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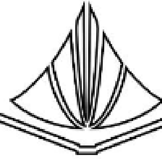
Editor's Foreword



Michael Ovens

In a departure from the previous issue's foreword, I am delighted not to open but to close Volume 2 of *Ceræ: An Australasian Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*. This issue has seen a number of developments and changes in how the journal is run, not least of which is the introduction of a rolling release schedule that allows us to reduce the turnaround time between article submission and publication – an arrangement which is good for both editors and authors! We have also seen a changing of the guard here at the journal as members finish their allotted terms on the Executive in order to make way for a new generation.

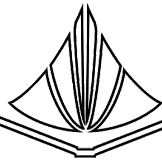
One thing which has not changed is the quality of the articles we have both received and published. This volume publishes seven articles from fifteen submissions which run the gamut from early Byzantine martial culture through to seventeenth-century witch trials, with two articles on the theme, Transitions, Fractures, and Fragments. We have also published our first multi-media article on the interpretation of harp performance in medieval romance. The future is bright for *Ceræ*!

On behalf of the Editorial Committee I would like to extend my deepest thanks to the Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies at the University of Western Australia for their ongoing support of the journal, and also to the Postgraduate Students Association and our anonymous PayPal donors. As an online journal we are able to keep our running costs low, but the ability to offer prize money which our sponsors

have enabled has allowed us to both attract and support quality scholarship from both new scholars in the field.

I would also like to extend our thanks to the anonymous peer reviewers and all who volunteered their time to the running of the journal; *Ceræ* would not exist without your dedication and support.

‘Nonsence is Rebellion’: John Taylor’s *Nonsence upon Sence, or Sence, upon Nonsence* (1651–1654) and the English Civil War



Emily Cock
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Abstract: This article examines the political content of John Taylor’s Nonsence upon Sence, or Sence, upon Nonsence: Chuse you either, or neither *(1651–1654), challenging the customary dismissal of this poem as light-hearted nonsense verse. Taylor was a staunch Royalist who had openly criticised the divisions of the English Civil War and the proliferation of religious separatists. I argue that* Nonsence *continues this project under a mask of playful ambiguity. The literary disorder created in this text, which Taylor calls ‘nonsence’, is made to mirror the social, religious and political fragmentation of post-war London, as sentences and words are broken down and rearranged in unfamiliar and disturbing ways. The article serves not only as a stylistic assessment of Taylor’s political satire, but also to historicise his engagement with nonsense and place within that literary tradition.*

England's transition from monarchy to short-lived commonwealth was never likely to be smooth.[1] The Civil War fed on religious and political divisions and left ongoing fractures in the body politic well into the Restoration period. John Taylor (1578–1653) was one of the most prolific Royalist pens to contribute to the explosion of print that occurred in this period, in which writers on both sides battled to 'out-word' each other as fiercely as did the soldiers in armed combat.[2] This article highlights Taylor's stylistic techniques in one of his last and longest poems, in which he uses a poetic sense of disorder, which he calls 'nonsence', to critique the fragmentation and disorder of Civil War England. *Nonsence upon Sence, or Sence, upon Nonsence: Chuse you either, or neither* was printed in three parts by an unknown London publisher in 1651 (parts one and two, in quarto) and posthumously in 1654 (part three, in octavo).[3] Taylor was one of the earliest English authors of nonsense verse, which was a style he first utilised in *Sir Gregory Nonsence His Newes from no place* (1622). Noel Malcolm argues that Taylor was 'the acknowledged master' of nonsense 'in his own time if not in ours'.[4] Holdfast's often-cited reference to Taylor's 'nonsense' in Henry Glapthorne's *Wit in a Constable* (1639) indicates that Taylor's works of nonsense verse were well known to his contemporaries.[5] This article historicises and interrogates the classification of Taylor's self-professed 'nonsence' as nonsense verse by foregrounding its political and religious allusions, including Taylor's use of nonsense to parody religious separatists. The nonsense of *Nonsence* mirrors the social, religious and political fragmentation of post-war London, as sentences and words are broken down and rearranged in unfamiliar and disturbing ways. I will first outline the meanings carried by 'nonsense' in the seventeenth century before considering more specifically Taylor's engagement with it in *Nonsence*, along with his satirical social, political and religious allusions and his politicised use of humour.

Throughout his career, Taylor wholeheartedly engaged with current affairs, published broadly, and was successful enough to indicate that his views were shared by many seventeenth-century Londoners. Accordingly, historians have long recognised the value of his œuvre, though his name was usually relegated — as Tim FitzHigham for the British television show *Time Team* put it — to 'the footnote of a very dusty history book in a very dusty corner of a library'.[6] But Taylor's work has enjoyed renewed attention, especially following Bernard Capp's cornerstone biography, *The World of John Taylor the Water-Poet 1578–1653*.[7] As Capp highlighted, Taylor was a remarkable historical character, fashioning his own celebrity as 'the Water Poet' by writing highly autobiographically, trumpeting his unlearned style and origins as a Thames boatman, and chronicling his own fabulous journeys and stunts, such as rowing a paper boat from London to Queenborough. Nevertheless, his writing has been largely dismissed as a 'knockabout brand of journalism', with little attention paid to his literary techniques and value.[8]

For those familiar with Taylor it is not so very surprising that *Nonsence* includes political content. Both Warren Wooden and P. N. Hartle have noted that the three parts present political and religious satire barely concealed beneath — in Wooden's terms — a 'veneer of nonsense'.[9] Their concern is not, however, to consider in detail the ways in which Taylor layers political critique into his verse, which renders the annotated extract in Malcolm's *The Origins of English Nonsense* the only close reading of the poem. Malcolm expressly rejects political interpretations of *Nonsence* and omits a passage from the Third Part on the 'lamentable Death and Buriall of a Scottish Gallaway Nagge' on the grounds that the lines are 'not [...] nonsense' (they form a polemic on religious sectarianism, the blatancy of which might have been enabled by the section's posthumous publication).[10] Similarly, James Mardock argues that Taylor 'stopped [writing] his propaganda and his religious polemics' after the king's execution in January 1649, instead moving

toward the 'safer genre of nonsense verse'.[11] Taylor's intricate and particular selection of social, cultural and political references elevates *Nonsence* above a purely journalistic style of only historical interest. His writing style, and especially his use of stylistic features now classed as typical of nonsense verse (*impossibilia*, *coniunctio oppositorum*, puns, paradox, etc.), form part of his political project. This also removes the poem from the canon of pure nonsense verse that we associate with Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll, which Taylor did come close to with *Sir Gregory*. The tone throughout that poem is light and humorous, and there is no significant political content. At the end of the dedication, Taylor refers the reader to 'the Midsommer nights dreame', and quotes part of Quince's prologue to the Mechanicals' play, *Pyramus and Thisbe*: 'If we offend, it is with our good will, we come with no intent, but to offend, and shew our simple skill' (sig. A4[v]).[12] Taylor thus directs the reader to consider *Sir Gregory* a successor to the humorous malapropisms and bathos of Quince, Nick Bottom, et al. As Wooden argues, placing *Sir Gregory* in the category of 'children's literature', Taylor's purpose in that text 'is fun rather than correction', amusement instead of satire.[13]

'Nonsense' was a novel term in the seventeenth century, and its meaning was still flexible. The first recorded use of the word is from Anthony Stafford in 1612, where he invokes it as '*non*sense' or '*non* Sense' — a meaning that is stressed typographically. Hence he berates the ungenerous 'ass' reader, who

> Though they can pick out good sense, yet they will not; contrarie to the equity of a Reader; who, in a place doubtful, should strive to understand, before he cry out *Non*sense. They little knowe, that hee, who writes in every thing properly, shall never write anie thing pleasingly.[14]

The bad reader will not be able or willing to supply these logical steps himself and will therefore be left with nonsense, while the good reader will fill in any gaps in order to follow Stafford's argument. Similarly, the *Oxford English Dictionary*'s second cited usage is from Francis Quarles (1629), who berates authors who 'have ventured

(trusting to the *Œdipean* conceit of their ingenious Reader) to write *non-sense*, and felloniously father the created expositions of other men' — their own poor writing's failure of logical development has left their readers like Œdipus facing the riddles of the sphinx.[15] Ben Jonson in *Bartholomew Fair* (first performed 1614) also describes a 'game of *vapours*' as '*non sense*. Every man to oppose the last man that spake: whethe [*sic*] it concern'd him, or no'.[16] The scene depicts a game of 'systematic contradiction', which as Paul A. Cantor argues is likely to represent Jonson's wary mockery of the political and religious dissensions with which London was already rife.[17] 'Nonsense' at this time could thus indicate a flawed or deliberately perverted progression or presentation of logic that ruins an author's argument, or renders it contrary to sense, more than simple absurdity. Though absent from the *OED*, *Sir Gregory Nonsence* may represent the earliest usage of 'nonsense' for deliberate, playful absurdity. In titling his 1650s texts *Nonsence upon Sence*, Taylor could rely on this multiplicity of meanings to be brought to bear on the work by his reader, including as a gathering of sense fragments that lose their face meaning in illogical arrangements.

Where Taylor himself lays charges of nonsense, it is against those who deliberately obscure their faulty logics through linguistic flexibility, sophistry and misrepresentation. In *A Bawd* (1624) he castigates such sophistic logicians for their

> subtill and circumventing speeches, doubtfull and ambiguous Apothegmes, double significations, intricate, witty, and cunning equivocations, (like a skilfull Fencer that casts his eye upon a mans foot, and hits him a knocke on the pate).

In *A Most Horrible, Terrible, Tollerable, Termagant Satyre* (1639), '*Logick's* a Speech, that seemes by disagreeing / To make things be, or not be in their being; / To whet mens wits, to try and tosse conclusions'.[18] In *Nonsence* he states simply that 'Logick hath Art to make an Ape a man' (sig. A5[r]). Taylor's concerns feed into ongoing debates over the exactness and capabilities of language, as expounded by writers such as John Locke, Thomas Hobbes and Francis Bacon.[19] In *Wit in a Constable*, the servant

Tristram responds to his master, Holdfast's, call for '*John Taylor*, get me his nonsense' (meaning *Sir Gregory Nonsence*, the only nonsense text at this date) with 'You mean all his workes sir'.[20] In addition to insulting Taylor's writing, Tristram here mocks Holdfast's pretence to wit. Just returned from Cambridge, Holdfast exemplifies the 'angels on a pinhead' school of understanding, which the play presents as secondary to the real knowledge gleaned from 'not bookes, but men which are true living volums' (sig. B2ʳ). Taylor's inclusion among a far more illustrious reading list demonstrates Holdfast's lack of discrimination — he will believe the words and arguments of 'the learned waterman' as easily as those of Thomas Aquinas or Francisco Suárez (sig. B1ᵛ). Yet Tristram's and subsequently Thorowgood's dismissal of Holdfast's book-learning is also intended to collapse these more illustrious authors down to the same level of 'nonsense' as Taylor's *Sir Gregory*. They are proponents of clever but pointless exercises of logic, impressive only to

> such youths as only
> Know how to frame a syllogisme in *Darij*,
> And make the ignorant believe by Logicke
> The Moones made of a Holland Cheese: and the man in't.
> A swagbellied Dutch Burger. (sig. B2ʳ)

The capacity of sense to be scattered and bent by seemingly logical arguments, which were actually as illogical as the *impossibilia* of *Sir Gregory Nonsence*, exposes ignorant readers like Holdfast to abuse by more worldly individuals.

Taylor noted that, given the power of such representations, Parliamentary and Royalist writers were locked in a battle for public opinion. Taylor attacked Parliamentary newspapers in pamphlets like *Mercurius Nonsencicus* (1648) — a riff on the Parliamentary title, *Mercurius Britanicus* — for a style that 'is easie stuffe to be read; but it will trouble a deepe understanding to pick out the meaning'.[21] In *Nonsence* he charges,

> Speake truth (like a Diurnall) let thy pen
> Camelion like, rouse Lyons from their Den,
> Turne frantick Woolpacks into melting Rocks,
> And put Olympus in a Tinder box. (sig. A2r)

Taylor suggests that it would be as (im)possible for a 'Diurnall' (newspaper) to 'speake truth', as for Mount Olympus to be confined to the 'Tinder box', or a 'Camelion' (a 'camelopard' or giraffe, which he elsewhere depicts as creatures as insubstantial as 'Aire, Smoake, Vapours, words and winde'), to frighten lions.[22] He abuses Parliamentary news editors for 'as very Villaines as could be spew'd from the bottomlesse Pit' and, like other Royalist writers, regularly attacked 'our *London* Diurnals' for 'often stumbl[ing] into most grosse errours'.[23] His direction in *Nonsence* that 'Blind men may see, and deafe men all shall heare, / How dumb men talk because Cow hides are deare' (sig. A3r) is not only an absurd joke but also evokes his remarks in *Mercurius Nonsencicus* about the sources on which Parliamentary news hacks relied. In this he presents the mock revelation of 'A Plot, a Plot, a most horrible, terrible, execrable, detestable, abhominable, and damnable Plot' against Parliament (sig. A2r). When giving his sources he announces that

> a blind Woman was the first that saw it, and she presently told it to a deafe Woman, the deafe Woman related it to a lame Woman, the lame Woman told it to a dumb, and she came post upon a lame Horse, and discovered the whole business to me. (sig. A2r)

Taylor thus reduces most political reporting to the worst level of (specifically womanish) gossip and hearsay.

Taylor announces that it is through such 'brabling businesse: twit, twat, tush, puffe, mew [...] words to fill up a sheet in print' that writers have deluded a 'Brave tag rag multitude of Omnium Gatherum' into supporting a rebellion that they do not understand.[24] He was particularly hostile toward 'mislead Beasts' within the Parliamentary army: 'Aske Rebells what's the reason they rebell, / And aske Dogges

why they berke, They cannot tell'.[25] Rather than a streamlined opposition with a coherent political program, Taylor's Roundhead enemies are a gallimaufry of political and religious radicals building unstable ideological sandcastles in the Thames mud. Laurie Ellinghausen notes that despite his self-fashioning as a humble boatman poet, Taylor frequently expresses distrust for the general populace as 'both easily misled and potentially menacing'.[26] His criticism of this anonymous mass also allowed Taylor to strategically attack matters of national importance without laying blame on powerful leaders or any specific political party.[27] In *Nonsence,* Taylor parallels the heterogeneous London rabble with people involved in the 1647 Neapolitan rebellion, in which the crowd of 'pickled Sausedges' (literally: full of mischief, mince-for-brains) enabled a fisherman called Masaniello to became king for a day:

> I tooke a Cammell, and to Naples went I,
> Of pickled Sausedges I found great plenty;
> The Gudgeon catcher there, o're top'd the Nobles,
> And put the Viceroy in a peck of troubles:
> [...] But now and then was squeez'd a rich Delinquent,
> By which good means away the precious chinke went. (sig. A5[r])

While obviously a ship of the desert would be useless for crossing the real sea, Taylor describes visiting Naples in order to parallel this situation with that of the Parliamentarian mob, whom he considered to be swindling 'Delinquents' (Royalists), depriving them of their 'chinke' (money), in their pursuit of illegitimate power.

One Parliamentary writer whom Taylor singled out for particular opprobrium was George Wither (1588–1667). Taylor had formerly praised both Wither's person and writing, in some works emulating his style, but the two fell by the ears after choosing opposing sides in the Civil War. In *Aqua-Musæ* (1645), Taylor

denounces Wither's *Campo-Musæ* (1643) as 'fragment[ed]', 'patch'd up' nonsense, written 'By insinuation to intrude / Into th'affections of the Multitude':

> Was ever such vile fragment Riming Raggs
> Patch'd up together with abusive Braggs;
> [...] His Honest Writings but a Paradox:
> His Verities are false, his Errors true,
> Such Riffe Raffe hotch Potch, his sweet *Muse doth Brew*.[28]

Taylor attacks Wither for his opposing political opinions, but even more so with the accusation that they are not his *true* opinions: that is, examination of the 'words and Sense' of his earlier works with *Campo-Musæ* reveal it to be nothing but a convoluted, 'Incongruent' work of 'wavering Lies and Lines (*Black upon White*) / [That] Shewes rayling Hypocrite, *Hermaphrodite*, / Nor Male or Female, neither both or neither' (sig. A3v; original emphasis). For Taylor, Wither's deceptive, deliberate obscuring of a non-existent argument through linguistic dexterity renders his writing 'most Ridiculous, and poor Nonsence': 'For Nonsence is Rebellion, and thy writing, / Is nothing but Rebellious Warres inciting' (sig. B4r). Moreover, Taylor points out that he can imitate this quite successfully for his own political agenda: 'I can Rand words, and Rime as well as thou: / Speak and write Nonsence, even by thy Example' (sig. B4r). He then proceeds to imitate Wither's 'nonsense' through a long passage of *impossibilia* and *coniunctio oppositorum* of the manner that he would later use in *Nonsence*: Wither's argument is like 'the wagging of the Dog-starres Taile, / Or like the Frost and Snow that falls in *June*, / Or like sweet Musique, that was ne're in Tune', etc. (sig. B4r). His final lines of 'Lofty Verse' end with 'words [...] purposely cloven or split, for the understanding of the Learned, Illiterate, Grave, Ridiculous Reader' (sig. B4v) — sense broken down to impossible nonsense.

Taylor also likens Wither to 'Tub-Preaching Tinkers, Pedlars, Pulpiteeres, / Whose best Religion, is most irreligious' (sig. B1v). Taylor was a firm proponent of

the Established Church, attacking 'irreligious' separatists throughout his career, and this is an important feature of *Nonsence*. 'Tub preachers' were non-conformist lay men (or occasionally women) who delivered and published sermons and other religious addresses alongside or in addition to their normal trades. In *Nonsence,* he writes that 'The Dunsmore Cowes milke shall make Sillibubs, / And our Religion shall be brought in Tubs' (sig. A2^{v}). A sillabub was a sweetened milk dessert traditionally consumed at Christmas, here produced from the legendarily inexhaustible milk supply of the Dun Cow. Figuratively, however, the term was also applied to 'something unsubstantial and frothy, *esp*. floridly vapid discourse or writing', and it is for this sense in particular that Taylor links it with the religion of 'Tubs'.[29] The title page of Taylor's *A Swarme of Sectaries, and Schismatiques: Wherein is discovered the strange preaching (or prating) of such as are by their trades Coblers, Tinkers, Pedlers, Weavers, Sow-gelders, and Chymney-Sweepers* (1641) contains an illustration that derisively literalises the phrase: it depicts the cobbler-preacher, Samuel How, sermonising from inside a washing tub.[30] As Taylor saw it, fracturing of the Protestant faithful into dissenting factions posed as great a threat to the Established Church as any Papists. London was 'scatter'd full of [religious] Sects' — Brownists, Baptists, Anabaptists, Familists, Adamites and more. Taylor bemoaned that,

> Amongst all Trades (some thousands zealous Widgeons)
> Were hardly more in number then Religions.
> In Preachers Roomes were Preach'd, for which I woe am,
> The basest people Priests like Jeroboam.[31]

Taylor attacked these lay preachers not only for their 'base[ness]', but also for their pedantic and incomprehensible Biblical interpretations — their nonsense appropriations of the Word. In *Mad Verse*, Taylor describes separatists as 'Nose-wise Scripture Picklers': they are conceited buffoons who 'pick' minutely over the scriptures (sig. A2^{r}). Like Stafford's asinine hypothetical readers, such readers lose

the wood for the trees, the sense for the sound. Nigel Smith notes that different Puritan groups did favour distinctive reading and discursive practices, and experimented with the ways that language could become ‘to some extent continuous with the personal experience of the spirit’. ‘Undoubtedly,’ he says, ‘the language of radical religion was founded upon irrationality in theory and in practice as the difference between the internal and the external, the literal and the figurative, disappeared.’[32] Diane Watt and Esther S. Cope, writing on female-authored prophetic texts of this period, have also noted how the prophets’ ‘fragmented syntax and idiosyncratic punctuation can be understood as an attempt to create an authentic and esoteric prophetic voice’.[33] Such inscrutability, Cope argues, ‘demonstrated graphically how the unbeliever could not understand the wisdom of the prophet’.[34]

Taylor, however, would have none of this presumption. The Brownists, who were established in 1581 by followers of Robert Browne, and who Smith notes were ‘extreme literalists’ when it came to Biblical interpretation, were some of Taylor’s favourite targets.[35] With a certain irony he decried how,

> These Amsterdamian Zelots can breath five hours in a Text, and they delight not only in Battologies [needless repetitions], but also in tautologies, which makes them become so infamous and ridiculous to the World, that they are ludibrious spectacles of derision.[36]

They were as bad as the Papists, who ‘in an unknowne tongue [their] Prayers scatter’, thus rendering them mere snippets of sound and fury.[37] Taylor produced spoof radical religious pamphlets, such as *A Tale In a Tub*, which uses flawed or circumlocutionary logic, fallacious etymologies and other wordplay to parse less than a single Biblical phrase.[38] He thus parodied the overblown rhetoric of such tub lectures, displaying, William P. Holden remarks, his ‘happy knack of giving the impression of interminable length and infinite nonsense all within six pages’.[39]

Taylor ties the convoluted styling of *Nonsence* to this corpus of religious parody through several references to the Brownists and other sects within the text, but most importantly in the title page description of the book as 'Written upon *white Paper*, in a *Browne Study*, be-twixt *Lammas* Day and *Cambridge*, in the Yeare aforesaid' (sig. A1^r^). Taylor's juxtaposition of the temporal 'Lammas Day' and spatial 'Cambridge', and his reference to a non-existent 'year aforesaid', typify wordplay employed throughout the text, but also alert the reader to the multiplicity of meanings in the phrase 'Browne Study'. Literally a brown-coloured home office, the phrase also denotes 'a state of mental abstraction or musing', with its association with the Brownists adding further connotations of religious madness.[40] Further in the text, Taylor speaks of,

> A long Dev'ls broath, be sure you bring a spoon,
> Our mornings shall begin at afternoone;
> And Minos, Eacus, nor Rhadamantus
> May roare and rant, but never shall out rant us. (sig. A5^v^)

In addition to echoing King Lear and the Fool's plans to 'go to supper i' th' morning. / And [...] go to bed at noon', Taylor here reworks the familiar expression, 'he must have a long spoon that will eat with the Devil' in connection with the loosely grouped antinomian and pantheistic association of 'Ranters'.[41] Taylor also drew on the proverbial phrase 'the devil dances in an empty pocket' to align separatists and the devil when announcing that 'A man may think his purse is turn'd a Round-head, / When all the crosses in it are confounded' (sig. A5^v^).[42] 'Crosses' was a common term for coins, after the figure of a cross stamped on one side, and Taylor here ridicules Puritan disapproval of making the sign of the cross, and also their removal of crosses from public places, such as Cheapside Cross in 1643. As with his positioning of his *impossibilia*, etc., as imitation of the political nonsense of writers such as Wither, Taylor ties his 'mad verse' to the mad ranting of religious radicals.

Taylor's nonsense, as T.S. Eliot said of King Lear's, 'is not vacuity of sense: it is a parody of sense, and that is the sense of it'.[43] A deliberate vacuity of sense is demonstrated by Taylor's earlier mock-heroic eulogies on Thomas Coryat (1577–1617) ostensibly in the 'Bermuda' and 'Utopian tongue[s]', which, as Emma Renaud highlights, entirely privilege 'sound' over 'intelligibility'.[44] The Bermudan text, for example, which he insists 'must be pronounced with the accent of the grunting of a hog', closes with, 'Isracominnogh Jaghogh Iamerogh mogh Carnogh pelepsogh / Animogh trogh deradzogh maramogh, hogh Flonzagh salepsogh'.[45] The poems serve to satirise Coryat's claim to fame as a traveller and make no attempt to present a discernible meaning outside of the entirely fantastical translation, which itself thus represents a fracturing of linguistic sense.

The section of *Nonsence upon Sence* that comes closest to pure nonsense is a macaronic verse in praise of the author. Like the Bermudan poem, it is followed by a so-called translation that includes *impossibilia* and bathos, but whose mistranslation renders it a multi-lingual non sequitur (sig. A8^{v}). The macaronic poem incorporates Latin, Italian, French, German and nonce-words in a passage that makes no overall sense. Educated poets composed serious macaronic poetry in virtuoso displays of their linguistic skills. In *The Arcadian Rhetorike* (1588), for instance, Abraham Fraunce combined English, Latin, Greek, Italian and Spanish when dedicating his book to Mary, Countess of Pembroke, and John Donne's dedicatory contribution to *Coryats Crudities* (1611) included Latin, English, French and Spanish.[46] Taylor refers in the poem to the Spanish city of Salamanca, which at this time was most famous for its university. He thus jibes those university-educated poets who had sneered at him (in both reality and his own imagination) throughout his career, by aligning their multi-lingual poems — which were 'so mysticall, sophisticall', that it is 'no marvell others understand them not' — with his openly incomprehensible macaronic.[47] But this was not the first time that Taylor had published the poem. As Hartle notes, Taylor

regularly appropriated text from his earlier works in order to invoke their more polemical themes and moods.[48] The macaronic poem was therefore drawn from the dedicatory material of *A Most Horrible, Terrible, Tollerable, Termagant Satyre* (1639).[49] This 'most wholesome [...] Black-mouth'd biting Satire' offered forthright attacks on diverse areas such as pride, hypocrisy, greed, quackery and alchemy (sig. A3[r]), and Taylor's incorporation of it into *Nonsence* serves to enhance that text's political content.

Taylor continues this fragmentation of linguistic sense elsewhere in *Nonsence*. His dedication — which, in an inversion of literary convention, is attached to the end of the first part — parodies typical eulogistic dedications with a fustian blend of complex sentences, tautologies, neologisms, ink-horn terms and sesquipedalian words. Most importantly, the passage includes a significant amount of mock-Latin, constructed through the addition of hyperbolic Latinate suffixes to nevertheless recognisable English or Latin stems. Taylor praises an ironic target who has himself been 'quartered into foure Offices, viz. a Scavenger, a Beadle, a Cobler, and halfe a Constable'. This man is heralded as the 'Potentissimo, Excellentissimo' (cod Latin for 'most powerful, most excellent'), and the 'Cleanser, clearer, and avoyder of the most Turpitudinous, Merdurinous, excrementall offals, Muck and Garbadge' ('Turpitudinous' being a neologism from 'turpitude' — shameful, foul — that pre-dates the *OED*'s earliest citation by 300 years, and 'Merdurinous' combining 'merd', or faeces, and 'urine').[50] Sense here is not absent, but relies on breaking up individual words into their stems, prefixes and suffixes, just as elsewhere Taylor's oxymorons and *impossibilia* depend on the staging of fragmented sense for their meaning.

Yet for all its political tension, *Nonsence* is fun to read, and often funny. This is part of Taylor's project. Taylor packs his poem with references to festivals, holidays and other folk customs of 'Merry England' banned under the Puritan government, which was a form of critique shared by other Royalist authors such as Robert

Herrick.[51] These pastimes' affiliation with Royalist sentiment had been solidified by Archbishop William Laud and Charles I's reissue of the *Book of Sports* in 1633; by 1643, copies were burned by the common hangman by order of Parliament.[52] In 1647 Parliament had formally abolished Christmas, Easter, Whitsun and all other former Church feasts, thereby consolidating its 1641 ban on Sunday dancing and sports and subsequent bans on folk customs such as the maypole.[53] Evidently Taylor was an adherent of James I's opinion that socially diverse people's attendance at festivities and sporting events produced 'a common amitie among themselves'.[54] To Taylor, the enforced loss of such recreations under Parliament signalled ongoing social division. Taylor frequently refers to Shakespeare's and other authors' plays in his interregnum texts, when to invoke the theatres following their closure in 1642 was for many authors a political move.[55] In *Nonsence*, Taylor writes that,

> Strange things are done by art and humane power:
> Quinborough Castle landed neare the Tower.
> Much like a prodigy old time playd Rex:
> A Kentish Castle came to Middlesex. (sig. A6^{r})

Edward II's castle in Queenborough had served as a Royalist stronghold during the Civil War until it was seized and demolished by the Parliamentarians in 1650.[56] Taylor's description of the castle 'land[ing]' in Middlesex (which it may have done after demolition as building materials or in seconded fittings) is phrased to echo Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, whose titular hero had been led to believe he would not be vanquished 'until / Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill / Shall come against him'.[57] Taylor's allusion thus not only functions as a reminder of the theatre and realised *impossibilium*, but also links the fates of Shakespeare's and his own defeated kings.

Similarly, *Nonsence* features frequent references to Christmas. In 1631, 1642 and 1652, Taylor had produced extended critiques of the neglect and subsequent banning of Christmas celebrations.[58] At one point in *Nonsence*, Taylor declares that,

> 'Tis not the Persian Gulph, or Epshams Well,
> Nor Westminsters sweet Plum broath (made in Hell)
> Can change my resolution; I have vow'd,
> To speake with silence, and to write aloud. (sig. A2^{v})

Here, Taylor ironically describes as 'sweet' the Hellish 'broath' served by the Parliament in Westminster (plum broth being a traditional Christmas soup of beef, prunes, raisins, white bread, spices and wine). As early as 1643, many members of Parliament had continued to transact business on Christmas Day.[59] To imagine them indulging in a festive plum broth would therefore be, to Taylor, one of the most ludicrous images of his entire poem (and yet still not enough to 'silence' him).

Even Taylor's decision to write in verse (he alternated between verse and prose throughout his career) might be understood as political, given his belief that Puritans gave 'Their hate to Verse, [and] love to tedious Prose'.[60] His rhyme and metre are almost tediously regular, giving the poem a sense of order despite the fragmentation of its sense. Jokes, both new and recycled from his earlier poems and the work of others, are as important as references to his polemically political texts for evoking this aspect of his project. These references stretch back to his earliest published work, *The sculler* (1612). *Nonsence*'s re-imagining of a 'dale with Milk and Creame that flowes' echoes *The sculler*, while evoking the image as a utopian *impossibilium* (sig. A3^{v}). Taylor explicitly refers to this scene as a 'Utopian Kingdome', leaning on utopia's meaning of 'no place' (a link made explicitly in *Sir Gregory*'s title), to both distance it from and remind his readers of the unpleasant realities of their interregnum surroundings (sig. A3^{v}). As in G. K. Chesterton's distinction between the spirit of pure nonsense and that of satire, Taylor's poem is

not completely removed from reality but instead displays 'a kind of exuberant capering round a discovered truth'.[61] For all its humour, the political cracks show through.

Taylor's works are marked by a nostalgia that is necessarily political in its desire for an England unmarked by Civil War divisions; disenchanted Royalist writers in the 1640s and 1650s often depicted England as a topsy-turvy world.[62] Unlike the 'good old days' wherein disorder was limited to festive occasions, it now runs riot through the streets (and verse) of 'This age wherin no man knowes whether he lives or not lives, whether he wakes, or dreames; when he can hardly trust his eares with what he heares, believe his owne eyes, wherewith he sees, or give credit to his owne heart'.[63] The consistency with which normality is inverted in *Nonsence* fashions a new version of the everyday in which the tumultuous political, religious and social changes surrounding Taylor have grown so familiar as to assume a level of normalcy akin to 'Etna and Vessuvius, in cold blood / [...] both drown[ing] in the Adriatick flood', or 'Great Agamemnon [...] combin[ing] with Hector, / To preach at Amsterdam an Irish [i.e. Catholic] Lector' (sigs. $A2^{r}$, $A4^{r–v}$). He had previously used the same or similar *impossibilia* in describing the likelihood of a Parliamentary victory; now, of course, the impossible had come true. His 1642 pamphlet *Mad Fashions, Od Fashions, All out of Fashions, Or, The Emblems of these Distracted Times* features a striking woodcut of a world turned topsy turvy: fish fly, a horse drives and whips his cart, the classic cat/mouse and dog/hare chases are inverted, and a man is pushed by his wheelbarrow.[64] Dominating the image is a central figure that embodies the fragmented body politic: a quartered man rearranged to stand on his hands, with his head protruding from his backside. Within the text, Taylor describes these features, explaining that 'This Monstrous Picture plainely doth declare / This Land (quite out of order) out of square' (sig. $A2^{r}$). The country has become unrecognisable from 'what it was but seventy yeeres agoe' (which was of course the

glory days of Elizabeth I, and Taylor's childhood), undergoing 'a Metamorphosis, / [...] most preposterous, as the Picture is, / The world's turn'd upside downe, from bad to worse' (sigs. A3$^{r–v}$). He berates attacks on religious ceremonies and festivals, the proliferation of religious sects, rise of lay preachers, and the ongoing discord between King and Parliament. These are all topics familiar from *Nonsence*, but *Mad Fashions* is nowhere near nonsense verse; instead, Taylor bluntly catalogues the *impossibilia* that have supposedly become possible in 'these distracted Times'. Passages from another text from this period, *Mad Verse, Sad Verse, Glad Verse and Bad Verse* (1644), in which Taylor was openly critical about the 'maddest mad Rebellion' that was sweeping the nation, also reappear more cautiously in *Nonsence*.[65] Though Taylor removes the direct references to England, and in some cases restructures foreign examples to make them seem more haphazard, his earlier, overt critiques echo through.

When compared against Taylor's earlier, openly polemical works, the political agenda of *Nonsence upon Sence* can seem intermittent and oblique. He was by now elderly, firmly on the wrong side of power with a history of political arrests, and determined not to suffer the fate of other writers judged seditious — that is, 'to keep [his] eares upon [his] head'.[66] The presentation of his work as 'nonsence' allowed him a level of ambiguity that might protect him. Writing nonsense worthy of university study was a challenge Taylor had set himself in *Mercurius Nonsencicus*: 'let thy [writing] be nonsencicall in heroick, duncicall, and naturall, artificiall Verses, beyond the understanding of all the Colledges, or Universities or either Kent or Christendome' (sig. A4^{r}). Such writing would not only be 'beyond understanding' of university wits, but also of the censors who would otherwise prosecute him for his political views. His 'mighty stock of Nonsence' could prove 'the universall Magazine / For Universities to worke upon' — not only a body of work for the university men to busy themselves with, but also a storehouse of ammunition to be used against his

enemies.[67] Taylor's devastation at the transition of authority from King to Parliament and the ongoing social divisions within the body politic shows through the fractured sense of *Nonsence*, despite his humorous guise of the absurd. He himself asserted that anyone 'Who [set] his wits, my Sence to undermine' — that is, mine or dig through to find — was 'A cunning man at Nonsence'.[68] 'Cunning' in this period carries both the positive associations of knowledgeability and skill, and its prevailing modern sense of bad artfulness.[69] A 'cunning man' could also suggest a wizard or conjurer, here using superhuman powers to decipher Taylor's nonsense.[70] The reader is thus returned to the book's subtitle, in which s/he is directed to 'chuse' if it contains 'either or neither' sense or nonsense — anything s/he finds is his or her own responsibility. Such movements enable Taylor to create a far richer, politicised satire than has been acknowledged, and justify further examination of the works of this lively Water Poet.

Notes

[1] I have benefited greatly from K. K. Ruthven’s supervisorial advice, Heather Kerr’s feedback on an earlier version of this essay, and from the feedback received from the *Ceræ* reviewers. Research for this paper was completed within the Bill Cowan Fellowship in the Barr Smith Library, the University of Adelaide.

[2] Robert Wilcher, *The Writing of Royalism 1628–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 182.

[3] John Taylor, *Nonsence upon Sence: or Sence, upon Nonsence: Chuse you either, or neither. Written upon white Paper, in a Browne Study, betwixt Lammas Day and Cambridge, in the Yeare aforesaid* (London: [n. pub.], 1651). Unless noted, all quotations are from this first edition.

[4] Noel Malcolm, *The Origins of English Nonsense* (London: Harper Collins, 1997), p. 19.

[5] Henry Glapthorne, *Wit in a Constable* (London: John Okes, 1640), sig. B1^{v}.

[6] Quoted in Matt Reynolds and Steve Platt, ‘Time Team Series 13, Queensborough, Kent. Castle in the Round’, <http://www.channel4.com/history/microsites/T/timeteam/2006_queen_t.html> [accessed 7 October 2007].

[7] Bernard Capp, *The World of John Taylor the Water-Poet 1578–1653* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

[8] Wilcher, p. 179.

[9] Warren W. Wooden, *Children’s Literature of the English Renaissance*, ed. by Jeannie Watson (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1986), p. 172; P. N. Hartle, ‘“All His Workes Sir”: John Taylor’s Nonsense’, *Neophilologus*, 86 (2002), 155–169 (p. 164).

[10] Malcolm, pp. 24, 210; Taylor, *The Third Part*, sig. A1^{r}.

[11] James Mardock, ‘The Spirit and the Muse: The Anxiety of Religious Positioning in John Taylor’s Prewar Polemics’, *The Seventeenth Century*, 14 (1999), 1–14 (p. 12).

[12] Cf. Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, V. 1. 108–110.

[13] Wooden, p. 133.

[14] Anthony Stafford, *Meditations, and Resolutions, Moral, Divine, Politicall* (London: H. L., 1612), sig. A8^{r}. The *OED*’s citation of Stafford as the first user is based on the other instance in the book: ‘Some, by the extraordinary application of a thing common, will bring the Reader both into admiration and delight. Others againe, by an unwittie application, make *non* Sense; and infuse lothing into the nice stomack of the Reader[.]’ (sigs. F2^{v}–F3^{r}).

[15] Francis Quarles, *Argalus and Parthenia* (London: John Marriott, 1629), sig. A3^{r}.

[16] Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew Fayre: A Comedie, Acted in the Yeare, 1614 By the Lady Elizabeths Servants* (London: Robert Allott, 1631), sig. I2^{r}. Editors in all modern editions that I have found have quietly emended this to one word.

[17] Joad Raymond, ‘Perfect Speech: The Public Sphere and Communication in Seventeenth-Century England’, in *Spheres of Influence: Intellectual and Cultural Publics from Shakespeare to Habermas*, ed. by Alex Benchimol and Willy Maley (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), pp. 43–70 (p. 56); Paul A. Cantor, ‘In Defense of the Marketplace: Spontaneous Order in Jonson’s *Bartholomew Fair*’ in *Literature and the Economics of Liberty: Spontaneous Order in Culture*, ed. by Paul. A Cantor and Stephen Cox (Auburn:

Ludwig von Mises Institutute, 2009), pp. 167–224 (p. 183).

[18] John Taylor, 'A Bawd. A vertuous Bawd, a modest Bawd: As Shee Deserves, reprove, or else applaud', in *All the Workes of John Taylor the Water Poet* (London: James Boler, 1630), sigs. Hh5^{r}–Ii6^{v} (sig. Ii2^{r}); John Taylor, *A Most Horrible, Terrible, Tollerable, Termagant Satyre* (London: [n. pub.], 1639), sig. B5^{v} (original emphasis).

[19] On this debate see Robert E. Stillman, *The New Philosophy and Universal Languages in Seventeenth-Century England: Bacon, Hobbes, and Wilkins* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1995). Locke, for example, sounds similar to Taylor when he despairs that 'all the artificial and figurative application of words eloquence hath invented, are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong ideas, move the passions, and thereby mislead the judgement; and so indeed are perfect cheats' (quoted in Stillman, 34).

[20] Glapthorne, sig. B1^{v} (original emphasis).

[21] John Taylor, *Mercurius Nonsencicus, written for the use of the simple understander* ([n.p.]: [n. pub.], 1648), sig. A2^{v}.

[22] Taylor, *Mercurius Nonsensicus*, sig. A3^{r}.

[23] Quoted in Capp, p. 153.

[24] *Mercurius Nonsensicus*, sig. A2^{v}; *Nonsence*, sig. A5^{r}.

[25] John Taylor, *The Noble Cavalier Caracterised, and a Rebellious Caviller Cauterised* (Oxford: [n. pub.], 1643), sig. A4^{r}.

[26] Laurie Ellinghausen, *Labor and Writing in Early Modern England, 1567–1667* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 113.

[27] Mardock, p. 4.

[28] John Taylor, *Aqua-Musæ: or, Cacafogo, cacadæmon, Captain George Wither wrung in the withers* (Oxford: [n. pub.], 1645), sigs. B3^{r}, A4^{r} (original emphasis).

[29] 'sillabub | syllabub, n.', in *OED Online*, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/179747> [accessed June 2013].

[30] Samuel How was an apt target for Taylor. His most famous sermon, on 'The Sufficiencie of the Spirits Teaching, Without Human Learning', vehemently praised the very lay preachers Taylor habitually denounced: Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters*: *From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 82.

[31] Taylor, *The Third Part*, sig. B4^{r}. The passage is appropriated from *Mad Verse, Sad Verse, Glad Verse and Bad Verse* (Oxford: Leonard Lichfield, 1644), sig. A1^{v}.

[32] Nigel Smith, *Perfection Proclaimed: Language and Literature in English Radical Religion 1640–1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 15, 18. On the 'aggressive and artificial' use of language by the Ranters more specifically, see Byron Nelson, 'The Ranters and the Limits of Language', in *Pamphlet Wars: Prose in the English Revolution*, ed. by James Holstun (London: Frank Cass, 1992), pp. 60–75.

[33] Diane Watt, *Secretaries of God: Women Prophets in Late Medieval and Early Modern England* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), p. 122.

[34] Cope quoted in Watt, p. 122.

[35] F. L. Cross, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997),

p. 243; Smith, p. 14.

[36] John Taylor, *The Diseases of the Times or, The Distempers of the Common-wealth* (London: R.T., 1642), sig. A3^{r}.

[37] John Taylor, *Mad fashions, od fashions, all out of fashions, or, The emblems of these distracted times* (London: Thomas Banks, 1642), sig. A4^{v}.

[38] 'Now the Babylonians had an Idoll they called Bell, and there were spent upon him every day, 12 gross measures of fine flower, and 40 sheep, and 6 vessels of wine': *A Tale in a Tub or, a Tub Lecture* (London: [n. pub.], 1642), sig. A2^{r}. The writer gets as far in his gloss as 'Now the Babylonians had an Idoll they called Bell'.

[39] William P. Holden, *Anti-Puritan Satire 1572–1642* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), p. 73.

[40] 'brown study, n.', in *OED Online*, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/23875> [accessed June 2013].

[41] William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ed. by Kenneth Muir (London: Methuen, 1966), III. 6. 86–87; Morris Palmer Tilley, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950), S771; Cross, p. 1365.

[42] Tilley, D233.

[43] Quoted in *OED Online*, s.v. 'nonsense, n. and adj.', <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/128094> [accessed June 2013].

[44] Emma Renaud, 'A Precursor of Nonsense: John Taylor, The Water Poet', *Cahiers Elisabéthains*, 48 (1995), 37–43 (pp. 41–41).

[45] Quoted in Renaud, p. 42. See further Joanne E. Gates, 'Travel and Pseudo-Translation in the Self-Promotional Writings of John Taylor, Water-Poet', in *Travel and Translation in the Early Modern Period*, ed. by Carmine G. DiBase (Kenilworth: Rodopi, 2006), pp. 267–280.

[46] Abraham Fraunce, *The Arcadian Rhetorike*, ed. by Ethel Seaton (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1950), p. 2; John Donne, 'In eundum Macaronicon', in Thomas Coryat, *Coryat's Crudities* (London: Scolar Press, 1978), sig. D4^{r}.

[47] John Taylor, *The Nipping or Snipping of Abuses: or, The Wooll-gathering of Wit* in *Workes*, sigs. Bbb4^{v}–Ddd4^{v} (London: James Boler, 1630), sig. Ddd2^{r}. Taylor's idol, Ben Jonson, referred to him as 'the water-rhymer', because 'a rhymer / And a poet, are two things' (Capp, p. 75).

[48] Hartle, p. 164.

[49] Taylor, *A Most Horrible, Terrible, Tollerable, Termagant Satyre*, sig. A3^{v}.

[50] Taylor, *Nonsence*, sig. A7^{r}; 'turpitudinous, adj.', in *OED Online*, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/243081> [accessed June 2013]; 'merd, n.', in *OED Online*, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/116716> [accessed June 2013].

[51] Thomas N. Corns, *Uncloistered Virtue: English Political Literature, 1640–1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 102–111; see also Leah Marcus, *The Politics of Mirth: Jonson, Herrick, Milton, Marvell, and the Defense of Old Holiday Pastimes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

[52] Alistair Dougall, *The Devil's Book: Charles I, The Book of Sports and Puritanism in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2011), p. 158.

[53] Ronald Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: The Ritual Year, 1400–1700* (Oxford: Clarendon

Press, 1994), pp. 201, 212.

[54] Quoted in Marcus, p. 3.

[55] Louis B. Wright, 'The Reading of Plays during the Puritan Revolution', *Huntington Library Bulletin*, 6 (1934), pp. 73–108.

[56] Reynolds and Platt.

[57] William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. by Sylvan Barnet (New York: Signet, 1963), IV. 1. 92–94.

[58] John Taylor, *The Complaint of Christmas. And the Teares of Twelfetyde* (London: James Boler and H. Gosson, 1631); John Taylor, *The Complaint of Christmas, Written after Twelfetide, and Printed before Candlemas* (Oxford: H. Hall, 1642); John Taylor, *Christmas In & Out: Or, Our Lord & Saviour Christs Birth-Day* (London: Francis Coles, 1652). Despite their similar titles, the texts of the *Complaints* differ substantially.

[59] Hutton, p. 207.

[60] Taylor, *Most Horrible*, sig. C1^{v}.

[61] G. K. Chesterton, 'A Defence of Nonsense', in *A Defence of Nonsense and Other Essays* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1911), pp. 1–11 (p. 3).

[62] Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. by Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), pp. 92–96; Marcus, p. 241; Smith, p. 13.

[63] Taylor, *Mercurius Nonsensicus*, sig. A2^{r}.

[64] This was reprinted with minor revisions as *The World turn'd upside down: or, A briefe description of the ridiculous Fashions of these distracted Times* (London: John Smith, 1647). Taylor's changing acknowledgement of authorship of this openly critical text reflects the shifting political climate of 1640s London. While he was happy to put his full name to the 1642 edition, by 1647 the title page diplomatically described the book as 'By T. J. a well-wisher to King, Parliament and Kingdom' (sig. A1^{r}).

[65] Sig. A5^{r} draws heavily from *Mad Verse* sigs. A1^{r}, A2^{r}, A3^{v}, *and The Third Part* sig. B4^{r} quotes almost verbatim from *Mad Verse*, sigs. A1^{v}–A2^{r}.

[66] John Taylor, *Bull, beare, and horse, cut, curtaile, and longtaile* (London: Henry Gosson, 1638), sig. E2^{r}.

[67] Taylor, *Nonsence*, sig. A6^{v}.

[68] Taylor, *The Second Part*, sig. B4^{r}.

[69] 'cunning, adj.', in *OED Online*, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/45866> [accessed June 2013].

[70] I thank Bernard Capp for this observation.

When Dylan Met the Bard:

Fragments of Screen (Sound) in Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet*

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Michael Almereyda's Hamlet *(2000) offers a stunning contemporary vision of Shakespeare's* Hamlet *set in a sleek urban world of New York City that is plagued by claustrophobia, conspiracy, and global corporate power. The film radically shifts the original period and milieu of* Hamlet*, and drastically edits and fragments Shakespeare's playtext. To counter the film's temporal brevity and drastic cuts, Almereyda employs numerous intertextual and popular culture references, as well as eclectic musical cues, in order to quickly and succinctly convey mood, tone, and significant textual information that have otherwise been excised from his film. Musical quotation is in particular, a potent signifier in* Hamlet. *A fragment of the Bob Dylan song 'All Along the Watchtower' (1966) is used as a filmic shortcut to translate Shakespeare's iconic 'Gravedigger scene' between Hamlet and the Gravedigger from playtext to screen. 'All Along the Watchtower' encapsulates certain ideas about mortality and the worth of life from the 'Gravedigger scene' and demonstrates these issues still resonate in the contemporary urban world the film is set. Dylan's lyrics are a deliberate modern translation of Shakespeare's poetry that casts Hamlet as the used and abused Joker struggling for meaning in his life, and Claudius as both Businessman and Thief, who robs Hamlet of the possibilities of succession.*

In his cinematic adaptation of *Hamlet* (2000)[1] director Michael Almereyda transplants Shakespeare's story into the corporate world of New York City at the end of the twentieth century. While acknowledging the iconography and canonical status of both Shakespeare, and more specifically of *Hamlet* on stage and screen, Almereyda offers a stunning contemporary vision of the Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The radical shift of period and milieu, massive edits to the text, numerous intertextual references to other films and popular culture, and eclectic musical cues, all emphasise that Almereyda's film is a more popular version of *Hamlet*, as opposed to (or at least equivalent to) a canonized version. Criticized for its heavy edits, rearranging, and (over)use of imagery, Almereyda's millennial film adaptation *Hamlet* is a film that literally does not have enough time to get across all of Shakespeare's words. Its running time of 112 minutes is relatively brief when compared with other major film adaptations of *Hamlet*.[2] To combat this temporal brevity, Almereyda creates an Impressionist *Hamlet*. The screen space is bombarded with visual information, Shakespeare's playtext has been significantly edited and visually and aurally fragmented, displaced, and rearranged, and other filmic short cuts, such as intertexual and popular culture references, as well as musical cues, quickly and succinctly convey mood, tone, and significant textual information that have otherwise been excised from his film.[3] Musical quotation is in particular, a potent signifier in *Hamlet*.[4] Almereyda uses Bob Dylan's song 'All Along the Watchtower'[5] in lieu of the 'Gravedigger scene' of Shakespeare's play (*Hamlet,* V, 1).[6] 'All Along the Watchtower' was written by Bob Dylan at the time of several major turning points in his musical and personal life; the ideas that Dylan was struggling with in this tumultuous time in his life, including issues of (his own) mortality and the worth of human life, are subjects that are raised in Hamlet's conversation with the Gravedigger, and with which Hamlet also struggles throughout the film. Almereyda recognises these issues are far too important to be left out of his film, and endeavors to include them in the form of a tiny musical fragment, which whilst short and almost unnoticeable, mirrors Hamlet's own inner turmoil and has great reverberations

throughout the film.[7] 'All Along the Watchtower' becomes more than what Douglas Lanier claims is a 'throwaway allusion'[8]; Dylan's lyrics are a deliberate modern translation of Shakespeare's poetry that casts Hamlet (Ethan Hawke) as the used and abused Joker struggling for meaning in his life, and Claudius (Kyle MacLachlan) as both Businessman and Thief, who robs Hamlet of the possibilities of succession.

Almereyda's film *Hamlet* has generated two soundtracks, the score by renowned composer Carter Burwell, and the soundtrack, featuring some of the popular music used in the film.[9] Unlike the way in which musical choices in film are heavily influenced by and marketed for a particular audience, for example in Luhrmann's highly commercially successful soundtrack from *Romeo + Juliet*[10], and the use of music in Gil Junger's teen film adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* as *10 Things I Hate About You* (1999)[11], music in *Hamlet* is deliberately chosen in order to emphasise the schizophrenic and fragmented mood of the film rather than as a slick marketing tool. Almereyda explains his approach regarding musical choice in the booklet accompanying the soundtrack of the film:

> The idea was to layer in music that could highlight the play's up-to-the moment tensions, textures and contradictions. Music as jagged and out of joint, restless and rich as the thoughts buzzing in Hamlet's brain. (Rykodisc)

Music in *Hamlet* sets the rhythm and the mood of scenes, and conveys what Simon Frith refers to as 'emotional reality'[12]: the underlying thoughts and nature of a character. Frith astutely observes that in film:

> Music, it seems can convey and clarify the emotional significance of a scene, the true, 'real' feelings of the characters involved in it. Music, in short, signals what's 'underneath' or 'behind a film's observable gestures.'[13]

Building on Frith's idea of emotional reality, recent film theory in its discussion of music argues that audiences are invited to establish a relationship with screen characters based on:

> … a reliable access to the character's state of mind, on understanding the context of the character's actions, and having morally evaluated the character on the basis of this knowledge.[14]

The 'chop-and-change' nature of the genre of musical choices in Almereyda's film matches the fragmentation of language and image within the film, and emphasises for the audience the fractured nature of Hamlet's character and state of mind. A prime example in the film of the fragmentation of Hamlet's thoughts and character is Almereyda's decision to split Hamlet's iconic 'To be, or not to be' soliloquy into three separate parts. Each is delivered at a different time in the film, runs for a different length of time, and is presented in a different way. The soliloquy is first delivered not by Hawke's Hamlet, but by Thich Nhat Hanh, Vietnamese Buddhist monk, peace activist, and author. Nhat Hanh offers an adaptation of the soliloquy, when he appears on a television screen in Hamlet's room at Elsinore speaking about the act of 'inter-being' with others. The second instance of the soliloquy is a truncated repetition of the opening 'To be, or no to be' line, delivered by Hawke's Hamlet in replayed footage from his video diary. Hawke finally delivers a full uncut version of the soliloquy in the scene where Hamlet stalks up and down the aisles of a Blockbuster video store.[15]

The soundtrack of Almereyda's film adaptation of *Hamlet* is littered with several styles, genres and samples of music. There is hardly a moment in the film where some sort of music is not heard: from the score by Carter Burwell to the soundtrack featuring eclectic musical artists such as Primal Scream and The Birthday Party. Of particular interest and the focus of this article is Almereyda's use of a fragment of the Bob Dylan song 'All Along the Watchtower', heard during the 'Gravedigger scene' of the film. The song is absent from both soundtracks released in conjunction with the film, a decision likely influenced by the cost associated with licensing such a well-known and popular song. The use of Dylan's 'All Along the Watchtower' is one of the most economical ways a musical cue is used in the film to convey emotion, rhythm, mood and textual information in the film. Almereyda uses a now iconic song— so memorable that he does not have to use the whole song, only

a fragment —to replace an equally iconic scene from *Hamlet*, the 'Gravedigger scene' where Hamlet contemplates Yorick's skull.[16]

Any discussion of the song 'All Along the Watchtower' and the album the song comes from, *John Wesley Harding* cannot begin without some background on Bob Dylan's life before the album's release. This includes Dylan's action of 'going electric' as well as his motorcycle accident of July 29, 1966; both of which are seen by critics as major events in Dylan's life, and influential to the production of the album *John Wesley Harding*. After years of releasing simply-arranged acoustic albums and basic solo performances, singer-songwriter Dylan became the subject of controversy when he 'went electric' during his performance at the Newport Folk Festival in July 1965. At this festival Dylan performed with an electric blues band in concert for the very first time. His first album of electric rock music, *Bringing It All Back Home* was released in March 1965, with two others *Highway 61 Revisited* (August 1965) and *Blonde on Blonde* (May 1966) following shortly after. This controversial and now iconic performance at the Newport Folk Festival has been the focus of several documentaries, including the critically acclaimed *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*[17], which includes footage from the festival, as well as newly-discovered footage of Dylan's famous Manchester Free Trade Hall concert in May 1966. Dylan's performance with his electric blues backing band was met with both cheers and jeers from the audience, as well as criticism from renowned singer Pete Seeger, a key figure in the mid-twentieth century American folk scene, who was backstage during Dylan's performance.[18] Dylan's electric set at Newport made him very unpopular in parts of the folk community (most likely influenced by Seeger's opinion and reaction during Newport), and also alienated fans, who saw his embracing of electric rock music as an abandonment, or outright rejection, of his acoustic folk roots. These fans became more critical and even openly irate when in concerts in 1965 and 1966 Dylan would play half the set acoustically, and half electrically. Such is the case of Dylan's performance at Manchester Free Trade Hall in 1966. One fan, angry with Dylan's electric sound, shouted towards Dylan in

derision: ‘Judas!’ to which Dylan responded: ‘I don’t believe you ... You’re a liar!’ In an act of defiance against the audience’s bitter response to his set, Dylan turned to his band and said: ‘Play it fucking loud!’ before launching into thunderous performance of the song ‘Like a Rolling Stone’. Footage from this performance, including the ‘Judas incident’ is included in *No Direction Home*. Dylan’s work transitioning in style, genre, and mode reflects on Almereyda’s own process of adapting *Hamlet* for a twenty-first century screen. Almereyda takes Shakespeare’s well-known revenge tragedy and transitions *Hamlet* out of what the public might want or expect and into something novel. Almereyda’s film takes the early modern *Hamlet* and twists and turns it into a postmodern space that is technologically up-adapted and potentially unpalatable to many–effectively Almereyda’s moment of ‘going electric.’

In June 1966 Bob Dylan returned exhausted from a gruelling nine-month world tour, where he was constantly met by hostility from his audiences. Writer Tony Scherman notes that Dylan was also under pressure from other commitments, including looming deadlines for his novel *Tarantula* (1971) and a documentary about his just completed world tour.[19] On the morning of July 29, 1966 Bob Dylan crashed his motorcycle near his home in Woodstock, New York, allegedly breaking several vertebrae in the accident. While mystery still surrounds the exact details of the accident,[20] the crash would profoundly affect Dylan. He withdrew from public life and it would be eight years before he toured again. In an interview in *Rolling Stone* magazine Bob Dylan later expressed concern about where both his career and private life were headed up until the point of the crash:

> Then I had that motorcycle accident, which put me outta commission. Then, when I woke up and caught my senses, I realized I was just workin’ for all these *leeches*. And I didn't wanna do that.[21]

This dissatisfaction and resentment and also the sense he was being used by those he was working for, such as record company executives, is evident in the song ‘All Along the Watchtower’ from the album *John Wesley Harding*, recorded after Dylan recovered

from his accident. This questioning of self-worth, and the realisation of, and frustration and anger with, the idea of how people are used by figures of authority plays a significant part in Almereyda's filmic interpretation of *Hamlet*, and is the likely reason for the song's inclusion in the film. Furthermore, the 'leeches' Dylan mentions, feature prominently in *Hamlet* (Claudius, and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in particular) and domineer over Hamlet throughout.

The album *John Wesley Harding* is Bob Dylan's return to 'traditional' acoustic roots music and has been described as a quieter, contemplative record of shorter songs, which draws on imagery from both the Bible and the American Old West. This record marked a departure not only from Dylan's 'bluesy' electric work but from the escalating psychedelic feeling of music from the 1960s.[22] 'All Along the Watchtower' is the fourth song on side one of the album *John Wesley Harding*. The lyrics of the song are derived from the Old Testament of the Bible, in particular the Book of Isaiah (21:5–9), which deals with the fall of Babylon (Isaiah is told to set a watchman who reports to him about the fall of Babylon and all her gods). 'All Along the Watchtower' is an unusual song, in that the conventional starting point of the lyrics, the line: 'All along the watchtower…' is actually in the middle of the song. As a result the song seems to repeat indefinitely. This sense of repetition and inescapability is later reflected in Almereyda's *Hamlet*. The complete lyrics of 'All Along the Watchtower' are as follows:

> 'There must be some way out of here,' said the Joker to the Thief,
> 'There's too much confusion, I can't get no relief.
> Businessmen, they drink my wine, plowmen dig my earth,
> None of them along the line know what any of it is worth.'
>
> 'No reason to get excited,' the Thief, he kindly spoke,
> 'There are many here among us who feel that life is but a joke.
> But you and I, we've been through that, and this is not our fate,
> So let us not talk falsely now, the hour is getting late.'

> All along the watchtower, princes kept the view
> While all the women came and went, barefoot servants, too.
>
> Outside in the distance a wildcat did growl,
> Two riders were approaching, the wind began to howl.[23]

The middle part of the lyrics, the line: '"There must be someway out of here" said the Joker to the Thief' appears at the beginning of the song. This gives the listener a sense of claustrophobia as they both come into and leave the song in the middle. The final line of the song: 'Two riders were approaching' can be inferred to be the Joker and the Thief, and so logically the line would be followed by the repetition of: '"There must be some way out of here" said the Joker to the Thief.' This inference is confirmed by Dylan, who in recent years when performing the song repeats the first verse again at the end of the song.[24] The third verse of 'All Along the Watchtower' goes straight into the first verse, and the song therefore forms an inescapable loop.[25] Along with the lyrics, the chord structure of song is equally repetitive and looping. The chords simply move back and forth between A minor and F major, via the G major chord: 'Am G F G Am.' The G major chord is transient and therefore the song spends about half of its time in the minor mode, the other half in major.[26] The song does not use any form of conventional cadence.[27] There is no way out of the song; it goes on and on, shifting back and forth, major to minor until the song ends on the minor chord, the key's tonic chord.[28]

The repetitive, inescapable nature conveyed in the song 'All Along the Watchtower' mirrors the nuance and mood of various scenes in *Hamlet*. Both Hamlet and Ophelia (Julia Stiles) struggle throughout the film with a need to escape the corrupt commercial world they live in. Almereyda's Denmark is an urban Watchtower, or Panopticon, a place where each person is constantly visible, constantly watched, and contained.[29] Certain spaces occupied by both Hamlet and Ophelia are therefore seen as a maddening prison. In these spaces both Hamlet and Ophelia's actions are severely restricted. For example is Ophelia is forced by her father Polonius

(Bill Murray) to wear a hidden microphone to her meeting with Hamlet, therefore unwillingly betraying him. Carter Burwell's score for the film, while not the focus of my analysis in this article, is also influential in conveying this sense of repression and inescapability and madness.[30] The score is both stark and minimalist, only employing strings and woodwinds, and dark and moody, epitomizing the tempo and environment of the film. The looping nature of Burwell's score combines with the film's visual representation of repetition, the spirals that are constantly present throughout *Hamlet*, in signalling these places of repression.[31] Spirals are dominant in both the Laundromat (the spinning interior of the washing machines), where Hamlet retreats to wash Polonius's blood from his clothes, and is also confronted and physically abused by Claudius, and the Solomon R. Guggenheim museum (the interior viewing gallery forms a helical spiral from the main level up to the top of the building) where Ophelia dissolves into madness. Spirals also adorn the box in which she keeps the remembrances given to her by Hamlet. This box is with her when she drowns. Even Elsinore itself contain spirals: the Hotel's doors endlessly revolve in the film's opening sequence; like The Eagles's 'Hotel California', Elsinore is a place you can always enter, but once inside you are entrapped and are never allowed to leave.

In Almereyda's *Hamlet* an excerpt of 'All Along the Watchtower' is heard briefly during the 'Gravedigger scene' where Hamlet has returned from England to find that Ophelia has died. Initially director Almereyda had filmed Hamlet's conversation with the Gravedigger as an extended scene in the Cypress Hills graveyards in Brooklyn, New York. All that remains of this scene in the final cut of the film are the lyrics that the Gravedigger (Jeffrey Wright) sings as Hamlet and Horatio (Karl Geary) pass him on the way to Ophelia's funeral; the lyrics are the opening lines of 'All Along the Watchtower.' Almereyda's comments in the published screenplay for the film elaborate on his decision to cut back on the 'Gravedigger scene.' He explains that, the 'tone and timing were off, and the whole episode seemed to sidetrack Hamlet's response to Ophelia's death.'[32] In an interview about the film Ethan

Hawke goes on further to critique the logistics of filming the scene in a modern setting: 'How do you find a skull in a modern day cemetery?'[33] (Anderson).

While Almereyda virtually eliminates the 'Gravedigger scene' from his film adaptation, he does not excise it completely. He includes a reference to the 'classical' performance of the scene earlier on in the film in one of the video clips Hamlet watches while working on his short film, *The Mousetrap*. This short film is Almereyda's filmic equivalent of the player's performance of *The Murder of Gonzago* in Shakespeare's playtext; the 'play-within-a-play' becomes a 'film-within-a-film.'[34] The video clip is an excerpt of a performance of *Hamlet* starring renowned Shakespearean actor John Gielguld, where Gielguld's Hamlet grasps the skull of Yorick. Pascale Aebischer identifies this clip as 'Sir John Gielgud's uncredited appearance as Hamlet in a clip from Humphrey Jennings's 1945 documentary *Diary for Timothy*.'[35] As Aebischer rightly notes, this clip pointedly bridges the gap between theatre and the medium of film, hinting both at Shakespeare's theatrical past and new place in the history of cinema. As is the case with 'All Along the Watchtower', the video clip of Gielguld is a stand-in for the truncated 'Gravedigger scene' and missing skull in Almereyda's film. Almereyda uses Gielguld's performance on screen to connect Hamlet's struggle over the nature of life and death (particularly that of his father) with his quest to prove Claudius's guilt. Thus, Hamlet not only enacts revenge for his father but also confirms the worth of old King Hamlet's life.

Almereyda's approach to this 'Gravedigger scene' is a significant departure from how other directors have chosen to present the same scene in recent major film adaptations of *Hamlet*. Franco Zeffirelli and Kenneth Branagh both set the scene conventionally in a graveyard, and contain Hamlet's contemplation of Yorick's skull. The difference between these two films is in the look of the graveyard and the way in which the scene is played by the actors, either downplaying or emphasising the humour. Franco Zeffirelli films the scene outdoors during the day and there is an emphasis on the green and natural looking surroundings. Zeffirelli begins the scene

at start of the Gravedigger's song (*Hamlet*, V. 1. 61–118) and includes no reference to the earlier humorous equivocal conversation regarding Ophelia's death (*Hamlet*, V. 1. 1–20). Actor Trevor Peacock plays the part of the Gravedigger as both straightforward and extremely literal. The Gravedigger is ignorant of the fact that he responds to Mel Gibson's Hamlet with double-entendres, puns and double-meaning. By contrast Kenneth Branagh sets the scene at night time, just before daybreak. The graveyard is obviously filmed on a soundstage, and what is emphasized most strongly is the artificiality of the setting. Unsurprisingly, Branagh's 'full text' film adaptation includes the Gravedigger's earlier comical equivocation 'proving' that Ophelia drowned herself sacrilegiously. Comedian Billy Crystal is cast as the Gravedigger, which falls in line with the 'star casting' of all other major roles in Branagh's adaptation, as well as emphasising the humour of the scene. Crystal accentuates the comedy in the lines; the word play with Hamlet is intentional. Crystal's Gravedigger is purposely playing a calculated and humorous game of words with Branagh's Hamlet, in attempt to win a battle of wits and words. This scene is also one of the select moments where cinematic flashback is used. As Hamlet recalls Yorick's life as court jester, Branagh literally visualises the scene with images of young Hamlet as a child being entertained by Yorick.

Almereyda's use of 'All Along the Watchtower' in lieu of including a complete 'Gravedigger scene' (and skull) is an interesting translation of ideas brought up in the conversation between Hamlet and the Gravedigger in Shakespeare's play, an exchange which is cut out of the film. The scene is important as here the Gravedigger is the sole character of the play who produces words that work to beguile Hamlet, and this scene is the only time within the play where a character is able to match wits with Hamlet.[36] Indira Ghose goes so far as to suggest the Gravedigger not only matches wits with, but is a far superior wit to Hamlet, who is now relegated to the role of 'straight man to the superior comedian [...] who outscores Hamlet in every single round.'[37] Through this interaction Hamlet comes to some understanding and

acceptance of death. As Catherine Belsey argues, in the graveyard Hamlet seeks to gain mastery over death. However, through his encounter with the Gravedigger, Hamlet 'relinquishes his desire for the closure of certainty and mastery over his own death', and comes to recognise 'death's [inevitable] mastery' over him.[38]

As the Gravedigger goes about his work singing merrily, Hamlet mediates on the meaning of human life and the value of the life of people who have died. Wondering how the Gravedigger can sing during his work he asks Horatio: 'Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making?' (*Hamlet*, V. 1. 65–6). Horatio responds that the man, having been a Gravedigger for some time, is so at ease with his work that it does not bother him (*Hamlet*, V. 1. 67–8).[39] As the Gravedigger roughly upturns two skulls while digging a new grave, Hamlet is horrified at the disrespect that he sees the Gravedigger showing to the remains of people who have died (*Hamlet*, V. 1. 89–90). Mortified by the Gravedigger's nonchalant attitude while grave-making, Hamlet confronts the very nature of life and death and goes to speak with him. Hamlet asks him whose grave he digs, to which the Gravedigger responds with equivocation:

Hamlet: *What man dost thou dig it for?*
First Clown[40]: *For no man, sir.*
Hamlet: *What woman, then?*
First Clown: *For none, neither.*
Hamlet: *Who is to be buried in't?*
First Clown: *One that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul,* she's dead.[41]

The grave he digs is for neither a man nor woman, but a corpse. For the Gravedigger the people that have died are simply objects that need to be buried. The Gravedigger, in the opinion of Maurice Hunt, 'does not think that skulls and rotting bodies are identical with the characters who gave them life'[42], and is able to differentiate the object from the person. The Gravedigger's assertion that Ophelia *was* a woman but is now a dead body is an example of how he does not insist 'that a past experience be

unnaturally superimposed upon the present.'[43] Hamlet on the other hand, 'is anxious to individualize the dead, attaching name tags to the indistinguishable skulls scattered across the graveyard.'[44] He is unable to divorce the object he see before him from the person who it once was. Upon learning that a skull the Gravedigger has upturned whilst digging Ophelia's grave is Yorick, Elsinore's former court jester, Hamlet contemplates it as if Yorick were standing before him. For Hamlet the objects of skull and dead body are merged with the memory of people that he's known, Yorick and Ophelia. As Hamlet grasps Yorick's skull he is instantly reminded of memories from his past and how Yorick's life, and the lives of others he has lost, such as his father and Ophelia had value and meaning. Similarly Hamlet later jumps into the grave containing Ophelia's body, embraces her, and rants at Laertes about how much her life meant to him (*Hamlet*, V. 1. 250–289). Only towards the end of his contemplation of Yorick's skull does Hamlet begin to seemingly come to the same sense of understanding and acceptance of the natural process of life and death as the Gravedigger. Looking upon the skull, Hamlet asks Horatio: 'Dost thou think Alexander looked o'this fashion i'th'earth?' (*Hamlet*, V. 1. 194–5). Shakespeare's use of the figure of Alexander the Great (and later of Caesar) suggests that Hamlet's personal reflection on death is now more congruent with that of the Gravedigger. Death transforms everyone, even great kings such as Alexander, Caesar, and subsequently Hamlet's own father (and eventually Hamlet himself) into nothing more than trivial dirt. Thus Hamlet seems to draw the conclusion that no rank or money can change the equality of death, only to revert to his former system of knowing when he emotionally leaps into Ophelia's grave and embraces her body.

Almereyda's film adaptation of *Hamlet* does not have time for the inclusion of Hamlet's lengthy, yet significant contemplation of the value of human life found in Shakespeare's playtext. Realising the importance of the scene, and wanting to include it in some form, Almereyda chooses to briefly sample a modern song which considers similar issues about the value of human life. 'All Along the Watchtower' reflects Bob

Dylan's sense of resentment of being used by record companies and others in his life at the time of his motorcycle accident, and his emerging belief in the importance of personal value compared with commercial value. What is valuable is human life, and what is not, are the more material things associated with a consumer society. 'All Along the Watchtower' opens with a conversation between the characters of a Joker and a Thief. The Joker tells the Thief why he wants to escape, that there is too much confusion in his life. This confusion arises from others (business men and ploughmen) benefiting from his labour, yet not understanding the worth (of his life) behind it. Thus, the opening verse of the song is about competing views on value; material possessions compared to the worth of a human life. This short sound-byte heard during the 'Gravedigger scene' in *Hamlet* illustrates certain ideas about mortality and the worth of someone's life, which director Almereyda considers important and relevant to a modern audience. In short, the 'Gravedigger's song offers a musical substitute for the material embodiment of Yorick's skull.'[45] Like the Joker, Hamlet believes lives have worth and importance. Hamlet's contemplation of Yorick's skull demonstrates his inability to completely embrace the Gravedigger's way of knowing, where dead bodies are divorced from the people they once were. For Hamlet, this value of a life transcends a person's mortal state.

The idea of Hamlet as joker, clown, vice, satirist, fool, sceptic, and malcontent is seen in his connection to the character of Vice, a staple of Medieval morality plays; the notion of Hamlet as Vice has been explored by several modern theorists.[46] In these morality plays, Vice is a fool-like character who resorts to crafty subterfuge, delights in ironic wordplay, and revels confidently in evil. Hamlet may refer to Claudius as a 'vice of Kings' (III.4. 96), and as a 'king of shreds and patches (III, 4. 99) —an allusion to the appearance of Vice in the morality plays (Vice was usually dressed as a fool, in a coat of party-coloured patches)—however, the mantle of Vice sits just as comfortably on his own shoulders. Hamlet's attitude to life is sardonic rather than evil—he delights in responding to Claudius (I. 1. 65; IV. 3. 17–36), Polonius (II. 2. 168–214; III. 2. 367–75),

and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (III. 2. 288–363) with biting sarcasm and nonsense—and he also revels in wordplay with the Gravedigger (V. 1. 110–73). The cryptic, powerful, and parabolic use of words by Hamlet provides a line of connection to Bob Dylan, an extraordinary wordsmith in his own right. We also clearly see Hamlet adopting the fool-like mantle — an outward demonstration of Hamlet's earlier revelation of his intention to 'put an antic disposition on' (I. 5. 170) — when he jests and sings before and after the performance of the play *The Mousetrap*, (III.2 110–28, 263–87). The foil to Hamlet's Joker is then clearly Claudius' dual role as Businessman and Thief. The idea of thieving in the Gravedigger's song is a profound metaphoric, philosophical and literal interpretation of Hamlet's family and political life. Claudius has wrested the kingdom of Denmark from its presumptive heir and now Hamlet is left without realm, title (although he does attempt to reclaim the crown of Denmark on his return from England, as seen when he announces himself as 'Hamlet the Dane' V. 1. 247), and most importantly father.

The Gravedigger's song also ties in well with the nature and vulnerabilities of Hamlet's subject-position in the corporate context in the film. As Douglas Lanier suggests, the allusion to the Bob Dylan song 'epitomizes Almereyda's desire to find "some way out" of the wraparound media system'[47] that Hamlet is subjected to. Throughout the film Hamlet is constantly surrounded by signs of money. Many trademarks and logos, mistaken by viewers as product placements, bombard the screen space, leading to a sense of commercial claustrophobia.[48] Hamlet declares to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern that 'Denmark is a prison' (*Hamlet*, II. 2. 246), and this modern prison, as Almereyda notes, is 'defined by the advertising, by all the hectic distractions, brand names, announcements and ads that crowd our waking hours.'[49] Elsie Walker goes so far as to suggest that in *Hamlet* the human is displaced with signs of money[50] a sentiment that is shared by the Joker in the lyrics of 'All Along the Watchtower.' The Joker explains to the Thief his anger that money is valued over human lives. Reflecting his own dissatisfaction with the commercial exploitation of

his talent, Dylan uses wine and earth as symbols of the material value of a person’s life. The Joker (and Dylan, and Hamlet’s father) has worked hard and now others profit from his labour. Those who profit do so without any consideration for the life of person who has provided these material things; they do not know the true worth of what they are taking. In *Hamlet* money is not only valued over human life but is also considered by some as worth killing for. Hamlet’s father is killed by his uncle Claudius in order to gain possession of the ‘kingdom’ of Denmark Corp. Material possession and wealth are more important to Claudius than the life of his brother. Conversely, for Hamlet, the lives of the people he loves are more important than material things. At the loss of his father Hamlet does not talk about him on a material level, but highlights the personal effect his father’s death has on himself, his mother, the kingdom and the nature of things. Hamlet’s ‘too solid flesh’ soliloquy (*Hamlet*, I. 2. 129–59) is an excellent example of how Hamlet does not dwell on his father’s role and duty as ruler of Denmark, nor on what material spoils accompany this title. Hamlet’s description of his father as an ‘excellent king’ (*Hamlet*, I. 2. 139) is important enough that he refers to it during the soliloquy. However, Hamlet’s emphasis is the realm of the personal. The strength of his parents’ love and marriage is what Hamlet sees as the paramount example of why his father should be considered a great man:

> So excellent a king, that was, to this
> Hyperion to a satyr: so loving to my mother,
> That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
> Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth,
> Must I remember? Why, she would hang on him,
> As if increase of appetite had grown
> By what it fed on[51]

This particular view of his father is also seen later in Hamlet’s response to Horatio’s description of his father as: ‘a goodly king’ (*Hamlet*, I. 2. 186). Hamlet’s reply is to focus on personal value rather than on office and title: ‘*He was a man*, take him for all and

all, I shall not look upon his like again.' (*Hamlet*, I. 2. 187–8, emphasis mine).[52] Having lost his father, Hamlet has now also lost the apparent love of his life, Ophelia, and this discussion on human life can also be seen to be applicable to her. Her life was valuable to Hamlet on a personal level, most notably displayed in his heartfelt admission to Laertes (Liev Schreiber), albeit too late, that: 'I loved Ophelia.' (*Hamlet*, V. 1. 266). Yet Ophelia is little more than a commodity to be controlled and used by the male authority figures in her life.

Burnett suggests that Almereyda's use of 'All Along the Watchtower' leads to an association specifically with the figure of Bob Dylan and his involvement with the civil rights movement, making reference to a rumoured assassination attempt on Dylan's life by the C.I.A.[53] He further connects this with Hamlet's return from London, and suggests that, having thwarted murderous designs on his own life, Hamlet is presented as a folk celebrity like Dylan. However, the words are sung by the Gravedigger, who is played by Jeffery Wright, an African-American actor, and not sung by Hawke's Hamlet himself. Therefore, the connections between Hamlet and this aspect of Dylan's celebrity are tenuous at best, and ignore both the context of the original song, and the emotion and tone behind the lyrics. What I refer to here in particular is Dylan's sense during the period he wrote 'All Along the Watchtower' of being stripped of his humanity and seen as just a commodity. Burnett's allusions to a period of social change, especially with regard to the civil rights movement, are much more applicable. These connections to ideas of race are further punctuated by the fact that 'All Along the Watchtower' was rearranged and brought to a different audience by Jimi Hendrix, an African-American musician. The song, which is synonymous with the 1960s (particularly the degeneration of American society into violence and confusion as a result of its involvement in the Vietnam war), serves as an anthem of that period and of social change (particularly in the United States of America), such as the beginning of racial and gender equality, and lost ideals, brought about by such history changing events as the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Vietnam war, and the

assassinations of influential political figures such as President John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara. The song also acts as a momentary example of nostalgia for a period that is a complete juxtaposition of the world in which this film adaptation of *Hamlet* is set, a freer, earthy culture (one immediately thinks of the wine and earth Dylan refers to in the song ‘All Along the Watchtower’, which also hints at the connection of the bacchanal symbology of wine and the free love movement of the 1960s), as opposed to the orderly, urban, material, capitalistic, cold, modern world where Hamlet lives. Almereyda pointedly explains that the scene in the graveyard is the ‘only respite from the city’s hard surfaced, mirrors, screens and signs.’[54] The graveyard scene was filmed in Brooklyn’s Cypress Hills Cemetery. Founded in 1848, Cypress Hills was one of the first rural cemeteries in America and has become not only a prestigious place to be buried (baseball player Jackie Robinson, actress Mae West, and artist Piet Mondrian are all buried here, along with several recipients of the Medal of Honor, the United States of America's highest military honor), but a place of natural respite, where people can enjoy the tranquillity of the landscaped surrounds away from the harsh grasp of Manhattan’s urban claustrophobia.

The significance of the Gravedigger scene, or what’s left of it in Almereyda’s film, is summarized astutely by Samuel Crowl in his remark that the scene signals a ‘return to a more natural and honest landscape—earth and death.’[55] The break from the harshly reflective, sterile hold of Manhattan’s urban landscape and a return to a natural space is achieved both visually and aurally. The bright warm autumn colours of the trees and the lush green of the grass in the graveyard contrast with the dark tones and blue filter that are used in the rest of the film. The scene’s setting is visually reminiscent of the graveyard in Zeffirelli’s film adaptation of *Hamlet*. As Burnett astutely argues, Hamlet and Ophelia are themselves representative of children corrupted by the impurity and immorality of the urban corporate world which surrounds them.[56] The graveyard and its natural surrounds is the one place that is

honest and free from the corruption and dysfunction of both Manhattan (and Elsinore) and those who have power and influence in that space. Both Hamlet and Ophelia have a desire for a connection with this pure natural world, and strive for a return to a location and a landscape unaffected by consumerism.[57] However, the only connection each is ultimately able to have is with representations of the natural world. Hamlet obsesses over a filmed flower during the preparation of his *The Mousetrap* short film. The filmed flower on his screen repeatedly opens and closes, lives and dies, no longer alive yet also not allowed to permanently die. Ophelia clutches a diorama of a forest scene while chastised by her father, an escape from the harsh real world and her impending madness. When she does succumb to insanity, in lieu of actual flowers, she distributes Polaroid photographs of them[58]. Substitute images of nature follow Ophelia to her death; she drowns not in a river, but in the fountain of a hotel lobby.[59] Only when she is buried in the cemetery is Ophelia allowed a connection with nature, albeit a landscaped park. Death becomes the ultimate escape from her life and the claustrophobia and surveillance that accompanies it. By film's end, Hamlet has also joined her.

In a 2011 article on Bob Dylan's greatest songs in a tribute issue of *Rolling Stone* magazine celebrating Dylan's seventieth birthday, U2 front man Bono writes of the connection between the two 'Bards', Shakespeare and Dylan: 'But at the top of this dysfunctional family tree sits the king of spitting fire himself, the juggler of beauty and truth, our own Willy Shakespeare in a polka-dot shirt.'[60] In his film adaptation *Hamlet* Michael Almereyda uses Dylan's iconic song 'All Along the Watchtower' as a fragmentary shortcut between a modern world saturated with pop references, and the multiple layers of beauty and meaning that are conveyed in the work of Bards from the Renaissance and the twentieth century, Shakespeare and Dylan. Almereyda recognises that ideas in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* relating to the worth of human life, the nature of death, and the desire to escape a corrupt money-hungry world still resonate in the work of modern troubadours like Dylan. Dylan himself acknowledges the

universality of themes raised in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* by including the figure of Ophelia in his epic song 'Desolation Row' which closes the album *Highway 61 Revisited* (1965), as well more significantly name-checking Shakespeare in the song 'Stuck Inside Of Mobile With The Memphis Blues Again,' from Dylan's seminal album *Blonde on Blonde* (1966).[61] The song fragment from 'All Along the Watchtower' provides a bridge between Shakespeare's and Dylan's ideas on humanity, and is a perfect cinematic substitute for the truncated 'Gravedigger scene' in *Hamlet*, a film which reflects an urban world where the worth of human life is outweighed by the value of material possessions. Hamlet and Ophelia's only escape from this world dominated by images, technology, surveillance and repression is nature; but sadly they are only able to find some way out of this corrupt and fragmented urban space through their untimely deaths.

Notes

[1] *Hamlet*, dir. Michael Almereyda (Miramax, 2000) [on DVD].

[2] Kenneth Branagh's 'full text' version at 242 minutes is more than double the running time of Almereyda's film. Laurence Olivier's and Franco Zeffirelli's adaptations also have longer running times (155 and 130 minutes respectively). *William Shakespeare's Hamlet*, dir. Kenneth Branagh (Castle Rock Entertainment/Sony Pictures Entertainment, 1996) [on VHS]; *Hamlet*, dir. Franco Zeffirelli (Icon Entertainment International/ Warner Bros, 1990) [on VHS]; *Hamlet*, dir. Laurence Olivier (Two Cities Films / Universal Pictures 1948) [on VHS].

[3] In this respect Almereyda's approach to adapting *Hamlet* for the screen owes more to Baz Luhrmann's frenetic reimagining of *Romeo and Juliet*, *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* (1996) than to Branagh's visual extravaganza *William Shakespeare's Hamlet*. *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*, dir. Baz Luhrmann (Bazmark Films/Twentieth Century Fox, 1996) [on DVD].

[4] For more on the diverse range of musical responses to Shakespeare that have taken place from the seventeenth century onwards see: Adam Hansen, *Shakespeare and Popular Music* (London; New York: Continuum, 2010); Julie Sanders, *Shakespeare and Music: Afterlives and Borrowings* (Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2007); Stephen M. Buhler, 'Musical Shakespeares: Attending to Ophelia, Juliet, and Desdemona', *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Popular Culture*, ed. by Robert Shaughnessy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 150–74; Stephen M. Buhler, 'Reviving Juliet, Repackaging Romeo: Transformations of Character in Pop and Post-pop Music', in *Shakespeare After Mass Media*, ed. by Richard Burt (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 243–64; and Arthur Graham, *Shakespeare in Opera, Ballet, Orchestral Music, and Song: An Introduction to Music Inspired by the Bard* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997). For more on the use of music in Shakespeare film adaptations see: Kendra Preston Leonard, *Shakespeare, Madness, and Music: Scoring Insanity in Cinematic Adaptations* (Lanham: The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc., 2009); Marina Gerzic, 'The Intersection of Shakespeare and Popular Culture: an Intertextual Examination of Some Millennial Shakespearean Film Adaptations (1999-2001), With Special Reference to Music' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Western Australia, Perth, 2008); and Sanders (2007).

[5] Bob Dylan, 'All Along the Watchtower', *John Wesley Harding* (Columbia Records, 1967; Sony Music, 2004) [on CD].

[6] All line citations from *Hamlet* are taken from William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* in *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford, UK; New York: Oxford University Press, 1988; repr. 1998), pp. 653–90.

[7] Almereyda repeats this technique of using a song by Bob Dylan as a musical short cut in his recent film adaptation of *Cymbeline*, dir. Michael Almereyda (Lionsgate, 2015) [on DVD]. Actress Milla Jovovich, who plays the scheming Queen (and wife to Cymbeline), sings the Dylan song 'Dark Eyes' (1985).

[8] Douglas Lanier, 'Shakescorp Noir', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 53.2 Summer (2002), 157–80 (180).

[9] Carter Burwell, *Hamlet: Original Score from the Miramax Motion Picture* (Varèse Sarabande Records, 2000) [on CD]; Various Artists, *Music From The Motion Picture Hamlet* (Rykodisc, 2000) [on CD].

[10] Baz Luhrmann wrote some of his musical choices for the soundtrack into his screenplay. The published screenplay for *Romeo + Juliet* contains cues for a limited number of musical selections on the soundtrack, some of which were eventually changed during postproduction. Craig Pearce, Baz Luhrmann, and William Shakespeare, *William Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet: The Contemporary Film, the Classic Play* (London: Hodder Children's, 1997), pp. 17, 45, 78, 94, 107, and 138. The remainder of the songs from the soundtrack, including most of the well-known (and commercially successful) songs by musical artists such as Radiohead, Garbage, The Cardigans, and Des'ree were added during post-production. Luhrmann discusses the process of selecting the music for the film in the special 'Music Edition' of *Romeo + Juliet*. *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*: *Music Edition*, dir. Baz Luhrmann

(Bazmark Films/Twentieth Century Fox, 2009) [on DVD]. Luhrmann discusses the difficulty with getting his musical choices approved in his Q&A with journalist Harvey Kubernik. Harvey Kubernik, 'Baz Luhrmann', in *Hollywood Shack Job: Rock Music in Film and on Your Screen* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), pp. 224–33.

[11] *10 Things I Hate About You*, dir. Gil Junger (Buena Vista, 1999) [on DVD]. For more on music and marketing in *Romeo + Juliet* and *10 Things I Hate About You* see Pamela Swanigan, 'Music as Facing-Page Translation in Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet*', *Borrowers and Lenders* 7.2 (Fall 2012/Winter 2013), np, <http://www.borrowers.uga.edu/497/show> [accessed on 2 October 2014]; Douglas Lanier, 'Recent Shakespeare Adaptation and the Mutation of Cultural Capital', *Shakespeare Studies* 38 (2010), 104-13, Sanders (2007), pp. 159–81; Richard Burt, 'Afterword: T(e)en Things I Hate about Girlene Shakesploitation Flicks in the Late 1990s, or, Not-So-Fast Times at Shakespeare High', in *Spectacular Shakespeare: Critical Theory and Popular Cinema*, ed. by Courtney Lehmann and Lisa S. Starks (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; London; Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 2002), pp. 205–32 (pp. 212–8); and Courtney Lehmann, 'Strictly Shakespeare? Dead Letters, Ghostly Fathers, and the Cultural Pathology of Authorship in Baz Luhrmann's *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 52.2 (2001) 189–221 (193–4). For an analysis of the commodification (and watering down) of the Riot Girl scene (and its music) in *10 Things I Hate About You*, see Jennifer Clement, 'The Postfeminist Mystique: Feminism and Shakespearean Adaptation in *10 Things I Hate About You* and *She's the Man*', *Borrowers and Lenders* 3.2 (Spring/Summer 2008), np, <http://www.borrowers.uga.edu/781814/show> [accessed on 2 October 2014]; and Gerzic (2008), pp. 59–69.

[12] Simon Frith, 'Mood Music: An Inquiry into Narrative Film Music', *Screen* 25 (1984), 78–87 (83).

[13] Frith, 83–4.

[14] Murray Smith, 'Altered States: Character and Emotional Response in the Cinema', *Cinema Journal* 33.4 (1994), 34–56. See also, Richard Dyer, *In the Space of a Song: The Uses of Song in Film* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012), especially pp. 5–12 where Dyer discusses music's affective potential to 'name and ground emotions' (5); Kathryn M. Kalinak, *Film Music: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2010), pp. 4–5, 16–21; K. J., Donnelly (ed.), *Film Music: Critical Approaches* (New York: Continuum, 2001); and John Mundy, *Popular Music on Screen* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999). There has recently been some fascinating analysis done of the psychology behind audiences responses to music in film, in particular how viewers read and relate to characters and their emotions through musical cues; see Berthold Hoeckner, et al. 'Film Music Influences How Viewers Relate to Movie Characters', *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts* 5.2 (2011), 146–53; and S. L. Tan, M. P. Spackman, and M. A. Bezdek, 'Viewers' Interpretations of Film Characters' Emotions: Effects of Presenting Film Music Before or After a Character is Shown', *Music Perception*, 25.2 (2007), 135–52.

[15] For more on the fragmentation of Hamlet's soliloquy and the influence of Thich Nhat Hanh's Buddhist ideas of 'interbeing' see: Melissa Croteau, 'Celluloid Revelations: Millennial Culture and Dialogic "Pastiche" in Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet* (2000)', in *Apocalytic Shakespeare*, ed. by Melissa Croteau and Carolyn Jess-Cooke (Jefferson, NC: McFarlnad, 2009), pp. 110–31 (pp. 115–22); Peter S. Donaldson, 'Hamlet Among the Pixelvisionaries: Video Art, Authenticity, and "Wisdom" in Almereyda's Hamlet', in *A Concise Companion to Shakespeare on Screen*, ed. by Diana E. Henderson (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 216–37; Alessandro Abbate, '"To Be or Inter-Be": Almereyda's End-of-Millennium *Hamlet*', *Literature/Film Quarterly* 32.2 (2004), 82–8; and Joana Owens, '"Images, Images, Images": The Contemporary Landscape of Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet*', *Interdisciplinary Humanities* 20.2 (2003), 21–7 (22–4). As the video of Thich Nhat Hanh plays in the background, Hamlet watches previously recorded footage on his Pixelvision camera of Ophelia reading the Eastern Spiritualist text *On Living and Dying* (1992) by Jiddu Krishnamurti (the book argues that death is inseparably joined with life). Amanda Rooks identifies the book Ophelia is reading. Amanda Rooks, 'The "New" Ophelia in Michael Almereyda's Hamlet', *Literature-Film Quarterly* 42.2 (2014), 475–86 (482). This brief moment poignantly connects Ophelia's own philosophy and belief, the connection between death and life (that

Krishnamurti talks about in *On Living and Dying*), with the film's fragmentation of the 'To be, or not to be' soliloquy.

[16] The use of 'All Along the Watchtower' as a musical cue is repeated by composer Bear McCreary in his music for the re-imagined science fiction television series *Battlestar Galactica* (2003, 2004–2009). The musical experience is associated in the series with a 'switch going off' in the minds of four characters, who suddenly become aware that they are not humans, but human-looking Cylons (human-created robots).

[17] *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*, dir. Martin Scorsese (PBS/Paramount Pictures, 2005) [on DVD].

[18] Pete Seeger, who has been referred to as a folk purist, was an early supporter of Dylan's career. Seeger claims that during Dylan's performance he went to the sound system and told the technicians to: 'Get that distortion out of his voice [...] It's terrible. If I had an axe, I'd chop the microphone cable right now.' (Pete Seeger qtd in *No Direction Home*). Seeger's statement has become the basis for several rumours about Dylan's set at Newport, including that a festival board member wanted to pull out the entire electrical wiring system, or that Seeger actually had an axe and was prepared to use it. In *No Direction Home* Bob Dylan claimed that Pete Seeger's unenthusiastic response to his set was like a 'dagger in his heart' and made him 'want to go out and get drunk' (Bob Dylan qtd in *No Direction Home*). Seeger's reaction to Dylan's set indicates that he preferred to hear Dylan play songs acoustically, which he reveals in his recollection of the events at Newport during an interview with David Kupfer. David Kupfer, 'Long Time Passing: An Interview With Pete Seeger', *Whole Earth* 104 Spring (2001), 19–22 (21).

[19] Tony Scherman, 'The Bob Dylan Motorcycle-Crash Mystery', *American Heritage.com: History's Homepage*, last updated 29 July 2006, <http://www.americanheritage.com/articles/web/20060729-bob-dylan-motorcycle-woodstock-methamphetamine-robert-shelton-howard-sounes-ed-thaler.shtml/> [accessed 20 October 2009].

[20] For more on the mystery behind Dylan's crash see: Scherman (2006).

[21] Kurt Loder, 'Bob Dylan, Recovering Christian,' *Rolling Stone* 21 June 1984, <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/bob-dylan-recovering-christian-19840621> [accessed on 21 October 2009], emphasis is Loder's. Dylan expounds on his state of mind at the time in a previously unheard audio interview (dated March 1966). During this interview Dylan talks angrily about the people he thinks are taking advantage of him: 'I'm sick of giving creeps money off my soul…' Bob Dylan qtd in Rebecca Jones, 'Dylan Tapes Reveal Heroin Addiction', *BBC Today*, last updated 23 May 2011, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_9492000/9492886.stm> [accessed on 29 November 2011].

[22] During this period The Beatles released their seminal album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967) and The Rolling Stones attempted psychedelic sound in *Their Satanic Majesties Request* (1967). Jimi Hendrix would draw the song 'All Along the Watchtower' back into the realm of psychedelia, by including a cover version on the album *Electric Ladyland* (1968) by The Jimi Hendrix Experience. Dylan himself would later acknowledge Hendrix's version of the song as 'definitive.' When asked by an interviewer about what he thought of Hendrix's cover of the song, Bob Dylan responded with: 'It overwhelmed me, really. He had such talent, he could find things inside a song and vigorously develop them. He found things that other people wouldn't think of finding in there. He probably improved upon it by the spaces he was using. I took license with the song from his version, actually, and continue to do it to this day.' Bob Dylan qtd in John Dolan, 'A Midnight Chat with Bob Dylan', *Fort Lauderdale Sun Sentinel* September 28 1995, section 1.E. For more on the connection between Dylan's and Hendrix's versions of 'All Along the Watchtower' see: Albin J. Zak III, 'Bob Dylan and Jimi Hendrix: Juxtaposition and Transformation "All Along the Watchtower"', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 57.3 (2004), 599–644.

[23] Bob Dylan, 'All Along the Watchtower', *BobDylan.com* <http://www.bobdylan.com/songs/all-along-the-watchtower> [accessed on 10 January 2010].

[24] Michael Gray, *The Bob Dylan Encyclopedia* (London; New York: Continuum International, 2006), p. 7.

[25] Christopher B. Ricks notes of the song's unusual looping repetitive structure, that: 'at the conclusion of the last verse, it is as if the song bizarrely begins at last, and as if the myth began again.' Christopher B. Ricks, *Dylan's Visions of Sin* (London: Viking Books, 2003), p. 359. In an interview with John Cohen and Happy Traum published in the folk music magazine *Sing Out!* (October, 1968), Dylan acknowledges the unconventional sense of time within the song's structure: ''All Along the Watchtower', which opens up in a slightly different way, in a stranger way, for we have the cycle of events working in a rather reverse order.' Bob Dylan qtd in John Cohen and Happy Traum, 'Interview with John Cohen and Happy Traum, *Sing Out!:* October/November 1968', in *Bob Dylan: The Essential Interviews*, ed. by Jonathan Cott (New York: Wenner Books, 2006): pp. 113–39 (p. 122).

[26] In musical modulation, a transient chord is 'an intermediate chord foreign both to the key left and that reached.' Theodore Baker, *A Dictionary of Musical Terms* (New York: Schirmer, 1923), p. 203.

[27] Cadence is the succession of notes or more often chords 'leading to a musical repose; the close or ending of a phrase, section, or movement.' Baker, pp. 33–4.

[28] A tonic chord is 'one which has the key-note as root.' (Baker, p. 206). For example, while A-major and A-minor have different modes they both have the same tonic. The tonic is the first note of a musical scale in the tonal method of musical composition. So A-minor is the parallel minor of A-major.

[29] For more on surveillance in Almereyda's film adaptation *Hamlet*, see: Elizabeth Klett, 'The Heart of the Mystery: Surveillance in Michael Almereyda and Gregory Doran's Films of *Hamlet*', *Literature-Film Quarterly* 41.2 (2013), 102–16; Mark Thornton Burnett, ''I See My Father' in 'My Mind's Eye': Surveillance and the Filmic Hamlet', in *Screening Shakespeare in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. by Mark Thornton Burnett and Ramona Wray (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp. 31–52; and Mark Thornton Burnett, '"To Hear and See the Matter": Communicating Technology in Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet* (2000)', *Cinema Journal* 42.3 Spring (2003), 48–69 (52–3).

[30] In the booklet that accompanies Carter Burwell's score for the film, Michael Almereyda describes how the music transports the listener and viewer of the film into the maddening dilemma of the film's central character: 'repeating melodies that circle and superb a heroic ideal. Lucid chords describing a descent into madness, man's mind resisting, and then riding, the sweep of fate, the coiling movements of love and loss.' Michael Almereyda qtd in the booklet accompanying the film's score. Burwell [on CD]

[31] For more on the way in which Carter Burwell's score emphasises the repressive spaces within the film see: Burnett (2003), 53.

[32] Michael Almereyda, *William Shakespeare's Hamlet* (London: Faber & Faber, 2000), p. 140.

[33] Jeffrey M. Anderson, 'Brushing Up Shakespeare: Interview with Ethan Hawke & Michael Almereyda', *Combustible Celluloid,* last updated 4 May 2000, <http://www.combustiblecelluloid.com/inthawke.shtml> [accessed on 5 Aug. 2004].

[34] For more on Hamlet's videoing, see Marina Gerzic, 'Reel life: Representing the Human in Michael Almereyda's Hamlet', in *What is the Human? Australian Voices from the Humanities*, edited by Bob Hodge, Philippa Kelly, and Liam Semler (Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2012), pp. 237–52; Donaldson, (2006), Yu Jin Ko, '"The Mousetrap" and Remembrance in Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet*', *Shakespeare Bulletin* 23.4 (2005), 19–33; Katherine Rowe, ''Remember Me': Technologies of Memory in Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet*', in *Shakespeare, the Movie, II: Popularizing the Plays on Film, Television, and DVD*, ed. by Richard Burt and Lynda E. Boose (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 37–55; and Courtney Lehmann, 'The Machine in the Ghost: Hamlet's Cinematographic Kingdom', in *Shakespeare Remains: Theatre to Film, Early Modern to Postmodern* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), pp. 89–129 (esp. pp. 98–9).

[35] Pascale Aebischer, *Shakespeare's Violated Bodies: Stage and Screen Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 100.

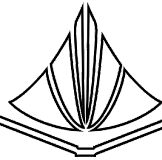
[36] For more on the significance of the graveyard scene in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, see: Indira Ghose, 'Jesting with Death: Hamlet in the Graveyard', *Textual Practice* 24.6 (2010), 1003–18; Catherine Belsey, 'Sibling Rivalry: Hamlet and the First Murder', *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden: The Construction of Family Values in Early Modern Culture* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 129–74; Maurice Hunt, 'Hamlet, the

Gravedigger, and Indecorous Decorum', *College Literature* 11.2 (Spring, 1984), 141–50; Gerard Reedy, '"Alexander Died": *Hamlet*, V. i. 216-40', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 24.2 (Spring, 1973), 128–34; Eleanor Prosser, 'The Readiness is All', in *Hamlet and Revenge*, second edt. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1971), pp. 219–42 (pp. 219–27); Bridget Gellert, 'The Iconography of Melancholy in the Graveyard Scene of "Hamlet"', *Studies in Philology* 67.1 (1970), 57–66; T. McAlindon, 'Indecorum in 'Hamlet', *Shakespeare Studies* 5 (1970), 70–96; Harry Morris, '"Hamlet" as a "Memento Mori" Poem', *PMLA* 85.5 (1970), 1035–40 (1036–8); and J. Dover-Wilson, 'Hamlet Returns', in *What Happens in Hamlet* (Cambridge University Press, 1951), pp. 265–75.
[37] Ghose, 1009.
[38] Belsey, pp. 170 and 166.
[39] Gellert reads this remark as Hamlet's 'denial of his own behavior in earlier episodes' (65), for example his jests about Polonius' corpse. Gellert elaborates that, 'It is now the Clowns that do the fooling' (66), a thought much in line with Ghose's comments above (see note xxxvii).
[40] While I have chosen to refer to the character as the Gravedigger, in Shakespeare's playtext the character of the Gravedigger is referred to by the name The First Clown.
[41] *Hamlet*, V. 1. 126–32.
[42] Hunt, 143.
[43] Hunt, 143.
[44] Ghose, 1011.
[45] Burnett (2003), 55.
[46] See Margreta de Grazia, *Hamlet Without Hamlet* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), esp. pp. 5, 181–194; Arthur McGee, *The Elizabethan Hamlet* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), esp. pp. 68–137; and Robert Weimann, 'Mimesis in Hamlet', in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, ed. by Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (London: Metheun, 1985), pp. 275–92. De Grazia argues that Hamlet's delay and reputed madness are representations of the behaviours of 'stock theatrical images of privation', the clown, madman, Vice, and devil, rather than images of psychological disorder (de Grazia 2007, p. 5). McGee refers to Hamlet's sadistic jesting during his game of hide-and-seek with Polonius' body as 'typical of Vice.' (McGee 1987, p. 136). Wiemann suggest that Hamlet 'as actor-character … revitalizes the legacy of the Vice actor as director and master of ceremonies theatrical.' (Weimann 1985, p. 285). For a more detailed look at Hamlet as a clown-like character see Manfred Draudt, 'The Comedy of Hamlet', *Atlantis* XXIV.2 (2002), 85–107; Malcolm A. Nelson, 'Hamlet', in *Fools and Jesters in Literature, Art, and History: A Bio-bibliographical Sourcebook*, ed. by Vicki K. Janik (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), pp. 231–36; and Sandra J. Pyle, 'Physician Heal Thyself -- Hamlet, the Clown Prince, Purges Sloth', in *Mirth and Morality of Shakespeare's Holy Fools* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998), pp. 115–42.
[47] Lanier, 'Shakescorp Noir', 180.
[48] Michael Almereyda paid for the privilege of using all the brand names. At the end of the film there is a long list of credits and thanks for all the companies that allowed their products and trademarks to be used.
[49] Almereyda, *William Shakespeare's Hamlet* (2000), p. xi.
[50] Elsie Walker, 'A 'Harsh World' of Soundbite Shakespeare: Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet* (2000', *EnterText: An Interactive Interdisciplinary E-Journal for Cultural and Historical Studies and Creative Work* 1.2 (2001), 317–41, (331).
[51] *Hamlet*, I. 2. 139–45.
[52] See also Hamlet's comparisons of his father and uncle (*Hamlet*, I. 2. 152–53 and *Hamlet*, III. 4. 52–66). Visual differences are symbolic of their dissimilarity in character and morality. Hamlet's father is a 'fair mountain' majestic and godlike, whilst his uncle is a 'moor' dark and muddy.
[53] Burnett (2003), 61.
[54] Michael Almereyda, 'A Live Wire to the Brain: Hooking Up "Hamlet"', *New York Times* May 7. 2000, p. 2.19.

[55] Samuel Crowl, *Shakespeare at the Cineplex: The Kenneth Branagh Era* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2003), p. 190.
[56] Burnett (2003), 56.
[57] Burnett (2003), 55.
[58] Carolyn Jess incorrectly claims the Polaroids Ophelia shows Claudius are of her father, Polonius. They are instead images of flowers, and are only handed to Laertes (and dropped on the floor) and not shown to anyone else. Carolyn Jess, 'The Promethean Apparatus: Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet* as Cinematic Allegory', *Literature/Film Quarterly* 32.2 (2004), 90–6 (92).
[59] For an in-depth analysis of the Ophelia (including her drowning scene) in Michael Almereyda's film adaptation of *Hamlet*, see Rooks (2014).
[60] Bono qtd in 'Great Artists Pay Tribute to Their Favourite Bob Dylan Songs', *Rolling Stone* May 10 2011, < http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/great-artists-pay-tribute-to-their-favorite-bob-dylan-songs-20110511> [accessed on 16 May 2011].
[61] Bob Dylan, 'Desolation Row', *Highway 61 Revisited* (Columbia Records, 1965; Sony Music, 2010) [on CD]. 'Stuck Inside Of Mobile With The Memphis Blues Again', *Blonde on Blonde* (Columbia Records, 1966, 2004) [on CD]: 'Shakespeare, he's in the alley / With his pointed shoes and his bells / Speaking to some French girl / Who says she knows me well.' Bob Dylan, 'Stuck Inside Of Mobile With The Memphis Blues Again', *BobDylan.com*, <http://www.bobdylan.com/us/songs/stuck-inside-mobile-memphis-blues-again> [accessed on 26 May 2015]. For more on the connection between Dylan's music and Shakespeare, see Hansen (2010), pp. 37, 40–2, and 149–50; and Marjorie Garber, *Shakespeare and Modern Culture* (New York: Pantheon, 2008), p. 50–1.

For 'Physitians of the Soule':

The Roles of 'Flight' and 'Hatred of Abomination' in Thomas Wright's *The Passions of the Minde in Generall*



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Abstract: This article attempts to understand how Thomas Wright's 1604 work, The Passions of the Minde in Generall*, might have fitted into his overall mission as an English Catholic preacher, particularly when read via Wright's understanding of Thomas Aquinas's passion of fuga seu abominatio. Some historians claim that Wright was a controversialist, previously describing* The Passions *as either a radical departure from Wright's mission, or the work of a different Thomas Wright. Earlier attempts to find a missionary element within* The Passions *have been inadequate. Through a close reading of* The Passions*, specifically analysing Wright's interpretation of fuga seu abominatio within the context of Wright's intended readership, the main message of* The Passions*, and his background, this article suggests a possible reading of the text as a work aimed specifically at fellow English Catholics. To Wright, the passions of hatred of abomination and flight or detestation, derived primarily from Aquinas's fuga seu abominatio, were not simply a form of disgust, as often assumed, but the potential worldly or otherworldly harm that someone we love, such as a neighbour, might face from the abominable evil of sin and damnation. By linking hatred of abomination, flight or detestation, and Wright's particular view of sin together, Wright was teaching English Catholics how these passions might be used to cure diseased souls, turning the work into a guide for preaching.*

In 1595, an English Catholic priest, Thomas Wright, picked a fight with Matthew Hutton, the new Archbishop of York. Wright believed that it was acceptable for a subject to kill his Monarch in the event of tyranny; the Archbishop disagreed. Earlier that year, Wright had returned to England after twenty years of exile. He had openly presented himself to Anthony Bacon, secretary to Queen Elizabeth’s treasurer and her one-time favourite, Robert Devereux, the Second Earl of Essex. Before returning home, Wright had upset, and then resigned from, the Jesuit order, and had come to realise that his loyalties lay with England. Wright struck a deal: he could be confident of his freedom in return for intelligence on King Phillip of Spain. Unfortunately for Wright, the protection that this deal afforded him was not enough to keep him out of prison after a confrontation with the Church’s second most senior Archbishop. He found himself under arrest within a year, and his situation worsened when he published a highly controversial work, *The Disposition or Garnishmente of the Soule* (henceforth referred to as *Disposition)*, promoting Catholicism.[1] Not only did this work call Wright’s reputation into question, it was also used to attack Essex and another of Wright’s circle, Henry Wriothesley, the Third Earl of Southampton. The chief prosecutor at the inevitable trial of Essex and Southampton was Anthony Bacon’s famous brother, Sir Francis Bacon, and Wright acted as a witness for the prosecution. Although Southampton claimed to have met Wright only once, he was imprisoned as a traitor until 1603. He could, nevertheless, take comfort from retaining his head, unlike Essex, who lost his in 1601.[2]

With the exception of one publication, Wright appears to have been a troublemaker. Historian Thomas O. Sloan describes him as a ‘controversialist' whose work and deeds were suffused ‘with a clear, doctrinaire, religious stance’.[3] The exception to this is believed to be his most famous publication, 1601’s *The Passions of the Minde*, and more particularly the extended version published in 1604, *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* (the latter is the focus of this paper and hereafter

referred to as *The Passions*).[4] This seems odd. If Wright was a controversialist, it is surely more likely that *The Passions* was in some way a part of Wright's missionary activities, rather than some radical departure. However, many of the assumptions of Wright's controversial nature were the result of his attempt to be both a good Catholic and a loyal Englishman, and his belief that the two were not mutually exclusive.

This article has two goals. The first is to try to comprehend how Wright described Thomas Aquinas's attempts to understand the nameless passion that lies opposite to desire that Aquinas described as *fuga seu abominatio*.[5] Wright's take on this passion will be unpicked in the second half, beginning with an exploration of Wright's view on the passions as a set of three binaries: those that tend towards an absolute, future or present good or evil. It will then explore how Wright developed Cajetan's interpretation of Aquinas's single *fuga seu abominatio* as two related passions — 'flight or detestation' and 'hatred of abomination' — within this framework.[6] These passions are often mistaken within modern historiography for disgust. By comparing Wright's interpretation of them to modern notions of disgust, it is possible to develop a fuller understanding of the differences between them, and so better understand *fuga seu abominatio's* role in *The Passions.* This is not to suggest that Wright's was the only interpretation of the passion in existence at the time, however, it is likely that those within his intended English Catholic readership would have recognised the passion as Wright described it.

The second and primary goal is to use Wright's interpretation of *fuga seu abominatio* in the context of a close reading of *The Passions*. This will highlight aspects of the work, and elements of a particularly relevant earlier work by Wright that caused him to be imprisoned, *The Disposition*, to suggest that *The Passions* was part of Wright's missionary activities. This is best understood through a criticism of how some historians have previously explained *The Passions*' central medico-theological

message of the cure and control of unruly or inordinate passions and how they were to be used to influence the actions of others. When placed alongside an examination of Wright's understanding of *fuga seu abominatio*, it reveals *The Passions*, at least in part, as a guide to conversion for English Catholics. This thread will run throughout the paper and into the conclusion. It will start with a discussion of interpretations of Wright's life as that of a troublemaker, suggesting that he was more likely someone trying to balance Catholicism and loyalty to his native England. This loyalty would have included attempting to turn the English nation he loved away from a Protestantism he reviled.

A CONTROVERSIALIST?

Wright was born to a Catholic family in York in 1561, but fled to the continent at sixteen years of age during a period of increased hostility against Catholics.[7] Desiring to become a missionary, Wright attended the Douai Seminary, followed by the English College in Rome. In 1580, he joined the Society of Jesus and in 1586 became a priest. Another more senior English Catholic, Father Robert Parsons, recognised Wright's talent for debating and channelled the young priest's energies into the teaching of apologetics against heretics at the Valladolid Seminary. This ploy did not achieve a great deal of success: Wright soon focused his rhetoric on his own Jesuit order, disagreeing with their support for a Spanish invasion of England. Instead, he suggested that by submitting to the English Crown, an era of tolerance might begin, believing that Elizabeth's successor would be a Catholic and the troubles would be over. This quarrel caused friction between Wright and the influential Allen-Parsons party, and particularly his old mentor, Robert Parsons. Parsons not only supported a Catholic invasion, but went as far as to support, if not plan, the assassination of Queen Elizabeth and the placing of Mary Queen of Scots on the throne prior to any full scale Catholic mission in England.[8] Eventually, this

rift forced Wright to leave the order and return to England to work as a missionary somewhat independently of Robert Parson's English Mission of the Society of Jesus. After upsetting the Archbishop of York and finding himself in prison, Wright continued to court controversy. Rather than remaining quiet, he seems to have passed his time preaching to other inmates. He is almost certainly the Thomas Wright that converted Schismatic Thomas Kemys in 1599, and it seems likely that he is the man responsible for the conversion of playwright Ben Jonson. Jonson, Wright, and another English Catholic, Hugh Holland, contributed dedicatory poems to each other's work.[9]

Wright continued to cause trouble within English Catholicism after his return home. Wright was desperate for more tolerance of Catholicism in England; a possibility all but scuppered by the Gunpowder Plot in 1605. The crown appointed Wright as an assistant in the questioning of Guy Fawkes, but he failed to attend the interrogation. He then suggested that it was acceptable for Catholics to hear a Church of England sermon – perhaps because some moral guidance was better than none – provided that any Catholics in attendance did not participate in the service. In a letter to Robert Parsons, Father Robert Jones stated that of all the English heresies 'the most bitter and intolerable, and most dangerous, is the doctrine of Thomas Wright'. He called those who followed him 'Sermonists'.[10] Another Catholic, Father Robert North, also wrote to Parsons warning that 'whole counties and shires run headlong without struggle into the heretics' churches at the behest of false prophets or wolves; whose leader is Thomas Wright.' [11] Although this makes Wright appear to be controversial, sermon and ritual were a central part of his faith.[12] For Wright, being a Jesuit, even an ex-Jesuit, would have meant that care for the immortal souls of his flock would have been important, even if it meant attending the occasional protestant service. To some extent, *The Passions* was part of this mission to care for people's souls, without the bloodshed of war or treason.

THE MINDE IN GENERALL

If Wright's history of *The Passions* is taken literally — which is probably unwise — it is a wonder that *The Passions* had any readership at all. Wright included an extraordinary tale regarding the origins of the work in his 'Epistle Dedicatory'.

> A treatise hereupon I penned […] it suffered shipwrack with the rest of my writings: and at what time I supposed it had bin lying rotting in the bottome of the sea, a favourable gale brought it ashoare […] When I beheld it, I wondered, and could not tell whether to reioyce to see mine infant revived, or feare wether it had been maimed and corrupted […] After the whole impressions was dispersed, the Printer made meanes to have me adde what I thought wanting.[13]

It seems unlikely that this tale was an accurate portrayal of events. One possible explanation was that Wright was using the familiar trope of the unruly passions as a storm-tossed sea to refer to his dissatisfaction with the original work. Katherine Rowe has provided another possible explanation. Rowe has pointed out that the image of a shipwreck and the storm-tossed sea was not an uncommon trope at the time, and it often had deeper religious and political meanings.[14] Wright himself described uncontrolled passions as 'tempests & waues on the Ocean sea' that were an 'impediment to virtue', that is, 'stratagems and deceits the Deuill vseth to draw vs from God'. [15] Perhaps his works lay at the bottom of the sea, beyond reach, because he believed that it was too controversial to publish them openly in England? This suggests that Wright considered *The Passions of the Minde* as provocative as any of his other works.

That another English Catholic, Valentine Simmes, printed both versions of *The Passions* seems to have gone unnoticed in previous analyses. Simmes was regularly in trouble for printing 'popish' works, eventually losing his licence as a master printer.[16] His involvement in Robert Parsons' Catholic English secret press seems likely. English Catholics were undoubtedly the most prevalent readers of Simmes's

publications, and there is no reason to think that *The Passions'* intended readership was any different. Simmes may have believed that the original *Passions of the Minde* was safe to print as it was, so he 'brought it ashoare', printing it relatively openly as 'V.S'.[17] There is nothing to suggest that Simmes published it without Wright's consent other than in the above quote, and there is no mention or record of a manuscript version of the text having been in circulation. Taken together, this suggests that Wright's story might have been a metaphor, and that he worried that the original *Passions of the Minde* might be controversial; a 'shipwrack […] at the bottome of the sea'. [18] In short, Valentine Simmes, a known printer of Catholic illicit materials and a likely member of the Catholic English secret press decided to publish the work, and rather than it being 'maimed and corrupted', its controversial nature was missed, allowing for the subsequent extended version. This conjecture may well be difficult to support, but it does fit the scenario better than taking his unusual anecdote as an accurate portrayal of the book's origins, especially when the contents of the work are taken into account.

The central argument of *The Passions* was one of control and cure of the disease of the unruly passions. On page two, Wright listed the various types of people who he imagined would make up his readership: 'the Diuine, the Philosopher, the curers of body and soule, I meane the Preacher & Physitian, the good Christian that attendeth mortification, & the prudent ciuill Gentleman'.[19] These are all people for whom control of the passions would be necessary. Susan James has described the work as part of a 'genre of works which offer to teach "the art to know men", construed as including the art to know oneself'.[20] This existed alongside works aimed at a 'predominantly male élite who occupy, or will occupy, positions of power […] to identify the acquisition of self-knowledge with the ability to master and manipulate passions, and to associate both with a process of cure'.[21] This is certainly the case with Wright, as he continually invoked the Socratic motto

of 'know thyself' for the curing of unruly, or inordinate, passions.[22] Wright also includes 'the curers of body and soule, I meane the Preacher & Physitian' within his intended readership.[23] Like many of his contemporaries, he saw the inordinate passions as a cause of disease in both body and soul. Wright claimed that 'Passions ingender Humours, and humours breed Passions'. The result of this cross-contamination is that 'the Passions cause many maladiues, & wellnigh all are increased by thē[m]'.[24] In a section added to *The Passions,* but not found in the original 1601 edition, Wright discussed 'disquietnesse of the mind', examining the ways that inordinate passions 'trouble the peaceable state of this Common-weale of our soul…by Contradiction, by Contrietie, by Insatiabilitie, By Importunitie', and 'by Impossibilitie'.[25] Each of these could harm not only the body but also the soul, potentially 'forcing the soule to lie there like a beast, which should haue soared in the heauens like an angel'. This is an example of the close relationship between medicine and theology within Wright's work. Inordinate passions could harm as easily as any disease, and worse, they could drag your soul into hell.

Thomas Sloan read the text as a theological work aimed primarily at divines and preachers, modernising Aristotelian rhetoric while promoting the type of inward meditation popularised by St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits. It is true that Wright discussed meditation at the end of the work, and that meditation almost certainly remained central to Wright's spiritual oblation even after his departure from the Jesuit order. However, meditation was not a primary focus of the rest of the work, or even the majority of the final section. Passages in book six did include meditative sentiments such as 'in my prayer, fire is kindled, because meditation bloweth the coals of consideration, whereunto followeth the flame of love & affection'. However, this part of *The Passions* is not only about meditation, but also medico-theological errors. Wright's description of one of these errors is particularly telling.[26] In book six of *The Passions*, Wright suggested that 'our

soules without […] the sacraments of Christ's Church', were, 'not unlike a dead body […] infected with vices, and stinking with sinnes'. Those who do not receive the sacrament of the church were 'not unlike sicke men, which know where medicines lie but will not seek for them, or receive them'.[27] The Sacraments were important to Wright's medico-theological outlook. In an earlier work published by the English Catholic secret press, *The Disposition*, Wright had laid out the process by which a good Catholic could become worthy of the Sacraments.[28] This is not a meditation but a series of steps necessary for the control and curing of the soul for God. This is more than simple meditation and is closer to Sorana Corneanu's regimen of the mind, where inner meditations and outward actions provided care for sick souls.

Wright's requirement to control the passions in order to avoid medical harm to both body and soul is also central to Corneanu's reading of *The Passions*. For her, 'physicians of the soul' were part of a wider tradition of the 'regimen of the mind'.[29] For Corneanu, 'The physician of the soul stands at the crossroads of practical divinity, medicine, moral philosophy, and rhetoric and uses the analytical tools of theology and natural philosophy. His object is the human embodied mind and the cure of its perturbations'.[30] To her, *The Passions* was part of a tradition of attempting to find ways to reclaim our prelapsarian mental clarity, and circumvent the intellectual limits placed upon the mind at the Fall.[31] It was a regimen of the mind that she describes as 'cultura anima', that is, 'to offer "medicine" or "Physick", or else to prescribe the best "culture" for a mind described as "diseased" or "distempered" or "perturbed"'.[32] Here, cultura anima has an 'anthropological-therapeutic core', understanding human limitations, and particularly those of the mind, and attempting to find ways around these limitations through the therapeutic practice of philosophically ordered spiritual exercises.[33]

At face value, Corneanu's 'cultura anima' sums up Wright's intentions in *The Passions* near-perfectly. To understand the work as a series of analyses and exercises aimed at the therapeutic control of the passions for the cure of a disordered mind is a good description of Wright's overall intention. Also, her further use of the notion of persona — 'an exemplary identity wrought by the intellectual, moral and even corporeal disciplines, one that represented an *office* (sometimes a noninstitutionalized one) in specific cultural spaces' — has some weight.[34] However, her suggestion that it was part of 'philosophy-as-a-way-of-life', akin to Pierre Hadot's conception of spiritual exercises, is only partly right.[35] What she describes as the 'prescription of remedies' for the mind in book three of *The Passions*, and particularly the 'exploration of the defects and imperfections of the understanding' in book six, do draw upon philosophical traditions. However, Wright was not trying 'to make the theological and philosophical traditions compatible with each other', as Corneanu has suggested.[36] These philosophical traditions were already part of his Catholicism. Rather than being an anthropological-therapeutic work based around personal philosophical spiritual exercises, *The Passions* was a medico-theological text. It prescribed a cure not to individuals, but to a particular group — English Protestants — while reminding English Catholics of the duties of their persona as physicians of the soul, and guiding them with the administering of medicine.[37]

John Staines described Wright's work as a guide to controlling the passions of others through rhetoric, in order to bring about moderation in political discourse. Staines noticed that Wright's work on the passions 'stemmed from his work as a Catholic missionary, preaching in the Protestant England of Elizabeth and James and engaging in print controversies on behalf of his faith.'[38] He is correct. However, Wright's discussion of rhetoric in *The Passions* was not just part of a call for a 'public sphere of free religious debate'; the lines of, perhaps unintentional, equivocation it trod upon were subtler, and included both a theological and medical element.[39] *The*

Passions was not only a call for the moderation and control of one's own passions, but of their use in the curing of diseased souls by steering them back to the Catholic faith.

For Wright, curative control of the passions should not be a purely personal endeavour, for this would go against his polemic against self-love as the source of sin. To Wright, self-love was the cause of all inordinate passions. Wright believed that 'an inclination, faculty, or power to consuerue it selfe, procure what is needeth, to resist and impugne whatsoeuer hinderth it of that appertaineth unto his good and conseruation' is a law of nature that applied to all things, not just living things. [40] For example, 'wee see fire continually ascendeth vpward, because the coldnesse of the water, earth, and ayre much impeacheth the virtue of his heate: heauie substances descend to their centre for their preseruation'. [41] This suggests that something akin to passions can act without the need for thought, with such inclinations existing beyond the will as part of the fabric of creation. However, God has granted humans 'a reasonable soule, the which, like an Empresse was to gouern the body, direct the senses, guide the passions as subiects and vassals'. Unfortunately, 'Selfe-Loue vpstarts, and for the affinitie whith sense […] wil in no case obey reason, but allured with the baite of pleasure and sensualitie, proclaimeth warres and rebellion against prudence, against the loue of God'.[42] If we give in to self-love, the all-important prudence needed to moderate the passions breaks down and with it we lose ourselves to inordinate passions at the expense of reason, and the health of our souls. A physician of the soul should also be able to generate passions in others as a weapon against this gateway to sin in those around us.

READING THE PASSIONS

Within the work are a number of passages that further point to a particular intended readership, passages that only make sense within the rubric of late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century English Catholicism. Wright tied his divines, noblemen, and physicians of body and soul together through the figure of the 'good Christian whose life is a warrefare vpon the earth; he who if he loue his soule, killeth it, he, whose studie principally standeth in rooting out vice, and planting of vertue'.[43] Given his rejection of both Protestants and 'Catholique-Lyke Protestants' in his earlier *Disposition*, it is hard to see who this 'mortified Christian' in 'the seruice of God' could be other than the English Catholics most likely to read his work.[44]

In 'The Preface unto the Reader' of *The Passions*, Wright assured his readership that the English are just as capable of grasping complex theological issues, such as salvation, as any Mediterranean and so Catholic man. In Mary Floyd-Wilson's work, *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama*, she suggests that Wright was proposing that the English should 'contravene their "northern" excess with "southern" qualities'.[45] For Floyd-Wilson, Wright hoped that the English could tap into a little of the manners, political awareness, and masculinity of dark-skinned southern Europeans.[46] She claims that 'Wright's text is most significant […] for its explicit articulation of the notion that the most potent remedy for the northerner's plain simplicity and rude behaviour is the adoption of a southern temperament'.[47] This, she believes, can be found in Wright's use of a medical understanding of the 'inconstant humours and changeable complexion' of the English.[48] It is certainly the case that Wright described the ways in which climate, skin colour, hair colour, gender, and age could affect the passions in detail. For example: he stated that 'the manners of the soule follow the temperature of the body' and that the face was 'the rhinde and leaves' of the passions.[49] It is also true that Wright acknowledged that English temperaments could change, likening the English to people that live in the

countryside who, after being brought to a city, are at first 'simple, and vnwarie, but afterwards, by conuersing a while, and by the experience of others mens behaviours, they become wonderful wise and iudicious.'[50]

There is more to the difference between southern and northern Europeans in this period than the colour of skin, however. Noting the changeable complexion of the English was not only a problem of manners, masculinity and being more politically aware, it was also an indicator of the instability of English faith. The 'simple and vnwarie', light-skinned and effeminate Protestant north was a contrast to the 'bold and audacious' dark-skinned and masculine Catholic south.[51] England had rocked back and forth between Catholicism and Protestantism over the course of the second half of the sixteenth century. Wright claimed that he desired 'the good of my Countrie; the last end, the glory of God; whereunto all our labours must tend, and all our actions be directed; and therefore to him let these little sparkes be consecrated, to kindle the fire in his most holy Temple.'[52] Wright believed that the English could become more southern in their thoughts and behaviour and, as a consequence, return once more to Catholicism. *The Passions* was part of his agenda to make England Catholic. Its role in this agenda becomes clearer when Wright's interpretation of the passions, and particularly his version of *fuga seu abomanatio*, is understood.

THE PASSIONS OF THE MINDE

Wright used a traditionally Aristotelian causal framework to analyse the various causes of the passions: firstly, the efficient causes or external influences; secondly, the material causes or the internal motions that are responsible; thirdly, the formal cause or the appearance or shape the cause takes; lastly, the final cause or the

purpose served by the object. At the centre of this was a tripartite soul that possessed rational, sensitive, and vegetative powers. Although using the terms 'passions', 'affections', and 'perturbations' interchangeably, Wright acknowledged the existence of a specific type of 'affections', that were 'immaterial, spiritual, [and] independent of any corporeal subject'.[53] Wright believed in a tripartite soul drawn from Aquinas and Aristotle. This split the soul between vegetative, sensitive and rational parts. The vegetative, found in all life including plants, is an object that not only exists but also contains life and is able to reproduce. Its responses to its inclinations, though more complex than non-living things, are simple and require little motion. The sensitive soul is found in humans and animals. Its increasingly complex responses and movement to its inclinations are influenced by sensations, either external through sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell, or internally through the passions. The rational soul is found only in humans, the angels and God. This part provides speech, abstract knowledge, and control over the will. The term 'minde' referred to both the rational soul and the sensitive soul, as Wright believed that the passions existed across these two parts, 'bordering vpon reason and sense'.[54]

Wright looked to Roman physician Galen for an explanation for the material cause of the passions. According to Galen and the medical understanding of the seventeenth century, the body contained four liquid humours, each associated with different physical attributes: Sanguine or Blood was warm and moist; Choler or Yellow Bile was hot and dry; Phlegm was cold and wet; Melancholic or Black Bile was cold and dry. An imbalance or excess of any one of these humours would create a damaging concoction, contaminating the other humours and causing illness. The removing, or purging, of the excess humour was believed to be the best way to effect a cure. Galen believed that the passions could cause a similar imbalance of humours in the heart. The resultant concoctions might cause the heart to heat up, cool down, dilate, or contract, depending on the passion. This would cause harm to both the

physical body and the soul if left unchecked.[55] Wright linked the internal feelings associated with the passions to the heart, believing it to be 'the peculiar place where that Passions allodge'.[56] Wright also acknowledged that it was possible to feel the effects of the passions in other parts of the body through the movement of spirits and humours.[57] Wright believed that the passions would express themselves through the voice, mannerisms, behaviour, and the face, and as was discussed earlier, that the intensity of the passions could differ depending on gender, race, and climate.[58] This formal cause was an essential ingredient and particularly important to the final cause. This final cause, however, is more difficult to pin down.

One candidate for Wright's final cause is rhetoric, although a section of *The Passions* not present in the 1601 *The Passions of the Minde* may suggest otherwise. It does seem to be the case that there was a greater focus on rhetoric in *The Passions* than in any similar book from the period, but this is not a traditionally rhetorical work.[59] Sloan suggests that rather than splitting the book into the traditional subtopics of rhetoric, two of the subtopics — style and memory — are found throughout the work with the exception of book five. In book five, Wright covers three of the subtopics — action, invention, and arrangement. Book five is something of an anomaly. Not existing in the original 1601 *The Passions of the Minde*, it stretches from page 149 to 293 of *The Passions* and is by far the longest section of the text.[60] Unlike the rest of the work, it is not separated into chapters, but instead reads as a single monograph with three loose themes. These are '*How Senses moues Passions*', '*Motiues to Loue*', and '*Meanes or Motiues to moue Hatred, Detestation, Feare, and Ire*'.[61] The first section examines techniques to use in speech and writing: visual aids, tones of voice, and actions of the body during discussion and preaching. Much of the later sections, and particularly '*Motiues to Loue*', read like a devotional work. They include such lines as 'O my God, the soule of my soule, and the life of all true loue, these dry discoueries of affections […] haue long detained, & not a little distasted me'. These

sections may be Wright's attempt to practice what he preached in the first part of book five. Book five is different enough to the rest of the work, so long, and so self-contained that it may have been intended as a separate publication. Whether this speculation is correct or not, it does make Sloan's suggestion of a work on rhetoric somewhat at odds with the existence of the 1601 work. It is surely unlikely that the original edition was a work on rhetoric that covered only the areas of style and memory. It is more likely that Wright's intentions were broader than simply the creation of a treatise on rhetoric.

Despite the inflated role of meditation and rhetoric within Sloan's analysis, he does properly suggest the influence of a more contemporary way of thinking. Sloan correctly points out that Wright attempted to urge divines and orators to read *De locis theologicis* by Melchior Cano, a controversial 1563 work that 'attempted to scientize theology'.[62] This referred to the Augustinian notion of scientia or knowledge, as opposed to sapientia or wisdom. *The Passions* was a work of scientia, as Wright explained himself: 'I have endeavoured first of all (as I thinke) to draw into forme and method, according to the principles of Sciences, hoping that some other will hereby take occasion to eyther perfect mine, or to attempt a better'.[63] This 'forme and method' consisted of a mixture of Thomist and Aristotelian scholasticism and elements of Scotism within the context of this new science. Sloan believes that this mixture of old and new ideas could account for the missing controversy in the work, but that makes little sense. Many of Wright's contemporaries had works in print that went some way beyond Wright in trying to modernise philosophical thinking without causing a great deal of trouble. Put next to Bacon's 1605 work *The Advancement of Learning*, for example, *The Passions* was tame. Wright's mixing of intellectual strands is curious, but far from unique.

Not explicitly mentioned in *The Passions*, one element was perhaps acquired through Wright's association with Sir Francis Bacon: a Ramist-style methodology.[64]

The Ramists sought a change in traditional scholasticism, seeking to replace it with a more schematic and ordered structure of knowledge. At the centre of this methodology was the subdivision of the universe into binary trees. *The Passions* follows a similar if not identical method, moving from the general to the particular. The inclusion of the word 'generall' in the title is likely to be a reference to this universal starting point. It is, however, a loose adaption of Ramist methodology; Wright was still able to incorporate and adapt Thomist and other frameworks. A good example of this approach is in Wright's understanding of Aquinas's fundamental passions.

Aquinas placed his passions into two groups borrowed from Plato: the 'Concupiscible' and the 'Irascible'.[65] The former consisted of those passions felt commonly: 'love' and 'hate', 'desire' and 'aversion or abomination', 'pleasure' and 'sorrow'.[66] The latter were those passions that assisted us when taking decisive action, or struggle was necessary: 'hope' and 'despair', 'courage' and 'fear', and 'anger'.[67] Wright reformulated this system using a loose Ramist-style methodology that also drew upon medieval Scottish theologian Duns Scotus's understanding of the passions. Instead of grouping the passions as irascible and concupiscible, Wright, like Scotus, split the passions into six binary pairs that either 'tends to good' or 'tends to evil'.[68] The six opposites were hatred and love, fear and desire, and sadness and pleasure. Sloan sees this as nothing more than a reformatting of Thomist doctrine, but in a great departure from both Aquinas and Scotus, fear, not *fuga seu abominatio*, had become the opposite of desire. This did not mean that Wright abandoned the notions of flight and abomination, just that he understood them as kinds of hate and fear respectively. To get a basic understanding of what *fuga seu abominatio* was and was not, it is worth considering the problems with the way recent historians have interpreted this passion through psychology.

DISGUST OR ABOMINATION

Thomas Aquinas did not define the passion of *fuga seu abominatio* beyond describing it as the opposite of desire and declaring that 'it had no name'.[69] Unfortunately, attempts to unpack the complex passion of *fuga seu abominatio* have now all but stopped, with modern historiography and philosophy mistaking it for modern notions of disgust drawn from psychology.[70] Psychologists often describe disgust as a 'basic emotion', assuming it to be universal and transhistorical.[71] While it may be true that all cultures and times have a bodily reaction akin to disgust, a reaction is not necessarily an emotion. If this were otherwise, other bodily responses such as hunger and physical pain would have to be included in psychology's list of basic emotions. Beyond the physical reaction, other elements of disgust that are assumed to be universal would have to be present in *fuga seu abominatio* and they are not. According to Paul Rozin, Jonathan Haidt, and Clark McCauley, core disgust consists of: the disgust or gape face, the lowering of the heart rate, the oral element or oral focus, the sense of contamination, and the revulsion to animal and human products.[72] A neighbour's fire, something that will be shown to be one of Wright's triggers for his version of *fuga seu abomoinatio*, does not sit easily with any of these core elements. William Ian Miller is perhaps the strongest advocate for the idea that the word 'abomination' is synonymous with modern disgust. He suggests that it was generalised from the Middle English 'abhominacioum' to mean 'loathsome, odious, or disgusting actions' that would trigger nausea.[73] He describes disgust, and so abomination in the medieval and early modern period, as 'expressions declaring things or actions to be repulsive, revolting, or giving rise to reactions described as revulsion and abhorrence as well as disgust'.[74] Even this wide description is not how *fuga seu abominatio* and its derivatives were regularly used in the late medieval and early modern periods, and was certainly not Wright's understanding of it.[75]

More recently, Nicholas Lombardo has translated *fuga seu abominatio* as 'aversion (*fuga*) or repulsion (*abominatio*)'.[76] He has suggested that it was the 'passion of avoidance', but he does not go into further detail, instead focusing on desire.[77] Aquinas, however, did not use any Latin words that would more easily translate into 'repulsion' in his description of this passion. Instead, Aquinas chose to use the word *abominatio* (abomination or detestation), almost certainly derived from the Latin Vulgate bible, and *fuga* (flight or aversion). The use of words deriving from 'repulsion', as suggested by Lombardo, would significantly alter the context of the biblical passages from which *abominatio* came. Most modern English bibles, and indeed the King James version, translate *abominatio* as either 'detestable', 'abominable' or 'abomination', but never as any word that could mean 'to repulse' and certainly not 'disgust'.[78]

Fuga seu abominatio was the best descriptive terms Aquinas could think of for a feeling he could not quite describe. The 'seu' is important. Aquinas appears to have been suggesting that the passion was related to both a biblical sense of that which will offend God, and the action of avoiding or moving away from the cause of offence. Flight, or aversion, described the actions and behaviours associated with the passion, or its formal cause. Abomination described the feelings engendered by the evil object responsible for the actions of flight or aversion: its efficient cause. This passion was both a physical sensation and an action: it caused a strong internal detestation of an object alongside a need to physically avoid or to repel it. Curiously, those who tried to understand or dispute Aquinas, such as Duns Scotus, Thomas Cajetan and Ockham, also appear to have found it difficult to describe this passion beyond declaring it the opposite of desire. Most of those who tackled the problem in the seventeenth century went little further.[79] Wright's elegant way out of this problem may provide the best solution of any who wrote about the passion; he chose to both show and tell.

Continuing his mixture of a variety of traditional scholastic ideas with a loose structural methodology, Wright split many of his six main passions into two further kinds. Of interest to this reading of *The Passions* are the species into which he divided fear and hate. Firstly, Wright split hatred into 'hatred of enmity' and 'hatred of abomination'.[80] Hatred of enmity was a hatred caused by an evil person or object because it was an opposite, an 'other', that could harm the self.[81] Hatred of abomination had two causes: 'first, the Person beloved, and all those reasons which may stir vp his love: then the hurt of the evill, and all the harmes it bringeth with it'.[82] Hatred of abomination was the hatred of an evil that could harm someone or something you love. It was a type of hatred caused by the love felt for another person, rather than self-love. Wright borrowed the terms 'hatred of enmity' and 'hatred of abomination' from a 1540 commentary on Aquinas by Cardinal Thomas Cajetan. According to Cajetan, hatred of abomination was not the harm that might befall a person beloved, but a hatred that caused flight away from an evil that could harm the self.[83] Wright's emphasis on 'the Person beloved', rather than the self, was almost certainly intentional; it seems unlikely that a well-educated priest like Wright would have been unaware of Cajetan's work.[84] To the Catholic Wright, the worst potential harm a person beloved could face would have been the ever-present possibility of eternal damnation. Wright also directly used fears of damnation in relation to these passions for the saving of souls, especially when linked to the passion of flight or detestation.

Fear was a valuable tool for Wright. In his earlier work, *Disposition*, he called fear 'the beginning of wisdom […] the first gate, by which we must enter into the palace of wisdom.' In this treatise, Wright was describing the ways in which a good Catholic could become worthy to receive the Sacrament. In this work, fear is split into four kinds: 'worldly', 'servyle', 'filiall, and 'angelicall'.[85] The first is 'an inordinate affection of the soule, whereby a man flieth the seruice of God'.[86] 'Seruyle

fear […] consiteth in auoiding sinne, lest God would punish the offence'.[87] 'Filiall feare' is that fear we have from being born sinners, and so being 'an offence to God'.[88] Finally, 'angelicall feare' is 'a most profound reverence, humilitie, respect, & submissiō[n] vnto God'.[89] Wright's stated use of fear in the *Disposition* was to find those with worldly fears and leave them 'terrified from sinne', moving them towards hope and wisdom, or rather, Catholicism.[90] In *The Passions*, Wright explained that fear could come in two forms relating either to imminent or distant evils. Ordinary fear was a 'flight of a probable euill imminent: where fore two things must be proved & amplified to enforce feare: first, that the euil is great: secondly, that it is very likely to happen'.[91] The second species of fear, flight or detestation, was the 'detestation of some evill, though not imminent, nor expected, yet such an evil as we abhorre it and detest it, and possibly may befall vs'.[92] The possibility of harm found in flight or detestation, in contrast to the probability of harm found in fear, was derived from Aquinas in the standard scholarly way: by inverting a part of his description of desire. It is also important to note that according to Wright, 'flight is detestation of some euill': like *fuga seu abominatio*, flight and detestation were different names for feelings and actions associated with the same passion.[93]

Hatred of abomination and flight or detestation were linked, but abomination was specifically linked to hate, and flight or detestation to fear. In a section entitled '*Means to moue flight and feare*', Wright also linked hatred of abomination and flight together by their efficient causes.[94]

> flight or detestation […] are stirred vp with the same motives […] [as] hatred of abomination, for as all the reasons apportable to render the inducements, which persuade the object of hatred to be abominable, all the same cause it to be detestable.[95]

Wright also linked these two passions through a shared material cause. According to Wright, all the passions elicited by evil 'obiects absent', or things that had the potential to harm, were found in the heart alone.[96] This material cause was a

particular concoction: 'much melancholy blood about the heart, which collection extinguisheth the good spirits, or at least dilluteth them'.[97] The infiltration of melancholy into the blood of the heart would, he claimed, make it colder and drier, and cause sensations of constriction. This would in turn lead to the face becoming 'eyther extreme pale, or high coloured'.[98] Both hatred of abomination and flight or detestation were related to potential harm, and so these passions shared the same material cause. In short, Wright had attempted to understand Aquinas's *fuga seu abominatio* by suggesting that it was not one but two interrelated passions: one a kind of hatred, the other a kind of fear. These passions were experienced together when someone or something we love might be harmed. The notion of harm, however, may not be as straightforward as it seems.

For Wright there was only one abominable object: 'sinne, and the offence of God', hence his example of what he perceived as the worst case of this: atheism.[99] Wright said: 'I have a virtuous friend whom I love intierly, he converseth with Atheists, the more I love him, the more I hate Atheisme, as evill to him and therefore I abhorre it should any way befall him. I am moved to abominate it as an extreme euill'.[100] Atheism was an extreme evil, and any step towards it was a step towards the worst kind of harm: eternal damnation. Wright certainly believed that Protestantism was a step in that direction, even if he did not link 'atheism' and 'Protestantism' in any obvious way. One indication of an implied link is present in Wright's *Disposition*. In this he lamented over the way 'Catholique-lyke Protestants' attempt to 'serue both God and the deuill, to be Christes disciple, & a fauorite of the worlde'. These were the 'most miserable' of people who 'lyve in continuall, horrible, and scandalerous sinne'.[101] This description of those who are not yet Protestant, but deny their Catholicism in all but name, is not far from his description of atheists, and his description of Protestants as those who 'cuteth upp all good works by the rootes' is no better.[102] Additionally, in a section of text added to *The Passions* but not present

in the 1601 version, Wright discussed *'apostasie* from the true Faith' in a paragraph that also covered 'Atheistes' and 'heretickes'.[103] It was these people, Protestants and Catholic-like protestants, who were the atheists and heretics that most needed to be 'terrified from sinne' for the sake of the health of their souls.[104] It was by using a combination of hatred of abomination and flight or detestation that Wright thought such terror was possible.

Persuading people to become Catholic was not purely a theological argument, however, it was also the dispensing of a medical cure to dangerous disease of the soul. In order to best administer this treatment, Wright suggested that a combination of hatred of abomination and flight or detestation should be the focus of a preacher's speech, gestures, and motions when discussing sin with sinners. To this end, Wright delivered a strikingly detailed account of the behaviours associated with hatred of abomination and flight or detestation. It appears in the section of book five which covers ways to move hate, fear and anger. Wright described the actions that can move hatred of abomination alongside flight or detestation in others, likening the behaviour associated with the fear of 'detesting an eminent euill' to the actions of a man whose discovers his neighbour's house on fire.[105] He suggested that only a fool would react calmly in such a situation. Sensible people are more likely to 'runne crying into the street', shouting 'fire, fire, help, help, water, water […] alas, alas, we are vndone'.[106] The passion being described here is not simple fear but flight or detestation. It is an evil that may befall someone or something you love: your property. What Wright said next is particularly noteworthy.

> the like should a Preacher doe, who knowing his auditours wallowed in sinne, ought not with filed phrases, and mellow mouthed words tickle their ears, but with terrors and feares pierce their hearts: he should cry fire of hell, fire fire is kindled, sinne is entered into the soule [...] the diuell stands readie to deuoure you, death watcheth at vnawares to strike you, hell mouth gaspeth open to swallow you down […] abandon your deceitfull pleasures, put on Christ, imitate his puritie.[107]

Wright went on to say that 'time is vncertaine, the peril too certain, the punishment eternal'.[108] Although Wright described 'punishment eternal' as 'too certain', it remained only a potential harm because it was curable for those who could turn their backs on self-love and earthly desires. In a passage of the *Disposition* aimed specifically at Protestants, their actions were described as 'sinnes, a steaned clothe, abominable in Godds sight, [that] deserue death and hell'.[109] In the above passage from *The Passions*, Wright was instructing physicians of soul how to save any 'Person beloved' who partook in such actions, curing them from the diseases of self-love and inordinate passions that would lead to eternal damnation. He was reminding his readership of their beloved Protestant and Catholic-like neighbours, and how they potentially might suffer for eternity. He was teaching them how to create sensations of servile fear through flight or detestation and hatred of as a medication for sin.

CONCLUSION

There are a number of factors that need to be brought together in order to understand this reading of *The Passions*: firstly, the intended readership of English Catholics; secondly, Wright's wish to convert and spread Catholicism throughout England without bloodshed; thirdly, the element of *The Passions* intended as a curative guide for controlling inordinate passions that disease the soul; and finally, the use to which Wright put the passions of hatred of abomination and flight or detestation. At face value, Wright's description of hatred of abomination and flight or detestation appears to be not that dissimilar from any of the other attempts to understand Aquinas's *fuga seu abomanatio* in the period. The only significant difference between Wright and contemporary writers seems to be that Wright believed abomination and flight or detestation was motivated by a potential harm to others, while other writers insisted that it was a potential harm to the self.[110] However, this focus on others rather than the self is important. When brought

together with the various elements surrounding Wright and *The Passions*, Wright's understanding of *fuga seu abominatio* as hatred of abomination and flight or detestation becomes a mixture of passions whose ordinate, or proper, use was helping others to cure sin and in the treatment of their souls. Through these passions, English Catholics could preach their religion and cure the English nation of the diseases of the mind that caused Protestantism.

When someone you love might, rather than will, be harmed by a detestable evil you experience hatred of abomination and flight or detestation, much as you might if they become stricken with a physical disease. It was a passion associated with protection of others from worldly and otherworldly harm, and more particularly, the disease caused by self-love and inordinate passions leading them to sin. The importance of love for your neighbour, an unusual addition to hatred of abomination by Wright, gave these passions a particular use. They were to be understood by a section of his intended readership as a guide to assist them when acting as physicians for 'sicke men' before their 'liuing soule[s] […] falleth away by putrifaction' and they 'die vpon a sudden, falling into hell'.[111] Hatred of abomination and flight or detestation became an important part of a curative work 'with a clear, doctrinaire, religious stance': to cure the diseased souls of the people of his country through preaching and conversion, and the teaching of others to do the same.[112]

Notes

[1] Thomas Wright, *The Disposition or Garnishmente of the Soule to Receiue Worthily the Blessed Sacrament Deuyded into Three Discourses, 1 Preparation. 2 Presentation before Christ. 3 Enterteinment* (Antwerpe [England]: Ioachim Trognesius [Valentine Simmes for the English Secret Press], 1596).

[2] Francis Bacon, *A Declaration of the Practises & Treasons attempted and committed by Robert late Earle of Essex and his Complices, Against her Maiestie and her Kingdoms and of the Proceedings as well at the Arraignments & Conuictions of the Said Late Earle, and his Adher* (London: Robery Barker, 1601); Thomas Birch, *Memoirs Of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth: From the Year 1581 Till Her Death. In Which The Secret Intrigues of Her Court, And the Conduct of Her Favourite, Robert Earl of Essex, Both at Home and Abroad, Are Particularly Illustrated, From the original papers* (London: For A Millar, 1756), pp. 251–53, 264, 307–8, 358–59, 405, 406; Mary Anne Everett Green, *Calendar of State Papers: Preserved in the State Paper Department of Her Majesty's Public Record Office. Reign of Elizabeth: 1598–1601* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1869), p. 568.

[3] Thomas O. Sloan, ‘Introduction’, *The Passions of the Minde in* Generall, ed. Thomas O Sloan (Urbana: University of Illonois Press, 1971), xvi.

[4] Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Minde* (London: V[alentine] S[immes], 1601); Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Minde in Generall. Corrected, Enlarged, and with Sundry new Discourses Augmented* (London: Valentine Simmes [and Adam Islip], 1604).

[5] Aquinas describes the passion as the opposite of desire with the phrase ‘innominata est’ (‘it has no name’). Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: The Emotions (1a2ae. 22–30)*, ed. Eric D'Arcy (London: Blackfriars, 2006), Q. 30.

[6] Wright, *The Passions*, pp. 272–73.

[7] The biography of Wright contained herein is mostly drawn from Sloan, ‘Introduction’; Thomas O Sloan, ‘A Renaissance Controversialist on Rhetoric: Thomas Wright's Passions of the Minde in Generall’, *Speech Monographs*, 36.1 (1969), 38–54; Theodore A. Stroud, ‘Ben Jonson and Father Thomas Wright’, *ELH*, 14.4 (1947), 274–82; Katherine A. Craik, ‘Wright, Thomas’, *The Encyclopedia of English Renaissance Literature*, ed. Jr. Garrett A. Sullivan et al. (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), 1075–1076.

[8] See, for example, Thomas H. Clancy, *Papist Pamphleteers: The Allen Parsons Party and the Political Thought of the Counter Reformation in England, 1572–1615* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1964).

[9] Henry Foley, ed. *Record of the English Province of the Society of Jesus, IV* (London: Burns and Oats, 1878), pp. 431–32; Ben Jonson ‘Ode’ in Hugh Holland, *Pancharis the First Booke. Containing the Preparation of the Loue Betweene Ovven Tudyr, and the Queene, Long Since Intended to Her Maiden Maiestie: and now Dedicated to the Inuincible Iames, Second and Greater Monarch of Great Britaine, King of England, S*. (London: V. S[immes], 1603); Hugh Holland ‘For His Worthy Friend, the Author’ in Ben Jonson, *Seianus His Fall* (London: G. Elld, 1605); H[ugh] H[olland], ‘To the Ternall and Aeternall Vnitie’; B[en] I[onson], ‘To The Author’ in Wright, *The Passions*; see also Stroud, ‘Ben Jonson’, p. 274; *see also* Ian Donaldson, *Ben Jonson: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 138–44, which describes Jonson's conversion via Wright's writing while awating a trail for manslughter. He claims that the idea expressed by Wright that Englishness and Catholicism were not incompatible, that religious leaning had swung back and forth in England since the death of Henry VIII, and that Catholicism

gave him hope for salvation should he go to the gallows.

[10] Foley, *Record of the English Province of the Society of Jesus, IV*, p. 372.

[11] Foley, *Record of the English Province of the Society of Jesus, IV*, p. 284.

[12] See Wright, *Disposition*.

[13] Wright, *Disposition*, epistle dedicatory.

[14] Katherine Rowe, 'Humoral Knowledge and Liberal Cognition in Davant's Macbeth', in *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotions*, ed. Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe, and Mary Floyd-Wilson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 178–79.

[15] Rowe, 'Humoral Knowledge and Liberal Cognition in Davant's Macbeth', p. 334, p. 330.

[16] Edward Arber, ed., *A Transcription of the Register of the Company of Stationers of London, 1554–1640*, (London: P. Smith, 1950), I, pp. 574–81.

[17] Wright, *Passion of the Minde* (1601), title page.

[18] Wright, *The Passions*, epistle dedicatory.

[19] Wright, *The Passions,* p. 2.

[20] Susan James, *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003).

[21] James, *Passion and Action*, pp. 2–3.

[22] See, particularly, Wright, *The Passions,* Book 1, Chapter 1, pp. 1–7.

[23] Wright, *The Passions,* p. 2.

[24] Wright, *The Passions,* p. 63.

[25] Wright, *The Passions,* p. 68.

[26] Wright, *The Passions,* p. 346.

[27] Wright, *The Passions,* p. 349.

[28] Wright, *Disposition.*

[29] Sorana Corneanu, *Regimens of the Mind: Boyle, Locke and the Early Modern Cultura Anima Tradition*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), pp. 46–48.

[30] Corneanu, *Regimens of the Mind*, p. 48.

[31] Corneanu, *Regimens of the Min*, pp. 67–68.

[32] Corneanu, *Regimens of the Mind*, p. 4.

[33] Corneanu, *Regimens of the Mind*, p. 6.

[34] Corneanu, *Regimens of the Mind*, p. 7.

[35] Corneanu, *Regimens of the Mind*, p. 7.

[36] Corneanu, *Regimens of the Mind*, p. 58.

[37] Corneanu, *Regimens of the Mind*, p. 53.

[38] John Staines, 'Compassion in the Public Sphere of Milton and King Charles', in *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion*, ed. Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe, and

Mary Floyd-Wilson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 94–95.

[39] John Staines, ‘Compassion in the Public Sphere of Milton and King Charles’, p. 95.

[40] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 12.

[41] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 12.

[42] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 12.

[43] Wright, *The Passions*, pp. 4–5.

[44] Wright, *Disposition*.

[45] Mary Floyd-Wilson, *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama (*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 64.

[46] Floyd-Wilson, *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama*, pp. 137–58.

[47] Floyd-Wilson, *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama*, p. 64.

[48] Floyd-Wilson, *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama*, p. 158.

[49] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 38, p. 30; see also Book 1, Chapter 10, pp. 37–44.

[50] Wright, *The Passions*, preface.

[51] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 137.

[52] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 137.

[53] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 32.

[54] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 32, p. 7.

[55] Galen, *Galen on the Passions and Errors of the Soul*. ed. and trans. by Walther Riese and Paul William Harkins (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1963), passim.

[56] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 32.

[57] Wright, *The Passions*, pp. 33–34.

[58] Wright, *The Passions*, pp. 37–44.

[59] See, for example, Edward Reynolds, *A Treatise of the Passions and Faculties of the Soule of Man With the Severall Dignities and Corruptions Thereunto Belonging (*London: R. H[earne and John Norton], 1640); William Pemble, *A Svmme of Moral Philosohpy Svccintly Gathered, Elegantly Composed and Methodically Handled* (Oxford: Iohn Lichfield, 1632); Jean-François Senault, *De L’Vsage Des Passions (*Paris: Vve J. Camusat, 1641); Nicolas Coëffeteau , *A Table of Humane Passions. With Their Causes and Effects,* trans. by Edward Grimeston (London: Nicholas Okes, 1621).

[60] Wright, *The Passions*, pp. 149–293.

[61] Wright, *The Passions*, pp. 149–93, 193–260, 260–93.

[62] Sloan, ‘Introduction’, xiv; Wright, *The Passions*, p. 190.

[63] Wright, *The Passions*, preface.

[64] Bacon was certainly aware of the Ramists. Indeed, his criticism of the rigidity of their methodology may have had an impact on Wright’s loose adoption of their methodology. See Francis Bacon, *The Major Works,* ed. by Brain Vickers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 342.

[65] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Man (1a.75–83)*, ed. and trans. by Timothy Lachlan Suttor

(London: Blackfriars, 1970), Q. 81.

[66] 'amor' and 'odium'; 'desiderium' and 'fuga seu abominatio'; 'gaudium' and 'tristia', Aquinas, *Summa (1a2ae. 22–30)*, Q. 23.

[67] 'Spes' and 'desperatio'; 'audacia' and 'timor'; 'ira', Aquinas, *Summa (1a2ae. 22–30)*, Q. 23.

[68] Wright, *The Passions*, pp. 22–26. For an excellent overview of medieval theories of emotions see Peter King, 'Emotions in Medieval Thought', *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 167–88, pp. 180–83.

[69] 'Ad tertium dicendum quod passio quae directe opponitur concupiscentiae, innominata est' Aquinas, *Summa (1a2ae. 22–30)*, Q. 30.

[70] See, for example, Alexandra Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust in Medieval Religious Polemic* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007).

[71] Paul Ekman, *Emotions Revealed: Understanding Faces and Feelings* (London: Pheonix, 2012), pp. 172–80.

[72] Paul Rozin, Jonathan Haidt, and Clark R McCauley, 'Disgust', in *The Handbook of Emotions*, ed. by Michael Lewis, Jeannette M Haviland-Jones, and Lisa Feldman Barrett (London: The Guildford Press, 2010), pp. 759–60.

[73] William Ian Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 2.

[74] Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust*, p. 2.

[75] Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust*, pp. 165–66.

[76] Nicholas E Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire: Aquinas on Emotion* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2011), p. 57.

[77] Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire: Aquinas on Emotion,*p. 57.

[78] See, for example, Deuteronomy 17:1 'non immolabis Domino Deo tuo bovem et ovem in quo est macula aut quippiam vitii quia abominatio est Domini Dei tui [You shall not sacrifice unto the Lord thy God any ox or sheep wherein is a blemish, or any fault for that is detestable (or abominable) to the Lord thy God].' See also Exodus 8:26; Leviticus 18:22, 26, 29; Deuteronomy 7:25,26; 13:31; 13:14; 17:4. Eusebius Hieronymus (St. Jerome), *Latin Vulgate Bible* (Kirkland: Latus Publishing, 2011).

[79] See King, 'Emotions in Medieval Thought', pp. 167–88; See also, for instance, Edward Reynolds, *A Treatise of the Passions*; William Pemble, *Moral Philosophy*; Senault, *The Vse of Passions*; Coëffeteau, *A Table of Humane Passions*.

[80] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 261.

[81] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 261.

[82] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 272.

[83] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 272. 'Odium inimicitiae' and 'odio abominationis'. Cajetan's analysis was faithful to Aquinas in most respects, but it deviated significantly in its attempt to understand Aquinas's *fuga seu abominatio*. Thomas Cajetan, *Secunda Secundae Summae Sacrosanctae Theologiae* (Lyons: Hugonem a Porta, 1558), p. 131. Presbyterian priest, Edward Reynolds, produced a description of Hatred of Abomination almost exactly the same as Cajetan's in 1640 that he attributed to 'schoole-men'. Reynolds, *Treatise of the Passions*, p. 111.

[84] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 272.

[85] Wright, *Disposition*, p. 31.

[86] Wright, *Disposition*, p. 31.

[87] Wright, *Disposition*, p. 32.

[88] Wright, *Disposition*, p. 33.

[89] Wright, *Disposition*, p. 36.

[90] Wright, *Disposition*, p. 44.

[91] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 274.

[92] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 273.

[93] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 273.

[94] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 272.

[95] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 273.

[96] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 34.

[97] Wright, *The Passions*, pp. 61–62.

[98] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 27.

[99] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 272.

[100] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 273.

[101] Wright, *Disposition*, To the Catholique-Lyke Protestants.

[102] Wright, *Disposition*, To the Protestants.

[103] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 54. Section ends 'and carrieth them to the deuil' in Wright, *Passions of the Minde* (1604), p. 97.

[104] Wright, *Disposition*, p. 44.

[105] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 181.

[106] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 182.

[107] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 182.

[108] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 182.

[109] Wright, *Disposition*, To the Protestants.

[110] See Reynolds, *Treatise of the Passions,* p. 66; William Pemble, *Moral Philosophy*, pp. 25–26; Senault, *The Vse of Passions*, pp. 301–8.

[111] Wright, *The Passions*, p. 349, p. 183.

[112] Sloan, 'Introduction', xvi.

The *Andreios* Eunuch-Commander Narses: Sign of a Decoupling of Martial Virtues and Masculinity in the Early Byzantine Empire?

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Abstract: This paper looks at the place of the sixth-century Byzantine general Narses (c. 480–573) in the history of Byzantine gender. Certainly, it has always been important for ancient and modern historians to emphasise Narses' eunuchism. Indeed, for many modern scholars, Narses' identity as a castrate has been more important for study than his military deeds and political achievements that proved ephemeral. For some, the presence of a eunuch in such an essential military role indicates a turning away from codes of generalship based on traditional martial courage and manliness. This paper questions such a view, suggesting that Byzantium had a much more flexible notion of eunuchs' gender status than some recent scholarship allows. Indeed, it suggests that Narses fits into a continuing hegemony of traditional masculine values based on the supremacy of Byzantine men's martial virtues

The sixth-century Byzantine general Narses (c. 480–573) has long earned historians' respect.[1] He deserves this acclaim since his major victories over the Goths in 552 and versus the Franks and Alamanni in 554 helped to secure the Emperor Justinian I's (ruled 527–565) retaking of Italy from the Goths after an arduous nineteen-year struggle.[2] So too did Narses perform admirably for twelve years in his role as prefect

of Italy. Of course, it has always been important to emphasise that Narses was a eunuch. Indeed, for many modern historians, Narses' identity as a castrate is more important for study than his military deeds and political achievements that proved ephemeral. For some, the presence of a eunuch in such an essential military role indicates a turning away from codes of generalship based on traditional martial courage and manliness.[3] This paper questions this view, suggesting that Byzantium had a much more flexible notion of eunuchs' gender status than some recent scholarship allows. It will show that Narses fits into a continuing hegemony of traditional masculine values based on the supremacy of Byzantine men's martial virtues.

Superficially, the argument that Narses' military role represents a turning away from martial masculinity as a component of Byzantine ideology appears attractive. Certainly the Byzantine period is marked by the essential role that eunuchs played at all levels of court society.[4] Although their primary function throughout the Byzantine era remained service within the imperial palace, Narses was one of three eunuchs to command Byzantine armies during Justinian's reign. The eunuch, Solomon, was *magister militum* and *praetorian prefect* of Africa.[5] Another castrate, Scholasticus, served as commander of an army sent against the Sklavenoi in 551.[6] The number of eunuch generals only grew larger in subsequent centuries.[7]

Moreover, in contrast to the gendered vitriol that had accompanied the eunuch Eutropius' military command against the Huns at the close of the fourth century, Narses' and the other eunuchs' prominent military commands, as far as we know, provoked little or no hostile response.[8] This absence may surprise since the battlefield had long represented a masculine realm in the Roman and Byzantine world. One sees late Roman sources, such as the poets Claudian (c. 370–404 AD) and Sidonius Apollonaris (c. 430–489), expressing the idea that eunuchs could not 'possess masculine military virtue.'[9]

A native Greek-speaker from Alexandria based in Italy, Claudian had crafted a famously hostile portrait of the late fourth-century Eastern eunuch-general and consul, Eutropius. The poet's gendered invective *In Eutropium* (Against Eutropius) lambasted the Eastern Romans for allowing an 'unmanly' eunuch to take on what he saw as the hyper-masculine duties of a military commander and consul.[10] Yet, this assessment is largely absent in sixth–century Byzantine writers. For instance, one finds in the sixth-century histories of Procopius and Agathias that Narses' status as a castrate did little to hinder his military acumen. Agathias, in fact, took seeming pleasure in rejecting this trope by depicting two Alamanni warriors in a Frankish army assuming foolishly that they would best the Romans in battle because 'a eunuch of the bedchamber' commanded their army. Guided magnificently by Narses, the Roman army annihilated the Franks.[11] Agathias attributed the Romans' subsequent victories to Narses' 'excellent generalship'.[12]

Modern scholars have used these ancient writers' depictions of Narses as a skilled military commander as evidence of larger societal shifts. Shaun Tougher sees Procopius' and Agathias' flattering views of Narses as an indication of 'a lessening of hostility towards eunuchs' from the fifth century, whilst in her recent study on eunuchs in Byzantine civilisation, Kathryn Ringrose contends that it serves as proof of a decline in the importance of *andreia* (the interchangeable concept of manliness or courage in ancient Greek) as a quality of a sixth–century Byzantine general. She also posits that contemporaries respected Narses for displaying what she considers 'good' eunuch traits such as 'cleverness and deviousness'. [13] While I largely agree with Tougher's point, the paper questions aspects of Ringrose's contentions. Before tackling these questions, let us explore briefly some of the reasons that moderns and ancients have sometimes perceived eunuchs as a threat to masculinity.

EUNUCHS AND BYZANTINE GENDER CONSTRUCTS

In androcentric cultures like Rome and early Byzantium, the seeming gender ambiguity of eunuchs could be troubling.[14] As Ringrose explains, 'The appearance and behaviour of eunuchs represented the antithesis of appropriate male behaviour. The eunuch was scorned as shameful, neither man nor woman, a monstrosity, an outsider, and pitifully womanlike'.[15] We find this sentiment expressed in the observation by the fourth-century panegyrist Claudius Mamertinus that eunuchs were 'exiles from the society of the human race, belonging to neither one sex nor the other as a result of some congenital abnormality or physical injury'.[16] The *Historia Augusta*, probably composed by an anonymous author in the last quarter of the fourth century (while pretending to be six different authors writing in the late third and early fourth centuries), asserted that eunuchs represented 'a third sex of the human race'.[17] The very ease by which a man could quite literally be cut off from the 'source' of his sexual identity troubled many late Roman writers. At the opening of the fifth century, Claudian quipped that the knife makes 'males womanish'.[18] It appeared a very simple process indeed for a man to become a non-man. As Mathew Kuefler remarks, 'The presence of eunuchs constantly tested the division between men and women, between the manly and the unmanly, and continually revealed that division as an arbitrary and constructed one'.[19]

The issue of eunuchs' gender status in Byzantium remains contentious. To simplify a complex debate, modifying the older paradigm that claimed that eunuchs represented a 'third sex' in Byzantine culture, Ringrose contends it is better to see eunuchs as making up a third gender, 'male in sex, but with a difference'.[20] She asserts that, unlike classical intellectuals, Christian Byzantines based their criterion on behaviour more than physiology.[21] Shaun Tougher is more hesitant to consider eunuchs as a third gender. He postulates, I believe rightly, that eunuchs had 'a multiplicity of concurrent gender identities'. He maintains that whereas eunuchs

could be portrayed as a separate gender, a good number of Byzantine sources saw them as 'simply men'.[22] Warren Treadgold goes further. He rejects the idea that Byzantines ever seriously considered eunuchs as a third gender, suggesting that their roles in the Church and the military prove that they were seen as male.[23]

Though all three of these Byzantinists' views on the 'gender' of eunuchs differ, each position helps to explain why eunuchs like Narses were not cut off from the masculine. Castration did not necessarily mean that a eunuch could not be deemed 'manly' or fight on the frontlines. The traditional dichotomy between virtue and vice based on a bipolar model of gender proved a popular method in describing 'good' and 'bad' eunuchs throughout the Byzantine era. On the one hand, when Byzantine sources praised eunuchs, they described them often as displaying typically masculine attributes. On the other hand, when eunuchs faced criticism, it was 'in terms of values traditionally ascribed to women'.[24] It is only against this background that one can understand how his fellow Byzantines could perceive Narses as an *andreios* ('manly', 'courageous') commander.

NARSES: THE MANLY EUNUCH

Like most sixth-century Byzantine eunuchs, Narses began his life in Constantinople as an outsider. Most of what we know of his life before 530, and in particular, how and when he became a eunuch, is based on conjecture rather than concrete evidence.[25] All that we can say with any real certainty is that he hailed from Persian Armenia and had risen to prominence under Justinian. He had first attended Justinian and Theodora as a *cubicularius* (chamberlain); ultimately, attaining the top post available to a court eunuch, the position of *praepositus sacri cubiculi* (grand chamberlain). He was also a treasurer (a favourite position for Byzantine eunuchs) and later served as *spatharius* (bodyguard).[26]

Although Procopius depicted Narses, at times, as vain, jealous, insubordinate, petty, and overly reliant on barbarian auxiliaries, the historian respected Narses for being a successful and resourceful commander.[27] Yet it does not appear that Procopius or Agathias took Narses' position as a general for granted. Procopius presented Narses 'as an anomalous example' of a typical eunuch. When Narses arrived to Italy from Constantinople in 538 with a large army, the historian proclaimed that the eunuch was more 'keen and more energetic than would be expected of a eunuch [ἄλλως δὲ ὀξὺς καὶ μαλλον ἢ κατ εὐνοῦχον δραστήριος]'.[28] Agathias too indicated that Narses' 'courage and heroism' were unusual for a eunuch.[29]

Seen in this light, Procopius' biographic sketch of Narses offers yet another inversion of 'typical' behaviours one finds throughout *Wars*.[30] Procopius' presentation of Narses does not indicate that just any eunuch could become an able military commander, only that in certain instances, just as one can find manly women and restrained barbarians, one can find a vigorous, and indeed, a manly eunuch. These inversions were not an invention of sixth–century writers. One finds such reverses before the fifth century. Ammianus Marcellinus, for instance, provided a similar account of an 'atypical' eunuch a century and a half earlier when he provided a backhanded compliment to the court eunuch, Eutherius, by suggesting: 'Among the brambles roses spring up, and among the savage beasts some are tamed'.[31]

Procopius and Agathias, however, undermine Ringrose's contention 'that neither' Procopius nor Agathias 'attributes Narses' success to traditional courageous manliness'. Examples from both historians demonstrate the opposite. Procopius reported with little sense of irony that Narses' supporters in the officer corps hoped that the eunuch would achieve his own fame through 'deeds of wisdom and manliness' [ἔργα ξυνέσεώς τε καὶ ἀνδρείας].[32] Agathias too described Narses as 'manly and heroic' [τὸ δὲ **ἀνδρεῖον** καὶ μεγαλουργὸν].[33] These characterisations serve as convincing proof that contemporaries had little problem with seeing Narses as an *andreio*s military man. With his remark about Narses 'that true nobility of soul

cannot fail to make its mark, no matter what obstacles are put in its path', it seems clear that Agathias would have placed Narses on or near the top of his ladder of human excellence and/or gender difference.[34]

Moreover, martial virtues had never centered solely on 'courage' or 'physicality'. According to Agathias, 'Brains and not brawn' represented the primary qualities of an effective Roman general.[35] This attitude need not surprise. Byzantine military handbooks, in fact, preferred it when military commanders avoided fighting on the front lines with their men. For example, the late sixth-century military guidebook, Maurice's *Strategikon*, advised that generals should avoid battle and limit their actions to directing the formations 'and adapting to the movements of the enemy'.[36] Procopius also criticised generals for risking themselves fighting on the frontline.[37] Moreover, men with little or no military background could lead Roman and Byzantine armies.[38]

Procopius' account showed that it was the combination of Narses' 'brains' with his soldiers' 'brawn' that had led to the Byzantines' final victories over the Goths. Indeed, one should not suppose that Narses avoided danger during these battles or assume that the eunuch had not received military training. Despite the eunuch's diminutive stature, Agathias described Narses on horseback leading his men into a skirmish against the Franks.[39] Narses' age (he was probably over seventy during the events depicted in book eight of Procopius' *Wars*), more than the fact that he was a former court eunuch, probably represented the primary reason that Narses failed to play a larger role in combat. Procopius depicted Solomon leading cavalry charges and fighting on the frontlines with his men.[40] In 541, the Empress Theodora had sent Narses—then the commander of the Emperor Justinian's bodyguard—to assassinate the praetorian prefect, John the Cappadocian. Though the attack failed, Narses took a leading role in the attempt.[41]

The imperial family frequently chose castrates for such important tasks because of their eunuchism. Moreover, military-eunuchs could lessen the threat of usurpation.

As Ringrose explains, 'eunuchs were seen as a safer option, and often utilised when women or minor children ruled'.[42] Though Procopius failed to make this point, no eunuch could hope to become emperor.[43] This reality had more to do with their 'mutilation' than their gender. Indeed, any type of mutilation generally barred men from becoming emperor. As God's representative on earth the emperor needed to maintain his corporeal perfection. Blinding, castration and *rhinokopia* (cutting off the nose) all served as effective methods to incapacitate one's rivals.[44]

So why did Justinian use eunuchs as military commanders? The emperor's reasoning for doing so appears multi-faceted. His break with recent precedent may have been a practical decision based on the reality that Solomon and Narses were the best qualified to lead. Solomon had first earned his military reputation during service under Belisarius in Persia and North Africa.[45] Narses' loyalty and financial acumen represent two reasons for his appointment to a military command.[46] Moreover, Narses had performed coolly under pressure during an uprising in 532 known as the Nika revolt, which had seen the near overthrow of Justinian.[47] The combination of Narses' quick-thinking during the revolt and his close relationship with Theodora — due in part to their shared Christological position[48] — provide the likely rational for the eunuch's appointment in 535 to lead a Byzantine army into Alexandria to reinstate the monophysite Theodosius as patriarch.[49]

Fear of usurpation appears to have also played a role in Narses' promotion. Where Procopius only insinuated, Agathias made it plain that Justinian felt threatened by Belisarius' growing popularity.[50] The fifth and early sixth centuries had seen Roman and non-Roman soldiers playing increasingly important roles in the making and the unmaking of Roman emperors. Generals like Aetius and Ricimer in the West and Aspar in the East were arguably the most powerful and influential fifth-century politicians. All of these men hailed from the military aristocracy, and they often used their power and influence to control the reigning emperors, who were often little

better than puppets. Moreover, many fifth–century emperors had begun their careers as relatively obscure soldiers in these generalissimos' armies.[51]

Therefore, it should not surprise us that the non-campaigning Justinian felt vulnerable to usurpation. His fears were not completely unjustified. After Belisarius' defeated the Gothic king, Vittigis, the Gothic nobility had offered, 'to declare Belisarius Emperor of the West'.[52] This threat to Justinian's authority appear to have made the emperor suspect Belisarius' loyalty. By appointing Narses, Justinian therefore removed the real threat that a charismatic — and corporeally intact — military man like Belisarius could present to those in the imperial leadership. Narses' survival probably depended on the emperor. Beholden to the ruling imperial regime, eunuchs in positions of prominence had long been vulnerable to execution during political crises or regime changes.[53] Narses, indeed, famously clashed with Justinian's successor Justin II and his wife Sophia.[54]

Further evidence suggests that contemporaries saw the choice of Narses to lead the military campaigns in Italy as unusual. Procopius explained that some Romans believed that Justinian had selected Narses because of a prophecy that a eunuch would bring about the Goths' downfall. Although Procopius discounted this explanation, his earlier comment that 'the reason why this was the wish of the emperor was explicitly evident to no one in the world', implies that Procopius felt somewhat befuddled by Narses' appointment. Therefore, I would largely agree with Averil Cameron's contention that 'it was for Procopius a galling blow that Narses achieved the final victory in Italy, not Belisarius.'[55]

One might ask then why does Procopius appear to celebrate Narses' virtues at the close of *Wars*? As Anthony Kaldellis has suggested, it may have served as a means of contrasting Narses' victories with what Procopius saw as Belisarius' failures in Italy after 540.[56] What better way to denigrate Belisarius than to explain how a eunuch had defeated the pugnacious Goths. Yet, one should be careful not to stretch the *Wars*'

subtext too far. Procopius never expressed this sentiment directly in any of his extant writings, including *Secret History*. The closest he came to creating a gendered contrast between the two generals comes in book six where Procopius related a rift in 538 between Narses and Belisarius that had paralysed the Byzantine army's progress. In a heated argument with Narses, Procopius tellingly described Belisarius as a 'man general' [στρτηγῶ ἀνδρὶ].[57]

Nevertheless, it must be stressed, that book eight of *Wars*, published shortly after Narses' successes, contains a largely positive assessment of Belisarius.[58] So too, as I have argued in more detail elsewhere, the close of *Wars* reveals a more upbeat attitude towards the reconquest as a whole than some modern historians have suggested.[59] Indeed, the negative portraits found in *Secret History* and books six and seven of *Gothic War*, were all likely composed and published at the nadir of Byzantine's fortunes in Italy around 550/51.[60] Book eight also exonerates Belisarius' failures in Italy somewhat, by claiming that the Romans' victories under Narses were partly due to Justinian's re-focus on the campaign and, most importantly, providing Narses with the supplies and the men that Belisarius had long begged for, but had never received.[61] So the historian's admiration for the general who had finally 'defeated' the martial Goths may have been genuine. Certainly, in Procopius' account, Narses played a primary role in defeating the martial Gothic king Totila at the fateful battle of Busto Gallorum (also known as the Battle of Taginae) in 552. A recent analysis of the battle, explains that Procopius had simplified the actual circumstances of the battle, and instead, crafted a 'caricaturing of the wily "eunuch-general" outwitting the brave, but rash "barbarian king" Totila'.[62] Narses' intelligence and planning paved the way to an overwhelming Roman victory.

Even if Procopius secretly held a grudge against the eunuch for disrupting Belisarius' earlier military campaigns, he needed to explain how and why Narses had attained a victory that his former superior had failed to achieve. Following values found in his historical model Thucydides,[63] Procopius believed in the link between

one's virtues and one's success in the world.[64] This mindset might help to explain why the historian replaced the flawed, conniving, and less politically successful Narses found in much of book six of the *Gothic War* with the more virtuous and triumphant eunuch depicted in books seven and eight.

Undeniably, Narses displayed many of the traits of an ideal 'manly' non-eunuch early Byzantine commander. The eunuch's affability, courage, cleverness, organisational and tactical abilities, as well as his oratory skills that allowed him to incite his soldiers to perform great deeds of courage and manliness on the battlefield, represent some of Narses' best 'martial' qualities. Unlike Ringrose and Rance, however, I do not believe that Procopius saw Narses' administrative skills and 'cleverness' as eunuch-specific traits; they are characteristics expected of any successful leader or general.[65] Procopius depicted Belisarius as clever, well organised, and, at times, devious.[66]

THE SOLDIER'S LIFE

A key question is whether the early Byzantines understood that the use of eunuchs in the military represented a larger societal move away from the traditional idea that the battlefield represented a masculine domain. If *andreia* was becoming a less important cultural and/or military value, one would except to see a decrease in the number of examples of idealised military men displaying typical martial courage and manliness in this period. The evidence does not support such a view.

Procopius and Agathias consistently praised military men as upholding the best traditions of 'Roman' manliness. For these Byzantine intellectuals, the manly deeds of courage and self-restraint performed in the theatre of war by idealised soldiers set a standard of masculine excellence that was difficult for their civilian counterparts to match. These historians shared a view found in Ammianus, that suggested that

Roman pre-eminence had been achieved because its early citizens had avoided the 'life of softness/effeminacy' [*vita mollitia*][67] brought on by wealth and the sedentary life and 'fought in fierce wars,' which allowed them to 'overcome all obstacles by manliness [*virtute*]'.[68]

We find similar sentiments when Agathias had Narses declare in a set-speech to his soldiers: 'To triumph forever over our enemies is our birthright and ancestral privilege'. Narses continued by praising his soldiers' superior physical and intellectual virtues. He declared, 'It would indeed be shameful, fellow Romans, if you were to suffer the same fate as the barbarians and not to outshine them as much by your superior intelligence as you do in physical prowess'.[69] In works that focused on warfare and the deeds of soldiers, it should not shock us that, in Procopius and Agathias' minds, a 'manly man' [ἀνηρ ἀνδρεῖός] was a military man.[70] In order to delve further into the ways sixth–century Byzantines connected the concept of *andreia* with military virtues, let us turn to Procopius' infamous portrait of Belisarius found in *Secret History*.

DRAINING *ANDREIA*

There are several important reasons for choosing Procopius as the main source for his era and as a good example of how early Byzantine gender ideologies were constructed.[71] Procopius has, arguably, long been the most important and widely read early Byzantine historian.[72] Procopius' writings attained popularity during his own lifetime; the historian claims that the history found an audience throughout the Empire.[73]

Yet as we have touched on above, uncovering Procopius' 'true' views is problematic. Undoubtedly, without careful analysis, Procopius' three works: the *Buildings*, the *Secret History*, and the *Wars*, may appear either to have different authors, or to be the work of one severely schizophrenic individual. In *Buildings,* Procopius

extolled Justinian as God's messenger on earth, leading the Empire back to glory. In contrast, in the *Secret History*, Justinian appeared as the 'Lord of the Demons', driving Byzantium to disaster.[74] The *Wars* took the middle ground, incorporating negative and positive descriptions of the emperor and his military campaigns. Some of these discrepancies, however, partly reflect the nature and the limitations of Procopius' historical models. The *Wars* was a work of secular history that focused on great men and great battles. The *Secret History* followed the literary genre of *psogos* (invective) and *komodia* (satire), while the *Buildings* followed the restrictions of 'the most artificial of all classical genres to modern taste, that of panegyric'.[75]

Procopius' oft-times paradoxical portraits of Justinian, Belisarius and Narses presents a real problem for anyone hoping to interpret his writings, particularly the *Secret History*. I would agree, however, with Anthony Kaldellis' assertion concerning Procopius, that 'Contrary to what is implied in recent scholarship, genres do not write books. Authors do'.[76] Moreover, as Kate Cooper has convincingly proven in her research, an understanding of even rhetorical constructions in ancient writers like Procopius helps provide a more detailed picture of how ancient men and women understood themselves.[77]

Although the audience for such a detailed prose account of Justinian's military campaigns in Persia, North Africa, and Italy could never have been large, its Byzantine readership probably included influential Greek-speaking members of the bureaucracy and the military high command.[78] Procopius may too have recited his work in front of larger and less-educated audiences, who, as Brian Croke aptly reminds us, 'were no less used to formal rhetoric and found these works enjoyable'.[79] The *Wars* also influenced other early Byzantine historians. Agathias, who accused some of his fellow sixth-century writers of composing histories that demonstrated a 'flagrant disregard for the truth' and no concern for historical precision, in contrast, complimented Procopius for his accuracy and reliability.[80] This praise was not limited to secular historians. The sixth–century ecclesiastical historian, Evagrius, who paraphrased large

sections of *Wars* for his own history, revealed the esteem in which Procopius was held: 'Procopius has set forth most assiduously and elegantly what was done by Belisarius, when he commanded the Eastern forces and by the Romans and Persians when they fought each other'.[81] The regard in which contemporary historians held him and his popularity amongst an influential segment of early Byzantine society indicates that his history was considered accurate and suggests that his paradigms of heroism and masculinity were ones that his audience could appreciate.

Procopius witnessed many of the events he described and knew many of the people found in his writings. In 527, the historian had been appointed as *assessor* (legal secretary) to Belisarius, the newly appointed commander of the Eastern forces.[82] For the next thirteen years, Procopius accompanied Belisarius on his military campaigns in the East against the Persians, to the West in Africa against the Vandals, and in Italy against the Goths. After 540, the two parted ways, and we lose track of the historian's exact location. We do not know if he joined Belisarius in his 541 campaign against the Persians, though he was present the next year when the plague struck in Constantinople. It is almost certain that after 542, he no longer witnessed the events he described, but relied on Byzantine diplomatic records and on his contacts in the Byzantine army and within the Roman Senate.[83] Though we do not know the exact circumstances behind the pairs split, as we discussed above, Procopius attributed the Goths and Persians resurgence after 540 on Belisarius' shortcomings as a general and a man.

Procopius' famously acrimonious *Secret History* attributed many of Belisarius' military defeats, not on failed military strategies, but on his contention that Belisarius had been effeminised. Procopius revealed that it was not rival generals or insubordinate troops that brought about Belisarius' downfall, but an even more formidable enemy: his wife. Procopius, who praised Belisarius for his ability to govern even the most fearsome barbarians, condemned his superior for becoming a slave to his own lust. Like any good warrior, Belisarius did not give in without a fight and he

waged a difficult campaign against her 'womanly wiles'. Again and again, he attempted to escape his wife's clutches and for brief moments he was able to restore his honour by rejecting Antonina's 'tricks of magic', and thereby he became a 'proper' man once more. Each time, however, the respite was fleeting, and Belisarius returned once again to be Antonina's 'faithful slave not her husband'.[84]

Procopius drew attention to how a 'real' man handled disruptive women when he presented the Byzantine general, Constantine, berating Belisarius for ignoring Antonia's suspected adultery: 'If I had been in your shoes, I should have got rid of that woman instead of the youngster [Theodosius — Antonina's purported lover]'. Belisarius not only refused to heed Constantine's advice, but as Procopius related, a short time afterwards had the general executed at Antonina's behest. These actions evoked the 'bitter hostility of the Emperor and of the influential Romans one and all'.[85]

Procopius deftly revealed how troubles in one's domestic world could spill over into the public domain. Following a rhetorical commonplace in classical literature, Procopius emphasised that once a man became enslaved to a woman he could never be a superior leader of men. Belisarius' concern over his wife's depravity led him to sacrifice the state's most vital interests to his own domestic concerns. According to Procopius, Belisarius' obsession with Antonina led to the Byzantine setbacks in the war against the Persians and the Goths. 'Incapacitated by his wife's waywardness', Belisarius refused to travel far beyond the Empire's boundaries, and therefore failed to take the initiative against the Persians. Procopius related that his fellow Romans claimed that Belisarius had 'sacrificed the most vital interests of the State to his own domestic concerns'.[86] The historian also blamed Belisarius' lacklustre second campaign in Italy on his refusal to punish his wife for her 'crimes'.[87]

In Procopius' mind, Belisarius' 'abandonment of his manhood [ἀρρενωπὸν ἀπελελοίπει]', had made him an unmanly shell of his former masculine self. The historian wrote:

> Thinking not one worthy thought nor even remembering that he had ever been a man, but perspiring constantly, with his head swimming, trembling violently in helpless despair, tortured by servile fears, and apprehensions, which were both cowardly and wholly unmanly [ἀνάνδροις].[88]

By allowing Antonina to take on the dominant role in their marriage, Belisarius not only drained his manliness, but according to Procopius, at that moment, 'the hand of God was unmistakably against him', and consequently, Justinian's reconquest of Italy.[89]

Although one can debate whether or not the hostile rhetoric above represented Procopius' 'true' feelings about Belisarius, it certainly provides proof concerning the role that a general's masculine virtues played in determining outcomes on the field of battle. This is only one of several examples in Procopius' writings where military failures resulted from a general's lack of manliness. For instance, in *Wars* and *Secret History*, Procopius blamed the failures of Sergius, supreme commander of Byzantine forces in North Africa (544–5), on his 'unmanly, [ἄνανδρος] 'soft' [μαλθακὸς] and 'effeminate nature' [γνάθους φυσων].[90]

Narses and his fellow eunuch commanders, Solomon and Scholasticus, conversely, were never depicted by Procopius as soft, effeminate, or unmanly. Though it is always dangerous to make an argument based on omission, it is also interesting that Narses does not appear in *Secret History*.[91] If Procopius was writing around 558/59, as some suggest (although 550/51 is the more accepted date), then he may well have been aware of Narses' appointment as commander-in-chief. Even if Procopius composed *Secret History* before Narses' commission, one would think that the eunuch's influential role in Justinian's army and on-going rivalry with Belisarius should have merited some comment. Like Eutropius a century and a half earlier, as a eunuch-commander, Narses would have seemed to have made a perfect target for a historian so fond of gendered invective. Indeed, as a eunuch, Narses would have been

perceived by most Byzantines to be immune to a women's charms. Yet Procopius said nothing.

Of course Procopius was pretty accepting of eunuchs' roles in Byzantine civilisation. This does not mean that Narses evaded all gendered jibes. As mentioned earlier, Procopius' continuer Agathias used the eunuch-trope in his history. So Procopius was probably aware of these gendered attitudes towards eunuchs, but chose not to use them.

His fellow Byzantine historians largely shared Procopius' respect for Narses.[92] In twelfth–century Byzantium, a successful eunuch-commander could be described 'as a new Narses'.[93] Perhaps more surprising, early medieval Western sources have also left us largely positive descriptions of Narses.[94] Writing in the Frankish kingdom of Burgundy in the early 580s, Marius of Avenches celebrated Narses' achievements in Italy:

> After Narses, former superintendent [of the sacred bedchamber] and patrician, had laid low so many usurpers — that is Baudila [Totila] and Tëias kings of the Goths; and Buccelin, a duke of the Franks; as well as Sindual the Herul — he was recalled from Italy in this year, by the above mentioned Augustus [Justin II] having commendably restored Milan and other towns the [Ostro] Goths had destroyed.[95]

Significantly, for our purposes, even Western sources that subscribed to Narses' anachronistic 'betrayal' of Italy to the Lombards first found in Isidore of Seville's chronicle from 616, portray Narses' reasoning for the 'duplicity' in a sympathetic light.[96]

In closing, sixth and seventh-century Byzantine texts abound with emotive rhetoric associating traditional Roman codes of masculinity with idealised visions of the soldier's life. Manly *andreia* continued to be an essential aspect of both generalship and idealised men's self-fashioning. This is not to say that the masculinity of soldiers represented the only type of heroic manliness in this period. Alternative pathways to

achieving 'true' manliness had long been a feature of masculine ideology in the late Roman and the early Byzantine period. Extreme ascetics, courageous martyrs, fearless philosophers, and powerful political and Church leaders were all, at times, compared favourably to military heroes.[97]

Traditional hegemonic masculinity secured in acts of bravery in warfare, however, proved resilient in the early Byzantine period. The increasing use of eunuchs in positions of command from the sixth century did little to shake the idea that 'Roman' greatness had been earned by the manly blood of its soldiers. As a realm dominated by 'real' men, the battlefield continued to provide one of the easiest places for men in the early Byzantine period to prove not only their courage, but also their manliness. Byzantines like Procopius and Agathias created a place for Narses in this masculine world. For these historians, and one suspects their contemporary readers, Narses' *andreia* and, indeed, manliness served as further evidence of Byzantium and its men's masculine supremacy.

Notes

[1] See for example, Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (London: Penguin Books, 1994), p. 555]; J. B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire from the Death of Theodosius I to the Death of Justinian* (London: Macmillan, 1958), pp. 267–80; T. S. Brown, *Gentlemen and Officers: Imperial Administration and Aristocratic Power in Byzantine Italy AD554–800* (London: British School at Rome, 1984), pp. 80–4; Lawrence Fauber, *Narses the Hammer of the Goths* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), p. 135; and John Martyn, 'The Eunuch Narses', in *Text and Transmission in Medieval Europe,* ed. by Chris Bishop (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholarly Publishing, 2007), pp. 46–56.

[2] Modern military historians, for example, have rated Narses as a better general than his rival Belisarius. See for example Bevin Alexander, *How Wars are Won: The 13 Rules of War from Ancient Greece to the War on Terror* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2002), pp. 49–52.

[3] Kathryn Ringrose, *The Perfect Servant: Eunuchs and the Social Construction of Gender* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 133. The original impetus for this essay was as a response to a question from the examiners of my dissertation, 'The Soldier's Life: Martial Virtues and Hegemonic Masculinity in the early Byzantine Empire', (unpublished doctoral thesis, The University of Queensland, 2012), who suggested that Procopius' presentation of Narses might serve as proof that the early Byzantines were turning away from the traditional belief that martial virtues were linked to masculinity.

[4] On the role of eunuchs in Byzantine civilisation, see Rodolphe Guilland, 'Les Eunuques dans l'Empire Byzantin: Étude de Titulature et de Prosopographie Byzantines', in *Études Byzantines*, Vol. I (Bucharest: Institute Français D' Etudes, 1943), pp. 197–238; Keith Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); Ringrose, *Perfect Servant,* 2003; and Shaun Tougher, *The Eunuch in Byzantine History and Society* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

[5] See for example Procopius, *Wars* 4.11.47–56, ed. and trans. by H. B. Dewing, Loeb Classical Library 5 vols. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1914-28). Procopius (*Wars,* 3.11.6), however, differentiated Solomon from man-made eunuchs by emphasising that his castration resulted from a childhood accident. For a discussion on the subtle differences in Byzantine attitudes towards 'accidental' eunuchs like Solomon and 'created' eunuchs see Tougher, *Eunuch*, 31–2, 46.

[6] Procopius, *Wars,* 7.40.5.

[7] For a select prosopography of eunuchs in Byzantine civilisation see Tougher, *Eunuch*, pp. 133–71.

[8] As a propagandist for the Western generalissimo Stilicho, Claudian was rather extreme in his denigration of a rival from a then hostile Eastern half of the Empire. It is important to point out, however, that several Eastern sources (e.g. Eunapius, frag. 64, 65, ed. and trans. by R.C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus, and Malchus*, 2 vols. [Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1983], Zosimus, *New History* 5.38–18, ed. and French trans. by Francois Paschoud, *Zosime, Histoire Nouvelle,* 3 vols [Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1971-89]; English trans. by Ron Ridley, New History, AABS 2 [Brisbane: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1986], Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicle* s.a. 396, ed. and trans by Brian Croke. AABS 7 [Sydney: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1995]) criticised Eutropius with similar hostile rhetoric. For a lucid discussion on the gendered aspects of Claudian's vilification of Eutropius see Mathew Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch: Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity, and Christian ideology in Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 65–7, 69.

[9] Jacqueline Long, *Claudian's 'In Eutropium' Or, How, When and Why to Slander a Eunuch* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), p. 129; and Sidonius, *Carmina* 1.9, trans. by W. B. Anderson, *Poems and Letters,* Loeb Classical Library, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1936).

[10] For just two specific examples see Claudian, *In Eutropium*, ed. by J. Hall (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1985); trans. by Maurice Plautnauer, Loeb Classical Library, 2 vols. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1922) 1.281, 2.112–14 (vol. 1).

[11] Agathias, *Histories,* 1.6.8, 1.22.6, ed. by R. Keydell, *Agathiae Myrinae Historiarum Quinque* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1967); trans. by J. D. Frendo, (New York: W. de Gruyter, 1975).

[12] Agathias, *Histories,* 2.9.1.

[13] Shaun Tougher, 'Social Transformation, Gender Transformation? The Court Eunuch, 300–900', in *Gender in the Early Medieval World: East and West, 300-900,* eds. L. Brubaker and J. M. H. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 88; and Ringrose, *Perfect Servant*, p. 133.

[14] For the centrality of the masculine in Rome and Byzantium see Craig Williams, *Roman Homosexuality: Ideologies of Masculinity in Classical* Antiquity (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Kuelfer, *Manly Eunuch*; Myles McDonnell, *Roman Manliness: Virtus and the Roman Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2007); Colleen Conway, *Behold the Man: Jesus and Greco-Roman Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); and Stewart, 'The Soldier's Life'.

[15] Ringrose, *Perfect Servant*, p.12; and Kuefler, *Manly Eunuch*, pp. 31–36.

[16] Claudius Mamertinus, *Speech of Thanks to Julian* 19.4., trans. by Samuel Lieu, *The Emperor Julian Panegyric and Polemic*, Translated Texts for Historians 2 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1986).

[17] *Historia Augusta* 23.4–8, ed. and trans. by David Magie, Loeb Classical Library, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921–32).

[18] Claudian, *In Eutropium,* 1.48.

[19] Kuefler, *Manly Eunuch*, p. 36. Cf. Peter Brown, *The Body and Society*: *Men Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p.10.

[20] Collin Wells, 'Review of Kathryn Ringrose, *The Perfect Servant: Eunuchs and the Social Construction of Gender*', *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* (2004.02.12), http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2004/2004-02-12.html [accessed 15 January 2012].

[21]Ringrose, *Perfect Servant,* pp. 2–23.

[22] Tougher, 'Social Transformation', p. 82.

[23] Warren Treadgold, 'Review of Kathryn Ringrose, *The Perfect Servant: Eunuchs and the Social Construction of Gender*', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* Vol. 12, No. 3 (2006), pp. 466–469.

[24] Ringrose, *Perfect Servant,* pp. 19–20.

[25] See for example, Robert Browning, *Justinian and Theodora* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), p. 41; Martyn, 'Narses', p. 46.

[26] John Malalas, *Chronicle* 18.66 (469), 18.71 (476), ed. by I. Thurn, *Ioannis Malalae Chronographia* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000); trans. by Elizabeth Jeffreys, Michaels Jeffreys, and Roger Scott, *The Chronical of John Malalas*, AABS 4 (Melbourne: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1986).

[27] Procopius' portrait of Narses is more nuanced, and in places, less positive than Tougher or Ringrose indicates. For his 'negative' qualities see *Wars,* 6.18.11, 6.18.28-29, 6.19.18., 8.23.17–20. For 'positive' traits see *Wars* 6.13.16, 8.26.5, 8.26.14, 8.31.22, 8.35.36.

[28] Procopius, *Wars,* 6.13.16–17.

[29] Agathias, *Histories,* 1.16.2.

[30] For a full discussion of these inversions in *Gothic War* see Michael Edward Stewart, 'Contests of *Andreia* in Procopius' *Gothic Wars*', *Παρεκβολαι* 4 (2014), pp. 21–54.

[31] Ammianus, *Res Gestae,* 16.7.4-8, ed. and trans. by J. C. Rolfe, Loeb Classical Library, 3 vols. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1935-1940). For these accounts of 'good' and 'bad' eunuchs throughout the late Roman and Byzantine eras see Tougher, *Eunuchs*, pp. 26–35.

[32] Procopius, *Wars,* 6.18.7. I have changed the translator Dewing's 'courage' for ἀνδρείας to 'manliness.' Procopius also described (*Wars,* 3.9.25) the Emperor Justinian as ὀξὺς (sharp, clever). Eunuch-commanders after Narses continued to face hostile gendered rhetoric. See the eleventh-century historian, John Skylitzes, *Synopsis of Histories* 16.8, trans. by John Wortley, *A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811-1057* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[33] Agathias, *Histories,* 1.16.12. To better match the gendered tone of this section of Agathias' history, I have changed the translator Frendo's' 'courage' for ἀνδρεῖον to 'manliness'.

[34] Agathias, *Histories,* 1.16.2.

[35] Agathias, *Histories*, 2.22.5.

[36] *Maurice's Strategikon,* 2.16, trans. by G. Dennis, *Maurice's Strategikon: Handbook of Byzantine Military Strategy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984).

[37] See for example, Procopius, *Wars,* 5.18.5.

[38] Though these inexperienced commanders represent the exceptions not the rule, a famous example is Areobindus the *magister militum Africae* (545) who was married to Justinian's niece Prajecta. Procopius described (*Wars,* 4.16.2, 4.25.25) him as having no military experience.

[39]Agathias, *Histories,* 1.21.5. For Narses' small, frail body, see *Histories,* 1.16.2.

[40] Procopius, *Wars,* 4.11.15, 4.19.17.

[41]Procopius, *Wars,* 4.11.47–56; 1.25.24–30.

[42] Ringrose, *Perfect Servant*, p. 134.

[43] Though, according to contemporary sources, the eunuch-exarch of Ravenna, Eleutherios, had attempted to have himself proclaimed Western emperor in 619. The chronicle known as the *Auctarii Havniensis Extrema* (ch. 25, ed. by Theodor Mommsen, *Auctarii Havniensis Extrema, Monumenta Germania Historica: Auctores Antiquissimi* 9 *Chronica Minora* 1: 339 (Berlin, Weidmann, 1892) published around 625, provides the longest account on Eleutherios, explaining that the eunuch had been coaxed to head to Rome to be crowned. Cf. Liber Pontificalis, *Vita Boniface* ch. 2, trans. by Raymond Davis, *The Book of the Pontiffs (Liber Pontificalis): The Ancient Biographies of the First Ninety Roman Bishops to AD 715*, Translated Texts for Historians 6 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1989); and Paul the Deacon, *History of the Lombards* 4.34, trans. by William Foulke (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1974); and Agnellus, *The Book of Pontiffs of the Church of Ravenna,* ch. 106, ed. by Deborah Mauskoph Deliyannis, *Agnelli Ravennatis Liber Pontificalis Ecclesia Ravennatis*, *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* 199 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006).

[44] Judith Herrin, *Unrivalled Influence: Women and Empire in Byzantium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013) p. 268.

[45] Pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle* 9.93, ed. by Geoffrey Greatrex, trans. by Robert Phenix and Cornelia Horn, *The Chronicle of Pseudo Zachariah Rhetor: Church and War in Late Antiquity,* Translated Texts for Historians 55 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011); and Procopius, *Wars,* 3.11.5–6.

[46] Shaun Tougher, 'Byzantine Eunuchs as Generals: The case of Narses', in *Verflechtungen zwischen Byzanz und dem Orient*, ed. by M. Grünbart (forthcoming).

[47] For a description of Narses' vital role in thwarting the revolt see Malalas, *Chronicle* 18.71 (476).

[48] For the probability of Narses being a Monophysite see John of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.39, ed. and Latin trans. by E. W. Brooks, *Historiae Ecclesiasticae Pars Tertia*, Corpus scriptorium Christianorum Orientalium, vols. 105-106 (Louvain: L. Durbecq, 1952).

[49] Marion Kruse III, 'Narses and the Birth of Byzantine Egypt: Imperial Policy in the Age of Justinian', (unpublished honours thesis, University of Richmond, 2008), pp. 24–27.

[50] Procopius, *Wars,* 6.30.1–5; and Agathias, *Histories,* 5.20.5. Historians continue to debate just how viable a rival Belisarius was; see Henning Börm, 'Justinians Truimph und Belisars Erniedrigung Überiegungen zum Verhältnis Zwischen Reich', *Chiron* 43, (2013), pp. 63–91.

[51] In the East, the emperors Marcian (ruled 450–7 and Leo I (ruled 457-74) had served under the Alan strong-man Aspar. Full discussion in Michael Edward Stewart, 'The First Byzantine Emperor? Leo I, Aspar and Challenges of Power and *Romanitas* in Fifth-century Byzantium', *Porphyra* 22 (2014), pp. 4–17.

[52] Procopius, *Wars,* 6.30.27.

[53] Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, pp. 176–96.

[54] Isidore of Seville, *Chronicon* 116, trans. by Kenneth B. Wolfe (2004), http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/isidore_chronicon_01_trans.htm [accessed 10 February 2015]; and Paul the Deacon, *History of the Lombards* 2.5.

[55] Averil Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century* (London: Duckworth, 1985), p. 203.

[56] Anthony Kaldellis, *Procopius of Caesarea: Tyranny, History, and Philosophy at the end of Antiquity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 193–6.

[57] Procopius, *Wars,* 6.13.4–5. Discussed in Kruse, 'Narses', p. 10.

[58] Procopius, *Wars,* 8.21.1–3, 8.25.12.

[59] Michael Edward Stewart, 'Aeneas' Ship: Notions of Return in Procopius' *Gothic Wars*', *Networks & Neighbours* 3.2 (forthcoming).

[60] Books five, six, and seven of *Gothic Wars* covering events in Italy from 535–550 are generally accepted to have been published around 550–551. Book eight, which described the on-going wars in Italy and Persia from 551–553 was probably published in late 553 or 554. For 550/51 as the likely date for *Secret History's composition*, see J. A. S. Evans, 'The Dates of Procopius' Works', *GRBS,* 37 (1996), pp. 301–20; and Cameron, *Procopius,* pp. 8–11; and Geoffrey Greatrex, 'The Dates of Procopius' Works', *BMGS,* 18 (1994), pp. 101–14; and Juan Signes Codoñer, 'Prokops Anekdota und Justinians Nachfolge', *JÖBG,* 53 (2003), pp. 47–82; and Anthony Kaldellis, 'The Date and Structure of Prokopios' Secret History and His Projected Work on Church History', GRBS, 49 (2009), pp. 585–616. For 558/59: Roger Scott, 'Justinian's Coinage and Easter Reforms and the Date of the *Secret History*', *BMGS,* 11 (1987), pp. 215–21; Brian Croke, 'Procopius' *Secret History*: Rethinking the Date', *GRBS,* 25 (2005), pp. 405–31.

[61] Procopius, *Wars,* 7.21-10, 8.26.7. Cf. Procopius, *Secret History* 4.39–40.

[62] Philip Rance, 'Narses and the Battle of Taginae (Busta Gallorum) 552: Procopius and Sixth-Century Warfare', *Historia*, 54 (2005), p. 426.

[63] For this influence see Charles F. Pazdernik, 'Procopius and Thucydides on the Labors of War: Belisarius and Brasidas in the Field', in *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 130 (2000), pp. 149–87; and Kaldellis, *Procopius*, pp. 17–61. On how Procopius' *Wars* differs from Thucydides see Maria Kouroumali, 'Procopius and the Gothic War', (unpublished doctoral thesis, Oxford University, 2005), pp. 9–26. Despite Procopius' reputation as a classicising historian, many of the themes in

Procopius' writings would have bewildered Herodotus and Thucydides. Foremost of these novelties was the Christian influence on the works. Full discussion in Cameron, *Procopius,* pp. 64–5; and Michael Stewart, 'Between Two Worlds, Men's Heroic Conduct in the Writings of Procopius', (unpublished master's thesis, San Diego State University 2003), pp. 25–9.

[64] Warren Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 223.

[65] For typical traits expected from an ideal commander see for example, the description of the fifth-century Roman generalissimo Aetius found in the fragment of the *Historia* of Renatus Frigeridus recorded by the sixth-century historian Gregory of Tours (*History of the Franks*, 2.8, trans. by Lewis Thorpe [London: Penguin Books, 1974): 'His (Aetius) intelligence was keen, he was full of energy, a superb horseman, a fine shot with an arrow and tireless with the lance. He was extremely able as a soldier and he was skilled in the arts of peace. There was no avarice in him and even less cupidity. He was magnanimous in his behaviour and never swayed in his judgement by the advice of unworthy counsellors. He bore adversity with great patience, was ready for any exacting enterprise, he scorned danger and was able to endure hunger, thirst and the loss of sleep'.

[66] See for example, Procopius, *Wars,* 5.22.1–9. Belisarius cleverly lures the Goths into battle and laughs at their 'barbarian simplicity'. *Wars,* 6.30.24–7. Belisarius shows his devious side by going along with the Goths' offer to make him emperor of the West. **Procopius described (*Wars* 3.9.25) Belisarius as ὀξὺς (sharp, clever).**

[67] For the close association of the term *mollitia* 'softness' with 'effeminacy' see Craig Williams, 'Some Remarks on the Semantics of *mollitia', Eugesta*', 3 (2013), pp. 240–63.

[68] Ammianus, *Histories,* 31.5.14 (my trans.); 14.6.10. I have replaced the translator Rolfe's 'valour' for *virtute* with 'manliness.' Cf. Theophylact, *History* 2.14.6, trans. by Michael and Mary Whitby, *The History of Theophylact Simocatta* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

[69] Agathias, *Histories,* 2.12.2–6.

[70] For example, Procopius' effusive praise in *Wars* of men with military backgrounds, Theodosius I (3.1.2–3), Majorian (3.7.4-13), Leo I (3.6.11), Belisarius (7.1.1–21), Totila (7.6.4), and Germanus (7.40.9); Agathias: the Roman Palladius (1.9.3), the Goth Aligern and the Herul Sindal (2.9.12).

[71] Procopius' views on gender—particularly his attitudes towards Theodora, Antonina, Belisarius, and Justinian found in the *Secret History*—have received particular attention. Much of this work has been the by-product of the upsurge of research focusing on the role of women in the early Byzantine Empire. For example see, Judith Herrin, 'In Search of Byzantine Women: Three Avenues of Approach', in *Images of Women in Antiquity*, ed. by Averil Cameron and Amelie Kuhrt (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983), pp. 167–89; Pauline Allen, 'Contemporary Portrayals of the Byzantine Empress Theodora (A.D. 527–548)', in *Stereotypes of Women in Power: Historical Perspectives and Revisionist Views*, ed. by Barbara Garlick, Suzanne Dixon, and Pauline Allen (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992), pp. 93–103; Lynda Garland, *Byzantine Empresses: Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527–1204* (London: Routledge, 1999); Liz James, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium* (London: Leicester University Press, 2001); Leslie Brubaker, 'Sex, Lies, and Texuality: The Secret History of Prokopios and the Rhetoric of Gender in Sixth-Century Byzantium', in *Gender in the Early Medieval World: East and West, 300–900*, ed. by Leslie Brubaker and Julia Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 83–101; and Harmut Ziche, 'Abusing Theodora: Sexual and Political Discourse in Procopius', *Βυζαντιακὰ,* 30 (2012–13), pp. 311–22.

[72] For a thorough discussion of Procopian scholarship in the past twenty years see Geoffrey Greatrex, 'Recent work on Procopius and the Composition of *Wars* VIII', *BMGS,* 27 (2003), pp. 45–67; and 'Perceptions of Procopius in Recent Scholarship', *Histos,* 8 (2014), pp. 76–121, (*Addenda*) 121a–121e.

[73] Procopius, *Wars,* 8.1.1.

[74] Procopius, *Buildings,* 1.1.16; and Procopius, *Secret History* 30.34, trans. by G.A. Williamson (London: Penguin Books, 1981)

[75]Averil Cameron stresses (*Procopius,* pp. 25, 60) that seeing the *Secret History* simply as an exaggerated satire does not give ‘justice to its complexity and its earnestness, and should not be used to obscure the substantial portion of the work that is devoted to detailed political accusation’, Geoffrey Greatrex goes further (‘Procopius the Outsider’, BMGS, 18 (1994), pp. 101–14), maintaining that the *Secret History* is not a separate genre from *Wars*, but was made up of material that Procopius hoped to insert into *Wars* if the emperor predeceased him. Opposing these views in a sharp revision, Henning Börm (‘Procopius and his Predecessors, and the Genesis of the *Anecdota*’, in Henning Börm ed., *Antimonarchic Discourse in Antiquity* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2015), pp. 305–45) submits that the hasty composition of the *Secret History* indicates that it was produced because Procopius feared a coup was inevitable, and he wanted to disassociate himself from Belisarius and Justinian’s inner-circle. Therefore, the views portrayed in this work are merely an attempt by Procopius to ingratiate himself to the ‘new’ regime, and therefore not reflective of his ‘true’ views at all. I see the points of view expressed by Procopius in the *Secret History* as exaggerated, yet sincere, suggesting that it is representative of the historian’s pessimistic mindset towards Justinian’s floundering Gothic campaign around 550–552 when he probably composed the diatribe.

[76] Kaldellis, *Procopius*, p. 143.

[77] Kate Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride: Idealized Womenhood in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 11–3.

[78] For this probable audience see Treadgold, *Byzantine Historians*, p. 189; and Brian Croke, ‘Uncovering Byzantium’s Historiographical Audience’, in *History as Literature in Byzantium,* ed. Ruth Macrides (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), p. 33

[79] Croke, ‘Historiographical Audience’, p. 33.

[80] Agathias, *Histories,* proem 18–22.

[81] Evagrius Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History,* 4.12, trans. by Michael Whitby, *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus*, Translated Texts for Historians 33 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000).

[82] Most historians believe that Procopius was a lawyer. For example see Juan Signes Codoner, *Procopio de Casarea*: *Historia Secreta*, (Madrid: Gredos, 2000), pp. 11–12; and Geoffrey Greatrex, ‘*Lawyers and Historians in Late Antiquity, in Law, Society and Authority in Late Antiquity*’, ed. by Ralph Mathisen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 151. However, James Howard-Johnston has theorised that Procopius was an engineer/architect. See James Howard-Johnston, ‘The Education and Expertise of Procopius’, *Antiquite Tardive,* 8 (2000), pp. 19–30.

[83] For this probable date see Cameron, *Procopius*, p. 188. We know from *Wars* 2.22.9 that Procopius was living in Constantinople when the plague struck in the spring of 542. See *Wars* 8.21.10–11, where a Roman senator provided Procopius with the story of the prophecy concerning Narses.

[84] Procopius, *Secret History,* 2.33.2, 2.37.2, 4.29–30 (trans. by Williamson).

[85] Procopius, *Secret History,* 1.25–30 (trans. by Williamson).

[86] Procopius, *Secret History,* 2.33.3, 2.25–7, 3.31 (trans. by Williamson).

[87] Procopius, *Secret History,* 4.39–45. Cf. However, a more positive assessment (*Wars* 8.21.1–4) of Belisarius composed after Narses had defeated the Goths.

[88] Procopius, *Secret History,* 4.22–6, 5.32–3, trans. by H. B. Dewing, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 6 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1935). I have used Dewing’s translation of this passage and the next because it more accurately reflects the gendered vocabulary of the original Greek.

[89] Procopius, *Secret History*, 4.42, 5.1–8 (trans. by Dewing).

[90] Procopius, *Secret History*, 5.32, I have changed the translator Dewing's 'effeminate in his way of living' for γνάθους φυσων to 'effeminate nature'; *Wars* 4.22.2.

[91] See Martyn, 'Narses', p. 55, where Martyn attributes this omission to Procopius' sincere respect for Narses.

[92] See for example, John Malalas, *Chronicle,* 18.110 (484), 18.116. (486); and Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History,* 4.24; and John of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History,* 3.1.39.

[93] Tougher, *Eunuch*, p. 121.

[94] See for example Gregory of Tours, *Histories,* 4.9; and Liber Pontificalis, *Vita Vigilius,* ch. 8, *Vita John,* ch. 2–3; and Paul the Deacon, *History of the Lombards,* 2.3, 2.5.

[95] Marius of Avenches, *Chronicle* s.a. 568, in *From Roman to Merovingian Gaul: A Reader,* ed. and trans. by Alexander Callander Murray (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), p. 106.

[96] See for example, Isidore of Seville, *Chronicon,* 116; and Liber Pontificalis, *Vita John,* ch. 3–4; and Paul the Deacon, *History of the Lombards,* 2.5.

[97] Maud Gleason, *Making Men: Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Kuefler, *Manly Eunuch*; and Colleen Conway, *Behold the Man: Jesus and Greco-Roman Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Grotesque Encounters:

Reading Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice* along the Principles of the Sublime, Beautiful and Grotesque

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Abstract: This article is an attempt to apply the basic principles of the aesthetic discourse on the sublime, beautiful and grotesque to William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice. *Even though it is a discourse that only begins in the course of the eighteenth century, I will argue that the structure of the play parallels the model of the traditional sublime, as it deals with a subject-object binary and meditates on the relationship between the material (body) and the transcendental (mind). However, the play is also rich in disruptive — or grotesque — forces that unsettle this binary structure. The parallels between the play and the aesthetic discourse could not only help our understanding of postmodern criticism and rewriting of the sublime, but the sublime can also, in turn, shed light on the reception of the play.*

> [A]stonishment is that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror.! In this case the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor by consequence reason on that object which employs it. Hence arises the great power of the sublime, that far from being produced by them, it anticipates our reasonings, and hurries us on by an irresistible force.
>
> —Edmund Burke[1]

William Shakespeare has often been associated with the sublime, either when being called a 'sublime writer', or in his capacity to trigger sublime feelings in his spectators/readers. Harold Bloom, in his latest book, *Anatomy of Influence*, for example, thinks that:

> [t]he difference between reading Shakespeare and reading nearly any other writer is that greater widening of our consciousness into what initially must seem a strangeness of woe or wonder. As we go out to meet a larger consciousness, we metamorphose into a provisional acceptance that sets aside moral judgment, while wonder transmutes into a more imaginative understanding.[2]

Venerations of Shakespeare of this kind have become all too familiar; they evoke ideas of genius and tradition, but they also carry the hope that sublime writing would somehow raise us through metamorphosis into a larger consciousness through the power of forming great conceptions.[3] The sublime would have the quality, as Bloom puts it, to transport and enlarge, so that the reader would experience 'something akin to authorship'.[4] As conveyed in Burke's and Bloom's passages, the sublime is generally conceived as the coupling of crisis and transcendence. When encountering a special kind of object that is so all-encompassing that it fills the subject completely, judgment is put aside, and 'motions are suspended, with some degree of horror', as Burke writes. The experience of perceiving the object, thus, is so overwhelming that it throws the subject into crisis.

This 'irresistible force'[5] of the experience eventually leads to some form of transcendence — it enlarges, raising the perceiver to something grander.

The sublime is an emotional experience with a long discursive tradition. Although it mainly emerged in the seventeenth century, emotions do not just appear with their discourses; they are already in the world. Likewise, thoughts on the sublime have been around since before the seventeenth century. Originating in Ancient Greece, the treatise *On the Sublime*, for instance, is generally attributed to Longinus. Contrary to widely held assumptions, 'its early modern revival did not begin with the adaptation published by Boileau in 1647; it was not connected solely with the early Greek editions that began to appear from 1545; nor was its impact limited to rhetoric and literature'.[6] It was present in art and architecture, philosophy, religion and anthropology, and should therefore not be reduced to literary discourse only; since before 1750, it escaped easy disciplinary classification.[7] Edmund Burke, Immanuel Kant, and William Wordsworth were later all preoccupied with the sublime, as were modernist and post-modern writers and philosophers such as Theodor W. Adorno, Jean-François Lyotard, or Patricia Yaeger. The history of discourses around emotions can remind us of their social character as well as of their central role for thought and creativity.

Shakespeare's plays are valuable texts for examining emotions because they provide insight into their historical context, test their credibility for contemporary audiences and, thus, offer insight into the social life of emotions. However, this article aims to demonstrate that our current post-modern discourses can also illuminate early modern plays and their emotional content. It thus claims that the sublime can be a fruitful category that frames Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* in a new light. The first part of this article considers Romantic and post-modern discourses on the sublime to gain a structural understanding of the play and analyses its inherent power relations as well as its dynamic of crisis and

transcendence. I will propose that while the play can be read along the principles of the traditional sublime, it equally disturbs this order through potentially 'grotesque' encounters with its 'others'; namely Shylock and his daughter Jessica. The second part of this article investigates the sublime as an emotion evoked in Act V that can speak to a (post)modern audience and generate new meanings for the play.

My discussion builds on post-modern rewritings of the sublime by writers and scholars such as Julia Kristeva, Jean-Francois Lyotard, and Jennifer Wawrzinek, who have tried to rework a more ethical version of this emotional experience. The existing body of theory hopefully enables a fresh reading of *The Merchant of Venice*, a play that has not yet been conceived of in terms of the aesthetics of the sublime, beautiful and grotesque.

READING THE PLAY WITH THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE SUBLIME

One of the main issues the discourse on the sublime negotiates is the relationship between subject and object. The sublime experience narrates an encounter with an object or an 'other' too vast to grasp, followed by an overpowering emotion of terror, pain and pleasure, which Burke considers to be 'the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling'.[8] Burke describes a certain sequence of events in this experience. First, the excess of the encounter fills the perceiver so completely that the faculty of judgement is blocked, and language fails: 'In this case the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor by consequence reason on that object which employs it'.[9] This encounter is accompanied by a negative pleasure, a delightful horror which, through its forcefulness, threatens to annihilate the subject. As a consequence of this crisis, writers such as Immanuel Kant and William Wordsworth have described the subsequent transcendence of the mind over 'matter', which experiences a kind of epiphanic new consciousness that has the

quality of a revelation.[10] This heightened sense of the self not only sublimates the disturbing emotion, but also forms the ground for a strengthened ego through a newly acquired concept. Often, this transcendence has taken the form of a celebration of human faculties that are superior to the object of contemplation. For Kant, these powers would lie in human reason. Wordsworth, on the other hand, would find them in the human imagination. A striking example for the process of transcendence described can be found in Wordsworth's encounter with a blind beggar in the streets of London:

> Amid the moving pageant, 'twas my chance
> Abruptly to be smitten with the view
> Of a blind Beggar, who, with upright face,
> Stood, propped against a wall, upon his chest
> Wearing a written paper, to explain
> The story of the man, and who he was.
> My mind did at this spectacle turn round
> As with the might of waters, and it seemed
> To me that in this label was a type,
> Or emblem, of the utmost that we know,
> Both of ourselves and of the universe;
> And, on the shape of the unmoving man,
> His fixèd face and sightless eyes, I looked,
> As if admonished from another world.[11]

Rather than pondering the social circumstances that might have triggered his misery, or else seeking a dialogue with the suffering man, the poet transforms the blind beggar into a type that in the coming verses helps the reader attain new knowledge of the world and the poet's relationship to it.

Not only does the outcome of the Kantian or Wordsworthian sublime strengthen binaries, but the conclusions drawn after this unsettling experience are also hierarchical, for they articulate a valorisation of some kind, be it in mind over

body, reason over imagination, imagination over reason, autonomous self over contingent other, human over nature, and so on.[12] Because of this hierarchical transcendence with its implied mastery over something designated as 'other', the Kantian sublime has been criticised for reinforcing subjectivity based on individuality and autonomy, and for objectifying the perceived other.[13] Whether through identification with or in contradistinction to the other, the object is subordinate and merely functions as a foil for the strengthened human subject. Transcendence of the subject is oblivious of the context, difference and singularity of the perceived other, whose sole purpose of existence seems to be determined through the capacity to be of use to the perceiver, the human individual. Thus, the traditional sublime encounter relies on a strong separation of subject and object, in which the reality of the object is only of abstract value and serves an intellectual goal.

In a similar way, *The Merchant of Venice* is constructed around a strong binary of subject and object, a logic following the 'us' and 'them' dynamic the play establishes between the white Venetian Christian identity versus Shylock 'the Jew', and other ethnically different 'intruders' of Venice and Belmont. The radical objectification of Shylock becomes apparent through the fact that he is the only character who falls into generic labelling; often he is simply designated 'the Jew'. Further, Venetian Christian identity is in crisis throughout the play, as can be seen through Portia's mainly foreign wooers and her scepticism towards them; Antonio's vulnerable white Christian body subject to Shylock's knife; and through the play's preoccupation with conversion and miscegenation as brought to play through Jessica and Launcelot the clown.[14] But with the help of a forensic trick, Shylock is outplayed, and eventually in Act V, Venetian identity is restored.

This basic plotline illustrates the principle concerns of the sublime, for it is the story of a fragile identity (white Christian Venetian) that finds its unity threatened upon the confrontation with an othered opponent (Shylock, Jessica, and other

'ethnic' intruders), but eventually manages to colonise this objectified other transcending and condemning it. The vertical transcendence over the material reality of the other (materiality meaning here the context and singularity of the objectified) happens with the help of a gained concept; in this case Christian spiritual superiority as expressed throughout the trial scene as well as through the idea of musicality in Act V. This potentially sublime experience therefore leads to religious, aesthetic, or racial supremacy, so that transcendence is exposed as a potentially violent act. The play, however, also harbours 'grotesque' elements that can be said to disrupt the structure of the transcendental sublime.

GROTESQUE IRRUPTIONS

The grotesque has been associated with the bodily, the abject, and the 'low'. The Jewish moneylender, against whom Christian identity is continuously constructed, is marked out by the play through his increasing grotesqueness. It is worth considering how this difference is constructed theologically and aesthetically in order to examine the significance of the grotesque in relation to the sublime.

Shylock's difference is delineated with the help of Christian supersessionist interpretations of Judaism. As Janet Adelman points out in her book *Blood Relations*, the play reflects the balancing act Christians underwent. On the one hand they recognised their religious source of Judaism, while on the other simultaneously displacing this 'father religion', claiming it as a religion of law, rather than forgiveness.[15] Adelman remarks that this rejection of Judaism implied a paradoxical argument: on the one hand, it maintained that Jesus would be the rightful, *physical* descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, while on the other hand, it emphasised that Christianity is the rightful *spiritual* inheritor of Judaism; spiritual, for it is open to all peoples of the world no matter of which 'blood line' and because it replaces a supposed 'religion of law' with spiritual values, such as mercy, forgiveness and

love.[16] Adelman uses the following Paulinian passage to illustrate this paradoxical struggle for Christians:

> all they are not Israel, which are of Israel: Neither are thei all children, because thei are the sede of Abraham...they which are the children of the flesh, are not the children of God: but the children of the promes are counted for the sede. (Romans 9.6–8)

Adelman thus points out that the Christian exegesis of the Bible reserved the material world to the 'older brother' Judaism, while claiming the rightful spiritual position of the 'younger brother' for themselves. This passage is not only telling for the objectification at hand, but also for the body-mind divide which serves a hierarchical structure. Adelman observes:

> the fleshly descendants of Abraham are to be displaced by sons of faith – and these sons of faith come to be typologically represented by none other than Isaac and Jacob, the fleshly ancestors of Christ. Issac and Jacob are thus called upon simultaneously to represent both the Jews from whom Christ descends in the flesh and the triumph of Christian spiritual lineage over Jewish fleshly lineage.[17]

Likewise, Shylock's grotesqueness seems to be grounded in his objectification as the representative of Judaism with its supposed material preoccupations with law, money, and the pound of flesh. This is constructed in contrast to the Christian Venetians' self-fashioning as carriers of transcendental ideals of mercy, morality, and music. A short example from the trial scene demonstrates this:

> Portia: 'Twere good you do so much for charity.
>
> Jew: I cannot find it; 'tis not in the bond. (IV. 1. 269–270)

The grotesque has been associated with the bodily and the ordinary, as well as the vulgar, all of which seem to be implied in Shylock's wish for the dubious 'pound of flesh', implicitly alluding to Antonio's genitals.[18]

Further to this theological categorisation, Shylock is also constructed as an aesthetic typecast by his fellow Venetians, for he is said to be 'the man that hath no music in himself'. As Lorenzo thinks:

> The man that hath no music in himself,
> Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
> Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils,
> The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
> And his affections dark as Erebus:
> Let no such man be trusted: - mark the music. (V. 1. 83–88)

Since musicality is linked to the capacity to be moral as well as spiritual in the play, it is conveyed that Shylock is mentally and physically incapable of morality, as he has 'no music in himself' and is 'not moved with concord of sweet sounds' (V. 1. 83–84). Implicit in this is his alleged inherent wickedness and the 'primitivism' that the Christians come to despise in the play and which they claim to have transcended long ago with their belief in Jesus. Shylock is the ultimate objectified other, who is loaded with theological concepts, symbols and aesthetic categories that easily slip into a racial construction of difference.

We have now seen how Shylock is both theologically and aesthetically constructed by the Christian Venetians as 'grotesque'. As the play unfolds, however, Shylock seems to increasingly fit into this image of the grotesque Jew that the Christians have reserved for him. To this extent, he even wishes his beloved daughter's death after she has eloped with a Christian, bemoaning the jewels she took with her ('I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear'; III. 1. 79); and it culminates in his whetting the knife on his shoe in the courtroom, hoping for his desired pound of flesh (IV. 1. 121–126). He increasingly becomes a monstrous figure that perfectly fits into a definition by Janeen Webb.

Aside from an imaginary animal or a misshapen variant of a recognisable form, a monster can be 'a person twisted (by such wickedness, cruelty or fanaticism) or otherwise damaged so that he partakes in the inhuman'.[19]

With the building up of his monstrosity, Shylock progressively functions like a mirror that reflects the cruelty committed to him by the Christians, who make use of him by borrowing his money, while despising him for doing exactly this. Shylock's famous soliloquy expresses his intention to replicate Christian behaviour:

> If you prick us do we not bleed? if you tickle us do we not laugh? if you poison us do we not die? and if you wrong us shall we not revenge? — if we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? revenge! If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? — why revenge! The villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction. (III. 1. 57–65)

Similar to Mary Shelley's creature (which is often referred to as 'monster') in *Frankenstein*, Shylock is holding a mirror to the society that produced his malice; he 'de-monstrates' that his opponent Antonio is, indeed, just the same in his unrelenting hatred towards the Jews: 'The villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction' (III. 1. 65). This interchangeability of Christian and Jew culminates in Portia's strangely salient question when she enters the courtroom as a judge: 'Which is the merchant here? and which the Jew?' (IV. 1. 172).

The term 'monster' originates from several noun and verb-forms, as Mark Thornton Burnett explains: 'In Latin, *monstro* means to show, demonstrate and reveal; a *monstrum* is a portent, prodigy or sign as well as an 'unnatural thing'; and *moneo* translates as to give warning of or presage'.[20] The category of the monstrous would therefore be useful for its quality of subsuming 'alterity' of many kinds, under which would fall not only the physically 'different' but also ethnic 'others'.[21] Burnett discusses Shakespearean characters such as Caliban (physically different), Cleopatra

(her appropriation of male power) or Othello (ethnically different) for describing the versatile faces of the monstrous, and how it came to signal 'a range of personality and behavioural traits which fall outside prescribed perimeters'.[22] He claims that in Shakespeare's time, representations of the monstrous were circulating widely, and that monsters occupied a firm space in the early modern psyche, making it 'the most intriguing and least understood discourses of the period'.[23] Shylock, however, has rarely been associated in terms of the grotesque or monstrous; Burnett does not mention him at all.

Shylock's threatening 'grotesqueness' seems to have the virtue of destabilising Christian identity, for he becomes an over-determined figure that in its de-humanised monstrosity puts Christian stereotypes on display. As Burnett observes, the monstrous body always seems to be an object of fascination because it produces anxieties about sameness and difference, autonomy and dependency, singleness and doubleness, civility and savagery.[24] The development of his character, as well as Jessica's fraught relationship to him, thus show the potential of being a 'monstrous' man. However, this potential also precariously reiterates the image of the abject Jewish body. Maik Hamburger has pointed out that the split between aesthetic and political effect makes it impossible to follow the play's affective potentials without being confronted with the accusation of racism.[25] The play's dilemma, therefore, seems to be that Shylock's implied grotesqueness perpetuates anti-Semitic imagery.

We have now seen how the grotesque is connected to the idea of the bodily, the abject, the 'low', how Shylock is constructed as theologically and aesthetically grotesque, and how he also seems to play up to this role with his increasingly 'monstrous' behaviour. But how exactly has the grotesque been conceived of as an aesthetic category and how does it relate to the sublime? The grotesque is excessive, irrational and hybrid; it is uncontainable. While Kant had pronounced the monstrous incompatible with the sublime for the defeat of intellectual end by

material form,[26] many postmodern critics place the abject or the grotesque alongside the sublime and the beautiful — as a third often forgotten aesthetic category.[27] The grotesque becomes crucial among post-modern critics precisely for its potential to unsettle circumscribed identity, binary thinking and, above all, because it discourages a transcendence that leads to the colonisation of the other through a concept. In her book *Powers of Horror*, for example, Julia Kristeva defines the abject as that which 'does not respect borders, positions, rules'.[28] Because the abject has the quality of throwing the subject into crisis by not withholding the neatly circumscribed subject-object relationship, she aligns it with the sublime:

> The abject is edged with the sublime. It is the same moment on the journey, but the same subject and speech bring them into being […] for the sublime has no object either.[29]

She thus writes about a sublime encounter with 'abjection':

> The abject has only one quality of the object – that of being opposed to I. [...] the jettisoned object, is radically excluded and draws me toward the place where meaning collapses.[30]

The abject encounter described is so ultimately strange to the perceiver that it cannot be assimilated into symbolic structures, such that it threatens to unsettle the subject in its defiance of conventional, instrumental sense-making. While describing a sublime encounter that leaves the subject moved and unstable, Kristeva omits the transcendental part of encountering an object. Rather than drawing conclusions that reinstate the self, the encounter unsettles identity, as meaning collapses and intellectual transcendence is defeated. It is because of this different conclusion to a disturbing contact with an 'other' that the grotesque has been restored in postmodern revisions of the sublime.

Placed in opposition to Christian moral spirituality, Shylock's grotesqueness also has the potential to disrupt the smooth surface of Christian Venetians' alleged superiority. His development into an embittered hyperbolic 'monster' can

deconstruct the religious and aesthetic categorisations including the assumption that Jews lack certain human qualities like mercy, for example. René Girard asserts that the play is obsessed with 'sharpening a difference that is less and less real', a quality which he finds characteristic of all of Shakespeare's works.[31] This disturbance between self and other lies in the uneasy sense that Antonio and Shylock — the two wealthy men who are somehow marked out as 'different' to the majority of society — are mirrors for each other. Adelman comments on the disruption of subject and object in the play: 'Theologically, the knowledge that *Merchant* simultaneously gestures toward and defends against is that the Jew is not the stranger outside Christianity but the original stranger within it'.[32] The aesthetic of the grotesque seems to negotiate its own kind of excessive encounter, in which identities mingle, intersect and therefore transcendence over a designated 'other' is debarred.

Because of the kinship of the two religions at stake, and because the play negotiates questions of personal, national and religious borders, Adelman points out that preoccupation of *The Merchant* with the two religions hinges on questions of 'bloodline' and spirituality, and tells of anxieties about the Christians' unpaid debt to the Jews.[33] These anxieties are not only mediated through Shylock and his Christian opponent Antonio, but also through Jessica, Shylock's daughter. As a Jew converting to Christianity, her own body becomes a field in which definitions of Judaism and Christianity are practised: is this young woman, Shylock's flesh and blood, with her maternal body, her so-called 'Jewish womb', an acceptable figure within the Christian community?[34] Is she welcomed among her new Christian brothers and sisters? The play demonstrates that her fellow Christians have great trouble accepting her as their like: Portia mostly ignores Jessica, while Gratiano marks her as different by calling her an 'infidel' (III. 2. 217) and a 'stranger', which awkwardly points to the way in which Jessica is physically excluded on stage: 'cheer yond stranger. Bid her welcome' (III. 2. 236).[35] In fact, Jessica's conversation with Launcelot

the clown anticipates this outsider position she cannot escape even after having converted, as Adelman has pointed to:[36]

> Launcelot: Yes truly, for look you, the sins of the father are to be laid upon the children, [...] therefore be o' good cheer, for truly I think you are damn'd; there is but one hope in that can do you any good, and that is but a kind of bastard hope neither.
>
> Jessica: And what hope is that I pray thee?
>
> Launcelot: Marry, you may partly hope that your father got you not, that you are not the Jew's daughter. (III. 5. 1–9)

As Launcelot explains to her, Jessica is pre-destined to remain excluded for her only hope would be not to have descended from a Jewish bloodline. Jessica thus becomes a liminal figure that, similar to Shylock, exposes the Christians' failure of treating their spiritual sister any different after she has renounced her father's heritage and changed her religion. This liminality is not only due to her status as a convert, but also happens by virtue of her femininity, for the prospect of her conceiving a child with a Christian has the capacity to irritate the neatly circumscribed white Christian Venetian identity.

Thus, the extermination of difference, the attempt to turn the 'other' into the same, is not only disrupted through the potentially complex grotesqueness of Shylock, but also through the seemingly marginal figure of Jessica, who has the capacity to disturb identities through her status as a convert, and by sheer virtue of her femininity — her prospect of being a future mother. Does this give her character a grotesque potential? It is certainly for directors to decide how to play her and to play with potentials in characters. In any case, it is she who, next to Portia, marks the play's melancholic last act and who — although having converted — continues to irritate Christian identity, especially after her father has been expelled. As the following section discusses, the last act reveals Jessica's subtle defiance to play into a harmonic end of this 'comedy'.

CHRISTIAN TRANSCENDENCE

The play's conclusion, Act V could be understood as the silence after the storm. It is marked by the ostensible absence of 'others' and presents us with the concept of Christian transcendental spirituality. This happens by means of a discourse on music through which positions and lessons learned are, somewhat abstractly, expressed. Music is literally played over the conspicuous silence of the night which seems to be the silence of the sentenced, the absence of 'others'. Lorenzo, Jessica's newly-wed husband, claims:

> In such a night as this,
> When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees,
> And they did make no noise (V. 1. 1–3)

Although the wind stirs the trees, they do not respond. Their silence is uncanny. Lorenzo here seems to point to Jessica's silence and the way she does not respond positively to the 'sweet music' of the last act. For Lorenzo, this 'sweet music' plays a great part as the expression of grand ideals, such as the beautiful and harmonious which enables morality and transcendence:

> Lorenzo: Such harmony is in immortal souls
> But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it. [...]
>
> Jessica: I am never merry when I hear sweet music. (V. 1. 70–73; 76)

With its evocation of rising above materiality and those beings that are apparently not sensitive to music, the concept of music conjures a form of the traditional sublime, as a transcendental ideal is expressed at the cost of those that are identified as other. Lorenzo instructs his melancholic wife, Jessica, about the concept of spherical harmony which clearly establishes the binary between materiality and spirituality. Jessica, however, seems to refuse an understanding of transcendence that

happens in differentiation to her father, who apparently is the one alluded to in Lorenzo's utterance ‘[t]he man that hath no music in himself’ (V. 1. 83). She claims she would be ‘never merry when I hear sweet music’ and thus reveals her sadness after her father has been expelled by alluding to ancient tragic myths of unhappy women, and by falling silent after her above statement (V. 1. 76).

Likewise, Portia displays a remarkable sadness in this last act that is meant to celebrate Venetian Christian self-restoration and the beginning of her marriage:

> This night methinks is but the daylight sick
> It looks a little paler; ‘tis a day,
> Such as the day is when the sun is hid. (V. 1. 124–126)

Portia seems to remark here on the fact that day and night are not so much opposites as versions of one another; the night merely resembles a dim day; it is characterised in terms of lack and illness — it is ‘sick’, ‘pale’ and ‘hidden’. The night is thus not an entity in itself with moon and stars, but characterised in terms of what is missing. Further, Portia embarks on a reflection of the circumstantial and relative, in contrast to Lorenzo’s absolute categories of harmony and morality through music[37]:

> Portia: Nothing is good (I see) without respect –
> Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.
>
> Nerissa: Silence bestows that virtue on it, madame
>
> Portia: The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark
> When neither is attended: and I think
> The nightingale, if she should sing by day
> When every goose is cackling, would be thought
> No better a musician than the wren!
> How many things by season season’d are
> To their right praise, and true perfection! (V. 1. 102–8)

Nothing is good 'as such', she claims, everything depends on the perspective of the perceiver. Here, the nightingale may only be loved because of the appearance of her song at a particular time of the night. Ruth HaCohen has remarked that the play hinges on the question of whether Shylock's wicked behaviour is the result of an 'original sin', or whether it is the circumstances of Venetian society that have led him to his monstrosity — a question Portia seems to resolve in favour of the latter, as she criticises a notion of a fixed morality or truth.[38]

This brings us back to the theory of the sublime and grotesque, for the grotesque specifically conveys the defiance of absolutes in favour of a material reality of context, of time and space. As Jennifer Wawrzinek remarks: '[T]he grotesque belongs to time and space, rather than the supersensible world of the sublime. It insists upon a body that is open and incomplete and which exists within a social and ecosystemic network'.[39] Shylock's grotesqueness holds the potential of seeing his otherness in context, thereby serving to demystify and de-demonise his alterity. Despite — or perhaps because of — Portia's role in Shylock's harsh punishment (which in fact seems to be his death sentence), she seems torn and unsatisfied in the concluding act of the play. 'Nothing is good without respect' (V. 1. 102); and even the dark creatures, crows, can be regarded as singing beautifully — depending on the context.

THE OTHER SUBLIME

After Portia rids music of appropriation and exclusivity, such as who possesses proper sounds, the playing of music over the silence of the sentenced has the potential to express the inherent melancholia in the play's conclusive fifth act. This act attempts to celebrate the transcendence over Shylock; yet, as mentioned above, Portia claims that the night is 'pale' and resembles a dark day. The night of this final act is not an entity in itself with moon and stars, but is characterised in terms of lack,

of what is missing. The sense that something has gone missing evokes the idea of melancholia which Sigmund Freud describes in his seminal essay 'Mourning and Melancholia' (1917). He defines it as a condition in which one is unable to declare the object of sadness dead. Freud contrasts this condition with mourning, finding that mourning is the healthy, unrepressed process of letting something go. When we mourn there is an end in sight, he claims; it is a process with a successful outcome: the object of sadness is finally released and the 'I' learns to live on. Melancholia, in contrast, entails a feeling of loss that cannot be determined and, therefore, not overcome. The ego, in this case, cannot enjoy 'the satisfaction of knowing itself as the better of the two, as superior to the object'.[40] Freud thus seems to designate melancholia with a failure of transcending the object of sorrow, so that the loss of the object taints the self, and results in what he claims to be an unproductive emotion.

The melancholic fifth act seems to revolve around a missing object, but is never able to refer to it or name it. We know, of course, that the end of the play needs to be seen in relation to Shylock's condemnation: the character who, previously an important agent at the play's core, is never mentioned explicitly again in Act V. It is therefore possible to say that instead of celebrating the rise over difference by having successfully shaped it as the same, the play's final scene is shaped around an obvious absence. The striking melancholia of Act V thereby points to the failure of absolute transcendence. In this way, it seems to speak to the unsettling effect the colonisation of its Jewish characters has had on the Christian Venetian's subjects. That is, Act V stages the realisation that the stranger is no longer without.

In her book *Strangers to Ourselves*, Kristeva offers a theory of modernity circling around the tension between union and separation — something that Act V anticipates. Kristeva describes the anxiety that arises when trying to distinguish between what is one's 'home' or people, and what is not.[41] Similarly, the play circles around the tension of self and other, and dramatises society's investment with

strangers, which both enable and disable the exclusion of 'foreigners'. This ambivalence comes to the fore with the expulsion of Shylock and the supposed integration of Jessica. Kristeva proposes to recognise the stranger in ourselves by internalising and individuating it: 'The foreigner is within us. And when we flee from our struggle against the foreigner, we are fighting our unconscious — that "improper" facet of our impossible "own and proper"'.[42] This disquieting realisation is seemingly embodied in the play through Jessica. Functioning as a kind of placeholder for her father, her apparent discomfort in Belmont — a white Christian Venetian society — is expressed through her defiant position to Lorenzo's theory on music, as discussed above. There seems to be no satisfying conclusion, no harmony and no redemption possible after her father has been expelled, as this melancholic last act reveals.

The failure of absolute transcendence over Shylock is not only delivered by the seemingly melancholic women, but also by Antonio — Shylock's mirror image, and the person who does not pair up at the end of this 'comedy'. It is he who sets the melancholic tone and whose melancholia never gets resolved and therefore leaves plenty of space for speculation (unrequited love for Bassanio is the most commonly conceived). The play opens on his melancholic note:

> In sooth I know not why I am so sad.
> It wearies me; you say it wearies you;
> But how I caught it, found it or came by it,
> What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,
> I am to learn; and such a want-wit sadness makes of me,
> That I have much ado to know myself. (I. 1. 1–6)

This evocation of a 'disease of the mind' evokes Freud's interpretation of melancholia, in which the object of sadness is not known and can thus not be mourned: 'But how I caught it, found it or came by it, / What stuff 'tis made of,

whereof it is born, I am to learn' (I. 1. 4). It further evokes the 'strangeness to oneself' that Kristeva points to: 'That I have much ado to know myself' (I. 1. 6). In this context, it is interesting to note that it is Antonio who is Shylock's most important hater and opponent, his mirror image whose hatred Shylock swears to replicate. Thus, the unhappiest character also seems the most relentless in his hatred towards the great 'other' of this play. It is as if the melancholia of the last act after the transcendence over Shylock has infected other characters too.

With the discourse on transcendental music and beings that are or are not receptive to it, it is possible to say that Act V centres on the emotions of the sublime and melancholic. To Jean-François Lyotard, these are the most characteristic aesthetics of modernity, which would describe a different kind of sublime experience:

> […] modern aesthetics is an aesthetic of the sublime, though a nostalgic one. It allows the unrepresentable to be put forward only as the missing contents; but the form, because of its recognizable consistency, continues to offer to the reader or viewer matter for solace and pleasure. Yet these sentiments do not constitute the real sublime sentiment, which is an intrinsic combination of pleasure and pain: the pleasure that reason should exceed all presentation, the pain that imagination or sensibility should not be equal to the concept.[43]

What is nostalgic in modernity is an unnamable 'missing content', as Lyotard suggests. What has gone missing is the concept under which Lyotard understands the grand meta-narrative. It might be worth recalling Longinus' text from ancient Greece mentioned earlier, in which the sublime was precisely defined as the 'power to form great conceptions'.[44] Lyotard, however, describes the sublime as an experience in which representation must necessarily fail, for 'the imagination fails to present an object which might, if only in principle, come to match a concept'.[45] In the postmodern criticism of the sublime, it is the grand concepts or the totalitarian meta-narratives that are no longer possible. The sublime would thus be an emotional experience that refutes transcendence. It is not the 'real sublime sentiment' — by

which Lyotard seemingly refers to the traditional sublime of Romantic discourse — but a new kind of sublime, a (post)modern sublime which tells of the sense that there is no totalising concept possible anymore, as objects are always bigger than what we can know about them. *The Merchant* seems to exemplify just that: a potentially sublime attempt at overcoming an 'other' that results in a melancholic conclusion. However, the colonisation ends with unsettled subjects, in the sense of an unnamable loss and the realisation of failure, as Act V suggests. The unsettling repercussions of Shylock's grotesque development, as well as Jessica's status as a convert and potential Jewish/Christian mother, seem to have successfully disrupted the smooth unity of white Christian Venetian society. The emotional household of this play seems so effective because it foreshadows modernity and its catastrophic investment with supposed 'strangers'.

CONCLUSION

> At the precise point where emotion turns into sound, on that articulation between body and language, on the catastrophe-fold between the two, there looms up 'my great rival, music'.[46]

As I hope to have shown, one fundamental emotional experience potentially at stake in *The Merchant of Venice* is the sublime. The last act in particular is concerned with questions of sublime transcendence, and of the perceived conflict between body and mind, between the grotesque and spiritual transcendence. The playing of music in Act V can convey several things, such as the failure of language, sublime supremacy — as wished for by Lorenzo — or for articulating the emotional residue of the conflict with Shylock: melancholia. The literal playing of music in this conclusive act thus has the power to determine the emotional outcomes of the play, as 'emotion turns into sound'.[47] It is up to directors to decide how to play this part. However, the striking melancholia inherent in the text emphasises that in this conclusion, smooth reconciliation is debarred and transcendence out of this negative emotion

impossible. Some characters are left unsettled, they cannot be 'merry' when they hear 'sweet music'. As Portia and Jessica suggest, they refuse to rise with music over difficult events. Others remain silent altogether — the melancholic Antonio hardly plays a part at the end.

This process is also helped through the virtue of possible grotesque encounters in the play, including those with Shylock and Jessica. The grotesque stresses relativity and context over absolute ideas and judgements which leads to the awareness that 'otherness' always exists in relation to what it deviates from. The grotesque in relation to the sublime speaks of the necessity to consider the material reality of the other, and in doing so, warning of supersensible meta-narratives that happen at the cost of the marginalised. It speaks of the wish to de-demonise alterity as well as the necessity for otherness to exist in its own right, rather than to be seen as a means to an end or a mere disturbance that needs to be overcome for achieving human greatness. Therefore, this aesthetic can trigger an earthbound, non-transcendent, but nevertheless transformative state. Act V conveys that no redemption is possible, as transcendental supremacy and absolute understanding become debarred, or an excess of meaning fails to be grasped in the realisation that the stranger is within. This gains particular relevance for a post-Holocaust, postcolonial audience. When considering accentuations and angles for interpretations, directors ultimately have to decide on the relevance that the 'other', the grotesque, or the abject takes in the symbolic structure of the play, for these aesthetic questions seem to be inextricably linked with ethics.

In the light of the aesthetics discussed, it is interesting to examine the history of reception of the play, such as the one from post-War Germany, which I will only briefly touch on here. Markus Moninger has remarked that every post-War staging of *Merchant* inevitably evokes Auschwitz.[48] This assertion has been problematised by Sabine Schülting and Zeno Ackermann, who have discussed the precarious

implications of staging the play in terms of post-Holocaust remembrance in Germany.[49] Moninger's observation remains undeniable; the association cannot be thought away. It seems fair to say that the discourse on transcendence and music in the last act hold potential for new meanings generated in the context of a post-Holocaust audience. As Ackermann has analysed, the play was remarkably popular in West Germany for the first sixteen years following the war for its capacity to confront the immediate past in a somewhat distanced, abstracted form; but also for the play's potential — if played with a certain accentuation — to celebrate a restored Venetian identity and provide the needs of a shattered national collective.[50] Many of these post-War productions would place their emphasis on the musical and romantic aspect of the play as well as on Portia's supposed genius at restoring harmony through mercy. Ackermann stresses that this interpretation was working in contradistinction to Shylock, for the rehabilitation of the German national collective happened at the cost of a renewed (symbolic) exclusion of the Jewish figure.[51] He concludes about the end of this early phase of post-War German productions between 1945 and 1961:

> Indeed, the confrontational figure of Shylock eventually proved more potent than the compensational plot of the play, so that performances of *Merchant* actually renewed the need to face what early productions had been quite eager to forget. In the long run, it proved impossible to simply 'play' the recent past 'away'.[52]

With its over-determined figure, the play has often triggered confusion between ethical and aesthetic problems, and as Ackermann analyses, has proven to escape reconciliatory ends that would enable a smoothly harmonious German remembrance.[53]

The text of the play itself indeed squares off against a cathartic, transcendental ending as wished for by some Venetians. When considering the context of a post-War German audience and the evocations generated by Shylock's trial, the inherent

melancholia as well as the playing of music over the silence of the sentenced, might speak of the crisis of transcendence over historical events, or finding a concept that would match the rupture in civilisation committed during the Shoah. However, it is easy to play over nuances in Shakespeare's complex and poetic texts, and so Lorenzo's and Portia's attitudes to music in Act V could be read quite differently in the immediate post-War period on the West German stage. In the German context, the way that transcendence over Shylock is played out immediately gains political significance.

A sublime that disables supremacy and a renewed harmonious community based on some kind of deeper connection could protect society's 'others' from being instrumentalised, from being seen as a necessary sacrifice or a means to an end. *The Merchant* seems uncanny in its foresight; in its ability to speak of the past and a haunted present in a playful, embodied form.

Notes

[1] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (London, 1757; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 53.

[2] Harold Bloom, *Anatomy of Influence: Literature as a Way of Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), pp. 20–1.

[3] From Dionysius Longinus, 'On the Sublime', trans. by William Smith (1743), in *The Sublime: a Reader in British Eighteenth-Century Aesthetic Theory*, ed. by A. Ashfield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 24.

[4] Bloom, *Anatomy of Influence*, p. 18.

[5] Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, p. 53.

[6] Caroline van Eck et al, *Translations of the Sublime: The Early Modern Reception and Dissemination of Longinus'* Peri Hupsous *in Rhetoric, the Visual Arts, Architecture and the Theatre*, ed. by C. van Eck et al (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), p. 1.

[7] Van Eck et al, *Translations of the Sublime: The Early Modern Reception and Dissemination of Longinus' Peri Hupsous in Rhetoric, the Visual Arts, Architecture and the Theatre*, pp. 2–4.

[8] Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, p. 36.

[9] Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, p. 53.

[10] Cf. Immanuel Kant, 'Analytic of the Sublime', Sections 25-29, in *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. by J.C. Meredith (London, 1790; repr. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), pp. 92–94. Compare: William Wordsworth, *The Prelude, or, Growth of a Poet's Mind: An Autobiographical Poem* (London, 1850; repr. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982), p. 268.

[11] William Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, p. 268.

[12] Jennifer Wawrzinek, *Ambiguous Subjects: Dissolution and Metamorphosis in the Postmodern Sublime* (New York: Rodopi, 2008), pp. 37–8.

[13] Wawrzinek, *Ambiguous Subjects*, p. 39. I will also refer to the Kantian sublime as the 'traditional' sublime. This kind of sublime entails the notion of the human reason/imagination as superior to its object of contemplation. This understanding, however, is not represented by Burke.

[14] Cf. Janet Adelman, *Blood Relations: Christian and Jew in The Merchant of Venice* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), p.97.

[15] Adelman, *Blood Relations*, pp. 36–7.

[16] Adelman, *Blood Relations*, p. 44.

[17] Adelman, *Blood Relations*, p. 45.

[18] Allusions can be found in I. 3. 147–50 and III .1. 29–31.

[19] Janeen Webb and Andrew Enstice, 'Domesticating the Monster', in *Seriously Weird: Papers on the Grotesque*, ed. by A. Mills (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), pp. 89-104 (90).

[20] Mark Thornton Burnett, *Constructing 'Monsters' in Shakespearean Drama and Early Modern Culture* (New York: Pelgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 2.

[21] Burnett, *Constructing 'Monsters'*, p. 2.

[22] Burnett, *Constructing 'Monsters'*, p. 2.

[23] Burnett, *Constructing 'Monsters'*, p. 4.

[24] Burnett, *Constructing 'Monsters'*, p. 4.

[25] Maik Hamburger, 'Unser Shakespeare – ein Judenfeind? Der Kaufmann von Venedig auf den Bühnen der DDR', in *Shylock nach dem Holocaust*, ed. by S. Schülting and Z. Ackermann (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), pp. 85–102 (97).

[26] Kant, *The Critique of Judgement,* p. 100. Compare: Patricia Yaeger, 'Toward a Female Sublime', in *Gender and Theory,* ed. by L. Kauffman (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), pp. 17–19.

[27] Wawrzinek, *Ambiguous Subjects*, p. 44.

[28] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. by L.S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 4.

[29] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 11.

[30] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, pp. 1–2.

[31] Girard cited in Adelman, *Blood Relations*, p. 48.

[32] Adelman, *Blood Relations*, p. 137.

[33] Adelman, *Blood Relations*, p. 4

[34] Adelman, *Blood Relations*, pp. 36–7.

[35] Adelman, *Blood Relations*, p. 75.

[36] Adelman, *Blood Relations*, p. 75.

[37] Cf. Ruth HaCohen, *The Music Libel against The Jews* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), p. 58.

[38] Ruth HaCohen, *The Music Libel against The Jews,* p. 58.

[39] Wawrzinek, *Ambiguous Subjects*, p. 46.

[40] Sigmund Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia', in *The Complete Psychological Works*, trans. by J. Strachey, vol. XIV (London: Hogarth Press, 1963), pp. 242–244; 257.

[41] Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, trans. by L.S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), p. 20.

[42] Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, p. 191.

[43] Jean Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 81.

[44] James S. Hans. *The Sovereignty of Taste.* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), pp. 141–145.

[45] Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, p. 78.

[46] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 190.

[47] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 190.

[48] Markus Moninger, 'Auschwitz erinnern. Merchant-Inszenierungen im Nachkriegsdeutschland', in *Das Theater der Anderen: Alterität und Theater zwischen Antike und Gegenwart,* ed. by C. Balme (Tübingen: Francke 2001), pp. 229–248 (229).

[49] Zeno Ackermann and Sabine Schülting have problematised the assertion that the Holocaust is the unavoidable companion of this drama, drawing attention to the way that *The Merchant* is 'strangely inadequate as a vehicle for remembrance, the play also having the virtue of squaring off against

established discourses' (Ackermann, p. 395). They assert that Shylock is a reluctant memory figure for the Shoah, as it hardly seems possible to integrate him into symbolic structures without running danger of reproducing anti-Semitic imagery or dynamics. See Zeno Ackermann, 'Performing Oblivion/Enacting Remembrance: The Merchant of Venice in West Germany, 1945 to 1961', *Shakespeare Quarterly,* 62.3 (2011), pp. 368–370; 376; *Shylock nach dem Holocaust*: *Zur Geschichte einer deutschen Erinnerungsfigur*, ed. by S. Schülting and Z. Ackermann (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011). See also the research project website: 'Shylock in Germany: The Reception of Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice after 1945', *Freie University Berlin* <http://www.geisteswissenschaften.fu-berlin.de/en/v/shylock/index.html> <accessed 19/8/2015>.

[50] The play was performed ca. 24 times until 1961 (a date which has been marked as the beginning of a new phase in the West German reception of the play when the director Peter Zadek approached the play in a radically different way), as compared to East Germany, where the play was not performed at all until 1976. See Ackermann, 'Performing Oblivion/Enacting Remembrance', pp. 366–67.

[51] Ackermann mentions the evocation of sublime terror (in relation to the war) and transcendence over the barely passed events by analysing a brochure from 1947, published by the theatre director Heinz Hilpert, in which the crimes committed in the Shoah are addressed with a 'feeling of sublime terror,' which leads to Hilpert's hope that 'the war, the downfall of the Third Reich, and even the guilty implications of the past might become the basis of a 'deeper peace."' Hilpert's wish for a 'deeper peace' points to the intricate relationship between the sublime (here evoked in terms of war) and transcendence (in this case the early wish to distance, forget, 'overcome', and rise above the catastrophe experienced). See Ackermann, 'Performing Oblivion/Enacting Remembrance', p. 376; p. 379; p. 384.

[52] Ackermann, 'Performing Oblivion/Enacting Remembrance', p. 386.

[53] Ackermann, 'Performing Oblivion/Enacting Remembrance', p. 386.

A 'Divellish' Woman Discovered: The Witch of Newbury, 1643

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During September 1643 a number of publications related the news that a witch had been found and killed by Roundhead soldiers just prior to the Battle of Newbury. This article will analyse the contents of the longest work on the Witch of Newbury, A Most Certain, Strange, and True Discovery of a VVitch, *focusing in particular on aspects of the account which illustrate developments in early modern English witch beliefs. In ascertaining her identity, the soldiers relied upon popular beliefs about witches and their powers, and these beliefs informed their reactions to the witch. The discussion of the Witch of Newbury's powers ,and the soldiers perceptions of them, illustrates how ideas about witchcraft could and did change throughout the seventeenth-century, and in particular, during the English Civil Wars.*

In late September, 1643, a pamphlet was published in London which claimed to be *A Most Certain, Strange, and True Discovery of a VVitch: Being taken by some of the Parliament forces, as she was standing on a small planck-board and sayling on it over the river of Newbury: together with the strange and true manner of her death, with the propheticall words and speeches she used at the same time* (1643, hereafter *A True Discovery of a VVitch*).[1] This extraordinary title was accompanied by a striking woodcut, which portrayed the witch in question. She stands, barefoot upon a plank which she

appears to be steering using a simple stick she holds upright in her left hand. Two black birds hover attentively on either side of her, while her apron and skirt shift with the wind of her passage along the waterway. The woman herself has a disturbing countenance: her face is haggard, bearing an unpleasant expression beneath messy hair partially held up under a cap, and her figure is hunched forward menacingly, with huge hands held out to either side. The pamphlet which accompanies this image is no less extraordinary, for it is the first account in England of a woman killed for witchcraft near the site of a major battle.

The pamphlet itself begins with an introduction that establishes the scriptural basis of witchcraft, and rails against those who might be sceptical of the account that follows. It then describes how in September 1643 a group of foraging Parliamentary soldiers spied a woman they presumed to be a Royalist camp-follower. They were amazed to see her floating upon the surface of a river, and they rushed to the bank to watch her. '[T]hey did observe, this could be no little amazement unto them you may think to see a woman dance upon the water, nor could all their sights be deluded'.[2] Soon afterwards several officers also saw the woman and though they saw that she was standing upon a plank of wood, they were still 'much astonished as they could be, still too and fro she fleeted on the water'.[3] She was either unaware that she was observed, or, unsurprisingly, didn't assume that they would interpret her skill at navigating the river on a plank of wood as a sign that she was a 'divellish woman' – a witch.[4]

The soldiers waited for her to reach the shore where they ambushed her and their commanders ordered that the woman be taken prisoner.[5] The pamphlet describes how they interrogated the woman, demanding to know 'what she was'[6]. The account describes her refusal to answer, and how they decided to shoot her, but 'with a deriding and loud laughter at them she caught the bullets in her hands and

chew'd them, which was a stronger testimony then [sic] the water, that she was the same that their imagination thought her so to be'.[7] After some consternation, one of the soldiers remembered that to draw her blood could break a witch's power, and scratched her face. She was then shot, and sank to the ground. As the author of *A True Discovery of a VVitch* put it, she left 'her legacy of a detested carcase to the wormes, her soul were ought not to judge of, though the evils of her wicked life and death can scape no censure.'[8]

The nature of the reports on the Witch of Newbury makes reconstructing the actual events that led to the Witch of Newbury's death impossible. Nor is it possible to identify if the woman really existed, and if she did exist in some form, who she was, or where she had come from. In fact, the different stories about the Witch of Newbury seem, at times, to be giving accounts about completely different events although they claim to be reporting the same incident. In brief, there was likely a woman killed by soldiers at Newbury, but the accounts of her death are so exaggerated they could be dismissed as merely fanciful stories. But in spite of the problematic nature of the evidence, the accounts of her death do provide details which allow an examination of the way propaganda shaped and re-shaped witch beliefs during the English Civil Wars (1642–1649).

The longest and best known narrative of the Witch of Newbury is found in the pamphlet *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, which describes the discovery, testing and – from the perspective of the author of the pamphlet – 'execution', of the supposed 'witch' in autumn 1643. The episode was further described by reports in the parliamentarian newsbooks *Mercvrivs Civicvs* (21st – 28th September), and *Certaine Informations* (25th September – 2nd October 1643); and was derided as superstitious fantasy in two Royalist newsbooks, *Mercurius Britanicus* (10th – 17th October 1643) and *Mercvrivs avlicvs* (14th October 1643).[9] All of these publications were attempting to

exert influence over public perceptions of the two sides in the English Civil Wars, using the 'witch' as a divisive figure. Both sides of the English Civil War saw or portrayed the war as a reflection of the Devil's presence disrupting the good order of society.[10] Royalists often quoted the Bible: "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft",[11] while Parliamentarians pointed to Charles I's personal rule and religious reforms as a different form of rebellion against God's order.[12]

The English Civil Wars were a period of intense political and religious disorder, and publications of the period were saturated with religious, often apocalyptic, rhetoric.[13] It is unsurprising therefore that the period between the outbreak of the Civil War in 1642, and the Restoration of Charles II in 1660 was the most intense period of witch trials in seventeenth century England. The Witch of Newbury was not the only nameless woman attacked and killed by Parliamentary or Royalist soldiers near or on the site of Civil War battles.[14] But only this woman was explicitly 'proven' to be a witch, and 'executed' for her supposed crime.

However, two years after her death, in 1645, a three year witch panic in East Anglia would lead to at least one hundred executions for witchcraft in the Eastern counties of England, representing approximately an estimated fifth of all English witch trials.[15] For the Witch of Newbury there was no trial, so the details usually available through court records in witchcraft cases are absent. Evidence of her life, death and supposed crime cannot be found in the records of English courts; instead, the only accounts that remain were published as news and anti-Royalist propaganda in the weeks following her death. However, those available accounts indicate that some aspects of English witchcraft beliefs were influenced by the witchcraft pamphlets during the early years of the English Civil Wars.

This article will analyse the contents of *A True Discovery of a VVitch,* focusing in particular on aspects of the account which illustrate developments in early modern

English witch beliefs. In ascertaining her identity, the soldiers relied upon several popular[16] beliefs about witches and their powers, and these beliefs informed their responses to the supposed witch. They observed her floating, her power to survive physical attacks (including the catching and chewing of bullets), and they 'broke' her power through the scratching of her face. The presence of a range of beliefs, both old and new, allows a particular moment in the evolution of English witch beliefs to be examined outside of formal court proceedings.

Those accused of witchcraft during the English Civil Wars have received considerable critical attention from scholars, including R.T. Davies, Malcolm Gaskill, Diane Purkiss, James Sharpe, Mark Stoyle and Frederick Valetta, although most of their attention has been focussed on women executed following trial.[17] Most analysis of the Witch of Newbury has focussed on the 'unreasonable terror'[18] of the roundhead soldiers, or on how it related to other witchcraft publications and propaganda during the Civil War.[19] The former emphasises motivations rather than methods or beliefs, and the latter is focussed on the description and deployment of witchcraft in propaganda during the Civil War.

The first significant attention paid to the Witch of Newbury was by R. Trevor Davies, who argued that 'so accustomed were the soldiers to the practice of floating witches and to the belief that water rejected the servants of the Devil, that the sight of her caused an immediate panic.'[20] Similarly Diane Purkiss focussed on the impact of the perceived dangerous and diabolic witch on the imagination of male Civil War soldiers.[21] She argues that 'the story of the witch of Newbury is a fantasy story […] that expresses and manages the terrible anxieties created by war and battle'.[22] Certainly gendered concerns are evident in *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, which begins with a long introduction – around a quarter of the text – emphasising the links between the fall of Eve and women's contemporary susceptibility to the Devil.[23]

Mark Stoyle has written in the most detail about the Witch of Newbury in recent scholarship.[24] He has analysed the incident as part of the context of the massacre following the Battle of Naseby in 1645; its links to the pamphlets on King Charles' nephew, Prince Rupert of the Rhine (1612–1682), and the exploits of his supposed witch-dog, Boy.[25] Stoyle argues that witchcraft was an effective slander on a number of levels as it explained Royalist victories, and emphasised their illegitimacy by claiming that they were won by diabolic arts.[26] Stoyle argues that the events recorded at Newbury suggest that at least some Parliamentarians had taken seriously one of the most innovative claims in *Observations Upon Prince Rupert's White Dog called Boy:* that the Devil could render a witch or a witch's familiar 'shot-free' (or bullet-proof) which was a new development in English witch beliefs.[27]

Malcolm Gaskill's analysis is concerned with the echoes of the pamphlet in the witchcraft trials in East Anglia, 1645–1647.[28] Gaskill suggests that '[t]he idea that the devil recruited witches in the king's interest went beyond mere propaganda, enjoying serious popular currency'.[29] Gaskill points to *Signs and wonders from heaven* (1645) which claimed that the prosecution of witches in East Anglia would cause Prince Rupert to 'be no longer shot-free'.[30] Gaskill also points out that a small number of those prosecuted for witchcraft in East Anglia confessed to other crimes related to the war, including attacking a Roundhead recruiter, and sending their imps to assist Prince Rupert.[31] Gaskill is correct in seeing a link between the trials and earlier publications of witches and Royalism, but I would argue that what links the Witch of Newbury to the East Anglia trials is the use of popular testing and the atmosphere of diabolic threat created by the war.[32]

A True Discovery of a VVitch warrants further exploration because it presents the arbitrary execution of a witch by soldiers, rather than a formal legal proceeding. It presents a clear portrait of how ordinary Roundhead soldiers and officers

conceptualised witches and witchcraft. The accounts of the Witch of Newbury reveal how the soldiers apparently 'proved' the witch's guilt through physical tests that they understood as evidence of the apparent supernatural abilities of the witch. The pamphlet therefore illuminates popular beliefs about what witches could do, and what at least some Parliamentarians thought the Devil and his servants were doing to help the Royalist cause in late 1643.

The incident at Newbury was not, however the first attack on a female camp-follower by Roundheads, it is useful at this point to consider the earlier Brentford incident of 1642, where several women were drowned or executed.[33] In November 1642, nearly a year prior to the attack on the supposed Witch at Newbury, Parliamentary soldiers killed four women near Brentford. *The true proceedings of both armies* from 1642 is the first account of Parliamentary soldiers killing a woman they identified as a possible witch. The writer claimed that on the 14th of November Roundheads had taken '3 women which fol-[ow] the cavaliers, that had used cruelty to our men, for they had cut the throates of many of our men that were wounded'.[34] As Mark Stoyle has pointed out, this accusation of throat-cutting may link the Brentford incident to depictions of Celtic 'viragoes',[35] who had reportedly slit the throats and disfigured the remains of English soldiers in previous wars, as Welsh women had apparently done after the battle of Bryn Glas in 1402. This idea had been revived by accounts of the violence of Irish women during the Irish rebellion of 1641, and carried over into hysterical claims of Irish women arriving in force in England early in the English Civil War.[36] However the Brentford account also implies that the true evil of at least one of the women may not have been foreignness or violence. The soldiers had thrown the three women caught on the 14th of November into the water, and while two drowned, the third:

> being throwne into the Thames, would not sinke, then they thrust her downe with a pike, but yet for all this she would not sinke, then they took her up againe, and layed her in the Stocks, and within a while after they killed her, before her death she confessed that they had two shillings a day for doing such horrid work.[37]

The implication of witchcraft may be present in her failure to sink, but the author of this account seems more concerned with her 'horrid work' in butchering wounded Roundhead soldiers than any apparent 'proof' of witchcraft. Another woman was caught and killed on the 16th of November, about whom the pamphlet merely says she 'was another actor of villainy and tirany which had done as the other, but our men put her to death'.[38]

This account of the killing of royalist camp-followers in November 1642 suggests that the causes of violence towards these women were not related to witchcraft, and in spite of her failure to sink and drown, the author makes no attempt to claim the third woman was in fact a witch. Nor do other accounts, such as the massacre of Royalist camp-followers at Naseby ascribe to the women any supernatural powers. *A True Discovery of a VVitch,* not only accuses the woman of being a witch, but appears to consciously imitate the structure of a witch trial pamphlet. This imitation is part of the process of proving the tale it tells is true, as it suggests a factual account of a witch's discovery and execution, complete with compelling witnesses and proof.

The Witch of Newbury had, like the woman of 1642, been seen to float upon the water, albeit on a piece of wood. The Witch of Newbury account also clearly drew upon pamphlets about Prince Rupert and his dog, Boy, who had been described facetiously as a 'witch-dog' by Royalist writers in Oxford.[39] In particular, the references to the Witch of Newbury being 'shot-free' draws directly upon accounts of Prince Rupert's dog protecting the Prince by catching assassins' bullets in

his mouth and chewing them.[40] It also claims that witches could, or at least believed that they could, alter the outcomes of major battles, like the Battle of Newbury.[41] Marion Gibson has described witchcraft publications as giving a 'privileged view of an element within the development of a very specific and enduring myth […] which intersects in increasingly complex ways with what we perceive to be real.'[42] The Witch of Newbury encapsulates both long-established witchcraft mythology and the particular concerns of English Civil War soldiers, as opposed to the concerns of small communities suffering from unexplained and tragic events, such as illnesses and natural disasters.

However, the soldiers' frame of reference for how to deal with witches was one they had brought with them to Newbury. One of the soldiers at Newbury remembered the belief that to 'scratch' or draw blood from a witch would cancel her power:

> [W]hereupon she began alowd to cry, and roare, tearing her haire, and making piteous moan, which in these words expressed were; and is this come to passe, that I must dye indeed? Why then his Excellency the Earl of Essex shall be fortunate and win the field, after which no more words could be got from her; wherewith they immediately discharged a pistol underneath her eare, at which she straight sunk down and dyed[.][43]

The soldiers believed that the Witch of Newbury had, prior to her death, displayed a series of powers which were 'testimony' of her witchcraft.[44] The use of words like 'testimony' echoes the usual trial of a witch, but the violence of this interrogation and the suddenness of her execution bear little relation to the usual process of bringing a witch to trial in early modern England. While acts of communal violence against witches – in particular scratching – had been a part of popular witchcraft beliefs in England for at least the previous half-century, they had been problematic from a judicial perspective.[45] While some demonologists and

jurists were deeply opposed to their use, others either suggested or even participated in the popular use of unsanctioned procedures, like the swimming test.[46]

The most significant support for the use of the swimming test, and the likely origin of its use in England, is King James VI and I. King James's *Daemonologie* is particularly significant as it appears to be the first publication in England to argue in favour of the efficacy of 'swimming' suspected witches.[47] He argued that there were only two physical proofs of witchcraft: the finding of the Devil's mark, and the method of 'swimming':

> there are two other good helpes that may be vsed for their trial: the one is the finding of their marke, and the trying the insensiblenes thereof. The other is their fleeting on the water: [...] God hath appoynted (for a super-naturall signe of the monstruous impietie of the Witches) that the water shal refuse to receiue them in her bosom, that haue shaken off them the sacred Water of Baptisme[.][48]

Like 'blooding' or 'scratching' a witch, 'swimming' seems to have become a method of dealing with witches, known to a wide variety of people in seventeenth century England, in spite of there being no records for its use prior to King James' *Daemonologie*.[49] Although it was rarely admissible proof in court, or accepted by the majority of demonologists and jurists as definitive proof, it nevertheless continues to appear sporadically during the seventeenth century, with its popularity a significant feature of the Civil War trials in East Anglia, 1645–1647.

The pamphlet account of the Witch of Newbury does not appear to have been written as a satire like *Observations*, and the newsbook reports appear to have been independent accounts. The pamphlet does not describe how the witch came to be in the Devil's service as is the case in most individual trial pamphlets; however it does go to considerable lengths to suggest that her gender makes her susceptible to the Devil's temptation.[50] It does not ascribe to her any specific crimes of magic, although

her capacity for magic is perhaps suggested in the accusation that she was going to aid the King's forces in the upcoming battle, and that with her death the outcome would be altered.

There are no accusations of specific acts of *maleficium* in *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, which is significant as *maleficium*, or the use of harmful magic, was the foundation of the majority of witchcraft accusations in early modern England. Without 'proven' acts of *maleficium* accused witches were usually not executed, even during the height of the witch panic in East Anglia.[51] *Diabolism,* having made a pact with Satan and being given 'supernatural' powers or having a familiar, did not usually lead to prosecution, although it was an implicit part of every act of *maleficium*.

The author of *A True Discovery of a VVitch* claims that the account he gives is 'credibly related by Gentlemen, Commanders, and Captains, of the Earl of Essex his [sic] Army', but doesn't name any of his credible witnesses.[52] The implication that officers and credible gentlemen had been involved in the execution of the witch may be an attempt to forestall accusations that gullible or ignorant soldiers had wrongly killed an innocent woman due to their unreasoning fear and superstitious beliefs.[53]

The very first statement made by the author of *A True Discovery of a VVitch* addresses scepticism that magical powers could be used by the 'silly sex of women',[54] and goes on to assure the reader that women were indeed capable of descending to the same evil as learned male magicians. This assurance is echoed in other witchcraft pamphlets, including pamphlets on the East Anglian witch-hunt, published in 1645.[55] The authors set out historical and biblical examples – including other witch trials – of the Devil's temptation of people into sin and witchcraft as proof that witchcraft exists.[56] *A True Discovery of a VVitch* argues:

> many ... are opposite in opinion against the same, that giving a possibility to their doubtings, that the malice, and inveterate malice of a woman entirely devoted to her revengefull wrath frequenting desolate and desart places, and giving way unto their wished temptation ... divers times been tried at the Assises…[57]

The newsbook accounts of the Witch of Newbury are briefer, but more damning.[58] The *Mercvrivs Civicvs*, 21st–28th of September 1643, reported that an old woman had come to the Parliamentarian camp and said she 'came to speake with *Essex*',[59] and that when a soldier went to lay hands on her she caused his saddle to turn under his horse and throw him down.[60] As in *A True Discovery of a VVitch, Mercvrivs Civicvs* also claimed that as the woman died she cried out that 'Essex should have the day', and that there were many 'credible persons' who witnessed her demise.[61] The *Mercvrivs Civicvs* also claims that the first shots did not kill her until they 'shot her in the eye'.[62]

The newsbook accounts agree with *A True Discovery of a VVitch* in declaring the woman killed by the soldiers to be a witch, but paint the woman as a far more immediate threat to Parliamentary forces than the pamphlet. The proofs of her diabolic allegiance in floating and being scratched are absent, her royalist allegiance is openly stated, and her primary act of witchcraft becomes her being shot-free. *Mercvrivs Civicvs* goes into greater detail about what the Roundheads thought she was there to do. She had come from the 'enemies Quarters' and many credible persons who had witnessed her death 'conceive her to be sent by the Cavaliers to blow up the Magazine, or to effect some other devilish designe upon our army.'[63]

This account is somewhat corroborated by *Certaine Informations from Severall Parts of the Kingdome*, 25th September – 2nd October 1643, which gives a more bizarre account of how she died:

> being shot at, was so impenetrable, that no bullets would pierce her, whereupon a Captaine bid shoot her with a button, and one of the souldiers pulled a brasse button from his doublet, and therewith charging his pistoll, fired it upon her head, and slew her.[64]

The efficacy of brass or buttons against witches is a superstition that does not seem to appear in any other account of English witchcraft. Like being 'shot-free', it is possible this is a foreign belief that had been brought by overseas mercenaries, the origins of which are discussed briefly in *Certaine informations*: 'it will be thought ridiculous that any man should be shot free. Whereunto we answer, that we have heard some English Commanders that have been in the Swedes wars, credibly affirme, that it is an ordinary thing in those parts.'[65] *Certaine informations* describes the Witch of Newbury as violent, aggressive, sent by the Cavaliers with devilish designs.[66] The similarities and discrepancies between the accounts in *Certaine informations* and *Mercvrivs Civicvs* and the narrative presented by *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, suggest that more than one soldier in Essex's army who had returned from the battle of Newbury told a story about a witch they had killed near the site of the battle.

The portrait given by the pamphlet and newsbooks of a disturbing woman approaching the Roundhead camp from the direction of the Cavaliers, and threatening their safety with her diabolic powers did not, of course, occur in a vacuum. The context in which the Witch of Newbury was killed is an important part of understanding why the soldiers believed they had encountered a Royalist witch.

The link between the descriptions of Irish or Celtic women, as desecrators of English corpses and throat-cutters, and the women killed in 1642 with the Witch of Newbury in 1643, is complex.[67] The Witch of Newbury's origins are uncertain in *A True Discovery,* with only newsbook accounts, *Mercvrivs Civicvs,* and *Certaine Informations from Severall Parts of the Kingdome*, openly claiming she was a Royalist

spy, saboteur and/or assassin.[68] While *A True Discovery of a VVitch* is not as blatant, the implication of Royalist association is still present. Her alleged statement, as reported by the pamphlet, is profoundly Royalist: 'and is this come to passe, that I must dye indeed? Why then his Excellency the Earl of Essex shall be fortunate and win the field'.[69] The woman is here not only referencing apparent foresight (Newbury was an important Parliamentarian victory), but suggesting that without her the Royalist army would be defeated,[70] implying that the Devil himself was waging war against Parliament on behalf of the King.

This implication drew upon the language of many Roundhead newsbooks and pamphlets, which had already associated the Royalist cause with diabolical power and Catholic subversion.[71] This may well have influenced how Parliamentary soldiers interacted with Cavalier women.[72] Accusations of witchcraft in the context of the Civil War, either serious or sarcastic, began in 1642, and by the end of that year the first implication that a Royalist witch had been found and executed appears, following the killing of the woman at Brentford who had floated.[73] Rumours of diabolic witches, particularly amongst the apparently large number of Irish women following the King's army, were reported and discussed in the popular press.[74] In one account from 1642 it was claimed that a church in Kingston-on-Thames had been used as a receptacle for 'the filth of 500 Irish and Welch women running after the army which are more cruell to those which lye on their mercy then any forraigne enemy whatsoever.'[75] In the same week another pamphlet claimed the same women had used skeans (Irish daggers) to threaten locals into revealing the location of their valuables. As Stoyle remarked in discussing the impact of such reports on Roundhead attitudes to Royalist camp-followers, 'The emphasis which was laid [...] on the allegedly intimate connection between Irish- and Welshwomen, knives and throat-cutting can hardly have been lost on the writer's audience'.[76] However this

association of evil women was not yet blatantly diabolic, merely foreign and potentially Catholic.

During the Second Battle at Newbury, in October 1644, it was reported that the Catholics of the King's army had many witches amongst them, whom 'Cromwell's souldiers did plainly perceive to fly swiftly from one side of the [K]ing's army to another'.[77] The account of the Witch of Newbury in *A True Discovery of a VVitch* a year earlier had not explicitly suggested that she was a camp-follower or Catholic, and neither did the newsbook accounts in *Mercvrivs Civicvs* and *Certaine Informations from Severall Parts of the Kingdome.* But they do claim she is a Royalist which in their minds likely implied both Catholicism and witchcraft.[78] These accounts of the Witch of Newbury therefore suggest or directly associate her with other dangerous women on the Royalist side, including those Irish Catholic women who were particular sources of fear for Parliamentarian pamphleteers throughout the Civil War. But these accounts also show how quickly new ideas could become part of the cumulative concept of witchcraft.[79]

Though the idea of being 'shot-free' had been in the public domain for less than a year, it is here used as a blatant sign of witchcraft 'which was a stronger testimony then [sic] the water, that she was the same that their imagination thought her so to be'.[80] *A True Discovery of a VVitch* can therefore be seen to be drawing upon the series of pamphlets on Prince Rupert,[81] which had alleged that his early successes against Parliament were owed to his *diabolism.* In *Observations* Prince Rupert had been described as being in league with the Devil, and having a familiar in the form of his poodle. Stoyle has argued that at least the first two of these were satirical and probably written by members of the King's own camp, centred on Oxford.[82] However innocent and amusing such a satire may have seemed to the Royalist

author of *Observations*, it created an atmosphere which linked Royalists and strange diabolical powers.

Parliamentarian writers built upon the satire of T.B.'s *Observations* with their own works, which asserted the Cavaliers had a diabolic agenda. The woodcut image of the witch used on the title-page of the *A True Discovery of a VVitch* is used as a template for a further work linked to Prince Rupert and the killing of his dog, 'Boy,' at the Battle of Marston Moor.[83] Whatever the factual basis for it, *A True Discovery of a VVitch* deliberately links the woman killed at Newbury with the earlier claim that Prince Rupert was 'shot-free' because his devilish dog caught and chewed all bullets fired at him.[84] This idea was linked to the Witch of Newbury and satirised in *Mercurius Britanicus:* 'I am perswaded you are so superstitious, you thinke one tooth of such a grave, old woman may be the preservation of Prince *Rupert* [sic] himself, and His Majesties whole Army.'[85] The publications about Prince Rupert also brought the question of the relationship between the King's cause and diabolic forces at work in the kingdom to a wider audience.

The two extra-judicial killings linked to witchcraft (at Brentford in 1642 and at Newbury in 1643) were not the only violent acts towards women on or around battlefields, but they were the only ones justified in contemporary accounts by accusing the victims of witchcraft.[86] The causes of other acts of violence against women on and around battlefields have been explained in several ways: as part of the 'normal' ad hoc violence which occurs during wars when civilians find themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time;[87] as the result of a propaganda campaign which demonised female camp-followers as violent foreigners, whores, and witches;[88] or as part of an ongoing struggle to maintain discipline and order, particularly in relation to unruly women.[89] Women accused of being immoral or damaging to good order and social harmony, including prostitutes, scolds, witches

and adulterers, were vulnerable to various communal punishments.[90] However, acts of public humiliation and shaming, such as 'rough music', which occurred in peacetime, did not usually endanger the lives of participants (even if they could cause nasty injuries), in contrast to the battlefield assaults.[91]

The pamphlet suggests that the Witch of Newbury was perceived as unruly and threatening. She appears to flout the laws of nature, by 'fleeting' upon the river, and then defies the authority of the officers who have ordered her to be seized, by refusing to answer their questions. She compounds her apparent supernatural acts with defiance and, according to the account given by the *Mercvrivs Civicvs*, attacks a Roundhead soldier.[92]

While the immediate context of the Civil Wars suggests interesting intersections between gender, violence and propaganda, there is also a wider context to be considered. The presence and physicality of providence is central to the description of the Witch of Newbury's pursuit and death as recounted in *A True Discovery of a VVitch*: she is 'discovered' by God's intervention and her own devilish practices causing her to float and fleet upon the water, and destroyed by the superstitious practice of 'blooding' or 'scratching' a witch to break her power. Her discovery, confession and 'execution' conform to a longer, older tradition of witchcraft tracts in which the witch's crimes were 'proven', and confessed to before her demise.[93]

The form for discovery of a witch could vary greatly, and not all trial records make clear how a witch was first discovered. However publications based on trials and guides to finding witches often discussed a number of methods by which a witch might be exposed. Many of these methods were forms of physical testing, which usually occurred during the pre-trial phase of investigation. These practices, while not endorsed by the many demonologists, were part of popular practices and

beliefs at the village level and were often believed to be effective proof by both witch and accuser.[94] The catching of bullets, the scratching and floating of a witch, were seen as authoritative proof to those present of her evil, in part because their efficacy as tests was believed to be a sign from God.

While swimming was condemned by some jurists involved in the trials in Suffolk in 1645, some of those involved in the trials claimed that the accused witches themselves had requested the process, believing it would clear their names.[95] Although this may be a somewhat self-serving argument by those who had endorsed or undertaken such testing, it remains possible and even likely that many people in communities across England, believed in the efficacy of such direct, visible proof. It is likely that those involved with the Newbury incident came from similar backgrounds to those who approved of the use of the swimming test in communities across Essex and Suffolk in 1645, and therefore likely were familiar with the idea that God had given men the ability to perceive and discover a witch's guilt.[96]

One of the most important endorsements for such an idea came from James VI and I's *Daemonologie*, which was first published in 1597, and then re-published in 1604 in England after King James's accession to the English throne. The method of swimming endorsed by James may have been of continental origin, though there is little evidence of its widespread use there. Neither was it used frequently, or officially, in England, despite its discussion in the King's famous demonological work. It was first recorded as being used in England in 1612, and then appears sporadically until the English Civil War.[97] During the Civil War it seems to have been an important part of the popular lexicon as far as witches were concerned, being widely deployed in the East Anglia witch trials of the 1640s.

In Northamptonshire in 1612, the first woman known to have been subjected to the swimming test had 'her hands and feete bound'[98] and was thrown into the

water on the orders of the local Justice of the Peace – the only known Jacobean account of the test being deployed by the authorities.[99] The account of *The Witches of Northamptonshire* (1612), has several direct quotations from King James' *Daemonologie*, and repeats the relationship between this sign of a witch's guilt and the bleeding of corpses in the presence of their murderer.[100] The following year, in neighbouring Bedfordshire, the experiment was repeated without the intervention or instruction of any officer of the law, suggesting that either knowledge of the content of James' *Daemonologie*, or rumours were spreading the use of the test across England.[101]

Wallace Notestein and James Sharpe both point to James's approval of the test as encouraging its introduction into English witch trials; Orna Alyagon Darr has argued that while the majority of learned treatises on witchcraft argued against the use of the swimming test, it was still used and believed efficacious by a large segment of the population.[102] Sharpe notes that 'it was widely employed subsequently, although, as we have noted, officialdom was ambivalent or hostile towards it'.[103] Yet ordeals in general, while common in medieval legal cases, had become problematic in early modern England, and were, by and large, dismissed as superstitious tests.[104] However the account of the Witch of Newbury, and the arguments of James VI and I, point to the persistence of belief in such 'evidence' in the discovery of witches. In spite of the antagonism of demonologists and learned writers like Richard Bernard, William Perkins, and Dr. John Cotta,[105] the medieval test of *judicium aquae frigidae*, which had been banned in the thirteenth century, experienced a resurgence in popularity in England during the seventeenth century.[106] As Orna Alyagon Darr argued, despite 'its illegality, and a lack of ecclesiastical backing, the practice gained popularity. It took place at the fringes of the official proceedings at the pre-trial stage and was usually conducted by fellow villagers trying to bolster the case against the suspect.'[107] The similarity of these beliefs to

those of the soldiers who believed that the Witch of Newbury's skill in navigating the river on a board or plank of wood was a sign of her diabolic powers is unsurprising.

James VI and I argued that witches floated because they had denied their Baptism and had made a new covenant with the Devil. If the soldiers or officers present at the execution of the Witch of Newbury were familiar with King James's arguments, they could have assumed the woman had been 'proven' guilty by what they understood as the divine authority of physical ordeals or testing such as the swimming test. How much of the detail of King James's argument on why water rejected witches was known to those employing his method of swimming is debatable. Certainly the theological validity King James ascribes to swimming is not always commented upon by those deploying this method against suspects. However, not understanding the theological reasoning, and believing in its efficacy, are not mutually exclusive.

King James's assertion that floating witches was a 'secret supernatural sign'[108] given by God to allow witches to be identified and punished perhaps explains why they felt entitled to take immediate and violent action against the Witch of Newbury. It is interesting to note the author of *A True Discovery of a VVitch,* cites a different hand at work in allowing the Witch of Newbury's capture, claiming that 'he that deceived her always did so then, blinding her that she could not at her landing see the ambush that was laid for her'.[109] Perhaps this suggests the idea of the Devil not only as a liar, but as God's ape, leading his witch into being captured in imitation of God. It is also possible that this sentence suggests that God has the Devil blind the witch, though that is not clearly stated.

Even once she is upon the shore, *A True Discovery of a VVitch* emphasises the physicality of the supernatural, particularly in the methods her attackers use to kill

her. In spite of her diabolical powers, the act of an ordinary soldier, in scratching her, is able to bring about her end. It is telling that in spite of the witch's power she cannot harm her captors. This may reflect two beliefs commonly held about witches in contemporary demonological theory; first that once arrested a witch could not do further harm, and secondly that God could and sometimes would protect a witch's interrogators.[110] In her capture and demise, the witch is exposed by divine intervention, and her attackers are defended by the same power. The belief in God's power to expose and defeat witches, for example through scratching, the relief of the bewitched' symptoms following the witch's arrest, and swimming, crossed over between popular beliefs and demonological theorists.[111]

During the Civil War, being thrown into water and drowned seems to have been a recurring phenomenon, particularly for female camp-followers.[112] Stoyle has pointed out that much of the violence against Royalist camp-followers was congruent with rumours of there being witches in the King's army.[113] To what extent incidents of drowning female camp-followers and soldiers, particularly Irish soldiers, might be related to attempted 'testing' is uncertain. Descriptions of the swimming test are not common in the early seventeenth century. However those that did exist in print detailed the complex use of ropes in the binding of the accused, which is absent from Civil War incidents where women were drowned.

While not usually admissible in court, the use of physical testing could, to a community, be powerful evidence of a witch's guilt.[114] Such 'proof' of a witch's power and apostasy was terrifying to those who believed or suspected the witch might turn her diabolic power upon them. For soldiers, experiencing the horror of battle and apprehension about future battles must have been deeply traumatic, and the added fear of diabolic intervention in the form of witches and witchcraft was part of the discourse of the Civil War. Female camp-followers experienced violence before and

after battles for a range of reasons, and those of the opposing camp were demonised as a threat and challenge to authority and godly order. Supernatural powers were perceived as a significant threat to God's authority, and to the bodies of the soldiers. Witches and witchcraft represented the worst subversions of the Devil himself, and by 1643 they were widely described by those sympathetic to the Parliamentarians' cause as being in league with the Royalist cause.

This article has sought to examine *A True Discovery of a VVitch* on its own merits, not as part of a wider survey of witchcraft beliefs during the period. It has tried to examine the narrative as a particular moment which can reveal, as Gibson has argued, the interaction of reality and myth in the discovery of a witch. *A True Discovery of a VVitch* cannot be understood as a simple reporting of the facts, but in building on Stoyle's work on the use and development of witch tropes in Civil War propaganda, this article has sought to discuss the narrative of action and response between witch and accuser in this singular case. The narrative of the pamphlet reveals important details about how people – in these case soldiers – understood the physicality of proving a witch's guilt. This case presents a different picture of witch beliefs because the account is not formalised or mediated by court proceedings; nor is it a theological, demonological or legal treatise by a learned author. Although *A True Discovery of a VVitch* is unrestrained by court procedure, it retains a legal flavour and seeks to emulate the language and form of earlier witchcraft tracts. For the author of the pamphlet, what the Witch of Newbury had done was a crime, proven by witnesses and tests which provided their own 'testimony' of her guilt. The pamphlet reveals a moment in which old and new ideas and methods relating to the discovery of witchcraft can be seen in action.

In conclusion, the main source for the execution of the Witch of Newbury based its structure on previous accounts of the trial and execution of witches, and on

propaganda levelled at Royalists like Prince Rupert. The Witch of Newbury would herself become part of the propaganda against Royalists, her image re-produced to celebrate the death of Prince Rupert's 'witch-dog' Boy in 1644 at the hands of another soldier, and allusions to her support of Royalism would be cited during the trials of 1645.[115] *A True Discovery of a VVitch* presented popular ideas about witchcraft, old and new, and mounted a strong defence of its arguments by citing both scripture and the evidence of contemporary trials, accounts of witnesses, and physical tests. For the Witch of Newbury there were no trial proceedings to give us her or her accuser's names, origins, or occupations, and no judge or jury to weigh the evidence against her. All that remains of the Witch of Newbury is the perceptions of her killers, and the narratives presented by sympathetic authors in pamphlets like *A True Discovery of a VVitch,* which revels in the victory of the Roundhead soldiers over a diabolic foe. The narratives of the Witch of Newbury illustrate ably the way in which ideas about witchcraft could, and did, change and develop throughout the seventeenth century, and in particular, during the English Civil Wars.

Notes

[1] Where possible dates are Gregorian Calendar rather than Julian Calendar, however it is not always clear which calendar is being used in the sources, or whether discrepancies in dating might be due to other causes. For the dates of pamphlets or newsbooks the original date stated has been used even if it is Julian Calendar. E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A Most Certain, Strange, and True Discovery of a VVitch. Being taken by some of the Parliament forces, as she was standing on a small planck-board and sayling on it over the river of Newbury: together with the strange and true manner of her death, with the propheticall words and speeches she used at the same time.* (London: John Hammond, 1643): p. 1.

[2] E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, pp. 4–5.

[3] E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 5. The author suggests that closer to the edge they saw she was not walking or dancing upon the water: 'they could perceive there was a plank or deale overshadowed with a little shallow water that she stood upon, the which did beare her up'. This plank of wood or 'deale' is not addressed further than the first mention, and her ability to navigate the river on the plank is viewed as a cause for alarm and suspicion by those who witnessed it. While from a modern perspective the plank of wood may suggest a natural explanation for the woman's ability to stand upon the water, *True Discovery of a VVitch* does not acknowledge that possibility. Indeed, on the cover of the pamphlet, the plank is represented under the witch's feet, and was certainly not seen as an impediment to the woman being perceived as witch.

[4] E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 5.

[5] E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 5.

[6] E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 6.

[7] E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 6.

[8] E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 7.

[9] E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*; E. 69 (8), Thomas Bates *Mercvrivs Civicvs*, (London: Thomas Bates, 21st–28th of September 1643), p. 4. E. 69 (8) Bates, *Mercvrivs Civicvs*, 4; E. 69 (17) 37, Ingler, William, *Certaine informations from severall parts of the kingdome,* (London: Henry Overton, 25th September–2nd October 1643); E. 71 (10); Thomas Audley, *Mercurius Britanicus, communicating the affaires of great Britaine for the better information of the people,* (London: G. Bishop and R. White , 10th–17th October 1643); E. 72 (1); Peter Heylyn, *Mercvrivs avlicvs,* (Oxford: Henry Hall, 14th October 1643).

[10] Nathan Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in early modern England*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): pp. 213–14.

[11] Diane Purkiss, *Literature, Gender and Politics During the English Civil War,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 213; Braddick argues "There was an established connection for contemporaries between witchcraft and rebellion". See Michael Braddick, *God's Fury, England's Fire,* (London: Penguin, 2008).

[12] Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism*, p. 213

[13] Peter Elmer, 'Towards a Politics of Witchcraft in Early Modern England', in *Languages of Witchcraft: Narrative, Ideology and Meaning in Early Modern Culture* (Houndmills: Macmillan Press, 2001), p. 109.

[14] A large number of women were killed following battles or sieges, usually by the victors, according to Will Coster. See Will Coster, 'Massacre and Codes of Conduct in the English Civil War', in Mark Levine and Penny Roberts, eds, *The Massacre in History* (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999), pp. 93–4. The first killing of a woman accused of witchcraft during the 1640s is a somewhat garbled account from the 1641 Depositions: 'the said Edmond had drowned the wife of Mr James Maxwell, & his wife demanding why he did it, the said Edmond answeared that Sir Phelemie o Neile tould him that the said mr Maxwells *wife* was a Witch & that he neuer had good loocke after he once kissed her, & more sayth not.' TCD, 1641 Depositions Project, online transcript [http://1641.tcd.ie/deposition.php?depID<?php echo 836228r120?>]

[15] James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness: witchcraft in England, 1550–1750*, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1996): pp. 125, 129–30; Malcolm Gaskill, *Witchfinders: a seventeenth-century English tragedy*, (London: John Murray, 2005): p. 283.

[16] This does not mean these tests were endorsed by all those who wrote on witchcraft, merely that they were widely perceived to be effective tests even though they were, by and large, not usually used as evidence in the actual trials of witches in this period, unlike in medieval ordeals. See Orna Alyagon Darr, *Marks of an absolute witch: evidentiary dilemmas in early modern England* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2011), pp. 278, 205–6.

[17] R. Trevor Davies, *Four Centuries of Witch Beliefs: with Special Reference to the Great Rebellion* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2011), pp. 147–9; Malcolm Gaskill, *Witchfinders*; Diane Purkiss, 'Desire and its deformities: fantasies of witchcraft in the English Civil War', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 27 (1996); Mark Stoyle, *The Black Legend of Prince Rupert's dog: witchcraft and propaganda during the English civil war* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press); Frederick Valletta, *Witchcraft, magic and superstition in England, 1640–70* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).

[18] Christina Hole, *Witchcraft in England* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1945), p. 73; see also Valletta, *Witchcraft, Magic and Superstition*, pp. 147–8; Purkiss, 'Desire and its deformities', pp. 104–6.

[19] See Stoyle, *The Black Legend*, p. 58; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, pp. 147–8.

[20] Davies describes the incident as casting 'a vivid light upon the mental anatomy of Parliamentarian soldiers' and argues that this fantastical story is evidence of the 'growing credulity of the reading public under Parliamentary rule'. Davies, *Four Centuries of Witch Beliefs*, pp. 147–8.

[21] Purkiss, 'Desire and its deformities', pp. 103–4.

[22] Purkiss, 'Desire and its deformities', pp. 105–6.

[23] E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, pp. 3–4.

[24] Mark Stoyle, 'The Road to Farndon Field: Explaining the Massacre of Royalist Women at Naseby', *English Historical Review* 208.503 (2008): pp. 895–923; Stoyle, *The Black Legend*,

[25] See Stoyle, 'The Road to Farndon Field'; Stoyle, *The Black Legend*, pp. 145–8.

[26] Stoyle, *The Black Legend*, pp. 32–9, 41–3.

[27] Stoyle, *The Black Legend*, p. 143; E. 245 (33) [Anon] 'T.B.', *Observations Upon Prince Rupert's White Dog called Boy* (London: s.n., 1642), pp. 3–4.

[28] The most intense period of witch persecution in early modern England occurred between 1645 and 1647. Some estimates suggest that as many as a fifth of all executions for witchcraft in early modern England took place in Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Ely and Huntingdonshire during these three years. James Sharpe and Christina Larner estimate that there were approximately 500 executions in England for witchcraft in the early modern period. Sharpe and Malcom Gaskill further estimate that around 100 people were hanged in East Anglia between 1645 and 1647. 100 executions in East Anglia is possibly a fairly conservative estimate, therefore 1/5 of all executions in England is also likely to be a conservative percentage. See James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness: witchcraft in England, 1550–1750* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1996), pp. 125, 129–30; Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, p. 283.

[29] Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, p. 149.

[30] E. 295 (2) [Anon] *Signes and wonders from heaven* (London: I.H., 1645), p. 7.

[31] C. L'Estrange Ewen, *Witch Hunting and Witch Trials,* (London: Heath Cranton, 1933), pp. 309–11.

[32] Nathan Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism*, pp. 212–14.

[33] See E. 127 (49) [Anon], *The true proceedings of both armies,* (London Printed by T. F., 1642), p. 1. The pamphlet describes it as 'the Bataille of BRANFORD', but it actually refers to the Battle of Brentford in Middlesex on the 12th of November, 1642.

[34] E. 127 (49) [Anon], *The true proceedings of both armies*, p. 5.

[35] The depiction of Irish women as sexually depraved, violent, and diabolic whores, was an established part of anti-papist propaganda that was intensified by Irish insurrection and fears about Catholic infiltration through the Irish 'backdoor'. Irish Catholics were portrayed as the inverse of English Protestants – much as the witch was portrayed as the unnatural inverse of good motherhood. They were part of the binary that depicted the true church of England as the good wife of God, and the Catholic Church as the 'Whore of Babylon'. Mary O'Dowd, ' Women and War in Ireland in the 1640s', in Margaret MacCurtain and Mary O'Dowd (eds), *Women in Early Modern Ireland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), p. 96.See also Alexandra Walsham, '"This Newe Army of Satan": The Jesuit Mission and the Formation of Public Opinion in Elizabethan England', in David Lemmings and Claire Walker (eds), *Moral Panics, the Media and the Law in Early Modern England* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

[36] This was during the Welsh rebellion of Owain Glyn Dwr. As Stoyle describes: 'The story of Bryn Glas may be swiftly told. At the height of Glyn Dwr's rebellion, a body of English troops under Sir Edmund Mortimer was surprised and defeated by the Welsh. Hundreds of English soldiers were killed, and, according to a contemporary account, once the fighting was over, swarms of Welshwomen descended on the battlefield and subjected their enemies' bodies to the grossest indignities: hacking off the genitals and noses of the slaughtered English soldiers and forcing these severed body parts into the mouths and anuses of the corpses. The veracity of this report remains open to doubt. What is important, for the purposes of the present paper, is that the story of the Bryn Glas atrocities was given "the widest possible currency" by subsequent generations of English chroniclers and was still being retold during the late Elizabethan period.' Stoyle, 'The Road to Farndon Field', pp. 901–2; E. 127 (49) [Anon] *The true proceedings of both armies*, 5; See also, Christopher

Highley, *Shakespeare, Spenser and the Crisis in Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 68, 101–3; O'Dowd 'Women and War in Ireland in the 1640s', p. 96.

[37] E. 127 (49) [Anon], *The true proceedings of both armies*; See Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, pp. 218–219; STC (2nd ed.) 14364 King James VI & I, *Daemonologie in forme of a dialogue, diuided into three bookes.* (Edinburgh, 1597).

[38] E. 127 (49) [Anon], *The true proceedings of both armies*, p. 6.

[39] Stoyle, *The Black Legend*, pp. 57–68.

[40] E. 245 (33) [Anon] 'T.B.', *Observations Upon Prince Rupert's White Dog called Boy*, pp. 3–4.

[41] E. 245 (33) [Anon] 'T.B.', *Observations Upon Prince Rupert's White Dog called Boy*, pp. 3–4; E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 7; See also Stoyle, *The Black Legend*, pp. 58, 148–151; Diane Purkiss argues that the story of the Witch of Newbury could only have been told after the fact, as it was contingent upon the defeat of Royalist forces at the battle. See Purkiss, 'Desire and its deformities', p. 104.

[42] Marion Gibson, *Early Modern Witches: Witchcraft Cases in Contemporary Writing* (Routledge: London, 2000), p. 9.

[43] E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 7.

[44] E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 6.

[45] Darr, *Marks of an absolute witch*, pp. 166, 170.

[46] Darr, *Marks of an absolute witch*, pp. 170–1.

[47] See Marcus Harmes's discussion in this volume on the contrasting dimensions of James's thought.

[48] STC (2nd ed.) 14364 King James VI & I, *Daemonologie in forme of a dialogue.*

[49] Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, pp. 159–160.

[50] Accounts of individual witches from early modern England share a number of features. They often begin by describing the crime of witchcraft generally as a fundamental evil and then describe the specific details of the alleged witch's crime, how the witch was lured into the Devil's service, their confession, trial and execution. They emphasise the evil of the Devil, his temptation of Christians, and often discuss scepticism of witchcraft, and reassure readers by citing the Bible and learned texts. While some accounts are narratives, others, like the Lancashire account of 1612, or the accounts about East Anglia, consist primarily of statements and confessions apparently recorded and printed by those actively involved in the trials, with some supplementary material or commentary. *True Discovery of a VVitch* follows this outline to some extent, beginning with an outline of the evils of witches, and why and how women, even poor and ignorant women, become witches. It also provides an eyewitness account of her discovery, testing, and confession prior to execution. Frances E. Dolan, *True Relations: Reading, Literature, and Evidence in Seventeenth-Century England*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), p. 53; See also STC (2nd ed.) 20138 Thomas Potts, *The vvonderfull discouerie of witches in the countie of Lancaster* (London: W. Stansby, 1613); E. 296 (35), [Anon], 'H.F.', *A true and exact relation of the severall informations, examinations, and confessions of the late witches, arraigned and executed in the county of Essex* (London: M.S., 1645).

[51] Gaskill, *Witchfinders*, pp. 128–129.

[52] E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch* , p. 4; the author of the *Mercvrivs Civicvs* seconds this claim to credible eyewitnesses. See E. 69 (8) Bates, Mercvrivs Civicvs, p. 4.

[53] E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, pp. 2–3.

[54] E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 2.

[55] E. 295 (2) [Anon], *Signes and wonders from heaven*, pp. 3–4.

[56] E. 295 (2) [Anon], *Signes and wonders from heaven*, pp. 3–4.

[57] E. 295 (2) [Anon], *Signes and wonders from heaven*, pp. 3–4.

[58] E. 69 (8) Bates, *Mercvrivs Civicvs*, p. 4.

[59] E. 69 (8) Bates, *Mercvrivs Civicvs*, p. 4.

[60] E. 69 (8) Bates, *Mercvrivs Civicvs*, p. 4.

[61] E. 69 (8) Bates, *Mercvrivs Civicvs*, p. 4.

[62] E. 69 (8) Bates, *Mercvrivs Civicvs*, p. 4.

[63] E. 69 (8) Bates, *Mercvrivs Civicvs*, p. 4.

[64] E. 69 (17) 37 Ingler, *Certaine informations from severall parts of the kingdome*, p. 8

[65] E. 69 (17) 37 Ingler, *Certaine informations from severall parts of the kingdome*, p. 8.

[66] E. 69 (17) 37 Ingler, *Certaine informations from severall parts of the kingdome*, p. 8.

[67] E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*; E. 69 (8) Bates, *Mercvrivs Civicvs*.

[68] E. 69 (8) Bates, *Mercvrivs Civicvs*, p. 4.

[69] E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 7.

[70] E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 7.

[71] Elmer, 'Towards a Politics of Witchcraft', p. 108; Purkiss, *Literature, Gender and Politics*, pp. 214–15; Stoyle, *The Black Legend*, pp. 41–2.

[72] Mark Stoyle, *Soldiers and Strangers: an ethnic history of the English Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 4–6; see also Stoyle, 'The Road to Farndon Field', pp. 922–3.

[73] E. 127 (49) [Anon] ,*The true proceedings of both armies*, p. 5.

[74] See Highley, *Shakespeare, Spenser and the Crisis in Ireland*, pp. 101–103; O'Dowd, 'Women and War in Ireland in the 1640s', pp. 96.

[75] E. 127 (48), *The Effect of All Letters Read in the House of Parliament* (London: John Cave, 1642), p. 3.

[76] Stoyle, 'The Road to Farndon Field', p. 907.

[77]The original pamphlet, which apparently made this claim, has not been found but it was quoted in the Royalist newsbook *Mercvrivs Avlicvs*. See E. 18 (11) [Anon], *Mercvrivs Avlicvs*, (27 October to 2 November, 1644). The *Mercvrivs Avlicvs* later mocked the witch-hunt in England, claiming that 'we have also multitudes of witches among us ... More, I may well say, than ever this Island bred since the

Creation. I speak it with horror. God guard us from the Devil, for I think he was never so busy upon any part of the Earth that was enlightened by the beams of Christianity; nor do I wonder at it, for there's never a Cross left to fright him away.' See E296 (33) [Anon], *Mercvrivs Avlicvs* (July 13 to July 20 1645).

[78] E. 69[8] *Mercvrivs Civicvs* (21– 28 Sept. 1643), p. 4.

[79] Brian Levack coined the term 'cumulative concept' to explain how medieval ideas, both elite and popular, contributed to the development of a relatively coherent series of witch tropes that were easily recognisable to both accused and accuser, and changed over time and in different localities. Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 3rd edn (Harlow: Longman/Pearson, 2006), pp. 32–67.

[80] E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 6.

[81] E. 245 (33) [Anon] 'T.B.', *Observations Upon Prince Rupert's White Dog called Boy;* E. 246 (23) John Taylor, *A dialogue, or, Rather a parley betweene Prince Ruperts dogge whose name is Puddle, and Tobies dog whose name is Pepper* (London: I. Smith, 1643); E. 92 (13) [Anon], *The Parliaments unspotted-bitch: in answer to Prince Roberts dog called Boy, and his malignant she-monkey* (London: R. Iackson, 1643); E. 93 (9) [Anon], *The humerous tricks and conceits of Prince Roberts malignant she-monkey, discovered to the world before her marriage. Also the manner of her marriage to a cavaleer and how within three dayes space, she called him cuckold to his face* (London: T. Cornish, 1643); E 90 (25) John Taylor, *An Exact description of Prince Ruperts malignant she-monkey, a great delinquent having approved her selfe a better servant then his white dog called Boy: laid open in three particulars 1. what she is in her owne-shape, 2. what she doth figuratively signifie, 3. her malignant tricks and qualities* (London: E. Johnson, 1643); E. 3 (17) John Taylor, *A dog's elegy, or, Rvpert's tears, for the late defeat given him at Marstonmoore, neer York, by the three renowned generalls; Alexander Earl of Leven, general of the Scottish forces, Fardinando, Lord Fairefax, and the Earle of Manchester generalls of the English Forces in the North. Where his beloved dog, named Boy, was killed by a valiant souldier, who had skill in necromancy. Likewise the strange breed of this shagg'd cavalier, whelp'd of a malignant water-witch; with all his tricks, and feats. Sad Cavaliers, Rupert invites you all that does survive, to his dogs funerall. Close-mourners are the witch, Pope, & devill, that much lament ye'r late befallen evill* (London: for G. B., 1644); E. 546 (28) Prince Rupert, Count Palatine, *The declaration of His Highnesse Prince Rupert, Lord High Admirall of all the navy Royall, belonging to the Kings Majesty Charles the II. Wherein hee cleareth himselfe from many scandalous rumours which have bin cast upon his reputation* (London: s.n. 1649).

[82] Stoyle, *The Black Legend*, pp. 57–68.

[83] See E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, 1; E. 3 (17) Taylor, *A dog's elegy*, p. 1.

[84] E. 245 (33) [Anon] 'T.B.', *Observations Upon Prince Rupert's White Dog called Boy*, pp. 3–4.

[85] E. 71 (10) Audley, *Mercurius Britanicus,* p. 6.

[86] *The true proceedings of both armies*, was published in late November 1642, and related events that occurred on the 14th and 16th of November. See E. 127 (49) [Anon],*The true proceedings of both armies.*

[87] See Coster, 'Massacre and Codes of Conduct n the English Civil War', in Mark Levine and Penny Roberts (eds), *The Massacre in History* (New York: Berghahn, 1999), pp. 89–106.

[88] Davies, *Four Centuries of Witch Beliefs*, pp. 157–158; Stoyle, *Soldiers and Strangers*, pp. 139–141.

[89] Diane Purkiss, *Literature, Gender and Politics during the English Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 218.

[90] David Underdown, *Revel, riot, and rebellion: popular politics and culture in England, 1603–1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p. 40.

[91] David Nash and Anne-Marie Kilday *Cultures of Shame: Exploring Crime and Morality in Britain 1600–1900* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 26, 30–31.

[92] E. 69 (8) Bates, *Mercvrivs Civicvs*, p. 4.

[93] See Darr, *Marks of an absolute witch*.

[94] Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), p. 194; Darr, *Marks of an absolute witch*, pp. 166, 170.

[95] See E. 388[2] Matthew Hopkins, *The discovery of vvitches: in answer to severall queries, lately delivered to the judges of the assize for the county of Norfolk. And now published by Matthevv Hopkins, witch-finder. For the benefit of the whole kingdome* (London: R. Royston. 1647); S5365, John Sterne, *A confirmation and discovery of witchcraft* (London: William Wilson, 1648).

[96] E. 388[2] Hopkins, *The discovery of vvitches.*

[97] Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, pp. 218–19.

[98] STC (2nd ed.)3907 [Anon], *The Witches of Northamptonshire* (London: Tho: Purfoot, 1612).

[99] Notestein, *A History of Witchcraft in England*, p. 83.

[100] See STC (2nd ed.) 3907 [Anon], *The Witches of Northampton-shire*, STC (2nd ed.) 14364 King James VI & I, *Daemonologie in forme of a dialogue.*

[101] Wallace Notestein. *A History of Witchcraft in England from 1558 to 1718* (Oxford: Benediction Classics 2012), p. 83.

[102] Notestein, *A History of Witchcraft in England*, pp. 78, 83. Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, p. 218; Darr, *Marks of an absolute witch*, p. 159.

[103] Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, p. 218.

[104] Darr, *Marks of an absolute witch*, p. 209.

[105] STC (2nd ed.) 1943 Richard Bernard, *A guide to grand-iury men diuided into two books*, (London: Felix Kingston, 1627); William Perkins, *A discourse of the damned art of witchcraft so farre forth as it is reuealed in the Scriptures, and manifest by true experience* (Cambridge: Cantrel Legge, 1610.); STC (2nd ed.) 5836 John Cotta, *The triall of vvitch-craft shewing the true and right methode of the discouery: with a confutation of erroneous wayes* (London: George Pvrslowe, 1616).

[106] Darr, *Marks of an absolute witch*, pp. 158–9, 178, 195.

[107] Darr, *Marks of an absolute witch*, p. 159.

[108] STC (2nd ed.) 14364 King James VI & I, *Daemonologie in forme of a dialogue*.

[109] E. 69 (9) [Anon], *A True Discovery of a VVitch*, p. 5.

[110] Both these are also found in King James's *Daemonologie.* See Chapter VI in STC (2nd ed.) 14364 King James VI & I, *Daemonologie in forme of a dialogue.*

[111] Darr, *Marks of an absolute witch*, pp. 178, 195.

[112] For other examples of drowning see E. 133 (14) Richard Johnson, *Good and True Newes from Ireland* (London: H. Blunden, 1642), p. 6; E. 51 (15) William Jesop, *A More Exact and Full Relation of Many Admirable Passages* (London: Mathew Walbancke, 1644); A.R. Bayley, *The Great Civil War in Dorset, 1642 – 60* (Barnicot and Pearce: Taunton, 1910), p. 188; E. 284 (20), *Mercurius Avlicvs* (Oxford: Henry Hall 20–27 April 1645); Peter Gaunt, *A Nation Under Siege: The Civil War in Wales, 1642–46* (London: HMSO, 1991), p. 44.

[113] Stoyle, *Soldiers and Strangers*, pp. 59 – 60; See also Mark Stoyle, 'The Road to Farndon Field', p. 916.

[114] Darr, *Marks of an absolute witch*, pp. 190–1.

[115] E. 3 (17) Taylor, *A dog's elegy.*

‘For musike meueþ affecciouns’: Interpreting Harp Performance in Medieval Romance

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Abstract: Performances are focal points in medieval romances with musical protagonists. Whilst these performances may not necessarily be accurate representations of medieval music, such episodes in popular literature are valuable to early music practitioners because they describe the whole context of the performance. These scenes preserve a snapshot of the medieval experience of music: the physicality of the performance, the sounds created and the emotional responses to the music. The hyperbolic tendencies of popular literature are effective at communicating imagined performance contexts because of the use of language that deliberately presents and evokes extremes of emotion, involving the reader or listener in a simulacrum of musical affect. When used alongside surviving musical notation, musical treatises, accounts of performances in historical records, and iconography, these romances are, I argue, a highly valuable and informative source for medieval performance. They reveal to the modern reader how music was perceived and represented in the medieval popular imagination. This paper will examine harp performances in several music-focused romances and I will set alongside these examples my own amateur reconstructions of the performances as described.

Musical episodes in romances preserve simulacra of the medieval experience of performance.[1] While treatises and surviving musical notation preserve factual details about performances, and reconstructions of medieval instruments allow for practical investigations, neither of these can truly record or recreate the lost sound of medieval music. Musical examples in popular literature are often discounted as evidence in reconstructions of early music because of their tendency to exaggerate and cloud the musical performances with rhetorical embellishments. Yet it is these fictional accounts of performance that are the closest approximation of the experience of musical performance in the Middle Ages. Fictional accounts encapsulate the whole moment of performance — sound, physicality, emotional affect — preserving multidimensional imagined performance contexts. Moreover, the rhetorical heightening of the scenes serves to depict performance in an affective manner that echoes the affective power of the musical performance itself. The emotions inscribed in such depictions of performance are a perceptible connection to the past for early music practitioners who wish to understand or recreate medieval performance. By recounting the emotions associated with the affective power of music, the romances preserve a fuller account of performance practice that allows us to experience and potentially recreate fictional music according to the emotions it evokes and to use this evidence alongside more 'trusted' sources, particularly musical treatises. Throughout my investigation, I will set beside some of the fictional performances a video of my own amateur reconstruction of the performance. These reconstructions do not make claims about whether the romances themselves were performed, nor are they advocating a particular practice of early music; I am, of course, taking something of a license in recreating performances which are, by most accounts, inventions. They are not so much performances as echoes of performance, transmitted and transformed through a textual lens, presumably several degrees removed from 'real' performance. Yet the attention to details in

performance episodes hints at some degree of accuracy: fictional medieval performers still take the time to tune their instruments and warm up. These performance reconstructions are, to use a medieval analogue, seeking the *trouthe* — the textual truth — rather than *sothe* — the objective reality.

In the range of romances surveyed in preparation for this article, it is possible to divide music into two categories: professional performance and amateur performance. This division extends to the location of the performance and, arguably, even the instruments used. Professional musicians (to whom we may apply the terms minstrel, *jongleur*, *histrio*, *joculator* and *gleeman*, amongst others) earn their living by performing, and within the romances this most commonly takes the form of musical performances. Historical minstrels were viewed poorly: they were of low social standing and demeaned as 'jacks of all trades'.[2] Giraud de Calanson, a thirteenth-century Provençal troubadour described in a poem that a true *jongleur* should 'speak and rhyme well, be witty, know the story of Troy, balance apples on the points of knives, juggle, jump through hoops, play the citole, mandora, harp, fiddle, psaltery'[3] Performers could be hired as household musicians or employed by noble patrons, but for the most part, they were usually little better than servants.[4]

Amateur musicians in the romances are nobles who have learnt music as a refined courtly achievement. Their performances are for pleasure only and must never be motivated by mercenary needs. The 'minstrel disguise' motif, which features frequently in the romances studied, allows the noble protagonists of the romances to alleviate their temporary social disadvantages by disguising themselves as minstrels and using music to gain entrance to private spaces. For example, in the Anglo-Norman *Roman de Horn* and the Middle English *King Horn*, Horn uses the minstrel disguise to regain entrance to his own castle and save his lover, Rymenhild/Rigmel, from marriage to the dastardly Fikenhild/Wikele.[5] This

disguise motif blurs the line between professional and amateur musicians and, as such, the texts are careful to emphasise that the minstrel disguise is a last resort and that nobles never take on more than the appearance of minstrelsy (except, perhaps, in *Roman de Silence*, where Silence runs away to become — albeit, temporarily — a minstrel).[6]

Professional and amateur musicians also perform in different spaces. For amateurs, music is a noble pastime, to be pursued in private chambers or at court.[7] Professional musicians entertain noble households in more formal settings, such as feasts. Edmund A. Bowles reconstructed the role of musicians at medieval feasts, mostly relying on information from popular literature, but supported by iconography and written records. Musicians were often positioned in a raised gallery and specific instruments marked phases of the banquet. For example, trumpet fanfares would announce the entrance of the food and accompany the serving. Stringed instruments would play while the guests ate and then general entertainment (*gestours*, minstrels, romance-readers) would conclude the festivities.[8] The Pentecost feast at Westminster in 1306, for instance, reportedly hired a total of 169 minstrels (including twenty-six harpers).[9] In 1309, a rather smaller number of minstrels sang with harp accompaniment at the feast following the investiture of Ralph, the Abbot of Saint Augustine's in Canterbury.[10] Sylvia Huot extends the division of professional/amateur musicians to their repertoires and even the instruments they used. Nobles tended to play the harp or sing unaccompanied. They favoured monophonic love lyrics and the occasional *lai*. Professional musicians in romances most commonly played the vielle and used this instrument to accompany their singing. Minstrels tended to sing narrative songs like *chansons de geste* and Breton *lais*. Playing and singing at the same time was a mark of great musical skill and tended to be reserved for professionals or unusually talented nobles.[11]

Overall, string instruments dominate performances in romances — perhaps their nature makes it easier for a performer to accompany their own singing. Linda Marie Zaerr suggests that the quality of sound produced by string instruments mimics the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in medieval verse and thus chordophone accompaniment was favoured as it emphasised the words.[12] Furthermore, string instruments offered a model for the morally sound and well-balanced human soul in early musical treatises, the most well-known of which is Boethius' *De Musica*. Boethius writes that 'the whole structure of our soul and body has been joined by means of musical coalescence.'[13] The Greek musical theorist Aristides Quintilianus expresses a similar view: 'instruments made of tuned strings are somewhat similar to the ethereal, dry, and simple part of the cosmos and to the soul itself.'[14]

In this paper, I will focus on harp performances by noble amateurs and disguised protagonists in a selection of romances dated between 1150–1350. The harp in the modern imagination is a powerful symbol of the romanticised past. However, the medieval or 'Romanesque harp' is a good deal humbler than modern pedal or lever harps. It has a long resonating body, a neck with tuning pins and a column/forepillar that braces the frame of the harp and may be straight or curved. The harp could have between seven and thirty strings made of gut, horsehair, silk or wire.[15] The later Gothic harp was a little larger and fitted with 'brays', which gave the harp a buzzing, nasal tone.[16]

We have extant examples of the wire-strung Irish harp (known as the Queen Mary or Brian Boru harp) and the Gothic harp (the Wartburg harp).[17] However, most of our information about the Romanesque harp is drawn from iconography and from descriptions of harps in musical treatises. Evidence from the Berkeley Theory manuscript, a fourteenth-century compendium of musical theory, verifies that the Romanesque harp was tuned diatonically.[18] Pierre of

Peckham's poem *Lumiere as Lais* describes in detail how the medieval harp is tuned:

> He who wishes to tune the harp aright
> And make it sound harmoniously
> Must arrange the strings
> So that each one agrees with its fellow
> According to true proportion.
> Let the ear judge the sound
> Both according to skill
> And according to the demonstrable laws of music,
> So that two accord in an octave
> And two in a fourth
> And two in a fifth[19]

When investigating medieval performance practice, modern attitudes to the harp technique must be re-evaluated. Iconographic evidence suggests, according to Herbert W. Myers, that the harp was mainly played using the thumb, index finger and middle finger. Myers supports this by noting that later written sources view the use of the ring finger as an innovative technique.[20] As for arrangements, an instrument with seven to thirty strings is hardly able to play the sweeping arpeggios that dominate the modern harp repertoire. Instead, the medieval harp seems more suited to closely-placed harmonised patterns and chordal accompaniment. Benjamin Bagby, the early music performer and scholar, proposes, furthermore, that a modern style of harp playing would not create the hypnotic effect so often mentioned in the romances. Bagby borrows the techniques of African mbira players, who play in a complex overlapping style with various repeating patterns.[21]

Video 1: 'Comparison of modern and historically informed styles' compares these two different styles of harp arrangement. Ideally, reconstructions

of medieval performances would use historically informed instruments. The instrument I use here, unfortunately, is of modern construction and materials with nylon strings and tuning levers. However, the number of strings (twenty-six) does lie within the range of the Romanesque harp and it is tuned diatonically.

Surviving notation allows the modern performer access to the melodies of the past; however, the ornamentation used in medieval music is significantly more difficult to recreate. Musical ornaments were not normally written down, but were part of the performance itself — improvised flourishes added by the musician and, presumably, highly individualised. A treatise by Johannes de Garlandia, a musical theorist working in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, offers a few clues about types of ornamentation:

> Ennoblement of a sound is the expansion or diminution of it by means of pride; by expansion so that it may be perceived more easily; in magnitude so that it may be heard better; with invention (*fictione*) so that is may be attractive; and in performance so that the spirits may be refreshed.[22]

Also, he advises,

> put colours in place of unfamiliar proportionate sounds [i.e. melodic phrases], for the more you colour it, the more the sound will be familiar, and if it is familiar, it will be pleasing. Or in the place of any colour in the region put a familiar cantilena, phrase (*copula*), or section (*punctum*) or a descending or ascending instrumental phrase of some instrument, or a phrase from a *lai.* (p. 9)

From these examples we can infer that ornamentation encompasses tone, dynamics, adding sections of other tunes and embellishments, and by varying the performance (*musica ficta/falsa musica*). Additionally, 'colour' can be added to the music by selecting 'well-ordered' intervals (harmonies) and by repetition (p. 9).

The depictions of performances in the romances appear to follow a conventionalised progression. The musician takes up the harp and will initially

tune it (perhaps also playing snippets of other pieces) before beginning to play in earnest. The remarkable skill of the musician and emotional responses to the music will be noted, perhaps by the narrator or by the in-text audience. The music inspires a display of emotion and often physical reactions as all those who hear the music are drawn towards it. The episodes often tend to focus on the physicality of the musician's performance, for example describing the performer's hands in particular detail, as in Gottfried von Strassburg's *Tristan and Îsolt*.[23] These conventions of performance scenes appear to have early roots, as Christopher Page notes an Old English precedent in *Apollonius of Tyre*:

> Then there was stillness and silence in the hall. Apollonius took his tuning-key (*hearpenaegl*) and then began to stir the harpstrings with skill and to mingle the sound of the harp with joyful singing. And the king himself and all those who heard him called out with great cries and praised him.[24]

The incorporation of tuning as part of the performance seems a fairly plausible feature and may be assumed to reflect historical performance practice; it is a musical necessity, as anyone who has ever played on gut strings will affirm (see Video 2: 'Tuning and scordatura'). The tuning may also be an example of *scordatura*, where the strings are tuned to alternative pitches. Pierre of Peckham suggests that *scordatura* was a well-known practice, whereby notes in the diatonic scale can be altered, as long as the basic intervals (octave, fourth and fifth) are retained.[25] *Scordatura* enables a musician to easily play in different modes on an instrument limited by its number of strings. This practice of re-tuning is particularly demonstrated in Thomas' *Roman de Horn*, when Lenburc 'tuned her harp: she raised it a whole tone in pitch'.[26] Benjamin Bagby rather romantically interprets the re-tuning of the harp as a symbolic assertion of self over the instrument and over performance.[27] Yet for the literary performances, this may not be far from the truth. The act of tuning sets the protagonist apart as they

impose their authority — their tuning — on the performance setting. Tuning aligns the 'well-tuned' *musica humana* of nobles with their *musica instrumentalis*, making the soul and the instrument reach 'a certain harmony […] a careful tuning of low and high pitches as though producing one consonance'.[28] Indeed, Pierre of Peckham's poem focuses in such detail on the harp purely because of the typological connection between the well-tuned instrument and the charitable and worthy Man.[29] As to the extreme reactions of the audience, we may take this to be a literary embellishment, but it is a reminder of how important and powerful music was perceived to be in the period. Conventionalised outburst of praise and the drawing in of the audience are used to codify and emphasise the emotional impact of music.

Turning to performance episodes in the romances, *Sir Orfeo*'s two disguised harp performances are internally quite similar. In the first, Orfeo, masquerading as a poor minstrel, plays his harp before the Fairy King and his court. Orfeo begins by tuning his harp ('[he] tok his harp so miri of soun, / And tempreþ his harp')[30] and then fills the palace with 'blisseful notes' (l. 438). The Fairy King and Queen take great pleasure in Orfeo's song and all those who hear the harp run towards the sound and sit at his feet. This provides an interesting parallel to an earlier (non-disguised) performance by Orfeo when exiled in the wilderness. Orfeo plays the harp 'at his owhen wille' (l. 271) and the music draws in and pleases 'all the wilde bestes that ther beth' (l. 272). In the second disguised performance, Orfeo (now masquerading as a poor heathen harper) is welcomed to play at a feast in his own hall by his steward. After the other musicians play ('trompours & tabourers, / Harpours fele, & crouders', ll. 521–2), Orfeo takes up his harp and, after tuning it, once more enchants those listening with 'Þe blissefulest notes' (l. 528). The notable repetition of the term 'blisseful' (l. 438) emphasises Orfeo's connection to divine power through his music (blissful being

a term commonly used to describe heaven). In the first performance, the harp creates what the Fairy palace can only imitate — the glory of Heaven — and Orfeo’s music succeeds in influencing events and rescuing Heurodis where military power and kingship have failed. In the latter performance, the affective power of Orfeo’s harping prompts the steward to recognise his master’s harp and to prove his loyalty in an outburst of emotion.

In *King Horn*, music is first mentioned as part of Horn’s education when fostered in the court of King Ailmar. Harping is set among other knightly skills like hunting, hawking and serving: ‘Stiwarde, tak nu here / Mi fundlyng for to lere / Of þine mestere, / Of wude and of riuere / And tech him to harpe / Wiþ his nayles scharpe’.[31] The worth of this musical education is proved at the end of the romance when Horn must gain entry to his own castle to prevent his lover, Rymenhild, marrying his enemy, Fikenhild. Horn disguises himself and his men as minstrels (purely, it seems, by carrying instruments and playing). Once inside, ‘[Horn] sette him on þe benche, / His harpe for to clenche. / He makede Rymenhilde lay, / And heo makede walaway. / Rymenhild feol yswoȝe; / Ne was þer non þat louȝe’ (ll. 1595–1600). They are granted entry to the hall and Horn supports his disguise with a performance of a *lai* — a form that combines sung or spoken words and musical accompaniment. Rymenhild is overcome with emotion and Horn is stirred to kill Fikenhild. The lack of detail about the disguise and its almost unexpected success are quite typical of the romance, which overall feels abbreviated and episodic. What is clear, however, is the power of music to raise emotions and enable action.

The Anglo-Norman *Roman de Horn* by Thomas, in contrast, grants music greater prominence in the narrative. The importance of musical education (and its connection to nobility) is emphasised: ‘In those days everyone knew how to play the harp well: the higher the rank, the greater the knowledge of the art’.[32] Horn

once again uses the minstrel disguise to gain entry to his castle and reclaim Rigmel (Rymenhild in the Middle English poem), from Wikele (Fikenhild). Horn and a hundred companions carry instruments ('Some carried harps, most fiddles', p. 135) and don 'cloaks of different colours' (p. 135), but are also armed and dressed in hauberks.[33] There is no musical performance once inside the hall as Horn wastes no time in slaying Wikele. Instead disguise and reality converge as their violent actions figuratively become the songs promised by the false minstrels: 'Now they would turn Wikele's joy into grief, and the songs they made would finish in misery', and Horn threatens, 'I'll play him a Breton lay with my steel sword'.[34]

Horn's earlier harp performance is of more interest to us here. A group of nobles have gathered in Lenburc's chambers (Lenburc is the daughter of King Gudreche of Ireland) and are passing her harp around, playing for pleasure. Horn's modest protests are ignored and he is asked to play. Horn first tunes the harp by playing melodies ('chanter') and chords ('organer'), then alters the pitch of the strings ('he began to raise the pitch and to make the strings give out completely different notes', p. 95). He then sings the *lai* of Baltof in the Breton manner ('loudly and clearly', p. 96), alternating between singing, then harping.[35] Horn's playing is praised:

> whoever then watched his knowledgeable handling of it, how he touched the strings and made them vibrate, sometimes causing them to sing and at other times join in harmonies, would have been reminded of the harmony of heaven! [36]

The details in this passage are telling. Horn makes the strings 'join in harmonies' as well as 'causing them to sing' which suggests that he is accompanying his melody with a mixture of intervals and playing in unison. The antiphonal style seems to be the most common arrangement in other accounts of *lai* performances. For example, when a musician plays before King Alexander in the twelfth-century

epic *Alexandre*, 'the harpist sat at the king's feet and began a lai, of which he had learned many, on the harp and flute'.[37] In *Roman de Silence*, Silence gives a similarly multi-instrumental performance when he returns home from his overseas travels and minstrel training: 'Then he took his harp and viele / and sang beautifully as he played. / Everyone from all around / came running to the inn.'[38] This passage is most likely literary exaggeration, as Silence can hardly play two instruments and sing at the same time. An antiphonal style of playing makes this example more plausible: for example, the harp could accompany sung verses and the vielle could play refrains or interludes. Perhaps one of the instruments could offer a different tune as a counterpoint, much like Johannes de Garlandia's suggested ornamentation.[39] Silence's ability to accompany his own singing acknowledges his skills as a professional musician, and so the addition of another instrument to his performance serves to demonstrate his skill beyond that of ordinary professionals. This scene clearly demonstrates how performance can be stylised for literary effect whilst still resembling plausible historical performance practice (See Video 3: 'Demonstration of antiphonal playing').

Before focusing on the romances of Tristan — the most detailed depictions of performance to be discussed here — it is worth continuing to examine *lais*. As previously noted, most musical performances in romances are of *lais*: narrative or lyric verses associated with the Breton tradition. Although it seems clear that they have words, performances of *lais* are frequently described by the instrument that plays them, rather than any reference to them being sung or recited. In *Roman de Silence*, we are granted an account of a performance by two itinerant musicians: 'One fiddled a Breton *lai*; / the other harped "Gueron".'[40] J. A. Westrup states:

> Whether or not the *lai* is Celtic in origin […] it clearly derives from an old tradition of minstrelsy in which persistent repetition similar to that of the *chanson de geste* is combined with the variety of structure to be found in the *puncta* (or contrasted sections) of dance forms such as the *estampie*.[41]

The *estampie* also features in romance texts and is defined by Johannes de Grocheio in his fourteenth-century treatise on secular music as:

> a textless melody having a difficult structure of agreements and distinguished by its sections [*puncta*]. […] it causes the mind of anyone who performs it – and of anyone who listens – to dwell upon it and it often diverts the minds of the powerful from perverse reflection.[42]

In *Bevis of Hampton*, Josian plays 'staumpes, notes, garibles gay' on her vielle.[43] Similarly, Isolde in Gottfried von Strassburg's *Tristan and Îsolt* plays at court for the delight of her father the King and his nobles: 'she sang, she wrote, and she read for them […] she fiddled her estampie, her lays, and her strange tunes in the French style' (pp. 147-8). Despite this clue as to the instrumentation and arrangement of the *lai*, the indiscriminate use of the term in the romances suggests that it is being used to refer to tales in general, especially those set to music and commonly with fantastical subjects (just as the term *geste* is used to refer to any kind of narrative tale). The preoccupation with the Breton *lai* in romances, particularly in *Le Roman de Silence*, the Tristan romances and *Sir Orfeo*, parallels a general tendency for nostalgia about music and musicians in the romances. Tristan's enrapturing harp performance in the court of King Mark and Horn's performance in Lenburc's chambers are played 'in the Breton style'.[44] The opening of *Sir Orfeo* describes Breton *lais* of mirth, woe and 'old aventours' played with a harp.[45] Indeed, the romance of Orfeo is itself presented as such a *lai* by the narrator.

In romances of Tristan, particularly those by Gottfried von Strassburg and Thomas of Britain, we have particularly detailed and artful accounts of performance. Tristan's harp performance in the court of King Mark is exquisitely and meticulously described and is often cited in accounts of historical performance practice due to its detail and poetic resonance. As is the norm,

musical entertainment takes place 'a little after supper' and a professional Welsh harper is entertaining the gathered populace with his skill.[46] Tristan is 'engrossed in the lay and its sweet music' (p. 89) and correctly identifies it as Breton *lai* of Sir Gurun (which, interestingly, is also played and sung by Ysolt in Thomas' *Tristan* and is probably the same *lai* of Geuron in *Le Roman de Silence*).[47] The Welsh harper is surprised by Tristan's knowledge and asks him to take up the harp. Tristan protests with customary modesty — 'my skill is now so feeble that I dare not play in your hearing' — but finally agrees to play.[48]

The narrative first focuses on the physicality of the performance. It describes Tristan's hands — 'When Tristan took the harp it was as if [it were] made for his hands, which (as I have said) were of surpassing beauty; for they were soft and smooth, fine and slender and dazzling white as ermine' (p. 89) — romanticising them to the point that they are as beautiful as the music they create. Tristan begins with snatches of multiple tunes, flitting through the repertoire of a skilled harper with 'preludes and phrases' and *lais* of Arthur (p. 89). Then he tunes the harp carefully with a 'key' (p. 89), plays the pieces again and embellishes them (See Video 4: 'Closeup of hands').

After focusing on Tristans' fingers, Gottfried von Strassburg's text switches to the emotional impact of the performance. Tristan's playing is 'so melodious with lovely string music' (p. 89) that any who hear the music are physically drawn towards it at a run. The melody that Tristan entices from the harp is so enchanting that 'many a man sitting or standing there forgot his very name. Hearts and ears began to play the fool and desert their rightful paths' (p. 90). The text then reverts to the focus on Tristan's hands ('nimbly his white fingers went dipping among the strings' p. 90) and describes the reactions to the music in physical terms — 'Nor was there sparing of eyes: a host of them were bent on him, following his hands' (p. 90).

Tristan continues to perform more *lais*, such as the *lai* of Thisbe, *lais* of Arthur, and the *lai* of Graland, and his singing in many languages is praised. When questioned, Tristan reveals his international musical education: 'Parmenians taught me the fiddle and orgnaistrum, Welshmen the harp and rote — they were two masters from Wales; Bretons from the town of Lut grounded me in the lyre and also in the sambuca' (p. 91).[49] Once again, the performance of Tristan appears to follow literary conventions, drawing attention to the skill of a noble 'amateur' who can out-play a professional Welsh harper and describing the physical pull of music on listeners. Tristan's music induces a heightened emotional state as Tristan's performance causes signs of madness: men are driven to distraction and forget their names. By grounding the audience both in the text and of the text in a microcosm of the physicality of performance — the musician's hands — the romance augments the enchanting affective power of music.

Isolde the younger, Tristan's pupil and (later) lover, is also musically talented and well-educated: she plays the lyre, harp, sings and 'played the fiddle excellently in the Welsh style'.[50] 'Her fingers touched the lyre most deftly and struck notes from the harp with power. She managed her ascents and cadences with dexterity' (p. 147). Isolde plays at court for the delight of her father the King and his nobles: 'she sang, she wrote, and she read for them […] she fiddled her estampie, her lays, and her strange tunes in the French style' (pp. 147–8). The romance gives more details about her performance:

> she struck her lyre or her harp on either side most excellently with hands as white as ermine […] She sang her "pastourelle", her "rotruenge" and "rondeau", "chanson", "refloit", and "folate" well, and well, and all too well. For thanks to her many hearts grew full of longing; because of her, all manner of thoughts and ideas presented themselves (p. 148).

Such a list of musical achievements seems like rhetorical amplification, using

Isolde’s talents to reinforce her worthiness as Tristan’s lover and to embellish the romance as a whole. Isolde’s ability to accompany her singing with the harp marks her as a musician of particular skill.

Music plays a further role in the romance as Tristan’s musical talents also enable him to rescue Isolde from the Irish baron Gandin. Gandin, a noble amateur rote-player, arrives at King Mark’s court. Instead of graciously protesting his lack of skill when asked to play (as Tristan does), Gandin impertinently refuses to play unless he knows what his reward will be (p. 215), a clear indication of his poor morals and hence — according to the Boethian model — inferior musical ability. Gandin plays two *lais* on the rote then claims Isolde as his prize. Tristan pursues the baron and while they wait for the tide, Tristan plays a *lai* ‘of such surpassing sweetness that it stole into Isolde’s heart and pervaded her whole consciousness to the point where she left her weeping and was lost in thoughts of her lover’ (p. 217). Gandin demands to hear the ‘Lay of Dido’ and Tristan’s performance is so enrapturing that the tide becomes too high to reach the boat (p. 217). Tristan offers to carry Isolde out on his horse then takes his chance to escape with her (pp. 217–18). Music enables action when used cunningly by the musician, but this power can be abused. It is fitting then that Tristan’s music is used to undo Gandin’s trickery and to soothe Isolde. Tristan himself is aware of the symbolic symmetry of this episode, telling Gandin, ‘what you tricked from Mark with your rote, I now take away with my harp!’ (p. 218).

Ultimately, these performance accounts cannot ever truly recount medieval performance. What we can see, however, is another side to the practical and methodological information from musical treatises and other surviving non-literary evidence. The harp is a powerful force in the Middle Ages, both as an instrument and as a symbol. Its suitability as an instrument for the high-born and its prevalence in romances attest to the harp’s versatility and (musical) nobility.

The harp is the perfect instrument for the multitalented romance protagonist whose many skills serve to enrich the fictional world they inhabit. Their music has the power to directly influence narrative events and to bring about the resolution of the story, whether this be returning from exile (for Horn and Orfeo) or accompanying their death (for Tristan). Performance is a phenomenon that can only be truly experienced in its performance context, else it is fundamentally and irrecoverably changed. As Isidore of Seville writes, 'If a man does not remember sounds, they perish, for they cannot be written down'.[51] Walter Ong echoes this nearly a millennium and a half later in stating that: 'sound exists only when it is going out of existence'.[52] The stylised performance moments in the romances I have discussed preserve the medieval experience of music by encoding its affective power in words and granting music narrative significance. Most importantly, these performance episodes in popular literature remind us why music (and, of course, popular literature itself) is created: to please the listeners and to elicit emotional responses.

Notes

[1] The title of this article, 'For musike meueþ affecciouns', is taken from Bartholomaeus Anglicus' thirteenth-century *De Proprietatibus Rerum* and expresses the widespread belief in the affective power of music (see, for example, the story of David curing Saul by playing the cithara or of a madman being restored to sanity by the music of Asclepiades, both of which are cited frequently in musical treatises). Bartholomaeus Anglicus in Merritt R. Blakeslee, *Love's Mask: Identity, Intertextuality, and Meaning in the Old French Tristan Poems* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1989), pp. 27–28.

[2] Take for example the comments of John of Salisbury: 'Concerning actors and mimes, buffoons and harlots, panders and other like human monsters, which the prince ought rather to exterminate entirely than to foster, there needed no mention to be made in the law; which indeed not only excludes such abominations from the court of the prince, but banishes them from among the people of God'; and, 'our own age, descending to romances and similar folly, prostitutes not only the ear and heart to vanity but also delights its idleness with the pleasures of the eye and ear. […] Does not the shiftless man divert his idleness and court slumber with the sweet tones of instruments and vocal melody, with gaiety inspired by musicians and with the pleasure he finds in the narrator of tales…?' John of Salisbury in John Southworth, *The English Medieval Minstrel* (Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 1989), pp. 5–6.

[3] Giraud de Calanson in Nigel Wilkins, *Music in the Age of Chaucer: With Chaucer Songs*, 2nd edn, (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1995), p. 126; and Richard Firth Green, *Poets and Princepleasers: Literature and the English Court in the Late Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), pp. 103–4.

[4] Southworth, pp. 46–47. Specific references to household musicians begin in earnest around the fourteenth century: musicians are hired in the French court of Louis X (1314–15), in the court of King Edward III in England (1327–77) and in the Spanish royal court from the mid-fourteenth century. Edmund A. Bowles, 'Musical Instruments at the Medieval Banquet' *Revue Belge de Musicologie/Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Muziekwetenschap*, 12.1–4 (1958), 41–51 (p. 41).

[5] Anon., 'King Horn', in *King Horn, Floriz and Blauncheflur, The Assumption of our Lady*, ed. by G. H. Knight (London: Oxford University Press, 1901), pp. 1–69 (following Cambridge, University Library MS Cambridge Gg.4.27.2); and Thomas, 'The Romance of Horn' in *The Birth of Romance in England: Four Twelfth-Century Romances in the French of England*, trans. by Judith Weiss (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2009), pp. 45–137. Citations will be given in Weiss' translation in-text, with the original French text provided in footnotes.

[6] Heldris de Cornuälle, *Silence: A Thirteenth-Century French Romance*, ed. by Sarah Roche-Mahdi (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2007), ll. 2739–71.

[7] For example, Eustache Deschamps references private and secret performances by nobles. Eustache Deschamps, *L'Art de dictier*, ed. and trans. by Deborah M. Sinnreich-Levi (East Lansing, Michigan: Colleagues Press, 1994), p. 65.

[8] Bowles, pp. 41–46.

[9] Southworth, pp. 93, 91.

[10] Linda Marie Zaerr, *Performance and the Middle English Romance* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2012), p. 57.

[11] Sylvia Huot, 'Voices and Instruments in Medieval French Secular Music: On the Use of Literary Texts as Evidence for Performance Practice', *Musica Disciplina*, 43 (1989), 63–113 (pp. 87–93).

[12] Zaerr, p. 21.

[13] Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius, *Fundamentals of Music*, trans. by Calvin M. Bower, ed. by Claude V. Palisca (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 7.

[14] Aristides Quintilianus in John Block Friedman, *Orpheus in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 81.

[15] Herbert W. Myers, 'Harp' in *A Performer's Guide to Medieval Music*, ed. by Ross W. Duffin (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), pp. 330–5 (p. 333); and Christopher Macklin, 'Approaches to the Use of Iconography in Historical Reconstruction, and the Curious Case of Renaissance Welsh Harp Technique', *Early Music*, 35.2 (2007), 213–24 (pp. 214–15).

[16] Myers, p. 331.

[17] Joan Rimmer, 'The Morphology of the Irish Harp', *The Galpin Society Journal*, 17 (1964), 39–49 (p. 39); and Macklin, p. 214.

[18] Christopher Page, 'Fourteenth-century Instruments and Tunings: A Treatise by Jean Vaillant? (Berkeley, MS 744)', *The Galpin Society Journal*, 33 (1980), 13–35 (p. 31).

[19] Translated from the Anglo-Norman by Christopher Page. Pierre of Peckham, cited in Christopher Page, *Voices and Instruments of the Middle Ages: Instrumental Practice and Songs in France 1100–1300* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1987), p. 115.

[20] Myers, p. 334.

[21] Benjamin Bagby, 'Imagining the Early Medieval Harp' in *A Performer's Guide to Medieval Music*, ed. by Ross W. Duffin (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), pp. 336–44 (p. 342). Examples of this playing style can be found in Benjamin Bagby's rendition of *Beowulf* as well as on *Lost Songs of a Rhineland Harper X & XI centuries,* Sequentia (Deutsche Harmonia Mundi, 82876-58939-2, 2005) [on CD] and *Edda: Myths from Medieval Iceland,* Sequentia (Deutsche Harmonia Mundi, 05472-77381-2, 1999) [on CD].

[22] Johannes de Garlandia in Timothy McGee, The Sound of Medieval Song: Ornamentation and Vocal Style According to the Treatises (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 8.

[23] Gottfried von Strassburg, 'Tristan' in *Tristan: With the 'Tristan' of Thomas*, trans. by A. T. Hatto (London: Penguin, 1960), pp. 40–297 (p. 89).

[24] Page, Voices and Instruments of the Middle Ages, p. 103.

[25] From *Lumiere as Lais*: 'One may change the settings / By tuning different notes, / And by different arrangements / Of variously placed semitones. / By this means/There is diverse tuning in the harp. / But wherever it may turn / There will always be need of three: / The fifth and the octave / together with the fourth.' Pierre of Peckham, translated from the Anglo-Norman by Page, in *Voices and Instruments of the Middle Ages*, p. 116.

[26] Thomas, 'The Romance of Horn', p. 95.

[27] Bagby, pp. 336–44.

[28] Boethius, p. 10.

[29] Pierre of Peckham in Page, Voices and Instruments of the Middle Ages, p. 114.

[30] Anon., *Sir Orfeo*, ed. by A. J. Bliss (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), ll. 436–37 (following Scotland, National Library of Scotland Advocates MS 19.2.1 [Auchinleck MS]).

[31] Anon., 'King Horn', ll. 245–46.

[32] Thomas, 'The Romance of Horn', p. 95.

[33] 'Harpes porterent asquanz, vieles li plusor'; 'Fors halbers vunt vestuz, dunt grant erc, / E lur chapals desus de diverse color'. Thomas, *Roman de Horn et Rimenhild*, ed. by Francisque Michel (Paris: Maulde et Renou, 1845), ll. 5175, 5177–78.

[34] Thomas, 'The Romance of Horn', p. 135. 'Jà turnerent la joie Wikle en dolor, / E lur chaluz qu'il firent finerent en tristor'. Thomas, *Roman de Horn et Rimenhild*, ll. 5180–81.

[35] 'Apres en lestrument. fet les cordes suner. / Tut issi cum en uoiz. laveit dit tut premier'. [Afterwards he made the strings sound in the instrument, just as he had first sung it with his voice.] Thomas, *Roman de Horn et Rimenhild*, ll. 2842–43.

[36] Thomas, 'The Romance of Horn', p. 95. 'Deu! ki dunc l'esgardast cum il la sot manier, / Cum ses cordes tuchot, cum les feseit tramler, / A quantes faire les chanz, à kantes organer, / Del armonie del ciel li pureit remembrer.' Thomas, *Roman de Horn et Rimenhild*, ll. 2831–34.

[37] Translated by Huot, p. 76.

[38] 'Dont prent sa harpe et sa viiele, / Si note avoec a sa vois biele. / N'i a celui d'illuec entor / Ne face a l'ostel donc son tor'. Heldris de Cornuälle, ll. 3521–24.

[39] Johannes de Garlandia in McGee, pp. 8–9.

[40] 'Li uns viiele un lai berton, / Et li alters harpe Gueron'. Heldris de Cornuälle, ll. 2761–62.

[41] J. A. Westrup in Gilbert Reaney, 'Concerning the Origins of the Medieval Lai', *Music and Letters*, 39 (1958), 343–46 (p. 345).

[42] Christopher Page, 'Johannes de Grocheio on Secular Music: A Corrected Text and a New Translation' in *Plainsong and Medieval Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 17–41 (p. 32).

[43] Anon., 'Bevis of Hampton' in *Four Romances of England*, ed. by Ronald B. Herzman, Graham Drake and Eve Salisbury (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1999), pp. 25–95 (l. 3908).

[44] Gottfried von Strassburg, 'Tristan' in *Tristan: With the 'Tristan' of Thomas*, trans. by A. T. Hatto (London: Penguin, 1960), pp. 40-297 (p. 90) and Thomas, *Roman de Horn et Rimenhild*, ll. 2840–41.

[45] Anon., *Sir Orfeo*, l. 8.

[46] Gottfried von Strassburg, p. 88.

[47] Thomas of Britain, 'Tristan', p. 313; Heldris de Cornuälle, l. 2762.

[48] Gottfried von Strassburg, p. 89.

[49] The sambuca is a high-pitched triangular 4-stringed instrument. John in *Hucbald, Guido, and John on Music: Three Medieval Treatises,* trans. by Warren Babb, ed. by Claude V. Palisca (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), p. 107.

[50] Gottfried von Strassburg, p. 147.

[51] Isidore of Seville in *Cassiodorus, 'Institutiones', Book II, Chapter V, Isidore of Seville, 'Etymologies', Book III, Chapter 15–23*, trans. by Helen Dill Goode and Gertrude C. Drake (Colorado Springs: Colorado College Music Press, 1980), p. 13.

[52] Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 32.

Brepols Publishers. *Brepols Periodica and Miscellanea Online* (2011). Online. <http://brepols.metapress.com/home/main.mpx>.

Finding an affordable, easily accessible medieval scholarly database complete with up-to-date research in various mediums and a wide array of academic subjects seems like a futile pursuit at times. Thankfully, Brepols Periodica and Miscellanea Online provides just these things. This recently launched database makes available a plethora of scholarly works from some of the most highly respected sources in academia. What is most impressive is its ease of access, making this database user-friendly for all levels of technological literacy.

The variety in scholarship provided by Brepols Periodica and Miscellanea is commendable and diverse. The Periodica includes scholarship from internationally renowned interdisciplinary journals. Topics range from general subjects such as History and Archaeology to more specific focuses like Egyptology and Book and Manuscript Studies. Articles are not limited to one classification, however: if an article falls into multiple categories, it can be found by beginning a search in one subject area and narrowing by clicking on additional subject areas in the margins. This helps users find specific scholarship easily and quickly, and reduces the need for additional searches or complex search options. The collections of articles from various Brepols published Miscellanea have similar features to the Periodica, though users can also search for a specific Book Series. Much of the research is modern and up-to-date: the Collections available online are from 2011 to the present while the Archive only goes as early as 1998. While journals go back to turn-of-century, as early as 1910, a majority of articles are from 1980 to present. Providing timely and current

research illustrates dedication to aiding scholars in their studies and the continuation of new and fresh medieval scholarship.

The most appealing feature of this database is the ease of access and its clear organization. Often databases combine book chapters and journal articles in searches, causing scholars to further sift through search results to find the source they desire. Brepols Periodica and Miscellanea Online provides a clear separation of the two types of articles, with sections that allow users to search journals, journal articles, books, and book chapters separately from one another. This search style allows the user to specifically search within that genre of scholarship and find research more easily and efficiently. Search features throughout the database have been simplified as a way to reduce the need for "advanced searches" when trying to find articles, though the option is still provided. An additional organizational detail is the updating of marginal information to match the search items. When searching within a specific topic, details such as author or date of publication update and become specific within the parameters of the search. This allows the scholar to modify the search without having to start over, a feature that makes searching for scholarship efficient and user-friendly.

Another feature that speaks to the dedication of this database to providing easy access to users is the ability for individuals to sign up free of charge to browse articles. Access is mostly restricted for individual users who wish not to pay, though first pages and abstracts are provided for each article and front matter is open access for select pieces. DOIs are also provided for each article, allowing quick and permanent access for scholarship and its metadata. Users with accounts are able to save or email articles, allowing individuals to access the information at a later time in an organized fashion. If a user wishes to purchase only one article, the option and price is provided. Institutions that wish to

subscribe are given a 30-day free trial access and are able to create a subscription that is budget-friendly. Providing these features gives users and institutions the opportunity to keep research clear, organized, and affordable.

Despite the high quality of the database, some critiques can be made. Since it is produced by Brepols publishers it only includes Brepols produced miscellanea, limiting users to only search within the parameters of the company's scholarship. Thankfully, there is variety with the periodica, though opening up the miscellanea to additional book series should be a future consideration. Another critique is that the explanation of the square icons beside articles titles is somewhat unclear. Although explained in one of the PDF overviews, it is not initially clear to the user what the green, white, or half-and-half icons represent. Making this explicit would help the database be consistent with clarity and user-friendliness.

Brepols Periodica and Miscellanea is one of the most sensible, user-friendly, and easily accessible databases for medieval and humanities scholars of all levels of study and technological literacy. The timeliness and prestige of the scholarship available provides a certainty in research credibility and helps keep the study of the Middle Ages alive and thriving. This database would make an excellent addition to any institution or individual's collection.

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Cochran, Peter, *Small-Screen Shakespeare*, Newcastle upon Tyne : Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013; hardcover; xii, 531 pages; 22 cm; R.R.P. US$59.99, £101.99; ISBN (10): 1-4438-4654-6, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-4654-7

Review

Small-Screen Shakespeare by Peter Cochran is an overview of the myriad of filmed versions and adaptations of Shakespeare's works which have been released in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Small-Screen Shakespeare is divided into five sections, 'Directors', 'Plays', 'Shakespeare Adaptations', 'Films with Shakespearean References' and lastly 'Two Theatre Reviews'. The book's title is misleading as a variety of productions are discussed, not only those which were specifically filmed for television, but also those released at the cinema and are now available on DVD/BluRay (and thus viewable on a television), as well as unexpectedly two stage productions. Furthermore, the plays in section two would be been better ordered alphabetically, or into genres (i.e. comedies, histories, and tragedies), rather than the chronological listing of composition.

The introduction to *Small-Screen Shakespeare* reads like a condescending anti-intellectual rant, as Peter Cochran clumsily attempts to wrest Shakespeare away from academics. Cochran rails against academics and their stranglehold on Shakespeare (3-4). In criticising the perceived snobbery in the study of Shakespeare in universities, he engages in the very behaviour he finds abhorrent. Cochran offers personal reflections on a variety of filmed productions of Shakespeare's works. Unfortunately these reflections are often un-even (at times very brief and lacking, others overly long-winded), offer analysis that is lacking in depth, and demonstrate Cochran's superficial grasp of the material. Cochran flippantly trashes productions he doesn't like, which seems at times to be the vast majority of works discussed,

using language which lacks critical finesse. The referencing throughout is appalling and seriously in need of editorial intervention. While reflecting on film and television productions, Cochran often refers to other films and productions and gives no further details such as year of release, names of directors (etc.), and at times quotes are stated but not referenced at all. As *Small-Screen Shakespeare* is focussed on television and film adaptations of Shakespeare's plays, I was surprised by the addition of two reviews of stage productions (which to my knowledge have not been filmed and are not available on DVD/BluRay) at the end of Cochran's book. In an act which demonstrates his conceit, Cochran offers a review of a partial-viewing of Peter Hall's staging of *Antony and Cleopatra* (Cochran reveals he walked out after an hour and fifteen minutes (491) - an action he talks about with pride, 6-7).

One of the few strengths of *Small-Screen Shakespeare* is the scope of works discussed; Cochran has selected a wide range of works in a variety of mediums, and several up-to-date works (at the time of the book's printing) are discussed including the recent mini-series *The Hollow Crown* (BBC, 2012) and *The House of Cards* (both the British (BBC, 1990) and American versions (Netflix, 2013)). *Small-Screen Shakespeare* could have been such an interesting and informative book if only it had been written by someone with a thorough knowledge of Shakespeare and performance, specifically film and television adaptations of his work (see for example H. R. Coursen, Richard Burt, Russell Jackson, to name a few), and who writes in a more detailed and in-depth manner.

Small-Screen Shakespeare deals (almost) exclusively with the visual medium of film and television, and so the book would have benefited greatly from the inclusion of a number of well-chosen stills and images. A standard bibliography sorted first by chronology and then alphabetically is included, as are two appendices. The first is a list of last minute inclusions to *Small-Screen Shakespeare*, the second a list of film and television adaptations and versions not included (as Cochran had not viewed

them – had he partially viewed them as with Hall's *Antony and Cleopatra*, I wonder if they would have made the cut).

It is unclear what market this book is primarily aimed at. Cochran confusingly offers in his introduction that his work is for the 'tiny minority' of people who 'put Shakespeare's plays on, or go to see his plays when they're put on' (p. 6). This tiny minority would be better suited to look at other similar but far superior works, such as Kenneth Rothwell's *A History of Shakespeare on Film* (Cambridge UP, 1999, second edt. 2004), and more recently Diana E. Henderson's edited collection *A Concise Companion to Shakespeare on Screen* (Blackwell, 2006), and Samuel Crowl's *Shakespeare and Film* (Norton, 2008).

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Dockray-Miller, Mary, *The Books and the Life of Judith of Flanders*, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015). Hardback. pp. 176. 36 colour and 5 b&w illustrations. R.R.P. £54.00. ISBN 978-1-4094-6835-6.

One of the obstacles facing scholarly attention to women and their roles in the Middle Ages is the relative lack of source material from which to form a faithful biographical account. That there were certain women who served as remarkable figures in Europe's medieval history is certain, and Mary Dockray-Miller's book brings together textual accounts of patronage and recent scholarship to confirm that Judith of Flanders is among those women.

Judith's life spanned a period of political turmoil for Europe and England, including events surrounding the Norman Conquest and the investiture dispute in the Holy Roman Empire. This, alongside her family ties and marital situation, presented challenges to Judith's autonomy as an individual and to her social status. Through the analysis of texts as well as the objects that Judith commissioned and donated, and her patronage history, Dockray-Miller shows how Judith was able to secure and maintain her social status and power, and be remembered for her largesse and piety. As well as an introduction with biographical and historical background, the book comprises five chapters, each covering a major period in Judith's life.

Dockray-Miller's introduction begins by linking the present and past, presenting the image of Judith in modern culture as a well-known patron of art, literature and of Weingarten Abbey. She includes references to a video game depicting Judith and invites the reader to view on YouTube the annual *Blutritt* of Judith's Holy Blood relic through the streets of Weingarten, Germany. That a comprehensive biography of this significant figure is problematical, the author acknowledges, and she proposes a "patronage biography" by way of analysing the

artworks Judith commissioned and donated. Dockray-Miller is also interested in showing that this pattern of patronage was undertaken by Judith as a cultural strategy to secure power and status. As such, this volume can contribute to the study of how middle-tier aristocratic women could wield power and influence that would have been more easily attained by monarchs and regents. Judith's patronage practices differ from women of higher social status in that she had no access to land, did not found or endow any monastic houses, and that her gifts consisted entirely of "moveable goods" with attention to how she wanted to be portrayed, using "literacy and patronage as a way to define and assert her status." (9)

There is a note on how hagiographic material is used; the author does not wish to discard any reference to Judith in the few documents that mention her, but treats them with reasonable caution, extracting fact from surrounding fiction. Throughout the biography, Dockray-Miller refers to various sources with which Judith's life story can be constructed, and gives a survey of criticism and scholarly opinion, noting similarities with other stories where relevant. This way, she is able to draw on several texts to both date major events in Judith's life and to discern a pattern in Judith's deeds and influence on her contemporaries.

One of the sources presented in the first chapter on Judith's life in Northumbria as the wife of Tostig Godwin is Symeon of Durham's *Libellus de Exordio*, where Judith is mentioned giving a donation to gain entry to see the shrine of St Cuthbert. Her journey to Rome is composed from accounts in the *Vita Wulfstani* and *Gesta Pontificum*, enabling the author to describe an altar of porphyry now in Cluny that is associated with Judith and her largesse.

The second chapter concerns the four Gospel books that Judith commissioned for herself, remarkable because they are the only personally-commissioned set of books remaining after the loss of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of this period. With metal treasure covers, jewel-encrusted, ornate, gold lettering, miniatures and full-page illustrations, they are an impressive example of secular patronage by a woman

in late Anglo-Saxon England. Dockray-Miller surveys the scholarship on these Gospels, referring to the work and analyses of Rosenthal and McGurk, but convincingly disputes the location of the scriptorium workshop being in Judith's household in York, using contemporary accounts of Tostig's southern land holdings, and information about one of the artists who is also credited with the Crowland Psalter.

Judith's Gospel books are now located in New York, Fulda and Monte Cassino, and Dockray-Miller gives a survey of these manuscripts and their decoration, and the scholarship linking them. She addresses the representations of the Evangelists, with special focus on the Monte Cassino manuscript, using as a reference the *Speyer Golden Gospels* and the *Trinity Gospels* to note stylistic as well as compositional similarities. She suggests that two birds, one an anthropomorphized St John, the other a transcended eagle, represent two versions of John rather than two different birds as was previously thought.

The third chapter tells of Judith's exile in Flanders after the rebellion in Northumbria. Several historical events are related where some detail can be discerned of Tostig's or Judith's actions and movements, and Tostig's role in William's conquest of England. The question of exactly how Tostig died at the Battle of Stamford Bridge is demonstrated in texts that are incongruent, such as the *Vita Ædwardi*, *Chronicle of John of Worcester*, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, *Carmen de Hastingae Proelio*, and that of William of Malmesbury and Oderic Vitalis. Judith's donor portraits from this time attest to her intentional depiction as culturally sophisticated, pious and wealthy, despite her being dependent on her half-brother Baldwin V, proclaiming her social status as the once potential queen of England.

Rather than live as an exile or go into a convent with her mother-in-law in St Omer, Judith took an active role in decisions governing her life and image. From the *Ea Tempestate* Dockray-Miller gleans important details about Judith's marriage to Welf IV: the messengers of marriage negotiation dealt directly with Judith rather

than her family, Judith travelled to Germany to meet Welf before the negotiations had been concluded, and she turned down the proposal until she could ascertain Welf's social and financial suitability and security. Although Welf was affected by the investiture dispute in the Holy Roman Empire, Judith's new home at Ravensburg remained secure. In addition to providing Welf with two sons, Judith gave one of her Gospels to the dowager empress Agnes, and became patron of Weingarten Abbey. Her gifts helped assert her status and assisted Welf's political position.

The last Chapter deals with the Holy Blood relic that Judith is said to have been given from Baldwin before his death, and which she donated to Weingarten along with relics of St Oswald, and for which she is still venerated. Referring to the *De Inventione Sanguinis Christi* and the *De Translatione Sanguinis Christi*, as well as the *Ea Tempestate*, Dockray-Miller shows how Judith is associated, by her gifts, with the most powerful figures of the eleventh century, and she relates accounts of the acquisition of the Holy Blood by Emperor Henry III and the Pope, among others, and, as always, compares texts and notes inconsistencies. In conclusion, Dockray-Miller shows how, despite the small amount of historical and biographical records, documents relating Judith's patronage give a biographical picture of her assertiveness through gifts during political and military turmoil, securing her long-lived reputation of generosity and piety, and contribution to eleventh-century material culture.

The nature of the reliance on primary textual sources, and that with scholarly caution, as well as the focus on objects as historical resources, is supplemented with the inclusion of colour plates and black-and-white photos of Judith's Gospels and portraits. Of great value are the appendices, which comprise Modern English translations of some of the source texts, such as the *Vita Oswini*, lists of gifts donated to Weingarten, and texts relating to the Holy Blood relic. The addition of family trees and an index that includes historical figures is also helpful.

This is a valuable, single-volume reference to the life of Judith of Flanders as well as a survey of Judith's Gospel manuscripts. With her presentation of a biography by means of material resources, Mary Dockray-Miller opens the way for the study of roles of women of the lower aristocracy, their contributions to culture and politics, and their significance as prominent figures in European history, and legitimizes ways in which resources can be understood.

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Amanda Hopkins, Robert Allen Rouse and Cory James Rushton, eds., ***Sexual Culture in the Literature of Medieval Britain,*** **(Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2014). Print, 186 pp., £55.00, ISBN: 9781843833795.**

This collection of essays begins with a reference to the HBO television series *Game of Thrones*. Although this cultural reference may not stand the test of time, the argument that sex in the Middle Ages was not as violent and brutal as portrayed in popular culture remains valid: one can find the whole spectrum of sexual desire in the literature of Medieval Britain. The introduction of this eleven-chapter collection surveys the theoretical framework surrounding sexuality, the erotic, and the culture of heterosexuality, and states that the aim of this collection is to present the diversity of medieval sexualities and examine how they reflect contemporary thought and behaviour.

The first chapter by Kristina Hildebrand argues that the disruptive power of male sexuality in Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* threatens the structures of feudal society and that male desire must be controlled through social practices. Yvette Kisor also examines the representation of male desire in Malory in Chapter 4 but with a focus on the character Elaine. Kisor uses close reading to contrast the description of Elaine with that of the unnamed, but vocal and active, maiden in the *Lancelot-Grail* cycle; observing that it is the vulnerability, passivity, and nakedness of a woman that engenders male desire.

Amy S. Kaufman uses feminist theory and criticism of Chaucer's *Merchant's Tale* to discuss female agency and desire. Kaufman argues that criticism has focussed too much on May's body and silence during her sexual encounter with Damyan and proposes that this scene conversely presents her desire. Kaufman is persuasive in her argument that the narrative is structured to allow the reader to follow May's

development as an erotic subject and this is evidenced through glossing by readers in the Harley MS. Female agency in relationships is also explored in Chapter 6, where Hannah Priest analyses the text *William of Palerne* to present the ways in which characters perform sexuality. Priest concludes that gender norms remain stable, as any performance, gender or species-bending is merely temporary: these behaviours or disguises are meant to entertain rather than trouble.

Megan G. Leitch examines space within the sexual economy of Middle English romance. Private space is imbued with the social hierarchies and power structures of public life and these spaces are manipulated by both men and women for desire and, more importantly, control. Space is also considered by Aisling Byrne in an intelligent and well-argued chapter discussing the use of the fairy lover as both narrative device and as an adoxic space for the satisfaction of transgressive desires without consequence. Byrne suggests that the fairy lover trope is used to examine gratification; the introduction of the taboo aspect of the human/fairy relationship reveals the need for order and restraint for personal growth.

The final chapter in this collection takes as its focus the importance of rape for a knight's development. Amy M. Vines proposes that sexual aggression is an implicit part of the courtly code, yet the knight-rapist's reparative quest is used to draw the reader's attention away from the rape and onto his chivalric prowess and improved reputation. Vines' argument is well supported by a wide range of examples, such as the staged rape in *Partonope of Blois*; however, this chapter serves more to reconfirm Kathryn Gravdal's work on the subject rather than offer an alternate view on the depiction of rape in medieval culture.

In the introduction, Robert Allan Rouse and Corey James Rushton note that a companion collection, *The Erotic in the Literature of Medieval Britain*, was criticised for its lack of attention to canonical authors and, perhaps in response, this collection does concentrate more heavily on Chaucer, Gower and Malory. While the chapters examine

a range of texts, and the desires and behaviours within those texts, what becomes immediately apparent is that over half of the chapters are concerned with sexuality in romance and many of the contributors use the same primary sources. Although this highlights the multiplicity of desire within medieval literature, chapters such as those by Anna Caughey, on sexuality and the abject in Dunbar, and Cynthea Masson, on sexual rhetoric and the hermaphrodite in alchemical texts, seem out of place in a collection so focussed on romance. One criticism of this collection is that although it presents a large range of sexualities, the chapters concentrate on male-female relationships; one area which is conspicuous by its absence is discussion of same-sex desire.

One must note that whilst each chapter is well-written and accessible, knowledge of the canon is often assumed and therefore non-specialists may require additional resources. However, this collection successfully demonstrates the complexity of medieval sexual culture and would be useful for any with an interest in gender, sexuality, and Middle English romance.

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Horobin, Simon and Linne R. Mooney (eds). ***Middle English Texts in Transition: A Festschrift dedicated to Toshiyuki Takamiya on his 70th birthday*****. York: York University Press, 2014. Hardback; 359 pages; 20 colour, 20 black and white illustrations; RRP GBP£60.00; ISBN 9781903153536.**

Review

Middle English Texts in Transition is a festschrift for noted manuscript scholar and collector Toshiyuki Takamiya, presenting essays on the manuscripts of English vernacular texts, 'their evidence of scribal practice, compilation, reading habits and reading communities' (xvi) and is, in short, a comprehensive and wide-ranging collection for scholars of book history.

The first section of four essays on canonical authors opens with Richard Firth Green's investigation of Adam Pinkhurst's signature in the official record of the London Scrivener's Guild. Green's chapter provides a refreshing behind-the-scenes perspective of scribal activities and business, and is a useful addition to scholarship on Chaucer's scribe. Simon Horobin's chapter on *Piers Plowman* in Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 201 is another valuable contribution to the collection, advocating studies of single manuscripts as the next step in *Piers Plowman* scholarship. The manuscript in question is often rejected as a witness, but Horobin suggests that its errors and place in the textual *stemma* are what make it valuable, deducing the existence of another scribal layer between this manuscript and the A-text. Terry Jones' chapter continues the high quality of this opening section, living up to its praise in the introduction. Jones re-examines the claim that Gower changed the dedication of *Confessio Amantis* from Richard II to Henry of Lancaster just prior to Henry's usurpation of the throne, concluding that evidence supporting this change is unreliable as it post-dates the usurpation. Finally, R.F. Yeager investigates the authorship and patronage of the French dream-vision poem *Le Songe Vert* in an

extended analysis of Ethel Seaton's previous study, considering the question of authorship more widely, and concludes that codicologically, linguistically and stylistically, *Le Songe Vert* does not appear to be the work of Gower.

The second section on lyrics and romances was particularly interesting, although variable. Phillipa Hardman opens with a detailed look at the sole manuscript of *Sir Fyrumbras*, examining the process of translation, revision and scribal correction – a fascinating insight into the experience of writing and reading in Middle English. John C. Hirsh's chapter focuses on Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson D.913, a collection of Middle English and Old French secular lyrics showing evidence of performative usage and carefully constructed *ordinatio*. No examination of Middle English lyrics and romances would be complete without mention of London, British Library MS Harley 2253, however, both chapters to do so in this collection are disappointing. Gareth Griffith and Ad Putter investigate multilingualism in medieval English manuscripts, considering the ordering and grouping of texts in different languages. The chapter is intriguing but covers too much ground and fails to properly address the questions that it raises. For such a hugely significant conclusion – "Middle English romances…were not written to complement French matter but rather to take its place" (124) – the analysis that leads up to it sadly lacks in detail. Eric Stanley's chapter suffers from the opposite problem: although he provides a useful summary of poems written as prose in Harley 2253, he is ultimately unable to rationalise the layout choices of the scribe.

The next section on devotional writings has much to offer the reader, with discussions ranging from medieval bishops (Powell), their works, manuscripts and careers (Sargent), to studies of late medieval devotional manuscripts (Taguchi, Morse). A particular highlight is Mary Morse's examination of Takamiya 56, a late medieval prayer roll used as a 'birth girdle' to protect women in childbirth.

The final section on owners and users extends to look at the afterlives of medieval books in print, editions and collections. Carrie Griffin's opening chapter

focuses on three manuscripts and three owners – Samuel Pepys, John Dee and finally Toshiyuki Takamiya – to reflect on issues of book collection, distribution and provenance. Next, James J. Murphy's chapter traces the texts of Laurentius Traversagnus in the intersection of printing and manuscript production. Natalia I. Petrovskaia tracks a manuscript fragment – a quire from *Imago Mundi* – which was preserved in the collection of the seventeenth-century historian Sir James Ware, suggesting that Ware obtained it (or at least heard of it) from Robert Cotton. Finally, Timothy Graham's intriguing chapter examines Takamiya MS 129 – a transcription and draft edition of Old English legal texts by William and Elizabeth Elstob.

A final section provides a personal reflection on Takamiya's career and his impact on the field of manuscripts studies – in scholarship (both in Japan and abroad), encouraging facsimile creation, and his work as the Director of the Humanities Media Interface (HUMI) Project promoting digitisation and digital humanities – as well as a bibliography of his work. This collection is a great contribution to manuscript studies, presenting fascinating and rigorous scholarship. The repeated connections to Takamiya – whether this be his research interests, publications, or studies of manuscripts from his collection – grants the collection an overarching cohesion, and it is certainly a worthy tribute to Professor Takamiya.

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Kim M. Phillips, *Before Orientalism: Asian Peoples and Cultures in European Travel Writing, 1245-1510* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014). Print. 328 pp. 6 black and white illustrations. $79.95. ISBN 978-0-8122-4548-6.

Review

When one considers European perceptions of the Orient throughout the medieval period, what usually comes to mind are images of decadence, monstrosity, and 'Otherness'. In this study, however, Kim M. Phillips argues that writings and illustrations referring to the East may actually tell us more about the prevailing interests of the writers and their audiences, specifically, in food, gender roles, sexualities, civilisations, and foreignness. In doing so, she reveals that the notion of Eurocentric superiority was, in fact, a later invention of the colonial period, and that people during the medieval, or 'precolonial', period actually regarded the Orient – places such as Mongolia, China, India, and Southeast Asia – with curiosity, even wonder. Phillips' study delivers a fascinating reinterpretation of numerous travel writings, encompassing both lesser-known and fragmentary sources and more popular writings such as those by Marco Polo and the famous *Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, providing an important contribution to the emerging field of precolonial studies.

The first part of Phillips' book, 'Theory, People, Genres', provides a detailed theoretical background, which serves to contextualise the thematic textual analyses in the second part. Her first chapter deconstructs the meaning of the word 'Orientalism' as posited by the literary theorist Edward Said, and attempts to reconcile it with the precolonial medieval period. She argues that there was no especial 'Orientalist' discourse until the early modern period and that it is therefore counterproductive to use Said's theoretical framework to analyse medieval texts. She emphasises that the aim of her book is not to provide a single answer about how we should read these

texts, but instead to offer a starting point for studies which will account for the polysemous nature of the East in the medieval European mindset. In her second chapter Phillips provides an introduction to the sources which she uses throughout the rest of her study, focusing on providing background on the contexts in which they were composed, disseminated, and read.

Following on from this, the third chapter discusses more broadly the genre of travel writing, arguing that readers have hitherto made numerous assumptions about the genre which are an impediment to conducting a holistic study. She suggests in particular that there is an overemphasis on the portrayals of otherness in travel accounts, while other motifs talking about similarities and continuities have been largely ignored. Of especial note is Phillips' discussion at the end of the chapter of whether or not there existed a single notion of 'Europe'. She proposes that it is important to differentiate between collective 'European' and 'Christian' identities, due to the modern connotations pervading the former appellation. While numerous historians have argued for the existence of a 'Europe' as a medieval construct, it is also important to remember that many people's interests were not quite on such a large scale, and that local concerns may have been at the forefront of readers' and writers' minds, rather than a singular European identity.

The second part of Phillips' book, 'Envisioning Orients', comprises five comparative textual studies, which focus upon the following themes: food and foodways, femininities, sex, civility, and bodies. In this section, Phillips tests her overarching argument that medieval writers used travel writings as a means of discussing, without overt moralisation or judgement, issues which were important to them. For example, when discussing sexuality, Phillips notes that acts which were acknowledged as illicit according to the dominant Christian mindset (such as polygamy and extramarital sex) were not always shown as emblematic of immorality; writers also focused upon the attractiveness of exotic eastern sexuality. By considering numerous microstudies using a thematic structure, Phillips also demonstrates that

medieval travel writers largely did not believe in the East as a homogenous entity. In her chapter on femininities, for instance, descriptions of Mongolian, Chinese, and Indian women are compared, and it is concluded that although stereotypes were prevalent, there were variations. While Mongolian women were portrayed as powerful, hard-working and unattractive, Chinese women were described as sexually alluring and beautiful, and Indian women were seen as erotic.

By challenging the dominant idea that medieval European travel writings portrayed a homogenous, fearmongering impression of the Orient, Phillips has provided an exciting starting point for historians to reinterpret different aspects of the relationship between Europe and the East throughout the centuries preceding the colonial period. This study has also revealed a secondary function of travel writings: although their primary focus is on describing the exotic locations and peoples the writer has encountered, they also tell us a lot about the writer's context, especially the prevailing concerns of both them and their readers. The success of Phillips' work rests largely upon this argument, the theoretical discussion provided in the first section, and her overall emphasis on nuances and multivalence.

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