gerald Eades] Bentley not only specifies one in his initial s.d.: '*Nearby is a curtained bed*', but also provides other s.d.'s in which Bacon gets into it and Miles closes the '*bed curtains*' (p. 75). However, combining Bacon's sleep and the two references to curtains do not render it necessary to postulate a curtained bed. In other plays of the period a similar combination calls for a quite different arrangement; see, for example, Peele's *Old Wives' Tale* (1591-4): "*He draweth a curten, and there Delia sitteth a sleep*" (1595, F1v);

described above can be viewed by requesting a user name and password from the site administrator.

and Munday and Chettle's *The Death of Robert, Earl of Huntington* (1598): "Drawe the cuten, the king sits sleeping" (1601, D3-3v). In an earlier play, *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, Henry IV sleeps in his chair within a "chamber" having curtains which are opened and closed. (xix)

Certainly, the frame is crowded, and keeping Bacon upright with the set full of furniture⁴³ effectively provides a small amount of extra space, blocking the figure at left from doing anything other than posing with his tabor and pipe. It also emphasizes the comic moments of the scene; how could Bacon possibly sleep through the sonorous musings of the Head, the flash and crash of the final "Time is past" and Miles's comic antics? As a spectator at the SQM performance, I found the friar's foot remaining under the curtain to be an effective device. While an early modern audience might well have accepted the conceit of Bacon remaining onstage *and at the same time* being oblivious to Miles's antics, what made the modern SQM staging effective for the audience was that while they never forgot Bacon's proximity to the action (the foot beneath the curtain), it was easier to accept that he might miss the ruckus because he did not see it. The curtain would act as a sound barrier as well as a visual one.

For the purposes of the woodcut illustration, Bacon's presence *is* valuable. The viewer must be reminded that Bacon does no magic here. In fact, in the play, all of Bacon's "seven years' study" (F4v) regarding the Brazen Head take place offstage during a scene break. He does speak spells and conjure, but in the case of the Head we hear only of its potential (it will enable Bacon to protect all of England for his king) and the exhaustion it has caused him. The physical Head that is seen in the woodcut and on the stage is the product of mechanical skill –

⁴³ The illustration of the murder sequence in *Arden of Faversham* as examined in chapter two is likewise crowded with furniture that serves to identify the location as a room one might see in a house, thereby rooting the scene in a sort of reality, but which ultimately undermines its relationship to a *staged* interior.

engineering, design, and what we would call artificial intelligence programming. This mechanical creation is the culmination of Bacon's long studies in science, rather than his mastery of the occult. In both the play and the source material Bungay, a scholar of lesser talents, has assisted Bacon in this project and is equally spent. Miles, the ne'er-do-well assistant and sometime student, appears to have contributed nothing other than supplying creature comforts to his master. And yet it is Miles who is rewarded with the experience of communicating with the Head. The slothful and frightened servant alone hears the prophecy. And Bacon must be in the visual frame to fully represent what is otherwise a performative experience: the power has transferred from disciplined master to rebellious servant. A body part such as a foot peeping out from beneath a curtain would not suffice. Bacon's presence serves to communicate the foundation of the sequence: by surrendering his watch to Miles he surrenders his power over the Brazen Head.

I agree with the last part of Levin's argument, pertaining to the longevity of Tarlton's celebrity and its visual impact on London citizens some four decades on. As has been examined throughout this chapter, representations of Tarlton were readily available to the London public (as a subject, an ascribed author, and an image) for some two hundred years after his death. Unless some hitherto undocumented performance of Miles by Tarlton comes to light, we must resist the temptation to envision this jiggling figure as some sort of portrait of Richard Tarlton. In "The True Physiognomy of a Man: Richard Tarlton and his Legend," Peter Thomson examines both Tarlton's larger-than-life persona and how his quintessence was absorbed, through the imitation of those who came after, into various forms of entertainment. Thomson suggests that Tarlton's performance as Dericke in *The Famous Victories* was demonstrative of this because, "[t]he part is a composite of *lazzi*, in which what was *done* must generally have had greater

impact than what was said” (204, emphasis in the original). *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance* defines the term “lazzo” as having originated with commedia dell’arte. It refers to a routine prepared by an actor the “details [of which are] rarely ... explained in the scenario text.” A lazzo can be “anything from a one-line gag to a complex physical or verbal routine involving many players ... [in] all cases [it] would have implied drawing on a stock of items already stored in the memory” (*Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre*). In the case of the illustration from the *Friar Bacon* title page, the figure is noted for just this sort of lazzo, but we cannot use it to identify the performer. This could be Tarlton, or Shank, or any other talented comic actor taking on the role as well as the clowning duties that went along with it. This visualization of a clowning performer as the illustrator might have seen him on stage transforms the scene into something memorable to the viewer and involves collective experience of performance. Regardless of whether or not Richard Tarlton actually ever played Miles, his essence imbues that character with a quality that overwhelms everything else in the scene.

That does not mean, however, that we cannot recognize some sort of visual echo here. I believe it is ultimately the question about the power of the extratheatrical jig and its relationship to the play that concerns us in the examination of the *Friar Bacon* illustration. The scene as incorporated into the *Friar Bacon* title page, while problematic in terms of its relationship to the play-text, incorporates both theatrical and extratheatrical elements. The Miles character performs a jig in the illustration that does not occur in either the play or the prose source, but would have been performed by Richard Tarlton or another clown actor in the course of a performance of such a play. While the other elements in the scene – the sleeping friars, the Brazen Head, etc. – are all within the theatrical construct, the clown figure with pipe and tabor is distinctly without that framework, and acts as an intrusive presence for the viewer of the woodcut as he would have

been for the audience. In my examination of the ninety-two extant title-page illustrations portraying a scene or character-derived portrait, the *Friar Bacon* illustration is the only one that does not adhere to the depiction of characters acting as they would in the scene in the text. This may be due in part to the connection between the *Famous History* version of the story and the woodcut; however, the Miles character as described in the *Famous History* still suggests the type of clown seen on stage rather than the one described in the text. This clown figure intrudes upon an otherwise well-formed composition of relatively high modality, whereas other illustrations identifying a clown figure, such as *The Two Maids of Moreclacke* and *Nobody and Somebody* are clearly of low modality, with no background detail that could suggest a scenic context or performance situation.⁴⁴ But this does not simplify the relationship between character and actor within these images, any more than it did for the players in performance. As Anthony Dawson explains, “[t]he Shakespearean performance-text distinguishes between theatrical and meta-theatrical effects, and shifts from one realm to the other in the pursuit, partially, of representational power. The person that emerges, both present and absent, physical and non-material, is the effect of a delicate poise between passionate engagement and awareness of fiction” (*The Culture of Playing* 37). This suggests a disconnection between the early modern and the modern (or postmodern) viewer when examining these particular illustrations. We may struggle with the presence of an extra-theatrical jiggling clown in *Friar Bacon*, but as was suggested by the story of Tarlton in *The Famous Victories* it is distinctly possible that the seventeenth-century viewer would not have been troubled in the least by this oddity, and in fact might relate it more directly to the theatrical experiences of these plays.

⁴⁴ One of Theo Van Leeuwen’s degrees of modality, as defined in *Speech, Music, Sound*, is the articulation of the background to form a scale that ranges from zero (or low articulation, as when something is shown against a white or black background, via lightly sketched-in backgrounds) to high (when backgrounds are shown in maximally sharp detail) 159.

Conclusion

The idea of linking Richard Tarlton to a performance of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, while appealing, is insupportable. There is no documentary evidence that meaningfully suggests he would have been alive to play the Friar's mischievous assistant in its initial Queen's Men production. And if we cannot document that relationship, we cannot superimpose Tarlton upon the woodcut illustration that accompanied the 1629 edition of *The Famous History* and the 1630 edition of *Friar Bacon*. It is possible to trace Tarlton's influence as a clowning performer, tracing his days on the stage and as an entertainer at Elizabeth's court through a variety of visual and textual print references to him that underscore the power of his celebrity to the incorporation of his clowning lazzi by comic performers who came after him. Tarlton's towering persona allowed him to eclipse the plays in which he performed. His extratheatrical and unorthodox relationships with Londoners and those at the highest ranks of society reinforced his celebrity both while he lived and long after he had died. His style of performance threatened the playwrights who were attempting to develop a new, more hermetically sound form of drama based on scripted comic roles rather than extemporaneous grandstanding. Even Queen Elizabeth embraced and encouraged Tarlton's obstreperous witticisms in a way she apparently afforded to no one else. Tarlton's royal relationship seems to have been unique, and no one stepped forward to replace him in quite the same way either with Elizabeth or the kings who followed. His influence on theatre and drama from 1588 to 1642 is curious for a different reason. While playwrights struggled to bring his protégés to heel by crafting more prescribed comic roles for them, the essence of Tarlton's style continued to be felt. Whether as a eulogy (as with the Yorrick speech in *Hamlet*) or as a visual association (such as William Rowley's performance of

Simplicity in *The World Tossed at Tennis*), Tarlton's jests and japes remained embedded in Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre. The role of Miles, although to the best of our knowledge never performed by Tarlton, required a Tarltonesque performer capable of invoking the clowning style that Tarlton had perfected. The strong elements of clowning referred to in *The Famous History* and *Friar Bacon*, separated by one year but probably both prompted by a popular performance by the Prince Palatine's Men, would have each benefitted by the incorporation of a title-page illustration featuring a disruptive clown that controlled the narrative of the scene as written and as performed. This echo of Tarlton ultimately enhanced the value of the publications in much the same way it would have done for taverns bearing his iconic image on their signs. Long after anyone remembered Tarlton as a performer, his persona and mannerisms added cultural value to publications associated with humor and misrule.

Chapter Five

“I’m now about a masterpiece of play”:

Theatre, politics, and the Spread of News in *A Game at Chess*

... when I returned from your Lordship hither uppon munday, I was saluted with a report of a facetious comedy, already thrice acted with extraordinary applause: a representation of all our spannishe traffike, where Gundomar his litter, his open chayre for the ease of that fistulated part, Spalato &ca. appeared uppon the stage. I was inuited by the reporter Sr Edward Gorge (whose ballance giues all things waight to the advantage) to be allso an auditor therof, & accordingly yesterday to the globe I rowed, which hows I found so thronged, that by scores thei came away for want of place, though as yet little past one; neuertheless loth to check the appetite, which came so seldome to me (not hauing been in a playhouse thes io. years) & suche a dainty not euery day to be found, I marched on, & heard the pasquin.¹

This excerpt of a long and revealing letter from John Holles to his sometime patron Robert Kerr, earl of Somerset and former favorite of James I, offers a unique contemporary eyewitness account of Jacobean theatre and politics.² The “dainty” of which Holles speaks is Thomas Middleton’s *A Game at Chess*, and “our spannishe traffike” refers to the prolonged, contentious, and controversial Spanish match – James’s series of attempts to forge an alliance between England and Spain through marriage between the two royal families. The play was, by

¹ John Holles, Lord Haughton to the Earl of Somerset, Wednesday, 11 August 1624, as reproduced in T. H. Howard-Hill’s 1993 Manchester UP edition of *A Game at Chess*, Appendix I 198.

² T. H. Howard-Hill identifies Holles’s description as the only eyewitness account of *A Game at Chess* in performance. See Howard-Hill “The Unique Eye-Witness Report of Middleton’s *A Game at Chess*” for an analysis of the letter. The OED defines pasquinade as “a lampoon posted in a public place” (pasquin refers to the person who wrote the lampoon; therefore, Holles was misusing the term).

seventeenth century measures, a blockbuster. Its performance over nine consecutive days was unprecedented and unequaled. No other play of the period saw such a long run or was the subject of such comment. Others corroborated Holles's description of playgoers being turned away "for want of place." John Chamberlain complained of the long wait required to "find any roome"³ and stayed away. Don Carlos Coloma, the Spanish ambassador resident in London at that time, wrote to the Conde-Duque Olivares back in Madrid that 12,000 people had seen the play in four days.⁴ If the Globe could hold 3,000 spectators when filled to capacity and if the play was performed twice a day on at least some of the days of its run,⁵ then at least 30,000 people – some one-seventh of the population of London – journeyed to Southwark to be part of the spectacle, on foot or by boat. The King's Men gave no indication that they were ready to return to their regular repertoire schedule – they took in some £1,500 at the door⁶ and probably could have made much more – but King James, away from London on his summer progress and apparently unaware of the goings-on back home, responded to an irate letter from ambassador Coloma and ordered the Privy Council to close down the play. An investigation was undertaken, the performance license of the King's Men was briefly revoked, and a warrant was issued for Thomas Middleton. Middleton slipped through the net and his son Edward was forced to give witness in his stead, but no further punishment was meted out. The King's Men's license was reinstated upon demonstration that the play had been approved by Henry Herbert, the Master of the Revels, and while they were forbidden to perform *A Game at Chess* again, they were back in business.

³ John Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton, Saturday 21 August 1624. Howard-Hill, Appendix I 205.

⁴ Coloma to Olivares, Tuesday [10] 20 August 1624. Ibid 197.

⁵ Gary Taylor speculates about this possibility in the introduction to his 2007 Oxford edition of *A Game at Chess* 1825.

⁶ Amerigo Salvetti, the Florentine ambassador, wrote in a letter to Sir John Scudmore dated 14 August 1624 that the King's Men "gett well nigh 200 l. a day." Howard-Hill, Appendix I 202.

Some contemporary observers were surprised at the mildness of the official response. John Woolley noted that “had so much ben donne the last yeare, they had eueryman ben hanged for it”⁷ Historians including Thomas Cogswell believe the reason for this may have been that Middleton wrote *A Game* under the patronage of Buckingham and/or Charles as part of a propaganda campaign to stoke nationalistic fervor against the Spanish. In fact, a sort of perfect political storm triggered and stoked the sequence of events that continue to puzzle scholars: Middleton wrote *A Game* in late 1623 and early 1624, immediately after the breakdown of marriage negotiations between Prince Charles and the Spanish Infanta. In May James proclaimed that all Jesuits were banned from England; the play was performed to sold-out performances in August 1624; and the play-text was printed beginning in spring 1625. If Buckingham or Charles commissioned Middleton to write the play, it may not have developed as they might have hoped. While *A Game* was ostensibly a flattering, complimentary portrait of the English monarchy and church, there were enough barbs in it pointed at the King, the Prince, and the powerful Duke to warrant some sort of smokescreen to protect the playwright and actors – and this may have been one reason why Middleton developed the chess allegory. However, guessing what characters were based on which political figures became part of the entertainment, and letters like that of Holles to Kerr are full of speculation about the identities of the Black Knight and the White King’s Pawn.

The play was widely circulated in print, in both manuscript and published form. All three of the near-simultaneous quarto editions printed editions featured elaborate engraved title pages. The editions now known as Q1 and Q2 bore the same engraving, while Q3’s illustration was in some ways similar but clearly distinct. It was the first individual play to include a title page

⁷ John Woolley to William Trumbull, Friday 6 August 1624. Ibid 193.

engraving and the only play-text of the time to be printed in multiple simultaneous editions with multiple title page illustrations (Taylor, *A Game at Chess* Introduction 1773). But such a storm could not last. There is no record of subsequent performances of the play,⁸ and there are no further known editions until the nineteenth century.⁹ Nor does the engraving from the title page appear to have been affixed to any other publications.¹⁰ Despite anecdotal references to its success by the likes of Ben Jonson and William Davenant, the nine days' wonder almost disappeared.

For many years *A Game at Chess* was considered dramatic ephemera, of more interest to political historians than to drama and textual critics. It was remembered for its box office feat rather than as a play of any serious merit. The play has been reclaimed through the efforts of a series of twentieth-century scholars such as R.C. Bald and T.H. Howard-Hill. Likewise, Paul Yachnin has revealed much about Middleton's approach to the political allegory and its roots in the chess metaphors that form the play's foundation. Most recently Gary Taylor, as part of the task of compiling a "First Folio" ("Lives and Afterlives" 58) of Middleton's work, has reclaimed *A Game* as an important final element of Middleton's corpus.

The value of *A Game at Chess* to theatre history is extremely difficult to gauge. Gary Taylor describes the process of working through the editorial problems as equivalent to working

⁸ Gary Taylor suggests, however, that a play performed at Oxford in 1641, with the future Charles II in the audience, may have been Middleton's play, with a new prologue warning Charles I to "look to't, ere't be too late./He has had sufficient checks; now 'ware the mate". *A Game at Chess*, Introduction 1774.

⁹ This observation is based on a search of the *Short Title Catalogue* and the bibliographical records in *Thomas Middleton and Early Modern Textual Culture: A Companion to the Collected Works*. Taylor, "General Textual Information"

¹⁰ Unlike woodcuts, copperplate engravings were rarely shared among publications due to the different printing process required. It was more common for all elements (title, image, and paratext) to be etched on one engraved plate rather than compiled from different elements (type and woodblocks) as in printing that incorporated woodcuts.

with a “Rubik cube, with eight sides instead of six, and each side containing hundreds of squares instead of just nine” (“General Textual Introduction” 712). Scholars have struggled to make sense of the play’s thematic complexities, as well as its political and social reception. The chess allegory, the identities of the characters – many of whom can be tied to real-life political players in the English and Spanish courts – and the propagandistic significance of the play have been analyzed by theatre and political historians including Howard-Hill, Taylor, Yachnin, Thomas Cogswell and Margot Heinemann. Only in the last twenty-five years, though, has attention been turned to the short publication history of the play in print, and the nature – not to mention the communication value – of the engraved title pages. The challenge of working with the play identified by Taylor extends to the analysis of these illustrations. Questions about their composition, narrative meaning, aesthetic quality and provenance have led theatre, book and art historians including John Astington, R.A. Foakes, A.M. Hind and Helen Pierce to labyrinthine analyses of the title pages’ role in the ever more complex popular sphere of political graphic satire in England during the 1620s.

The brief but intense publication history and the puzzling nature of the dual illustrations make *A Game at Chess* especially pertinent to this dissertation’s examination of early modern illustrated title pages. The title-page illustrations for the play provide a valuable contrast to the other works considered in the previous chapters, not only in terms of medium, but also in terms of the content and style of the illustrations themselves. Throughout this thesis I have examined illustrations associated with play-texts to determine if any clues pertaining to performance might be ascertained, or whether artists relied on text or other sources to support their rendering of scenes or characters. While the engraved illustrations of the title-pages for *A Game at Chess* do not seem to offer evidence of the play in performance, neither do they present a strict

representation of the action based on the text alone. The artists (and the publishers who commissioned their works) appear to have been creating something in between: an attempt to articulate the dramatized chess allegory through visual composition and characterization. The chessboards, for example, serve very different purposes in the two engravings but neither has to do with a description from the text or an artist's rendering of how the stage might have been transformed into a giant chessboard. Through the illustration, the chessboard becomes a powerful signifier not only for political strategy, but in conjunction with the chess bags holding taken players, a warning of religious consequences, as well.

In chapter two we examined the relationship between the printed play-text (*Arden of Faversham*) and another popular form of publication, the broadside ballad. In this chapter we will expand this comparison to include an increasingly influential form of publication during the early 1600s, the religio-political 'news' pamphlet. The popular discourse afforded by these editorial pamphlets, focusing on international and religious affairs and their impact on English policy and nationhood, had a direct effect on the writing and reception of *A Game at Chess*. It also had a surprising resonance in the graphic composition of the engraved title pages for the play.

In chapter three we looked at the incorporation of dialogue into illustration through the use of speech ribbons, and considered what impact they might have on the viewer of *The Spanish Tragedy* title page. Once again in *A Game* banderoles are used to identify the moment (or moments) being enacted in the engraving. Here, in addition, labels are employed to reinforce in one case the characters' identities and in both cases their allegiances. The application of these labels is not without confusion, however, and encourages further examination.

In chapter four, much attention was given to the question of likeness, and whether or not a particular character or celebrity might be identified from an illustration related to a play-text, especially a highly visible personality such as Richard Tarlton. For the first time in this study we are able to look closely at the sources used by artists in preparing their etchings. In not one but two distinct iterations this play offers an opportunity to compare the characters in the engravings with possible source material available to the artists. Both engravings feature fine-etched, potentially recognizable political figures that were featured in the play (specifically the Spanish ambassador Diego Sarmiento de Acuña – the Conde de Gondomar, and Marcus Antonius de Dominis – Bishop of Spalato). The similarity between these figures and widely distributed printed portraits of Gondomar and de Dominis allows us the invaluable opportunity to consider the importance of likeness in such printed publications.

Lastly, *A Game at Chess* offers an opportunity to revisit certain bibliographical assumptions made by nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholars of the play in a new light. Based on W.W. Greg's dating of the three editions, most scholars have been content to accept the idea that the engraved illustration attached to the edition known as the third quarto (Q3) is derivative of that produced for the first quarto (Q1). Through the application of visual analysis and by examining the illustrations individually and in comparison with one another, as well as consideration of probable source material, I believe it is possible to reconsider this order. The composition and style of the Q3 engraving make much more sense if placed before the more elaborate but less cohesive Q1 engraving.

But why did the play resonate so powerfully in 1624 and 1625 and then virtually disappear? Was the play a victim of the political manipulations undertaken by those who had been close to the royal family from 1613 to 1624 and were uncomfortable with Middleton's

unbridled satire? Or was it a victim of fashion, hugely popular over a period of a few months – so popular as to convince two independent publishers to invest extra capital in producing more elaborate than usual editions – and then just as quickly outmoded and worthless in the bookstalls as it was onstage? Although political powers held significant sway over theatre and publishing concerns of the day, we may well discover through better understanding of the relationship between the editions that the question of timeliness is more likely to have been the cause of the play’s disappearance from the print stalls as well as the stage.

“God be praised that he is come home ALONE”: Examining Anglo-Spanish relations in terms of

A Game at Chess

John Holles’s letter to Somerset, excerpted above, was discovered among his papers and first published in 1983. It has greatly enhanced early modern theatre scholarship in general and our particular knowledge of *A Game at Chess*. But it does not simplify our understanding of the play in its original context. If anything, it complicates what we know of the reception of *A Game*. In writing so urgently to Somerset, Holles was not only sharing news of a London curiosity. He was alerting his patron to a dangerous situation in which Robert Kerr might find himself implicated. Kerr, before his banishment from court,¹¹ had been a strong proponent of the Spanish match; some suspected that he was the model for the duplicitous White King’s Pawn in the play. Holles identified the earl of Bristol as the model, but the tone of the letter suggests that Holles

¹¹ Robert Kerr had experienced a meteoric rise to power during the years when he was James’s favorite, rising to the rank of earl of Somerset. All came crashing down in the wake of his affair with Frances Howard, then wife of the third earl of Essex. A court official, Sir Thomas Overbury, became embroiled in the scandal, was sent to the Tower, and there died. Somerset and his new wife were suspected of poisoning Overbury and put on trial. The countess confessed to the murder but Somerset maintained his innocence. He was nevertheless found guilty. By 1624 James had pardoned both of them. Somerset lost his place his court, however, and by 1624 was living in a form of banishment at his home.

was disturbed by the play and what his patron might hear. For one thing, the timing of the letter suggests nervous urgency: Holles had left Somerset on Monday, a day's journey from London. He apparently had not heard of the play before his return, but within twenty-four hours Holles had run into Edward Gorge and agreed to join him at the theatre on Tuesday – even though Holles proclaimed his lack of interest in the theatre. And within a day of witnessing *A Game*, Holles was sending a long letter focused solely on the play to Somerset.

If the letter presents Holles's honest opinion of the play, and not just reassurance to a patron whom he was urgently trying to appease (the letter begins, "My Lo. though from Mr. Whittakers, or others, this vulgar pasquin may cum to your eares, yet whether he, or thei saw it, I know not, muche beeing the difference between eyesight & hearsay"),¹² he found it unappealing and called it a "foul iniury to Spayn, and no great honor to England."¹³ Yet he was impressed enough – or concerned enough – by the wit and action of the play to reproduce its plot and character in minute detail. Rumors about *A Game* and the inevitable royal reaction were spreading with remarkable speed beyond London, and Holles did not want an unreliable witness to catch his patron unawares. By this time Somerset had been stripped of all political influence, but the letter suggests that those political figures identified with the play might be in real danger of arrest and trial. Middlesex and Bristol, both enemies of Buckingham who had been involved with the negotiations of the Spanish match, were tried for treason. Holles understood too well that Somerset could ill afford another such political attack.

The connection between *A Game at Chess* and the earl of Somerset underlines the historically complex political relationship between England and Spain. A brief examination of Anglo-Spanish affairs will help illuminate the contemporary significance of the play as well as

¹² Holles to Somerset, Howard-Hill, Appendix 198.

¹³ Ibid 199.

the resonance of its illustrated printed editions. The relevance of political and religious reactions to the play in both countries cannot be underestimated, and will help to clarify the developing sense of English nationalism that *A Game* addressed. In the process more clear identification of several of the allegorized characters can be made. It is also important to remember that while the occasion of the Spanish match and its aftermath provided the impetus for the play and powered its reception, there had been problems between the two countries for at least a century.

When James became king he positioned himself as a peacemaker, and for most of his reign England's foreign policy promoted that self-image. He intended to negotiate marriages for his three children that would forge powerful alliances across Europe and avoid the need to take part in fractious wars. Robert Cross suggests that negotiations – especially those with Spain – began immediately upon the new king's accession, if not earlier:

James was quick to avow that he wanted peace with Spain, and that his natural sympathies did not lie with the Dutch rebels[;] the Spanish offer of an infanta became an issue of large import. Encouraged by James' not-so-secretly Catholic queen, Anna, and by conferences with James and various of his chief ministers ... [they] began to pursue the issue almost immediately. ("Pretense and Perception" 581)

Princess Elizabeth was married off to Frederick V, Elector of the Palatine. James hoped to join Henry, the Prince of Wales, with a princess of France or Spain. The strong-minded, militantly Protestant Henry (who disagreed heartily with his father's pacifist policies) refused these Catholic brides. It all came to nothing – in 1612 eighteen year-old Henry died of a fever. This left the youngest surviving child, Charles, to bring a balancing allegiance and a much-needed dowry to James's coffers.

The complex relationship between England and Spain reached fever pitch in the early 1620s. James wanted to find a peaceable and profitable solution to England's role in the disastrous Thirty Years War. Elizabeth's feckless husband Frederick had briefly ruled as King of Bohemia, effectively provoking the Catholic European countries into war. Instead of allying himself overtly with the Protestant Palatinate, James fell under the sway of the Spanish ambassador, Gondomar.¹⁴ James refused to assist his son-in-law, and Frederick's reign lasted only a year. Elizabeth and Frederick now lived in exile in the Hague.

There were three competing power factions at Court, all lobbying for different marriage alliances. Many of the Scots who had followed James down from Edinburgh when he became King of England favored a marriage with France. The earls of Southampton and Pembroke, along with the Archbishop of Canterbury, urged an alliance with the Dutch. The earls of Northampton and Suffolk, led by Robert Kerr (another of James's Scottish companions), advocated a marriage with Spain.¹⁵ From 1613 to 1615, Kerr and Gondomar engaged in a series of meetings regarding a potential match between Prince Charles and the Infanta Maria Anna. By 1616, Kerr had fallen from favor and was confined in the Tower, and George Villiers had replaced him as James's favorite and eventually as chief negotiator for an alliance with Spain. Discussions continued for another seven years, while Villiers consolidated power and control over the weakening King. By 1623 Villiers was the Duke of Buckingham, and was eager to extend his influence over the future king as well as the current one.

Buckingham, reckless and arrogant, convinced Charles and James that the marriage negotiations would be successful if the two young men presented their case in person at the

¹⁴ By many accounts Gondomar asserted remarkable influence over the King and his favorites. It was this influence that inspired Thomas Scott to write *Vox Populi*.

¹⁵ See Allastair Bellany's *ODNB* entry on Robert Carr/Kerr for an analysis of Kerr's political career and the risks and complexities of his surreptitious negotiations with Spain.

Court of Madrid. In a ridiculous show of hubris, Buckingham and Charles – virtually alone – galloped across England and through Europe, wearing false beards and bearing fake names under the assumption that they could travel incognito. Despite their precautions, their identities were broadcast ahead of them and a surprise royal welcoming committee met them outside the walls of Madrid. Charles, romantically predisposed, found the Infanta to be a perfect prospect for a bride, and showered her with presents and love letters. Buckingham and the earl of Bristol, English ambassador (and one candidate for the character of the White King’s Pawn in *A Game*), set to work negotiating the marriage.¹⁶

When word leaked out in England about Charles and Buckingham’s quixotic adventure, there was unhappiness at all levels of society and government. Parliament was exasperated with James; once again he had used the Spanish negotiations to ignore their counsel, keep out of warfare in Europe, and rule without having to sacrifice royal prerogative (Cross 568). Puritan leaders panicked at the thought of a resurgent Catholic Church in England. And many people loathed the idea that their longtime nemesis might become their ally – or worse yet, their conqueror. There was widespread concern for the young prince’s safety and agonizing over the potential outcome. Thomas Scott wrote that, “when wee first heard them set out (for see them wee could not, and it was happy wee did not) our hearts were filled with astonishment, doubt, despayre; wee gaue them for lost, and our selues with them, and with them and vs, our lawes, libertyes, land, and (what was dearest) our religion” (*Vox Dei* 59). It was alarming that Buckingham should send the heir to the throne without protection into a country whose relationship with England was historically hostile. Many feared that the Spanish court might hold Charles hostage in order to further their plans for control of the Holy Roman Empire or for

¹⁶ See Hibbert, *Charles I*, particularly chapters three and four, for a detailed description of Buckingham’s relationship with James and Charles, as well as his role in the Spanish match.

reassertion of Catholic rights in England. Charles remained at the Spanish court for almost eight months. Anxiety about his safety, and fear that England itself was endangered, persisted. As Scott reflected, “Wee saw him such as wee could have wished, in all respects, but in this MATCH: but there wee wondered, the whole world could not afford him a bewty, wherevpon to fixe his affection, but that one, whom none of his truest hearted servants could affect, as knowing it both, in being Spanish, and Romish, so fatall to him, to the State, and Church” (62, “MATCH” is capitalized in original).

The major issue of the negotiations was religion, and Thomas Scott was not alone in fearing for the English. The Spanish negotiators, led by the Conde-Duque Olivares (Buckingham’s equal as Philip IV’s favorite and the model for the Black Duke in *A Game*), presented a list of demands that would have shocked the Puritan divines back home. All practicing Catholics in England would be recognized and their worship sanctioned by the Crown. The Infanta was to be accompanied to England by a robust household of Spanish nobles and a significant company of Jesuit priests. All children of the union between Charles and Maria Anna would be educated as Catholics – meaning that the next heir to the English throne, the leader of the Anglican Church, would be Catholic. If this last came to pass, the English church would collapse. And yet James capitulated to every demand.

The marriage articles took months of hard-fought negotiation to articulate. James was very interested in what was happening with his favorite and wrote a steady stream of letters to “his sweet boys” – in particular to Buckingham – begging them to come home. It might have been in Buckingham’s best interest to do so. According to letters from Bristol to Parliament, Buckingham misbehaved and misrepresented the role he had been commissioned to play in the negotiations. He was shockingly rude to the Spanish negotiators, dismissive of Bristol, and

openly condescending to Charles. He ordered valuable jewels from the King's collection, ostensibly as gifts for the Infanta, only to keep them for himself. He insulted Olivares by flagrantly and publicly flirting with his wife. His behavior was so incorrigible that the Spanish ambassador in London demanded his execution and the Spanish believed he was purposely trying to scuttle the negotiations.¹⁷ Olivares wanted him removed from the situation and attempts were made to send him back to England, leaving Charles and Bristol to complete the arrangements. Perhaps his strange behavior was a result of anxiety over his job security. Buckingham was alerted to the fact that in his absence others had stepped forward and were attempting to come between him and the King. Some even tempted James with his homoerotic penchant for attractive young men.

Ironically it was Buckingham's perverse behavior, so at odds with his original stated intent and manipulation of James and Charles, that prevented the marriage from coming to pass. Ultimately, even Charles saw that the prospects of marriage to the Infanta were slim at best. While continuing to present a public show of faith and chivalric love, Charles and Buckingham began to make plans to return to England. Charles gave his proxy to Bristol on the off chance that an agreement could be worked out and the wedding moved forward. The prince bade farewell to Phillip IV and the Infanta, and as cavalierly as they had arrived, Charles and Buckingham galloped out of Madrid and back to England. Eight months after they had got James's blessing to undertake Buckingham's foolish plan Charles and Buckingham rode back into London to an overwhelming reception. There were bonfires and fireworks and street celebrations that royal observers chose to see as signs of joy and affection for a dashing young prince. The outcry might just as easily have been seen as a spontaneous demonstration of relief.

¹⁷ See Roger Lockyer's *ODNB* entry on George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, for an accounting of his behavior.

As Thomas Scott wrote, “God be praised that he is come home ALONE” (*Vox Dei* 63). England had barely escaped a union that many feared would spell doom for their religion and their growing position as an international power. After the initial celebration for Charles’s return was over, the Crown would need to expend significant energy in spinning the Spanish match into something more palatable to the English people. Buckingham and Charles strove now to represent themselves as virtuous nationalists who had played along with the Spanish in order to reveal the Catholic plot against the English church. This new position would, they hoped, stoke English support for a war against Spain. It is distinctly possible that Middleton was part of this propaganda campaign.¹⁸

Clashes between Protestant and Catholic ideologues continued throughout James’s reign. When an opportunity was presented to enhance the English Church’s credibility at the expense of Rome, James seized it. In 1616 Marcus Antonius de Dominis of Dalmatia, a widely published intellectual and influential Catholic bishop from Croatia, recanted his faith and appealed to James for sanctuary. James rewarded him with the Mastership of the Hospital of the Savoy and the Deanship of Windsor. De Dominis wrote a series of tracts condemning Catholicism, including *De Republica Ecclesiastica* (1617). De Dominis quickly became a liability. He was vain, greedy, materialistic, and gluttonous.¹⁹ He expected to be lavishly rewarded for his pro-Anglican publications, and quickly became disenchanted with what he saw as second-rate preferments. When Gregory XV (a kinsman and supporter) was elected pope in 1621, de Dominis left England for Europe and re-recanted in hopes of better rewards. He wrote another

¹⁸ For analysis of the propagandistic nature of the play and the question of who may have sponsored it, see, T. H. Howard Hill, “Political Interpretations of Middleton’s *A Game at Chess*” and Thomas Cogwell, “Thomas Middleton and the Court, 1624: *A Game at Chess* in Context”.

¹⁹ These character traits and his noted obesity would serve as a perfect iconic feature in his appearance as the Fat Bishop in *A Game at Chess*.

series of books condemning the English church to prove his loyalty to Rome, but by 1623 Gregory XV was dead, and de Dominis's pension was rescinded. His self-aggrandizement and materialistic expectations lost him any friends or supporters who might have helped him, and the Inquisition arrested him, keeping him imprisoned until his death in 1624 (Patterson, *ODNB*). De Dominis's double-dealing provided a theme for anti-Catholic pamphleteers, and presented Middleton with another valuable target for his attacks on the Catholic Church in *A Game*.

The immediate trigger for the writing (and popularity) of *A Game at Chess* was the breakdown of the marriage negotiations, the public response to the collapse, and Buckingham's politically shrewd – and hypocritical – demand that war be declared on Spain. Nervous and paranoid, he loudly insisted that the trip to Spain had been a ruse to trick the Spanish into revealing their true motives in undertaking the marriage: global domination with Catholicism as the universal faith. Buckingham, supported by Charles, pointed to the marriage contract and the explicit articles regarding royal offspring as proof of this plot of dominion over England.²⁰ He raised the specter of the Thirty Years War (long ignored by James) as further evidence that Spain was on the move and England's protestant allies (including James's son-in-law Frederick V) must be protected. The Lord Treasurer, the earl of Middlesex, led a pro-Spanish, anti-war party

²⁰ Thomas Cogswell points out that, "questions about precisely what had transpired in Madrid quickly returned and became more insistent as it became apparent that Charles and Buckingham desired a war against Spain as well as the termination of the marriage negotiations. Did the loftiest reasons of state compel them to press for such a radical move or were they simply driven by pique?" 282. Roger Lockyer believes that Buckingham would probably not have secured support for his planned war against Spain without Charles's support. ("Villiers, George first duke of Buckingham," *ODNB*). Ian Munro argues that there is a strong correlation between the desire to "discover the Black House's plots that leads the White Knight and Duke into the Black House [... This is] the same argument that Buckingham and Charles presented on their return to England after the failure of the Spanish marriage" 208.

and tried to temper Buckingham's attempts to stoke nationalistic fervor.²¹ Middlesex had been unsuccessful in implementing cost-cutting measures in the Treasury, and by 1624 the English coffers were very low (due in part to James's lavish spending, including valuable income-earning gifts to a string of favorites). A sustained land war against Spain would be financially untenable. Buckingham used Middlesex's resistance to his war plans as the means for his downfall, and Middlesex was impeached on grounds of corruption and banished from Court (Butler 153). Buckingham also recalled Bristol from Madrid, accusing him of treasonous dealings with the Spanish. Buckingham's enemies were safely contained, and the failing king was back under his control. With the seeds of a more complimentary version of the story of the Spanish match sown at Court and in the popular press, Buckingham had reached the zenith of his power. By the

²¹ Thomas Scott dedicated *The Second Part of Vox Populi* to Frederick V and Elizabeth of Bohemia. Reinforcing his position in line with Frederick and driving home the question of Spain's (and Gondomar's) duplicitous activities, Scott ended the pamphlet with a caution to the English Parliament: "Here as in a little glasse, may you (Most Honorable, Great, and Graue *Senate*) viewe the *epitome*, or rather the effect of a seauen yeares Treaty with Spaine, yee may plainly see the holde and assurance wee were euer like to haue had of that Nation, yea, euen when wee thought our selues surest of them. Here wee may (to our warning of taking heede whom wee trust) behold to the life the Haughty-Pride, Thirsty-Couetousnes, and kind dissimulation of the same Fox *populi*, Count *Gondomar* the * [at this point a printed gloss appears in the margin, that reads: "For they say he is a *Grande* in *Spaine*."] GREAT. Here may the Netherlands perceiue, the imminent danger that hung-ouer their heades, shortly without doubt to haue fallen vpon them, had not the Spanish ambushes beene timously discovered. Heere may that Illustrious King, and the most renowned and second Queene *Elizabeth* (for her constancy and spirit) of *Bohemia*, and princes *Pallatines* of the *Rhine*, consider how assuredly faithfully the surrendring of their Pallatinate should haue beene performed. In a word, heere may wee all see the great Mercies of God towards vs, whose providence it hath beene, that we should cleare our selues from these Spanish Rockes, that all this while lay vnder water, and vnseene, doubtlesse to our ruine, had wee not I say by immediate helpe from heauen beene relieued. Let vs then, as wee are one people of the same Language, Religion, Lawes, Gouerned by the same Gracious and good King, embrace with that wise Lord, and graue Councillor (as in his Poesie) *Vnam cor, vnam viam*, then neede not our Brittaines so famous ofould, for her triumphes and many victories over other Nations, nor care a strawe for the vaine and windy threats of proude Spaine, nor the menaces of the most daring Aduersarie whosoeuer" 59-60.

beginning of 1624 he was in effect running the government and was overseeing negotiations to marry Charles to the French princess Henrietta Maria.

“A foule iniury to Spayn & no good honor to England”: News Pamphlets as sources of

A Game at Chess

The 1620s was a unique period in the development of English information dissemination. For the first time international affairs, domestic political and social criticism, matters of faith and morality, and popular gossip blended together into new and ever-more widely available forms of publication. In chapter two we examined the broadside ballad – an amalgam of salacious tabloid fare and moralistic rhetoric. As the Puritan divines gained power and prominence, they worked to counteract the impact of popular forms of entertainment, both live and in print. A significant number of sermons were published during this period,²² and preachers such as Thomas Scott and Samuel Ward extended their influence by penning tracts that incorporated invective against political figures and issues. James was by the end of his reign unpopular for many reasons. Still, observers both within England and on the Continent were surprised at the openly negative portrayals of the British king in both text and image.²³ These portrayals, many focusing on the turbulence caused by the Thirty Years War, were distributed in England with increasing regularity; they included letters and dispatches distributed in the form of ‘corantos’ or

²² Peter Blayney talks about the relative popularity of sermons as a printed genre. He estimates that between 1583 and 1640, more than 1,850 sermons were printed, whereas he identifies 606 plays printed in the same period. “The Alleged Popularity of Playbooks” 48-9. Richard Cust cites Sir Richard Grosvenor purchasing sermons in the late 1630s for between 2s and 2s 6d, while he bought “separates” (newsheets) for a comparable price. “News and Politics” 64.

²³ See Pierce, especially chapter one, for details about the increasing number of critical representations of James, as well as his lieutenants’ failed attempts to suppress them.

newsbooks.²⁴ The very real concerns about the imperial ambitions of Spain and the threat of an overthrow of the English church by the Papacy, combined with a certain laxity on the part of censors – not to mention the exponential increase in literacy among the London populace – created an unprecedented forum for the development of what we would call a news industry. Whether this discourse took the form of sermons, ballads, tracts, pamphlets or even plays, it provided opinion and insight for readers in a new format that supported the readers’ more active role in public discourse.²⁵

Perhaps the brief presence of the *Game at Chess* play-text in the marketplace, as well as the nature of the illustrated title pages, can reveal something to us about the value of drama as a form for the conveyance of information and propaganda. The popularity of broadside ballads that dwelt upon crime and punishment, and the reprinted sermons of Puritan divines such as John Donne were now joined by politically motivated editorial pamphlets such as Thomas Scott’s two-part *Vox Populi*, pieces overtly critical of James’s foreign policies and his dealings with Spain in particular. Thomas Middleton, himself a successful pamphleteer, relied in part on Scott’s work to set the tone for *A Game at Chess*. Taylor explains that, “*A Game at Chess* made news ... because Middleton’s play was made from news” (*A Game at Chess*, Introduction 1776). I agree with John Astington that the figure identified as Conde Gondomar on the title page of Scott’s *The Second Part of Vox Populi*, published in 1624, is “related” to that of the Black Knight on the title pages of Q1 and Q3 of *A Game at Chess* (“Visual Texts” 239). Critics of the crown still abided by the fiction of writing and publishing using an alias – *Vox Populi* was “Printed at Goricom by Ashuerus Janss”; the Q3 title page of *A Game* states that it was printed

²⁴ Richard Cust identifies corantos as forerunners of the newspaper; these corantos focused solely on foreign affairs. “News and Politics” 61.

²⁵ Paul Yachnin emphasizes the value of the social exchange regarding news and information, particularly that pertaining to the state and the church. See *Culture of Playgoing* 188.

“in Lydden by Ian Masse” (now agreed by scholars including Greg, Bald, Howard-Hill, and Astington to be a misdirection, in fact printed in London by Augustine Mathewes and Edward Allde). Even later in Charles I’s reign, plays featuring unflattering portraits or themes such as *Canterburie his change of diot* and *Beer, Wine, Ale and Tobacco* were published anonymously or under an alias. However, the images that often accompanied them, such as the image that is clearly of Gondomar on the title page of *The Second Part of Vox Populi* or even the woodcut representation of Archbishop Laud being jailed and tortured in *Canterburie*, were overtly mocking and blatant in their identification of recognizable public figures. These works were widely available through politically and religiously motivated publishers including Nicholas Okes, William Jones and Thomas Jenner. They contributed to a baseline of understanding among the literate population²⁶ about what was happening across Europe and how the King and Parliament were responding to events and alliances that could affect the English people. It was this newly heightened awareness, impossible a generation before when the press was much more tightly regulated, that enabled Middleton to write a play that required such detailed knowledge of policy and policymakers on the part of his audience. It was this eager consumption of news and court gossip that created such a sensation when *A Game* was performed in 1624 and published in 1625. And equally, it was the introduction of a proto news cycle that just as quickly consigned *A Game* to the status of irrelevance by the end of 1625.

The preacher Thomas Scott is an example of how a skilled propagandist could take advantage of this new form of communication. Enormously successful as a pamphleteer, Scott focused his authorial energies on the religio-political threat posed by James’s relationship with

²⁶ The term literate must be considered here in its broadest sense, where reading and writing ability were not necessarily fully congruous. See David Cressy for a thorough examination of contemporary English literacy and its impact on society.

the manipulative Spanish ambassador and the Spanish match. In a series of pamphlets covering 1620-1624 (including *Vox Populi*, *Vox Dei*, *Vox Regis*, and *The Second Part of Vox Populi*), Scott wrote in ever more virulent terms about the joint threat posed by Spain and Rome. His rhetoric resonated with the English people, who were already predisposed to be afraid of a Spanish/Romish conquest.²⁷ He employed a range of rhetorical devices from a confessional mode (*Vox Dei*) to a fictional account of Gondomar relating his Machiavellian plans against the English king to a chortling group of Madrid courtiers (*The Second Part of Vox Populi*). The latter is of particular value to this study, as it features an engraved title page satirizing Gondomar, as well as several accompanying illustrations. Read in sequence, these pamphlets trace the palpable fears of one representative Englishman who was increasingly convinced that his king has left the country to rot and ruin. The pamphlets – not coincidentally – cover the period when James’s attempts to cement the Spanish match were ever-closer to fruition, and the figures involved – particularly Prince Charles – are represented as in jeopardy. Scott did not possess any particular access to the Court that would provide him with specific insight for these observations. He had actually fled the country after the uproar caused by *Vox Populi*, and wrote the rest of his pamphlets from the relative safety of Utrecht; Scott’s criticisms, therefore, were made at a remove from court that would have affected his observations in the sense that he had to rely on second- and third-hand accounts of London goings-on.²⁸ But his words had a profound effect on

²⁷ Scott was certainly not the only author who played upon this fear. Pierce analyzes *The Double Deliverance: 1588:1605*, published in 1621 and ‘invented’ (either written and drawn or commissioned) by the Ipswich preacher Samuel Ward. See *Unseemly Pictures* for an examination of anti-Catholic satire 35-67.

²⁸ Sean Kelsey’s *ODNB* entry on Scott suggests that by 1625, at the latest, he had developed a relationship with the exiled Frederick and Elizabeth of Bohemia (James’s son-in-law and daughter).

a wide array of readers. Pierce describes him as a zealot who spearheaded “a wave of printed polemic” (35). And one of his readers was Thomas Middleton.

Middleton was a prolific playwright. Gary Taylor estimates that between 1601 and 1624 he wrote at least sixty-nine plays, an average of three per year (“Lives and Afterlives” 52). He was also a devoted chronicler of London events,²⁹ and was a published pamphleteer in his own right, author of *Father Hubbard’s Tales*, *The Meeting of the Gallants at an Ordinary*, *News from Gravesend*, and *The Owl’s Almanac*, among others. He had an ongoing relationship with the Jacobean court, writing masques and plays for the King’s Men and the Prince’s Men. *The World Tossed at Tennis*, co-written with William Rowley in 1620, was commissioned by Prince Charles as part of an early attempt to speak out against his father’s international policy and encourage him to pay more attention to events at home.³⁰ Middleton was a regular producer of the annual London civic pageants, writing and publishing some fifteen pageants during his career, many of them printed by Nicholas Okes (who would print Q1 and Q2 of *A Game at Chess*). He was fascinated by the civic mechanisms of the City, and the remarkable cross-section of classes and characters that populated its streets. Gary Taylor suggests that it was this unique fascination and facility with London high and low life that made Middleton such a powerful and critical commentator of its events. In his pamphlets as in his plays, the focus seems to have been on the intersection of class and politics. Religious matters appear to be a secondary but still crucial motif, melded with national identity and international affairs.

²⁹ In 1620 Middleton was appointed official Chronicler of the City of London, the first to be paid an annual salary. Taylor, “Lives and Afterlives” 45.

³⁰ By most accounts it was a propagandistic failure. C.E. McGee suspects the masque may never have been performed at court at all, a victim of the conflict between James and Charles. McGee suggests that the masque was relatively popular in the public theatre, performed “divers times” by the Prince’s Men at the Prince’s Arms (Swan) Theatre 1406.

While playwrights such as Shakespeare focused on recreating English history at a safe remove,³¹ Middleton appears to have become increasingly drawn to contemporary political and social themes as his career progressed. Whereas Shakespeare could draw upon the chronicles of Raphael Holinshed and Edward Hall, Middleton drew from popular publications for his city plays as well as his political satires. The speed with which *A Game* took shape, and its myriad topical references, indicate how recent publications formed its core. James Hogg has identified a list of pamphlets and tracts that can be traced as direct sources for *A Game at Chess*. Among them are works by Thomas Scott, Thomas Robinson, and John Gee³²; of the twelve works listed by Hogg, only one is dated before 1620. An important aspect of the use of this type of source material is the resonance it would have had for a broad reading London audience. These were timely and popular publications, as opposed to scholarly works. The stage depiction of Gondomar comes directly (visually as well as textually) from *The Second Part of Vox Populi*. Thanks to Scott, Gondomar's anal fistula³³ was a running joke in London, and the appearance of his especially-designed chair with enclosed stool would have caused a laugh of recognition because of its inclusion on the pamphlet's title page engraving. Likewise, a pamphlet with the title *Newes from Rome: Spalato's Doome* would call to mind the onetime Dean of Windsor who

³¹ Both Yachnin and Taylor contrast the stage death of Talbot in *Henry VI* to the very immediate dramatization of James's troubles in *A Game*. See Yachnin, *Culture of Playgoing* 14; and Taylor, *A Game at Chess* Introduction 1773.

³² Hogg lists these works as *Vox Populi* (1620) and *The Second Part of Vox Popui* (1624) by Scott; *The Anatomie of the English Nunnerie at Lisbon* (1622) and *Vox Coeli* (1624) by Thomas Robinson; *The Foote out of the Snare* (1624) by John Gee; and the following anonymous works: *Declaration of the Variance between the Pope and the Segniory of Venice* (1606), *The Downfall of the Jesuites* (1621), *The State Mysteries of the Jesuites* (1622), *The Friars Chronicle* (1622), *A Jesuites Oration to the Prince* (1623), *An Experimentall Discoverie of Spanish Practices* (1623), and *Newes from Rome: Spalato's Doome* (1624). Hogg, "An Ephemeral Hit" 316.

³³ Gondomar was afflicted with an anal fistula, which was apparently extremely painful and required that he be carried around the city in a sedan chair and that he sit on a special seat with a hole in the middle. The *OED* defines a fistula as "A long, narrow, suppurating canal of morbid origin in some part of the body; a long, sinuous pipe-like ulcer with a narrow orifice."

had embarrassed James by recanting his conversion to the English church, and was by the summer of 1624 dying painfully in a Roman cell.

By relying so heavily on these religio-political pamphlets Middleton was addressing his London audience with an expectation that they were knowledgeable of both the events and the commentary about them. The more an audience member had read of these pamphlets the more he would recognize the finer points of plot and character. The use of these (often critical) pamphlets also complicates the relationship between Middleton's play and the Court. As a piece of propaganda directed at the citizens of England the play makes some sense. As a tool designed at the urging of Buckingham and/or Charles, *A Game* becomes more complicated: while Charles had some experience employing Middleton to create a dramatic challenge to his father (*World Tossed*), the embedded criticism of the King, Charles and Buckingham in *A Game* begs the question of how they would have received it. Did Middleton intend for the play to be performed at Court? Gossips like John Woolley repeated in late August, after the play had been shut down, that "... Some say (how true it is I know not) that the Players are gone to the Courte to Act the game at Chesse before the Kinge,"³⁴ and that "the higher powers I meane the P.[rince] and D.[uke] if not from the K.[ing] for they were all loth to haue it forbidden, and by report laught hartely at it ..."³⁵ But the "Spanish traffike" was extremely close to home for James, Charles, Buckingham, Bristol, Middlesex, Somerset, and the other courtiers who feared they were part of the fabric of the allegory. Would they really have enjoyed a comic political allegory pointing out their foibles?

³⁴ John Woolley to William Trumbull, Saturday 28 August 1624. Howard-Hill, *A Game at Chess*, Appendix I 207.

³⁵ Woolley to Trumbull, Friday 20 August 1624. Ibid 203.

Ghedruckt in Lydden?: Text and Visual Editorial Complexities

Three quartos and six manuscript versions of the play remain to us. The relationship among these extant texts is remarkably complex – some elements reflect a pre-performance state while others incorporate what was clearly stage business and therefore suggest composition during or after rehearsal and performance. Gary Taylor and Adrian Weiss have presented the most recent and thoroughly comprehensive work on the editorial provenance of the play-texts.³⁶ While their work is far too complex to summarize here, there are a few pertinent elements that should be clarified before proceeding with a visual analysis of the title page illustrations. Most recent scholars have concluded that Nicholas Okes oversaw the printing of Q1 and Q2 (perhaps with Middleton’s input) and Edward Allde and Augustine Mathewes produced Q3. There is no Stationers’ Register entry or court document pertaining to any of the editions, which prevents a thorough comprehension of how the editions came to market – we cannot identify one of these men as the licensor, and therefore the possibility that one edition is a pirated version of another cannot be decided. The significant textual variances do indicate that the publishers were working from different source materials. The lack of a Stationers’ Register entry also makes dating the editions very difficult. Scholars have traditionally relied on W.W. Greg’s estimate of 1625, although none of the editions bears a date on its title page. One piece of primary evidence confirms that at least one edition was available as early as May 1625: in a letter to Sir Martin Stuteville Joseph Mead wrote, “[t]he play called the game at chesse is also in print but because I haue no skill in the game I vnderstand it not.”³⁷ From this information we can surmise that nine months after the performances the play-text was for sale to book buyers, suggesting that despite

³⁶ See Taylor, “General Textual Introduction” and Weiss, “Printing in Middleton’s Age”.

³⁷ Joseph Mead to Sir Martin Stuteville, 25 May 1625. Taylor, “General Textual Introduction” 873.

the actions of James and the Privy Council to remove the play from the reach of the public, interest in the play was still strong enough to warrant publication. Okes's version sold well enough, at least, to require a second edition. And regardless whether it came before or after, a question that will be taken up at length below, the Alde/Mathewes version was released at roughly the same time.

Traditionally, scholars believed that the initial investigation into the propriety of the King's Men's production led to efforts on the part of publishers (as well as the playwright) to protect themselves from any political backlash. Certainly Middleton's name is absent from all of the title pages, but that is not uncommon in the period. Nor is it without precedent for the publisher, printer, or bookseller to be unidentified. What has confused scholars – and led to the belief that at least some of those involved were trying to protect themselves – is the inclusion on the Q3 illustration of the phrase “Ghedruckt in Lydden by Ian Masse”. This phrase led scholars to hunt fruitlessly for a Leiden-based printer named Jan Masse. W.W. Greg identified Masse as a pseudonym for the printer Augustine Mathewes, and most scholars have followed his conclusion. For some reason, perhaps to protect themselves from political or guild recriminations, Alde and Mathewes perpetuated this ruse.

More important to this study is the question of why these editions bore distinct engravings, and who might have been involved in producing them. The engravings show several similarities – particularly in the “scene” featuring three figures in Q1 and two in Q3. It is not clear, however, how one develops from the other, and this has caused confusion regarding the order in which they were produced. There are very few contemporary examples of sequential editions of play-texts featuring new or different illustrations; in the case of *Doctor Faustus* the 1663 edition features a near exact copy of the woodcut on the 1631 edition, and may be a

replacement due to breakage or excessive wear (*Doctor Faustus* was printed seven times with the woodcut between 1616 and 1663; there was also a broadside ballad that featured the woodcut, printed at least once in 1628). In the case of the closet drama *Ignoramus*, originally published in 1630, the reissue in 1658 bears an almost exact replica of the copperplate engraved title page, differing mainly in minor details such as the addition of titles to book spines propped on a shelf. I know of no extant play-texts for the period that feature two unique title page illustrations, and certainly no examples where such illustrations might have appeared almost simultaneously.

The unique engraved title pages of Q1 and Q3 have only recently begun to receive attention from critics. Usually their presence is noted with an acknowledgement that this is the first individual English play to be accompanied by a copperplate engraved title page (as in the introductions to Howard-Hill and Taylor's editions). Often, only one of the two etchings is presented as a visual reference to the printed play-text.³⁸ Until very recently, scholars adopted W.W. Greg's conclusion (reinforced by R.C. Bald in his 1929 edition of the play) that Q1 chronologically preceded Q3; therefore the Q3 illustration was a reworking of Q1. Scholars speak in terms of Q3 "reducing" or "removing" elements,³⁹ from what they see as a superior and more complex original. However, it is equally possible – and perhaps more rhetorically sound in a visual sense – to reverse the order of the illustrations, and thereby renew the question of the publication order of the quartos. A thorough visual examination will be undertaken below, with special attention paid to the visual sources that were almost certainly used to draw the main characters in Q1 and Q3.

³⁸ Curiously, in what may be an editorial oversight, Howard-Hill's edition of the play includes the Q1 illustration twice, erroneously labeling the second figure as the Q3 illustration. See Introduction, 7 and 11.

³⁹ See Astington, "Visual Texts" 245; Foakes, *Illustrations* 122-5.

“The Picture explained, after manner of the Chess-play”: Analyzing the Q1 and Q3 Illustrations

The Q3 illustration⁴⁰ [Figure 18] presents all information in a single, unified frame. The composition is fluid and aesthetically pleasing to the modern eye. The title treatment and visual representation of the characters and chess allegory demonstrate the ability of the artist to integrate composition with rhetorical appeal. The title is neatly written in the top center; flourishes in the bottom line of text (‘The Globe on the Banck Side’) link the mitre of the ecclesiastical figure on the left with the wide-brimmed hat of the courtier on the right, unifying the frame. On the outside edge of each character’s hat is a label: “the White Hous” is written at the left edge, and “the Black Hous” is written at the right. The meaning of these labels is obscure unless one has knowledge of the play (and perhaps Alde assumed that the customer at a book stall would recognize the reference to the exchange between the Black Knight and the Fat Bishop in 3.1). These labels, along with the speech balloons emanating from the characters’ mouths, form the only direct identification of characters from the play (in performance or text form) in the illustration. However, the artist’s incorporation of details from popular print images of de Dominis and Gondomar add a further level of identification. The knowledgeable viewer recognizes the priest on the left as the Fat Bishop (de Dominis) and the courtier on the right as the Black Knight (Gondomar). The identification of the Fat Bishop with the White House is somewhat problematic, as we will see below. The bodies of the two characters form a triangle, in three quarter profile, with one foot pointed forward and the speech balloons unfurling between them. The triangle is reiterated by the action of the two characters: the Black Knight proffers a letter while the Fat Bishop holds out his hand, palm upward, to take it. Both characters have placed a foot on the oversized chessboard that lies on the ground, with chess pieces in play.

⁴⁰ I will examine the Q3 illustration before Q1, in hopes of better clarifying visual components and possible sources.

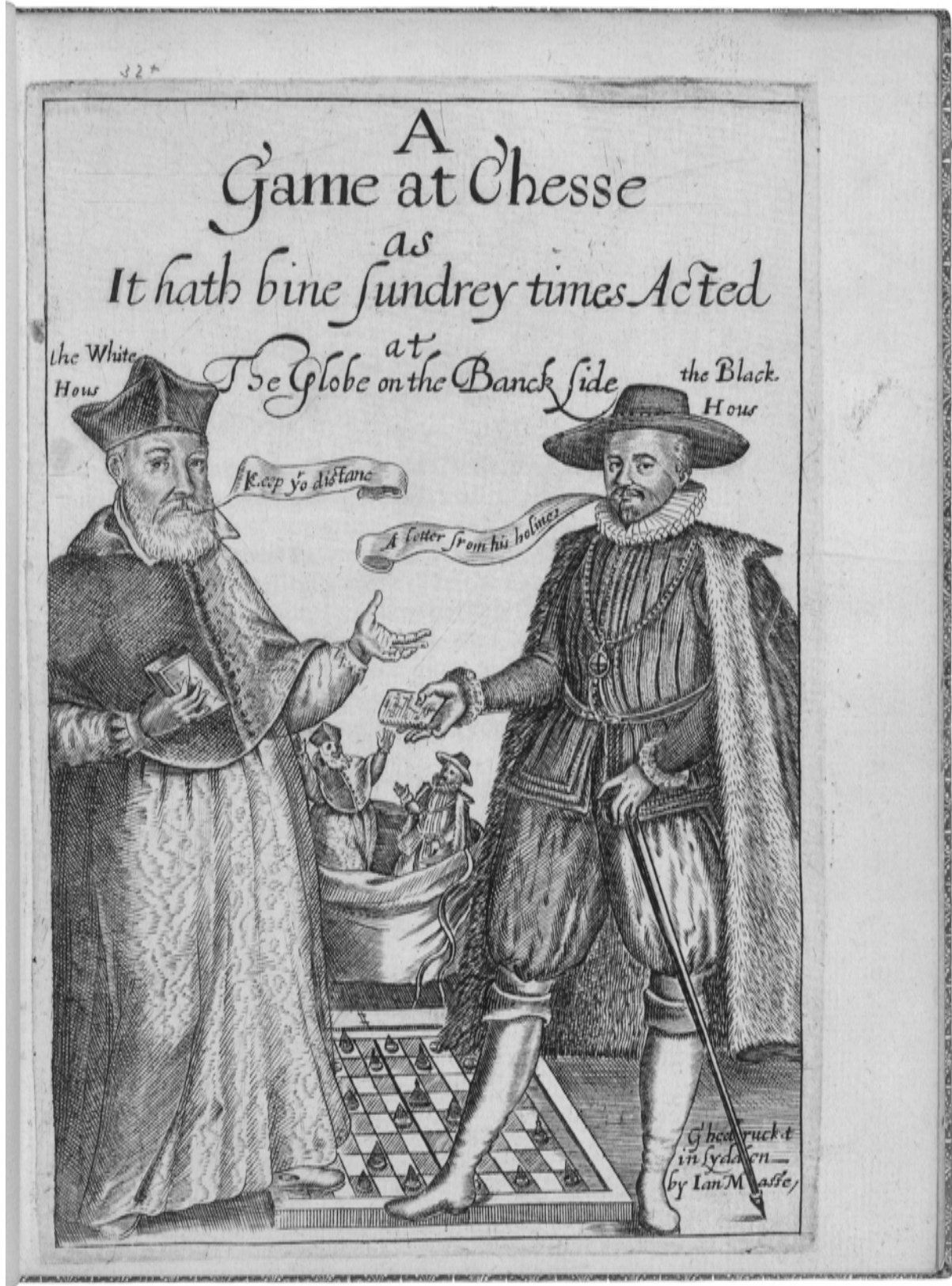


Figure 18: *A Game at Chess*, Q3 edition. [1625?]

Between the two characters is a small bag holding miniature versions of the Fat Bishop and the Black Duke. The miniature Fat Bishop is also reaching upward as if to touch or take the letter [See Figure 23].

The two characters are drawn with significant detail, both in terms of facial features and clothing particulars. The Fat Bishop wears a gown, stole and mitre of rich lustrous cloth. He is clearly obese, with a distended belly from which his robe falls. His cuffs are trimmed with lace. His straight collar appears above the neck of his cape, which features a long line of buttons down the front. His head is slightly disproportionate to the rest of his body, appearing somewhat too large. His beard is light – perhaps grey – full and square. His nose and forehead are prominent; his eyes are wide set, looking out at the viewer. In his right hand, held perpendicular to his body, the Fat Bishop holds a small book. The angle of his left arm, reaching out for the letter, is bent at roughly the same angle as the right arm.

The Black Knight is richly accoutered. His clothes are dark and conservatively cut, but of luxurious fabric. His doublet shows a vertical striped pattern and he wears a double ruff collar. There are also ruffs at the edge of his cuffs, as well. Draped from his shoulders is a knee-length fur cape. His breeches are full and bound at the knee. His boots fold over at the top, but are tight at the calf. Around his neck he wears a chain of office, at the end of which is some sort of round medallion adorned with a square cross. He wears a simple, wide-brimmed black hat. His beard is pointed, his mustache trimmed. His hair is short and brushed back from the temples. His face is long with a high, prominent forehead. His left hand rests on the knob of his walking stick, the left arm tucked inside his cape. His right arm is extended from the elbow, his hand holding the inscribed letter. The Black Knight's walking stick is roughly parallel to the lines made by the

Bishop's gown and the right edge of the chessboard. Its tip touches the ground, pointing at the written phrase: "Ghedruckt in Lydden by Ian Masse." This visually reinforces the misdirection perpetrated by Allde and Mathewes.

The transaction represents one plot progression that spans 2.2 through 3.1 and requires a degree of knowledge of the play on the part of the viewer to comprehend its significance – especially in terms of the foreshadowing of the characters' fate, shown doubled in the miniature bag. In 2.2 the Fat Bishop and his Pawn enter, discussing the publication of the Bishop's books denouncing the Catholic Church. The Bishop wants to distribute copies to members of the White House, presumably to reassure them of his loyalty to their cause. The book the Fat Bishop holds in his right hand in the Q3 engraving may be an allusion to these publications. The Pawn exits and the Fat Bishop speaks a soliloquy replete with food and eating imagery, "'Tis a most lordly life to rail at ease,/Sit, eat, and feed upon the fat of one kingdom,/And rail upon another with the juice on't" (2.2.18-20). He praises the White House for keeping him fat and happy while he has written his books, but expresses his disappointment at not receiving more valuable preferments. The Black Bishop and Black Knight enter together. Apparently the Black Knight and Fat Bishop share a mutual dislike – the Fat Bishop once played a trick on the Black Knight and the Knight has vowed to get his revenge. The Black Knight watches the Fat Bishop's Pawn re-enter with the books and cringes, "Yonder greasy gourmandizing prelate/Has wrought our House more mischief by his scripts,/His fat and fulsome volumes/Than the whole body of the adverse party" (54-7). The Black Bishop confesses that it would be valuable to bring the Fat Bishop back into the Catholic fold, but the Black Knight emends this with a more sinister plan. Yes, they will re-convert him, "And then damn him/Into the bag for ever, or expose him/Against the adverse part which now he feeds upon,/And that would double damn him" (59-62). While the Fat Bishop may

not represent as crucial a strategic capture for the Black House as the White Knight will be, he is significant to the Black Knight's sense of honor and revenge.⁴¹ Together the Black Knight and Bishop concoct a plan whereby a counterfeit letter from "our second Bishop absent" (assumed by scholars to represent Pope Gregory XV, who had been a friend of de Dominis) offering the Fat Bishop a "*sede vacante*" – a bishop's see.

The plot is continued in 3.1, as the Fat Bishop enters alone, complaining again about the lack of reward for his written criticisms of the Black House:

But where's my advancement all this while I ha' gaped for?
I'd have some round preferment, corpulent dignity,
That bears some breadth and compass in the gift on set;
I am persuaded that this flesh would fill
The biggest chair ecclesiastical
If it were put on trial. (3.1.6-11)

This soliloquy damns the Fat Bishop in the eyes of the spectator or reader. It is unquestionably clear that the Fat Bishop is insincere in his faith and deserves what is about to happen to him. The Black Knight enters and calls out, "I bring fair greetings to your reverend virtues./From Cardinal Paulus,⁴² your most princely kinsman" (24-5). The Black Knight gives the counterfeit letter to the Fat Bishop, who accepts it with caution, "Pray keep your side and distance; I am chary/Of my episcopal person" (27-8). The letter, which the Fat Bishop reads aloud, purports to be from the pope, chiding the Fat Bishop for turning away from the faith but promising him his own see if he repents and returns to the flock. The Fat Bishop is won over by the Black Knight's

⁴¹ See Reta Guibault for a description of the difference between Spanish personal honor, which reflected a more medieval sentiment, and the more progressive concept of English nationalist honor in the play, "National Unity and English (Dis)Honour" 355.

⁴² This is a mis-reference to de Dominis's patron Pope Gregory XV.

ploy. It is, after all, just a matter of making “a bonfire of my books,” packing up ill-got valuables and stealing away by night. What is another recantation, after all, “inventing/Two or three bitter books against the White House/And then I’m in a t’other side again/As firm as e’er I was, as fat and flourishing—” (51-4). The trap is sprung. The scene ends with the duped Bishop announcing his recantation to the gathered houses, threatening harm to the White House with new books to come. In an aside to the Black House, the Black Knight confides, “Flatter him a while with honours, til we put him/Upon some dangerous service and then burn him” (299-300). In fact, the Fat Bishop is set up by the Black Knight as a sacrifice in 4.5, and taken by the White Queen and White Bishop.

Comprehension of the illustration suffers significantly without knowledge of the plotline featuring the Fat Bishop and Black Knight. Unlike the *Spanish Tragedy* illustration, which marries word and action, this visual sequence is very static. The Fat Bishop’s speech balloon reads “Keep yo^r distanc,” a contracted version of his line in the play, but phrased in a more aggressive tone. The Black Knight’s ribbon reads “A letter from his holines,” which clarifies his line in the text, but still does not reveal the weight of the announcement or the ruse being perpetrated. The moment as drawn is just prior to the Fat Bishop’s acceptance of the letter. It reinforces the tension of his distrust for the Black Knight (“Keep yo^r distanc”) while presenting the consequences of his actions – he will end up tricked, captured, and ultimately consigned to “the bag, like hellmouth” (5.3.179), doomed to spend eternity with his mortal enemy. By accepting the letter, he triggers the sequence of events that lead to his downfall.

The engraving for Q1 [Figure 19] is more rhetorically ambitious –more elements and references from the play and to chess are packed into the composition, but at times it falls short in terms of execution. However, the artist did attempt to incorporate a reference to the chess

A Game at Chæss as it was Acted nine days together at the Globe

The Black-House | on the banks side, | The White-House.



Figure 19: *A Game at Chess*, Q1 edition. 1625

allegory, as well as include a broader spectrum of action from the play than Q3. The title page is split into three separate panels: the title and performance information, a scene presenting eight individual characters sitting around a large table with a chess board at its center, and a scene featuring three identified characters in the foreground, with a bag holding three small figures in the background. The panels are delineated by narrow straight lines – the left edge also is bordered by a line. The panel including the title layout is crowded, the letters giving the appearance of being forced into a space smaller than the one dictated – perhaps laid in after the illustrative panels below. Astington suggests that the artist anticipated a larger working area (“Visual Texts” 240) The “A” in the top line of the title is not centered, and the words “Gam^e at Chæss as it was Acted” are not separated. The ligature in Chæss is sloppy, as if it has been etched over to correct a mistake. On either side of the phrase “on the banks side” are two boxes set off from the rest of the design by thicker lines. That on the left reads “The Black-House,” and that on the right reads “The White-House”.

R.A. Foakes posits that these two boxes provide an indicator of stage entrances at the Globe, “[t]hese show how entrances were used, for in the Induction the two sides in the game are called in a stage-direction to enter separately in ‘order of game,’⁴³ and the opening begins with two pawns entering, the Black Queen’s pawn from the ‘Black-House,’ and the White Queen’s pawn from the ‘White-House’” (*Illustrations* 122). I agree that it would have been sensible to stage the initial entrance during the Induction so that the houses were isolated. And yet the action in later scenes is too fluid to allow this to act as a consistent stage direction throughout the play. Black and White characters enter from different locations and sometimes in mixed groups. Also,

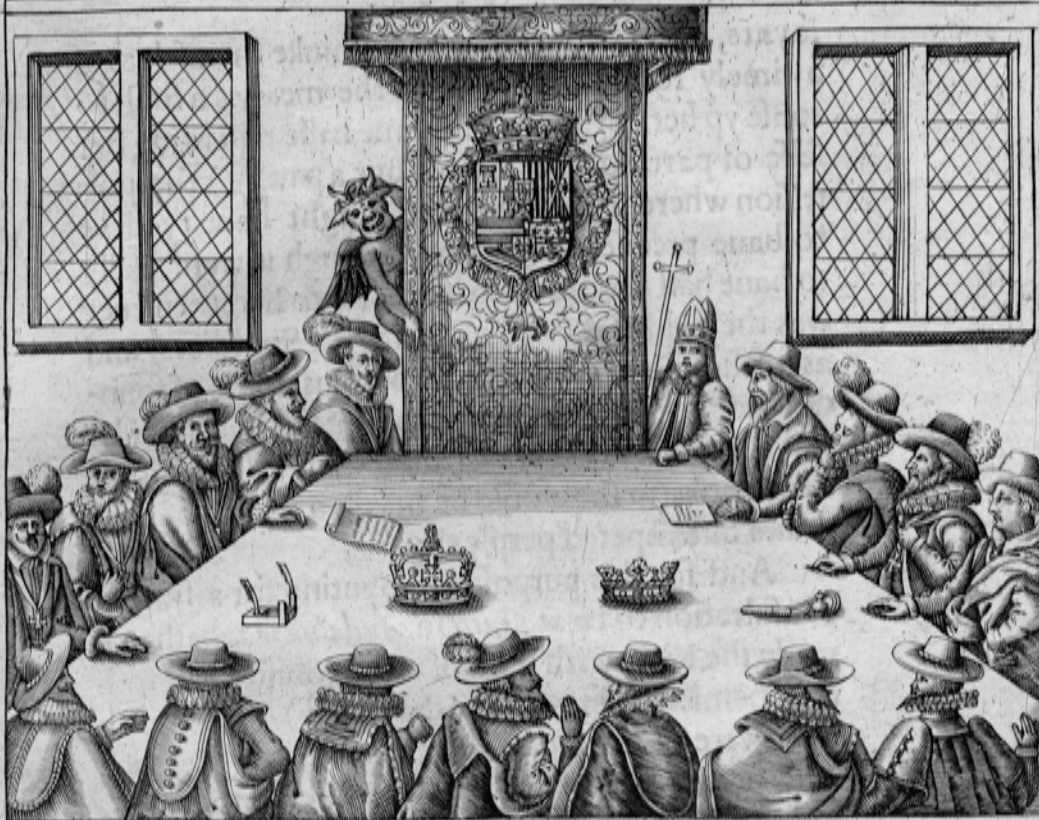
⁴³ In chess, the white side makes the first move. This stage direction indicates that the White House would enter first, followed by the Black House.

the composition of the overall page does not bear out the separation. While the middle panel is split in line with the houses – black players below the label ‘Black-House’ and white players below ‘White’ – the lowest panel does not sustain this categorization. The White Knight is properly aligned with the ‘White-House’ on the right. The Black Knight, whose allegiance and motives in the play are never in doubt, is curiously placed in the middle. The Fat Bishop acts as a player for one of the houses in only the strictest sense of the chess allegory (which Middleton did not observe in writing the play).⁴⁴ In that sense he is a white bishop; his appearances in 2.2 present him as publishing anti-Catholic tracts as a matter of self-aggrandizement rather than devotion, and by 3.1 he has been lured back to the Black side by means of a trick played on him by the Black Knight – a faked offer of preferment. The Fat Bishop, as he reveals his duplicity to the gathered houses proclaims, “Is there so much spent on him/That’s but half black?” (3.1.281-2). He thus attempts to play for both houses, but is turned by the Black Knight and put in the bag by the White House. Consistent rhetorical alignment would switch the Black Knight and the Fat Bishop to emphasize the “half black” nature of the latter.

John Astington compares the middle panel to the engravings entitled “The Jesuites Council” and “The Spanish Parliament” from *The Second Part of Vox Populi* [Figures 20 & 21]. He claims that the use of a square table surrounded (on four sides, not three as in the Q1 panel) by figures in negotiation, as well as the placement of paned windows at top left and right of these images, constitute significant models for the Q1 engraving. Astington believes the middle panel of Q1 would therefore have had “immediate iconographic context for the literate viewer with

⁴⁴ Paul Yachnin and Jerzy Limon also point out that Middleton’s own grasp of the game was far from masterful. While the general rules of the game are followed in the play, enactment of chess rules and strategy are often set aside when they do not suit the action of the story.

THE SPANISHE PARLAMENT .



Ingentibus exidit ausis .

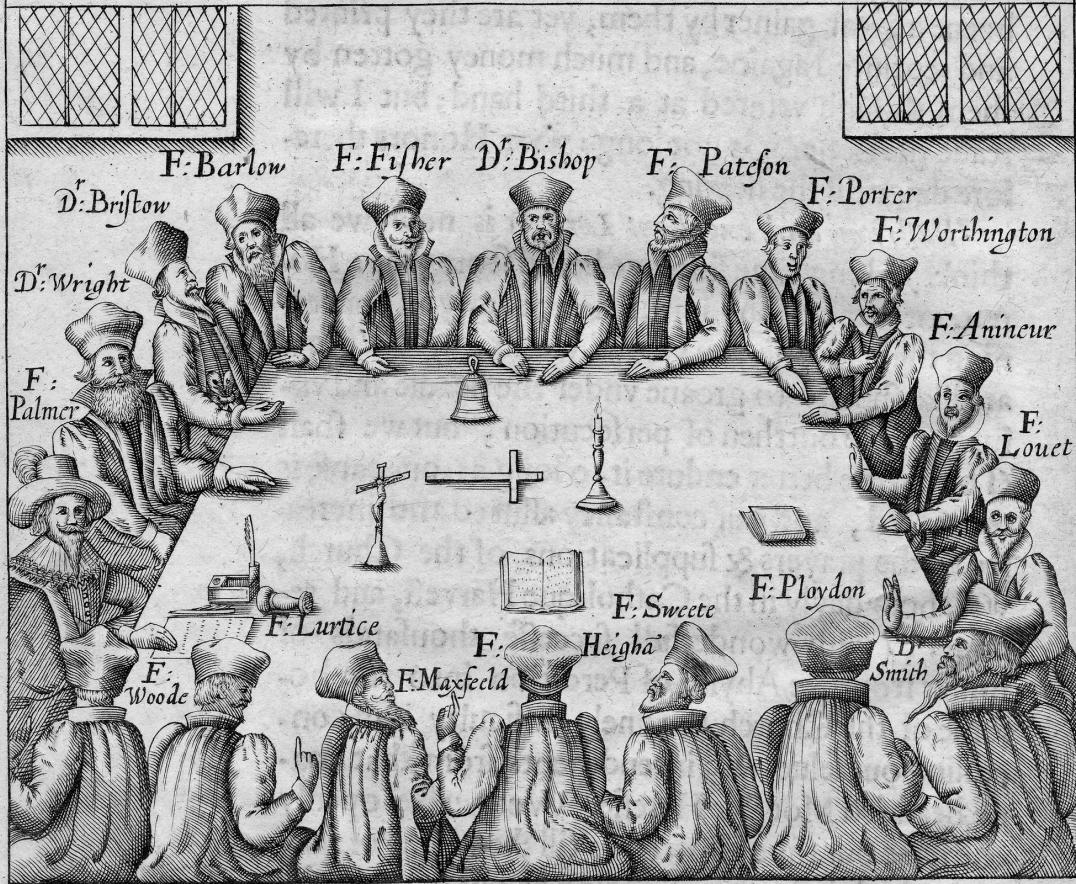
After the shouts and acclamations of all true hearted English, for the safe & single returne of the Prince of Great Brittain, had made the roose of Heauen to resound, and with the noyse had shooke such a terror into the ill affected body of *Spainne*, that a cold, and beaummung feare, ran through her
A 2 ioyns,

Figure 20: "The Spanish Parliament", *The Second Part of Vox Populi*, 1624

(54)

mired pollicie, is the compasse by which we all Steere to escape present danger. Our Lord protect your Honor to all our Comforts; and our blessing be vpon you. From London this 3. of May.

I haue here sett the true portrature of the Iesuits and prists :



as they vse to sitt at Counsell in England to further y Catholicke Cause.

Figure 21: "The Jesuit Council", *The Second Part of Vox Populi*, 1624

Protestant sympathies” (“Visual Texts” 241). This argument is not completely satisfying, however. While *The Second Part of Vox Populi*’s title page was almost certainly used as a model for parts of the *Game at Chess* illustration, the composition of the two internal illustrations is not close enough to the middle panel of *A Game* to serve as a unifying pattern. The placement and posing of figures is different and the perspective is completely dissimilar. As for the windows, the conceit is not so unusual as Astington would suggest. The double window indicating interior space was a common contemporary feature in illustrations. At least three examples of play-text title pages incorporating such window treatments come to mind: *Arden of Faversham*, *A Maidenhead Well Lost*, and *Swetnam the Woman Hater*. In all three cases the presence of two windows high in a rear wall serves to reinforce the idea of an internal space and to balance the composition.

The middle panel also provides particular physical detail about some of the lead characters in the play without revealing any performance elements of the play’s action. The characters are arrayed around the table in a conversational mode that never occurs in the play. From bottom left we see the Fat Bishop (as opposed to the Black Bishop, who by rights should be in this position), the Black Duke, Queen and King. From bottom right we have the White Bishop, Duke, Queen and King. The two bishops are seated in similar straight-backed chairs. No other indication of seating is visible. The Knights are not incorporated into the scene, which is either intentional (both are featured prominently in the bottom panel, so perhaps the artist felt their placement at the table was redundant) or an accident of labeling (it is possible that the two cavalier figures at the table were meant to be the Black and White Knights but were misidentified by the engraver).

The figures in the panel are for the most part quite animated and incorporate individual details that we do not often see in woodcut illustrations for plays. The Fat Bishop wears a bishop's mitre and stole apparently made of some luxurious silken fabric; it is identical to the one worn by the Fat Bishop in the bottom panel. The Fat Bishop is engaged in casual conversation with the Black Duke, something that never happens in the play. The Black Duke is dressed in cavalier fashion, with falling collar, gauntlets and a wide-brimmed plumed hat. With his gloved hand he gestures to the Bishop, his elbow resting on the table. He wears his hair long and curled, with pointed beard and mustache.

Above the Duke is the Black Queen. She wears a high heart-shaped, lace-edged collar open at the front. Her bodice is low and her breasts have been pushed up to enhance her cleavage. The shoulders of her dress are capped and the cuffs of her sleeves also appear to be trimmed with lace. Her arms rest before her on the table. Neither she nor the White Queen appear to be in conversation with anyone, although they may be looking at one another. The Black Queen is strikingly provocative – the elaborate collar and plunging décolletage speak to her material being and sexually alluring nature. In keeping with the allegory that the Black House represents both Spain and the Jesuits, and the figure of the Queen (on both sides) is a signifier of church, then the message here is that the Black Queen is a seductive creature more interested in worldly goods than matters of the soul.⁴⁵

The characters on the right side of the table embody some aspect of more respectable Englishness. The White Bishop is dressed simply in an academic gown and square cloth cap, a ruff collar visible below his beard. His hands are folded before him on the table as he converses with the Duke to his left. The White Duke, dressed in similar cavalier attire to the Black Duke,

⁴⁵ Both Queens are identified in the play as allegorical representations of the churches of each country rather than flesh-and-blood spouses of the Kings.

also assumes a familiar posture towards the White Bishop, with his right forearm laid along the table. But whereas the body language of the Black Duke suggests confidence and superiority, leaning back in his chair, the White Duke leans forward attentively to the White Bishop, suggesting respect or deference. The White Queen is much more demurely, perhaps even severely, dressed. Her ruff is high but full and closed in front, and her gown is plain with a high front – her cleavage is definitely not on display here. She appears to be gesturing, her right hand pointed at herself and her left hand opened outward. Her gestures are directed either at the Black King and Queen or the White King: she may be interjecting into his conversation with the Black King or advising him— a proper action for the allegorical figure representing the Anglican faith.

The two kings appear to be interchangeable, dressed almost identically, including their crowns. They are engaged in thoughtful discourse, with the Black King making a point with left arm raised toward the White King, who appears to be in a passive pose. In chess the king is the weakest of the pieces (his movements are extremely limited) but his safety is crucial to the game. The placement of these two kings at top center of the scene gives them the highest degree of salience. Not only are they the only characters in the scene that are drawn in isolation from the other characters (every other character overlaps with another), the lines created by the perspective of the table, the chessboard, and the outer edge of the characters surrounding the table all lead the viewer's eye to the two kings. In fact, the vanishing point lies between their two crowns and just above the White King's extended hand.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Kress and Van Leeuwen analyze planes, angles and vanishing points in terms of the degree of involvement or detachment a viewer experiences when looking at an image. In the case of the Q1 illustration, the panel featuring the chess match involves the viewer through a frontal plane and horizontal angle that brings the viewer's eye from the wide bottom edge of the table to the two kings at upper center 133-40.

A political reading of this scene, then, suggests that the matter of the game is policy, both foreign and ecclesiastic, and the determination of that policy lies with the kings. In this instance and in the way the king characters are identified the Black King (Philip) clearly has agency and is prevailing upon the White King (James) who is static and weaker. The scene as drawn suggests a moment before the White Knight's unexpected "Check mate by discovery," when it appears that the White campaign is doomed.

John Astington claims that "the game on the exaggeratedly large and thick board is entirely meaningless, consisting of undifferentiated and solely white pieces arranged chequer-like" ("Visual Texts" 243). This is true. However, a close examination of the board space reveals two curious and to my knowledge previously undocumented features: the Black Queen holds a captured piece in her left hand, and the White King is reaching toward the board, about to grasp a piece [Figure 22]. This suggests a much more dynamic moment of interaction, perhaps related to the checkmate move revealed in the bottom panel. It could be this action upon which the White Queen is advising the King. The Black Queen and White King are not the central figures in the "double check"⁴⁷ in 5.3, in which the Black Knight is on the verge of taking the White Knight when the tables are turned. These two allegorical figures (the Catholic Church and England) are however at the center of the game as drawn. The White King thus shifts from a passive, weak character to one embodying strategy and agency.

⁴⁷ Although James was not a fan of chess (Paul Yachnin notes in "A Game at Chess and Chess Allegory" that James wrote, "it is over-wise and Philosophicke a folly," 317), chess was very popular in London in the seventeenth century, both as a participatory game and as a spectator sport. Gioachino Greco was considered the greatest chess player of the period; he "resided in England from 1622-24, and ... Middleton may well have seen [him] playing in the London eating houses at this time." Yachnin and Hogg believe that Middleton's understanding of chess was topical and not very advanced, but he seems to have been aware of the more popular moves and strategies: Greco practiced the double-check gambit in his public matches. Hogg, "An Ephemeral Hit" 314-5.



Figure 22: Chess-play by Black Queen and White Knight in Q1 illustration

The bottom panel features three male figures in the foreground labeled “the Fatte Bishop”, “the Black Knight,” and “the White Knight.” Between the Fat Bishop and the Black Knight is a bag holding three small figures, one wearing a bishop’s mitre and stole [Figures 23 & 24].⁴⁸ The



Figures 23 & 24: Q1 and Q3 inserts – chess bag

⁴⁸ The other two male figures are indistinguishable, but it is doubtful that these figures replicate the larger figures in the foreground in the way that Q3 does – the play does not support the idea that the White Knight would be banished to the bag with the black players, since he is not taken during the game.

Fat Bishop and Black Knight are similar in design to the presentation in Q3; in fact, the Fat Bishop is drawn in an almost identical pose, although the arms are at a slightly different angle. But here the inclusion of the White Knight significantly alters the composition. In this version the Fat Bishop and the Black Knight each touch the letter – the transaction has been completed, once again foreshadowing the Fat Bishop's doom in the bag. The posture of the Black Knight has also been altered. Here he is in a frontal stance, facing the viewer and slightly turned away from the Fat Bishop. He appears to be moving forward with his weight shifting off his right foot to his left. The reason for this change in posture seems to be the White Knight, who is gesturing and speaking to the Black Knight.

The White Knight is dressed in cavalier fashion with longish curling hair and a dapper beard and mustache. His hat is tipped jauntily with a plume showing over the brim. His ruff is made of intricate lace and falls over his shoulders. He wears a metal cuirass rather than cloth doublet, and his sword is buckled at his side. He wears a short cape pulled back from his shoulders, and elaborately decorated wide breeches. He wears gauntlets, and his floppy knee-high boots are spurred. The White Knight's appearance raises an interesting issue. He is dressed in a particularly militaristic fashion, with cuirass, sword, and spurs. This may be simply a signifier for the role of the knight piece in chess, which to this day carries the suggestion of a military figure. However, the Black Knight is not dressed for battle, so this idea does not bear out in the illustration. If the action of the play – and in particular this moment between the White and Black Knights – is supposed to represent the time when Charles was wooing the Infanta at the court in Madrid, his martial appearance is out of joint. It was not until after Charles and Buckingham returned to England that they began to advocate war against Spain. This appearance of a physically aggressive Charles/White Knight is much more in keeping with the period of

1624-5 than 1623. It therefore serves to underscore the idea that the play (or at least this engraving) was part of a propaganda campaign, vilifying the Spanish and encouraging thoughts of war in the English audience.

The White Knight is shown in profile, his right leg forward and his right arm reaching out to the Black Knight. Without an understanding of the play's plot progression, the action of the scene suggests a transaction between the Fat Bishop, the Black Knight *and* the White Knight. The letter exchanges hands and the White Knight discovers the action. He then reaches out to receive the letter. Of course, as has been discussed above, the play does not support this interpretation. As we saw with *The Spanish Tragedy*, speech ribbons are employed to link the engraving to action in the play. In this case, rather than tying the elements of a sequence together, the banderoles identify two completely disparate moments of action, which have little, or even nothing, to do with one another.

The relationship between the Black Knight and the White Knight in the illustration represents a completely separate plot line at the denouement of the play. This plot concerns the efforts of both houses to lure the opposite knight into a trap that will humiliate his house and lead to its downfall. It also underscores the propaganda that Buckingham and Charles had been spreading since their return from Madrid: that both men had been aware of Spain's connivance regarding the marriage negotiation, and were only playing along to reveal Spain's true purpose. The plot launches in earnest in 4.4, when the White Knight and Duke discuss their plan:

WHITE KNIGHT: Let us prevent their rank insinuation
 With truth of cause and courage, meet their plots
 With confident goodness that shall strike 'em groveling.

WHITE DUKE: Sir, all the gins, traps and alluring snares

The devil has been at work since '88 on
Are laid for the great hope of this game only.

WHITE KNIGHT: Why, the more noble will truth's triumph be;
When they have wound about our constant courages
The glitteringest serpent that e'er falsehood fashioned
And glorying most in his resplendent poisons,
Just heaven can find a bolt to bruise his head. (4.4.2-12)

The White Duke's allusion to the Armada serves to reinforce Spain's history of aggression toward England.⁴⁹ The Black Knight enters, and the White Duke comments on his "face-falsehood." The White Knight rues the need to dissemble and resort to lies in order to catch the Black Knight, who launches into a long speech about his loyalty to the White Knight and the glories that await him if he marry into the Black House. The Black Knight assures his counterpart, "I will change/To any shape to please you, and my aim/Has been to win your love in all this game" (4.4.42-4).

The plot continues in 5.3, when the Black Knight tries to lure the White Knight with a convoluted lecture on the dangers of gluttony (as related to the errors of the White House and recalling the character of the Fat Bishop). This devolves into a revelation of the Black House's ambitions, envisioned as a feast, "We count but the White Kingdom whence you came from/The garden for our cook to pick his salads;/The food's lean France larded with Germany" (5.3.82-6) and goes on to describe a meal made up of courses garnered from Italy, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Portugal, India, the Middle and Far East, and the rest of the world – in other words, England represents a small step in Spain's plan for global domination.

⁴⁹ There are other places in the play where anti-Spanish sentiment is stirred, including reference to the attempted poisoning of Queen Elizabeth by Doctor Lopez.

The White and Black Knights continue on in a game of cat and mouse, with the White Knight identifying his own sinful desires and the Black Knight tempting him with ever more material riches that would be his if he were to join the Black House. The White Duke asks what is in the project for him claiming, “You quite forget me, I shall be shut out/By your strict key of life” (118-19). He identifies his own sin as venery; in an exchange that T.H. Howard-Hill identifies as a blatant allusion to the Duke of Buckingham’s notorious profligacy (*A Game at Chess*, Footnote 185), the Black Knight assures the White Duke that he will find sexual fulfillment in the Black House. Finally, the White Knight confesses his worst sin – the greatest obstacle the Black House might have to accepting him, “I’m an arch-dissembler, sir ... The time is yet to come that e’er I spoke/What my heart meant!” (145; 148-9).⁵⁰ The Black Knight assures him that this quality would be most highly valued in the Black House, admitting, “what we have done/Has been dissemblance ever” (157-8). Thus the trap is sprung; the White Knight proclaims, “There you lie then/And the game’s ours – we give thee checkmate by/Discovery, King, the noblest mate of all!” (59-61). It is this moment that is depicted in the engraving with the White Knight standing confidently, hand on hip, right arm and leg extended toward the Black Knight, the speech balloon emanating from his mouth reading, “Check mate by discovery.”

With the White Knight’s checkmate, the action of the play (and the illustration) is all but done. The White House enters, and the White King reveals the fate of his nemesis, “And there behold: the bag, like hell-mouth, opens/To take her due” (179-80). There has been much debate about how this bag would have appeared onstage. The reference to a hell-mouth creates a link to the medieval mystery plays, when characters consigned to hell would be thrown into a curtained

⁵⁰ The meaning of this line is ambiguous. It reinforces the White Knight’s cunning and confirms that he is setting up the Black Knight. The White Knight’s confession that he is a liar and a fraud can also be read as a criticism of Charles, implying that he possesses attributes that are less than admirable.

area below the pageant wagon. It is also possible that the actors were pushed through the tiring room entrance or down through the trap (Howard-Hill, *A Game at Chess*, Footnote 188). It seems unlikely, and a significant expenditure on the part of the acting company, to commission a huge cloth pouch that could hold at least twelve actors, such as the one shown in the engraving.

Whichever solution was chosen, several of the taken characters, including the Fat Bishop, must deliver lines from within the “bag,” meaning that they had to regain access to at least part of the stage (their heads had to appear from the trap or through a curtain) for several moments, at least. Of course, such a thorough recollection of the play’s finer points is not required of the viewer, but it provides a more nuanced and provocative understanding of the scene as engraved.

In both Q1 and Q3 a poem is included in the front matter entitled “Prologue”, which presents some interesting questions about addressing the reader or audience member as a player in this chess game. More pertinent to our discussion is a second poem that appears only in the Q1 edition. It offers an intertextual analysis of the play-text *and* the engraving. It reads:

The Picture explained, after
manner of the Chess-play.
A Game at Chesse is here displayed,
Between the *Black* and *White-House* made,
Wherein Crowne-thirsting Policy,
For the *Black-House* (by Falacy)
To the *White-Knight*, checke, often giues,
And, to some straites, him thereby driues;
The *Fat-Blacke-Bishop* help’s also,
With faithlesse heart to giue the blow:

Yet (maugre all their craft) at length,
The *White Knight*, with wit-wondrous strength;
Giues Check-mate by Discouery
To the *Blacke-Knight*; and so at last
The Game (thus) won, the *Black House* cast
Into the Bagge, and therein shut,
Finde all their plumes and Cockes-combes cut.

Plaine-dealing (thus) by wisdomes guide,
Defeates the cheates of Craft and Pride. (A2)

It is highly unusual to see an engraving analyzed and incorporated into the overall presentation of the play-text in this way. To my knowledge there is only one other contemporary example of this: *The Vow-Breaker, or, The Fair Maid of Clifton*, printed in 1636. It is certainly intriguing that the publisher would commission such a synoptical piece that focuses so intently on the meaning of the visual component (none of the other characters or plot progressions are referred to). The illustration is placed on the second recto page, with a poem entitled “The Illustration” across from it on the reverse side of the title page. This placement provides secondary marketing value, being accessible to the reader only once he has picked it up and begins to leaf through it at the bookseller’s stall – or once he has purchased the book and taken it home. It must have been designed to appeal to a discerning reader or curious shopper, someone whose interest had already been engaged by the engraved title page of the play-text and was browsing through the front matter as he contemplated a purchase.

This poem appears to analyze the action of the middle and bottom panels, with reference to chess strategy and emphasis on the right side of the bottom panel – the composition formed of

the White and Black Knights. The Fat Bishop is consigned to a supporting role (“The Fat-Black-Bishop help’s also”). Surprisingly he is identified as a player for the Black House; while he certainly changes allegiance and is used by the Black House in their strategy, in the play he is not identified as one of the Black Bishops. Perhaps this realignment is an error on the part of the poet, or perhaps the Fat Bishop’s obvious sinful nature would have allied him with the Black House for a contemporary reader in a much more direct manner than I am giving credit for. Most important is the fact that this poem reasserts a reading of the bottom panel that is more in line with the faulty analysis I suggested above – that of someone not overly cognizant of the intricacies of the play, who was attempting to supply an analysis based solely on the engraved image. Strangely, it leads the reader astray by imposing a narrative that cannot be found in the play itself.

“You shall see Checque-Mate giuen to Vertues Foes”: Likeness and Source in the
Game at Chess Illustrations

One benefit of copperplate engraving that cannot be duplicated in woodblock carving (as we have seen with likenesses of Richard Tarlton), is fine detail in the depiction of garments as well as facial features. Skilled engravers copied paintings for public distribution with remarkable clarity (the engraved copy of *The Memorial for Lord Darnley* examined in chapter three is a fine example). Conscious of the power of the (re)printed image, Queen Elizabeth attempted to restrict the production of royal portraits in the marketplace, an attempt that resulted in a draft patent by her appointed Serjeant Painter George Gower.⁵¹ Her caution may have resulted from sensitivity

⁵¹ Gower drafted a patent that would have given him control over every form of reproduction of Elizabeth except limning (which would have gone to Nicholas Hilliard). “It was to cover painting on wood or canvas, engraving and woodcuts and the right to print them. The

over unflattering portraits or inclusion of her likeness in political satire such as several iterations of the *Allegory of the Low Countries*.⁵² Helen Pierce writes at length about the critical visual satires featuring James.⁵³ This propagandistic approach could be used for positive effect as well as attack. Heroic images of James's older son Henry (on horseback, in armor, wielding a lance) were widely distributed during his lifetime and would have served to reinforce his great popularity with the people. The ability to replicate the likenesses of well-known public figures resulted in a market where people were more widely conscious of personal visages rather than abstract concepts of rank. Whether or not a Londoner had ever seen the King, the royal family, or high-ranking political figures in person as they moved about the City, they could identify (at least nominally) these figures as they read about their actions. This would have great significance for the *Game at Chess* illustrations, as we shall see.

John Astington believes that the representations of the White King and White Knight in Q1 are based on identifiable portraits of James and Charles. He claims that the White King is a likeness of James, "but a rather younger James than the worn-out man of 1624-5" ("Visual Texts" 243). He does not provide any references for this assumption, and I believe his positive identification is optimistic in light of the lack of distinguishing features in the White King's face. He also identifies the source for the White Knight as a "small print by either Simon de Passe or John Payne, from about 1622" [Figure 25].⁵⁴ An examination of this print does not support

patent failed to materialize but provided a pointer that the answer to the problem of the control of royal portraiture lay, not in the dissemination of patterns to London portrait studios, but in the establishment of a single court painter whose workshop was large enough to sustain the production of the royal image en masse at a high level." Strong, *Gloriana* 15.

⁵² See Louis Montrose, *The Subject of Elizabeth*, particularly chapter 10, 132-43.

⁵³ See *Unseemly Pictures*, particularly chapter one.

⁵⁴ Hind vol. 2, 255, 300-1; pl. 188a.



*The most illustrious and renowned
Prince CHARLES, Prince of Wales,
Duke of Cornwall, York and Albany
etc.*

Figure 25: Prince Charles, 1622

Astington's identification. In the title page engraving, the White Knight is shown in profile, his features covered in facial hair and by the brim of his hat. Neither the facial features nor the clothes demonstrate any similarity to Prince Charles. In the de Passe print, the angle of the face, style of hair, even the plumed hat are completely different. In fact, the only common detail between the de Passe portrait and the White Knight in Q1 is that both wear a cuirass. However, even here the relationship is limited to a decoration on the side, at around hip height. The Fat Bishop and Black Knight are another matter, however.

The representation of the Fat Bishop in both Q1 and Q3 derives from the frontispiece engraving for de Dominis's *De Republica Ecclesiastica* (1617) [Figure 26]. According to A.M. Hind, the frontispiece was engraved by Renold Elstrack and printed by John Bill, one of the King's Printers (173). In a legend to the left of de Dominis's head the date 1617 is included. This engraving shows de Dominis as a learned scholar in his study, surrounded by volumes and writing in a book on his desk, a quill pen in his hand. While this portrait shows de Dominis seated, from the waist up, his posture, facial features, and even the drape of his stole are faithfully reproduced in the *Game at Chess* illustrations we have examined. The Q3 version is particularly well rendered. His high forehead, lidded eyes, prominent nose and full, square beard are the same. The shape and shading of his mitre are replicated. The slope of his stole, and the draping of the fabric over his arms is remarkably similar. Even the position of his arms has been reproduced. Only minor details have been altered: whereas in the *De Republica* engraving de Dominis holds open a book in his outstretched left hand and a quill pen in his right, in the Q3 engraving his left arm reaches out for the letter and in his right he holds a book. *De Republica*



Figure 26: Marcus Antonius de Dominis, print from *De Republica Ecclesiastica*, 1617

Ecclesiastica was the first anti-Catholic tract that de Dominis published under James's protection. The engraver of the *Game at Chess* illustration must have had access to the 1617 portrait, either via a copy of the book or the plate in storage. It would have been surprising if a book by a disgraced prelate were still available for sale, but it may well still have been in someone's library.

There is a second factor associated with the use of the de Dominis likeness as a source for the Fat Bishop, which has to do with public recognition of de Dominis as the allegorized figure. Was de Dominis still an important or widely-known visual figure in 1625? James Hogg identified the 1624 pamphlet *Newes out of Rome: Spalato's Doome* as one of Middleton's sources in writing the play, so it would seem that the disgraced bishop was still in the consciousness of the English people. And his corpulence was clearly important to character development in the play – his dialogue and descriptions of him by other characters are rife with references to his appetite, both literal and metaphorical. Why, then, was it so important to represent de Dominis as the Fat Bishop? The answer must have to do with the extension of the political allegory from stage to page. The letters written by Holles and others confirm that the allegorized characters in the play could easily be identified with public figures. If this identification was so clear in the theatre, and served to reinforce its cultural capital to such an extent (even as it placed the playwright and players in some jeopardy), why not maximize that identification as a marketing tool for the play-text? It would appear that despite his three-year absence from London and his fall from grace, de Dominis was still a visually identifiable figure in the minds of London book buyers. Nicholas Okes and/or Edward Allde made the most of it. The question of popular identification is even more intriguing when we examine the representation of the Black Knight, particularly in Q3.

The source for the image of the Black Knight is almost certainly the figure of the Conde de Gondomar on the title page of Thomas Scott's pamphlet *The Second Part of Vox Populi* [Figure 27]. The sub-title states, "Gondomar appearing in the likenes of Matchiavell in a Spanish Parliament." That Scott's pamphlet should have been a textual source for the play as well as a visual source for the title page makes it extremely unusual among early modern English play-texts.⁵⁵ The title page features Gondomar's horse-drawn sedan, apparently a common site around the city while Gondomar served as ambassador. It also includes a rendering of the especially designed chair meant to ease the intense pain of Gondomar's anal fistula (and hide its awkward side effects). Both the sedan and the chair appeared on stage during the play,⁵⁶ supposedly to the great amusement of the audience.⁵⁷ Most relevant to this study is the representation of Gondomar. Again, the similarity between this portrait (which is also facially similar to other portraits of Gondomar) and the Q3 engraving is remarkable. Aside from the fact that the figure is reversed – in Scott's pamphlet he faces his left while in the Q3 engraving he faces right – the details are profoundly alike. The cut and pattern of the doublet are the same; the billow of the breeches, bound at the knee, is very alike. The only significant differences are the length of his walking stick (it is much shorter in the Q3 engraving), and the fact that Gondomar wears a sword

⁵⁵ As was examined in chapter one, the relationship between engravings affixed to play-texts and other popular publications is very difficult to clarify. However, in cases such as *Arden of Faversham* and *Doctor Faustus* the woodcut was re-used in its woodblock state without alteration. I know of no other contemporary instance where a single element of a source was replicated in a new context in another engraving to do with drama.

⁵⁶ In "The Unique Eye-Witness Report of Middleton's *A Game at Chess*" Howard-Hill notes that, "Gondomar's sedan chair was as famous as his fistula. The beginning of v. i was rewritten to make a better entry for the Black Knight 'in his litter'" 172.

⁵⁷ Scholars are split as to the nature of these properties. Some believe the King's Men were actually able to purchase Gondomar's possessions (including a suit of his clothes) and use them in the play. Others believe they jury-rigged a sedan and chair to replicate the ones he used, thus mocking his physical discomfort.

THE SECOND PART OF VOX POPVLI,

OR

Gondomar appearing in the likenes of
Matchiauell in a Spanish Parliament,

wherein are discovered his treacherous & subtile Practises
To the ruine as well of England, as the Netherlandes.

Faithfully Transtated out of the Spanish Coppie by a well-willer
to England and Holland.



Gentis Hispanæ decus

Printed at Goricom by Ashuerus Sanss.
1624. Stilo nouo.

Figure 27: Title page of *The Second Part of Vox Populi*, 1624

buckled at his left hip in the *Vox Populi* engraving. This likeness is reinforced in a portrait oval of Gondomar engraved by Simon de Passe in 1622, in which the facial features, clothing, and square cross medallion appear to be almost exactly the same [Figure 28]. The question about popular recognition is much more straightforward in this case than in the portrait of de Dominis. Even though Gondomar had returned to Spain in 1623, he had been easily identifiable to London citizens who frequently saw him making his way to Whitehall Palace in the sedan chair. In addition, pamphleteers such as Thomas Scott had used Gondomar as the archfiend in their printed diatribes against Spain and the Pope. He was the perfect “Matchiavell,” as Scott called him. It would have been a particularly potent rejoinder, then, to use his specific likeness as the visual representation of the Black Knight. That Middleton had used Scott’s textual lampoon of Gondomar as the basis for the character only strengthened that alignment.

The likeness in Q1 is still strong – the Black Knight’s clothes are nearly the same and his facial features are very like those in *Vox Populi* as well as more formal engraved portraits. The difference is in his posture, which is similar to the *Vox Populi* source only in the sense that his head is turned to his left. His stance is completely different from both *Vox Populi* and Q3: facing and stepping forward, with left hand on his heart. The reason for this different posture, as was stated above, is the participation by the Black Knight in the two narrative moments from the play. In order to accommodate them both, his posture has to be adapted significantly from the source. He provides the visual bridge between the Fat Bishop and the White Knight.



Figure 28: Portrait of Conde Gondomar by Simon de Passe, 1622

Scholars have traditionally accepted Greg's order of the editions, and therefore look at the engraved title pages – often with prejudice – about their genesis and relationship to one another. Bald observed that the Mathewes/Alde illustration “seems to be copied from that of” Okes ... “the group seated around the chessboard are *omitted*, and the figures of Spalato and Gondomar are *enlarged so as to fill* all the available space” (emphasis added).⁵⁸ Howard-Hill presented a convoluted argument that Q1 must have been printed before Q3: “[a]pparently the manuscript behind Q3 was written out before Q1 was printed because ... part of the copy for Q1 was supplied by Crane [that postdates the MS upon which Q3 is based] from this early transcript. However, Q3 was printed after Q1 for it bears an engraved title page adapted from the title-page of the first quarto” (*A Game at Chess*, Introduction 8). Astington contradicts himself by claiming that Q1 “has drawn more attention from commentators on the play, particularly in the light of its possible demonstration of what was seen on the stage,” but dismisses Q3's value on the grounds that “it may be visually derivative from the Okes plate” (“Visual Texts” 245). He presumes authorial input into the layout of the Q1 engraving, stating without evidence that Middleton directed its design: “I think that he must have described [to the engraver] what he wanted fairly fully” (244). Only Gary Taylor seems ready to reconsider the order of the editions by taking the illustrations into account. He dismisses Bald's observation by pointing out that the panel with the chessboard might just as easily have been added, and the size of the Fat Bishop and Black Knight reduced, making Q1 derivative of Q3 (“General Textual Introduction” 751). He also suggests that the lack of visual reference to the White House (seen by some as having been removed from the Q3 design, a response to political pressure) does not prove that Q1 was produced before Q3. It is impossible, in his opinion, to use this as a determining factor of order (752).

⁵⁸ Bald 1929, 31; as cited in Taylor, “General Textual Introduction” 751.

What seems to have been ignored in this discussion is the matter of how the sources for the characters were used in the illustrations. Astington, Foakes, and Taylor acknowledge the title page of *The Second Part of Vox Populi* as a prime source for the representation of the Black Knight in the *Game at Chess* illustration. Astington also reproduces the de Dominis print in his analysis. And yet none take into account the fact that the representations in Q3 are closer to and finer reproductions of their sources than the versions in Q1. As has been pointed out above, although his figure is reversed, the portrait of Gondomar in *Vox Populi* is very closely copied in the Q3 representation of the Black Knight. And the figure of the Fat Bishop, though expanded from a seated to a full portrait and differing in what he holds in his hands, is almost exact – down to the angle of his arms. In addition, the two small figures in the chess bag more closely reflect the dramatic foreshadowing of this particular negotiation. The Fat Bishop and the Black Knight are doomed to spend eternity in hell tormenting one another. The three figures in the bag in Q1 do not so closely follow this foreshadowing.

On the contrary, it can be argued that the bottom panel of the Q1 engraving is derivative of Q3. The Fat Bishop as represented here is similar to Q3, but is not nearly so finely reproduced. The character is less like the figure in the *De Republica* print. The facial features are more vague, and the arms are placed in different positions that do not reflect the source material. Even more problematic is the representation of the Black Knight. While his clothes bear a strong resemblance to the source – especially the cape, doublet, and hat – the Black Knight's pose is completely different. Only the angle of his head suggests a similarity to the way it is tilted in *Vox Populi*. I can think of two reasons for this: either the engraver of Q1 used a different source for the Black Knight – another print portrait of Gondomar in the same clothes but a different stance – or the Q1 engraver produced his illustration after and from the one for Q1, maintaining the

overall look of the Fat Bishop but redrawing the Black Knight to fit into the composition that now included the White Knight.

In fact, this order makes more sense in terms of adapting sources. Why would the first engraver go to the trouble of copying the figure of Gondomar from *Vox Populi* without maintaining his posture? If the point was to remind the viewer of the physical features from the well-known pamphlet, why undermine that recognition? And the more vexing question might be: why would a second engraver (for I do not agree with Astington's assumption that both illustrations were drawn by the same engraver) return to the source material and reimpose elements such as pose and detail that were not incorporated in a first iteration? If one crops out the White Knight from the Q1 panel, nothing is lost in the narrative transaction between the Fat Bishop and the Black Knight. If anything, the Black Knight's physical repulsion is now stronger. With his face turned away and his body moving forward, he appears to be trying to get away from the Fat Bishop as quickly as possible. It would have been aesthetically more practical to keep the poses of both characters if the order were Q1 then Q3. It is at least conceivable, based on this examination, that the Q3 illustration – and thus, perhaps the edition – was prepared first. The composition is more sound and rhetorically coherent. The quality of the engraving is better. And as will be examined below, the stylistic elements are much closer to the de Passe style, whose artists were responsible for the portrait of Gondomar and the title page of *The Second Part of Vox Populi*, which served as such significant sources.

We must also address the question of who might have been responsible for the engravings and how they came to be printed in London. As woodblock carvers of the time have been perceived by art and book historians to be inferior to copperplate engravers, so London-based engravers have been consigned to a position of lesser quality than those on the Continent –

particularly in the Low Countries. A.M. Hind, in his exhaustive three-volume catalogue of English engravings in Tudor and Stuart England, makes a point of repeatedly differentiating between English and European engravers and consistently preferring the latter. John Astington, relying on Hind's opinion, forms conclusions about the lesser abilities of English engravers.

Copperplate engraving required a different type of press than the one used for text and woodblocks. Including an engraved title page, then, necessitated a print shop with at least two presses and employees with different skill sets. All of these issues contributed to a higher cost for publications that included engravings. This does not take into account, however, the question of who drew and etched the engravings. Hind includes dozens of works by the masterful Crispijn de Passe the Elder and Wenceslas Hollar, but glosses over the question of geography. De Passe built his workshop in Utrecht, where he trained his three sons and one daughter to engrave using a distinct style that made a work identifiable as a de Passe but difficult to distinguish as made by Crispijn the Younger, Simon, Willem, or Magdalena de Passe. As Hind explains, the “[d]efinite distinction of their several works is often difficult in the case of unsigned plates, so that a single series, with attributions, *ambulando*, to one or another of the family was the most reasonable solution” (*Engraving in England* 245). While this eases the work of cataloguing, it complicates the efforts of anyone trying to trace the work of an English-based printer and an (apparently) European-based engraver.

Such is the case with the *Game at Chess* title pages and their source material. Hind identifies the engraver of *The Second Part of Vox Populi* as Crispijn de Passe the Elder (45-6). Thomas Scott had fled England in 1620 and was by 1624 living, writing, and publishing in Utrecht, and so de Passe would have been local. The publisher and engraver of his pamphlet were both located in the same city; the pamphlet was printed and exported to London (where

William Jones may have produced a pirated edition).⁵⁹ A similar production process can be followed for the source for the Fat Bishop. While the engraving is derived from a portrait by an unknown Dutch artist, de Dominis wrote *De Republica Ecclesiastica* after he had moved to England, and both Elstrack and Bill, the engraver and printer identified by Hind, were working in London, so the publication would have been undertaken there (173). Where the issue becomes problematic is with the engraving of Q1 and Q3. The style and attention to detail of the rendition of the Black Knight suggests an engraver with familiarity – perhaps even training – with the de Passe style. But at the same time, the adaptation of de Dominis as the Fat Bishop, particularly in the Q3 version, is particularly fine and close to the engraving produced by Elstrack and Bill. In addition, as examined above, John Astington cites internal illustrations from *The Second Part of Vox Populi* as the models for the chess game in the middle panel of Q1. While I am not so convinced as Astington of this connection, the question of inspiration should certainly be raised.

How could such an amalgamation of elements come to pass, if Crispijn de Passe the Elder was situated in Utrecht, Renold Elstrack was in London, and the Q1 and Q3 printers (despite the clever misdirection) were in London? It seems unwieldy, although not impossible, for a London-based printer to give a commission to an engraver in Utrecht. Commercial traffic seems to have been frequent between England and the Netherlands at this time. But there may have been another option, which seems to have eluded print culture historians in this case. Both Hind and the National Portrait Gallery website state that Simon de Passe lived and worked in London between 1612 and 1623, with “intermittent visits to Utrecht during that period” (Hind 245). His younger brother Willem joined the London firm during that period and continued the family business – in its style – after Simon moved on to Paris in 1623. In addition, the National

⁵⁹ However, this does not take into account the related portrait of Gondomar engraved by Simon de Passe, residing in London, in 1622.

Portrait Gallery website identifies John Payne as “the finest native-born engraver working during the reign of Charles I” (*NPG* website) and as a pupil of Simon de Passe in the family’s London studio. So it is at least possible that a master engraver, if not bearing the de Passe name at least working in its distinctive style, was engaged in the engraving of at least one of the *Game at Chess* engravings.

Almost everything about *A Game at Chess* was extraordinary, and its incorporation into any study of early modern English drama must be handled with care. Its spectacular success at the box office and the availability of (apparently) competing editions in bookshops makes it unique among the plays studied here. Some of the differences are socio-political, and allow an examination of the conditions in England leading up to the performances in 1624. Middleton, as chronicler of London and observer of the goings-on at Court, was perhaps distinctly qualified to write what has been described as a modern English history play (Taylor, *A Game at Chess*, Introduction 1773). His fascination with the machinations of politics, and his participation in the expansion of London’s news media converged to help him create a play that was powerfully resonant as well as personally treacherous. By invoking the royal family, the king’s favorite, and influential political allies and diplomats Middleton ran the risk of censure and imprisonment. But as John Woolley pointed out, what would have been a hanging offence even a year before was now punished only with a fine. Whether or not Middleton had written *A Game* at the behest of Prince Charles, the Duke of Buckingham, or some other politician eager to put forward an anti-Spanish agenda, the resulting dramatic work was more unpredictable than they might have expected. For while Middleton was in many ways a creature of civic London, he was also a sharp-eyed and sharp-tongued citizen, and the pamphlets he read – as well as the discourse in which he seems to have engaged, or at least witnessed – were becoming increasingly overt in

their criticism of the King. Middleton disguised some of this criticism in allegory, but it clearly reverberates throughout the play.

As I have attempted to demonstrate throughout this dissertation, the early years of the seventeenth century saw a nexus of two distinct forms of entertainment: the theatre and the book. The increasing popularity of the printed play-text, and in particular those featuring illustrations, suggests that the theatre audience and the book-buying public overlapped in terms of interest and activity. This was particularly the case with *A Game at Chess*, where those usually uninterested in the theatre, such as John Holles, were drawn to the Globe and those curious about its subject matter, such as Joseph Mead, read the play (although he “understood it not”). The extreme popularity of the play on stage drove two independent publishers, Nicholas Okes and Edward Allde, to invest capital in producing three editions of the play, seemingly within one year. They, too, saw something special about *A Game*. Rather than rushing to market with an unadorned play-text – as was done so often during this period – they each committed extra resources to produce a work that would be especially appealing at the marketplace. Contrary to traditional assumptions, individual play-texts did not follow the trend of other printed works of literature in years after – printed plays continued to feature woodcuts when illustrated title pages were employed at all. In this case the two publishers commissioned unique engravings, and while one is clearly derivative of the other, both display distinct aesthetic and rhetorical appeal.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have analyzed both illustrations in an effort to better understand their individual relationships to the play. In doing so, I have paid particular attention to the source materials that clearly influenced the engravers who designed and etched the illustrations. In a manner unavailable with woodcuts, the example of *A Game at Chess* allows us to see that the people who provided the inspiration for Middleton's play were as overtly referred to in print as they supposedly were on stage. The attention to detail – the appearance in particular of de Dominis as the Fat Bishop and Gondomar as the Black Knight – suggests how important physical identification could be with this play. And while I do not see the same specificity in likeness between Prince Charles and the White Knight that John Astington recognizes, the idea of representing a living royal personage in a printed play as well as on the stage is intriguing, and the differences might have been a result of caution on the part of the publisher.

The complexities of each illustration reveal less about how the play might have been performed and more about how the allegory should be interpreted by the reader. The interaction between particular characters – the Fat Bishop and Black Knight in Q3, and the addition of the White Knight as well as the “Houses” at play in Q1 – require the viewer to pay particular attention to composition and narrative transactions. The casual glance undermines the rhetorical intent, particularly in Q1 where the White King's chess move changes his relationship to the Black King and Queen, and the incorporation of the White Knight in the bottom panel complicates the action of the sequence in terms of its relationship to plot. Based on these complications, as well as the specifics of the characters as compared with their visual source material, I believe it is distinctly possible that the traditional ordering of the illustrations may actually be incorrect. The emphasis on a single narrative transaction, as well as the finer copying

of details from the source material, suggest that the Q3 illustration is actually the first iteration of the engraving, and that its elements were adapted and incorporated into the more complex but less polished Q1 illustration. It is unclear what implications this would have for the ordering of the editions themselves. While both share certain front matter (the Prologue poem immediately before the Induction), the editions incorporate some different textual sources. At the very least, this observation may encourage scholars to reexamine prevailing bibliographic assumptions based on extra-textual information.

As Gary Taylor describes it, working with *A Game at Chess* is akin to trying to solve a super complex Rubik cube. At the same time that we have a remarkable amount of commentary about the play and its reception, we see a dearth of information about its publication. It makes sense that the King's Men stopped performing the play – they were ordered not to, and were probably disinclined to defy that order despite potential box office benefit. But the reason for the abbreviated print life of the play-text is more elusive. What may have appeared to be a financial windfall in late 1624, when at least one of the publishers committed to printing the play, may have proved less lucrative in mid- to late-1625. By this time James was dead, King Charles was married to Henrietta Maria, Buckingham was beginning to lose power, the villainous Gondomar and de Dominis were out of the picture, and the country's attention was more squarely focused on the Thirty Years War. At the same time, Charles was proving himself to be less and less of a White Knight. The play's resonance had dissipated. It was yesterday's news, something to recall with amazement (“Acted nine days together at the Globe”!) but no longer a vital part of the public discourse. Nevertheless, the play offers us an early example of how popular publication was finding its way around the constraints of censorship – a problem that would increase significantly for King Charles during his reign.

Chapter Six, Conclusion:

“Look here upon this picture, and on this”

In this dissertation I have offered new readings of illustrations, using historical and theoretical contexts, that provide a better understanding of why they were produced and what value they had at market. These illustrations can tell us much about the culture of theatre and print in early seventeenth-century London. I have been able to pinpoint specific works that were compelling and/or problematic, but have always come back to questions about how the audiences for London professional theatre and consumers of early modern popular publications intersected. My application of social semiotic tools to the illustrations has allowed me to examine different aspects of the images in terms of composition and narrative presentation, while revealing important elements about how the artists who designed these images would have incorporated information about the plays and perhaps performances they might have witnessed. By employing these tools and approaching my “reading” of these title pages along the lines utilized by other visual rhetoricians, I believe I have established a means by which a new discourse can be undertaken concerning these images. By examining the illustrations in this way we *can* learn about early modern theatre practices. While they may not constitute documentary evidence of performance, they can, in certain cases, suggest approaches to staging. And the re-use of some of these illustrations in other forms of publication enhances rather than undermines their relationship to contemporary drama.

The relatively small corpus of illustrated title pages, and a finite period of time that covered the foundation of London professional theatre and the explosion of popular print in England, provided a manageable foundation on which to build this study without exhausting the

avenues for research. Each of the four case studies examines the questions posed using a different approach.

The *Arden of Faversham* woodcut offered the opportunity to argue how a close intertextual reading of the source material in relation to the illustration – the play-text, Holinshed’s *Chronicle* account, and the ballad – reveals that the artist relied more on the play than the other textual versions of the scene in composing the woodcut. At the same time, the placement of characters in the illustration suggests that the artist may have been attempting to communicate something more ambitious than he was previously given credit for in terms of figure motion and plot progression.

The *Spanish Tragedy* woodcut suggested the closest relationship between illustration and stage practice, with incorporation of what may very well be a depiction of stage properties and costumes. Latter day editions of the play have imposed a scene break that has created confusion for scholars. However, re-examination of the 1623 edition of the play revealed that the action in the visual and textual sequences is much more closely aligned than scholars have presumed.

The study of Richard Tarlton and his visual legacy, particularly in terms of how it might have affected the composition of the *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* woodcut illustration, was particularly challenging. In this case there was no way to argue that the illustration provided documentary evidence of performance – especially involving the long-dead Tarlton. Nor can it be considered a true portrait of Tarlton in his clowning guise. However, a broader examination of visual and textual references to the great clown, some decades after his death, suggests that his legacy was powerful enough, both among his protégés and in the minds of consumers, to create identification between his jesting character and the figure in the *Friar Bacon* woodcut.

Last, the engravings for two distinct and probably simultaneous editions of *A Game at Chess* provided the means by which I could look more closely at elements of composition as well as the importance of likeness in reference to real people. The representations of the Black Knight and the Fat Bishop are clearly derived from prints of Gondomar and de Dominis that had been distributed within a few years of the publication of the play, suggesting that publishers valued the visual aspect of political allegory as a marketing tool. In this chapter I also was able to address the question of precedence. Scholarly tradition has identified the Q1 engraving as the earlier occurrence of the design, from which Q3 was adapted. In fact, I believe the reverse to be true, based on careful examination of the elements of each composition. This type of reconsideration affords scholars of early modern drama a new means by which to better evaluate the dating of early modern play-texts.

This study has by no means been exhaustive, and much work remains to be done. I believe these artists may have been influenced by a wide array of artistic genres. A more thorough and expansive examination of other forms of early modern visual media and examination of a wider sample of woodcuts and engravings needs to be undertaken to establish commonalities and trends in early modern artistic style between such visually rich works as bibles and religious tracts, political broadsides and paintings, scientific works, portraiture, and these play-text illustrations. As I suggested in chapters two and four, there are opportunities to look at a variety of genres of painting and determine how they might have influenced the creation of these title page illustrations. Further research in this area will enhance our understanding of a wide range of cultural fields in which visual and verbal materials interacted, in which print and performance were complementary, and in which individuals crossed boundaries between professions, genres, and audiences.

As stated in the introduction, incomplete Stationers' Company records for the period in question hampers any examination of play-text publication trends regarding these illustrated editions. However, there are opportunities to overlay the data about illustrated editions on top of the publication data analyzed by Alan Farmer and Zachary Lesser, as well as contextual and historical information about the period, in hopes of revealing tendencies toward publishing certain types of plays with illustrated title pages. My examination of *A Game at Chess* has sparked my interest as to whether the last decade of James's reign resulted in an increased number of play-texts that in some way were critical of the government, and in turn how this may have affected trends in Caroline drama. What role do illustrated "plays" such as *Canterburie his change of diot* and *Wine, Beer, Ale and Tobacco* play in the public discourse prior to the Civil War?

There are several more case studies of illustrations that I would like to undertake in hopes of extending my understanding as to how these images communicated elements of the plays to viewers. One of these is the verso illustration for William Sampson's *The Vow Breaker, or, the Faire Maide of Clifton* [Figure 29]. The woodcut for this illustration, which is accompanied by an explanatory verse, presents a progression of vignettes from the play in a curious clockwise pattern around the edge of the page. The composition is unlike any other play-text illustration I have examined. It is in some ways reminiscent of more complex illustrations used in religious tracts such as *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, or even architectural narrative friezes. A close, contextualized reading of this illustration affords an opportunity to examine the breadth of artistic genres (and even non-print media) that an artist referred to as he produced such frontispieces.

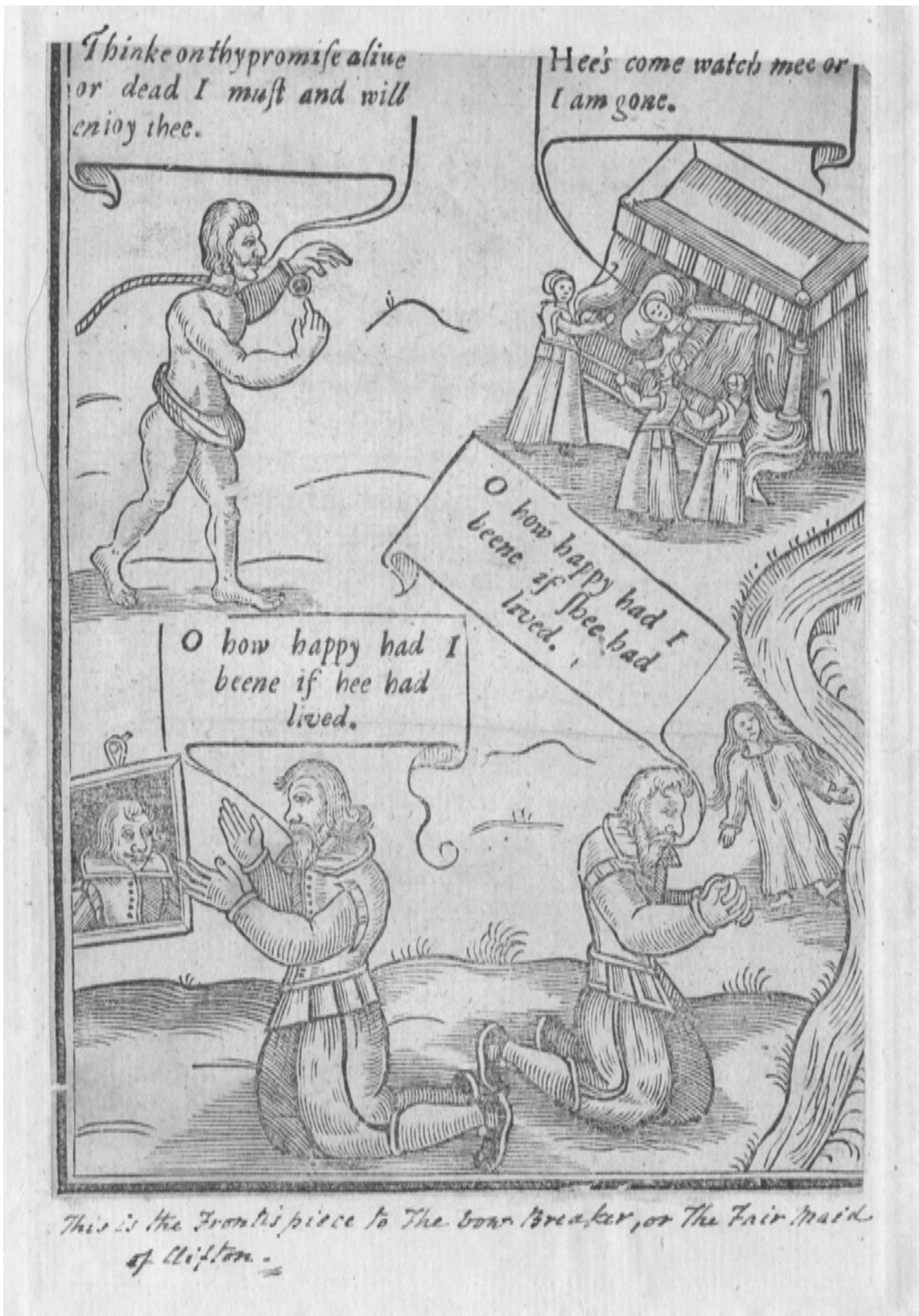


Figure 29: *The Vow Breaker, or The Faire Maide of Clifton*, 1636 edition

The brief reference to *Doctor Faustus* [Figure 1] in the introduction indicates my ongoing fascination with this image. The woodcut exemplifies how resonant were the ideas of magic and the occult at this time and yet does not capture the power and spectacle inherent in the scene represented. But the specificity with which the references to Faustus's status as a powerful alchemist are presented in the illustration suggests that the artist had access to knowledge of science or alchemy, or (as was more likely) was cognizant of the signifiers and symbolism of the occult through design of illustrations for scientific works he had been commissioned to undertake.

I am curious about the relationship in a number of illustrations between allegedly chivalric characters and acts of subversive violence. The spectacular moments chosen for these title-page illustrations suggest a more complex relationship between heroic characters and their actions and would involve a comparison of the images and texts for *The Maidens Tragedy* [Figure 30], *Philaster, A Faire Quarrel*, and *The Four Prentices*. In all of these illustrations, the moment of violence depicted undermines the heroic nature of the protagonist. In both *The Maidens Tragedy* and *Philaster*, this involves stabbing the female love interest in the breast, and in the *Philaster* illustration the protagonist is depicted sneaking away into the bushes. What arguments can be constructed about the perception of such violence in Jacobean tragicomedy?

I fully acknowledge the challenges inherent in using early modern play-text illustrations as definitive documentary evidence regarding theatre practice of the period. However, at the end of this phase of my study I am more convinced than ever that these images can assist us in learning more about seventeenth-century theatre and print culture. This period in time, when English theatre and publication were both expanding, and the audiences for drama on stage and in print were converging, can tell us much about how people read these texts, and what

The Maides Tragedy.

AS IT HATH BEENE

diuers times Acted at the *Blacke-friers* by
the KINGS Maiesties Seruants.



LONDON

Printed for *Francis Constable* and are to be sold
at the white Lyon ouer against the great North
doore of *Pauls Church*. 1619.

Figure 30: *The Maides Tragedy*, 1619 edition

appealed to them in the marketplace. Our knowledge of how these texts were circulated is, of course, fragmentary. The examples presented in this study can reveal much about how visual materials assisted in the relationship between observed theatre and printed publications referring to these pieces of drama. The inclusion of these purpose-carved illustrations suggests that publishers understood that by adding these illustrations they were adding value to the purchase of the play-texts. They were prepared to increase their investment in the publication of particular editions by commissioning such images, thus reminding theatregoers of a scene or a character that had been particularly impactful onstage and assisting them in learning how to recapture these memories in the texts. In the process of examining these illustrations, I have been able to provide some clarification regarding the relationship between the members of the seventeenth-century printing community regarding play-text publication and other forms of popular publication, including how woodblocks might have been shared among publishers in the printing of plays and ballads, and how the design of the title page for a pamphlet might have inspired the that of a play-text. Ultimately, I believe these case studies provide a distinct perspective on early modern English theatre, print, and popular culture.

APPENDIX 1:

Description of the murder of Master Arden in Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (from the second edition, 1587, Vol. II, p. 1064)

Thus she [Alice] being earnest with him [Mosby], at length hee was contented to agree vnto that horrible deuise, and thereupon they conueied blacke Will into master Arden's house, putting him into a closet at the end of his parlour. Before this, they had sent out of the house all the seruants, those excepted which were priuie to the deuised murther. Then went Mosbie to the doore, and there stood in a night gowne of silke girded about him, and this was betwixt six and seuen of the clocke at night. Master Arden hauing beene at a neighbors house of his, named Dumpkin, & hauing cleared certeine reckonings betwixt them, came home: and finding Mosbie standing at the doore, asked him if it were supper time? I thinke not (quoth Mosbie) it is not yet readie. Then let vs go and plaie a game at the tables in the meane season, said maister Arden. And so they went straight into the parlor: and as they came by through the hall, his wife was walking there, and maister Arden said; How now mistresse Ales? But she made small answer to him. In the meane time one chained the wicket doore of the entrie. When they came into the parlor, Mosbie sat downe on the bench, having his face toward the place where blacke Will stood. Then Michaell maister Ardens man stood at his masters backe, holding a candle in his hand, to shadow blacke Will, that Arden might by no means perceiue him coming forth. In their plaie Mosbie said this (which seemed to be the watchword for blacke Will comming forth) Now maie I take you sir if I will. Take me (quoth maister Arden) which waie? With that blacke Will stept foorth, and cast a towel about his necke, so to stop his breath and strangle him. Then Mosbie hauing at his girdle a pressing iron of fourteene pounds weight, stroke him on the hed with the same, so that he fell downe, and gaue a great grone, insomuch that they thought he had been killed.

APPENDIX 2:

Arden of Feversham. Scene XIV. ll 153-259

Here enters MICHAEL

Michael. Mistress, my master is coming hard by.

Alice. Who comes with him?

Michael. Nobody but Mosby.

Alice. That's well, Michael. Fetch in the tables; and, when thou hast done, stand before
the countinghouse door.

Michael. Why so?

Alice. Black Will is locked within to do the deed.

Michael. What? Shall he die tonight?

Alice. Ay, Michael.

Michael. But shall not Susan know it?

Alice. Yes, for she'll be as secret as ourselves.

Michael. That's brave! I'll go fetch the tables.

Alice. But, Michael, hark to me a word or two:

When my husband is come in, lock the street door;

He shall be murdered or the guests come in –

Exit MICHAEL [and re-enters shortly with the
tables]

Here enters ARDEN and MOSBY

Husband, what mean you to bring Mosby home?

Although I wished you to be reconciled,

'Twas more for fear of you than love of him.

Black Will and Greene are his companions,

And they are cutters and may cut you short;

Therefore, I thought it good to make you friends.

But wherefore do you bring him hither now?

Mosby. Master Arden, methinks your wife would have me gone.

Arden. No, good Master Mosby, women will be prating. –

Alice, bid him welcome; he and I are friends.

Alice. You may enforce me to it if you will,

But I had rather die than bid him welcome.

His company hath purchased me ill friends,

And therefore will I ne'er frequent it more.

Mosby. [Aside] O, how cunningly she can dissemble!

Arden. Now he is here, you will not serve me so.

Alice. I pray you be not angry or displeas'd;

I'll bid him welcome, seeing you'll have it so. –

You are welcome, Master Mosby. Will you sit down?

[MOSBY sits down in chair facing the countinghouse
door.]

Mosby. I know I am welcome to your loving husband,

But for yourself you speak not from your heart.

Alice. And if I do not, sir, think I have cause.
Mosby. Pardon me, Master Arden; I'll away.
Arden. No, good Master Mosby.
Alice. We shall have guests enough though you go hence.
Mosby. I pray you, Master Arden, let her prate her fill.
Alice. The doors are open, sir; you may be gone.
Michael. [Aside] Nay, that's a lie, for I have locked the doors.
Arden. Sirrah, fetch me a cup of wine; I'll make them friends. –

[Exit MICHAEL.]

And, gentle Mistress Alice, seeing you are so stout,
You shall begin. Frown not; I'll have it so.

Alice. I pray you meddle with that you have to do.

Arden. Why, Alice, how can I do too much for him
Whose life I have endangered without cause?

[Re-enter MICHAEL with wine.]

Alice. 'Tis true; and, seeing 'twas partly through my means,
I am content to drink to him for this once. –
Here, Master Mosby! And, I pray you, henceforth
Be you as strange to me as I to you.
Your company hath purchased me ill friends,
And I for you, God knows, have undeserved
Been ill spoken of in every place;
Therefore, henceforth frequent my house no more.

Mosby. I'll see your husband in despite of you. –

Yet, Arden, I protest to thee by heaven,

Thou ne'er shalt see me more after this night.

I'll go to Rome rather than be forsworn.

Arden. Tush, I'll have no such vows made in my house.

Alice. Yes, I pray you, husband, let him swear;

And, on that condition, Mosby, pledge me here.

Mosby. Ay, as willingly as I mean to live. [He and ALICE drink.]

Arden. Come, Alice, is our supper ready yet?

Alice. It will by then you have played a game at tables.

Arden. Come, Master Mosby, what shall we play for?

Mosby. Three games for a French crown, sir, and please you.

Arden. Content. [He sits down on stool opposite Mosby.]

Then they play at the tables.

[Re-enter WILL and SHAKEBAG from behind Arden.]

Will. [Aside] Can he not take him yet? What a spite is that!

Alice. [Aside] Not yet, Will. Take heed he see thee not.

Will. [Aside] I fear he will spy me as I am coming.

Michael. [Aside] To prevent that, creep betwixt my legs.

Mosby. One ace, or else I lose the game. [He throws the dice.]

Arden. Marry, sir, there's two for failing.

Mosby. Ah, Master Arden, 'Now I can take you.'

Then WILL pulls him down with a towel.

Arden. Mosby! Michael! Alice! What will you do?

Will. Nothing but take you up, sir, nothing else.

Mosby. There's for the pressing iron you told me of.

[He stabs Arden.]

Shakebag. And there's for the ten pound in my sleeve.

[He stabs him.]

Alice. What, groans thou? – Nay, then give me the weapon! –

Take this for hind'ring Mosby's love and mine.

[She stabs him.]

Michael. O, mistress! [Arden dies.]

Will. Ah, that villain will betray us all.

Mosby. Tush, fear him not; he will be secret.

Michael. Why, dost thou think I will betray myself?

Shakebag. In Southwark dwells a bonny northern lass,
The widow Chambley. I'll to her house now;
And if she will not give me harborough,
I'll make booty of the quean even to her smock.

Will. Shift for yourselves; we two will leave you now.

Alice. First lay the body in the countinghouse.

Then they lay the body in the countinghouse.

Will. We have our gold. Mistress Alice, adieu;

Mosby, farewell; and, Michael, farewell too.

Exeunt [WILL and SHAKEBAG].

Enter SUSAN.

Susan. Mistress, the guests are at the doors. [Knocking.]

Hearken! They knock. What, shall I let them in?

Alice. Mosby, go thou and bear them company – Exit MOSBY.

And, Susan, fetch water and wash away this blood.

[Exit SUSAN, returns with pail of water and begins
washing the floor.]

Susan. The blood cleaveth to the ground and will not out.

Alice. But with my nails I'll scrape away the blood. –

[She tries to scrape away the stain.]

The more I strive, the more the blood appears!

Susan. What's the reason, Mistress, can you tell?

Alice. Because I blush not at my husband's death.

Etc.

APPENDIX 3:

[the] Complaint and Lamentation of Mistresse Arden of [Fev]Ersham in Kent Who for the Loue of One Mosbie, Hired Certaine Ruffians and Villaines Most Cruelly to Murder Her Husband; with the Fatall End of Her and Her Associats. To the Tune of, Fortune My Foe.

[as transcribed in *The Tragedy of Arden of Faversham*, ed. M.L. Wine]

[Stanzas 37-41]

Mosby and I, and all, our plot thus lay,
That he at Tables should with Arden play,
Black-will and S[h]akebag they themselves should hide
Vntill that Mosby he a watchword cride.

The word was this whereupon we did agree,
Now (Master Arden) I have taken ye:
Woe to that word, and woe vnto vs all,
Which bred confusion and our sudden fall.

When he came home, most welcome him I made,
And Iudas like I kist whom I betraide,
Mosby and he together went to play,
For I on purpose did the tables lay.

And as they plaid, the word was straightway spoke,
Blacke-will and S[h]akebag out the corner broke,
And with a Towell backwards pull'd him downe,
Which made me think they now my ioyes did crowne.

With swords and knives they stab'd him to the heart[;]
Mosby and I did likewise act our part,
And then his body straight we did conuey
Behind the Abbey in the field he lay.

APPENDIX 4:

The Famous Historie of Fryer Bacon Containing the wonderfull things that he did in his life: also the manner of his death; with the liues and deaths of the two coniurers, Bungye and Vandermast. Very pleasant and delightfull to be read.
(transcribed from the 1629 edition).

How Frier Bacon made a Brasen Head to speak, by which he would have walled *England* about with Brass.

Friar Bacon reeding one day of the many conquests of England, bethought himself how he might keep it hereafter from the like conquests, and to make himself famous hereafter to all posterities. This (after great study) he found could be no way so well done as one, which was to make a Head of Brass, and if he could make this Head to speak (and hear when it speaks) then might he be able to wall England about with Brass. To this purpose he got one Frier Bungey to assist him, who was a great scholar and a Magician, (but not to compare to Frier Bacon:) these two with great study and pains so framed a head of Brass that in the inward parts' thereof there was all things like as in a natural mans head: this being done they were as far from perfection of the work as they were before, for they knew not how to give these parts that they had made, motion, without which it was impossible that it should speak; many books they read, but yet could not find any hope of what they sought, that at the last they concluded to raise a spirit, and to know of him that which they could not attain to by their own studies. To do this they prepared all things ready, and went one evening to a Wood thereby, and after many ceremonies used, they spake the words of Conjuraton, which the Devil straight obeyed and appeared unto them, asking what they would: Know, said Frier Bacon, that we have made an artificial Head of Brass, which we would have to speak, to the furtherance of which we have raised thee, and being raised, we will here keep thee, unless thou tell us the way and manner how to make this head to speak. The

Devil told him, that he had not that power of himself. Beginner of lies (said Frier Bacon) I know that thou dost dissemble, and therefore tell it us quickly, or else we will here bind thee, to remain during our pleasures. At these threatenings the Devil consented to do it, and told them, that with a continual fume of the six hottest simples it should have motion, and in one months space speak, the time of the month or day he knew not, also he told them, that if they heard it not before it had done speaking, all their labour should be lost: they being satisfied, licensed the spirit for to depart.

Then went these two learned Friars home again, and prepared the Simples ready, and made the fume, and with continual watching attended when the Brazen head would speak: Thus watched they for three Weeks without any rest, so that they were so weary and sleepy that they could not any longer retain from rest; Then called Friar Bacon his man Miles, and told him, that it was not unknown to him what pains Frier Bungay and himself had taken for three weeks space, onely to make and to hear the brazen head speak, which if they did not, then had they lost all their labour, and all England had a great loss thereby: therefore he intreated Miles that he would watch whilst that they slept, and call them if the head speak. Fear not, good Master (said Miles) I will not sleep, but hearken and attend upon the head, and if it chance to speak, I will call you, therefore I pray take you both your rests, and let me alone for watching this head: After Friar Bacon had given him a great charge: The second time Frier Bungey and he went to sleep, and left Miles alone to watch the brazen head; Miles, to keep him from sleeping, got a Taber and Pipe, and being merry disposed, sung this Song to a northern tune of

Cam'st thou not from New-Castle.

To couple is a custom,

All things thereto agree:

Why should not I then love?
Since love to all is free.

But I'll have one that's pretty,
Her cheeks of Scarlet dye,
For to breed my delight,
When that I ligg her by.

Though vertue be a Dowry,
Yet I chuse money store:
If my Love prove untrue,
With that I can get more.

The fair is often unconstant,
The black is often proud,
I'll chuse a lovely brown,
Come Fidler scrape the crowd.

Come Fidler scrape the crowd,
For Peggy the brown is she,
Must be my Bride, God guide
That Peggy and I agree.

With his own musick, and such songs as these spent he his time, and kept himself from sleeping, at last after some noise the head spake these two words, Time is, Miles hearing it to speak no more, thought his Master would be angry if he waked him for that, and therefore he let them both sleep, and began to mock the head in this manner. Thou Brazen-faced head, hath my Master took all this pains about thee, and now dost thou require him with two words? Time is: had he watched with a Lawyer so long as he hath watched with thee, he would have given him more and better words than thou hast yet; if thou canst speak no wiser, they shall sleep till dooms day for me: Time is, I know Time is, and that you shall hear, Goodman Brazen-face.

To the tune of Dainty come thou to me.

Time is for some to plant,

Time is for some to sow;

Time is for some to graft

The horn as some do know.

Time is for some to eat,

Time is for some to sleep,

Time is for some to laugh,

Time is for some to weep.

Time is for some to sing,

Time is for some to pray,

Time is for some to creep,

That have drunk all the day.

Time is to cart a Bawd,

Time is to whip a Whore,

Time is to hang a Thief,

And Time is for much more.

Do you tell us, Copper-nose, when Time is? I hope we Scholars know our Times, when to drink, when to kiss our Hostess, when to go on her score, and when to pay it, that time comes seldom.

After half an hour had passed: the head did speak again two words, which were these: Time was.

Miles reflected these words as little as he did the former, and would not wake them, but still

scoffed at the brazen head, that it had learned no better words, and had such a Tutor as his

Master: and in scorn of it sung this song.

To the Tune of a rich Merchant-man.

Time was when thou a Kettle

Wert fill'd with better matter,

But Frier Bacon did thee spoil,

When he thy sides did batter.

Time was when conscience dwelled

With men of occupation:

Time was when Lawyers did not thrive

So well by mens vexation.

Time was when Kings and Beggars

Of one poor stuff had being:

Time was when Office kept no knaves,

That time it was worth seeing.

Time was a bowl of water

Did give the face reflexion:

Time was when women knew no paint

Which now they call complexion.

Time was: I know that Brazen-face, without your telling, I know that Time was, and I know what things there was when time was, and if you speak no wiser, no Master shall be waked of me.

Thus Miles talked and sung till another half hour was gone, then this Brazen Head spake again these words, Time is past, and therewith fell down, and presently followed a terrible noise, with strange flashes of fire, so that Miles was half dead with fear: At this noise the two Friers awaked, and wondered to see the whole room so full of smoke but that being vanished they might perceive the Brazen Head broke, and lying on the ground; at this sight they grieved, and called Miles to know how this came. Miles, half dead with fear, said, that it fell down of it self, and that with the noise and fire that followed, he was almost frighted out of his wits: Frier Bacon asked him if he did not hear it speak? Yes (quoth Miles) it spake, but to no purpose, I'll have a Parret speak better in that time that you have been teaching this Brazen Head. Out on thee Villain (said

Frier Bacon) thou hast undone us both, hadst thou but called us when it did speak, all England had been walled about with Brass, to its glory and our eternal fames: what were the words it spoke? Very few (said Miles) and those were none of the wisest that I have heard neither: first he said Time is. Hadst thou called us then (said Frier Bacon) we had been made for ever: then (said Miles) half an hour after it spake again, and said Time was. And wouldst thou not call us then (said Bungey): Alas (said Miles) I thought it would have told me some long Tale, and then I purposed to have called you: Then half an hour after he cryed Time is past, and made such a noise, that he hat waked you himself methinks. At this Frier Bacon was in such a rage, that he would have beaten his man, but he was restrained by Bungey: but nevertheless for his punishment he with his Art struck him dumb for one whole months space. Thus this great work of these learned Friers was overthrown (to their great griefs) by this simple fellow.

[B4v-C3v]

APPENDIX 5:

*The honorable historie of Frier Bacon, and Frier Bongay As it was lately plaid by the Prince
Palatine his seruants. Made by Robert Greene, Master of Arts.*
(transcribed from the 1630 edition)

Enter Fryer Bacon drawing the courtains with a white sticke, a booke in his hand, and a lampe
lighted by him, And the brazen head, and Miles, with weapons by him.

Bacon. Miles, where are you?

Miles. Here, sir.

Bacon. How chance you tarry so long?

Miles. Thinke you that the watching of the brazen head craues no furniture? I warrant
you, sir, I haue so armed my selfe, that if all your deuils doe come, I will not feare
them an inch.

Bacon. Miles, thou knowst that I haue diued into hell,
And sought the darkest places of the Fiends,
That with my Magicke spels great Belzephon
Hath left his lodge and kneled at my cell,
The rafters of the earth rent from the poles,
And three-form'd Lama hid her siluer lookes;
Trembling vpon her concaue continent,
When Bacon read vpon his Magicke booke,
With seuen yeeres tossing Nigromanticke charmes,
Poring vpon darke Hecats principles,
I haue fram'd out a monstrous head of brasse,

That by th'enchanting forces of the Deuill,
Shall tell out strange and vncoth Aphorismes,
And girt faire England with a wall of brasse.
Bungay and I haue watcht these threescore dayes,
And now our vital spirits craue some rest,
If Argos liu'd and had his hundred eyes,
They could not ouer-watch Phobeters night,
Now Miles, in thee rests Fryers Bacons weale,
The honour and renowne of all his life,
Hangs in the watching of this brazen-head;
Therefore I charge thee by the immortall God,
That holds the soules of men within his fist,
This night thou watch; for ere the morning starre
Sends out his glorious glister on the Norht,
The head will speake; then (Miles) vpon thy life,
Wake me: for then by Magicke Art Ile worke,
To end my seuen yeeres taske with excellence,
If that a winke but shut thy watchfull eye,
Then farewell Bacons glory and his fame,
Draw close the curtaines, Miles, now for thy life,
Be watchfull and

Here he falleth asleepe.

Miles. So, I thought you would talke your selfe asleepe anon, and 'tis no maruell, for Bungay on the dayes, and hee on the nights, haue watcht iust these ten and fifty dayes, now this is the night, and 'tis my taske and no more. Now Iesus blesse me, what a goodly head it is, & a nose! You talke of nos antem glorificare; but here's a nose, that I warrant may be cal'd nos antempopelares for the people of the parish. Well I am furnished with weapons, now sir, I will set me downe by a post, and make it as good as a watch-man to wake me if I cance to slumber. I thought, Goodman head, I would call you out of your moments, passion a God, I haue almost broke my pate: Vp, Miles, to your taske, take your browne bill in your hand, heres some of your masters Hobgoblins abroad.

With this, a great noise.

The Head speakes.

Head. Time is.

Miles. Time is. Why, Master Brazen-head, haue you such a capitall nose, and answer you with syllables, Time is? Is this all my masters cunning, to spend seuen yeeres stuie about Tie is? Well, sir, it may be, we shall haue some orations of it anon; well, Ile watch you as narrowly as euer you were watcht, and Ile play with you as the Nightingale with the Slow-worme, Ile set a pricke against my brest; now rest there, Miles, Lord haue mercy vpon me, I haue almost kild my selfe: vp, Miles list how they rumble.

Head. Time was.

Miles. Well, Frier Bacon, you haue spent your seuen yeeres study well, that can make your Head speake but two words at once, Time was: yea mary, time was when my Master was a wise man, but that was before he began to make the Brazen-head. You shall lye while you arse ake, and your Head speake no better: well, I will watch and walke vp and downe, and be a Peripatetian and a Philosopher of Aristotles stampe. What, a fresh noyse? Take thy Pistols in hand, Miles.

Here the Head speakes, and a lightning flasheth forth and

A hand appeares that breaketh down the

Head with a hammer.

Head. Time is past.

Miles. Master, master, vp, hell's broken loose, your head speakes, and there's such a thunder and lightning, that I warrant, all Oxford is vp in armes; out of your bed, take a browne bill in your hand, the latter day is come.

Bacon. Miles, I come. O passing warily watcht:
Bacon will make thee next himselfe in loue.

When spake the head?

Miles. When spake the Head? Did not you say that he should tell strange principles of Philosophy? Why sir, it speakes but two words at a time.

Bacon. Why villaine, hath it spoken oft?

Miles. Oft, I mary hath it thrice: but in all those three times it hath vuttered but seuen words.

Bacon. As how?

Miles. Mary sir, the first time he said, Time is, as if Fabius Commensator should haue pronounst a sentence: he said, Time was: and the third time with thunder and lightning, as in great choler, he said, Time is past.

Bacon. Tis past indeed. A villaine, time is past:
My life, my fame, my glory, all are past:
Bacon, the turrets of thy hope are ruin'd downe,
Thy seuen yeeres study lieth in the dust:
Thy Brazen-head lies broken through a slaue
That watcht, and would not when the Head did will.
What said the Head first?

Miles. Euen, Time is.

Bacon. Villaine, if thou hadst cald to Bacon then,
If thou hadst watcht and wakte the sleepy Fryer,
The Brazen-head had vttered Aphorismes,
And England had been circled round with brasse:
But proud Asteroth, ruler of the North,
And Demegorgon, master of the Fates,
Grudge that a mortall man should doe so much.
Hell trembled at my deepe commanding spels,
Fiends frownd to see a man their oer-match,
Bacon might boast more than a man might boast:
But now the braues of Bacon haue an end.
Europes conceit of Bacon hath an end:

His seuen yeeres practice sorteth to ill end:

And villaine, sith my glorie hath an end,

I will appoint thee fatall to some end.

Villaine, auoid, get thee from Bacons sight:

Vagrant, goe rome and range about the world,

And perish as a vagabond on earth.

Miles. Why then, sir, you forbid me your seruice.

Bacon. My seruice, villaine? With a fatall curse,
That direfull plagues and mischiefe fall on thee.

Miles. Tis on matter, I am against you with the old prouerb, The more the Fox is curst,
the better he fares. God be with you sir, Ile take but a booke in my hand, a wide
sleeued gowne on my backe, and a crowned cap on my head, and see If I can want
promotion.

Bacon. Some fiend or ghost haunt on thy weary steps,
Vntill they doe transport thee quicke to hell:
For Bacon shall haue neuer merry day,
To lose the fame and honour of his Head.

[F4-G2v]

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