ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: SPECTACLE IN EARLY MODERN ENGLISH DRAMA

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The early modern English theater abounds with sights that were prepared, designed, and built to be seen. Playwrights conjured evocative and terrifying spectacles for their productions on the London stages between 1576 and the early 1640s, and publishers preserved those moments in printed plays with stage directions. Early modern play scripts call for flayed skins, arrows shot through hearts, tritons in flowing rivers, Zeus's thunderbolts, fiery hellmouths, brazen heads that speak, vengeful ghosts, bridled kings, cannibalistic feasts, enlivened statues, hungry bears, sea battles, naked puppets, vomiting wives, cursing monsters, and the hand of God.

Determining how these spectacles operate is the purpose of this dissertation. I argue that spectacle--the hypervisual shows demanded by playwrights in stage directions and dialogue cues--is a fundamental tool of early modern dramatists. In the hands of certain playwrights, spectacle defamiliarizes the known world, making it strange and evocative in order to guide the audience to re-imagine their understanding of such objects and events. Spectacles such as mythological figures, broken bodies, talking dogs, and

military machines compel audiences to recognize but then reassess what those images signify.

Each of the dissertation's four chapters focuses on a spectacle that is indicative of a larger pattern in dramatic literature. Chapter One, “Herculean Efforts: Spectacle of Rebellion," studies the liminal figure of Hercules in Thomas Heywood’s *The Silver Age* (1611), Jasper Heywood’s 1561 translation of Seneca’s *Hercules Furens*; and Thomas Heywood’s *The Brazen* Age (1613). Herculean spectacle suggests an unnerving connection between spectacular control and rule. The second chapter, "Spectacular Suffering: *Edward II* and *Titus Andronicus*," suggests that broken bodies on stage are more compelling when they do not adhere to the decorum that accompanied punishments on the scaffold. Chapter Three, "Bad Dog: Spectacle in *The Witch of Edmonton*," investigates the unsettling tension between morality and spectacularity that centers around Dog, a devilish talking canine in Thomas Dekker, Thomas Rowley, and John Ford’s 1621 true-crime drama. Finally, "Spectacular Collapse? *Tamburlaine, Parts I and II*," argues that Tamburlaine’s shows demonstrate the instability of spectacular power as they become increasingly illegible

SPECTACLE IN EARLY MODERN ENGLISH DRAMA

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

"See heere my shew, look on this spectacle"
Thomas Kyd, *Spanish Tragedy* (~1585-89)

The early modern English theater abounds with sights that were prepared, designed, and built to be seen. Playwrights conjured evocative and terrifying spectacles for their productions on the London stages between 1576 and the early 1640s, and publishers preserved those moments in printed plays with stage directions. Their ubiquity indicates how significant spectacle was to the construction of plays. Early modern play scripts call for flayed skins, arrows shot through hearts, tritons in flowing rivers, Zeus's thunderbolts, fiery hellmouths, brazen heads that speak, vengeful ghosts, kings bridled to chariots, cannibalistic feasts, enlivened statues, hungry bears, sea battles, naked puppets, vomiting wives, cursing monsters, and the hand of God.

Determining how these spectacles operate is the purpose of my dissertation. Over the course of four chapters, I will argue that spectacle--the hypervisual shows demanded by playwrights in stage directions and dialogue cues--is a fundamental tool of early modern dramatists. Playwrights employed spectacle to dazzle and move their spectators, but also to challenge them. In the hands of certain playwrights, spectacle defamiliarizes the known world, making it strange and evocative in order to guide the audience to re-imagine their understanding of objects and events. Spectacles such as mythological figures, broken bodies, talking dogs, and military machines compel audiences to recognize but then reassess what those images signify. In doing so, spectacle argues for a more theatrical understanding of these events.

In spite of its abundance, few critics have interpreted or analyzed theatrical spectacle from this period. Yet once we attend to spectacle, we may contextualize it within a theatrical and cultural tradition. First, the word "spectacle" itself--from the Latin *specto*, meaning 'to look at'--was a familiar one in the period.[1] Renaissance poets, playwrights, and essayists used the word to describe objects worthy of admiration or contempt. Popular devotional literature of the period presented the "weighty spectacle" of the crucified Christ to encourage doleful contemplation. Poetry celebrated the inspirational power of spectacle, as when Ben Jonson reveled over the firing of armaments in "An Epigram. To William Earle of Newcastle": "This were a spectacle! A sight to draw / Wonder to Valour!" Plays, of course, were self-conscious about the term. When Hieronimo finds his son's body hung upon an arbor in *The Spanish Tragedy*, he asks, "But stay, what murdrous spectacle is this?" Marlowe's Tamburlaine barrages his enemies with one "bloody spectacle" after another until they submit.

Spectacle infuses new life into a staged object or event by obliging the spectator to renegotiate his or her relationship with what is being seen. Drawing from "representational and rhetorical codes," codes that are literary, historical, or folkloric, playwrights can present the figure of Zeus, for example, and assume that the image is intelligible.[2] What makes a moment spectacular is when a recognizable image--a classical character, regal pomp and splendor, a figure of myth or legend--appears on the boards of the early modern stage, and audiences are asked to negotiate the recognizable along with the unforeseen. The result, a show both familiar and strange, is a spectacle

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[1] *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s.v. "spectacle."

[2] Karen-Edis Barzman, "Early Modern Spectacle and the Performance of Images," *Perspectives on Early Modern and Modern Intellectual History: Essays in Honor of Nancy S. Struever*, ed. Joseph Marino and Melinda W. Schlitt (Rochester, NY: U of Rochester P, 2000) 289.

that can be read multiple ways. Spectacle challenges the familiar, the normal, and indeed, the normalizing, by staging and changing events and objects. In the process, spectacle can redefine for the audience what they see before them.

Consider as an example the decapitated heads found in so many plays. The heads of convicted criminals could be seen all over London, whether at the execution of a nobleman or atop the London Bridge. Those heads represent capital punishment; they are displayed as reminders that treason equals death. In the playhouses, heads function as a *memento mori--The Famous History of Sir Thomas Wyatt* and *Thomas, Lord Cromwell* both feature severed heads as evidence of execution[3]--but they can also suggest an uneasy triumph by representing the frightening other; or they may destabilize the meaning of decapitation altogether. In *Macbeth*, Macduff enters the final scene "*with Macbeth's head*" and uses the head to establish that Scotland's troubled times have ended. He declares to Malcolm, "Behold where stands / Th'usurper's cursed head: the time is free" (5.9.20-21).[4] His simple message is misleading, however. Although the play began with the decapitation of the previous Thane of Cawdor, that head's effect was apparently negligible. In *The Battle of Alcazar,* Muly Mahomet's banquet features a bowl of human heads--likely to emphasize the man's dehumanizing barbarism--but the scene's gratuitous bloodiness makes it the most interesting part of the play.[5] Finally, under the weak hand of Henry VI in *The Second Part of King Henry VI,* human heads become tools of rebels. Jack Cade declares in 4.7 that "the proudest peer in the realm shall not wear a head on his

[3] See Act Five, Thomas Dekker and John Webster*, The Famous History of Sir Thomas Wyatt* (London, 1607), and the opening scenes in W.S., *Thomas, Lord Cromwell* (London, 1602), which was included in the Third Folio of Shakespeare's works in 1664.

[4] Quotations from Shakespeare taken from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).

[5] George Peele, *The Battle of Alcazar* (London, 1597). See Act Four's "bloudie banket."

shoulders" (line 129), and he makes good on his promise when he parades Lord Say's and Cromer's heads around the stage, making them bob atop wooden stakes and kiss like grisly puppets. This scene is certainly comic, in large part because of the character's delighted impropriety. In addition, the play suggests that Cade's spectacular exploitation of a severed head may be more effective than any physical weapon for frightening his enemies. Cade later bears these noble heads before his army "instead of maces" (4.7.136). All of these spectacular heads clarify dramatic action or emphasize a particular moment in the plays in which they appear, but they also deploy their properties to toy with what heads can represent. Jack Cade in particular uses his heads' theatrical potency to rally his troops and unnerve his foes. Say and Cromer's heads become both exciting and troubling because they have been estranged from the established use of a head, even a severed head. The spectators at Jack Cade's parade would be forced to reevaluate the significance of a nobleman's head in these new circumstances, and the audience for Shakespeare's play is bound to do the same. The unsettled civil war of *2 Henry VI* bleeds into the playhouse as this dependable symbol of state punishment is transformed by Cade into a psychological weapon.

Spectacle can spoil the seductiveness of allegory and mimesis as it activates images that were formerly comprehensible and places them directly before our eyes to be rediscovered. An execution, a wedding, or a ghost are all identifiable markers on stage. This accessibility relies upon a cultural expectation of what these figures stand for. To see a banquet brought onstage is to anticipate formality and procedure. Spotting an injury suggests that a character has been made a victim. A crown indicates royalty. These associations and metonymies are reinforced by the world outside the playhouse

and by the theater itself in its non-spectacular mode. Plays use spectacle to bend, twist, and sometimes break these theatrical connections between life and art to make a wordless contention about these objects and events. Denied the moorings provided by expectation and experience, audiences must reckon with the spectacular event and deduce for themselves how to read these sights. This moment of judgment opens the door for alternative definitions or understandings of the defamiliarized sight. Plays often employ spectacle as a form of pathetic appeal to fill this gap and advocate a new interpretation.

Once one considers the wide range of spectacles on the early modern stage, a number of central, recurring issues emerge. Foremost in the discussion is spectacle's centrality and importance to Renaissance audiences and playwrights. Since the majority of Renaissance drama criticism focuses on play texts as accretions of words, literary critics tend to brush past descriptions of spectacle on stage and in stage directions. However, the habitual use of spectacle, particularly in non-Shakespearean plays, confirms that it was a vital tool for playwrights, one that could excite as well as persuade. Second, the spectacular genealogy of English drama and the recognizable referencing of effects between plays indicate how playwrights alluded to one another while grounding their own productions in a larger tradition. Third, the visual patterns that emerge within plays reveal some of the ways that playwrights, players, and companies worked together to use spectacle rhetorically in order to suggest alternate understandings of motifs like Hercules, dismemberment, witchcraft, and war.

To assert that theatrical spectacle is meaningful and interpretable is to contradict the critical commonplace that it is artless, irrational, and unbelievable. This bias against spectacularity dates back to Aristotle, who famously wrote that "spectacle, though an

attraction, is the least artistic of all the parts [of tragedy]."[6] Although spectacle's irrational characteristics draw Aristotle's scorn, as does the appeal of pathos, much of his distaste seems to stem from his belief that, "the getting-up of the Spectacle is more a matter for the costumier than the poet."[7] Horace, too, although recognizing that "the things which enter by the ear affect the mind more languidly, than such as are submitted to the faithful eyes," begs playwrights, "let not Medea murder her sons before the people; nor the execrable Atreus openly dress human entrails: nor let Progne be metamorphosed into a bird, Cadmus into a serpent. Whatever you show to me in this manner, not able to give credit to, I detest."[8] Centuries later, Sir Philip Sidney follows suit, pleading with playwrights to report rather than represent. Asserting that contemporary plays have little to offer by way of unity or verisimilitude, Sidney complains,

> Now you shall have three Ladies walke to gather flowers, and then we must beleeve the stage to be a garden. By and by we heare newes of shipwrack in the same place, then we are to blame if we accept it not for a Rock. Upon the back of that, comes out a hidious monster with fire and smoke, and then the miserable beholders are bound to take it for a Cave:

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[6] *On Poetics*, trans. Ingram Bywater (New York: Modern Library, 1984) 1450b, 17-20. Other editions translate Bywater's "though an attraction" as "capacity to guide the soul" (Benardete and Davis) or "psychologically powerful" (A.J. Boyle). See Aristotle, *On Poetics*, trans. Seth Benardete and Michael Davis (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2002)1450b, 17-20; and A.J. Boyle, *Tragic Seneca: An Essay in the Theatrical Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 1997) 231, n. 18.

[7] Aristotle 1450b, ll.19-20.

[8] Quintus Horatius Flaccus, *The Art of Poetry* in *The Works of Horace*, ed. C. Smart, Perseus Digital Library Project, ed. Gregory R. Crane, May 2006, Tufts University, 9 May 2006 <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Hor.+Ars+1>.

> while in the meane time two Armies flie in, represented with foure swords & bucklers, and then what hard hart wil not receive it for a pitched field.[9]

This from the man who wrote and performed in the *Four Foster Children of Desire* (1581) before Queen Elizabeth: a chivalric entertainment for visiting French diplomats featuring a Fortress of Beauty, cannons shooting sweet powder and perfumed waters, and a "rowling trench," or movable siege tower, that played music.[10]

Followers of Aristotle abound to this day, for his "deprecation of spectacle has penetrated deep into the European critical consciousness."[11] Moreover, Shakespeare's predominance has skewed our perception of what was actually on the early modern stage. Andrew Gurr's tenet is typical: "as a general rule the better the playwright the less spectacle there was likely to be in his plays."[12] The preference for hearing over vision is a hallmark of Shakespeare studies. Russ McDonald states, "Shakespeare comes to believe that talking is a kind of doing. In the theatre, it is the only kind of doing."[13] This is logocentrism with a vengeance, but the preference is also a covert kind of classism; overemphasis on the aesthetic merit of poetry overlooks the power that spectacle wields over the audiences. After all, the "unfashionable" theaters like the Red Bull and the Rose

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[9] Philip Sidney, *The Defense of Poesie* (1595; Menston, UK: The Scolar Press, 1968) 156.

[10] See Jean Wilson, *Entertainments for Elizabeth I* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1980) 61-84.

[11] Michael Hattaway, *Elizabethan Popular Theatre: Plays in Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1982) 11.

[12] *The Shakespearean Stage, 1574-1642* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1992) 175.

[13] Russ McDonald, *Shakespeare and the Arts of Language* (New York : Oxford UP, 2001) 167.

packed their houses with audiences and their playwrights packed their plays with spectacle.[14]

Although several scholars have addressed the presence of spectacularity in early modern drama, most still shy away from analysis in favor of definition and categorization. Frances Teague begins with an assertion that spectacle occurs when "the visual matters more than the verbal." This is a useful start, but her explanation then retreats from interpretation into classification: "scenes may be spectacular because of their context (supernatural appearances, ceremonies), the way in which they use performers (processions, dumb shows), or the way in which they use properties and costumes (sensational objects like bloody heads, emblematic clothing)."[15] Similarly, Andrew Gurr delineates spectacle using a list of events and properties: displays and discoveries, descents and ascents of deities from the stage heavens, dumbshows, and flying.[16] These definitional arguments can lead us toward a larger appreciation of what was spectacular on stage, but they stop before attempting any interrogation of how those spectacles might function once they are set in motion.

Theater and performance historians have also attempted to address spectacle in their work, but their inquiries do not always address why these special effects might be used by playwrights. Ruth Lunney and Michael Hattaway have carefully examined the evolution of spectacularity and stage effects in the Tudor period, and have suggested that playwrights such as Christopher Marlowe and Thomas Heywood consciously deployed

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[14] Alexander Leggatt, *Jacobean Public Theatre* (New York: Routledge, 1992) 3.

[15] Frances Teague, *Shakespeare's Speaking Properties* (Lewisburg : Bucknell UP, 1991) 88.

[16] Gurr 170-74.

spectacles to amuse and even to teach their appreciative audiences.[17] Molly Easo Smith, Jean MacIntyre and Garrett P.J. Epp also have attended to how playwrights manipulate audience expectations with costume and properties.[18] These considerations of the components of spectacle have made exciting forays into determining how different properties and stagings might direct audience response, but these critics have not addressed spectacular moments holistically. Many of these readings break spectacle into pieces--stage properties, stage spaces--or they investigate how certain effects would have been achieved technically.[19] Although I have relied upon such work to ground this study in spectacularity in a historical context, these approaches do not typically push far enough into what those squibs, traps, and flights *meant* for a play and its audience. The works of Jonathan Gil Harris, Natasha Korda, Andrew Sofer, Ann Rosalind Jones, and Peter Stallybrass, however, have helped me bridge the gap between theater and drama criticism.[20] Most of all, Alan Dessen's close readings of spectacle in the context of

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[17] Ruth Lunney, *Marlowe and the Popular Tradition: Innovation in the English Drama Before 1595* (New York: Manchester UP, 2002) 5 and Hattaway 23.

[18] Molly Easo Smith, "The Theater and the Scaffold: Death as Spectacle in *The Spanish Tragedy,*" *SEL* 32.2 (1992): 217-232; Jean MacIntyre, *Costumes and Scripts in the Elizabethan Theatres* (Alberta: U of Alberta P, 1992); and Garrett P.J. Epp (with Jean MacIntyre), "'Cloathes worth all the rest': Costumes and Properties," *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York: Columbia UP, 1997) 269-85.

[19] See especially George Fullmer Reynolds, *The Staging of Elizabethan Plays at the Red Bull Theater 1605-1625* (New York: Oxford UP, 1940); Ernest L. Rhodes, *Henslowe's Rose: The Stage & Staging* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1976); Christine Eccles, *The Rose Theatre* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Philip Butterworth, *Theatre of Fire: Special Effects in Early English and Scottish Theatre* (London: Society for Theatre Research, 1998); and more generally, the work of Glynne Wickham, E. K. Chambers, Alexander Leggatt and Michael Hattaway's more recent work on the public playhouses.

[20] Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda, eds., *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2002); Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2000); and Andrew Sofer, *The Stage Life of Props* (Ann Arbor: U Mich P, 2003).

performance history has led the way for my closer study of how spectacle operates within plays.

Alan Dessen's work enthusiastically interrogates spectacularity in early modern English drama.[21] Our distance from early modern theatrical practices makes it difficult to gauge a spectacle's emotional appeal and to interpret its dual function as entertainment and commentary; nonetheless, critical work may still be done. Dessen recommends that "the scholar today [. . .] work with whatever scraps of evidence have chanced to survive and then indulge in inference, hypothesis, and conjecture, all to recapture what would have been obvious to an untutored groundling at the Globe."[22] He recommends that "interpreters start with odd or extreme moments, assume they are especially noticeable *because* they seem so strident, and then build an interpretation upon them."[23] Like Dessen, I believe that Elizabethan dramatists, players, and audiences "relished" spectacular extravaganzas and stunning effects.[24] The onstage slaughters, the mythological extravaganzas, the perplexing dumbshows, these outrageous, indecorous, spectacular moments are key to understanding the multiple functions of early modern theatre.

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[21] *Elizabethan Drama and the Viewer's Eye* (Chapel Hill, NC: U of North Carolina P, 1977); *Elizabethan Stage Conventions and Modern Interpreters* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1984); *Recovering Shakespeare's Theatrical Vocabulary* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1995); and *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama 1580-1642* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1999).

[22] *Stage Conventions* 30.

[23] *Recovering* 90.

[24] *Stage Conventions* 13.

Although the present study follows Dessen by exploring the moments of "theatrical italics" in early modern drama, it also extends his assertions.[25] First, the following chapters include both Shakespearean and non-Shakespearean plays. Evidence from a range of playwrights reveals that Shakespeare's colleagues were more spectacle-friendly than the Bard, and that their plays assert their own language of spectacularity. Second, I argue that the spectacle—as a signifying object—requires interpretation. This assertion begins with Dessen's premise that spectacle encodes a play's larger meaning, but I also suggest that each spectacle may signify independently of its context within the play.[26] However, all spectacles are not equally significant. Sometimes a devil is simply a lad trying to watch a play for free.[27]

Because of spectacle's ability to move an audience to wonder, awe, fear, and doubt, all without words, we must use a multidisciplinary approach to question it. The discussion of ritual in anthropology offers one method of understanding how spectacle participates in the larger social function of theater. Plays are stories people tell themselves about themselves, and spectacularity helps to convey both the narrative and shape the history.[28] Ritual is used by a community to create cohesion, by a religion to

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[25] "Theatrical italics" is Dessen's term in *Recovering Shakespeare's Theatrical Vocabulary* for moments that demand attention from the spectator (88-108).

[26] Cf. Cary Mazer's critique of Dessen in "Historicizing Alan Dessen: Scholarship, Stagecraft, and the 'Shakespeare Revolution,'" *Shakespeare, Theory, and Performance*, ed. James C. Bulman (New York: Routledge, 1996) 156.

[27] Thomas Killigrew told Samuel Pepys that "he would go to the Red Bull, and when the man cried to the boys, 'Who will go and be a devil, and he shall see the play for nothing?' then would he go in and be a devil upon the stage, and so get to see plays." See Samuel Pepys, "Thursday 30 October 1662," *Pepys' Diary*, ed. Henry Benjamin Wheatley (London, 1893.) *Project Gutenberg*. 4 May 2006 <http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/4/1/3/4138/4138.txt>.

[28] Cf. Clifford Geertz's description of ritual: "rituals produce a story people tell themselves about themselves." Quoted in Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1997) 4.

access the supernatural, and by a leader to establish her rule because these shows possess persuasive power. Spectacle, like ritual, "gives access to emotional states that resist expression in language," appealing as it does to the senses and emotions rather than to the mind.[29] Edward Muir suggests in his work on ritual in early modern Europe that "authorities strive to create [rituals], manipulate them, embellish them, regulate them, even abolish them" because of their dangerous intelligibility.[30] Spectacles, too, are devices that can dramatize a moment as easily as they can move a mob. Within plays, these shows can advance a story even as they renovate the stable referents of a community. Recognizing spectacle's emotional affect, its persuasiveness, encourages us to discover how theatrical spectacles stimulate their audiences and to seek ways of interpreting what these shows stage.

Spectacle's pathetic appeal can make it seem elusive and difficult to critique. As Ayako Kawanami has noted, "these elements which appeal to the passion of the audience, of course, are difficult to handle in an academic way."[31] Yet spectacle moves audiences with images every bit as much as rhetoric persuades audiences with words. Pathos is "called into being by the scenes of cruelty, torture, and lingering death to be found everywhere in Renaissance tragedy" as well as by scenes of marriage and magic that inspire joy and relief.[32] One need only think of the crowd's reaction to the cutting off of John Stubbes's hand in 1579--"The people round him stood mute"--to recognize how

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[29] Muir 2.

[30] Muir 2.

[31] "'Pleasing All': Thomas Heywood's Preservation of the Bases of Elizabethan Theatre," *Shakespeare Studies* 34 (1996): 46.

[32] Ronald Hurbert, *The Performance of Pleasure in English Renaissance Drama* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) 5.

theatrical spectacles could easily produce similar emotional responses.[33] Did the theater evoke and manage these reactions in the same way Stubbes directed the crowd's response to him? After surviving the amputation, Stubbes removed his hat with his remaining hand and cried, "God save the queen." He encouraged his audience to look at him, and then shocked them by doing the unexpected. He stunned them, and he forced them to interpret his show for themselves. Learning how audiences decipher visual addresses requires another disciplinary approach.

If we are to make early modern theatrical spectacles more identifiable to us, then we must contextualize them within the period's visual culture. A melding of art history with cultural history may help us better understand how spectacle would be read in a world as visual as our own. Shops, inns, and alehouses all advertised their wares with pictures. The literate, too, were served by the emblems used by booksellers at Paul's: shops could be found at the sign of the black bear, at the sign of the gun, at the rose and crown, at the sign of the fleur-de-lis, or at the sign of the Bible.[34] Within those stalls were books with "new ways of representing, or responding to, space: in maps of the world and the heavens, in the typography of books and the designing of tableaux."[35] People's identities were also visibly marked. Laborers at hiring fairs held the tools of their trade in their hands to identify themselves. Sumptuary laws sought to maintain class

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[33] From William Camden, *Annales, The True and Royall History of the Famous Empresse Elizabeth Queene of England...* Book 3 (London, 1625) 16.

[34] All of these sold Christopher Marlowe's works. The 1598 edition of *Hero and Leander* and the 1594 *Dido, Queen of Carthage* were found at the Black Bear; *The Massacre at Paris* (1594) was available at the sign of the Gun; Richard Jones offered the 1597 edition of *Tamburlaine the Great* at the Rose and Crown; Marlowe's translations of Lucan (1600) could be found at the sign of the Flower de Luce; and *Doctor Faustus* (the 1616 "B-text") could be found (without irony) under the sign of the Bible.

[35] Lunney 43.

distinctions at a time when imported fabrics and an impressive range of colors allowed more lavish apparel.[36] Of course, politics meant pomp and circumstance. Masques, processions, and ceremonies communicated wealth, power, and ideology.[37] If Guy Debord is correct, then these visuals were no mere "collection of images; rather, [they described] a social relationship between people that is meditated by images."[38] Spectacle is no less social than spoken language, but analyzing these images is a challenge for scholars of language.

Spectacle's wordlessness complicates the critical approach, because attention to spectacularity inevitably expresses itself in simile. Spectacle may be compared to many things, but to express what it is requires a different sort of language, one that seems inaccessible to the literary critic. There are some access points for interpretation, such as historically situating the objects and events selected by the playwright to do spectacular work. The figure of a witch or an onstage hanging, for example, may inspire audiences differently depending on each sight's proximity to analogous figures and ideas in the world outside the playhouses. There is a danger to this approach, however. Connecting a spectacle too completely to a historical analogue evacuates the moment of its

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[36] Color names in the period show this range: Bristol Red (A "pleasant" red) to Dead Spaniard (Pale greyish tan) to Goose-Turd (Yellowish green) to Maiden Hair (Bright tan) to Sheep's Color (Natural). Brighter colors included Gingerline **(**Reddish violet), Incarnate **(**Red), Peach (Deep pinkish orange) and Willow (Light green). See Drea Leed, *The Elizabethan Costuming Page* 1997-2000. 1 May 2006. <http://www.elizabethancostume.net/>.

[37] For recent overviews of political spectacle, see James Knowles, "Court Drama and the Masque," *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*, ed. Michael Hattaway (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000); R. Malcolm Smuts, "Progresses and Court Entertainments" and Lawrence Manley, "Civic Drama," *A Companion to Renaissance Drama*, ed. Arthur Kinney (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002); and David Bevington and Peter Holbrook, eds., *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1998). Earlier works by Stephen Orgel (especially *The Jonsonian Masque* [1965] and *Illusion of Power* [1975]) and David Bergeron's *English Civic Pageantry 1558-1642* (London: Edward Arnold, 1971) remain invaluable resources.

[38] *The Society of the Spectacle* (New York : Zone Books, 1994) 12. Debord argues that spectacle reinforces ideology, which is too limited a definition for theatrical spectacle in this study.

theatricality, of its worth as a fleeting moment of persuasive performance. Although the logic of linking a spectacle to its possible inspiration can soothe the critic seeking solidity and coherence, the equivalence does not always serve the analysis. However, we draw nearer to a method of spectacular interpretation by incorporating spectacle's historical specificity into any reading, particularly its connection to the history of theater.

Even as Elizabethan and Jacobean theater reflects and refracts English society through spectacle, it also asserts its own purpose and history within that culture. In practice, playwrights drew upon established spectacular conventions for their plays while constructing their own systems. The grotesque banquets of *Titus Andronicus* and *Tamburlaine the Great, Part I,* for example, both summon Seneca's Thyestean banquet, but each meal also possesses an independent significance and meaning within its play. Spectacles in Renaissance dramas frequently refer to and adapt earlier dramatic forms, as though telling the story of their own history or situating a current drama within its lineage. Recycling effects may be seen as "part of a citational practice, based on models and precedents already codified in texts and art."[39] Véronique Plesch and David Bevington are among those who have noted the extraordinary theatrical standards of earlier drama. Medieval drama featured "machine-operated descents and ascents from overhead. Hell-mouths belched smoke, and could be opened and closed to display souls in torment. Storms, earthquakes, flaming swords, burning altars, and God speaking from a cloud were popular effects."[40] In her archival work on Continental theater, Plesch has found additional evidence of extraordinary effects for disembowelment, wounds,

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[39] Barzman 285.

[40] Bevington, *From "Mankind" to Marlowe: Growth of Structure in the Popular Drama of Tudor England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1962) 115.

bleeding, dismemberment, and the use of dummies for the more dangerous stunts.[41] One need only look at plays like *Cambises, Antonio's Revenge, The Virgin Martyr*, or *The Two Noble Kinsmen* to see these effects reappearing decades later.[42] Spectacular precedents were found outside the playhouses as well. Historical record may be the foundation for Edward II's execution in Christopher Marlowe's eponymous play, but how the theater embodies and animates that event distinguishes the performance from the past. Even as a play offers up a vision that may be interpreted historically--a bloodied body, a fiery apotheosis--it asserts the spectacle's theatrical worth by pushing its audience to engage with the display as though seeing it for the first time. Playwrights not only acknowledged but highlighted their spectacular pedigrees. Their appreciation encourages us to incorporate spectacle into criticism.

Although an awareness of these varied approaches may enrich interpretation, admission to early modern spectacular dramaturgy is finally through the extant playtexts: their printed stage directions and dialogue cues.[43] Spectacle-plays require that we "concentrat[e] on what would strike an audience, immediately, in the heat of performance, and on the script as a series of opportunities for performers and stage

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[41] See "Notes for the Staging of a Late Medieval Passion Play," *Material Culture & Medieval Drama*, ed. Clifford Davidson (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1999) 75-102.

[42] *Cambises* (ca. 1560), *Antonio's Revenge* (1600-01), *The Virgin Martyr* (printed 1622), and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (printed 1634).

[43] Any extrapolations about staging from stage directions and other textual evidence must be accompanied by a dose of skepticism, largely because their authorship and relationship to actual stage practices or performances cannot always be determined. As Alexander Leggatt summarizes, "depending on the provenance of the text–author's manuscript, playhouse copy, pirate's report–stage directions can be of three kinds: what the author asks for, what the company actually did, and what a reporter or actor remembered" (2). Reynolds argues that "[directions] are demonstrably often as imaginative as the dialogue itself" (1-2). To alleviate this problem, critics such as Alan Dessen use groups of directions from professional playwrights to argue for patterns. See *Stage Conventions and Modern Interpreters* 31.

technicians."[44] The printed stage direction--though obscured in modern editions because of its exclusion from line numbering--offers the blueprint for spectacular communication. Directions are tantalizing markers that must stand in for the complex theatrical operations that would bring the spectacle to life, but only by reading them carefully can the critic begin to extrapolate how the direction would operate, and to what effect.

This process can be frustrating, because what occurred on stage is not always apparent in printed editions. Moments that seem discarded in one-line directions or that receive only a brief response in the dialogue can often signal substantial staging. Examples like "*Exit, pursued by bear*" (s.d. 3.3.58) and "*Here a dance of twelve satyrs*" (s.d. 4.4.343) from Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* both call for significant stage business: a plausible bear that will go on to kill and eat Antigonus, and a reel by hairy men that can clearly manifest the festive but dangerous nature of Perdita's pastoral world. Michael Hattaway has argued that plays, "which might seem lame stuff on the page, come to life when their motif patterns, dramatic rhythms, and formulaic plots work upon the group consciousness of a playhouse audience so that action turns to theme, spectacle to emblem, and speech to discourse."[45] Spectacle functions in a similar fashion by animating the familiar, and by forcing its audience to look again. Playwrights and playhouses wagered their jobs and their fortunes upon the effectiveness of this convention.

Looking at dozens of stage directions makes apparent how much energy, money, and creativity the theater devoted to spectacular shows. To use Hattaway's example, the

[44] Leggatt 2.

[45] Hattaway 3. Cf. Alexander Sofer: "Often invisible on the page, props are vital on the stage" (vi).

pastoral *Mucedorus* (1598) calls for an earlier incarnation of Shakespeare's bear and a "wilde man" for what is largely a romantic comedy. The Admiral's Men make a similar speculation with Doctor Faustus's complex and unnecessary dragon. The company spent considerable money, time, and manpower creating a fiery beast that would only be seen once in the beginning of the play.[46] Obviously the study of spectacularity alters our conception of what constituted "necessity" in early modern drama; these shows may appear to be flamboyant luxuries, but their use by professional dramatists and playhouses argues that they operate on both artistic and pragmatic levels. Spectacles like the dragon, the bear, and the dance of hairy men seem odd, but their oddness may be intentional, used to demand our attention. Such strange and wonderful moments "not only stand out as noteworthy but actually cry out for interpretation–much like a trumpet or drum roll that in effect says 'look at me!'"[47]

The appearance of spectacle in so many different plays by so many different playwrights tells us that it was a requisite part of the early modern theatrical experience. As Jeremy Lopez has argued, "repetition in the commercial theatre is a good index of theatrical success: for a device to become conventional it must be functional and give pleasure."[48] These sights are meant to be looked at and admired. But this is not to say that spectacle correlates with "lowbrow" or "popular" theater, although that has certainly

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[46] The "dragon" only appears in Faustus's invocation to Mephistopheles in 1.3 of the "B-text," printed in 1616. The word dragon appears to be an inserted stage direction, likely a warning to stage hands to prepare for the dragon's appearance at the invocation's end. See "j dragon in fostes" in the "lost" inventory of Admiral's Men company properties, dated 10 March 1598. *Henslowe's Diary*, ed. R.A. Foakes, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge UP, 2002) 320.

[47] Dessen, *Recovering* 89.

[48] Jeremy Lopez, *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2003) 4.

been the traditional view.[49] Audiences appear to have expected spectacles at all of the playhouses, and "no playwright of the period can [. . .] have written for the instruction or delight of a particular class."[50] There was undeniably pleasure to be had from these spectacles, but a degree of virtuosity existed as well according to the evidence related to the production of spectacular effects.

We may infer the importance of spectacle to playing and to the dramatic arts from its significance within the early modern theatrical industry. Although the sophistication of effects must have varied from one company to the next, even the traveling company that put on Thomas Preston's *Cambises* in the 1560s used "a little bladd of vineger prickt" to represent the blood of a wound. The plot of *The Battle of Alcazar* (1591) calls for "3 violls of blood and a sheep's gather" to make the play's spectacular slaughter more compelling.[51] Whether the effects were realistic by modern standards remains

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[49] Playhouses that consistently staged spectacular plays are often described as low-end, "popular" theaters. For example, Jean MacIntyre and Garrett P.J. Epp describe the difference between the theaters by properties: "the Rose, the Fortune, and the Red Bull, which catered to a shopkeeping and artisan audience; shops and merchandise seldom appeared in plays at the Globe and Blackfriars, which aimed their appeal at 'gentlemen'" (282). Alexander Leggatt distinguishes between the fashionable and "unfashionable" theaters and companies; the latter include: "the Admiral's-Prince Henry's Men at the Rose and the Fortune, and Worcester's-Queen Anne's Men at the Boar's Head, the Curtain, the Rose, and the Red Bull" (3).

[50] Hattaway 11. Hattaway's work focuses on the Elizabethan theaters; there is considerable evidence that audiences began splitting off by class during the Jacobean period. Private theaters appear to have attracted a higher class, while the public theaters drew working classes. A piece of verse from a 1612 ballad articulates this difference in audiences using gender, characterizing the low-end Red Bull as more masculine than the softer, rounder Globe or Swan:

> The players of the Banke side
> The round Globe and the Swan,
> Will teach you idle trickes of loue,
> But the Bull will play the man.
> --From *Turners dish of Lenten stuffe (1612)*

The identity of the early modern playgoer has been debated for decades. See especially Ann Jennalie Cook, *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London*: *1576-1642* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); and Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* 3rd ed. (New York: Cambridge UP, 2004). More recently, see Susan Bennett, *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1997) 3.

[51] See Reynolds 40.

unknowable, but the early modern playhouse appears to have had the capacity and the desire for skilled production.

In addition to the playwrights who requested spectacularity for their plays, the individuals who participated in the fabrication of spectacles appear to have been trained craftsmen who were compensated for their expertise. Edmund Tylney, Master of the Revels to Elizabeth I, was authorized to

> take and retaine [. . .] as many painters Imboroderers Taylors Cappers Haberdashers Joyners Carders Glasiers Armorers Basketmakers Skinners Sadlers waggen makers plaisterers fethermakers as all other p*ro*p*er*tie makers and con*n*inge Artificers and laborers whatsoever [. . .] for the speedie workinge and fynisheinge of any exploite workmanshippe or peece of s*er*uice that shall at any tyme hereafter belonge to our saide office of the Revells[.][52]

Extant records contain the names of craftsmen like John Carrowe, "property maker," who made 20 "hedd*es*" for 6 shillings, 8 pence each, and used "Canvas for a monster" for various shows at Court.[53] Were these effects, the work of skilled craftsmen, incidental or central?

I have come to believe that spectacle constituted a vital aspect of theatrical composition and production and that it functioned through an interpretable sign system. There is a visual imperative in Renaissance drama--playwrights' enthusiastic calls for

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[52] From "A Commission Touching the Powers of the Master," *Documents Relating to the Office of the Revels in the Time of Queen Elizabeth* (1606; Louvain: A. Uystpruyst, 1908) 51.

[53] From the Loseley Mss – Accounts from Christmas 1558-Sept 1559 and the Accounts from 1571 in *Documents Relating to the Office of the Revels,* 106 and 175.

onstage immolations, flying dragons, and golden apple trees that rise and then sink below stage assure it--and it was not without an intellectual component. But we should not be embarrassed to say that professional playwrights wrote and produced "a theatre of exciting physical action, a theatre which was a spectacle and an entertainment, a magical vision of unexperienced riches."[54] Rather, we should be guided by the spectacular evidence. Even as its presence disturbs our assumptions about Renaissance drama, it opens the door for a new comprehension of what constituted a convention in the period. Plays were designed to entertain, spectacle to delight. Audiences expected spectacle and playwrights obliged them, although they obliged with effects that could be as complex as they were stunning.

Spectacular criticism means putting words to visions and interpreting staging historically, rhetorically, and creatively. The critic must access the messages of spectacle and determine their strength through the margins of the text and the borders of the literary domain. However, they are packets of persuasion that are designed and deployed to move a particular audience toward reinterpretation. As such, their arguments may be contextualized, classified, and analyzed. How this exchange takes place with particular spectacles will be explored in more depth in the chapters that follow.

This dissertation is not an exhaustive catalogue of spectacle in early modern drama. Rather, it focuses on four spectacles--two characters and two motifs--that represent the larger practice of spectacularity in the theater. I have chosen the plays because of their thoughtful employment of spectacle. Each of them possesses an abundance of stage action as well as spectacular representations of major cultural

[54] Kathleen E. McLuskie, *Dekker and Heywood: Professional Dramatists* (New York: St. Martin's Press: 1994) 15.

touchstones like justice, government, and the theater itself. Spectacular figures bookend the study: Hercules, who rails against spectacle even as he deploys it in Thomas Heywood's *Silver Age* and *Brazen Age*, and Tamburlaine, whose dependence upon display cautions against spectacularity in Marlowe's two-part play. These two characters create spectacle, and their manipulation and control of their shows may hint at their playwrights' relationships with performance. The spectacular patterns of *Edward II, Titus Andronicus,* and *The Witch of Edmonton* are similarly bold in their manipulations of audience expectation. Edward II's assassination, the Andronici mutiliations, and the arrival of Dog in Edmonton force us to reconsider straightforward criminality in surprising and sometimes revolutionary ways. These shows confirm the theater's ability to shock and to challenge by using spectacle to force a reevaluation of myth, history, folklore, and rule: Hercules the over-reacher stands against revolution; torture counterintuitively empowers victims; a magical animal complicates witchcraft; and Tamburlaine exposes the dangers of uncontrollable spectacles.

Chapter One, "Herculean Efforts: Spectacle as Rebellion," examines the early modern period's fascination with this liminal figure of spectacular strength. In Thomas Heywood's *The Silver Age* (1611), Hercules harrows hell; Jasper Heywood's 1561 translation of Seneca's *Hercules Furens* describes the harrowing's bloody aftermath; and Thomas Heywood's *The Brazen Age* (1613) ends with Hercules's apotheosis. Herculean spectacle in Thomas Heywood's plays belies the character's self-identification as a plain-spoken hero and suggests an intimidating connection between spectacular control and rule. The spectacular scenes in the *Ages*--in which Hercules harrows hell and attempts to enter heaven--propose that only the intervention of powerful rulers with their own brand

of showmanship can counteract the subversive potential of spectacle discussed in *Hercules Furens*. Yet the gods' efforts to contain Hercules--logical argumentation, madness, revisionist mythology--only barely succeed in stopping the dangerous demigod before he launches himself into Olympus uninvited.

The second chapter, "Spectacular Suffering: *Edward II* and *Titus Andronicus,*" illuminates how broken bodies on stage are more compelling when they do not adhere to the decorum that accompanied punishments on the scaffold. In Marlowe's *Edward II*, justice is undermined and then tenuously restored as the play careens between visible public execution and hidden violence. The stunningly explicit torture and onstage murder of England's king employs the emotional energy of theatrical spectacle in a way that shatters the effectiveness of the judicial spectacle that follows. Yet Edward III's symbolically-laden funeral services and capital executions do succeed in keeping the peace, if only because they must. While *Edward II* finally resigns itself to the spectacle of state-sponsored dismemberment, *Titus Andronicus* explores its counterproductiveness. Amputation serves only to stimulate resistance in *Titus*, and it may have done the same in England under Elizabeth, where libelers could be punished with the loss of a hand. Indeed, the play consistently places the tools of writing in the maimed hands and mouths of Titus and his daughter Lavinia, suggesting that neither writing nor resistance are easily quelled. Both Marlowe and Shakespeare ask whether spectacular scenes of torture and death can ever eradicate the treasonous or the criminal body.

Chapter Three, "Bad Dog: Didacticism vs. Spectacle in *The Witch of Edmonton*," takes up the figure of Tommy the Dog in Thomas Rowley, Thomas Dekker, and John Ford's unique rethinking of the Jacobean witch play. Witch plays in the black-magic-

obsessed Stuart period often present stories torn from the headlines, but no other witch play incorporates into its depiction of witchcraft the spectacle of a talking familiar. The speaking devil dog in *Edmonton* makes lonely scolds seem the least of a town's problems. Dog is a compelling, Vice-like figure for whom performance and magic are but prologues to the destruction of the lives of those around him; he exploits the tension between laughter and fear. The playwrights access the comic potential of a pet who claims to be the devil while staging the frightening possibility that he is actually evil incarnate. He enables Rowley, Dekker, and Ford to criticize communities that scapegoat witches for their troubles at the same time that he gives them all the theatrical advantages that come with staging a talking dog.

Finally, Chapter Four, "Spectacular Collapse?: *Tamburlaine, Parts I and II,*" examines the imperial spectacles of Marlowe's champion. Parts I and II track Tamburlaine's rise and fall across ten acts, but the plays do not follow the *de casibus* trajectory. Tamburlaine broadcasts his might with a spectacular system that extends from his own blazoned body to the colors of his tents and armor to the bodies of his enemies. Yet as the plays progress, these spectacles become increasingly illegible to those he would conquer. Tamburlaine's shows escape his authorial control, take on a life of their own, and eventually consume their creator. Yet, the play succeeds as theater. The *Tamburlaine* plays explore the instability of spectacular power while demonstrating Marlowe's mastery of the medium.

The four spectacular groups under discussion in this project are theatrical mainstays: mythological figures, bloody bodies, magic, and imperial pageantry. Spectacle in these plays "is at once a theatrical image and a transformation into theater of

the major concerns of the rest of the text that it both represents and is contained by."[55] Playwrights present these visions as a way to look at the world differently; the spectacle offers a means to see with new eyes. The spectacularization of cultural touchstones like Hercules and corporeal punishment recalibrates what those sights could mean for an audience. Figures and objects that were once literary, political, or social become theatrical when they are activated by spectacle, and the results encourage a more dynamic and engaged audience.

[55] Anthony B. Dawson, "Witchcraft/Bigamy: Cultural Conflict in *The Witch of Edmonton,*" *Renaissance Drama* 20 (1989): 92.

CHAPTER 1

HERCULEAN EFFORTS: SPECTACLE AS REBELLION

Thomas Heywood's *The Brazen Age* opens with Hercules squaring off against the river god Achelous for the hand of Deianeira. Ordered by the bride's father to "expresse / Your loues to Deianeira," the suitors' rhetorical competition soon devolves into a brawl, for Hercules "cannot wooe, / Nor paint my passions in smooth Oratory" (B2v).[1] "I cut off words with deeds," he says, "and now behold / For me, the eccho of my blowes thus scold" (B3r).

"Behold" we must, for the scene explodes into a match of spectacular intensity. Achelous is "*beaten in*" again and again, but returns each time in a new shape, for "Not Proteus can trans-shape himselfe like us" (B2v). After the first blows, Achelous *"immediately enters in the shape of a Dragon."* When Hercules "*beats away the dragon,"* it is replaced by "*a Fury all fire-workes*." No sooner does Hercules employ his club to "quench" the flame of the fury than it "*sinkes"* and *"a Buls head appeares."* In this last contest, *"He tugs with the Bull, and pluckes off one of his horns. Enter from the same place Achelous with his fore-head all bloudy*." (B3r). In the space of eight lines, Heywood's play requires the entrance of three different attention-getting creatures that battle and disappear, until Achelous finally reappears as the bloody de-horned bull. As Achelous is finally forced to concede, "no Magicke, or inchanting spell / Haue power on

[1] All quotations from *The Brazen Age* (London, 1613).

vertue and true fortitude. / No sleight Illusion can deceiue the eyes / Of him that is diuinely resolute" (B3r).[2]

Hercules does not need oratory, because his spectacular strength--what Achelous describes as fortitude--operates persuasively. He directs his opponent and the onlookers to watch him and to listen to his blows. Spectacle--in this case, a spectacular battle--silences spoken language while communicating Hercules's message of physical dominance both visually and through the sounds of battle. His strength wins his battles against pyrotechnics, which are portrayed as sophistry and illusion next to Hercules's brute force. He battles display and rhetorical shrewdness with his virtuous might. Yet even while Hercules distinguishes himself from the smooth oratory and dazzling appearances of his opponents, he demands to be beheld. Hercules is a paradox: a spectacular iconoclast.[3]

Hercules fights monsters. This is his destiny. He confronts crazed boars, three-bodied men, poisonous hydras, giants, sea serpents, man-eating horses, and the devil himself. Yet what is a monster but a spectacle--a visible wonder, an incitement to awe and terror.[4] Aristotle warned against the use of spectacle in *On Poetics* precisely because of the vulgarity that may result: "Those who do not produce through *opsis* the fearful but only the monstrous have nothing in common with tragedy, for one should not seek every

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[2] Moralized versions of this conflict present an allegorical battle between the Son of God (Hercules) and the devil (the horned Achelous) for the human soul (Deianeira). For example, Psalm 74 declares that God will break the horns of sinners.

[3] The distrust of spectacle inspired much of the antitheatrical literature of the early modern period. See Jonas Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1981) and Michael O'Connell, *The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm and Theater in Early Modern England* (New York: Oxford UP, 2000).

[4] *Monstrō* (*~āre*), to show, and *monstrum*, an omen or awful thing, are both in play here. See also the French "le monstre," which means an enormous display. *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, s.v. "*monstro*" and "*monstrum.*"

pleasure from tragedy but what is proper to it."[5] Spectacle is monstrous because it is both improper and unnatural. Hercules "the monster-master," as Omphale calls him in *The Brazen Age*, should be spectacle's mortal enemy, but instead he uses his own spectacular fortitude to fight every enemy and to cross every boundary offered by the world of Heywood's *Four Ages*.

Hercules is an improper iconoclast; he seeks out spectacle only to appropriate it. He wears the emblems of his battles on his body, starting with his fabulously, spectacularly strong body. Attired in the skin of the Nemean lion and carrying arrows tipped with Hydra's blood, Hercules is a walking trophy case. He seems unstoppable, overturning or overpowering marvelous creatures who should make him quail with fear and then appropriating them into his persona. This absorption and deployment of spectacularity contributes to his astonishing successes as well as to his dangerous potential to overpower the gods.

This chapter will examine Herculean spectacularity in Thomas Heywood's *The Silver Age* (1613), in which Hercules harrows hell; in Jasper Heywood's translation of Seneca's *Hercules Furens* (1561), which describes the harrowing's aftermath; [6] and in Thomas Heywood's *The Brazen Age* (1613), which features Hercules's assumption into heaven as its finale. These three texts address Hercules's series of transgressions against the gods and the Olympians' spectacular responses. Such conflicts power these plays, which manipulate mythology to highlight Hercules's rebelliousness as well as the necessity of reining him in. *The Silver Age* stages Hercules's near overthrow of Hell; *The Brazen Age* presents a finale in which the hero attempts to become immortal in spite of

[5] (1453b 1-11).

[6] *Hercules Furens* is reprinted in 1581 for Thomas Newton's *Seneca His Tenne Tragedies*.

the gods. Similarly, Juno's ruminations on overreaching in Seneca's play reveal why Hercules could be such an upsetting and powerful figure in the Renaissance. In all three plays, Hercules's ability to traverse the boundaries set for mortal men excites spectacular responses from the gods, who attempt to quell Hercules's headstrong rebelliousness before he overthrows everything.

The Herculean source materials manipulated by these texts are consistent only in their attempts to reconcile the various aspects of Hercules's two-sided identity with the social, cultural, and religious needs of their time.[7] He is the son of a god, but also his mortal mother's child. He is a hero, but one whose heroism coexists with destructive rage, distracting lust, and rebellious independence. Hercules is not one man, but many men. The Renaissance embraced the classical figure Hercules and associated him with Old Testament heroes and with Christ himself; his dynamic and shifting identity facilitated this mobility of meaning.[8] To recognize better how Heywood and Seneca construct their respective Hercules, a simple biography is the best way to begin.

The basic outlines of Hercules's parentage are well-known. Jupiter seduces Amphytrion's wife Alcmena while disguised as her husband. He dallies with the very

[7] This source material is vast and far-ranging. The stories themselves are among the oldest and most numerous in Greco-Roman mythology (cf. Brumble 154; Edith Hamilton's *Mythology*). Hercules is the only pan-Greek mythological personage, according to Ronald Tobin: "that is, all of the separate Greek traditions accept Hercules, whereas Theseus, for example, belongs specifically to the Athenian mythology" (288). Written material begins with Hesiod's *Theogony* and continues in Ovid, Juvenal, Seneca, Augustine, and Erasmus, through the centuries. Elizabeth Truax claims that the story of Hercules was probably written in the first century AD, and could have been found in the library of Apollodorus ("Macbeth and Hercules: The Hero Bewitched," *Drama and the Classical Heritage: Comparative and Critical Essays*, ed. Clifford Davidson et al (New York: AMS P, 1993) 159-76.

[8] Eugene Waith, *The Herculean Hero in Marlowe, Chapman, Shakespeare, and Dryden* (New York: Columbia UP, 1962) 39.

pregnant Alcmena during a magically-extended night that lasts three days.[9] Alcmena later gives birth to two boys: Ipectetes, the son of Amphytrion, and Alcides, the son of Jupiter. Jupiter's wife Juno attempts to kill Alcides in the cradle using poisonous snakes, but she murders the mortal son instead. Alcides survives to pursue a life fraught with amazing feats of strength and courage as well as moments of terrifying violence and depravity, and to become known as Hercules.[10] Although best known for his Twelve Labors, adventures that included slaying the Nemean Lion and cleaning the Augean stables, Hercules's full career divulges a more complex figure than the heroic doer of deeds. The Labors themselves, for example, are taken on as penance by Hercules for slaughtering his first wife and children in a fit of madness. His great strength causes the deaths of dozens of people, many of them innocent bystanders to his terrible rage or uncontrolled violence, just as often as it rescues people and towns from tyranny and mayhem. The numerous Hercules stories retold in the Renaissance may praise the stalwart hero, and they may as easily collapse before his terrifying force.

This two-sided nature may be seen even in Hercules's name. Early in his life, Hercules is known as Alcides, descendent of Amphytrion's father Alcaeus.[11] Upon leaving his mortal family for a life of heroic pursuits, Alcides becomes Hercules. These

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[9] In *The Silver Age*, Heywood links the extended night to Joshua, who is battling the Canaanites at that very time. While Jupiter seduces Alcmena, the sun stands still over the Hebrew nation, allowing Joshua to "have there slaughter" (C3v). This blending of biblical and classical time occurs in other parts of Heywood's plays, including Hercules's harrowing of Hell.

[10] "Hercules" means "renowned through Hera." Cf. George Sandys, *Ovid's Metamorphosis Englished* (London, 1626) 424. Because Heywood refers to the figure as Hercules, I follow that spelling. The spelling variations are inevitable when one considers that Hercules existed in one form or another all around the Mediterranean, from Greece to Rome to Egypt to North Africa. In the classical period and throughout the Renaissance, he could be known as Herakles, Heracles, Hercules, or Hercles. Each of these spellings can cue a particular story or a particular version of the figure. Galinsky's *The Herakles Theme,* for example, begins with the Homeric Hercules. G. Karl Galinsky, *The Herakles Theme: The Adaptations of the Hero in Literature from Homer to the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1972).

[11] Cf. Edith Hamilton, *Mythology* (Boston: Little Brown, 1942) 161.

two different names represent two parts of the demigod: the mortal child of Alcmena and the immortal son of Jupiter. Hercules straddles the boundary between the world of men and the world of gods, making him a powerful hero as well as a deity. However, this duality has misled critics such as Stephen Orgel to discuss the hero entirely in terms of elegant dichotomies: "From the most ancient sources onward, this demigod has led a double moral life: he is the embodiment of brute strength and destructive passion, but also the civiliser and defender of mankind; Stoic hero and paragon of virtue, but the archetype also of lechery and gluttony; comic grotesque and tragic hero."[12] These pairings illustrate Hercules's contradictory nature but fail to explain a host of other identities that attached themselves to Hercules during the Renaissance, such as the Christian warrior, the humanist model, and the man who chooses between Pleasure and Virtue.[13] Then, too, Hercules stands on a boundary between categorical pairs rather than on either one or the other side. His capacity for being all things to all men while remaining substantially unaltered results in remarkable cultural longevity. Still, the primary agenda in the Renaissance was finding a moral core within the pagan hero.

Fitting Hercules into a moral Christian framework required a considerable reworking of his traditional identity. Early modern Stoic philosophy molded Hercules into an emblem of moderation and control, a civilizer. Hercules unites noble force with inner fortitude, becoming a man who puts his gifts of courage and strength to use while

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[12] Stephen Orgel, "The Example of Hercules." *Mythographie der fruhen Neuzeit. Ihre Anwendung in den Kunsten* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1984) 25.

[13] Christian mythographers like Stephen Batman constructed Hercules as a Christian warrior. See Stephen Batman, *The Golden Booke of the Leaden Gods* (1577; New York: Garland Publishing, 1976) Cr-v. Italian humanists such as Marsilio Ficino lauded Hercules's ability to achieve through force of will. See Waith's chapter 2. Albrecht Durer among others used Hercules's choice between Pleasure and Virtue in his woodcuts.

remaining in thoughtful control of his capacity to overthrow the world. Hercules similarly interested the Italian humanists, who declared that he represented the drive for glory that made man truly great. While Erasmus proffered an explicitly Christian Hercules who earns a place in heaven through industry, others recognized in him the end goal of humanist education.[14] As Orgel writes, "He is the hero who became a god solely through his own efforts, the only member of the classical pantheon to do so."[15] Hercules achieves mobility through talent and will--a humanist dream, but a political nightmare. Thomas Heywood follows in this tradition by creating a dramatic Hercules who is identifiably ethical while still worryingly dynamic.

Heywood's presentation of Hercules as a figure worthy of attention belongs to a long line of moralizing English authors' responses. Arthur Golding's dedicatory letter to the Earl of Leicester (1567) in his translation of Ovid exemplifies how myth and fable were clarified for Christian readers in the early modern period. Golding asserts that pagan poetry conceals moral truths.[16] "Poets tooke the ground of all their cheefest fables out / Of scripture," Golding argues, and he encourages Leicester and other pious, thoughtful readers like him to "plucke those visers fro / Their doings, and too bring ageine the darkened truth too lyght / That all men may behold thereof the cleerenesse

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[14] Cf. Waith 40-59; A. J. Boyle, *Tragic Seneca: An Essay in the Theatrical Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 1997) 106-10; and Richard Norman, *On Humanism* (New York: Routledge, 2004) 5-9.

[15] Orgel 28.

[16] Golding's defensive tone may indicate a pre-emptive strike against anti-mythology polemicists like Stephen Gosson in *Schoole of Abuse*: "they [classical tales] belie God, and bewitch the reader with bawdie charmes [. . .] thus making gods of them that were brute beastes, in the likenes of men, diuine goddesses of common harlots; they robbe God of his honour, diminishe his authoritie, weaken his might, and turne his seate to a stewes.'" *An Apologie of the Schoole of Abuse, against Poets, Pipers, Players, and their Excusers* (London, 1579) 84. Cf. Douglas Bush, *Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry*. (New York: Norton, 1963) 257-58.

shining bryght."[17] A similar agenda to incorporate the classical as well as the biblical past within the Christian present may be found in William Warner's *Albion's England* (1612), which traces the lineage of the Britons:

> ...and thus the Brutons bring
> Their pedigree from Iupiter, of Pagane Gods the King:
> And adde they may, that Brute his Syer of Venus sonne did spring.
> Thrice fiue degrees from Noe was Brute, and sower times sixe was he
> From Adam: and from Iaphets house doth fetch his petigree.[18]

The pagan past must be reconciled with the present in order to illuminate moral lessons. Jupiter was the king of pagan gods, but his lineage extends to biblical figures, whose descendents are the Britons. Golding and Warner worked more generally to soften the barbaric edges of the distant past for early modern readers while mythographers worked feverishly to construct Hercules, in particular, as a moral Christian figure.

Because of his classical identity as a fighter, a man of more might than wit, Hercules posed tremendous problems for early modern mythographers who had to wrestle this amoral figure into new agendas. Hercules might be a mere "treasure-house of fascinating story wrought out in magnificence of detail, all but void of any deep spiritual significance."[19] Furthermore, his defining characteristic, fortitude, is itself an amoral quality similar to courage. Orgel writes, "ethical implications are grafted onto the

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[17] *The xv. Bookes of P. Ouidius Naso, entytuled Metamophosis, translated oute of Latin into English meeter, by Arthur Golding Gentleman* in *Shakespeare's Ovid Being Arthur Golding's Translation of the Metamorphoses,* ed. W.H.D. Rouse (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 1961) lines 529-40. The letter to Leicester is dated 1567, when the first edition appeared in print.

[18] William Warner, *Albions England* (1612) (New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1971) 62.

[19] Robert Kilburn Root, *Classical Mythology in Shakespeare* (New York: Gordian Press, 1965) 8.

Hercules story as moralizations or obvious accretions."[20] Yet in order to make Hercules functional, he had to be transformed from a rogue strongman into a more palatable symbol. For example, Renaissance emblem books like Andrea Alciati's or Geoffrey Whitney's contain images of Hercules surrounded by maxims and moral reminders that offer proper readings of Hercules's appearance and his famous conflicts.[21] Early modern mythographer Stephen Batman pasteurizes Hercules by allegorizing the famous attributes of the hero as moral qualities. Under the "signification" of Hercules, Batman writes,

> Hercules apparayled in a Lions skinne, signyfyeth the valiant courage of a woorthy Captayne, also the Prudencie wherewith his minde beinge furnished, he subdued his outragious affections: the Club, signifieth understanding, throughe which the motions of wicked affections are repressed and utterly vanquisked.[22]

Manly *virtu* becomes prudence; fortitude becomes "valiant courage," blending sturdiness with worthy valor and giving courage a moral purpose. His strength serves the just. His battle trophies signify understanding and wickedness vanquished. Heroic deeds are transformed into symbolic accomplishments against abstract evils. The mythographers insist upon Hercules's goodness and control, using words like "subdue" and "vanquish," precisely because his potency resides in his wildness. For him to be a useful didactic tool, Hercules must be restrained.

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[20] Orgel 35.

[21] Andrea Alciati, *Emblematum liber* (1550), trans. Betty I. Knott (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996) and Geffrey Whitney, *A choice of emblemes and other devises* (Leiden, 1586).

[22] Batman Cr-v.

Emblem books and mythographies may contain Hercules with words and with images, but his theatrical incarnation cannot be so confined. Hercules represents temperance but embodies brute strength. He tames tyrants and is tyrannized by his own temper. He presents the potential for human transcendence but he is defined by his body. The range of roles present at once within the Herculean personality--mortal son, demigod, bastard, hero--makes Hercules particularly attractive to the theater. In addition, Hercules as the man shouldering the world served as the emblem for the Globe Theater.[23] The choice of image is appropriate, for Hercules is a player himself, a man who assumes and then sheds a role like Atlas's along the path in his quest for glory. He puts on and takes off the role of spectacular hero just as easily, creating incredible theatrical effects when in motion, then disparaging the excess in his rare moments of stillness.

Although Hercules could represent a civic hero, he is simultaneously a tyrant-tamer, a Christian allegory, an angry loner, and a raging adulterer. Plot lines can set boundaries for Hercules, but spectacular staging unleashes the unstable potential within this complex character. Although Heywood's play proceeds along an ethical trajectory similar to that of the mythographers', one that presents Hercules as a force kept in check by reason, it also provides Hercules with extraordinary spectacularity. Heywood's Hercules cannot be bound within the literary, historical, or physical frameworks of *The Four Ages*. Hercules breaks into hell and heaven within the play, and bounds into the

[23] Whether the symbol at the Globe's entrance was truly Hercules or Atlas is not known. Robert Root argues in favor of Hercules based on Rosencrantz's line in *Hamlet* that the boy players carry the theater business away, "Hercules and his load too" (2.2.361), which he claims is a reference to the competition between Shakespeare's company and the boy players (72-3). M. T. Jones-Davies also agrees that Hercules was likely the emblem for the Globe. See "Shakespeare and the Myth of Hercules," *Reclamations of Shakespeare*, ed. A.J. Hoenselaars (Atlanta: Rodopi, 1994) 61.

playhouses without. Heywood releases Hercules on the world, and he nearly takes it over.

Thomas Heywood, author of domestic tragedies like *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (printed 1607) and comedies like *The Witches of Lancashire* (1634), produced the five plays known as *The Four Ages* in the 1610s.[24] Drawing from the story of the four ages that opens Ovid's *Metamorphoses,*[25] Heywood's mythological chronicle plays are comparable in scope to Shakespeare's history plays.[26] A chronicle of classical myth, Heywood's sequence also contains some of the most outlandish calls for spectacle from the period.[27] In his book on Red Bull plays, including Heywood's sequence, George Reynolds declares that *The Four Ages* "demand some of the most spectacular staging

[24] The arguments over when each of *The Four Ages* was written have been considerable. The print dates are *The Golden Age* (1611), *The Silver Age* (1613), *The Brazen Age* (1613), *The Iron Age* (1632), *The Second Part of the Iron Age* (1632). Because Heywood borrows from himself throughout his career, it is often difficult to tell which version of the story came first. Ernest Schanzer, argues that the *Ages* plays are a dramatization of the stories in Heywood's earlier poem, *Troia Brittanica* (later registered 1608), and that the *Hercules* plays mentioned in Henslowe's 1598 inventory are Heywood's first drafts. See "Heywood's *Ages* and Shakespeare," *Review of English Studies* 11.41 (1960): 18-28. Cf. Chambers' discussion of the *Hercules* plays in *The Elizabethan Stage*, vols. 2 and 3 (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1951). Allan Holaday goes a step further and argues that the plays are barely changed Elizabethan revisions of the *Troia Brittanica:* "Heywood's *Troia Britannica* and the *Ages*," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 45.4 (Oct 1946): 430. Frederick S. Boas argues that the *Ages*--whether or not they are rehashes of any or all of the *Hercules* plays--were written and produced closer to their print dates, and that *The Golden Age* likely premiered at the Red Bull for the reopening of the theaters in 1610. See Chapter 7 of his *Thomas Heywood* (London: Williams and Norgate, Ltd., 1950). I rely on Boas for my chronology of the plays, because both the plays' print dates as well as the technology demanded by Heywood's directions suggest an early seventeenth-century composition date.

[25] Golding's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* begins with a history of the Golden Age, when "there was no feare of punishment, there was no threatening lawe," followed by the Silver Age, when men began to settle down and domesticate animals as the seasons changed. The Brazen Age begins when men are "somewhat bent to cruell warres and rage," and the Iron Age begins when "opened was the veyne / Therein all mischief rushed forth, then Fayth and Truth were faine / And honest shame to hide their heades" (106-147).

[26] Mowbray Velte argues that "The method in these plays is throughout that of the chronicle play....Instead of English history and English chronicles the dramatist has tried to place on the stage classical history, using his sources exactly as the writers of the chronicle plays had used chronicle history." See *The Bourgeois Element in the Dramas of Thomas Heywood* (New York: Haskell House, 1966) 48.

[27] Cf. Kathleen E. McLuskie, *Dekker and Heywood: Professional Dramatists* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994) 15.

ever suggested by the Elizabethan public stage, so spectacular that some scholars have doubted whether they were ever performed, or, provided they were performed, whether the stage directions are really to be taken as actual stage directions or instead as mere literary hopes or descriptions by the too sanguine author." He concludes, somewhat ruefully, that "whenever a sensational effect could be secured by realistic business, or a plot required a situation, no matter how unsuited to the theatrical conditions, the playwrights, at least most of those at the Red Bull, let no considerations of artistic consistency or of taste deter them from attempting it."[28] Red Bull plays dealt in Aristotle's monstrosities, and in Heywood's *Ages,* Hercules arrives to tame them. Hercules is the spectacular engine of Heywood's *Ages* plays as he battles devils, harrows hell, and ascends and descends like a god, but Heywood balances his hero's allure with a dramatic structure that presents Hercules as a cautionary tale: the spectacular rebel who must be tamed.

Heywood's plays illustrate Hercules's spectacularity in part by staging his ability to move between the three levels of the stage. Public plays like Heywood's *Ages* often used vertical staging techniques to symbolize hierarchy.[29] Vertical staging, which brings all three levels of the theatre into play, creates a visual hierarchy that can reinforce or

[28] George Fullmer Reynolds, *The Staging of Elizabethan Plays at the Red Bull Theater 1605-1625* (London: Oxford UP, 1940) 9, 123.

[29] Leggatt comments that "a significant amount of the blocking at the Red Bull was vertical" (Alexander Leggatt, *Jacobean Public Theatre* (New York: Routledge, 1992) 51). Heywood was one of the resident playwrights for this "downmarket" playhouse (McLuskie 14-15). Cf. Ayako Kawanami, "'Pleasing All': Thomas Heywood's Preservation of the Bases of Elizabethan Theatre," *Shakespeare Studies* 34 (1996): 35; and Arthur Melville Clark, *Thomas Heywood: Playwright and Miscellanist* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1931) 63.

transform spectators' "mental alignment" based on what they see.[30] When a creature descends from *above*, the audience assumes that it is divine. Similarly, the realm below stage houses devils, ghosts and similarly hellish creatures. Together, they surround the mortal world.[31] Alexander Leggatt argues, too, that vertical staging reinforces the proper place of mankind even while exploring the supernatural realms that surround humanity: "The world we see on stage is not the only world; there are more things in heaven and earth, angelic and demonic, and they inhabit a world around, above and beneath the world we can see." The humbling immenseness suggested by these other realms helped to create easy opposites for storytelling.[32] The gods belong up, the devils belong below, and man should be satisfied with being in between.

The allegorical layout of vertical staging recalls Robert Weimann's distinction between the *locus* and *platea*: the *platea* is the realm of the vice, of metatheater, of audience interaction, while the *locus* remains firmly within the play's own fictional universe.[33] The physical regions of Weimann's stage--whether the edges nearest the pit or the boards closest to the tiring house--distinguish between levels of discourse and audience interaction in the play's fictional world. Vertical staging also delineates interactions, but between the larger play-world and the audience. Both geographies are

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[30] "Mental alignment" is Andrew Gurr's term, and I take it to mean how and where the viewer places himself within the universe of the play. See his "Traps and Discoveries at the Globe," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 94 (1997): 91.

[31] In his discussion of traps in *Hamlet's* graveyard scene, Gurr recommends that we view these regions "in terms of Tudor iconography. Murder and revenge are hellish matters which belong below ground. News of murder first comes from below" (99).

[32] "The popular imagination needed strong contrasts of good and evil, heroes and villains, angels and devils; the theatrical language embodied in the stage trap and the flying machinery fed that appetite" (Leggatt 51).

[33] Cf. Robert Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater: Studies in the Social Dimension of Dramatic Form and Function* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1978) *passim.*

oriented toward the audience--the audience's physical and metaphorical proximity to a character can determine the location of the *platea* (although it is generally thought to be the downstage), just as the audience's humanity orients them toward the middle ground of the stage in the vertical hierarchy. This conservative structure fails, however, to account for aspirations that direct the audience's gaze upwards toward something greater than the stage of this world. This is the case for Hercules.

Vertical geography is especially relevant to Hercules, whose liminal identities allow him to bestride and even cross social and theatrical boundaries in his quest for greater fame. Heywood employs the distinct boundaries between earth, Olympus, and Hades to represent Hercules' most spectacular feats as transgressions. Hercules does not stay in his proper place, and can overpower any opposition. G. Karl Galinsky explains, "Although [Hercules] rarely became a Promethean figure in the sense that he defied the gods, he was too vital even at the beginning of his literary development to be absorbed into the codified system of Homeric ethic, 'summed up in the word *aidos*, which exhorted all to keep their station and show respect to those above them--the young to the old, slaves to masters, men to gods.'"[34] Hercules's vitality, which manifests as spectacularity, makes him incapable of staying in his proper place. Vertical staging in Heywood's *Ages* plays embodies *aidos* in order to stage how Hercules smashes through those stations. Hercules pushes from the stage through to the realms above and below, and the play pushes back against his disobedience.

Heywood's *Four Ages* spectacularize verticality, constructing the plays' universe as host to constantly embattled hierarchy. The plays are based on myths that obsess

[34] W.K.C. Guthrie qtd. in Galinsky 6.

about boundaries and degree, about the maintenance of rule, and the role of men. The world has barely begun before Saturn overthrows Uranus, then Jupiter usurps Saturn. Jupiter must constantly battle upstart monsters eager to overthrow Olympus. Heywood's play argues for and reinforces boundaries whenever possible. Transgressions of boundaries, once set, often result in destruction. For example, in *The Silver Age,* when Semele demands to make love to Jupiter while he is "armed with his godhood," Jupiter "*descends in his maiesty, his Thunderbolt burning*" (I4v).[35] Semele immediately recognizes the shift away from the mortal plane, and cowers before Jupiter's true potency: "What terror's this? Oh thou immortal speake! / My eyes are for thy maiesty too weake" (K1r). The spectacle of Jupiter's majesty and his wrath calls attention to the significance of Semele's hubris. The precise stage directions instruct that, "*As he toucheth the bed it fires, and all flyes up, Iupiter from thence takes an abortiue infant*." [36] Semele's punishment is dazzlingly vertical in its trajectory; Jupiter descends to her, destroys her and her bed, and then carries the infant Bacchus with him as "*he ascends in his cloud*." The moral of the episode, redundantly voiced by Jupiter, is similarly vertical in its instruction: "He by the Gods dyes, that 'boue man contends" (K1r).

In the language of the play, Semele is punished for contending "'bove man." She aspires above her station, wishing to rise above the mortal stage to the heavens, to "make this drosse immortall," in her words (L4v). Andrew Gurr argues that this vertical staging may reflect an idealized "vertical sociology in Tudor England," which manifests itself in the playhouses by the tiered-seating plan that placed the less well off in the pit while their

[35] Semele is "*drawne out in her bed*" (s.d. I4v). Barely on the mortal plane, lying horizontally on her bed, she is ready for her lover's embrace.

[36] I know of no abortive infant property.

betters sat on or above the stage itself. What Gurr calls the "physical affirmation of social differences" in the design of the playhouses also serves to distinguish the realms of human and immortal experience within the plays.[37] Only gods and immortals may cross the boundaries between the realms by ascending and descending in Heywood's plays. Except Hercules, of course. Hercules is uniquely capable of crossing between realms, arguably as a result of his boundary-straddling identity as both god and man. But the play cannot let him get too far. Heywood will not sanction such subversion. The explorations of Hercules's crossings in *The Silver Age* and *The Brazen Age* present the spectacular marvel of Hercules's strength only to counter his accomplishments with divine assertions of station and rank.

The scenes of Hercules in hell in Act Five of *The Silver Age* are noteworthy for three reasons. First, the scenes conflate several different myths of Tartarus, combining the stories of Proserpine's ravishment with Theseus and Pirithoüs's quest to retrieve her and Hercules's twelfth labour for his cousin Eurystheus. Second, the scenes incorporate Hercules's reputations as both the tyrant-tamer and proto-Christian by mixing classical elements with Christian imagery. Last, the scenes deploy an outlandish amount of spectacle even for the effects-heavy *Four Ages* series. Heywood draws attention to his original tale of Hercules harrowing hell to present the theatrically alluring power of Hercules while asserting the undesirability of rebellion against the status quo.

The nature of mythology--stories that help us find for ourselves a coherent place within the universe--requires that the tales change according to the needs of the teller and

[37] Gurr 85-88.

the audience.[38] Early modern authors who alter a classical source signal to their audience their points of view. Of course, different portions of different audiences had different competences with regard to mythology. Heywood translated and adapted many classical texts and plays both to amuse and to teach, in accordance with his poetic agenda.[39] Heywood's incorporation of spectacle to highlight the changed stories under consideration here argues that he is asking his audience to pay attention. Heywood's spectacularization of his Hercules source stories, especially those portions that deal with justice and obedience, suggests that he deployed his classical knowledge to create a new reading of an old story, one which reaffirms the place and role of men and gods.

Act Five of *The Silver Age* features Hercules descending into Tartarus with Theseus, Pirithoüs, and Philoctetes in order to fetch Proserpine on behalf of her mother. Along the way, Pirithoüs is killed by Cerberus, Hercules defeats Pluto and calls for an end to all infernal tortures, and the gods are forced to descend to re-order the universe after Hercules's chaotic invasion. This retelling takes three stories and makes them one very different tale. In the vast majority of Renaissance mythological compilations and translations, Hercules enters hell only for his twelfth labor, when he is ordered by his cousin to fetch Cerberus from the entrance of Tartarus and bring him up to the light of

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[38] As A. B. Taylor asserts in his introduction to *Shakespeare's Ovid*, "Myth is virtually impossible to define, as G.S. Kirk recognizes, but whatever form it takes, it asks fundamental questions about man's place in the world, his relationship to the gods, to Nature, to birth and death, to human functions such as sex or feeding." *Shakespeare's Ovid: The Metamorphoses in the Plays and Poems* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2000) 4.

[39] In addition to translating and reworking a number of classical themes and stories, including a version of *The Rape of Lucrece* (1608) and Ovid's *Art of Love* (1625), Heywood took as his poetic motto a revision of Horace's famous aphorism *Aut Prodesse volunt aut delectare poetae* (Poets aim either to benefit or to amuse). Heywood merged the two aims in his motto as *Et prodesse solent & delectare*, or "[Poets] desire at once to amuse and to benefit." For notes on Heywood's biography and professional dedication to classics, see McLuskie, Kawanami, and Velte. See also Heywood's own *Apology for Actors* (1612), which is ripe with theater history and classical references.

day.[40] Theseus and Pirithoüs come to the underworld in order to kidnap Proserpine as part of their ravishing marathon, which included Theseus kidnapping the young Helen of Troy. Their latest exploit fails, and they are trapped in Pluto's world until Hercules releases them. Proserpine, on the other hand, is taken to Tartarus by Pluto and hidden underground, and only leaves when Jupiter allows Ceres to have her back for half of the year. The other six months must be spent with Pluto because she consumed several pomegranate seeds.[41]

Heywood's adept melding of three known stories produces a new Hercules who independently plans and executes a successful invasion of Hell followed by a narrowly thwarted *coup d'etat*. Order is restored in this telling only by intense diplomatic negotiations between the immortals and Hercules, who is just barely convinced to leave the underworld quietly. Although the better known stories tell of an obedient hero following orders, the punishment of foolish mortals, and the justice of the gods, this version stages a hero who acts as he sees fit rather than as the gods wish. The structure of the three-tiered stage is penetrated by Hercules as he pushes past the boundaries that do not suit him. This alteration complicates Stephen Orgel's findings that "mythography in the Renaissance tends to be written in the interests of the ruling power, its moralizations

[40] Hercules only accomplishes this by winning permission from Pluto to take Cerberus above ground.

[41] Heywood would have had access to all of these versions through mythographies, dictionaries, and emblematic texts such as Boccaccio's *De Genealogia Deorum* (1371), Natalis Comes' *Mythologiae* (1551), *Emblemata* (1531), Cooper's *Thesaurus* (1565), Geoffrey Whitney's *A Choice of Emblemes and Other Devices* (1586), Abraham Fraunce's *The Third part of the Countesse of Pembrokes Yuychurch* (1592), and more. All the mythographers split these myths into pieces, mention them in passing, or do not mention them. Only *Albions England* features the Hercules story as Heywood tells it, and it is printed soon after Heywood's play. William Warner, *Albion's England* (1612) (New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1971) 21-22.

naturally tend to argue against anything implying social change, and in favor of any kind of existing hierarchy."[42] Spectacle draws attention to the anxious upheavals of this scene.

The scenes in hell start with good intentions, when Hercules begins his quest for Proserpine at her mother's pitiful appeal. But the rescue mission turns violent after he beats the talkative hell-hound Cerberus.[43] Hercules tells Theseus that:

> Hels bowels I must pierce, and rouze black Dis,
> Breake (with my fists) these Adamantine gates,
> The Iron percullis teare, and with my club
> Worke my free passage (maugre all the fiends)
> Through these infernals. (K2v).

Hercules will not only enter hell as a living person, he will penetrate and destroy it.[44] Although his litany recalls a contractor's checklist as he lists the parts of hell he needs to demolish, Hercules's plan sounds most like a disembowelment. There is a decided sexual energy to the plan as well, because the penetration Hercules describes sounds like a physical violation. Hercules narrates his agenda while his desires begin to take action:

> Lo, I sinke my selfe
> In Charon's barge, Il'e ferry burning Styx,
> Ransacke the pallace where grim Pluto reigns,
> Mount his tribunall, made of sable Iet,

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[42] Orgel 33.

[43] Henslowe's catalog speaks of a Cerberus head, but there is debate about whether this particular play calls for such a prop, mostly stemming from the existence of two lost *Hercules* plays referred to in Henslowe's diary. For a debate over how to determine which properties were used for which Hercules play, see Schanzer and Holaday.

[44] Eugene Waith describes Hercules's passage similarly: "[He] fearlessly penetrates even the domain of the gods of the underworld" (18).

Despite his blacke guard, stownd him in his chaire,

And from his arme snatch beauteous Proserpine (K2v)

Hercules's itinerary displays an accurate knowledge of hell's defenses and geography, but his intentions sound overblown, from his plan to sink himself into hell to his proposed finale, when he will "snatch" Proserpine from Pluto's very arm after he "mount[s]" and "stownd[s]" the god in his chair. The play sets Hercules up as overly ambitious in order to emphasize the spectacular accomplishment when he does indeed "ransacke" hell and rattle the foundations of Pluto's supremacy.

Upon his arrival, Hercules harrows hell by pitting himself against the extensive spectacle and symbolism of the underworld.[45] He seeks to make the underworld part of his legend by battling Pluto. This is not iconoclasm, in that Hercules is not trying to destroy Hell, but rather a conquest and occupation that overpowers and then appropriates spectacle. The stage directions calling for Hercules's entrance into Tartarus reveal what a theatrical extravaganza this scene must have been: *"HERCULES sinks himself: flashes of fire; the Diuels appeare at euery corner of the stage with seuerall fire-workes. The Iudges of hell and the three sisters run ouer the stage, HERCULES after them: fire-workes all over the house"* (K2v-K3r).

[45]I use the term "harrowing" intentionally, for this scene presents Hercules's descent as a figure of Christ's harrowing. The scene is also intentionally reminiscent of the harrowing of hell episodes in the mystery cycles. After Jesus is crucified and buried, he descends into hell and breaks the doors of hell open to liberate proto-Christians like King David and Isaiah (Cf. Ephesians 4:9 and 1 Peter 3:18, as well as the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus). Chester's version of this play, pageant XVII, features demons on the run and two very frustrated middle-management devils facing off with Christ while Adam, Eve, and the other prophets look on (lines 153-185). David Mills comments that the Chester play is one "of triumph, and one of spectacle also. Its central scene is hell itself with its great gates, a dungeon of smoke, stench and darkness over which Satan presides, sitting on his throne." See *The Chester Mystery Cycle* (East Lansing, MI: Colleagues Press, 1992) 302. Eugene Waith discusses Hercules's association with Old Testament figures and with Christ in *The Herculean Hero* (39).

From the first words of this remarkable stage direction, Hercules is changing the rules governing mortal behavior. Only immortal powers like Jupiter, Mercury, Earth, and the river gods are able to rise above or sink below the plane of mortals, the stage.[46] That Hercules can sink himself upsets the vertical hierarchy of heaven, earth, and hell. The boundaries of hell are permeable to Hercules – he is not deterred by any of the encircling fences surrounding the underworld, but rather pierces them by force. The journey relocates the play to hell itself, moving the default location to the realm usually only hinted at by creatures rising from *below*. Hercules does not descend to hell alone; he takes his audience with him.

Heywood's presentation of hell places Renaissance devils and fireworks into a classical Hades. This melding of classical with Christian material creates a doubly-hellish underworld, one which would have been recognizable from sermons and stories alike. With the stage direction quoted above--"*Fireworkes all over the house*"--Heywood brings the classical and Christian hells into the theater itself, making the playhouse its own underworld. Setting off the fireworks in the house forces the theater audience to participate in the play rather than watch safely from their seats or place in the pit. The spectacle of hell becomes as much of an experience for the audience as for Hercules; hell is all around them.[47] Instead of a trap-door nod to Hercules's famous descent into the underworld, Heywood stages an encounter that brings Hercules and the audience into the

[46] Jupiter descends and ascends, Mercury *flies from aboue* (H1r), Earth *riseth from vnder the stage* (H1v), and the river Arethusa *riseth from the stage* (H2r).

[47] Given that *The Silver Age* is dated within five years of the Gunpowder Plot, the play's interest in underground pyrotechnics and, later, the justice of torture raises fascinating questions. See Antonia Fraser, *Faith and Treason: The Story of the Gunpowder Plot* (New York: Doubleday, 1996) and Elizabeth Hanson, "Torture and Truth in Renaissance England," *Representations* 34 (Spring 1991): 53-84.

Red Bull's version of hell, which is sufficiently classical to be distant, and sufficiently Christian to be close.[48]

Although the play exploits the theatrical effectiveness of hell, with its fireworks and shrieking devils, it also marks these spectacles for humiliation and near defeat. The fiery devils are not the only characters sent running at Hercules's arrival; the Judges of Hell and the Fates start fleeing as well. Running is rarely decorous, yet here we find the six most powerful forces in the lives of gods and men sprinting for their lives. One might imagine grey hair flying out behind them as Rhadamanthus (Rhadamant in this play), Minos, Aeacus, and the Fates hitch up their black cloaks and head for the hills. The resulting comic effect threatens an inappropriate inversion, evidenced by Pluto's angry statement to Hercules, "Thou canst not reuell here" (K3r). Yet the spectacle of this play shows us just that – Hercules playing with the traditional iconography of hell as he upsets the underworld's power structure. The living control the dead.

In the middle of the conflict, Hercules makes an unexpected detour and directs his attention to the suffering souls scattered throughout the underworld. After his explosive entrance, Hercules threatens another sort of upheaval by demanding an end to the Tartarean punishments, a fascinating sidebar in his quest for Proserpine:

> Hence rauenous vulture, thou no more shalt tire
>
> On poore Prometheus, Danae spare your tubs,
>
> Stand still thou rowling stone of Sisiphus,

[48] The play's staging at the Red Bull is relevant because this particular playhouse was notorious for lowbrow entertainment and high levels of spectacle. George Reynolds' informative book cites contemporary perceptions of the house as well as more recent interpretations, like that of Louis Wright, who describes the Red Bull as "'from the beginning, frankly a plain man's playhouse, where clownery, clamor, and spectacle vied with subject matter flattering to the vanity of tradesmen.'" As Reynolds relates, "'No idle tricks of love but manly plays, full of vigor, were to be seen at the Red Bull'" (8).

And with the shrinking waues quench thy hote thirst.

Thy bones Ixion, shall no more be broke

Vpon the torturing wheele: the Eagles beake

Shall Titius spare at sight of Hercules,

And all the horrid tortures of the damn'd

Shall at the wauing of our club dissolue. (K3r)

Hercules demands an end to the torments of hell in part because they are part of hell's spectacularity. Hercules, as indicated by the stage direction that introduces his spectacular harrowing, must battle against the figures that define hell, including the furies, the judges, the devils, and Pluto. He also takes up arms against what he perceives as injustice. The punishments of the damned similarly are emblems unto themselves--Ixion on his wheel, sentenced for seducing Hera; Prometheus chained to a rock, punished by the ravenous vulture for his theft of Olympian fire; and the forty-nine Danaides, doomed to carry water in leaky vessels for murdering their husbands--and Hercules also disagrees with the punishments meted out by the infernal justices. He demands alternatives to hell's justice, as though rallying the spirits of the departed to his flag. Hercules attempts a rebellion against hell's unjust system as he upsets the routines of the underworld with his spectacular appearance.[49]

That the damned are aptly tortured for their crimes is not surprising – one could read in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* of the physical transformation of people into what they are

[49] Not only does Hercules himself decide to alter the domestic policies of Tartarus, he overthrows the leader in an embarrassingly short battle. Pluto enters "*with a club of fire, a burning crowne, Proserpine, the Iudges, the Fates, and a guard of Diuels, all with burning weapons*" (K3r), meeting Hercules's famous penetrative club with a fiery club of his own; but Hercules "*fels Pluto, beats off the Diuils with all their fire-workes"* and rescues Proserpine.

morally, or in *The Divine Comedy* for the Dantean notion of *contrapasso,* which relies on the poetic relationship between crime and punishment for its effectiveness.[50] What is surprising is that Hercules's first speech in hell responds directly to their suffering, and that he identifies himself with the mortals in eternal agony rather than with the divine powers who are also his kin. He objects to the mortals' sufferings and to the judges who deem the punishments appropriate. His speech questions the legitimacy of hell's punishment while his actions deny the effectiveness of hell's hierarchy. He calls attention to the scene of these torments and then declares that his power--signified by the sight of him and his waving club--will make them disappear. The agenda of Hercules's excursion into hell suddenly expands from liberating Proserpine into facing off against the judgment of questionable gods. With this move, Heywood toys with our perception of Hercules as both a tamer of tyrants and as a Christological figure.

In this version of the Harrowing of Hell, Hercules not only takes on the role of Jesus traveling to hell and ripping off the gates, but he also brings with him the suggestion of a more merciful universe, what Rhadamant shudderingly describes as "mingl[ing]...Murder with pitty, hate with clemency" (K3v). Recalling another liminal figure who could transcend the mortal plain, Hercules wants to end the tortures mandated by the pagan judges, and to install a more merciful alternative that takes pity into account. The play does not follow this scenario to its conclusion, however, for Hercules cannot succeed in overthrowing Hell and installing himself as its new leader. His purposes are heroism and glory, not rebellion. To counter Hercules's tempting

[50] For a consideration of transformation and metamorphosis in Ovid and Shakespeare, see John Velz, "Shakespeare's Ovid in the Twentieth Century: a critical survey," *Shakespeare's Ovid: The* Metamorphoses *in the Plays and Poems*, ed. A.B. Taylor (New York: Cambridge UP, 2000) 181-197; and Leonard Barkan, *The Gods Made Flesh: Metamorphosis and the Pursuit of Paganism* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1986).

alternatives, the play spectacularly emphasizes the established order of law at the end of *The Silver Age*, which takes place in an otherworldly courtroom. Hercules's revels in hell send the gods scurrying for ways to stop him. He poses such a threat that Jupiter and Pluto, as well as the judges of hell, must justify their existence and deploy a spectacular pageant that counteracts Hercules's violent upheavals.

Hercules's adventures in hell turn political when Hercules argues with Rhadamant about the relative justice of man and god. To recover, the play produces a judicial scene to reestablish order. When Hercules attempts to seal his victory by returning Proserpine to her mother, Rhadamant warns Hercules that "To alter this / The heauens must faile [. . .] Chaos againe / Confuse the triple Masse, all turne to nothing" (K3v). What has been "alter[ed]" is the very hierarchy of the universe; Hercules's defeat of Pluto and his Tartarus could potentially put out the fires of hell altogether. Hercules has outrun his destiny; he should not be in Hell and he should not be claiming to be the king of the underworld. Rhadamant advocates on behalf of the status quo, "Now there is order: Gods there are, and Diuels: / These reward vertue; the other punish vice. / Alter this course you mingle bad with good, / Murder with pitty, hate with clemency" (K3v). This "order" is bound up with the immortal hierarchy of the playing space and with vertical staging. Up remains up, down remains down, and mortals on stage understand their place in this schema. To "mingle" or blend these boundaries invites relativism and a systemic collapse.

Rhadamant's speeches warn not only against relativism, but disobedience. The judge's frightening tales of chaos and villainy echo the Homily on Obedience, first published in 1547. The homily threatens,

> [W]here there is no right order, there reigneth all abuse, carnal liberty, enormity, sin, and Babylonical confusion. Take away King, Princes, Rulers, Magistrates, Judges, and such estates of God's order, no man shall ride or go by the highway unrobbed, no man shall sleep in his own house or bed unkilled…all things shall be common, and there must needs follow all mischief, and utter destruction both of souls, bodies, goods, and commonwealths.[51]

The disordering of Hell, Hercules's spectacle, suggests similar confusion. The mingling of good with evil echoes the homily's warnings against "all things be[ing] common." Both insist that mischief and destruction follow disorder and disobedience. Hercules threatens to displace the rulers of Hell to enact his own agenda, but to do so could potentially upset the world. Even though his calls for mercy are tempting, they must not be realized. His actions have brought hell frighteningly close to the mortal world of the playhouse, rallying even the audience toward a peaceful return to normalcy. This rebellion requires the reinstatement of what the homily calls "God's order."

The play's solution to Hercules's spectacular and political rebellions is to stage a re-ordering that visibly brings unambiguous justice back into the world after Hercules has nearly banished all categories. After the pandemonium, decorum returns the play to reasonable order. Hercules agrees to divine adjudication to determine Proserpine's fate. The Stoic's hero is wooed by rhetoric appealing to the greater good, but the reestablishment of divine rule requires a visual and aural spectacle to replace those damaged by Hercules's invasion. A "*sownd,"* likely meant to evoke some ethereal music

[51] "An Exhortation concerning good Order, and obedience to Rulers and Magistrates," *Certain sermons or homilies appointed to be read in churches,* Book 1 (London, 1623).

of the spheres, heralds the entrance of the gods. "*Sownd. Enter Saturne, Iupiter, Iuno, Mars, Phoebus, Venus, and Mercury: they take their place as they are in height*" (K4r). The arrangement of the gods by their height cues us to the solution for hell's Herculean chaos.

Although simple and plain compared to Hercules's riotous battle, the gods' performance of hierarchy and station offers a soothing and preferable alternative to Hercules's invasion. The gods organize themselves in a line on the now-quiet stage. Aural and visual harmony prevails in a scene that differs in every detail from the previous scene's chaotic running and noises of fiery conflict. The presentation is meant to appeal not only to Hercules, but also to the audience, who have themselves been trapped among the fireworks exploding throughout the playhouse. The gods model how everyone should "take their place as they are in height," reaffirming the desirability of maintaining one's station. The changes attempted by Hercules are violent and frightening, while the serene solution presented by the Olympians offers a gentler option. Stability offers more than revolution in this scene, and the gods serve as able monarchs as they guide their theatrical subjects back from rebellion.

The spectacle of harmony continues with displays of logic in a divine courtroom. Again order is emphasized by the structure and decorum of the scene. The gods return Proserpine to Pluto, an act that should put Hercules in his place, but their decision perplexes him. To his mind, the ravishment is unfair and Hell's tortures are cruel. The gods' correct proceedings and appeals to peace do not placate him. When Jupiter returns his prize to Pluto, Hercules laments,

> What can Alcides more for Ceres loue,

Then ransacke hell, and rescue Proserpine?

Needs must our further conquests here take end,

When Gods and Fates against our force contend. (K4v)

Hercules's chagrin is fascinating. He begrudgingly admits defeat even as he reminds us that not long ago, he defeated both gods and fates when he set them both on the run. Although the last two lines in this passage are printed as a declarative statement, the questioning, doubting tone of the first two lines seems to infect what follows. Hercules says that he will cease and desist, but his syntax has an interrogative feel, as though Hercules is wondering: "*Must* I stop? *Needs* must our further conquests here take end?" Hercules recognizes the necessity of restraint, but his questions suggest that he knows nothing can happen without his cooperation. This hints at resistance even as he submits.[52]

Although the final act of *The Silver Age* shows that peace is preferable to upset, the fact remains that Hercules must be dealt with. He remains the man who could have taken the underworld by force. After taking Proserpine back, Jupiter attempts to solve the Hercules problem by consigning him to an active life that will provide no opportunities for further upset; but he succeeds only in emphasizing his own nervousness about Hercules's power. To Hercules he declares, "We limit you to dragge hence Cerberus, / To the vpper world, and leaue thee to the vniuerse / Where thou shalt finish all thy Iouiall tasks" (L1r). Jupiter cleverly limits Hercules even as he frees him. He may

[52]Cf. Ellen R. Belton. "Hercules immediately accepts Rhadamant's prohibition, but a slight feeling of frustration lingers. Here is a hint that the skills men cultivate may sometimes clash with the powers that control human affairs. An element of rebellion has been introduced against the system established in *the Golden Age.*" See "'A Plaine and Direct Course': The Unity of Thomas Heywood's *Ages*," *Philological Quarterly* 56 (1977): 174.

return to the universe, but he must finish his *jovial* tasks, which are both enjoyable and assignments from Jove himself. The need to keep Hercules busy, to bind his strength with appropriate work, indicates the anxiety produced by Hercules's destruction of the gods' vertical boundaries. It is best to keep powerful contenders too occupied to conspire or plot.[53] Yet, this foundation for peace remains unstable. To recreate a sense of order, the gods moved from their places in the heavens to justify themselves to Hercules. The judge of hell himself had to reason with Hercules for clemency. Additionally, Jupiter has succeeded in offering Hercules more opportunities to behave spectacularly.

The play therefore reinforces the re-ordering by reiterating its vertical staging in the final scene. The last stage direction in *The Silver Age* enacts the separations between heaven, earth, and hell through character exits, modeling the proper places for all men, women, and gods.

> *Exeunt three wayes Ceres, Theseus, Philoctetes, and Hercules dragging Cerberus one way: Pluto, hels Iudges, the Fates and Furies downe to hell: Iupiter, the Gods and Planets ascend to heauen.* (L1r)

Even though all these figures seem to have walked to the courtroom from the sides, they ascend and descend back to their seats of power. Using the theatrical realms of above, below, and the stage to represent the domains of gods and men, the play reorganizes itself. The three-way departure is as simple as the Olympian height arrangement and

[53] A Hercules in need of limits appears briefly in another play. In scene 9 of Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, a demon takes on the shape of Hercules to serve the wishes of German conjurer Vandermast, who wishes to dispute with Oxford's greatest magicians. Vandermast summons "Hercules" to destroy Bungay's golden tree of the Hesperides. The mythological Hercules appears in his lion skin, responds to Vandermast in Latin, and proceeds to rip the tree to pieces. This is a Continental Hercules, summoned by a German at the Emperor's request and fluent in Latin, and his malicious purpose is to ravage the benign spectacles of Bungay. Only with Bacon's arrival can the spectacle of Hercules be contained and used for proper purposes. Bacon, like Jupiter in Heywood's *Ages*, reins in Hercules's destructive powers and guides him toward more appropriate behavior. Not only does Hercules follow Bacon's instructions rather than his master's, he also begins speaking English rather than Latin.

similarly easy to understand. The men and the goddess of agriculture return to their world and their work, while the gods return to their respective realms to go about their business. Although the play attempts a soothing end to tumult, Hercules's return to the surface reminds us that he has many more adventures to undertake and several more battles with his divine father and the Olympians. In many versions of the Cerberus myth, for example, Hercules has to come right back in order to return the hell hound to his proper master. Jupiter's limitations enable Hercules to increase his fame, but they also provide an opportunity for additional spectacular conflict. Hercules isn't going anywhere.

The importance and repercussions of Hercules's victory in Thomas Heywood's underworld become more apparent when read alongside Seneca's *Hercules Furens*, translated by Jasper Heywood in 1561.[54] Translated into English 40 years before *The Silver Age*, Seneca's play begins where *The Silver Age* ends, with Hercules emerging from the underworld dragging Cerberus along behind him. Given his classical learning, Thomas Heywood undoubtedly wrote a Herculean drama with Seneca in mind, cleverly ending his play in time to send Hercules up to meet Juno. Although there are considerable differences between Seneca's and Heywood's Herculean chronology, both playwrights insist that the conquest of hell leads directly to the violence that transpires on the surface. Hercules's victorious invasion of hell in Heywood's plot necessitates a divine display of tranquility. His return to the surface in *Furens* results in a violent, spectacular punishment by Juno that makes Hercules the main event in Juno's terrible play.

[54] There is no relation between the two Heywoods – Jasper Heywood is the second son of John Heywood, who was a composer of interludes such as *The Play of the Wether*. Citations (by page number) are from *Hercules Furens***,** trans. Jasper Heywood, *Seneca His Tenne Tragedies Translated Into English,* ed. Thomas Newton (London, 1581) (New York: Knopf, 1927).

The Silver Age concludes with assurances that Hercules has been tamed and can be set free, while *Hercules Furens* violently chastises Hercules for his spectacular descent and unmitigated pride. Here the drama focuses on Juno's antagonism for her stepson, a hatred that precipitates most of Hercules's trials. Juno's loathing of Hercules informs every telling of his myth, but she fears him even more than she hates him in Jasper Heywood's translation. Juno faces the prospect that her greatest enemy might have the power to overthrow the Olympians. Her fears, although proven baseless, are reinforced by the ease with which Hercules handles her monsters and the lord of Tartarus himself. "Nor land suffiseth wyde," she worries, "But broake he hath the threshold loe of that infernall Jove, / And spoyls with him of conquered king he drawes to Gods above" (10). Juno seems to narrate Hercules's penetration from *The Silver Age.* A boundary has been crossed ("the threshold"), and a bastard son has conquered the king of the underworld. Hercules's liminal identity distresses Juno in two ways: he is both god and man, and as a result he can penetrate almost any boundary. Additionally, Hercules has the "spoyles" of Pluto, the holder of all "unsatiable gotten riches," in Stephen Batman's moral terminology.[55]

Although Juno might appear simply paranoid or jealous if Heywood's more reasonable Hercules were her opponent, this play's Hercules appears to have aspirations to Olympian status, or at least a hearty disregard for his elders. Hercules remembers his Tartarean conquest casually: "And yet if thyrde place pleased more for mee to enter in, / I there coulde raygne" (28), offhandedly considering the underworld a third-class property.

[55] Batman C2r.

Hercules scoffs at the power of hell. As a result, Hercules's conquest of Pluto and Cerberus is seen by Juno as the seed of a rebellion against the gods themselves:

> For heaven I may be frayde, lest he may get the highest rayne,
> That lowest wonne, the sceptors from his father wil he take,
> Nor hee to starres (as Bacchus dyd) his way wil gently make:
> The way with ruine will he seeke, and hee in empty skyes
> Wil reygne alone with force displayd hys haughty hart doth ryse,
> And he that heaven it selfe by force of his might gotted be,
> It bearying learnd. (11)

The "force of his might," like the penetrating force mentioned in *The Silver Age*, threatens all the gods' supremacy. Hercules has "displayd" his arrogance, and Juno foresees another *coup d'etat* that will leave only him standing. Hercules represents a new hero, a rebellious one who refuses to make his way "gently" to the stars, and Juno intends to restrict this latest progression in human potential. The ultimate question for Juno, and indeed for any ruler, is how to contain a powerful opposing force. Like the gods in *The Silver Age,* she must find a method to contain Hercules. She seeks on, below, and above earth for something to defeat him, but realizes "thers none, except hymselfe" (11). Here is the ultimate solution to rebellion and the fittest means to divide enemy forces: "let him agaynst himselfe rebell" (11). If Hercules is the most powerful thing living, let him use his strength against himself and those he loves. Juno will use Hercules's might against him: through madness, his strength will become her curse.

To punish and control Hercules, Juno devises a fit of fury that will fall upon him after he defeats his enemy Lycus. Juno ties her plan directly to Hercules's time in hell,

threatening, "Despyse mans workes thinkst thou fierce wight that hell and soules alow / Thou hast escape? nay here I will another hel thee show" (11). Just as Hercules attempted to make hell part of his own spectacle in Heywood's play, here Juno will re-stage those tortures using Hercules himself as the prime attraction. His sinews will draw the bow to shoot his sons, and his arms will raise the club that beats his wife Megara to pieces, all before the horrified eyes of his father and Theseus. The sufferings and torments narrated by Hercules in *The Silver Age* make a horrifying reappearance. Juno specifically wants to injure the aspects of Hercules that derive from his divine father – his strength being foremost. It must be his Jove-given strength that does the deed, for as Juno wishes, "yea let it here be my commodity, / That he of Jove begotten is" (12). Commodity can mean both property and advantage, and both meanings hold true here.[56] Juno will use the powers deriving from Hercules's Olympian parentage against him and to her advantage. To increase the pain, she designs his punishment to be a public scene, one witnessed by his family and friends alike.

In Act IV of *Furens*, Hercules shoots one of his children through the neck, swings the second around his head before smashing the boy's brains out on a rock, frightens the youngest to death before even touching him, and then beats his wife to death with his club. His father Amphitryon narrates the actions in typical Senecan declamation, which would allow the action to remain offstage, but it is arguable that at least the first child is killed onstage.[57] After awakening from his madness to see the pile of bodies, Hercules confuses the image with the memory of his visit to the underworld. What he wrought

[56] *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s.v. "commodity."

[57]For the theatricality and potential staging of Senecan plays in Rome and in England, see Dana Ferrin Sutton, *Seneca on the Stage* (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1986) 1-2; and articles by John Fitch, Jo-Ann Shelton, and Sander M. Goldberg in *Seneca in Performance*, ed. George W.M. Harrison (London: Duckworth, 2000).

below has followed him back to the mortal plane. Just as he carries the trappings of his victories against the Nemean lion and the Hydra in his lion skin and poisoned arrows, now he carries the scenes of hell inside his mind:

> Of truth we are returned from hell whence in my house downe bet
> See I these bloudy bodyes? hath not yet my mynd of cast
> Th'infernall shapes? but after that return from hel at last
> Yet wander doth that helly heape before myne eys to see? (46).

The Senecan spectacle of hell is a far cry from the fiery excitement that met Hercules in *The Silver Age*, just as the Senecan Hercules differs from Heywood's. However, the Senecan spectacle can be mobilized to "wander" after Hercules, pursuing him eternally. Defeated by himself and the torments he fought to conquer, Hercules is left at Juno's mercy. Rather than a show of peace to temper Hercules's rage, Juno arranges the horrors of hell to crush him. If in Heywood, Hercules defeats spectacle, in Seneca, he is defeated as a spectacle. This mad violence and the hellish imagery, absent from Heywood's version thus far, will re-emerge once more in the next installment of Hercules's biography, *The Brazen Age*.

Having sent Hercules to hell, Heywood prepares to send him to heaven in his next play. *The Brazen Age* regales the audience with Hercules's victories and triumphs--his jovial tasks--from Troy's walls to the island of the Golden Fleece. The title page promises the death of Hercules in the fifth act, and expectations are set for a pathos-laden hero's demise.[58] Yet, rather than portraying Hercules's apotheosis as his glorious destiny,

[58] The title page of the 1613 edition of *The Brazen Age* reads: "The first Act containing, The death of the Centaure Nessus, The Second, The Tragedy of Meleager: The Third The Tragedy of Iason and Medea. The Fovrth Vulcans Net. The Fifth. The Labours and death of Hercules." Homer, the Prologue and Chorus figure for the first three Ages, asserts from the first that *The Brazen Age* "shall proceed, / And Hercules

the play's last scenes feature Hercules struggling to die a worthy and, more importantly, legibly heroic death. Threatened with a passive death by poison after having spent months in shameful servitude, Hercules must strive once again against the fates and his divine father to conceive and execute a lasting image of his heroic death. He cannot become a legend without first guaranteeing his legacy as a virile conqueror through a spectacular demise. Hercules seeks a good death.

Hercules's death at Mt. Oeta is made strangely ambiguous by its placement within Heywood's revised Herculean chronology. Hercules's death by poison and fire constitutes, in Eugene Waith's words, "a story which can be told either to assert the limits beyond which even the greatest of men cannot go, or, by emphasizing Hercules's ultimate reward, to demonstrate the transcendence of the hero."[59] Heywood's creative re-ordering of the familiar timeline, placing Hercules's affair with Omphale as his penultimate legend in *The Brazen Age*, detracts considerably from the heroic death that Hercules craves so desperately. As much as Hercules desires transcendence, Heywood's play ties him securely to the earth. Just as conflating the Tartarean myths resulted in a more militant Hercules, here the juxtaposition of Hercules's dramatic end with his servitude to Omphale taints his heroic death with hints of effeminacy and unstable identity. Hercules's death always results from the jealousy of his wife, Deianeira, but in Heywood's telling his suffering seems poetic justice for his time spent at Omphale's loom. His death, which should secure his legendary status and guarantee his legacy, now comes hard on the heels of a time when Hercules forgets both his name and his legend.

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vistorious [sic] acts relate: / His marriage first, next many a noble deed / Perform'd by him: last how he yeelds to Fate" (B1r).

[59] Waith 19.

After four acts of manly deeds, *The Brazen Age* reveals the infamous image of "*Hercules attired like a woman, with a distaffe and a spindle"* (K1r). This scene is not Jupiter in humorous drag seeking to seduce Calisto in *The Golden Age*[60], nor is the image infused with the sexuality of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*.[61] Cross-dressed Hercules doing women's work embodies a substantial cultural anxiety about the instability of sexuality and identity. Hercules without his emblematic club and insistently phallic identity becomes a woman: within this context, nothing. Beneath an emblem of Hercules spinning, Henry Peacham bemoans, "Alcides heere, hath throwne his Clubbe away."[62] Heroism, specifically masculine, must be made spectacular with appearance and movement, and Hercules sits down on the job.

Hercules declares that he chooses to stay with Omphale, and in doing so he transgresses another boundary, although not one represented by the play's vertical staging. He has crossed the boundaries of life and death, god and man, and here Hercules crosses the line between genders. The spectacle of Hercules at the spindle shows manliness as mutable. Alison Findlay argues, "the play presents Hercules's fall as a return to the female, to his point of illegitimate origin," which has the power to

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[60] Jupiter gives a very amusing speech about how to look like a woman. It begins, "There I strid too wide. That step was too large for one that professeth the straight order: what a pitiful coyle shall I haue to counterfeit this woman; to lispe, (forsooth) to simper, and set my face like a sweet gentlewoman's made out of gingerbread?....I hope Diana doth not use to search her maides before she entertaines them" (*The Golden Age* D4v-E1r). These lines draw self-consciously on the tradition of men playing women on the stage.

[61] Cleopatra remembers playful cross-dressing and gender role-playing with her lover, although Antony's response to the game remains a mystery: "Then put my tires and mantles on him, whilst / I wore his sword Philippan" (2.5.22-23).

[62] Peacham ends this his moral by wondering, "How many are there more / Who hauing Honor and a worthy name / By actions base and lewdnes loose the fame." See Henry Peacham, *Minerva Britannia or A garden of heroical devises* (London, 1612) 95.

"decompose heroic identity."[63] This concern over Hercules's identity--whether he is inherently and stably a man--explodes in the Omphale episode, which visibly questions, "What does a hero look like?"

This humbled Hercules emerges in other Renaissance plays, indicating that Hercules's cross-dressing was an epicenter of cultural concerns. Consider the allusions to the Omphale episode in *Much Ado About Nothing,* a play that overflows with anxiety over masculinity in the presence of sharp tongued women. Benedick complains that Beatrice "would have made Hercules have turn'd spit, yea, and have cleft his club to make the fire too" (2.1.253-4), while Borachio regales his fellow conspirators about the fashion of tapestries featuring "the shaven Hercules" (3.3.135).[64] The seduction of a hero by a powerful woman and his subsequent emasculation (evidenced by cleft clubs and shaven beards) here evokes nervous laughter.[65] Heywood's Hercules cannot laugh.

Hercules crosses the boundaries of gender less spectacularly than before, but he still suffers tragic repercussions. His transgression results in his shameful exposure to his friends and to the audience. Omphale declares in an audience address, "Is't not strange to see / A womans beauty tame the Tyrant-tamer? / And the great Monster-maister ouer-match?" (K1r). Omphale has a right to gloat, for in Heywood's account her beauty has conquered Hercules (in most tellings, Hercules serves Omphale because he murders

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[63] Alison Findlay, *Illegitimate Power: Bastards in Renaissance Drama* (New York: Manchester UP, 1994) 244, 188.

[64] Root suggests that Borachio's reference especially shows that this particular story was indeed popular enough in early modern England to be featured on tapestries (73).

[65] Musidorus sees Pyrocles disguised as an Amazon in the New *Arcadia*, wearing a robe "with a very right jewel, the device whereof (as he after saw) was this: a Hercules made in little form, but set with a distaff in his hand (as he once was by Omphale's commandment), with a word in Greek, but thus to be interpreted: 'Never more valiant." Since Pyrocles is disguised as a woman to get close to his beloved, we should read the motto ironically; Musidorus certainly does. Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The New Arcadia)*, ed. Victor Skretkowicz. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987) 69, lines 5-9.

Iphitus).[66] Omphale mocks Hercules while calling attention to how it is "strange to see" Hercules enjoying his servitude. Hercules is not truly enslaved; he simply relishes Omphale's company far more than slaying yet another monster. Neither an unwilling captive nor a begrudging servant, Hercules is besotted with his hostess, and dotes upon her until his comrades shame him back to his more public self.[67]

The entreaties of his horrified friends point out the seriousness of Hercules in drag. Upon seeing Hercules at the spindle, Jason cries out that this man must be "some base effeminate groome, not he / That with his puissance frighted all the earth" (K1v). By muddying the boundaries between masculine and feminine, Hercules becomes ignoble, womanly, and servile. In one stroke Jason erases Hercules's identity as a hero and defines him by his costume. Jason then threatens Hercules's biological identity by summoning a spectacle more monstrous than his cross-dressed form: "This is some woman, some Hermaphrodite" (K1v). When he is not the lion-skinned fighter, Hercules's existence appears to fall away. Jason's disgust at Hercules's mixed appearance recalls Rhadamant's distaste for the "mingling" of merciful justice. Hercules has become one of the monsters he lives to battle, sexually deformed and easily labeled as despicable. When

[66] Waith 19. Omphale purchases Hercules's services when he sells himself into penitential servitude, and he spends three years fighting crime in her kingdom. The parallel story understands Hercules as a fawning love slave who is subdued by love.

[67] Private and public constitute a zero sum game for Hercules in this portrayal, much as they do for Aeneas or Marc Antony. He cannot indulge in private life without endangering his reputation, and his heroic persona allows no room for privacy. In other works, Hercules's uxoriousness threatens to erase his identity. In *Albion's England*, Deianeira bemoans Hercules's infidelity with Iole by saying, "Oh how vnlike to Hercules is Hercules in this?" (59).

Hercules recollects his proper role, he describes himself as "transshapt" into a fool by lovesickness (K3r).[68]

The frightening ease with which Hercules slips into womanliness and then back into heroism colors the final moments of the play. After being displayed as a monstrously bisexual figure, Hercules must perform his heroic self in order to prove his manliness, his character, and his worth as legendary hero. His penitential prayers and visible reassertion of the proper role of hero and husband are part of the pattern established earlier by Heywood: rebellions replaced by reorderings. His foray across the gender divide must be cleansed with a better, clearer spectacle of heroism, just as his early harrowings are wiped away with performances of harmony and justice. The scenes with Omphale are therefore followed immediately by Hercules's arrival at a temple bearing on his back brass pillars which tell of his heroic deeds.[69] The recuperation is interrupted, however, by the arrival of the shirt of Nessus.

Falling from one feminine trap into another, Hercules is again pulled from the public path of heroism, this time by the famous shirt. The gift from his wife will supposedly make him loyal only to her, but it is actually drenched with the poisonous blood of the Centaur Nessus. The play presents the shirt of Nessus as something more than a dangerous misunderstanding: it is a very real and feminine threat that could finally

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[68] He is like Antony in Egypt: "the triple pillar of the world transformed / Into a strumpet's fool" (1.1.12-13).

[69] Stephen Orgel discusses the use of Hercules's pillars, and their motto, *ne plus ultra*, in Renaissance family crests in his article, "The Example of Hercules." This emblem makes a number of ambiguous appearances in other Renaissance dramas. Antonio in Marston's *Antonio's Revenge* describes his grief with it: "Behold a prostrate wretch laid on his tomb; / His epitaph thus: *Ne plus ultra*. Ho! / Let none out-woe me; mine's Herculean woe" (2.2.132-4). Because the Hercules role likely required considerable emotional display, this is probably Marston mocking Antonio's liberal tendency to lie down and moan. He collapses throughout this play and its predecessor, *Antonio and Mellida*.

destroy the son of Jupiter with a shameful poison, one which has been described as Nessus's blood as well as his semen.[70] The shirt's power is unclean: tainted both by the fluid it contains and by the woman who has sent it. Hercules may potentially be overpowered by a dead enemy and his own wife. Only a spectacular solution can prevent this fate and fulfill the expectations of his Greek comrades and the English audience.

Although *The Four Ages* do not stage the madness classically associated with Hercules--the *furens* that causes him to kill his children--they do include a scene of mania before his death. The agonies of the shirt of Nessus cause Hercules's frenzy, which offers him a "tragic self," one theatrical enough to raise Hercules above victimization.[71] Through this latter-life episode of *furor*, Hercules can transform his passive suffering into violence, murder, and mayhem.[72] Whether or not Hercules is "mad" is debatable. He seems to recognize people at certain times in his agonies, but he also confuses Omphale with Deianeira and kills her with a rock. Whatever the cause, Hercules nearly destroys the theater in his ravings, as he tears down trees and hurls rocks from various regions of the stage. *The Silver Age* brought hell to the Red Bull; here *The Brazen Age* brings

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[70] Cf. Rene Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1977). Girard discusses the ritual taboo of blood, especially menstrual blood, as well as semen. Nessus and his shirt are given as examples of sexualized fluid - so deadly that it can kill Hercules.

[71] A.J. Boyle contends that "*furor* is a central ingredient of what the Renaissance received as the Senecan tragic self" (176).

[72] Rolf Soellner argues that the *Hercules Furens* convention provided "a general stimulus for the device of temporary madness in Elizabethan and Jacobean tragedy" (315), and this same debilitating madness can be seen in characters like Othello (his "trance" in 4.1 and 5.1), Antony in 4.7, Macbeth's "fit" in 3.4, as well as in plays like *Antonio's Revenge*. "The Madness of Hercules and the Elizabethans," *Comparative Literature* 10.4 (fall 1958): 309-324. Cf. Antony's lines in 4.12 of *Antony and Cleopatra*:
"The shirt of Nessus is upon me; teach me,
Alcides, thou mine ancestor, thy rage.
Let me lodge Lichas on the horns of the moon,
And with those hands, that grasp'd the heaviest club,
Subdue my worthiest self." (43-47)

Hercules's madness within inches of the audience, both through his tossing of trees and through the potential threat that the actor playing Hercules might be mad as well.[73]

Heywood himself points to the tradition of madness associated with this scene. In Book Two of his *Apology for Actors* ("Of Actors, and their ancient Dignitie"), the playwright relates the story of how Julius Caesar, when playing the role of Hercules, "although he was, as our Tragedians vse, but seemingly to kill him [the servant playing Lychas] by some false imagined wound, yet was Caesar so extremely carryed away with the violence of his practised fury, and by the perfect shape of the madnesse of Hercules [. . .] that he slew him dead at his foot, & after swoong him *terq;quaterq;* (as the Poet sayes) about his head."[74] Just playing the role of Hercules so possessed Caesar that he murdered his co-star. The madness has a "perfect shape" that enables and encourages violent action. Hercules's move from howling victim to raging madman offers the hero alternatives to an ignoble death.[75] From the point at which he begins to throw trees and kill bystanders, Hercules ironically controls his reputation. His violence, the engine of his spectacularity, retakes the stage. He is no longer a questionable effeminate character,

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[73] Stage directions call for Hercules to "*enter* [. . .] *from a rocke aboue, tearing down trees.*"

[74] Heywood E3v.

[75] Rolf Soellner suggests that stories like the one about Caesar reveal that the role of Hercules is a Herod-role, one which required frenzied over-acting to be considered effective (311-312). Bottom's lines about Hercules from *Midsummer Night's Dream* also rely on this tradition of Hercules as a ranting figure:
Bottom: I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

'The ragin rocks
And shivering shocks
Shall break the locks
Of prison gates;
And Phibbus' car
Shall shine from far,
And make and mar
The foolish Fates.'

This was lofty! Now name the rest of the players. This is Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein; a lover is more condoling" (1.2.29-41). The note for this passage in the 1974 Riverside Shakespeare mentions that "The tradition for ranting in this part grew from Seneca's *Hercules Furens*" (p. 225, n.29).

but a raging hero seeking his legacy. The power of his madness seems to give him strength to seek immortality even through his unspeakable agony.[76]

In his quest to reinstate his heroic identity after the Omphale incident, Hercules selects a spectacular means of suicide that will engrave an honorable death in everyone's memory while simultaneously creating a platform for his desired apotheosis. He cries to his friends in a moment of clarity, "But shall Hercules / Dye by a womans hand? No." (L2v), then constructs a funeral pyre for himself. Hercules builds his pyre to be a triumph, one which proves his willingness and ability to undertake any trial, even when the trial must conclude with his own death. Hercules places himself in the path of death in order to raise himself to Olympus. By "thron[ing]" himself "in the midst of fire" (L2v), Hercules stages a coronation at his own funeral. What should be his defeat by a jealous wife is remade as a conquest, a spectacle proving Hercules's worth and inherent divinity.

Hercules's builds his apotheostic pyre to push himself completely beyond the boundaries of the earthly stage. On it, Hercules suffers beyond human tolerance and burns away the limiting flesh of his mortal birth. Even while he burns his famous accessories – his lion's skin, his club – Hercules asks his friends to record his end for posterity:

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[76] Ovid describes the effect of the envenomed shirt thus:

> He went about too teare
> The deathfull garment from his backe: but where he pulled, there
> He pulld away the skin: and (which is lothsum too report)
> It eyther cleaved to his limbes and members in such sort
> As that he could not pull it of, or else it tare away
> The flesh, that bare his myghty bones and grisly sinewes lay.
> The scalding venim boyling in his blood, did make it hisse,
> As when a gad of steele red whot in water quenched is.
> There was no measure of his paine. (9.203-211)

These lines could be in the minds of audience members as this scene unfolded.

heape fire on fire,

And pile on pile, till you haue made a structure

To flame as high as heauen, and record this

Though by the Gods and Fates we are ore-throwne,

Alcides dies by no hand but his owne. (L3r)

He will triumph even without the properties of his legend, transcending both his physical body and the trappings of his mortal fame as he dies a noble, even Stoic death. Continuing the ceremony of self-deification, Hercules recites a list of his accomplishments, calling upon his father to see him anew: "Olimpicke thunderer now behold thy sonne, / Of whose divine parts make a starre, that Atlas / May shrinke beneath the weight of Hercules" (L2v). In this demand to be seen, Hercules articulates his spectacular agenda: make me immortal. Although Hercules does not seem to fear death, he does fear being forgotten. He calls upon heaven to see him and to find him worthy, almost like an early modern martyr calling upon his God as he enters the execution grounds.

Even as Hercules's hubristic self-immolation calls to mind martyrs who were burned for their faith, the scene actually denies any connection between the spectacle of martyrdom and Hercules's death.[77] The play appropriates the spectacle, imagery, and even the discourse of victorious martyrdom, but Hercules's own words break the

[77] Although Heywood's text does not make Hercules a true martyr, one of the source texts for this scene considers the connection more closely. *Hercules Oetaeus*, translated in 1566-67 by the Puritan John Studley, expands upon the agonies of the pyre, which are not present in Heywood's version. As Ovid and Heywood emphasize the agonies of the poisoned shirt, John Studley's translation focuses on the pains of burning. Given the earlier translation's date in the tumultuous 1560s, there could be more work done to tease out the implications of that translation. In one disturbing sequence, narrated by Philoctetes to Hercules's mother, Hercules undergoes incredible tortures in the fire: "The flame lickt up his singed hayre, and yet he did not winke / But open kept his staring eyes." *Hercules Oetaeus* in *Seneca: His Tenne Tragedies* (1581) (New York: Da Capo Press, 1969) 250.

connection. Hercules "placeth himselfe" in the fire made by his comrades on stage, and thanks them for their help, stating, "thus [. . .] with a dreadlesse brow [I] confront my death" (L2v). His eagerness for death echoes the remarkable equanimity with which early modern Christian martyrs approached the scaffold, just as the staging of the pyre could look frighteningly similar to the fires used to burn state criminals and martyrs. Indeed, Hercules's funeral pyre as well as his pleas with his own god/father certainly suggests a parallel between Hercules's suicide and martyrdom. However, one cannot martyr oneself as Hercules does and be a true martyr. Brad Gregory discusses this dynamic when he distinguishes martyrdom from suicide: "the phrase 'to martyr oneself' is an oxymoron when applied to the early modern period; to be reckoned a martyr, one had 'to be martyred.'" He continues, "the voluntary nature of martyrdom was profoundly paradoxical: the martyrs' agency depended upon relinquishing control, their strength upon a naked admission of their utter impotence and total dependence on God."[78] Hercules is incapable of this kind of passivity; the threat of victimhood is what drives him into the flames in the first place. However, he will yield to a god before the end.

Hercules does recognize the importance of dying well, a spectacular agenda he shares with early modern martyrs. A number of martyrs explicitly considered how their deaths would be received and how they might bring more glory to God through their public executions. Bradley Gregory discusses one Protestant martyr in particular, Joyce Lewis, who was burned at the stake in 1557. According to Foxe, in the days leading up to her execution, Lewis "'desired certain of her friends to come unto her, with whom (when they came) she consulted how she might behave herself, that her death might be

[78] Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1999) 105, 132.

most glorious to the name of God, comfortable to his people, and also most discomfortable unto the enemies of God.'"[79] From an evangelical standpoint, an execution that creates a martyr is a tremendous opportunity to gain converts. Lewis seeks counsel on how to best serve the Protestant cause through the spectacle of her death. Her behavior could (and did) determine whether her death was an execution or martyrdom, a punishment or a gift.[80] Dying well--which would be patient sufferance for the Christian martyr and roaring resistance for the warrior--would immortalize one's life and worth as a Christian, or as a hero.[81] Hercules has a similar awareness about the importance of his death in this play, but he intends to secure his own immortality and glory rather than the glory of god or his father. A hero must not be passively poisoned; he must suffer and die heroically and spectacularly in order to preserve his fame. With his reputation at stake, especially after his shameful cross-dressing, Hercules creates a set-piece to recuperate his reputation.[82]

Although Hercules controls the moments leading up to his apotheosis, the event itself requires the intervention of a god. As with his previous shows of power, Hercules's rebellious acts must be tempered by divine pageants. The stage directions for the final

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[79] Gregory 98 (qtd. and modernized from 1563 *Acts and Monuments*, pp. 1619-1621).

[80]Lewis impressed bystanders with her frailty as well as with her equanimity and modesty as she approached the scaffold--after asking for a beer to wet her throat she sang hymns and called upon the crowd to pray with her, which many did (Gregory 99).

[81] Cf. Michel Foucault: "[the execution] was a moment of truth that all the spectators questioned: each word, each cry, the duration of the agony, the resisting body, the life that clung desperately to it, all this constituted a sign." *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (1977; New York: Vintage, 1979) 46.

[82] Heywood's play is not the only one that considers the importance of Hercules's death. In Sophocles's *The Women of Trachis*, "The major concern of Heracles at the end is a death suitable to his greatness" (Waith 24).

push undercut Hercules's agency by including a *deus ex machina*--the hand of Jupiter. When Hercules at last falls silent while the flames consume him, the directions call for:

> *Iupiter aboue strikes him with a thunder-bolt, his body sinkes, and from the heavens discends a hand in a cloud that from the place where Hercules was burnt, brings vp a starre, and fixeth it in the firmament*. (L3r)

While Hercules lies atop his pyre, burning away the mortal parts of himself, Jupiter emerges to help Hercules transcend his earthly bounds with a thunderbolt.[83] Once again the three tiers of vertical staging come into play as Jupiter throws the bolt, Hercules sinks below, and the hand of a god reaches down to bring a star from the stage up to the heavens. This spectacle reverses Hercules's earlier crossing of the boundary into hell, but also demands a new interpretation of the movement. While the gods, mortals, and devils departed in "three wayes" at the finale of *The Silver Age*, here Hercules is lowered and then taken up rather than departing under his own power. Hercules stages his death in order to guarantee his heroic legacy, but the intercession of Jupiter complicates Hercules's reputation. The gods reward his striving with immortality, but Hercules does not achieve transcendence alone.

Even though Hercules cries to his father with a list of his accomplishments, his deeds do not ensure his divinity.[84] Hercules is completely passive according to the stage direction, which shows his body struck, sunk, and then raised by a literal hand of god.

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[83] Philip Butterworth's extensive research on pyrotechniques in the English and Scottish theaters explains much about how these sorts of effects were created. Thunderbolts were generally staged using a flaming squib hitched on a line stretched between two points, here likely the heavens and Hercules's pyre. The squib could be made to create an explosion when it reached the bottom of its wire, although some productions simply created the sound of thunder while the squib was moving. Butterworth finds this technique described by characters in several plays: Act One of Dekker's *If this be not a Good Play, the Devil is in it* has an explicit stage direction calling for "Fire-workes on lines." *Theatre of Fire: Special Effects in Early English and Scottish Theatre* (London : Society for Theatre Research, 1998) 42-45.

[84] Cf. Galinsky 5.

His onstage audience seems to construe the end as Hercules's victory, evidenced by Jason's reading of the spectacle as: "Juno thou hast done thy worst; he now defies / What thou canst more, his fame shall mount the skies" (L3r). Jason interprets Hercules's ascension as a defiant accomplishment, ignoring the necessity of the gods' approval and intervention--including Juno's--for Hercules to become immortal. Hercules boldly presents himself to his divine kin--"Olimpicke thunderer now behold thy sonne"--but then begs to be made a "starre," even asking Juno herself to "glut thy hatred now." (L2v). Hercules claims to die by no hand but his own, but the play displays that he ascends only with help.

Hercules's assisted apotheosis is a puzzling finale to *The Brazen Age*. The hero's friends declare that "we all have seene Alcides deifi'd," (L3r) but that deification is visibly controlled by the heavens rather than by Hercules himself. The warrior of spectacular battles, who carried the symbols of his conquests on his back and in his hand, becomes part of an Olympian triumph at play's end. As the title page to *The Brazen Age* implies, this is where Hercules "yielded" to fate. The spectacle also suggests that heroic virtue and modest yielding will be rewarded spectacularly with metamorphosis and immortality, as Hercules's burnt remains--"all that was his mothers"--are "chang'd by fire," and "what he tooke of Iove, and was deuine, / Now a bright star in the high heauens must shine" (L3r). The spectacle of fire cleanses Hercules like a purgatorial flame and allows him access to the highest reaches of existence.

The heavenly hand that reaches down to pluck Hercules up to heaven hints at the availability of secular immortality. Hercules did not fight his way into heaven; he was allowed entrance and escorted into his eternity. After delineating the unique powers of

Hercules, the play turns and ends his life and his story by pointing out that he was still a man who needed divine intervention. His urge to transcend the limits of the stage's verticality as well as the fourth wall of the playhouse is not rewarded. Heywood's series of plays repetitively repel Hercules's rebellions with images of peace and divine might. No matter how much theatrical space Hercules occupies, he never succeeds completely on his own terms. The plays consistently argue for yielding by defeating Hercules's spectacles. Hercules's agonies, madness, and defeated agendas all come out against his striving. Yet in spite of their insistence upon countermanding Hercules's spectacular imperatives, Heywood's plays relish the displays he accomplishes. Even the greatest must not be allowed to conquer all.

The Herculean figure cannot help but live lavishly and die early, reined in by a universe intolerant of his rebelliousness. All the early modern efforts to tame Hercules, to make him palatable, are brushed off in both the Heywoods' incarnations. On the page his strength is made virtuous and his conquests are changed to moral victories, but in the theater Hercules is all spectacle. *The Four Ages* link Hercules's dynamic spectacularity--which travels between the tiers of the stage and even spills dangerously into the playhouse--directly to his suffering. The altered biography suggests a causal relationship between spectacular excess and shame or punishment. Yet even as Hercules burns to death in his pyre, the play suggests that such a fate is the ideal theatrical end. As will be seen with other spectacular Herculean figures like Tamburlaine, the spectacle maker always contains within him the potential for complete self-destruction. But they will also go out with a bang, not a whimper.

CHAPTER 2

SPECTACULAR SUFFERING: *EDWARD II* AND *TITUS ANDRONICUS*

In *Edward II* and *Titus Andronicus*, Marlowe and Shakespeare spectacularize punishment, and the result is an emotional maelstrom: there is more theatrical excitement in suffering than in the political ceremonies of punishment. These two playwrights exploit the gruesome intensity of uncontrolled violence and torture to disturb the audience's response to characters and events on stage. The violence done to Edward II and Lavinia does not make them victims; it makes them spectacular and therefore more theatrically viable. *Edward II* defamiliarizes the viewer's response to injured bodies by placing the audience in the position of voyeurs watching an assassination. The horrific torture and death of King Edward II are appalling yet mesmerizing, particularly when juxtaposed with the legitimate execution of his murderers. *Titus Andronicus* forces its audience to reconsider amputation. Rather than being handicapped by their lost limbs, Lavinia and Titus both evolve into dynamic revengers, newly capable of creative and darkly comic retribution. Both plays activate the images of broken bodies, making them spectacularly superior to the decapitations and amputations of hands, ears, and noses which took place on "stage[s] set up in the Market-place."[1]

Several critics suggest that equating the stage's portrayal of punishments with penal scaffolds is misleading. Steven Mullaney and Molly Easo Smith argue that theatrical representations are different from the actual scaffold; that dismemberment and execution were social rituals that were structured to effectively eradicate criminals from

[1] William Camden, *Annales, The True and Royall History of the Famous Empresse Elizabeth Queene of England...* (London, 1625) Bk.3, 16. 120.

the community.[2] Mullaney would have it that "execution is treason's epilogue, spoken by the law,"[3] and that it eliminates crime and replaces it with authority. But such epilogues were hardly the last word: similar scenes of pain resurfaced on London's stages, where theatrical representations of their use undermined their significance while exploiting their theatrical energy.

Staging broken bodies both mimics and interrogates the decapitations and maimings in Tudor London and beyond.[4] In public punishments and public theater alike, the "very excess of the violence employed is one of the elements of its glory: the fact that the guilty man should moan and cry out under the blows is not a shameful side-effect."[5] Far from shameful, the expression of pain can make for powerful theater. But the plays that feature dismembered bodies reveal considerable unease about the relationship between punishing bodies and punishing crimes. On stage, the state's arsenal of dismemberment solves very little; spectacular displays of bodies in pain are theatrical and emotionally compelling but rarely ethically grounded. The unsettling connection

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[2] Molly Easo Smith, "The Theater and the Scaffold: Death as Spectacle in *The Spanish Tragedy*" *SEL* 32.2 (1992): 217-32. For more on public execution as a community-binding ritual, see Stephen X. Mead, "The Crisis of Ritual in *Titus Andronicus*" *Exemplaria* 6.2 (Fall 1994): 459-79; Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966)*;* and Rene Girard, *Violence and the Sacred,* Trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1977).

[3] Mullaney, "Lying Like Truth: Riddle, Representation and Treason in Renaissance England," *ELH* 47.1 (Spring 1980): 32-47. Cf. Lacey Baldwin Smith, "English Treason Trials and Confessions in the Sixteenth Century," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 15.4 (Oct 1954): 471-98. Smith argues that the vast majority of Tudor traitors denounced their accusers at trial, but went to the scaffold without a peep.

[4] Stephen Greenblatt writes that maimings and executions "would have been easy for Elizabethan actors to represent in graphic, realistic detail, for they had seen such things performed in the flesh on scaffolds in the suburbs, near the playhouse." See *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare* (New York: Norton, 2004) 179.

[5] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Trans. Alan Sheridan (1977) (New York: Vintage, 1979) 34.

between staging violence and savoring violence for its theatrical worth often goes unmentioned in the critical commentary.

Critical analysis of stage violence frequently proceeds according to close reading or allegories. One need only look at the past decade's lively exchanges in *Connotations* over Lucius's role in the violence of *Titus Andronicus*--featuring Anthony Brian Taylor, Maurice Hunt, Philip C. Kolin, and Jonathan Bate--to recognize the enormous critical interest in spectacular bloodshed. Eugene Waith and Katherine Rowe, though separated by forty years of criticism, both find in the violence of *Titus Andronicus* emblems of disorder and of lost agency.[6] Richard Rowland interprets the spitting of Edward II to be a representation of the punishment for sodomy in hell.[7] For Joan Parks, Marlowe's vision of Edward III's accession makes clear "that this image of legal succession and justice done masks a bloody disruption in English history."[8] Michael Neill's work on dismemberment imagery, along with that of Karen Coddon and Gillian Murray Kendall, places great importance on the relationship between bodies and the metaphor of the body politic.[9] Politics also inform Molly Smith's reading of *Titus*, which presents a world with "punitive practices not unlike those held at Tyburn or Tower Hill," and Karen Cunningham's comparison of Marlovian executions with legally-sanctioned violence in

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[6] Eugene Waith, "The Metamorphosis of Violence in *Titus Andronicus,*" *Shakespeare Survey* 10 (1957): 39-49; Katherine Rowe, *Dead Hands: Fictions of Agency, Renaissance to Modern* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1999) 52-76.

[7] Richard Rowland, ed. *Edward II* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1994) xxxii.

[8] Joan Parks, "History, Tragedy, and Truth in Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II*" *SEL* 39.2 (Spring 1999): 289.

[9] Michael Neill, "'Amphitheaters in the Body': Playing with Hands on the Shakespearian Stage," *Shakespeare Survey* 48 (1995): 23-50; Karin S. Coddon, "'Unreal Mockery': Unreason and the Problem of Spectacle in *Macbeth,*" *ELH* 56.3 (Fall 1989): 485-501; and Gillian Murray Kendall, "Overkill in Shakespeare," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 43.1 (Spring 1992): 33-50.

England.[10] These readings seek a moral center or an intellectualism in the staging of violence that may not be present.

The violence against bodies in these two plays operates spectacularly: the sight of these incomplete or tortured bodies influences an audience's reaction. Huston Diehl has argued that stage violence, although bloody, "need not be gratuitous (like Hollywood horror movies) or ludicrous (like Saturday-morning cartoons)."[11] Still earlier, Maurice Charney acknowledged the persuasiveness of violence, asserting that "violence tends to produce an extreme situation in which ideas, values, and styles may be confronted and tested."[12] Playwrights stage dismemberment "for its own visceral thrill," for the shock and surprise, but they also use it to persuade audiences to feel. Whether the audience feels sympathy for the victims of such violence or simply feels exhilarated by the excess is a more complicated question.[13]

An analysis of severed heads in *Edward II* and severed hands in *Titus Andronicus* confirms that Marlowe and Shakespeare had reservations about spectacular ceremonies of local and state punishment. Their two plays acknowledge the social functions of public sacrifice and execution, but they veer away from their public square analogues, awarding

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[10] Molly Easo Smith, "Spectacles of Torment in *Titus Andronicus,*" *SEL* 36 (1996): 316; Karen Cunningham, "Renaissance Execution and Marlovian Elocution: The Drama of Death," *PMLA* 105.2 (March 1990): 209-222.

[11] Huston Diehl, "The Iconography of Violence in English Renaissance Tragedy," *Renaissance Drama* 11 (1980): 44.

[12] Maurice Charney, "The Persuasiveness of Violence in Elizabethan Plays," *Renaissance Drama* 2 (1969): 59-70.

[13] Daniel Kane, "The Vertue of Spectacle in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus,*" *Connotations* 10.1 (2000/2001): 10. Cf. John H. Astington, "Gallows Scenes of the Elizabethan Stage," *Theatre Notebook* 37.1 (1983): 3-9.

considerable stage time to the visible agony of the suffering victim.[14] Spectacles of punishment and pain need not justify their proceedings in most cases; they must only entertain and stimulate their viewers.[15] As a result, spectacles of punishment could excite any number of reactions in an audience, an excess that the scaffold sought to contain.

Representations of executions or amputations stimulate precisely the diversity of interpretations that state punishments sought to thwart on their scaffolds, where strictly ceremonial proceedings and published official versions aimed to control reception.[16] John Bellamy relates several occasions when the condemned's last words were interrupted or censored by officials. One priest who asserted that he was being executed for his faith was stopped in mid-speech by the officials who reminded him that he was charged and convicted of *treason*. On the stage, however, spectacles of suffering broadcast competing understandings. Plays featuring dismemberment represent an Elizabethan apprehension that public punishments might be tendentious, and that cutting off hands or heads was hardly an effective way to safeguard the state.[17] Instead, the spectacle of punishments

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[14] I link these two playwrights in spite of arguments (like Stephen Greenblatt's) which suggest that Marlowe's handling of executions, such as those in *Jew of Malta*, are replete with "corrosive, merciless irony." He believes that Shakespeare "repudiates" this tendency by treating the process more delicately and by regarding the villains more kindly than his colleague (*Will in the World* 280-286). I observe a similar ambivalence about punishment in both, handled differently by each.

[15] Richard Dutton's work has suggested that there were relatively few interventions by the state into performances. See "Censorship," *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York: Columbia UP, 1997) 287-304; and *Mastering the Revels: The Regulation and Censorship of English Renaissance Drama* (London: Macmillan, 1991).

[16] According to Karen Cunningham, "using theatrical techniques to disguise personal motives as public justice, Tudor officials exploited actual violence to authenticate their version of events and dramatize an intimidating conclusion" (214). Many pamphlets circulated fictionalized versions of the deceased's "final words." See John Bellamy, *The Tudor Law of Treason* (London: Routledge, 1979)198.

[17] Cecil's defense of the Lopez trial and execution was published to answer a series of libels punished locally and abroad: "And thereby it may manifestly appeare to all men, how [. . .] for sowing of sedition by warrant and allowance of the same, these persons were iustly condemned of treason, and lawfully executed by the auncient lawes temporall of the Realme, without charging them for any other matter then for their practizes and conspiracies both abroade and at home against the Queene and the realme." The public

exploited the emotional affect of such amputations, even while the appetite for seeking truth and punishing crime through mutilation appeared to be ebbing.[18]

Under the Tudors, England shifted from punishing crimes through fines to punishing bodies. Dismemberment as a method of punishment re-emerged as a sentencing tool for the state after centuries of disuse.[19] The much older Norman law favoring penalties like castration and blinding had been abandoned by the mid-thirteenth century in favor of "medieval law," which was primarily concerned with personal (not state) retribution, and "feudal law," which was first and foremost about settling economic and property disputes between two parties.[20] Although corporal punishments never completely disappeared, they diminished in frequency. When public punishments regained prominence later in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, corporal violence returned to the fore. Flogging, mutilation, and death, once reserved for far more serious crimes, were now punishments for felonies like theft. In addition, "various new forms of corporeal punishment were introduced and in particular, torture became commonplace in

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execution is one important means of making justice "manifestly appeare." See William Cecil, Lord Burghley, *The Execution of / Iustice in England for maintenaunce / of publique and Christian peace, / against certeine stirrers of sedition*...2nd ed. (London, 1583) B3r.

[18] For more on the move away from corporal punishment and torture after the Tudors, see Elizabeth Hanson, "Torture and Truth in Renaissance England," *Representations* 34 (Spring 1991): 53-84. Cf. Molly Easo Smith on *Titus Andronicus*: "judicial torture reached its greatest ecumenity in the reign of Elizabeth [. . .] this perhaps explains Shakespeare's reliance on the spectacle of torture in this Elizabethan tragedy and his later departure to an exploration of psychological torment in plays such as *Macbeth* and *King Lear*" ("Spectacles of Torment" 318).

[19] For a broader European view of the trend towards corporal and capital punishments, see Michael R. Weisser, *Crime and Punishment in Early Modern Europe* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities P, 1979); Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish;* Pieter Spierenburg, *The Spectacle of Suffering: Executions and the evolution of repression: from a preindustrial metropolis to the European experience* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1984); and Mitchell B. Merback, *The Thief, the Cross, and the Wheel: Pain and the Spectacle of Punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1998).The first three texts primarily explore transformations in judicial practices; Merbeck is more interested in artistic representations of punishment.

[20] John Bellamy, *Crime and Public Order in England in the Later Middle Ages* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1973) 182.

most judicial proceedings."[21] England moved from a system of private negotiations and personal vengeance toward a state-controlled justice system in which the Tudors "gradually established a monopoly of violence over most of England."[22] As Pieter Spierenburg notes, the increase in the frequency of corporal and capital penalties does not indicate an increased taste for violence, but a need for visible legitimacy: "[The increase] was primarily a consequence of the growth and stabilization of a system of criminal justice."[23] Elaborately choreographed dismemberments were performed on raised scaffolds in market squares; state sanctioned punishment and retribution were meant to be seen.[24] Presenting dismemberment before the public signals its legitimacy--open proceedings and spectacular maimings suggest that the legal system has nothing to hide and that the accused is rightly punished before God and man.[25] Ironically, the very visibility that was supposed to guarantee legitimacy at Tyburn instigated doubt in the public theater.

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[21] Weisser 100-101. I have not found any evidence that torture became "commonplace," but it was certainly a tool in the Tudor arsenal.

[22] Spierenburg 10.

[23] Spierenburg 12.

[24] The expansion of the infamous Tyburn Tree facilities exemplifies the increasing trend toward spectacular execution and the subsequent need for more rope: Tyburn began as a convenient grove of trees for hangings that was later expanded with a more permanent gallows. However, the typical gallows could only be used to hang a handful of people. In 1571, a new elevated scaffold was built on the site with three sides that had space to hang 24 people at once. See Mark Herber, *Criminal London: A Pictorial History from Medieval Times to 1939* (Chichester, West Sussex: Phillimore, 2002) 118; and John Bellamy*:* "The detailed instructions given about the height and position of this scaffold [Tyburn] should remind us that the intention was that all those present should be able to see the execution; this was standard practice" (*Treason* 189-90).

[25] Although penalties of exposure, meant to publicly shame the accused, are included in the category of corporal punishments, they generally do not involve dismemberment, and I will not be considering the cucking stool, the scold's bridle, the stocks, or the pillory in any detail. For more information on these mechanisms, see Luke Owen Pike, *A History of Crime in England*, vol. 2 (1873-1876; Montclair, NJ: Patterson Smith, 1968) 84-5; and William Andrews, *Bygone Punishments* (London: William Andrews & Co., 1899) 140-55.

Punishments featuring dismemberment were spectacular set-pieces meant to shock observers and persuade against criminality. Fatal or not, they advertised the state's strength and competency. The symbolism was hardly subtle: libel and coining, which met with the amputation of hands, deprived one of "the executors of our *Primary Conceptions*."[26] Crimes against the crown also included cutting of ears and noses, as well as branding.[27] The most important aspect of non-fatal dismemberments was not the injury itself, however, but the visibility of the loss and its effect on the condemned's life after the dismemberment. These men "lived as an example of the danger which attended the commission of petty crimes."[28] Dismemberment lasted far longer than the shaming punishments of the pillory or cucking stool. Missing hands, like slit noses and missing ears, intimidated others no less than they humiliated the criminal.

Executions were likewise cautionary. The procedure was carefully managed and steeped in threatening symbolism, for its success depended upon an audience's understanding and acceptance of the sight before them.[29] Convicted traitors were subject to a dizzying array of painful tortures that ranged in intensity according to the whims of the crowd.[30] Decapitation was a privilege for nobles facing the death sentence, as its

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[26] Johann Rothmann, *Cheiromantia* (London 1642), qtd. in Michael Neill, 28.

[27] For libel and seditious words one might also be whipped, put in the pillory, have one ear cut off and the side of one's nose slit, or be branded with "ss" for stirrer up of sedition. These were the sentences for convicted libelist Alexander Leighton in 1630. (Cf. Pike 162-63, Andrews 134-163, Bellamy *Treason* 184) Although "libel against the crown" may be understood as "seditious libel," this legal term was not officially used in Star Chamber until 1605, when it was defined loosely as criticism of public persons or government (*de libellis famosis*).

[28] Andrews 134.

[29] Cf. Molly Easo Smith, "Spectacles of Torment" 324.

[30] Sympathetic traitors often had their legs pulled on by the crowd while they were hanging to make sure they died before being mutilated. For example, Alfred Marks recalls how Robert Southwell the poet priest inspired pity, "for at his execution the bystanders prevailed on the executioner to let him hang till dead"

relative speed and efficiency was a welcome alternative to the slow torture of hanging and the mutilation that often followed.[31] Traitors like Dr. Lopez--accused of attempting to poison his royal patient--were hanged, then cut down while still alive, since hanging entailed slow strangulation rather than a quick neck break. A disemboweling followed, which often included "the abscission of the victim's 'members' as well as the slitting of the stomach, the putting out of the entrails, and the cutting out of the heart." The victim's entrails were then burned, often while he was still alive to watch.[32] The significance of the mutilations would be clear--the traitor's bowels are burst like Judas Iscariot's, while his "members" were cut off "to show his issue was disinherited with corruption of blood."[33] Finally, decapitation and quartering followed. The deterrent effect might be augmented by displaying the quarters of the traitor's body and the head--which were parboiled or tarred to preserve them--at locations where the treason had been hatched,

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(169). Less popular prisoners, like Dr. John Story in 1571, were cut down very quickly from the noose so that they would suffer. See Bellamy, *Treason* 203; and Alfred Marks, *Tyburn Tree Its History and Annals* (London: Brown, Langham & Co.,[1908]) 159.

[31] There were gender differences in sentencing as well as class differences. Although men were typically hanged for civil offenses, women were often burned rather than hanged for the same charges. This was considered a commutation for women. Justice Blackstone sums up the logic thus: "'For as the decency due to the sex forbids the exposing and publicly mangling their bodies, their sentence is, to be drawn to the gallows, and there to be burnt alive'" (qtd. in Andrews 98-99). Traditionally, executioners would mercifully strangle those sentenced to burning at the stake before the fire became too intense. J. A. Sharpe, *Crime in Seventeenth-Century England: A county Study* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1983) 142.

[32] As an example, John Bellamy relates the story of Sir Thomas Blount's execution in 1400, "when the executioner was busy burning his entrails before his eyes, someone asked the knight if he would like a drink and received the reply that he would, but he had nowhere to put it" (*Crime* 188-89). Jody Enders describes this practice as forcing tortured men to "view the staging of their own dismemberment." *The Medieval Theater of Cruelty* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1999) 188.

[33] Bellamy, *Treason* 204. In Acts 1:18, Judas is said to have died in the field he had bought with the silver coins, his stomach bursting and his bowels spilling out. "As a result, Judas is usually represented hanged, sometimes with a devil pulling his soul out of his burst abdomen. This latter motif, derived from the Acts narrative, was attributed to the fact that his sinful soul could not exit through the mouth, which had been sanctified by kissing Christ at Gethsemane." Véronique Plesch, "Notes for the Staging of a Late Medieval Passion Play," *Material Culture & Medieval Drama*, ed. Clifford Davidson (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1999): 93.

where the traitor had found support, or at public sites like London Bridge and the other gates of the city.[34]

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Given his penchant for subversion, a playwright like Christopher Marlowe might be expected to doubt the legitimacy of public punishments. In *Edward II*, however, he acknowledges the necessity of public punishment as a mode of legitimating power even as he undercuts its effectiveness. Jealous and worried about the power of Gaveston, the king's newly-returned favorite, the nobles turn against their ruler. Monarch and nobles only threaten to dismember one another at first, but then their language explodes into action and Gaveston is captured and decapitated. Mortimer seizes power and has Edward taken to a dungeon where he is tortured and finally executed in a manner designed to leave no trace. Mortimer has in mind a secret assassination, but Marlowe stages it as the spectacular climax of the play. After learning of his father's death, the young Edward III ascends the throne and publicly punishes his father's killer, using the scaffold and the traditional sentence for high treason. The play ends with a funeral ceremony and the display of the traitor's head by the new king.

Only one hundred lines from the play's opening, King Edward II and his nobles are threatening each other using the language of decapitation. Edward celebrates the return of his darling, Gaveston, while his nobles express their outrage at the king's favoritism. Edmund, the king's brother, urges him, "Brother, revenge it, and let these

[34] For example, the quarters of the Gunpowder Plot conspirators were deliberately placed: Fawkes and the other leaders' heads were placed on London Bridge, but the two men who died before capture--Robert Catesby and Thomas Percy--were exhumed, decapitated, and their heads placed on stakes atop Parliament, the building they sought to destroy. See Antonia Fraser, *Faith and Treason: The Story of the Gunpowder Plot* (New York: Doubleday, 1996) 195; and Eric N. Simons, *The Devil of the Vault: A Life of Guy Fawkes* (London: Frederick Muller Limited, 1963) 209. For the practice of displaying quarters and heads in England, see Bellamy, *Treason* 208; Herber 114; Andrews 80, 111; and Marks 155.

their heads / Preach upon poles for trespass of their tongues" (1.1.116-17).[35] The brash Mortimer retorts, "Cousin, our hands, I hope, shall fence our heads / And strike off his that makes you threaten us" (122-23), while Mortimer Senior agrees that "Wiltshire hath men enough to save our heads" (126). Lancaster storms from the palace with all the nobles after warning Edward,

> Adieu, my lord, and either change your mind
> Or look to see the throne where you should sit
> To float in blood, and at thy wanton head
> The glozing head of thy base minion thrown. (129-32)

Threats of insurrection and disobedience summon competing images of headlessness, the body politic without a leader, and a body at war with itself.[36] Edmund's leap to the language of execution exacerbates the situation, as it seems to incite the nobles to counter with their own dialect of spectacular punishment. Although Edmund threatens Mortimer and the nobles with punishment for treason, they promise their own vigilante justice when they propose to show the king a real traitor by bringing him Gaveston's head.

Edward's refusal to participate in the language of decapitation so readily employed by his brother and his nobles suggests a worrisome weakness. It quickly becomes apparent that the king must control access to the language of punishment as carefully as the act itself. Actual decollation begins soon after with the killing of

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[35] All quotations taken from *Edward II* in *Doctor Faustus and Other Plays*, ed. David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen (New York: Oxford UP, 1995).

[36] This debate and the ensuing violence inspired by Gaveston's arrival may have had what Richard Rowland calls a "profound immediacy" for audiences after 1587, when Holinshed's revised *Chronicles* was published with new additions about Scotland. In it, young James VI is portrayed as enthralled by base favorites in language that foreshadows this play. Walsingham wrote to the Scottish court and advised James to change his behavior by citing Edward II as a negative example. In addition, in his accusations against Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Kyd declared that Marlowe wanted very much to join James in Scotland and send other young men to him as well (xix-xxiii).

Gaveston by the nobles, but even then the king cannot react satisfactorily to the betrayal. Edward responds to the news of Gaveston's death by threatening the murderers: "If I be England's king, in lakes of gore / Your headless trunks, your bodies will I trail, / That you may drink your fill and quaff in blood" (3.2.135-137). Compared to the nobles' bold action against Gaveston, Edward's apocalyptic words sound puny, and only echo the earlier, more forceful language of the nobles. The king can merely parrot the language of violent spectacle; he cannot enact it.

Beginning the play with the discourse of decapitation and then placing Gaveston's execution offstage amplifies the audience's expectation for violence. The language of decollation and the nobles' narratives of decapitation feed anticipation that soon, this violence will be deployed *on* stage in order to stabilize the realm. The play offers no alternative solutions to the usurpations and betrayals that run rampant through England. There will be violence, and it will happen soon. Decapitation started this civil war, and it must be used to end it. But the legitimate decapitation that will end the usurper government of Mortimer and Queen Isabel is deferred again and again. The play teases its viewers instead with chase scenes between Edward II and the enemy nobles and scenes featuring Edward's disloyal family and intimates until at last, the king is captured and imprisoned.

Rather than witnessing the death of those who rebel against the king, we are presented with the torture and murder of the king himself. Although the dungeon scenes serve as an additional piece of evidence against Mortimer and lead the play towards a restoration of justice, the torture and eventual execution of Edward II also exist to renew the play. The scenes manipulate the audience's desire for action by presenting a scene of

spectacular intensity, but the vision of the dungeon is also a horrific exploration of torture and regicide. Edward is tormented body and soul and then murdered by an assassin. The emotional affect of his suffering rivets the audience and transforms their understanding of the end of the play.

The king is taken to various prisons under cover of darkness "like the nightly bird" (5.3), but the audience is privy to all his movements. His beard is shaved in puddle water by his keepers, who then chain the deposed king in the sewers of a castle and keep him awake night after night with drums.[37] These mechanisms are meant to break the king by wiping away any traces of his identity and his sanity, but instead of erasing Edward, these torments insistently expose his suffering as the audience looks on like spies, seeing what was meant to be hidden. The play forces the audience to participate in Edward's torture and death. There is no consideration given to whether Edward II deserves to die, only how he will die.[38] The deferral of spectacular action until Act Five makes the audience crave this long-delayed consequence even as they squirm at the defilement of a king.

In spite of five acts featuring Edward's terrible decisions--the nobles' rebellion seems justified at many points--the spectacularization of Edward's grisly murder may inspire audience sympathy. H. B. Charlton has argued, "it is a measure of the final scenes that they can make us forget so entirely the deplorable folly we have been

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[37] Marlowe's consideration of torture evokes a similar contemporary consternation about the dungeons of England. Elizabeth Hanson's excellent work on torture details how officials sought truth by tormenting the imprisoned body.

[38] Michael Hattaway writes that "the play does not address itself to the question of why the king should be killed but how the king should be killed." *Elizabethan Popular Theatre: Plays in Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1982) 142.

witnessing." [39] By foregrounding Edward's pain and theatrically activating the tortures, however, Marlowe may also be making us forget to sympathize even as we are left shuddering with horror at this death. Maurice Charney describes how scenes like this can operate: "The rawness and cruelty of these scenes do not allow for any mitigating effects, so that violence on the stage may be persuasive and emotionally convincing in a way no narration could aspire to."[40] The violence persuades us to pity Edward's suffering even as it encourages its audience to relish the drama. There is room for a number of reactions on this roller coaster of pathetic appeal, and it is difficult to pin down how any one audience member might react. The torture scene becomes an opportunity for theater: the spectacularization of Edward's torments borrows the historical reports of Edward's murder to stage a violating assassination that both fascinates and repels the audience.

The vulgar death stroke--spitting with a poker--creates its own series of associations for the viewer, including the potential connections to Edward's loving relationship with his Gaveston. However, the play never firmly alleges that Edward's homoerotic relationships with his favorites condemn him to death. Many characters comment on Edward's blatant misbehavior, declaring that "never doted Jove on Ganymede / So much as he on cursed Gaveston," (1.4.180-81), or describe how "he claps his cheeks and hangs about his neck, / Smiles in his face and whispers in his ears" (1.2.51-52). Gaveston's own plans for frolicking with Edward suggest a playfully prominent sexuality, such as his "Italian masques" featuring men and boys dressed as satyrs and nymphs, and "a lovely boy in Dian's shape [. . .] And in his sportful hands an olive tree / To hide those parts which men delight to see." (1.1.54-64). Yet these masques

[39] H. B. Charlton and R. D. Waller, eds. *Edward II* (1930) (New York: Gordian Press, 1966) 61.

[40] Charney 61.

are kept offstage, like Gaveston's death, and so the audience cannot judge.[41] Although Mortimer Senior argues hopefully that perhaps Gaveston is only Edward's minion--another Hephaestion or Patroclus--the emphatically anal punishment of the king implies that his carnal desires are also being disciplined.[42] The lovestruck king who wished that the "sea o'erwhelm my land / Than bear the ship that shall transport [Gaveston] hence" (1.1.151-152), is punished by a fatal penetration. Though the play toys with linking Edward's physical desire to his punishment, the king is spitted so that his body will appear undamaged.

Through Lightborn, Mortimer's chosen assassin, Marlowe taps into a particularly English concern over invisible methods of murder. In 1531 a cook named Richard Rose was convicted of poisoning his master and several dinner guests. Henry VIII was so troubled about a potential upsurge in criminal poisoning, which he considered a more subtle "Italian" style of homicide, that he ordered a new act to punish such crimes. As a result, Parliament passed the Act for Poisoning, and Richard Rose was boiled to death at Smithfield.[43] Marlowe's Lightborn embodies all that Henry VIII feared; he is an Italianate assassin whose murders are so subtle as to be undetectable:

> I learned in Naples how to poison flowers,
>
> To strangle with a lawn thrust through the throat,
>
> To pierce the windpipe with a needle's point,
>
> Or, whilst one is asleep, to take a quill

[41] Richard Rowland argues that the references to masquing would have hit close to home for Elizabethan audiences because masques like Gaveston's were being played at Elizabeth's Court (*xxviii)*.

[42] Huston Diehl notes that the punishment for sodomites in medieval hell is spitting (43).

[43] A maid servant was boiled for poisoning her mistress in 1531 in King's Lynn, as was Margaret Davy of Smithfield in 1542. (Andrews 106-7). Edward VI's ministers abolished this particular Act upon Edward's accession (Pike 82).

And blow a little powder in his ears,

Or open his mouth and pour quicksilver down. (5.4.30-35)

The intimacy of Lightborn's murders is particularly horrifying.[44] He penetrates orifices of the body--through the nose with poisoned scents, into the ears with powder, and down the throat with mercury. All that is lacking from the list (for men) is the anus--for Edward--and the eyes. Eyes are never an entry point for Lightborn's murders, because he and his work must remain unseen. A good assassin leaves a body unmarked and a death uninvestigated. When he realizes Lightborn's intentions, Edward begs him, "let me see the stroke before it comes" (5.5.76). Although Edward never sees the killing stroke, the audience can see nothing else.

Lightborn's hidden murder is spectacularized by the play, which allows the audience to observe a famous and dreadful historical event unfold. There is a *frisson* to this participation that makes it unlike the spectatorship of an execution. This murder is without clear meaning or symbolism, and, above all, it is just a play. There needn't be guilt or satisfaction, only appreciation from the audience. However, this pleasurable voyeurism is tempered by the upsetting emotional force of Edward's death and the basic understanding that this murder did actually take place. Activating this execution and putting it before an audience intrigues the viewer, but the spectacle's success depends on its ability to move its spectators. The play accomplishes this precarious balance by basing the depiction on historical evidence and then presenting it in the present.

[44] Lightborn's poisonous breath in the sleeper's ear foreshadows the murder of Hamlet senior as well as Milton's depiction of Lucifer--Lightborn's namesake--tempting Eve in the garden by whispering in her ear as she sleeps.

Marlowe draws directly from the popular account of Edward's death related in Holinshed, which involved a bed, a table, and a hot iron.[45] In its chronicle version, Edward's death is a small but dreadful occurrence. In the context of hundreds of years, it becomes just another piece of English history. Marlowe's play collapses the distance between the present and Edward's time and brings the murder into the presence of hundreds of witnesses. *Edward II* is a history play, like *Henry VI*, but it is also "a demythologizing work, uncompromisingly realist."[46] Although the method of the murder was well known, the play puts faces and bodies to history's names and dusty details, forcing the description into performance.

According to historical accounts, Edward was held down under a table or bed while being spitted with a hot poker. This technique leaves no bloody traces, as all the devastation occurs inside the confines of the body. As Lightborn assures Edward, "These handes were neuer stainde with innocent bloud, / Nor shall they now be tainted with a king's" (81-82). To guarantee that no traces will remain, Lightborn urges his helpers to be cautious in holding Edward down, saying "not too hard, lest that you bruise his body" (5.5.113). In spite of these efforts at secrecy, we see everything. Our sight is tormented by Marlowe and his spectacular colleague, Lightborn. Like his satanic ancestor, Lightborn illuminates for us what Mortimer meant to hide. Edward is pinned down by a bed or "table," which is "stamp[ed] on" by Matrevis and Gurney (112), while Lightborn

[45] The information is actually second-hand, as Holinshed drew his account from Geoffrey le Baker, who composed what was known as the *Chronicle of Thomas de la More* (H.B. Charlton 49).

[46] Hattaway 141.

carries out the gruesome spitting.[47] Edward screams in pain, and the thing is done, "bravely done," in Lightborn's professional opinion (116).

Unlike the enforced decorum of the scaffold, where meaning was clearly stated and repeated in word and deed, Lightborne's work is not meant to be watched.[48] Edward's death appears overtly brutal and painful, though his corpse will show no traces of his agony. Lightborne is presented as a professional, but watching his labor affects the audience differently than hearing about it. His previous murders rely for their elegance upon a tidy corpse. No one is privy to his methodology. Here, Edward's keepers must heat, fetch, and carry a poker, a featherbed, and a table from different parts of the stage, then hold the man down while Lightborn spits him. Although Lightborn achieves his bloodless killing, it requires three men and a procession of unwieldy tools to finish off the king. In spite of Lightborne's reputation, there is awkwardness and a thoughtless amateurism to the proceedings, which, while running counter to the ordered proceedings of a state execution, facilitate an additional range of emotional affect. The keepers themselves become uncomfortable as they nervously refer to Edward as "the king" even as 5.5 closes and wish the deed "undone" in the next scene (5.6.2). "Murder cannot be hid," moans Queen Isabella (5.6.46); the spectacle of Edward's death assures it.

Marlowe tantalizes the audience with the promise of Edward's death, but then overloads the viewer with an excess of spectacular violence. When the murder becomes vicious the audience cannot escape their roles as witnesses to the painful and degrading

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[47] Charlton and Waller argue that the audience sees the spit, but that they are not subjected to the murder itself (50). I contend not only that the text puts the violence quite clearly on stage, but that it's done in a believable manner. Cf. Charney: "The staging of scenes of violence tended to be very realistic" (65). Bevington and Rasmussen argue that "the act is easily simulated in the theatre, and this present scene does require that the table be thrust upon Edward to hold him down" (491, n. 113).

[48] The pleasure of this scene surely stems in part from the audience's sense of transgression. See Cartelli.

proceedings. Edward's suffering simultaneously draws our sympathy and dehumanizes him into an object worthy of study. This is not a quick death, nor is it a silent one. In addition to the spitting that takes place on stage, the murder is aurally inescapable. Unlike Lightborn's previous jobs, which are described as quiet and subtle murders of unwitting victims, Edward resists to the very end. His agony is visible in his body trapped beneath the mattress and audible from his shrieks of terror and pain. As he is being tortured to death, the king cries out so loudly that Matrevis worries that "this cry will raise the town" (5.5.114). The audience cringes at the sound, but the effectiveness of the spectacular murder--affecting even the onstage participants-- overpowers any sympathetic response. Edward II is subsumed into the spectacle of his suffering. His agonies echo still in the next scene, where his son attempts to use public punishments to silence his father's screams.

By juxtaposing the murder in 5.5 with a state-mandated execution in 5.6, the play reinforces the emotional effectiveness of the theatrical murder.[49] The spectacular assassination feeds the audience's craving for action and violence while stunning them with the disturbing affect of Edward's death. The later scene, directed by Edward III, cannot help but result in dissatisfaction. Edward III's decapitation of Mortimer deploys all the trappings of state-sanctioned ceremony, but at the same time the deliberate layering of several state spectacles--including execution and funeral--reveals how much visual energy and force is required to make execution work under even the most basic

[49] Joan Parks reads the juxtaposition thus: "what Marlowe has made horrifyingly clear by staging the murder is that this image of legal succession [at the end] and justice done masks a bloody disruption in English history" (289).

circumstances.[50] There is no pleasure to be had in the final scenes. Although this seeming lack could be a failure on the play's part, it also asserts the theater's superior ability to move an audience. The symbolism is all in place for the execution, but the spectacular murder that precedes it overpowers the state's ceremony. Even so, Marlowe's depiction articulates the political and social necessity of Edward III's course of action.

Edward's young son, the new King Edward III, attempts to punish assassination with the proven spectacle of state justice. He says to Mortimer:

> My father's murdered through thy treachery,
> And thou shalt die, and on his mournful hearse
> Thy hateful and accursed head shall lie,
> To witness to the world that by thy means
> His kingly body was too soon interred. (5.6.28-32)

Edward seeks to present a show that could conceivably cleanse his father's death, one that can "witness to the world" Mortimer's criminal intent. Unlike his father, Edward III is able to employ the language of capital punishment and decapitation. He brings forth Mortimer's severed head. To assure that the head is legible, Edward places the traitor's head on top of Edward II's hearse, the centerpiece of another procession. Unlike Mortimer, who had Edmund dragged away to be quickly beheaded, Edward demands that the entire spectacle of high treason take place in front of an audience to punish Mortimer's treason. "Drag him forth, / Hang him, I say, and set his quarters up" (5.6.52-

[50] Michael Hattaway argues that in this play, Marlowe "uses the non-illusionistic stage to uncover 'theatocracy', the illusion of power." (142). Karen Cunningham agrees that "using the resources of the stage, Marlowe turns theatricality against itself to expose the fraud at the core of public punishments, even as he acknowledges their thematic power" (210).

53), he orders, but these violent shows remain offstage. What remains are the funeral hearse and a head. The spectacles are combined to create a visual equation between the crime and the punishment. However, this reinforcement of spectacle also suggests that the head cannot communicate alone.

Edward III attempts to infuse his own show with a degree of pathos by offering his tears as proof of his grief. As he stands with Mortimer's severed head, Edward III asks his audience to "let these tears distilling from mine eyes / Be witness of my grief and innocence" (5.6.100-102).[51] Edward's performance is not an activated moment of punishment like the spectacle of his father's death. The scene's procedural efficiency and his own well-timed tears appear staged and false, especially compared to the deep pathos and spectacular power of his father's murder. Even as the play notes that Edward III must punish his father's killer with the expected ceremonies of justice, it shows its audience that such actions are inadequate rehearsals of the playhouses' superior stagings.

Even though the play places more importance on the theatrical viability of suffering, Edward III's employment of capital punishment still heralds a successful transformation from the previous reign. Edward II was unable to control the ceremonies that held his nation together. His son, for all his apparent distrust of capital punishment's effectiveness, can still deploy its spectacularity for his benefit. Edward has stood up to his mother and avenged his father's death; he is already more kingly than his father. However inadequate the ceremonies that seek to cleanse spectacular criminality from the state, they are necessary if the kingdom is to move forward.

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[51] The humoural power of tears stemmed from their involuntariness. It was thought that they could not be controlled, only emitted. Edward's performative tears argue against this.

Titus Andronicus pivots on the loss of hands as it traces the suffering of Lavinia and the grief of Titus, who both lose theirs to the Goth queen Tamora, the Emperor Saturninus, and their faction. The Andronici are punished and mutilated by enemies who hope to shame them into silent despair. Lavinia, though tongueless and handless, guides her family to revenge, while Titus uses his apparent feebleness to plot a bloodthirsty revenge on those who have wronged him and his family.

The play also spectacularizes damaged bodies that were meant to be invisible. Just as Lightborne spits Edward II to leave no physical traces, Lavinia is raped and silenced to make her disappear. Likewise, Lavinia's hands and Titus's hand were cut off to shame the Andronrici family into extinction. These wounds and the wounded become dynamic theatrical spectacles that are used by this violent play to explore what emotions and action lie beyond the pale of pain and injury.

Spectacular violence in *Titus Andronicus* opens a dangerous conduit to influence for victims who are dismembered and survive. The sacrifice of Alarbus, Tamora's eldest son, by Titus arouses the Goth's dreadful revenge, but the Andronici response to Lavinia's ravishment and mutilation metamorphosizes from grief into a horrific reprisal because of Lavinia's adamant survival and the ghastly surfeit of her injuries. Not only does the play use the theatrical shock value of stage blood, it tests the limits of character and audience tolerance by keeping the bloodied victims and their severed remnants on stage.[52]

Revenge tragedies are bloody business, and Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* knows this business well. It revels in dismemberment, both metaphorical and actual,

[52] According to Leo Kirschbaum, "we shall misinterpret Shakespeare if we do not admit a plentiful use of stage blood will always excite horror in the audience, whether the character be killer or victim, be good or bad, provoke pity or not, whether the stage effect be relatively simple or greatly complex in its meanings. Shock there must be." See "Shakespeare's Stage Blood and its Critical Significance," *PMLA* 46.3 (1949): 528.

even as it transforms the injured parties into active agents. The bloody gore – consistently and unapologetically staged – threatens to overwhelm any story that the play might tell. In 1596 a French tutor who saw the play performed in Sir John Harrington's house reported that he found the spectacle worthier than the subject: "le monstre a plus valu que le sujet."[53] The spectacle of *Titus Andronicus* is not superior to its subject, it *is* the subject. Although the plot contains stories of political power and familial ties, the play insists on being a visual experience above all.

Titus suggests that the effects of excessive violence are sometimes creative and theatrically appealing. The play wallows in scenes of blood and body parts: no sooner is Lavinia mutilated than her father's hand is chopped off. Dramatic language feeds the brutality. Characters attempt to mitigate the horror by linking the punishments leveled against bodies to Ovidian myths and poetic models, but the play's spectacles of bodily harm leave their precedents behind.[54] Titus warns that his vengeance against Tamora and her sons will create a new mythology of revenge: "worse than Procne I will be revenged" with a banquet that "may prove / More stern and bloody than the Centaurs' feast" (5.2.195-203). His creative performance of revenge fulfills his prophecy. The loss of hands, tongues, and chastity inspires the breaking and consumption of enemy bodies to complete the cycle of violence and revenge.

The play, as many scholars have noted, is "wittily-obsessive" about severed hands in particular.[55] Both the title character and his daughter lose one or both of their hands as

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[53] Kane 2.

[54] Michael Hattaway argues that the play "concentrates the audience on the effects rather than the sensational spectacles of violence," but the energy devoted to the sensational seems to belie this (203).

[55] Albert H. Tricomi, "The Aesthetics of Mutiliation in *Titus Andronicus,*" *Shakespeare Survey* 27 (1974): 11.

part of the Goth queen Tamora's revenge for the sacrifice of her eldest son. As the work of Katherine Rowe and Michael Neill has shown, the Renaissance conception of hands as rich signifiers of human potential sheds light on how significant the punishment of severing hands could be. The hand is "the most distinctively human and anatomically advanced part of the body, after the head, of which it is the agent."[56] In the 1615 *Mikrokosmographia*, Helkiah Crooke explained:

> By the helpe of the hand Lawes are written, Temples built for the service of the maker, Ships, houses, instruments, and all kind of weapons are formed [. . . .] By our hands we promise, we call, we dismisse, we threaten, we intreate, we abhorre, we feare, yea and by our hands we can aske a question.[57]

Hands build and sustain civilization. Johann Rothmann argues, "our *Fate* for the most part, and Our *Power* are very much reposed in our *Hands*."[58] Losing one or both hands dehumanizes and incapacitates.[59] As a Tudor punishment for crimes like libel and coining, the amputation of hands punished by diminishing a person's ability to take action

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[56] Claire Richter Sherman, introduction, *Writing on Hands: Memory and Knowledge in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Claire Richter Sherman (Carlisle, PA: Trout Gallery, Dickinson College; Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, 2000) 13.

[57] Helkiah Crooke, (*Mikrokosmographia) A Description of the Body of Man...Collected...Out of All the Best Authors of Anatomy* (London, 1615) 729.

[58] Qtd. in Neill 28.

[59] There is no one word that means "having one's hand(s) cut off," although alternative terms have been brought to my attention, including chirotomy, demanification, manusection, emancipation, manputation, and so on. Thanks to the morbid but creative minds of the FICINO listserv and my patient readers for their suggestions.

against the crown. Those sentenced to amputation were intended to live on as signs of their punishment, marked by their inflicted deformity, dire warnings to all.[60]

The staging of severed hands in the play may be partially understood in the context of this system of punishment as well as a complex early modern visual culture. Rowe's recent work on hands explores these "extraliterary symbolic systems in which stage dismemberments operate" in *Titus.* I share her interest in how the scattered body parts in the play function rather than "the way the play literalizes rhetorical conventions."[61] However, I find her distinction between Lavinia's "effectless" hands and Titus's "victorious" hands and her argument that severed hands exemplify the "supplemental and contingent nature of purposeful action" less compelling.[62] Instead, this play's abattoir of severed limbs reveals how amputation can counterintuitively empower the dismembered. The gore of punishment does not cow the spectator; it inspires reaction and response.

Titus Andronicus makes spectacular bodies its centerpiece, even those in pieces. The play explores how injury can compel pity with the rape of Lavinia, but then it pushes further. *Titus* empowers the mutilated survivors of its violence, and stages their brutal retribution.[63] The play damages Lavinia and Titus and then liberates their theatrically compelling bodies, giving itself over to the Andronici's violence while urging the audience to cheer on their inventive and darkly comic revenges. Dismemberment should

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[60] "Men, says Pike, branded on the forehead, without hands, without feet, without tongues, lived as an example of the danger which attended the commission of petty crimes, and as a warning to all men who had the misfortune of holding no higher position than that of a churl" (Andrews 134).

[61] Rowe 218, n.5.

[62] Rowe 53, 59.

[63] Molly Easo Smith also debates the effectiveness of the play's dismemberments. See "Spectacles of Torment" 316.

annihilate the Andronici, but instead the theater uses amputation and pain to change Lavinia and Titus into spectacular monsters. Their insistent and inescapable presence shocks the audience into reexamining their own preconceptions about wholeness as well as justice.

We will follow Shakespeare and begin with Lavinia's suffering and Titus's unwilling self-mutilation, then observe how the two Andronici metamorphose into compelling killers. Their strange transformation from silenced victims into avenging writers reinforces the play's argument that amputation is ineffective at silencing troublesome thinkers. Lavinia and Titus make the act of inscription a disturbing spectacle indicting the cruelty of their amputations.

The play's first dismemberment sets the cycle of violence into motion. Led by Andronicus, the Romans have returned home from battling the Goths, and now seek to bury their dead and offer a sacrifice to the gods. Lucius, Titus's eldest son, calls for "the proudest prisoner of the Goths, / That we may hew his limbs, and on a pile / *Ad manes fratrum* sacrifice his flesh" (1.1.95-97). Alarbus is taken away, dismembered, and burned in spite of Tamora's cries for mercy. Anthony Brian Taylor rightly argues that "Alarbus' 'lopped' and 'hewed' limbs signal the entry into a dramatic world where hands are chopped-off, a tongue torn from a girl's mouth, heads severed, throats slit, and events rise to a macabre crescendo when, in a bloody banquet, a mother unwittingly devours her murdered sons."[64] This "cruel irreligious piety" (1.1.133) leads Demetrius, one of Tamora's two remaining sons, to urge his mother to hope that the gods who aided Hecuba in killing Polymnestor's children "may favor Tamora [. . .] to quit the bloody wrongs

[64] Anthony Brian Taylor, "Lucius, the Severely Flawed Redeemer of *Titus Andronicus,*" *Connotations* 6.2 (1996-97): 142.

upon her foes" (1.1.142-44). Titus's sacrifice of Alarbus, intended to "appease their groaning shadows that are gone" (129) and to humble his prisoners, serves only to excite a hunger for retribution in the Goths who survive.[65] Tamora and her "cubs" will revisit this cruelty upon the Andronici ten-fold--"I'll find a day to massacre them all / And race their faction and their family" (1.1.453-54)--but they will cut, not kill, some of the Andronici and condemn them to live on in dishonor and grief.

Lavinia at the opening of 2.4 represents rape made visible. The scene begins with a direction: *Enter the Empress' sons, with Lavinia, her hands cut off, and her tongue cut out, and ravished*.[66] This startling cue describes an aftermath of violence as disturbing as the aggression itself. Chiron and Demetrius assume that Lavinia can best horrify and shame her family if her bloody rape and mutilation are publicized. In the preceding scene, when Tamora encourages her sons to take Lavinia's "painted hope" of chastity, even her language suggests her desire for discernible damage. Not surprisingly, Lavinia herself begs to be killed and thrown into a hole, "where never man's eye may behold my body" (2.3.177). Instead, she re-enters "ravished," her hair loosened and her clothing ripped or disheveled. Unsatisfied with these familiar theatrical signifiers, Shakespeare adds the bloody ruin of her mouth and hands. Stumps are all that remain of her hands, while her tongueless mouth issues "a crimson river of warm blood" (2.4.22). This is

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[65] See Anthony Brian Taylor and Maurice Hunt especially regarding how much "piety" exists in this ceremony. Hunt defends Lucius's role in the sacrifice of Alarbus, arguing that he orders the dismemberment "with reverence for what Romans need to do to honor a family and its dead killed in war." See Taylor 142; and Hunt, "Exonerating Lucius in *Titus Andronicus*: A Response to Anthony Brian Taylor," *Connotations: A Journal for Critical Debate* 7.1 (1997-1998) 87.

[66] Quotes from the play are taken from Russ McDonald's Pelican edition. *Titus Andronicus* (New York: Penguin, 2000).

theatrical hyperbole, a spectacle of suffering that is wildly disproportionate to its ostensible cause (Tamora's loss).[67]

Tamora encourages the rape suggested by her sons to ruin Lavinia's reputation and injure Titus, but the dismemberment and exposure--intended to "make [Lavinia] sure" (2.3.133 & 187) and incapable of revenge--activates the image of the ravished woman and transforms her. Lavina's injuries exceed the boundaries of shame and become something strangely powerful in their own right. The Goth's hyperbolic symbolizing, carved onto Lavinia's body, defeats its purpose. To Tamora, the dismemberment will compensate for her son's "hewed" limbs while transforming Lavinia into an unspeaking emblem of pain and dishonor. Instead, dismemberment converts Lavinia into a spectacle that incites the Andronici's revenge. Where Alarbus's remains were burned away, Lavinia's living body remains in sight. What was intended to be a crushing blow to Lavinia makes her a dangerously visible figure, and what should have diminished the Andronici honor instead guides the family towards revenge. The brothers' spectacular immodesty pushes Lavinia beyond the reticence she previously begged for. Beyond modesty, however, there is the appeal of spectacle.

Chiron and Demetrius's extravagant mutilation of Lavinia's body mocks her pleas for an unseen death and burial, but the brothers miscalculate how compelling a dismembered woman can become. To them, Lavinia's rape and disfigurement offer a demented homage to Ovid's story of Philomel.[68] Chiron and Demetrius gloat over their

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[67] Productions of the play sometimes shy away from this stage direction. In Peter Brook's production of 1955, Vivien Leigh's Lavinia emerged with her hands swathed in gauze and with red ribbons trailing from her arms and mouth. For more on this and other productions, see Alan Dessen, *Titus Andronicus,* Shakespeare in Performance ser. (New York: Manchester UP, 1989) 5.

[68] Philomel is kidnapped and raped by her brother-in-law Tereus, who then cuts out her tongue to keep her silent. Philomel weaves her story on her loom for her sister, Procne. In revenge, Procne murders her son

allusive dismemberment as 2.4 opens, reveling in their avoidance of Tereus's fate while taunting the bleeding woman:

> *Dem*: So, now go tell, an if thy tongue can speak,
>
> Who 'twas that cut thy tongue and ravished thee.
>
> *Chiron*: Write down thy mind, bewray thy meaning so,
>
> An if thy stumps will let thee play the scribe.
>
> *Dem*: See how with signs and token she can scrawl.
>
> *Chiron*: Go home, call for sweet water, wash thy hands.
>
> *Dem*: She hath no tongue to call, nor hands to wash,
>
> And so let's leave her to her silent walks. (2.4.1-8)

Chiron and Demetrius seek to redefine Lavinia as a collection of absences, a gathering of deficiencies.[69] Their sadistic glee is so clearly villainous that we may, in Molly Easo Smith's words, be able to "discern [. . .] growing skepticism about the value of torture as discipline or punishment."[70] Marking a body with amputation is cruel work already, but to associate it with these fiendish boys empties the act of any meaning, in spite of the literary reference. Tamora's sons seek to sacrifice Lavinia with their actions, but do not

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Itys and feeds him to his father. All three are turned into birds. Shakespeare also taps into European folktales with the image of the maiden without hands. The most famous retelling of this archetypal story may be found in the Grimm Brothers' 1812 tale, "The Maiden without Hands," which tells of the devil making a bargain with a virtuous girl's impoverished father that tricks him into cutting off his daughter's hands. The trope of female dismemberment in folk culture is often a marker for incest and other social taboos. The disturbing oral penetrations of Lavinia later in the play, undertaken by her uncle and father, may belong to this traditional association between dismemberment and the uncomfortable, even the unspeakable. "The Maiden without Hands," *The Complete Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*, ed. Johnny Gruelle, trans. Jack Zipes, 3rd ed. (New York: Bantam, 2003) 109-112. See also Maria Tatar, *The Hard Facts of the Grimm's Fairy Tales (*Princeton: Princeton UP, 1987) 9-12.

[69] Kendall notes the excess of their exchange: "What Shakespeare places on the stage [Lavinia ravished] needs no words to describe. But words he provides, in some sense re-fragmenting in metaphor an already literally fragmented reality." ("Overkill" 306).

[70] Smith, "Spectacles of Torment" 318.

recognize that they have martyred her. The display of her wounding theatrically empowers their victim by making her well worth our gaze. Chiron and Demetrius laugh at how she can "scrawl" in spite of having neither hands nor tongue, but fail to recognize how her gestures might find avid readers and interpreters.

Lavinia seems helpless, "lopped and hewed and made…bare" (2.4.17) of hands and fingers that could easily have written down her enemies' names, but she can now inspire audiences in a new way. Because Chiron and Demetrius associate Lavinia's hands with her capacity for writing, as well as civilized practices like cleaning herself, they feel assured that they have left her without the capacity for accusation, without the ability to do anything other than walk silently. Lacking hands, she can no longer "bewray" her meaning (2.4.3), a rich word that means "reveal" but carries the resonance of "betray."[71] Tamora's sons believe that they have removed Lavinia's ability to produce meaning, but her wounds make her an unstoppable theatrical force. Her newfound spectacularity allows her access to heights of pathetic appeal that she could never have attained in her whole form. One need only to look at Lavinia to be moved.

In light of the play's reliance on the mythological precedents of dishonored women,[72] Lavinia's fate ought to be either quick and quiet suicide or metamorphosis into a silent tree or speechless bird.[73] The brothers recognize their Ovidian inspiration, and incorporate the stories of wronged women into their brutalization of Lavinia, relying on

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[71] Several critics concur with the boys' assessment. For example, Katherine Rowe suggests that, "In losing her hands, Lavinia appears to lose the ability to *do* for herself: to wash, to express thirst, or even to hang herself. Loss of these means represents a contingent loss of self-representation" (70).

[72] The play also brings up Portia (swallowed hot coals after Brutus's fall), Virginia (killed by her father either before or after her rape by Appius, depending on the version), and Lucrece (raped by Sextus Tarquinius, then stabs herself).

[73] In some versions of the myth Philomel is transformed into a swallow, which does not sing. Procne becomes a nightingale.

models to assure her despair. Once they seem to have silenced her, they suggest different ways that she might kill herself. Chiron claims that "An 'twere my cause, I should go hang myself." His brother laughingly argues that even hanging is impossible for Lavinia now (2.4.9-10). Her silence appears impenetrable and her death inevitable; what is there to live for without chastity, hands, or tongue? But Chiron and Demetrius have forgotten to finish their Ovid: Philomel did not die; she lived to name and punish the man who wronged her and to become an immortal icon of the ravished and revenged woman.[74]

Like Philomel, Lavinia metamorphoses. Her injuries, while symbolically significant, are not fatal. She *should* die; she does not. Instead the play foregrounds Lavinia after her dismemberment, insisting upon her continued relevance to her family, the plot, and the play's re-consideration of dismemberment. Lavinia has been changed into a sign, but her theatrically dynamic representation of rape and violence endows her with a surprising degree of power.[75] Her loss of chastity, which passes almost without mention, exacerbates this instability. No longer a maid or a wife, she is now a ravished widow. Her family attempts to redefine her by comparing her to wounded animals, caged birds, and other natural images, but the reality of her bodily, human, female woe cannot be reduced to simile. She is a broken body who will not hide her wounds.

Rape or maiming would be reason enough for Lavinia's ruin, but the play focuses on her dismemberment. Her absent body parts provoke lines upon lines of discussion and

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[74] Chiron and Demetrius also misinterpret Titus's agenda when he sends the boys weapons wrapped in a verse from Horace in 4.2. Aaron recognizes Titus's veiled threat behind the lines while the boys only remember learning the poem in school. Tamora is similarly confused by Lavinia's allusions to animal fables in 2.3: "I know not what it means" (157). Gillian Murray Kendall partially attributes the boys' mistaken reliance upon mythological precedents to their inadequate education. She notes that the major pieces of writing referred to in the play are, as Chiron says, from "a grammar." See "'Lend me thy hand': Metaphor and Mayhem in *Titus Andronicus*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40.3 (Fall 1989): 311-12.

[75] Cf. Karen Bamford, *Sexual Violence on the Jacobean Stage* (New York: St. Martins, 2000). "[I]n Jacobean drama the victim of rape is, like the witch, invested with an excessive, threatening agency" (2).

despair from every member of the family, while the rape surfaces less frequently.[76] However, Lavinia's constant presence on stage serves as a ghastly memento of her experience. The rape itself cannot be seen easily, but her associated injuries--the dismemberments--help make Lavinia represent all of her violations. The Andronici cannot stop talking about hands, and every mention of Lavinia's missing extremities forces them and the audience to look again at her injuries. It is the unavoidable sight of her injured body that spurs the family to retaliate. Tamora and her children similarly swore to avenge Alarbus's dismemberment, but they cannot gain comparable inspiration from his absent body. As in *Edward II*, excessive and indecorous bodily harm becomes a theatrical tool to provoke an emotional response. Lavinia is more theatrically fascinating after her spectacularization, and she is used to power the play forward.

Uncomfortably echoing Lavinia's rapists, her uncle Marcus and Titus first construct the ravished woman as a doomed creature missing pieces of herself. As Tamora had hoped, their speeches emphasize the tragedy of her violation and the hopelessness of her situation even while they mourn her fate. Like her attackers, Marcus and Titus accept the dismemberment as a defining blow rather than something to be overcome. They can not read her spectacular form yet, even while the audience cannot take its eyes off of her. Marcus's puzzling and lengthy speech upon discovering Lavinia particularly emphasizes her maiming; he describes and details her wounds rather than help her.[77] Marcus can only read the pieces Lavinia has lost, offering belated encomia

[76] This verbal redirection away from Lavinia's rape may have to do with theatrical business. Rape is famously hard to prove, particularly because the damage can be hard to see. The stage direction for "ravished" shows almost the full extent of theater's ability to depict rape. In addition, the suggestion of sexual violation draws attention to the boy actor playing Lavinia.

[77] Marcus has upset critics for many years. Thoughtful considerations of Marcus's long speech upon discovering his niece include: Nicholas Brooke, who argues that Marcus serves as a Chorus to Lavinia

for her missing hands and tongue. He thoughtlessly connects Lavinia's amputations with the pruning of trees (dismemberment was a gardening term)[78]: "what stern ungentle hand / Hath lopped and hewed and made thy body bare / Of her two branches, those sweet ornaments / Whose circling shadows kings have sought to sleep in . . . ?" (2.4.16-19).[79] Her hands and "pretty fingers" are lilies that "tremble like aspen leaves upon a lute" (42-45). Marcus works tirelessly to make some sense of Lavinia, but there is no logic to be had in this spectacle. Lavinia now functions by producing reactions, not the inadequate analogues listed by her uncle. Marcus attempts to transform Lavinia into a tree, into a lily that cannot feel pain, but he has come too late. Lavinia is no longer Philomel, but disfigured Daphne. Like Ovid's Apollo, who cut several of the transformed Daphne's laurel branches as trophies, Chiron and Demetrius have "lopped and hewed" Lavinia's ornaments to make her sure.

Marcus emphasizes his niece's hands because their loss should damn Lavinia to unsalvageable violation. His incessant harping about her injuries indicates clearly to those watching that she has become something spectacular, but his attempts to reason out her fate using precedent become ludicrous, and link him with her cruel but clueless attackers. He tells his niece that her tongue was cut by "some Tereus," but a "craftier"

(*Sh.Early Tragedies*, 1968), and Maurice Charney, who asserts that the speech is not meant to be realistic, but rather an interpretation of an emblem (1990). Gillian Murray Kendall states that Marcus's rhetoric is more violent than the harms that have befallen Lavinia (1989); Heather James discusses Marcus's upsetting attempt to make Lavinia's body into poetry (in *Violence in Drama*, 1991); and Jonathan Bate defends Marcus's retreat into formalism, because the man is trying to speak the unutterable. Alan Dessen notes that nearly every stage production cuts down or totally omits Marcus's speech. One actor playing Marcus complained "it was the hardest thing he ever had to do on stage, for, as he put it, every nerve in his body was crying out 'GET FIRST AID!!!'" (54). In a compelling recent reading, A.B. Taylor describes the speech as "an old man's reverie" beginning and ending with references to sleeping and dreaming--Marcus retreats to his own thoughts rather than confront the reality of his niece (149).

[78] Diseased branches were "amputated" as often as they were "pruned." s.v. OED.

[79] Marcus's description of Lavinia as "lopped and hewed" echoes Lucius from Act One, scene one, when he lops and hews Alarbus for the sacrificial pyre (Taylor 143).

man than he (2.4.26-27) removed her hands. This shift from one mythological precedent to another is noteworthy, for while Philomel survived her rape and lived on with her sister as a bird, Lucrece died by her own hand. Marcus further instructs Lavinia that she cannot "sew her mind" like Philomel, and that the ability to identify her attacker "is cut from thee" (39-40). Indeed, he bemoans that no one can ever understand her again: "O that I knew thy heart!" (34). Without the physical release that comes from communication--which Marcus believes can only happen through use of tongue or hands --Lavinia is doomed. "Sorrow concealed, like an oven stopped, / Doth burn the heart to cinders where it is" (36-37). The woman has nothing to live for, as Marcus concludes when he introduces her to Titus: "This *was* thy daughter" (3.1.63, emphasis mine).

Titus echoes Marcus and the Goths in his despondent certainty that Lavinia is doomed:

> Thou hast no hands to wipe away thy tears,
> Nor tongue to tell me who hath martyred thee.
> Thy husband he is dead, and for his death
> Thy brothers are condemned, and dead by this. (3.1.106-09)

She is the "picture" of plight, a "map of woe" (3.2.12) who lives only to drive her father mad. Titus encourages her to die quickly, urging her to "get some little knife between thy teeth / And just against thy heart make thou a hole" (3.2.16-17). Marcus urges, "teach her not thus to lay / Such violent hands upon her tender life," while Titus assures him, "What violent hands *can* she lay on her life?" (21-25, emphasis mine), reminding his brother, as Demetrius reminded Chiron, that Lavinia cannot even die properly without her hands.

If Marcus attempts to make sense of Lavinia's body using myth, Titus sees her dismemberment as a reflection of his own suffering as well as her death sentence. He turns each of his speeches about her back to himself, reading Lavinia as "that which gives my soul the greatest spurn" (3.1.101). She is "a faggot to bright-burning Troy," a superfluity to his grief. If he empathizes with her injuries--"Give me a sword: I'll chop off my hands too" (3.1.72)--it is not to share in her misery, but to recall his own hands which "have fought for Rome [. . .] all in vain" (72-73). He believes his hands serve to illustrate their family's pain better than hers, and the play agrees.

In 3.1, Titus chops off his own hand to ransom his sons, trusting in the effectiveness of its symbolism to move the emperor. Aaron the Moor poses as a messenger from Saturninus and Tamora to facilitate this false trade, lending the grotesque proceedings some degree of legitimacy by requesting Titus's hand as a worthy trade for his sons. But these random negotiations are meaningless, staged only for Aaron's amusement. The Moor degrades the symbolism of the warrior's hand from that of a worthy ransom to a meaningless remnant as he falsely barters some Andronici pieces for others--Titus's hand for the heads of his sons.

Because Titus, Marcus, and Titus's eldest son Lucius have given their bodies and loyalties in service to the state as soldiers and senators, they see a symbolic equivalence in offering their hands back to the state as ransom. Their debate over who should have the honor of emancipating the boys reminds us of the appropriate relationship between dismemberment and duty. Lucius argues that Titus's hand is too noble to be wasted, and that his own "youth can better spare my blood than you" (3.1.165). Marcus the Senator reads worth in soldiering hands, which have defended Rome and "reared aloft the bloody

battle-ax," and offers his comparatively "idle" hand to be sacrificed (168-71). Marcus and Lucius conceive of their hands as offerings of love and duty to Titus, their patriarch. Lucius wishes to "be thought [Titus's] son," while Marcus desires to "show a brother's love" (179-82). Both men believe that their hands can stand for honor and valor, but the play refutes them even as Aaron's specious offer works because it feeds into their perceptions of appropriate bodily sacrifice. The Earl of Essex's wry response to his death sentence is apt: upon learning the verdict for his uprising against Elizabeth I--that his head and quarters would be scattered at her Majesty's pleasure--Essex replied, "I think it fit my poor quarters that have done her Majesty true Service in divers parts of the World, should be sacrificed and disposed of at her Majesty's pleasure."[80]

Alone with the Moor--having tricked his kinsmen into fetching a knife--Titus confesses to Aaron that "more hath [my hand] merited" than the treatment he receives (196); but he still sacrifices it to liberate his sons. Titus trusts in the power of his hand's symbolic meaning to move Saturninus, as he did when he asked the Romans to "Stand gracious to the rites that we intend!" (1.1.81). Tradition and public spectacle justify the deaths of his sons and the death of Tamora's eldest in the opening of the play:

> These are their brethren, whom you Goths beheld
> Alive and dead, and for their brethren slain
> Religiously they ask a sacrifice:
> To this your son is mark'd, and die he must,
> To appease their groaning shadows that are gone. (1.1.125-29)

[80] J.W. Willis-Bund, *A Selection of Cases from the State Trials,* Vol. 1 Trials for Treason (1327-1660) (New York: Cambridge UP, 1879) 173.

Titus relies on blood sacrifice to appease the dead, and his sons lop Alarbus's limbs to give their brothers rest. The dead must be appeased and the living must be taught a lesson. Now, he reasons that hewn limbs will placate and instruct the emperor, even though his daughter's body asserts otherwise. The scene's terrible handclasping ceremony highlights further this confidence in the power of proportional dismemberment. Titus asks Aaron, "lend me thy hand, and I will give thee mine" (185-86).

Titus reads his newly severed hand--the stage direction states simply, "*He* [Aaron] *cuts off Titus' hand*"--as the hand that protected Rome and its emperor: "Good Aaron, give his majesty my hand: / Tell him it was a hand that warded him / From thousand dangers" (193-95). This is his shield hand, a worthy gift and an appropriate one.[81] Like Lavinia when she asks Tamora to bury her untouched corpse, Titus requests a modest treatment of his body, even its pieces. Titus even attempts to teach Aaron the spectacular power of his hand when he tells the Moor to "bid [Saturninus] bury it" immediately (195). Rather than the hand that wielded his sword, this is the hand that defended his country against danger. Now Titus would use his shield hand to defend the Andronici family against similar destruction from outside forces. His valuable sacrifice is marked again by the Messenger who returns Titus's hand to him: "Worthy Andronicus, ill art thou repaid / For that good hand thou sent'st the emperor" (234-45).

In spite of Titus's attempts to explain what hands mean, in spite of the many reflections upon the importance of hands to being human, the Andronici pieces are flung back at the family like trash. Having failed to convey its worth, Titus's hand is returned without ceremony along with the boys' heads. The Messenger enters to another direction

[81] Cf. Michael Neill, "for Titus it is the shield-hand, the sign of his role as Rome's defender." (24).

for dismemberment: *Enter a Messenger with two heads and a hand.*[82] The play presents the heads and hands for inspection, but these pieces seem incapable of telling an intelligible story. Lavinia's mutilated body elicits horror and fear, but these heads and hand are more uncanny than terrible.[83] They are considerably more inscrutable than Lavinia.[84] Without the judicial spectacles that give dismemberment cultural meaning--such as Titus's early sacrifice for the war dead--hands and heads can be pitiful remnants that arouse only despair. Without an executioner declaring "Here is the head of a traitor" or reading the libeler's crimes before chopping off his hand, the dismembered pieces are illegible.[85] Aaron and his lover Tamora intend to crush the family with this cruel assortment of parts, but they miscalculate their message. Rather than paralyzing the living with their incomprehensibility, the spectacular pieces finally persuade the Andronici to create a new language for those without tongues and an resourceful course of action for those without hands.

The Messenger exemplifies the confusion of those faced with dismemberment in his opening remarks. The Messenger, as well as the Andronici, seeks a way to

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[82] This terse direction also suggests an image of a man with two heads instead of hands, and one hand instead of a head. The grotesque image seems apt--the resulting monster would be completely unable to *do* anything.

[83] Freud describes the uncanny as "that species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and had long been familiar." See Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny," *The Uncanny*, trans. David McLintock, (New York: Penguin, 2003) 124.

[84] Cf. Michael Hattaway: "Shakespeare is deliberately getting us to look at it [a hand] purely as an object, quite displaced from its usual position in the world and therefore strange and frightening" (188).

[85] Consider the reported stunned silence of the crowds watching John Stubbes lose his hand in 1579. Camden attempts to explain their silence in his description: "The people round him stood mute, whether stricken with fear at the first sight of this strange kind of punishment, or for commiseration for the man whom they reputed honest, or out of a secret inward repining they had at this marriage, which they suspected would be dangerous to Religion." William Camden, Bk.3, 16.

understand these pieces, made more horrible by their unexpected arrival and their uncanny incomprehensibility:

> Here are the heads of thy noble sons,
>
> And here's thy hand, in scorn to thee sent back,
>
> Thy grief their sports, thy resolution mocked,
>
> That woe is me to think upon thy woes
>
> More than remembrance of my father's death. (3.1.236-240)[86]

The Messenger appears sincerely moved by this mistreatment of the *patria*, and compares it to a sad yet surmountable sorrow--the death of his *pater*.

Marcus, won over once again by the persuasive symbolism of dismemberment, believes that "these miseries are more than may be borne" (243). He tries to make Titus share his despair by reading the spectacle thus:

> see thy two sons' heads,
>
> Thy warlike hand, thy mangled daughter here,
>
> Thy other banished son with this dear sight
>
> Struck pale and bloodless, and thy brother, I,
>
> Even like a stony image, cold and numb. (3.1.254-62)

Through this image of division, Marcus unconsciously creates unity. They are all damaged now; Titus and Lavinia are both mangled, and even those who remain physically whole have been transformed to stony images by the violence.[87] With a

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[86] In a recent production of *Titus Andronicus* by the Washington Shakespeare Company (2004-2005 season), the Messenger delivered these lines sarcastically, as though he was bored by it all. The tone pushed the scene into farce, and was totally ineffective. The Messenger's pity provides some perspective, if only to give a humane alternative to Titus's terrifying laugh later in the scene.

[87] Cf. Rowe: "The severed hands of *Titus Andronicus* display the sufficiencies and insufficiencies of the metaphor of the political body as a means of constituting political community" (53).

terrifying laugh, Titus now recognizes his dismembered family as an evocative emblem teaching him revenge:

> For these two heads do seem to speak to me,
>
> And threat me I shall never come to bliss
>
> Till all these mischiefs be returned again
>
> Even in their throats that hath committed them. (3.1.271-74)

The vision of Titus's mangled family offers revenge as a potential salvation as their presence becomes spectacularly legible to him. What were dead pieces and stricken bodies are reanimated into inspirational guides.

Although some critics argue that the parade of body parts that ends 3.1 signals only the devastating effects of Tamora's successful revenge upon the Andronici, Titus's revelation and subsequent creation of a new ritual tradition in fact revitalize him and his family.[88] The presentation of the hands and heads lets Titus "see what task I have to do" (275), and clarifies the new roles for his daughter, brother, and son. With another of the play's upsetting puns on separation, bodily and otherwise, he tells his exiled son Lucius, "Let's kiss and part, for we have much to do" (288). As he breaks apart one relationship, Titus knits together another by taking back the severed heads of his sons and his own chopped hand in order to re-organize and piece together his family. With a processional seemingly drawn from a mid-century dumbshow, Titus foreshadows how this newly functioning family will destroy the Goths.

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[88] Gillian Murray Kendall argues that Titus doesn't realize that there is life after dismemberment until the family dinner, with its painful punning and "handling" of themes (3.2) ("Lend me" 304). In addition to the fact that the family banquet is not found in the extant quartos of the play, Titus's employment of actual body parts in a vow of vengeance is a much more revelatory moment, especially given the inclusion of that nihilistic laugh--the hallmark of so many revengers. Lavinia's ability to name her attackers in 4.1 is also obviously important, but the family has already promised revenge prior to the discovery of the rapists' identities.

The parade of Andronici bodies, whole and broken, signals a shift in how the play operates. Once the family embraces their spectacular injuries by implementing new ways of functioning and participating, the play ceases being their tragedy and begins to stage their revenge. There are no overt directions for the pageant, only Titus's instructions to his family to pick up the pieces and move on. "Come, brother, take a head, / And in this hand the other will I bear; / And, Lavinia, thou shalt be employ'd; / Bear thou my hand, sweet wench, between thy teeth" (3.1.279-82).[89] This funeral procession should remind us of how fractured this family has become. Daughters and old men carry away the bloody remains while the young men seek exile.[90] But this image also demonstrates the family carefully reconciling their missing pieces. The Andronici persevere by interring their losses properly at last, and dismemberment is redefined to mean action rather than despair.

The procession reveals how the family can literally put themselves back together. Titus begins to rely on his right hand to "bear" the burden of his son's head. Marcus also carries "a head," as though it were simply a prop rather than a son or nephew's face. Their pragmatic interaction with these limbs is the spectacular antidote to the devastating potency of dismemberment. Lavinia participates in the grotesquely triumphant procession as well when she carries her father's hand in her mouth like an intelligent

[89] The quarto has line 281 end with "employed in these arms," while the Folio ends "employed in these things." Both are curious, for the line works metrically without either one. (Cf. Russ McDonald's 2000 Pelican edition of the play for additional considerations, especially page 56, note to line 281.)

[90] Alan Dessen includes this scene in his chapter on theatrical italics--those moments that demand greater attention as a result of their spectacularity - because he believes it reminds the audience of the family's complete violation. See *Recovering Shakespeare's Theatrical Vocabulary* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1995) 94-5.

hunting dog.[91] The disturbing image serves to remind us yet again of her missing hands and her maimed mouth, but it also shows that she can still contribute to the family ceremony. She can help guide the hand that blessed her in Act One to its proper rest inside the privacy of their home and their tomb.[92] This distressing ritual has method in its madness: the body domestic reincorporates itself. The body politic will have to wait.

Once the Andronici have reconciled themselves to their new bodies, they can deploy them as tools in their revenge. Their rebirth prefigures the creativity that will characterize their revenge. Spectacle operates by summoning associations and then defamiliarizing them, and the Andronici's retribution functions similarly. Dismemberment is discarded in favor of reformation when Titus and his daughter begin using their own spectacular appearance as a weapon on their own behalf. Titus and Lavinia's sad, broken bodies encourage associations of handicap and weakness, but they will both surprise their spectators with the utility of their injuries.

The violence and fragmentation of the first half of the play are left behind in favor of more theatrical undertakings as the family makes their revenge as spectacular as themselves. Titus in particular uses his damaged body to mislead his enemies into thinking him harmless. Although he keeps his literal sword hand, Titus follows more closely the mad intellectualism of revengers like Hieronimo and seeks retribution through deceit and spectacularity. He plays on the correlation between hands and his continuing ability to act in order to portray himself as helpless while secretly seeking reprisal. Titus

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[91] This image is Alan Dessen's, and I think it is an apt description of Lavinia at this point--obedient and quite effective in bringing down prey (56).

[92] Cf. Katherine Rowe, who argues that "when [Lavinia] carries Titus's hand offstage in her mouth, she symbolizes her instrumentality as the vehicle and emblem of his efficacious action" (72). She also continues to perform within the family unit.

also pursues the conventional revenge tragedy path of feigned madness; but by linking his feeble-mindedness to his handlessness, he feeds into the expectations of how amputation should affect the victim ("How can I grace my talk, / Wanting a hand to give it action?" [5.2.17-18]). He cannot gesture properly, so words are useless. His ironic declarations also mark the emergence of a frightening humor in these proceedings. Titus's laugh in Act Three heralds the cruel wit that will characterize his revenge.

Vengeance is spectacular yet unexpected and even darkly comic for the Andronici. Life after dismemberment in *Titus Andronicus* is devoted to reprisal, but it is not the revenge the audience or the play's Romans are led to expect: Titus's revenge does not rely solely upon violence. As Titus tells his angry grandson after the names of Lavinia's rapists are revealed, "I'll teach thee another course" (4.1.119). The practice of writing is the other course, and the process becomes visually central for both Lavinia and Titus, as both injured writers struggle to overcome their disability even as they continue performing their weakness. The association of writing with amputation also lends a political edge to the play. *Terras Astraea reliquit*, Titus asserts during his feigned madness, so he must draw Justice's attention with petitions and writing, and only later with his own bloody revenge.[93]

Titus and Lavinia both use the written word to release their pain and to assist their plotting.[94] This shift is ironic given the fate of many unfortunate libelers in Tudor

[93] Astraea, the goddess of divine justice, has left the earth.

[94] For a more literal consideration of writing in the play, see Thomas P. Anderson, "'What is Written Shall be Executed': 'Nude Contracts' and 'Lively Warrants' in *Titus Andronicus*" *Criticism* 45.3 (Summer 2003): 301-321. Huffman describes writing as a kind of "spectral agency" for those without hands. See "Amputation, Phantom Limbs, and Spectral Agency in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and Normand Chaurette's *Les Reines*" *Modern Drama* 47.1 (Spring 2004): 70-73..

England,[95] particularly since the play's handless characters are the ones most devoted to the written word.[96] The Andronici's writing is also juxtaposed against the spoken threats of Tamora and Saturninus, who seem incapable of interpreting Titus's libels, suggesting that inscription may be equated with civilization.[97] Titus and Lavinia renovate the poetry and myth that have been misinterpreted by Tamora and her sons, but they also reveal the unexpected theatricality of writing itself. The physical process of putting pen to paper becomes a strange new spectacle when the mutilated Titus and Lavinia inscribe their futures in spite of their missing hands.

The unsettling scene of inscription that opens Act Four begins the play's exploration of writing without hands. Marcus is "inspire[d]" by Lavinia's attention to Ovid to offer his staff as a way for her to "write [. . .] and here display at last / What God will have discovered for revenge" (73-74). In order to "print [her] sorrows plain" (4.1.75), Lavinia "*takes the staff in her mouth and guides it with her stumps and writes*" (s.d. 76). Lavinia's pen, which she uses to write the names of Chiron and Demetrius as well as "stuprum" (rape), is a strange stylus held between her mangled wrists and resting

[95] "Some of the tortures and mutilations associated with execution were symbolic: a hand figuratively (or literally) raised against the king might be cut off or burned, as if rebellion against the state were an action committed by parts of the body, rather than a production of the mind" (Kendall, "Overkill" 33).

[96] This was not the only punishment for libel; William Prynne lost his ear for writing *Histriomastix* (1633). See Andrews 163.

[97] For example, the petitioning arrows--shot by the Titus and Marcus with their friends in 4.3--cause Saturninus to react with fury and fear: "Sweet scrolls to fly about the streets of Rome! / What's this but libeling against the Senate / And blazoning our unjustice anywhere?" (4.4.16-18). He later hangs the Clown who brought "a letter and a couple of pigeons" (4.4.46). The Emperor and Tamora prefer to keep their contracts verbal, because that is where they are most powerful: Tamora's promises to destroy Titus indicate an awareness of language's capacity to wound or destroy. "I will enchant the old Andronicus / With words more sweet, and yet more dangerous, / That baits to fish or honey stalks to sheep, / When as the one is wounded with the bait, / The other rotten with delicious feed" (4.4.90-94).

in her damaged mouth.[98] As in the family procession in 3.2, Lavinia seems orally violated by her uncle's phallic staff, but her attempts to write are presented as evidence of her subjectivity, not her violation. Heretofore the object of spectacle, the writing Lavinia becomes the subject of spectacle, turning writing itself into something strange and new. Although she has lost her hands and tongue, Lavinia still has her body and her mind, and these allow her to create meaning out of dust. Marcus understands that "there is enough written upon this earth / To stir a mutiny in the mildest thoughts," and the family again kneels down to swear "mortal revenge" (84-93). As the Boy declares later when he meets Chiron and Demetrius, "you are both deciphered" (4.2.8).

For Titus, too, writing guarantees action and enables revenge, and so he struggles to use his own pen as intensely as his daughter to use Marcus's staff. Titus's attempts to write without his left hand, which would be the hand for holding and blotting his paper, shows his deep attachment to writing, even if it must be done indecorously.[99] Directly after Lavinia's revelatory inscription, he sends weapons to Chiron and Demetrius wrapped in verses from Horace: "he who is of upright life and free from crime does not need the javelins or bow of the Moor."[100] He shoots arrows carrying petitions to heaven hoping to "move the gods / To send down Justice for to wreak our wrongs" (4.4.51-52), and calls for "pen and ink" to write a "supplication" to Saturninus (4.4.106-109). As the play hurtles toward its bloody finale, we pause for a moment in Titus's study, where he is furiously writing down his plans. Having perhaps learned from Lavinia to associate

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[98] Shawn Huffman describes the staff as Lavinia's "phantom tongue." (71).

[99] For an example of a writing manual, see Jehan de Beau-Chesne and John Baildon, *A booke containing divers sortes of hands as well as the English as French secretarie with the Italian, Roman, chancelry & court hands* (London: Imprinted by Richard Field, 1592), A2.

[100] McDonald's translation, page 67, note 20-21.

writing with revenge, Titus begins to bloody his paper to accomplish his ends. When Tamora approaches Titus in disguise, he says "for what I mean to do / See here in bloody lines I have set down" (5.2.13-14). Titus now believes that "what is written shall be executed" (5.2.15), using the imperative "shall" as a commandment. Given the explicit suggestion of violence and his bloody lines in the study scene, the possibility that Titus's wounded wrist serves as his ink pot cannot be ignored (14).[101] The physical reminder of his dismemberment serves him in this aspect of his revenge, not as a woeful reminder of his shame but as a tool in writing his plot.

Titus single-handedly inscribes his own vengeance myth "on a leaf of brass" (4.1.102). He looks to the "pattern, precedent, and lively warrant" of stories to guide him (5.3.44), and executes his own final revenge by brutalizing the already overburdened Philomel myth, the same text that maimed then aided Lavinia. He will bid Tamora to a feast drawn from the conclusion of Philomel's sad story. Her sons will be made into meat pies and served to their mother, just as Procne, the beleaguered sister of Philomel, served her son Itys to his father Tereus. "This is the banquet she shall surfeit on," Titus warns, "For worse than Philomel you used my daughter, / And worse than Progne I will be revenged" (5.2.193-95). Titus surpasses his sources as his need for violence outstrips even the bloodiest of myths, but there is surprising humor in his production.

The play's self-consciousness about writing--including the spectacularization of the process that created the play itself--encourages the audience's awareness of how this play alludes to itself as theater. Titus's plan to rewrite the Philomel myth and stage it for

[101] Lines of blood may also be found in Bel Imperia's letter to Hieronimo in *The Spanish Tragedy* and Tamyra's enforced letter to Bussy in Chapman's *Bussy D'Ambois,* yet Titus's bleeding lines do not appear to be feminine or a warning of danger to anyone but Tamora.

a production "starring" his guests has a sense of humor in its metatheatricality while situating the play in the tradition of revenging masquers and playwrights.[102] Titus trusts in writing, poetry, and, above all, performance to complete his revenge, although the play nearly becomes full parody when Titus emerges to his banquet clothed "*like a cook*" (s.d. 5.3.25). Just as the play *Titus Andronicus* has reactivated the notion of dismemberment for the audience and made these wounded men and women vital once more, Titus himself spectacularizes the archetypal Thyestean feast with a knowing smile for the audience. His grim smile throughout the production holds the performance together, while the audience must wincingly acknowledge the appropriateness of Titus's "other course" (4.1.119)[103] Because Titus appears to understand his role in this production, the audience can laugh with him even as they gasp with horror when he succeeds in wiping out his enemies, his daughter, and himself. The relief we feel at their deaths is considerable. Unfortunately, the play cannot end with Titus's finale; Rome must undertake its own reincorporating in order to carry on.

With the return of Titus's son Lucius, there seems to be new hope for the body politic to be restored and whole once again. But the attempts by the banquet's survivors to normalize the dismemberment metaphor still ring blackly comic in the play's final scene, suggesting that this decorous ending cannot work. Marcus suggests to the gathered Romans that he would "teach you how to knit again / This scattered corn into one mutual sheaf, / These broken limbs again into one body" (5.3.70-72). His grotesque

[102] Cf. Hieronimo's masque in *The Spanish Tragedy*, Vindice's "masque of revengers" in *The Revenger's Tragedy*, and Hamlet's *Mousetrap*, which all expose and punish criminal behavior.

[103] Louise Noble argues that these "macabre comic moments" are "important instances of early modern English culture's anxiety over corpse pharmacology," and that the play considers whether cannibalism can have a therapeutic function and can help heal the integrity of the polluted state. See "'And make two pasties of your shameful heads': Medicinal Cannibalism and Healing the Body Politic in *Titus Andronicus,*" *ELH* 70 (2003): 677-708.

imagery encourages a conception of the body politic as a patient that can be healed, but he also invokes the body parts that have littered the stage at various points, and the bodies that lie below him even as the lines are spoken.[104] The broken limbs are still far too real to be fully acceptable as metaphor. What kind of Frankenstein's monster would emerge from such a re-knitting?

Typically heedless of his own painfully apt language, Marcus assures the crowd that if they find the family guilty of any wrongdoing, "The poor remainder of Andronici / Will *hand in hand* all *headlong* hurl ourselves / And on the ragged stones beat forth our souls, / And make a mutual closure of our house" (5.3.129-134, emphasis mine).[105] After the unceasing iterations of hands, handlessness, and headlessness that pummel the reader and audience in this play, this final alliterative reminder of Andronici bodies is confusing in its excess. The play should hurtle back to decorum with a healing ceremony, and Marcus's words do assert that the survivors of this play, unlike Titus and Lavinia, are physically whole and can indeed seamlessly rejoin society.[106] However, Titus's literalization of metaphor, his spectacular violence, needs neither apology nor

[104] Jonathan Bate and Anthony Brian Taylor both believe that the surviving Andronici go aloft during the skirmish at the final banquet. See Bate's edition from Arden 3rd Series (London: Thompson Learning, 2000), and Taylor, "'The Goths protect the Andronici, who go aloft': The Implications of a Stage Direction," *Notes & Queries* 241 (1996): 152-155.

[105] Kendall considers Marcus's unnecessary "hand in hand" in her article on *Titus* ("Lend me" 315-316).

[106] Cf. David Willbern: When Marcus and Lucius tell the story, "remembrance becomes re-membering." "Rape and Revenge in *Titus Andronicus,*" *Titus Andronicus: Critical Essays*, ed. Philip C. Kolin (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995) 176. (176). Shawn Huffman similarly suggests that, in *Titus*, amputation becomes a signifier of irreparable injustice that prevents the process of psychic healing (68).

epilogue. Marcus asserts unity once again, assuring Rome that justice may indeed return to earth, but Rome without Titus seems a paltry compensation.[107]

The spectacular process of these two plays blends horror and excitement, pity and repulsion. To what end? Spectacles like Edward's assassination and Lavinia's beleaguered body operate cathartically. The display of bloodied bodies in pain fixes the audience's attention in order to command an emotional response. The horror of these two plays climaxes in the overwhelming feelings that catharsis promises. The voyeuristic audience is allowed to watch in horror or laugh along without fear of reprisal or shame. After the intensity of feeling that accompanies both spectacular performances, the two plays also offer up more recognizably political shows. Although Edward III's execution/funeral and Marcus's speech to Rome cannot help but seem banal compared to the spectacles that precede them, there is also relief in their relative normalcy. Spectacle evokes and stimulates, but thankfully cannot last forever.

Marlowe and Shakespeare's provocative use of horrific spectacle forces viewers to reconsider their preconceptions about pain, humor, and revenge. This uncomfortable amalgam requires an actively engaged audience with the stamina to endure the shifts in valence. The often incomprehensible Dog, the spectacular centerpiece of *The Witch of Edmonton*, inspires a similar range of reactions as he jumps from the role of familiar to friend to killer to judge. Much like Lavinia, Dog is a mobile and visually dynamic spectacle that claims the play for himself and forces the audience to follow him, or else.

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[107] Frances Yates described Lucius's role in bringing back justice back to Rome as an "apotheosis [. . .] this perhaps represents the Return of the Virgin--the return of the just empire and the golden age" (qtd. in Taylor 75). I demur.

CHAPTER 3

BAD DOG: SPECTACLE IN *THE WITCH OF EDMONTON*

"The land is full of witches," Lord Chief Justice Anderson declared late in the sixteenth century. "They abound in all places."[1] English playwrights agreed: John Lyly, William Shakespeare, Thomas Heywood, Richard Brome, Thomas Dekker, Thomas Middleton, Barnabe Barnes, Ben Jonson, and John Marston all composed plays featuring witches. Witchcraft abounds even in history plays such as *1 Henry VI* (Joan la Pucelle), *2 Henry VI* (the witch hired by the Duchess of Gloucester), and in *The Valiant Welshman,* by Robert Armin, where witches are consulted by the Bastard's men.[2] Witches are uncanny prophets in *Macbeth*, sexually voracious in *Sophonisba*, and bawdy comic relief in *The Witches of Lancashire*; but for the most part, stage witches are either confined to subplots or they are limited "agents of festive, temporary, reversible disorder."[3] Playwrights exploit the theatrical energy of witches--the crooked body, the curses, the magical eruptions--but dodge the predicament of their existence.

Witches are a particularly fascinating brand of spectacle in the early modern period because of the intersections between their onstage and offstage identities. First, witches produce spectacle with their magic. Karen Newman notices that *maleficium* has as its root *facio*, to make, to fashion, to build; the similarity between the witch's craft and

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[1] Qtd. in Arthur Kinney, introduction, *The Witch of Edmonton*, by John Ford, Thomas Dekker, and William Rowley (New York: Norton, 1998) xxix. This was the justice's conclusion during the 1598 trial of Elizabeth Jordan, who was accused of bewitching 14 year old Mary Glover.

[2] Richard Wilson's list of authors includes Lyly's *Endimion* (Dipsas), Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (Weird Sisters), Brome and Dekker's *The Witches of Lancashire*, Dekker's *Whore of Babylon* (use of "image magic" by conjuror), Middleton's *The Witch* (Hecate), Barnes's *Devil's Charter*, Jonson's *Masque of Queenes*, and Marston's *Sophonisba*. See Wilson, "The pilot's thumb: *Macbeth* and the Jesuits" in *The Lancashire Witches: Histories and Stories,* ed. Robert Poole (New York: Manchester UP, 2002) 127.

[3] Frances E. Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars: Representations of Domestic Crime in England, 1550-1700* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1994) 211.

the playwright's adds a dynamic reflexivity to any staging of witchery.[4] Witches also serve as legible manifestations of the uncertainties and anxieties of a community. They offer the "satisfaction of figuration" to the anxious playgoer as well as to the nervous farmer concerned with a community's malaise.[5] The mortal woman called "witch" can be punished, even expunged, unlike the deeper problems of poverty and disenfranchisement witches represent. Even as they offered a convenient scapegoat, witches and their theatrical representations also provided audiences with pleasure, the "thrilled recognition of the presence of supernatural power in the material world."[6] Witchcraft makes great theater, as can be seen by the spectacular magics that are found in witch plays: flying across stage, sinking below ground, transfigurations, disappearances, invisible voices, and familiar spirits. These spectacles may delight an audience even as they offer evidence proving the witch's guilt, a phenomenon particular to plays that allude to actual accused witches.[7] This tense connection between the stage and the world outside makes the figure of a witch irresistible to early modern playwrights and critics.

The true-crime witch play is a particularly intriguing subset of the witch play genre because it employs the techniques of more literary plays as well as the identifiable

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[4] Karen Newman, *Fashioning Femininity and English Renaissance Drama* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1991) 66. Others have noted the theatricality of both witches and playwrights. See Stephen Greenblatt, "Shakespeare Bewitched," *New Historical Literary Study: Essays on Reproducing Texts, Representing History*, ed. Jeffrey N. Cox and Larry J. Reynolds (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993) 120; Heather Hirschfeld, "Collaborating across Generations: Thomas Heywood, Richard Brome, and the Production of *The Late Lancashire Witches,*" *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30:2 (Spring 2000): 365; David Stymeist, "'Must I be...made a common sink?': Witchcraft and the Theatre in *The Witch of Edmonton,*" *Renaissance and Reformation* 25.2 (2001): 34; and the work of Diane Purkiss, especially *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-Century Representations* (New York: Routledge, 1996) 180-263.

[5] Greenblatt 116.

[6] Greenblatt 115.

[7] Cf. Thomas Heywood and Richard Brome, *The Witches of Lancashire* (printed 1634).

plot of a known trial set in a recognizable location. A.M. Clark terms such plays "dramatic journalism," but the moniker may be misleading. Many of the critics encountering these plays--primarily *The Witch of Edmonton* and *The Witches of Lancashire*--predicate their readings on the perilous assumption that playwrights can be cooperative court reporters. The explicit relationship between "real" witch plays and their contemporary analogues often inspires credulous readings that neglect the spectacularity powering these plays.

Although the rich archival work on historical witch plays such as *The Witches of Lancashire* by critics Alison Findlay and Heather Hirschfeld has produced fascinating insights about the political and religious atmosphere in Lancashire--the famous home of several accused witches--their readings do not address *Lancashire*'s multiple spectacular scenes.[8] Indeed, the seriousness of their approach disregards how noteworthy the play's spectacularity was from its first three-day run at the Globe in August of 1634.[9] Nathaniel Tomkyns described the play's staging thus:

> The subject was of the slights and passages done or supposed to be done by these witches sent from thence hither and other witches and their Familiars; Of ther nightly meetings in severall places: their banqueting with all sorts of meat and drinke conveyed unto them by their familiars upon the pulling of a cord: the walking of pailes of milke by themselves [. . .] the transforming of men and weomen into the shapes of severall

[8] See Alison Findlay, "Sexual and spiritual politics in the events of 1633-34 and *The Late Lancashire Witches,*" *The Lancashire Witches* 150-163; and Heather Hirschfeld, "Collaborating across Generations: Thomas Heywood, Richard Brome, and the Production of *The Late Lancashire Witches,*" *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30:2 (Spring 2000): 339-374.

[9] The three day run was "acted by reason of the great concourse of people." Quoted in Herbert Berry, "The Globe Bewitched and *El Hombre Fiel*," *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England* 1 (1984): 212.

> creatures and especially of horses [. . .] the cutting off of a witch-gentlewoman's hand in the forme of a catt [. . .] the filling of pies with living birds and yong catts &c.[10]

Tomkyns realizes immediately that the subject is the witches who are imprisoned in London at the time ("sent from thence hither"), but he finds the play compelling because of its magical spectacles. Indeed, he is surprised and perhaps relieved that "there be not in it (to my understanding) any poeticall Genius, or art, or language, or judgement to state or tenet of witches (which I expected), or application to vertue but full of ribaldrie and of things improbable and impossible." He praises instead the "newnesse of the subject" and its humor, "mixed with divers songs and dances," and declares the work a "merrie and excellent new play."[11]

The Witch of Edmonton--another "excellent" historical witch play, although far less "merrie"--encourages similarly historical readings that can neglect the playwright's attention to spectacle. The playwrights incorporate lines upon lines of convicted witch Elizabeth Sawyer's own testimony, and the spectacular familiar Tommy, a dog, is drawn directly from Sawyer's confession. Surprisingly, although those same materials include the witch confessing to incredible crimes such as the killing of children, the dramatists focus exclusively on Sawyer's relationship with the spectacular Dog.[12] The play's clear social conscience can waylay critics as well. Sawyer gives several articulate, moving speeches about the plight of the poor and the forgotten. She rails against her neighbors

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[10] Qtd. in Berry 212-13.

[11] Berry 213.

[12] David Atkinson, "Moral Knowledge and the Double Action in *The Witch of Edmonton,*" *Studies in English Literature* 25 (1985): 431, n. 7.

and the powerful members of her community for making her a witch while remaining oblivious to their own culpability. Arthur Kinney is correct to suggest that John Ford, Thomas Dekker, and William Rowley are "especially keen on showing how the forces of society work." However, Kinney misses the play's spectacular essence when he argues that "the playwrights take their journalistic representations of events, activities and characters seriously."[13] Although the playwrights do offer a compelling portrait of a woman who is labeled a witch, they devote the vast majority of the play's energy to a talking dog. This chapter will follow their path and concentrate on Tommy the Dog, because his presence transforms *The Witch of Edmonton* from a witch play into a unique hybrid that declares its spectacular canine to be more remarkable than any alleged witch.

The Witch of Edmonton (1621), the account of an elderly woman accused of magic, is neither a witch play nor a dramatization of real world criminality. Dekker, Ford, and Rowley place Elizabeth Sawyer in the world of festive, popular practices like morris dancing and counterwitchcraft, similar to other local witch plays like *The Witches of Lancashire*. But instead of relishing Sawyer's spectacular magics, mocking the community's discombobulation, and closing with her recovery into the community as *Lancashire* does, they push Sawyer aside and direct the audience's attention to her familiar, a black dog. The spectacular Dog--who walks, talks, claims to be the devil himself, and seduces Sawyer's soul--easily displaces the titular villainess and becomes the agent of Edmonton's woes. His influence over each of the play's plot lines and his own thrilling dramatic presence confuses the play's genre and unsettles the viewer.[14] Dog

[13] Kinney xx.

[14] Clark suggests that accepting witches as straightforward manifestations of early modern beliefs and fears "has the advantage of bypassing the problem of their meaning by reducing them to epiphenomena." See

destabilizes this so-called witch play. When the magic appears too harmless, Dog inserts a dose of malice. When the community unites to expel their witch, Dog exposes their complicity in her fate. And just when Dog comes too close to overtaking the play completely, he disappears and leaves the hapless residents of Edmonton to their own flawed devices.[15]

Critics have labeled *Edmonton* a witch play, but the playwrights toy with its generic conventions as though they are testing the parameters of what is possible within that category. Although David Stymeist writes that the play "effectively confirm[s] that [the witch's] eradication will purge pollution from the world and drive out the Devil," and while it does end with the witch's execution, the play's spectacular investment in Dog asserts that the witch is secondary to this plot, at best. [16] The play's use of actual trial records further rocks audience expectation. Knowing already that Sawyer will hang for witchcraft--she was dead by the time of composition and long buried by the play's printing in 1658--the audience expects the play to dramatize the story of her fall. Instead of a re-enactment of Sawyer's testimony, the play offers a magical animal. Without the generic conventions of a witch play or the recognizable parameters of a known news story, the audience is left unmoored.

The unexpected density of Dog's and Sawyer's identities and the ever-shifting blame for the town's troubles further muddy the play's waters. Dog shifts at high speed from a comic figure whose playfulness is most reminiscent of a Vice figure to a

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"Inversion, Misrule and the Meaning of Witchcraft," *The Witchcraft Reader*, ed. Darren Oldridge (New York: Routledge, 2002) 149.

[15] Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge discuss the timing of Dog's exit. See *Three Jacobean Witchcraft Plays:* The Tragedy of Sophonisba*,* The Witch*,* The Witch of Edmonton (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1985) 3.

[16] Stymeist 43.

spokesman for the devil who threatens those nearest him both physically and spiritually. The audience is by turns attracted to Dog's merry mischief and repulsed by his easy malice. Likewise, Elizabeth Sawyer seems at times to exemplify the typical witch figure--a solitary, shrewish woman who curses everyone in sight--but her lucid self-awareness of how she has been reduced to selling her soul complicates any easy conclusions about whether she deserves her final fate. Elizabeth Sawyer's eloquent expression of her plight and her desperate loneliness--exploited by Dog at every step--adds a disconcerting complication for audience members trying to determine their allegiances. The result is a play that is neither comic nor tragic, yet at times both funny and painfully sad. This unsettling blending of genres and confused expectations, epitomized by the shifting spectacular presence of Dog, forces its audience to reconsider the witch play's purpose.

Dog is spectacular because he demands to be beheld. Even when he declares himself invisible on stage, Dog speaks to the audience and draws our attention to him. The essential incongruity of a man or boy in a dog suit is only the beginning. On stage, Dog bounds, barks, threatens, and even communicates his evil magics to the people of Edmonton by rubbing against them. In addition to this physical showmanship, Dog has a speaking part. His devilish sophistry and alluring arguments seduce Elizabeth Sawyer's soul within minutes, and his clever asides directed toward the audience delight us, too. Dog's spectacularity derives from the power of his language as well as the vigor of his frighteningly strange body.

Dog unsettles critics as easily as he unsettles theater audiences. He does not belong in the usual witch archetypes presented by the stage: the mannish hag (*Macbeth*), the young seductress (*Lancashire*), the harmless wise woman *(Wise Woman of Hodgson)*,

the archetypal Hecate (*The Witch*), the aged sorceress (*Endimion*), or the classical super-witch (*Sophonisba*). Because of his fluctuating persona within the play, too, critics often misread him. Frances Dolan, for example, fleetingly incorporates Dog into a larger theory of "dangerous familiars" by declaring him "only an especially vivid manifestation of the early modern preoccupation with 'familiar' threats and threatening 'familiars.'"[17] His canine costume can fool readers, who equate him with a hobby horse instead of an evil force: "the danger that Dog elsewhere embodies, for example, is invoked by his mischievous presence at the morris, but it is reduced and harmonized--he is domesticated as a magic folk figure, a talking beast."[18] We must begin a consideration of *The Witch of Edmonton* by trusting in our playwrights, who have created a Dog who is "a strikingly effective theatrical creation."[19] He is magical and unnatural, "single-mindedly serving his own ends" like the witches in *Macbeth*.[20] Perhaps more important: even as Dog embodies the occult, he is simultaneously a domesticated animal, the epitome of order and civilization.[21] Dog's blended identity, a melding of devil and dog, requires a flexible kind of reading that can keep up with his shifts between the two poles, but his hybrid nature suits the multi-plot structure of his play perfectly. Like Dog, *Edmonton* presents several different faces over the course of five acts.

Edmonton's witchcraft tale is a subplot within a larger domestic tragedy of bigamy and murder. The main plot focuses on gentleman Frank Thorney's illicit

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[17] Dolan 220.

[18] Anthony B. Dawson, "Witchcraft/Bigamy: Cultural Conflict in *The Witch of Edmonton,*" *Renaissance Drama* 20 (1989): 92.

[19] Corbin and Sedge 23.

[20] Atkinson 426.

[21] Cf. Dawson 84.

relationship and secret marriage to Winifred, a serving girl he forsakes in order to marry wealthy yeoman's daughter Susan Carter and so save his cash-poor gentry family. Frank's deception accelerates into uxoricide, which he successfully blames on two innocent townsmen: Somerton and Warbeck. His guilt surfaces when Susan's ghost returns to accuse him for his part in her murder. Frank confesses to the crime once the bloody murder weapon is found on his body and Susan's coffin is brought in to force a declaration of guilt. He is executed in the play's final scene.

The Elizabeth Sawyer/witch plot is drawn from Henry Goodcole's account of Sawyer's trial and execution for witchcraft in April 1621.[22] His pamphlet, published days after her death, is entitled, "The wonderfull discouerie of ELIZABETH SAWYER a Witch, late of Edmonton, her conuiction and condemnation and Death. Together with the relation of the Diuels accesse to her, and their conference together."[23] Sawyer's testimony tells how the Devil came to her "in the shape of a dogge" when she was cursing and how she granted her soul to this beast in return for her safety and "such mischiefs as I did bid him to do."[24] Dialogue drawn from her testimony appears throughout the play's subplot, which follows Sawyer's descent into witchcraft and her eventual execution. A third, more minor subplot stars Cuddy Banks, a clown figure, who seeks to put on a morris dance with his friends. He becomes involved with the witch in

[22] Kinney's introduction to the play discusses how the play follows Henry Goodcole's account of Elizabeth Sawyer's execution. Goodcole's testimony was published later in April. A Court performance of the play is recorded on December 29, 1621--there is some evidence of earlier productions that year at the Cockpit Theatre in London (xiii).

[23] Kinney xv.

[24] Henry Goodcole, *The wonderfull discouerie of Elizabeth Savvyer a witch late of Edmonton*... (London, 1621) C2v, C1v.

order to attract the interest of the town beauty, but Dog seizes upon him as a companion as well.

Although Tommy the Dog emerges full-blown from Elizabeth Sawyer's testimony, he is also part of the literary and folkloric tradition of the familiar.[25] In the Continental witchcraft narratives that influenced other witch plays like Thomas Middleton's *The Witch* (1613), such an animal would be the devil himself, for "the Devil was widely reputed to appear to his disciples in the shape of an animal, usually a monstrous dog, cat, goat, or ram, and witches on the Continent made a habit or riding or flying to the Sabbats on the backs of demons disguised as animals."[26] In *The Witches of Lancashire,* which draws upon this same European tradition, witches transform themselves and others into animals, including greyhounds.[27] Witchcraft lore and trial records in England suggest that local "witches were predominantly solitary," and as a result often turned to companion creatures, who were spirits but not the devil.[28] Dog appears to be a distillation of both kinds of animals: he is a "familiar" in the English tradition, but he also asserts that he is the devil.

The phenomenon of the familiar appears to have been pervasive and widely acknowledged. The records of English witch trials show the extent of the belief in witches' familiars: women were frequently accused of being "served by toads, ferrets,

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[25] Cf. Dawson 84.

[26] James A. Serpell, "Guardian Spirits or Demonic Pets: The Concept of the Witch's Familiar in Early Modern England, 1530-1712," *The Animal/Human Boundary: Historical Perspectives*, ed. Angela N.H. Creager and William Chester Jordan (Rochester, NY: U of Rochester P, 2002) 160.

[27] In Thomas Heywood and Richard Brome's *The Witches of Lancashire* (1634), a boy finds a brace of greyhounds that turn into witches and demonic children (2.5).

[28] Serpell 182.

cats, frogs, moles etc."[29] The familiar was a particularly hazardous creature because it merely had to touch its victim to transmit its harmful curse, called a *maleficium*. This touching was especially difficult to avoid or prevent, because familiars appear harmless. As Frances Dolan has observed, "the familiarity of witches and their imps--their apparent innocuousness--also made them especially disquieting. How could one distinguish a needy neighbor or her playful dog from a demonic threat? How could one know whom to trust?"[30] The canine familiar like Dog is particularly worrisome, because the creature itself was a trusted member of a household, a companion for hunting, and a guardian for the home. In addition, the dog can be powerful and mobile. Unconfined by a box of wool, like the frogs and moles referred to in witch trials, his autonomy augments his influence.

Black dogs like Sawyer's Tommy are commonly mentioned as familiars in court proceedings and in pamphlet literature.[31] In Essex in 1579, an accused witch confessed that her familiar killed a young woman for striking her in the face. The morning after the girl's death, her mother "espied (as she thought) a thyng like to a black Dogge goe out at her doore, and presently at the sight thereof, she fell distraught of her wittes."[32] *Edmonton's* Tommy also recalls the dark canine belonging to the famous Pendle witches of Lancashire, who were tried in 1612. In that case, Alizon Devise had inherited her

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[29] Corbin and Sedge 23.

[30] Dolan 175.

[31] There is also a substantial folk tradition associating black dogs with the devil or with the souls of dead criminals. They are also thought to be harbingers of death. This creature might be called a Grim, a Black Shuck, or Padfoot, depending on the region. See Geoffrey Ashe, *Mythology of the British Isles* (London: Methuen, 1990).

[32] Extract in C. L'Estrange, *Witchcraft and Demonianism* (1933; New York : AMS Press, 1984) 149-55.

familiar from her grandmother (who was also on trial). Devise's testimony has marked similarities to *Edmonton*'s presentation of Dog: "This examinate [i.e., Devise] being walking towards the rough-lee, in a close of one john robinsons, there appeared unto her a thing like unto a blacke dogge: speaking unto her, this examinate, and desiring her to give him her soule, and he would give her power to do any thing she would."[33] The dog here plays the role of seducer who lures the woman away from the well-traveled path.

The enticement in the lea leads to a physical union reported by many witch confessions and outraged pamphlets, a relationship that is both erotically charged and maternal. Alizon's Devise consummates her relationship with her new companion by suckling him: "this examinate being therewithall inticed, and setting her downe; the said blacke-dogge did with his mouth (as this examinate then thought) sucke at her breast, a little below her paps, which place did remaine blew halfe a yeare next after."[34] This nursing is typical of the alleged relationships between witches and their familiars; the witches reward their companions by sustaining them with their blood. Although this union evokes an "obscenely distorted inversion of the normal mother-child relationship," it also signifies intimacy.[35] Sawyer's "tickling" with Dog in 4.1 and other embraces between them suggests exactly this kind of physical and emotional closeness. The devilish embrace is cozy and it is pitiable, the affection "of a lonely poverty-stricken woman to her pet animal."[36] Yet these creatures are not only companions. Sawyer

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[33] See Thomas Potts, *The Wonderful Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancaster* (1613) in *The Lancashire Witches: Histories and Stories*, 6-59.

[34] Poole 50.

[35] Serpell 181.

[36] Serpell 183.

"looks on the Dog as her confidant, her companion and comfort," but she also uses him to exact her petty revenges.[37] In addition, Dog frequently takes his own initiative, and his meanderings are staged by *Edmonton*.

Putting animals on stage may not have been uncommon in the early modern period. It has been suggested that some playhouses, such as the Red Bull, used live horses and other animals in their productions.[38] Other plays seem to require trained animals, such as Launce's dog in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1593), while earlier Tudor entertainments appear to call for live animals, such as the hawk and dog that are traded in John Skelton's *Magnyfycence* (~1515-1526). Larger animals would have been played by men or boys in costumes.[39] Although animals appear to have populated the background, few plays give these beasts speaking parts. Those that do gesture toward the magical and miraculous, but these effects are difficult to sustain.

The Chester Mystery Cycle, Play V, *Moses and the Law: Balaack and Balaam,* features a compelling speaking animal. In this pageant, based on the Biblical story from the Book of Numbers, King Balaack hires a soothsayer named Balaam to determine how best to curse the Israelites. Balaam complies with the king in spite of divine instruction, and is confronted by an angel of God.[40] Balaam's ass sees the angel before her master and falls to her knees, and Balaam beats his mount. The angel then gives the ass, named

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[37] Corbin and Sedge 25.

[38] Cf. George Reynolds, *The Staging of Elizabethan Plays at the Red Bull Theater 1605-1625* (London: Oxford UP, 1940) 87, note 11.

[39] Peter Happé notes that "the device of hiding someone--probably a small boy--was used in the liturgical drama." See *English Mystery Plays: A Selection,* Ed. Peter Happé (New York: Penguin, 1975) 663, n.19. Henslowe's inventory lists "one black dog," but it's difficult to know whether this is a prop or a costume (*Diary*, App. 2, 92).

40 Cf. Numbers 22:21-35

Burnell, the power of speech to confront and scold her master for his foolishness.[41] Burnell saves her master's life by kneeling before the angel, and uses her speech to shame Balaam for beating her, his loyal servant. The Post-Reformation banns that heralded the cycle indicate how vital this scene was to the show; they commanded performers to "Make the Ass to speak, and set it out lively."[42] After her brief lecture, however, Burnell the ass returns to her mute animal form, never to speak again.

The ability to communicate is divinely inspired in the Chester pageant, and the ass speaks sensibly when given the power to talk to her master. Her eloquence is portrayed as key to preserving the Israelites from the Moabites and their soothsayer, at least temporarily. Even so, her ability to speak is limited and serves one purpose, likely because the effect could not be sustained for long. The vague, suggestive quality of the stage direction suggests that the effect was also very humorous in production. Balaam's violent response to his ass's importuning was likely hilarious, and the Cappers' speaking animal would have been a slapstick highlight in a long day of pageants.

Even though a domesticated beast's ability to speak would present humorously, a talking dog may have been more ominous. The theatrical ancestor of speaking hounds like Dog is the classical hell-hound Cerberus. Burnell the ass can speak because God inspires her; the hounds of hell can speak because the devil encourages them. Guardian of the underworld, Cerberus is a three-headed dog with a dragon's tail that devours mortals attempting to enter Hades and spirits trying to leave. Since Henslowe mentions a Cerberus head, companies could have staged him with an attention to size and

[41] Burnell is traditionally recognized as a she-ass.

[42] *The Chester Mystery Cycle*, ed. David Mills (East Lansing, MI: Colleagues Press, 1992) 84.

fearsomeness as well as audibility.[43] In Thomas Heywood's *The Silver Age* (see Ch. 1), Cerberus faces Theseus, Perithous, and Philoctetes at the gates of Hades. He speaks to them scornfully--"These my three empty throats you three shall gorge, / And when my nailes haue torne you limbe from limbe, / I'le sit and feast my hunger with your flesh"--before slaying Perithous. Cerberus uses his ability to speak to both threaten and incite the men. He eggs on the heroes to attack before Hercules arrives, and taunts them into an impetuous battle so that he can feed upon them. Cerberus finds his foe's weakness and exploits it. Only Hercules's brute force can finally overpower him. Cerberus's persuasiveness and malice resurface in *Edmonton*'s Dog, the talking beast who offers beleaguered women revenge against their oppressors.

Unlike Burnell or even Cerberus, Dog needs few props or effects. His appearance is not specifically noted in the play, apart from his color, but his mobility and his ability to stand on his hind legs suggest that he would have been played by an actor unencumbered by heavy costuming.[44] Some of the directions for Dog require subtle, even emotional responses; the audience needs to see his face and his body. He "*fawns and leaps*" (s.d. 2.l.244), "*barks"* (s.d.3.1.49), laughs (3.1.95), "*rubs*" his victims (s.d. 3.3.14, 4.1.197), "*ties*" up Frank (s.d.3.1.73), "*plays the morris*" (s.d. 3.4.52), "tickles" with Sawyer (4.1.168), "*shrug[s] as it were for joy, and dances*" (s.d. 4.2.64), "*paw[s] softly at Frank*" (s.d. 4.2.110), "*stands aloof*" (s.d. 5.1.75), and finally turns white before

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[43] Costume heads could be constructed to amplify the speaker's voice. See Philip Butterworth, *Theatre of Fire: Special Effects in Early English and Scottish Theatre* (London: Society for Theatre Research, 1998), particularly his discussion of *The Castle of Perseverance.*

[44] A bear is a similarly apt animal for acting--human-sized and capable of standing upright. (Cf. *Mucedorus* and *Winter's Tale*) These animals could be brought to life rather than represented by properties. See Jean MacIntyre and Garrett P.J. Epp, "'Cloathes worth all the rest': Costumes and Properties" in John Cox and David Scott Kastan, *New History of Early English Drama* (New York: Columbia UP, 1997) 269-86.

he abandons Sawyer (s.d. 5.1.27).[45] The detail in these directions--"*joyfully*" shrugging and "*softly*" pawing at Frank before the latter's downfall--confirms the extent to which the play relies upon Dog's ability both to draw the audience's gaze and to communicate through movements and facial expressions.

As a result of these demands, Dog's spectacularity relies heavily upon the body of the actor. Indeed, his physical stance is perhaps even more vital than his costume, because his stooping, shuddering walk--somewhere between four legs and two-- becomes its own allusion to his place within the theatrical tradition of witch plays. Dog embodies the inversion, the preposterousness, which witches signified in early modern thinking.[46] His contorted body--a human form cramped into dog-ness--replicates the "strange postur[es]" the morris dancers use to mock Mother Sawyer's crooked back when they come upon her in Act 2. Jonson's description of the witches' anti-masque in *The Masque of Queens* (1609)--"a magical dance full of preposterous change and gesticulation"--corresponds to Dog's inverted movement.[47] At least one twentieth-century production has given us a Dog who is mostly naked, painted black, and who wears some sort of furry headpiece, a costuming choice that would allow the actor to move easily between subtle movements and canine bounding.[48]

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[45] All quotations from Thomas Dekker, John Ford and William Rowley, *The Witch of Edmonton,* ed. Arthur F. Kinney (New York: Norton, 1998).

[46] "The behaviour of witches was described according to the same principle of inversion found in other types of rebellion. Witches, like scolding women, disobedient children or subjects, turned the world up-side down." Alison Findlay, "Sexual and spiritual politics in the events of 1633-34 and *The Late Lancashire Witches*" in. *The Lancashire Witches: Histories and Stories*, 152. For the relationship between witchcraft and inversion, see the work of Stuart Clark, particularly *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[47] Ben Jonson, *The Complete Masques*, ed. Stephen Orgel (New Haven: Yale UP, 1969) 134.

[48] See in particular images from the RSC production of 1981 in Kinney's edition of the play (xxxvi).

Surprisingly, while the speaking animal is not a stranger to the stage, Dog remains a considerable anomaly in witch plays. For all the associations between witches and familiars, no other English witch play gives its animals a voice. Witch plays typically discuss familiars, although several do stage them. The Weird Sisters in *Macbeth* call to "Graymalkin" the cat and "Paddock" the toad within 10 lines of the play's opening. Middleton's *Witch*, Hecate, calls to her coven's pets, "Titty and Tiffin, Suckin and Pidgen" and then "*conjures* [. . .] *a Cat, playing on a fiddle"* (1.2). The *Witches of Lancashire* dance with their *spirits*, whom they term their "feat familiars" (2.1.7). Joan la Pucelle's "fiends" in *1 Henry VI* can "*walk,"* but they "*speak not"* (s.d. 5.3.12). Giving Dog words makes him a force instead of a pet; he becomes a character in the play rather than one of the special effects. His fluency functions like Cerberus's: he rattles his opponents as well as the audience.

The spectacle of Dog in *Edmonton* draws much of its theatrical effect from the uncanny portrayal of a common dog doing uncommon things. Dog appears at first to be a comic figure, but his capacity for speech exaggerates our sense of unease. It would have been one thing to read the familiar's "speeches" in Sawyer's testimony, another to see and hear Dog as a walking, talking monster. The clown Cuddy Banks, for example, reacts to this disquieting spectacle with nervous laughter. To Dog's assertion, "Yes, I can speak," Cuddy replies, "The Devil you can. You have read Aesop's fables then" (3.1.109-10). When faced with the incomprehensible, Cuddy retreats to the known and makes Dog into a character from a tale; he refuses to recognize his demonic disposition.[49] Dog's

[49] Cuddy Banks's refusal to treat Dog as anything other than a friendly neighborhood mutt seems to save him, judging from their final conversation in Act Five.

frequent laughter and ironic "bow wow wows" further mock these attempts by Sawyer and Banks to comprehend his nature.[50]

Humor plays a complex role in *Edmonton*. The play's structure is comic, its mocking tone toward the townspeople is intentionally humorous, and the inclusion of a talking dog should only make the play funnier. Instead, Dog seems to be the only figure enjoying himself. Even the audience, who may at times enjoy the ridicule of their rural English neighbors, cannot rely upon the play for any consistent amusement because the safe moments of clowning and moralizing are frequently undercut by Dog. When Frank Thorney is discovered to be a murderer, Dog suddenly "dances" on stage and steals his thunder. Cuddy Banks's silly morris dance is also overtaken by the crowd-pleasing animal when Dog bewitches the fiddle player and plays the morris himself. Although Dog encourages laughter, he also creates uncomfortable moments when he laughs alone. When Sawyer nears her fatal end, or when Cuddy Banks wishes that Dog could be a better animal, Dog's humorless chuckle is chilling.

As the play draws to a close, it becomes apparent that Dog is laughing at the audience, too. He, along with the playwrights who made him, mocks the expectations of the spectators and offers them only confusion and unease. Dog so destabilizes the play that what was comic becomes uncomfortable and what bordered on tragic now seems wry. Yet there is pleasure in this uncertainty. Once Dog empties *Edmonton* of its easy didactic thrust and its facile clowning, the play requires a more active audience. The expectations for a "witch play" are dashed, as are the audience's hopes for a silly animal

[50] Dog laughs frequently: "Ho!" (2.1.120) and "Ha, ha!" (2.1.156) when he first meets Sawyer; "Ha, ha, ha, ha!" (3.1.95 and 102) when he tricks Cuddy Banks; "Ha, ha, ha, ha!" when he forsakes Sawyer (5.1.82); and "Ha, ha!" (5.1.168 and 181) when he tells Cuddy Banks of his true identity.

character. Yet by dropping these conventions, the play allows Dog's dynamism to carry the play, and his energy sweeps the audience along.

Dog's spectacularity makes him the director of this play. As such, he gives himself all the best parts, shifting between canine and supernatural identities from scene to scene. His theatrical mobility forces the audience to become aware of the complexities within what could easily have been a witch comedy. He plays the seducer for Elizabeth Sawyer and Cuddy Banks. He also plays the Vice, and uses his enthusiasm for misbehavior to bond himself to the audience while facilitating the sins of Frank Thorney. He also plays the devil, a role (like the witch) that the play belittlingly links to morris dancing and other counterwitchcraft rituals. However, while Dog moves easily between each of these poles, his witch, Elizabeth Sawyer, is bound by her situation and dies for being witchlike. Her destiny and the fate of Edmonton finally rest with Dog, whose final role is judge and jury to Sawyer, Frank Thorney, and the rest of Edmonton. Even after his timely exit, Dog's influence seems to shimmer throughout the play's final scenes.

Dog quickly gets to work once he enters the play, uniting Dekker, Ford, and Rowley's three plots (the Frank Thorney story, the Elizabeth Sawyer subplot, and Cuddy Banks's morris dance) into a case study of social misconduct.[51] Dog's presence visibly cues the audience to the ubiquity of evil. His involvement as tempter, agent, and facilitator shows how easily each of these stories incorporates his helpful malevolence.

[51] The connection between Frank Thorney's bigamy and Sawyer's witchcraft is tenuous even with Dog's interference, and several critics have wondered over their combination in the play. David Atkinson argues that the two criminal plots are combined because "in 1604 two consecutive Acts of Parliament were passed, the first making bigamy a felony punishable by death (it had previously only been an offence in ecclesiastical law) and the second revising the law on witchcraft, in particular making the formation of a compact with an evil spirit (which is at the heart of Mother Sawyer's crime) also a felony punishable by death." Atkinson suggests that John Ford's legal training would have helped him know about this strange coincidence. See "The Two Plots of *The Witch of Edmonton,*" *Notes and Queries* (Jun 1984):229-30.

As Dog informs Cuddy Banks near the end of the play, "Thou never art so distant / From an evil spirit, but that thy oaths, / Curses and blasphemies pull him to thy elbow" (5.1.131-33). Even so, Dog's presence is sought after, both by those onstage and by those who watch.

Dog's obvious enjoyment of his work adds to his attractiveness on stage. His strange appearance and cavorting catch the eye, but the pleasure he takes in luring souls to hell makes him a persuasive figure. Like the Vice, Dog entangles other characters and even the audience in the pleasures of sinfulness with his well-timed jests and his joyous movements on stage. He is like Titivillus, the laughing devil audiences literally paid to see in *Mankynd*.[52] Dog wins over the town of Edmonton by giving people what they think they want. He offers Elizabeth Sawyer love and vengeance, Cuddy Banks the promise of stardom, and Frank Thorney an easy way out of his messy marriage.

Dog first uses his silver tongue to draw Elizabeth Sawyer to him, assuaging the woman's fear of him with skilled rhetoric: "Come, do not fear, I love thee much too well / To hurt or fright thee. If I seem terrible, / It is to such as hate me" (2.1.123-25). Dog's description of his gentle nature hidden by a fearsome front reflects Sawyer's own plight. She is old, bent, and missing one eye, a caricature of the rural witch, and her rage feeds off her bitterness and loneliness. Like Dog, she only appears frightening to those who hate her. He continues his seduction by appealing to her feelings of self-righteous indignation: "I [. . .] have seen and pitied / Thy open wrongs, and come out of my love / To give thee just revenge against thy foes" (2.1.125-27). His vengeance *will* be just, for she is truly wronged by her neighbors. Dog offers Sawyer what she craves--a friend and

[52] The devil Nowadays, for example, tells the audience, "[Titivillus] loveth no groats, nor pence of tuppence; / Give us red royals, if ye will see his abominable presence" (lines 464-65). See *Mankind* in *Three Late Medieval Morality Plays*, ed. G.A. Lester (New York: Norton, 1999).

a champion--and her response betrays the extent of her longing: "May I believe thee?" (2.1.127). Sawyer wants to believe in both Dogs, the powerful devil and the domestic companion.

Dog's potent disguise as a friendly dog bewitches the son of Sawyer's neighbor as well. Even when Old Banks returns to threaten Sawyer and her dog with burning for their part in driving a neighbor's wife mad, Dog is shielded by those who love him. Banks assures the witch that the spirit who "comes to you in the likeness of a dog" will be taken if he is seen. "If we do [see him]," Banks threatens, "unless it be the Devil himself, he shall go howling to the gaol in one chain, and you in another" (4.1.228-30). Cuddy leaps to Dog's defense: "You send the poor dumb thing howling to th'gaol? He that makes him howl, makes me roar [. . . .] I'll lie by the heels myself, before Puppison shall" (4.1.233-40). The son testifies that "neither is this the Black Dog of Newgate." Old Banks, ever astute, replies "No, Goodman Son-fool, but the Dog of Hell-gate," but his son loves the dog (4.1.250-1). Young Banks affectionately explains his defense to Dog: "I am bewitched, little cost-me-nought, to love thee--[your games] make me spit in thy mouth" (4.1.270-71). Banks is taken in with the marvel of the talking dog, and cannot or perhaps will not look more closely or consider what the presence of such a beast must mean. Banks laughs at his "bewitchment" but the play draws no conclusions about how much people are coerced into helping Dog. Because Dog has delighted Cuddy Banks, Cuddy will not harm him. By giving his victims what they want, Dog succeeds in insinuating himself into their lives. He does the same with the audience by fulfilling their need: anticipation and pleasure.

Dog visits the play's main plot--Frank Thorney's bigamous love triangle, which results in the murder of Susan Carter--because he aims to do harm, but his enjoyment of malice seduces the audience as well. Dog moves against the couple autonomously; there has been no interaction between the witch and the Thorneys to this point. Like a Vice, Dog speaks intimately to the audience of his nefarious plans, relishing with us the impending crime. As Act 3 opens, Dog trots onstage and confides to the audience, "Now for an early mischief and a sudden. / The mind's about it now. One touch from me / Soon sets the body forward" (3.1.1-3). We see through Dog's eyes that Frank is up to no good, and we will make a face along with him at Frank's empty assurances to his trusting new wife. Dog's declaration that "the mind's about it now" suggests that Frank is already thinking about killing Susan in order to be with Winifred. Dog's "touch," the *maleficium* that was the hallmark of familiars in this tradition, is only a mild encouragement to murder. The audience is quickly snared in Dog's web and observes Frank's fall with no small glee.

Frank's consciousness of his wrongdoing is emphasized when his literal brush with evil--"*Dog rubs him*" (s.d. 3.3.15)--directly follows his use of an aside. Frank has gone off into the forest to meet his first wife Winifred, but he is followed by Susan. Although Frank may have been thinking about harming Susan in the woods, he only takes action after resorting to the Vice-like technique of speaking to the audience about his dark wishes. Because Dog seems drawn to wickedness--as we saw, he comes to Sawyer when she curses--Frank becomes susceptible when he voices his intentions. Upon finding her husband with his "page," Susan assures him that her father and brother will be looking for them, and Frank replies aside, "So, I shall have more trouble"

(3.3.14). Articulating his dismay this way reveals that Frank wishes he were free of his new wife. As Dog nudges him, transferring his harmful magic by touch, Frank continues his aside, saying, "Thank you for that. Then I'll ease all at once. / 'Tis done now. What I ne'er thought on" (15-6). There appears to be real magic in Dog's caresses, even if they only magnify intentions already present.[53] Frank may later protest that he never thought of harming his wife until the devil suggested the possibility, but he quickly resigns himself to bloodshed.[54] Dog is free to disappear into the background until Frank has stabbed Susan and requires assistance to cover the crime.

Dog encourages Frank's crime, even helping the murderer to cover his tracks. In order to conceal his part in Susan's murder, Frank wounds himself and then ties himself up to make it appear that he has been robbed or overpowered. As he struggles with the ropes, *Dog ties him* (73). Frank's response is unnerving: "So, so, I'm fast; I did not think I could / Have done so well behind me. How prosperous / And effectual mischief sometimes is" (3.3.73-75). As Dog offers Frank enough rope to hang himself, the scene teeters between comedy and heartbreak: Frank's innocent amazement is stunningly foolish, and his wonder at how easily one can kill one's spouse is laughable. Dog has helped Frank achieve his goals, loyal hound that he is. Like the devil on his shoulder, or

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[53] When Ratcliffe threatens to tear Mother Sawyer's face with her nails, Sawyer sends Dog to "touch her" (4.1.197). Although Ratcliffe is already "*mad,*" once she is touched she begins babbling: "There's a Lancashire hornpipe in my throat. Hark how it tickles it, with doodle, doodle, doodle, doodle. Welcome sergeants: welcome Devil. Hands, hands; hold hands, and dance around, around, around" (4.1.199-202). She later brains herself to death.

[54] Though he makes a feeble Thane, Frank sounds like Macbeth after Susan's murder: "'Tis done; and I am in. Once past our height, / We scorn the deep'st abyss" (3.3.66-7). Three of the echoes from Shakespeare: "If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well / It were done quickly" (1.7.1-2); "I go and it is done" (2.1.62); and "I am in blood / Stepped in so far that, should I wade no more, / Returning were as tedious as go o'er" (3.4.135-37). All Shakespeare quotations are from the *Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).

the embodiment of Frank's darker self, Dog provides a malicious inspiration that delights Frank as well as the audience.

The third piece of the story--Cuddy Banks and his plans for a morris dance--offers yet another avenue for the play to revel in Dog's theatricality while dramatizing how easily Dog can enter people's lives. Banks longs to be as theatrically potent as Dog, and he gets his wish in the Edmonton morris dance by playing the hobby horse. The play spends considerable time on Banks's morris dance for two reasons. First, it is a set-piece replete with music, dancing, and clowning: a place where a play and a theatrical creature like Dog can thrive. The morris even provides a spectacular animal to serve as Dog's playmate: the hobby horse. Second, the dancers' language of role playing and performance offers another way of articulating the play's unsteady position on witchcraft. The dancers--fools to a man--are never clear whether witches are real or simply pretend roles played by old women, but their confusion leads their spectators to reconsider the difference between fact and fiction for themselves.

The dancers' conversations link witchery to performance while also reminding the viewer how different *Edmonton* is from its predecessors, even though Dog is nowhere to be found. The morris dancers participate in the play's reconsideration of witchcraft with their own theatrical efforts: their discussions about the witch's role in the morris summon other witch plays while suggesting that there is no such a thing as a real witch. When Young Banks leads the dancers on stage near the beginning of the play, the young men's exchange sounds strangely like the witches in 4.1 of *Macbeth*. Young Banks's list of supplies needed for the upcoming morris dance--"A new head for the tabor [. . .] silver tipping for the pipe" (2.1.36)--recalls the seven syllable lines used by *Macbeth*'s witches

("Thrice the brinded cat hath mew'd" [4.1.1].). As their banter continues, so does the evocative sound of their language. The dancers call for "double bells [. . . .] double bells" from "Crooked Lane," repeating "double" four times before repeating "treble" another four (2.1.39-43). Although their talk appears unremarkable on the page, the sound of the words is strikingly similar to Shakespeare's: "Double, double toil and trouble" (4.1.10). Although these echoes may warn us that certain kinds of language--like cursing--can make one a witch, the play mocks the suggestion by putting the magic words in the mouths of clowns. Even so, the resonance created between witches and acting destabilizes the definition of witch in Edmonton.

The morris dancers cannot decide whether witches are widespread enough to be dangerous or ordinary enough to be clichéd, and their uncertainty reflects the unsettled appearances of all things in Edmonton after Dog's arrival. The dancers are attracted to the potential theatricality of the witch, to the point that they would like to have one join their troupe, but they remain unsure about how dangerous a real witch might be. As 3.1 opens and the dancers gather to rehearse, Cuddy asks his colleagues "Have we e'er a witch in the morris?" (3.1.8). The dancers reply in the negative, and Banks retorts, "I'll have a witch; I love a witch" (11). Banks has recently received assistance from Sawyer in his quest for the love of a neighboring girl, and this line may show his new partiality, but he also desires dark power for his dance. Cuddy does not recognize the peril of such a role; he only has an inkling about the drama that such a role could provide.

Compared to Dog's spectacularity, a witch's theatricality seems mild. The First Dancer demurs: "Faith, witches themselves are so common now-a-days, that the counterfeit will not be regarded. They say we have three or four in Edmonton, besides

Mother Sawyer" (3.1.12-14). His resistance to having a witch in the morris is more theatrical than moral: there is no novelty. The Second Dancer is also cynical. He wishes Mother Sawyer "would dance her part with us" (15), as though she might liven up their production with a cameo appearance. The Third Dancer sees a difference between their dance and their lives, however, and argues against this blending of morris role with reality: "So would not I, for if she comes, the Devil and all come along with her" (16-17). This dancer's understanding that witches bring trouble encapsulates the dilemma facing Elizabeth Sawyer. At the same time the dancers wonder carelessly about how a "real" witch could enliven their routine, Sawyer is trapped in her own production. Her use of the theatrical language suggests her own understanding of this irony. A witch may be just a mask, the play suggests, but it cannot be taken off, unlike the easy transitioning between roles performed by Dog or the one-day of dress-up attempted by the morris dancers. From the opening of the play, Sawyer plays the part that has been thrust upon her, and her performance is compelling.

The title figure of the play deserves a moment of our time. Rather than following the simpler trajectory of the doomed sinner, the play offers considerable room for Sawyer to embody the marginalized and impoverished creature so often labeled a witch even as Dog steals the show. She functions as a foil in this play, serving to make Dog all the more stunning, but her complexity makes the comparison affecting. The witch's humanity--easily accessed through her eloquent speeches about her own suffering and the sinfulness of the world--sets off Dog's demonic nature for all to see.

Sawyer enters the play behaving in a traditionally witch-like manner even before she meets Dog. She is recognizable as a witch based on common characteristics reported

in folktales, court reports, and literary and dramatic depictions. First, she is angry, a central facet of most witch stories.[55] Little separates the scold from the witch in the early modern period; both are punished for expressing their displeasure too freely. "Being classified as a scold is integral to Sawyer's conviction; her iconoclastic verbal defiance rather than *maleficium* itself becomes the major basis for her execution."[56] Interestingly, Sawyer qualifies this characteristic by insisting that her shrewish tongue has been "enforce[d] upon me" by the townspeople, that her "bad tongue" has been taught to her by their "bad usage" (2.1.10-14). Second, she is old. As one character muses in *The Witches of Lancashire*, ""I do not say as witches go nowadays, for they for the most part are ugly old beldams."[57] Third, Sawyer is both poor and alone. Arthur Kinney refers to such figures as the "unassimilable women in the community," the spinsters, widows, healers, and midwives who could be sacrificed to ensure a town's survival.[58] Because she is so powerless, Sawyer plays the cursing hag to achieve some agency in Edmonton. But there is no sense as the scene opens that Sawyer seeks to sell her soul. We see instead how she is driven to that end. She plays a witch because it is the only role available to her in Edmonton. But, by having chosen "to behave like a witch, she must become one."[59] Act 2 opens with this angry, aged pariah commenting upon her degradation.

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[55] See Dolan: "Anger reappears as central in accounts of witchcraft" and was "sometimes feared as a kind of agency in itself [. . .] Speech was the primary means of expressing that anger, of provoking the devil, and of enacting ill will" (196-98). Also, Alison Findlay notes that "witchcraft functions as a metaphor for threats posed by unruly subjects" See "Sexual and spiritual politics in the events of 1633-34 and *The Late Lancashire Witches,*" in Poole 153.

[56] Stymiest 40.

[57] Richard Brome and Thomas Heywood, *The Witches of Lancashire*, ed. Gabriel Egan (London: Nick Hern Books, 2002) 1.1.100-01.

[58] Kinney xxxi.

[59] Kinney xx.

Sawyer has been prevented from gathering sticks from her neighbor's yard as 2.1 opens, and her diatribe against her neighbor, the elder Banks, is redolent with cursing and threats. Her speech ends with an apostrophe to evil worthy of Lady Macbeth, one that succeeds in summoning those "spirits that tend on mortal thoughts." Elizabeth cries out against her ignorance and powerlessness and calls upon "some power good or bad" to instruct her in revenge (2.1.106). Her hunger for vengeance is so great that she offers to "go out of myself, / And give this fury leave to dwell within / This ruined cottage, ready to fall with age" (108-110).[60] It is not her desire to be possessed, however, that summons the devil; it is her offer to "study curses, imprecations, / Blasphemous speeches, oaths, detested oaths [. . .] so I might work / Revenge upon this miser" (112-13). Sawyer must curse with her own tongue and seek violence against others to be worthy of anyone's attention. Her decrepit body is of no interest, and so she unthinkingly offers up the only thing of value to her: her soul.

There are few options for the witch-like woman, and Sawyer's serious consideration of selling her soul illustrates her dilemma. We cannot know whether her language deliberately invokes a familiar or even a devil; as she cynically notes, it doesn't matter what her intentions may be. She reasons that, "'Tis all one, / To be a witch as to be counted one" (117-18), and longs for some kind of power if she is to be so labeled. Sawyer's performance of witch-like behavior--her rage at her neighbor Banks for not allowing her to gather sticks--is a feeble attempt to punish or frighten a bully. Her curses

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[60] Cf. Lady Macbeth's:
"Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
Of direst cruelty!" (1.5.40-43)

attract the beast, though, who cries, "Ho! Have I found thee cursing? Now thou art mine own" (120). It is as if she even determines the form of her master when she refers to Banks as "this black cur, / That barks and bites, and sucks the very blood / Of me, and of my credit" (115-19). The image of a black dog that suckles its witch mistress's blood combined with her oaths finally summons Dog, and this amateur foray into witchery opens Sawyer to the Dog's powers.

The process of becoming a witch is not typically staged in witch plays, and its inclusion here is part of a larger strategy by the playwrights to undercut the notion of "witch." Although Dog remains the spectacular focus, Sawyer demands the audience's pathetic appeal. From the beginning, Sawyer's suffering and her naïveté are painful. Scraps of her piety peep through as she nervously considers offering her soul to Dog, but those second thoughts instigate Dog's frighteningly swift shift from friend to attacker: "I'll tear thy body in a thousand pieces" (2.1.136). Her invective has given way to doubt, but Dog's sugared lies pale in the face of his powerful canine form. Faced with the dark Dog, likely standing on hind legs and baring his teeth at her, she chooses to preserve her body and "see full revenge / On all that wrong me" (138-39). The play offers Sawyer an alibi for her witchiness--she sells her soul in self-defense.

Whether or not Sawyer wanted to become a witch, all hell breaks loose: Elizabeth's arm is lapped by a creature that is neither man nor beast while sound effects rattle the firmament: *Sucks her arm, thunder and lightning* (144).[61] Amateur witchcraft has hardened into a contract with a devil, and a canine metaphor has become a black dog that literally sucks blood. The lines between man and animal have already been crossed

[61] Cf. a similarly devilish scene in *1 Henry VI*. Joan of Arc tries to bribe her silent demons: "Where I was wont to feed you with my blood, / I'll lop a member off and give it you / In earnest of a further benefit" (5.3.14-16).

in the figure of Dog--the devil played by a man playing a dog--but staging Sawyer's suckling intensifies the horror of the transgression. Dog's size and his ability to stand up make him more of a vampire than a domestic animal in this moment. Like an incubus, the male demon supposed to breed with witches, Dog drinks from Sawyer and leaves her dry. Having taken from her "so much of me as I can call mine own" (143), Dog emerges from their embrace as the spectacular power of *Edmonton*. Sawyer is left merely to play the role of witch in Dog's malevolent drama.

Even in her smaller role, Sawyer's presence and exchanges with Dog encourage close attention and emotional responses. The interactions between witch and devil recall the strange intimacies hinted at in the testimonies of accused witches. *Edmonton* stages these embraces, but refuses to characterize them as pitiful or threatening. Our emotions ricochet between pity and disgust as Dog demands Sawyer's blood while the witch longs for a companion's touch. As the town begins to turn against her in earnest, Sawyer asks Dog, "Comfort me. Thou shalt have the teat anon," but her request elicits a response that could be playful or threatening. "Bow, wow. I'll have it now" (4.1.160-1). The rhyme may sound teasing, but Dog will be asking for more than Sawyer's blood soon enough. He will have her body and soul before she knows it. Sawyer describes the men who have just left as "a pack of curs / Clapped all upon me," just as she had described Old Banks in her first speeches as "this black cur, / That [. . .] sucks the very blood / Of me" (2.1.115-17), but the most dangerous animal of all is the one directly in front of her. Dog's domesticated appearance works as well on his witch as it does on the townspeople. Even as she rails against the beasts that suck her blood, she offers a teat to Dog. The contrast is

painful, particularly due to Sawyer's inability to distinguish between her canine metaphors and the demonic reality begging at her feet.

Equally distressing is Sawyer's wistful request that Dog become something more than an animal. She asks her familiar, "Stand on thy hind-legs up. Kiss me, my Tommy, / And rub away some wrinkles on my brow" (4.1.165-66). If he obeys her, the actor playing Dog will rise up from his faux-four-legged stance and become something resembling a man. The sight of this crooked figure must recall images of Pan or of the devil himself, often portrayed with bent, goatish legs and a furry head. The testimonies from witch trials often told of a dark man who would lie with the witches. He was apparently "a good bedfellow," but "his flesh felt cold."[62] Sawyer's yearning for intimacy urges a similar transformation in Dog, from familiar to friend and lover. She "tickles" with Dog (168), which is a term of affection but also a permissive direction that has inspired a number of different stagings, ranging from Sawyer rubbing Dog's stomach to the two rolling around the stage together.[63]

The closeness between Sawyer and Dog affirms Sawyer's declaration that "No lady loves her hound, / Monkey, or parakeet, as I do thee" while encouraging sympathy for the witch (4.1.171-72). Sawyer compares her devil to a tame animal and treats him like a pet, but there is no enjoyment of Dog's trickery in this exchange, even though Sawyer's "old ribs [. . .] shrug for joy" when she hears about Dog's latest exploits (167). He has "nipped the suckling child," ruined the maid's butter, and "had rare sport / Among the clowns i'th'morris" (169-76), but Dog does not share with his mistress how he facilitated a murder and ruined the lives of two men with false accusations. Sawyer

[62] *Witches of Lancashire* 5.5.221-26.

[63] Cf. Kinney 83, n. 168.

should know better than to be taken in by this playful act, particularly given her cynical awareness of how the world works in Edmonton. She knows why she must become a witch, and she is all too aware of what other sins are covered by accusations of bewitchment. Yet in spite of her intelligence and her eloquence, Sawyer's need overpowers her. She belongs only to her Dog, and her doom is sealed.

As the director of this play, Dog stage manages Elizabeth Sawyer as easily as he manipulates Frank and his in-laws. He dons a new costume to signal his shifting role in his fifth act confrontation with Sawyer. The scene opens with Sawyer at the brink of despair over her abandonment--she has not seen Tommy in days. She cries out in Act 5's opening monologue for her darling, ranting hyperbolically: "Could I run / Like a swift powder-mine beneath the world, / Up would I blow it all, to find out thee / Though I lay ruined in it" (5.1.20-23). The friendly embraces of Dog offered Sawyer a respite from her loneliness, and to be deprived again pushes her toward madness. Her craving for Dog's company, even at the cost of her own annihilation, affirms the level of her anguish, but his appearance in a new coat unsettles her even more. When Dog finally returns to his witch after a three day absence, he appears as a white dog and explains that he has done so in order to put Sawyer "in mind of thy winding sheet" (5.1.36). Sawyer's participation in the witch role has reached its inescapable conclusion, and Dog changes his attire to signal his new role in the unfolding drama.

Before, Dog was the witch's "raven, on whose coal-black wings / Revenge comes flying" (5.1.8-9), but now he transform into a deadly minister, a jest he enjoys. Like Tamburlaine, Dog's spectacular brother, the devilish canine seeks to telegraph his new role with a change of clothing. The white coat with its connotations of purity and

cleanliness are a visual slap in the face to the witch. Dog leaves Sawyer behind because he can change. She cannot, and he mocks her for it. Dog's new teasing tone is heralded by his "Bow, wow," the ersatz bark that he has used with other characters to confuse and misguide those who think him just a dog (5.1.31). He is physically playful with her as well, although there is a new edge to his romping. As Dog preaches to the witch, "when / The Devil comes to thee as a lamb, / Have at thy throat," he lunges at Sawyer, causing her to cry, "Off, cur" (5.1.37-39). Sawyer slowly begins to take stock of Dog's new role --"thou dissembling hell-hound"--while her Tommy savors his part as a shape-shifting cleric, mockingly instructing the witch that the devil "has the back / Of a sheep, but the belly of an otter" (39-40). In full ironic frenzy, Dog asks his witch, "Why am I white? / Didst not thou pray to me?" (41-2). Dog may rise from four legs to two to physically manifest this bombastic crescendo. As he poses this final question, he seems fully upright, pointing an accusing finger, resplendent in pale judgment. The witch has prayed to a false idol, and Dog relishes the sin and despises the sinner.

Having witnessed this incredible metamorphosis from Tommy the Dog to the devil's high priest, Sawyer is finally able to see Dog clearly. She nervously avers, "I do not like thy puritan paleness" (53). Although Dog's blackness marked him as fiendish, his new pale coat suggests something more treacherous. The "puritan" Dog is the proverbial wolf in sheep's clothing, although here he is better described as a devil in angel's robes.[64] As Sawyer exclaims, "Why to mine eyes are thou a flag / Of truce? I am at peace with none; / 'Tis the black colour or none, which I fight under" (50-2). Of course, Dog is loyal neither to flag nor mistress, only to the pacing and finale of his own

[64] The term "puritan" in this context also summons associations with antitheatrical literature and religious hypocrisy. Cf. Purkiss 188 and Dawson 79.

twisted drama. He cues his witch, "Thy time is come to curse, and rave, and die," but Sawyer will not hit her marks (5.1.63). This final resistance plays as bravery; Sawyer has had to move from despair and loneliness through fear to determination, and her stamina alone merits applause. But Dog calmly "*stands aloof*" while the "Countrymen" come to take Sawyer to the gallows. In his quest for good theater, Dog pushes Sawyer to the point that she becomes his rhetorical equal, if only for a moment. She realizes the trap that Dog slams down upon her just before it closes. Sawyer cannot talk her way out of the witch's fate awaiting her.

Because Dog's performance so obviously savors its own theatricality rather than any other virtue, Sawyer's fate seems part of a pat ending rather than the execution of justice. Before he watches her being taken away, Dog taunts Sawyer metatheatrically: "Be blasted with the news: whiteness is day's foot-boy, / A fore-runner to the light, which shows thy old rivelled face. / Villains are stripped naked, the witch must be beaten / Out of her cockpit" (45-47). Beating the witch "out of her cockpit" moves the Dog's diatribe from the scaffold to the playhouse, for the Cock-pit was a playhouse frequented by the Prince's Men before they took this particular play to Court.[65] Elizabeth Sawyer is shown only as a tired old woman led astray by a stage-hogging devil. Edmonton cannot offer a judicial ending appropriate to Sawyer's crimes, however, only Dog's spectacular meddling.

Dog's enabling comes to a screeching halt late in the play, when he changes from an agent of evil to a purveyor of demonic justice. The witch play, once a devil play,

[65] Arthur Kinney and David Stymiest both note that this line is likely a play on the Cockpit Theatre where this play was performed in London, but other sources indicate that the play was likely composed with a Red Bull audience in mind rather than the Cockpit. The Prince's Men, who owned the play, moved from the Red Bull to the Cockpit, which was called the Phoenix after 1618, when it was rebuilt after being burned down.

becomes a fractured morality play beginning in Act Four when Dog ties up the loose ends in Edmonton and leads Thorney and Sawyer to their inevitable fates. The weak presence of justice and law in town has been a help to Dog's plans to this point, and now he uses his own spectacular presence to guide the fumbling townspeople toward the "truth" of their town's woes. They have sought out some kind of justice for their wandering spouses, their troubled livestock, and their unnatural cravings. Their scapegoating of the witch is not the answer, nor does the play argue for it, but there seem to be few other options in Edmonton. The usual formalities of the community are not functioning properly. Lords are abusing their servants, the poor are not cared for, and the girl next door is a devil. Even the Justice, who declares the townspeople's accusations of witchery "ridiculous," is eventually convinced that burning the witch will solve the town's problems. In this atmosphere, real crimes are left unpunished. Frank Thorney's murder of his wife Susan remains undiscovered

The unsettled lack of social integrity manifests itself first in Cuddy's morris dance, which is ruined by Dog in Act 3. Cuddy Banks brings Dog to the morris and uses the creature's power to play the hobby-horse, dance, and play fiddle at once. Cuddy recognizes that Dog bewitches the fiddler's violin and mutters, "My ningle's knavery. Black Tom's doing" (3.4.40), but he still uses the Dog to help him become the main attraction in the show. Dog's interference changes more than the dance, however. The morris, performed to bring joy, to encourage fertility, and to banish darkness, neither unifies nor cleanses the community. Instead it follows uncomfortably on the heels of the on-stage murder of Susan and concludes with the entrance of a constable to arrest innocent men for her murder. Although unseen, Tommy has visible effects on all those

present at the morris. The strange sensation of being in Dog's presence is emphasized by Sir Arthur's barking "Ha!" and Somerton's nervous laughter, "Ha, ha, ha" (3.4.56-57), which mimic Dog's mean-spirited laugh. Proper feelings are thrown asunder by Dog's interference, suggesting that something is now desperately wrong in Edmonton. The same direction calling for Dog to play the morris concludes, "*which ended, enter a Constable and Officers.*" The practiced movements of the dance are disordered by Dog's intervention, and the Officers' entrance suggests how far Dog's mischief has ranged. The purpose of the morris is to restore harmony, but the fiddler has no music, and the tightly organized dance ends chaotically with the arrests of the wrong men. Arthur Kinney connects the slain morris to the injustices in Edmonton: "Just as the forces on which community is based are unable to prevent the breaking of custom [in the morris], so the forces of punishment are unable to heal."[66] The ritual's failure answers to the disturbed equilibrium in Edmonton. Only Dog remains untouched, and only Dog seems to retain any control over the events that follow.

In spite of the morris's failure, Edmonton still attempts to heal itself by punishing those they find guilty of crimes against the town. Elizabeth and then Frank are tried and found guilty, not by any judge, but by the eyewitness accounts of their neighbors. Neither trial inspires confidence, but Elizabeth Sawyer's interrogation in particular seems about as sophisticated as the country dance which precedes it. The Edmontonians gather to commiserate over their ill luck, which they all blame on the witch. Countrymen blame their adulterous wives and sick livestock on Elizabeth Sawyer: "Our cattle fall, our wives fall, our daughters fall, and maid-servants fall; and we ourselves shall not be able to stand, if this beast be suffered to graze amongst us" (4.1.12-14). The accusations of

[66] Kinney xix.

bestial behavior strike somewhat close to home, for Old Banks confesses that he, too, has been so bewitched that he "cannot choose, though it be ten time in an hour, but run to the cow, and taking up her tail kiss (saving your worship's reverence) my cow behind" (4.1.57-59). Mockery then changes to forensic showmanship as the townspeople attempt to prove their knowledge of counterwitchcraft.

Sawyer's criminal involvement in the town's problems is proven to nearly everyone's satisfaction by setting some thatch from her roof on fire, "which trick as surely proves her a witch, as the pox in a snuffling nose is a sign a man is a whore-master" (4.1.38-39). Sawyer duly appears once her roof thatch is fired, and is thereby proven a witch. The superfluous spectacle--the entire town has already assumed her guilt--indicts the townspeople's moral blindness as well as their Dog-like craving for display. Even though a judge ridicules the method, Sawyer's scathing commentary on "city witches" and "men-witches" so unnerves the men that they enforce her guilt in order to silence her. The play further mocks the townspeople's misguided accusations and wild investigations by staging their inability to notice Dog: the real problem padding around Edmonton. Old Banks, Sir Arthur, and the Justice are so unsettled by Sawyer's awareness of their sexual and pecuniary misdeeds that they do not--or perhaps, cannot--see Dog. The hound happily abandons Sawyer to her neighbors, who seem to have witchhunting well in hand, but he seems driven to involve himself in exposing Frank Thorney.

Dog's part in the spectacular, ghostly interlude that accompanies the uncovering of Frank's homicide is murky. As in the dance, Dog takes pleasure in upsetting proceedings. Now, however, his malicious playfulness brings a criminal to justice. Dog's proximity to the events as they unfold suggests that he plays some role in the

uncovering of evidence, but we are given the sense that Dog helps only because he delights in destroying lives. He was present when the crime was committed, and he seems to enjoy watching his drama unfold. The discovery of Frank's knife, dirty with his wife's blood, seems a work of providence in 4.2, but Dog's dancing entrance, *"shrugging as it were for joy"* (s.d. 64) undercuts any suggestion of sympathetic divine intervention. Dog is at least partially responsible for Frank's exposure as a murderer.

Frank lies convalescing in his father-in-law's home as the scene opens. Katherine, Frank's sister-in-law, discovers the murder weapon in Frank's pocket just as Dog enters. Katherine leaves to tell her father of her discovery, and Dog runs off, leaving Frank alone in bed. Even though Frank has been found out, a lengthy direction offers a second, spectacular form of evidence to prove him guilty. Frank's dead wife returns to accuse her husband:

> *The Spirit of Susan his second wife comes to the bed-side. He [Frank] stares at it, and turning to the other side, it's there too. In the meantime, Winifred as a page comes in, stands at his bed's feet sadly. He frighted, sits upright. The Spirit vanishes.* (s.d. 4.2.68)

The only other "spirit" in this play is one of Dog's minions, disguised *in shape of Katherine, vizarded* in order to lead Cuddy Banks into a pond and dunk him (s.d. 3.1.73). Yet Susan's ghost is not marked as a spirit "in the shape of Susan"; the apparition appears to be Susan, not a devil. However, the "sport" of tricking Cuddy may still be in play here. The spirit's movements, first from one side of the bed, then to the other, could easily play for a laugh. When the ghost doesn't have the desired effect, perhaps because of Winifred's strange, sudden appearance, Dog must return to finish the job.

The brief interlude frightens Frank, but he can still console himself with Winifred until Dog returns, *pawing softly at Frank*. Even though Katherine and her father are now aware of Frank's crimes, Dog continues to press Frank to incriminate himself. Dog's potent touch makes Frank scream out "The knife, the knife, the knife!" just as his father-in-law and Katherine return (4.2.110-117). Even this eruption does not end in a confession, and so Susan's body is carried on stage in a coffin to force Frank's hand, and he collapses at the sight of Susan's open, dead eyes. His bloody knife and Winifred's testimony confirm his crime, and he is carried off to jail. Surely whatever power watches over Edmonton works in mysterious ways: it leads a criminal to confess only when faced with spectacles like a devil dog, a ghost, and the staring corpse of Frank's dead wife. This is forensic spectacle--evidence proving Frank's guilt that also proves the inadequacy of the town's more typical justice. Without Dog and other supernatural presences, Frank might never have been exposed.

Although Frank will not repent until he marches to the gallows, his crimes are clearly revealed in a play that seems directed by Dog. In addition to making the supernatural ethically ambiguous, the scene asserts, although ironically, how theater can be used as a tool of justice.[67] Like Hamlet with his Mousetrap or Hieronimo with his murderous masque, Dog's interlude featuring Susan's ghost and the presentation of her corpse in a coffin helps to expose Frank's crime. The staging of the supernatural forces Frank's confession--the ghosts and corpses draw his guilt from him. Dog provides the only satisfactory "justice" in Edmonton. Although the exposure of this crime and Sawyer's should signal the return of stability to Edmonton, they do not. Dog exposes

[67] Cf. Thomas Heywood, *An Apologie for Actors* (London, 1612).

both crimes, not the community, and the sense of unease and discomfort about these proceedings will linger until the play's epilogue. What justice can the devil provide?

Elizabeth Sawyer's cursing attracts the devil to her, but her angry eloquence as she walks "*to execution"* (s.d. 5.3.20) attracts audience sympathy. As she enters the stage to cries of, "Away with her! Hang her, Witch!" (5.3.20), Sawyer faces accusers who attribute every crime to her. Frank's father-in-law accuses her of "witch[ing] the Devil into my son-in-law" (21) as well as "bewitch[ing] Anne Ratcliffe to kill herself" (l32). Other anonymous Countrymen assert that she "bewitched Gammer Washbowl's sow" (36-7). With her response, "Who doubts it? But is every devil mine?" (5.3.28), Sawyer acknowledges that these false accusations will pass for truth while reminding her neighbors of their guilt. Even though Dog's involvement reminds us that Sawyer is being scapegoated, his participation does not absolve her completely.[68] Sawyer may repent and warn all those present that "there is no damned conjuror like the Devil" (51), but she also mourns the loss of her powers and wishes she could have a familiar to tear her accusers to pieces.

Unlike Mother Sawyer, who "would live longer if [she] might" and goes to the scaffold snarling (5.3.43), Frank Thorney is a model penitent. Indeed, he assures his father and first wife Winifred that "a court hath been kept here, where I am found / Guilty; the difference is, my impartial judge / Is much more gracious than my faults / Are monstrous to be named" (5.3.87-90). But this contrition seems tainted, for the same judge who "impartially" indicted Frank also punished Mother Sawyer, whose sentence is largely inaccurate. Even though his family finds "comfort in this penitence" (91), Old

[68] "[T]he play actively participates in the Jacobean fascination with and sensationalism surrounding witchcraft trials: this participation supports negative stereotypes of the witch and is ultimately complicit with the scapegoating ritual" (Stymeist 34).

Carter, Frank's father-in-law, notes that "We have lost our children both on's the wrong way, but we cannot help it" (145-46). Sir Arthur, the scoundrel nobleman who set some of the play's events in motion by abusing Frank's first wife, Winifred, similarly eludes proper judgment while the young man swings "the wrong way" (146). The Justice's final words sum up the unsatisfactory conclusion to the events in Edmonton: "make of all the best. / Harms past may be lamented, not redressed" (169-170). Nothing is truly resolved by this ending; all Edmonton can do is mourn.

Without Dog, justice is not much to look at. Its unspectacularity depletes the poetic justice of the play's final events. Dog is neither present nor punished. The devil staged the sins of Edmonton and helped punish the gravest offenders, but his departure evacuates the play's ending of emotional impact. Not only are the executions unfair, and forced, the creature most responsible for the damages barks at Cuddy Banks and is never seen again. This underwhelming finale could teach a lesson about the nature of evil and how, as Dog warned Cuddy, the devil is always within hearing but out of your reach. However, *The Witch of Edmonton* does not end with the Justice's bland orders for everyone to move along. A final scene remains, one that further undermines the conservative ending presented by the Justice and the righteousness of the punishments in 5.3.

Although the play could indeed come to an end when the witch is dead, the murderer has been hanged, and the Dog has been shunned by the good Cuddy Banks, there remains an Epilogue delivered by Winifred, the pregnant widow. She has neither husband nor family nor employment now, even though Frank has asked his family and his in-laws to watch over her. If anyone is primed to become the next witch of

Edmonton, it is she. Even without Dog's assistance the audience can see clearly this woman's vulnerability. Winifred speaks of her widowhood and her hopes of marrying again, if the free and noble tongues of gentlemen will "speak one kind word for me" (4-5). We have seen how rare kind words can be in Edmonton, and our expectations for Winifred's fate must be low indeed. Here is another lonely woman, modest and young for now, but facing a troubling future. Will some call her witch and teach her to realize, "a witch? Who is not?" (4.1.111).

Perhaps the most confusing characteristic of Dog is how easily he walks away from this play. After *Edmonton* has summoned the devil and given him the run of the town, it drives him out. Dog's departure deprives the play of its obvious villain, and the town can only look at itself for culpability once the familiar exits. Dog's boundless agency and interpretive domination within the play are belied once he leaves, too, because Edmonton remains as flawed as before. The injudicious sentences for Sawyer and Thorney, which equate first degree murder with emotional damages in order to hang them both, stage the community's failure to adequately address its own problems. Finally, Winifred's lonely last speech shows all too well that Edmonton does not need a Dog to make witches. After unsettling the play and its audience for five acts, Dog steps back to show how the townspeople can spiral into sin even without his nudges. The spectacular deceiver trots away, barking. It is no wonder that the play feels empty after Dog leaves: there is no one left to blame

Dog's manipulation of his surroundings suggests another would-be director, Tamburlaine the Great. Like *Edmonton*'s familiar, Tamburlaine easily exploits the trappings of spectacle to bend others to his will. However, Tamburlaine does not possess

Dog's ability to make a graceful exit. Unlike Dog, Tamburlaine remains on stage too long, and leaves too much unconquered.

CHAPTER 4

SPECTACULAR COLLAPSE? *TAMBURLAINE, PARTS I AND II*

In the two parts of *Tamburlaine the Great*, Tamburlaine first triumphs by means of spectacularity and then is defeated by it. His army and his empire are spectacular; his body is spectacular; even his tactics--the colored armor, the colored tents, the emperor-powered-chariot--are spectacular. At his apex, Tamburlaine kills with a glance. But slowly, surely, inexorably, Tamburlaine's deployment of spectacularity turns into his dependence on it. In Part II skeptical and vocal audiences begin to question the very meaning of his displays and to look askance at his mighty shows. What was once the sign of Tamburlaine's dominance becomes proof of his mortality.

On one level, Tamburlaine's addiction to spectacle reveals the tangled relationship between politics and display. Like other charismatic leaders, he depends on spectacle to shape the social, political, and psychic lives of his followers. Because he begins as an outsider, his recourse to spectacle "comes into being in response to extreme or extraordinary circumstances."[1] But the very materials of his spectacle--"treasure chests and crowns, robes and swords, hearse and map; the white, red, and black of sieges; the faces of friend and foe; the 'town burning' and the bonfire of books"[2] --all of these point to the reactionary, not the revolutionary aspirations of the outsider. Tamburlaine wants what others have, not what he has had before. Hence, unsurprisingly, his spectacles

[1] Raphael Falco, *Charismatic Authority in Early Modern English Tragedy (*Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2000) 13.

[2] Ruth Lunney, *Marlowe and the Popular Tradition: Innovation in the English Drama Before 1595* (New York: Manchester UP, 2002) 52.

begin to repeat themselves. There is a sense of stasis, having been there before, that dooms his theatrics and him, too.

Even when it is innovative and disruptive, such spectacle cannot be perpetuated forever. After a time, the hero is seen to be acting under duress, in crisis mode. Political success, the play tacitly suggests, depends upon the showman's ability to become a leader. But Tamburlaine, who begins by brilliantly manipulating the signs of terror, never does move on. Soon, he is himself under constraints. What was at first effortless (Thomas Cartelli writes of "Tamburlaine's effortless command of the resources of the stage"[3]), eventually meets resistance. The strain begins to show. The terror begins to puzzle and demand interrogation.

David Thurn describes how "Tamburlaine seeks to fix the image of his power in the eyes of those who behold him"; but the process is reiterative and inflexible: the "structure of spectacularity is broken by the need to repeat the act of appropriation."[4] Rather than the successful amplifications that Jocelyn Powell sees in the hero's repetitive displays of armor, blood, and death, Tamburlaine's late spectacles are trapped in an ineffective loop.[5] Like the painful punishments of Edward II and Lavinia, these displays of bloodthirsty force do not always convince their onstage audiences. The execution of Tamburlaine's son Calyphas and the chariot drawn by kings in particular both diminish

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[3] *Marlowe, Shakespeare, and the Economy of Theatrical Experience*. (Philadelphia: U Pennsylvania P, 1991) 67.

[4] "Sights of Power in *Tamburlaine*." *English Literary Renaissance* 19.1 (Winter 1989): 3-21. Rpt. in *Critical Essays on Christopher Marlowe*, ed. Emily C. Bartels (New York: GK Hall & Co., 1997) 182.

[5] "Marlowe's Spectacle," *Tulane Drama Review* 8.4 (Summer 1964): 195-210.

Tamburlaine's authority. Part II not only calls into question the efficacy of a dramatic sequel, it suggests as well the difficulty of political sequels.[6]

Much has been written about his demise, but little has been said about how Tamburlaine collapses under the weight of his own self-imposed spectacular imperative. When the need to produce and then reproduce spectacles overtakes Tamburlaine's set pieces, his imperial displays, even his own body, begin to fail him and undermine his imperial agenda. A gap opens between spectacle and message; excess undermines persuasion. Marlowe's two-part play self-reflexively admits that spectacle cannot be routinized, making for a cautionary tale for powerful architects of political shows and playwrights alike. Dependant on replicable effects and multiple performances, both Tamburlaine and Marlowe have to reckon with the instability of spectacle.

At the same time, in spite of the onstage incredulity and distaste for Tamburlaine's failed shows in Part II, Marlowe's spectacles remain hugely entertaining for the play's audience. Marlowe's two-part play presents the continuum of theatrical success: Tamburlaine's seduction of Theridamas and Zenocrate, as well as his capture of Bajazeth represent spectacular high points that are praised onstage; the slaughter of the Damascene virgins, his recruitment of Calyphas, and the infamous "pampered jades of Asia" dangle precariously in the realm of failure. These shows appear unable to communicate or move their onstage viewers. Marlowe, like Tamburlaine, is so certain of his ability to move his audience that he seems to test how far he can push them away before drawing them back. He directs Tamburlaine's spectacles at the play's audience rather than the onstage spectators, arguing for the difficulty of staging spectacularity while demonstrating how well he does it. Contemporary responses to this maneuver--audiences are described as

[6] Cf. Claire Harraway, *Re-citing Marlowe: Approaches to Drama* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 2000) 81-94.

ravished and struck dumb with admiration by the play--suggest that Marlowe succeeded.[7] The audience disregards the criticism of onstage witnesses and reads the spectacles for themselves as unparalleled examples of theatrical entertainment. That Tamburlaine collapses under the weight of his own spectacular imperative is secondary to the immortality his play attains because of those spectacular shows.

Considering such a two-fold purpose in this two-part play may help reconcile some of the diverse reactions found in *Tamburlaine* criticism. The hero of the play and his shows are so obviously repugnant that the play reads as a cautionary tale. Even so, the extravagance and dynamism of the script work brilliantly in the theater; Peter Hall noted in his director's diary how "very impressed" he was "by the feeling of absolute evil that [*Tamburlaine*] unleashed in the auditorium."[8] Suggesting that an Elizabethan playwright's relationship with the audience evolves and oscillates, even in a single play, is not new; this notion has been explored in considerable detail by critics such as Anne Righter Barton, who discusses the evolution of audience address across the sixteenth century; Robert Weimann, who differentiates between scripted action and performative energy using the concepts of *locus* and *platea*; and Kent Cartwright, who discusses plays' complex orchestrations of audience attachment and detachment.[9] Although these readings lead us toward recognition of the dramaturgical complexities operating within plays, they do not focus on Marlovian methodology, which relies as heavily on spectacle

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[7] See Richard Levin, "The Contemporary Perception of Marlowe's Tamburlaine," *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England* 1 (1984): 51-70.

[8] Qtd. in George L. Geckle, *Tamburlaine and Edward II: Text and Performance* (Atlantic Heights, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1988) 32.

[9] See Anne Righter Barton, *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1962); Robert Weimann, *Author's Pen and Actor's Voice: Playing and Writing in Shakespeare's Theatre*, eds. Helen Higbee and William West (New York: Cambridge UP, 2000); and Kent Cartwright, *Shakespearean Tragedy and Its Double: The Rhythms of Audience Response* (University Park, PA: Penn State UP, 1991).

as on the spoken word. How spectacle, specifically Marlowe's spectacle, repulses and seduces spectators requires a different set of dramatic parameters.

Marlowe works upon his audiences with both rhetorical and theatrical devices, but critics variably address his technique. Ruth Lunney argues that "in the performance of Marlowe's plays the spectators were led to 'see' and 'hear' differently [. . .] to change the ways that they 'saw' or made sense of the action and characters before them."[10] Although Lunney's thorough examination of Marlowe's dramaturgy argues convincingly for such a change in audience perception, her description of Tamburlaine's spectacles then withdraws from this difference. After suggesting a new kind of seeing, Lunney ties spectacular comprehension to onstage commentary. She says, "the words organise perception and response, leading to the construction of a narrative to make sense of what is seen," rather than suggesting that the spectacle--what Lunney calls a "dramatic emblem"--might communicate without words.[11] Thomas Cartelli also tackles Marlowe's audience addresses and concludes that his plays, *Tamburlaine* in particular, arouse their audiences "to find pleasure in the charged affective field of transgression."[12] Cartelli's interpretation is tempting, given *Tamburlaine*'s "vision of biological excess and decay," but his focus on transgression is not as useful as his more general assertion that Marlowe "conditions" his audiences to accept his spectacular offerings.[13]

Tamburlaine first asks the audience to rethink successful ceremonies and rituals--coronations, banqueting, and funerals-- as they are manipulated and deployed by

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[10] Lunney 5.

[11] Lunney 45.

[12] Cartelli 91.

[13] Cartelli 91, 67 *passim*.

Tamburlaine in his quest for power. Yet as Part I draws to a close and Part II opens, Tamburlaine's spectacles challenge spectators to embrace what appear to be a series of failures. Part II includes filicides, masochistic wounding, brutalized kings, and concludes with Tamburlaine's strangely weak and unspectacular demise. The play demands that the audience appreciate these episodes, even as onstage witnesses declare the shows to be despicable or even incomprehensible.

The Prologue associates Tamburlaine with spectacle before he even steps on stage.

> From jigging veins of rhyming mother-wits
> And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay
> We'll lead you to the stately tent of War,
> Where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine
> Threat'ning the world with high astounding terms
> And scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword.
> View but his picture in this tragic glass,
> And then applaud his fortunes as you please. (Prol. 1-8)[14]

Anything but a moral or didactic prologue, Marlowe's opening lines emphasize the performative weight of the eponymous hero.[15] The "tragic glass" may hint at the *de*

[14] Quotations from *Tamburlaine, Parts I and II* are taken from the 1995 Oxford edition, edited by David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen. The two plays were performed separately in 1587-88 by the Lord Admiral's Men and printed together in 1590. Later editions separated them, e.g. the 1605 quarto, which contains only Part I, and the 1606 quarto of Part II.

[15] Consider two more typical prologues: *The Life of Cambises* (1569) begins by quoting Agathon's council to princes, followed by a narrative synopsis of Cambises' family, failings, and fall, then ends with the questionable assurance, "His crueltie we wil dilate, and make the matter plain" (34). *Sir John Oldcastle* (printed 1600) uses its Prologue to inform its audience which Oldcastle (martyr or traitor) will be portrayed: "The doubtfull Title (Gentlemen) prefixt / Upon the Argument we have in hand, / May breed suspence, and wrongfully disturb/ The peacefull quiet of your settled thoughts: / To stop which scruple, let

casibus tradition, and "scourging kingdoms" may feint in the direction of the theatrical Scourge of God figure, but rather than follow the well-trod morality play path, this Prologue dismisses morality in favor of performativity. [16] As Ruth Lunney asserts, the Prologue resists telling the audience the lesson or moral of the play; it works instead to "enlist" spectators to judge the worth of the work on its visual and rhetorical merits.[17] Without the safeguards and reassurances of didacticism or recognizable historical precedent, the audience must accept Tamburlaine and his play on Marlowe's word alone.[18] The play and its protagonist leave tradition in their wake and offer up a hero who wins with his words and conquers with his looks.

A "rhetoric of speaking pictures," conjoins with Edward Alleyn in a "stately tent of War" (3) to produce Tamburlaine in all his military splendor, conquering sword in hand.[19] The Prologue insists that we first "view but his picture in this tragic glass" (7), then pass judgment on the play. Sounding like Tamburlaine himself, the Prologue demands the audience's attention, urging them to behold the man and then resist him if they dare. Already the Prologue pronounces the spectacular imperative that will echo throughout this play even as it acknowledges the agency that will inevitably destroy

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this brief suffice" (1-5). Marlowe's prologue to Part I deliberately avoids these lesson-prompts; it seeks to disturb the viewer's "settled thoughts."

[16] Roy Battenhouse argues for a reading which accepts Tamburlaine as the Scourge of God punishing the Christians and heathens. This reading – a Christian one in Battenhouse's case but an exploration of a trope in others – also understands Tamburlaine's death as the hand of God taking back its powers. Cf. *Marlowe's* Tamburlaine*: A Study in Renaissance Moral Philosophy* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt UP, 1941).

[17] Lunney 3.

[18] Thomas Cartelli similarly asserts that the audience is coerced into accepting Tamburlaine as a theatrical creature before being introduced to his history (67).

[19] J.S. Cunningham, ed. *Tamburlaine the Great* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1981) 44.

Tamburlaine. For better or for worse, his spectators will "applaud" Tamburlaine as they "please" (8).

Marlowe loads Tamburlaine with a considerable dramatic burden by allowing his Prologue to conjure Tamburlaine in the field but then deferring his entrance. The play opens instead in the Persian court, where the king and his men are discussing this strange new figure in their lands. The play puts the audience in the position of the fascinated, nervous Persians in 1.1: both are hungry for information about this new marvel. By the time we are allowed to see Tamburlaine himself, we have been properly prepared, having heard all about him. By deferring Tamburlaine's arrival this way, the play creates a suitable entrance, one that coincides with his debut as the latest force in Asia. Tamburlaine does not disappoint us.

We are introduced to the vision of Tamburlaine on the rise and to his capacity for verbal and spectacular persuasiveness. As he tells the captured Zenocrate, "I *am* a lord, for so my deeds shall prove" (35, *emphasis mine*). Claire Harraway describes Tamburlaine's assertion as part of "the ever-increasing ability of Tamburlaine to keep his word, to make his language immediately effective."[20] His spectacles of might and force do not simply manifest his metaphors, however; they communicate independently. Tamburlaine's rebirth is inseparable from his spectacular presentation. His communicative shows constitute a language of their own, one that starts with body language. Performing a costume change that will align his appearance with the reputation that has literally preceded him, Tamburlaine begins to look the part of the conqueror.

[20] Harraway 88.

Tamburlaine first struts in his shepherd's weeds, confident of conquest; but he soon dons more appropriate garb. He intuits a need for change and quickly adapts. In dialogue that calls for a change of clothes, he declares, "Lie here, ye weeds that I disdain to wear! / This complete armour and this curtle-axe / Are adjuncts more beseeming Tamburlaine" (1.2.41-3).[21] Rather than being defined by costume, Tamburlaine uses costume to redefine himself. It is his "adjunct," as he sheds softer pastoral weeds for an interpretively sound, metallic casing. Costume and sumptuary identifiers make him a conqueror even before we see him in battle.[22] Investiture is a potent, if unstable, indicator of identity here.[23] It is conveniently left unsaid that the armor itself is stolen.[24] Just as Edward Alleyn wore borrowed weeds or costly hand-me-downs for this role, Tamburlaine matches clothing to ambition.[25]

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[21] Alan Shepard distinguishes between Tamburlaine's stage action and his dialogue in this scene: "In itself, the act of donning armor does not make him a soldier. He must articulate why he wears it, and presto, he is a conqueror." See *Marlowe's Soldiers* (New York: Ashgate, 2002) 37. Although the extent of this costume change remains under debate, Michael Hattaway asserts that on-stage costume changes were common (*Popular* 21).

[22] Cf. Prospero's change of clothing near the end of *The Tempest*: "Ariel, Fetch me the hat, and rapier in my cell, / I will discase me, and my selfe present" (5.1.83-85). Prospero takes off the concealing "case" of his magician's robes and reveals himself as a political creature, "sometime Milan." He knows his audience--the new Milan and Naples--and dresses to suit. Jeffrey Masten discusses Prospero's costume changes in *Textual Intercourse* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1997) 102-111.

[23] Ann Jones and Peter Stallybrass note that "Investiture was [. . .] the means by which a person was given a form, a shape, a social function, a 'depth.'" See *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2000) 2. The potential for metamorphoses like Tamburlaine's created intense discomfort in England, resulting in numerous pamphlets and legislation. The sumptuary laws, although primarily toothless and repealed in 1604, attempted to contain sartorial abuses, such as when members of the merchant classes wore colors and styles outside their station.

[24] Philip Stubbes complained in *The Anatomie of Abuses* (1583) that "'it is very hard to knowe, who is noble, who is worshipfull, who is a gentleman, who is not: for you will haue those, which are neither of the nobylitie gentilitie nor yeomanry, no, nor yet anie Magistrat or Officer in the common welth, go daylie in silkes, veluets, satens, damasks, taffeties and such like, notwithstanding that they be both base by byrthe, meane by estate, & seruyle by calling'" (C1v-C2v).

[25] Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass discuss the secondary clothing trade and the theaters in great detail in chapter 7 of their excellent book, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*.. See also

This particular spectacle also draws upon the ceremony of coronation. Although Tamburlaine changes shepherd's robes for armor, the transformation still relies upon the symbolic registers of donning the robes of state. Though premature, Tamburlaine presents the show to offer a vision of the future to the followers, when they will be able to see him truly crowned. The traditional English coronation begins with the public display of the monarch in a progress through the streets of London. Westminster is covered in gold and silk in a display of wealth that asserts the rightful dominance of the crown. A new shirt and coat are ordained for the coronation ceremony, and the ruler must offer up something of great value on the altar so that he may "appear neither void nor empty in the presence and sight of the lord God."[26] Tamburlaine's treasure--brought on stage with him--and his new clothes may draw upon this tradition, especially its emphasis on observable transformation. His "coronation" has the splendor and visual significance of the legitimate show, but not its religious significance. Instead Tamburlaine attempts to stabilize his self-proclaimed accession by recalling the prophecy of the "gracious stars" that promised at his birth the Persian crown (1.2.92). A bastardized performance, it nonetheless succeeds. The applause of his men provides all the sanction he needs.

Well-trained spectators as well as soldiers, Tamburlaine's men interpret his costume and new role and respond to his coronation accordingly. Techelles sighs, "As princely lions when they rouse themselves, / Stretching their paws and threat'ning herds

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Natasha Korda, *Shakespeare's Domestic Economies: Gender and Property in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: U Pennsylvania P, 2002).

[26] One of the English precepts for coronation. See Brian R. Price's transcription of the ceremony from the Hastings Mss. [f.16] in *Archaeologia* 57.1 (1996).

of beasts, / So in his armour looketh Tamburlaine. / Methinks I see kings kneeling at his feet" (1.2.52-55).[27] Tamburlaine's performance prompts an active, visionary audience like Techelles. The play's audience is also reading Tamburlaine's shows, recognizing the ceremony and how it is transformed.[28] Techelles' extemporaneous imaginings draw their inspiration from Tamburlaine's appearance, and his commentary corroborates Tamburlaine's spectacular mythos. Tamburlaine looks like a conqueror, and so he must be one.

Tamburlaine's opening scene also presents him surrounded by the bounty of his latest heist in 1.2: the stage offers "S*oldiers loaden with treasure*," the prisoners, and Zenocrate. Tamburlaine appropriates the trappings of political and military power to further transcend his status as a mere shepherd. Consciously using objects to bedazzle his enemies and the audience, he orders his soldiers to "Lay out our golden wedges to the view, / That their reflections may amaze the Persians" (1.2.138-39). Like the Prologue, Tamburlaine believes that the Persians need only look upon his mirror-bright gold to be swayed. Not only does the gold show the extent of Tamburlaine's war chest, it also operates as a weapon.[29] The Persians will be dumbfounded by their own images in the metal; the gold will amaze the enemy with "*their* reflections." This mirroring recalls the

[27] Tamburlaine's relationship with his men is also based on his seductive charisma, as when he asserts that "Not all the gold in India's wealthy arms / Shall buy the meanest soldier in my train" (1.2.85-86). This sort of leadership foreshadows Henry V and his promise that he will not be ransomed at Agincourt. See also Falco 27-60.

[28] Cf. Kent Cartwright, who argues that Part I is made both believable and acceptable for the audience by such "witnesses." See "Bearing witness to *Tamburlaine, Part I*," *Theater and Humanism* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1999) 194-221.

[29] "Wedge" could also mean troop formation (s.v. OED, definition 5), which corresponds to Tamburlaine's use of spectacle as a weapon of warfare.

Prologue's "glass" while suggesting that even while looking at their own reflections, all the Persians will see is Tamburlaine.

Tamburlaine's most valuable weapon, his own body, confounds, threatens, and persuades both followers and enemies. His spectacular success depends upon his audience connecting his appearance with his destiny. Because his body looks like a god's, his followers need only look upon him to remain in awe of him. But even his enemies judge him based upon his spectacular physiognomy. Cosroe demands first-hand accounts of Tamburlaine's stature so that he can decide whether to ally himself with such a man. This leads to Menaphon's famous blazon, an unsettling blend of gendered signifiers. Tamburlaine's copious body contains within itself both male and female elements, suggesting godlike proportions and infinite potential for regeneration. He is an enormous man, a new Atlas whose large limbs and sinewy muscles present "excess of strength" (2.1.28). But he is also pale, with

> ...amber hair
> Wrapped in curls, as fierce Achilles' was,
> On which the breath of heaven delights to play,
> Making it dance with wanton majesty. (2.1.23-26)

Although Tamburlaine's long mane need not be feminine, its playful dancing in the breeze does convey unexpected delicacy. Menaphon's extended consideration of Tamburlaine's dancing locks threatens to undermine his Olympian stature. Yet Tamburlaine's greatness is such that he can contain both. Menaphon concludes by assuring Cosroe that "in every part [Tamburlaine is] proportioned like the man / Should make the world subdued" (29-30).

Menaphon's interpretation of Tamburlaine's spectacular body also forecasts the future: "His lofty brows in folds do figure death, / And in their smoothness amity and life" (2.1.21-22). Yet these lofty brows belong to a "fox" and a "thief" (1.1.31, 36). Once a shepherd, Tamburlaine now looks and speaks the part of a king, and enlists new followers effortlessly. The confusing juxtaposition of base birth and royal appearance--like Tamburlaine's masculine and feminine attributes--first flusters but then seduces or subdues his enemies when they come to confront him. Expecting a "sturdy Scythian thief" (1.1.36), they find instead a "thrice-noble" soldier (1.2.249). Tamburlaine's success with Theridamas, the Persian's champion, confirms the power of this unsettling combination.

Like the gold he presents to the Persian foes, Tamburlaine has mirroring qualities. To look at him is to be dazzled by his appearance but also to see oneself incorporated into his image. Having come to challenge Tamburlaine, Theridamas is stunned by his foe's beauty: "Tamburlaine? / A Scythian shepherd, so embellished / With nature's pride and richest furniture? / His looks do menace heaven and dare the gods" (1.2.154-57). Tamburlaine entrances the Persian by repaying his compliment, declaring that, "by characters graven in thy brows / And by thy martial face and stout aspect / [Thou] Deserv'st to have the leading of a host" (169-71). Tamburlaine's response offers himself as a reflection of Theridamas; as he amazed the Persians with their golden reflections, he now woos Theridamas by promising him the world by means of Tamburlaine.[30] The mirroring continues between the two men as the swooning Theridamas declares himself "won with thy words and conquered by thy looks" (228-31), an ironic echo of Mycetes'

[30] Cf. Kent Cartwright's discussion of this exchange: "Tamburlaine says implicitly to Theridamas, 'As you can see greatness in me, I can see it in you,' so that to reject the other is to reject the self" See *Theater and Humanism* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1999) 207.

earlier praise to his captain: "Thy words are swords, / And with thy looks thou conquerest all thy foes" (1.1.74-75). Tamburlaine's charisma seems irresistible as he proceeds through the Near East.

We learn just how successful Tamburlaine's reinvention as a warrior has been later in Act 4, when the Egyptian Sultan's messenger introduces his master to the enemy at their gates with an oration. Unlike Menaphon, who had to contend only with Tamburlaine's body, now the trappings of Tamburlaine's military complex take center stage. Tamburlaine's spectacularity has been rendered graphically into a three-tiered system of besiegement that is terrifying in its simplicity:

> The first day when he pitcheth down his tents,
> White is their hue, and on his silver crest
> A snowy feather spangled white he bears,
> To signify the mildness of his mind
> That satiate with spoil, refuseth blood.
> But when Aurora mounts the second time,
> As red as scarlet is his furniture;
> Then must his kindled wrath be quenched with blood,
> Not sparing any that can manage arms.
> But if these threats move not submissions,
> Black are his colours--black pavilion,
> His spear, his shield, his horse, his armour, plumes,
> And jetty feathers menace death and hell. (4.1.48-61)

Tamburlaine's extravagant costuming and his carefully articulated reputation establishes a symbolism around him. Tamburlaine draws on familiar analogies: white for mercy, red for blood, and black for death.[31] This undemanding sign system, at once spectacular and unambiguous, encourages terror and surrender. The Sultan may deem Tamburlaine a "merciless villain" and a "peasant ignorant / Of lawful arms or martial discipline" (4.1.64-65), but he fully appreciates the import of Tamburlaine's color code. It is attractive to the extent that it urges surrender without physical confrontation. It is menacing to the extent that is cannot tolerate dissent. Doubters must be converted or swept aside before they can interfere with Tamuburlaine's persuasive pageantry.

Given his dependency upon spectacularity for his power, Tamburlaine's insistence on interpretive clarity makes sense. When confronted with disbelief--such as when the captured Agydas expresses his distaste for his captor--Tamburlaine seems compelled to change minds. Spectacle is uncomfortable with skepticism. When Zenocrate's train does not accept his new lordly status, for example, Tamburlaine becomes a tyrannical visionary. "These lords, perhaps, do scorn our estimates," he growls, and orders that Zenocrate and Agydas "shall be kept our forcèd followers / Till with their eyes they view us emperors" (1.2.61-67). The cure for poor spectacular vision is an increased dosage of display. Rather than changing his message to fit the audience, Tamburlaine just speaks louder. Agydas and Zenocrate must look upon him until they see what Techelles and the others already see – that Tamburlaine is meant to rule.

[31] For example, consider how the Romans used a red flag to summon soldiers to battle, as in Thomas Heywood's *The Golden Age* (1611), when Saturn bemoans "the threatnings of red war" in Act III (E4v). Black has been a color of mourning in the West since the ancient Egyptians. In heraldry, white (argent) represents purity, innocence, beauty or gentleness.

This solution prevails with both the audience and Zenocrate, who weeps when Tamburlaine does not look upon her, "fearing his love through my unworthiness" (3.2.65); her servant Agydas willfully refuses to be seduced. Tamburlaine responds by unleashing the power of his compelling body: he "*look[s] wrathfully on Agydas, and says nothing*" (s.d. 3.2). Tamburlaine uses "his choler shut in secret thoughts / And wrapped in silence of his angry soul" (3.2.70-71) rather than his conquering words to communicate with Agydas, and Agydas learns to read Tamburlaine in spite of his resistance.[32] As the man shudderingly relates:

> Upon his brows was portrayed ugly death,
>
> And in his eyes the fury of his heart,
>
> That shine as comets, menacing revenge,
>
> And casts a pale reflection on his cheeks. (3.2.72-75)[33]

Searching for an adequate comparison, Agydas resorts to epic simile after this mini-blazon, comparing his fear at Tamburlaine's looks to the terror of sailors who see a tempest hurtling towards them: "As when a seaman sees the Hyades / Gather an army of Cimmerian clouds....So fares Agydas for the late-felt frowns" (3.2.76-85). Tamburlaine's message is unavoidable and irresistible. Given a dagger by Techelles, the dissenting

[32] The scene's "subject is bearing witness to Tamburlaine; its subtextual action is interpreting him; and its meaning is that not to admire Tamburlaine is to die" (Cartwright, *Humanism* 212).

[33] This description is one of many examples that portray Tamburlaine as a choleric type. The blazing eyes indicate the enormous heat inside Tamburlaine's body, while his pale skin is another indicator of a choleric personality. This humour will become more significant as the play proceeds, and as Marlowe complicates the morality play type to which he links Tamburlaine.

Agydas is wordlessly persuaded to self-slaughter.[34] Tamburlaine, like a force of nature, can make men despair with a look.

After four acts of spectacular dominance Tamburlaine anticipates the benefit of staging his supremacy before battling the city of Damascus, and creates a scene designed to highlight his power, his munificence, and his control. Just as he used the donning of robes and presentation of wealth to recall the energies of coronation, now Tamburlaine attempts to make use of the state dinner and its rituals of precedence, bounty, and entertainment. Banquets are characteristically theatrical because of their intricate levels of decorum and display, the public nature of the meal, and the guests themselves.[35] Tamburlaine seeks to convey his message of domination while performing the role of the beneficent ruler, but his blunt, coarse demeanor makes the banquet into a scene of torture and starvation. Dissenting voices begin to emerge again when the inclusion of the imprisoned Turkish emperor and his wife introduces a powerful note of discord into the gathering. Before, he compelled Agydas to die rather than resist him; Tamburlaine now draws these enemies closer, as though testing the limits of his interpretive control.

The scene opens with the banquet being brought on, followed by Tamburlaine "*all in scarlet"* (4.4 s.d.) and the captured emperor Bajazeth drawn in his cage. Although his red armor cues his followers and foes to his intent, Tamburlaine spells out his intentions:

> Now hang our bloody colours by Damascus,
>
> Reflexing hues of blood upon their heads

[34] Battenhouse asserts that this scene illustrates the fate of virtuous philosophers under tyrants but Agydas is less of a philosopher than a keen critic who must be silenced for Tamburlaine to proceed in his conquests. Later, Tamburlaine's son Calyphas will take up this role and face a similar fate (153).

[35] Frances Teague argues that banquets are "occasions of grotesque, even tragic spectacle." See *Shakespeare's Speaking Properties* (Lewisburg : Bucknell UP, 1991) 102-03. Critics such as David Bevington argue that Elizabethan banquet scenes represent community. See *Action is Eloquence: Shakespeare's Language of Gesture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1984) 159.

While they walk quivering on their city walls,

Half dead for fear before they feel my wrath.

Then let us freely banquet and carouse

Full bowls of wine unto the god of war,

That means to fill your helmets full of gold. (4.4.1-7)

Once again Tamburlaine uses spectacular reflection ("reflexing") to stun his opponents and to reward his friends. The scarlet banners reflect Tamburlaine's wrath upon the Damascenes, bloodying their uninjured heads before the battle even begins. His spectacles--which are read carefully by the Damascenes--do his fighting for him and free Tamburlaine for reveling and bloody banter with his more belligerent reflection, the emperor of Turkey.

Bajazeth already has been soundly beaten by Tamburlaine in an offstage battle (featuring commentary by their consorts), his wife has been made a servant to a waiting woman, and they both have been subjected to continuous instances of spectacular humiliation. Bajazeth's punishments–as footstool, as prisoner, as starving potentate--are always staged.[36] Tamburlaine roundly defeats Mycetes and Cosroe, but he makes Bajazeth represent all of their humiliations. Bajazeth's resistance feeds Tamburlaine as completely as any meal. The unconvertible Turk becomes Tamburlaine's Fool, an object for Tamburlaine's amusement, and perhaps ours, too. The question is, can Tamburlaine

[36] Fred Tromly suggests the importance of an audience for Bajazeth's torment, which he views as Tantalean: "In addition to lending itself to dramatic representation, the punishment of Tantalus is inherently theatrical because the full effect of its humiliation depends on the presence of spectators." See *Playing with Desire: Christopher Marlowe and the Art of Tantalization* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1998) 24. Cf. Cartelli 67-93.

control the effect of his darkly funny sadism--at what point does his pageant get out of hand?

Although the spectacle of a banquet typically aims to evoke a new society, this meal's raging words and inedible courses of crowns and gold force both the audience and the onstage diners to reevaluate their expectations. Given that Tamburlaine's scarlet feast of "appalling barbarity" is replete with cannibalism and starvation, his new society relies upon conquest and destruction.[37] This scene runs red with blood and tormented flesh, as though the "reflexions" from his scarlet flags shine on the banquet, too. Yet in spite of the explicit violence and threats of pain, the audience's main response could be dark laughter as easily as outrage or fear.

Comparable uncertainty arises with regard to the dinner conversation. Tamburlaine and Bajazeth's verbal battle devolves into a flyting match that echoes the earlier verbal jousting between Zenocrate and Zabina (3.3.166-211). To Tamburlaine's mocking question, "And now, Bajazeth, hast thou any stomach?" Bajazeth replies that he does and would willingly feed upon Tamburlaine's heart (4.4.10-12). Tamburlaine parries this response by suggesting that Bajazeth's own heart is "easier to come by," then serves his prisoners meat by sword point, threatening Bajazeth, "Take it up, villain, and eat it, or I will make thee slice the brawns of thy arms into carbonadoes and eat them" (4.4.43-45). Usumcasane joins in, urging that "'twere better he killed his wife, and then she shall be sure not to be starved, and he be provided for a month's victual beforehand" (46-48). Although this is hardly dinner conversation, Tamburlaine and his men control

[37] Christopher Marlowe, *Complete Plays and Poems*, ed. E.D. Pendry (London: Dent, 1976) xv. Lisa Starks writes that with the banquet Tamburlaine "transgresses the limits of 'decency' to an extreme Sadeian degree." See "'Won with thy words and conquered with thy looks': Sadism, Masochism, and the Masochistic Gaze in *1 Tamburlaine*," *Marlowe, History, and Sexuality*, ed. Paul Whitfield White (New York: AMS, 1998) 181. Does Tamburlaine anticipate the pleasures and perversions of sadism?

the perception of the banquet as a time for celebration and mockery that the anger and distaste of the prisoners and Zenocrate can gain no footing. To finish the triumph, Tamburlaine completes the meal with a "course of crowns," which he represents as toys, sweetmeats, or "cates you desire to finger," in his apt yet crude phrasing (112). By transforming the slippery crowns into a dessert for his deserving men, Tamburlaine displays his control over such powerful symbols while rewarding his most admiring audience.

Tamburlaine's banquet, then, presents him as a powerful conqueror who contentedly chews on in spite of the disagreement, but his aplomb may be a sign of obliviousness. "The Turk and his wife make a goodly show at a banquet," Theridamas muses, and they may even be "a great deal better than a consort of music" (4.4.63-64), but Bajazeth and Zabina's stubborn refusal to concede rattles the onstage presentation.[38] "This banquet [will] prove [. . .] ominous" (4.4.23-25), warns Zabina. The banquet bears out Zabina, for while the scene itself functions properly for both Tamburlaine and those in the audience avidly watching, it marks the first example of the play's shifting alliances. While the audience continues to be treated to spectacle after spectacle, those within the play begin to see Tamburlaine differently.

The tenuousness of Tamburlaine's control of his displays emerges still more clearly as the battle for Damascus draws near. We see a new vulnerability in his relationship with spectacle. Tamburlaine's spectacular agenda is in control here but the

[38] Mark Thornton Burnett, in his book on the monstrous, reads the banquet thus: "By building on 'monstrous' subtexts, these registrations of 'monstrous' appetite institute lines of demarcation codified in terms of food and flesh, civility and savagery." See *Constructing 'Monsters' in Shakespearean Drama and Early Modern Culture* (New York: Palgrave, 2002) 44. The evocation of cannibalism, in other words, transforms the state dinner into a savage feeding frenzy. This potential certainly exists throughout the banquet. What is noteworthy is that the dinner does not self-destruct in spite of the violent undercurrents, owing to Tamburlaine's spectacular control.

man himself appears out of sorts. Resplendent in black armor, the formerly choleric Tmaburlaine is now "*very melancholy.*" While Marlowe may not be bound to the humours as a basis for Tamburlaine's character, he may nonetheless be signaling a new inconstancy.[39] That inconstancy would pertain not simply to character, then, but to the degree to which Tamburlaine can still communicate clearly with his shows and conquer by reputation.

The resistance of the Damascenes may explain Tamburlaine's poor temper. Although the leader typically compels surrender by wearing the white or red armor, Tamburlaine must wear his black armor when "these threats move not submission" (4.1.58). His enemies now are not frightened by his appearance or his displays, and as a result he must enact his "custom," which includes "slaughtering terror" and "the sworn destruction of Damascus" (5.1.66-72). The play has not shown Tamburlaine in black before; this may be the first time he goes through with his threats and massacres an entire town. His reputation demands that his promises be kept, and so Tamburlaine is forced to enact his spectacular reputation.

Spectacle becomes compulsion in Damascus as Marlowe sacrifices his own character's success in favor of a greater theatrical goal. Unless his opponents believe Tamburlaine's visible sermon of military might and consent to become a part of his legend, his spectacles are worthless to him. At Damascus, the colorful ritual fails to compel submission, and Tamburlaine's distress becomes evident. Yet he must go through with the series of white, red, and black regardless. Tamburlaine's "martial observations" are "as peremptory / As wrathful planets, death, or destiny" (5.1.122-28), but his violence

[39] Jocelyn Powell emphasizes the inconstant nature of melancholy to show how Tamburlaine's firmness of purpose wavers in this scene (207).

is more theatrically viable than his colorful attire. The play demands that Tamburlaine expand his spectacular arsenal to include actual, not reflected, bloodshed. Although Tamburlaine fails to elicit a Damascene surrender, he still conquers the city. The victory is no longer on his terms, though, and Tamburlaine struggles to find out why.

Tamburlaine's strange depression is evident from his reaction to the Damascus virgins with their wreaths: "What, are the turtles frayed out of their nests?" (5.1.64). There is tenderness and even grief in this metaphor. The young women are frightened birds who have foolishly fled the safety of their homes.[40] The virgins had promised their governor that they would convince Tamburlaine to be merciful "through [his] eyes and ears" (5.1.53), and their helpless beauty brings them startlingly close to this goal. "Alas, poor fools," he says before they speak, "must you be first shall feel / The sworn destruction of Damascus?" (5.1.65-66). The virgins are not Bajazeth: there is no pleasure or glory in Tamburlaine's threats at this point, only resignation and perhaps regret. Tamburlaine is not a man who cries "Alas," yet his lecture to the virgins is gently scolding and poignant. "Milk-white flags," "sweet mercy," and "gentle beams" precede the more familiar language of "fury and incensed hate" (68-71). Not even Tamburlaine wants to kill these women. Loveliness is its own spectacularity, and slaughtering girls may put his reputation at risk. Because he is vulnerable to beauty, he cannot stage its destruction. However, maintaining his reputation's integrity demands that he slaughter every Damascene.

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[40] Cf. Odysseus's punishment of Penelope's lascivious maids, who are "hung like doves or larks in springe's triggered in a thicket, where the birds think to rest--a cruel nesting." The maids have betrayed their master, but the comparison to birds makes their death seem pitiable. Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Robert Fitzgerald, *Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces,* 7th ed., vol. 1 (New York: Norton, 1999) 22.486-89. Cf. Chapman's 1615 translation: "Looke how a Mauis, or a Pygeon / In any Groue, caught with a Sprindge, or Net; / With strugling Pinions 'gainst the ground doth beat / Her tender body; and that then-streight bed / Is sowre to that swindge, in which she was bred."

Tamburlaine cannot toss aside his carefully constructed routines, and he fulfills the custom of his black armor. When the virgins present Tamburlaine with a laurel wreath and their suit to spare Damascus, Tamburlaine draws his sword and demands, "Behold my sword. What see you at the point?" (5.1.108). Underlying this conversation is a distressing phallic sharpness he presses upon the virgins, ordering them to "behold" his manhood, his power, and their death. Because the virgins can see "[n]othing but fear and fatal steel, my lord," Tamburlaine cries, "Your fearful minds are thick and misty, then, / For there sits Death, there sits imperious Death, / Keeping his circuit by the slicing edge" (109-12). The virgins see clearly enough to perceive their demise, but they do not understand that Tamburlaine's sword is also Death's courthouse. The virgins' literalism makes them poor interpreters of Tamburlaine's symbolism, and their belief in their petition blinds them to the greater spectacular power of death.

Even though the virgins appear incapable of comprehending his figures, Tamburlaine orders his men to "show them Death!" (5.1.120). Tamburlaine is insisting upon his spectacular agenda by realizing the promise of black-armored slaughter, while the play seems to fulfill the deferred expectation of a bloody battle scene.[41] The communicative spectacularity of Tamburlaine's colored armor is thrown aside in favor of slaughter. We hear from Techelles that his horsemen have shown the virgins Death, "and on Damascus' walls / Have hoisted up their slaughtered carcasses" (5.1.130-31), and Tamburlaine responds that this is "a sight as baneful to their souls, I think, / As are Thessalian drugs or mithridate" (132-33). He has provided a full measure of

[41] Judith Weil notes that "Marlowe's virgins seem more wise than foolish. By contrast, Tamburlaine's insistence upon punishing them in accordance with his established customs appears mad indeed." See *Christopher Marlowe: Merlin's Prophet* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1977) 130. The play has had battle scenes to this point, but the set-up for this particular moment calls for something more climactic.

Tamburlainean spectacularity, but still the spectacle remains offstage. We may assume that this sight is baneful, but we cannot be sure. Spectacle obviously works best when it is visible. The necessity of enacting the slaughter symbolized by his black armor damages this show, which appears forced, strained, and unnecessary compared to the effortless conquests that preceded it.

Inspired and troubled by the Damascene women's performance of resistance and his own men's counter-performance, Tamburlaine endeavors to articulate the nature of his relationship with the visual. In his curious soliloquy, "What is beauty, saith my sufferings then?" (5.1.135-90), Tamburlaine contemplates beauty, personified by Zenocrate, and then attempts to reconcile its allure with its dangerous and potentially contagious femininity.[42] Beauty, like spectacle, exerts a dangerous pull. Even Tamburlaine, who prefers an audience to soliloquy, seems momentarily transfixed by the upsetting distraction presented by the visual.[43] His confusion is reflected in the speech's snarled syntax. Spoken hard upon the virgin's slaughter, the speech's opacity and his unsteadiness reveal the extent of his vulnerability. As he walks apart, Tamburlaine worries about the temptation of succumbing to beauty or to a beautiful woman. He

[42] This speech has drawn critical attention from many scholars. E.D. Pendry sees in it a warning that "there are forms of beauty that lie beyond words," a fearsome conclusion for a man with such "working" words (xvi). Lisa Starks interprets the soliloquy as an exercise in containment, imprisoning the female by making her into an object of worship (184). Alan Shepard discusses how Tamburlaine often uses poetry to mesmerize his soldiers, yet falls prey to his own magic in instances like this speech (27). C.L. Barber hints at my conception of this speech when he discusses how "the crucial thing is not only the power of his poetry but the way the poetry is used to put pressure on the stage action." See *Creating Elizabethan Tragedy: The Theater of Marlowe and Kyd*, ed. Richard P. Wheeler (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1988) 52. Likewise, J.S. Cunningham reads the passage as an "impulse to assert mastery over a troubled sensitivity to Beauty" (201, note.)

[43] Powell describes this speech as the point at which "the dramatic action transfers itself from the deed to the thought" (207), and this movement, seemingly away from spectacle and manifestation, deserves note. Tamburlaine's approach to the *platea*, to use Robert Weimann's terminology, should present an opportunity for a rapport between the protagonist and the audience, but the tangled nature of the speech and the unseemly proximity between its rhapsody on beauty and the murder of the virgins alienates the audience more than it enchants.

explicitly praises Zenocrate, but he also worries whether beauty may be beyond anyone's control. The virgins' grief reminds him of Zenocrate's worries for her homeland; together they set off "a doubtful battle within my tempted soul" (152). The display of Zenocrate's grief "lays more siege unto my soul / Than all my army to Damascus's walls" (155-56). Suddenly, Tamburlaine understands why and how his enemies succumb to his persuasive shows. He marvels that beauty can surpass even the language of poets, that it is a natural spectacle "which into words no virtue can digest" (5.1.173). Recognizing his own weakness in the face of beauty, Tamburlaine moves back toward the language of conquest. If beauty can harm Tamburlaine, he must learn how to control it.[44]

Tamburlaine's new awareness of beauty may suggest a way to interpret his relationship with spectacularity. Having just faced the disappointing inadequacy of his spectacular military machine, Tamburlaine is very aware of how much he relies upon the visual for his own continued existence. As the soliloquy turns from rumination to action, we may see Tamburlaine strategizing how to assert new mastery over both Zenocrate and his spectacular routines. He describes this plan as "conceiving and subduing, both" (183), accepting spectacle while conquering it. He loves Zenocrate, but she weakens him. He needs spectacularity, but understands that he must harness it. He assures himself that he may control both by embracing them. By discussing beauty, by conceiving of it and mastering it, he may direct it. His self-serving strategy allows him to embrace his beloved and continue his spectacular path, but the new focus upon control--conceiving and *subduing*, both--changes the tenor of these relationships. The conqueror has sensed the penetrative danger of spectacle through Zenocrate. What he has not yet

[44] Cf. Cartwright: "In essence, Tamburlaine can sing his hymn to Zenocrate and to beauty's power only after he has proven his mastery of them through atrocity" (*Humanism* 214). The conclusion of the speech, however, suggests that Tamburlaine has not mastered anything yet.

realized is that he cannot truly subdue beauty or spectacularity. After rumbling to his soliloquy's end with promises of greater discipline, he retreats from the quicksand of beauty to his more familiar shows. His excited musings end abruptly when he returns to the action in order to inquire about Bajazeth. Tamburlaine retreats to the venues he can control. This step reinstates the masculine discourse of war; but our strange journey through Tamburlaine's ruminations leaves us wondering at his sudden vulnerability.

Bajazeth's suicide reinforces the new weakness that has shown itself in Tamburlaine, for it is another spectacle that slips through his fingers. Bajazeth and his consort Zabina are wheeled on stage by their handlers to watch the battle while Tamburlaine and his men rush off to sack Damascus. Anticipating Cleopatra, Zabina wonders, "Why live we, Bajazeth [. . .] in this oppression, / That all the world will see and laugh to scorn / The former triumphs of our mightiness / In this obscure infernal servitude?" (5.1.249-54). Bajazeth, too, laments that they have been made abject spectacles:

> O dreary engines of my loathed sight
> That sees my crown, my honour, and my name
> Thrust under yoke and thraldom of a thief,
> Why feed ye still on day's accursed beams
> And sink not quite into my tortured soul? (259-63)

Bajazeth's understands how much Tamburlaine relies upon spectacle for his power; his prayers for "an endless night" (282) that will render Tamburlaine invisible prove as much. He sends his queen away and then "*brains himself against the cage*" (s.d. 304).

This stunning response to his imprisonment, a grotesque but strangely courageous death, stops the play in its tracks. For a moment, at least, Bajazeth controls spectacle. Until now he had been the Fool for Tamburlaine, an object lesson in Fortune's fickleness. He chooses how to die, and then stages his own death, offering up an unsettling range of theatrical possibilities. His braining must startle and amaze; it is more than a dumbshow, rather a kind of wordless soliloquy that affords him center stage. Bajazeth shows Tamburlaine that he will no longer be a captive audience; he needs no final word.

Zabina's grief-crazed response to her husband's crushed head does similar damage to Tamburlaine's spectacular control. The Scythian's "Streamers white, red, black" become tormenting flags in Zabina's mind (314). Tamburlaine's triumphant shows--the swords, the feasts, the killing--are incorporated into a shrill rant of grief and horror that reinscribes Tamburlaine's spectacles as tortures. Zabina even cries out Tamburlaine's name before "*she runs against the cage and brains herself*" (s.d.317). The intense brutality of Zabina and Bajazeth's deaths contrasts sharply with the melancholy musings that have characterized this act. When Agydas also killed himself, his suicide suggested obedience: Tamburlaine wished him dead. The Turks die without permission, and they die in a manner that mocks their captor: using their cages as weapons to free themselves. Their bodies, left on stage for all to see, defy Tamburlaine's triumph.

The potency of the Turkish suicide is made clear by Zenocrate's disgusted response. She enters almost immediately after Zabina's suicide, crying to herself at the sight of her homeland "dyed with Egyptian blood" (5.1.319), and questioning how her love could be the cause of her pain. Seeing the Turks' bodies in this context, she calls them "another bloody spectacle," and links their demise to the wrongful deaths of the

Damascus virgins (338). Bajazeth and Zabina's deaths focus Zenocrate's distaste for Tamburlaine's shows by giving her a spectacle to read. Zenocrate cries out, "Behold the Turk and his great empress!" three times while warning "those that are proud of fickle empery / And place their chiefest good in earthly pomp" to look at these dead rulers (351-52). *Tamburlaine the Great* has celebrated the spectacularity of its hero over five acts, but as the play comes to its end, the spectacles of his enemies occupy center stage while the hero's love cries out against "earthly pomp." *Tamburlaine, Part II*'s Prologue will soon echo this language: the next episode is "where death cuts off the progress of his pomp" (4). Tamburlaine's audience has begun to resist his spectacular message, but *Tamburlaine*'s audience savors the stunning emotional climax even as it damages the hero. Marlowe allows this rockiness to continue to the very last lines of the play, threatening to end a triumphant play with disagreement and strife. With little time to recuperate Tamburlaine or his shows, the play offers what may be a deliberately underwhelming finale.

Part I comes to an end with a rushed marriage between Tamburlaine and Zenocrate. Having decided to conquer spectacle with military force, Tamburlaine subdues beauty with a wedding. According to Thomas Greene, the rituals of death and marriage create palatable dramatic endings: "the mechanism of ritual was apparently perceived [. . .] to produce that uncanny serenity required for the sense of an ending."[45] Marlowe mocks the ceremony of marriage as a tool and emphasizes its instrumentality by

[45] "Ceremonial Closure in Shakespeare's Plays," *Perspectives on Early Modern and Modern Intellectual History: Essays in Honor of Nancy S. Struever*, eds. Joseph Marino and Melinda W. Schlitt (Rochester, NY: U of Rochester P, 2000) 211.

locating the ceremony on a bloody stage.[46] Even though Zenocrate and Tamburlaine are convincingly in love--evidenced by their constant declarations of affection and devotion--the timing and execution of their wedding has no emotional impact. Rather than a celebration of love or peace, the union is welcomed by his men as a relief: "For now her marriage time shall work us rest" (5.1.503). This uncomfortable awareness of Tamburlaine's decline draws further attention to how feebly the ceremony finishes the play. In spite of all lingering doubts, however, the wedding concludes Part I, and Tamburlaine lives on to fight and show another day.

The spectacles that powered Tamburlaine--the armor, the tents, the crowns--require new energy in Marlowe's sequel. *Tamburlaine, Part II* forecasts death and the end of display to signal the challenges facing Tamburlaine after his hard-won victories. Death has become Tamburlaine's rival, we are warned: "what became of fair Zenocrate, / And how with many cities' sacrifice / He celebrated her sad funeral, / Himself in presence shall unfold at large" (6-9). Death no longer makes his circuit on Tamburlaine's sword; now it manipulates Tamburlaine. The Scythian once held "the Fates bound fast in iron chains" (I, 1.2.174), but now "murd'rous Fates throw all his triumphs down" (5). *Tamburlaine, Part II* shows Tamburlaine reacting and responding to crises; he no longer turns Fortune's wheel. The death of Zenocrate and the defiance of his son Calyphas are presented as failures, and his reactions--some of the most creative spectacles ever staged --spin wildly out of his control.

As intimated by the slaughter of the Damascene virgins, Tamburlaine is now faced with the necessity of expanding his spectacles beyond the trappings of his person

[46] Cf. Cartwright: "*Tamburlaine* installs the resolution of the stage romances: the displaced suitor is granted a bathetic death; the Soldan is saved, happy in his overthrow; and the unsullied daughter is given in marriage to the hero" (*Humanism* 218).

and train. He can no longer simply *look* spectacular, he must *act* spectacularly. His armor and tents could not cow his enemies at the end of Part I; he must mobilize his shows in order to maintain his reputation, which is decades-old as Part II opens. This play's excess represents Tamburlaine's attempt at preservation. As his martial and political spectacles find fewer appreciative audiences, Tamburlaine attempts to restore himself through his sons. His children offer a more lasting monument to Tamburlaine than any procession or memorial, but their responsibility--to be little Tamburlaines--is nearly impossible. Again and again Tamburlaine seeks a way to perpetuate his charismatic spectacularity, but he is stymied at every turn. He is a spectacular dinosaur in the world of Part II.

As in Part I, the first scene of Part II features Tamburlaine's enemies planning their assault. Now, however, more than a decade later, Tamburlaine's enemies are more concerned with politics, treaties, and religion than with bodies or class. Conquest and coronation have settled down into governance and politics for both Tamburlaine and those who oppose him: the Turkish kings seek a treaty with the Europeans, there is a discussion of contractual obligations, and characters debate which prophet, Christ or Mahomet, deserves greater respect (1.1). This swerve toward political abstractions notifies the reader and audience that the rules for domination and display have changed.

The politicking and alliances announce how much Tamburlaine's world has altered--he is no longer the bold shepherd strutting before his golden treasury, but a powerful monarch attempting to retain his position and territories. He cannot maintain his command with pure personality, and as a result Tamburlaine's spectacles look like a series of increasingly frantic attempts to secure his supremacy. Pendry notes that under

this play's regime, "the highest good that a man can propose to himself or anyone else is to hold a procession," suggesting that when spectacle ceases to become spontaneous and original it becomes banal.[47] Although routinizing his charisma makes Tamburlaine rigid in his self-presentations and repetitive in his displays of violence on stage, his spectacles work perfectly well as theater.[48] The real audience for Tamburlaine's shows in Part II is in the pit, not on stage.

Unlike the shows in Part I, which were "reflexions" of Tamburlaine's own glory, this play demands extra-Tamburlainean spectacle. Yet the greater and grander his performances become, the more his onstage audiences lose interest. Roy Battenhouse has described the excess of Part II as "patent insanity," both "excessively violent" and "reliant upon extra-historical spectacle."[49] He might also have noted the diminishing returns of Tamburlaine's efforts. The number of scenes requiring substantial scenery and properties in Part II is telling: suddenly all sorts of peripheral material is required in order to communicate. What was once a spectacular seduction is now an onslaught.

For example, Tamburlaine's grief at Zenocrate's deathbed lacks the intelligibility of Part I's set-pieces. Fearing that neither Zenocrate nor his followers will understand him, Tamburlaine overnarrates, and goes so far as to blame Zenocrate for the uncontrolled violence that will follow her death:

> Behold me here, divine Zenocrate,
>
> Raving, impatient, desperate, and mad,

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[47] Pendry xvii.

[48] See Falco, p. 56, on routinization and its effect on charismatic figures.

[49] Battenhouse 4.

Breaking my steeled lance with which I must burst
The rusty beams of Janus' temple doors,
Letting out death and tyrannizing war
To march with thee under this bloody flag;
And if thou pitiest Tamburlaine the Great,
Come down from heaven and live with me again! (2.4.111-18).

Tamburlaine's anguish turns to melodrama as he reaches back into his oeuvre of high astounding terms to assert his dominance, to remind all of his red, warlike armor, and to restate his need to be seen. But his grieving seems both recycled and unseemly; death and war are released to march with the pacifist Zenocrate.

Although Tamburlaine previously relied largely on his words and his own appearance to convince his intimates, the lines he speaks to Zenocrate seem to demand physical contact. The franticness of his speech and his followers' saddened attempts to calm him may suggest that he take up her head and direct its sightless gaze towards him once again. As Tamburlaine begs Zenocrate's corpse to look at him, Theridamas gently says, "Ah, good my lord, be patient. She is dead, / And all this raging cannot make her live....Nothing prevails, for she is dead, my lord" (2.4.119-24). Such pleas were unnecessary and unheard in Part I, when Tamburlaine's ambition allowed him unsurpassed energy and conquering strength. Yet here his frenzy dominates, self-narrated more rantingly as each scene progresses. Death controls the play now, and Tamburlaine can only attempt to keep up.

Tamburlaine cannot prevail against Death or save Zenocrate, but he can try for an enduring spectacle. Act 3 calls for a piling on of *things*. The elaborate entrance for

Zenocrate's funeral runs: "*Tamburlaine with Usumcasane, and his three sons; four bearing the hearse of Zenocrate, and the drums sounding a doleful march, the town burning"* (3.2, s.d). The stage must surely stagger under the burden of Tamburlaine's insistent representation: a memorial pillar written in Arabic, Hebrew, and Greek forbidding the rebuilding of the burned town; a streamer bearing Persian and Egyptian crests to signify Zenocrate's royal birth; a tablet covered with lists of her great qualities; and finally, a picture of the dead queen. Forgetting is how forbidden; earlier, remembering was taken for granted. Part II's spectacles seem at best reactive, supplemental, and worrisomely transient. They are also revisionist.

Although Zenocrate's affection for her consort was never in doubt, she often remained unconvinced by his spectacular agenda. Now, in death, she will be Tamburlaine's silent supporter. Kent Cartwright describes Zenocrate's new role: "She is his resisting and idealized audience figure now made spectacle [. . .] taken finally and completely inside the illusion."[50] As Tamburlaine says to the hearse, "Thou shalt not beautify Larissa plains, / But keep within the circle of mine arms!" (3.2.34-35). Zenocrate is even changed by Tamburlaine into a war maiden when he promises to hoist her picture "upon my royal tent" at every siege so that her looks will threaten the enemy like those of "Bellona, goddess of the war" (3.2.37-40). After containing her troublesome pacifism in a golden case--subduing beauty *with* spectacle--Tamburlaine displaces his own upsetting grief onto the town he has burned. He tells his sons, "Boys, leave to mourn. This town shall ever mourn, / Being burnt to cinders for your mother's death" (44-45). Tamburlaine uses this show to free himself from grief--he creates a spectacular

[50] Cartwright, *Humanism* 220.

funeral in order to tamp down the violent emotions that threaten to shatter him completely. He wants to continue forward with his sons even as he drags his feminine counterpart behind him.[51] Memorializing Zenocrate motivates Tamburlaine to follow a somewhat different path, however: towards his own immortality.

Faced with death, Tamburlaine recognizes the need to ensure his own fame. He seeks regeneration as well as expression; having conquered so much, he must find a way to maintain and even expand his empire. Even though the play could stage this drive as an analogue to the processions and pageants of the English monarch, the focus shifts to a local level instead. Newly aware of his own mortality, Tamburlaine rechristens his children as his spectacular heirs. His potency can live on forever through his three sons Calyphas, Amyras, and Celebinus, for they are both his creations and little Tamburlaines themselves.[52] Tamburlaine needs his sons not just to follow him, but to *become* him. They must not only be reflections of him--his spectacles--but propagators of their own displays. Like the spectacles which keep slipping out of his grasp, however, the sons cannot all be directed so easily.

Tamburlaine attempts to awaken his sons' inner Tamburlaines, but they will not fall in line. He regales them with tales from his military life: stories of marching with armor, sleeping outside, besieging a town, constructing base camps, and slaughtering enemies (3.2.53-92). Ironically, Tamburlaine himself has likely not been besieging much in recent years, so his persuasions for a bold future are heavily infused with his own

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[51] Tamburlaine's insistence on keeping Zenocrate by his side may be an ironic allusion to Aeneas fleeing Troy with Anchises on his back and dragging Ascanius by the hand while leaving his wife's body to burn. Cf. Marlowe's own description of this flight in *Dido, Queen of Carthage*: "By this, I got my father on my back, / This young boy in mine arms, and by the hand / Led fair Creusa, my beloved wife [. . .] And we were round environ'd with the Greeks. / O, there I lost my wife!" (2.1.265-70).

[52] Raphael Falco's work on Western civilization's insistence upon charismatic inheritance informs this discussion.

nostalgia. He assumes that his stories will leave his sons awestruck and eager to enlist like those who were won with his working words. It falls to Calyphas, who cannot or will not see his father as an awesome hero, to expose his father's fallibility. His incredulity goads Tamburlaine to new feats of spectacularity to win back his son.

Anything but dazzled by descriptions of military might and conquest, or moved by Tamburlaine's pathos-laden language of homosocial adventure, Tamburlaine's son focuses on the hardships and sacrifices required. After listening to Tamburlaine's recitation of what manly feats the family will undertake, Calyphas responds aloud while his brothers remain appropriately dumbstruck: "My lord, but this is dangerous to be done. / We may be slain or wounded ere we learn" (3.2.93-94). Calyphas does not find the rewards of women and wealth alluring, nor is he captivated by the romance of struggle and victory. Like his mother, Zenocrate, Calyphas tries to reason with his father, but his reasoning is alien to the Tamburlainean spectacular imperative.

E.D. Pendry argues that both Zenocrate and "her cowardly son Calyphas" are the most important fictional additions to this story.[53] Bajazeth offers his own counter-spectacle, but Zenocrate and Calyphas are anti-spectacularists. Tamburlaine's wife and son mount the only credible opposition to Tamburlaine's ideology of spectacles. They resist "the progress of his pomp" (Prol. 4), and they resist his party-line interpretations. They judge him for themselves. Hardly an attractive alternative to Tamburlaine, Calyphas nonetheless represents reason and common sense. Like his father, Calyphas rebels against expectations and refuses to walk the path laid before him if it does not suit him. Although he is more of an epicure than a conscientious objector when he lolls in his

[53] Pendry 4.

tent and plays cards during battle, Calyphas consistently articulates skeptical responses to his father's shows.[54] He is unmoved by both Tamburlaine's working words and his splendid appearance, and replies accordingly. Like the virgins in Damascus, Calyphas is a literalist who cannot read Tamburlaine's allegory. To persuade such an audience, Tamburlaine takes action.

Having failed to motivate his son with the funeral or with his nostalgic description of the military life, Tamburlaine attempts to mimic the Passion in Act 3. The religious resonance of coronations and banqueting pales in comparison to Tamburlaine's offer of his body and blood to his sons, but the drive to unify through spectacle remains consistent. This turn toward an identifiable Christian ritual is somewhat in keeping with Part II's awareness of the battles between Islam and Christianity in the East, but it only takes a minute to realize that Tamburlaine's Eucharist is purely secular—he desires the continuation of his own life. What should be an offering of sustenance for his sons is actually as inedible as Tamburlaine's bloody banquet of crowns in Part I: it is all appearances. Tamburlaine empties this ritual of any significance outside of his own need to gain his sons' loyalty.

Calyphas is concerned about being hurt in battle, so Tamburlaine wounds himself. He slices open his arm on stage--"*He cuts his arm"* (3.2 s.d.)--and urges his sons to probe the wound.[55] He extravagantly presents his cut for view, even narrating the moment, as though his bloody arm alone cannot persuade his doubtful audience.

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[54] Cf. Barber: Calyphas's "later, fuller statements have validity as a critical response" (74). Battenhouse likewise gives Calyphas great credit when he claims that he is like Alexander's philosopher Callisthenes, a voice of reason and moderation to a vainglorious conqueror who is killed for his effrontery (165), while Alan Shepard demurs, "Calyphas is not a particularly high-minded dissident" (43).

[55] Alan Shepard compares Tamburlaine to military heroes like Coriolanus, who delight in their scars and define themselves by those wounds (47). Karen Cunningham, cited by Shepard, reads the self-wounding

A wound is nothing, be it ne'er so deep [. . . .]

Now look I like a soldier, and this wound

As great a grace and majesty to me

As if a chair of gold enamelled [. . . .]

Come, boys, and with your fingers search my wound

And in my blood wash all your hands at once,

While I sit smiling to behold the sight.

Now, my boys, what think you of a wound? (3.2.115-29)

As Judith Butler might say, he attempts to perform his identity to stabilize it. Different, though, is Tamburlaine's subjectivity. Before, he *was* a lord ("I am a lord, for so my deeds shall prove" [1.2.34].), but now he only looks "like a soldier." Suddenly Tamburlaine is the reflection rather than the thing itself.

The dilution of Tamburlaine's spectacular effectiveness is exacerbated by his poor choice of symbols. The spectacular wound Tamburlaine presents--when seen in the context of the ceremony he evokes--does not register as warlike. Tamburlaine wants to look like a soldier, like a military man, but his ceremony makes him a sacrificial victim. These wounds should appear persuasively masculine, like Coriolanus's, but the spectacle Tamburlaine chooses defeats this association. The emotional and spiritual registers of the Passion undercut Tamburlaine's agenda. He seeks enthusiastic applause and increased enlistment, but the spectacle he produces encourages a confused blend of distaste and

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as: "a hyperbolic show of paternal masculinity before his sons, [that] reveals a deep anxiety that he only looks 'like'–but in some ultimate, humanist way is not–a soldier, that he only looks like–but is not–a man" (47).

doubt.[56] He urges a new baptism for his children–no longer their mother's sons, but his, washed in the blood from his self-induced stigmata--but his symbolism is confused and unconvincing. The warrior Tamburlaine sits pelican-style, as though he was nursing his brood with his blood. His confused approach muddies the already vexed nature of this display. As though attempting to clarify, Tamburlaine tells his sons, "View me, thy father [. . .] quite void of scars and clear from any wound, / That by the wars lost not a dram of blood, / And see him lance his flesh to teach you all" (3.2.110-14). Tamburlaine's play, at once masochistic and a little frightening, suggests instead that this shepherd has forgotten how to guide his flock.

Indeed, Tamburlaine succeeds only in summoning doubting Thomas's skepticism. Belief in the Resurrection required faith, not evidence, and the Apostle's need for proof was seen as a failure of belief.[57] Tamburlaine desires a similar faith from his children, particularly Calyphas, but the child is not persuaded by his father's words. Tamburlaine's charisma has not persuaded his son, now his spectacle fails as well. Even though Amyras and Celebinus ecstatically convert during Tamburlaine's show and demand wounds of their own, skeptical Calyphas responds to Tamburlaine's "what think you of a wound?" with, "I know not what I should think of it. Methinks 'tis a pitiful sight" (3.2.130-31). An appropriate Christian response, but hardly Tamburlainean.

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[56] Texts that encourage contemplation of the wounds of Christ include medieval religious poetry like the *Dream of the Rood*, the innumerable Passion Plays, Ignatius Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises,* and Martin Luther's sermons. This very visual tradition began with monks around the 10th century and continued on through the early modern period. For an overview, see Chris Armstrong, "The Fountain Fill'd with Blood," *Christianity Today* 48.3 (March 2004): 42.

[57] Thomas declares, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe" (John 20:25). After obtaining his proof, Thomas is scolded by Jesus: "Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed" (John 20:29).

Calyphas understands that he is not interpreting the spectacle as his father would like. In simple monosyllables, he declares that he knows not what he "*should* think of it" (3.2.130, emphasis mine). He then distinguishes between what Tamburlaine wants him to think and what he actually feels: "*Me*thinks" (130). Like a clever critic, Calyphas recognizes the spectacular agenda, but then he cannot or will not follow the show through to its conclusion. He does not read Tamburlaine's message. Again this sounds like his mother. Calyphas is more saddened than delighted or disgusted by his father's wounds, as are we.[58] We too understand that Tamburlaine's presentation to his son has failed, no matter how vehemently the other sons beg for wounds of their own. The inarticulate presence that was Bajazeth undermined Tamburlaine's control of spectacle in Part I; here, in Part II, the articulate Calyphas is even more devastating.

Again faced with a recalcitrant spectator, Tamburlaine punishes the viewer who will not be persuaded. From this moment on, Calyphas stands in opposition to Tamburlaine's martial life, to Tamburlaine himself, as he chooses to abstain from warfare in favor of drinking and playing cards. Tamburlaine's murderous response to Calyphas's disobedience is an attempt to prune away this diseased branch of his family and silence the hostile audience, but he seriously misjudges the rest of his audience and nearly alienates his entire train.

Tamburlaine would make an example of his son, but his followers are left not knowing what to think. When Tamburlaine's soldiers return to camp after their next conflict, the more martial sons leading the Turkish kings prisoner, he lauds their bravery

[58] Carolyn Williams argues that this scene reveals Calyphas as an effeminate, for "he fails to appreciate [the wound's] symbolic value as an index of masculine courage" (59). This is true, but Calyphas's almost apologetic re-reading of the wound complicates his role considerably. "'This Effeminate Brat': Tamburlaine's Unmanly Son," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 9 (1997): 56-80.

before dragging Calyphas from his tent. In a simple rhetorical exercise of definition by contrast, Tamburlaine describes Calyphas as a picture, a poor likeness of himself.

> Image of sloth and picture of a slave,
> The obloquy and scorn of my renown,
> How may my heart, thus fired with mine eyes,
> Wounded with shame and killed with discontent,
> Shroud any thought may hold my striving hands
> From martial justice on thy wretched soul? (4.1.90-95)

Tamburlaine reads Calyphas as Menaphon read his own body so many years ago, seeing in his son an emblem of laziness and servitude, a spot on his fame. His son tarnishes his brilliant reflection; he fails to reproduce his father's greatness. Hence, there is the need for a spectacular punishment.[59]

That Calyphas must be punished is self-evident, but Tamburlaine again feels the need to explain rather than trust the spectacle to speak for itself. Tamburlaine's incessant narration detracts from his shows rather than enhancing them. Here, he justifies murdering his son by returning to the discourse of images, describing Calyphas's soul:

> A form not meet to give that subject essence
> Whose matter is the flesh of Tamburlaine,
> Wherein an incorporeal spirit moves [. . .]
> For earth and all this airy region
> Cannot contain the state of Tamburlaine. (4.1.110-19)

[59] Eugene M. Waith suggests that the murder of Calyphas, in Tamburlaine's eyes, "is almost a ritual killing – the extirpation of an unworthy part of himself." To call it a ritual killing may be to speak too highly of Tamburlaine's perception of Calyphas. *The Herculean Hero in Marlowe, Chapman, Shakespeare, and Dryden* (New York: Columbia UP, 1962) 80.

The father's frustration with his son's inability to become him, to reproduce the Tamburlainean flesh properly, may be at the root of the anxiety over failing spectacles that permeates Part II. Yet Tamburlaine's succession anxieties do not operate as spectacularity. Calyphas's death takes place on a stage full of witnesses because it is both a capital punishment and a public scapegoating. The black sheep must be culled from the herd as a lesson to the other brothers, and the soldiers must learn the consequences of disobedience. But the witnesses will not stand still and observe. Instead, Tamburlaine's trusted lieutenants kneel and sue for mercy for the boy: "Yet pardon him, I pray you majesty," "Let all of us entreat your highness' pardon" (4.1.97-98). Tamburlaine forces Theridamas, Techelles, and Usumcasane to stand by reminding them of the "argument of arms." The other two sons fall to their knees. They assure their father that Calyphas will be forced to the field hereafter if he will "let him be forgiven for once" (4.1.96-100). But compulsive spectacularity again drives Tamburlaine to slaughter. Effeminate Calyphas occupies the place of the Damascene virgins; he is shown death on Tamburlaine's sword.

Unlike the inner circle of Tamburlaine's advisors and family who protest the slaughter, the prisoners from camp are silent onlookers before and after the killing, struck dumb with horror and fear for themselves.[60] When they do find their voices, like Bajazeth and his queen, or like the stubborn Agydas, the kings do not accept the Tamburlaine's actions. Tamburlaine turns from his son's body and attempts to incorporate the murder into his terrifying reputation, saying, "And now, ye cankered curs

[60] Carolyn Williams and Nina Taunton raise the arguments that Elizabethan and Jacobean audiences would have agreed with Tamburlaine's impulse to slay his son in this scene based on contemporary parenting treatises and the rules of military behavior, respectively. The "effeminate" Calyphas disobeys his father *and* his commander, and must be punished. The reaction of others on stage suggests that Tamburlaine's sentence is both extreme and repulsive to friend and foe. See Williams 56; Nina Taunton, *1590s Drama and Militarism: Portrayals of War in Marlowe, Chapman, and Shakespeare's* Henry V (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2001) 59.

of Asia, / That will not see the strength of Tamburlaine / Although it shine as brightly as the sun, / Now you shall feel the strength of Tamburlaine" (4.1.131-34). He attempts to couch this atrocity within the framework of his famous spectacular custom, but the death still reads as a murder. Although the killing and its explanation explicitly threaten him and his companions, Orcanes asserts that Calyphas's death is "barbarous damned tyranny" (4.1.137-38). Even Tamburlaine's own prisoners reject his justice and speak against his spectacles. To punish their stubborn sight and criticisms, Tamburlaine attempts to dehumanize the imprisoned kings by making them into a property in his play. Bajazeth became Tamburlaine's footstool; here the kings of Asia are transformed into his vehicle.

Is Tamburlaine intuitively attempting to recover control, after the execution of his son, with the spectacle of the chariot? Tamburlaine may not have foreseen the kings' furious reaction to his cruelty, which explains why he overreacts to their curses with: "Well, bark, ye dogs. I'll bridle all your tongues / And bind them close with bits of burnished steel / Down to the channels of your hateful throats" (4.1.177-83). The prisoners' opinions are meaningless, but Tamburlaine still wants their approval, or he will settle for the spectacle of their humiliation. Now Tamburlaine enters, *"drawn in his chariot by Trebizond and Soria with bits in their mouths, reins in his left hand, in his right hand a whip, with which he scourgeth them."*[61] The chariot evokes several visual traditions. First, the direction summons up the commonplace of the tyrant as a ruler whose people must be kept in chains. The emblem was legible even on the stage: the Lord Admiral's Men reused Tamburlaine's prop in their production of Thomas Lodge's

[61] The scene following Calyphas's murder features yet another resistant prisoner, Olympia. Brought along with the train as a prisoner of war by Theridamas, who falls in love with her, Olympia resists her captors, then tricks Theridamas into killing her. The juxtaposition of these hostile audiences in the play indicates the extent to which Tamburlaine is losing control.

Wounds of the Ciuill War (1594). In that play, the tyrant Sulla is drawn by Moors in a golden chariot, offering a tutorial on how to view Tamburlaine's chariot.[62] The detailed directions for Tamburlaine's actions also recall his identity as the Scourge of God (*flagellum dei*) coming to punish the world. The play offers up this association several times – the frontispiece of the 1590 edition refers to Tamburlaine as the Scourge of God "f*or his tyranny, and terrour in warre*," and the play ends with Tamburlaine himself declaring that "Tamburlaine the scourge of god must die." But there is a third association summoned by this spectacle: the bridling of scolds.

The kings' noisy disbelieving voices must be silenced, and so their tongues must be caged, like those of the wives who spoke too shrewishly in early modern England.[63] The "scold's bridle" in England punished women who scolded or cursed too much. This contraption shattered women's teeth and ripped their tongues with a spiked bit as they were paraded through their towns as a lesson for others. Tamburlaine, too, has found a way to bridle men, but he induces fear and loathing in his prisoners, not obedience.

Tamburlaine's show--designed to silence and humiliate--is so fraught with negative associations of tyranny and cruelty that it actually speaks *for* the imprisoned kings. Indeed, neither the chariot nor the bits work well. Tamburlaine complains that the kings "draw but twenty miles a day" (4.3.2), while the other kings' unbridled "cursing tongues...Break through the hedges of their hateful mouths / And pass their fixed bounds

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[62] The lavish direction for "Scilla's" chariot: *Enter Scilla in triumph in his chare triumphant of gold, drawen by foure Moores, before the chariot: his colours, his crest, his captaines, his prisoners: Arcathius Mithridates son, Aristion, Archelaus, bearing crownes of gold, and manacled. After the chariot, his souldiers bands, Basillus, Lucretius, Lucullus: besides prisoners of diuers Nations, and sundry disguises.* (3.2).

[63] Cf. Lynda E. Boose, "Scolding Brides and Bridling Scolds: Taming the Woman's Unruly Member," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 42 (1991): 179-213.

exceedingly" (4.3.44-47). The chariot works beautifully for Marlowe's play as an allusive piece of theatrical spectacle, but it fails to take Tamburlaine where he needs to go.[64] Dehumanize them as he will, Tamburlaine cannot stop enemy voices and bodies from breaking into his shows.

The rapid decline in Tamburlaine's spectacular control reaches its nadir in Babylon, the last city that refuses to yield to his black armor. Tamburlaine is no longer sad or pensive; he is simply perplexed. He wonders why the Governor could not be affrighted by "the view of our vermillion tents [. . .] no, nor I myself" (5.1.86-91). The Babylonian responds tellingly, "'Tis not thy bloody tents can make me yield, / Nor yet thyself" (5.1.103-04). To this point, we have observed the failure of Tamburlaine's spectacles to move his children, his men, and his prisoners. We have not yet seen a military failure. When Babylon's Governor assures Tamburlaine that "my heart never did quake, or courage faint" (106), he completely subverts Tamburlaine's system of spectacular conquest. Tamburlaine recognizes that he "could not persuade [Babylon] to submission" (94), but he has nothing new to offer. All that is left is for him to reach into his visual arsenal and find the most hideous display he can manage.

Having had several scenes to practice dealing with disruptive and unappreciative spectators, Tamburlaine knows how to punish Babylon and its bold Governor: "Go draw him up. / Hang him in chains upon the city walls, / And let my soldiers shoot the slave to death" (5.1.106-08). The Damascus virgins were lanced and left to bleed offstage; Babylon is strung up and shot in plain view like a Saint Sebastian as Tamburlaine extends the range of his spectacularity. The audience sees the Governor hung up in chains, and

[64] Cartelli attributes the chariot's theatrical success to its "comprehensive inversion of prevailing social and political arrangements," which evokes "amoral wonder" in its audience (79-80).

watches Theridamas shoot him with arrows.[65] We hear, too, about the excessive violence that follows--the men, women, and children are to be bound hand and foot and drowned in the lake, and all copies of the Qu'ran are to be burnt. Like the town that burned for Zenocrate, Babylon must fall completely to compensate for Tamburlaine's failure to persuade.

The Babylon scene brings on stage every single one of Tamburlaine's shows at once, but they are meaningless, even to him. The chariot and its enraged "steeds," Tamburlaine's soldiers and remaining sons, his armor and tents, bloodied victims, fire, and Death all appear. Yet the effect of all this spectacularity is decidedly underwhelming. Sensing its inadequacy, Tamburlaine begins to taunt the gods for a miracle. As his soldiers fling the "Turkish Alcoran" into a fire onstage, Tamburlaine calls to Mahomet and asks him to "come down thyself and work a miracle" (5.1.186). He demands a "furious whirlwind" or divine retribution (190), but the request seems like a plea for a *real* spectacle that can truly move him and the others. When nothing appears, disappointment echoes in his quiet statement: "Well, soldiers, Mahomet remains in hell" (196). No god has been watching Tamburlaine, and no one heeds his cries.

Tamburlaine's subsequent "distemper" has been read as the irritated response of Mahomet, Allah, or God, but the play's continuous undercutting of such generic expectations argues otherwise. As Peter Hall notes in his director's diary, "Tamburlaine

[65] Firing arrows at an onstage target is unusual. Most shots fall offstage because of the understandable safety issues. Both *Cambises* and *The Silver Age* feature onstage arrows, but both fudge how the arrows hit their targets. Alan Dessen considers this dramatic effect in "The Arrow in Nessus: Elizabethan Clues and Modern Detectives," *Shakespeare in Performance*, ed. Robert Shaughnessy (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000).

dares God (or Jove or Allah) to stop him, and God does nothing."[66] To read Tamburlaine's death as a neat ending in the *de casibus* or morality play tradition–the scourge is finally reined in–is to ignore the noticeable decline in his spectacular powers and Tamburlaine's own cravings for divine intervention. C.L. Barber has argued that Tamburlaine's death should not be confused with the "stable moral, eschatological framework, such as we get in *De Casibus* literature like *The Mirror for Magistrates*." He suggests instead that "Tamburlaine's death is presented simply as the result of the exhaustion of his natural vital powers."[67] These "natural vital powers" may be inseparable from the energy of spectacle.

Tamburlaine's sudden physical decline and death follow hard on the heels of his failures to convert Calyphas, to bridle the kings, and to subdue Babylon. Unlike Zenocrate, who was finally subdued and brought into line, Tamburlaine cannot dominate these other challengers.[68] The play links his ailment—a dried-up heart—directly to his spectacularity. Soria curses Tamburlaine before being bridled: "May never spirit, vein, or artier feed / The cursed substance of that cruel heart, / But, wanting moisture and remorseful blood, / Dry up with anger and consume with heat!" (4.1.177-80). Tamburlaine's body, previously a spectacle in its own right, begins to deteriorate after show upon show fails to persuade its audience. The depleted spectacular body seems to be roasting itself with its excess:

Your veins are full of accidental heat

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[66] Hall continues, "We have been saying for months that it's an immoral play in a morality play structure. But it is actually attempting to prove that there is no God" (qtd. in Geckle 32).

[67] Barber 51.

[68] Calyphas, the kings, and Babylon are all marked as feminine, too. Calyphas is an epicure and a pacifist; the Kings are punished like scolds, and Babylon is penetrated by phallic swords and arrows.

Whereby the moisture of your blood is dried.

The humidum and calor, which some hold

Is not a parcel of the elements

But of a substance more divine and pure,

Is almost clean extinguished and spent,

Which, being the cause of life, imports your death. (5.3.84-90)

This diagnosis is appropriately humoural, given the trope of choler that has been associated with Tamburlaine throughout the play. Tamburlaine's veins are full of dangerous and unnatural heat, the overheating of a choleric man.[69] Although the masculine body naturally would be filled with heat and dryness, the physician argues for a surplus of manliness, a killing dose. Simultaneously, the fuel for Tamburlaine's spectacles and his charisma, the "substance more divine and pure" has been spent. Tamburlaine has consumed himself; his spectacularity can no longer sustain him.

Death, his former servant, is now his nemesis, an "eyeless monster that torments my soul" (5.3.216-17). David Thurn argues that blind Death "draws our gaze beyond what can be seen," like a *memento mori*.[70] For Tamburlaine, there could be nothing more terrifying than sightlessness. His images, shows, spectacles, and ceremonies must be beheld. Even his last order insists upon sight: "Give me a map, then, let me see how much / Is left for me to conquer all the world" (5.3.123-24). As long as he can see and be seen, Tamburlaine knows he is alive and capable of more display. His final words

[69] Roy Battenhouse argues that Tamburlaine's death results from his angry ambition, and this final fever is "associated by Renaissance writers with the most dangerous form of choler – namely, choler adust. According to the accepted theory, all four of the humours are liable to adustation, which is caused when a humour becomes burnt through excessive heat." (220).

[70] Thurn 187-88.

suggests hopefully that sight might yet outlive his eyes: "my soul doth weep to see / Your sweet desires deprived of company; / For Tamburlaine, the scourge of God, must die" (246-48).

C.L. Barber describes Tamburlaine's career as "miming omnipotence by confirming, in stage action, magical expectations launched by Marlowe's 'mighty line.'"[71] Tamburlaine's spectacles, in the eyes of his onstage audience, do not finally embody what J.S. Cunningham calls Tamburlaine's "dream landscape." They can barely mime the power he craves.[72] They mock his ambitions, like the dreaded map that illustrates to him just how much is left unconquered. Yet outside of Tamburlaine's drama, his stage actions are better than magical. They manifest Tamburlaine and his vision--Christopher Marlowe's vision--and assert the potency of theatrical communication even as Tamburlaine himself must crumple. Death may seem the victor in this play, but really Marlowe the playwright is the one who makes his circuit on Tamburlaine's sword. Even as Tamburlaine dies with a whimper, he dies on cue.

Tamburlaine's body is borne offstage in a chariot drawn by the king of Jerusalem, graphically restating the significance of Tamburlaine's spectacles. The last sights of this play are Tamburlaine's body and his unstable cart. The play has accomplished its goal: thrilling and sating its audience with a figure who "from the state of a shepheard in Scythia, by his rare and wonderfull conquests, became a most puissant and mightie monarque."[73] Richard Jones worried that the play might not please once printed, because

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[71] Barber 49.

[72] Cunningham 59.

[73] *Tamburlaine the great* (London, 1597) frontispiece.

those moments that so delighted audiences would now "seeme more tedious unto the wise." He overestimated his readers, for we, too, "greatly gap[e]" at Tamburlaine's spectacularity, just like the "vain, conceited fondlings" in the audience.[74] Marlowe knew best.

[74] "Letter to the Gentleman Reader," *Tamburlaine* (1597) A2r.

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