

**Controversial Discourse:
Early Modern English Satire, 1588-1601**

By

Eric D. Vivier

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Members of the Final Oral Committee:

David Loewenstein, Professor, English (UW-Madison)

Karen Britland, Professor, English (UW-Madison)

Michael Witmore, Professor, English (Director, Folger Shakespeare Library)

Joshua Calhoun, Assistant Professor, English (UW-Madison)

Johann Sommerville, Professor, History (UW-Madison)

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INTRODUCTION: SATIRE AS A RHETORICAL GENRE

Nearly every early modern text that announces itself as a satire anticipates its reader's displeasure. This is of course part of the point: if satire is "a matter or poesye made in the rebuke of some state or persone," as Thomas Elyot suggested,¹ or "a poesy, rebukying vyces sharpely not regarding any persons," as Thomas Langley suggested,² then its attack on vice is in fact *intended* to displease the vicious. When Maartin van Dorp objected to some "astringent pleasantries" in Erasmus' *Praise of Folly*,³ Thomas More replied that the "nature" of satirical poetry demanded a certain displeasing harshness: "unless it is biting, it is not satire."⁴ Joseph Hall declared that his satires would "please [him] more, the more [they] do displease."⁵ And John Marston vowed to renounce his satiric muse if his poems failed to displease: "If thys displease the world's wrong-iudging sight, / It glads my soule," he said in *Certaine Satyres*, "But if that this doe please, / Hence, hence, Satyrick Muse, take endlesse ease."⁶

But there were other, more problematic senses in which early modern satirists knew their texts could displease their readers. The most obvious issue was the violence of satirical rhetoric. Although Thomas Nashe bragged of his terms "laid in steepe in *Aquafortis*, & Gunpowder," his suggestion that his attack on Richard Harvey would make the latter "go to the chiefe Beame of [his] Benifice" and "trusse vp [his] life in the string of [his] Sancebell" uncomfortably alluded to

¹ Thomas Elyot, *The Dictionary of Sir Thomas Elyot* (London, 1538).

² Thomas Langley, *An Abridgement of the Notable Woorke of Polidore Vergile* (London, 1546), Fol. xix.

³ Maarten van Dorp, "To Erasmus, September 1514," in *The Collected Works of Erasmus*, vol. 3, trans. R.A.B. Mynors and D.F.S. Thomson (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 19.

⁴ Thomas More, "Letter to Maartin van Dorp" (21 October 1515), in *St. Thomas More: Selected Letters* ed. Elizabeth Frances Rogers (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), 55.

⁵ Joseph Hall, *Virgidemiarum*, in *The Poems of Joseph Hall*, ed. Arnold Davenport (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 1969), 4.1.80-1.

⁶ John Marston, *The Metamorphosis of Pigmalion's Image and Certaine Satyres* (1598), in *The Poems of John Marston*, ed. Arnold Davenport (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1961), 5.179-82.

satire's violent beginnings—to Archilochus' furious iambs, which drove his betrothed and her father to hang themselves.⁷ By dwelling on the details of sinful behavior, furthermore, satire tended to be filled with the very type of lasciviousness that the satirist reprehended. In his translation of Sebastian Brandt's *Ship of Fools* (1509), Alexander Barclay felt obligated to point out that Lucilius and other satirists used “mery speche” not “to the intent to exercyse wanton wordes or vnrefrayned lascyuyte, or to put his pleasour in such dissolute langage: but to ye intent to quenche vyces and to prouoke the commons to wysedome and vertue, and to be asshamed of theyr foly and excessyfe lyuyng.”⁸ And satirists knew that their unlicensed speech could cross political lines as well. In Ben Jonson's *Every Man Out of His Humour* (1599), Mitis warns Asper that “The dayes are dangerous, full of exception, / And men are growne impatient of reproofe,” but Asper resolves to “scourge” the humourous apes on and offstage “With constant courage and contempt of fear.”⁹ Early modern satire was thus trapped between its premise of moral profitability on one hand and the violence, prurience, and political instability of its rhetoric on the other. Modern critics have tended to view such satirical apologia as commonplace, but in fact these apologia speak to a real ambivalence about satirical discourse in early modern England.

This dissertation explores the ambivalence about satire as it became a matter of religious, political, and literary significance in England during the long final decade of the sixteenth century. Classical satire had been taught, translated, and imitated throughout the sixteenth

⁷ Thomas Nashe, *Pierce Pennilesse His Supplication to the Devil* (1592), in *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, 5 vols., ed. Ronald McKerrow (1908; reprint ed. F.P. Wilson; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), 1.195-8. For an account of Archilochus, see Robert C. Elliott, *The Power of Satire: Magic, Ritual, Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), 6-9.

⁸ Alexander Barclay (trans.), *The Ship of Fools* (1509), ed. T.H. Jamieson (London: Henry Sotheran & Co., 1874), 6-8.

⁹ Ben Jonson, *Every Man Out of His Humour*, ed. Randall Martin, in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), Ind. 124-5, 115-20.

century as part of the humanist educational program developed by Erasmus,¹⁰ but 1588 represented a watershed year for English satire: with the anonymous publication of the inflammatory Martin Marprelate tracts, which openly mocked members of the Elizabethan episcopacy and advocated radical reform of the English church, the propriety of satirical discourse suddenly became a topic of national debate. Some of those who denounced Martin's theological politics, like Thomas Nashe and Robert Greene, found much to imitate in Martin's energetic and witty prose. Others, like Gabriel Harvey and Francis Bacon, found in such linguistic pyrotechnics the kindling of social instability. Over the following decade, two other major satirical controversies would capture public attention: the print quarrel between Gabriel Harvey and Thomas Nashe (1590-6), and the Poets' War involving Ben Jonson, John Marston, Thomas Dekker, John Weever, Everard Guilpin, and William Shakespeare (1599-1601). Taken separately, these controversies present complex literary and historical questions about the relationship between satire and religious, poetic, and theatrical authority. Taken together, they represent a sustained debate about the ethics, politics, and value of satirical discourse. This debate came to an explicit end with Jonson's "Apologetical Dialogue" appended to *Poetaster* in 1601, but it would continue to shape poetry and theater throughout the following decade.¹¹

The readings of the Marprelate Controversy, the Harvey-Nashe quarrel, and the Poets' War that follow challenge conventional accounts by considering satirical texts as both products of and agents within particular historical contexts. This formulation—and indeed the entire approach of this dissertation—has been deeply influenced by Jean Howard and Louis Montrose,

¹⁰ Students at grammar school and university would have read Persius, Horace, Juvenal, Aristophanes, and Lucian. See T.W. Baldwin, *William Shakespeare's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke*, 2 vols. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1944).

¹¹ Although there are several recent studies of early Stuart satire—see, for example, Andrew McRae, *Literature, Satire, and the Early Stuart State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)—none consider such satire in light of the vexed debate in the 1590s about the ethics, politics, and value of satirical discourse.

whose early statements of new historicism stressed the importance of recognizing texts as both products of and agents within history. According to Jean Howard, “Literature is *part* of history, the literary text as much a context for other aspects of cultural and material life as they are for it. . . . Rather than passively reflecting an external reality, literature is an agent in constructing a culture’s sense of reality. It is part of a much larger symbolic order through which the world at a particular historical moment is conceptualized and through which a culture imagines its relationship to the actual conditions of its existence.”¹² Montrose similarly suggests that to speak “of the the social production of ‘literature’ or of any particular text is to signify not only that it is socially produced but also that it is socially productive—that it is the product of work and that it performs work in the process of being written, enacted, or read.”¹³ But this imperative has largely been obscured in the succeeding decades by Stephen Greenblatt’s Foucauldian-inspired depiction of monolithic power (even if Greenblatt himself has distanced himself from some of his more totalizing claims), in which the only real social function of aesthetic practice is fundamentally conservative—that literature in general and the theater in particular act as a kind of safety valve, helping to contain the subversive energies of a culture by simultaneously representing and re-appropriating them back into the totalizing power structure of the ruling class.¹⁴ I hope the rhetorical readings of satire in this dissertation allow for a more nuanced view of the various ways satire may act as an agent in a culture endlessly in conflict with itself and endlessly reconstituting itself.¹⁵

The first chapter considers Martin Marprelate’s satirical attack on the bishops not as an

¹² Jean Howard, “The New Historicism in Renaissance Studies,” in *Renaissance Historicism*, ed. Arthur F. Kinney and Dan S. Collins (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1987), 15

¹³ Louis Montrose, “Renaissance Literary Studies and the Subject of History,” *ELR* 16:1 (Winter 1986), 8-9.

¹⁴ See especially Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

¹⁵ This formulation is primarily indebted to Raymond Williams, who views literature as an agent in the hegemonic process—a process that, by definition, is never complete. See Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 112-13, and below.

isolated stylistic innovation but as a response to John Bridges' 1,400-page *Defence of the Government Established in the Church of Englande for Ecclesiasticall Matters*. This massive text, I show, was not the boring work of pedantry most critics have assumed it to have been, but was instead a playful and condescending deconstruction of the presbyterian argument for ecclesiastical reform. Martin's satirical response must therefore been seen as a rhetorically strategic response to a perceived threat: Martin attacks Bridges not *because* he is a fool but in order to *make* him a fool, to undercut the legitimacy of Bridges' assault on the presbyterian cause by highlighting his refusal to argue according to the terms of theological debate. So too was Martin's satire intended to be rhetorically disciplinary: by exposing the misdeeds of the bishops, Martin hoped to shame both bishop and reader alike into proper (and presbyterian) Christian obedience. But what Martin did not anticipate was that his satire would be above all productive of further satire, as the bishops determined that the best way to answer a fool was according to his own folly.

The second chapter examines the intersection between the anti-Martinist response to Martin Marprelate and the beginnings of the quarrel between Gabriel Harvey and Thomas Nashe. I show that the anti-Martinists were caught in a difficult rhetorical situation: their task was to denounce Martin's satire as a threat to both church and state even as they employed the very same satirical strategy. For Thomas Nashe, one of the hack writers hired to respond to Martin, the issue was not satire itself but the relationship between satire and established authority: whereas Martin worked to undermine the church and state, Nashe worked to defend and uphold them. But for Gabriel Harvey, who was provoked to respond to the controversy by a snide personal affront in John Lyly's anti-Martinist *Pappe with an Hatchet*, satire was an inherently lawless and dangerously destabilizing form of discourse. Just like the anti-Martinists, however,

Gabriel Harvey found it difficult to denounce satire without reproducing it.

The third chapter explores the Harvey-Nashe quarrel in further detail. Although this controversy has generally been read in terms of the nascent marketplace of print, I show that the central intellectual division was not between amateur and professional authorship but between satire and panegyric, between a poetics of blame and a poetics of praise. Whereas Nashe attempted to set himself up as a satirical defender of art, believed that the poet's job was to praise virtue and blame vice, and argued that blame could be profitable for both reader and writer, Harvey argued that the proper use of poetry was not invective but praise—that by praising fellow poets, social superiors, and heroic deeds, the poet could not only win praise for himself but could help to usher in a new Sparta, a new age of global exploration and military discipline. But once again Harvey could not discredit blame without adopting its terms, and Nashe could not undermine Harvey's self-praise without upholding himself as a worthy adversary. The story of the Harvey-Nashe quarrel, I show, is ultimately about the satirical production of similarities: in their attempt to distinguish themselves from one another, they tied themselves to each other.

The long fourth chapter revisits the Poets' War in light of this debate about the ethics, politics, and value of satirical discourse. Satire became increasingly popular in the late 1590s, but—perhaps because personal application to particular members of the nobility became increasingly possible—the same bishops who had authorized the anti-Martinist campaign in 1589 issued a proclamation banning satire from the press a decade later. I argue that Ben Jonson's three comical satires adopted many of the formal and thematic characteristics of the banned verse satire for the theater in order to defend satire, the satirist, and himself from their detractors. John Marston, however, whose verse satires had been banned and burned, was considerably more skeptical about the satirist's assumption of moral authority and assertion of

satirical efficacy; even as he experimented with satire in his early plays, he undercut the satirist's authority both on- and off-stage. Both Marston and Thomas Dekker, whose *Satiromastix* directly challenged Jonson's assertion of poetic and satirical authority, were part of a new movement in the debate about the ethics, politics, and value of satire: as satire itself became increasingly popular, these writers began to satirize satire itself. The fullest expression of this movement, I suggest, can be found in John Weever's *The Whipping of the Satyre* (1601), which mocks the idea that the harsh words of the satirist can be morally effective in deliberately paradoxical terms.

These readings of satirical controversy in the long final decade of the sixteenth century have considerable implications for the significance of early modern satire to the study of early modern English literature. Satire was not only the subject of a sustained national debate but, as satirists of the 1590s actively mocked and eventually displaced the previous generation's interest in romance, satire became the most popular and the most important genre of literature in England. So too was the debate about the propriety of satirical discourse intricately connected to the debate about the value of poetry and the function of literature: in both the Harvey-Nashe quarrel and the Poets' War, those who advocated for and against satire were primarily concerned with its rhetorical purposes and its moral effects—that is, they attempted to articulate what satire was supposed to *do*. The connections I reveal between the Marprelate tracts, the energetic prose of Thomas Nashe, the formal verse satire of the satyr-satirists, and the comical satire of Ben Jonson, furthermore, demonstrate that there was a direct line of influence between the explosion of interest in satire in the late 1580s and the satirical comedy and satire of the public theaters in the first two decades of the seventeenth century.

These readings also have considerable historical implications. In each chapter I attempt to

explain *why* the controversy emerged when and how it did and to gesture towards its consequences. This leads me to consider what primarily literary texts can reveal about the complex struggles for religious, political, poetic, and theatrical authority taking place in the long final decade of the sixteenth century. I suggest, for example, that the presbyterian argument for reform posed more of a threat to the religious establishment, and, conversely, that John Bridges' *Defense* posed more of a threat to presbyterian arguments for reform than most historians acknowledge. I provide a literary and historical answer to the central puzzle of the Harvey-Nashe quarrel by suggesting that the subject of the quarrel was also its medium: Harvey and Nashe were ultimately arguing over the poetic, moral, and social value of satire. And my readings of the Marprelate controversy, the Harvey-Nashe quarrel, Poets' War have consequences for our understanding of the Bishops' Ban in 1599: the debate about satire that courses through these controversies suggests a much more significant anxiety about the destabilizing potential of satirical discourse than historians have recognized.

Finally, the reading of early modern English satirical controversy presented in this dissertation also underscores the significance of early modern satire for our understanding of satire itself. The savage indignation and deliberately obscure terms of the Elizabethan satyr-satirists have never fit particularly well with theories of satire produced by eighteenth-century scholars, who would prefer to find the defining characteristics of the genre in the urbane Augustan verse of Pope and Swift. Most contemporary theorists of satire therefore follow the pattern established by John Dryden, who in his influential *Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire* (1693) skipped from the Roman satirists to his own day with only a brief glance at John Donne (whom he thought a very good wit but not a particularly good poet).¹⁶

¹⁶ John Dryden, *A Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire* (1693), in *The Works of John Dryden*, vol. 4, ed. H.T. Swedenberg, Jr. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 78. Donne is widely considered to

Whereas the Elizabethans believed satire was descended from *vetus comoedia* and Greek satyr plays—and that “*satyra* was, in both a literal and imaginative sense, the utterance of satyrs”¹⁷—Dryden followed Isaac Causubon, who in 1605 had pointed out that “satire” was properly derived from the Latin phrase “*lanx satura*” (“heaped plate” or “mixed dish”).¹⁸ For Dryden—and for many who came after him—this meant that the savage indignation of the Elizabethan satyr-satirist was something of a literary mistake: whatever Joseph Hall, John Marston, Everard Guilpin, and even Ben Jonson thought they were doing, it was not satire.¹⁹

As Dustin Griffin suggests, modern “satiric theory has been largely built on Augustan foundations.”²⁰ Like their early modern predecessors, eighteenth-century defenders of satire insisted that satire was an attack on vice and therefore a defense of virtue. Dryden insisted that it was “an Action of Virtue to make Examples of vicious Men,” both for their own amendment “and for the Terrour of others, to hinder them from falling into these Enormities, which they see

be the best and most important of the Renaissance satirists, but in many ways he is not representative of the satire of the 1590s. His satires are more urbane and polished, much less morally self-assured, and much less deliberately modelled on classical forms than those of his contemporaries. His targets are not hidden sin, as in Marston’s or Guilpin’s satires, or literary/social pretension, as in Hall’s satires, but the absurdities of his own very intimate and particular circles: the court, the church, the law. Donne is smart enough to know that he is not smarter than anyone else, smart enough to know that he shares in the hypocrisy of the court and the law, smart enough to know that he shares in the motley humorist’s vanity. And although several of his satires touch on contentious topics—especially his third satire, skeptical as it is of all religious authority—Donne never works himself into a state of righteous indignation and never becomes contentious in the way that his contemporaries do. He has been omitted from this dissertation because his unpublished satires never became involved in the type of public satirical controversy that is the broader subject of this dissertation.

¹⁷ Oscar James Campbell, *Comical Satyre and Shakespeare’s Troilus and Cressida* (Huntington Library: San Marino, CA, 1938), 24-5. This derivation was popularized through an essay by the fourth-century grammarian Aelius Donatus, which was regularly prefixed to grammar-school editions of Terence. See also Alvin Kernan, *The Cankered Muse* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 54-5.

¹⁸ Dryden, 29.

¹⁹ After defending himself against the lampoons and libels circulating about him for years, Dryden distinguished between Greek and Roman satire and then, unnecessarily, endeavored to determine whether Horace, Juvenal, or Persius was the superior satirist. The distinctions Dryden drew between Horace and Juvenal would inform scholarship on satire for centuries. Although most critics have long since moved beyond the crude distinction between “Horatian” and “Juvenalian” satire—even Horace is sometimes “Juvenalian,” and even Juvenal is sometimes “Horatian”—occasionally these terms make a comeback. For a recent example, see William R. Jones, “The Bishops’ Ban of 1599 and the Ideology of Satire,” *Literature Compass* 7:5 (May 2010), 332-46.

²⁰ Dustin Griffin, *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction* (Lexington: University Press, of Kentucky, 1994), 28. Although I do not agree with all of his characterizations, I am indebted to Griffin’s account of twentieth-century satiric theory.

are so severely punish'd, in the Persons of others."²¹ Alexander Pope claimed repeatedly that in his satires he "follow[ed] Virtue" and disdained villainy; "O sacred weapon!" he said of satire, "left for Truth's defence, / Sole dread of Folly, Vice, and Insolence, / To all but Heav'n-directed hands denied."²² Whereas the Victorians tended to disapprove of satire as a "low genre," both in style and substance, and therefore unworthy of the same type of critical attention afforded to Shakespeare, Sidney, and Spenser, early twentieth-century scholars such as Hugh Walker, Oscar Campbell, and Mary Clare Randolph upheld the legitimacy of satire as an object of study by returning to the idea of satire as a moral art.²³ Randolph argued that the satirist attacks a specific vice or folly only to uphold an opposing virtue,²⁴ and she focused on the medical metaphors in Renaissance satire that at once looked backward "to the ancient idea of the magical curse as a lethal instrument" and looked forward to the more "cultured and sophisticated notion of satire as a sanative instrument, a means of curing a man of his moral ills."²⁵

Building on this idea, Robert Elliott explored the widespread belief in the destructive, supernatural power of words of ill-omened invective in "primitive" societies, including Ancient

²¹ Dryden, 60.

²² Alexander Pope, "Epilogue to the Satires, Dialogue II" (1738), in *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. John Butt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 95, 212-14. Although the point I am making here—that modern satiric theory largely reflects the preoccupations of "Augustan" satire—remains true, Ashley Marshall usefully suggests that Pope's sentiments were not representative of early eighteenth century satire in England, that "Augustan" satire, broadly conceived, did not exist, and that there was in fact a considerable range of satiric practice over the hundred-year period beginning with the Restoration in 1660. Marshall's book is a necessary intervention in the scholarship of eighteenth-century satire, particularly for its insistence upon the historical contingency and particularity of satire, but I disagree with her taxonomic method, which is descriptive rather than analytical or interpretive. My criticisms of previous satiric theory align with many of hers, but my own theoretical suggestions about satire do not. See Ashley Marshall, *The Practice of Satire in England, 1658-1770* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2013).

²³ Hugh Walker, *English Satire and Satirists* (1925; repr. New York: Octagon Books, 1965); Campbell; Randolph cited below. John Peter can also be included on this list, if only because in his distinction between Medieval complaint and Renaissance satire—a distinction that I reject outright—Peter upheld the superiority of Renaissance satire (especially More, Wyatt, and Donne) over complaint as an object worthy of critical attention, though he did not care for the "thoroughly undesirable style of writing" characterized by the Elizabethan satyr-satirists (Peter, *Complaint and Satire in Early English Literature* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956]).

²⁴ Mary Clare Randolph, "The Structural Design of the Formal Verse Satire," *Philological Quarterly* 21 (1942), 368-84.

²⁵ Mary Clare Randolph, "The Medical Concept in English Renaissance Satire," *Studies in Philology* 38 (1941), 125-57.

Greece, Arabia, and Ireland, and argued that in its remotest origins satire was ritualistic. But for Elliott what was important was the shift “from ritualistic efficacy to aesthetic value,” from magical act to literary art.²⁶ This opened a gap between the author of a satire and the satirist within the poem, the latter of which became a symbolic role, and allowed other formalist scholars—many of whom were his colleagues at Yale in the late 1950s—to push back against earlier biographical and historical readings of satire and to insist that a satirical text should be seen as a unified work of art that spoke to universal truths. Alvin Kernan argued that “we need to approach satire in the way we do other poetry—as an art. That is, not a direct report of the poet’s feelings and the literal incidents which aroused those feelings, but a construct of symbols—situations, scenes, characters, language—put together to express some particular vision of the world. The individual parts must be seen in terms of their function in the total poem and not judged by reference to things outside the poem such as the medical history of the author or the social scene in which he wrote.” For Kernan, the satirist was not the author himself but a function of satirical poetry, a persona put on to play a certain traditional role. The *attack* so central to satire was only meaningful as a means of achieving a certain effect *within* the text.²⁷

The formalist approach of the Yale critics elevated satire to the level of “art” and contributed to our sense of satiric convention, but it did not sit particularly well with a number of critics at the University of Chicago in the early 1960s, who insisted that satire is rooted in and

²⁶ Elliott, 92.

²⁷ Kernan, 2-3, 250. For a related Structuralist account, see Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 223-34. Frederick Bogel has recently revived and revised the formalist approach of the Yale school, arguing that satire is not “a response to a preexisting reality,” that the attack on historical particulars is a convention rather than a description of satire’s relation to historical reality, and that “an intenser formalism” would distinguish between “reference (a relation between this text and that object) and referentiality (a textual gesture outward, whether to a historical object or not).” Bogel suggests that satirists identify something in the world that is both unattractive and dangerously like them and then “works to *produce* a difference between two figures whom the satirist—who is usually one of these figures—perceives to be insufficiently differentiated.” The plot of satire is thus a movement from partial to complete disapproval and rejection. See Frederick Bogel, *The Difference Satire Makes* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 9-13, 42-51.

refers to the historical moment of its composition. Edward Rosenheim Jr. argued that the targets are neither “mere fictions” nor generalizations of vice and folly but “*discernible, historically authentic particulars*,” that satire was not necessarily addressed to general and timeless problems, and that satire was therefore not necessarily a moral art. He acknowledged that the satirist *could* work to persuade us to virtue by exposing evils hitherto unrecognized by its audiences or eliciting blame for individuals, institutions, or ideas, but Rosenheim also pointed out that there were many satires that do not seem to persuade us of anything at all. Instead, these satires seem to punish—for our literary enjoyment—someone or something we already agree is blameworthy. Although he stressed the historical particularity of satire, Rosenheim also argued that all satire involves what he called a “satiric fiction”: a recognizable departure from literal truth that is ultimately the instrument of attack. The historical targets of satire are relatively easy to identify; in practice, the literary critic’s real job was to analyze the artful construction of this “manifest fiction.”²⁸ Like the Yale critics, then, the Chicago critics were ultimately interested in discovering the principles that made satire cohere as a literary genre.²⁹ Even as they undermined the idea that satires speak to universal truths, they paradoxically insisted on the essential—and therefore ahistorical—generic identity of satire more broadly.

As later critics have recognized, however, there are significant problems with the idea that satire is, in Oscar Campbell’s terms, a “well-defined literary form.”³⁰ Although satire seems to function generically in shaping our interpretive expectations and although at numerous points in literary history various formal patterns have emerged and materialized into what look like

²⁸ Edward Rosenheim Jr., “The Satiric Spectrum,” in *Satire: Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. Ronald Paulson (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1971), 307, 312, 318, 321. As I will acknowledge in more specific terms below, Rosenheim’s essay is my theoretical point of departure. He is the only critic to recognize the connections between satire and polemic, but he backs away from the idea that all satire is polemical or rhetorical (persuasive), opting instead to posit a spectrum between persuasive and punitive satire. I will suggest instead that even those satires that “do not seem to ‘persuade’ us, in any reasonable sense of the term” (307) in fact do perform persuasive work.

²⁹ Griffin, 30.

³⁰ Campbell, vii.

literary genres (e.g., the mock epic, the mock encomium, menippean satire, the formal verse satire of the early eighteenth century), the most superficial survey of the texts we are prepared to call “satirical” presents major obstacles to the idea of an essential satirical generic identity. Some works are “satiric” only in particular moments, others seem to be “satiric” throughout, and those that are “satiric” throughout not only cross well-established generic lines (e.g., prose, poetry, drama, film; comedy, tragedy; etc.) but transcend the very borders of the “literary” into journalism, music, and the visual arts. Satire’s only formal consistency is that it has no consistent form; it appears to transcend genre, and perhaps even literature itself.

This problem has occasioned what Dustin Griffin calls “a retreat from large-scale theoretical claims about ‘the nature of satire,’” as most late-twentieth century critics have abandoned the attempt to account for the genre as a whole and have opted instead to account for the satire of a single writer.³¹ Those who have continued to write about satire in theoretical terms have responded to the problem of satire’s generic identity in a number of different ways. The first has been to suggest that satire is not a genre but a mode—what Alistair Fowler defines as a “nonstructural aspect of a kind (or genre)” which can be extended to modify another kind.³² According to this argument, satire is essentially “protean”: it has no form of its own, but it works as a parasite, adopting a ground-plan from other genres and transforming—or de-forming—them into itself.³³ “When satire takes over another literary structure,” Dustin Griffin suggests, “it tends not just to borrow it . . . but to subvert it or . . . to alter its ‘potential’ and to direct its energies

³¹ Griffin, 31.

³² Alistair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 107. Fowler notes that “satire is the most problematic mode to the taxonomist, since it appears never to have corresponded to any one kind. It can take almost any external form, and has clearly been doing so for a very long time” (109).

³³ See James Nichols, *Insinuation: The Tactics of English Satire* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971); Michael Seidel, *Satiric Inheritance: Rabelais to Sterne* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); and especially Leon Guilhamet, *Satire and the Transformation of Genre* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987).

toward alien ends.”³⁴ Thus, in Charles Knight’s terms, satire is “pre-generic: it is not a genre in itself but an exploiter of other genres.”³⁵ This is perhaps a useful way to capture the general mood or tenor of satire, the attitude of the satirist towards his or her target. In practice, however, the modal theory of satire turns out to be little more than a terminological sleight of hand. As soon as satire—which still has not been defined—transforms another genre into itself, it again becomes a genre. Such theorists acknowledge that satire is not a literary genre but carry on talking about it as though it were anyway.³⁶

The second solution to the generic problem of satire has been to argue that satire really refers to two related but different genres. Formal verse satire refers to the Roman tradition of poetic satire, as practiced by Lucilius, Horace, Persius, and Juvenal. This is what appeared in English for the first time in the late 1590s with Donne and Hall, reappeared in the late seventeenth century with Dryden, and then reached its poetic zenith in the early eighteenth century with Pope. Formal verse satire has the appeal of generic purity, as its practitioners are always very conscious of the tradition in which they are writing. As a result, the notion of the independent generic status of formal verse satire has had enormous staying power, particularly for students of the eighteenth century. “Informal” or “menippean” satire, on the other hand, is the catch-all term that has been used to refer to everything else. Scholars have traced this tradition back to Greek rather than classical Roman antiquity, to the Old Comedy of Aristophanes and the prose writings of Menippus of Gadara. Menippean satire tends to be characterized by its mockery of serious learning, its digression and exaggeration, and its mixture of prose and verse forms. Menippean satire does have a long history and was an important literary genre in

³⁴ Griffin, 3.

³⁵ Charles Knight, *The Literature of Satire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 4.

³⁶ I would include in this account of modal satire those theorists who speak of “satiric attitude” or “satiric spirit,” such as George Test (*Satire: Spirit and Art* [Tampa: University of South Florida Press, 1991]), who rather vaguely defines the “satiric spirit” as “a universal urge so varied as to elude definition” (ix).

medieval and early modern Europe,³⁷ but much recent scholarship has been too heavily influenced by Mikhail Bakhtin's analysis of the relationship between Menippean satire and festive folk culture, which tends to understate satire's subversive potential.³⁸ These Menippean-inspired theories of satire tend to see satiric texts as spaces of play, display, inquiry, and provocation, sanctioned spaces in which aggressive impulses and historically relevant critiques may be expressed rather than enacted.³⁹

Here again we confront something that was implicit in the Yale critics' insistence that satire is a "unified work of art" as well as in Rosenheim's suggestion that most satires do not seem to persuade us of anything we do not already know: the idea that satire, for all of its aggressive certainty that it will "cleanse the foul body of th'infected world,"⁴⁰ does not really *do* anything at all. Stripped of its moral purpose, satire becomes, for all intents and purposes, impotent. For some theorists, in fact, this sense of impotence is one of the hallmarks of satire.

³⁷ See W. Scott Blanchard, *Scholar's Bedlam: Menippean Satire in the Renaissance* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1995); and Howard Weinbrot, *Menippean Satire Reconsidered: From Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

³⁸ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 112-31. Menippean satire, Bakhtin argues, is "saturated with a specific *carnival sense of the world*"—the joyful relativity and popular festivity that comes with the violation of the "customary course of events and the established norms of behavior and etiquette, including manners of speech" (117). For Bakhtin, carnival is the temporary liberation of the people from the prevailing notions of truth and from the seriousness, hierarchy, and oppression of the social order; it offers the possibility of "free and familiar contact among all people," a utopian moment of joyful equality, community, and freedom of expression. In carnival laughter he sees the ambivalence of mockery and rejoicing shared by and directed at all people. But as Terry Eagleton has pointed out, Bakhtin's analysis of carnival undermines its subversive potential: carnival becomes a "licensed affair in every sense, a permissible rupture of hegemony, a contained popular blow-off" (Eagleton, *Walter Benjamin; or Towards a Revolutionary Criticism* [New York: Verso, 1981], 148). And by associating satire with carnival and festivity, Bakhtin figures satire as play rather than as rhetoric. Satire becomes a temporary inversion of established rules, order, and hierarchy, a festive moment of political and social regeneration, rather than a potentially potent strategy for persuading an audience to reject the dangerous appeal of or claim to authority by an antagonist.

³⁹ See Griffin; Knight; and Alvin Kernan, "Aggression and Satire: Art Considered as a Form of Biological Adaptation" in *Literary Theory and Structure: Essays in Honor of William K. Wimsatt*, ed. Frank Brady, John Palmer, and Martin Price (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 115-29. Bakhtin's reading of Menippean satire has been particularly influential for new historicist critics, who have found in his analysis a perfect example of the transfer, circulation, and exchange of materials, energies and forms from one discursive sphere to another. But Stephen Greenblatt himself is not entirely comfortable with Bakhtin's idealistic reading of Rabelais, whose laughter, he suggests, offers more of a challenge to the dominant structures of authority than Bakhtin acknowledges (Greenblatt, "Filthy Rites," *Daedalus* 111:3 [Summer 1982], 1-16).

⁴⁰ William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, ed. Jean Howard, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Greenblatt et al. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1997), 2.7.60.

John Snyder suggests that the satiric stance is “an admission of defeat”; all the satirist can do “is decry and commend, analyze and affirm, criticize and espouse.”⁴¹ Dustin Griffin sees satire as a space to exercise the reader’s critical judgment, but he does not believe that satire has any real persuasive power: “Despite the fears of political authorities from ancient to current times, it has not been convincingly shown that satire has the power to encourage the actions or alter the attitudes of its readers.”⁴² And although Charles Knight is open to the possibility that satire can affect the minds of its readers by “cultivat[ing] the will to resist and enabl[ing] the power to say no,” he ultimately accepts Michael McKeon’s assertion that literature in general and satire in particular is “trapped by its recognition that the political reform it identifies as needed will not (can not, as society is presently constituted) come about. Hence the satirist issues a call for reform that he is well aware will be fruitless, or he retreats into a self-consuming irony. The frustration of literature in its desire to act upon the world (like the frustration of Pygmalion before his statue) marks the separation of literature from political reality.”⁴³

The readings of satirical controversy in this dissertation, however, remind us that those who objected to satire in the 1590s worried that satire would *do too much*. John Weever did not believe that “bitter euill slanderous speach” was the “fittest method vertuous deeds to teach,” but he did think the satirist’s mockery, derision, scoffing, flouting, defamation, and slander had consequences: the satirist injured himself, “payring his good name, / For he is after noted for a knaue”; he injured “Him that he speakes it of, by his defame, / For he shall causelesse ill opinion haue”; and he injured “Him that he speakes it to, deceiued so, / For he takes it for trueth, and tels it to.” The satirist also threatened the social hierarchy by bringing his social superiors into

⁴¹ John Snyder, *Prospects of Power: Tragedy, Satire, the Essay, and the Theory of Genre* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1991), 145.

⁴² Griffin, 154.

⁴³ Knight, 47.

disrepute, threatened the Church in his unchristian attempt to “wring the Diuell out by his owne vice,” threatened the state by usurping the office of the civil magistrate “to punish all her [Majesty’s] Subjects with the pen, / Against the Law of all Ciuilitie,” and threatened social stability by instigating and perpetuating satirical controversy: “Shamesless of shame, how darest thou attempt / To pluck the plume of Englands happinesse, / And broach the malice of thy base contempt, / In ciuill iarres bred by vnciuilnesse?”⁴⁴

What the readings in this dissertation suggest above all is that satire is less an aesthetic object than a particular kind of *doing*. A “satire,” in other words, may perhaps best be described as a text that *satirizes*. Although satire always contains a “*departure from literal truth* and, in place of literal truth, a reliance upon what may be called a *satiric fiction*,”⁴⁵ this fiction-making is always an inherent aspect of satire’s extra-textual rhetorical project: its attempt to *make* something ridiculous, hateful, or absurd.⁴⁶ Early modern satirists are unusually explicit about this. “I am worth twentie Pistle-penners,” John Lyly says in his response to Martin Marprelate: “let them but chafe my penne, & it shal sweat out a whole reame of paper, or *make them odious* to the whole Realme.”⁴⁷ In his *Anatomy of Absurdity*, Nashe suggests that he has put on a “*satyricall* disguise” and wandered through the Stationer’s shop in order to note the “*vnsauery duncerie*” of the “Authors of the absurder sort” assembled there, “that each one at the first sight may eschew it as infectious, *to shewe it to the world that all men may shunne it*.”⁴⁸

Unlike the targets of mild(er) ridicule in comedy, which tend to be harmless and which

⁴⁴ John Weever, *The Whipping of the Satire* (1601), ed. Arnold Davenport (Liverpool: University Press of Liverpool, 1951), 497-8, 625-7, 745-50, 844, 585-6, 655-8.

⁴⁵ Rosenheim, 312.

⁴⁶ This both suggests that to satirize something or someone is an intentional act and that these intentions can be determined from the text. The obvious antithesis between these claims and the central premise of poststructuralism may help to explain why poststructuralist critics have largely avoided satire.

⁴⁷ John Lyly, *Pappe With an Hatchet* (1589), in *The Complete Works of John Lyly*, vol. 3, ed. R. Warwick Bond (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 407 (emphasis mine).

⁴⁸ Thomas Nashe, *Anatomy of Absurdity*, 1.5, 9 (emphasis mine).

can be both reformed and reincorporated into the community, the targets of satire are potentially harmful or destructive and must be purged from the community in order for the community to move forward.⁴⁹ For early modern satirists, satiric targets are always things that must be—but are as yet insufficiently—“shunned.” Part of the threat they pose is that they are too popular, too alluring, too appealing either to the satirist himself or to the audience to whom he writes. This means that we must take seriously the extent to which satirists are threatened by the targets of their ridicule, even targets that we have come to see as conventional: women, usurers, hypocrites, other writers, etc. Martin Marprelate did not attack Bridges because he was already foolish but because he made the presbyterians look foolish. Nashe did not attack the Harveys because they were already dismissed as fools but because their criticism of his satirical writing carried the aura of learned legitimacy. Hall and Marston did not attack vice because it was already despicable but because its overwhelming popularity threatened to drive England over the brink into riotous, lustful, and chaotic damnation. Jonson attacked romance because it was too popular and attacked his detractors because they presented a real obstacle to his laureate ambitions.

Early modern satirical controversy in fact shows us that the threat posed by the targets of satire is that of an antagonist—that is, a situation in which the existence of an “other” presents an

⁴⁹ Much modern satiric theory has tended to conflate satire with comedy. Northrop Frye, for example, suggests that “satire is irony which is structurally close to the comic,” as “the comic struggle of two societies, one normal and the other absurd, is reflected in its double focus of morality and fantasy” (Northrop Frye, *The Anatomy of Criticism* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957], 224). More recently, Paul Simpson has argued that satire is a type of verbal (and pictorial) humor, rather than a literary genre, which has three relevant social functions: the release of aggression, the reinforcement of intra- and inter-group bonds, and the pleasure of intellectual play (Paul Simpson, *On the Discourse of Satire* [Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2003], 2-3). But this would have made little sense to the formal verse satirists of the 1590s, who, as Oscar Campbell pointed out long ago, assumed the role of the reformer and conceived their task to be the exposure of vice (Oscar James Campbell, *Comical Satyre and Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida* [Huntington Library: San Marino, CA, 1938], 35-6). Here I am building on Leon Guilhamet's useful distinction between the satiric and the comic: “The basic difference between the satiric and the comic is that the satiric reinterprets the ridiculous in an ethical light. The satiric employs comic techniques of ridicule, but discovers harm and even evil in the ridiculous. The ridiculous that is proper to satire cannot be reconciled to the good at the conclusion of a comic plot. Rather the evil or perversity is isolated in expectation of some more correction” (7-8).

obstacle to the satirist's (or the group on whose behalf the satirist speaks) own legitimacy.⁵⁰ This is most obvious in cases where satire emerges at the site of rival claims to religious or political authority, such as in the Marprelate controversy, but satire may also emerge at the site of less obvious struggles for power: in rival claims to intellectual or poetic authority, such as in the Harvey-Nashe quarrel, or even in rival claims to authority over satire itself, as in the Poets' War. The antagonism could be even more more generalized and culturally diffuse, as in misogynistic satire, which attempts to contain the threat women's beauty poses to male hegemonic power; in satire that attacks the popularity of new fashions and commodities, which attempts to curtail nascent capitalism in favor of an older, aristocratic system of value; and even in overtly moral satire, which is so often rendered explicitly as a struggle between Virtue and Vice or as a struggle between Christ and the Devil. Whatever the case, satire emerges as an antagonistic articulation—an articulation that simultaneously recognizes an other as an obstacle to its own legitimacy and works to undermine the legitimacy of that other. The fact that satire can emerge on either or both sides of an antagonism, as a challenge to establishment authority (as in Martin Marprelate's satire) or on behalf of the establishment (as in Nashe's anti-Martinist satire), shows definitively that satire is neither inherently conservative nor inherently revolutionary.⁵¹

There are thus no "easy" targets of satire, no targets that are already universally despised.⁵² In satire there are only dangerously appealing antagonists, worryingly tempting

⁵⁰ This formulation is indebted to Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, 2nd ed. (New York: Verso, 2001), 125.

⁵¹ Some recent theorists have argued that there is a fundamental distinction between conservative and revolutionary or iconoclastic satire (see Test, 225-46; Jones, 332-46), but the obvious and intended similarities between Martinism and anti-Martinism suggest that such distinctions are irrelevant. It is perhaps more productive to think of *all* satire as both ideological and (to borrow Joseph Navitsky's term) "oppositional" (Navitsky, "Disputing Good Bishop's English: Martin Marprelate and the Voice of Menippean Opposition," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 50 (2008), 182).

⁵² Nearly all theorists of satire agree with Frye that "To attack anything, writer and audience must agree on its undesirability" (224). Frederick Bogel is one of the few who rejects this idea; he points out that those things that are already universally and unambivalently abhorred, such as mass murderers, are nearly impossible to satirize (52).

behaviors, and disturbingly stable orthodoxies. Even those values that seem so central to the hegemonic order—like Christianity—must be continually reinforced and continually policed from the temptation of proscribed ideas or behaviors—like lust, pride, envy, gluttony, anger, and greed.⁵³ As Raymond Williams argues, hegemony is always a process, a realized complex of experiences, relationships, and activities, and even if by definition a hegemony “is always dominant, it is never either total or exclusive. At any time, forms of alternative or directly oppositional politics and culture exist as significant elements in the society,” either as residual forms of an earlier hegemonic order or as emergent forms that have not yet achieved hegemonic domination. Thus hegemony is never singular, and it never exists passively as a form of dominance: “It has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended and modified. It is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not at all its own.”⁵⁴ What Edward Rosenheim Jr. could not recognize is that those satires that “do not seem to ‘persuade’ us, in any reasonable sense of the term”⁵⁵ are doing persuasive work of exactly the kind Williams describes: they work to reinforce, renew, recreate, defend, and modify the values of a social order continually in conflict with itself.

Satire is thus *always* persuasive—or, perhaps more accurately, dissuasive. The early modern satirist recognizes the ugliness or foolishness of his target, but he worries that this ugliness is hidden. He figures his project as an anatomy, as a revelation, as an exposure of the ugly truth beneath the false surface, but he also acknowledges that this is a necessarily rhetorical act: he works to *make* target *seem* despicable, ridiculous, or repugnant so that his audience will reject its appeal. The central rhetorical act of early modern satire is therefore *blame*, and, as Rosenheim suggests, this blame is carried out through some sort of recognizable distortion of the

⁵³ The broad targets of Nashe’s *Pierce Penilesse* are in fact the seven deadly sins.

⁵⁴ Williams, 112-13.

⁵⁵ Rosenheim, 307.

target. In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle argued that the rhetorical tools of epideictic speech—praise or blame—are magnification, minimization, and association: the speaker who wants to make another man blameworthy must magnify that man’s vices, minimize his virtues, and associate him with whatever the audience finds shameful.⁵⁶ This is exactly what we see in the fiction-making of early modern satire: the satirist inflates his targets to frighteningly monstrous proportions and deflate them to laughably diminutive dimensions, sometimes simultaneously, such as Martin Marprelate’s accusation that the bishops are “petty popes and “petty antichrists.”⁵⁷ So too do early modern satirists often turn to scatology in order to discredit their targets: in a culture ashamed of bodily waste, there is no more powerful way make a man seem blameworthy than to associate him with the dunghill.

It is possible that this blame can work the way Joseph Hall wanted it to—that “*Satyre*” can be “like the *Porcupine*, / That shoots sharpe quills out in each angry line, / And wounds the blushing cheeke, and fiery eye, / Of him that heares, and readeth guiltily.”⁵⁸ As Michael Billig argues, ridicule can potentially act as a corrective for ideas or behaviors social norms or customs.⁵⁹ But it is probably unlikely that the satirist is ever really able to persuade the vicious themselves that they are blameworthy. What early modern satire makes clear, however, is that satire is most importantly dissuasive for the observer, the third party, the impartial or “indifferent” reader. Just as a tendentious joke produces pleasure not in the teller or the target but in the third person who listens and laughs at the target’s expense, satire works to make its targets laughable to a larger audience, to make its antagonists contemptible, to deprive its antagonists of

⁵⁶ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, ed. Lane Cooper (New York: Pearson, 1960), 46-55.

⁵⁷ Martin Marprelate, *Epistle* (1588), in *The Martin Marprelate Tracts*, ed. Joseph Black (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 9.

⁵⁸ Hall, *Virgidemiarum*, 5.3.1-4.

⁵⁹ Michael Billig, *Laughter and Ridicule: Towards a Social Critique of Humour* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005), 202.

their “claim to dignity and authority.”⁶⁰ After telling Richard Harvey that he “could not refraine” from “bequeath[ing]” Harvey’s *Lamb of God* “to the Privie, leafe by leafe as [he] read it,” Nashe turns back to his audience, not only for their approval of him but for their disapproval of Harvey: “*Redeo ad vos, mei Auditores* [back to you, my auditors], haue I not an indifferent prittye vayne in Spurgalling an Asse?”⁶¹

Although modern theorists have repeatedly denied satire’s persuasive power, early modern opponents of satire knew that satire could be an effective rhetorical weapon. Thomas Cooper knew that Martin’s “venemous, scoffing, and vnbridled tongue” could not only do him personal harm but could turn the “simple and ignorant people” against the bishops and all forms of authority: “if this outrageous spirit of boldenesse be not stopped speedily, I feare he wil proue himselfe to bee, not onely *Mar-prelate*, but *Mar-prince*, *Mar-state*, *Mar-lawe*, *Mar-magistrate*, and all together, vntil he bring it to an Anabaptisticall equalitie and communitie.”⁶² Even though he thought Nashe was a “contemptible rascall,” Harvey knew that Nashe’s public mockery could “do [him] harme by detraction.”⁶³ The lasting reputations of figures who have found themselves the object of satire, such as John Bridges, should be an indication of the rhetorical power of satire: thanks to Martin’s satire, scholars of the Marprelate controversy have been so convinced that Bridges’ enormous *Defence* is foolish and pedantic that, by and large, they have not bothered to look beyond the title page.

But early modern proponents and opponents of satire alike also knew that satire could

⁶⁰ Sigmund Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, trans. James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1963), 100, 189.

⁶¹ Nashe, *Pierce Penilesse*, 1.198-9.

⁶² Thomas Cooper, *An Admonition to the People of England: Wherein Are Ansvvered, Not Onely the Slanderous Vntruethes, Reprochfully vttered by Martin the Libeller, But Also Many Other Crimes by Some of His Broode, Obiected Generally Against All Bishops, and the Chiefe of the Cleargie, Purposely to Deface and Discredite the Present State of the Church* (London, Christopher Barker, 1589), sig. A2^r, 163, 36.

⁶³ Gabriel Harvey, *Pierces Supererogation, or A New Prayse of the Old Asse* (1593), in *The Works of Gabriel Harvey*, ed. Alexander Grosart (New York: AMS Press, 1966), 2.233-4.

have unintended consequences. By violating norms of propriety and by associating his antagonist with things he knows the audience will find shameful, the satirist inadvertently associates himself with that shame. “Know, thou filthy sweepe-chimney of sin,” Weever says to the satirist, “The soyle thereof defiles thy soule within.”⁶⁴ The extensive knowledge required to “reveal” the hidden “truth” about his target creates a problem for the satirist: if this target is so despicable, ridiculous, or repugnant, if it is so blameworthy and if it is so urgent for us to reject its appeal, why does the satirist *know so much about it*? Nashe dismissed Harvey as an “indigested Chaos of Doctourship, [a] greedy pothunter after applause, an apparant Publican and sinner, [and] a self-loue surfetted sot,”⁶⁵ but he had clearly read everything Harvey ever wrote and spent years gathering “perfect intelligence of [Harvey’s] life and conuersation.”⁶⁶ And as so many opponents of satire pointed out, the satirist’s attack on sin could just as easily instruct his readers about that sin as dissuade them from it. In Weever’s *Faunus and Melliflora*, for example, innocent “Tusco” is puzzled by lines in a satire until “court-boy *Brisco*” helps him out: “I’m glad of this,” Tusco replies, “I thought there had not bin / Such nouell pastimes, such a new found sinne.”⁶⁷ The satirist, in other words, draws attention to the very thing he wants his readers to ignore. He legitimizes his antagonist as an antagonist at the very moment that his ridicule works to persuade his readers to reject the legitimacy of his antagonist’s rival claim to authority.

Early modern satirists and opponents of satire were also much more aware than modern critics tend to be of satire’s tendency to provoke further satire, and thus for satire to generate controversy. Satire is inherently—and intensely—polarizing. Those who rejected the ridicule of the satirist often found that they had no choice but to challenge the authority of the satirist, and

⁶⁴ Weever, *Whipping of the Satyre*, 179-80.

⁶⁵ Nashe, *Strange Newes*, 1.302.

⁶⁶ Nashe, *Have With You*, 3.29.

⁶⁷ John Weever, *Faunus and Melliflora, or the Original of our English Satyres* (1600), ed. Arnold Davenport (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1948), 93, 96-7.

often discovered that the only means of doing so was by responding in kind. “It is therefore thought the best way,” a prominent anti-Martinist remarks, “and some wise men were before of that judgement, and the wise man himself dooth so advise us, and Martin the foole himselfe is of the same opinion, to answere the fooles, according to their foolishness.”⁶⁸ Ridicule, in other words, generates further ridicule, and satire generates further satire. Bridges’ ridicule provoked Martin’s satire, and Martin’s satire provoked that of the anti-Martinists; Nashe’s satire provoked the Harveys, who provoked Nashe, who provoked Gabriel Harvey, who provoked Nashe; Jonson provoked Marston, who provoked Jonson, who provoked Marston, who provoked Jonson, who provoked Dekker, who provoked Jonson; Weever provoked Breton, and both provoked Guilpin. Early modern writers knew that satire rarely exists in isolation. “*Qui replicat, multiplicat*”; ‘he that replieth, multiplieth,’” Francis Bacon remarked; “*Alter principium malo dedit, alter modum abstulit*”; ‘by the one’s means we have a beginning, and by the other’s we shall have none end.’”⁶⁹ “There is no ende of girdes, & bobbes,” Gabriel Harvey remarked, and this was especially true “in this Martinish and Counter-martinish age: wherein the Spirit of Contradicton reigneth, and euerie one superaboundeth in his owne humor, euen to the annihilating of any other, without rime, or reason.”⁷⁰ Even if satire does not “cleanse the foul body of th’ infected world,” then, it certainly has its effects.⁷¹

In broad terms, then, satire may be most productively considered in terms of its rhetorical strategies and consequences, or as what Amy Devitt calls a *rhetorical genre*. Rhetorical genres emerge in response to particular situations, use particular strategies for particular purposes, and

⁶⁸ Marphoreus (pseud.), *Martins Months Minde* (London, 1589), sig. D1^v.

⁶⁹ Francis Bacon, “An Advertisement Touching the Controversies of the Church of England,” in *Francis Bacon: The Major Works*, ed. Brian Vickers (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 4.

⁷⁰ Gabriel Harvey, *Pierces Supererogation, or A New Prayse of the Old Asse*, ed. Alexander Grosart (New York: AMS Press, 1966), 2:133. *Foure Letters*, 1.203.

⁷¹ There may be other effects as well: it is possible that in crossing boundaries of propriety, satire may help to shift or even break down those boundaries. This is something I would like to consider further in the future.

provoke particular responses. They are “typified” forms of “social action,” “patternings from repeated actions according to which (or in reaction against which) readers and writers use language,” “rhetorical use[s] of symbols in frequently encountered contexts” that are used to accomplish particular purposes.⁷² To think about satire in these terms would allow us to consider the way satirical texts appear on either side of a struggle for power, work to persuade their audiences to reject the other side by rendering it ridiculous, and provoke satirical imitations and responses. To think about satire as a rhetorical genre would allow us to consider the important rhetorical continuities between literary and non-literary forms of satire, such as poetry and visual art, and between satirical texts and non-satirical texts, such as Nashe’s *Pierce Penilesse* and sermons.

To think about satire as a rhetorical genre would not prevent us from considering the artistic and literary aspects of satirical texts, as the “satiric fiction”—the magnification, minimization, and other recognizable distortion of the satiric target—is the central aspect of satire’s rhetorical strategy, the means by which satire renders its object blameworthy or ridiculous.⁷³ Nor would it prevent us from considering the way multiple different forms of satire have materialized into literary genres, such as formal verse satire and menippean satire. As Devitt suggests, the historically contingent formal conventions of rhetorical genres “develop as rhetorical acts and continue to act rhetorically.”⁷⁴ But it would allow us to consider satirical texts in the same way Kenneth Burke considers poetry, “in terms of a situation and a strategy for confronting or encompassing that situation”;⁷⁵ it would allow us to consider the ways that early

⁷² Amy Devitt, “Integrating Rhetorical and Literary Theories of Genre,” *College English* 62: 6 (July 2000), 696-718.

⁷³ Indeed, this dissertation will devote significant space to a consideration of these “literary” aspects of early modern satirical texts.

⁷⁴ Devitt, 698.

⁷⁵ Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1974), 64.

modern satirical texts were not only socially produced but socially productive.⁷⁶ Satirical texts are strategic rhetorical interventions in specific historical contexts and conversations: they emerge at sites of antagonisms; they render threatening individuals, ideas, or institutions absurd, ridiculous, or hateful; and they frequently provoke both satirical imitations and equal but opposite satirical responses.

By paying careful attention to the particular historical circumstances of early modern satirical texts, their particular rhetorical strategies, and the particular responses they provoke, this dissertation provides new readings of the Martin Marprelate controversy, the Harvey-Nashe quarrel, and the Poets' War. It provides a means of thinking about the ways in which early modern English satirical texts were not only products of but agents in a culture continually reinforcing, reproducing, and reshaping itself. And above all, it shows that in the long final decade of the sixteenth century, satire was both the medium and the matter of controversy.

⁷⁶ Howard, 15; Montrose, 8-9.

CHAPTER 1: “*LEARNED DISCOURSING BRETHREN*”: JOHN BRIDGES AND THE MARTIN MARPRELATE CONTROVERSY

In the spring of 1588, a radical puritan minister named John Udall published (anonymously) a pamphlet called *The State of the Church of Englande, Laide Open in a Conference Between Diotrophes a Bishop . . . and Paule a Preacher of the Word of God*, in which Udall attacked the hierarchy of the English Church as a vestige of popery and attacked the bishops themselves as covetous wretches who purposefully hindered the further reformation of the church in order to maintain their worldly privilege. For his efforts, Udall was summoned (not for the first time¹) to appear before the court of high commission at Lambeth Palace and was deprived of his living at Kingston. Copies of *Diotrophes* had been rounded up and burned, and the printer, Robert Waldegrave—who himself had a history with the High Commission²—was deprived of his own livelihood: his shop was raided and the Stationer’s Court ordered that his press and type be destroyed.³

In October of that year, Waldegrave printed two more anonymous presbyterian pamphlets on a press acquired by the radical puritan John Penry and hidden (as the authorities would later learn) at the manor of Elizabeth Crane in East Molesley, Surrey.⁴ The first was Udall’s *Demonstration of the Trueth of that Discipline*, which attempted to prove syllogistically the

¹ Udall appeared before the High Commission for his efforts on behalf of Presbyterian reform in 1586, though he was restored to his position thanks to the influence of the Earl of Warwick. See Joseph Black (ed.), *The Martin Marprelate Tracts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), xlvi. All references to the seven Marprelate tracts will be to this edition.

² Waldegrave had been imprisoned for six weeks after printing William Fulke’s *Briefe and Plaine Declaration*, also known as the *Learned Discourse of Ecclesiastical Government* (1584), and the anonymous *Dialogue, Concerning the Strife of Our Church* (1584). See Black (ed.), *Marprelate Tracts*, l.

³ Black (ed.), *Marprelate Tracts*, l. See also Martin Marprelate, *Epistle*, 23-4.

⁴ Black (ed.), *Marprelate Tracts*, l.

unlawfulness of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the scriptural necessity of the presbyterian discipline. Whereas conformists argued that the government of the church did not pertain to salvation and that the Christian magistrate was free to order the church as he or she saw fit, presbyterians argued that Christ had prescribed a specific form of government in the New Testament, that this government was comprised of preachers, doctors, deacons, and elders, that no minister could have any lawful superiority over any other, and that ministers should be elected by their congregations.⁵ This government was to be followed by all Christian nations in perpetuity, and the proper government of the Church pertained to salvation insofar as it was a matter of obedience to Christ. At the heart of this argument was a desire to see Christ not only as the king of the church but as a successor to and superior of Moses, as a lawgiver who demanded strict obedience to the orders he had “prescribed in his word.” Conformists who gave Christ the “tytle” of king but denied him “the authority belonging to the same” made Christ “an Idol, making him to cary a shew of that which he is not, and (with the crucifiers of him) to put a reede in his hand, in stead of his yron rod; and crowning him with thorns, in stead of the crown of greatest glory” (11). By maintaining a system of church government that had no scriptural foundation, by suppressing those ministers who called for the presbyterian discipline, and by damning the souls of their parishioners in order to maintain their dignities, Udall claimed, the bishops were “the cause, of all the ignorance, Atheisme, schismes, treasons, poperie and

⁵ In using the terms “presbyterian” and “conformist” throughout this chapter I am following Peter Lake. “Presbyterian” refers to “those men who can be shown to have espoused or defended the presbyterian platform of church government.” The term “puritan” is used “to refer to a broader span of opinion, encompassing those advanced protestants who regarded themselves as ‘the godly,’ a minority of genuinely true believers in an otherwise lukewarm or corrupt mass. It is therefore used as a term of degree, or relative religious zeal rather than as a clear-cut party label. Thus, while all presbyterians were puritans, not all puritans were presbyterians.” The term “conformist” is used “to refer not to all those who can in some sense be said to have conformed to the rites and ceremonies of the English church, but only to those men who chose to make a polemical fuss about the issues of church government and ceremonial conformity and who sought to stigmatize as puritans, those less enthusiastic about such issues than themselves.” Peter Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans? Presbyterianism and the English Conformist Thought from Whitgift to Hooker* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), 7.

vngodlines” that was “to be founde” in England (4).

There was nothing particularly new about Udall’s argument. Many of the more radical protestants who had returned to England from Geneva at Elizabeth’s accession in 1558 had been unsatisfied with the compromises of 1559, and throughout the 1560s they continued to fight over specific aspects of ceremony. Presbyterianism began to take hold in the early 1570s, with Thomas Cartwright’s lectures at Cambridge and his public animadversions with John Whitgift in the controversy following the anonymous publication of *An Admonition to the Parliament* (1572).⁶ But the harshness of Udall’s attack reflected the presbyterians’ growing frustration: they saw themselves as messengers of God who brought revealed truth about the proper government of the church, but their patient “supplication to [the] Conuocation house,” “writing in defence” of the discipline, and frequent challenge to the bishops to dispute over the truth of the discipline had produced few results (7). Udall therefore upped the ante. Not only did he offer to venture his life against an opponents’ bishopric in open disputation (and suggest that a refusal to take up his challenge would reflect either that the bishops knew their cause could not “abide the tryal” or that they would “take no pains to confute vs that keep such a sturre in the Church” [7]), but he threatened that the discipline would prevail in one way or another: “If it come in by that meanes, which wil make all your heartes to ake, blame your selues; for it must preuail, maugre the mallice of all that stande against it” (7).

The second pamphlet Waldegrave printed on Penry’s secret press in October 1588 had a very different tone. In the *Learned Epistle* to the forthcoming *Epitome of the first book of that right worshipful volume written against the puritans, in the defence of the noble clergy, by as worshipful a priest, John Bridges* (etc.), “the reverend and worthy Martin Marprelate,

⁶ See Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), esp. Chs. 1-3.

gentleman” adopted a range of satirical personas and strategies in order to mock the episcopal hierarchy, from the bumbling mispronunciations of a northern curate to the polished prose of a university graduate, from mocking gossip to deadly serious and open accusation. “Martin” mocked Bridges’ *Defence of the Government Established in the Church of England for Ecclesiasticall Matters* (1587), the principal conformist response to presbyterianism, as a long-winded and “most senseless book” (7) that had done more to help than hinder the presbyterians; he mocked the “bishops and proud, popish, presumptuous, profane, paltry, pestilent and pernicious prelates” as “petty antichrists, petty popes, proud prelates, intolerable withstanders of reformation, enemies of the gospel, and most covetous wretched priests” (10); he exposed the misdeeds of several bishops, including John Aylmer, the Bishop of London, who had seized stolen cloth recovered on his property rather than returning it to its rightful owners (13); he ridiculed Archbishop John Whitgift for his refusal—which Martin claimed was his inability—to respond to Cartwright’s last effort in the *Admonition* controversy some twelve years earlier; he demanded that radical puritan ministers such as Udall and Giles Wigginton be restored to their livings; and he threatened to continue to reveal the private “knaveries” of the bishops until they stopped persecuting “the best servants of God” and agreed never to “slander the cause of reformation, or the furtherers thereof, in terming the cause by the name of Anabaptistery, schism, etc., and the men puritans, and enemies to the state” (34).

As numerous critics have argued, Martin’s mockery of the bishops and his deliberately foolish jesting was a popularizing strategy designed “to move ecclesiological controversy out of the study where learned polemic was written and read and into the wider public sphere of popular debate.”⁷ Martin himself acknowledged this in his third tract, *Hay Any Work for Cooper*:

⁷ Black, *Marprelate Tracts*, 4. See also Raymond Anselment, ‘Betwixt Jest and Earnest’: *Marprelate, Milton, Marvell, Swift & The Decorum of Religious Ridicule* (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 34; Joseph Black,

I saw the cause of Christ's government, and of the bishops' antichristian dealing, to be hidden. The most part of men could not be gotten to read anything written in the defence of the one and against the other. I bethought me therefore of a way whereby men might be drawn to do both, perceiving the humors of men in these times (especially of those that are in any place) to be given to mirth. (115)

But as fewer critics have recognized, Martin's *Epistle* was also supposed to be a companion piece to Udall's *Demonstration*, intended to highlight the distinction between the presbyterians' syllogistically rigorous argumentation and the conformists' foolish erudition, specious logic, and self-interested justification of the episcopal hierarchy. "I jested," Martin declared in the opening of his second tract, the *Epitome* (1588), "because I deal against a worshipful jester, D. Bridges, whose writings and sermons tend to no other end than to make men laugh" (53).

Despite Martin's explicit insistence that he is "sometimes tediously dunstical and absurd" in order to "keep *decorum personae*" with "Master Doctor's book" (*Epistle*, 7), few critics have bothered to pay much attention to Bridges.⁸ Bridges is generally acknowledged as the "occasion" of this controversy, as the stuffy old bore whose insufferably pedantic ecclesiology provided the clever Martin with an easy target for satire. His *Defence* has been noted almost exclusively for its length—and as the subject of Martin's most frequently quoted joke: "The complete work (very briefly comprehended in a portable book, if your horse be not too weak, of an hundred threescore and twelve sheets, of good demy paper) is a confutation of *The Learned Discourse of Ecclesiastical Government*" (*Epitome*, 56).

"The Rhetoric of Reaction: The Martin Marprelate Tracts (1588-89), Anti-Martinism, and the Uses of Print in Early Modern England," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 28:3 (Autumn 1997), 709; Jesse Lander, *Inventing Polemic: Religion, Print, and Literary Culture in Early Modern England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 80-109; Black (ed.), *Marprelate Tracts*, xviii, xxv-xxxiv, (etc.); and Jesse Lander, "Case Study: 1588-1589," in *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture, Volume 1: Cheap Print in Britain and Ireland to 1660*, ed. Joad Raymond (Oxford, 2011), 557-77.

⁸ Martin's claims of *decorum personae* have generally been taken ironically. See, e.g., John S. Coolidge, "Martin Marprelate, Marvell, and Decorum Personae as a Satirical Theme," *PMLA* 74: 5 (Dec. 1959), 526-32.

Admittedly, at 1,401 pages—not including the preface—Bridges’s *Defence* is probably too long. Even Thomas Cooper acknowledged as much, though he claimed the good Dean of Sarum was “drawen” to such “long discourses” by the presbyterians’ “strange and intricate assertions.”⁹ Less generous critics said less generous things. Walter Travers, a prominent presbyterian, complained that “it were a tedious idlenes to followe [Bridges] from poynt to poynt.”¹⁰ More recently, Peter Lake has referred to the *Defense* as “perhaps the longest and probably the most boring conformist defence of the English Church against presbyterianism.”¹¹ And in certain respects—such as Bridges’s tendency to reproduce verbatim passages from the church fathers that extended to thirty pages or longer—Lake might be right.

But as Martin’s remarks suggest, the presbyterians’ principal objection to Bridges’ *Defence* was not that it was too long-winded or boring. They were more upset because Bridges was too funny. Walter Travers suggested Bridges’s “iestes and scoffes,” his “play-stile,” his tales “out of Aesop, Of a Dogge and a Foxe,” and his “gybing and iesting” were “matters fitter for some other stage then he is nowe vpon,” and he reminded Bridges that “the Apostle sayeth, *These are thinges not seemelie*, and reckoneth this pleasaunt humour amongst a number of other things, whereof all professours of the Gospell, and much more the Preachers of it, shoulde bee ashamed.” (38). And as I will demonstrate below, Martin’s own jesting was intended to draw attention to Bridges’ indecorous argumentative practice.

In the first section of this chapter, I will examine Bridges’ rhetorical strategy in the long *Defence of the Government Established in the Church of Englande for Ecclesiasticall Matters*. I

⁹ Thomas Cooper, *An Admonition to the People of England: Wherein Are Answered, Not Only the Slanderous Vntruethes, Reprochfully vittered by Martin the Libeller, But Also Many Other Crimes by Some of His Broode, Obiected Generally Against All Bishops, and the Chiefe of the Cleargie, Purposely to Deface and Discredit the Present State of the Church* (London, 1589), 85.

¹⁰ Walter Travers, *A Defence of the Ecclesiastical Discipline Ordayned of God to be Vsed in His Church* (Middleburg, 1588), 143.

¹¹ Peter Lake, “Calvinism and the English Church 1570-1635,” in *Reformation to Revolution: Politics and Religion in Early Modern England*, ed. Margo Todd (New York: Routledge, 1995), 183.

will show that Bridges was a masterful prose stylist in his own right, a deft and witty writer whose argumentative practice posed a significant threat to presbyterian claims to godly learning and to interpretative authority. Rather than offering a serious and scholastic justification of the episcopacy using syllogisms drawn from scripture, Bridges poked holes in the argument for episcopal reform by poking fun at his presbyterian opponents. With a certain wry condescension, Bridges playfully turned his “brethren’s” words back against them and subtly mocked their pretensions to learning and godliness.

In the second section, I will argue that this thorough analysis of Bridges’ *Defence* is necessary for our understanding of the Marprelate controversy, as Martin responded much more directly to Bridges than has yet been recognized. Many of Martin’s colloquialisms, asides, and marginal notes were modeled on Bridges’s own, and in certain respects Martin’s ridicule was simultaneously an exaggeration and a refutation of Bridges’s more subtle mockery. Martin’s satire itself, I will demonstrate, must be read as an attempt to undermine the threat posed by Bridges’s argumentative practice, and even—paradoxically—as an attempt to return the debate to proper theological disputation.

And in the third section, I will examine the ways that Martin’s satire can be seen as a product and extension of the presbyterians’ interest in discipline and obedience. But in fact Martin’s satire itself posed a problem of discipline for the establishment, who saw Martin’s attack on the bishops as a new and dangerous type of lawless discourse. As the Marprelate tracts pushed an ecclesiastical controversy into the public eye, in other words, they also brought to public attention the fraught ethics of satirical engagement.

1. John Bridges and the Rhetoric of Ridicule

Even before he became Archbishop, John Whitgift had very little interest in debating the presbyterians. His responses to John Field's and Thomas Wilcox's *Admonition to the Parliament* (1572) and to Thomas Cartwright's *Replie to an Answere* (1573) are both saturated with the irritated impatience of a parent explaining to a group of precocious children why they cannot simply overhaul the structure of the English Church. He speaks from an assured position of power, dismisses nearly all of the presbyterian arguments out of hand, and lumps nonconformists together with Anabaptists, Brownists, and the Family of Love on one side and with Catholics on the other. He paints the presbyterians as troublemakers, "suche as contemne the good orders and lawes of that place where they dwell, suche as make schismes, factions, and contentions in the Church, suche as can not or will not be subiecte and obedient to their superiours."¹² The problem, as he sees it, is that such men had been given too much freedom "to obey and disobey what they liste, to speake what they liste, agaynst whome they liste, and where they liste, to broche what opinions and doctrine they liste" (7). Such troublemakers need to be "by discipline either reformed, or remoued" before they cause any more trouble (129). "Such insolent audacitie against states and lawfull regiment," he insists, is "rather to be corrected with due punishment, than confuted by argument" (68).¹³

When Whitgift replaced Edmund Grindal as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1583, he was as good as his word. Grindal had been sympathetic to moderate puritan reform and had not strictly enforced conformity to the standards of 1559 (for which attitude he tumbled, in rather disastrous fashion, out of the Queen's favor).¹⁴ Whitgift showed no such sympathy. He

¹² John Whitgift, *An Answere to a Certen Libell Intituled, An Admonition to the Parliament* (London, 1573), 129.

¹³ Whitgift apparently meant this in earnest, because he makes the point several times: "Your slandrous spech . . . is rather seuerely to be punished, than with words to be confuted" (206).

¹⁴ Collinson, *Elizabeth Puritan Movement*, 160.

demanded subscription to three articles as a precondition for the exercise of any ecclesiastical function, one of which—absolute approval of the *Book of Common Prayer*—was a sticking point even for moderate puritans. He authorized the new High Commission to administer the self-incriminating oath known as *ex officio mero* to those who refused to subscribe, and he imprisoned nonconformists, often without formal charges and for indefinite periods.¹⁵ These authoritarian measures raised eyebrows even among conformists, and almost certainly radicalized ministers whose desire for moderate reform was no longer publicly tenable. Presbyterian tracts that coupled arguments for the scriptural necessity of the discipline with more widely accepted complaints about the episcopacy—pluralities, accumulation of wealth, shortage of fit ministers, general abuses of power, and so on—found a larger and more sympathetic audience. Against Whitgift’s attempt to impose conformity and despite the Queen’s staunch opposition to such meddling in matters of religion, radical puritans mounted insistent, if unsuccessful, campaigns for church reform in the Parliaments of 1584 and 1586/7.¹⁶

Presbyterians had worked hard to be taken seriously in their effort to reform the government of the English Church. They presented themselves not as sectarians but as godly scholars who, “through meticulous learned and prayerful scriptural study, had discovered new truths about the way Christ’s church should be governed.”¹⁷ Whereas conformists insisted that the time of miracles, prophecy, and revelation had ended with the death of the apostles, presbyterians insisted that the revelation of God’s will was progressive,¹⁸ and they stated in more

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 266.

¹⁶ Collinson suggests that the religious reform bill introduced by Anthony Cope and Job Throkmorton (probably one of the authors of the Marprelate tracts) in 1586/7 was “perhaps the most immoderate measure ever to come before the House of Commons.” It proposed to replace the *Book of Common Prayer* with the Geneva Book and “to make ‘utterly void and of none effect’ all such existing laws, customs, statutes, ordinances and constitutions as established and defined the worship, ceremonies and government of the Church.” *Ibid.*, 307-8.

¹⁷ Peter Lake with Michael Questier, *The Antichrist’s Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 507.

¹⁸ Peter Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans?*, 25.

or less explicit terms that they had been chosen as His messengers. The authors of the *Admonition to the Parliament*, for example, declared they were presenting the “true platform of a church reformed” such that their countrymen might either endeavor to plant it in England or else “be without excuse before the maiestie of our God, who for the discharge of our conscience, and manifestation of his truth, *hath by vs reuealed vnto you* at this present, the sinceritie and simplicitie of his Gospel.”¹⁹ To conformists who insisted that long study and intimate knowledge of the church fathers were necessary to understand the difficult passages of scripture, presbyterians pointed out that God rarely chose the most well-educated or respected theologians—or, indeed, members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy—to serve as his messengers. In the anonymous *Dialogue Concerning the Strife of Our Churche* (1584), the puritan minister Orthodoxos argues that worldly learning cannot compare to the revelation of God’s will:

the Case is not altogether lyke in Heauenlye matters, which men can not reache vnto by study & wit, as they do vnto earthly, but wher God doth inwardly lighten & teach by his spirit. Now God hath not tyed him selfe vnto multitude, nor vnto yeares, but where it pleaseth him to reueale: and therefore one poore man bringing reason and authoritie out of the holy Scriptures, is more to be esteemed, then tenne thousande great Bishoppes, standing vpon their consent without warrault of the worde.²⁰

What the worldly bishops found to be dark and difficult in scripture was clear, plain, and accessible to the inwardly illuminated presbyterians: they were taught by the spirit of God to bring reason and authority out of the holy Scriptures.

¹⁹ John Field and Thomas Wilcox, *An Admonition to the Parliament* (Hemel Hempstead?, 1572), sig. A2^r (emphasis mine). Thomas Cartwright similarly referred to the *Admonition* as “the louing admonition of the Lorde” (Thomas Cartwright, *A Replye to an Answere made of M. Doctor Whitegifte, Againste the Admonition to the Parliament* [Hemel Hempstead?, 1573], 5).

²⁰ *A Dialogue, Concerning the Strife of Our Churche* (London, 1584), 22-3.

Presbyterians simultaneously maintained that this type of illumination was available to anyone who was willing to be taught by the spirit, regardless of their level of formal education, and that it was intellectually superior to the conformists' position. "[W]e haue truely supposed," Dudley Fenner argues, "that the cause hath this probabilitie in the sight of all sounde Christians, when we see first so manie learned and godlie in both the Vniuersities, of our iudgement in this behalf."²¹ The clearest proof of the intellectual superiority of the presbyterian position could be seen in Thomas Cartwright's alleged victory over Whitgift in the *Admonition* controversy.²² Presbyterians interpreted Whitgift's lack of response as his inability to answer Cartwright's arguments, as Martin does repeatedly in the Marprelate tracts: "If you can answer those books, why do you suffer the puritans to insult and reioice at your silence? If you cannot, why are you an archbishop? He hath proved the calling to be unlawful and antichristian" (*Epistle*, 8).

Into this silence, and through puritan biblical conferences known as exercises and prophesying,²³ presbyterians projected the superiority of their position. "Learning" came to mean "godly learning," as "learned" began to refer more or less exclusively to those who sought further reformation in the church. In John Udall's *State of the Church of Englande, laide open in a conference* (1587), for example, the episcopal bishop in the dialogue admits to stocking the ministry with ambitious worldlings and popish priests, "least there should be too manie learned,

²¹ Dudley Fenner, *A Defence of the godlie Ministers, against the slaunders of D. Bridges, contayned in his ansvvere to the Preface before the Discourse of Ecclesiasticall gouernement, with a Declaration of the Bishops proceeding against them* (Middelburg, 1587), sig. H3^v.

²² Actually, both sides declared victory. Thomas Cooper, the first to respond to the "libeller" Martin Marprelate, referred almost casually to the "great difference in learning" that could be seen between "the answere of the one [Whitgift], and the replie of the other [Cartwright]." Whitgift, Cooper said, felt that there was "sufficient written already to satisfie an indifferent reader," and had not bothered to respond to Cartwright's lengthy and rather repetitive *Second Replie* (Cooper, 39).

²³ See Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, 169.

not one whereof will stand to vs.”²⁴ Here “learned” clearly demarcates the godly presbyterians from the profane conformists, those who know the truth of the discipline from those who are kept (deliberately) in the dark. Presbyterians assumed too that as godly learned messengers they were both the latest in and the culmination of a long line of godly reformers stretching back to the primitive church. This included the church fathers—Udall brags in the *Demonstration of Discipline* (1588) that the testimony he had collected out of both old and new writers “may plainly declare, that al godly learned men of al times, haue giuen testimony vnto the trueth” of the discipline²⁵—as well as prominent figures in the English reformation, such as John Jewell. Presbyterians frequently called for an open conference on the lawfulness of the episcopacy, confident that such an event would prove them to be better learned and that the truth of the discipline would shine through.

The “central issue” here, as Joseph Black suggests, “was the question of interpretative authority.”²⁶ As both sides were largely in agreement that only a commandment in the Word of God would constitute evidence for a necessary and perpetual government in the church, the controversy hinged, in large part, on the authority to determine whether such a commandment existed. By presenting themselves as both godly and learned, presbyterians asserted their control over the meaning of scripture. John Field, Thomas Wilcox, Walter Travers, John Udall, and Thomas Cartwright always seemed to *know* what Christ meant, to understand “the purpose of the Apostle in this place,” and to determine what Paul “intended.”²⁷ They wrote with the certainty and conviction of the inspired and scholarly messengers of God. And they claimed, in no

²⁴ John Udall, *The State of the Church of Englande, laide open in a conference betweene Diotrophes a Bishop, Tertullus a Papist, Demetrius an usurer, Pandocheus an In-keeper, and Paule a Preacher of the Word of God* (London, 1588), sig. C4^r. I will subsequently refer to this tract by its colloquial title, *Diotrophes*.

²⁵ John Udall, *A Demonstration of the Trueth of that Discipline which Christe hath Prescribed for the Governement of His Church* (1588), in *An Introductory Sketch to the Marprelate Controversy*, ed. Edward Arber (London, 1880; reprint New York: AMS Press, 1967), 12.

²⁶ Black (ed.), *Marprelate Tracts*, xxiv.

²⁷ Travers, *Defence*, 43.

uncertain terms, that “all externall discipline, is not left to the order of the church, being particularly prescribed in the scriptures.”²⁸ Far from being an indifferent matter, they argued, the government of the church was an aspect of obedience to the laws of Christ, “directlie partayning to saluation, and in that respect necessarie” as a “meanes ordayned of God for the better furtherance of our saluation.”²⁹ Moses had been careful to provide strict instructions for the temple in the Old Testament, and it would be absurd to suggest (as Martin Marprelate does ironically in his *Certain Mineral and Metaphysical Schoolpoints* [1589]) that “Christ Jesus the son of God was not so faithful in the government of his own house as Moses was” (94). For presbyterians, the specific plan for the government of the Christian Church could be found in the scriptures precisely because it *must* be found in the scriptures. “[L]et it be a shame,” Cartwright declared, “to say that the cheefe pillar and vpholder of the church, is not expressed in the scripture, nor can not bee concluded out of it.”³⁰

The only problem, of course, was that there was no clear plan for church government in the New Testament, or at least nothing as explicit or extensive as the set of laws left by Moses in Leviticus. So presbyterians “concluded out of” a few details of the Pauline epistles (particularly Romans 12, Ephesians 4, and 1 Timothy 6) and scriptural accounts of the Apostolic church (which they took to be binding laws) that there could only be one lawful form of church government, regardless of time or place: a four-office platform of church government, or “discipline,” in which ministers would be elected by their congregations and no minister would have authority over any other. Presbyterians proved their case by constructing elaborate

²⁸ Cartwright, *A Replye*, 32-3. Similar claims can be found in nearly every tract that promotes the presbyterian discipline, such as in Udall’s *Demonstration*: “The worde of God describeth perfectly vnto vs, that forme of gouerning the Church which is lawfull, and the officers that are to execute the same; from the which no Christian Church ought to swarue” (13).

²⁹ Travers, *Defence*, 34, 7.

³⁰ Cartwright, *A Replye*, 85.

sylogisms based on scripture, and they demanded that conformists respond in kind: “let [them] sillogistically proue and deducte out of the worde of God, the Ecclesiasticall gouernement & Discipline exercised by the Archb. Bi. their Commissaries and Officialls, and therewithall that it is ordinarie, perpetuall, and the best,” Dudley Fenner urged, “and vvee vwill yeelde [them] the cause.”³¹

This presbyterian demand for conformists to prove the perpetual authority of the episcopacy by scriptural warrant is exactly what John Bridges claims can not be done. Joseph Black notes that “Bridges is sometimes credited with initiating the Elizabethan claim to episcopacy *jure divino*,”³² but in the *Defence of the Government Established in the Church of Englande for Ecclesiasticall Matters* Bridges explicitly insists that the government of the Christian church is an external or indifferent matter, neither prescribed in scripture nor necessary for salvation:

wee confesse against the aduersaries of the *scripture*, and with our Brethren, that the diuine and Canonically scripture is the onely *rule*, that containeth all things perfectly, concerning fayth and the saluation . . . but that the holy scripture is the onely *rule, whereby the Church of God ought to bee gouerned*: vnderstanding by these wordes, that the *scripture* hath set downe a perpetuall and generall *rule*, of all the *onely* order of the *Churches* forme of externall *gouernment*, as well as it hath of *faith*, and of the morall part of mans actions and conuersation: if we *search the scripture* neuer so much, neither we nor our brethren shal euer *find* it. For, the *church of God* may safely admit, according to the diuersities of the states

³¹ Fenner, sig. V3^v.

³² Black (ed.), *Marprelate Tracts*, xcvi n28.

thereof, diuers formes and orders whereby it may be *gouerned*. (831)³³

Bridges consistently maintains that the Christian Church is neither bound to follow the pattern of the primitive church nor required to treat examples in scripture as binding laws. Instead, Bridges argues, the episcopacy derives its authority from the Christian Magistrate, who is free to order the church as she sees fit, provided she does nothing “debarred *by the expresse worde of God*” (339). In the course of arguing against presbyterians’ insistence that all ministers are equal in the primitive church, Bridges—who holds that the Christian Church is neither bound to follow the pattern of the primitive church nor required to treat examples in scripture as rules—does point to numerous examples of hierarchy in scripture, and may have inadvertently laid the groundwork for later conformists who claimed divine authority for the episcopacy.³⁴ But for Bridges, the goal at all times is to demonstrate to the “indifferent” reader that the presbyterian discipline is neither scripturally necessary nor good for the English Church.

Rather than providing a scriptural justification of the episcopacy, Bridges’ *Defence* carefully and methodically pulls apart the arguments for the presbyterian discipline set forth in

³³ Peter Lake claims that Bridges was the first conformist to argue in print that “there was one form of church government contained in and commended by scripture,” and that “a range of contemporary opinion, stretching from Martin Marprelate through Walter Travers and Sir Francis Knollys to Richard Hooker, acknowledged that he was breaking new ground” (Lake, “Presbyterianism, The Idea of a National Church, and the Argument from Divine Right,” in *Protestantism and the National Church in Sixteenth-Century England*, ed. Peter Lake and Maria Dowling [London, 1987], 208). But the evidence Lake cites supports neither point. Lake suggests, for example, that Bridges maintains the scriptural basis of the episcopacy on pp. 366-71, but in this place Bridges disputes Beza’s reading of Epiphanius and leans on Calvin to prove that scripture does not call for ordination by a community of elders; if the scripture shows that Paul ordained Timothy and Titus as bishops, that only proves that the episcopacy does not *violate* scripture, not that Paul’s example is a rule that must be followed. Likewise, Jesse Lander suggests that Bridges “made a confused and tentative claim for *jure divino* episcopacy” (Lander, *Inventing Polemic*, 103), but on the page in question Bridges in fact allows that bishops are the “ordinance of man,” not of God, and that Peter’s injunction to submit to any “good law . . . made by lawful authoritie of *man*, not contrary to Gods worde” (280) binds presbyterians to obey the lawful authority of the Christian Magistrate. Nonconformists did accuse Bridges of flirting with a scriptural justification of the episcopacy, but they did so in order to align him with their Catholic enemies, and they (at least implicitly) recognized Bridges had not actually gone quite that far (e.g., Travers, *Defence*, 84).

³⁴ See Cyndia Clegg, *Press Censorship in Elizabethan England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 186. As early as February 1589, Richard Bancroft incorporated aspects of the *jure divino* argument in his sermon against false prophets (i.e., Martin Marprelate), and thus Black is still right to observe that Martin had “an ironic role in the expanded claims of episcopal authority that marked the late Elizabethan and Jacobean church” (*Marprelate Tracts*, lxi).

William Fulke's *Briefe and Plaine Declaration, Concerning the Desires of all those Faithfull Ministers, that haue and do Seeke for the Discipline and Reformation of the Church of England* (1584) and Theodore Beza's *Judgement of a Most Reuerend and Learned Man from Beyond the Seas, Concerning a Threefold Order of Bishops* (c. 1585). Whereas Whitgift had waved away the central claims of the *Admonition to the Parliament* with irritated impatience, Bridges gives due attention to every argument the presbyterians present—as well as to a good number they do not. He engages in a type of close reading that is nearly deconstructive: he considers the range of meanings of every word, points out semantic slippages and instabilities, and pushes his opponents' arguments to their logical extremes. This deconstruction is not only linguistic but logical and practical, as he shows time and time again that the presbyterians' corrections to the administration of the church would result in the same problems they objected to in the episcopacy.

In retrospect, rather ironically, Bridges sees his task as one of reconciliation.³⁵ Unlike Whitgift, who painted nonconformists as troublemakers and schismatics, Bridges always recognizes his opponents as his “brethren in Christ,” as members of the same Church and as faithful subjects (more or less) of the same queen. If they would just yield, Bridges urges, “then indeed, we that are *brethren at variance*, should be so *reconciled*, that after a most sure and *holye vnion of both our forces*, we should *couragiously set vpon the common aduersary*, which now (we being at this *variance*) *vniteth all his forces to set vpon us*” (9). His goal, in this sense, is to prove to presbyterians that the reform they demand is neither scripturally necessary nor beneficial to the commonwealth, and that they should therefore give over their contentions. His intended audience, then, includes the presbyterians, and he frequently addresses them directly:

³⁵ Bridges quotes from the Sermon on the Mount at the end of his Preface in order to make this intended role clear: “Blessed are the peace makers, for they shall be called the children of God” (John Bridges, *A Defence of the Government Established in the Church of Englande for Ecclesiasticall Matters* [London, 1587], sigs. ¶5^{r-v}).

“crye *God and her Maiestie* in your hearts hartilie mercie, and with humble reuerence and good opinion, submit your selues to *her Maiesties disposition of these matters*” (111).

Yet Bridges knows the presbyterians are men whose minds are already made up, and that no amount of reasoned argumentation or impassioned exhortation by members of the episcopacy will convince them to yield. “Is it likely these *learned men* would acknowledge their *ignorance*, and would desire to be *satisfied*, or be *satisfied* indeed *with reason*, as they ought to be, if they might *haue reasons by the Bishops themselues giuen unto them*?” (1316). Although presbyterians repeatedly demanded a free and open debate about church government, Bridges points out, this debate had in fact already taken place—and had been decided in favor of the episcopacy—at the beginning of Elizabeth’s reign.

And yet all this will not now satisfie our brethren, but they will haue the matter fetched again about, as though it were fresh to beginne, or had neuer yet by so good a *manner and meanes* as these, bene hetherto *disputed, examined, or deliberated* upon. But would once more, serue their turne? No, nor I think one hundred or thousand times moe, except it were concluded in al points, euen as they themselues would haue it. (46)

Because presbyterians believed they had the spirit of God on their side, Bridges acknowledges, “either we must *yeeld* to them, or else nothing shall be determind between us” (18).³⁶

Bridges therefore recognized the absolute antagonism that existed in the struggle for power in the English Church. So too did he recognize that the presbyterians posed a legitimate

³⁶ Bridges was probably not wrong in this assumption. Numerous presbyterian tracts spoke to their absolute refusal to give over. The discipline was to be “laboured for . . . by writing, and preaching, and by petitions offred to the conuocation house, of some of the commons in Parliament,” Walter Travers argued, and was “not to be giuen ouer, till God may heare vs, and the righteousnes of Syon may come forth as the light of the day, and hir saluation shine like a burning lampe: and till the lawfull authoritie set ouer vs, may attende our pleas in Gods behalue, and giue sentence with vs” (Travers, *Defence*, 9).

threat to the authority of the establishment: the fact that he responded to Fulke's *Brief and Plaine Decalaration* at all,³⁷ let alone at such length, indicates the extent to which Bridges and the conformists were concerned about the nonconformists' growing push to meddle in religious matters, both in Parliament and in the pulpit. Bridges indicates at several points that he would have preferred to stay away from a rhetorical landscape already too crowded with "reciprocal inuictiues" that "hath bred and breedeth much unnecessarie trouble" (sig. ¶4^v), and he acknowledges that responding to controversial writers could "provoke further controversies, of which wee are pestered with too many, and those not a little rayed, or enkindled, by often and intemperate disputing, aunswering, and replying to one another." But he fears silence would be worse: when a "wrong and daungerous error" wins favor on all sides, he argues, "what were silence then, but grosse negligence, the very yeelding to the error and danger, yea, the wilfull betraying of the truth, and consenting to the ouerture of our state?" (sig. ¶3^v).

One of the goals of the *Defence* is therefore to ensure that the "wrong and daungerous error" does not win favor on all sides. Bridges does not write for a popular audience—not only are his proofs entrenched in a long line of scholarly Protestant disputation, but the physical book itself is neither portable nor readily affordable³⁸—but it would be wrong to suggest that the book is not meant to be read, or that Bridges writes primarily to an entirely polarized audience. His most frequent addressee is the "indifferent reader," the well-educated (probably ministerial) reader of Elizabethan ecclesiastical controversy who weighs each argument with impartial judgment before making up his mind. Even if no truly "indifferent readers" actually existed, the

³⁷ Whitgift had not bothered to respond to Cartwright's *Second Replie of Thomas Cartwright: against Maister Doctor Whitgiftes Second Answer, touching the Churche Discipline* (1575). Although presbyterians frequently interpreted this silence as Whitgift's inability to answer—and therefore as a victory for Cartwright—Thomas Cooper later claimed that Whitgift "neuer thought" Cartwright's *Second Replie* "so necessarie to bee answered, as the factious authors of the Libel pretend" (39).

³⁸ Martin jokes that Thomas Chard had run into debt by printing Bridges's *Defence*, "for men will give no money for [Bridges's] book, unless it be to stop mustard pots" (*Epistle*, 14).

fact that both sides addressed an undecided audience speaks to the probability that there were readers who fell squarely on neither side.³⁹ So too does this speak to the rhetorical strategy of polemic: as Jesse Lander argues, the polemicist's aim is not necessarily "to convert the object of attack but to convince a wider audience that the case is so."⁴⁰

In the *Defence*, Bridges sets out to prove to this "indifferent reader" that the presbyterian platform for church government presents a legitimate threat both to the church and to the state. Because they demand the "erection of a new Tetrarchie" by which "all matters should be directed, and all crimes eccl. or ciuill censured," Bridges worries, "they mount up to the highest toppe, euen of the Princes supreme gouernment" (sig. ¶3^v). The presbyterians have "altogether fallen from describing vnto vs the *Princes authoritie* . . . to the description all of *the Princes subiection*" (1375), and the discipline they desire would not be possible "without the *alteration of the whole State, and of the Princes supream Government, and of all the Magistrates authorities whatsoever throughout ye whole Realme*" (1059). What nonconformists ultimately want to do, Bridges argues, is "exclude the *Princes established authoritie*, and sette vp such a straunge newe *gouernement among them-selues, and that in euerie particular Congregation, that is, in euerie parish Church, both with vs in Englande, and throughout all Christendome*" (862).⁴¹ How "fitlie this would draw and proceed to *godly reformation,*" he quips, "we haue partly seene,

³⁹ The exact religious condition of post-Reformation England has been the subject of much debate. Revisionist historians have questioned earlier assertions that the majority of the English population under Elizabethan was puritan-leaning, pointing, instead, to the vestiges of Catholicism that continued to exist both in official church practices and in many (particularly northern) communities. Peter Lake suggests this problematic may have "come, if not to an end, then at least to an important caesura. Having started off with a set of questions about the pace and nature of religious change, the relations between the religion of 'the people' and of 'the godly' . . . we have arrived at a number of overlapping processes of ideological struggle and negotiation, of contacts and exchanges between different ideological, cultural, and social levels" (Lake, "Religion and Cheap Print," in *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture*, vol. 1, ed. Joad Raymond [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011], 234).

⁴⁰ Lander, *Inventing Polemic*, 12.

⁴¹ However exaggerated for rhetorical effect, Bridges's fears were probably well-founded. Despite their insistence on the separation of church and state, presbyterians were in fact very much interested in keeping the two closely linked: their complaint was ultimately that the government had control of the church instead of the other way around. See Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans?*, 58-59.

let others thinke further of it, I feare the worst” (1391).

Even as he works to legitimize the threat the presbyterians pose to church and state, however, Bridges turns to ridicule in order to delegitimize this threat. Throughout the *Defence*, Bridges subtly pokes fun at his “brethren” by playing with their language, puzzling over the impracticality of the discipline, calling into question the extent of their learning, and mocking their ability to read scripture. He answers the presbyterians’ righteous indignation with deliberate condescension, using their own language in order to render their claim to interpretative authority ridiculous.⁴² Nothing ever quite comes to a punch line, and there is certainly nothing resembling Martin’s self-congratulatory bravura. Still, throughout the *Defence* Bridges continually implies that he is taking the presbyterians seriously only in order to show how ridiculous it is for him to do so.

Many of Bridges’s subtle digs might be easy to miss, particularly as they are so often buried in dependent clauses and tangential asides. His ridicule grows quietly over incredibly long sentences and is interrupted by occasional outbursts of polemical frustration and extended quotations from various ecclesiastical authorities. His playfulness appears in the way he feigns surprise when he discovers faulty logic and poor reasoning at the heart of the presbyterians’ arguments, in the way he feigns eagerness to learn what he already knows they cannot teach him, and in the way he feigns concern for their intellectual well-being: “But I pray you brethren, do yee meane indeede good earneste as yee say, when ye tell us, that *the order of Ecclesiasticall Gouernment in the Primitiue Church is restored?*” (83). His mockery erupts suddenly in

⁴² Bridges uses different fonts to distinguish his language from his opponents’. The black letter type he uses for his own argument, used in royal proclamations and other official documents, is clearly intended to convey the authority of the establishment. This was certainly not a new technique; Whitgift, for example, had irritated Cartwright in the *Admonition* controversy by using two different fonts. (See Lander, *Inventing Polemic*, 29.) But few other polemicists incorporate so much of their opponent’s language into their own argument: Bridges switches back and forth between fonts at a dizzying rate, drawing attention to each individual word and phrase he borrows, questions, or plays with. The Roman font that distinguishes material quoted from Fulke and Beza is here represented in italics.

colloquial expressions and rhetorical questions (“in what a pickle be we now?” [1264]), gains momentum in playful repetitions of key words and phrases (“if they *thinke* that other *thinke* as they *thinke* herein; they *thinke* greatly amisse, and deceaue themselues” [667]), and takes over in mock dialogues:

What doo they (brethren)? saye me that againe: doo they deale thus with euerie *matter whatsoever?* And at their owne *pleasure, whatsoever it shall please them?* And haue they no better prooffe, then their bare *calling or counting it to be indifferent?* is that all the *reason* they alledge? . . . But (I beseech you brethren) who are they that vse such dealing? *The ciuill magistrate, or themselues.* What? *The ciuill magistrate?* God forbid. Take heed what ye say, yea, vnsaye that againe. No, no, we say (you will say) *the ciuill magistrate.* And will ye so indeed?
(107)⁴³

Bridges shifts back and forth quickly between direct address and indirect address, between presbyterian audience and indifferent audience, and between the language of the *Brief and Plaine Decalaration* and his own voice. He leans on specific terms until they bend or break under the strain, and he asks questions about particular lines of argument until they become patently absurd. His unexpected cleverness, wry sense of irony, and quiet deprecation is a far cry from either the impatient polemic of his predecessor or the scholastic argumentation demanded by his antagonists.

Conformists frequently challenged the presbyterian discipline on practical grounds, but Bridges makes this impracticality reflect back upon the presbyterians’ general reasoning skills. He chides them for making unnecessary distinctions, as between “teacher” and “exhorter”—“not

⁴³ Martin not only imitates this passage in the *Epistle* but cites the appropriate page number in the margin (*Epistle*, 9). See below.

one [teacher] that I can yet reade or heare of, but that nowe and then hee *exhorteth*, rebuketh, or *applyeth in his teaching*” (232)—and he points out with a subtle but ever-present sense of irony the various ways in which the administration of the discipline would necessarily subvert presbyterian ideals, such as in the inevitable inequality between ministers in local and national synods. He notes that the presbyterians object to prescribed forms of prayer but prescribe their own forms of prayer (495); when they complain that the prescribed form of prayers are too long, he reminds them that they would prescribe considerably longer forms of confessions and prayers (636). He attacks those who insist that the episcopacy should be pulled down immediately but have no idea “howe their *Ecclesiasticall regiment* should be set vp” or “howe wee shall deale *in the meane time, till GOD shall blesse vs with a sufficient number of learned pastors*” (530). For presbyterians, the difficulty of implementing the discipline was beside the point; God had commanded a certain form of church government, and no argument about its inconvenience could change that. For Bridges, the impossibility of implementing such a system in England proves not only its incompatibility with the English Church but also the impracticality—and the dangerous naiveté—of the “learned” men who clamor for it.

Whereas in presbyterian tracts the term “learned” had come to mean “godly learned,” in the *Defence* Bridges uses “learned” ironically in order to highlight the distinction between his brethren’s conception of themselves and the actual extent of their ecclesiastical knowledge. He insists on referring to William Fulke’s *Briefe and Plaine Declaration* by its running header, *The Learned Discourse of Ecclesiasticall Gouernment*, and he never lets his readers forget the tract he writes against is so titled:

[T]hey lightly giue not this to any of vs, to be counted eyther *learned*, or *studious*, or *sounde in iudgement*, or of *greate zeale*, or of *best example*. But they

oftentimes commende themselues for all these thinges, to bee *godlie, wise, graue, and zealous men*; . . . and still, looke vp to the top of euery leafe, and there hangeth vp this Iuie Garland to tolle on the reader, *A Learned discourse of Ecclesiasticall gouernment*. As for our *Bishops*, tush, for them, *it is well knowne, they are not all of the best learned, nor all of the longest studie, nor all of the greatest zeale, nor all of the best example*. (1318-19)

Bridges repeats the phrase “learned discourse” as often as he can throughout the *Defence*, slyly referring to his “*learned brethren*,” his “*learned discoursing brethren*,” the authors of such a “*learned discourse*,” and so on. Each repetition is a reminder that his opponents are guilty of “vaunting their selues of that they had *written*, to be such a profound peece of worke, such a *learned discourse*,” which “might be, or seeme but an ouerliking of their owne babie, and proceede of too good an opinion of their owne *learning*” (1380). By continuing to refer to the *Briefe and Plaine Declaration* as the *Learned Discourse* even as he demonstrates that it is filled with contradictions, confusion, evasions, and ambiguities, he makes the *Learned Discourse* seem downright foolish.

By continuing to refer to his opponents as his “learned discoursing brethren” even as he highlights their errors in logic, reason, and interpretation, furthermore, Brides undermines the presbyterians’ claim to interpretative authority. Whereas Whitgift had angrily accused the presbyterians of deliberately misrepresenting the Word of God in order to “bleare the eyes of the ignorant people” (17), Bridges condescendingly responds to his “brethren” as though they are well-intentioned but immature young men, too quick to jump to extreme conclusions and too willing to overlook contradictory evidence:

I knowe that these our reuerend Brethren (beeing both godly and learned men)

doe not cite these authors of any set purpose to deceiue vs, in Fathering that on them [i.e., the church fathers] which they neuer spake, nor thought, nor knew: but as the prouerbe sayth *mistaking makes misse-reckoning*: so they hauing conceiued this with them-selues, that such a *kinde of Gouerning and not teaching Ecclesiasticall Elders* there was in the *Apostles* times, and in the *Primitiue Church*: so often as they reade in the Fathers the name of *Presbyters or Elders*, . . . straight-way they conceiued that which they fancied, that these *Elders* were those *Ecclesiastical Elders gouerning only and not meddling with teaching*. Which too quick conceiuing, vpon their forestalled opinion, (especially in the heate of zeale to haue things amended,) may fall out nowe and then, for lacke of more mature deliberation and examining, euen to the best *learned* and most holy men. (931-32)

The presbyterians are not bad men, Bridges implies. They are just bad scholars—naive, overly literal, and irresponsibly selective in their reading practices. “If we should fall to *weighing the Apostles wordes, and reasons*,” he condescendingly remarks, “we should finde, that our Brethren which will them to *bee weighed*, did not their selues *weigh* the peyse of them so deliberatelie, either as they *might*, or as they *ought* to haue done” (1063).

Where the presbyterians see simplicity and clarity, Bridges introduces complexity, ambiguity, and contingency. What his “*learned brethren*” take to be “*the euident demonstration of Gods spirit*” is neither “the expresse testimonies of the *scripture*” nor the “necessarie consequent of the *scripture*,” but rather “their owne interpretations, and rhetoricall exornations of *the scripture*” (17). He points out again and again that the scripture the presbyterians cite as evidence does not necessarily mean what they say it means: he quotes lengthy segments from the

church fathers to show that other learned scholars had understood scriptural passages differently, he challenges the presbyterian practice of interpreting particular examples in scripture as absolute or perpetual rules, and he provides the full context of verses that they had excerpted. At every turn his conclusions reflect wryly on his brethren's claim to interpretative authority. "[T]hey haue oftentimes told vs, it is *grounded on Gods word*, but when we come to seeke for the *words*, wee can neuer find them, nor any necessary consequence that they haue led vs vnto, in all the *word of God*, either for any example or commaundement, that wee are charged or bounde to followe" (1289).

By the end of the *Defence*, Bridges has made it more or less impossible to take seriously the idea that the presbyterians are "learned," that they provide authoritative readings of scripture, or that the discipline is a scriptural necessity. In a remarkable passage—which I quote at length in order to provide a full sense of his patiently deconstructive and wryly condescending prose—Bridges uses the presbyterians' own language to demonstrate the extent to which an "indifferent" reader should find the presbyterian argument for the necessity of the discipline persuasive:

whereas (the more to perswade the reader to beleeeue them) they say, this *forme* that they haue here *set forth, is (as they are thoroughly perswaded) agreeable to the word of God*: I aunswer, this is not materiall, what they are or are not *thoroughly perswaded to be agreeable to the word of God*. For though in *Christ*, we wish as wel to them, as they to vs: yet depende wee no more on their *perswasions* to themselues, than they on ours to vs.

But if they could haue brought, or can bring, any sufficient and cleere profe of matter, out of *the worde of GOD* indeede, that might *perswade vs thoroughly* thereunto: If they could doe that, it were very materiall, and by the

grace of God, wee should not gaynsay it, contrary to our consciences, but yeeld on all hands thereunto, and bee as *thoroughly perswaded* as there [*sic*] are. But this must bee with better and firmer prooues of *Gods worde*, than either our Bre. haue yet alledged, or any other that euer I read, *agreeable* or inclinable to their opinion. For, setting aside all such *perswasions* of men; this *perswasion* must bee wrought with pure matter. For till then, they can neuer *thoroughly perwade* other, to be *perswaded* as they bee, if they their selues be indeed (as they say they are) *thoroughly perswaded*. And although I may be somewhat easily *perswaded*, that they are somewhat *perswaded*, that this their *forme is agreeable to Gods word*: yet as yet, I can neither be *thoroughly perswaded*, that they their selues are *thoroughly so perswaded* of this *forme*: nor that this *forme* of this *learned discourse* (let the *learning*, in eche mans *perswasion*, goe as it shall) is either the *discourse, declaration, or desires, of all those faithfull Ministers, that haue and doe seeke for the discipline and reformation of the Church of England*. . . . it is apparant, that diuers of them are so farre from being *thoroughly perswaded in the forme here set foorth*; that almost none of their writings & bookes in many poynts, and some of those very materiall, are *agreeable* either one with another, or with this *forme*, as by conference of them will easily appeare. . . . Yea, we haue seene, how their owne selues oppugne their owne selues, with diuers and contrary assertions in this *learned discourse*. (1369-70)⁴⁴

What looks like thorough persuasion becomes, through Bridges's deconstructive repetition of "thoroughly perswaded," not really thorough persuasion. What looks like learning becomes—even

⁴⁴ There are two different pages numbered 1369, as the first page numbered 1375 is followed by 1361 (with no break in or reproduction of text). This is quoted from the second page numbered 1369, or sigs. Ssss^{r-v}.

if Bridges appears to leave it to “eche mans *perswasion*”—not really learning. These are not “learned discoursing brethren” who have discovered new truths about the way the church should be governed; these are “well meaning, but misweening brethren” (sig. ¶3^v), too foolish to understand the consequences of their “great ouerzealousnes” (1377). What might have seemed persuasive about the presbyterian argument for church reform becomes, through Bridges’s sustained but subtle mockery, not really persuasive at all.

Playful and mocking as it may be, Bridges’s *Defence* never quite becomes satire. As difficult as satire is to define, there is a general consensus that satire involves both ridicule of an extra-textual object and, “to some extent, *a departure from literal truth* and, in place of literal truth, a reliance upon what may be called a *satiric fiction*”—that is, “a fictional construction which either directly debases or mockingly elevates the nonfictional object which is its counterpart in the world of reality.”⁴⁵ But there are several important conclusions to be drawn from Bridges’ simultaneous exaggeration of the threat the presbyterians posed to the episcopacy and mockery of their claims to learning interpretative authority. First, mockery paradoxically legitimizes its target as a threat even as it works to delegitimize that threat. Presbyterians really did challenge the authority of the episcopal hierarchy, and in their tendency to blur the line between ecclesiastical and civil discipline, they challenged the authority of the state as well. The fact that Bridges responded to the presbyterians at such length legitimizes their credibility even as he works to undermine that credibility; the fact that Bridges turns to ridicule legitimizes the

⁴⁵ Edward Rosenheim Jr., “The Satiric Spectrum,” in *Satire: Modern Essays in Criticism*, Ed. Ronald Paulson [Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1971], 312. The Marprelate tracts, on the other hand, do employ satiric fictions of various types and are generally agreed to be satirical, even if, as Lander suggests, the tracts “resist easy classification” (*Inventing Polemic*, 82). Dustin Griffin’s suggestion that the Marprelate tracts “are not satire proper” but are instead “polemical and controversial prose that makes use of satiric elements” (Griffin, *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction* [Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994], 152) is neither clearly supported nor a particularly useful distinction. Prendergast distinguishes between railing and satire classifies the Marprelate tracts as railing, but, as I hope to demonstrate, a rhetorical definition of satire obviates the need for such a distinction (Prendergast, *Railing, Reviling, and Invective in English Literary Culture, 1588-1617: The Anti-Poetics of Theater and Print* [Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012], 13).

presbyterians as a threat to the power of establishment even as it makes that threat laughable.

Bridges' exaggerated alarm about the threat the presbyterians posed to the stability of the English church and state is in part a suggestion that the presbyterians are too foolish and idealistic to understand the practical consequences of their platform. But it also provides his undecided reader with an urgent reason to reject the presbyterians' claims to learning and interpretative authority. In order for his ridicule to be effective, Bridges must persuade his reader to take seriously the very thing he hopes to persuade his reader not to take seriously. And in doing so, Bridges paradoxically legitimizes the presbyterians as a threat to the conformists' own authority in the church even as he works to delegitimize that threat. By turning to ridicule in order to deflate the threat posed by the presbyterians' claim to authority, in fact, Bridges inadvertently highlights the insecurity of conformists' own hold on authority in the church.

Second, Bridges' turn to ridicule in the *Defence* allows us to more clearly recognize the type of context in which ridicule—and, I would suggest, satire—emerges. Bridges' *Defence* allows us to think about the ongoing ecclesiastical controversy in terms that challenge New Historicist conceptions of power—as antagonisms in a war of position rather than as a monolithic power structure that produces its own subversion in order to contain it.⁴⁶ His ridicule emerges as an antagonistic articulation⁴⁷—an articulation that recognizes an other's existence as an obstacle to one's own legitimacy, and an articulation whose primary rhetorical purpose is to undermine the legitimacy of that other. This ridicule is disciplinary insofar as ridicule may act as

⁴⁶ The controversy between the conformists and the presbyterians was not, as Edward Arber suggests, “really a conflict between Official Power and Public Opinion” (Arber, *An Introductory Sketch to the Marprelate Controversy* (London, 1880; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1967), xi). This was an antagonism between rival claims to authority. Neither side recognized the others' right to exist; each sought to control the other as its primary objective, as the others' existence was proof of their own incomplete hold on power over the English Church. Although Whitgift used ecclesiastical courts and the strong arm of the state to enforce conformity, both sides turned to the court of public opinion as a means of checking or controlling their opponents.

⁴⁷ I have borrowed this terminology from Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's description of the conditions necessary for hegemony. See Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, 2nd ed. (New York, 2001), 135-36.

a corrective for ideas or behaviors that threaten or violate social norms or customs.⁴⁸ But it is primarily intended to work upon the undecided, impartial, or “indifferent” reader. Just as a tendentious joke produces pleasure not in the teller or the target but in the third person who listens and laughs at the target’s expense,⁴⁹ discursive ridicule works to make its target laughable in the eyes of the “indifferent” reader. In Freud’s terms, Bridges makes the presbyterians comic “in order to make [them] contemptible, to deprive [them] of [their] claim to dignity and authority”⁵⁰ in the eyes of his “indifferent” reader.

2. Answer a Fool: Martin Marprelate’s Response to John Bridges

Bridges’ *Defence* was supposed to silence the presbyterian agitators by proving once and for all that there was no platform for church government in the New Testament. Instead, Bridges provoked a number of furious responses. Dudley Fenner and Walter Travers each produced hastily-written, partial replies within the year. Fenner’s *Defence of the Godlie Ministers, Against the Slaunders of D. Bridges* only manages to address Bridges’ preface; he claims he published this “before the Refutation of the rest of [Bridges’] booke” both because “the length of [Bridges’] flourishes” would force presbyterians to write several separate treatises and because “vve could not vvith-hold our selues, from clearinge oure innocencie before the church of God and the equall iudgement of all.”⁵¹ Travers devotes well over two hundred pages to the first of Bridges’ sixteen books, and—though he claims otherwise—he does not seem at all convinced that the “graue” testimony of Fulke’s *Briefe and Plaine Declaration* (which Bridges had

⁴⁸ Michael Billig, *Laughter and Ridicule: Towards a Social Critique of Humour* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005), 202.

⁴⁹ Sigmund Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, trans. James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1963), 100.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 189.

⁵¹ Fenner, sig. A2^v.

dissected) “will carie more credite and authoritie with it, to perswade men of th’ ordinance of God in this behalfe, then not only all the iestes wherewith the Replyer scoffeth at them, but then his most colourable reasons shalbe able to preuayle to the contrarie.”⁵²

Fenner and Travers were clearly annoyed by Bridges’ exhaustive habit of “descanting in a maner vpon euery word, tedious for extrauagant matters, & points impertinent, to the question in hand,”⁵³ but it was not the length of the *Defence* that they found so threatening. Rather, presbyterians were threatened because Bridges was too funny. Fenner sputters about Bridges’ “gibe[s],” his “vnsauorie cauilles and harde slaunders.”⁵⁴ Travers complains repeatedly about “his iestes and scoffes”; the “presence” of God and the “expectation” of amendment, he claims, “requireth a farre other speache and style then is here vsed.”⁵⁵ Bridges’ humor was a real source of anxiety for the presbyterians, who knew they would not be successful if they were not taken seriously. Travers anxiously insists that the proper title of Fulke’s tract is not “*The Learned Discourse of Ecclesiasticall Gouernment*”—which, he complains, Bridges had “must iested at and played withall”—but “*A brieffe & plain declaration, &c.*” The running header, he explains, “is of like the Printers, or some others to whose hande the copie might come, a thing vsuallie done, and without anie iust note of ostentation in the Author, who is seldome or neuer priuie to such additions.”⁵⁶ This anxiety about being taken seriously is even more explicit in John Udall’s *Demonstration of Discipline*: “the controuersie is not about goats wolle (as the prouerbe sayth) neither light and trifling maters, which may safely be folowed or reiected,” as Bridges had so

⁵² Travers, *Defence*, 70.

⁵³ Travers, *Defence*, 68.

⁵⁴ Fenner, sigs. C1^v, D1^r.

⁵⁵ Travers, *Defence*, 161, 107.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 4. See also Fenner, sigs. H4^{r-v}.

“confidently” affirmed, “but about no les matter then this, whether Iesus Christ shalbe king or no.”⁵⁷

Fenner and Travers demand that Bridges “leauē this kinde of speache” and “intreate grauilie” of “matters of grauitie and diuinitie, . . . as becommeth a Diuine.”⁵⁸ This meant a return to the forms of proper scholastic disputation, which required Bridges to prove the legitimacy of the episcopacy using syllogisms drawn from scripture. Fenner asks Bridges “to leauē slaundring, caueling, peruerting of playne sentences,” and, instead, to “reason pithelie and Syllogisticallie out of Gods worde.” He claims that the controversy would be concluded if Bridges would only give an appropriate defense of the episcopacy: “let him sillogistically proue and deducte out of the worde of God, the Ecclesiasticall gouernement & Discipline exercised by the Archb. Bi. their Commissaries and Officialls, and therewithall that it is ordinarie, perpetuall, and the best, and vvee vvill yeelde him the cause.”⁵⁹ But neither of these responses to Bridges provoked an answer from the establishment, let alone a syllogistic rebuttal from Bridges. After Waldegrave’s shop was raided by the authorities in April 1588,⁶⁰ the conformist effort to put the presbyterian question to rest seemed in danger of succeeding. This is the context in which I would like to read the Martin Marprelate tracts.

No longer transfixed by lingering questions of authorship,⁶¹ recent scholars have related

⁵⁷ Udall, *Demonstration of Discipline*, 11.

⁵⁸ Travers, *Defence*, 107.

⁵⁹ Fenner, sig. V3^v.

⁶⁰ Black (ed.), *Marprelate Tracts*, 1.

⁶¹ The critical consensus is now that Job Throkmorton was primarily responsible for the satirical voice of the tracts, but that John Penry (and perhaps others) was almost certainly responsible for part of their composition; the search for a solitary (Romantic) author figure has given way to an understanding of Martinism—the writing, printing, publishing, and distribution of the tracts—as a highly collaborative project. See William Pierce, *An Historical Introduction to the Marprelate Tracts* (London: Arcbald Constable, 1908); J. Dover Wilson, “The Marprelate Controversy,” in *The Cambridge History of English Literature, III: Renascence and Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), 425-52; Donald McGinn, *John Penry and Marprelate Controversy* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1966); Leland Carlson, *Martin Marprelate, Gentleman: Master Job Throkmorton Laid Open in His Colors* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1981); and especially Black (ed.), *Marprelate Tracts*, xxxiv-xlvi.

the Marprelate tracts (and the anti-Martinist responses) to such important issues as the rise of the public sphere, the enforcement of censorship, the social uses of print, the development of anti-puritan satire, the function of anonymity, the history of pamphlets, the dialectical development of polemic and literature, the oppositional potential of Menippean satire, the theatrical appropriation of polemical modes and tropes, and the queer poetics of railing.⁶² Few of these productive analyses, however, have made more than a passing reference to Bridges.⁶³ Most accounts of Martin's polemical strategy have focused instead on the ways Martin supposedly turned away from Bridges—on the ways Martin introduced an “unwonted note of levity” into an “otherwise staidly academic” debate about church government in order to push it into the court of public opinion.⁶⁴

Certainly Martin was interested in spreading the arguments for reform by capturing popular attention and encouraging public debate, as he acknowledges in his oft-cited satirical apologia in *Hay Any Work for Cooper* (115). But Martin does not quite put on a comic mask in order to deflate the pompous gravity of a pedantic old bore.⁶⁵ Despite so many critical claims to

⁶² See Alexandra Halasz, *The Marketplace of Print: Pamphlets and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Clegg; Black, “Rhetoric of Reaction”; Kristin Poole, *Radical Religion from Shakespeare to Milton: Figures of Nonconformity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Marcy North, *The Anonymous Renaissance: Cultures of Discretion in Tudor-Stuart England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Lander, *Inventing Polemic*; Joseph Navitsky, “Disputing Good Bishop’s English: Martin Marprelate and the Voice of Menippean Opposition,” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 50 (2008), 177-200; Joseph Black, ““Handling Religion in the Style of the Stage’: Performing the Marprelate Controversy,” in *Religion and Drama in Early Modern England: The Performance of Religion on the Renaissance Stage*, ed. Jane Hwang Degenhardt and Elizabeth Williamson (Burlington, VT, 2011), 153-72; and Prendergast. The publication of Black’s excellent scholarly edition of *The Martin Marprelate Tracts* ensures that these and other conversations will continue.

⁶³ A surprising number of scholars have repeated the misinformation that Bridges’ *Defence* was composed in response to John Penry’s *Treatise Containing the Aequity of a Humble Submission* (1587). See, e.g., Evelyn Tribble, *Margins and Marginality: The Printed Page in Early Modern England* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), 104.

⁶⁴ Lake and Questier, 505.

⁶⁵ Nearly every scholar of the Marprelate controversy refers to Martin’s style as “theatrical.” (Black, who calls the Marprelate tracts “fundamentally performative” [*Marprelate Tracts*, xxvi], is an exception.) In this they (unwittingly) reproduce the central criticism levied against Martin by the bishops: “The residue of their malicious & more then ruffianly railings together with Historionical mockes & scoffes, too immodest for any Vice in a Play, are

the contrary, Martin took seriously the threat that “worshipful jester, D. Bridges” (*Epitome*, 53) posed to a presbyterian campaign already on the verge of desperation.⁶⁶ The church was under the control of power-hungry worldlings who went “about to blind [the] state that they may never see a perfect regiment of the church in our days” (*Hay Any Work*, 117), and their principal spokesman, Dean John Bridges, not only refused to take seriously the godly inspired arguments for reformation but openly mocked those who worked on its behalf.

Martin responds much more directly and thoroughly to Bridges’ *Defence* than scholars of the controversy have recognized. Martin numbers himself among the “many” whom “Mass Dean” had “provoked” to write against Whitgift and the bishops, and he claims on several occasions that his own “sometimes tediously dunstical and absurd” manner is a matter of keeping *decorum personae* with “Master Doctor’s book” (*Epistle*, 7). He had clearly read the *Defence* carefully: he quotes “periods . . . of great reason, though altogether without sense” in the *Epistle* (14), provides a sustained response to its argument in the *Epitome* (“In the mean time, mark how stoutly Master Dean goeth forward . . .” [64]), cites specific claims and page numbers in the *Certain Mineral and Metaphysical Schoolpoints*, and alludes to Bridges’s playful passages in the later tracts (e.g., “therefore, I persuade myself that they their selves are thoroughly so persuaded,

not meete for any honest man to meddle with: and therefore are returned ouer to the Libellers themselues, as vnfallible tokens of that spirite, with which they are ledde to these outragious dealings” (Cooper, 96). The critical association between Martin and the stage is particularly strange considering the widespread puritan opposition to the theater. Martin vehemently denies any association with stage players, especially after he had been represented onstage in the summer of 1589: “There be that affirm, the rimers and stage-players to have clean put you out of countenance, that you dare not again show your face. Alas poor hagglers, their fathers are too young to outface the least of your sons. And I do think that, lay aside their tyranny, all the bishops of England are too weak to deal with a scare-crow that hath but the name of reverend Martin written upon it. And therefore, I persuade myself that they their selves are thoroughly so persuaded, ka my nuncka Bridges, that you contemn such kennel rakers and scullions, as to their shame, in the time of your silence, have sold themselves for a pence a piece, to be derided of come who so will, to see a company of disguised asses” (*Theses Martinianae*, 161).

⁶⁶ As Black notes, the aggressiveness of the Marprelate tracts “reflected a discontent verging on desperation within the [presbyterian] movement’s radicalized core as it witnessed the ongoing inefficacy of more moderate approaches” (*Marprelate Tracts*, xx).

ka my nuncka Bridges...” [*Theses Martinianae*, 161]).⁶⁷ And Martin in fact turns some of Bridges’s more threatening accusations back against the conformists. Bridges had been concerned about potential treason; Martin calls him a traitor (*Epistle*, 16). Bridges had accused the presbyterians of denying royal supremacy; Martin suggests the bishops are deserving of a “preminure” for demanding subscriptions above and beyond Elizabethan statute and thus threatening royal supremacy (22). Bridges had objected to the presbyterians’ habit of passing off their interpretations of scripture as divine commandments; Martin echoes and inverts this by accusing the bishops of passing off their own prerogatives as royal commandments: “Seeing you have nothing to show that it is her Majesty’s will, why should any man subscribe contrary to statute? Forsooth, men must believe such honest creatures as you are on your words? Must they? As though you would not lie: yes, yes, bishops will lie like dogs” (22).

Many of the stylistic aspects of the Marprelate tracts which have struck recent scholars as subversively innovative in fact imitate and exaggerate aspects of Bridges’s playful mockery. As Raymond Anselment has pointed out, many of Martin’s ironic poses and satirical personae “mime mannerisms found in Bridges’s *Defense*.”⁶⁸ Martin’s use of marginal notes to comment ironically on his own text, for example, mirrors the occasional irony and exasperation of Bridges’s own marginalia (e.g., “If the debaters should be moderat men, then should our brethren vse more moderation in their tearmes & not be so peremptory in their dealing”).⁶⁹ Martin repeats the key terms of Bridges’s condescension (“take heed brethren of your reverend and learned brother Martin Marprelate” [*Epistle*, 8]), imitates the way Bridges switches between direct and

⁶⁷ To his substantial credit, Joseph Black catches this allusion (as well as several others to Bridges’s *Defence*) in his edition of *The Marprelate Tracts*.

⁶⁸ Anselment, *Decorum*, 41.

⁶⁹ Bridges, 15. Lander suggests that sarcastic marginal glosses were a fairly typical aspect of Elizabethan religious polemic, part of “an attempt to reconstitute in print the sort of legible hierarchy visible in the academic institutions where the protocols of debate were inculcated” (*Inventing Polemic*, 30). But Bridges went even further with his ironic marginalia than his sarcastic predecessor Whitgift.

indirect address, and mimes Bridges' habit of carrying on conversations with a ventriloquized interlocutor: "We deny your minor, M. Marprelate, say the bishops and their associates. Yea my learned masters, are you good at that? What do you brethren? Say me that again? Do you deny my minor?" (9).⁷⁰ He appropriates Bridges' mock-earnestness as well as his deconstructive habit of "descanting in a maner vpon euery word":

Is this your answer, brother John? Why, what sense is there in these words? . . .
 And in good earnest Dean John, tell me how many orders of ministers in the
 congregation, where you mean this bouncing priest should have his superiority . . .
 . But you would mend your answer? . . . Do you mean, then, that his grace should
 be this superior priest, who by Sir Peter's allowance may have a lawful superior
 authority over the universal body of the church? Truly I do not mean so. And
 good now, do not abuse his grace's worship in this sort, by making him a pope.
 (17)

Like Bridges, Martin makes his opponent speak, and, like Bridges, Martin pushes his opponents' arguments to ludicrous extremes.⁷¹

Even Martin's notorious *ad hominem* attacks on individual bishops, which scholars have associated with contemporary ballading and libeling,⁷² may have been prompted by the *Defence*. Bridges had denounced the way his opponents "*cried out vpon*" corruption in the episcopacy without naming names or giving specific details: "If the matter *be little amended*, this is not to *amend* it more, but to make it worse, for this is naught worth, but to norishe malice, suspition, &

⁷⁰ cf. "What doo they (brethren)? saye me that againe: doo they deale thus with euerie *matter whatsoever*?" (Bridges, 107; quoted above).

⁷¹ Navitsky is thus right to suggest that "Marprelate's greatest license comes with his impersonations of England's authorized voices" ("Disputing," 183), but these impersonations are also, importantly, exaggerations of Bridges's own rhetorical strategy.

⁷² See Patrick Collinson, "Ecclesiastical Vitriol: Religious Satire in the 1590s and the Invention of Puritanism," in *The Reign of Elizabeth I; Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, ed. John Guy (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 150-70.

sclander, & yet the fault not knowne, much lesse *amended*.” If the presbyterians knew something, Bridges continued, they needed to file legal complaints, naming the parties involved: “But till they name and proue any to haue then bene, or yet to be suche euill *Bishops*: this againe may go for so a foule slaunder, that it deserueth for answere, a due rewarde of so great an obloquie” (1279-82). Puritans had been collecting scandalous stories and grievances against the bishops for years, thanks largely to the efforts of John Field,⁷³ and this passage of the *Defence* may have provoked Martin to reveal some of the more egregious items in the register. Martin’s explicit account of the reprehensible behavior of several bishops, including John Aylmer, Bishop of London, who refused to return stolen cloth to its proper owners because it had been “taken within his own lordship” (*Epistle*, 13), are not exactly legal complaints, but Martin names names and offers to bring in witnesses as though he is in a court of law: “The man is yet alive, he may be sent for, if you think that Master Martin hath reported an untruth. No, I warrant you, you shall not take me to have fraught my book with lies and slanders, as John Whitgift and the dean of Sarum did theirs. I speak not of things by hearsay as of reports, but I bring my witnesses to prove my matters” (26).⁷⁴ At the very least, these claims shift the burden of proof to the bishops, whose justifications of their behaviors in Cooper’s *Admonition to the People of England* are not entirely convincing.⁷⁵

More importantly, Martin responded to Bridges’s playfully dismissive attitude toward the presbyterians’ godly learning by mocking Bridges’s own learning. Martin sarcastically commended his “learned brother Bridges” (15) for his skill “in the learning of *ob* and *sol*” (*Epistle*, 14), for his “sweet learning” (15), for his “variety of learning” (*Epitome*, 57). Each

⁷³ See Collinson, *Puritan Movement*, 394; and Black (ed.), *Martin Marprelate Tracts*, xlix.

⁷⁴ In his account of the anti-Martinist’s (supposed) register of puritanical misdeeds, Lander notes that the “emphasis on registering advertises the sort of documentary and scribal practices associated with the bureaucratic world of legal administration” (“Case Study,” 568).

⁷⁵ See below.

repetition of “the learned Bridges” (*Epistle*, 19) and “the learned and prudent Master Dean” (*Epitome*, 56) ironically undercut both Bridges’s repetition of “learned discoursing brethren” and his ability to censure the learning of the presbyterians. Bridges lacked both “wisdom” and “a natural wit” (*Just Censure*, 177); his books “seem[ed] to proceed from the brains of a woodcock, as having neither wit nor learning” (*Epistle*, 14). In the *Epitome*, Martin clearly echoed Bridges when he ironically scolded his puritan “masters” for being too hard on one of the Dean’s argumentative missteps:

For shame my masters, deal more charitably and bear with the infirmities of your brethren. I grant indeed it was Master D.’s oversight in naming Junius his Syriac Testament: and the sermon upon 1 Cor. 12 instead of Rom. 12. But what then, should you therefore take him up for it, as though he were the veriest ass in a country? Learned men may easily commit such oversights, especially quoting authors upon other men’s reports, as Master D. hath done. (84)⁷⁶

If Bridges was not the “veriest ass in the country,” it was only because there was strong competition for the title in the episcopal hierarchy.⁷⁷

Bridges had mocked the foolishness of his “well meaning, but misweening brethren” (sig.

⁷⁶ cf. “Which too quick conceiuing, vpon their forestalled opinion, (especially in the heate of zeale to haue thinges amended,) may fall out nowe and then, for lacke of more mature deliberation and examining, euen to the best *learned* and most holy men” (Bridges, 931-32; quoted above).

⁷⁷ The “veriest ass in the country” would almost certainly be “his Canterburiness” himself (*Epistle*, 17), John Whitgift, to whom Martin refuses to grant even the smallest measure of learning. But Martin famously provides a litany of explicit attacks on the learning of other “asses” in the hierarchy of the English Church: John Aylmer, Bishop of London, is “Dumb dunstical John of Good London” (21); Thomas Cooper, Bishop of Winchester, is a “monstrous hypocrite,” a “very duns,” who translated his dictionary “verbatim out of Robert Stephanus his *Thesaurus*” (31, 40); the Bishop of Gloucester “show[ed] all his learning at once” by giving a ludicrous sermon on the Apostle John (“John, holy John, not John full of holes, but holy John”) (40); and so on, concluding that “many of you our lord bishops and clergy men are men very notorious for their learning and preaching” (38). Indeed, he asks shortly afterwards, “what do I speak of our bishops’ learning, as long as Bishop Overton, Bishop Bickley, Bishop Middleton, the dean of Westminster, Doctor Cole, Doctor Bell, with many others, are living, I doubt me whether all the famous dunses be dead” (40). This attack on the bishops’ learning categorically delegitimizes the bishops’ claim to intellectual authority in the Church; it answers Bridges and subverts his own claim to interpretative authority over both scripture and presbyterian writing.

¶3^v); Martin turns Bridges into a fool. He repeatedly figures Bridges as a fool and a clown—a charge that would make considerably less sense if it had been levied at a pedant or a bore. Martin accuses Bridges of “play[ing] my Lord of Winchester’s fool in Sir Mary’s pulpit in Cambridge” (*Epistle*, 41), asks Bridges to “put [his] corner cap a little near a to side, that we may see [his] parti-coloured beard” (*Epistle*, 41), and claims Bridges deserves “to be cased in good motley cloakbag for his labor” (*Epitome*, 85).⁷⁸ Martin suggests Bridges is “fit” to wear “a wooden dagger and a cockscomb” as Whitgift’s personal fool (*Just Censure*, 181), and he even uses Bridges’s own foolish logic to prove the matter syllogistically: “Some man in the land (say they) weareth a wooden dagger and a coxcomb, as for example, his grace of Canterbury’s fool, Doctor Perne’s cousin and yours. You, presbyter John Catercap, are some man in the land. Therefore by this reason, you wear a wooden dagger and a coxcomb” (*Epistle*, 41).

This is a deliberately rhetorical move. Bridges was not already a fool: in fact, in the beginning of the *Epitome* Martin acknowledges the rhetorical threat Bridges posed to the presbyterian campaign: “the dean in a sermon of his at Paul’s Cross did not only confute a great part of this book [i.e., *The Learned Discourse*], but by his said learned sermon, made many of the puritans relent and distrust their own cause: what cannot a smooth tongue and a scholar-like wit bring to pass?” (56). Martin’s popular audience—both those who might have been tempted by Bridges’ arguments and those who did not have the opportunity (or the patience) to read the *Defence*—needed to be persuaded that Bridges was a fool and that the *Defence* was the product of a foolish mind. By metaphorically giving Bridges a wooden dagger and a motley coat, by mocking his foolish erudition and his foolish sentence structure, and by exaggerating Bridges’s own deconstructive reading practices, Martin makes it very difficult for his audience—both contemporary and modern—to take Bridges’s *Defence* seriously.

⁷⁸ For a discussion of the sodomitical nature of these and similar charges, see Prendergast, especially 65-70.

By attacking Bridges as a fool and the conformists whose cause he defended as asses, Martin undercuts the threat Bridges's *Defence* posed to the legitimacy of the presbyterian campaign. Rather than a devastating deconstruction of the arguments for reform, the *Defence* becomes, in Martin's hands, "a most senseless book" (*Epistle*, 7), filled with "barbarisms and solecisms," illogic and absurdity (*Epitome*, 85). Bridges's extensive citational apparatus becomes an attempt to "cozen the silly puritans" with deliberate misreading, a crime as petty and desperate as nicking food at the dinner table: "he can now and then without any noise allege an author clean against himself, and, I warrant you, wipe his mouth cleanly, and look another way, as though it had not been he" (*Epistle*, 20). Far from demonstrating the breadth and depth of his reading, Bridges's habit of "translat[ing] out of one man's writing six or seven pages together" becomes evidence both of his interpretative inadequacy—"he bringeth those testimonies for his purpose whose very words translated and set down by him are as flat against the purpose whereto he bringeth them as fire in quality is contrary to water" (*Epitome*, 57)—and of his inability to carry out an argument on his own: "for sparing labor he is to be admired, that he hath set down under his own name those things which (to speak as I think) he never wrote himself" (*Epistle*, 20). Bridges's "senseless kind of writing," his "good English tongue" (*Epistle*, 15-16), and his "rude and barbarous style" (45)—"smooth as a crabtree cudgel" (*Epitome*, 56)—become evidence of the senselessness, rudeness, and barbarity of the conformist cause itself: "Presbyter John defended our church government which is full of corruptions, and therefore the style and the proofs must be of the same nature that the cause is" (57).⁷⁹ The *Defence* itself becomes worse than useless for the conformists. Not only had Bridges "[done] the cause of sincerity no hurt," Martin declares, but he had in fact "graced the same by writing against it. For I have heard some

⁷⁹ Black similarly notes that "By repeatedly critiquing Bridges's style as well as his arguments, Martin implies that a bad cause could be defended only by poor writing and specious logic" (*Marprelate Tracts*, 49).

say, that whosoever will read his book, shall as evidently see the goodness of the cause of reformation, and the poor, poor nakedness of [the bishops'] government, as almost in reading all Master Cartwright's works" (*Epistle*, 7).

Despite all of this mockery, Martin does not, as some critics have suggested, mock the terms of theological debate.⁸⁰ Rather, Martin violates the terms of theological debate in order to draw attention to the fact that Bridges had violated those terms. Whereas the brethren "confirm their *aye* and overthrow Master Doctor's *no*" about the necessity of the discipline "by scripture" (*Epitome*, 60), and whereas "the author of the *Learned Discourse*, and 500 green heads more that are on their side, within two syllogisms would set the Dean of Sarum at a flat *non plus*, and answer his whole work in a threepenny book" (58), Bridges had refused to argue syllogistically. Instead, Martin suggests, Bridges had willfully ignored scripture: "Fie, fie," Martin has Bridges say about Paul's letter to the Romans, "this were too bad, and my Lord of Canterbury would never abide such scripture. . . . I will allow of no such scripture, I trow, as may impeach the opinion which my Lord Canter. conceived of the preaching of the word" (80). For Martin, Bridges's *Defence* is representative of the deliberately misleading argumentative strategy of the "corrupt bishops":

Now reason with one of our corrupt bishops, or any other that defend their corruptions, and say that our church government is wicked and unlawful, because it is not expressly set down in the word. They will by and by demand, whether anything belonging to the service of God be lawful, but that whereof there is express mention made in the word. And whether anything belonging to church causes be changeable. As whether it may be lawful for the minister to preach in

⁸⁰ See, for example, Raymond Anselment, "Rhetoric and the Dramatic Satire of Martin Marprelate," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 10 (1970), 103-119; and Lake and Questier, 515.

his gown, whereas there is no express mention that our Saviour Christ and his apostles did so? Or whether it may not be lawful for the church of Geneva to begin his sermon at eight of the clock, whereas it may be the church of Helvetia beginneth at nine or ten? . . . And thus all the pack of them run from the matter in controversy unto the question of things indifferent. (62)

As a corrupt member of a corrupt church who had been charged with defending corruption, Bridges had employed a corrupt form of religious argumentation: he had “run from the matter in controversy unto the question of things indifferent,” flat out ignored scripture, refused to argue according to proper syllogisms drawn from the Word, “jest[ed] at the title” of the *Learned Discourse* (57), and jested at everything else like a fool.

As a fool, Bridges did not deserve to be answered seriously; proverbially, he should be answered according to his folly. In the starkly somber satirical apologia buried in the middle of *Hay Any Work for Cooper*, Martin justifies his own jesting as an answer to a fool: “Aye, for jesting is lawful by circumstances, even in the greatest matters. The circumstances of time, place, and persons urged me thereunto. . . . The Lord being the author both of mirth and gravity, is it not lawful in itself for the truth to use either of these ways, when the circumstances do make it lawful?” (115). As “lawful” invariably means “supported by scripture” in presbyterian writing, here Martin is almost certainly referring to Proverbs 26:5: “Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.” The Marprelate Tracts, then, attempt to answer Bridges according to his folly.⁸¹ In the beginning of the *Epistle*, he asks for the reader’s permission to “play the Duns for the nonce as well as he, otherwise dealing with Master Doctor’s book,” he

⁸¹ This discussion builds on points made by both Anselment and Black. Anselment remarks that Martin’s justification of his satire by *decorum personae* “echoes the counsel imparted in Proverbs 26:5 to ‘Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit’” (*Decorum*, 36), and Black outlines what this means: “Martin asserts that a senseless book deserved a foolish response, and so adopts the voices of the episcopal dunce, stage clown, and rustic simpleton to represent the opponents such jesting deserved” (*Marprelate Tracts*, xxv).

could not “keep *decorum personae*.” If he becomes too absurd in either the *Epistle* or the *Epitome* that will follow, he invites the reader to “ride to Sarum, and thank his Deanship for it. Because I could not deal with his book commendably according to order, unless I should be sometimes tediously dunstical and absurd” (7). Martin’s own foolish performance is simultaneously an exaggerated and an inadequate—because unnatural—imitation of Bridges: “let the learned reader judge whether other men cannot play the ignorant sots as well as you, brother Bridges. Tush, tush,⁸² I would not have you claim all the skill in barbarisms and solecisms unto yourself. Other men can behave themselves with commendations that way as well as you, though indeed not so naturally I grant” (*Epitome*, 85). Martin’s foolish performativity is designed to undermine the threat the *Defence* posed to the presbyterian campaign by exposing Bridges as a jester in ecclesiastical attire—to draw attention to Bridges’s playfulness, his indecorous argumentative practice, and his refusal to treat the arguments for reform seriously.

In this sense, Martin’s ridicule is, paradoxically, aimed at ridicule itself—aimed, that is, at the idea that Bridges could not defend the episcopacy without resorting to mockery and slander. “How could their government stand, unless they should slander their brethren, and make her Majesty believe that the church government prescribed in the word would overthrow her regiment, if it were received in our church, and that the seekers of reformation are a sort of malcontents, and enemies unto the state?” (*Epistle*, 8). Martin reproduces and exaggerates Bridges’ foolery in order to demonstrate to readers that Bridges’ playful argumentative form has no place in serious ecclesiastical debate.

Whereas Bridges hoped to end the debate about the proper government of the English Church, Martin’s exaggerated imitation of Bridges’ foolishness is part of an attempt to ensure

⁸² I suspect Martin’s “Tush, tush” echoes Bridges; cf. “As for our *Bishops*, tush, for them, *it is well knowne, they are not all of the best learned, nor all of the longest studie, nor all of the greatest zeale, nor all of the best example*” (1319).

that the debate would continue. Indeed, Martin shares none of Bridges' reluctance or ethical concerns about entering into controversy. Martin does not merely accept the idea that his tracts will provoke a response from Bridges; he demands such a response: "If you dare answer my reasons," he says, "let me see it done" (*Epitome*, 53). He mocks Whitgift for leaving "Cartwright's books . . . a dozen years almost unanswered," he mocks "John Copcot" for failing to answer "the confutation of [his] sermon at Paul's Cross" (*Epistle*, 8) and he threatens to "course" Bridges if he does the same:

And because you have taken upon you to defend lord bishops, though you be as very a sot as ever lived (outcept dumb John of London again), yet you shall answer my reasons, or else I will so course you, as you were never coursed since you were a simoniacal dean, you shall not deal with my worship, as John with his Canterburiness did with Thomas Cartwright, which John left the cause you defend in the plain field, and for shame threw down his weapons with a desperate purpose to run away, and leave the cause, as he like a coward hath done. (19)

This language is confrontational, and it is meant to provoke a fight. Martin gives the bishops the lie, declares at the top of his lungs (so to speak: "I will speak as loud as ever I can") that "all the lord bishops in England, Ireland and Wales, . . . all our lord bishops I say, are petty popes, and petty usurping antichrists," and urges them to "make the most of it": "reply when you dare, you shall have as good as you bring" (12). This is the language of a challenge: Martin Junior "cast[s] down the glove in [his] father's name, and the names of the rest of his sons" (*Theses Martinianae*, 161). Despite his assertion that Bridges would "shortly have twenty fists about [his] ears" (*Epistle*, 7)—and despite Cooper's and Bancroft's willful misinterpretation—Martin has no intention of instigating a violent uprising. Instead, the field is the medium of print, and the

weapons are discursive, as Martin Junior makes explicitly clear: “take my challenge if you dare. By writing you may do it, and be sure to be answered” (*Theses Martinianae*, 162).

This is, in fact, a declaration of (discursive) war. If the bishops do not accept his terms of peace, Martin says, “then your learned brother Martin doth proclaim open war against you, and intendeth to work your woe” (*Epistle*, 34). Martin’s terms of peace, however, which call for an end to the episcopal practices that close down the possibility of debate about the discipline—silencing preachers, installing unlearned ministers, requiring subscription, excommunicating dissenters, and associating presbyterians with Anabaptists—themselves ensure that the war will continue. To refuse to respond, Martin suggests syllogistically, is as much as an admission of defeat: “Some men dare not dispute with their adversaries, lest their ungodly callings should be overthrown, and they compelled to walk more orderly. But our bishops are some men. Ergo they dare not dispute lest their ungodly callings and places should be overthrown” (43).

Despite this open challenge and declaration of outright war, Martin’s provocation does not ask for and would not welcome a satirical response. The challenges he offers—and upon which he eventually, like Udall, stakes his life⁸³—are for proper ecclesiastical disputations, conducted by means of syllogisms drawn from the Word of God. “If you should write,” he says in the *Epistle*, “deal syllogistically: for you shame yourselves when you use any continued speech, because your style is so rude and barbarous” (45). He declares that he and Thomas Cooper “must go out alone into the plain fields, and there . . . try it out, even by plain syllogisms” (*Hay Any Work*, 106). And despite his personal challenges, despite his occasional

⁸³ “I who do now go under the name of Martin Marprelate, do offer personally to appear, and there to make my self known in open disputation, upon the danger not only of my liberty but also of my life, to maintain against all our bishops, or any else whosoever that shall dare in any scholastical manner to take their parts, the cause of the church government, which is now in controversy betwixt me and our prelates: so that I may have this condition following inviolably kept and observed, vz. That for appearing, or for anything that I have either published or caused to be published in this cause, I be not dealt with, or molested, except they overthrow me by the word of God, which if they do, confusion be upon me if I do not yield” (*Protestation*, 199).

sustained argumentation, despite, even, his general braggadocio, the point seems to be to provoke the establishment to respond to those figures in the presbyterian movement who were responsible for preaching or writing more serious declarations about the necessity of the discipline. Martin demands that Wiburn, Paget, Wigginton, and “all the preachers” the bishops have “put to silence” be “restore[d] unto their former liberty” (*Epistle*, 27), and he suggests that the reasoned argumentation of Travers and Udall pose the real threat to the episcopacy.⁸⁴ Martin demands attention for Udall’s *Demonstration of Discipline* in particular (published, he says, “together with mine *Epistles*”), which defends the presbyterian discipline with a series of syllogisms: “you defend your legs against Martin’s strokes, while the puritans by their *Demonstration* crush the very brain of your bishopdoms. Answer that book, and give the puritans the overthrow by disputation, or else I see that Martin hath undone you” (*Epitome*, 54). Thus Martin works to draw attention to—rather than away from—scholastic arguments made on behalf of the necessity of the discipline. By mocking Bridges’s violation of the customary terms of ecclesiological debate, Martin hopes, in part, to return the debate to its proper terms.

Much of Martin’s confident swagger, caustic inventiveness, and aggressive bravura is thus a direct response to the threat Bridges’ mockery posed to the legitimacy of the presbyterian campaign. While Martin’s response is designed partly “to move ecclesiological controversy out of the study where learned polemic was written and into the wider public sphere of popular debate”⁸⁵—to turn the tide of popular opinion against the episcopacy through an ever-widening circle of discussion—it is also designed, paradoxically, to return the debate to its proper terms.

Even as Martin explicitly violates the terms of theological debate, he calls for a stricter

⁸⁴ “Let the Templars have Master Travers their preacher restored again unto them, he is now at leisure to work your priesthood a woe I hope. If such another book as the *Ecclesiastical Discipline* was to drop out of his budget, it were as good for the bishops to lie a day and a night in Little Ease in the Counter. He is an odd fellow in following an argument, and you know he hath a smooth tongue, either in Latin or in English” (*Epistle*, 27).

⁸⁵ Black (ed.), *Marprefate Tracts*, 4.

adherence to them. “[O]ne sound syllogism (which I tell you is dainty ware in a bishop’s breast),” Martin says in the *Protestation*, “brought in for the proof of their unlawful callings shall more dismay and sooner induce me to give over my course than a thousand warrants, a thousand pursuivants, a thousand threats, and a thousand racks” (198). He does not mock the terms of theological debate; he uses these terms to mock Bridges’ refusal to argue according to them. Martin “very publicly [does] a series of jigs and dances all over” the “line that separated the forward from the forward”⁸⁶ to draw attention to the fact that Bridges had violated the terms of theological debate, to persuade the reader to reject the conformists’ ludicrous argumentative form, and to force the bishops to produce a more appropriately scholastic defense of the episcopal hierarchy. By exposing, publicly, Bridges’ foolish argumentative form, Martin hoped to provoke the bishops to respond to the syllogistical arguments made by prominent figures in the presbyterian movement.

3. Martin Marprelate and Satirical Discipline

At the same time that Martin attempts to undermine the legitimacy of Bridges’ mockery in order to uphold the terms of proper theological disputation—and as much as his project works to draw attention to the preaching of the presbyterian ministry and the scholarly work published by Cartwright, Travers, Penry, and Udall—Martin is also very interested in the threat he poses to the episcopacy in his own right. He is confident that his epistles will “course,” “besoop,” “bumfeg,” “thwack,” “bepistle,” and “frump” the bishops until they are all as “banged . . . to their woe” as Whitgift was by the “blows which Master Cartwright gave him in this cause,” and he suggests that he himself will be responsible for the downfall of the bishops: “I will work your

⁸⁶ Lake, *Antichrist’s Lewd Hat*, 515. I quote Lake’s language in order to make nearly the opposite point he does.

woe and overthrow, I hope.”⁸⁷ He mocks the “bishops and proud, popish, presumptuous, profane, paltry, pestilent and pernicious prelates” as “petty antichrists, petty popes, proud prelates, intolerable withstanders of reformation, enemies of the gospel, and most covetous wretched priests” (*Epistle*, 10); he exposes the misdeeds of several bishops, including John Aylmer, the Bishop of London, who had seized stolen cloth recovered on his property rather than returning it to its rightful owners (13); he demands that radical puritan ministers such as Udall and Giles Wigginton be restored to their livings; and he threatens to continue to reveal the private “knaveries” of the bishops until they stop persecuting “the best servants of God” and agree never to “slander the cause of reformation, or the furtherers thereof, in terming the cause by the name of Anabaptistery, schism, etc., and the men puritans, and enemies to the state” (34). His ridicule is designed to make the bishops hateful in the eyes of the common people—to demonstrate that they are “apostates from their ministry, sinners against their own consciences, persecutors of their brethren, sacrilegious church robbers, and withstanders of the known truth for their own filthy lucre’s sake,” and that they are “afraid lest the gospel and the holy discipline thereof should be received in every place” (43). And his open attacks against Bridges, Whitgift, Cooper, Aylmer, and the rest of the episcopacy are part of a deliberate attempt to create a scandal that will bring attention back to the presbyterian cause, an effort to remind a public that had either become bored or placated that the bishops are still abusive and are still unlawfully occupying positions of power in the English Church.⁸⁸

Martin certainly did cause a scandal. As he notes in the beginning of the *Epitome*, his

⁸⁷ Marprelate, *Epistle*, 19; *Hay any Work*, 105, 130, 131, 136; *Epistle*, 8; *Epitome*, 55.

⁸⁸ Martin says as much in his satirical apologia in *Hay Any Work*. Whereas the bishops had succeeded in limiting the debate to theological professionals behind closed doors, Martin wants to push that debate out into the open. His goal in the *Epistle*, he says, was to persuade the public to join in: “I saw the cause of Christ’s government, and of the bishops’ antichristian dealing, to be hidden. The most part of men could not be gotten to read anything written in the defence of the one and against the other. I bethought me therefore of a way whereby men might be drawn to do both, perceiving the humors of men in these times (especially of those that are in any place) to be given to mirth” (115).

pamphlets were incredibly popular: “you see how I am favored of all estates . . . Many would gladly receive my books, if they could tell where to find them” (53). But this popularity did not draw attention to Udall’s *Demonstration*, lead to an open disputation between Udall and the bishops, or bring about the immediate downfall of the episcopacy. Rather than persuading the bishops to discontinue their persecution of the godly and restore silenced preachers to their ministry, furthermore, Martin’s scandalous and illicit publication provoked a considerable manhunt for the anonymous author(s) and the fugitive press—a manhunt that eventually exposed much of the radical puritan network and, at least in the short run, doomed the presbyterian cause.⁸⁹

The first to respond to Martin was Thomas Cooper, the Bishop of Winchester, whose *Admonition to the People of England* was published in January 1588/9.⁹⁰ Cooper was probably chosen to write on behalf of the episcopacy in order to emphasize the bishops’ connections both to the protestant heroes of the English reformation and to the social authority of the queen. Cooper’s age and wisdom stood in stark contrast to the young, hot-headed presbyterians who, though “not of the greatest vvisedome and skill,” wanted to “take vpon them to controlle the vvhole Realme, and to binde both Prince & people, in necessity of conscience, to alter the present state, and to tie themselues to a certaine platforme deuised by some of our neighbours” (85). Cooper notes with some pride that he had studied the gospel for more than fifty years (77), and he had helped to “beate downe the grosse superstition of Antichrist and his ministers” (151)

⁸⁹ See below. See also Lake and Questier, *The AntiChrist’s Lewd Hat*, 509; and Clegg, 171-97.

⁹⁰ The *Admonition* was in fact signed “T.C.,” which was clearly intended to recall Thomas Cartwright, the principal presbyterian intellectual. At no point does Cooper ever identify himself within the tract; he in fact refers to the Bishop of Winchester at numerous points in the third person (e.g., “The bishop of Winchester hath openly more impugned the vices of this age heere in the Church of England, then the whole broode of them that are of the Anabaptisticall Conuenticles, and the residue of these Libellers” [64]). But Martin was quick to sniff out Cooper: “A crafty whoresons brethren bishops, did you think because the puritans’ T.C. did set John of Cant. at a *non plus*, and gave him the overthrow, that therefore your T.C., alias Thomas Cooper bishop of Winchester, or Thomas Cooke his chaplain, could set me at a *non plus*?” (*Hay Any Work*, 102).

at the accession of Elizabeth, whom God had raised, almost Christ-like, “as it were out of the dust of death” to be “a nurse or protectresse of his church” (241). Those who had brought the church out of persecution and who obeyed this Virgin queen were satisfied with the way the church had “setled in a tollerable maner of reformation,” and knew that it was better to “beare with some imperfections, then by attempting great alterations, in so dangerous a time, to hazard the state both of the Church and of the Realme” (144).

Cooper denounces Martin’s attack on the bishops as derisive, immodest, and libelous; this is the “boldnesse,” “bitternes,” “raging furie,” and “great threatnings,” he claims, of a “deceitfull and slaunderous tongue” (sig. A2^{r-v}). Cooper repeats many of the same arguments against Presbyterianism that Bridges had made in his lengthy *Defence*, including the idea that the presbyterians are a threat to the state: he claims that the discipline is “most vnfit” for a monarchy (85) because it would require a drastic alteration of “the whole state of the lawes of this Realme” (86), and he worries that the presbyterians’ “whole drift” is to “bring the Gouernment of the Church to a *Democracie* or *Aristocracie*.” It is “greatly to bee feared,” therefore, that the presbyterians will “very easily transferre the same to the Gouernement of the common weale” (92-3). Martin’s scandalous raillery becomes further evidence that the presbyterians respect neither authority nor the laws of the realm; theirs is an “outragious spirit of boldnesse” that needs to be “stopped speedily” lest Martin prove himself to be “not onely *Mar-prelate*, but *Mar-prince*, *Mar-state*, *Mar-lawe*, *Mar-magistrate*, and all together, vntil he bring it to an Anabaptisticall equalitie and communitie” (36).

Martin’s satirical attack on the bishops represented a new and dangerous type of lawless discourse: in his willingness to say anything under the cloak of anonymity in order to bring his social superiors into discredit, Martin’s “vnbridled tongue” (sig. A2^r) threatened the very

hierarchy of the social order. Cooper complains that Martin is not even constrained by notions of satirical decorum: these “Libellers,” he says, are “not contented to lay downe great crimes generally, as some other haue done, but with very vndecent tearmes, charge some particular Bishops with particular faultes” (36-7). Martin gleefully attacked the persons of individual bishops in pamphlets “so fraught with vntrueths, slaunders, reproches, raylings, reuilings, scoffings, and other vntemperate speeches,” Cooper claims—a bit melodramatically—“as I think the like was neuer committed to Presse or paper, no not against the vilest sort of men, that haue liued vpon the earth. Such a preiudice this is to the honour of this State and Gouvernement, as neuer was offered in any age” (35).

The bishops were obviously nervous about the effects such lawless speech might have on the general public. Martin had not written to a select audience of puritan ministers or to the ministry more broadly, but (in Cooper’s worried terms) had “printed and spread abroad” his pamphlets “almost into all Countreyes of this Realme” (35). This was now an all-too public debate, and even as Cooper trusts that God will “deliuer vs from the daunger of euill tongues,” he is also nervous that “so many vncharitable, and contemptuous speeches, so many slaunderous vntrueths, so many wrested Scriptures, so many false conclusions, so many impertinent allegations” (32) might very well “bring” the bishops “into hatred and misliking” (156). He thus finds himself addressing (and admonishing) “*the people of England,*” explaining to them that the bishops are not the causes of “the euils and vices, which shew themselues in a great number of this Realme” (21), but “*the Angels of God, the Ambassadors of Christ, the Ministers of our saluation,*” and “the instruments of Gods blessing” (7-8). The real cause of “backsliding” (126) in England, which had “wounded the hearts of an infinite number, causing them partly to reuolt to Papistry, partly to Atheisme, and neglecting of all Religion” (128), Cooper argues, is the

“schisme, faction and dissention” of the puritans and the “vehement and bitter inuectiues . . . made against the bishops and other Preachers of the Church of England, to the discredite not onely of their persons, but also of the doctrine which they haue taught” (127). Martin’s satirical speech affects more than its intended target: not only does it hurt the bishops themselves, but it threatens the Christian cause that they defend. He therefore urges his good Christian readers not to be “feared away” from the episcopacy by “this glorious countenance, and these bigge wordes of a bragging champion” (162).

But Cooper also recognizes that it is dangerous to answer Martin. He knows full well that “the malicious Back-biter & Rayer will neuer be satisfied,” and that “the more he is answered, the worse he will be” (sig. A3^v). Not only is Cooper opening himself up to “any hurt, that venemous, scoffing, and vnbridled tongues can worke” (sig. A2^r), but he knows he will be charged with “follie” by the universities “for answering so godlesse and lewde a person” (43). The presbyterians had already been “disputed & conferred with oftner then either the worthines of their persons or cause did require” (39), he knows, and by “meddl[ing] with” their “malicious & more then ruffianly railings” and their “Historionical mockes & scoffes, too immodest for any Vice in a Play” (96), Cooper acknowledges that he lends them more credit than they deserve. But Cooper “mistrusts” that “the simple and ignorant people, or other that be not acquainted with the Scriptures, by the very name and reuerence of the word of God,” will be “carried away” by their “vaine Arguments” (163) and their attempt to discredit the bishops.

In the event, Cooper probably did more harm than good. Although he answered many of the presbyterians’ objections to the episcopacy in pragmatic terms,⁹¹ his explanations of

⁹¹ Like Bridges, Cooper argued that Christ had not prescribed a clear platform for church government in the Gospel, and therefore Christian magistrate was free to order her church as she saw fit. It was not only impractical but impossible, Cooper argued, to provide a “learned and discrete minister” (91) in every parish of the realm, “For neither sufficient number of learned men can be had, nor, if there could, woulde they be contented to be to such

episcopal wealth and his defenses of individual bishops were less convincing.⁹² He admitted that Aylmer had held onto the cloth recovered on his grounds because his lawyers had resolved that “the propertie of this cloth was altered and transferred to the lyberties” (52), and he admitted that Aylmer had indeed made his porter a minister, though he claimed that this man had been found “by good and long experience to be one who feared God, to be conuersant in the scriptures, & of very honest life & conuersation” (53-4). And ultimately he argued that “it becommeth not euery common & base person, to demaund an account of the doings of men in authoritie” (42)—that in “Christian charitie” the puritans should “winke” at the bishops’ “smaller faultes” because the bishops had “many occasions to offend,” and therefore it was “harder for them to stande vpright, then for some other that are in priuate state” (19).

The next to respond was Richard Bancroft, who on 9 February 1588/9 preached a sermon at Paul’s Cross denouncing presbyterians (and, if only implicitly, their new satirical spokesman) as false prophets. Like Cooper, Bancroft claims that these false prophets “despise goverment and feare not to speake evill of them that are in dignitie and authoritie”; they are contemptuous of the bishops, ambitious and greedy for their own authority, singular (i.e., overly confident in their own opinions), and covetous of the bishops’ livings. Martin’s unlicensed speech threatens to set a singular precedent in which “every boy” would “take upon him (as though he onely were learned, zealous & wise) to control, condemne, and to rage” against proper authority in the church and in the state.⁹³

On 13 February, the Queen issued *A Proclamation against certaine seditious and*

places appointed”—that is, those with “very small stipends” (114-15).

⁹² Black is probably right to suggest Aylmer in particular “might have been better advised to restrict himself to a generic condemnation of Martin’s text rather than offer detailed, magisterial, and usually self-implicating justifications of all his actions—such as refusing to return stolen property found discarded on his lands” (“Rhetoric of Reaction,” 710).

⁹³ Richard Bancroft, *A Sermon Preached at Paules Crosse the 9. of Februarie, being the first Sunday in the Parleament, Anno. 1588* (London, 1588 [1589]), 5, 16-24, 60.

Schismatical Bookes and Libels, &c., which did not identify Martin by name but denounced the “sundry schismaticall and seditious bookes, diffamatorie Libels, and other fantasticall writings” which attacked “the persons of the Bishoppes . . . in rayling sorte, and beyond the boundes of all good humanitie.” The proclamation reaffirmed the “Estate of the Prelacie” as “one of the three auncient estates of this Realme vnder her Highnesse,” called for the “enormious malefactors” to be “discouered and condignely punished,” and demanded that “all persons whatsoever” in possession of the “saide seditious Bookes, Pamphlets, Libels, or Writings . . . with conuenient speede bring in, and deliuer vp the same vnto the Ordinarie of the Diocesse, or of the place where they inhabite, to the intent they may be vtterly defaced by the said Ordinarie.”⁹⁴

Martin was of course thrilled with the attention. In late March he published *Hay Any Work for Cooper*, in which he thanks the bishops for further popularizing his pamphlets: “Now truly, brethren, I find you kind, why ye do not know what a pleasure you have done me. My worship’s books were unknown to many before you allowed T.C. to admonish the people of England to take heed . . . Now many seek after my books, more than ever they did” (101). Martin mocks Cooper—“profane T.C.” (119), as opposed to the real T.C., Thomas Cartwright—as an old fool, and accuses him of misrepresenting the presbyterian arguments against the episcopacy in order to more effectively cast them as “stark enem[ies] to all religion, yea to her Majesty and the state of this kingdom” (104). But as Whitgift sent pursuivants out into the countryside to track down the secret press, there is also detectable in Martin’s gleeful “catch me if you can” attitude a concern that Bridges, Cooper, and Bancroft had succeeded in painting the presbyterians as schismatics and as enemies to the state. He insists in sometimes serious, desperate terms that the bishops are the real enemies—indeed, they are “the greatest enemies that

⁹⁴ *A Proclamation against certaine seditious and Schismatical Bookes and Libels, &c.* (London, 1588 [1589]).

now our state hath” (116).⁹⁵ Because they withstood “this true and natural government of the church by pastors, doctors, elders and deacons,” Martin claims, the bishops had already proven themselves to be “Mar-church and Mar-religion” and were likely to become “Mar-prince, Mar-state, Mar-law, Mar-magistrate, Mar-commonwealth” (114).

As the search for Martin and the secret press continued—and as the press moved covertly about the English countryside—the growing cast of Martinist voices became more and more frustrated at the bishops’ attempt to discipline the presbyterians instead of answering their arguments. Rather than addressing the presbyterian objections to the episcopacy “by modest writings handled anything scholar-like, that is, by good and sound syllogisms, which have both their major and minor confirmed by the word,” Martin Junior complains, the conformists’ “common weapons” have become “[f]ire and faggot, bands and blows, railing and reviling . . . And these, with their bare assertions and their wretched cleaving to popish absurdities, are in a manner the only proofs and tried maxims they offer unto the church in this age” (*Theses Martinianae*, 148). Rather than answering “Master Fenner’s and Master Penry’s syllogisms, whereby Doctor Bridges his book is confuted, and the cause of reformation unanswerably proved”—or, for that matter, the long litany of “learned discourses” in which “the corruption and the unlawfulness of the places and proceedings of lord bishops are shamefully laid open to the world”—the bishops have turned to the tools of oppression: “halter, axe, bonds, scourging and

⁹⁵ This claim is all the more remarkable in light of the all-too-recent threat of Spanish invasion, which most Englishmen were convinced had only been delayed by the miraculous defeat of the Armada the previous summer. This certainly was not lost on Thomas Cooper, who lamented that “wee shoulde see in mens handes and bosomes, commonly slaunderous Pamphlets fresh from the Presse, against the best of the Church of Englande” even now, “when the viewe of the mightie Nauie of the *Spaniards* is scant passed out of our sight: when the terrible sound of their shot ringeth, as it were, yet in our eares: when the certaine purpose of most cruel and bloody conquest of this Realme is confessed by themselues, and blazed before our eyes: when our sighes & grones wit our fasting and prayers, in shewe of our repentance, are fresh in memorie, & the teares not washed from the eyes of many good men,” and so on (33-4).

racking, with such other weapons as were bequeathed unto them by their forefathers, the ancient enemies and persecutors of the church” (*Protestation*, 200).

There is a certain irony to the fact that the presbyterians became not only the subject of conformist discipline but also the central justification for the episcopal hierarchy.⁹⁶ There is a related irony in the tendency of literary scholars to accept, at least implicitly, the general Whiggishness of Edward Arber’s influential account of the Marprelate controversy, in which the persecuted Martinists become proto-republicans and martyrs for civil and ecclesiastical liberty.⁹⁷ For the presbyterians of the 1580s were neither republican agitators—they were, in fact, more than eager to profess their celebrate the civil authority of the Christian Magistrate and profess their loyalty to Elizabeth⁹⁸—nor advocates of civil or ecclesiastical liberty. In fact, what was so appealing about the presbyterian discipline for the godly, what was indeed proof that it was “profitable and necessary in the church of God,” was that it was “most effectual to bring the people to obedience.” Udall insists that the discipline will “keepe men in obedience to the gospell,” make “men more afraide to offend,” keep “the godly in more carefull obedience,” and

⁹⁶ Cooper owes this idea to Whitgift, who in his polemical exchanges with Cartwright in the 1570s had insisted that a strict hierarchy of Archbishops, bishops, and clergy was needed “to keepe vnitie in the Churche, to compound contentions, to redresse heresies, schismes, [and] factions,” and to ensure that everyone did their duty. Without such a hierarchy, he claimed, “you shall have as many kyndes of Relygion, as there is parishes: as many sectes, as ministers: and a Churche miserably torne in peeces wyth mutabilitie and diuersitie of opinions” (*An Answere to a Certen Libell*, 70, 87).

⁹⁷ Arber acknowledges that Udall and Penry may have been narrow-minded and fanatical, but he insists that the presbyterians “were in the right. They saved England from a perpetual tyranny. They were essentially a law-abiding class. . . . Let their great acts and greater long-suffering be remembered with gratitude for ever!” (Arber, *Introductory Sketch*, 14). In his introduction to Udall’s *Demonstration of Discipline*, Arber claims that “[t]here is nothing more heart-rending than judicial murder for ecclesiastical opinions; when men of the highest personal integrity and spotless citizenship come to their end unrighteously, either by long imprisonment or by swift execution” (vii).

⁹⁸ The presbyterians insisted that Elizabeth would support the discipline “were it not for the subtil perswasions and wicked dealings of thy horned generation [the bishops], as by their false doctrine and cruell practises is to bee seen” (Cartwright, *A Replye to an Answere*, sig. A1^r). But as Patrick Collinson suggests, this was a rather long ways from the queen’s actual views. Whatever her personal understanding of scripture, she approached the public administration of religion with a secular mind and was determined to uphold the laws and channels of authority that had been established at her accession. She was entirely supportive of the conservative approach to church government favored by John Whitgift, Grindal’s successor at Canterbury, and made it clear during the Parliament of 1584-5 that the Commons was not to meddle with matters of religion (*Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, 286).

“keep in the hypocrites.”⁹⁹ Whereas conformists like Cooper blamed the presbyterians’ “vncharitable and needeles contentions” as the “cause to many, of falling, both from the trueth of God, and to wickednesse of life” (126), presbyterians like Cartwright and Travers blamed the insufficient oversight of the episcopacy for the continued prevalence of sin and upheld the discipline as the means of “knitting together” the church in true Christian obedience.¹⁰⁰

Indeed, presbyterians argued that the discipline was not only a matter of obedience to Christ’s Laws¹⁰¹ but the means Christ had given the church to bring about obedience to his laws. The discipline was comprised of four ecclesiastical offices, each with its own particular role: preachers, who ministered the word to the laity; doctors, who were responsible for teaching ministers, determining standard interpretations of scripture, and defending church doctrine; deacons, who were responsible for distributing donations to the poor; and elders, who were to “admonishe euery one, by whome offence appeareth vnto them to grow in the Church.”¹⁰² The elders would act as “watchmen” in every church to “mark, ouersee and obserue all mens manners”; without these, Travers suggested, “ther are many faultes which may easilie escape those who haue not a carefull eye ouer them.”¹⁰³ It was, in fact, the responsibility of all the godly to police one another’s behavior: “it is to hate a man,” Orthodoxos claims in *A Dialogue*

⁹⁹ Udall, *Demonstration of Discipline*, 30, 59, 74, 77.

¹⁰⁰ “[W]here you say oure churches are full of drunkardes and whoremongers . . . you vtter or euer you be aware, howe euill succes the preaching of the gospell hath had heere (for want of discipline and good ecclesiasticall government),” Cartwright claims (50); “thye forme of pollicy which is by archbishops, and such byshops as we haue, is not the meanes to knitte vs one to an other in vnitie vnder the domynion of Christ” (131). Travers too complains that “[a]ll manner of offences are committed, and remayne without redresse, at the least without redresse sufficient, and such as God hath appointed” (*Defence*, 64).

¹⁰¹ Although the specific form of church government was not technically necessary for salvation, the commandments of Christ were “binding to a necessarie obedience”; as a commandment of Christ, Travers argues, “nothing can be more necessarie” than the discipline (*Defence*, 41, 64). It was a matter of urgency, therefore, that the episcopacy be abandoned, the discipline be “restored,” and Christ once again set up as the monarch of his Church, “for God doth not disclose his wil to any such end, but that you should yet now at yt length with all your mayne and might, endeuor that Christ (whose easie yoke & light burthen we haue of long time caste of from vs) might rule and raygne in his church by the scepter of his worde onely” (Field and Wilcox, sig. A1’).

¹⁰² Travers, *Defence*, 73.

¹⁰³ Walter Travers, *A full and plaine declaration of Ecclesiasticall Discipline owt off the word of God, and off the declininge off the churche off England from the same*, trans. T. Cartwright (Heidelberg, 1574), 156.

Concerning the Strife of Our Church, “when one seeth him walk in sinn, and doth let him alone, and not reprove him.”¹⁰⁴ When the Law is taught, “then euery man can espy when his neighbour doth sinne, and then will admonish and reprove him . . . Are not men commaunded to admonish and reprove one another when they doe amisse[?]”¹⁰⁵

The presbyterian discipline was bottom-up rather than top-down, based on constant surveillance of the godly by the godly rather than on punishment for transgressions by the bishop. In this sense, it represented an attempt to transform discipline “from a schema of exceptional discipline to one of a generalized surveillance,” in which the subject of a field of visibility “assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection.”¹⁰⁶ The eldership, Udall argued, would “bridle the outrageous sinnes of some, and keepe in the derision and mockery, that priuate admonitions do receiue”; “for if men knewe that they should answere vnto the Church for their ill demeanour, to them that rebuke them for sinning; they woulde refraine (at least for feare) from such kinde of outrage.”¹⁰⁷ If the ungodly behavior continued, public admonition by the elders would follow. Those who obstinately refused to reform would be excommunicated. Public admonition would “sheweth” to “euery one” that “they cannot get away with vngodly life; no, not among themselues”; excommunication would allow everyone to “see thereby, the vnworthy (for whose sakes, God might be angrie with them all, Iosh. 7.11.) weeded from among them.”¹⁰⁸ The eldership thus offered the possibility of constant surveillance which

¹⁰⁴ *A Dialogue Concerning the Strife of Our Church*, 78.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 56.

¹⁰⁶ Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1995), 209, 202-3. Foucault suggests that this form of discipline would not be realized in Europe until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

¹⁰⁷ Udall, *Demonstration of Discipline*, 74.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 77.

Foucault describes as coercion by means of observation, “an apparatus in which the techniques that make it possible to see induce effects of power, and in which, conversely, the means of coercion make those on whom they are applied clearly visible.”¹⁰⁹

Presbyterians insisted that this discipline was purely ecclesiastical, and, as such, did not encroach upon the power of the civil magistrate. The “lawfull discipline neither punysheth any thing which belongeth to the courtes of ciuill officers,” Travers says, “nor yet punysheth with cyuill punishment.”¹¹⁰ But it is clear throughout much presbyterian writing that ecclesiastical discipline trumped civil discipline. The godly were citizens of the kingdom of Christ first and the kingdom of Elizabeth second; obedience to scripture thus took precedence obedience to the laws of the commonwealth. In *A Dialogue Concerning the Strife of Our Churche*, Orthodoxos explains that “men must obey ye higher powers vnder paine of damnation: but when any thing is commanded which is against gods word, we must obey God rather then men.”¹¹¹ If a godly puritan disobeys a law of the magistrate, the *Second Admonition* suggests, “that lawe is to be reformed, and not we to be punished.”¹¹² Disobedience to the magistrate in fact could become a higher form of obedience, as the godly do not “inuert any thing in the state that is good,” but instead work “to haue the corruption thereof remooued, and hir maiestie more honoured before God and men, in drawing more neare vnto hir God, in aduauncing the kingdome of his sonne more gloriously within hir dominions.”¹¹³

In large part, then, the entire debate was about controlling behavior and upholding considerably stricter standards of obedience. Presbyterians were certainly interested in eliminating any and all vestiges of Catholicism from the church—including the hierarchy of the

¹⁰⁹ Foucault, 170-1.

¹¹⁰ Travers, *Full and Plaine Declaration*, 162.

¹¹¹ *A Dialogue Concerning the Strife of Our Churche*, 66.

¹¹² *A Second Admonition to the Parliament* (Hemel Hempstead?, 1572), sig. B1^r.

¹¹³ Udall, *Diotrephes*, sigs. F1^{r-v}.

episcopacy—which represented the workings of Antichrist and the danger of sliding back into idolatry and superstition.¹¹⁴ So too did they complain about the lack of regular preaching in English churches and nit-pick specifics details of the administration of the sacraments. But the real reformation of the church depended on bringing its members into strict obedience with the Gospel. The goal was to “limit membership of the visible church to those Christians who had attained to a proper visible godliness,”¹¹⁵ to create a community of the elect held together in strict obedience, “knitte . . . one to an other in vnitie vnder the domynion of Christ.”¹¹⁶

Whereas the conformists maintained a strict distinction between the imperfect, this-worldly visible church on the one hand and the invisible church of God’s elect on the other, presbyterians believed that “active construction of a community of self-consciously godly persons was what the visible church existed to achieve.”¹¹⁷ The Church was not there simply to provide men with opportunity for salvation, should they choose to take it, but to create the kingdom of Christ. The entire purpose of the visible church, in other words, was to bring about the invisible church—not eventually, not in heaven, but immediately, here on earth, in England:

where yt is prophesied that in the kingdome off Christe all thinges shalbe ordered by perfecte Justice and equitie, that all his subiectes shalbe obedient and full off heauenly knowledge, that there shall be no Cananyte in all the lande, that the gentiles shalbe shutte out off the citie off god, and suche other thinges which the

¹¹⁴ Whitgift argued that “euen things altogether dedicated to Idols and vsed in idolatrie may be conuerted to common vses, and vsed in the seruice of God and to his honor” as long as they were no longer used privately or “supestitiously” [*sic*] (*An Answer to a Certen Libel*, 58). Conversely, Travers argued that “off all the leproous garmentes, they haue chosen the filthiest and most polluted; and suche as cannot be washed nor made cleane againe by anie art or conning off the fuller” (*Full and Plaine Declaration*, 131). Aspects of the Catholic Church such as the cope and surplice, he said, were retained “because they think it is of some authority with the people, and bringeth some estimation to ther office, and to ther persons, and is thought to be of great force, to make a man seeme to be graue and off authoritie” (129).

¹¹⁵ Lake, “Calvinism,” 183.

¹¹⁶ Cartwright, *A Replye to an Answer*, 131. According to Patrick Collinson, through exercises and prophesyings in local communities, presbyterians began to implement the discipline on their own in the 1580s, creating—in his memorable phrase—the “church within the church” (*Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, 14).

¹¹⁷ Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans?*, 34, 47.

prophetes most worthelie and notablie haue sett out: we must vnderstand, that all these thinges after a certeyne manner are to be referred also to his Kingdome in this life, and declareth that the gouernment of this Kingdome of his churche here, owght also to be iust and equall, that the faithfull who are his subiectes, owght not to be brutishe and ignoraunte, but as conning in heauenly matters and as full off that knowledge as maie be: That men off vicious lyfe and geuen to all sinne and wickednes, are to be cast out and banyshed from the churche, and the temple off god, to be kepte as nere as is possible free and cleane from all pollutions and prophanacions.¹¹⁸

If God had given us a “perfecte fourme of hys church” in the scripture,¹¹⁹ presbyterians argued, then it was both possible and necessary to bring the church to perfection. As Dudley Fenner insists, “we truely say we vrge not the alteration, but the perfection of the Church.”¹²⁰

Able to imagine a perfect church and a perfect kingdom of Christ—a perfect world—Martin Marprelate instead finds himself surrounded by folly, corruption, and ungodliness.¹²¹ The church, which should be governed by ministers, doctors, deacons, and elders, is instead under the control of fools, asses, dunses, and beasts who “go about to blind [the] state that they may never see a perfect regiment of the church in our days” (*Hay Any Work*, 117).¹²² The bishops are not

¹¹⁸ Travers, *Full and Plaine Declaration*, 11.

¹¹⁹ Cartwright, *A Replye to an Answer* 25.

¹²⁰ Fenner, sig. R2^r.

¹²¹ Martin clearly believes that he is working to bring about the perfect church and the kingdom of Christ in England. “[I]s it inconvenient,” Martin asks in *Hay Any Work*, “for a state or kingdom to have the body of Christ perfect therein?” (130). In the *Theses Martinianae*, one of Martin’s conclusions is based on the assumption that the church is perfectible: “3. That the Lord in his word hath left the church perfect in all her members, which he should not have done if he had not ordained all the officers, namely, the members thereof, and so he should leave the building of his church unperfect, and so it must continue, for who will presume to finish that which he hath left undone in the building of the church?” (149)

¹²² Whitgift, Bridges, and Cooper did, in fact, deny the possibility of achieving anything resembling perfection in the government or administration of the church; “humane frailtie and the miserable state of this worlde,” Cooper suggested, would not allow it. “For if God shoulde shoulde measure all thinges done in his Church by the perfect rule of his word, who should be able to stand before him? We may not therefore, either condemne other, or esteeme

only “tediously dunstical and absurd,” but, as “[r]ight poisoned, persecuting and terrible priests” (*Epistle*, 7), they have also proven themselves to be a threat to both the church and the state. They are “limbs of Antichrist” (34), they are “enemies unto the doctrine of our church” (*Just Censure*, 177), they are “traitors to God and his word” (*Hay Any Work*, 109), and, if they do not amend, “shortly [they] will bring our church to ruin” (*Epistle*, 25). They “wound God’s religion, and corrupt the state with atheism and looseness, and so call for God’s vengeance upon us all” (*Hay Any Work*, 116). They are responsible for casting aspersions on her Majesty’s best subjects at the same time that they pass their own devilish edicts off as her commandments— “[a]s though her Highness would command that which were contrary unto the true doctrine of our church, and contrary unto her lawful statutes and privileges” (*Just Censure*, 179). They have “long since” proven themselves to be “Mar-church and Mar-religion,” and they “are likely to become Mar-prince, Mar-state, Mar-law, Mar-magistrate, Mar-commonwealth” (*Hay Any Work*, 114). Martin thus imagines the world at crossroads, poised between two equally extreme futures: the first, perfection; the second, annihilation.

At the same time that Martin Marprelate ridicules the learning and godliness of the bishops in order to delegitimize the threat they pose to the presbyterian platform, then, he depicts the bishops as lords, tyrants, and beasts in order to legitimize the threat they pose to the kingdom of Christ. The bishops become “pestilent and dangerous beasts” who threaten the civil state (*Hay Any Work*, 125); these “profane beasts” (120) demand to “be called and accounted lords, and bear civil offices” against the “express commandment of our Saviour Christ, and the examples of his apostles” (*Epistle*, 39); these “horrible and blasphemous beasts” (*Hay Any Work*, 137) have “become apostates from their ministers, sinners against their own consciences, persecutors of

our selues condemned before God, if through the frailtie of the worlde, we be not able to frame all things in his Church to such perfectnesse as his holy word appoynteth” (116-17). For presbyterians, this was a wrath-inducing cop out.

their brethren, sacrilegious church robbers, and withstanders of the known truth” (*Epistle*, 43). These “cursed beasts” would hazard the church, the state, and the eternal souls of untold thousands “rather than a few civilians should want maintenance” (*Hay Any Work*, 117, 122-3) and “thereby, besides their own fore-provided damnation, are guilty of the blood of infinite thousands” (*Just Censure*, 178). These “impudent, shameless, and wainscot-faced bishops,” who should be restraining and disciplining the ungodliness of “so many swine, dumb dogs, nonresidents with their journeymen the hedge priests, so many lewd livers, as thieves, murderers, adulterers, drunkards, cormorants, rascals, so many ignorant and atheistical dolts” (*Epistle*, 30), Martin suggests, are themselves in need of discipline.

The Marprelate tracts themselves attempt to enact this discipline. In accordance with Christ’s decree in Matthew 18,¹²³ Martin first speaks directly to the bishops, admonishing them of their faults (particularly their crimes against the presbyterians) and urging their amendment. The “theme” of his *Epistle* is in exactly these two parts: “First, most pitifully complaining, Martin Marprelate, etc. Secondly, may it please your good worships, etc.” (7). The long list of reasonably polite admonitions at the conclusion of this tract—“Favor learning more than you do, and especially godly learning . . . in a word, become good Christians, and so you shall become good subjects, and leave your tyranny” (45)—is only the concluding example in a tract filled with the private airing of grievances and its accompanying brotherly advice. But as the bishops have refused to listen to previous presbyterian complaints, and as he is publishing his complaints to the entire godly community, Martin is simultaneously “telling it unto the church.” It is this

¹²³ Matthew 18:15-18: “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”

public exposure, linked with the threat of further exposure, that is at the heart of both presbyterian and Martinist discipline:

But you see, my worshipful priests of this crew to whom I write, what a perilous fellow M. Marprelate is: he understands of all your knavery, and it may be he keeps a register of them: unless you amend, they shall all come into the light one day. And you, brethren bishops, take this warning from me. If you do not leave your persecuting of godly Christians and good subjects, that seek to live uprightly in the fear of God, and the obedience of her Majesty, all your dealing shall be made known unto the world. And I'se be sure to make you an example to all posterities. (33)

Both presbyterian and Martinist discipline depend upon the unwelcome revelation of that which is meant to remain hidden. They are meant to restrain ungodly behavior by exposing faults to a critical public whose opinion matters either for one's identity or one's authority. Both types of discipline hinge, in other words, on the production of shame.¹²⁴

Martin's ultimate goal, of course, is to help bring about the divinely sanctioned form of ecclesiastical government, the perfect church, and the kingdom of Christ. He ridicules the conformists' argumentative form and inability to provide a scholastic, syllogistical justification of the episcopacy in the hopes that further controversy and proper debate will lead to the

¹²⁴ It is thus not surprising that the Marprelate tracts are filled with the language of shame: Martin asks Whitgift to restore Wilburn "to preaching again for shame"; he breaks off stories "for shame"; he calls the bishops "impudent, shameless, and wainscot-faced" for thinking that the church of England is flourishing; he tells the bishops that they "shame [themselves] when [they] use any continued speech, because [their] style is so rude and barbarous"; he accuses Bridges of being "long since . . . past shame"; "Are you not ashamed to deny the elms to be cut down at Fulham?" he asks the Bishop of London; he tells the bishops that their learning cannot compare with any of the reformers, "which I speak not but to your great shame, with a desire of your amendment"; the bishops "should be ashamed to have it recorded unto ages to come that they have ever shunned to maintain their cause, either by open disputation, or by any other sound conference or writing"; he argues that in his tracts, "the corruption and the unlawfulness of the places and proceedings of lord bishops are shamefully laid open to the world"; and he finally claims victory over the bishops, "to their shame" (*Epistle*, 27, 28, 30, 45; *Hay any Work for Cooper*, 132; *Theses Martinae*, 160; *Protestation*, 199, 200).

downfall of the bishops. But in writing to support the presbyterian discipline, Martin in fact promises to set up a version of the presbyterian discipline on his own. If the bishops do not accept the conditions of his offer of peace—if they do not promote preaching, if they continue to support the unlearned ministry, if they continue to urge subscription to dubious articles, if they continue persecuting, etc.—then he promises to “watch [them] at every half turn, and whatsoever [they] do amiss, [he] will publish it.” He will, in fact, “place a young Martin in every diocese, which may take notice of [their] practices,” a “Martin in every parish,” every one of them “able to mar a prelate” (*Epistle*, 35). These young Martins will act as presbyterian elders: they will mark, oversee, and observe the manners and behaviors of the episcopal hierarchy, and they will reprove the bishops for faults which may otherwise have escaped notice. Martin speaks throughout the tracts as though he is building up an invisible, anonymous network of “Martins,” sons and imitators, twenty of whom will spring to take his place. In the *Epitome*, he is “Martin Marprelate gentleman, primate, and Metropolitan of all the Martins in England” (53); in *Hay Any Work*, he is “Martin Marprelate gentleman, Primate and Metropolitan of all the Martins wheresoever” (101); in the *Protestation* he is “the worthy gentleman Doctor Martin Marprelate, Doctor in all the Faculties, Primate and Metropolitan” (195). He is the father of sons who will one day be his equals; he is the overseer of anonymous watchmen; he is the archbishop of a movement that will undo and overthrow all archbishops.

Yet even as he created new Martins to represent the proliferation of Martinist voices,¹²⁵ both Martinism and the hopes of the presbyterian discipline were falling apart. The manhunt for Martin not only tracked down the secret press but also exposed an extensive network of presbyterian activism and coordination. John Hodgkins, Valentine Simms, and Arthur Thomlin,

¹²⁵ There is no reason to suppose that the tracts by “Martin Junior” and “Martin Senior” are actually by different authors. As Black points out, “the two manuscripts were in the same hand, the hand that Matthew Sutcliffe identified as Job Throkmorton’s” (*Marprelate Tracts*, 167).

who took over the printing of the Marprelate tracts after Robert Waldegrave backed out, were surprised while setting type for *More Work for Cooper*; all were imprisoned and tortured for information about the author of the tracts (though apparently Simms and Thomlin knew very little and Hodgkins, who had employed them, remained silent).¹²⁶ Henry Sharpe, who was responsible for stitching and distributing the tracts, was arrested in the late summer of 1589 and confessed everything he knew (and apparently a good amount he did not).¹²⁷ Based on Sharpe's deposition, Whitgift arrested Elizabeth Crane, who had harbored the secret press at her manor in East Mosley as Waldegrave printed the *Epistle* and Udall's *Demonstration of Discipline*; Sir Richard Knightley, who harbored the press at Fawsley Hall in Northamptonshire as Waldegrave printed the *Epitome*; John Hales, who harbored the press in Coventry while Waldegrave printed *Certain Mineral and Metaphysical Schoolpoints* and *Hay Any Work*; and Roger Wigston and his wife, who harbored the press at Wolston while Hodgkins, Simms, and Thomlin printed *Theses Martinianae* and *The Just Censure*. All were imprisoned and fined enormous sums.¹²⁸ Humphrey Newman, the main distributor of the tracts, was arrested and imprisoned. Job Throckmorton was arrested and convicted in Warwickshire for his involvement in printing the tracts, though he never admitted to authorship and was never punished.¹²⁹ John Penry, who fled to Scotland, was never found guilty as the author of the Marprelate tracts, but in 1593 he was arrested and hanged as a schismatic and an instigator. John Udall was arrested for writing the *Demonstration of Discipline* and died in prison. Rather than enacting the discipline, in other words, Martin helped to bring about its downfall.

And instead of returning the debate about the government of the English Church to

¹²⁶ Pierce, 199-200.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 203.

¹²⁸ Sir Richard Knightley, for example, was fined £2,000. It's likely that Whitgift remitted some of their sentences; see Black (ed.), *Marprelate Tracts*, lii-lvii.

¹²⁹ Pierce, 215.

proper syllogistical argumentation, Martin's exaggeration of Bridges' subtle mockery initiated a proliferation of satirical voices that would continue to echo throughout the following decade.

Concerned that further serious replies to Martin would be met with the same treatment and concerned that Martin's satire could be all too effective in its effort to discredit the authority of the episcopacy, the bishops changed tactics: at Richard Bancroft's recommendation, the bishops enlisted hack writers to answer Martin and his fellows "after theyr owne vayne in writing."¹³⁰

These were the wrong type of "Martins"—those who imitated his style but not his theological convictions. In the late spring or early summer 1589, several anonymous anti-Martinist poems appeared, one called *A Whip for an Ape*, another called *Mar-Martine*. At about the same time, several public theaters staged anti-Martinist plays. None of these have survived, but several of the later anti-Martinist tracts describe their general tenor: in *The Return of the Renowned Caualliero Pasquil of England*, Pasquil suggested that "*Vetus Comaedia* beganne to pricke him at London in the right vaine, when shee brought foorth *Diuinitie* wyth a scratcht face, holding of her hart as if she were sicke, because *Martin* would haue forced her, but myssing of his purpose, he left the print of his nayles vppon her cheekes, and poysoned her with a vomit which he ministred vnot her, to make her cast vppe her dignities and promotions" (1.92); in *An Almond for a Parrat*, Cutbert Cunnycatcher suggested that Martin had been "attired like an Ape on ye stage" (3.354). In August the anti-Martinist *Countercuffe Given to Martin Junior* (by "Pasquil of England") and *Martins Months Minde* (by "Marphoreus") were published, followed by *The Return of Pasquil* (October 1589), *Pappe With An Hatchet* (October 1589), Cutbert Cunnycatcher's *Almond for a Parrat* (early 1590), and *The First Part of Pasquil's Apologie* (July

¹³⁰ The phrase comes from John Whitgift's testimony on behalf of Richard Bancroft when the latter was up for the bishopric of London in 1597. See Black (ed.), *Marprelate Tracts*, lxii.

1590).¹³¹

The bishops' decision to answer Martin according to his folly—as Martin had answered Bridges according to his folly—was denounced by many contemporaries as irresponsible. Francis Bacon famously wrote that he “dislike[d] the invention of him who (as it seemeth) pleased himself in it as in no mean policy, that these men are to be dealt withal at their own weapons, and pledged in their own cup.”¹³² Gabriel Harvey argued that it was “Martins folly, to begin that cutting vaine: some others ouersight, to continue it: . . . If the world should applaude to such roisterdoisterly Vanity, (as Impudency hath beene prettily suffered to sett-vpp the creast of his vaine glory:) what good could grow out of it, but to make euery man madbrayned, and desperate; but a generall contempt of all good order, in Saying, or Dooing but an Vniuersall Topsy-turvy?”¹³³ Modern scholars have tended to agree with Bacon and Harvey, and have tended to deem the anti-Martinist tracts as low-quality imitations of Martinist style. But from a strategic point of view, the bishops' decision was brilliant. By employing writers outside of the episcopacy to respond to Martin, the bishops held themselves above the controversy as it devolved into mockery and name-calling—even, in fact, regaining the moral high ground by shutting down the theaters for performing anti-Martinist plays.

When the anti-Martinist tracts appeared, it became possible to detect Martin's growing anxiety about the consequences of his satirical engagement. Whereas in the early tracts he dismisses his fellow puritans' discomfort with his jesting as easily as he dismisses the bishops—

¹³¹ All of the anti-Martinist tracts were published anonymously, but John Lyly, Thomas Nashe, Robert Greene, and Anthony Munday were most likely responsible. Lyly certainly wrote *Pappe With an Hatchet* and may have written *A Whip for an Ape*; Nashe was responsible for *An Almond for a Parrat*; Lyly and Nashe may have collaborated on *Mar-Martine*; Robert Greene and Anthony Munday have been suggested as possible authors of the *Pasquil* tracts. For a more thorough discussion of the anti-Marprelate tracts—and, in particular, Nashe's involvement—see Chapter 2. See also Black (ed.), *Marprelate Tracts*, lvi-lxxiv.

¹³² Francis Bacon, “An Advertisement Touching the Controversies of the Church of England,” in *Francis Bacon: The Major Works*, ed. Brian Vickers (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 4.

¹³³ Gabriel Harvey, “An Advertisement for Papp-hatchett, and Martin Mar-prelate,” in *The Works of Gabriel Harvey*, ed. Alexander Grosart (New York: AMS Press, 1966), 2.131.

“I am plain, I must needs call a spade a spade, a pope a pope” (*Epitome*, 53)—in the later tracts he cannot help but address the Mar-Martins, “the rimers and stage-players” who attempted to “put [him] out of countenance” (*Theses Martinianae*, 161-2), and his lengthy tirades about each reveal the threat they pose to him. This is a new threat, vastly different from the one posed by Bridges’ *Defence*. He is threatened by the possibility that he is now on the same level as rhymers and stage-players, “poor varlets” who are “so base minded, as at the pleasure of the veriest rogue in England, for one poor penny, they will be glad on open stage to play the ignominious fools for an hour or two together” (162). Once assured that his “course” was lawful, the Martin of the later tracts becomes increasingly skeptical of the propriety of satirical discourse.

A similar tension can be seen in the anti-Martinist’s simultaneous appropriation of and attempt to discredit Martin’s satire: even as they adopt his railing style and employ many of his terms, the anti-Martinists argue that satirical discourse itself poses a threat to the church and state. This question about the propriety of satirical discourse would echo long after Martin himself went silent, through the proliferation of satirical and anti-satirical prose, poetry, and drama of the following decade—through the quarrel between Thomas Nashe and Gabriel Harvey, through the snarling satyres of Joseph Hall and John Marston, and through the Poets’ War between Marston, Ben Jonson, Thomas Dekker, and William Shakespeare.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown that John Bridges’ *Defence of the Government Established in the Church of Englande for Ecclesiasticall Matters* is significant not only for its length but for its wry deconstruction of the presbyterian arguments for reform and subtle mockery of the presbyterians’ pretensions to learning. Bridges, I have shown, was clearly more than the hapless

“occasion” of a notorious ecclesiastical controversy; as the practitioner of a new rhetorical strategy, he was its catalyst. His playful prose and subtle mockery threatened the presbyterians and provoked Martin’s much more aggressive satire. Martin, in turn, responded much more directly to Bridges than most critics have recognized. Although his targets included Whitgift, Aylmer, Cooper, Perne, and the rest of the episcopacy, Martin claimed Bridges provoked him to “take pen in hand” (*Epistle*, 7), and Bridges was never too far from his thoughts. One of Martin’s central goals was to persuade his readers not to take seriously the man who had not taken the presbyterian arguments for reform seriously. In doing so, both Bridges—who hoped to bring peace and unity to the English Church—and Martin—who hoped to return the debate about the English Church to its proper form—ignited an ambivalent and vexed public fascination with satire that would extend through the 1590s and beyond.

This reading of the Marprelate controversy has significant implications for our understanding of satire in the early modern period. It demonstrates that satire emerges out of an antagonism, a war of position in which ridicule becomes the means of undercutting a rival’s claim to legitimacy or authority. It also demonstrates that satirical discourse hinges on two important paradoxes. In order for ridicule to be effective, the satirist must take seriously—and must persuade the reader to take seriously—the very thing he hopes to persuade the reader not to take seriously. As a result, the satirist legitimates the threat posed by the antagonist at the very moment that the satirist works to render the antagonist ridiculous and delegitimize their claim to authority. The second paradox can be seen in the failure of Bridges’s attempt to quell the tide of “reciprocal inuictives” (sig. *4^v) with invective of his own, and in the failure of Martin’s satire to return the debate about the government of the English church to its proper, syllogistical, terms. Both conformists and presbyterians found that the effort to legitimize their claim to religious

authority by delegitimizing their antagonist paradoxically threatened the legitimacy of their own claim: not only was the recourse to ridicule itself seen as shameful, but the attempt to shame their opponent into silence provided that opponent with the opportunity to respond in kind. By persuading their audience to take their opponents less seriously, both conformists and presbyterians ran the risk that they themselves would be taken less seriously. A satirist thus opens himself to satire, satire generates satire, and satirical controversy provokes further satirical controversy.

CHAPTER 2: (UN)PROFITABLE DISCOURSE: ANTI-MARTINISM, ANTI-ANTI-MARTINISM, AND THE BACKGROUND OF THE HARVEY-NASHE QUARREL

Martin Marprelate hoped to return the debate about the government of the English Church to its proper terms, but instead he triggered an extended debate about the propriety of satirical discourse. This debate began immediately, as both the establishment and the puritans objected to his satirical method: “The puritans are angry with me, I mean the puritan preachers. And why? Because I am too open. Because I jest.”¹ Martin defended this method repeatedly throughout the Marprelate tracts, explaining that he jested as a matter of *decorum personae*—“I jested, because I deal against a worshipful jester, D. Bridges, whose writings and sermons tend to no other end than to make men laugh” (53)—and in accordance with scripture: “The Lord being the author both of mirth and gravity, is it not lawful in itself for the truth to use either of these ways, when the circumstances do make it lawful?” (*Hay Any Work*, 115). The debate about the propriety of Martin’s satirical method was further complicated by the bishops’ response. Although Thomas Cooper emphatically denounced Martin’s heterodox theology, his “outrageous spirit of boldnesse,” and his “very vndecent tearmes,”² the bishops covertly commissioned a group of semi-professional writers to answer Martin according to his own folly. The anti-Martinists—probably John Lyly, Thomas Nashe, Robert Greene, and Anthony Munday—went about their task with varying degrees of enthusiasm, but each found themselves in the difficult position of denouncing the very satirical method they employed.

¹ Martin Marprelate (pseud.), *The Epitome*, in *The Martin Marprelate Tracts*, ed. Joseph Black (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 53. All references to the seven Marprelate tracts refer to this edition.

² Thomas Cooper, *An Admonition to the People of England: Wherein Are Answered, Not Onely the Slanderous Vntruethes, Reprochfully vttered by Martin the Libeller, But Also Many Other Crimes by Some of His Broode, Obiected Generally Against All Bishops, and the Chiefe of the Cleargie, Purposely to Deface and Discredit the Present State of the Church* (London, 1589), 36-7.

In this chapter I show how the fallout from the Marprelate controversy intersected with the beginnings of the protracted public quarrel between Thomas Nashe and Gabriel Harvey. Nashe, one of the anti-Martinists, had been attempting to set himself up as a satirical defender of poetry when the Marprelate controversy broke out. In his two early tracts, *The Anatomy of Absurdity* (1589) and the Preface to Robert Greene's *Menaphon* (1589), Nashe attacked the enemies of profitable poetry in the press, in the theater, and in the system of patronage. Although Nashe disagreed with Martin's theological politics, he admired Martin's style and saw the anti-Martinist project as an opportunity to prove that satire could defend the church, the state, and the social order. In his popular *Pierce Penilesse His Supplication to the Divell* (1592), Nashe defended satire as a moral and profitably persuasive form of poetry.

For Gabriel and Richard Harvey, on the other hand, the bishops' decision to commission hack writers to respond to Martin in kind failed to appreciate the inherent lawlessness and destabilizing potential of satirical discourse. Drawn into the controversy by a personal aside in John Lyly's anti-Martinist *Pappe with an Hatchet*, Gabriel Harvey attacked both Martin's satire and the anti-Martinist response as both an inappropriate medium for ecclesiological debate and as a threat to intellectual, religious, and social order. Richard Harvey's *Lamb of God* (1590) went further, decrying all satirical (or Lucianic) speech as a form of ungodliness. But both found it difficult to attack satire without reproducing its terms.³ Gabriel's long response to Lyly vacillates between rational deliberation and irrational outrage, between serious self-defense and satirical attack. Richard Harvey's preface to his *Lamb of God* denounces satire but attacks both Martin and Thomas Nashe as "piperly makeplay[s]" and "makebate[s]."⁴

³ The Preface to Richard Harvey's *Lamb of God* may in fact have been written (or co-written) by Gabriel Harvey. See below.

⁴ Richard Harvey, *Lamb of God* (1590), in *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, ed. Ronald McKerrow (1908; reprint ed. F.P. Wilson; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), 5.180. McKerrow included the Preface to Richard Harvey's *Lamb of*

1. Nashe vs. the Enemies of Art

Some critics have been reluctant to label Thomas Nashe as a satirist,⁵ seeing perhaps in this term an association with “low” or second-rate writing from which they must rescue him. Instead, most modern commentators have followed C.S. Lewis in his influential assertion that Nashe’s work approaches “pure” literature because he writes about and says “Nothing.”⁶ In Jonathan Crewe’s account, for example, Nashe’s writing is only about something insofar as it is about itself, about “his own performance, his own rhetorical predicament, and his own roles.”⁷ But these critics ask the wrong question: what matters was not what Nashe was writing *about*, but what Nashe was writing *to do*.

From this perspective, there may be no more consistent aspect of Nashe’s writing than his general satiric stance. Even when he announced his farewell to “fantasticall Satirisme” in the preface to the first edition of *Christs Teares Over Jerusalem* (1593), in which vein he acknowledged he had “heere-to-fore . . . mispent [his] spirite, and prodigally conspir’d against

God in the fifth volume of *The Works of Thomas Nashe*; for the remainder of the text, however, I will refer to Richard Harvey, *The Lamb of God* (London: 1590).

⁵ See, e.g., Lorna Hutson, *Thomas Nashe in Context* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), who would prefer to think of Nashe as an author of carnival festivity and menippean satire (11), which, I will argue below, is not at all the same thing; Rayna Kalas, *Frame, Glass, Verse: The Technology of Poetic Invention in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 65.

⁶ C.S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), 416.

⁷ Jonathan Crewe, *Unredeemed Rhetoric: Thomas Nashe and the Scandal of Authorship* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 2. Crewe’s book is itself widely cited, though now that literary studies has largely moved beyond deconstruction it is frankly difficult to see why. Crewe’s version of Nashe seems to have little to do with the actual historical author or what he actually wrote, and his definition of rhetoric as style or performance that gets in the way of, distracts from, or detracts from meaning is insufficiently historicized. At no point does he acknowledge the association between rhetoric and persuasion that was so central to Nashe’s understanding of poetics (see my argument below) or indeed to Renaissance poetics more generally before the Civil War (see, e.g., Victoria Kahn, *Rhetoric, Prudence, and Skepticism in the Renaissance* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985]). Crewe’s rather bizarre focus on *Christs Teares Over Jerusalem* (1593) as the centerpiece of Nashe’s work is a case in point: he finds a breaking point in Nashe’s text by suggesting that Nashe inadvertently shows Christ’s “all too human” inability to redeem his chosen city and people (62), but he completely misses the way that the lesson lost on Jerusalem is supposed to function typographically and rhetorically—i.e., persuasively—for London, a point which Nashe makes explicitly in the text (2.80).

good houres,”⁸ he could not shake his conviction that the best way to defend orthodoxy was to attack its enemies.⁹ Even there, the voice of Christ becomes that of a satirist, attacking the sins of Jerusalem in order to warn contemporary Londoners to abstain from sin. As Charles Nicholl suggests, “[s]atire was in Nashe’s bones—he was quarrelsome, insubordinate, his typical mood one of confrontation.”¹⁰

At school Nashe would have encountered the old comedy of Aristophanes, the satirical poetry of Horace, Persius, and Juvenal, and the satirical fables of Lucian, for all of whom at various points he offered at least qualified praise. Nashe was drawn to the way these writers “interfuse delight with reprehension,” and found that his own “invention” was better suited to reprehending vice than to “magnif[ying] vertue” (*Strange Newes*, 1.285).¹¹ His most important satirical model throughout his career was probably Pietro Aretino, the Italian satirist whose works were first published in England in the late 1580s by John Wolfe.¹² As Ian Moulton argues, Aretino stood for everything that Nashe hoped to accomplish in his own writing: “Aretino comes to represent the ideal satirist, set free from economic necessity, and agent of social justice who is himself above the law. Far from taking the conventional view of Aretino as a sodomite and

⁸ *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, ed. Ronald McKerrow (1908; reprint ed. F.P. Wilson; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), 2.12. All references to Nashe’s works are to this edition.

⁹ See Chapter 3, where I argue that Nashe was announcing his farewell to “fantastical” satire, not satire itself.

¹⁰ Charles Nicholl, *Cup of News: The Life of Thomas Nashe* (Boston: Routledge, 1984), 4. I cite Nicholl here approvingly because, along with Hibbard’s outdated literary historicism, his is probably the most thorough and suggestive study of Nashe’s work. But Nicholl does not have much to say about Nashe’s satire, and in fact his central argument is ultimately a version of Lewis’s claim that Nashe says “Nothing”: he argues that Nashe is a proto-journalist and that his pamphlets are early experiments in the nascent “news” industry. Furthermore, Nicholl tends to repeat the arguments of previous scholars as though they are his own (e.g., McGinn’s reading of the Bear and the Ape episode of *Pierce Penilesse*, or Hibbard’s suggestion that the “comédie” Greene and Nashe wrote together was the *Defence of Conney-Catching*). Finally, his claims about Nashe’s ties to the Raleigh circle and necromancy are clearly overstated.

¹¹ In the Preface to the pirated edition of Sidney’s *Astrophel and Stella* (1592), for example, Nashe worried that “generall report” would condemn his “rhetoricke of dulnesse for so colde a commendation” of the Countess of Pembroke (3.331-2). But this preface was as aggressive towards the Countess and her circle of literary admirers as it was deferential. Two years later, in fact, Nashe’s scorn would be much more explicit: “I hate those female braggarts that contend to haue all the Muses beg at their doores, and, with Doues, delight euermore to looke themselues in the glasse of vaine-glorie; yet by their sides weare continually Barbarie purses, which neuer ope to any but pedanticall Parasites” (*Christs Teares*, 2.10-11).

¹² Neil Rhodes, *Elizabethan Grotesque* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), 27; Nicholl, 4.

atheist, Nashe sees him as a defender of religion against ‘atheism, schism, hypocrisy, and vainglory.’”¹³ Nashe praised Aretino unequivocally in *The Unfortunate Traveler* (1594) as “one of the wittiest knaues that euer God made,” one who “writ with nought but the spirit of inke,” sent “a whole legion of deuils into some heard of swine or other” every hour, and singularly “commented of the humanitie of Christ” (2.265-6). This was what Nashe meant in *Lenten Stuffe* (1599) when he declared that “of all stiles [he] most affect[ed]” and strove “to imitate *Aretines*” (3.152): a simultaneously witty and biting style that would embolden the righteous and decimate the unrighteous, written by a visionary who valued the license to speak truth to power over his own life. Aretino was a politically influential writer who was feared by the powerful because of his popularity, a satirist whose rhetorical and financial success went hand in hand. To the charges that Aretino was “lasciuious,” Nashe responded by distinguishing between style and character (a distinction that Harvey would later refuse to acknowledge): “If lasciuious he were, he may answeare with *Ouid, Vita verecunda est, musa iocosa mea est*; My lyfe is chast though wanton be my verse” (*Unfortunate Traveler*, 2.266).

As he made clear throughout his work, Nashe was determined that the best service he could offer to the state was as a poet. This may not have been his first choice: an apparently autobiographical passage in *The Anatomie of Absurdity* (1589) indicates that he was “withdrawne from [his] studies” at Cambridge for lack of financial support after his father died, “as yet altogether raw, and so consequently vnfitte for any calling in the Common wealth.” Unable to complete his MA, Nashe saw in poetry a means for someone who had “tasted the elements of Arte, and laide the foundation of knowledge” (1.37) to profit the commonwealth: as a poet he could entertain and instruct his readers, glorify virtuous praxis, dissuade them from vice, and

¹³ Ian Frederick Moulton, *Before Pornography: Erotic Writing in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 164.

instill in them a desire for knowledge. But Nashe was also convinced that poetry was beset on all sides by the enemies of art. On one side were “brainlesse Bussards” (1.9) who offended poetry “in the impudent publishing of witles vanitie” (1.27) and who thought “to out-braue better pennes with the swelling bumbast of bragging blanke verse” on stage (*PM* 3.311); on another side were Puritans and Ramists who, “in senceless stoicall austeritie, acount[ed] Poetrie impietie, and witte follie” (*AA* 1.27); on still another side were ungrateful patrons who barely returned a word of thanks to those poets who glorified their names in print. Three of Nashe’s early pamphlets demonstrate his conviction that “Arte” and poetry could best be defended by “defacing her enemie[s]” (1.5)—by using satire to attack those who threatened poetry in the press, in the theater, and in the system of patronage.

* * *

The Anatomy of Absurdity was primarily concerned with anatomizing the absurdity of the press.¹⁴ Nashe declares in the dedicatory epistle to Charles Blunt that his “wit” has been “compelled” to “wander abroad vnregarded in this *satyricall* disguise” (1.5) because of some “ingratitude” he had encountered “in the forme of *Cupid*,” and he spends several pages in the early part of the pamphlet rehashing admittedly “worne out” (1.12) complaints about women. But in fact Nashe is less concerned about the threat women pose to men than about the threat the men who praised them pose to the marketplace of print. The *Anatomy* promises to expose the “vnsauery duncerie” of “Authors of the absurder sort” who crowd “the Stacioners shop,” noting offending texts “with a *Nigrum theta*” as though they are houses of the plague so that “each one

¹⁴ Many commentators have dismissed Nashe’s first work as a rather sophomoric exercise in Euphuism (e.g., Hibbard, 17-18), and as such it has received very little attention. (See, e.g., G.R. Hibbard, *Thomas Nashe: A Critical Introduction* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962], 17-18.) But even if the *Anatomy* is indeed self-consciously, unrelentingly, even stubbornly alliterative throughout—it may, in fact, be the most alliterative pamphlet of the Renaissance, if not of all time—the debt to Lyly seems overstated, as Nashe largely drops the Euphuistic use of antithesis and piling up of instances when he drops the attack on women several pages into the tract. (For Nashe’s categorical denial that his style was at all indebted to Lyly, see *SN* 1.319.) My analysis, I hope, suggests the *Anatomy* is worthy of further attention.

at the first sight may eschew it as infectious, to shewe it to the worlde that all men may shunne it” (1.9).¹⁵

Nashe’s first targets are those who “offend in the impudent publishing of witless vanitie” (1.27)—authors of amorous pamphlets, romances, ballads, astrological prognostications, and so on. These “vnlearned sots” threaten poetry—and Nashe—in several related ways. Nashe implies that the presence of “vnlearned” writers in the marketplace of print will spoil the press for university-educated gentlemen who disdain the idea of being associated with “make-shyfts” and “Idlebies”: “those that are more exquisitly furnished with learning shroude themselues in obscuritie, whereas they that are voide of all knowlege, endeuour continually to publish theyr follie” (1.9-10).¹⁶ If the print market continues to be overrun with “brainlesse Bussards” (1.9), Nashe suggests, the press will cease to be a viable option for learned writers who hope to profit the commonwealth and earn a living by writing poetry.

Whereas Sidney had simultaneously figured the poet as a “maker” whose creations were god-like and as a gentleman who “slip[ped] into the title of a poet” during his “idlest times,”¹⁷ Nashe consistently figures the poet as a craftsman and poetry as the product of material labor. As Alexandra Halasz argues, this is an “artisanal model of discursive production,” which “emphasizes the craft, or technique, involved in the making of objects.”¹⁸ Only those artisans initiated into the “mystery” of a craft could make commodities that were “profitable,” defined

¹⁵ Stephen Hilliard similarly notes that Nashe is critical of popular writers in the *Anatomy*, particularly of those who encouraged lust and catered to women readers (Hilliard, *The Singularity of Thomas Nashe* [Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1986], 14). For a similar claim, see Hibbard, 15.

¹⁶ Sidney had made much the same point in his *Defence of Poetry*: “base men with servile wits undertake it [i.e., writing poetry], who think it enough if they can be rewarded of the printer . . . while, in the meantime, they *Quies meliore luto finxit praecordia Titan* are better content to suppress the outflowings of their wit, than, by publishing them, to be accounted knights of the same order.” Philip Sidney, *A Defence of Poetry*, ed. J.A. Van Dorsten (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 63.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 22-4, 17.

¹⁸ Alexandra Halasz, *The Marketplace of Print: Pamphlets and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 100.

throughout so much Renaissance prose by the benefit a commodity offered to the consumer. In this Nashe followed his sometime collaborator and fellow “professional” writer Robert Greene, who defended the “publicke,” pre-capitalist notion of profit in *A Quip for an Vpstart Courtier* (1592).¹⁹ For Greene, something could only be profitable if it served its purpose well: leather and shoes should be durable, coal sacks should be full, ale should be strong, bread should be nourishing, and so on. For Nashe (as for Sidney, Plutarch and Horace), poetry could only be profitable if it mixed “precepts of doctrine with delightfull inuention” (*AA*, 1.27) and therefore *moved* its readers to pursue both knowledge and virtue. And only those writers who had “spent all their time and studies” acquiring wisdom and knowledge were capable of framing fables that were “fraught with wisdom & knowledge” and were therefore profitable to the reader (1.26).

This artisanal model of poetic production also emphasized a reciprocal relationship between writer and reader: profit, in other words, should go both ways.²⁰ The writer, of course, should profit the reader: thus in *The Anatomy of Absurdity* Nashe argues that “in Poems, the things that are most profitable, are shrouded vnder the Fables that are most obscure” (1.26); he suggests that “profitable knowledge” may be “sucked and selected” out of even “the filthiest Fables” (1.30); he calls for everyone to reject pride and embrace learning “to your profit” (1.38); and so on. The consumer of artisanal goods also had a responsibility to compensate the artisan appropriately for the materials and labor put into the commodity. The artisanal model depended

¹⁹ Many commentators, including McKerrow, have concluded that Nashe had Greene in mind when he attacked those writers who should be ashamed “to adorne a pretence of profit mixt with pleasure, when as in their bookes there is scarce to be found one precept pertaining to vertue, but whole quires fraught with amorous discourses” (1.10). I suspect that Nashe was probably not thinking about Greene, who had a university education and therefore at least approximated Nashe’s ideal of a scholar-poet. But the relationship between Nashe and Greene is admittedly complicated. See below.

²⁰ This is nicely figured in the title of the most famous of Greene’s deathbed publications, *Greene’s Groatsworth of Wit*. As David Landreth explains, “The title of the pamphlet announces that its reader is getting just what he paid for. A groat, a coin worth four pence, was presumably the purchase price. It’s a transaction that is ostentatious as taking place between Robert Greene and the buyer of the text, eliding the mediation of the printer and bookseller as well as that of the textual medium; and it’s a symmetrical transaction, fully adequated between the quantum of wit that’s a groats-worth and the face value of the silver coin” (Landreth, *The Face of Mammon: The Matter of Money in English Renaissance Literature* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2012], 212).

for its stability on a reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship between producer and consumer, a zero-sum balance in which everyone took from the system no more and no less than what they put into it. For Sidney, payment for his poetry would compromise his gentility; for Nashe, on the other hand, payment for his poetry qualified him as a member of the guild of poets whose work profited their readers. He expected to be compensated for his labor, as he would make explicitly clear much later, in *Have With You to Saffron-Walden*: “when I doo play my Prizes in Print, Ile be paid for my paines, that’s once; & not make my selfe a gazing stocke and a publique spectacle to all the world for nothing, as [Harvey] does, that giues money to be seene and haue his wit lookt vpon, neuer Printing booke yet for whose Impression he hath not either paid or run in debt” (3.128).

But the omnipresence of absurdity in the stationer’s shop threatens the possibility that learned writers such as Nashe would be appropriately compensated for their labor. This threat is simultaneously about material resources and about competition in the marketplace of print. Even though the capacity of the press in Europe had grown astronomically over the course of the sixteenth century, Nashe is keenly aware of material and market limitations in England;²¹ by “blot[ting] many sheetes of paper in the blazing of Womens praises” (*AA* 1.11), these witless writers in fact *waste* paper that could be put to more profitable use. Nashe sees the press in zero sum terms: if publishers are buying and printing unprofitable drivel, they are not buying and printing the profitable poetry of qualified poetic craftsmen. “Might *Ouids* exile admonish such Idlebies to betake them to a new trade,” Nashe suggests, “the Presse should be farre better

²¹ See Andrew Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), who notes that the print industry in England remained small in comparison to the rest of Europe, thanks to close control by the government and the conservative Stationer’s Company (259). See also Douglas Bruster, “The Structural Transformation of Print in late Elizabethan England,” in *Print, Manuscript, & Performance: The Changing Relations of the Media in Early Modern England*, ed. Arthur Marotti and Michael Bristol (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2000), 49-89, who points out that in the last decades of the sixteenth century the number of imprints in London “remained relatively stable” (56).

employed” (1.10). The same zero-sum terms applies to consumers in the marketplace: if they are buying and reading unprofitable drivel, they are not buying and reading profitable poetry. The popularity of unprofitable romances, astrological tracts, and ballads—the astrologers’ “Monsters” straightaway “become the Alehouse talk of euery Carter” (1.23), for example, and the “Songs and Sonets” of ballad-makers are swallowed by “euery ignorant Ale knight” (1.23)—indicate the extent to which learned writers are in danger of being crowded out of the marketplace of print by authors of absurdity.

The popularity of such unprofitable pamphlets, furthermore, indicates the extent to which consumers in the marketplace of print are unable to distinguish between profitable and unprofitable discourse. Thus it is necessary for Nashe to persuade his undiscerning popular audience to reject the appeal of amorous pamphlets, romances, astrological tracts, and ballads as “witless vanitie.” To do so he figures the authors of such pamphlets as “brainlesse Bussards” (*AA*, 1.9), as “idle wits” (1.9), as unqualified craftsmen who are too ignorant and too witless to instill into their poetry the wisdom necessary to profit the reader. They can perhaps delight their readers with their “painted shewe,” but they are unable to provide even a single “Morrall of greater moment.” These writers, Nashe claims, “obtrude themselues vnto vs, as Authors of eloquence and fountains of our finer phrases, when as they sette before vs nought but a confused masse of wordes without matter, a Chaos of sentences without any profitable sence, resembling drummes, which beeing emptie within, sound big without” (1.10). His dismissal of foolish and unprofitable authors is tinged with the derision reserved for the destitute and disorderly: “amisse it were not, if these which meddle with the Arte they knowe not, were bequethed to Bridwell, there to learne a new occupation” (1.25).

At the same time that this “witless vanitie” is unprofitable foolishness, it is also

menacing. The outpouring of unlearned and unprofitable discourse from the press is not only wasteful but also potentially corrupting: it threatens the accuracy of histories, it “Italianates” Englishmen, it makes lust look like love, it allows vice to mask itself “vnder the visard of vertue” (1.10), it leads poor country farmers to fear floods, comets, and dragons, and it makes lies sound like truths and truths sound like lies. “Thus,” Nashe says about astrological tracts, “are the ignorant deluded, the simple misused, and the sacred Science of Astronomie discredited” (1.23). Authors of absurdity threaten the popularity and the integrity of profitable poetry: as Basilisks drive out all other serpents, Nashe says about ballad-writers, “so these rude Rithmours with their iarring verse, allienate all mens mindes from delighting in numbers excellence” (1.25). Even as he attempts to persuade his readers that they should not take seriously the “witless vanitie” of “brainlesse Bussards,” then, Nashe asks them to take seriously the threat these unlearned authors pose to themselves, to the press, to poetry, and to the future of learning.

Nashe’s second targets in *The Anatomy of Absurdity* are the puritans. In their impudent publishing, in the way they “presumptuously presse[d] into the Presse” (1.21), they too contribute to the general outpouring of absurdity and “waste paper” from the stationer’s shop. Puritans in fact threaten to turn the press into “the dunghill whether they carry all the muck of their mellancholicke imaginations, pretending forsooth to anatomize abuses and stubbe vp sin by the rootes” (1.20). But Philip Stubbes’ *Anatomy of Abuses*, cleverly alluded to here, is not just waste paper. Stubbes not only inveighed against vice in his works, but he attacked the lascivious and corrupting effects of the very same products of the press that Nashe attacks as unprofitable, lascivious, and potentially corrupting. Nashe thus has to distinguish his own “declamatorie veine” from that of the puritans. On one hand, Nashe attacks them for their lack of wit and thus their inability to please their readers (1.21), a charge which he would later levy against Harvey

(*SN*, 1.322). On the other hand, Nashe attacks the puritans for extending their attack too far: “wresting places of Scripture against pride, whoredome, couetousnes, gluttonie, and drunkenesse,” he claims, puritans “extend their inuectiues so farre against the abuse, that almost the things remaine not whereof they admitte anie lawfull vse” (*AA*, 1.20). This was most significant in their determination that *all* poetry was impiety and that *all* wit was folly.

What distinguishes Nashe’s satire from the categorical castigation of the puritans, then, is both his wit and his willingness to discriminate between the abuse of a thing and the thing itself. After attacking the absurdity of the press at length, Nashe offers a sustained, serious defense of poetry, in which he “account[s] of Poetrie” as a “more hidden & diuine kinde of Philosophy, enwrapped in blinde fables and darke stories, wherin the principles of more excellent Arts and morrall precepts of manners” are contained. Like Cicero, Nashe holds that Poets follow “sweetnes of verse, and variety of inuention” in order to “allure men with a greater longing to learning” and “prick men forward to the attaining of knowledge” (1.25-6). This defense of poetry (and of the scholar-poet) again recalls Sidney’s, which Nashe may well have read in manuscript; in fact, *The Anatomy* seems designed to announce Nashe as the great courtier’s successor in defending poetry against puritans. But unlike Sidney, Nashe sets himself up as a satirical defender of poetry. Rather than simply answering the puritan arguments, he attacks the puritans themselves. He derides their learning and their godliness as ignorance and hypocrisy cloaked in zeal. These men, Nashe claims, “neuer tasted of any thing saue the excrements of Artes”; their “thredde-bare knowledge” is “bought at the second hand” and is “spotted, blemished, and defaced, through translators rigorous rude dealing,” and yet they “vaunte [their] reading when the sum of their diuinitie consists in twopennie Caticismes” (1.20). In the face of the puritans’ all too threatening popularity—“more earnestly I agrauate their faulte,” Nashe admits, “because

their crime is crept into credit, and their dooinges deemed deuotion” (1.21-2)—Nashe’s ridicule seeks to convince a popular audience who might be swayed by their pretense to divinity that puritans in fact have neither intellectual nor religious credibility.

Nashe’s third targets in *The Anatomy* are the adherents of Peter Ramus, “vpstart reformers of Arts” who “respect not so much the indagation of the truth, as the ayme of their pride” (1.44). Ramus, the King’s Professor of Philosophy and Eloquence at the University of Paris, had made a name for himself by attacking Aristotle and other traditional teachings in rhetoric throughout the 1540s, 1550s, and 1560s. He hoped to clear university study of scholastic technicalities and simplify instruction in dialectic and rhetoric so that it would be easier to learn, more practical, and more useful in the world outside of the university.²² Ramus linked together dialectic (logic) and rhetoric and reduced the core principles of both to a small number of doctrines. “By reducing the number of doctrines Ramus ensured that pupils would move rapidly on from studying the textbook to observing the way in which Cicero and Virgil used the principles. His teaching was based on an alliance between rhetoric and dialectic, on reading classical literature, and on focusing on what was practical for students.”²³ Because Ramus had converted to Protestantism in the 1560s and died in the Bartholomew Day massacre in 1572, he became a Protestant martyr and hero, and his rhetorical reforms “constituted one of the chief Protestant weapons of attack against the scholastic Aristotelianism still largely fostered by the Church of Rome.”²⁴

²² Ramus “proposed as a test of an education that it should prove ‘useful’ – that it should repay those who undertook it with skills applicable outside the universities. He thereby won the approval of a mercantile class determined to get value for money from their ‘investment’ in their sons’ education (and who continued to support Ramus when the university establishment tried to remove him)” (Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and the Liberal Arts in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Europe* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986], 168).

²³ Peter Mack, *A History of Renaissance Rhetoric, 1380-1620* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 136.

²⁴ Harold Wilson (ed.), *Ciceronianus* (1577), trans. Clarence A Forbes, ed. Harold Wilson, *Studies in the Humanities* 4; *University of Nebraska Studies* (November 1945), 19.

Ramist reform had become popular at Cambridge in the late 1570s and early 1580s thanks in large part to the efforts of Gabriel Harvey,²⁵ who published two Ramist-inspired Latin lectures in 1577, *Ciceronianus* and *The Rhetor*. In the first, *Ciceronianus*, Harvey sought to displace the predominance of Sturm's and Ascham's scholastic rhetorical training by arguing that true Ciceronian eloquence did not lie in the mere superficial imitation of Ciceronian style; the rhetorician needed not only to read Cicero, but needed to read Cicero's teachers, to train himself to think like Cicero, and to be able to discover what was Ciceronian in other writers.²⁶ In his second lecture, *The Rhetor*, Harvey criticized both Aristotle and Cicero for mixing up oratory and rhetoric with the other arts. Just as many shoots are grafted onto a single tree, "so too ha[d] the wisdom of many arts been grafted onto eloquence."²⁷ Harvey insisted that "Invention, Arrangement, and Memory belong not to speech, but to reason; not to the tongue, but to the mind; not to eloquence, but to the intelligence; not to rhetoric, but to dialectic." The two remaining aspects of Aristotle's five-fold division, Style and Delivery, were the only "true and proper and, one might say, natural features of rhetoric."²⁸

Like many contemporary scholars protective of the ascendancy of Aristotle, Nashe found

²⁵ Harold Wilson, "Gabriel Harvey's Orations on Rhetoric," *English Literary History* 12:3 (September 1945), 167-83. Wilson suggests that Harvey was one of the earliest advocates of Ramist philosophy in England: "Whatever were the obscure beginnings of Ramist influence in England, Harvey seems to be the key figure among those of whom we have any record. Until the prior claims of some other teacher are established, he may be regarded as the first promoter of the Ramist vogue at Cambridge, where the Ramist doctrines subsequently became the foundation of undergraduate studies, and from Cambridge travelled to the New World" (182).

²⁶ Harvey, *Ciceronianus*, 69-73. For Harvey this course of study necessarily involved the separation of style from invention and arrangement and thus the separation of rhetoric from dialectic: "Let us make rhetoric the expositor of the oratorical embellishments and the arts which belong to its school, and dialectic the expositor of invention and arrangement" (87). In doing so, Harvey cleverly suggested that he was following "the well-known Aristotelian doctrine of the categories" (93), but in fact he was using Aristotelian logic to displace Aristotelian rhetoric.

²⁷ Gabriel Harvey, *Rhetor* (London, 1577), trans. Mark Reynolds (2001; unpaginated).

²⁸ Although many literary scholars have taken this to mean that Ramus therefore reduced rhetoric to style and delivery, Peter Mack reminds us that Ramus always insisted rhetoric and dialectic be studied together: "In a properly Ramist scheme of teaching, everyone who studies Ramus's rhetoric will also learn about invention and organization from the dialectic text which is studied alongside the rhetoric. So whereas a traditional rhetoric course teaches five skills: invention, disposition, style, delivery, and memory; Ramus's students learn invention and disposition in the dialectic manual, style and delivery in the rhetoric manual" (Mack, *Renaissance Rhetoric*, 145).

such reforms abhorrent. In the *Anatomy*, Nashe attacks Ramists as ambitious and singular sect-makers, thus associating them with religious nonconformists. By separating eloquence from invention, Nashe suggests, Ramists threaten on one hand to separate rhetoric from poetry, making poetry an unprofitable husk of empty ornamentation (not unlike the “witless vanitie” of the sonneteers and ballad-makers), and threaten on the other hand to separate rhetoric from scholarship, rendering all types of learning (including divinity) hopelessly dull: “A man may baule till his voice be hoarse, exhort with teares till his tongue ake and his eies be drie, repeate that hee woulde perswade, till his stalenes dooth secretilie call for a Cloake bagge, and yet moue no more then if he had been all that while mute, if his speech be not seasoned with eloquence, and adorned with elocutions assistance” (1.45). Here is another picture of unprofitable discourse: the Ramist orator who cannot move his audience to listen, let alone remember, and whose speech therefore only pleases himself.

* * *

Nashe extended this attack on Ramism in the Preface to Robert Greene’s *Menaphon* (1589), where he singles out Ramism as an intellectually dishonest shortcut to learning. There he casts Ramism as an “abiection of Arts” (*PM*, 3.318), an education through “trifling compendiaris,” “Epitomes,” “barren compendiums,” and analyses rather than through the wisdom of ancients like Aristotle (3.317-8). Whereas the difficulty of scholastic Aristotelianism had served as a productive deterrent to the worldly ambitions of intellectually underqualified social climbers, Ramism opens up the university to “bungling practitioners in principles” who have “no more cunning in Logicke or dialogue Latine then appertaines to the literall construction of either” and who can never hope to “profit the Common-wealth by their negligent paines” (3.318). So too, Nashe implies, has Ramism become a key tool for the “vpstart discipline of our

reformatorie Churchmen (3.321)—i.e., puritans, those “Diunitie Dunces, that striue to make their pupills pulpit-men before they are reconciled to *Priscian*” (3.318).

But if *The Anatomy* is largely an attack on the enemies of poetry in the press, Nashe’s Preface to *Menaphon* is primarily devoted to attacking the enemies of poetry in the theater.²⁹ Whereas Sidney had written about plays from the perspective of someone who wanted little to do with the public stages, Nashe attacks uneducated playwrights as though they are unfit competitors, threatening to leech away the livelihood of “better pennes” like Marlowe. Thus Nashe attacks “mechanicall mate[s]” (3.311) and “deep read Schoolemen of Grammarians” who have “no more learning in their skull then will serue to take vp a commoditie, nor Art in their braine then was nourished in a seruing mans idlenesse” (3.312) but who nevertheless “busie themselues with the indeuours of Art” (3.315). He attacks “shifting companions” who left “the trade of *Nouerint*, whereto they were borne” and who, like “the Kid in *Aesop*,” leap “into a newe occupation” and translate “whole Hamlets, I should say handfult of Tragicall speeches” from English translations of Seneca (3.315-16). (This may well allude to Thomas Kyd, whose father was a scrivener, who by 1589 was certainly the most prominent Senecan dramatist, and who represented a new class of “unlearned” playwrights.) These writers “that never ware gowne in the Universitie” put themselves in direct competition with more learned writers, and, Nashe complains, indiscriminating theater managers are all too ready to employ these “thredbare wits,

²⁹ Nashe’s Preface to Greene’s *Menaphon* has long been famous for its reference to a pre-Shakespearean *Hamlet* and for its apparent attacks on both Marlowe and Kyd. Many commentators have supposed that Nashe was enlisting himself on Greene’s side in Greene’s well-known feud with Marlowe and the players (see, e.g., Edwin Miller, “The Relationship of Robert Greene and Thomas Nashe (1588-1592),” *Philological Quarterly* 33:4 [October 1954], 353-67; esp. 354). But the relationship between Nashe and Greene is anything but clear; whereas in his quasi-autobiographical pamphlets Greene harbored a deep antipathy toward the players and depicted playwrighting as a last resort, Nashe not only offered unqualified praise of several actors in *Pierce Penilesse* (1.215) but consistently depicted the theater as a potential source of employment for the university-educated poet. Furthermore, there is no evidence that Nashe had any ill will toward Marlowe, whom Nashe had almost certainly known at Cambridge. His attack on the “ideot Art-masters” that “intrude themselues to our eares as the Alcumists of eloquence, who (mounted on the stage of arrogance) thinke to out-braue better pennes with the swelling bumbast of bragging blanke verse” (*PM*, 3.311) may certainly *sound* like a shot at Marlowe—and may even have been designed to satisfy Greene himself, Hibbard suggests (34)—but this seems instead to be directed at Marlowe’s imitators.

to emptie their invention of their apish devices” (3.313).

Equally threatening is the effect these “mechanicall mate[s]” have on poetry itself. In their “seruile imitation of vaine glorious Tragedians,” these uneducated writers confuse profitable eloquence with lofty language and inkhorn terms, “thinking themselues more then initiated in Poets immortality” if they can “embowell the cloudes in a speech of comparison” (3.311). Rather than “that *temperatum dicendi genus*, which *Tullie* in his *Orator* tearmeth true eloquence” (3.12)—moderate, pleasant, flexible, and above all deeply learned—these writers produce overwrought but ultimately empty ornamentation, the “swelling bumbast of bragging blanke verse” (3.311), the “spacious volubilitie of a drumming decasillabon” (3.312). These writers may “intrude themselues” to their audiences’ “eares as the Alcumists of eloquence” (3.311), but they are ultimately con-artists: they cannot create real eloquence out of the base materials of their shallow learning.

The Preface to *Menaphon* is very much about legitimizing Nashe himself as a satirical defender and purifier of art. Nashe deeply distrusts the “vndiscerning iudgment” of the popular audience—which makes “drosse as valuable as gold” and which rates “a tale of Ioane of Brainford” with “the best Poem that euer *Tasso* eternisht” (3.314)—but he also hopes to persuade his popular readers to substitute his university-trained, scholarly judgment for their own. He hopes, that is, to persuade his readers to reject the unprofitable poetry of the “mechanicall mates” who press into the press and “busie themselues with the ineduours of Art” in the theater (3.315).³⁰ He figures himself as the most recent in a long line of purifiers of art, as

³⁰ Nashe’s preface to *Menaphon* ultimately suggested that profitable poetry could be distinguished from unprofitable poetry by paying closer attention to the educational status of its author. In this sense, then, the preface to Greene’s *Menaphon* does seem to be an opening salvo in the transition to what Richard Helgerson calls “an author’s theater” (Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992], 199), though I would qualify Helgerson’s account slightly: Nashe was much less interested in wresting authority away from the players than in undermining the authority of playwrights who “never ware gowne in the Universitie” and in legitimizing the theater as a means of employment for those who had.

the newest St. John's graduate who "either by [his] priuate readings or publique workes" will, like "sir *John Cheeke*, . . . sir *John Mason*, Doctor *Watson*, *Redman*, *Ascam*, *Grindall*, *Leuer*, [and] *Pilkinton*" before him, "repurge[] the errors of Arte . . . and set before our eyes a more perfect methode of studie" (3.317). This purge will come, he indicates, by satirically attacking the enemies of art: "Reade fauourably, to encourage me in the firstlings of my folly, and perswade your selues, I will persecute those idiots and their heires vnto the third generation, that haue made Art bankerout of her ornaments, and sent poetry a begging vp and downe the Countrey" (3.324).

* * *

In *Pierce Penilesse His Supplication to the Divell* (1592), Nashe continued this "bout" with "the enemies of Poetrie" (1.192). He singles out those "dul-headed Divines" who "tearme our best Writers but babling Ballat-makers" and "deeme it no more cunning to wryte an exquisite Poem, than to preach pure *Calvin*"; he argues that these puritanical ministers lack the eloquence and the invention "to tie the eares of [their] Auditoye vnto [them]," and that it takes far more "exquisite paines and puritie of witte" to write "one such rare Poem as *Rosamond*" than "a hundred of your dunsticall Sermons" (1.192). To Ramists intent on separating rhetoric from dialectic, he argues that "there is no studie" that poetry cannot "illustrate and beautifie" (1.192), and he holds up the example of Henry Smith as a singular example of effective poetic preaching (1.193). To those who "demaund, what fruites the Poets of our time bring forth, or wherein they are . . . necessary to the state," Nashe answers with Spenser that poets have "cleansed our language from barbarisme" and with Sidney that the social function of the poet is to encourage virtue and discourage vice (1.193). He insists that it is the poet's duty to exalt the names and the deeds of the gentility (1.194), thus figuring poets at the very foundation of all social order. Not

only do poets serve as disciplinarians in their exposure of vice, but the sweetness of their praise preserves the legacy of the nobility and therefore upholds the social hierarchy itself.

But it is this relationship between poets and the nobility, Nashe suggests, that is under threat. If the *Anatomy* and the Preface to Greene's *Menaphon* attack the enemies of art in the press and in the theater, respectively, *Pierce Penilesse* attacks the enemies of art in the system of patronage. Sidney had known "what belonged to a Scholler"—"what paines, what toyle, what trauel, conduct to perfection"—and could well "giue euery Vertue his encouragement, euery Art his due, euery writer his desert." But Sidney is dead, and there are too few successors to "cherish the Sons of the Muses, or water those budding hopes with their plenty" (1.159). This is a crisis of patronage, and it is getting worse: "ther is not that strict obseruation of honour, which hath beene heeretofore. Men of great calling take it of merite, to haue their names eternizde by Poets; & whatsoeuer pamphlet or dedication encounters them, they put it vp in their sleeues, and scarce giue him thanks that presents it" (1.159). Those writers who "deserue best," Nashe claims, find themselves "kept vnder by Dunces" and "vngrateful Peasants" who had risen into fortune from "the Dung-hil of obscuritie" (1.159-60) and who do not understand the appropriately reciprocal relationship between poets and patrons.³¹

Pierce Penilesse encapsulates the complex attitudes Nashe (and probably many other writers) had towards a system in which "cap and thanks" (1.241) were often the only payment a poet would receive in exchange for a dedication. Nashe attacks the illiberality of upstart courtiers who profit from poetic praise but fail to compensate poets in return: "giue an Ape but a nut, & he will look your head for it; or a dog a bone, and hele wag his taile: but giue me one of my yong

³¹ Edwin Miller argues that the system of patronage on which writers of previous generations had depended was in conflict with a world moving toward a capitalist economic system, and a steadily declining number of nobles "supported the literary arts with any degree of largesse" (*The Professional Writer in Elizabethan England* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959], 94, 129).

Maisters a booke, and he will put of his hat & blush, and so go his waie” (1.241-2). Poets have become beggars, castaways, masterless men in a system that fails to recognize the value of knowledge and poetry. What is necessary, therefore, is a poet who, like Pietro Aretino, “dares” to “openlie vpbraide” these all too “common courses of the world”: “We want an *Aretine* here among vs, that might strip these golden asses out of their gaie trappings, and after he had ridden them to death with railing, leaue them on the dunghill for carion” (1.242).

But Nashe was not entirely willing to dismiss the entire system of patronage. He makes an uneasy distinction between those “Carterly vpstarts” (1.160) who do not know “how to vse a Scholer” (1.241) and those “bright stars of Nobilitie” (1.242) who, like Sidney, know “what belonged to a Scholler” (1.160). At the same time that Nashe rails on illiberal patrons and threatens to leave “some elaborate, polished Poem” as a “liuing Image to all ages” of their “beggerly parsimony and ignoble illiberalitie” (1.195), he appeals to liberal patrons for monetary support. *Pierce* in fact serves as an advertisement to these liberal patrons: Nashe attacks Richard Harvey, for example, to demonstrate “howe for a neede [he] can rayle” (1.199) on behalf of a patron; he promises that “if any *Mecaenas* binde me to him by his bounty, or extend some round liberalitie to mee worth the speaking of, [Nashe] will doo him as much honour as any Poet of [his] beardless yeeres shall in *England*” (1.195); and he concludes with an overwrought dedication to an anonymous patron he refers to as “*Amyntas*” (1.243-4).³² At once rebellious and subservient, at once frustrated and optimistic, Nashe epitomizes the late Elizabethan university graduate who sought to make a living with his pen: he bristles at the frequently fruitless humiliation of the self-debasement required to flatter a patron, yet he optimistically proceeds,

³² Charles Nicholl argues that this anonymous *Amyntas* is Lord Strange (87), though as this is actually an offer of a future dedication (“if my vnable pen shoudl euer enterprise such a continuate taske of praise, I woulde...” [1.244]), it seems likely that this was an appeal for patronage rather than praise of someone who was already supporting Nashe.

knowing that a patron is the best means to a steady income.³³

2. Nashe and Anti-Martinism

At the very moment that Nashe was attempting to set himself up as a satirical defender of art and poetry, satire exploded as a vexed topic of national, political, and religious conversation. Between the time Nashe had finished writing the *Anatomy* and the time he wrote the Preface to *Menaphon*, Martin Marprelate's satirical attacks on the hierarchy of the English Church appeared. Thomas Cooper and Richard Bancroft denounced Martin as a libeler and the presbyterians as schismatics and false prophets, but their attempt to reassert the authority of the episcopacy only drew more attention to Martin and provided him with further material to ridicule. Unwilling to further engage Martin, the bishops covertly enlisted a number of sympathetic writers from the nascent publishing world in London to do to Martin what Martin had done to John Bridges: render him ridiculous by answering the fool according to his folly. At first these were collections of doggerel poetry, such *Mar-Martine* and *A Whip for an Ape*, but eventually the anti-Martinist tracts took on a life of their own, developing complex satirical personas, fictitious backstories, and energetic prose to match Martin's. The anti-Martinist movement spread to the stage, furthermore, where apparently anti-Martinist plays drew such crowds that the bishops had to shut them down.³⁴

³³ Nashe's relationship with patronage throughout his career was complex and unsteady. His patrons at various points probably included Archbishop John Whitgift, Lord Strange, and Sir George Carey, but none of these relationships seemed to last for very long. He offered dedications to Charles Blunt (*Anatomy of Absurdity*), Elizabeth Carey (*Terrors of the Night* and *Christ's Teares Ouer Ierusalem*), and Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton (first edition of *The Unfortunate Traveler*), but he was just as likely to dedicate his texts to the devil (*Pierce Penilesse*), a tapster (*Strange Newes*), or a barber (*Have With You*). Nashe always seemed to be offering his services to a potential patron and always seemed to be frustrated with the necessity of doing so. See Hilliard, 5-9.

³⁴ In *Pappe with an Hatchet*, Lyly bemoans the fact that the bishops will not permit the anti-Martinists to stage those "Comedies" that had already been "pend" (*Pappe with an Hatchet*, in *The Complete Works of John Lyly*, 3 vols., ed. R. Warwick Bond [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967], 3.408).

The anti-Martinist tracts all attempt to shift the terms of the controversy away from the government of the church to the figure of Martin himself. On one hand, they attack Martin for his indecorous jesting about religious matters, for making a mockery of the bishops, the church fathers, “the *Saints* of God, yea the mother of *Christ*,” and “the Scriptures themselues.”³⁵ They attack Martin for his irreverence in writing against his social superiors and his disdain for the authority of the magistrate and the queen; they claim Martin’s ambitions went higher than the bishops, and they figure him as a threat to the church, to the universities, to the state, and to the entire social order.

And think you not he will pull downe at length
 Aswell the top from tower, as Cocke from steeple?
 And when his head hath gotten some more strength,
 To play with Prince as now he doth with people?
 Yes, he that now saith, Why should Bishops bee?
 Will next crie out, Why Kings? The Saincts are free.³⁶

Martin had scoffed at the laws of the land and the authority of the prince; “in plaine and flat termes,” Marphoreus declares, Martin had made “a iest of *Princes*: and *the troubling of the State*, and *offending of her Maiestie*, hee turneth of with a frumping, *forsooth*, as though it were a toie to think of it.”³⁷ “I neuer saw so bolde, so open, so barbarous contempt of magistracie, in any other part of the whole world, as I haue seene here,” Pasquil claims; “such canuaces made, such stales set, such traynes layde, such platformes drawne by the factious, to bring theyr Superiours

³⁵ Marphoreus (pseud.), *Martins Months Minde, That Is, A Certaine Report, and True Description of the Death, and Funeralls, of Olde Martin Marre-prelate, the Great Makebate of England, and Father of the Factious* (London, 1589), sig. B3^r.

³⁶ *A Whip for an Ape: or Martin displaid* (London: 1589), 5.

³⁷ *Martins Months Minde*, sig. C1^v.

into contempt.”³⁸ What Martin’s attack on the bishops ultimately revealed, the anti-Martinists suggest, is the presbyterians’ disdain for all degrees, ecclesiastical or social, and their desire to “drawe euery place in this Campe royal to an equalitie with themselues.”³⁹

On the other hand, the anti-Martinists set about transforming Martin from the crowd-pleasing spokesman of a godly campaign against corruption in Christ’s Church into an ape, a vice-figure, and a harmless, impotent fool. They put Martin onstage, both literally and figuratively: “These tinkers termes, and barbers iestes first *Tarleton* on the stage, / Then *Martin* in his bookes of lies, hath put in euery page,” one of the *Mar-Martine* poems claims;⁴⁰ in *Martins Months Minde*, Marphoreus has a dying Martin confess to his sons that he learned his terms “in Alehouses, and at the Theater of Lanam and his fellowes.”⁴¹ They argue that Martin’s satire not only lacked wit⁴² but had failed in its intent: rather than serving as an effective weapon against the proper authority of the bishops, the anti-Martinists insist, Martin’s satire had inadvertently exposed the underlying foolishness of the presbyterian cause. Thanks to Martin, the general public could now see that the presbyterians are “ignorant and vnlearned men, vnfitte for any eminent charge in the Church themselues”,⁴³ they are “fooles & boyes” grasping at power,⁴⁴ “boyish deuines” who “leape into the pulpet” and “talke very desperately of discipline before they can construe *Qui mihi discipulus*.”⁴⁵

Even as they denounce Martin’s satire as both indecorous and ineffective, however, the anti-Martinists stress the decorousness and efficacy of their own ridicule. Martin is the fool; the anti-Martinists are simply answering a fool according to his folly. “[I]f here I haue vsed bad

³⁸ *Return of Pasquil*, 1.80.

³⁹ *Return of the Renowned Caualliero Pasquill of England* (1589), in *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, 1.91.

⁴⁰ *Mar-Martine* (London, 1589), sig. A4^v.

⁴¹ *Martins Months Minde*, sig. F2^r.

⁴² e.g., *Mar-Martine*, sig. A4^v.

⁴³ *Return of Pasquil*, 1.91.

⁴⁴ *Mar-Martine*, sig. A3^v.

⁴⁵ *An Almond for a Parrat*, 3.358.

tearmes,” Lyly claims in *Pappe with an Hatchet*, “it is because they are not to bee answered with good tearmes: for whatsoever shall seeme lauish in this Pamphlet, let it be thought borrowed of *Martins* language.”⁴⁶ When a frustrated Martin Junior lashed out against Mar-Martin and the players in *Theses Martiniana* (161-2), the anti-Martinists had proof of the effectiveness of this strategy; in *Martins Months Minde*, Marphoreus provides an extensive and elaborate overview of the specific ways in which “these Jigges and Rimes, have nipt the father in the head & kild him cleane.”⁴⁷ Martin’s defiant but desperate reappearance in the badly-printed *Protestation* in September 1589—after the secret press had been discovered near Manchester—only became further evidence that the anti-Martinists had succeeded in driving Martin to desperation, and they boasted that they would rail Martinists everywhere into silence and submission.

The swaggering satirical braggadocio of the anti-Martinists at Martin’s decline reveals the inherent and uncomfortable contradiction of the anti-Martinist campaign. Even as they attacked Martin for his scurrility, the anti-Martinists not only reproduced that scurrility but promised to silence him by out-performing him in it.⁴⁸ They echoed his railing terms and his threats of verbal violence, claiming to take up the glove he had cast down and promising to give Martin and his sons “Cuffes” that would be “so soundlie set on, as I doubt not shall make them stagger.”⁴⁹ They echoed Martin in their pseudonymns, in their ventriloquized conversations, in the mocking stories they told of puritans, and even in their insistence that their opponent was ultimately responsible for their own breach of polite decorum.⁵⁰ The problem, then, was that by

⁴⁶ *Pappe With an Hatchet*, 3.396.

⁴⁷ *Martins Months Minde*, sigs. E3^v-E4^r.

⁴⁸ Numerous other critics have made similar observations. See, e.g., Peter Lake with Michael Questier, *The AntiChrist’s Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists, and Players in Post-Reformation England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 522; Brian Griffin, “Marring and Mending: Treacherous Likeness in Two Renaissance Controversies.” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 60:4 (1997), 363-80.

⁴⁹ *Martins Months Minde*, sig. A2^r.

⁵⁰ Martin had argued that he could not keep “*decorum personae*” in dealing with Bridges without being “sometimes tediously dunstical and absurd,” and he instructed his reader that if he were to be “too absurd in any place (either in

reproducing Martin's satirical terms in order to refute him and undermine his popular appeal, the anti-Martinists became too much like him. This was not lost on the anti-Martinists themselves—Lyly was clearly ambivalent about using “bad tearmes” to answer Martin—or on their contemporaries, many of whom disapproved of the bishops' implicit sponsorship of the anti-Martinist campaign.⁵¹ Even some modern commentators have suggested that the anti-Martinists were ultimately responsible for “lower[ing] the tone of the controversy to gutter abuse.”⁵²

* * *

Nashe's role in the anti-Martinist campaign has long been a subject of critical debate. There was a tradition stretching back to the early seventeenth century that Nashe had been primarily responsible for putting down Martin, and his name has at one time or another been associated with nearly every anti-Martinist tract. But McKerrow began to doubt that Nashe had anything to do with the Pasquil tracts;⁵³ he thought it was possible that Nashe *may* have been the author of *An Almond for a Parrat*, but could not find any conclusive internal evidence.⁵⁴ Donald McGinn eventually provided this conclusive evidence by connecting Nashe's prose style and verbal coinages with *An Almond*.⁵⁵ Nashe's *Almond* is generally agreed to be the “best” of the

this Epistle, or that Epitome),” they should “ride to Sarum, and thank his Deanship for it” (*Epistle*, 7).

⁵¹ The bishops' sponsorship of the anti-Martinist campaign was never openly recognized, but as R. Warwick Bond suggests, remarks by Gabriel Harvey, Francis Bacon, and others indicate that “the Bishops' engagement of Lyly and Nash was an open secret” (R. Warwick Bond [ed.], *The Complete Works of John Lyly* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967], 3.391). Bacon's language is particularly telling: he applauded Cooper for remembering that ““a fool was to be answered, but not by becoming like unto him”” and for considering “the matter that he handled, and not the person with whom he dealt,” but he “dislike[d] the invention of him who (as it seemeth) pleased himself in it as in no mean policy, that these men are to be dealt withal at their own weapons, and pledged in their own cup” (Francis Bacon, “An Advertisement Touching the Controversies of the Church of England” [1590?], in *Francis Bacon: The Major Works*, ed. Brian Vickers [New York: Oxford University Press, 2008], 4).

⁵² Brian Vickers (ed.), *Francis Bacon: The Major Works* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 496.

⁵³ Ronald McKerrow (ed.), *The Works of Thomas Nashe* (1908; reprint ed. F.P. Wilson; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958) 5.44-65.

⁵⁴ The change in McKerrow's thinking is reflected in the fact that the Pasquil tracts are included in the first volume of Nashe's *Works* but the *Almond* is not included until the third volume, under “doubtful” works.

⁵⁵ Donald McGinn, “Nashe's Share of the Marprelate Controversy,” *PMLA* 59:4 (Dec, 1944), 952-84. Nashe in fact indirectly acknowledges his authorship of *An Almond* in *Strange Newes*, where he refers to “Pierce his Father” (i.e., himself) as “*Dame Laws. Poet*” who wrote “many goodly stories of her in *An Almond for a Parrat*” (1.268). This type of triangulation might help establish Nashe's other contribution: because the author of *An Almond* referred to

anti-Martinist tracts, perhaps because Nashe was better able to reproduce Martin's particular style and turn it back against the presbyterian campaign than any of the other anti-Martinists. It has in fact become something of a critical commonplace to suggest that Nashe "found" his voice in writing against Martin.⁵⁶

For Nashe, the threat posed by Martin was not quite the same as that posed by puritans like Philip Stubbes. Whereas Stubbes had attacked poetry as impiety, Martin employed the very type of raucous wit in his attack on the bishops that Stubbes despised. Martin's style, in fact, was exactly the type that Nashe had praised in Greene—an "extemporall veine" that excelled "our greatest-Art-maisters deliberate thoughts," an invention "quicker then his eye," which challenged "the prowdest Rhetorician to the contention of like perfection with expedition" (3.312).⁵⁷ The threat posed by Martin, then, was that he had learned how to please his audience. Both the "vnexperienced and illiterated Punies" that comprised the popular audience and the "quadrant crepundios" who could be equally stupid in matters of taste were "so affectionate to dogged detracting," Nashe complains in the Preface to *Menaphon*, "as the most poysonous *Pasquil* any durty mouthed *Martin* or *Momus* euer composed is gathered vp with greedinesse before it fall to the ground, and bought at the dearest" (3.314).⁵⁸

In *An Almond for a Parrat*, Nashe attacks Martin's "ribauldry termes" and "intemperate stile" (*AP*, 3.347), but his problem is never with satire itself; after all, he argued on numerous

himself at several points as "Mar-Martine" (e.g., 3.350), it's likely that Nashe did indeed have something to do with that early anti-Martinist tract (see also Black [ed.], *Marprelate Tracts*, lxii).

⁵⁶ See, e.g., Travis Summersgill, "The Influence of the Marprelate Controversy upon the Style of Thomas Nashe," *Studies in Philology* 48:2 (April 1951), 145-60; Hibbard, 180; and Hilliard, 34-5. Summersgill probably overstates Nashe's commitment to professional authorship and he certainly understates the sincerity of Nashe's commitment to conformism, but he is right to argue that Nashe incorporated many of Martin's rhetorical techniques in his later work.

⁵⁷ Nashe certainly recognized and respected Martin's wit: he not only adopted Martin's satirical swagger and even borrowed several of his jokes, but much later he scoffed at the idea that anyone could have suspected Harvey of being Martin, for nobody ever "imputed to [Harvey] so much wit" (*HWY* 3.138).

⁵⁸ Citing this line, Hibbard suggests plausibly that Nashe's Preface to *Menaphon* was effectively an advertisement of his satirical abilities and anti-puritanical sentiment to the episcopal authorities at a time when he hoped to be enlisted as an anti-Martinist (27).

occasions that the poet's two principal tasks are to extol virtue and denounce vice, to exalt the names of the gentility and to make vicious men infamous. Instead, the problem is that such an "intemperate stile" was being employed by unqualified men for unsuitable purposes. Even if Martin was witty, he represented "sinfull simplicitie, pufte vppe with the pride of singularity" (3.358). Martin spoke on behalf of a group of men who opposed university learning (the only proper training for a poet) and hoped to put underqualified and undereducated "Fishermen, scullers, Coopers, Stitchers, Weauers, and Coblers" (3.351) in positions of ecclesiastical and civil authority. Like the "mechanicall mate[s]" who attempt to "out-braue better pennes" by affecting an overwrought but ultimately empty eloquence (*PM*, 3.311), the Martinists were simply not qualified to instill their poetry or prose with any profitable sense, and could therefore never hope to profit their readers. The anti-Martinists, on the other hand, were university-educated and therefore "better pennes."

So too does Nashe distinguish between the unprofitable and dangerous satire of the Martinists and the profitable satire of the anti-Martinists based their respective relationships to authority and orthodoxy. Whereas the presbyterians had stressed that the discipline was a matter of obedience to Christ's Laws,⁵⁹ Nashe figures the presbyterians' plan for church government as "theyr discipline disobedience" (3.350), stresses the presbyterians' disobedience to the laws of the realm, and insists that Martin's satire is both an act and an instrument of disobedience. He exposes John Udall as a backbiter and slanderer of his "honest neighbors" and as an open opponent of the established government (3.365); he exposes Thomas Cartwright as an ambitious scholar whose disdain for degrees of art and ecclesiastical superiority was a result of his disappointed hopes for the vice-chancellorship of Cambridge (3.359); and he was the first to

⁵⁹ In some ways, Martin had figured his own satire as an enactment of the discipline, as a means of shaming the bishops and the members of the English Church into obedience. See Chapter 1.

expose Martin as none other than “his welchness” (3.355), John Penry: “let al posteritie that shall heare of his hauerie attend the discouery which now I will make of his villanie. *Pen., I. Pen., welch Pen., Pen.* the Protestationer, Demonstrationer, Supplicationer, Appellationer, *Pen.* the father, *Pen.* the sonne, *Pen. Martin Iunior, Martin Martinus, Pen.* the scholler of Oxford to his friend in Cambridge, *Pen. totum in toto, & totum in qualibet parte*, was somtimes (if I be not deceiued) a scholler of that house in Cambridge whereof D. *Per.* was maister” (3.365).⁶⁰

Nashe’s satire thus suggests that Martin’s disdain for the authority of the bishops was not a result of revelation or obedience to the gospels but was instead the product of a man who had a history of disdain for authority. While at Cambridge, Penry had been a “studious disgracer of antiquitie,” an “vnnatural enemie to *Aristotle*” and a “new-fangled friend vnto *Ramus*,” a generally “mutinous block-head” who was known throughout town and college as a “seditious dunce” because of his opposition to any and all types of authority: “For one while he wold be libelling against *Arist.* and all his followers he knew, another while hee would all to be-rime Doctour *Perne*, for his new statutes, make a by-word of his bald pate, yea, had the Dean, President, or any other officer neuer so litle angerd him, they were sure ere the weeke went about to haue hard of it, in some libell or other” (3.368). Whereas Cooper’s text directed its readers to “vniformity” and “obedience” (3.345), Nashe argues, Martin/Penry’s “huperbolical blasphemies” and “prophane scurrility” (3.345) ignored Paul’s commandment to obey the civil magistrate (3.349) and stirred up the masses to rebellion (3.356). The poet was supposed to delight and profit his reader by urging him towards virtue, but Martin/Penry fomented strife instead: “By this

⁶⁰ Although he fingered Penry as the main author of the Martinist tracts, Nashe in fact held a rather modern view of the collaborative nature of the Martinist project: “Neither would I haue you thinke there was no more heades in it then his owne, For I can assure you to the contrary, that moste of the Puritane preachers in Northampton shire, Warwick shire, Sufolke and Northffolke, haue eyther brought stone, strawe, or morter to the building of this *Martin*” (3.368). Modern scholars generally agree that the Marprelate tracts were the collaborative effort of Job Throckmorton and John Penry. For an overview of the attribution history, see Black (ed.), *Marprelate Tracts*, xxxiv-xlvi.

time, I thinke, goodman Puritan, thou art perswaded that I knowe as well as thy owne conscience thee, namely *Martin Makebate* of Englande, to bee a moste scuruie and beggarlie benefactor to obedience, & *per consequens*, to feare neyther men nor that God who can cast both bodie and soule into vnquenchnable fire” (3.353).

In contrast, Nashe repeatedly stresses his own ties to proper authority. He is not only writing on the bishops’ behalf but is actively rooting out puritan opposition, “tracing too and fro” those who sought to “peruerte the name and methode of magistracy” (3.358). On more than one occasion Nashe indicates that his own satirical rhetoric is restrained, held in check by his proper appreciation for authority. He wishes, for example, that he were “permitted” to challenge Martin “for the best benefice in England” such that he could “driue this *Danus* from his dunghill, and make him faune like a dog for fauour at the magistrates feete,” but he ultimately recognizes that “Authority best knows how to diet these bedlamites” (3.369). The central distinction between Nashe’s satire and Martin’s, then, is its relationship to established authority. Whereas Martin’s satire attempted to undermine the authority of the established government of the church and, therefore, of the realm, Nashe’s satire works to uphold the established authority by dissuading a popular audience from following a dangerously appealing, disobedient opponent of all good order. For Nashe, in fact, the anti-Martinist campaign is the perfect opportunity for the poet to defend the state against its enemies.

* * *

Aside from *Mar-Martine* and *An Almond for a Parrat*, Nashe had one other venture into anti-Martinism: the allegorical tale of the Bear and the Ape told by the Knight of the Post in *Pierce Penilesse*. This passage seems to have been something of a thorn in Nashe’s side, as he was still complaining about “peruerse applications” years later (in *Lenten Stuffe*, 3.214), and it

has puzzled many modern scholars. According to Donald McGinn's reading of the allegory, the Bear represents Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester, and the first part of the tale draws heavily on the anonymous (and scandalous) *Lieicester's Commonwealth* (1584). In the second part of the tale, Nashe figures Leicester as covetous of the bishops' livings and supportive of Cartwright, Penry, and the wasp-like puritans.⁶¹ As Nicholl remarks, Nashe charges Leicester "with championing Puritan reform in order to feather his own nest with episcopal wealth: a common and not implausible charge against Puritan-tending noblemen."⁶²

McGinn's reading of the allegory is compelling. But neither McGinn nor Nicholl are able to explain why Nashe would have included such an attack on Leicester in *Pierce Penilesse*, as Leicester had been dead since 1588 and Martin Marprelate had not been heard from for the better part of two years. Nicholl is certainly right to point out that "the anti-Puritan message was still as relevant in 1592," as Cartwright was again free, Penry and Robert Waldegrave were still at large, and Udall had received an official pardon (though he died in prison before he could be released). But his tentative suggestion that Nashe's fable was intended to attack Sir Walter Raleigh as a "latter-day Leicester" is less compelling.⁶³ Instead, Nashe was almost certainly responding to Edmund Spenser's *Prosopopoia, or Mother Hubberds Tale* (1591), published only the year before, which includes in its allegorical attack on the Cecils a sustained puritan-leaning critique of ecclesiastical livings.

Spenser had written much of *Mother Hubberd* more than a decade earlier, during the

⁶¹ McGinn argues that the bloodthirsty Bear represents Leicester; the unsuspecting Lyon is of course Queen Elizabeth; the Ape (the Bear's co-conspirator) probably represents Nicholas Throckmorton; the horse (or "camell") trapped and killed by the Bear is probably Thomas Howard, the Duke of Norfolk, whom Leicester and Throckmorton supposedly entrapped in the early 1570s; the Deer, poisoned by the Bear, probably represents Walter Devereux, the first Earl of Essex, whom Leicester was rumored to have poisoned before marrying Essex's widow; the Unicorn may represent Lady Lennox, a member of the Scottish royal family whom Leicester had supposedly murdered. See Donald McGinn, "The Allegory of the 'Beare' and the 'Foxe' in Nashe's *Pierce Penilesse*," *PMLA* 61:2 (June 1946), 431-53.

⁶² Nicholl, 114. Nicholl echoes McGinn's identifications.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 114-15.

crisis of the proposed match between the queen and the French Duke of Alençon, but he had revised the poem for publication in 1591.⁶⁴ This probably included the section where the Fox and the Ape encounter an unlearned clergymen, a clear depiction of the type of “reading minister” puritans so frequently complained about: he can hardly read or write, he knows neither Latin nor Greek, and he avoids learned controversies. “All his care was, his seruice well to saine, / And to read Homelies vpon holidayes: / When that was done, he might attend his playes; / An easie life, and fit high God to please” (392-5). Like Whitgift and other conformists, this “priest” argued that ministers could not save the souls of their parishioners but could only offer the opportunity for salvation: “To feede mens soules (quoth he) is not in man: / For they must feed themselues, doo what we can. / We are but charg’d to lay the meate before” (433-5).

Spenser did not, by any means, venture into the type of brazen satirical assault on individual figures in the ecclesiastical hierarchy that was characteristic of Martinism. But his satirical depiction of this worldly conformist minister pushed back against the swaggering confidence of the anti-Martinists and continued the puritan condemnation of clerical abuses that Martin had popularized. From the poem’s point of view, the conformist priest clearly abuses his profession: rather than saying the holy service every day, as ministers did “of yore” (447), he barely does so once a week “vpon the Sabbath day,” as “It is enough to doo our small deuotion, / And then to follow any merrie motion” (456-8). This priest is far more focused on the worldly benefits of ecclesiastical life. He wears “the finest silkes” (461); he is not “tyde to wilfull chastitie,” but has his “louely Lass” lying by his side (476-7); and he recommends the clergy as an avenue for social mobility: “How manie honest men see ye arize / Daylie thereby, and grow to goodly prize? / To Deanes, to Archdeacons, to Commissaries, / To Lords, to Principalls, to

⁶⁴ Richard A. McCabe (ed.), *Edmund Spenser: The Shorter Poems* (New York: Penguin, 1999), 610. All references to *Mother Hubberds Tale* are to this edition.

Prebendaries” (419-22). The priest suggests that most of these positions need to be bought, but if the Ape and the Fox hope for a benefice at court, they must learn “to laugh, to lie, / To face, to forge, to scoffe, to companie, / To crouche, to please, to be a beetle stock / Of thy great Masters will, to scorne, or mock” (505-8)—the last of these probably alluding to Whitgift and the anti-Martinist campaign. The Fox and the Ape readily agree that this sounds like a good deal, obtain a benefice between them, and are shortly run out of office by their parishioners, who complain about their gross abuse of office and accuse them of “crimes and heresies” (564).

Nashe’s allegorical tale of a Bear and an Ape in *Pierce Penilesse* serves as an answer to Spenser’s tale of a Bear and a Fox in *Mother Hubberds Tale*. Nashe both echoes and builds upon the charges in *Leicester’s Commonwealth* (c. 1584)⁶⁵ in order to figure Spenser’s patron as a bloodthirsty and covetous sponsor of the Martinist campaign. In the second part of Nashe’s tale, the Bear’s (Leicester’s) thirst changes from blood to honey, and he works to convince the “Husbandmen of the soyle” (Englishmen) to spoil the Bees (the bishops, whom Martin had referred to as the “Lord Bbs”) of their “pretious Honny-combes” as well as their honey (not only episcopal wealth but the spiritual fruit of episcopal labor):

Nowe did hee cast in his head, that if hee might bring the Husbandmen of the soyle in opinion that they might buie honey cheaper than beeing at such charges in keeping of Bees, or that those Bees which they kept were most of them Drones, and what should such idle Drones doe with such stately Hyues, or lye sucking at such pretious Honny-combes; that if they were tooke away from them, and distributed equally abroade, they would releue a great many of painfull labourers that had neede of them, and would continually liue seruiceable at theyr commaund, if they might enioy such a benefite. Naye more, let them giue Waspes

⁶⁵ *Leicester’s Commonwealth*, ed. D.C. Peck (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1985).

but onely the waxe, and dispose of the honie as they thinke good, and they shall humme and buzze a thousand times lowder than they, and haue the hiue fuller at the yeares ende (with young ones, I meane) than the Bees are woont in ten yeere.
(*PP*, 1.224)

The Drones here represent reading ministers; the equal distribution of honey obviously echoes the presbyterian argument for ministerial equality; and the buzzing Wasps represent the far more pernicious puritan ministers, known for talking through their noses, who (Nashe suggests) were more likely to convert simple minds than save men's souls. The argument for reform becomes less a response to clerical abuses than the malicious plot of a known murderer to line his pockets with episcopal wealth.

Nashe's allegorical account of the Marprelate controversy is itself relatively straightforward. The Bear employs the Fox (Thomas Cartwright) to help "bring it to passe" by promising to make him "the Kings Poulterer for euer" (1.224).⁶⁶ The Fox, in turn, "[grows] in league with an old Chamelion" (Martin Marprelate) and instructs him to shift shapes, sport, and sting in order to persuade men "that the honny that their Bees brought foorth was poysonous and corrupt" (1.225). The Fox and the Chamelion tell tales which tempt the uninstructed multitude—" [t]hese perswasions made the good honest Husbandmen to pause, and mistrust their owne wits very much, in nourishing such dangerous Animals" (1.225)—but eventually they are discovered by the Fly (perhaps Nashe himself), who informs on them to Linceus (Whitgift). Nashe gives a not unflattering depiction of the High Commission's crackdown on nonconformism: "[Linceus] awaking his hundred eies at these vnexpected tidings gane persue them wheresoeuer they went, and trace their intents as they proceeded into action, so that ere half their baits were cast forth,

⁶⁶ Nicholl points out that Leicester had appointed Cartwright Master of his hospital in Warwick—and had given him the patent for life—in 1586 (114).

they were apprehended and imprisoned, and all their whole counsaile detected” (1.226).

Eventually the Bear dies out of anger and impatience, “leauing the Foxe and the Camelion to the destinie of their desert, and mercie of their Iudges” (1.226).⁶⁷

Even though Nashe had the utmost admiration for Spenser and insisted that his speech “sauour[ed] of friendship,” he admitted that he was not necessarily “alied” with Spenser in “iudgement” (1.244). He clearly disagreed with Spenser’s judgment on the state of the English Church, and his depiction of Leicester as first a bloodthirsty burgomaster and then a covetous sponsor of Cartwright and Martin/Penry replaced Spenser’s depiction of the Cecils as conniving upstarts and of the conformists as corrupt wordlings. Nashe’s later remarks about the tale suggest that he was probably less interested in attacking Spenser than in using his refutation of Spenser to continue to challenge Martin’s popular appeal.⁶⁸ In the tale of the Bear and the Ape, Nashe rather attacked “the hedlong vulgar” for their “folly” in attending to “these iugling Mountebanks” (i.e., Cartwright and Martin/Penry) and allowing themselves to be “drawne to contemne Art and experience, in comparison of the ignorance of a number of audacious idiots” (1.225-6). Even as he continued to disparage Cartwright and Penry/Martin as “two deceiuers” who did “much harme vnder the habite of Simplicity” (1.224), Nashe despaired at the credulousness of “the light vnconstant multitude, that will daunce after euerie mans pipe” (1.225). The efficacy and persuasive power of satire lent further proof that such power could only be profitable when it was written by—and therefore should only be entrusted to—properly educated and virtuous poets. Although he disagreed with his theological politics, Nashe acknowledged that Spenser was qualified to write satire. Martin Marprelate, on the other hand,

⁶⁷ These identifications are indebted to—and largely agree with—those in McGinn, “Allegory of the ‘Beare’ and the ‘Foxe’,” 431-53.

⁶⁸ When Gabriel Harvey suggested that “Mother Hubbard in heat of choller” had “wilfully ouer-shott her malcontented selfe” (*FL* 1.164), Nashe responded that Harvey had unnecessarily “rekindle[d] against [Spenser] the sparkes of displeasure that were quenched” (*SN* 1.281).

was not.

3. Unprofitable Discourse: Richard Harvey, Gabriel Harvey, and Anti-Anti-Martinism

Whereas Nashe argued that the poet's role was to praise virtue and blame vice, Gabriel Harvey tended to see poetry in terms of an economy of praise: the poet's (and the critic's) job was to win praise for himself by praising others. As Paul McLane suggests, Harvey's conception of the proper function of the writer was similar to Spenser's: "It was . . . 'to praise and immortalize heroic deeds; to honor virtue and valor; to enhance the excellence of the English tongue and to excel the greatest writers in Europe.'"⁶⁹ Harvey had clearly learned as a student at Cambridge that a well-placed letter to a social superior might be the only means of moving up in the world—his *Letter-Book* is filled with ornately flattering letters to such figures—and he later orchestrated elaborate exchanges of mutual praise with fellow writers, which he would publish as prefatory matter to his own work.⁷⁰ Harvey was from relatively humble origins (his father was a rope-maker in Saffron-Walden), but he was determined to succeed to an important place at the University or at court by winning praise and by establishing a reputation for learning and eloquence.⁷¹ As a young lecturer at Cambridge, he printed his two Latin orations, *Ciceronianus* and *The Rhetor*, before it was not yet common to do so.⁷² With *Ciceronianus* he suggested that the publication was solicited by his friend, fellow scholar, and well-wisher William Lewin, but

⁶⁹ Paul McLane, *Spenser's Shepherdes Calender: A Study in Elizabethan Allegory* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1961), 260.

⁷⁰ See my discussion of *Pierces Supererogation* in Chapter 3.

⁷¹ Moore Smith (ed.), *Gabriel Harvey's Marginalia* (Stratford-Upon-Avon: Shakespeare Head Press, 1913), 55; Wilson, "Introduction to *Ciceronianus*," 34; Frank Whigham, *Ambition and Privilege: The Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy Theory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 12-13; Grafton and Jardine, 185.

⁷² Wilson, "Introduction to *Ciceronianus*," 11-12.

with *The Rhetor* he rather less humbly noted that “so many Englishmen” had gathered together “in so great a throng from the whole university” to hear him speak.⁷³

By 1578 Harvey seemed well on his way to achieving a position at court. He had become acquainted with the Earl of Leicester, Philip Sidney, Edward Dyer, and Daniel Rogers, and he was one of the Cambridge dignitaries to dispute before the queen at Audley End, at which event Elizabeth reportedly commended him and remarked that he looked like an Italian. To commemorate the occasion, Harvey once again turned to print, and once again his printed text was deliberately self-promotional, designed both to appeal to the major figures of the English court and to show off his close ties to these figures. *Gratulationes Valdinenses* was composed of four books of Latin verse, addressed, respectively, to Elizabeth, Leicester, Burghley, and Oxford, Hatton, and Sidney (a list of potential patrons pragmatically designed, no doubt, to cut across factional lines). But the real praise seems reserved for himself: he dwells on Elizabeth’s praise of him, for example, suggesting that she ascribed “the look and face of an Italian” to him because two Italian poets had praised his earlier *Musarum Lachryma* (a book of poetry written on the death of his patron, Sir Thomas Smith), and that “E’en to Italians I seem almost / To be Italian.”⁷⁴

In *Three Proper, Wittie and Familiar Letters* (1580), Harvey presented himself as a discriminating and clever public intellectual, patiently explaining the likely causes of an earthquake to mixed company and holding himself above the corruptions of learning at Cambridge. More importantly, Harvey showed himself to be the learned friend and artistic counselor of that new poet, *Master Immerito* (transparently Spenser), as well as one of the leading figures (along with Sidney and Dyer), if not *the* leading figure, in the movement to

⁷³ Gabriel Harvey, *Rhetor*.

⁷⁴ I quote Grosart’s translation. See *The Works of Gabriel Harvey*, 3 vols., ed. Alexander Grosart (New York: AMS Press, 1966), 1.xxxix-xl. All references to Harvey’s work other than *The Rhetor* and *Ciceronianus* are to this edition.

reform English poetry. Harvey recognized that he did not have the poetic talent of his friend—“Master *Collin Clout*” had the “special fauour” of “*Mistresse Poetrie*” (1.93)—but he was certainly interested in presenting himself as an authority on poetry as well as on rhetoric. The *Shepherdess Calendar* might have been the product of Spenser’s genius, but for Harvey the project of reforming English poetry that the *Calendar* represented was emphatically “ours” (1.75). Harvey figured himself as the learned judge Spenser needed to help refine and sharpen his genius: on numerous occasions throughout the *Familiar Letters*, Harvey critiqued poetry Spenser had sent to him, including, famously, an unspecified portion of the nascent *Faerie Queene*, which Harvey did not particularly seem to like.⁷⁵ Harvey was the one, furthermore, to write the new “Rules and Precepts of Arte” for “our English Artificall Prosodye,” though he would “reserue the Copping out and publishing therof” until he had “a little better consulted with [his] pillow, and taken some farther aduize of *Madame Sperienza*” (1.76).⁷⁶

The *Familiar Letters* also reveals Harvey’s early interest in satire. It is clear from the first letter that Harvey was not only writing but circulating satirical poetry: Spenser remarks that Harvey would “hardly beleue what greate good liking and estimation Maister *Dyer* had of [Harvey’s] *Satyricall Verses*” (1.37). Harvey praised Spenser’s satirical poetry in return “because

⁷⁵ “And must you of necessitie haue my iudgement of hir in deede? To be plaine, I am voyde of al iudgement if your *Nine Comaedics*, whereunto in imitation of *Herodotus*, you giue the names of the *Nine Muses* (and in one mans fansie not vnworthily) come not neerer *Ariostoës Comaedics*, eyther for the the finenesse of plausible Elocution, or the rarenesse of Poetical Inuention, then that *Eluish Queene* doth to his *Orlando Furioso*, which notwithstanding, you wil needes seeme to emulate, and hope to ouergo, as you flatly professed yourself in one of your last Letters” (Harvey, *Familiar Letters*, 1.95).

⁷⁶ Harvey never did publish these “Rules and Precepts of Arte,” but he gave at least some indication of their contents. One precept was “vniuersally to agree vpon one and the same Ortographie, in all pointes conformable and proportionate to our Common natural Prosodye” (1.76); another was Harvey’s preference for meter rather than rhyme, and his insistence on the hexameter as the proper meter for English poetry. Despite Spenser’s (at best) ambivalent view of hexameters, and despite later mockery by Greene and Nashe, Harvey remained proud to be associated with the device: “If I neuer deserue anye better remembraunce,” he declared in the *Foure Letters*, “let mee rather be Epitaphed, The Inuentour of the English Hexameter: whome learned M. Stanihurst imitated in his *Virgill*; and excellent Sir Phillip Sidney disdained not to follow in his *Arcadia*, & elsewhere” (1.182). Here Harvey’s qualifications to be the heir of Sidney could not be clearer: as Sidney himself had “followed” Harvey, surely Harvey was well suited to follow Sidney.

they sauour of that singular extraordinarie veine and inuention which [he] euer fancied moste,” and which he admired in such prototypical Greek and Italian satirists as “*Lucian, Petrarche, Aretine, Pasquill*” (1.93). What Harvey liked about satire was not its aggression or vulgarity—he deliberately excluded the Roman satirists from this list, suggesting that they were “but verye Ciphars in this kinde”—but the fact that it was, “in some respecte or other, and especially in *liuely Hyperbolicall Amplifications*, rare, quaint, and odde in euery pointe, and as a man woulde saye, a degree or two at the leaste, aboue the reache, and compasse of a common Schollers capacitie” (1.93). Harvey liked the intellectual challenge of satirical conceit, both in composition and appropriate application. Because of its difficulty and the exclusiveness of its interpretive community, satire was for Harvey—at least initially—the perfect way to prove one’s own cleverness and win the praise of fellow poets, scholars, and patrons.

Harvey not only read and admired “inuectiues, and Satyres, artificially amplified in the most exaggerate and hyperbolicall kinde,” but—as he later explained in *Foure Letters*—he “could hardlye refraine from discoveringe some little part of [his] reading” (1.178). After recounting his “short, but sharpe, and learned Iudgement of Earthquakes” in the second of his *Three Letters*, Harvey turns to a vitriolic diatribe against the state of learning at Cambridge. He complains that Tully, Livy, Salust, Xenophon, and Aristotle are neglected for Lucian, Machiavelli, Aretino, Petrarch, Catiglione, and Boccaccio (1.68-70), that the Gospel is taught but not learned (1.70), that there are “many Inuectiues” but “small amendment” (1.71), and so on. Harvey’s attack on the popularity of satirists such as Lucian and Aretino as well as on the frequency of invectives seems to contradict his praise for such figures later in the same publication, but Harvey’s focus here is on novelty, singularity, and innovation at the expense of tradition: “all inquisitiue after Newes, newe Bookes, newe Fashions, newe Lawes, newe

Officers, and some after newe Elementes, and some after newe Heauens, and Helles to” (1.70). He later explained that he “greatly misliked the preposterous and vntoward courses of diuers good wits, ill directed” at the university, and that he was frustrated by “some sharpe vnderdeserued discourtesies to exasperate [his] mind” (*Foure Letters*, 1.179)—chief among them the machinations of Dr. Andrew Perne, who had recently prevented Harvey from attaining the prestigious position of University Orator.⁷⁷

Harvey also included in the third of the *Familiar Letters* a short vignette of a vain, effeminate Italianate Englishman entitled “Speculum Tuscanismi.” This was clearly intended to win the praise of a discriminating, intellectual audience—an audience who, like Spenser, would need to “call a Parliament of [their] Sensible, & Intelligible powers together” in order to decipher his “bolde Satyricall Libell” (1.83). This was about impressing his reader and about advertising—Harvey suggested that he was “set[ting] open [his] shoppe windowes” (1.83)—his ability to compose a “*liuely Hyperbolicall Amplification*” that would be “a degree or two at the least, aboue the reache, and compasse of a common Schollers capacitie” (1.93). If, as certain of Harvey’s more discriminating audience members believed, this was supposed to be a portrait of the Earl of Oxford,⁷⁸ Harvey was probably advertising to Leicester in particular, whose nephew, Sidney, had recently quarreled with Oxford and who was currently at odds with Oxford over the queen’s proposed marriage with the French Duke of Alençon.

Harvey’s advertisement backfired. John Lyly, then the Earl of Oxford’s secretary, brought the poem to Oxford’s attention; a number of Harvey’s colleagues at Cambridge were

⁷⁷ Harvey had a long-standing antagonism with Perne. Earlier in 1580, despite then-Chancellor Burghley’s endorsement for the post of Public Orator at Cambridge, “Harvey’s old enemy Andrew Perne had manoeuvred to defeat Harvey’s candidacy by arranging for the reluctant Bridgewater to stay in office an additional year” (Virginia Stern, *Gabriel Harvey: His Life, Marginalia, and Library* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979], 53-4). Harvey would offer ironic praise of Perne as an “old Fox”—and as a worthy adversary—in *Pierces Supererogation*.

⁷⁸ Stern points out that “some notes within his ‘Letter-book’ suggest that Harvey’s intentions may not have been altogether innocent” (66).

upset with Harvey's depiction of the state of learning at the university; and Sir James Croft, the Controller of the Queen's Household, saw himself depicted in a passage directed against Perne. Harvey denied any intent of wrongdoing and was apparently able to smooth things over with Oxford; as he later said, the Earl was "not disposed to trouble his Iouiall mind with such Saturnine paltery" (*FL*, 1.184). But there were clearly hard feelings all around. Harvey was forced to write an apology to "that flourishing University, my deere Mother" (1.180), he never found employment in Leicester's household or at court,⁷⁹ and there were rumors that he had been "orderly clapt in the Fleet" for the affair.⁸⁰ All of this must have had a significant impact on Harvey's attitude towards the profitability of satire. Instead of receiving praise for the cleverness, rarity, or quaintness of his "*liuely Hyperbolicall Amplifications*," Harvey received blame. His satirical conceit was neither profitable to his readers, his country, nor himself.

Harvey's opinion of satire must have taken a hit on two further occasions in the early 1580s: first when he became the object of ridicule in Edward Forsett's Latin comedy *Pedantius*,⁸¹ performed at Trinity Hall in February 1580/1, and again when his brother Richard

⁷⁹ Either because of the notoriety of the *Speculum*, because Harvey suggested in *Gratulationes Valdinenses* that Leicester would be a suitable candidate for Elizabeth when Leicester was already secretly married to the Countess of Essex (Stern, 43), or because Harvey "often lacked restraint and judgment" (Wilson, "Introduction to *Ciceronianus*," 34), Harvey missed his chance for promotion. If Nashe is to be believed—and, as I will suggest below, he probably should not be—Leicester, who had summoned Harvey to serve as his secretary, "finding that he was more meete to make sport with than anie way deeply to be employd, with faire words shooke him of, & told him he was fitter for the Vniuersitie than for the Court or his turne, and so bad God prosper his studies, & sent for another Secretarie to *Oxford* (*HWY*, 3.79).

⁸⁰ Greene, *Quip*, sig. E4^r. Harvey's denial ambiguously couples together something for which he was in fact responsible with something that supposedly did not happen: "Happy man I, if these two be my hainousest crimes, and deadliest sinnes, To bee the Inuentour of the English Hexameter, and to bee orderlie clapt in the Fleete for the foresaide Letters: where he that sawe me, sawe mee at Constantinople" (*FL*, 1.182). Nashe repeated the charge in both *Strange Newes* (1.297) and *Have With You* (3.78), where he more explicitly connected the "Speculum Tuscanismi" with Leicester's rivalry with Oxford.

⁸¹ Written on behalf Anthony Wingfield, Harvey's rival in his second attempt to attain the post of University Orator, the titular figure of *Pedantius*—a foolish, self-loving pedant—was clearly meant to represent Harvey. Pedantius is "insatiably self-admiring," a "veritable Narcissus" (II.iv) who brags about his "Italianate countenance" (III.v), embellishes his Greek and Latin texts "with marginal notes like jewels or stars" (IV.iv), promises to write a tragedy entitled "*The Muses Tears*" (III.vi), and, when he woos the central female figure, Lydia, provides an encomium to the real object of his affection—himself (III.vi) (Edward Forsett, *Pedantius* [1581], ed. Dana F. Sutton [University of Birmingham, 1998]). According to Nashe, furthermore, not only did the authors "stuff" Pedantius' mouth with

became the object of public derision after his magnificently cataclysmic predictions about the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in *An Astrological Discourse* (1583) failed to come true.⁸² The Harveys had learned a difficult personal lesson about the violence satire can perform upon a man's reputation. In a world where all hope of social mobility depended upon reputation,⁸³ satire posed a legitimate threat to the Harveys' socio-economic standing. What had appealed to Gabriel's intelligence and anger as a young man later seemed like a youthful mistake, tolerated by those "that affect such ruffianish braueryes, and deuide their roister-doistering Iestes into Cuttes, slashes, and foines," but otherwise useless for "any other of what-soeuer qualitie, or calling" (*PS*, 2.221).

It is not surprising, then, that ten years after Gabriel Harvey had tried his hand at a "bolde Satyricall Libell," both he and his brother Richard were strongly opposed to the satire of Martin Marprelate. Nothing might have come of this opposition if John Lyly—who had initially suspected Harvey of satirizing the Earl of Oxford—had not dragged Harvey back into public view in the anti-Martinist tract called *Pappe with an Hatchet*. Apropos of nothing, Lyly promises Martin he will "coniure vp" and enlist the services of one who, "writing a famliar Epistle about the naturall causes of an Earthquake, fell into the bowells of libelling, which made his eares quake for feare of clipping, he shall tickle you with taunts." If this libeller—clearly Gabriel Harvey—should happen to join Martin instead of the anti-Martinists, Lyly continues, "then haue

the "iust manner of his [Harvey's] phrase in his Orations and Disputation" and "bolster[] out his part" with the "Buffianisme" to be found "throughout his whole bookes," but they made the "concise and firking finicaldo fine School-master" look and act like Harvey as well: "I leaue out halfe; not the carrying vp of his gowne, his nice gate on his pantoffles, or the affected accent of his speach, but they personated. And if I should reueale all, I thinke they borrowd his gowne to playe the Part in, the more to flout him" (*HWY*, 3.80). For an overview of the debate about the authorship of *Pedantius*, see C. G. Moore Smith (ed.), *Pedantius* (Louvain: A. Uystpruyst, 1905), xvii.

⁸² See Richard Harvey, *An Astrological Discourse Vpon the Great and Notable Coniunction of the Two Superiour Planets, Satvrne & Iupiter, Which Shall Happen the 28th Day of April, 1583*, 2nd ed. (London, 1583). Nashe reported that the "whole Universitie hyst at him, *Tarlton* at the Theator made jests of him, and *Elderton* consumd his ale-crammed nose to nothing, in bearbayting him with whole bundles of ballets" (*PP*, 1.196-7).

⁸³ See, e.g., Whigham, 41-5; see also *The Letter Book of Gabriel Harvey, A.D. 1573-1580* (ed. John Long Scott [London: Camden Society, 1884]), in which Harvey is endlessly concerned about the threat his various detractors at Cambridge pose to his reputation.

I my wish, for this tenne yeres haue I lookt to lambacke him. Nay he is a mad lad, and such a one as cares as little for writing without wit, as *Martin* doth for writing without honestie; a notable coach companion for *Martin*, to drawe Diuinitie from the Colledges of *Oxford* and *Cambridge*, to Shoormakers hall in Sainct *Martins*.”⁸⁴

Gabriel Harvey’s response to both Martin and Lyly—his “Aduertisement to Papp-hatchet, and Martin Mar-prelate”—was dated November 5, 1589, but it was not published until 1593, as the central section of *Pierces Supererogation*. Despite the fact that Harvey had met with accusations of puritan leanings while at Cambridge, despite his obvious admiration for Thomas Cartwright,⁸⁵ and although he had apparently been asked, for some reason or another, to defend Martinizing,⁸⁶ Harvey here shows himself to be thoroughly orthodox in his articulation of the conformist position.⁸⁷ Harvey has been praised by modern commentators on the Marprelate controversy for the reasonableness of his argument,⁸⁸ but there is ultimately very little new about it.⁸⁹

More interesting is the manner in which Harvey presents himself as the epitome of a considerate, deliberative scholar and sets up such scholarship in opposition to both religious and

⁸⁴ Lyly, *Pappe with an Hatchet*, 3.400.

⁸⁵ In the *Familiar Letters* Harvey laments that “Maister Cartwright” is “nighe forgotten” (1.71); in *Four Letters* he includes Cartwright along with Jewel, Harding, Sidney, Spenser, and Whitgift as examples of eloquence (59); and in the *Supererogation* he says “For a polished, and garnished stile, fewe go-beyonde Cartwright” (2.290-1).

⁸⁶ “And thus much in generalitie touching Martinizing, being vrged to defend it, if I durst: but for feare of indignation I durst not” (Harvey, “An Advertisement,” 2.209).

⁸⁷ As Paul McLane suggests—albeit anachronistically—Harvey was a “thoroughgoing Anglican” (261).

⁸⁸ See, e.g., Black, *Marprelate Tracts*, lxxi.

⁸⁹ At times ironic, though more often earnest, Harvey argues that each country was free to determine the government of its church (2.136-7); that Geneva should not be held up as a model for all Christian nations (2.147); that the disagreement is not an article of belief and therefore should be determined by the sovereign authority (2.141-2); that popular elections were for popular states, not monarchies (2.137); that the scriptures did include examples of bishops and that hierarchy was necessary in the church (2.155-8); that without such central authority, each local minister would become a princely priest, civil courts would be transformed into ecclesiastical courts, and there would be far more corruption in the church than under the episcopacy (2.144); that the Jewish Synedrion was an poor model for a Christian monarchy (2.179); and that, for all of their zeal, the presbyterians lacked learning and were unlikely to produce a more “incorruptible Method of Ecclesiasticall gouernment” in “a Pamflet, or two” than the sum total of the “studdy, or practise of fiteene hundred yeeres.” (2.134). Each of these arguments had been made by Whitgift and Bridges, and many would later be developed by Hooker.

satirical controversy. He suggests that “the finall ende of these endlesse Contentions” will be “a maze of confusion, and a wilderness of desolation”; he complains that it is “a mad world, when euery crew of conceited Punyes, puffed-vp with a presumptuous, or phantasticall imagination, must haue their seuerall complot, or faction, as it were a certaine Punicall warre”; and he asks what the outcome of these schisms in the church will be if not “present shame, wretched confusion, vtter ruine, euerlasting infamie, horrible damnation, & a most hideous nullity” (2.175-6). Harvey suggests ironically that Martin’s singularity of expression hardly fit his religious purposes: “if that were the tenour of a godly, or zealous stile, methinkes some other Sainct, or godly man, should some way haue vsed the like elocution before” (2.197-8). He acknowledges that Martin’s satire would be popular among the vulgar, but he points out that it is unlikely that such a “roisterly course would winne the harts of good fellowes, and make ruffians become Precisians” (2.198). In other words, he denies both satire’s persuasive and disciplinary power, at least in matters of religion. Ever the composed, level-headed humanist, Harvey acknowledges that there are matters that should be reformed in the church, but he concludes that it is “not a ruffianly stile, or a tumultuous plot, that will amend the matter: some Apostolicall vertues would doe well; and that-same Euangelicall humilitie were much-worth” (2.204). He rather kindly urges “Good Martin” to “be good to the Church, to the Ministry, to the state, to thy country, to thy patrons, to thy frends, to thy brethren, to thiselfe: and as thou loouest thiselfe, take heede of old Puritanisme, new Anabaptisme, & finall Barbarisme” (2.197).

Harvey also objects to the anti-Martinists’ decision to answer Martin according to his folly, arguing that it would have been “a better course, to haue followed Aristotles doctrine: and to haue confuted leuity with grauity, vanity with discretion, rashnes with aduise, madnesse with sobriety, fier with water, ridiculous Martin with reuerend Cooper,” particularly in

“Ecclesiasticall causes” (*PS* 2.132). Like Francis Bacon, Harvey thinks serious matters should be handled seriously, that church matters should be discussed “without ranke scurrility,” that the anti-Martinists had only helped to popularize the controversy, and that either silence or “sound Arguments” made by established authorities would have been a more fitting response (2.132-3).

The most fascinating part of Harvey’s “Advertisement,” however, is the way Harvey responds to Lyly’s brief attack on him in *Pappe With an Hatchet*. Harvey blames Martin for beginning “that cutting vaine” and others for continuing it, but he excoriates Lyly for “set[ting] it agogg” (2.131). Martin’s “rash proceeding” and “wanton scurrilous Veine” was a youthful mistake, an error in judgment made by someone who was “young in yeares” and “younger in enterprise” (2.197), but Lyly’s “hare braind Declamation” was “one of the most paltry things, that euer was published by graduate of either Vniuersitie” (2.219). Harvey denounces Lyly’s proceedings in *Pappe Hatchet* as an unscholarly, ineffective, and self-condemnatory act by someone who should have known better. Lyly had a “commendable gift,” but he had chosen to write “bad matter” in “vile form” (2.219), “alehouse and tinkerly stuffe” that no scholar or gentleman could read “without blushing” (2.128). The poet’s task is to produce “polished and refined Eloquence” that will “bedeck, and embellish Humanity,” not “noisome, & nasty gargarismes” (2.218) to tickle the scoffing multitude. Such satire is furthermore entirely ineffective in its stated purpose: Harvey suggests that if he had been Martin, he would have been “so farre from being mooued by such a fantasticall Confuter, that it should haue beene one of my May-games, or August triumphes, to haue driuen Officials, Commissaries, Archdeacons, Deanes, Chauncellors, Suffraganes, Bishops, and Archbishops, (so Martin would haue florished at the least) to entertaine such an odd, light-headed fellow for their defence” (2.131-2). At best, Harvey argues, such “roisterly brauery” (2.124) is useless, “good for nothing but to stop mustard

pottes, or rubbe gridirons, or feather rattes neastes” (2.219). At worst it is self-condemnatory, as such “vanity confuteth itselfe, and impeacheth the cause” (2.132), or even a form of lawlessness, “ruffianly foolery” (2.124) that threatens to “make euery man madbrayned, and desperate” and lead to “a generall contempt of all good order, in Saying, or Dooing,” a “Vniuersall Topsy-turvy” (2.131). It is thus in his response to Lyly, rather than in his response to Martin, that Harvey offers his clearest denunciation of satire as unprofitable discourse.⁹⁰

Lyly had attempted to hold himself apart from his satirical performance in *Pappe With an Hatchet*, suggesting in the preface that he was “loath so to write as [he had] done” (3.394), but that he was pressed to do so by circumstances beyond his control. Harvey refuses to allow any such distinction between character and style, collapsing the two repeatedly throughout the “Advertisement.” An artist, Harvey claims, is soon discovered “by his tearmes” (2.126); “euery man speaketh according to his Art” (2.213); “Indeede what more easie, then to find the man by his humour, the Midas by his eares, the Calfe by his tongue, the goose by his quill, the Play-maker by his stile, the hatchet by the Pap?” (2.215). Not only had Lyly revealed himself to be the author of *Pappe* by his euphuism—“Euphues Similes, double Vs phrases, are too-well knowen, to go vnknowen” (2.216)—but in writing such a “brothellish Pamflet” (2.214) Lyly had revealed his true character: “his knauish, & foolish malice palpably bewrayeth it self in most-odious fictions” (2.212). Lyly’s terms were a form of problematic knowledge, as his familiarity with indecorous language was a sign of the places he frequented and the company he kept. Lyly was “deeply beholding for great part of his fine conceits, and dainty learning,” Harvey suggests, to “the Ruffians bagge, the Tapsters spigot, the Pedlars pack, the Tinkars bugget, the Knaues truffe, and the Roges fardle” (2.220). For Lyly, *Pappe* was an admittedly tiresome but performative

⁹⁰ Jennifer Richards offers a different view, arguing that Harvey opposed satire because it threatened to lead to tyranny. Richards, “Gabriel Harvey’s Choleric Writing,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Literature, 1485-1603*, ed. Mike Pincombe and Cathy Shrank (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 655-70.

response to a bothersome fool. For Harvey, it was in *Pappe* that Lyly was most like himself. “Milke is like milke: hoony like hoony: Papp like papp: and hee like himselfe; in the whole, a notable ruffler, and in euery part a dowty braggard” (2.127).

But in Harvey’s conflation of Lyly’s style with his character as well as in Harvey’s brief alignment of himself with Martin—in his ability to see things from Martin’s perspective, to imagine himself triumphing over the bishops for driving them to hire Lyly to write on their behalf (2.131-2, cited above)—we may begin to glimpse the ways in which Harvey participates in the very forms of discourse that he is so quick to denounce in Lyly. Harvey collects entire catalogues of “arrant phrases” from his antagonist in order to demonstrate the ways they reveal or “discouer” the “Lucianicall breath” of their author (2.215), but he fails to recognize his own culpability in reproducing such terms in his own text—the way that such reproduction both borders on appropriation and inevitably perpetuates the destabilizing controversy he decries. He has no problem holding himself above Martin’s scurrility, but he cannot entirely separate himself from Lyly’s personal affront. He debates with himself about the most appropriate way to respond, but this self-reflective debate, which is supposed to demonstrate his own thoroughgoing reasonableness and thoughtfulness, tends more to demonstrate Harvey’s inability to entirely assuage his anger with reason.⁹¹ At the same time that Harvey suggests the bishops should have remained silent rather than responding to Martin’s attack because “vanity confuteth itself” (2.132), he finds plenty of legitimation for his own response to Lyly, even though he insists that Lyly had similarly “knocked himselfe on the sconse with his own hatchet” (2.216-17).

Harvey’s response to Lyly is fascinating in terms of its length—all told, he devotes the

⁹¹ As with any good humanist, Harvey’s reason serves as much to justify the very action for himself that he disclaimed in others: “I could in curtesie be content, and in hope of Reconciliation desirous, to mitigate the harshest sentences, and mollifie the hardest termes. But can Truth lye: or Discretion approoue follie: or Iudgement allowe Vanitie: or Modestie abide Impudencie: or good manners sooth bad speaches?” (2.217).

better part of twenty pages (in its modern edited version) to a refutation of some twenty lines of *Pappe With an Hatchet*—as well as its dizzying rhetorical reversals. In one place Harvey strikes a tone of paternal condescension, urging Lyly as would a sometime friend and mentor to abandon such gross scurrility because of the way it reflected badly on him as an author: “Euphues, it is good to bee merry: and Lilly, it is good to bee wise: and Papp-hatchet, it is better to loose a new iest, then an old frend” (2.215). But in the same breath—literally the same sentence—Harvey reminds Lyly that this particular “old frend” could “cramme the capon with his owne Papp, and hew-downe the woodcocke with his owne hatchet” (2.125). Even as he “scorne[s]” Lyly’s “roisterly brauery” (2.124), in other words, Harvey reminds Lyly that he is not only capable of railing himself but that it is only his better judgment that prevents him from vanquishing Lyly with the latter’s own weapons.

If Harvey’s response to Lyly is paradoxical in the sense that he disavows Lyly’s satire even as he slips into satire of his own, it is also paradoxical in the sense that Harvey simultaneously mocks Lyly’s lack of satirical prowess and excoriates him for his satirical villainy. Harvey’s mockery of Lyly’s raillery as “a fewe pilfred *Similes*” and “a little Pedanticall Latin” borrowed in rhyme and reason from Elderton and Tarlton (2.129-30) comprises the central portion of Harvey’s own satirical attack on Lyly. This is designed to undermine Lyly’s satirical authority, to weaken the significance of Lyly’s brief attack on him as libelous, witless, and dishonest, and to confront the threat Lyly thus posed to his reputation by figuring Lyly as a malicious and unoriginal hack writer. Lyly promised much but delivered little; his “mandillion was ouer-cropped; his witt paunched . . . his conceit as lank, as a shotten herring.” What at first glance looked to be the blast of a powerful adversary, Harvey suggests, upon closer inspection revealed itself to be “Nothing, but pure Mammaday, and a fewe morsels of fly-blown

Euphuisme, somewhat nicely minced for puling stomackes” (2.130). But even as he mocks Lyly for the weakness of his satirical performance, he attacks Lyly for the thoroughness of his scurrility:

Vanitas vanitatum, the fome of grudge, the froth of leuitie, the scum of corruption, and the very scurse of rascallitie: nothing, worthy of a Schollar, or a Ciuill Gentleman: altogether phantasticall, and fonde, without ryme, or reason: so odly hudled, and bungled together, in so madbraine sort, and with so brainesicke stuffe, that in an Ouer flowe of so many friulous, and ridiculous Pamflets, I scarcely know any One in all points, so incomparably vayne and absurde, whereunto I may resemble that most toyishe and piperly trifle, the fruite of an addled, and lewd wit, long-since dedicated to a dissolute, and desperate Licentiousnesse. (2.219-20)

Few men have ever been as fond of *copia* as Harvey, but even in a world where the press is already overrun with “Commonwealthes of Wast-paper” (2.219) he is unable to find an apt comparison for Lyly’s *Pappe With an Hatchet*. For Harvey, Lyly’s tract is both derivative and incomparable, at once as little threatening as “pure Mammaday” (runny food given to recently weaned babies)⁹² and as monstrous as the “Spawne of ranke Calumnie” (2.212).

Harvey’s doubly paradoxical descent into satire in the “Aduertisement”—disavowing satirical discourse even as he engaged in it, minimizing Lyly’s ability to rail even as he magnified his criminality in railing—prefigured Harvey’s response to Nashe, as did the ultimate similarity between satirist and satiric target that we first saw in the anti-Martinist response to the Marprelate tracts. Even as he disavowed Lyly’s satirical discourse Harvey reproduced it; even as he decried Lyly’s “bad matter” and “vile form,” Lyly became the subject or “matter” of Harvey’s

⁹² *OED* “mammaday,” citing this as the first example.

own writing and ultimately shaped Harvey's own form. In closing, Harvey seemed to recognize how much his own style had been shaped by his antagonist, but only insofar as it made his own stylistic reformation contingent on Lyly's own—and in doing so he reinforced the continued similarity of their writing: "When he vseth himselfe with more modestie, and his friendes with more discretion, I may alter my stile: (let him chaunge, and I am chaunged)" (2.221). Ironically, of course, this was more or less the same thing Lyly had said to Martin.⁹³

* * *

For Gabriel's brother Richard, satirical discourse in religious matters was not merely indecorous, or even an ineffective means to go about reforming the church. Playful or satirical speech was absolutely intolerable, a "drunken stile" (*LG*, 5.178) that was always and absolutely "vnbeseeing any good Christian, or any honest man." Like "cursed Sodomites," satirists "iest and sport at that which good men in naturall modestie are ashamed to speake of" (96). In the *Lamb of God*, Richard Harvey singles out Martin's "vndecent and vnciuill language" (189) for condemnation in terms reminiscent of the cataclysmic language of his *Astrological Discourse*: Martin is "A busy fellow, a spitefull rayler, an odious iester, a factious head, a contentious wit, a seditious commotioner, a most insolent Libeller, in briefe, one of the most pernicious and intollerable writers that euer I had read in our language" (5.177). Richard associates satire with irreverence, impiety, and a form of scoffing atheism of which Lucian was the prime example. The satirist is thus a man who has figuratively turned his back on God and who misapplies or perverts rhetoric and philosophy, using the God-given gifts of speech and reason in order to lead men away from God rather than towards him. Satire is speech directed "against him that raigneth

⁹³ "If thou wilt deale soberlie without scoffes, thou shalt be answered grauely without iests . . . If thou refuse learning, and sticke to libelling; if nothing come out of those lauish lips, but taunts not without bitternesse, yet without wit; rayling not without spite, yet without cause, then giue me thy hand, thou and I will trie it out at the cuckingstoole" (*Pappe with an Hatchet*, 3.410).

in heauen” (87) rather than speech used to praise and “behold this blessed most sweet lambe of God, vnto whom we are so infinitely beholding” (72).

Richard Harvey’s extended refutation of Martin in the *Lamb of God*, furthermore, collapses the irreverence of satirical discourse with the threat presbyterianism posed to the hierarchy of the English church and social order. Both the presbyterian and the satirist are guilty of singularity, or an over-estimation of their own knowledge and an unwillingness to submit to lawful authority. Like presbyterians, who “speake and write their pleasures in publicke cases, seeking on their owne heads without any good allowance or lawfull warrant of the rulers, factiously and arrogantly to alter the state that is builded and framed on Gods and mans law” (148), satirists are “seniors in rayling and iuniors, in obeying” (173). Imitators of Aretino go about “euen like hungrie beares, seeking whom they may deuour, as it were in very extreme contempt of the lambe of God,” a type of “monstruous and vnprofitable singularitie” that threatens “that most blessed vnion and singularity of true faith” (96). Satirical speech is thus not only problematic because of its irreverence for heavenly authority but also because of its disregard for human authority and social hierarchy. Such “fond pamphlets” are ultimately “good for nothing either in doctrine or discipline, but fostering a licencious veine, and altogether tending to the maintenance of priuate presumption, publike disorder, and vniuersall confusion, both in the Church and in the Common-wealth” (5.177).

The form this “vniuersall confusion” would take in an anti-hierarchical world, Richard Harvey suggests, would be equality or popularity. The presbyterian attack on the Elizabethan episcopacy was based in part on their insistence on a strict equality between ministers, both within local parishes and in the national church as a whole. Like his brother (and like many

conformists before him⁹⁴), Richard worries that such equality in the church would be disastrous in a monarchical society, as it would “make a wofull Democracy without order, honour, or seemely estate, and a right cyclopicall and giantlike church, and consequently such a commonalty, where euery bold one may be a controller of his betters, and powre out his fancies like water that runneth apace” (142-3). But for Richard it is also the lawless speech of the “correcting, corrupting” satirist who brings “the best names of fathers, and brothers, and other” into contempt, “by disobedient thoughts” breeding “equalitie in mens minds.” Without correction, the satirist would produce “a monarchie turned into a democratie, a king into a subject, a better into a worse” (168). Like the presbyterians, then, the satirist’s disregard for proper authority threatens to undermine the hierarchy on which proper order and stability depends, creating a world in which any man could attack any other.

A limited number of copies of *The Lamb of God* contained a preface in which Richard Harvey attacks “one *Thomas Nash*, . . . who taketh vpon him in ciuill learning, as *Martin* doth in religion, peremptorily censuring his betters at pleasure, Poets, Orators, Polihistors, Lawyers, and whome not? and making as much and as little of euery man as himselfe listeth” (5.179-80). Harvey here refers to the Preface Nashe had written for Robert Greene’s *Menaphon* the previous year, in which Nashe had indeed shared his judgment of the general state of English poetry and learning. Nashe had in fact praised the particular poets, orators, lawyers, and scholars that Harvey now attacks him for “censuring”—“*Sir Thomas Moore*, *Sir Iohn Cheeke*, *Doctor Watson*, *Doctor Haddon*, *Maister Ascham*, *Doctor Car*, my brother *Doctor Haruey*, and such like” (5.180)—and had even singled out Gabriel Harvey as one of the few legitimate Latinists in

⁹⁴ e.g., Thomas Cooper: “[T]heir whole drift, as it may seeme, is to bring the Gouernment of the Church to a *Democracie* or *Aristocracie*. The principles and reasons whereof, if they bee made once by experience familiar in the mindes of the common people, and that they haue the sense and feeling of them: It is greatly to bee feared, that they will very easily transferre the same to the Gouernement of the common weale” (92-3).

England (*PM*, 3.320). But Harvey goes out of his way to lump Nashe together with Martin Marprelate for his petulant “singularity”: he accuses Nashe of “playing the douty *Martin* in his kinde,” denounces him as a “carping Censour,” counsels both to “study more, or presume less,” and warns Martin, Nashe, the author of *Pappe With an Hatchet*, and any other “such famous absoure man, or any other piperly makeplay or makebate” not to “presume ouermuch” of his patience (*LG*, 5.180).

Numerous commentators have followed McKerrow in supposing that Nashe had somehow overstepped the bounds of propriety by appraising others when he was himself “not a sufficiently old and tried scholar,”⁹⁵ but this fails to explain why Richard Harvey singles out Nashe and connects him with Martin Marprelate. Nashe was hardly crossing any lines by holding up for praise the most iconic of English writers, men whose names had appeared in countless dedications and prefatory epistles. And as far as we know, Richard Harvey did not make it his business to police any other young scholar’s praise of the central figures of English letters. Although Nashe was initially incredulous that someone more or less unknown to him, someone he “never wronged in [his] life,” would name him expressly in print, accuse him of “want of learning,” and upbraid him for praising well-known scholars “as if they were no meate but for his Maisterships mouth” (*PP*, 1.195), he later speculated that this preface to *The Lamb of God* had been “summerd out betwixt” both Richard and Gabriel Harvey (*HWY*, 3.130).⁹⁶ Nashe may well have been right. Certainly Richard was capable of writing sections of this preface, but numerous passages have the distinct feel of Gabriel’s cleverness, irony (of which Richard was elsewhere altogether incapable), and phrasing. At least one of the charges made against Martin in the Preface to *The Lamb of God* is a nearly perfect echo of Gabriel Harvey’s dismissal of Lyly’s

⁹⁵ McKerrow, 4.454.

⁹⁶ See also *SN* 1.271, where Nashe reported that Greene thought “the elder brothers hand was in it.”

Pappe With an Hatchet in “An Aduertisement”: in “An Aduertisement,” Lyly’s entire work was “a bald Toy, full of stale, and wooden Iestes” (*PS*, 2.219); in the Preface to the *Lamb of God*, Martin “affects stale iestes and balde toyes” (5.177).

This would go a long ways towards explaining the attack on Nashe in the Preface to *The Lamb of God*. Both Gabriel and Richard Harvey would have been threatened by Nashe’s attack on Ramism as a shortcut to learning: Gabriel had made a name for himself at Cambridge by arguing for Ramist reform, and Richard had also been an outspoken adherent of Ramism.⁹⁷ Both would have been threatened by Nashe’s direct association between Ramism and the intellectual myopia of the puritans. Richard in particular, a second son and a minister, would have objected to being lumped together with the very group that most threatened his social and material standing.⁹⁸ More significantly, Gabriel would have been threatened by Nashe’s obvious attempt in the Preface to *Menaphon* to set himself up as a satirical defender of art and as an heir to Sidney. For more than a decade, Gabriel had been trying to establish himself as an authority on eloquence and poetry in both Latin and English, and he clearly had closer ties to Sidney. But

⁹⁷ Nashe claimed that Richard had “scorned the Prince of Philosophers” while at Cambridge (*PP*, 1.195).

⁹⁸ Richard Harvey devoted the second half of *The Lamb of God* to a thorough refutation of the presbyterian argument against episcopal wealth, succeeding in some ways where Bridges and Cooper had failed. Harvey argues that no man was forbidden to “keep his owne goods which are lawfully giuen him” (138), and that “vertue and wealth, godlines and riches” may well “be in one and go together,” as the example of “the most soueraigne princes and godly puissant captaines of Gods church” had well proven (148). He cleverly turns the presbyterian argument about Moses—that it was blasphemy to think that Moses was a better lawgiver than Christ, and that Christ therefore *must* have left specific laws for the establishment of his church in the New Testament—on its head: as no Christian could think “that the law of *Moses* is greater then the gospell of *Iesus*,” it follows that “they which teach the gospell ought euery way to liue in more honour and credite thereby among the Christians, then they which taught the law liued in honour and reuerence thereby among the Israelites” (150). He argues further that there is no good reason that “papistes should be readier to magnifie their Cleargie in a false superstition, then the Protestants to vphold & rewarde their cleargie in a true religion” (151), why secular men should be better rewarded than spiritual men (151), why “physicians of the bodies” should be “in great account, for healing an outward maladie” while “physicians of the soule must be out of account, for preseruing the immortall part of a man” (165), or why lawyers should be set “afloate in wealth” while “the spiritual & true decretals of the Apostles” should be set in “penury” (165). In fact, Harvey goes so far as to suggest that without the stability offered by “the sustenance of learned and religious men in schooles & churches, for the reuerence and safegard of the chiefest in learning and manners of life,” the entire “body of the kingdome would soone prooue a huge monster of ataxy and anarchy” (173, 176). With this in mind, it becomes somewhat easier to understand why Richard Harvey would have been less than thrilled with Nashe’s association between Ramism and radical puritanism.

most significant of all would have been the Harvey's mutual rejection of satire as unprofitable discourse and their sense—made even more apparent by the appearance of *An Almond for a Parrat*—that Nashe was enlisting himself as Lyly's protégé.

Something similar should be said about *Plaine Percevall the Peace-Maker of England* (1590), which has been attributed to Richard Harvey solely on the strength of a remark in Nashe's *Strange Newes*.⁹⁹ Like a number of other generally anti-satirical texts from 1589-90, *Plaine Perceval* disapproves of both Martin and the anti-Martinists, finding in ongoing satirical controversy the spark that could “set a whole house, a Towne, an Uniuersitie, a Citie, a whole Realme on fire, the affections of young men be so readie to nourish it.”¹⁰⁰ But unlike Richard Harvey, whoever wrote *Plaine Perceval* takes obvious pleasure in his task and finds in the occasion the opportunity to display his own cleverness and wit. He guards himself against the temptation to replicate the satirist's playful discourse, but this is a temptation he ultimately fails to resist. His inability to hold himself above satirical discourse seems almost deliberate, or at least conscious, as he is clearly attempting to rival Martin and the anti-Martinists in rhetorical badinage. His tone throughout vacillates between that of an outraged ally of the anti-Martinists, that of a friendly counselor to both sides (he even seems to suggest, at one point, that Martin could be forgiven for his trespass),¹⁰¹ and that of satirical opponent to all. At the end of the tract, realizing that his efforts to “Botch vp a Reconciliation between MAR-TON and Mar-tother” with “his Blunt Persuasions” (sig. A1^r) would most likely be futile, Perceval braces himself, as would

⁹⁹ “Thy hot-spirited brother *Richard*,” Nashe said to Gabriel Harvey, “hauing first tooke vpon him in his blundring Persiual, to play the lacke of both sides twixt *Martin* and vs, and snarld priuily at *Pap-hatchet*, *Pasquill*, & others, that oppode themselues against the open slaunder of that mightie platformer of Atheisme, presently after dribbed forth another fooles bolt, a booke I shoulde say, which he christened *The Lambe of God*” (1.270).

¹⁰⁰ *Plaine Percevall the Peace-Maker of England. Sweetly Indevoring with his Blunt Persuasions to Botch vp a Reconciliation between MAR-TON and Mar-tother* (London, 1590), 20. The anonymous *Marre Mar-Martin* similarly suggested that the instability of civil strife would open the door for Catholic invasion: “Traitor, no traitor, here's such traitors striuing, / That *Romish* traitors now are set a thriuing” (sig. A3^r).

¹⁰¹ “As for thine offence *Martin*, of higher Powers, I dare vndertake, the Bishops seeke no blood, so as thy rash attempt might be qualified with submission” (*Plaine Percevall*, 21).

any good satirist, for retribution. Even as *Plaine Perceval* opposes the fire of satirical controversy that threatens to “light on the heads of vs all, and kindle in our bedstraw” (2), he not only participates in it but also rekindles the flames.

Richard Harvey had no such ambivalent feelings about satire, and nowhere in the rest of his writings did he approve of—much less produce—the playful and satirical rhetoric that can be found in *Plaine Perceval*. Perceval’s paradoxical attempt to rail against raillery was far more similar to the way Gabriel Harvey responded to Lyly. There is no strong internal evidence to link the tract to Gabriel Harvey, and it is entirely possible that he had nothing to do with it. What’s more important is that *Plaine Perceval* participates in the type of paradoxical satirical opposition to satire that we see in Harvey’s writing and that we will see again in the anti-satirical satire of John Weever.¹⁰²

4. Profitable Discourse: Nashe and the Defense of Satire

Nashe may have responded to Richard Harvey with *A Wonderfull, Strange and Miraculous Astrological Prognostication for This Yeere 1591*, supposedly by one “Adam Fouleweather.” The pamphlet is a send-up of astrological tracts more generally, but its title-page suggestion that “if there be found one lye” in the tract “the Author will loose his credit for euer” points specifically to Richard Harvey’s similar claim in the *Astrological Discourse*.¹⁰³ If this was written by Nashe, its mockery of astrology as a foolish intellectual enterprise and its skillful manipulation of the hyperbolic rhetoric of astrological tracts served as a reminder of Richard

¹⁰² See Chapter 4.

¹⁰³ Adam Fouleweather, *A Wonderfull, Strange and Miraculous Astrological Prognostication for This Yeere 1591*, 2nd ed. (London, 1591). cf. Harvey’s claim: “[I]f there appeare not a sensible difference betwene certaine yeares immediatlye following, and other ordinary yeares, let me lose the credite of my Astrologie” (Richard Harvey, *Astrological Discourse* [London, 1583], 15).

Harvey's foolishness, and thus worked to undermine the legitimacy of Harvey's attack on Nashe as a Martin-like "piperly makeplay, or makebate" in *The Lamb of God* (5.180).¹⁰⁴ As Nicholl points out, however, this attribution is far from conclusive. Both astrological tracts and parodies were far too common for the *Astrological Prognostication* to be an effective satirical attack on Richard Harvey.¹⁰⁵

The first clear response to Richard Harvey's *Lamb of God* came in the summer of 1592, when Robert Greene's *Quip for an Vpstart Courtier* included a satirical portrait of the entire Harvey family.¹⁰⁶ Greene terms Richard "a vaine glorious asse, . . . well giuen to the shew of the world," mocks the youngest brother, John, for his *Astrological Addition* (1583), attacks Gabriel for claiming to be "the first that inuented Englishe Hexamiter" and for his remarks about Cambridge in his *Familiar Letters*, calls the mother a witch, and ridicules the father for earning his living "by making fatal instruments, as halters and ropes, which diuers desperate men hang themselues with." Greene apparently misunderstands—perhaps deliberately—Harvey's attack on Nashe's satirical presumption as an attack on poets and poetry more generally.¹⁰⁷ In a marginal note, Greene promises that "all the Poets in England wil haue a blow at your breech for calling them poperlye¹⁰⁸ [*sic*] makeplaies, and will if you [Richard] reconcile not your selfe bring your

¹⁰⁴ The *Astrological Prognostication* does bear striking stylistic and thematic similarities to Nashe's other works; not only does its author attack "the baser sorte" for following Martin's attempt "to ruinate authoritie, and peruert all good orders established in the Church" (sig. B4^r), but it bemoans the poverty of scholars who "studie much and gain litle" (sig. C3^r) and denounces the "vnlettered fooles" who would "creep into the ministerie, if the prouident care of good Bishops did not preuent them" (sig. C3^r).

¹⁰⁵ Nicholl, 82.

¹⁰⁶ The passage attacking the Harveys was removed in subsequent editions. In *Four Letters*, Gabriel Harvey claimed that on his deathbed Greene had "offered ten, or rather then faile twenty shillings to the printer (a huge som with him at that instant) to leaue out the matter of the three brothers: with confession of his great feare to be called *Coram* for those forged imputations" (1.162). Nashe denied this, however, claiming instead that Greene had left out the attack on the Harveys because his own physician had seen in Greene's attack on John Harvey—who was a doctor—an attack on doctors more generally (*SN*, 1.279-80). Neither explanation is particularly satisfying. Edwin Miller suggests, plausibly, that Greene censured the Harveys at the instigation of Nashe, and then "deleted it because he had never been deeply concerned about the Harveys in the first place" (Miller, "Relationship," 364-7).

¹⁰⁷ Nashe repeated this claim in both *Strange Newes* (1.271) and *Have With You* (3.130).

¹⁰⁸ This error seems to promise an even more significant misreading, but my efforts to track down any religious

worship on the stage.”¹⁰⁹

Greene had been writing quasi-satirical tracts for several years leading up to *Quip*. When he turned away from Euphuistic romance in the late 1580s he began writing tracts that were ambivalently romantic and repentant, mixing stories of young men led into misery and poverty by lust for courtesans with autobiographical accounts of his own similar experience and warnings to his readers not to follow in his footsteps. As Richard Helgerson argues, “Satire serves as an antidote to romance. The former wanton makes amends by warning others of the dangers he has known.”¹¹⁰ This was as true for a text like *Francescos Fortunes* (1590), in which a resolute palmer determines to make “penance for the follies of [his] youth” by traveling to Venice in order to “quip at follies” and “drawe others from that harme” that had “brought [him] to this hazard”¹¹¹ as it was in the coney-catching tracts, in which Greene used his familiarity with card-playing rogues in order to “forewarn” others of their “gracelesse villeinies.”¹¹² Greene’s satire relied on insider knowledge and experience for its dissuasive power at the same time that it seemed to recognize the ultimate inefficacy of this knowledge and experience. Not only does the palmer of *Francescos Fortunes* stand little chance in reforming the entire city of Venice, the European center of “Venus’ vanities,”¹¹³ but as a young man the palmer himself had heard and ignored the exact same advice that he now sets out to give. Even as Greene himself claimed to set about exposing and dissuading his readers from vice, he also seemed to recognize that he was tempting his readers. The palmer spends more time reveling in the pleasures of his purportedly

significance in Greene’s remark have gone nowhere. Nashe reproduces “piperly” correctly in *Pierce Penilesse*.

¹⁰⁹ Robert Greene, *A Quip for an Upstart Courtier: Or, a Quaint Dispute between Velvet Breeches and Cloth Breeches. Wherein is plainely set downe the disorders in all Estates and Trades* (London, 1592), sigs. E3^v-4^r.

¹¹⁰ Richard Helgerson, *Elizabethan Prodigals* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 79-80. Helgerson’s books remains the standard critical text on this aspect of Greene’s work.

¹¹¹ Robert Greene, *Francescos Fortunes: Or the second part of Greenes Neuer too late* (London, 1590), sigs. K3^{r-v}.

¹¹² Robert Greene, *A Notable Discovery of Coosenage, Now daily practised by sundry lewd persons, called Connie-catchers, and Crosse-byters* (London, 1591), sig. A2^r.

¹¹³ Greene, *Francescos Fortunes*, sig. K3^r.

dissuasive fictions than in castigating vice, and the coney-catching pamphlets instruct readers in the art of coney-catching and delight in stories of conquest as much as they teach readers how to avoid the traps of coney-catchers. It was probably in this sense that the author of *The Defense of Conny-Catching* (1592)—perhaps Greene himself, perhaps Greene and Nashe—described Greene as “a scholler, and a Maister of Artes, and a Conny-catcher in his kinde.”¹¹⁴

Greene’s *Quip* was decidedly less ambivalent about satire. In *A Quip*, Greene runs through all of the “*Estates and Trades*” of England in order to expose the ways ambitious tradesman cheat their customers in order to attain an undeserved and destabilizing form of social mobility. “Since men placed their delights in proud lookes and braue atyre,” Greene says in his dedicatory epistle to Thomas Burnabye, “Hospitality was left off, Neighbourhood was excited, Conscience was skoft at, and charitie lay frozen in the streets . . . vpstart Gentlemen for the maintainance of that their fathers neuer lookt after, raised rents, rackte their tenants, and imposed greate fines.”¹¹⁵ Greene returned to an older model of estates satire in order to demonstrate, against the example of Martin Marprelate and in indirect response to Richard Harvey, that satire *could* be a profitable form of discourse—that it could be employed to uphold traditional forms of social hierarchy (“the old and worthy customs of the Gentilitie and yeomanrie of *England*” [sig. A3^v]) and rebuke the self-love and singularity of those who had “their wishes about their fortunes” (sig. B1^r).

Nashe finally responded to Richard Harvey’s *Lamb of God* (either for the first time or more directly) in *Pierce Penilesse*, written in the summer of 1592 and published in September.

¹¹⁴ Cuthbert Cunycatcher, *The Defence of Conny-Catching or A Confutation of Those Two Injurious Pamphlets Published by R.G. Against the Practitioners of Many Nimble-Witted and Mysticall Sciences* (London, 1592), sig. A4^r.

¹¹⁵ Greene, *Quip*, sig. A3^r. In this *A Quip* continued the project of *A Defense of Conny-Catching*, which set out to prove that “there be in England other professions that bee great Conny-catchers and caterpillers, that make barraine the field where in they baite” (sig. A4^v). A number of critics, including Miller (“Relationship,” 358-60) and Nicholl (125-7) suggest that the *Defense of Conny-Catching* was the “comédie” that Greene and Nashe wrote together (see Robert Greene, *Greenes Groatsworth of Witte, Bought with a Million of Repentance* [London, 1592], sig. E1^r).

Like Greene, Nashe understands Harvey's (or the Harveys') attack on him as an attack on poets and poetry in general, and he figures Richard Harvey among the "enemies of Poetrie," particularly those "dul-headed Divines" who "tearme our best Writers but babling Ballat-makers" and who "deeme it no more cunning to wryte an exquisite Poem, than to preach pure *Calvin*, or distill the juice of a Commentary in a quarter Sermon" (1.192). In response, Nashe defends the "*lawfull liberty*" (1.192, marginal note) and necessary singularity of the poet, arguing that unlike "slow spirited Saturnists, that have nothing but the pilfries of [their] penne[s], to pollish an exhortation withall," poets must privilege their own powers of original invention in order to sell their books: "Should we (as you) borrowe all out of others, and gather nothing of our selues, our names should bee baffuld on euerie Booke-sellers Stall, and not a Chandlers Mustard-pot but would wipe his mouthe with our wast paper" (1.192). So too does Nashe defend the usefulness of poetry beyond "describ[ing] thoughts and youthfull desires": not only is there "no studie" that poetry can not "illustrate and beautifie" (including sermons themselves) but, as we saw above, poetry is "necessary to the state" (1.193).

Nashe attacks Richard Harvey himself as a "ridiculous Asse" (1.196), a "*Pigmie Braggart*" and a "Pamphleter of nothing but *Peans*" whose censure could hardly bring him any discredit (1.195-6) because Harvey had already so thoroughly discredited himself. Not only did he have his "hood turn[ed] ouer [his] eares" when he was a bachelor "for abusing of *Aristotle*" (1.195), but, as Nashe reminds his readers, Harvey had sacrificed his credit when "his Astronimie broke his day with his creditors, and *Saturne* and *Jupiter* prov'd honest men then all the World tooke them for" (1.196-7). Nashe attacks *The Lamb of God* as "monstrous," ruinous to the printer, and unfit for anything other than to serve as waste paper:

I have read over thy Sheepish discourse of the Lambe of GOD and his enemies,

and entreated my patience to be good to thee whilst I reade: but for all that I could doe with my selfe, (as I am sure I may doe as much as another man) I could not refraine, but bequeath it to the Privie, leafe by leafe as I read it, it was so ugly, dorbellicall, and lumpish. . . . If the Printer haue any great dealings with thee, hee were best to get a priuiledge betimes, Ad imprimendum solum, forbidding all other to sell waste paper but himselfe, or else he will bee in a wofull taking.

(1.198)

Nashe imagines that “Pen, Incke, and paper” themselves prayed that they would “not bee troubled with [Richard] anymore” (1.199), and he suggests that other “Poets and Writers about London” whom Richard had “called piperlye Make-playes and Make-bates” will torment him until he is “constrained to go to the chiefe Beame of [his] Benefice, and there . . . with a trice, trusse vp [his] life in the string of [his] Sancebell” (1.198).

This was a virtuoso performance, and Nashe knew it. “[H]aue I not an indifferent pritty wayne in Spurgalling an Asse?” Nashe asks his readers; “if you knew how extemporall it were at this instant, and with what hast it is writ, you would say so” (1.199). His ability to use Richard Harvey’s attack on him as an opportunity to display his own “extemporall” wit (1.199) was what ultimately separated him from the more deliberative Gabriel Harvey, whose endless catalogues of outrage were frequently painful rather than playful. But this does not mean that we should accept Nashe’s insistence that his rhetorical performance was not “in good earnest . . . but onely to shewe howe for a neede [he] could rayle, if [he] were throughly fyred” (1.199) at face value. Nashe was clearly threatened by Richard’s association of him with Martin—he would bring this up again in both in *Strange Newes* (1.269) and *Have With You* (3.130)—and he was upset by Harvey’s imputation of his intellectual insufficiency. Most importantly, however, Nashe was

threatened by Harvey's sweeping condemnation of satire.

In her influential reading of Nashe, Lorna Hutson argues that *Pierce Penilesse* can best be understood “by analogy with the carnivalesque pastimes of pre-Reformation society in the model of dialogic, menippean satire.”¹¹⁶ Hutson sees *Pierce Penilesse* as a temporary inversion, an ultimately licensed space of play in which radical thoughts and anarchic energies can find expression but only as voiced through a trickster figure—Nashe's persona, Pierce—whose playfulness allows us all to laugh at ourselves and whose inevitable decrowning will restore appropriate order. The text becomes “pure inconsequential experience, pure pastime” that “both mocks its own pretensions to achievement and derives pleasure from that mockery in the form of an improvised game.”¹¹⁷ Hutson argues, in fact, that Nashe mocks the very impotence of ethical satire, a genre that Nashe felt had worn itself out in the previous decade. Nashe's persona Pierce, she claims, “deliberately lacks the integrity to persuade, convince, and so teach the reader.”¹¹⁸ If Nashe is trying to persuade us of anything, Hutson's reading suggests, it is paradoxically that satire cannot persuade us of anything at all.

But this seems to me to be the very opposite of what Nashe was up to.¹¹⁹ I would suggest instead that in *Pierce Penilesse* Nashe set out to demonstrate—against the example of Martin Marprelate and in response to the categorical dismissal of Richard Harvey—that satire *could* be both profitable and persuasive.¹²⁰ In his description of the “odde foule mouthde knaue, called *Charles the Fryer*,” for example, Nashe distinguishes between the unprofitable knavery of “those

¹¹⁶ Hutson, 11.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 104-5.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 123.

¹¹⁹ Hutson herself admits that “the indulgent, carnivalesque impetus of *Pierce Penilesse*” is not “consistently evident” and recognizes that Nashe “*is occasionally in earnest*”; if she has “misread Nashe's mockery of the moral pretensions of Elizabethan satire,” she concedes, she is not the first to do so (176).

¹²⁰ Hilliard generally agrees: “The purpose of most of Nashe's major works was to persuade his readers to be good citizens of the commonwealth, although as a satirist most of his effort went into attacking abnormalities, rather than advancing a positive position” (9).

that get their liuing al the yeere long, by nothing but rayling” (*PP*, 1.190) and the productive artistry of the Aretine-like satirist. This Charles, who has been consistently identified as Charles Chester, a sort of professional railer who was notorious about the London tavern scene,¹²¹ was despicable both because he was indiscriminate in his raillery—he was a “venemous toothd Cur” that would “do nothing but bite euey one by the shins that passe[d] by”—and because of his general disregard for established authority and social hierarchy: “Noblemen he would liken to more vgly things than himself.” Even though he was apparently hired by those who “delight[ed] in detracting” for their entertainment, Charles was beyond restraint. He had been spit on and sent to Bridewell so often that “it was impossible for any shame or punishment to terrifie him from ill speaking,” as he apparently demonstrated all too clearly on one occasion: “Vpon a time, being chalenged at his owne weapon in a priuate Chamber, by a great personage (rayling, I meane), he so far outstript him in villainous words, and ouerbandied him in bitter tearmes, that the name of sport could not perswade him patience, nor containe his furie in any degrees of ieast, but needs hee must wreake himselfe vppon him” (1.190). Like Martin, Charles was out of control.

The Aretine-like satirist, on the other hand, writes on behalf of established authority and against “Atheisme, schisme, hypocrisie, & vainglory” (1.242).¹²² The satirist exercises a productive rather than destructive disciplinary function: his “quill” keeps “in awe” those “that care neither for God nor the diuell” (1.193), and his ability to publish men’s shame to the world,

¹²¹ Chester apparently led quite the extraordinary life, having been imprisoned by the Spanish in the Canary Islands only to escape, return to London, and find himself imprisoned for being a Roman Catholic. Since Aubrey’s *Lives* he has been identified as the source of Carlo Buffone in Ben Jonson’s *Every Man Out of His Humour* (1599), who exists in that play precisely in the way Charles does in Nashe’s *Pierce Penilesse*. Matthew Steggle has done rather extensive research on Chester; his description of Chester’s career as a professional railer is based on this passage of *Pierce Penilesse*. See Matthew Steggle, “Charles Chester and Ben Jonson,” *SEL* 39: 2 (1999), 313-26; Matthew Steggle, “Charles Chester and Richard Hakluyt,” *SEL* 43:1 (2003), 65-81; Nicholl, 104. For a discussion of Jonson’s distinction between the raillery of Carlo Buffone and the satire of the authorial Asper/Macilente, see Chapter 4.

¹²² Nashe’s distinction may not have been quite as sharp as he wanted it to be, particularly as his attack on Richard Harvey—which he used as an advertisement of his ability to rail on behalf of a potential patron—followed so soon after his denouncement of Chester.

like the “malicious eye” of an adversary, makes men “more vigilant ouer [their] imperfections than otherwise [they] would be” (1.211). By deriding the social ambition of “vpstart gallants” who “without desert or seruice” were “raised from the plough to be checkmate with Princes” (1.173), furthermore, the profitable satirist reinforces the social hierarchy rather than undermines it. Like Greene, Nashe works in *Pierce Penilesse* to expose those “seruile, insinuating slaue[s]” who “filche” their way into some noblemans service (“either by bribes or flattery”) only to “vaunt themselues ouer the common multitude” when they win his favor (1.175).¹²³ And Nashe makes it clear that the “golden asses” he attacks are not the “bright stars of Nobilitie” (1.242) but the “Carterly vpstarts, that out-face Towne and Country in their Veluets” (1.160): by failing to provide liberal patronage to the poets who uphold true virtue and gentility, it is the upstarts, not the satirists, who threaten the social hierarchy. For Nashe, the satirist is a defender against all types of threats to the establishment. The satirist defends scholars from the threat posed by scribes who allow “euery grosse braind Idiot” with a “Treatise of *Tom Thumme*” to come into print (1.159); defends true learning from the threat of “fantastical foole[s]” like antiquaries” (1.183); defends true religion from the threat of schismatics and Martinists; and defends even the state from the threat of foreign customs and fashions.

If Nashe’s satire is trying to persuade us of anything, then, it is that satire *can* be profitably persuasive. Far from being “pure inconsequential experience,” in fact, Nashe’s *Pierce Penilesse* attempts to dissuade men from vice. As the Knight of the Post points out, the Devil would hardly be pleased by Pierce’s Supplication: “me thinks thou hast handled all the seuen deadly sinnes in it, and spared none that exceeds his limits in any of them” (1.217). In the

¹²³ This is not to suggest that Nashe upheld social rigidity; he argued that “Vertue ascendeth by degrees of desert vnto dignitie” (1.176), he attacked the Danes for their complete lack of social mobility (1.179), and he suggested that “titles of fame and glory” should be available for and set in view of “forward minds” (1.180). But, like Harvey, he tended to think social mobility should only be available to scholars.

antagonism between Virtue and Vice, Christianity and the forces that opposed it, Nashe ironically writes to the Devil in order to side with Christ. Nashe's satirical discourse is profitable in its ability to both delight and instruct: at the same time that his prose is witty and pleasurable to read, Nashe makes the various vices appear blameworthy, such that his readers will reject them. His description of drunkenness, for example, offers clever names for the eight different types of drunkards, but it also exaggerates the effects of drunkenness and associates drunkenness with a type of bestial nature in order to render such behavior unappealing. By entreating the Devil to "wipe this sin out of the catalogue of [his] subtilties" (1.205), Nashe entreats his more human readers to avoid a "beastly imperfection" that could "vtterlie obscure all that is commendable" in them (1.205). At times, this clever and exaggerated form of dissuasion can be surprisingly direct: "Gentlemen, all you that will not haue your braines wise sodden, your flesh rotten with the Dropsie, that loue not to go in greasie dublets, stockings out at the heeles, and weare alehouse daggers at your backes, forbear this slauering brauery, that will make you haue stinking breathes, and your bodies smell like Brewers aprons" (1.208).

5. Conclusion

Nashe's attempt to demonstrate the profitable potential of satirical discourse should serve as a reminder of the rhetorical continuities between satire and other forms of discourse that are intended to be persuasive—particularly, in this case, sermons. Nashe clearly saw little significant difference between sermons by "those Diuines" who had "tasted the sweete springs of *Pernassus*" (1.192) and his own satirical railing against vice. Perhaps the latter allowed somewhat greater flexibility for the exercise of his wit—especially in his fictionalized vignettes and in those moments where his pleasure in language itself takes over—but both poetic sermons

and poetic satires had more “wit to mooue” and “passion to vrge” than the “dunsticall Sermons” of “some dul-headed Divines” (1.192). The rhetorical connection between satire and sermons was obvious to Renaissance theorists who considered satire in terms of its social function. George Puttenham, for example, suggested that satire was one of “three kinds of poems reprehensiuē” that came about when poets found in man “generally much to reprove & little to praise”; these poets, he claimed, “made certaine poems in plaine meetres, more like to sermons or preachings then otherwise.”¹²⁴ As J.B. Leishman notes, despite their virulent antipathy for the puritans, the satirical “University wits, no less than Stubbes and Gosson, [were] essentially and very Englishly preachers, mounting their pulpits to denounce particular sins and particular sinners. (It is perhaps worth observing that, of the authors mentioned in the foregoing list, at least five—Donne, Hall, Marston, Bastard, and Nicholson—sooner or later became parsons.)”¹²⁵ The Renaissance satirist, like his counterpart in the pulpit, rendered various dangerously appealing behaviors, attitudes, ideas, or even people blameworthy by making them appear monstrous and despicable and by associating them with sin, vice, and evil. This reminder should reinforce the earnestness underpinning Nashe’s attack on the seven deadly sins, an earnestness which could hardly be doubted the following year in *Christs Teares Ouer Jerusalem* (1593).

¹²⁴ George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589), in *English Literary Criticism: The Renaissance*, ed. O.B. Hardison, Jr. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963), 161.

¹²⁵ J.B. Leishman (ed.), *The Three Parnassus Plays* (London: Ivor Nicholson & Watson LTD, 1949), 46.

CHAPTER 3: THE HARVEY-NASHE QUARREL: THE POETICS OF PRAISE VS. BLAME

In the four centuries since the quarrel between Thomas Nashe and Gabriel Harvey fizzled out—and then burned for good with the Bishop’s Ban in 1599—critics have been hard-pressed to explain what all the fuss was about. Many of the details have been worked out (thanks, in no small part, to Nashe’s helpful overviews of the quarrel¹), but scholars through the middle of the twentieth century saw in the exchange great words over little matter. David Perkins doubted “whether *any* really clear-cut and important intellectual issue exists at all in the dispute.”² Ronald McKerrow supposed that even Nashe’s and Harvey’s Elizabethan contemporaries neither knew nor cared “what the quarrel was about, or on whose side was the right.”³ Edwin Miller supposed there was some truth in Thomas Middleton’s remark that the quarrel “was but the running a tilt of wits in booksellers’ shops on both sides of John of Paul’s churchyard.”⁴ And C.S. Lewis famously declared that “if you are looking for serious debate you will find [the quarrel]

¹ See *SN* 1.270-1 and *HWY* 3.130, where Nashe explains that Richard Harvey had attacked the anti-Martinists in (the anonymously published) *Plaine Perceval* (1590) and then attacked Nashe by name in the preface to *Lamb of God* (1590). Greene, acting as the “chiefe agent for the companie . . . tooke occasion to canuaze [Richard Harvey] a little” in his *Quip for an Upstart Courtier* (1592), as did Nashe in an extended aside in *Pierce Penilesse* (1592). Gabriel Harvey responded to Greene (who had, rather inconveniently for Harvey, one feels, since died) and Nashe in *Four Letters, and Certaine Sonnets* (1592). Nashe took the bait in *Strange Newes of the Intercepting Certain Letters* (1593), though he subsequently apologized in a preface to *Christs Teares Over Jerusalem* (1593). At about the same time, Harvey released his massive diatribe against Nashe, *Pierces Supererogation* (1593). Nashe, incensed, promised a new attack in his preface to the second edition of *Christs Teares* (1594), which he finally delivered in *Have With You to Saffron-Walden* (1596). The following year, *The Trimming of Thomas Nashe* (1597) appeared, which has sometimes been ascribed to Gabriel Harvey, though most critics now find his authorship unlikely. Nashe promised a rebuttal in *Lenten Stuffe* (1599; see 3.153), but his and Harvey’s works were banned and burned on June 1, 1599, and neither were heard from again.

² David Perkins, “Issues and Motivations in the Nashe-Harvey Quarrel,” *Philological Quarterly* 39:2 (April, 1960), 224-33; 227.

³ Ronald McKerrow (ed.), *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, 5 vols. (1908; reprint ed. F.P. Wilson; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), 5.65.

⁴ Cited by Edwin Miller, *The Professional Writer in Elizabethan England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), 168. Nashe himself seemed to support a version of this idea in *Have With You*, though, characteristically, he deferred responsibility: the frozen wits of Paul’s Churchyard, he said, “to recreate and enkindle their decayed spirites, they care not how they set *Haruey* and mee on fire one against another, or whet vs on to consume our selues” (Nashe, 3.30).

unreadable.”⁵

The quarrel between Nashe and Harvey has been all the more puzzling because their disagreement cannot be mapped onto larger Elizabethan social divisions of religion, class, or general outlook. Simply put, Nashe and Harvey were too similar. Both Harvey and Nashe were thoroughly conformist in their religious views: although Harvey has been accused of leaning puritan⁶ and a recent case has been made for Nashe’s affinity with Catholicism,⁷ both writers vehemently opposed Martin Marprelate and both considered themselves to be orthodox defenders of the Church of England. Despite the fun Nashe poked at Harvey’s father and despite Harvey’s attacks on Nashe’s poverty, both were from middle-class backgrounds: Harvey’s father was a successful and apparently well-respected rope maker in Saffron-Walden,⁸ and Nashe’s father was a curate in Lowestoft and then rector of West Harling, in Norfolk.⁹ Both attended Cambridge (Harvey at Christ’s College, Nashe at St. John’s), and both were outspoken adherents to the humanism they learned there. They were both ambitious, learned, and proud of their abilities, they both considered themselves fit for service to the state, and both were, ultimately, disappointed in their hopes.¹⁰

⁵ C.S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), 413.

⁶ See McKerrow, 5.70-1. Nashe had tried to associate Harvey with presbyterianism for general appreciation of Thomas Cartwright and his attack on Dr. Perne (*Have With You*, 3.138), but really he was grasping at straws.

⁷ See Charles Nicholl, *Cup of News: The Life of Thomas Nashe* (Boston: Routledge, 1984), especially Chapter 8: “Pierce Politic.”

⁸ Harvey was very sensitive about the fun Greene and Nashe had with jokes about hangmen, and insisted on more than one occasion that his father had spared no expense in sending three sons to university (see, e.g., Harvey’s sonnet to his father appended to *Four Letters* [*The Works of Gabriel Harvey*, 3 vols., ed. Alexander Grosart (New York: AMS Press, 1966) 1.250-1]).

⁹ G.R. Hibbard, *Thomas Nashe: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 1.

¹⁰ More than one modern commentator has noted that Gabriel Harvey was the poster child for the successes and failures of the Renaissance humanist project. Sixteenth-century humanism taught Englishmen that “learning in the *literae humaniores* imparted that peculiar wisdom and judgement needed in the conduct of public affairs” and that therefore university men were “especially qualified to serve the State” (Mark Curtis, “The Alienated Intellectuals of Early Stuart England,” *Past & Present* 23 (1962), 25-43; 39). A brilliant student of the classics and rhetorical theory, Harvey nevertheless met staunch resistance to his attempt to rise within the University. This resistance was attributed to his willingness to entertain radical ideas (such as Ramism) and his inept social skills, but it was more likely the consequence of class animosity. As Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine argue, whatever the tenets of humanism, it tended to benefit those who were already members of the elite: “If outstanding ability in the

Harvey and Nashe were personally similar as well. The picture of Harvey as an arrogant pedant entirely lacking humor, social poise, and self-criticism,¹¹ ill-equipped to deal with the clever and self-deprecating Nashe is amusing but probably misleading, as much the product of Nashe's account in *Have With You* as a reflection of reality.¹² In fact both authors were deeply learned in classical poetry and philosophy, thought of themselves as scholars, and were eager to display that learning; if anything, Nashe was the more conservative in his attachment to Aristotle and his disdain for new or fashionable ideas.¹³ Harvey's early writings reveal his extensive sense of humor and playfulness, neither of which are entirely overshadowed by the bitterness of his later attacks on Greene and Nashe. Nashe, for his part, could never entirely hide the bitterness he felt towards Harvey under his playfulness and sense of humor. They were equally proud, equally vain, and equally likely to accuse the other of pride and vanity. Perhaps Nashe was the more willing of the two to quarrel publicly,¹⁴ but, as Nashe pointed out, once it began Harvey was

humanities was a ticket to preferment, it was only so, evidently, for those born within easy reach of office, those of gentle or noble birth" (*From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and the Liberal Arts in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Europe* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986], 196).

¹¹ See, for example, G.C. Moore Smith's assessment of Harvey: "If he had been a man of good birth and a gentleman by nature, he could have been what he was and still kept on good terms with his equals. But with all his lofty ambitions, he was a *parvenu*, without that instinctive sense of the happy mean in bearing and conduct which saves a natural gentleman from ridicule or dislike. Even in his letters to the Master of his College, Dr. Young, who was his firm friend, we see a want of *savior-faire*—a tendency to praise the Master according to the forms of rhetoric—which was unbecoming in a man in Harvey's position. His Saffron Walden breeding had made him a scholar, but it had not taught him how to behave himself modestly and easily in society. The defect might have been made good if Harvey had had any sense of humour; without such a sense—and no man was ever more deficient in it than Harvey—the defect was incurable" (Moore Smith (ed.), *Gabriel Harvey's Marginalia* [Stratford-Upon-Avon: Shakespeare Head Press, 1913], 11-12). Alexander Grosart's "Memorial Introduction" (in *The Works of Gabriel Harvey*, 3 vols., ed. Grosart [1884; repr. New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1966]) is considerably less kind.

¹² Paul McLane argues that "the whirligig of time has taken its revenges, and today Harvey instead of being regarded as a learned blockhead or the pedant *par excellence*—an attitude fostered by the biased and unsympathetic treatment accorded to him by his first editor, Dr. Grosart—stands as one of the most learned scholars of his age, a thoroughgoing humanist and Renaissance man, and perhaps the Elizabethan Englishman whose mind we know best" (McLane, *Spenser's Shepherdes Calender: A Study in Elizabethan Allegory* [Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1961], 237-8). But as Neil Rhodes demonstrates, unabashed antipathy towards Harvey is still alive and well: "Although clearly a very able scholar, his personality was an oleaginous mixture of vanity, obsequiousness and pomposity, a living travesty of Castiglione's ideal to which he absurdly aspired . . . His was a personality which invited and received ridicule" (Rhodes, *The Power of Eloquence and English Renaissance Literature* [New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992], 58).

¹³ See McKerrow, 5.65.

¹⁴ Still, I do not agree with Moore Smith that Nashe "fights with a light heart and a rollicking enjoyment of it all"

much more willing to find time for it than he let on.¹⁵ Conversely, for all Nashe's determination to answer anything that Harvey wrote against him—to “spit fire for fire, fight diuell fight dragon, as long as he will” (*HWY*, 3.63)—he clearly grew weary of carrying on with the good doctor and was every bit as interested as the latter in moving on to more important matters.¹⁶

Most modern commentators have supposed that the dispute had something to do with the development of the marketplace of print and the rise of professional authorship. According to this view, first (and perhaps best) articulated by Phoebe Sheavyn, Harvey was the “narrow University pedant, arrogant, dry-as-dust, censorious . . . he has Courtly pretensions and he seeks to give the impression of a writer in the Court's amateur tradition. Nashe, on the other hand, was the self-confident, emancipated young man of the world, despising the other for his narrow outlook, and flouting his pretensions to superiority; a popular writer with all the instincts of a professional.”¹⁷ And certainly there does seem to be some truth to this. Harvey, after all, declared in the beginning of *Pierces Supererogation* that he had, “in iudgment, scorned, to appeere in the rancke of this scribling generation: and could not haue bene hired with a great fee, to publish any Pamflet of whatsoeuer nature, in [his] owne name, had [he] not bene intollerably prouoked” (2.33-4).¹⁸ Nashe, on the other hand, emphatically declared, “when I doo play my Prizes in Print,

(*Marginalia*, 71).

¹⁵ See Thomas Nashe, *Have With You to Saffron-Walden* (1596), in *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, 5 vols, ed. Ronald McKerrow (1908; reprint ed. F.P. Wilson; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), 3.118. All references to Nashe's works are to this edition.

¹⁶ This catalogue of similarities between Harvey and Nashe thus opposes Hibbard's claim that “In almost every respect Nashe was Harvey's antithesis” (204). Hibbard's list is an instructive reminder that there were important differences between the two writers, but in this chapter I will attempt to demonstrate the significance of the similarities necessary for and produced by satirical controversy.

¹⁷ Phoebe Sheavyn, *The Literary Profession in the Elizabethan Age*, 2nd ed, rev. J.W. Saunders (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1967), 134. For variations on this theme, see David Perkins, “Issues and Motivations in the Nashe-Harvey Quarrel,” *Philological Quarterly* 39:2 (April, 1960), 224-33; Kenneth Friedenreich, “Nashe's *Strange Newes* and the Case for Professional Writers,” *Studies in Philology* 71:4 (Oct, 1974), 451-71; Alexandra Halasz, *The Marketplace of Print: Pamphlets and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); and Rayna Kalas, *Frame, Glass, Verse: The Technology of Poetic Invention in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 2007).

¹⁸ All references to Harvey's works (unless otherwise noted) are to *The Works of Gabriel Harvey*, 3 vols, ed.

He be paid for my paines” (*HWY* 3.128).

But this view of the quarrel fails to explain why, in McKerrow’s terms, a dispute about the rise of professional authorship would be “so long drawn out and so acrimonious.”¹⁹ Upon closer inspection, furthermore, Harvey may have been less of an amateur and Nashe less of a professional than this account would suggest. Whatever his disdain for “scribbling,” Harvey was much more willing to go to press than he cared to admit, and his tenure as the corrector of the press for John Wolfe before and during the printing of *Pierces Supererogation* put him in close company with the new class of professional writers.²⁰ Although Nashe was certainly committed to making a living with his pen, the strict association of Nashe with professional authorship downplays his continued attempts to find a steady patron as well as his disdain for some of the more commercial products of the early modern press.²¹ As Jennifer Andersen notes, this reading of the quarrel tends to posit Nashe as the protagonist and Harvey as the antagonist in a game that has long since validated Nashe. Those critics who associate Nashe with narratives “about the rise of capitalism, the commodified text, and the professional, commercial writer,” Andersen argues, render Nashe as “more of a modern than an early modern. Such readings tend to give us Nashe the avatar of modern secular humanism, midwife to realistic fiction and the novel and sundry other hallmarks of modernity.”²²

As I began to suggest in Chapter 2, the quarrel between Gabriel Harvey and Thomas

Alexander Grosart (1884; reprint New York: AMS Press, 1966).

¹⁹ McKerrow, 5.65.

²⁰ See Virginia, *Gabriel Harvey: His Life, Marginalia, and Library* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 102-3.

²¹ Kenneth Friedenreich, for example, argues that Nashe was “as enthusiastic in defending ballad maker as he was in defending dramatists” (466), but in fact the only time Nashe defended ballads was when he responded to Harvey’s attack on Elderton (*SN*, 1.280). Elsewhere Nashe was consistent with his attack on ballad-makers and almanac writers, and, as I will demonstrate below, throughout *Have With You* he associated Harvey with both.

²² Jennifer Andersen, “Thomas Nashe and Popular Conformity in Late Elizabethan England,” *Renaissance and Reformation* 25:4 (2001), 25-43; 27.

Nashe primarily concerned the value of satire in the nascent marketplace of print.²³ As the quarrel progressed, it splintered into a dizzying sequence of retorts and counter-retorts, display and disdain, but the central intellectual and poetic controversy that emerged was between blame and praise, between satire and panegyric. Nashe, buoyed by the success of the anti-Martinist campaign, attempted to demonstrate that satire could be profitable for both reader and writer alike. Harvey, convinced that the best use of the press was to win praise for oneself by praising heroic deeds and social superiors, equated scurrilous style with bad character and argued that discredit impoverished the reader and redounded upon the writer. But even as he tried to hold himself above the “grosse scurility, and impudent calumny” of his detractors (*Four Letters*, 1.204), Harvey found that he could not discredit the blame that had been levied against him without paradoxically—and self-damningly—discrediting the authors of that blame. Nashe, in turn, found that he could not defend himself and his own use of satirical discourse without reproducing the very self-praise that he had denounced in Harvey’s writing.

The Harvey-Nashe quarrel is rife with compelling details about the contemporary world of print, particularly because Nashe was so interested in the materiality of writing and the economics of Paul’s Churchyard. But what is most significant for our understanding of what satire *does* is the way their feud produced similarities and associations between two writers who were already very much alike. In reading each other’s work so carefully and in responding to one another so extensively, Harvey and Nashe infected each other’s style, reputations, and lives. This has significant consequences for our understanding of the relationship between the satirist and the satiric object, for, as Harvey recognized, the satirist implicates himself by revealing his own extensive—and therefore problematic—knowledge of the very blameworthy target he is in the

²³ Rhodes probably comes closest to this line of argument in describing the quarrel as “a collision between rhetoric and satire,” though his argument—as well as his understanding of both “rhetoric” and “satire”—is very different from my own. See Rhodes, *The Power of Eloquence*, 118-22.

business of exposing. Thus even as Harvey and Nashe went about to prove that the other's writings were wasteful—a waste of time, a waste of paper, and literally full of waste—each finally recognized that such waste was the matter of their own writing.

1. Discrediting Discredit in Harvey's *Four Letters*

Gabriel Harvey's outrage at Greene's attack on the Harveys in *A Quip for an Vpstart Courtier* (1592) was exacerbated by his brother John Harvey's untimely death in the summer of 1592.²⁴ In late August or early September, Harvey arrived in London in order to settle his brother's estate; there he also planned to confront Greene and perhaps sue for libel. But while Harvey was debating with himself how best to proceed, Greene died—"not of the plague, or the pockes," Harvey suggested, but of an illness brought about by "a surfett of pickled herringe and rennish wine" (*FL*, 1.162). Denied legal redress,²⁵ Harvey turned to the court of public opinion. He probably should not have. On 5 September he wrote an attack on Greene in the form of a letter to Christopher Bird of Saffron Walden, which he acknowledged would be "matter inough for a new ciuill war . . . if this poore Letter should fortune to come in print."²⁶ Harvey must have read Nashe's *Pierce Penilesse* several days later, for in the middle of a second letter about Greene—this one addressed "To euery Reader fauourable, or indifferently affected"—Harvey

²⁴ Greene had attacked John Harvey as "a Physitian or a foole" who might have "proued a proper man if he had not spoiled himselfe with his Astrological discourse of the terrible coniunction of Saturne and Iupiter" (*A Quip*, sig. E3^v-4^r). John Harvey had indeed published various almanacs and astrological treatises throughout the 1580s, including *An Astrological Addition, or Supplement to be Annexed to the Late Discourse Vpon the Great Coniunction of Saturne, and Iupiter* (London, 1583), *Leap Year* (London, 1584), and *A Discursive Problem Concerning Prophecies* (London, 1588). All are filled with the same type of apocalyptic language that characterized his brother Richard's *Astrological Discourse* (London, 1583). For an overview of Greene's attack on the entire Harvey family, see Chapter 2.

²⁵ Harvey claimed that because of Greene's death he was "deprived of that remedy in law, that I entended against him, in the behalfe of my Father, whose honest reputation I was in many duties to tender" (*FL*, 1.168). Hibbard points out, somewhat more cynically, that in January 1592 Harvey's fellowship at Trinity Hall, which he had held for more than a decade, expired, and that Harvey may have been short of money (186).

²⁶ McKerrow supposed that this letter appeared in print before the rest of the *Four Letters* (5.81).

interrupts his rant about the odious nature of invective and the abominable nature of Greene's "forged & suborned calumnies" (1.192) to turn to Nashe:

Flourishing M. Greene is most-wofully faded, and whilst I am bemoaning his ouer-pittious decay; & discoursing the vsuall successe of such ranke wittes, Loe all on the suddaine, his sworne brother, M. Pierce Penni-lesse (still more paltery, but what remedy? we are already ouer shoes and must now goe through) Loe his inwardest companion, that tasted of the fatall herringe, cruelly pinched with want, vexed with discredite, tormented with other mens felicitie, and ouerwhelmed with his owne misery; in a rauing, and franticke moode, most desperately exhibiteth his supplication to the Diuell. (1.193-4)

This letter, the longest of the bunch, was dated 8-9 September. By 12 September Harvey had written another letter; by 16 September he had written a dedicatory epistle; and at some point along the way he added twenty-two doggerel sonnets covering the same general material. The collection was published as *Foure Letters, and Certaine Sonnets* later that fall.

Foure Letters has received relatively little critical attention, perhaps because it seems so schizophrenic.²⁷ Harvey was a powerfully intelligent scholar who was capable of arguing both sides of a question, and in *Foure Letters* he continually debates not only the best way to respond but also whether or not it is appropriate for him to respond at all—all while responding at considerable length. He is caught in the unenviable position of trying to discredit those who had discredited his family without discrediting himself in the process. Even as he tries to “temper

²⁷ The most significant treatment of Harvey's *Foure Letters* can be found in Kenneth Friedenreich's essay on the quarrel. Friedenreich, like some others, suggests that the quarrel hinges on the rise of professional authorship and the market for news; as a result, he overstates Nashe's interest in writing for a public audience as well as Harvey's objections to the print market. See also Jennifer Richards, "Gabriel Harvey's Choleric Writing," in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Literature, 1485-1603*, ed. Mike Pincombe and Cathy Shrank (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 655-70.

[his] stile in euery part”; even as he “demeane[s]” himself such that he “might neither seme blinded with affection, nor enraged with passion”; even as he tries so hard to strike a disinterested, scholarly pose in order to “mildly & calmly shew, how discredit reboundeth vpon the autors” (*FL*, 1.157), Harvey ultimately can not completely hold his anger at bay. His prose turns dizzyingly from self-defense to mild rebuke, from condescending advice to personal attack, from reasoned analysis to satirical denunciation. *Foure Letters* is fascinating as a document of Harvey’s struggle—and ultimate failure—to maintain the scholarly detachment he worked so hard to cultivate.

In *Foure Letters*, Harvey he goes out of his way to emphasize his reluctance to enter into public controversy. He figures himself as a scholar who has “smal superfluity of leysure, to entend such businesse” (1.173) and who would rather be doing almost anything other than writing against two hack writers who are so far beneath him: “he is pitifully bestead, that in an Age of Pollicy, and in a world of Industry, (wherein the greatest matters of Gouvernement, and Valour, seeme small to aspiring capacities) is constrained to make woefull Greene, and beggarly Pierce Pennylesse, (as it were a Grashopper, and a Cricket, two pretty musitians, but silly creatures) the argumente of his stile” (1.222-3). He insists that he would prefer to “play the Dumme Dog, with some auncientes” (1.235), and that he is one of those who “would bee Mutes, if they might bee suffered to be, as were meetest for them, and onelie to dwell in the excellent monuments of diuine wittes, whose sweet company they cannot enioy inough” (1.203). And as a scholar of Horace, Harvey knows that nothing should be “committed to a publike view” that is “not exactly laboured both for matter and maner: and that importeth not some notable vse, to one, or other effecuell [sic] purpose” (1.176).

This scholarly pose is part of Harvey’s larger effort to appear unruffled by Greene and

Nashe. He insists that “patience” had trained him “to pocket-vp more hainous indignities” (1.166), that he pays little attention to his “own iniury” because he had been “born to suffer, & made to contemne iniuries,” and that one who had “in his youth flattered not himselfe with the exceeding commendations of some greatest schollers in the worlde” can hardly “at these yeares, either be discouraged with misreporte” (1.177). He almost boasts that he can “easely defie the proudest, that dare[s] to cal [his] credite in question” or accuse him “of any hishonest, or scandalous parte, either in deede, or in word” (1.178); they trouble him “little,” and he would “very well leaue them to the iollity of their owne swinge” (1.235). But—with Harvey, as we shall see, there is always a “but”—Harvey insists that he cannot overlook the injury done to his father and to his two brothers (1.167) or ignore the “vehement importunity of some affectionate friends” (1.176) who have implored him to defend his family’s reputation. Thus Harvey carries forward in his declamation of Greene and Nashe while at the same time insisting that he is “exceeding loath to penne” what he has written (1.155) and that the “little” he has done has been “compelled” (1.235).

Compelled to respond, Harvey maintains that he desires nothing more than “some little contentation of friendes, and some reasonable mittigation of ill-willers” (1.213). At no point in *Foure Letters*—or in fact anywhere throughout the controversy—does Harvey acknowledge that Greene and Nashe had themselves responded to Richard Harvey’s attack on Nashe in *The Lamb of God*; from Harvey’s perspective, Lyly had attacked him without provocation in *Pappe with an Hatchet* and then incited two of his fellow “scribling foole[s]” (1.161) to join in. In fact, Harvey continually suggests that he and Richard are nothing if not well-wishers to Nashe. Gabriel suggests that he “in charitie kisseth thy [Nashe’s] hand, and in pitie wisheth thee better luck”; his brother Richard, he knows, “notwithstanding the notorious Diabolicall discourse of the saide

Pierce . . . shall vnfaignedly pray for him” (1.198-9). Gabriel’s intention is “not, to displeasure, or discredite any” (1.213); rather he “diligently” and even “affectionately” dedicates his “endeauour” to his living opponents’ own “good” (1.213). He hopes to teach his young detractor that satire is unprofitable to its readers, to its authors, and to the state.

Harvey acknowledges that Nashe has a “delicate witte” and is “a Creature” of “singular, and wonderfull hope” (1.196), but he worries that, “like a Greeke Parasite” who “misuse[d] the Tragedy of Hecuba” (1.198), Nashe employs his “queintest Inuentions” for the wrong purposes. Harvey counsels Nashe to “either gallantlie aduance [his] vertuous self, maugre Fortune: (what impossible to aspiring industry?) or mightilie enchant some mangificent Mecaenas, (for thou canst doe it) to honour himselfe in honouring [Nashe]” (1.197)—failing to acknowledge, of course, that Nashe had in fact figured his attack on Richard Harvey as an advertisement of his abilities to such a liberal patron.

Harvey counters Nashe’s defense of poetry and satire in *Pierce Penilesse* with an insistence that the true or “diuine” poet, like Sidney and Spenser, wins “immortal Fame” for themselves by using “heauenly Eloquence” and “heroicall Cantoes” to “honour right Vertue, & braue valous indeede.”

Right artificiality, (whereat I once aimed to the vttermost power of my slender capacity,) is not mad-brained, or ridiculous, or absurd, or blasphemous, or monstrous: but deepe-conceited, but pleasurable, but delicate, but exquisite, but gracious, but admirable: not according to the fantastick mould of Aretine, or Rabelays, but according to the fine modell of Orpheus, Homer, Pindarus, & the excellentest wittes of Greece, and of the Lande, that flowed with milke, and hony.
(1.217-18)

Whereas Nashe saw two functions for the poet—praising virtue and blaming vice—Harvey recognizes only one: praise. For Harvey, praise not only reinforces the values of the established hierarchy but serves to valorize the poet as well. By praising others, the poet wins praise for himself.

By demeaning others, on the other hand, Harvey suggests, the satirist demeans himself. Harvey figures satire as a misuse of poetic talent and a misuse of the press; it is roister-doisterly stuff, “vaigneglorious and Thrasonically braunge,” “scandalous, and blasphemous rauing” (1.168), shameful speech unworthy of a gentleman, a scholar, or a poet. Whereas Nashe (like Lyly) saw style as something that could be performed, Harvey argues (as he did in his encounter with Lyly) that a writer’s style is a reflection of his moral character.²⁸ Greene’s “dissolute, and licentious liuing” and “piperly Extemporizing, and Tartletonizing” therefore went hand in hand (1.168). For Harvey, only the most “riotous” and “outrageous” characters are capable of “impudent pamphletting, phantasticall interluding, and desperate libelling,” and thus one could reasonably conclude that impudent pamphlets, fantastical interludes, and desperate libels must have been written by riotous and outrageous characters. (There is a bit of circular reasoning here, as Harvey suggests that Greene’s attack on him cannot be credited because it had been written by a dissolute character, and that the clearest evidence that Greene was a dissolute character is that he had attacked Harvey.) Greene’s fate, Harvey implies, should serve as an example for those who follow a poetics of blame: Greene “sought Fame by diffamation of other, but hath vtterly discredited himselfe: and is notoriously grown a very prouerbe of Infamy, and contempt” (1.163).

Whereas Nashe had attempted to use satire to purge the press of its unprofitable absurdity, for Harvey *satire* is the problem with the press. “The Print is abused, that abuseth,” he

²⁸ Hilliard notes this as well (201).

argues, and he “earnestly beseeche[s] flourishing writers, not to trouble the Presse, but in case of vrgent occasion, or important vse” (1.231). Harvey thinks the press should be the repository of the purest eloquence and the most refined poetic and divine endeavors of the finest minds. Instead it has been over-run by “scribblers” like Greene and Nashe who would instruct others before they were informed themselves.²⁹ Rather than edifying the reader, satirical pamphlets are at best “wast paper” (1.202) and at worst “the abhominable villanies of . . . base shifting companions: good for nothinge, in the opinion of good mindes, but to cast away themselues, to spoile their adherentes, to pray vpon their fauourers, to dishonour their Patrons, to infecte the Aire, where they breath” (1.224). It is a “mad world, where such shameful stuffe is bought, and sould: and where such roisterly Varlets are suffered to play vpon whome they lust, and how they lust” (1.187).

Harvey is troubled by the presumption of satirical speech, by the way it transgresses decorum and threatens the established social hierarchy. The satirist is “ouerweeninge in conceit” (1.178), and in his liberty of expression and willingness to attack anyone—including his social superiors—the satirist threatens to erase the distinctions and pull down the degrees that uphold society: “giue him his peremptory white rod in his hand, and God-night all distinction of persons, and all difference of estates: his Pen is his mace, his lance, his two-edged sword, his scepter, his Hercules club: and will beare a predominant sway, in despight of vaine glorious Titles, and ambitious Degrees” (1.233). Satirical speech is a type of lawlessness that threatens the stability of the state and the social order. Orators and poets may claim “a speciall Liberty” and an “absolute Licence” for themselves, but this can not be “Liberty without boundes” or “Licence

²⁹ This is both a problem of “Our new-new writers” (1.233) and the reading public for whom they wrote, a reading public more interested in novel material than in profitable matter. For this reading public, even “the Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia is not greene enough.” Instead, Harvey complains, they “must haue *Greenes* Arcadia,” and they “most eagerlie longed for *Greenes* Faerie Queene” (1.191).

without limitation.” Invectives “by fauour”—here Harvey probably glances at Leicester’s implicit support for Martin Marprelate, which Nashe had attacked in *Pierce Penilesse*—have “bene too bolde: and Satyres by vsurpation too-presumptuous.” Even Spenser had overstepped the bounds of poetic decorum by attacking his social superiors: “Mother Hubbard in heat of choller, forgetting the pure sanguine of her sweete Feary Queene, wilfully ouer-shott her malcontented selfe” (1.164). “*Penilesse*,” Harvey says, looking at Nashe, “is not Lawlesse,” and “a Poets, or Painters Licence, is a poore security, to priuilege debt, or diffamacion” (1.199). For Harvey, true poetry should benefit the state by praising virtue and upholding nobility; instead, satire “perillously threatens the Commonwealth” by publicly attacking the honor, worship, fame, and reputation of private citizens—the “inuiable partes” of the commonwealth (1.165). Satirists who attempt to “pull downe, or disgrace other without order” will “become odious & intollerable to all good Learning, and ciuill Gouernment” (1.164). The “Spirit of Contradiction” that reigns over “this Martinish and Counter-martinish age,” in fact, threatens to return civil society to a Hobbesian state of nature, in which “euerie one superaboundeth in his owne humor, euen to the annihilating of any other, without rime, or reason” (1.203).³⁰ As it is better that “an hundred Ouids were banished, then the state of Augustus endangered, or a soueraigne Empire infected” (1.192), Harvey concludes that “Aretine, and the Diuels Oratour might very well be spared in Christian, or politicke Commonwealthes” (1.203).

This is the version of Harvey as he wanted to be read: a reasonable, deliberate, and disinterested scholar tracing out the poetic, ethical, and political problems with satirical

³⁰ This challenges one of Hutson’s central points about Harvey. Hutson claims that Harvey recognizes the political efficacy of “rhetorical license”—which she defines as “the licence of the orator to invent persuasive fictions”—in *Four Letters* but is driven to adopt his brother’s opposition to such license in *Pierces Supererogation* (69-70). But this confuses two distinct ideas that Harvey keeps very much separate from one another. He had in fact opposed the freedom adopted by the satirist before the appearance of Martin Marprelate (whom he never “admired” for the “political effectiveness of his irony”), and he would continue to believe in the political efficacy of persuasive praise through the end of *Pierces Supererogation*.

discourse. But for all of Harvey's insistence that he can "easily defie the proudest, that dareth cal [his] credit in question" (1.178), he is clearly threatened by Greene's and Nashe's attacks. The very length of Harvey's response is evidence enough; as Nashe would later say in *Strange Newes*, "About some seauen or eight lines it was [in Greene's *Quip*] which hath pluckt on an inuectiue of so many leaues" (1.271). If satire is a form of rhetorical violence, is it enacted upon a person's public reputation; for a man like Harvey, whose potential for social mobility was largely dependent upon the approval and good will of those in positions above him, reputation was everything. It is impossible to underestimate the importance of this "fundamental sort of value" to the ambitious would-be courtier in Elizabethan England.³¹ As Harvey himself declares in *Foure Letters*, "Many will sooner loose their liues, then the least Iott of their reputation" (1.165), and there is "Nothing more deere, or inestimable, then a mans good name" (1.167). As much as here and elsewhere Harvey scorns the inefficacy of satire and the threat Greene poses to his good name, Harvey also insists that "diffamation is intollerable: especially to mindes, that would rather deserue iust commendation, then be any way blemished with vniust slander" (1.156).³²

Even as Harvey insists that Greene's works are "vnwoorth the aunswering, or reading" (1.189) and that Nashe's *Pierce Penilesse* is "still more paltery" (1.194), he takes the threat both pose to his reputation seriously. He had clearly read both Greene's *Quip* and Nashe's *Pierce Penilesse* carefully. He quotes from the latter extensively, not only reproducing Nashe's attack on his brother Richard but also citing the various terms of Nashe's satirical braggadocio and alluding to minute particularities. Paradoxically, then, Harvey has read carefully the very thing

³¹ Frank Whigham, *Ambition and Privilege: The Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy Theory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 45.

³² Hilliard notes that printed defamation was especially threatening to Elizabethan because "print reached a wide audience and became a matter of public record" (188).

he declares is not worth reading, the very thing, in fact, that he hopes to convince his audience not to read (or at least not to pay any attention to). A similar paradox arises from the fact that Harvey's allusions to the "odd wittes" who can "spurgall Asses mightily," and "tell parlous Tales of Beares and Foxes, as shrewdlye as mother Hubbard, for her life" (1.205) in fact depend for their comprehension upon a reader who has already read Nashe's *Pierce*. In reproducing Nashe's attack on his brother, furthermore, Harvey only further advertises for an author whom he claims wants to be "as egregiously famous, as euer was *Herostratus*" (1.205): as with everyone who retells the story about the latter, by responding to Greene and Nashe, Harvey ironically participates in perpetuating the fame of the very figures he hopes to damn to oblivion.

And even as he offers his sage counsel, even as he extends an olive branch and offers to "bee made friendes with a cup of white wine" (1.216), Harvey not-so-subtly goads his antagonists. Every offer of peace comes with a back-handed insult: his request that "that mightie Bombarder of termes, to spare quiet men that meane him no harme" (1.205) drips with sarcasm; his assurance to Nashe that he does not in any way dislike his person, but only Nashe's "rash, and desperate proceeding against [his] well-willers" (1.219) does more to reinforce Nashe's impropriety than offer kindness; his declaration that he will be the first to "wrap-vp such memorials, not in a sheete of wast paper, but in the winding sheete of Obliuion" if Nashe can be "entreated, to qualifye his distempered veine" (1.224) insults Nashe in the exact manner that Nashe had insulted Richard Harvey. Harvey will "not sticke," he claims, "to sweeten the liuing spirite of a wished friend: howsoeuer extreamely meane, or famously obscure" (1.224).

And even as Harvey emphasizes his best intentions and figures himself repeatedly as a "well-willer," he continually reminds his readers of his capacity for raillery. In describing Greene's wretched living conditions at the end of his life, Harvey pauses to consider how ripe of

an occasion he has to mock the man who had mocked his family: “O Lord, what a pregnant occasion were here presented, to display leaud vanity in his liuely coullours, & to decipher the very misteries of that base Arte?” (1.168). Again, several pages later: “Oh what notable matter were here for a greene head, or Lucianicall conceit: that would take pleasure in the paine of such sorry distressed creatures?” (1.172). Harvey seems almost disappointed, as though by remaining above the fray he has missed out on an opportunity to demonstrate his wit in his consideration of Greene’s wretched estate. Imagining what “another” might have said allows him to exercise this wit without discrediting himself; at the same time, it prods his reader to supply the missing “Lucianical conceit.” Harvey’s paternalistic counsel to Nashe, similarly, begins to sound more and more like a veiled threat. After declaring that if everyone were like him, “small time should be lost in auenging, or debating verball inuiries,” he emphasizes that “there was a time, when paraduerture [he] coulde speake with them, that talked with [him]”: “Though the case be altered; and I now, none of the hastiest to striue for those bucklers: yet a general, a special, a glowing, a piercing indignitie may rekindle some little sparkes of courage, and . . . who knoweth not, how violentlie force prouoketh force: or how mightilie nature worketh in compatible natures?” (1.185-6).

This is mockery that is not mockery; these are threats that are not threats. Many of Harvey’s attacks on Greene and Nashe come in various forms of *praeteritio*—the rhetorical device in which a speaker declares that he is not doing the very thing that he is doing. Harvey attributes his extended attacks upon Greene to other voices: he simply reports that “the common voice of the cittie esteemeth him [Greene]” a “very prouerbe of Infamy, and contempt” (1.163); *he*, Harvey, was “altogether vnacquainted with the man,” but “who in London [had] not heard of [Greene’s] dissolute, and licentious liuing; his fonde disguisinge of a Master of Arte with

ruffianly haire, vnseemely apparell, and more vnseemelye Company[?]" (1.168). *He*, Harvey, of course, is "none of those, that bite the dead" (1.172)—but "who [had] euer esteemed [Greene] wise, or learned, or honest or anyway credible? how many Gentlemen, and other say of him . . . What an egregious makeshift[?]" (1.189). Alas, Harvey sighs, "that anie shoulde say as I haue heard diuers affirme: His witte was nothign but a minte of knauerie; himselfe a deuiser of iugling feates: a forger of coutous practices: an Inuentour of monstrous oathes: a derider of all religions: a contemner of God, and man: a desperate Lucianist: an abhominable Aretinist: an Arch-Athiest: and he arch-deserued to be well hanged seauen yeares agoe" (1.190). Harvey himself is certainly not one to bite the dead, but these "diuers" others have very little good to say about Greene. By couching so much of his aggression in terms of praeteritio, Harvey is able to persuade himself, at least, that he retains his scholarly disinterest and prevents discredit from "redounding" upon himself.

Whereas Harvey relies upon Greene's already-public notoriety in order to discredit Greene's attack on his family, Harvey discredits Nashe's attack on his brother by figuring Nashe as a young, misguided poet in need of advice. More than one critic has noted that Harvey's attitude towards Nashe in the *Foure Letters* is less acrimonious than condescending,³³ but few have recognized that this is a deliberate rhetorical strategy, a means of mocking and discrediting Nashe without appearing to. Harvey—himself the master of discretion—says that he would "aduse ouer-weening youthes to remember" that "There is a certaine thing, called Modestie, if they coulde light vpon it: and by my younge Masters leaue, some prity smacke of discretion would relish well" (1.199-200). He claims that he would let everything go if Nashe could be "entreated, to quallifye his distempered veine; and to reclaimed his vnbrideled selfe" (1.224). Thus Harvey denies the distinction Nashe had attempted to draw between himself and Martin—

³³ See, e.g., Freidenreich, 454.

that Nashe, unlike his railing counterparts, could restrain himself—even as Harvey appears to counsel Nashe in friendly terms: “Good sweete Oratour, be a deuine Poet indeede: and vse heauenly Eloquence indeede” (1.217).

So too does Harvey condescendingly conflate Nashe with his persona, Pierce Penillesse, in order to suggest that Nashe attacked Richard Harvey (and various other figures) out of desperation. Lorna Hutson argues that Harvey was not a particularly good reader of Nashe,³⁴ in part because he fails to distinguish between Nashe and his persona, Pierce Penillesse.³⁵ But Harvey was a much better reader of Nashe than Hutson suggests. His conflation of Nashe with Pierce Penillesse, in fact, is rhetorically advantageous.³⁶ Harvey had dwelled on Greene’s poverty at length in order to collapse his impoverished style with his impoverished character; in much the same way, Harvey dwells on Pierce’s poverty in order to suggest that Nashe’s desperate proceeding against the Harveys stemmed from Nashe’s desperate circumstances. Pierce, Harvey suggests, revealed Nashe to be “cruelly pinched with want, vexed with discredite, tormented with other mens felicitie, and ouerwhelmed with his owne misery” (1.194). Harvey thus charitably and condescendingly counsels Nashe/Pierce not to “cast [his] drearie selfe headlong into the horrible Gulf of Desperation (1.196), to “be [his] resolute selfe; not the Slaue of Fortune” (1.198), and to be “the friend of Vertue, that is richest in pouerty” (1.198).

In his condescending instruction about poetic practice, Harvey also denies Nashe the poetic authority that Nashe had claimed for himself throughout his early writings. This is clearest in the fourth letter, where Harvey’s friendly veneer is the thinnest. Based on Harvey’s reference to the “absurdities in Arte” that had “too lately ouerflowed the banckes of all good Modesty, and discretion” (1.231), it seems likely that Harvey had read Nashe’s *Anatomy of Absurdity* between

³⁴ Hutson, 7.

³⁵ Huston, 196.

³⁶ Hilliard suggests that Harvey was “calculatingly literal in his reading of *Pierce Peniless*” (187).

completing the third and beginning the fourth letters. There he would have discovered the extent to which Nashe had set himself up as a theorist of and satirical defender of poetry.³⁷ This would explain Harvey's distinction between "Method" and "Practise" and his curious preference ("where they must be vnmarried") for "Exercise without Arte" over "Arte without Exercise" (1.228). Harvey castigates "the pratling Parrat" (i.e., the author of *An Almond for a Parrat*) for his "ignorant discourses," in which he "garishly disguised the worthiest Artes, and deeply discredited the profoundest Artistes" (probably Sidney), "to the pitifull defacement of the one, and the shamefull preiudice of the other" (1.229). Harvey seems to be suggesting here that in his satirical practice Nashe had not lived up to his own theories of art, and that such "good sweete Autors" needed to "infourme [them] selues" before "instruct[ing] other" (1.231).

More importantly, Harvey denies Nashe's claim to originality (or poetic singularity) in *Pierce Penilesse*. He suggests, for example, that Nashe's *Pierce* was a derivative imitation of Tarlton's "famous play of the seauen Deadly sinnes" (1.194), which Harvey had seen performed some years before at Cambridge. *Pierce*, Harvey claims, was "not Dunstically botched-vp, but right-formally conueied, according to the stile, and tenour of Tarletons president" (1.194), though Nashe had graced this "current" and "learned president"—Harvey's condescending irony here is palpable—"with diuers new-founde phrases of the Tauerne" (1.195). The implication is that Nashe's style is nothing new; Nashe is little more than "a brave Tarlton," so far unlike his aggressively original idol Aretine that Harvey's reassuring "had not Aretine bene Aretine, when he was, vndoubtedlie thou hadst beene Aretine" (1.201) becomes positively laughable. The latter remark is ironic on several levels: first, Nashe was *not* Aretine; second, by emulating someone

³⁷ In Chapter 2, I suggested that Richard Harvey was provoked by the extent of Nashe's attack on Ramism in *The Anatomy* and in the Preface to *Menaphon*, and that Gabriel may well have had a hand in this attack. Such a claim does not necessarily require Gabriel Harvey to have read Nashe's *Anatomy* by 1590, but it does seem to suggest that Gabriel was more familiar with Nashe than he let on in *Four Letters*.

else's originality he failed the first test of originality; and third, if Tarlton was outdated, Aretine was ancient. Nashe had little to show for himself, Harvey scoffs, other than "his good olde *Flores Poetarum*, and Tarletons surmounting Rhetorique, with a little Euphuisme, and Greenesse inough, which were all prettily stale, before he put hand to penne" (1.202). Far from the originality Nashe claimed for himself in *Pierce Penilesse*, Nashe's style, Harvey suggests, is derivative, old, and stale, the "childish, & garish stuffe" (1.201) of ballad-makers, jest-book writers, and stage clowns.

And yet, paradoxically, Harvey depicts Nashe's style as damningly singular, as an affront to all good precedent and to all manner of respectable proceeding. "Good Lorde, what fantastical panges are these? who euer endighted in such a stile, but one diuine *Aretine* in Italy, & two heauenly *Tarletons* in England: the sole platformers of odd Elocution, and onely singularities of the plaine worlde?" (1.217). Nashe is thus derivative of Aretine and Tarlton exactly in his dangerous and destabilizing originality; he is a threat to the social order and ultimately the state in his disregard for other men's good names. Here we can clearly see Harvey's unscholarly anger boil to the surface and erupt—however briefly—in the very type of invective that he is so determined to condemn. The same is true of his earlier attack on Greene:

Peruse his [Greene's] famous bookes³⁸ and in steede of, *Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit vtile dulci* (that forsooth was his professed Poesie) Loe a wilde head, ful of mad braine and a thousande crochets: a Scholler, a Discourser, a Courtier, a ruffian, a Gamester, a Louer, a Soudier, a Trauailer, a Merchaunt, a Broker, an Artificer, a Botcher, a Petti-fogger, a Player, a Coosener, a Rayler, a beggar, an Omnigatherum, a Gay nothing: a Stoarehouse of bald and baggage stuffe, vnwoorth the aunswering, or reading: a Triuiall, and triobular Autor for knaues, &

³⁸ Harvey had earlier claimed that he was altogether unfamiliar with Greene's work.

fooles: an Image of Idlenes: an Epitome of fantasticalitie: a Mirroure of Vanitie
[etc.]. (1.189-90)

Harvey thus participates in exactly the type of simultaneous rhetorical amplification and diminution so central to satirical discourse. Greene is at once “a Gay nothing” and superabundant something, idle and excessively employed, empty and overflowing. Greene is a “a rauing, and desperate Dick,” and yet he is “Aunswared inough with a Doctors fart” (1.161). Nashe, of course, is no better.

Despite Harvey’s attempt to maintain his scholarly detachment from satirical discourse, then, and despite his insistence that he wants nothing more than peaceful reconciliation, Harvey engages in the same type of raillery that he decries in his adversaries. He recognizes in his third letter that “in some tearmes” he may have “vsed a little plaine dealing,” though “not without respecte” (1.213), and in his prefatory epistle (written after the fact) he suggests his pen may have slipped: “if [I] failed [to temper my stile] in some few incident termes, (what Tounge, or Pen may not slipp in heat of discourse?) I hope, a little will not greatly breake the square, either of my good meaning with humanity, or of your good acceptance with indifferency” (1.157). If Harvey rails, in other words, it is an accident, an inconsequential and understandable slip of his pen. But it may have been more accurate to suggest that raillery is the unavoidable outcome of his subject matter. Harvey claims he wants nothing less than to “leauue behind [him] any Period in the stile of the Diuels Oratour: or any verse in the vaine of his Dammes Poet” (1.220), but throughout the third letter in particular Harvey quotes, paraphrases, and echoes Nashe extensively. He had made “woefull Greene, and beggarly Pierce Pennylesse” the “argument of his stile” (1.222-3), and his own style had become infected. We will see much the same pattern in the longer—and more rhetorically dizzying—*Pierces Supererogation*.

2. Praising Blame and Blaming Praise in Nashe's *Strange Newes*

After delivering *Pierce Penilesse* to the printer in London sometime in August 1592—and perhaps attending Greene's fatal banquet of red herring—Nashe left London for “a house of credit, as well gouerned as any Colledge, where there [were] more rare quallified men and selected good Schollers than in any Noblemans house . . . in England” (*SN*, 1.329). This was probably Archbishop Whitgift's house in Croydon, where Nashe's only surviving play, *Summers Last Will and Testament* (printed 1600) was written and performed in October 1592.³⁹ With the exception of *The Unfortunate Traveler*, the play has received more critical attention than any other of Nashe's works, not least because the fool, Will Summers, serves as both an author-figure and a humorous detractor of the “beggerly Poet that writ” the play (347-8).

Summers Last Will has little relevance for the Harvey-Nashe quarrel. Nashe had not yet seen Gabriel Harvey's *Foure Letters*, and he probably had little incentive to continue to attack Richard Harvey in the midst of a private performance at the Archbishop's house. But Winter's long diatribe against learning in the middle of *Summers Last Will* does have some bearing on our understanding of Nashe's attitude towards the popular audience. In *Pierce* Nashe had claimed that he was “so vnmoueable resolved of the excellencie” of learning that he would “not, by the vnderpropping of confutation, seeme to giue” the author of a treatise against learning and scholarship “so much encouragement, as hee should surmize his superficiall arguments had shaken the foundation of it” (1.191). In *Summer's Last Will*, however, he ventriloquizes such “superficiall arguments” at length in order to dramatize their hypocrisy and inevitable collapse. Winter argues that “there is no vice, / Which learning and vilde knowledge brought not in, / Or in

³⁹ McKerrow, 4.416-19.

whose praise some learned haue not write” (1394-6), that “all bookes, diuinitie except,” are “Poyson wrapt vp in sugred words” (1417, 19), and that “bookemen” are “pestilent members in a state” (1421-2). Winter ironically demonstrates the extent of his own learning as he argues against it, citing the very authorities that mark him as a product of the Elizabethan education system (Socrates, Cicero, Erasmus, Ovid, etc.). “Gainst her owne bowels thou Arts weapons turn’st” (1487), Summer declares, echoing Nashe in *Pierce*,⁴⁰ and he immediately dismisses Winter’s diatribe as “So much vntrueth” (1486).

What’s relevant about all of this is that the play clearly rejects the position so frequently assigned to Nashe in modern criticism on the Harvey-Nashe quarrel: the advocacy of popularity over scholarship. “Blest is that gouernment where no arte thriues,” Winter declares, “*Vox populi, vox Dei*; / The vulgars voice, it is the voice of God” (1425-7). Winter’s conflation of populism with democracy and artlessness should caution us against too easily aligning Nashe with professional authorship and with any kind of allegiance to a popular audience. When he found it convenient, as I will suggest below, Nashe certainly stressed the popularity of his own works over Harvey’s. But intellectually, artistically, and poetically, Nashe was firmly on the side of scholarship over *vox populi*. It was the poet’s job to instruct and thus profit his readers, to teach as well as delight, rather than simply to satisfy their base desires.

In December 1592 (or about “three moneths” after Greene’s death⁴¹), Henry Chettle published *Kind Harts Dreame*, which stoked the quarrel by encouraging Nashe to respond to Harvey. The pamphlet is a kind of sequel to *Pierce Penilesse*: waiting for his companions at a tavern in the middle of the day, the narrator falls asleep and envisions an encounter with a

⁴⁰ There Nashe had claimed that no man could argues against learning ““if her selfe had not helpt him to hurte her selfe” (1.191).

⁴¹ Henry Chettle, *Kind Harts Dreame. Containing fiue Apparitions, with their Inuectiues against abuses raining* (London, 1592), sig. A3^v.

number of deceased Englishmen of recent memory who are upset because Nashe's Knight of the Post had refused to carry their "inuectiue[s] against abuses raining" (sig. B3^v) back to the world of the living. One of these is Greene, whose attack on playwrights in the *Groatsworth* was already infamous.⁴² Chettle's "Greene" writes from beyond the grave to Pierce Penilesse, informing Pierce of his own "disquiet after death," of which Pierce had either "not heard or [would] not conceiue": having just been laid in his grave, "Enuie (no fit companion for Art) spit out her poyson" in the form of invectives against his books and his life (sig. E1^r). Chettle does not name Harvey, but in "Greene's" defense of his death and Christian buriall, as well as in his reference to the "iniurie offred" to Pierce, the allusion to Harvey's *Foure Letters* is clear. The dead "Greene" chastises Pierce for failing to respond quickly enough, worrying that he will "approu[e]" himself "to be of all other most slacke, beeing in [his] owne cause so remisse" (sig. E1^v). He is concerned that Pierce, like himself, will die before being able to respond, and he urges Pierce in rather harsh terms to act before it is too late: "Awake (secure boy) reuenge thy wrongs, remember mine: thy aduersaries began the abuse, they continue it: if thou suffer it, let thy life be short in silence and obscuritie, and thy death hastie, hated, and miserable" (sig. E2^r).

Nashe finally did respond with *Strange Newes of the Intercepting Certaine Letters, and a Conuoy of Verses, as they were Going Priuillie to Victuall the Low Countries* in January 1592/3.⁴³

Beginning with the title—which associated Harvey with astrologers,⁴⁴ newsmongers,⁴⁵ and

⁴² Chettle, a scrivener and a sometime playwright, denied the charges current in London (and still current in modern commentary) that he was responsible for writing the *Groatsworth*: "I had onely in the copy this share, it was il written, as sometimes *Greenes* hand was none of the best, licensd it must be, ere it could bee printed which could neuer be if it might not be read. To be brieft I writ it ouer, and as neare as I could, followed the copy, onely in that letter I put something out, but in the whole booke not a worde in, for I protest it was all *Greenes*, not mine nor Maister *Nashes*, as some vniustly haue affirmed" (sig. A4^r).

⁴³ *Strange Newes* was entered into the Stationer's Register on 12 January 1592/3 and was probably issued shortly thereafter (McKerrow, 4.153).

⁴⁴ In his general dismissal of astrological tracts in *The Anatomy*, Nashe had referred derisively to John Doleta's *Straunge Newes out of Calabria* (1586), which prophesied floods, great winds, pestilence, and earthquakes for 1587 (McKerrow, 4.24). Later in *Strange Newes*, Nashe suggests that Richard Harvey was said "out of the fabulous

puritans,⁴⁶ and in its deft pun on “*Priuilie*” and “Low Countries” suggests that the natural destination of the *Foure Letters* is the dunghill—this was a masterful response. Nashe was in full swing, writing with the confidence of a best-selling author who had finally found patronage. *Pierce Penilesse* was immensely popular (it would go through at least five editions before 1596⁴⁷), and Nashe had apparently moved from Croydon House to the Isle of Wight⁴⁸ with Sir George Carey, in whom he had finally “found an influential and wealthy benefactor.”⁴⁹

Nashe sees right through Harvey. “None so desirous of quiet as hee, good olde man,” Nashe notes wryly, “who with a pure intent of peace, first put fire to the flame that hath hedgde him in” (1.327). Whereas Harvey had professed his reluctance to enter into needless contentions, Nashe commits himself to the fray exuberantly, boasting—in the vein of Martin Marprelate—that he means to “trounce [Harvey] after twentie in the hundred” (1.258) and “proclaim[ing] open warres” with “*Gabriell & Richard*” (1.298). Harvey had tried to answer a fool without resorting to his folly, to discredit his discreditors without discrediting himself. In response, Nashe seizes Harvey’s attack as an opportunity to demonstrate his considerable powers of invention and satirical prowess. Nashe figures Harvey as an unskilled performer and answers his unimpressive foolishness with the skilled foolishness of an expert.

abundance of his braine to haue inuented the newes out of *Calabria* (*Iohn Doletas* prophesie of flying dragons, commets, Earthquakes, and inundations)” (1.289).

⁴⁵ Numerous commentators seem to have missed the irony in this title and have instead figured Nashe as a proto-journalist. Nicholl, for example, takes his title from a line in Nashe’s dedicatory epistle: “one Cuppe of nipitaty puls on another. In moyst consideration wherof, as also in zealous regard of that *high* countenance you shew vnto Schollers, I am bolde, in steade of new Wine, to carowse to you a cuppe of newes” (1.255). But Nashe’s point has less to do with his own work than with Harvey’s, whose invective against Greene and Nashe, Nashe implies, had the underlying flavor of gossip and “newesmungrie” (1.308). Nashe had only a slightly higher opinion of “newsmungrie” than he did of astrology, as a remark later in *Strange Newes* makes clear: “yet wilt thou . . . inuest that [astrology] in the highest throne of Art and Schollership, which a scrutinie of so manie millions of wel discerning condemnations hath concluded to be viler than newesmungrie [?]” (1.308).

⁴⁶ Puritans and other militant protestants advocated throughout the 1580s and 1590s for Elizabeth to support the protestants in the Low Countries in their war against Spanish Catholic control.

⁴⁷ McKerrow, 4.77.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.153.

⁴⁹ Nicholl, 181.

Nashe wanted his readers to believe that his victory in the encounter was a foregone conclusion, and that he took neither Harvey nor Harvey's *Foure Letters* seriously. All Harvey had been able to do, Nashe suggests, was "pluck[] in pieces" a "fewe Elegeicall verses" and dismember a few "Margine notes, but all [was] incke cast away" (1.307). "Whome hast thou wonne to hate mee," Nashe asks—explicitly addressing the central rhetorical function of satire—"by light crawling ouer my Text like a Cankerworme?" (1.307). Nashe claims that he has "other important business," and that an answer to Harvey is a "work[] of supererogation" (1.259)—that is, superfluous or unnecessary⁵⁰—because Harvey is already laughable, already a pedant and a fool. Not only had he "hee bepist his credite, about twelue yeeres ago, with *Three proper and wittie familiar letters*" (1.261), which were "derided & scoft at throughout the whole realme" (1.297), but Harvey had been "miserably flouted at in M. *Winkfields* Comoedie of *Pedantius* in Trinitie Colledge" (1.303).⁵¹ Whatever claims Harvey had made about the intolerable nature of defamation are therefore "friulous, because all the world knows him better than he knows himselfe . . . in iustifying his owne innocence, theres none will beleue him" (1.270). Nashe only stands "darting of quils a while like a Porpentine," he claims, because of the "strong fayth" certain "Gentlemen" had "conceiu'd" that he would do so.⁵²

Even as he oozes Martin-like braggadocio in his certainty that he will "leau[e] [Harvey] the miserablest creature that the sunne euer sawe" (1.320), however, Nashe recognizes that his audience may still esteem Harvey as a respectable scholar and poetic authority. Harvey had irritated some of his colleagues at Cambridge with his attack on the general state of learning in

⁵⁰ *OED* 1b, citing this instance under "work of supererogation."

⁵¹ For discussions of these texts, see Chapter 2.

⁵² It is certainly worth noting here how similar these claims are to those made by Harvey, who had insisted that Greene's writing was despicable enough to confute itself, that Greene was already widely known to be a knave, and that he only wrote at the behest of certain friends who were concerned about his family's reputation. For further consideration of the similarities between Nashe and Harvey, see below.

the *Familiar Letters* and he had lost face with the coterie Cambridge audience of *Pedantius*, but he was still a respected member of the academic community. Harvey held a Master of Arts from Cambridge and a Doctorate from Oxford; he had disputed before the Queen at Audley End; he was known and generally respected in the Sidney circle; and for more than a decade he had been a reader of rhetoric at Cambridge. Nashe even admits that at Cambridge he had himself been “indifferently perswaded of” Harvey (1.269). Most importantly, Harvey was widely recognized as the close friend and sometime tutor of England’s greatest poet, Edmund Spenser, a friendship which Harvey had emphasized by attaching a sonnet Spenser wrote for him at the conclusion of *Foure Letters*.

Nashe therefore had no choice but to take Harvey’s attack seriously. There is plenty of evidence in *Strange Newes* that Nashe had not only read Harvey’s *Foure Letters* carefully—he quotes (and misquotes) from it in an animadversion-type refutation—but had clearly gone back and read all of Harvey’s earlier works. He alludes to “*Gabrielis Scuruei Rhetor*” (1.268), *Gratulationes Valdinenses, Musarum Lachrymae* (1.303), and of course the *Familiar Letters*, which on more than one occasion he refers to by specific page number (1.284, 1.304). Nashe claims the ability to “destroie more” in “one minutes studie” than Harvey could “build in ten daies” (1.307), but he had certainly devoted significantly more time and resources than “one minutes studie” in refuting Harvey. Nashe also justifies his own standing in the quarrel in surprisingly earnest terms: he reminds his readers that he had never “speld eyther his [Harvey’s] or anie of his kindreds name in reproch” before Richard (or Gabriel) Harvey had “barkt against [Nashe] as one of the enemies of the Lambe of God,” and he claims that he therefore has little choice but to “draw vppon [Harvey] with [his] penne, and defende [him] selfe with it and a paper buckler as well as [he] might” (1.262). According to “the Law of armes or of ale,” Nashe insists,

“beeing first prouokt,” he cannot be first “inioynde to the peace, or be sworne true seruant to cowardize & patience” (1.262).

There is also evidence that Nashe was threatened by Harvey’s condescending imputation of intellectual inferiority and artistic unoriginality. Perhaps unadvisedly, he challenges Gabriel to write on any subject (other than divinity) in any language and promises to “confute it and answer it” (1.305). He frets at Harvey’s suggestion that his style is derivative of Tarlton, Lyly, and Greene: “Wherein haue I borrowed from *Greene* or *Tarlton*, that I should thanke them for all I haue? Is my stile like *Greenes*, or my ieasts like *Tarltons*?” (1.318-19). He admits that he had read *Euphues* when he was “a little ape in Cambridge, and then [he] thought it was *Ipse ille*,” but he insists that he had not looked on it “this ten yeare” (1.319).⁵³ He denies copying Tarlton’s *Seven Deadly Sins* in *Pierce Penilesse*—he challenges Harvey to “exemplifie . . . one minnum of the particular deuice” that he had “purloind” (1.304)—and he argues that both Tarlton and Greene had in fact deferred to him, as they had “been contented to let [his] simple iudgement ouerrule them in some matters of wit” (1.319). The emphatic nature of this declaration that his style is original demonstrates the extent to which Harvey’s suggestion that Nashe was a derivative hack touched a nerve: “This I will proudly boast (yet am I nothing a kindred to the three brothers) that the vaine which I haue (be it a *median* vaine, or a madde man) is of my owne begetting, and cals no man father in England but my selfe, neyther *Euphues*, nor *Tarlton*, nor *Greene*” (1.319).

But, as in *Pierce Penilesse*, what Nashe found more threatening was Harvey’s attack on satire itself. Nashe refuses Harvey’s attempt to collapse all satire and raillery into one category of lawless, unrestrained, and unprofitable discourse. He denies the accusation by the “welwillers to

⁵³ As Nashe’s *Anatomy of Absurdity* (written in the summer of 1587) was patently Euphuistic, this was probably an overstatement.

[his] digrace” that his “onely Muse [was] contention” (1.259).⁵⁴ And to Harvey’s suggestion that “skolding [was] the language of shrewes: and rayling the stile of Rakehells” (*FL* 1.215), Nashe denies that either “scolding” or “railing” applies to his own writing:

Do I scold? do I raile? Scolding & railing is loud miscalling and reuiling one another without wit, speaking euery thing a man knows by his neighbour, though it bee neuer so contrary to all humanitie and good manners, and would make the standers by almost perbrake to heare it. . . . If I scold, if I raile, I do but *cum ratione insanire*; Tully, Ouid, all the olde Poets, Agrippa, Aretine, and the rest are all scolds and railers, and by thy conclusion flat shrewes and rakehels: for I doe no more than their examples do warrant mee. (*SN*, 1.324)

Nashe’s satire is not only distinct from scolding but is, at least implicitly, distinct from Harvey’s own writing. Whereas Harvey violated “all humanitie and good manners,” Nashe follows classical precedent—poets, as Nashe points out, whom Harvey himself had praised in his *Familiar Letters* (1.283-4).

So too does Nashe reject Harvey’s attempt to tie style to character. On one hand, Nashe rejects the way Harvey had collapsed Greene’s reputation about London with the moral profitability of his writing: “Why should art answer for the infirmities of maners? Hee had his faultes, and thou thy follyes” (1.287). But on the other hand, Nashe refuses to be too closely associated with Greene, who, he admits, may not have been as careful about his credit as he should have been (1.330). Nashe insists that he was not “*Greenes* companion any more than for a carowse or two” (1.302), and that there are “A thousande” who had “more reason to speake in his behalfe” than he does, as he had “beene two yeares together and not seene him” since he

⁵⁴ Though by imagining that he could out-perform “any such deepe insighted detracter” in any “aduenture of Art” whatsoever, Nashe rather seems to confirm that characterization (1.259).

“first knew [Greene] about town” (1.330).⁵⁵

Nashe likewise refutes Harvey’s suggestion that he was “pincht with any vngentleman-like want when [he] inuented *Pierce Pennilesse*” (1.303). He admits that he had occasionally “dealt vpon spare commodities of wine and capon” and euen “sung *George Gascoignes Counter-tenor*” (i.e., been to debtor’s prison), but he insists that many honest gentleman of credit have been to the Counter. In fact, he argues, the experience of debtor’s prison paradoxically bestows credit upon gentlemen and wisdom upon poets: “I protest I should neuer haue writ passion well, or beene a peece of a Poet, if I had not arriu’d in those quarters. . . . there is no place of the earth like it, to make a man wise” (1.310). Nashe responds “in earnest” to the Harveys’ direct attacks upon his character, such as Gabriel’s comparison of him to Babington (the leader of the 1586 Romish conspiracy to murder Elizabeth and release Mary Stuart [1.302]), and Richard’s (or Gabriel’s) comparison of him to Martin Marprelate in *The Lamb of God* (1.269). He insists that his harsh terms have nothing to do with the morality of his character.

If anything, Nashe insists that the harsh terms of the satirist emanate from his devotion to virtue and to the commonwealth. In *Strange Newes* Nashe mounts an even more rigorous defense of poetic blame than he had in *Pierce Penilesse*.⁵⁶ He argues that there is “no other vnlasciuious

⁵⁵ The relationship between Nashe and Greene is anything but clear. Greene was nearly a decade older and had already established himself as a professional pamphlet writer and dramatist by the time Nashe came to London in 1587 or 1588. It is not known how Nashe came to Greene’s attention, or how he came to write such a long preface for Greene’s *Menaphon*, which did less to introduce Greene’s euphuistic work than to introduce Nashe as a poet-critic and an heir to Sidney. Whatever their relationship, Nashe was clearly trying to distance himself from Greene in January 1593, a few months after Greene’s death, when Nashe was trying to secure patronage from the Carey family. So too did Nashe want to distance himself from Greene’s *Groatsworth of Wit*, which some readers had attributed to Nashe (he denied the attribution in the epistle to the second edition of *Pierce Penilesse* [1.154]). But by 1596, when Nashe’s hopes of patronage had fallen through and Greene had been dead for nearly four years, the picture he gave of their relationship was somewhat more ambivalent. He attacked Greene’s style, but only after claiming that he “neuer abusd *Marloe*, *Greene*, *Chettle* in my life, nor anie of my frends that vsde me like a frend; which both *Marloe* and *Greene* (if they were aliue) vnder their hands would testifie” (*HWY*, 3.131). And in the same breath as his attack on Greene’s style, Nashe praised Greene’s playwriting ability and implied that he had collaborated with Greene in the theater: “while he liu’d (as some Stationers can witnes with me),” Nashe claimed, Greene “subscrib[ed] to me in any thing but plotting Plaies, wherein he was his crafts master” (3.132).

⁵⁶ Jennifer Richards suggests that in *Strange Newes* Nashe “makes a tentative step towards the defence of invective

vse or end of poetry, but to infamize vice, and magnifie vertue”—note that here blame comes before praise—and that “if they assemble all the examples of verse-founders from *Homer* to *Hugh Copland*, they shall not find anie of them but hath encountred with the generall abuses of his times.” Poetry without “one of these two strings of praise and reproofe” may “tickle the eare,” he continues, but it “neuer edifies” (1.285). He turns to ancient Rome (as Jonson would later do in *Poetaster* [1601]), where “it was lawful for Poets to reprove that enormitie in the highest chairs of authoritie,” not only for precedent for satirical license but also in order to suggest that the speech of the satirist can be the only curb on abuses by those in power (1.285). Whereas Harvey had suggested that satirical speech endangered the state, in other words, Nashe insists that the satirist defended it. But Nashe also recognizes that satirical license only extends so far, as the “secrets of God must not be searched into,” and the actions of Kings, who are “Gods on earth,” “must not be sounded by their subiects” (1.286).

Whereas Harvey had categorically dismissed “*Archilochus*, *Aristophanes*, *Lucian*, *Iulian*, *Aretine*,” and even “*Tully*, and *Horace*” as “that whole venemous and viperous brood, of old & new Raylers” (*FL* 1.164), Nashe makes careful distinctions between these writers in order to evaluate what is and what is not profitable about them. He applauds Horace, Perseus, and Juvenal, but he suggests that their “vnsugred pilles (howeuer excellently medicinable) would not haue beene so harsh in the swallowing” if they had mixed a bit of “mirth and pleasure” into their verse. Archilochus went even further in this direction: his “incensed *Iambicks*” were “all gall and no spleene,” and were so effective that they had driven a man to “runne and hang himselfe” (1.284-5). For Nashe this is effective but too destructive; profitable blame is supposed to cure, not destroy. Although elsewhere Aretino is clearly Nashe’s ideal satirist, here he condemns

as essential to the health of the commonwealth, a cure for choleric writers like Harvey” (660), though she does not recognize that this otherwise unsupported remark contradicts the support she offers earlier for Hutson’s reading of Nashe (657).

Aretino along with Lucian and Julian for their lack of religion; if they had been anything other than “abominable Atheists,” he protests, he would “obstinately defende” (1.285) them. Instead, the poetic and satiric ideal Nashe sets forward in *Strange Newes* is the old Comedy of Aristophanes, which “interfuses delight with reprehension” (1.285).⁵⁷ Through these distinctions we can see the importance that Nashe places on both wit and morality in his conception of satirical discourse. He recognizes that wit is instrumental in gaining and holding the reader’s attention, and he values the type of moral instruction that can only be given by the Christian scholar-poet. Profitable satire, in other words, both pleases the reader and instructs them to avoid vice.

As much as Nashe—like so many later commentators—pleaded ignorance about the motivation behind Harvey’s attack, then, he recognized *Foure Letters* as Harvey’s attempt to discredit poetic blame, and he responded with a serious justification of satirical discourse. But Nashe also recognized that in order to undermine the legitimacy of Harvey’s attack on his character, his learning, and his claim to poetic authority, he had to undermine Harvey’s own character, learning, and claim to poetic authority. The fact that Nashe embraced this task with such verve and apparent ease has prevented most critics from recognizing the extent to which this was a thoroughly persuasive exercise: what was threatening about Harvey was the possibility that an uninformed reader of *Foure Letters* (if any existed) might be convinced to reject Nashe along with Greene as a reprobate youth or, worse yet, as a derivative hack writer willing to say anything in order to improve his desperate circumstances. Nashe recognized, therefore, that he needed to *make* Harvey appear foolish, to persuade their mutual audience to reject Harvey’s

⁵⁷ Jonson would follow Nashe in this precedent as well; see *Every Man Out of His Humour*, in which Cordatus can only compare Jonson’s new “comicall satyre” to “*Vetus Comaedia*.” *Every Man Out of His Humour*, ed. Randall Martin, in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, 7 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), “Induction” 225-7.

opinions and pronouncements as those of a “filthy vaine foole” (1.265). He needed to succeed where Harvey had failed: to *win* his readers to “hate” Harvey (1.307). *Strange Newes* thus needs to be read not only as Nashe’s serious justification of satirical discourse but also as Nashe’s (by all means, largely successful) effort to *convince* his “Gentlemen” readers that Harvey was “an apparant Publican and sinner, a selfe-loue surfetted sot, [and] a broken-winded galdbacke Iade, that hath borne vp his head in his time, but now [was] quite foundred & tired, a scholer in nothing but the scum of schollership, a stale soker at *Tullies Offices*, the droane of droanes, and maister drumble-bee of non proficientes” (1.302).

In *Strange Newes*, Nashe goes about ridiculing Harvey’s claim to intellectual and poetic authority in workman-like fashion. He insists that Harvey had not “done his Acts” at Oxford and therefore is “scarse a Doctor” (1.256); Harvey is “but a plaine motheaten Maister of Art” who “neuer polluted [him] selfe with any plaistrie or dawbing of Doctourship” (1.278).⁵⁸ Nashe scoffs at Harvey’s *Rhetor*, in which, he claims, Harvey had “thought to haue knockt out the braines of poore *Tullies Orator*,” but had in truth done “nothing else, but gather a flaunting vnsauory fore-horse nosegay out of his well furnished garland” (1.268). He claims that Harvey had only received favor from the queen at Audley End because she was good to scholars and “it pleased hir so to humble the height of hir iudgement,” and he mocks Harvey’s (admittedly impolitic) public proclamation of the queen’s favor towards him in *Gratulationes Valdinenses* (1.277). Nashe is at best unkind about Harvey’s hexameters, condescendingly striking the tone of one friend telling another a difficult but necessary truth: “Why should friends dissemble one with another? they are very vgly and artlesse” (1.324). He acknowledges that the hexameter verse is

⁵⁸ Harvey of course denied this charge, claiming that “a thousand” had heard him perform his doctors acts at Oxford and boasting that they were “done with as little premeditation, as euer such actes were done: (For I answered vpon the questions, that were giuen me by Doctor Cathedrae, but two dayes before; and read my Cursory Lecture with a dayes warning:)” (*PS*, 2.74). It’s also worth noting that Nashe himself had left Cambridge before finishing his MA, probably for financial reasons (see *AA*, 1.37), and thus was not himself even a “plaine motheaten Maister of Art.”

“a Gentleman of an auncient house,” but he argues that it could not “thriue” in England: “he goes twitching and hopping in our language like a man running vpon quagmiers, vp the hill in one Syllable, and down the dale in another, retaining no part of that stately smooth gate, which he vaunts himselfe with amongst the Greeks and Latins” (1.298). Here Nashe re-establishes both his classical learning and rustic native wit at Harvey’s expense, as he is capable of moving seamlessly between the languages of learning and the common vernacular and capable of explaining the insufficiency of this particular poetic form in terms accessible to less educated readers. But he also suggests that only a man who needed to “learne [his] Primer of Poetry ouer again”—and thus a man who lacked any kind of poetic authority—could fail to recognize the “Reprobate” and ridiculous nature of those “Heathenish and Pagan Hexamiters” (1.277).

Nashe also works hard to undercut Harvey’s relationship with Spenser. On one hand Nashe uses Harvey’s damning remark about *Mother Hubbard* in *Foure Letters* and criticism of the *Faerie Queene* in the *Familiar Letters* to persuade Spenser to dismiss Harvey as a blot upon his own poetic reputation. “Immortall *Spencer*,” he says directly to the great poet, “no frailtie hath thy fame, but the imputation of this Idiots friendship: vpon an vnspotted *Pegasus* should thy gorgeous attired *Fayrie Queene* ride triumphant thought all reports dominions, but that this mud-born bubble, this bile on the browe of the Vniuersitie, this bladder of pride newe blowne, challengeth some interest in her prosperitie” (1.282). On the other hand, Nashe suggests to Harvey that Spenser is not actually his friend, that Spenser is only keeping Harvey around for his entertainment, and that Spenser’s praise is not actually praise: “You will neuer leaue your olde trickes of drawing M. *Spencer* into euerie pybald thing you do. If euer he praisd thee, it was because he had pickt a fine vaine foole out of thee, and he would keepe thee still a foole, by flattrng thee, til such time as he had brought thee into that extreame loue with thy selfe, that thou

shouldst run mad with the conceit, and so be scorned of all men” (1.323-4). Nashe both accuses Harvey of being incapable of fully appreciating Spenser’s poetic mastery and of improperly capitalizing on Spenser’s good name. But Nashe himself respects Spenser’s good name too much to lean on this too strongly; thus, even though Nashe “vehemently suspect[s]” that Harvey had written the commendatory sonnet from Spenser published at the end of *Four Letters*, Nashe refuses to look into the matter too closely, because Spenser’s “good name is able to sanctifie any thing, though falsely ascribed to it” (1.327).

Whereas in *Pierce Penilesse* Nashe had distinguished between his own profitable satirical practice and the unprofitable railing of Charles Chester, in *Strange Newes* Harvey becomes the representative of unprofitable raillery. Nashe figures Harvey as a “professed poetical braggart” (1.256) and “an olde mechanical meeter-munger” who “would faine raile, if he had anie witte”; he is a “poore secular Satirist,” a “dolt-sicke and brainlesse” old fool who “betuggeth a dead man” (i.e., Greene) “with the toothlesse gums of his Poetry” (1.275). Harvey is an unoriginal and dull-witted pedant, the “sole Emperour of inkehornisme” and a “galimafrier of all stiles in one standish, as imitating euerie one, & hauing no separate forme of writing of [his] owne” (1.317). He is not even creative enough to defend his father against jokes about rope-making: “Had I a Ropemaker to my father, & somebody had cast it in my teeth,” Nashe declares, “I would forthwith haue writ in praise of Ropemakers, & prou’d it by sound sillogistry to be one of the 7. liberal sciences” (1.270). Even if Harvey has “some good words,” he can not “writhe them and tosse them to and fro nimbly, or so bring them about, that hee maye make one streight thrust at his enemies face” (1.283); his soul lacks the “effects of a soule,” and he can not “sprinkle it [his soul] into a sentence, & make euerie line leape like a cup of neat wine new powred out, as an Orator must doe that lies aright in wait for mens affections” (1.307). Harvey is an opponent of

satire, in short, because he is himself incapable of writing effective satire. Harvey hates the “declamatory stiles” of Tully, Horace, Archilochus, Aristophanes, Lucian, and Aretino, Nashe claims, because “they haue broght in a new kind of a quicke fight, which [Harvey’s] decrepite slow-mouing capacitie” can not “fadge with” (1.283). Instead, Harvey is a mere scold, someone who “miscall[s] and reuil[es]” another “without wit,” as his gossiping invective against Greene had made clear (1.324).

Although elsewhere Nashe has little patience for the absurd products of a commercial press and puts little faith in the judgment of a popular audience, in *Strange Newes* Nashe finds it convenient to equate commercial with poetic and satirical profitability in order to ridicule Harvey. Nashe accuses Harvey both of bribing booksellers and stationers (1.261) and of “giuing mony to haue this his illiterat Pamphlet of Letters printed (wheras others haue monie giuen them to suffer them selues to come in Print),” which Nashe equates with simony (1.258)—a fascinating charge, not only for its echo of Martin Marprelate’s attack on the sale of ecclesiastical offices in the episcopal hierarchy but also for its basic association of the print market with an office that was supposed to be unblemished by greed or worldly ambition. Because Harvey cannot please his readers, furthermore—he cannot “winne liking and grace of [his] readers” because he lacks the wit to “set before them continually that which shall cheare them and reuiue them”—Harvey’s works cannot effectively “hinder” Nashe, profit the reader, “nor benefit the Printer” (1.322). Although Nashe does not always value commercial success—he consistently attacked ballads and astrological tracts as entirely unprofitable for the reader, for example, even though they were enormously profitable for printers—here Harvey’s inability to benefit the printer even after he had paid for his own impression becomes illustrative of his poetic impotence.

At the same time that Nashe defends profitable blame and mocks Harvey for his own inability to rail effectively, he blames Harvey's unprofitable self-praise. Nashe is particularly attuned to the way Harvey "extolls himselfe and his two brothers in euerie booke he writes" (1.257); Harvey, a "professed poetical braggart" (1.257), a "greedy pothunter after applause" (1.302), a "grosse painted image of pride" (1.282), built "his heauen in vaine-glory" (1.270) and "arrogated to [him] selfe more than *Lucifer*, or any *Miles gloriosus* in the world would doe" (1.323). Nashe warns noblemen to "take heed how they giue this *Thraso* the least becke or countenance, for if they bestowe but halfe a glaunce on him," Harvey will "straight put it verie solemnly in print, and make it ten times more than it is" (1.276). "[P]oore creature," Nashe laments, Harvey is "faine to commend himselfe, for want of friendes to speake for him" (1.294). Thus Harvey does "nothing but transport letters vp and downe in [his] own commendation" (1.261). The letter from Christopher Bird to Emanuel Demetrius, for example, which is the first of the *Four Letters*, seems, Nashe rather plausibly notes, "by all reference or collation of stiles, to bee a Letter which M. *Birds* secretarie, *Doctour Gabriell*, indicted for him in his owne praise, and got him to sette his hand to when he had done" (1.273). The commendatory letter by "a welwiller to both the writers" that prefaces Harvey's epistolary exchange with Spenser (i.e., the *Familiar Letters*) sounds suspiciously like Harvey as well (1.296-7). In short, Harvey is "a forestaller of the market of fame" and "an ingrosser of glorie" (1.261).

But all of this self-praise, Nashe slyly suggests, ultimately amounts to dispraise. "*Nashe*, do thy worst, the three brothers bid a Fico for thee: discommend thou them neuer so much, they will palpably praise, *and so consequently dispraise*, themselues more in one book they set foorth, then thou canst disparage them in tenne" (1.297-8, emphasis added). Whereas Harvey had argued that a poet who blamed another discredited himself, Nashe suggests that a poet who praises

himself blames himself.

Throughout *Strange Newes*, Nashe both discredits Harvey and demonstrates his own impressive satirical prowess. Harvey's schizophrenic attack in *Foure Letters* not only serves as a foil for Nashe's wit and creativity but also provides Nashe with material for his own satirical self-creation, a ready-made source of invention. He toys with Harvey's language, pushes Harvey's claims to outrageous extremes, and delights in the subtle mockery of refashioning Harvey's name, referring to him as "good *Gilgilis Hobberdeboy*" (1.299), "*Gregory Habberdine*" (1.301), "Gabriel Hangtelow" (1.308), and so on. The more Harvey wrote, the more material Nashe had to work with: "Quods, quods, giue mee my Text pen againe, for I haue a little more Text to launce" (1.331). Nashe claims both that he will "confute and answere" anything Harvey writes in any language (1.305) and that he will "neuer leaue [Harvey] as long as" he is "able to lift a pen" (1.319). Harvey offers Nashe the fantasy of an endless source of satirical invention: as Nashe suggests in his concluding "*Sonnetto*," "Write hee [Harvey] againe, Ile write eternally. / Who feedes reuenge hath found an endlesse Muse" (1.333).

But there is an underlying tension in *Strange Newes* between the promise of an eternal battle of wits and Nashe's growing weariness and wariness. Wrestling with Harvey proved exhausting. "The weather is cold," Nashe claims at one point, "and I am wearie with confuting" (1.320). Even as he promises never to stop writing against Harvey, Nashe cannot get through Harvey's text fast enough. If in the beginning of the tract he announces that he has "[broken his] day with other important business" to "stand darting of quils a while like the Porpentine" (1.259), by the end of the tract he hopes to return to a more profitable strand of writing: "shortly I will present you with some thing that shalbe better than nothing" (1.333). And even as Harvey's text serves as inspiration for Nashe's satirical invention, it also threatens to become an

obstacle to that satirical invention, as Nashe becomes wary that Harvey's style will infect his own. Early in the tract Nashe refuses to "trot a false gallop through" Harvey's "ragged Verses" so that he will not "infect" his own "vaine with [Harvey's] imitation" (1.275); he later complains that his "stile, with treading in [Harvey's] clammie steps," has "growne as heauie gated, as if it were bound to an Aldermans pace, with the irons at Newgate cald the widows Almes" (1.322). By reproducing and pulling apart Harvey's "sober Mules pace" (1.292) in order to mock it, Nashe recognizes, he has also begun to imitate it, and thus he has compromised the very aspect of his style that he is most proud of—his "extemporall veine," his lightness and quickness of invention. By the end of the tract, Nashe feels "chained to [Harvey] by the necke" (1.322), forced by the logic of contention to follow Harvey rather than another, more profitable muse: "I am wrested and vtterly diuorced from my owne inuention, & constrained still still, before I am warme in any one vaine, to start away sodainely, and follow him in his vanitie" (1.335).

In certain respects, finally, Nashe does in fact follow Harvey in his vanity. Not only does the structure of *Strange Newes* follow that of *Foure Letters*—which is not surprising for an animadversion—but Nashe finds himself defending *Pierce Penilesse* in the same (not entirely convincing) manner that Harvey had defended his *Familiar Letters*. Harvey had complained that his verses against Tuscanism were deliberately wrested from their innocent intent and misapplied to the Earl of Oxford by a malicious interpreter (i.e., Lyly); so too does Nashe complain that "rash heads, vpstart Interpreters, haue extorted & rakte that vnreuerent meaning" out of his Tale of a Bear and a Fox that he had never intended: "Now a man may not talke of a dog, but it is surmised he aimes at him that giueth the dog in his Crest" (1.260-1).⁵⁹ And even as Nashe criticizes Harvey's elaborate and extensive self-praise, he praises himself in similarly extensive

⁵⁹ This clearly refers to the easy identification of Leicester with the Bear in Nashe's tale, as Leicester's crest had included a bear.

terms. Nashe may have been right to insist that *Pierce Penilesse* was “a better booke” than Richard Harvey’s *Astrological Discourse* (1.308), but some of his self-aggrandizing assertions go beyond typical satirical braggadocio. Not only does he claim that he will confute anything Harvey wrote in any language—“Take truths part,” he taunts, “and I wil proue truth to be no truth, marching out of thy dung-voiding mouth” (1.305)—but he claims to be able to out-perform any ill-willers who think he could do nothing other than rail in any sort of poetic endeavor. “I haue written in all sorts of humors priuately,” Nashe declares, “more than any yoong man of my age in England” (1.320). Put in the same position as Harvey, Nashe engages in the same type of self-defensive self-aggrandizement as his opponent. These rhetorical similarities, as we shall see, will only increase as the quarrel continues.

3. Answering Blame with Praise in *Pierces Supererogation*

Harvey must have started writing his response to Nashe’s *Strange Newes* relatively soon after reading it, for the bulk of *Pierces Supererogation, or A New Prayse of the Old Asse*—written, Harvey claimed, “onely at idle howers” (*PS*, 2.330)—was completed by late April 1593.⁶⁰ This massive and dizzying text was itself apparently only “*A Preparatiue to certaine larger Discourses, intituled Nashes S. Fame*,” which Harvey had also written by late April,⁶¹ as well as to “certain Discourses of regard” written by a mysterious (and still unidentified) “Gentlewoman” (2.263), though neither of these texts were ever seen.⁶²

⁶⁰ The date given to the third and final section—27 April 1593 (2.331)—probably applies to the first major section as well. The middle section, the “Aduertisement,” was dated 5 November 1589, though it might well have been revised before publication. The *Precursor*—which in Grosart’s edition prefaces the *Supererogation*—was not written until July 1593, but was originally published before the *Supererogation* (Grosart, 2.4). The *New Letter*, published at about the same time as the *Supererogation*, was written in mid-September 1593.

⁶¹ “*Touching the matter, what wanteth, or might be expected here, shall be particularly, and largely recompensed, aswell in my Discourses, intituled Nashes S. Fame, which are already finished, and attend the Publication*” (2.318).

⁶² Either because they did not exist or because Harvey withheld them from publication after finally seeing Nashe’s

Harvey apparently thought of his *Supererogation* as his “necessary defence” (2.324). The centerpiece of the text is a paradoxical encomium of himself as an old Ass (the term Nashe had applied to him), and thus he answers Nashe’s blame with praise. But in fact the bulk of *Pierces Supererogation* is comprised of the same type of schizophrenic debate about how or even whether to answer Nashe that makes up so much of *Foure Letters*—the same attempt to hold himself above satirical controversy and the same reluctant descent into “some little plaine dealing” (2.268). Harvey vacillates between reason and rage, between earnestness and irony, between deliberation and denunciation. His prose is at times impenetrably dense and at times amazingly suggestive, at times the model of restrained Erasmian *copia*, wit, and eloquence, and at times the epitome of unrestrained satirical fury.⁶³ As in *Foure Letters*, Harvey relies extensively on praeteritio, ascribing attacks on Nashe to others or insulting Nashe even as he claims to be praising him. One begins to feel that the entire *Supererogation* hinges on the words “yet” and “but”—that Harvey’s responds by first explaining why he should not respond or why a response is out of character and then by explaining why he needs to respond. “I dare auowe,” Harvey claims, “he”—that is, himself, “the wronged party”—“neuer did, nor euer will iniury, or preiudice any, in deede, word, or intention: *but* if any whosoeuer will needes be offering abuse in fact, or snip-snapping in termes, sith other remedy shrinketh, he may peradventure not altogether passe vnaunswere” (2.313, emphasis mine). The *Supererogation* is a frustrating but also a

apology in the Preface to *Christs Teares* (1593). See the discussion of the relationship between Nashe’s apology and Harvey’s *New Letter* below.

⁶³ Virginia Stern provides the most thorough account of the quarrel from Harvey’s perspective. She notes that Nashe’s “needling but jocular, only half-earnest manner” stands in stark contrast to Harvey’s, which is that of “a methodical man who persisted in painstakingly rebutting the substance of every attack” (109). Her characterization of Harvey’s prose style in *Pierces Supererogation* is worth quoting at some length: “What he has achieved is a document, of which many parts are cleverly and well written, but that in its inordinate bulk and copiousness tends sometimes to become tedious, especially when the erudite Harvey inappropriately sinks to the racy Nashe’s level of coarse vulgarity. Despite the underlying intensity of the author’s emotions and the justice of his cause, the reader is occasionally lulled into inattention and near insensitivity. Harvey has here chosen to write in Euphuistic style: filling each sentence with paratactic clauses and piling phrase upon phrase until the full possibilities of a subject have been included. One begins to long for a variety of sentence structure, for prose less continuously cadent and stylized, for thought more spontaneously expressed, but above all for a pause in the congested volume of words” (104).

fascinating text, for in its contradictions and inconsistencies we can glimpse one of the most brilliant thinkers of the English Renaissance at war with himself about how best to answer a fool.⁶⁴

As in *Four Letters*, Harvey once again insists that he is reluctant to participate in controversy or appear in print. He “scorn[s]”—not “in pride, but in iudgement”—to “appeere in the rancke of this scribling generation” (2.33). He is a scholar who, if he could “dispose freely of [his] owne howers,” would prefer to spend his time writing about virtue, political or military affairs, the private lives of excellent personages, or “whatsoever booke-case, or schole-point is found by experience to be essentiall, and practicable in the world” (2.35-5). He asks Nashe to “forbeare one, that is not ouer-hasty to troble himselfe with trobling other” (2.88), and again condescendingly figures himself as Nashe’s well-willer, apparently oblivious to his own derision of Nashe in *Four Letters*: “Thomas Nashe might haue beene aduised, and in pollicy haue spared them, that in compassion fauoured him; and were vnfaynedly sorry, to finde his miserable estate, aswell in his style, as in his purse, and in his wit, as in his fortune” (2.80). So too does Harvey present himself as his own harshest critic. He claims to “daily confute [him] selfe, and condemne euery” one of his “owne default[s] with rigour” (2.32); he is already the “subiect of his own contempt, and the argument of his owne Satyres”: surely “no man lesse dotes vpon himselfe, or more seuerely censures his own imperfections” (2.33). Those who “impeach” Harvey “of imperfection in learning, or practise, in discoursing, or endighting, in any art, or profession” only “confirme [his] own confession” (2.317). (Seriously, “who reddier to confesse his owne imperfections, then [himself]?” [2.81].⁶⁵)

⁶⁴ There is even less criticism on Harvey’s *Supererogation* than on his *Four Letters*. What follows is, to my knowledge, the first comprehensive account of Harvey’s massive and nearly impenetrable text

⁶⁵ For all of Harvey’s talk, it’s notable that he never once confesses to a single one of his own imperfections, other than perhaps his own “want of Pride,” which, he claims, had been the central obstacle to his own social mobility: “It

And Harvey again insists that he is not threatened by Nashe's attacks on his reputation. He knows that his "Confuters swordes, or [his] enemies daggers" will not "carry any credite with the wise" (2.31-2), because "all the world, that knoweth him [Nashe], calleth him" a "filthy companion, or a scuruy fellow" (2.322).⁶⁶ Indeed, Harvey declares, "Lay-open his vanity, or foolery, who knoweth it not?" (2.59). As "common opinion reportes" of him, Nashe has

little witt: lesse learning: lest iudgement: no discretion; Vanity enough: stomacke at will: superabundance of selfe-conceit: outward liking to fewe, inward affection to none: . . . no reuerence to his patrons: no respect to his superiours: no regard to any, but in contemptuous, or censorius sort: hatred, or disdaine to the rest: continuall quarrels with one, or other: (not such an other mutterer, or murmerer, euen against his familiarest acquaintance): an euer-grudging, & repining mind: a rauinous throte: a gluttonous mawe: a dronken head: a blasphemous tongue: a fisking witt: a shittle nature: a revolting, and rennegate disposition: a broking, and huckstering penne: store of rascall phrases: some little of a brabbling Schollar: more of a rauing scould: most of a roisterly seruing-man: nothing of a Gentleman: lesse then nothing of a fine, or cleanly Artist. (2.269-70)

Nashe's writings are further evidence of his depraved character, which in turn informs Nashe's writing, as Harvey continues to collapse style and character in a cycle of mutual reinforcement: "His Life daily feedeth his Stile; and his Stile notoriously bewraieth his Life" (2.88). Indeed, by the very act of writing against Harvey, Nashe (like Greene) has revealed himself to be a scoundrel. *Strange Newes* has "nothing more in it," Harvey claims, "then is vsuallie in euery ruffianly Copesmate, that hath bene a Grammar schollar, readeth riotous bookes, haunteth

is not excesse, but defecte of pride, that hath broken the head of some mens preferment" (*PS* 2.81-2).

⁶⁶ This is in fact another excellent example of praeteritio, because Harvey insists that he had "not called" Nashe such terms "as all the world, that knoweth him, calleth him" (2.322).

roisterly companie, delighteth in rude scoffing, & karrieth a desperate minde” (2.115-6).

Even more damning is Nashe’s *Choice of Valentines*, an unpublished erotic poem featuring a trip to the brothel gone embarrassingly awry: “I kisse, I clap, I feele, I view at will,” Nashe’s speaker bemoans, “Yett dead he lyes not thinking good or ill. / Vnhappie me, quoth shee, and wilt’ not stand?”⁶⁷ Harvey must have seen the poem—known colloquially as *Nashe’s Dildo* after the emasculating way in which the courtesan resolves the situation⁶⁸—in manuscript, for he condemns Nashe’s “vnprinted packet of bawdye, and filthy Rymes” as a lewd and corrupting imitation of Aretino’s “egregious” bawdiness (2.91-2). Here is evidence (if anyone needed it) that Nashe is an unfit disciple of Sidney: whereas Sidney (and Spenser) imitated Petrarch, Nashe “lickes vp” the “infectious poyson of the world” that had been “vomit[ed]-out” by his hero Aretino, “an Italian ribald” (2.91). Whereas Sidney was “the Secretary of Eloquence; the breath of the Muses; the hooney-bee of the dayntiest flowers of Witt, and Arte: . . . and the Paragon of Excellency in Print” (2.102), Nashe is “the infamy of learning,” “the corruption of his reader,” “the miserie of youth,” “the scurfe of the Citie, the scabbe of the Vniuersitie, the bile of the Realme,” and “the damnation of whatsoeuer is termed good, or accounted honest” (2.107). Harvey therefore can hardly be “agreeue[d]” with the “odious detraction of this pestilent libeller” (2.84). In fact, he suggests more than once, it is “as great a prayse, to be discommended of the dishonest, as to be commeded of the vertuous” (2.58).

As in *Foure Letters*, Harvey makes it clear that he *can* respond to Nashe in the same satirical terms Nashe had used against him. “Pardon me gentle Ciuilitie: if I did not tender you,

⁶⁷ Thomas Nashe, *Choice of Valentines*, in *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, 3.408; 129-31.

⁶⁸ “Hence-forth no more will I implore thine ayde, / Or thee, or men of cowardize upbrayde. / My little dilldo shall suplye their kinde: / A knaue, that moues as light as leaues by winde; / That bendeth not, nor fouldeth anie deale, / But stands as stiff, as he were made of steele, / And playes at peacock twixt my leggs right blythe, / And doeth my tickling swage with manie a sighe; / For, by Saint Runnion he’le refresh me well, / And neuer make my tender bellie swell” (3.412-13; 237-46).

& disclame impudency, I could do him some peece of right; & shew him his well fauored face in a Cristall, as true as Gascoignes steele-glas” (2.73). Harvey’s refusal to answer Nashe in satirical terms of course serves as further evidence of the scholarly restraint which Nashe lacks but which Harvey possesses in droves. “Did I list to persecute him in his owne vaine, or were I not restrained with respectiue termes of diuine, and ciuill moderation: o Aretin, how pleasurably might I canuas the bawling cur, in a tossing sheete of paper[?]” (2.76). The real scholar and gentleman is one who is capable of railing an opponent into silence but who, out of discretion, civility, and moderation, chooses not to; the true poet recognizes that satirical speech is ultimately a form of “impudency.” Never mind the obvious pleasure that Harvey takes in imagining such a victory. Harvey stands firmly on the side of “pure Reason, the soueraigne principle of sound proceeding,” which requires a man not to be “transported with wrath, or any blinde passion”; he “bring[s] the standard of Iudgement with him; & make[s] Wisedome the moderatour of [his] Wit” (2.47). The impudent satirist, on the other hand, is a man whose “affection otherwhiles swunged [his] reason, where reason should haue swayed [his] affection” (2.27); he values both wit and wisdom alike and can “phansy no Autor, but his owne phansy” (2.47-8). The satirist attacks indiscriminately, fearing neither “Goodman Sathan, nor master Beelzebub, nor Sir Reuerence, nor milord Gouvernement himself” (2.270). Such unrestrained, lawless, irreverent discourse is both “odious” and “intollerable”: “To be ouer-bould with one, or two, is something: to be sawcy with many, is much: to spare fewe, or none, is odious: to be impudent with all, is intollerable” (2.76).

Harvey in fact works hard to reassert his intellectual and scholarly superiority over Nashe, who had boasted in *Strange Newes* that he had “readd more good Poets thorough than [Harvey] euer hardst off” (1.315). Harvey scoffs at the idea that Nashe had “deuoured Libraries”

and would be thought “to know all thinges” (2.287), reminds his readers that it had rather “pleased fauour, to repute [Harvey] something” as a learned judge and critic of “the Art of endighting” (2.281), and declares that if he were “disposed to discourse, as sometime [he had] bene forward vpon lesse occasion, for the onely exercise of [his] stile, and some practise of [his] reading,” he could “with a facility declare at-large” the things to criticize in the best writers and commend in the worst (2.288). Apparently Harvey did feel so disposed, because he launches into a lengthy demonstration of his knowledge and careful evaluation of authors, styles, ecclesiastical disputations, and even printed sermons. He declares that in “Grafton, Holinshed, and Stowe; in Heywood, Tusser, and Gowge; in Gascoigne, Churchyarde, and Floide; in Ritch, Whetstone, and Munday; in Stanyhurst, Fraunce, and Watson; in Kiffin, Warner, and Daniell,” many things were “commendable, diuers things notable, some things excellent” (2.290); he praises the “polished, and garnished stile” of “Cartwright, and the chiefest of his Confuters” [i.e., Whitgift], along with “Reinolds, Stubbes, Mulcaster, Norton, Lambert, and the Lord Henry Howarde” (2.290-1); and he “presume[s] to intimate [his] slender opinion, without flattery, or other vndecency” of the most famous preachers of the Elizabethan Age (2.291-2). Throughout this lengthy digression—as in numerous other passages of the *Supererogation*—Harvey is deliberate in his attempt to demonstrate that he in fact lives up to his own standard of judgment and wisdom: “I deeme him wise, that maketh choice of the best; auoideth the worst; reapeth fruite by both; despiseth nothing, that is not to be abhorred; accepteth of anything, that may be tollerated; interteineth euery thing with commendation, fauour, contentment, or amendment . . . In the best, I cannot commende the badd; and in the baddest I reiect not the good” (2.292-3).

In one of the most fascinating passages of the *Supererogation*, Harvey declares—wrongly, it turns out—that the time of satire was over. “Had he begun to Aretinize, when

Elderton began to ballat, Gascoine to sonnet, Turberuille to madrigal, Drant to versify, or Tarleton to extemporise,” Harvey says of Nashe, “some parte of his phantasticall bibble-bables, and capricious panges, might haue bene tollerated in a greene, and wild youth” (2.96). Harvey thus excuses his own youthful dalliance with the satire as appropriate for the state of English poetry in the late 1570s and early 1580s at the same time that he brands Nashe’s own satirical aggression as both immature and outdated. In fact, of course, Nashe was anything but outdated; literary scholars are only now beginning to recognize the extent to which Nashe’s innovative satirical prose influenced the playwrights, poets, and satirists—including Dekker, Middleton, Hall, Marston, Guilpin, Weever, Jonson, and Shakespeare—who would dominate the London theater and publishing houses over the following decade. But for Harvey, writing in early 1593, “[t]he date of idle vanities is expired” (2.95). This is the age of voyage, discovery, and warfare, not satire (2.96-8). Harvey envisions England not as a new Athens, as Nashe was occasionally inclined to do, or as a new Rome, as Jonson would later do, but as a new Sparta, a nation known for its industry and discipline rather than its artistry: “there is another Sparta in hande, that indeede requireth Spartan Temperance, Spartan Frugality, Spartan exercise, Spartan valiancye, Spartan perseuereance, Spartan inuincibility: and hath no wanton leasure for the Comedyes of Athens; nor anye bawdy howers for the songes of Priapus, or the rymes of Nashe” (2.95-6). For Nashe, satire was a means of defending the English nation from its enemies at home and abroad. For Harvey, satire is not only intolerably irreverent and impiously infectious but an unprofitable distraction from the more important business at hand, a business already very much underway—that of reshaping the English nation into a learned, industrious, and martial state. For such an endeavor, “Sir Roger Williams Discourse of War,” “M. Thomas Digges Stratiotics,” or even “the Countess of Pembrookes Arcadia”—which teaches “sage counselling” and “valorous

fighting” along with “amorous Courting” (2.99-100)—are more “proffitable discourses” than “the songes of Priapus, or the rymes of Nashe” (2.96). These “Mercuriall, and Martiall Discourses, in the actiue, and chiualous veine,” are far more appropriate than “phantasticall Pamflets” for “a souerain Monarchie, that tendereth politique gouernment” (2.108-9).

Despite his numerous assurances that he is more than capable of “persecut[ing]” Nashe “in his owne vaine” (2.76), then, Harvey clearly determines not to answer the fool according to his own folly. In fact, as in *Four Letters*, Harvey explicitly debates the merits of responding to Nashe at all. “To striue with dirt,” he knows, “is filthy: to play with edged tooles, daungerous: to trie masteries with a desperate aduersary, hazardous” (2.59). Harvey appears to recognize that no good can come of this controversy, and therefore that “Patience, or Submission, or any course” would be “better, then farther discourse” (2.57-8). He apparently has friends—“diuers honest men of good reckoning, and sundry worshipfull Gentlemen”—who had advised him in express terms “not to soil [his] hands vpon such a contemptible rascal; but to let the reckles Villain play with his own shaddow” (2.233-4), and at numerous points (albeit scores or even hundreds of pages into his reply) he seems all but determined to “let the crooked rectifie itselfe” and to leave Nashe well enough alone: “he is none of my charge: it suffiseth me to be the Curate of myne owne actions, the master of mine owne passions, the frend of my friends,” and so on (2.108).

After defending himself from a number of Nashe’s charges against him in *Strange Newes* (e.g., about his doctor’s acts) and insisting that Nashe had not said anything of substance against him, therefore, Harvey substitutes his answer to Lyly (Nashe’s “mighty protectour at a pinch” [2.77]) and to Martin instead. On one hand, Harvey is taking advantage of the opportunity to publish the response to Lyly’s “spitefull prouocation” he had written three years earlier, as he believed Greene had attacked the Harvey family thanks to Lyly’s “procurement, or

encouragement” (2.122). On the other hand, this is a deliberately condescending non-response to Nashe: “As for other remarkable Particulars in the Straunge Newes,” Harvey declares, “Ink is so like Ink, spite so like spite, impudencie so like impudencie, brocage so like brocage, and Tom-Penniles now, so like Papp-hatchet, when the time was; that I neede but ouerrun an old censure of the One, by way of new application to the Other” (2.120-1). This implies that Harvey cannot be bothered to write a response to Nashe (despite the significant space he has already devoted to *Strange Newes*) at the same time that it associates Nashe with both Lyly and Martin Marprelate. So too is this sustained, serious, and uber-logical response to the general problem of lawless and unrestrained satirical discourse intended to reinforce Harvey’s scholarly detachment from satirical controversy and earn Harvey praise as a learned, reasonable, and diplomatic commentator.

But with Harvey, there is always a “but.” Even as Harvey recognizes that “Patience, of Submission, or any course” might be “better, then farther discourse” (2.57), even as he claims he can “vow silence in brawles” and “professe Patience in wronges” (2.32), even as he feigns indifference to Nashe’s taunts and elaborately constructs his own scholarly detachment, even as he insists that he is “vnwilling to vndertake any enterprise, that was vnmeete for [him]” (2.31), Harvey also argues that he is compelled to answer Nashe.

Harvey figures his general opposition to the lawlessness of satirical or slanderous discourse and thus his response to Nashe as a matter of public interest, as it is necessary to prevent such transgressions of social decorum and potential threats to the stability of the social hierarchy from going unchecked.

Silence may seeme suspicious to many; Patience contemptible to some; A good minde, A bad hart to those, that value all by courage; A knowne forbearer of

Libellers, A continuall bearer of coales; and there is no end of abuses vpon abuses, of iniuries vpon iniuries, of contempt vpon contempt, where presumptuous Impudency, and odious Slaunder, the two errantist vagabonds in the world, may safe conduct themselues, and franckley passe vncontrolled. (2.31-2)

As he had argued in *Four Letters*, “publike enormities” are “incredibly pernicious,” and those who “violate the inuiable partes” of honor, reputation, and fame “perilously threaten the Commonwealth” (*FL*, 1.165). Responding to Nashe is thus Harvey’s public duty. To allow “Libellers” or slanderers to “passe vncontrolled” would be in some sense to condone and thus participate in a world of continuous contention, controversy, and unrest. This is particularly important in an age when “licentious follie by priuiledge, lewd ribaldrie by permission, and rank villanie by conniuance haue become famous Autours,” when such “idle toyes, or vayne trifles” have become popular enough with the masses to pose a threat to all decent order “in a souerain Monarchie” (*PS*, 2.109). For as much as he “hate[s] malice in [him]selfe,” then, Harvey refuses “to be an Vpholster of stuffed, and bombasted malice in other” (2.237). He is compelled to respond to Nashe in order to defend the general principles of honor and reputation, which Harvey feels are at the very foundation of the Elizabethan social order.

But Harvey is also compelled to protect his own reputation. “[W]hat a desperate dissolutenesse were it in him, that regardeth his good name,” Harvey asks, “to abandon himselfe, or to relinquish the deerest thing in this life, (I know no deerer thing, then honest credit) to the fauour of Enuy, or to the discretion of Fortune?” (2.32-3). Even as he scoffs at the inefficacy of Nashe’s satire, then, Harvey is unwilling to “offer his throte to the blade of villany, or his forehead to the brand of diffamation” (2.33), to “suffer [Nashe] to do [him] harme by detraction”

(2.233), or to “suffer himselfe to be proclaimed an Asse in printe” (2.39). Besides, he asks—the irony is almost painful—“what honest minde, in case of mortalitie, hath not a care, how the posterity may be informed of him?” (2.86). By defending his own reputation, furthermore, Harvey suggests that he is defending the reputations of all those who had praised him in print. In “debas[ing]” him, Harvey argues, Nashe “reuiles” “those excellent learned men, those worshipfull, & honorable personages, whose Letters of vnderdeserued, but singular commendation may be shewen.” If Harvey is “an Asse,” he asks, “what asses were those curteous frendes”? What an ass is Nashe himself, who had “publish[ed]” Harvey’s “praise amongst the notablest writers of this realme” (2.82)?⁶⁹

Thus even though Harvey insists that he stands “as little vpon others commendation, or [his] owne titles, as any man in England whosoeuer,” he argues that he would be “a notorious insensate asse” indeed if he were to “eyther sottishly neglect the reputation of soe worthy fauorers, or vtterly abandon [his] owne credit” (2.83). Having just given himself a title as the most humble man in England, Harvey then stands upon others’ commendation by naming all of the “Sweet Gentlemen, renowned knightes, and honorable Lordes” unto whom he has been “exceedingly beholding for letters of extraordinary commendation” (2.83-4). He boasts that these letters are “such, as some of good experience haue doubted, whether they euer voutsafed the like vnto any of either vniuersity” (2.84). In this mixture of humility and hubris we can see not only the importance Harvey places upon his own reputation but also his inability—or perhaps his refusal—to extend his keen sense of irony to his own actions.

In this catalogue of others’ commendations we may also begin to see Harvey’s central rhetorical strategy: even though he “loues not to be his owne defender, much lesse his owne prayser” (2.33), Harvey goes about answering Nashe’s blame by heaping praise upon himself. As

⁶⁹ See Nashe’s Preface to *Menaphon*, 3.320.

in *Foure Letters*, where Harvey had counseled Nashe to turn from satire to encomium, from blame to praise—“to employ [his] golden talent with amounting vsance indeede: and with heroicall Cantoes honour right Vertue, & braue valour indeede: as noble Sir Philip Sidney, and gentle Maister Spencer haue done, with immortall Fame” (1.217-18)—Harvey in the *Supererogation* consistently prefers praise to blame. He figures himself as “the frend of [his] frends, the pittyer of [his] enemies, the loouer of good witts, and honest mindes, the affectionate seruant of Artes, & Vertues, the humble Oratour of noble Valour, the Commender of . . . honorable writings, or any commendable workes” (2.108)—in other words, as the author of praise instead of blame. And as in *Foure Letters*, where he had imagined himself under different circumstances “bestow[ing] more complements of rare amplifications vpon [Nashe], then euer any bestowed vpon” Sidney or Spencer, “or any Aretinish mountaine of huge exaggerations can bring-foorth” (1.218), in the *Supererogation* he wistfully imagines himself encountering Nashe with “the more reputation” (2.233) and argues that Perne had been an “Asse” insofar as he had “troubl[ed]” one who “might possibly haue it in him, to requite him aliue, and dead” (2.313).

The key to making sense of the otherwise impenetrable *Supererogation*, in fact, is to recognize that Harvey “endeuour[s] to maintaine” his “honesty, & credit” (2.317) by re-establishing the supremacy of praise over blame and by reclaiming his own position in the scholarly and pseudo-courtly economy of poetic praise. Nashe had called Harvey an ass in print; Harvey responds with “*A New Prayse of the Olde Ass*” (title-page). This is supposed to be a witty and charming paradoxical encomium, designed both to “prooue [him]selfe no Asse” (2.83) and to win praise for himself through his clever ability to turn Nashe’s critique to his own benefit. He lists famous asses (e.g., Lucian’s Ass, Aesop’s Ass); he argues that “*Euery Asse* is naturally a well disposed creature, and . . . a mirroure of clemency, patience, abstinence, labour, constancy,

and diuine wisdome” (2.248); he claims that he knows of no ass “but hath some good quality, that is, some speciall propertie of an Asse, either proffitable for commodity, or pleasurable for delight, as an Asse may be proffitable, or pleasurable either simply, or in some respect” (2.254-5); and, boastingly, he declares that he has

penned large Discourses in prayse of studdy, meditation, conference, exercise, industry, vigilancy, & perseuerance, the worthiest things in the circuite of the Earth, (nothing vnder heauen, equiualent to labour): and whatsoever I haue addressed in their behalfe, I may in sort alledge in honour of the Asse; and complilde whole Volumes in his commendation, more auailable for commodity, and more necessary for Vse, then the workes of some great Commenters in humanity, Philosophy, history, and other higher Professions. (2.257)

Harvey was certainly no Erasmus. His *New Prayse of an Olde Ass* lacks the cleverness and good-natured humor of the *Praise of Folly*,⁷⁰ and it hardly merits much further critical attention from a literary standpoint. But by praising himself as an “Olde Ass,” by proving that asses have good qualities, and by showing that everyone and everything can be considered an ass—even “the great world” is “a great Asse” (2.260)—Harvey hopes both to distance himself from blameworthy satire and to overwhelm the threat Nashe’s attack posed to his reputation.⁷¹

Harvey’s most elaborate reassertion of the superiority of praise over blame actually comes in the *Precursor* to the *Supererogation*—dated 16 July 1593 but published before the rest of his response to Nashe—in which Harvey (very publicly) thanks his “Very gentle and Liberall

⁷⁰ Though of course Erasmus was not always good-natured in the *Praise of Folly*, as in his bitter attack on the theologians.

⁷¹ Harvey is threatened, of course, by Nashe’s attack on Harvey’s obvious efforts at self-promotion throughout his earlier writings; hence Harvey’s emphasis on his own humility throughout the *Supererogation*—which itself can seem boastful (“surely no man lesse doteth vpon himselfe, or more seuerely censureth his own imperfections” [2.33]).

frendes, M. Barnabe Barnes, M. Iohn Thorius, [and] M. Antony Chewt” (2.6) for the “ouerflowing affection” they have shown to him in their commendatory letters and sonnets. There Harvey clearly distinguishes between Nashe’s preference for blame and his own preference for praise: whereas Nashe makes “the same reckoning of Letters, Sonets, Orations, or other writings commendatory, that [he does] of meate without nourishment, of hearbes without vertue, of plants without fruite” (and so on, and so on, and so on; 2.9),⁷² Harvey is “not so deuouide of good manners, but [he] conceiue[s] what belongeth to ciuill duty, and will euer be prest to interteine Curtesie with curtesie, & to requite any frendship with frendship” (2.9). This is not to say that Harvey was one of those “that greedily surfet of self-conceit, or sottishly hugge their owne babyes”; that title goes to Nashe, the *real* example of self-love, who is “his owne Idol” (2.8). Instead, Harvey upholds the superiority of what I would call an economy of praise—a community of letters outside of the marketplace of print in which gentlemen, scholars, courtiers, and other would-be poets circulate their work and exchange commendatory letters and sonnets. It is “a frendly Pollicy,” he claims, for one writer “to encourage their louing acquaintance to labour the attainement of those perfections, which they blason them, as already atcheiued” (2.6). Not only is this a policy of “Ciuility” to make the latter writer “beholding” to the former for their “extreme affection” (2.6), but it is (at least implicitly) a means for the former writer to earn praise for himself. For Harvey, in other words, a poet earns praise for himself by praising others, not by attacking them.

Harvey takes advantage of this economy of praise in the *Precursor* in order to refute Nashe’s blame. He cannot in good conscience go so far as to publish his own praise of himself,

⁷² This is not, of course, an entirely accurate account of Nashe’s theory of poetry, as I have suggested above. Although in *Strange Newes* Nashe had praised Aristophanes for “interfus[ing] delight with reprehension” (1.285) and although in his Preface to Sidney’s *Astrophel and Stella* he mocked the overwrought language of commendatory letters (3.331-2), Nashe consistently argued that the function of poetry was *both* to “magnifie vertue” and “infamize vice” (1.285).

but he does publish others' commendatory letters, even if he does not have their permission: "I could not be persuaded by any eloquence, or importunacy in the world," Harvey claims, "to suffer your thrise-affectionate Letters and Sonets, or rather your thrise-lauish beneuolences to be published, which so farre surmount not onely the mediocrity of my present endeuour, but euen the possibility of any my future emproouement," if he were not as "monstrously reuiled by some other without reason" as he is "excessiuey extolled by you without cause" (2.10).⁷³

But even in the *Precursor*, where Harvey clearly argues for the superiority of praise over blame, where Harvey insists that he would be a "cold aduersary" to anyone who were to "empeach [his] ability in wordes, or deedes," "debase [his] fortune," "abridge [his] commendations," or "annihilate [his] fame," and where Harvey declares that it is "his vnfained request, that Order should repeale disorder; moderation restraine licentiousnesse; discretion abandon vanity; mildnesse assuage choller; meeknesse allay arrogancy; consideration reclaime rashnesse; indifferency attemper passion; Curtesie mitigate, Charity appease, & Vnity attone debate" (2.12-13), Harvey also asks to be pardoned if "nothing will preuaile with fury but fury, and nothing can winne desired amity, but pretended hostility, that must driue-out one naile with another, & beat away one wedge with another" (2.13). In other words, even as he refuses to answer Nashe according to his folly, Harvey declares that a fool must be answered according to his folly. This is what gives the *Supererogation* its schizophrenic character: Harvey tries to follow both of Solomon's injunctions about answering a fool simultaneously.

Harvey's attack on Nashe in the *Supererogation* vacillates between deeply sarcastic praise, mockery of Nashe's satirical insufficiency, and savage, unrestrained indignation at

⁷³ These commendatory letters and sonnets written in praise of Harvey, however, seem slightly beside the point. Most are overwrought requests for Harvey to share or publish his "praise-moouing workes, full of gallantest discourse, and reason" (2.19), and those that do deal more directly with Nashe or with Harvey's *Supererogation* sound suspiciously like Harvey. See below.

Nashe's villainy, impropriety, and lack of restraint. In the first section of the *Supererogation*, Harvey sarcastically praises Nashe as the "young Apuleius"—thus associating Nashe with the author of the *Golden Ass*—noting his "rare, and quaint Inuention," his "gallant, and gorgeous Elocution," his "braue, and admirable amplifications," and the "liuely pourtraitures of egregious prayes, and disprayses" (2.39). Harvey figures this young Apuleius as the most singular satirist who has ever lived (clearly playing on Nashe's insistence upon his own originality), outdoing Archilochus, Theon, Aristarchus, Aristophanes, Lucian, Horace, Erasmus, More, and even Aretino (2.42-3). In praising his singular satire Harvey mockingly echoes Nashe's articulation of his ideal of eloquence in the Preface to *Menaphon*⁷⁴ and insists that Nashe has brought to perfection the artistry that had barely "budd[ed]" in Sidney and Spenser (2.50). Harvey goes further: Nashe has outstripped Columbus in discovering "a new-found land of confuting commodities" and detecting "new Indies of Inuention" (2.45); he has surpassed Alexander and vied with God himself for his ability to remake the world in his own image. The lovers of Rhetoric, humanity, gentle arts and liberal sciences "must either take their leaues of their sweetest freendes; or become the slaues of that dominiering eloquence, that knoweth no Art but the cutting Arte; nor acknowledgeth any schoole, but the Curtisan schoole" (2.52). Throughout this deeply sarcastic section—the only section that can compare with the success of Harvey's ironic praise of Perne as the "old Fox"⁷⁵—Harvey cleverly and bitinglly blames Nashe by

⁷⁴ This is Nashe: "[G]iue me the man whose extemporall veine in any humour will excell our greatest Art-maisters deliberate thoughts; whose inuentions, quicker then his eye, will challenge the prowdest Rhetorician to the contention of like perfection with like expedition" (*PM*, 3.312). This is Harvey's echo: "Giue me the fellow, that is as Peerelesse, as Pennylesse; and can oppose all the Libraries in Poules Churchyard, with one wonderfull work of Supererogation; such an vnmatcheable peece of Learning, as no bookes can counteruaile, but his owne; the onely recordes of the singularities of this age" (*PS*, 2.42-4).

⁷⁵ See *PS*, 2.295-317, where Harvey praises his old nemesis at Cambridge, Dr. Andrew Perne, for his craftiness and wile, so unlike Nashe's Martin-like braggadocio: "one such thrise-secret, and thrise-profound enemy, was incomparably more pernicious, then a hundred Hatchets, or Country-cuffes; a thousand Greenes, or Cunnycatchers; an army of Nashes, or Pierces Penniles; a forrest of wilde beastes; or whatsoever Ilias of profesed Euils. It is not the threatener, but the vnderminer, that worketh the mischief: not the open assault, but the priuy surprize, that terrifieth

praising him as “the very prodigality of Art, and Nature” (2.39).

At other moments, however, Harvey more directly mocks Nashe as an insufficient satirist, a “Gargantuist” who “thundreth . . . direfull threatnings” (2.224) but who, “in steede of thunderboltes, shooteth nothing but dogboltes, and catboltes, and the homeliest boltes of rude folly” (2.41). This is a dramatic and in some cases jarring shift from Harvey’s rhetoric elsewhere in the *Supererogation*: whereas elsewhere Harvey stresses his reluctance to enter into controversy, his preference for a kind of scholarly retirement, and his irritation at being provoked by “the two impudentest mates, that euer haunted the presse” (2.34), here he expresses a very different kind of disappointment at Nashe’s performance in *Strange Newes*. Here Harvey suggests that he had looked for—indeed, almost *hoped* for—“A redoubted aduersary,” a “fine-witted man, as quicke as quick-siluer,” whose “nimble dexterity of liuely conceite” and terms “as wilde as wild-fire” would leave Harvey “thunder-stricken vpon the ground” (2.41). But “neuer poore man found his Imagination so hugely mocked,” Harvey claims, “as this confuting Iugler coosened my expectation without measure” (2.60). Harvey’s mistake, then, was thinking *too* highly of Nashe. He had braced himself for an Aretino but instead found himself beset with “an Oratour of the Stewes,” a “Poet of Bedlam,” a “broker of baggage stuffe,” a “pedler of straunge newes” (2.61).

Indeed, Harvey claims never to have seen “so great Impudency married to so little witt” (2.66). Not only was Nashe’s wit “as shallow as Trumpington foorde, and as slight as the newe workmanship of guegawes to please children, or of toys to mocke apes, or of trinketts to conquer sauages” (2.91),⁷⁶ but his “ruffian Rhetorique” was not even original:

His gayest floorishes, are but Gascoignes weedes, or Tarletons trickes, or Greenes

the old souldiour: . . . not proclaimed warre, but pretended peace, that striketh the deadly stroke” (2.303-4).

⁷⁶ The entire *Supererogation* is like this, a massive and fascinating exercise in *copia* in which Harvey both demonstrated the extent of his reading and betrayed the extent of his anger.

crankes, or Marlowes brauados: his iestes, but the dregges of common scurrilitie,
 the shrewds of the theater, or the of-scouring of new Pamflets: his freshest
 nippitatie, but the froth of stale inuentions, long-since lothsome to quick tastes:
 his shrouing ware, but lenten stuff, like the old pickle herring: his lustiest verdure,
 but ranke ordure, not to be named in Ciuilitie, or Rhetorique. (2.115)

These were of course the same charges that Harvey had made against Nashe in *Foure Letters* and against Lyly in the “Aduertisement,” but as more than one commentator has noted,⁷⁷ in *Pierces Supererogation* Harvey seems particularly keen to associate Nashe with “this scribling generation” (2.33)—hack writers, ballad-makers, sonneteers, and “botchers in Print” (2.280) who would write anything or attack anyone for profit. Nashe is both “Danter’s gentleman” (2.41)⁷⁸ and “Danter’s Maulkin” (2.229); he is “thrise-affectionately bounden to the Right-honorable Printing-house, for his poore shifts of apparell” (2.243).⁷⁹ Nashe’s wit is “base enough for Elderton, and the riffe-raffe of the scribling rascality” (2.65), and in Greene’s absence, Nashe has become “the bellweather of the scribling flocke, the swish-swash of the presse,” and “the poulkat of Pouls-churchyard” (2.273).

But even as he mocks Nashe for his “*stale Iestes*,” his “creast-falne stile, & his socket-worne inuention” (2.119), Harvey also viciously attacks Nashe for his “monstrous Singularity” (2.279) and declares that there has never been “a more pestilent example of prostituted

⁷⁷ See Georgia Brown, *Redefining Elizabethan Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1-2.

⁷⁸ Probably because John Danter had printed “Thomas Nashe Gentleman” on the title page of *Strange Newes* (Richard Jones had printed the same thing on the title page of the first edition of *Pierce Penilesse*), thus elevating Nashe into the gentry via print. Nashe both supports his gentility and disavows the printer’s label in *Strange Newes*: “For the gentilitie of the *Nashes* . . . yet some of vs who neuer sought into it til of late, can proue the extrancy of our auncestors before there was euer a ropemaker in England. Wee can vaunt larger petigrees than patrimonies, yet of such extrinsecall things, common to tenne thousand calues and oxen, would not I willingly vaunt, only it hath pleased M. Printer, both in this booke and *Pierce Pennilesse*, to intaile a vaine title to my name, which I care not for, without my consent or priuitie I here auouch” (1.311-12).

⁷⁹ It is possible that this and “Danter’s gentleman” refer to Nashe’s employment in Danter’s printing-house, where Nashe probably worked as a text-corrector, but if so it must refer to a time before the spring of 1593 (the time of Harvey’s composition), as Nashe was then in the Isle of Wight with the Careys.

Impudency” (2.42).⁸⁰ In long catalogues of unbridled and desperate rage, Harvey lashes out against Nashe as the most villainous and opprobrious satirist who has ever lived. Nashe outstrips even Martin for his “challenging, ruffling, and railing stile” (2.122); his “plots of Ribaldry” are “too-palpable” and his “formes of libelling, too-outrageous” (2.234); his are “the fowlest and filthiest scurse of odious termes, that Villany could inuent, or Impudency vtter” (2.235). Harvey has never read “a more garish, and pibald style, in any scribling Inkhornist; or tasted a more vnsauory slaumpaump of wordes, and sentences in any sluttish Pamfletter” (2.277). Nashe is “a busie peece of worke for the sonne of a mule, a rawe Grammarian, a brabbling Sophister, a counterfaict cranke, a stale rakehell, a piperly rymer, a stump-worne railer, a dodkin autor” (2.113); he is “The cockish challenger, the lewd scribler, the offal of corruptest mouthes, the draff of filthiest pennes, the bag-pudding of fooles, & the very pudding-pittes of the wise, or honest” (2.116); he is “the boldest bayard in Print; a hare-braind foole in [his] head; a vile swad in [his] hart; a fowle lyer in [his] throate; and a vaine-glorious Asse in [his] pen” (2.237); he is “the bellweather of the scribling flocke, the swish-swash of the presse, the humm of Impudency, the shambles of beastlines, the poulkat of Pouls-churchyard, the schrichowle of London, the toade-stoole of the Realme, the scorning-stocke of the world, & the horrible Confuter of four Letters” (2.273). Nashe is simultaneously nothing, so many things, and the same thing: “Railing, railing, railing: bragging, bragging, bragging: and nothing else, but fowle railing vpon railing, and vayne bragging vpon bragging; as rudely, grosely, odiously, filthily, beastly, as euer shamed Print” (2.117). These catalogues are mesmerizing in their variety as well as their severity. It is certainly not going too far, in fact, to suggest that in these moments Harvey prefigures the furious indignation of the satyr-satirists of the late 1590s.

⁸⁰ Notice here that Nashe’s penchant for alliteration has worn off on Harvey. See my discussion of their mutual infection below.

In vacillating between irony and outrage, between mockery and savagery, between belittlement and exaggeration, Harvey encapsulates both poles of satire. He at once figures Nashe as trifling and as beastly, as the laughingstock of the city and as a threat not only to the press and to poetry but to the social hierarchy and the commonwealth. Despite his attempt to remain above satirical controversy, to present himself as a reasonable and rational scholar who would meet Nashe's "hoat rauing in cold termes" (2.110), and despite his attempt to blame satire as wasteful and to uphold the superiority of praise, Harvey finds himself reproducing and even outstripping Nashe's terms of abuse.

In the darkest moment of the *Supererogation*, Harvey descends into an unrestrained fury, surpassing Nashe's blustering rhetoric by threatening actual, rather than rhetorical, violence. "Wheresoeuer I meete thee next, after my first knowledge of thy person, (not for mine owne reuenge, but for thy correction) I will make thee a simple foole, and a double sawd, aswell with my hand, as with my tongue," Harvey declares; "And if thou entreate me not the fayrer . . . trust me, I will batter thy carrion to dirt, whence thou camst; and squise thy braine to sniuell, whereof it was curdled" (2.237-8). This outburst culminates with Harvey's recognition of his own impossible circumstances, his resigned realization that he will be tarnished by his encounter with Nashe no matter what course of action he chooses:

To refuse the tryall, would in the common opinion seeme a shame; to accept the offer, in the best iudgements is a shame: to take the foile, were a discredit; to giue the foile is no credit. A hard case, where Patience may be supposed simple, and auengement will be reputed vnwise; where I cannot hold my peace without warre vpon warre, nor speake without blame vpon blame; where I must either be a passiue, or an actiue Asse in Print. (2.241-2)

In this passage, steeped in the language of—and indeed informed by ideas of honor governing—an aristocratic duel, Harvey recognizes that he cannot possibly emerge from an encounter with Nashe victorious or in any way win praise. Even to speak of blame is blameworthy. It is his “greatest affliction,” as he says earlier in the tract, that he is “constrained to busy [his] penne, without ground, or substance of discourse, meete for an actiue and industrious world” (2.34).⁸¹

At numerous points Harvey attempts to back away from his own indignation. “I was not wont to endight in this stile,” he declares; “I confesse, I neuer knew my Inuectiue Principles, or confuting termes before: and perhaps some better Schollars are nigh-hand as farre to seeke in the kinde rudiments, and proper phrases of pure Nasherie” (2.229-30). Such invective terms are a digression from his purpose, as he “honour[s] the meekest Humility” and “scorne[s] the insolentest Arrogancy” (2.240).⁸² But—with Harvey there is always a “but”—“the fairest offer is fowly contemned; the gentlest suite vnkindly repulsed; say I, what I can, malice wilbe itself; or do I, what I can, Arrogancy wilbe itself: and no other impression can sinke into the hart of Spite, or the eare of Pride, but instigations of Spite, or suggestions of pride” (2.241). Because Nashe had declared that he would never cease until he had the last word, “Fury must be tamed with Fury . . . obstinacy awed with obstinacy; force mastred with force; threatnings cooled with threatnings; contempt aunswered in his owne toungue” (2.238).

And this, finally, may help to explain the mysterious gentlewoman Harvey introduces in the *Precursor*, the gentlewoman who, Harvey promises, will surely “broach the barrell of [Nashe’s] frisking conceit” (2.91), but from whom we have only two largely unimpressive

⁸¹ The fact that Harvey still published the *Supererogation*—and in fact seemed, as Hibbard notes, “proud of it” (216)—proves the fundamental validity of McKerrow’s assertion that Harvey was “curiously deficient in the power of self-criticism” (5.70).

⁸² W. Schrikx argues persuasively that Harvey’s preferred humor was sanguine or cheerfulness. Schrikx, *Shakespeare’s Early Contemporaries: The Background of the Harvey-Nashe Polemic and Love’s Labour’s Lost* (Antwerp: De Nederlandsche Boekhandel, 1956), 118-20.

sonnets (published at the end of the *Precursor*) and an attributed passage in the *New Letter*. If this gentlewoman in fact existed, we have no record of her and no clear means to determine who she was. Based on Harvey's remark that she was "neither the noblest, nor the fairest, nor the finest, nor the richest Lady" (2.320), it is extremely unlikely that she was in any way Harvey's social superior (such as the Countess of Pembroke), as Harvey would not dare speak of the members of the nobility or aristocracy in anything but obsequious terms.⁸³ Instead, Nashe was probably right to call her "Madam *Gabriela*" and argue that Harvey created her as a device to distance himself from satirical raillery: "hee thinkes in his owne person if hee should raile grosely, it will be a discredit to him, and therefore hereafter hee would thrust foorth all his writings vnder the name of a Genlewoman" (*HWY*, 3.111, 13). The gentlewoman, in other words, functions for Harvey in the same way that the anti-Martinists functioned for the bishops in their encounter with the notorious presbyterian pamphleteer. By displacing the satirical response onto someone else, the bishops were able to condemn Martin's satire as libelous scurrility at the same time that they ensured that the fool was answered effectively according to his folly.⁸⁴ When Harvey recognizes that he is descending into Nashe's satirical vein and that he cannot win—that he must answer fury with fury, satire with satire—he displaces the responsibility for Nashe's confutation onto an unnamed Gentlewoman. Thus Harvey is able—as far as he is concerned, at least—to distance himself from blame at the same time that he praises the gentlewoman as a righteous blamer.

⁸³ Matthew Steggle in fact argues that Harvey *was* referring to the Countess of Pembroke, albeit tactlessly, though he concludes that it is very plausible that Harvey attributed his own writings to his "Patronesse" without her approval in a botched attempt at flattery. See Steggle, "Gabriel Harvey, the Sidney Circle, and the Excellent Gentlewoman," *Sidney Journal* 22:1 (2004), 115-29.

⁸⁴ Jennifer Andersen is only critic who really appreciates this aspect of the bishop's strategy; see "Thomas Nashe and Popular Conformity," 39.

4. A Stale Jest: Nashe's Have With You to Saffron Walden

Nashe may well have glanced at Harvey in the images of the two orators Jack Wilton encounters at Wittenberg in *The Unfortunate Traveler* (dated June 1593). The first, a university orator who delivers a ‘rather ruthfull oration’ that is “by patch & by peecemeale stolne out of Tully,” empties his phrasebook in ostentatious praise of the Duke and concludes every sentence with “*Esse posse videatur*” (2.246), a phrase which Nashe later suggested was a favorite phrase of Harvey’s.⁸⁵ The second—a less likely portrait of Harvey not only because he is the town orator but also because, unlike Harvey, he has a “bursten belly” and a “sulpherous big sowlne large face” (2.247)⁸⁶—is called “*Vanderhulke*,” the same name Nashe later called Harvey.⁸⁷

But sometime after completing *The Unfortunate Traveller*, Nashe apparently had a change of heart. Declaring “A hundred vnfortunate farewels to fantasticall Satirisme,” in which vein he had “mispent [his] spirite” (*CT*, 2.12), Nashe sacrificed his “zealous wit to simplicite, and [his] deuout pen to reprochfull penitence” (2.179), and in the epistle “To the Reader” prefacing *Christs Teares Over Jerusalem* (published September/October 1593) he offered a lengthy, specific, and by all accounts sincere public apology to Gabriel Harvey:

Nothing is there nowe so much in my vowes, as to be at peace with all men, and make submissiue amends where I haue most displeased. Not basely feare-blasted or constraintiue ouer-ruled, but purely pacifycatorie suppliant, for reconciliation and pardon doe I sue to the principallest of them, gainst whom I profest vtter enmity. Euen of Maister Doctor Haruey, I hartily desire the like, whose fame and

⁸⁵ See *Have With You*, 3.66. McKerrow reluctantly agrees that this is plausibly a portrait of Harvey (4.272-3).

⁸⁶ Harvey was apparently very thin; in *Have With You*, Nashe suggests Harvey “look[ed] like a case of tooth-pikes, or a Tue pin put in a stue of apparell” (3.38).

⁸⁷ See *Have With You*, 3.31, where Nashe refers to Harvey as “Doctour *Vanderhulk*.” It is entirely possible that the association worked the other way around—that is, that Nashe did not have Harvey in mind when he created *Vanderhulk* in *UT* but later found it convenient to associate Harvey with this “bursten belly inkhorne orator.”

reputation (though through some precedent iniurious prouocations, and feruent incitements of young heads) I rashly assailed: yet now better aduised, and of his perfections more confirmedly perswaded, vnfainedly I entreate of the whole worlde, from my penne his worths may receiue no impeachment. All acknowledgements of abundant Schollership, courteous well gouerned behaiour, and ripe experienst iudgement, doe I attribute vnto him. Onely with his milde gentle moderation, heervnto hath he wonne me. (2.12)

This apology is certainly “pacifycatorie” in its reassertion of Harvey’s worths—particularly those of Scholarship, courtesy, and judgment, in which Harvey took so much (humble) pride—but in fact Nashe here obliquely defers responsibility both for the previous antagonism and for his current efforts at reconciliation. Although he admits that he “rashly assailed” Harvey’s reputation, this is qualified both by a reminder of Harvey’s “precedent iniurious prouocations” and by the “feruent incitements of young heads”—those like Chettle, who encouraged Nashe to respond to Harvey. His suggestion that he is “better aduised” and “more confirmedly perswaded” of Harvey’s “perfections” likewise indicates the influence of an intermediary of some kind who negotiated the terms of peace.

In the remainder of *Christs Teares*, Nashe—perhaps tired of being the “Deuils Oratour”⁸⁸—becomes Christ’s Orator, and takes upon himself the voice of Christ as he chastises an unrepentant Jerusalem before that city is destroyed. Despite his farewell to “fantasticall satirisme,” Nashe’s sanctimonious attack on sin in *Christs Teares*—which he hopes will “be acceptable to God and his Church” (2.80)—is very much satirical, a slightly more serious version of his attack on the seven deadly sins in *Pierce Penilesse*. The point of thus “bequeath[ing]” his pen “to the prosternating and enforrowing the frontiers of sinne,” Nashe explicitly declares, is to

⁸⁸ Harvey, *Foure Letters*, 1.203.

“lend [London] a Looking-glasse” (2.80), which he fears will be all too likely to suffer the same fate. In the second half of the tract, he takes “principall ayme” at the sons and daughters of pride and rails upon everything relating to “Ambition, Vaine-glory, Atheisme, Discontent, Contention . . . Disdaine, Gorgeous-attyre, and Delicacie” (2.81) in creative, original, and aggressive prose, rendering everything in his gaze either absurd or hateful as he looks about the corrupt and corrupting city of London. As in *Pierce Penilesse*, Nashe attacks puritans at length, particularly those “hotte-spurd” but dull-headed “Diuines” who “count it prophane to arte-enamel” their sermons (2.124). Once again Nashe argues on behalf of art and poetry in a manner that reveals his conviction in the profitability of satirical discourse:

Men are men, and with those thinges [i.e., art and rhetoric] must bee mooued, that men wont to be mooued. They must haue a litle Sugar mixt with their soure Pylls of reproofe; the hookes must be pleasantly baited that they bite at. Those that hang foorth theyr hookes and no bayte, may well enough entangle them in the weeds, (enwrap themselues in contentions,) but neuer winne one soule. (2.124)

Satire succeeds where the sermons of so many “cow-baby-bawlers and heauy-gated lumberers” (2.123) fail because it mixes pleasure and profit: it sweetens the “sourer Pylls of reproofe.” Far from a farewell to “satirisme,” this is a farewell to the “fantasticall”—a term Nashe frequently associates with useless and unprofitable forms of discourse. If anything, *Christs Teares* is Nashe’s most serious attempt to write profitable, edifying satire.

Unbeknownst to Nashe, of course, Harvey was at the same time preparing *Pierces Supererogation* for print—hardly an example of the “milde gentle moderation” Nashe had so generously attributed to him. The publication of the *Supererogation* in the wake of Nashe’s sincere public apology has seemed distasteful to numerous critics of the quarrel. For Grosart,

Harvey's harshest critic, this rejection of Nashe's offer of reconciliation makes any vindication of the "Blockhead" scholar impossible.⁸⁹ In the *New Letter of Notable Contents* (September 1593), a letter Harvey wrote to his printer, John Wolfe—and then of course published for posterity—Harvey appears to debate and summarily reject Nashe's offer of peace in *Christs Teares*. But as McKerrow argues, although the style of the *New Letter* is "unusually obscure, even for Harvey," a "careful perusal of the letter will bring an unbiased reader to the conclusion that at the time of writing (September 16) Harvey had not yet seen *Christ's Tears* nor Nashe's apology prefixed thereto."⁹⁰ All of the evidence in fact suggests that Harvey had *heard* of Nashe's offer of reconciliation, probably through an intermediary, but because he had not yet *seen* an apology he found it difficult to "*listen*" to such "promises of trust" (*NL*, 1.285; emphasis mine). Harvey claims that he has "earnestly, and instantly craued personall conference" with Nashe, but he complains that "All must be done by the mediation of a third, and a fourth." Even if Harvey "conceiue[s] well of the interposed persons," he cannot entirely be confident that Nashe will be as good as his word (1.286).

The *New Letter* is thus not a debate about what to do now that Nashe has apologized but rather a debate about whether Nashe's verbal offer of reconciliation can be trusted. On one hand, Harvey declares that he can "easily be enreated" to pardon the injury he had suffered, "to bestow a great benefit in steade of a great reuenge, and to loose the exercise of many weeks"—i.e., to give up what he had already written against Nashe—as it would demonstrate his own liberality (1.274). On the other hand, however, Harvey finds it difficult to believe that Nashe, who had "penned the most desperate and abominable Pamflet of *Straunge Newes*, and disgorged his stomacke of as poisonous rancour, as euer was vomited in Print," would "within few moneths"

⁸⁹ Grosart (ed.), 1.xlviii-xlix.

⁹⁰ McKerrow, 5.96.

be “won, or charmed, or inchaunted” to “astonish carnall mindes with spirituall meditations” (1.273). Harvey thinks “the raunging Eyes vnder that long haire, (which some would call ruffianly haire) should scarsely yet be bathed in the heaumently Teares of Christ, or washed in the diuine Teares of Penitence” (1.288). Having “so heauy causes of diffidence, and so light causes of credulity,” Harvey thinks it would be foolishly “simple” to “runne hastily into the trapp” (1.285); until “a *publique iniurie* be publiquely confessed, and *Print* confuted in Print,” Harvey sees “no credible hope of *Peace*, but in *Warre*” (1.287). Harvey therefore determines to carry forward with the publication of *Pierces Supererogation*, which had already been printed (1.279).⁹¹

Nashe was understandably incensed. In the second edition to *Christs Teares*, published the following year (1594), he wrote a scathing new epistle “To the Reader” in which he lamented that he had been “most confounded” by the “loue or pitie” he showed towards his “enemie”: “whereas I thought to make my foe a bridge of golde, or faire words, to flie by, he hath vsed it as a high way to inuade me” (2.179). From Nashe’s perspective, Harvey—“the vowed enemie to all vowes and protestations”—had begged “with a slauish priuat submission a generall publike reconciliation” (2.179), and upon this “prostrate intreatie” Nashe was “content to giue him a short Psalme of mercie” (2.180). In return, Harvey had published “Sixe and thirtie sheetes of mustard-pot paper” against him, “wherein like a drunken begger he hath rayled most grossely” (2.180). Nashe’s indignation at *Pierces Supererogation* in fact has much in common with Harvey’s own outrage at *Strange Newes*: Nashe declares that Harvey’s writing was superlatively filthy,⁹² that Harvey had failed to confute *Strange Newes* in any significant way (2.180), and that

⁹¹ Nashe’s apology may have eventually had an effect on Harvey, however: either *Nashes S. Fame* and the “Reply of the excellent Gentlewoman” (1.276) never existed, or Harvey decided not carry forward with their publication once Nashe’s “professed *Paenitet*” in fact “appeare[d]” (1.292-3) in print.

⁹² “Was neuer whore of Babylon so betrappt with abhominations as his stile (like the dog-house in the fields) is

he is at a loss because he has “tried all wayes with [his] aduersary” (2.181).

Nashe’s outrage in the second edition of *Christs Teares* indicates that Nashe was much more threatened by Harvey’s attack on his character and his style than most critics of the quarrel have acknowledged.⁹³ Nashe was upset not only because Harvey had reneged on his promise but because Harvey’s attack on his style had gained some traction. In the remainder of the epistle “To the Reader,” Nashe is defensive about criticisms of his “puft-vp stile” in *Christs Teares*, about his bitterness, and about the targets of his blame. He complains about (mis)interpretations of *The Unfortunat Traveller*, particularly those that tried “to anagrammatize the name of Wittenberge to one of the Vniuersities of England” (2.182), but he also offers a general apology to the gentlemen of Cambridge, insisting that he “had no allusion in sentence, word, or sillable vnto anie of [them]” (2.183).

Nashe had fallen on hard times by early 1594. For whatever reason, his residence at the Carey’s had ended, and he had returned to London, where, as he would admit in *Have With You*, he worked as a corrector of the press for John Danter. In addition, “twise or thrise in a month, when *res est angusta domi*, the bottome of [his] purse [was] turnd downward,” he “prostitute[d] his pen in hope of gaine” by writing amorous sonnets for “some of these newfangled *Galiardos* and *Snior Fantasticos*” at court (3.30-1).⁹⁴ This was hardly the type of profitable poetry Nashe had hoped to produce. However raving Harvey’s *Supererogation* may seem to us, Nashe needed to counter the idea that a respected scholar of good learning and judgment had exposed him as a malicious backbiter and a two-penny hack. In the second edition of *Christs Teares*, Nashe therefore figures his determination to respond to Harvey’s *Supererogation* as a matter of

pestered with stinking filth” (2.180).

⁹³ Hilliard is one of the few to recognize that “Harvey’s criticisms were too damaging to go unanswered” (203).

⁹⁴ Nicholl points out that Nashe was also attacked in the *Phoenix Nest* anthology (1593), which included anonymous work now known to be written by Raleigh, de Vere, Dyer, and Greville—all defenders of Leicester—as well as in the preface to Chapman’s *Shadow of Night* (175).

“conscience” and sage religious policy: he says he had “askt counsell” of “diuerse great diuines . . . whether it were lawfull to rap a foole with his owne bable and teach him to know him selfe” and reports that these divines “expresly certified” him that “it was euerie way as allowable as the punishing of malefactors and offenders” (2.181).

This response would not come until two years later, however. In the interim, Nashe and Harvey purportedly lodged next door to each other at the Dolphin Inn while both were visiting Cambridge, a wholly unverifiable coincidence that sounds too good to be true. Nashe reports in *Have With You* that Harvey desired “a meeting or conference . . . wherein all quarrells might be discust and drawne to an attonement,” but Nashe “had no fancie to it.” Not only had he been duped by Harvey before, he claims, but he neither wanted to “loose so much paines [he] had tooke in new arraying & furbishing [Harvey]” nor would be satisfied with private amends for “a publique wrong in Print” (*HWY*, 3.92-3).

When *Have With You to Saffron-Walden* was finally published in 1596, Nashe acknowledged that the response was a long time in coming—and that “Nashe against Haruey” was by then “a stale ieast”—but he insisted that even though he had been “this two or three yeare about it,” he had not “plodded vpon it continually,” or “vsed in all this space nothing but gall to make inke with” (3.18). Nashe suggested that he taken so long to publish *Have With You* both because he took “some further time to get perfect intelligence of [Harvey’s] life and conuersation” (3.29) and because he waited for “some company to march with [him]”—probably Lyly, who, despite having an answer “lyne ripe by him readie gathered,” apparently “[came] not forward according to promise” (3.32, 53).

Like Harvey’s *Pierces Supererogation*, Nashe’s *Have With You* is, as McKerrow aptly

suggests, “very disorderly and defies analysis.”⁹⁵ Other critics of the quarrel have referred to *Have With You* as a knockout punch, presumably because Harvey never responded.⁹⁶ But Nashe’s last tract against Harvey lacks the exuberance of *Pierce Penilesse* and the confident mastery of *Strange Newes*. Nashe certainly has plenty of braggadocio left—“I mean to come vpon him with a tempest of thunder and lightning worse than the stormes in the West *Indies* calld the *Furicanoes*,” Nashe brags in the epistle “To all Christian Readers” (3.20)—but he is also angrier, more defensive, less secure in his fortunes, and less confident about the efficacy and propriety of satirical discourse.

Have With You is divided into six main sections: a long dedicatory epistle to “Dick Lichfield,” the barber of Trinity College, Cambridge; another long prefatory letter “To all Christian Readers”; a “Dialogue” with four interlocutors (3.24ff); “the vnflattered picture of Pedantisme” (3.42ff), in which Nashe creatively strings together a nonsense oration out of Harvey’s outlandish terms and phrases while the interlocutors from the dialogue interrupt in order to heap further ridicule on Harvey; the absurd “*life and godly education from his childhood of that thrice famous Clarke, and worthie Orator and Poet, Gabriell Haruey*” (3.55ff); and finally “A Summarie or breife Analysis of such matters as are handled in the Doctors Booke” (3.102ff). From these varied sections Nashe hopes to paint Harvey in a variegated coat, but in fact a somewhat confused and conflicted picture of Harvey emerges. In Nashe’s hands Harvey is at once a perfect picture of pedantry, laughable in his inability to navigate the commercial print market, and a hack writer who supported himself by selling almanacs and ballads in droves. Harvey is at once a vain and fulsome sycophant, absurd in his flattery even of those who did not deserve it, and an inconsiderate, self-interested scoundrel, a serial abuser of other men’s good

⁹⁵ McKerrow, 4.302.

⁹⁶ I agree with the current critical consensus that *The Trimming of Thomas Nashe* (1597) was not written by Harvey.

will.

Nashe is quick to imagine that he can “compell” those who have railed against him to “fall downe and worship [him] ere [he] cease[s]” (3.40), and he brags that his earlier writings against Harvey had already “brought [Harvey] lowe, and shrowdly broken him” (3.94). In fact, Nashe gleefully relates, his *Strange Newes* had driven Harvey to lock himself “at *Wolfes* in *Powles Church-yard*” in order to write *Pierces Supererogation* during “the ragingest furie of the last Plague, when there dyde aboue 1600. a week” in London, “inck-squitting and printing,” “cloystred and immured” for the better part of a year (3.87). But Nashe implicitly admits that Harvey’s *Supererogation* has affected his own credit. Nashe complains that Harvey’s friends had “vrg[ed] what a triumph [Harvey] had ouer [him]” (3.19), and one of the interlocutors, Importunato, suggests that if Nashe is “so senceless” as to not respond to Harvey, Nashe will be held unworthy “to be any thing but the sinke of contempt, to be excluded out of all men of worths companies, & counted the abiect scumme of all Poets and ballet-makers” (3.28). Apparently there was some real concern that Harvey had damaged Nashe’s reputation, for one of the other interlocutors (as Nashe explains in his epislte “To the Christian Reader”) was based on a real-life figure who “vncessantly perswaded [Nashe] to preserue [his] credit from iadish dying of the *scratches*” (3.22).

Throughout *Have With You*, Nashe is much more on the defensive than he had been in his earlier writings. Whereas in *Strange Newes* Nashe had placed Harvey’s letters on trial—slyly mocking Harvey’s most recent aspirations at Civil Law—in *Have With You* Nashe figures himself as the defendant, answering “Importunato’s” charges about his delay in responding to Harvey and refuting the charges Harvey had made against him in the *Supererogation*. He bristles at Harvey’s sarcastic praise of him as a Young Apuleius, and he denies that he has written

against old and new writers, universities, parliaments, and the city of London (3.118). He chafes at Harvey's implication that he "scrape[s] vp" his livelihood "from writing to the Presse," claiming he had "got nothing by Printing these three yeres" until "the Impression of this Book" (3.128). He is incensed at Harvey's repeated suggestion that he imitated Greene, declaring that he "more scorne[s] it than to haue so foule a iakes for [his] groaning stoole as [Greene's] mouth" (3.128).

Most importantly, Nashe is for the first time openly defensive about his satirical practice. "Is there such high treason comprehended vnder calling a foppe a foppe, & cudgelling a curre for his snarling?" he asks. He argues instead that Harvey, "standing much vpon his reading," had concluded that anyone who "writes against him [Harvey] must write against" all of the ancient fathers, renowned philosophers, poets, and orators; "if he vaunts him aboute them all, he is a *changer, an innouater, an impostor, a railer at all, & confounds heauen and earth*" (3.119). Nashe offers an extensive defense of the jokes he had made at Harvey's father's expense, explaining that he did not "vrge it" as "anie such hainous discredit simply of it selfe" but as a reminder that it was Harvey's "fault to beare himselfe too arrogantly aboute his birth, and contemne and forget the house from whence he came" (3.56). So too is Nashe defensive about his involvement in the anti-Martinist campaign, which Harvey had called into question in the "Advertisement": "In that he twatleth, *it had bin better to haue confuted Martin by Reuerend Cooper than such leuitie*; tell mee why was hee not then confuted by Reuerend *Cooper*, or made to hold his peace, till Master *Lillie* and some others with their pens drew vpon him?" (3.138). To be sure, this indicates Nashe's continued faith in the efficacy of satire, but it also shows Nashe's sensitivity to Harvey's critique. Indeed, Nashe is still unhappy that in *The Lamb of God* Richard (and possibly Gabriel) Harvey had "compar'd [him] to *Martin*" (3.130).

So too does *Have With You* betray Nashe's uneasiness about Harvey's elaborate economics of praise, in which Harvey exchanged courtesies with other scholars and built up credit for himself by publishing letters and sonnets from others who praised him. Nashe explains away letters of commendation by eminent figures such as Sir Philip Sidney and Spenser—figures whom Nashe himself held in the highest regard—by suggesting that “there was sometimes some pretty expectation” of Harvey. A man like Sidney, who “was a naturall cherisher of men of the least towardnes in anie Arte whatsoever,” may have written “some kinde Letters” to Harvey “to encourage and animate him in those his hopefull courses he was entred into” (3.116). Nashe is careful, in other words, to attribute as little “towardnes” in art to Harvey as possible, and to attribute whatever commendations Harvey had received to the natural good will of eminent figures. But by the time Harvey wrote the *Supererogation*, Nashe claims, Harvey “could get no man of worth to crie *Placet* to his workes, or meeter it in his commendation.” Instead, Harvey had employed “worthlesse Whippets and Iack Strawes” such as Barnabe Barnes and Anthony Chute, whom he “compare[d] with the highest” in order to “connycatch the simple world” into thinking that “these and these great men, euerie waye sutable to Syr *Thomas Baskeruille*, Master *Bodley*, Doctor *Androwes*, Doctor *Doue*, *Clarencius*, and Master *Spencer*, had seperately contended to outstrip *Pindarus* in his *Olympicis* and sty aloft to the highest pitch, to stellifie him aboute the cloudes and make him shine next to *Mercury*” (3.107). These “princockesses,” Nashe suggests—who had never so much as known “how to knock at a Printing-house dore” before they met Harvey but had since been infected by his “spirit of Bragganisme” (3.109)—wrote each other letters of courtesy and commendation “from a farre, as namely, out of the hall into the kitchin at *Wolfes*, where altogether at one time they lodged and boarded” (3.102).

Nashe's attempt to pierce Harvey's balloon of praise indicates the extent to which *Have*

With You is itself a rhetorical project. In the face of “Six and thirtie sheetes” of invective against him (3.36), an “vnconscionable vast gorbellied Volume” in which Harvey had “likend” Nashe to every “villaine,” “Atheist,” “murdrer,” “traitor,” and “Sodomite hee euer read of” (3.35, 123), and in the face of Harvey’s inflated credit, Nashe needed to persuade his reader that Harvey is a fool whose judgment—along with his critique of Nashe—should be rejected.

The persuasive nature of *Have With You* can be seen most clearly in the “heroicall Grace” that Nashe asks Dick Lichfield to put up on behalf of the “*reprobate brace of Brothers of the Harueys*” in the Dedicatory Epistle (3.12).⁹⁷ Here Nashe figuratively strips the Harveys of their academic robes and dresses them in motley by asking his readers to grant the Harveys degrees as fools:

whereas for anie time this foure and twentie yeare they haue plaid the fantasticall gub-shites and goose-giblets in Print, and kept a hatefull scribling and a pamphleting about earth-quakes, coniunctions, inundations, the fearfull blazing Starre, and the forsworne Flaxe-wife; and tooke vpon them to be false Prophets, Weather-wizards, Fortune-tellers, Poets, Philosophers, Orators, Historiographers, Mountebankes, Ballet-makers, and left no Arte vndefamed with their filthie dull-headed practise: it may please your Worships and Masterships, these infidell premisses considered, & that they haue so fully performed all their acts in absurditie, impudence, & foolerie, to grant them their absolute Graces to commence at Dawes crosse,⁹⁸ and with your general subscriptions confirm them

⁹⁷ As Rayna Kalas explains in her discussion of *Have With You*, a “grace put up” at university was “a formal appeal to the fellows of a college or another governing body for a degree, promotion, or dispensation from scholarly requirements” (67).

⁹⁸ An imaginary rendezvous of fools (McKerrow, 4.307).

*for the profoundest Arcandums, Acarnanians, and Dizards,⁹⁹ that haue been
discovered since the Deluge: so let them passe throughout the Queenes
Dominions. (3.12)*

Nashe then leaves a blank space in his text for the reader to sign the grace, *but only if* Nashe can convince the reader that the Harveys are fools. This renders the rhetorical purpose of the tract explicit: “Purposely that space I left, that *as manie as I shall perswade they are Pachecoos, Podauisses, and Dringles¹⁰⁰* may set their hands to their definitue sentence, and with the Clearkes helpe to crye *Amen* to their eternall vnhandsomming” (3.12-13; emphasis mine).¹⁰¹ Nashe is therefore conscious of his need to persuade his audience that the Harveys are fools and that they should reject Harvey’s claims that Nashe is a scurrilous, lawless, and irreligious hack.

As in *Strange Newes*, Nashe works to undermine Harvey’s claims to poetic and intellectual authority. Nashe figures Harvey as a pedant, a nearly incomprehensible old fool whose ostentatious “rope-rhetorique” (3.15) was both effusive and cumbersome. The “vnflattered picture of pedantisme” (3.42) cobbles together terms from Harvey’s *Supererogation* in order to render Harvey so out of touch with a popular audience that his language is largely unintelligible: “*In manie extraordinarie remarkeable energeticall lines and perfunctorie pamphlets,*” Nashe has Harvey say, “*both in ambidexteritie and omnidexteritie, together with matters adiophorall, haue I disbalased my minde, & not let slip the least occasionet of*

⁹⁹ All are terms for fools (McKerrow, 4.307).

¹⁰⁰ Terms for fools (McKerrow, 4.307).

¹⁰¹ Kalas misreads “they” in this passage for the reader (instead of the Harveys) and thus argues that “any idler or fool can have a *hand*, literally and metaphorically, in the unhandsoming of the Harveys, or in the reader’s own unhandsoming, since to sign on to what the Harveys profess is to damn oneself” (68). This is part of her larger argument about the ways that “the reader’s hand is constitutive of the text’s authority,” that Nashe was engaged in a struggle about “whether English vernacular writing will answer to a lineage of learned authority or to a ‘usuall market of fellowship,’” and that Nashe ultimately hoped to turn judgment over to a popular audience (67-9). But as I have argued throughout this chapter, even if Nashe is conscious of his need to persuade his reading audience to reject Harvey’s claim to intellectual and poetic authority, Nashe has little confidence in the judgment of the print market. In this “grace” he in fact attacks the Harveys for their participation in astrological pamphleteering, almanac writing, and ballad-making, three of the most popular items in the early modern print market.

aduantage, to acquaint the world with my pregnant propositions and resolute Aphorismes"

(3.44). So too does Nashe return to Harvey's hexameters—"that drunken staggering kinde of verse, which is all vp hill and down hill . . . and goes like a horse plunging through the myre in the deep of winter" (3.7)—mockingly suggesting that Harvey had nearly consumed himself by attempting to turn the entire body of Civil Law into hexameters. "For himself," Nashe claims, "hee verie religiously obseru'd it, neuer meeting anie Doctor or frend of his, but he would salute him or giue him the time of the day in [hexameters] most heroically" (3.86).

Nashe also figures Harvey as a sycophant, attacking him as a vain and self-congratulatory social climber who had been roundly rejected by his social superiors. Harvey is "distractedly enamour'd of his own beautie, spending a whole forenoone euerie day in spunging and licking himselfe by the glasse" (3.68); "twice double his patrimonie hath he spent in carefull cherishing & preseruing his pickerdeuant" (3.7). Harvey praises everyone he meets in grandiose terms, surfeiting and "ouer-gorging" his friends and acquaintances "with English" (3.92); he will not refer to a bishop as a bishop but as "*A great Pontife or Demygod in omnisufficiencie*" (3.16); he "neuer bids a man good morrow, but he makes a speach as long as a proclamation" (3.37). This effusive praise, Nashe argues, inevitably backfires: "in all his praises," Harvey is "the most fore-spoken and vnfortunate vnder heauen, & those whom he feruentest striues to grace and honour he most dishonors by some vncircumcised sluttish epithite or other" (3.49). By publicizing whatever praise he receives from his superiors, furthermore, Harvey reveales himself to be a social climber and a parasite. Like Sidney, those superiors eventually regretted praising him in the first place:

when [Harvey's] ambitious pride and vanitie vnmaskt it selfe so egregiously, both in his lookes, his gate, his gestures, and speeches, and hee would do nothing but

crake and parret it in Print, in how manie Noble-mans fauours hee was, and blab euerie light speach they vttered to him in priuate, cockering & coying himselfe beyond imagination; then Sir Philip Sidney (by little and little) began to looke askance on him, and not to care for him, though vtterly shake him off hee could not, hee would so fawne & hang vpon him. (3.116)

Nashe similarly suggests that Thomas Watson—whom Harvey had included in his list of those who had written commendatory letters on his behalf—had been the first one to tell Nashe that Harvey was an ass (3.126-7). Thus Nashe attempts to undermine Harvey’s insistence on the superiority of poetic praise as well as his association of himself with eminent courtiers and poets such as Sidney and Spenser. Harvey, Nashe suggests, ostentatiously praised undeserving subjects, tarnished those subjects whom he did not deserve to praise, and betrayed his own parasitic ambitions.

Somewhat more surprising—as it does not at all fit the narrative of the Harvey-Nashe quarrel as a contest between learned scholarship and professional authorship—is the way Nashe figures Harvey as a hack writer. In his biography of Harvey, Nashe suggests that Harvey “pist incke as soone as euer hee was borne” (3.62), wrote ballads at the age of nine (3.63-4), wrote poems at university that were based on ballads (3.67), and wrote pamphlets “on the births of monsters, horrible murders, and great burnings” (3.69) as a bachelor.¹⁰² Harvey then not only became a “familiar Epistler, & made *Powles Church-yard* resound or crie twang againe with foure notable famous Letters,” but he also “became a common writer of Almanackes” under the name of “*Gabriel Frend*” (3.70). Someone named Gabriel Frend had indeed published numerous almanacs by the mid-1590s and would continue to do so through the second decade of the

¹⁰² According to McKerrow (4.337), there is no record of any such pamphleteering or ballad-writing.

seventeenth century;¹⁰³ fascinatingly, Nashe uses the fact that nobody seemed to know anything about this Gabriel Frend in order to suggest that Harvey had written them. Harvey's continued maintenance, furthermore—particularly when he received nothing from his practice in the civil law, when he earned nothing from his other publications,¹⁰⁴ and when he did not have a private benefactor—becomes evidence of Harvey's hack writing: “the best wit-craft I can turn him too, to get three pence a weeke and keepe the paper soales and vpper leather of his pantoffles together, is to write Prognostications and Almanackes” (3.72).

Even as Nashe figures Harvey as a pedant laughably out of touch with a popular audience, then, he also figures Harvey as “the dead Palsie and Apoplexie of the Presse” (3.11), a ballad-maker, a pamphleteer, and the author of prognostications and almanacs. These are the most useless and unprofitable products of the early modern print market, most readily found “at a Barbers or Chandlers shop” where they would be used as waste-paper. Indeed, all of Harvey's writings, Nashe suggests, are little better than “waste paper” (3.85): like Richard Harvey's *Lamb of God*, which was “conuerted” to no other uses than to “turne it to wast paper and goe to the priuy with it” (3.126), Nashe suggests that “manie cholericke Cookes about *London* in a mad rage haue dismembred” the *Supererogation*, “and thrust it piping hot into the ouen vnder the bottomes of dowsets, and impiously prickt the torne shetes of it, for basting paper” (3.14). Still, the privy was the only truly fitting destination for their writing, for the two Harveys are “the most contemptible *Mounsier Aiaxes* of excrementall conceipts and stinking kennel-rakt vp inuention that this or anie Age euer afforded” (3.11).

Also new was Nashe's picture of Harvey as a villain. This surely stemmed from Nashe's resentment at Harvey for publishing the *Supererogation* after a peace had been brokered and

¹⁰³ McKerrow, 4.337.

¹⁰⁴ Nashe suggests that “not a hundred of anie Impression of the Doctors bookes” ever sold (*HWY*, 3.114).

Nashe had written a sincere public apology in the preface to *Christs Teares*, and it is a much darker, more bitter, and more stinging depiction than most critics acknowledge (particularly those who award Nashe easy victory in the quarrel or those who follow Hutson in seeing Nashe as a figure of carnival festivity). Nashe suggests that Harvey is “a verie gracelesse litigious youth,” one who would “pick quarrels” with accepted authors and violently accost those classmates “whom he could not ouer-come in disputation” (3.60). As a student at Cambridge Harvey was “seditious and mutinous in conuersation, picking quarrels with euerie man that [would] not magnifie and applaud him” (3.68). This fabricated history of quarrelsomeness allows Nashe to declare that Harvey had lied about his reluctance to enter into controversy: “You ly, you ly, *Gabriell* . . . You were most willing to vndertake this controuersy, for els you would neuer haue first begun it” (3.118). Nashe assaults Harvey’s character with a fascinating story about the printing of *Pierces Supererogation*, “the charge whereof the Doctor had promist to defray and be countable to *Wolfe* for, amounting (with his diet) to 36. pounds”: Harvey apparently skipped town with an apprentice, going from place to place, until finally the apprentice, starving, demanded to be returned to Wolfe; when they got back to London, Harvey was dragged to Newgate, where he literally went insane. Eventually sent out to the streets again, Harvey was rescued by a minister, who procured him a chamber “at one *Rolfes*” and stood bound for him for his appearance at court; finally, Harvey “left both of them in the lurtch,” neither appearing at court nor repaying Rolfe for room or board (3.96-101). By the end of this story—which sounds very much like an episode out of *The Unfortunate Traveller*—Harvey is no longer a pedant and a fool. He is a rogue, a debtor, and a serial abuser of other men’s goodwill.

Like so much of *Have With You*, this story about Harvey is, at best, difficult to believe. Despite Nashe’s claim that he had taken the time “to get perfect intelligence” of Harvey’s “life

and conuersation, one true point whereof, well set downe,” would “more excruciate & commacerate him than knocking him about the eares with his owne stile in a hundred sheetes of paper” (3.29), much of *Have With You* reflects instead on Nashe’s own problematic knowledge. Not only had Nashe taken the time to familiarize himself with a worthless subject, not only did he admit to reading the *Supererogation*, a figuratively waste-full text, carefully—“I haue here tooke the paines to nit and louze ouer the Doctours Booke,” he admits (3.14)—but so many of the “true points” Nashe sets down about Harvey are transparently made up. Nashe recognizes, for example, that he cannot possibly possess the letter sent from Harvey’s tutor to Harvey’s father while Harvey was a student at Cambridge, and he acknowledges that his inclusion of it is hardly believable: “I will not positiuely affirme it his Tutors Letter neither, and yet you maye gather more than I am willing to vtter, and what you list not beleeeue referre to after Ages” (3.64). The same is true for Nashe’s story about Harvey stealing velvet from a borrowed saddle in order to made a doublet: “As good cheape as it was deliuered to mee (at the second hand) you haue it . . . I was not at the cutting it out, nor will I binde your consciences too strictly to embrace it for a truth, but if my iudgement might stand for vp, it is rather likely to be true than false” (3.74). Fictionalizing is of course one of the principal components of satire, but the satirist’s manifest fiction—his grotesque exaggeration and belittling minimization—usually reveals something supposedly true about the satiric object. Nashe’s satiric fictions in *Have With You* instead draw attention to themselves as improbable fictions, as the stuff of a news monger, as the unprofitable discourse of the hack writers Nashe otherwise detested.¹⁰⁵

Nashe’s *Have With You*, then, is hardly the “knockout punch” critics have supposed. Its explicit attempt to render Harvey foolish reveals the extent to which Nashe was in fact

¹⁰⁵ Hilliard picks up on Nashe’s vacillating relationship to the truth (206-8), though he thinks this is all a pose, that these are “transparent games,” and that Nashe is posing as a truth-teller in order to posit Harvey as a liar.

threatened by Harvey's attack upon him, and in its contradictory depictions of Harvey as both pedant and hack, fool and knave, Nashe reveals as much about his own foolishness, knavery, and hack work as he does about Harvey's. Even as he boasts and brags his way through *Have With You*, even as he dismisses Harvey's *Supererogation* as so much waste paper, Nashe ultimately acknowledges that his own writing against Harvey is both unprofitable and wasteful. He knows his biography of Harvey will "yeeld" his reader "sport for [their] money" (3.55), and that he might meet with "foolish praise . . . such as is afforded to ordinarie Iesters that make sport," but otherwise there is "not one pint of wine more than the iust Bill of costs and charges in setting forth, to be got by anie of these bitter-sauced Inuectiues" (3.18). He also knows that in writing this biography he "dispende manie Pages that might haue been better employed" (3.55). The back and forth of satirical controversy, Nashe finally recognizes, is neither profitable for the reader nor profitable for the writer. Even as he swears that he will "spit fire for fire, fight diuell fight dragon" as long as Harvey will (3.63), Nashe also swears that in the future he will "care for no conquest or victorie which carries not with it a present rich possibilitie of raysing [his] decayed fortunes, and a Cauallier flourishing with a feather in [his] cappe (hey gallanta) in the face of enuie and generall Worlds opinion" (3.30). Writing against Harvey, Nashe ultimately recognized, offered neither.

5. Conclusion: A Couple of Beggars

At the end of *Pierces Supererogation* Harvey appended several letters, sonnets, and stanzas from well-wishers, further buttressing the fortress of praise he had built up around himself. On 10 July 1593, John Thorius wrote that he wished he "were of desert to set-forth" Harvey's "long-deserued prayse, and of hability to expresse" Harvey's "singular habilities, in

stile, knowledge, and other most commendable vertues” (*PS*, 2.335).¹⁰⁶ In an appended sonnet, Thorius attacks Nashe as a “simple Ignorant” who “fowly himselfe shameth” by writing against Harvey (2.336). On 3 August, Thorius wrote again, apologizing for his long silence and for the simplicity of his enclosed “three *Stanzaes*,” which he modestly worried were not “equall to [his] good will” (2.342). In these stanzas Thorius praises Harvey in the company of Homer, Virgil, Demosthenes, Tully, and the great modern French and English wits, and then turns abruptly to attack Nashe: “Yeelding fond Nash thy glory shalt not staine, / But rather shalt encrease thy prayse hereby / . . . And thy desert by so much shall seeme greater, / By how much thou art knowne to know thy better” (2.344).

In *Have With You*, Nashe is considerably less harsh on Thorius than he is on Harvey’s other well-wishers, Anthony Chute and Barnabe Barnes, because, he claims, Thorius had “made his peace with [him]” (3.105). Near the end of *Have With You*, Nashe includes the letter Thorius had sent to him “vnder his owne hand, which hee sent [Nashe] to be printed, vtterly disclaiming the wrong which the Doctour (vnder his name) hath thrust out against [Nashe]” (3.135). In this letter, Thorius insists that he would never have railed against Nashe “vnprouoked”; he explains that he had written “certaine verses in [Harvey’s] commendation” upon seeing “fiue or six sheets of Doctor *Harueyes* Booke,” but the stanzas had been “altred to [Nashe’s] disgrace in some places” and the sonnet subscribed with his name was not his (3.135). This does indeed seem to be an entirely plausible claim. Thorius’s first letter contains no mention of Nashe at all, but then in the sonnet he disparages Nashe somewhat too conveniently in exactly the terms Harvey had used throughout the *Supererogation*: Harvey was “Defam’d by One, who most himselfe defameth,” and Nashe “prooues all fonde, to prooue himselfe a Foole” (2.336). Thorius’s second

¹⁰⁶ Thorius (b. 1568), was a minor translator and poet about whom relatively little is known. He attended Christ’s Church, Oxford (BA 1586) and in the 1590s published several translations from the Spanish and the Dutch (*ODNB*, “John Thorius”).

letter similarly makes no mention of Nashe, and whereas two of the appended stanzas praise Harvey in glowing terms, the third stanza is a bit too specific and Harvey-like in its attack on Nashe. There is every reason to suspect that Harvey had altered Thorius's poems.

But—even though Harvey never responded to defend himself—Nashe's letter from Thorius is open to the exact same charges. After apologizing to Nashe, Thorius curiously turns against Harvey and adopts Nashe's own terms of attack: the same writer who had praised Harvey not only among the most "worthy *English* wittes" of the age but among the most renowned authors of classical antiquity now claims to be "offended with the vniust vaine glorious Print" by "so contemptible a person." Thorius's claim that he little thought "the booke should haue had so famous a Title, or so many Prefaces, or so many Letters and Preambles" (1.135) fits a bit too conveniently, furthermore, with the remark by Don Carneades—one of the interlocutors in Nashe's ongoing ventriloquized dialogue—that Harvey had "infected" his well-wishers "with his methode of *Lenuoyes, Post-scripts, and Preambles*" (1.135). Nashe's claim that he had Thorius's letter "vnder his owne hand" is an empty reassurance in a printed text, particularly in a text that includes such problematically unverifiable information as the details of Harvey's mother's dream while she was pregnant (3.60-1). Ultimately, we can be no more certain of the legitimacy of Thorius's letter to Nashe in *Have With You* than we can be of Thorius's letters, sonnet, and stanzas printed in the post-script to *Pierces Supererogation*.

In fact both Nashe and Harvey accused each other of forgery at numerous points throughout the quarrel. In *Strange Newes* Nashe accuses Harvey of writing the anonymous epistle by a "welwiller to both the writers" prefacing the *Familiar Letters* (1.296-7), of setting Spenser's name to his own poem at the end of the *Foure Letters* (1.326-7), and of writing sermons for his brother Richard (1.333). In *Pierces Supererogation* Harvey dismisses these

accusations as “lewd supposals . . . without any probabiliy of circumstance, or the least suspition, but in his owne vengeable malitious head, the common forge of pestilent surmyzes, and arrant slaunders,” and then—without any more evidence than Nashe had had, but with a good deal more praeteritio—Harvey levies the same charge against Nashe:

Examine the Printers gentle Preamble before the Supplication to the Diuell: and tell me in good sooth, by the verdicte of the Tuchstone, whether Pierce Penniles commende Pierce Penniles, or no; and whether that sory praise of the Authour Thomas Nashe, be not lothsome from the mouthe of the Printer Thomas Nashe. In coniectural causes I am not to auouch any thinge; and I mentioned not anye such supposition before: but the tenour of the style, & as it were the identitye of the phrase, together with this newe descant of his profound insight into forgery, may after a sort tel tales out of the tytle De Secretis non reuelandis; & yeld a certain strong fauour of a vehement presumption. (2.87-8)

In *Have With You* Nashe conveniently misunderstands Harvey’s accusation: whereas Harvey referred to the short letter by “R.I.” (Robert Jones) prefacing the first edition of *Pierce Peniless*, Nashe explains condescendingly that he *had* signed his name to the epistle prefacing subsequent editions (3.127). In return, Nashe not only accuses Harvey of writing the Printers Advertisement to the Reader prefacing *Pierces Supererogation* (3.117), but accuses Harvey of writing the sonnets from the mysterious gentlewoman in nearly the exact terms that Harvey had used: “the style bewraies it, that no other is this goodwife *Megara* but *Gabriel* himself; so doth the counter-sonnet and the correction of preambles, which is his methode as right as a fiddle” (3.113).

What is perhaps most remarkable about the Harvey-Nashe quarrel, as these brief examples suggest, is just how similar Harvey and Nashe turn out to be. In some respects, this is

to be expected: entering the quarrel, Harvey and Nashe claimed the same type of intellectual authority and in fact had overlapping interests in monitoring or even regulating the output of the press in the expanding marketplace of print. As Freud noted, it is “precisely communities with adjoining territories, and related to each other in other ways as well, who are engaged in constant feuds and in ridiculing one another.”¹⁰⁷ But this certainly goes against our expectations of the *outcome* of satire. Frederick Bogel argues that satire should be understood as “a literary mechanism for the *production of difference* in the face of anxiety about replication, identity, sameness, and undifferentiation”—that, confronted with “a potentially compromising similarity,” the satirist “works to produce a kind of defamiliarization of the object that is also a recovery of our own capacity for disapproval and rejection.”¹⁰⁸ According to Bogel, then, in satire what begins with similarity should end with difference.

In the Harvey-Nashe quarrel, however, what begins with similarity ends with even more similarity. There are hundreds of minor ways in which Harvey and Nashe resemble one another. They both claim the quarrel has interrupted more important business elsewhere, they both accuse the other of vanity and raillery, they both decry the other for making superficial criticisms: “A few Elegeicall verses of mine thou pluckest in pieces most ruthfullie, and quotes them against mee as aduantageable, together with some dismembred Margine notes, but all is incke cast away, you recouer no costs and charges,” Nashe says in *Strange News* (1.307); “his only Art, & the gengeable drift of his whole cunning, to mangle my sentences, hack my arguments, chopp and change my phrases, wrinch my wordes, and hale euey sillable most extremely; euen to the disioynting, and maiming of my whole meaning,” Harvey says in *Pierces Supererogation* (2.115). Nashe accuses Harvey of digging up old dirt, an “iniurie deepe buried in the graue of

¹⁰⁷ Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, 68; quoted in Halasz, 86.

¹⁰⁸ Frederick Bogel, *The Difference Satire Makes* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 21, 42, 51 (emphasis mine).

obluiion,” when Harvey refers to an old quarrel Nashe had had with Thomas Churchyard (*SN*, 1.309; *FL*, 1.199), but throughout *Strange Newes* and *Have With You* Nashe digs up as much old dirt on Harvey as he can—Harvey’s supposed attack on the Earl of Oxford in his *Speculum Tuscanismi*, Harvey’s misunderstanding with Sir James Croft, Harvey’s spectacular deception of and flight from his printer, and so on. Both men accuse the other of railing against Cambridge, and both find themselves apologizing to Cambridge. Both men accuse the other of being an unworthy adversary: Harvey, as we have seen, claims that “neuer poore man found his Imagination so hugely mocked, as this confuting Iugler coosened [his] expectation without measure” (*PS*, 2.60); Nashe, similarly, claims that when he “came to vnrip and vnbumbast this *Gargantuan* bag-pudding, and found nothing in it but dogs-tripes, swines liuers, oxe galls, and sheepes gutts,” he was “in a bitterer chafe than anie Cooke at a long Sermon when his meate burnes” (*HWY*, 3.34). Harvey mocks Nashe for being Danter’s gentleman; Nashe mocks Harvey for being Wolfe’s man. Both accuse the other of printing nothing but waste paper, and both worry that their own writing—for trifling with such dunghill material—will be similarly wasteful.

The most important similarity between Harvey and Nashe can be found in their interest in the others’ language. In *Strange Newes* Nashe compiles a long catalogue of Harvey’s inkhorn terms and then, fascinatingly, betrays his own inkhorn terms when he declares that “euerie third line” of the *Supererogation* had “some of this ouer-rackt absonisme” (1.316). In his own catalogue of Nashe’s “rablement of absurde, and ridulous wordes,” Harvey includes “*Absonisme*” among “a number of such Inkhornish phrases, as it were a pan of outlandish collops, the very bowels of his profoundest Schollerisme” (*PS* 2.275). Neither seems to recognize that in ridiculing the others’ language they not only reproduce it in their own text but

in fact achieve a certain amount of fluency in it. Nashe mocks “*Gabrielisme*” as overblown amplifying rhetoric, but he had learned it well enough to instruct Dick Lichfield in the dedicatory epistle to *Have With You* to alter “a rich spirit and an admirable capacitie” to “*an enthusiasticall spirit & a nimble entelechy*” (3.17). Harvey claims that there are others much better skilled in the “kinde rudiments, and proper phrases of pure Nasherie” (*PS*, 2.229-30), and that he might “pierce the whole Alphabet of [Nashe’s] sweet Eloquence a little better” when he is “better grammered in the Accidents of his proper Idiotisme, and grown into some more acquaintance with his confuting Dictionary” (2.246), but in fact Harvey learns Nashe’s language all too well: he imitates Nashe’s braggadocio in threatening to “prooue vpon the carkasse of [Nashe’s] wit” that Nashe is “the boldest bayard in Print; a hare-braind foole in [his] head; a vile swad in [his] hart; a fowle lyer in [his] throate; and a vaine-glorious Asse in [his] pen” (2.237). Harvey even picks up Nashe’s alliteration, immediately after mocking Nashe for “hunting the letter”: he declares that he had seldom “tasted a more vnsauory slaumpaump of wordes, and sentences in any sluttish Pamfletter; that denounceth not defiance against the rules of Oratory, and the directions of the English Secretary” (2.277).

Harvey and Nashe both acknowledge that their writing styles have been infected by their encounter with the other. Not only does Harvey frequently appropriate the language of coney-catching—his “poore suckling hope” in Nashe’s performance, for example, was “incredibly crisbitten with more then excessiue defection” (2.286)¹⁰⁹—but at the end of *Pierces Supererogation* he admits that he was “neuer more entangled, and intricated in the discourse of [his] owne reason, then since [he] had to do with this desperate Dick.” As much as he would prefer to confute Nashe by not confuting him, Harvey claims, he “must desire [Nashe’s]

¹⁰⁹ This as much the result of Harvey’s encounter with Greene than with Nashe, of course, who denied “euer writ[ing] of Conycatching” in *Have With You* (3.132).

Patience, to be a little content to be confuted with confuting, rather after [Nashe's], or others guise, then after [Harvey's own] manner" (2.328). Nashe is attentive to the way that Harvey imitated Greene—he notes that Harvey “fetcheth Metaphors from Conny-catchers” (*SN*, 1.299)—and the way that Harvey borrowed from his own work: “thou has borrowed about twenty phrases and epithites from mee, which in sober sadnesse thou makst vse of as thy owne, when thou wouldst exhort more effectually” (*SN*, 1.304).¹¹⁰ And, as I suggested above, Nashe is conscious of the way his own style becomes infected by his encounter with Harvey:

A bots on thee for mee for a lumpish, leaden heeld letter dawber, my stile, with treading in thy clammie steps, is growne as heauie gated, as if it were bound to an Aldermans pace, with the irons at Newgate cald the widows Almes. Ere I was chained to thee thus by the necke, I was as light as the Poet *Accius*, who was so lowe and so slender that hee was faine to put lead into his shooes for feare the winde should blowe him into another Countrie. (1.322)

Nashe complains that he is “wrested and vtterly diuorced from [his] owne inuention” by writing against Harvey, “& constrained still still, before [he is] warme in any one vaine, to start away sodainely, and follow [Harvey] in his vanitie” (1.335). If *Strange Newes* was “*cats-meate and dogs-meate*,” Nashe argues in *Have With You*, then Harvey’s book must be “much worse, since on hys mine hath his whole foundation and dependance and I doo but paraphrase vpon his text” (3.123).

What all of this suggests, finally, is that in attempting to persuade his audience to reject the threatening appeal of his antagonist or satiric object, the satirist problematically associates himself with that antagonist. Not only does the satirist know more than he should about a subject

¹¹⁰ In *Have With You*, Nashe claims similarly that Harvey had “purloyned something from mee, and mended his hand in confuting by fifteen parts, by following my presidents” (3.132).

that he hopes his audience will find ridiculous, but the satirist inevitably—and irrevocably—associates himself with the very thing he hopes his audience will reject. There may be no better image of this than the one Nashe provides in *Have With You*, when he claims to add not so much as a knot to the winding sheet of the “vnflattered picture of Pedantisme”: “only a needle and thred to trusse vp his trinkets more roundly (vppon better aduice) I am determined to lend him, in hope it may be his thred of life, and euen by that single bountie dubble stitch him vnto me to be my deuoted beadsman till death” (3.42). As much as Nashe “would faine end or rid [his] hands” of Harvey (3.19), as much as Harvey found it his greatest affliction to “busy [his] penne” in writing against “Such an Antagonist” (*PS*, 2.34, 273), the two still remain stitched together, “a couple of beggars” (*HWY*, 3.19) bandying factions in the annals of literary history.

CHAPTER 4: JUDGING JONSON: THE POETS' WAR AS "SATIROMACHIA"

In the Folio version of *Hamlet* (1600), Rosencrantz explains to Hamlet that the “tragedians of the city” are out in the country on tour—and about to arrive at Elsinore—because of a “late innovation”:

there is, sir, an eyrie of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question and are most tryannically clapped for't. These are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages—so they call them—that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills, and dare scarce come thither. . . . Faith, there has been much to-do on both sides, and the nation holds it no sin to tarre them to controversy. There was for a while no money bid for argument unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.¹

To Hamlet's incredulous “Is't possible?”, Guildenstern reassures him: “O, there has been much throwing about of brains” (341-3).

Critics have long agreed that this passage refers to a satirical controversy taking place on the London stages at the turn of the seventeenth century, but there has been far less agreement about who was involved in this “to-do,” or what this “throwing about of brains” was actually about. For several critics writing in the late nineteenth century, including Frederick Fleay, this was for a time an all-encompassing “War of the Theaters” in which playwrights satirized other poets and playwrights of the day by personating them onstage. Without much in the way of evidence or explanation, Fleay identified nearly every character that appeared onstage at the turn

¹ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Greenblatt et al (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1997), 2.2.326-30, 337-40.

of the seventeenth century with a famous literary figure.² In 1899, however, R. A. Small carefully and not altogether impatiently dismantled most of Fleay's more egregious speculations and worked out the basic chronology that still forms the basis of most accounts of the controversy: John Marston personated his fellow playwright Ben Jonson in *Histriomastix* (1598/9); Jonson responded in *Every Man Out of His Humour* (1599); Marston again personated Jonson in *Jack Drum's Entertainment* (1600); Jonson again responded with *Cynthia's Revels* (1600); Marston again personated Jonson in *What You Will* (1601); Jonson again responded with *Poetaster* (1601); and Thomas Dekker attacked Jonson in *Satiromastix* (1601).³

Small was too busy downsizing the quarrel from the entire dramatic output in London circa 1599-1601 to about ten plays and identifying "personal satire" to be much concerned with motivation. He simply suggested that this type of satirical representation was inevitable because satire was popular and because Jonson was Jonson. The first to offer a substantive analysis was Robert Sharpe, who was dismissive of the personal satire and flyting of the "War of the Theaters" but found in the plays evidence of what he called the "real war of the theaters": an ongoing struggle for prominence between the Lord Admiral's Men and the Lord Chamberlain's Men.⁴ For Alfred Harbage, the rivalry was not between Henslowe and Burbage or really between Jonson and Marston but between the private and public theaters, an external symptom of the

² Fleay claims that "any criticism of any play bearing a date of production one of the three years 1599 to 1601 which does not take account of this, for the time, stage-absorbing matter must be imperfect and of small utility" (Frederick Fleay, *A Chronicle History of the London Stage, 1559-1642* [1890; reprint New York: Burt Franklin, 1964], 119). His identifications were extensive. Fleay guessed, for example, that in Jonson's *Every Man Out of His Humour*, Asper/Macilente was Jonson, Puntarvolo was Sir John Harington, Carlo Buffone was Thomas Dekker, Fastidious Brisk was Samuel Daniel, Deliro was Anthony Munday, Saviolina was Elizabeth Carey, Sordido was Richard Burbage, and so on (Frederick Fleay, *A Biographical Chronicle of the English Drama, 1559-1642*, 2 vols. [London: Reeves and Turner, 1891], 1.360; *passim*). As later critics have pointed out, Fleay is not always consistent in his assignments.

³ See Roscoe Addison (R.A.) Small, *The Stage-Quarrel Between Ben Jonson and the So-Called Poetasters* (Verlag von M. & H. Marcus, 1899). Small's account is brief but in many respects brilliant. It has been incredibly influential, not least because E.K. Chambers accepts and reproduces nearly all of his remarks on the controversy in *The Elizabethan Stage* (4 vols. [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923]).

⁴ Robert Sharpe, *The Real War of the Theaters: Shakespeare's Fellows in Rivalry With the Admiral's Men, 1594-1603. Repertories, Devices, and Types* (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1935).

clash of ideals discernible in their rival repertories: whereas the university-educated dramatists of the private theaters wrote satirical plays repudiating “the informing spirit of the popular drama,” the playwrights for the adult actors addressed their plays “to the affections rather than the fears and hatreds of men” and defended themselves by attacking satire itself.⁵ And for David Bevington, the intellectual issue at stake was “the proper role of satire in a commonwealth shaken by religious and dynastic uncertainties.”⁶

Many critics and editors have distanced themselves from the “War of the Theaters,” either avoiding the issue entirely or apologizing for all of the attention such questions of have received. In their studies of Shakespeare, Jonson, and Marston, Oscar James Campbell, Alvin Kernan, and Philip Finkelpearl all deny that the plays in question contain any significant personation or meaningful inter-theatrical attack.⁷ Tom Cain laments the fact that Jonson’s *Poetaster* is of interest only “the dwindling band of scholars still interested in the ‘War of the Theatres,’” and insists that the play be recognized on its own merit as “one of the most ideologically interesting of English Renaissance plays, the first and still one of the most powerful statements of an Augustan literary programme in English.”⁸ Some recent critics have in fact questioned the extent to which a “War of the Theaters” even occurred. David Bergeron, for example, provocatively argues that the “War of the Theaters” was a product of the nineteenth century, a fictional narrative of Elizabethan theater history that emerged out of the prevailing

⁵ Alfred Harbage, *Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1952), 90-119.

⁶ David Bevington, *Tudor Drama and Politics: A Critical Approach to Topical Meaning* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 279. Bevington’s claim is, generally speaking, my point of departure, though I disagree with many of his subsequent claims in his brief chapter on the “War of the Theaters,” which focuses almost exclusively on Jonson’s comical satires.

⁷ Oscar James Campbell, *Comical Satyre and Shakespeare’s Troilus and Cressida* (Huntington Library: San Marino, CA, 1938); Alvin Kernan, *The Cankered Muse: Satire of the English Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959); and Philip Finkelpearl, *John Marston of the Middle Temple* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969).

⁸ Tom Cain (ed.), *Poetaster* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 1.

“Darwinian ethos” of Victorian scholarship.⁹ Similarly, Roslyn Knutson suggests that the idea of a “War” was both produced by and helped to reinforce an economic theory of the Elizabethan theatrical world, which held that “playing companies were rivals for playgoers in an early form of cutthroat capitalism in which the weaker competitors were driven out of business.”¹⁰

Recently, however, there has been renewed interest in the “War of the Theaters.” Matthew Steggle has attempted to recover and rehabilitate the “difficult and potentially disastrous topic” of personation, which he rightly asserts “did exist,” whatever our reservations about the old biographical reading of Renaissance play-texts, “and has consequences for how we interpret and understand particular plays.” Steggle argues that the plays involved in the “War of the Theaters” used representations of real people as one of the means of “conducting an argument about the status of professional drama”: whereas Jonson denigrated the oral satire of railers like Charles Chester in order to develop “an oppositional definition of ‘comical satire’ as something literary, morally justifiable, and worthwhile,” Marston and Dekker resisted the notion that “comedy is fundamentally a matter of text.”¹¹ And in the impressively researched and forcefully argued *Shakespeare and the Poets’ War* (2001), James Bednarz claims that the “Poets’ War”—note the change in name¹²—was ultimately an ongoing theatrical negotiation between Shakespeare and Jonson about the nature of comedy. According to Bednarz, Jonson set out to oppose Shakespearean festive comedy with comical satire and establish for himself sole poetic

⁹ David Bergeron, *Practicing Renaissance Scholarship* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2000), 123-45.

¹⁰ Roslyn Knutson, “*Histrion-Mastix*: not by John Marston,” *Studies in Philology* 98:3 (Summer 2001), 359-77.

¹¹ Matthew Steggle, *Wars of the Theaters: The Poetics of Personation in the Age of Jonson* (University of Victoria: English Literary Studies Monograph Series 75, 1998), 11-12, 28, 40.

¹² As Steggle explains, these two terms are not identical: “War of the Theaters” (used by R.B. Sharpe, Alfred Harbage, Steggle, and many others) speaks to competition between acting companies and playhouses, whereas “Poetomachia” (Dekker’s deliberately and hideously pedantic coinage) or “Poets’ War” (which James Bednarz prefers) speaks to an argument between poets and about poetry (*Wars of the Theaters*, 21). As the former term does not adequately account for the non-dramatic aspects of this controversy, I will use the latter, though I will suggest that a more appropriate term may be the deliberately archaic and ugly manufactured term in my chapter title: “Satiromachia.”

authority based on humanist and neoclassical standards. Shakespeare, in response, set out to contain comical satire and undercut Jonson's redefinition of comedy and assertion of authority by upholding "nature" and "folly" above "art" and judgment." Thus, Bednarz claims, the distinction between Jonsonian "art" and Shakespearean "nature" that was mythologized in nineteenth-century criticism was in fact produced by Jonson and Shakespeare themselves in the Poets' War.¹³

Although Bednarz's account of the "Poets' War" is impressive in its detective-like revelation of a debate about theoretical principles of comedy and important for its inclusion of Shakespeare in a controversy that has usually been limited to Jonson, Marston, and Dekker, he overstates the significance of comedy in a controversy that was primarily concerned with—and carried out through—satire. So too does he over-emphasize Jonson's concern with Shakespeare at the expense of Marston and Dekker: in his hands, Marston becomes little more than a slavish imitator of Shakespeare, and Dekker's devastating attack on Jonson in *Satiromastix* becomes—surprisingly—insufficient.¹⁴ Finally, Bednarz tends to read both Shakespeare and Marston in the same way he reads Jonson, too easily finding authorial self-representations in plays like *As You Like It* and *What You Will* and too easily associating all satirist-figures in those plays with Jonson.¹⁵ As a result, Bednarz deliberately upholds the Jonsonian art versus Shakespearean nature binary that, James Shapiro has shown convincingly, Jonson produced retroactively after

¹³ James Bednarz, *Shakespeare and the Poets' War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 266-76, 2, 105, 42.

¹⁴ Bednarz reshapes the chronology of the "Poets' War" to fit his assumption that Marston imitated Shakespeare (rather than the other way around) and then uses Marston's tendency to imitate Shakespeare in order to reinforce his chronology. In fact it is more likely that *Antonio and Mellida* preceded *As You Like It* and that *Antonio's Revenge* preceded *Hamlet*. Scholars are only just beginning to recognize the extent of Marston's radical poetics and dramaturgy; see, for example, Rick Bowers, *Radical Comedy in Early Modern England* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008).

¹⁵ As I will suggest below, this is a frequent habit of Jonson scholars who write about Marston.

Shakespeare's death.¹⁶

In this chapter I will build upon and develop claims by David Bevington, Tom Cain, and Gabriele Bernhard-Jackson in order to argue that the “terrible *Poetomachia*” between “*Horace the second*” and the “band of leane-wittd *Poetasters*” was in fact a “*Satiromachia*,” the culmination of a larger re-evaluation of satire occurring both on and off the stage in the wake of the 1599 ban on satire.¹⁷ In *Every Man Out of His Humour* and the comical satires that followed, Ben Jonson attempted to defend satire on theatrical and theoretical grounds. Jonson associated satire with comedy, insisted that satire was an effective cure for the diseased judgment of the popular audience, and figured the satirist as an ally of the monarch. John Marston shared Jonson's interest in the dramatic possibilities afforded by satire as well as his opposition to popular “opinion,” but he questioned the satirist's claim to moral and poetic superiority and was skeptical of the satirist's ability to effect meaningful change in a hedonistic world. Others were more radically opposed to Jonson's defense of satire: both Dekker and Weever turned satire against itself, mocking the satirist as self-loving, hypocritical, and humourous, and figuring satire itself as a dangerous and destabilizing threat to the social order.

¹⁶ Shapiro demonstrates that Jonson's prefatory poems and marginal commentary had a “profound effect on the ways in which both Shakespeare and Jonson have been read and canonically positioned for the past four centuries. The binary oppositions to which their poetic practices were reduced through Jonson's retrospective labeling of ‘Shakespeare’ and ‘Jonson’ (e.g. easyflowing vs. labored, native vs. classical, natural vs. artificial) would be appropriated (for very different ends) by such canonical figures as Milton, Dryden, Pope, Johnson, Wordsworth, and Coleridge.” The problem with looking at entire plays as statements in a sustained dialogue, Shapiro suggests, “is that in the absence of extended and unmistakable topical allusion, it is difficult to prove that multifaceted plays were conceived primarily as sustained attacks upon each other's art or as defenses of their own. Moreover, this approach to literary influence tends to bring to the plays hardened preconceptions of the literary styles and values we call ‘Shakespearean’ and ‘Jonsonian’ and to run the risk of merely confirming these stereotypes” (James Shapiro, *Rival Playwrights: Marlowe, Jonson, Shakespeare* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1991], 138-54).

¹⁷ For Bevington's claim (279), see above. Tom Cain similarly suggests that *Poetaster* and *Satiromastix* were involved in a “debate about the satirist's function” and “the proper nature of satire and its motivation” (*Poetaster*, 4, 23). Gabriele Bernhard Jackson notes in her recent edition of *Poetaster* that there was “widespread” disagreement about “whether satire is corrective and promotes a well-ordered state, or destructive and arises from malice,” and that “The dispute between Marston and Jonson in 1599-1601 formed part of a much wider discussion covering the rhetoric of satire and its poetic theory” (Jackson [ed.], *Poetaster*, in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, vol. 2 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012], 14). But each of these claims is more or less limited to what I have quoted here. In this chapter I consider the extensive and complex ways that Jonson, Marston, Dekker, Weever, Guilpin, and Shakespeare employed, defended, reflected upon, and challenged satire.

I will also suggest that the Poets' War is instructive about the relationship between satire and popularity. As we have seen with Nashe, satire tends to ridicule people, fashions, ideas, or institutions that have become threateningly popular—things whose popularly- or socially-determined value is at odds with their intrinsic, inherent, or internally-determined merit. For the formal verse satirists whose writing emerged from the antagonism between the older, aristocratic system of determining value and nascent capitalism, these targets included not only the most glaring examples of conspicuous consumption but also the idea of “popular opinion” itself. Jonson continued this attack on conspicuous consumption and popular opinion first on the popular and then on the private stage, figuring his satirists as solitary men of merit and judgment lashing out against an audience who failed to distinguish between true poetry and “servile imitation” and who, along with the bishops, had grown tired of the virtuous reproof they knew they needed. But for Marston, whose earlier satires had not only failed to curb the appeal of lechery but had been themselves stigmatized as lecherous, the appearance of satire on the public stage was an indication that satire itself had become too popular. Weever's *Whipping of the Satyre* was in this sense inevitable: when satire itself became too popular, when the popular estimation of its value became greater than its intrinsic merit, satire turned upon itself.

1. A Note About Evidence

Aside from numerous indirect references such as the one in *Hamlet*, there are four direct external references to the Poets' War: (1) In an “Apologetical Dialogue” appended to the end of the Folio version of *Poetaster*, Jonson claimed that he had been “provoke[d]” on all sides by various poetasters’ “petulant styles / On every stage” for “three years”;¹⁸ (2) much later, Jonson

¹⁸ Ben Jonson, *Poetaster*, ed. Gabriele Berhnhard Jackson, in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*,

admitted to William Drummond that he “had many quarrels with Marston: beat him, and took his pistol from him; wrote his *Poetaster* on him. The beginning of them were that Marston represented him in the stage”;¹⁹ (3) in an epistle “To the World” prefacing the printed version of the *Satiromastix*, Dekker declares, “I care not much if I make description (before thy *Vniuersality*) of that terrible *Poetomachia*, lately commenc’d betweene *Horace the second*, and a band of leane-witted *Poetasters*. They haue bin at high wordes, and so high, that the ground could not serue them, but (for want of *Chopins*) haue stalk’t vpon Stages”;²⁰ (4) in an academic comedy called *The Return From Parnassus, Part 2*, probably performed at Cambridge at Christmas 1601-2, a character named (and based on) William Kemp includes Shakespeare in the mix: “O that *Ben Ionson* is a pestilent fellow, he brought vp *Horace* giuing the Poets a pill, but our fellow *Shakespeare* hath giuen him a purge that made him beray his credit.”²¹

From Jonson’s claims that he had been provoked for “three years” and that Marston had “represented him in the stage,” R.A. Small determined that Marston must have depicted Jonson onstage sometime in 1598 or 1599. He found this representation in the character of Chrisoganus in *Histriomastix*, a play published anonymously but frequently attributed to Marston. Since Chrisoganus is not an altogether discreditable character in the play, Small concluded that Jonson must have taken Marston’s praise for criticism.²² Jonson may or may not have responded by depicting Marston as Clove in *Every Man Out of His Humour* (1599), a character who speaks

vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), “Apologetical Dialogue,” 83-5. All references to *Poetaster* refer to this edition.

¹⁹ Ben Jonson, *Informations to William Drummond of Hawthornden* (1619), ed. Ian Donaldson, in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 216-18.

²⁰ Thomas Dekker, *Satiromastix*, in *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker, Volume 1*, ed. Fredson Bowers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), “To the World,” 6-11.

²¹ *The Return From Parnassus, Part 2*, in *The Three Parnassus Plays*, ed. J.B. Leishman (London: Ivor Nicholdson & Watson LTD, 1949), 1770-4.

²² Small, 63-89.

Marston-like fustian in a fruitless attempt to impress the other gallants in St. Paul's walk.²³ Small suggested that Marston again personated Jonson in *Jack Drum's Entertainment* (1600), this time as the foolish humourist Brabant Senior. Jonson, in turn, personated Marston as Hedon and Dekker as Anaides in *Cynthia's Revels* (1600). Marston responded with Lampatho Doria in *What You Will* (early 1601); Jonson responded with Crispinus (as Marston) and Demetrius (as Dekker) in *Poetaster* (mid-1601); and Dekker attacked Jonson in *Satiromastix* (late 1601). Shakespeare's "purge" of Jonson, Small determined, could be found in the character of Ajax in *Troilus and Cressida*: "I regret to say that I believe, that in several passages the name Ajax is so brought in that it could not fail to suggest to an Elizabethan audience the pun on 'A jakes' made popular by Harington's *Metamorphosis of Ajax*. 'Ajax goes up and down the field asking for himself' (3.3.244) is a sure case."²⁴

Although personation undoubtedly did occur on the Elizabethan stage, Small, Steggle, Bednarz and others have tended to see rather too much of it. As Morse Allen suggests, "it is probable that personal satire was put on the Elizabethan stage with considerable caution, much less frequently than has often been assumed by critics, who tend to find a bird or two in every bush."²⁵ When such personation did occur, there was rarely any real doubt about it; as Dekker said of Jonson's personal attacks, four out of five hundred members of the audience would all be able to "point with their fingers / At one and the same man" (1.2.242-4). We must therefore be cautious about finding personation where there was only a well-established type, such as with Chrisoganus in Marston's *Histriomastix*. So too must we be cautious about assuming that a

²³ In fact Small doubted this association, but enough critics before and since have made the association between Clove and Marston that it is worth including here. Bednarz demonstrates that much of Clove's language is drawn from Marston's *Scourge of Villainy* and from *Histriomastix* (Bednarz, "Writing and Revenge: John Marston's *Histriomastix*," *Comparative Drama* 36:1-2 [2002], 21-51; 24), though that does not necessarily mean that Clove is a direct personation of Marston.

²⁴ Small, 169 n1.

²⁵ Morse Allen, *The Satire of John Marston* (Columbus, OH: F.J. Heer, 1920), 55.

character who may briefly serve as a vehicle for personal attack, such as Lampatho Doria in Marston's *What You Will*, is a thoroughgoing portrait. The only two plays that we can say for certain that personation did occur are *Poetaster* and *Satiromastix*, but even in the former Crispinus is not entirely Marston; at times he is a type borrowed from Horace. This chapter will focus less on issues of personation than on the way various writers engaged with satire dramatically and theoretically, and will therefore touch only briefly on longstanding debates such as whether Clove in *Every Man Out* represents Marston or whether Brabant Senior in *Jack Drum's Entertainment* represents Jonson.

We also must be cautious about establishing any kind of certainty about the chronology of the controversy. The dating of plays is based on a combination of incomplete records (such as Henslowe's Diary), intertextual allusion, reasonable inference, and guesswork. Even if we have a general idea of when something was first performed, there is of course no way to know exactly what was performed onstage, as printed editions of plays may have been based on imperfect memorial reconstruction, may have contained "more than hath been Publickely Spoken or Acted" (as Jonson claimed with the quarto edition of *Every Man Out of His Humour*²⁶), or may have been revised for performance or for publication. Even when we know that an author revised his own work, such as with the Folio version of Jonson's *Every Man In His Humour*, we cannot know when or why. Although exciting work continues to be done on revision, collaboration, and adaptation of play-texts, such work will nevertheless continue to undermine any sense of a stable relationship between the surviving printed play-text and the original (or repeated) performance of that play. This has serious consequences for any study of satirical controversy: whereas most of the evidence for the Marprelate controversy, the Harvey-Nashe quarrel, and the Hall-Marston

²⁶ Ben Jonson, *Every Man Out of His Humour*, ed. Randall Martin, in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), title page. All references to *EMO* are to this edition.

quarrel is there to be found in the printed texts that survive, we simply cannot know exactly what Thomas Dekker saw or heard when he attended a performance of Jonson's *Poetaster* at Blackfriars in the late spring or early fall of 1601. Because there can be no certainty about chronology, I have decided to organize this chapter by author. Although this makes it more difficult to address some of the nuances of direct exchange—particularly between Jonson's *Poetaster* and Dekker's *Satiromastix*—it permits me to address continuities and habits of thought that might otherwise be obscured. It also allows me to correct some mistaken claims about Marston that have come about through reading his work in opposition to Jonson's.

Finally, we must be cautious about ascribing motivation where no clear evidence exists. Unlike in the Marprelate controversy or the Harvey-Nashe quarrel, where the particular features of the satirical attack reveal the extent to which the satirist is threatened by something, it can be impossible to determine how or why a playwright feels threatened based on the statements of characters onstage. We must therefore be cautious of uncritically assuming that particular characters serve as authorial mouthpieces. Even if Jonson's relatively transparent self-representations usually can be trusted to speak for him, or at least for his ideal—though there are exceptions here too—the same cannot be said for characters usually assumed to speak for Marston, such as Quadratus in *What You Will*. As I will suggest below, Marston was skeptical of the moral authority of his satirists both on the page and on the stage, and as a result his work frequently leaves his audience without a moral or authorial guide. Indeed, Marston's radical skepticism is an instructive guiding principle for a new analysis of the Poets' War.²⁷

²⁷ This skepticism is meant to push back against Bednarz's *Shakespeare and the Poets' War*, where speculation too often becomes certainty. Elsewhere Bednarz acknowledges that "writing early modern theater history is a perilous task complicated by scarce and often ambiguous textual evidence," but he argues that the field "largely proceeds," with "considerable success," through inference and assessments "render[ed] probable" by "the strongest circumstantial evidence" ("Writing and Revenge," 47). Nowhere in *Shakespeare and the Poets' War*, however, does Bednarz acknowledge that his evidence is "circumstantial" or his arguments "probable." Instead, he frequently uses unproven assertions as the evidence for subsequent claims and opportunistically relies upon earlier critical

2. Jonson's Judgment: Defending Satire, the Satirist, and Himself

On June 1, 1599, John Whitgift, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Richard Bancroft, the Bishop of London, issued an edict to the Stationer's Company calling in satires such as Joseph Hall's *Virgidemiarum*, John Marston's *Pigmalion's Image and Certaine Satyres*, Marston's *Scourge of Villainy*, Everard Guilpin's *Skialetheia*, Thomas Middleton's *Microcynicon*, and John Davies's *Epigrammes*. It demanded that "all nasshes bookes and D Harvyes bookes be taken wheresoever they maye be found and that none of their bookes bee ever printed hereafter," it declared that "noe Satyres or Epigrammes" were to "be printed hereafter," and it required the authority of the Privy Council for the printing of "Englishe histories."²⁸ The edict offers no explanation and, though there are several contemporary allusions to the ban, no explanation survives.

Modern scholars are divided on the motivation for the ban, its effectiveness, and its effects. Lynda Boose is the most outspoken of those who see satire as an inadequate cause for the ban. She argues that the bishops in fact targeted the Aretine-inspired conjunction of satirical invective and sexualized literature, the type of "English pornography that brought together prurient lust and revulsionary loathing" best represented by the works of John Marston.²⁹ Richard McCabe, however, argues rather more convincingly that the ban was politically, not morally, motivated: he notes that the primary target of proclamation "was neither eroticism nor lewdness but satire itself," and he suggests that what made satire dangerous was its potential for

consensus in order to present a misleadingly tidy and complete account of what is in fact a messy and fragmented affair. I will have frequent occasion to offer specifics below.

²⁸ For the full text of the proclamation, see Richard McCabe, "Elizabethan Satire and the Bishops' Ban of 1599," *Yearbook of English Studies* 11 (1981), 188-93.

²⁹ Lynda E. Boose, "The 1599 Bishops' Ban, Elizabethan Pornography, and the Sexualization of the Jacobean Stage," in *Enclosure Acts: Sexuality, Property, and Culture in Early Modern England*, ed. Richard Burt and John Michael Archer (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 185-200.

political commentary and social complaint.³⁰ Cyndia Clegg generally agrees with McCabe that the principal motive of the ban was not sexual morality, but she qualifies his argument by stressing that all but two of the named satires had previously received ecclesiastical approval. Even if the Elizabethan government was interested in controlling potentially subversive cultural forms, Clegg points out, something must have changed to make a previously sanctioned form suddenly unacceptable. Clegg argues that the ban “was a response to political events that changed the ways in which the offending texts were read”: each of the offending texts were somehow related to Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex, and their censorship may have been motivated “by particular interest in deflecting criticism of the government during the crisis of 1599—the Earl of Essex’s ill-fated war effort in Ireland.”³¹

Clegg’s account is the most convincing, though I would qualify her insistence on government approval of satire earlier in the 1590s. Whitgift and Bancroft were clearly wary of satirical discourse during the Marprelate controversy, and only authorized the anti-Martinist response as a necessary evil; when anti-Martinist plays themselves became too popular, they shut them down. The fact that they closed the theaters again over the *Isle of Dogs* affair later in the decade indicates that they did not wholeheartedly approve of satire. As Philip Finkelpearl notes, the line between a satire and a libel “was sometimes extremely thin,” and even though satirists like Marston claimed in formulaic fashion that they “note[d] generall vices” under “fained priuate names,” personal satire was probably inevitable.³² The authorities probably tolerated the in-group mutual incrimination of the Inns of Court satires, but when personal application to a

³⁰ McCabe, 189, 191. McCabe also notes that letters between Bancroft and Whitgift “show quite clearly that for them censorship was a predominantly political, rather than moral, issue. None of the extant letters deals with immorality or indecency, but they are all in one way or other concerned with matters of public order and policy. . . . There is nothing, therefore, to suggest that in 1599 the bishops were not acting, as usual, as ministers of state” (189).

³¹ Cyndia Clegg, *Press Censorship in Elizabethan England* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1997), 198-217.

³² Finkelpearl, 72, 88.

member of the nobility was obvious or when such a reading became newly possible, such as in the political climate leading to the Essex campaign in Ireland, they intervened.

Although numerous scholars (including Bednarz) have downplayed the effectiveness of the Bishops' Ban on satire,³³ McCabe is probably right to suggest that "a serious attempt was made to continue the anti-satiric policy" after June 1599.³⁴ Not only were two satirical texts by Samuel Rowlands—*A Merry Meeting, or tis meery when Knaves meet* and *The Letting of Humour's Blood in the Head Vaine*—recalled and burned in 1600,³⁵ but the overall publication of satirical poetry declined dramatically. But at the same time that satire all but disappeared from the press, it appeared, in reinvented form, onstage. According to Oscar James Campbell, in the wake of the Bishops' Ban, Jonson and Marston "immediately sought to write plays that would serve as effective substitutes," attempting "to prolong an artificially arrested development in the field of English letters."³⁶

Campbell's thesis has had significant staying power, in no small part because the facts are largely on his side: the private boys' theaters that opened at Paul's in late 1599 and at Blackfriars in 1600 indeed began producing satiric plays in the wake of the Ban; these plays, in turn, influenced the public stages over the following decade. If numerous critics have nevertheless questioned Campbell's thesis of a clearly defined movement from the page to the stage, it is almost certainly because, like Bednarz, they prefer to see Jonson's comical satire as a dramatic innovation rather than an adaptation or imitation of formal verse satire.³⁷ Certainly

³³ Bednarz, *S&PW*, 57. The evidence usually cited is that Nicholas Breton's *Pasquil* poems were allowed in spite of the ban, but Breton's poems are hardly satirical in the same way Marston's *Scourge* is, and do not offer the same potential for personal application.

³⁴ McCabe, 190.

³⁵ Edmund Gosse, "Memoir on Samuel Rowlands," in *The Complete Works of Samuel Rowlands*, Vol. 1 (Glasgow: Robert Anderson, 1880), 6.

³⁶ Campbell, vii.

³⁷ Bednarz repeats what is ultimately a superficial critique of Campbell: that the transformation of formal verse satire into drama did not occur because the only poet to write in both genres was Marston (Bednarz neglects

Jonson represents himself as an innovator, proudly declaring “*Non aliena meo pressi pede*” [“I walk not where others trod”] and coining the term “comicall satyre” on the title page of the 1600 Quarto edition of *Every Man Out of His Humour*.³⁸ Throughout this play, Jonson uses his chorus to figure himself as the newest in a line of dramatic innovators stretching back to antiquity, a poet who could not only to define comedy according to classical precedent (3.1.412-19) but who “in the dignity of his spirit and judgement” could “suppl[y] something” to its laws (Ind. 239-47). Furthermore, Jonson’s systematic dismantling of popular forms of drama as well as his obvious and long-standing antipathy to the popular audience do not seem to fit with Campbell’s suggestion that Jonson rushed to fill the popular demand for satire.

But in fact Jonson did adapt a number of well-known aspects of both verse and prose satire—both classical and contemporary—to the stage in *Every Man Out*. This is clear from the very beginning of the Induction, in which Asper’s angry outburst echoes Juvenal’s “*difficile est saturam non scribere*”: “Who is so patient of this impious world / That he can check his spirit or rein his tongue?” (Ind. 2-3). Much of the remainder of the Induction, in which Asper argues with his more cautious friends and counselors about the dangers of writing satire, adapts Horace’s *Satires* 2.1 (a text that Jonson would later translate and insert into the revised version of *Poetaster*). Asper’s pre-emptive defense against charges of personal attack (Ind. 139-42) is drawn not only from Horace but also from Joseph Hall, who had similarly claimed that he was blameless of specific application in the “Post-script” of *Virgidemiarum*.³⁹ And Asper’s tone and

Middleton), and that Jonson was unaffected by the ban because he had not published verse satires before 1599 (*S&PW*, 57). For an example of a critic who has objected to Campbell’s thesis for reasons unrelated to Jonson, see Janet Clare, *Art Made Tongue-Tied By Authority: Elizabethan and Jacobean Dramatic Censorship*, 2nd ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 96. Clare attributes the rise of dramatic satire to the factional politics of the period and to the re-emergence of the boys’ companies.

³⁸ Jonson, *EMO*, title page. For the translation, see Martin (ed.), *EMO*, 250. By quoting Horace, Jonson ironically demonstrated that he *was* following in others’ footsteps, even as he claimed otherwise.

³⁹ Joseph Hall, *Virgidemiarum*, in *The Poems of Joseph Hall*, ed. Arnold Davenport (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 1969), “Post-script to the Reader,” 98.

language—his defiant assertion that he will “strip the ragged follies of the time / Naked as at their birth . . . and with a whip of steel / Print wounding lashes in their iron ribs” (Ind. 15-18)—is adapted from a much closer source: John Marston, who in *The Scourge of Villainy* had declared that he bore “the scourge of iust *Rhamnusia*, / Lashing the lewdnes of *Britania*.”⁴⁰

Indeed, although Jonson figures Marston as an imitator and a plagiarist in *Poetaster*, Jonson’s new comical satire owes a considerable debt to Marston. As David Kay points out, several of Jonson’s most successful characters in *Every Man Out* are “openly borrowed from Marston’s *Certain Satires*”: Fastidious Brisk is based on Marston’s Briscus in *CS* 2 (who appears again as Piso in *SV* 11), and Fungoso is “artfully developed” from a clothes-conscious but cash-strapped gallant in *CS* 3.⁴¹ Jonson’s definition of a humour as “one peculiar quality” that “Doth so posses a man that it doth draw / All his affects, his spirits, and his powers / In their confluxions all to run one way” (Ind. 103-6) itself appears to be based on the final satire of *The Scourge of Villainy*, entitled “Humours,” which presents a series of characters whose entire social beings are defined by such “peculiar qualities.” The manner in which Jonson’s satirists direct our attention from one figure to another in a parade of fools, only to castigate them and drive them from the stage, mimics the roving eyes and harsh dismissal of Marston’s satirists. And if Marston’s *Histriomastix* indeed preceded Jonson’s *Every Man Out*, then Asper’s attack on the “monstrousness of time, / Where every servile imitating spirit” flings “His ulcerous body in the Thespian spring, / And straight leap’s forth a poet” (Ind. 64-5, 68-9) owes something to Marston’s Chrisoganus, rather than the other way around: “O age when every Scriveners boy shall dippe / Prophaning quills into Thessaliaes Spring, / When every artist prentice that hath

⁴⁰ John Marston, *The Scourge of Villainy*, in *The Poems of John Marston*, ed. Arnold Davenport (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1961), “Proemium in librum primum,” 1-2.

⁴¹ W. David Kay, *Ben Jonson: A Literary Life* (London: MacMillan Press, 1995), 48.

read / The pleasant pantry of conceipts, shall dare, / To write as confident as *Hercules*.”⁴²

Certain thematic aspects of Jonson’s comical satires which Bednarz has pointed to as evidence that Jonson redefined comedy specifically in opposition to Shakespeare’s romantic comedy must also be recognized as theatrical adaptations of 1590s satire. Jonson’s aversion to romantic comedy is less of an innovation or an affront to Shakespeare in particular than an adaptation of a major trend in contemporary satire. Nashe had attacked those “bable bookemungers” who filled their books with “amorous discourses” and endeavored to “repaire the ruinous wals of *Venus Court*.”⁴³ Hall complained that “*Pernassus*” had been “turned to he stewes” and that the muses had become whores (1.2.17); he attacked both “The loue-sicke Poet” who hoped “to conquer his disdainfull dame, / With publique plaints of his conceiued flame” (1.7.7-10) and the “lust-stung letcher” who “needs indite / The beastly rites of hyred Venerie” (1.9.22-4). Marston declared that his intention in *Metamorphosis of Pigmalion’s Image* was to “wantonly display / The Salaminian titillations, / Which tickle vp our leud Priapians.”⁴⁴ William Rankins turned his back on those “gilded Braggadochio[s]” who discourse “Of Loue, of Courtships and of fancies force”,⁴⁵ Guilpin decried “these *Lydian* tunes which blunt our sprights / And turne our gallants to *Hermaphrodites*” (“*Satyre Preludium*,” 1-2). The general opposition

⁴² Marston, *Histriomastix*, in *The Plays of John Marston*, ed. H. Harvey Wood (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1939), 3.274. (Wood’s edition does not have scene divisions or line numbers, so scholars have traditionally referred to the play by volume and page number.)

⁴³ Thomas Nashe, *The Anatomy of Absurdity*, in *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, ed. Ronald McKerrow (reprint, ed. F.P. Wilson; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), 1.10-11.

⁴⁴ John Marston, *The Metamorphosis of Pigmalion’s Image and Certaine Satyres*, in *The Poems of John Marston*, ed. Arnold Davenport (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1961), “The Author in Praise of the Precedent Poem,” 4-6. See also Marston’s repeated defense of the poem in *The Scourge of Villainy*: “Hence thou misjudging Censor, know I wrot / Those idle rimes to note the odious spot / And blemish that deforms the lineaments / Of moderne Poesies habiliments” (6.23-6). Most critics have assumed that *Pigmalion* is an Ovidian erotic poem and that Marston only added the verses declaring otherwise when he “perceived, like Jonson’s Fungoso, that the fashion had outstripped him” (Leishman, 50), but some have seen in the poem’s many ironies a sophisticated burlesque on the Ovidian vogue. Finkelppearl attempts, unsuccessfully, to stake out a middle ground (94-105). For what it’s worth, I believe Marston here; the idea that he would entrap his reader only to pull the rug out from underneath them—as well as his own poem—seems perfectly consistent with the radical skepticism of his poetry and drama.

⁴⁵ William Rankins, *Seauen Satyres Applied to the Weeke* (London, 1598), sig. A3^v.

of satire to romance was so well established, in fact, that in *Faunus and Melliflora* (1600), John Weever created a mythological origin story for satire based on the idea, suggesting that satires were the monstrous sons of a nymph of Diana's court transformed "euermore [to] be vtter enemies, / To louers pastimes, sportfull veneries."⁴⁶ As J.B. Leishman notes, the opposition of satirists to sonnets, Ovidian love-poems, and romance was generational, as younger writers and readers (particularly those associated with the Inns of Court) turned against the literary ideals and fashions of the previous generation.⁴⁷ Jonson's own aversion to romantic comedy was thus in keeping with the satirists of his own generation.⁴⁸ Not all of Jonson's disparaging allusions to romantic poetry or comedy necessarily refer specifically to Shakespeare, and when he does allude specifically to Shakespeare, Jonson is not always antagonistic.⁴⁹

There is, then, plenty of evidence to lend support to Campbell's thesis that Jonson's comical satires represent the theatrical continuation of a literary form that was artificially arrested in the press by the Bishops' Ban of 1599. Jonson was clearly influenced by classical and contemporary satiric forms, and his opposition to public opinion and to romance continued similar concerns of the formal verse satires that had just been banned. But Campbell's thesis

⁴⁶ John Weever, *Faunus and Melliflora, or the Original of our English Satyres*, ed. Arnold Davenport (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1948), 1067-70.

⁴⁷ Leishman, 42. Numerous other critics have noted the general and generational opposition of satire to romantic poetry. See Finkelppearl, 71; and especially Richard Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton, and the Literary System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 123-8.

⁴⁸ In general this series of points pushes back against Bednarz's insistence that *Every Man Out* can only be properly understood in terms of Jonson's dramatic development. Bednarz downplays the significance of satire in the Poets' War because he wants the controversy to be about competing theories of comedy, but this really only works for *Every Man Out* and *As You Like It*, which can be read in opposition to one another. None of the other plays in the "Poets' War" are really *about* comedy in the same way, even if Jonson continued to refer to them as "comical satires." It is not surprising, then, that Bednarz's strongest claims have to do with *Every Man Out* and *As You Like It*, that he has comparatively little to say about *Cynthia's Revels* and *Poetaster*, and that he downplays the significance of the central plays of the quarrel, *Poetaster* and *Satiromastix*.

⁴⁹ Ian Donaldson also resists Bednarz's "more speculative notion of a personal antagonism" between Shakespeare and Jonson: "Not all of [Jonson's] passing remarks [about Shakespeare] need be seen as unfriendly; the [reference to Falstaff at the end of *Every Man Out of His Humour*] indeed frankly acknowledges the great popular success of Shakespeare's *Henry IV*" (Donaldson, *Ben Jonson: A Life* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011], 465 n14, 159). It is difficult to overstate the significance of this point for Bednarz's central thesis that Jonson specifically opposed comical satire to Shakespearean romantic comedy.

does need to be qualified, for Jonson's adaptation of satire to the stage was less of an effort to capitalize on popular opinion than an attempt to defend satire against the popular audience that had turned against it. For even if there is no evidence to suggest that the popular audience actually did turn against satire—if anything, in fact, satire only became more popular onstage during this period—Jonson certainly believed that it had. As Mitis warns Asper in the Induction to *Every Man Out*, “The days are dangerous, full of exception, / And men are grown impatient of reproof,” and the men of “ingenious and free spirit” who are “eager and constant in reproof” have all but had their “lips sealed up” (122-3, C.D. 1-2, Ind. 11). But Asper makes little difference between popular judgment and preference for sin or between popular antipathy towards reproof and the forces outside of the play that have banned satire. The sins of strumpets, brokers, usurers, lawyers, and courtiers, he complains, have become “so innate and popular / That drunken Custom would not shame to laugh / In scorn at him that should but dare to tax ‘em” (27-9). When he opposes himself to this popular judgment, it is against those who will “except against” his satire: “None but a sort of fools, so sick in taste / That they contemn all physic of the mind, / And, like galled camels, kick at every touch” (129-32). By putting a satirist onstage in the wake of the Bishops' Ban, Jonson both defied official sanction and defended satire against that sanction.

* * *

There could be little doubt that Asper, who bursts onstage in the Induction to *Every Man Out of His Humour*, is a satirist exactly in the mold of the formal verse satires that had just been banned and burned. Against the practical warnings of his friends and counselors to “Stay [his] mind,” he resolves to carry forward “With constant courage and contempt of fear” and “strip the ragged follies of the time / Naked as at their birth” (Ind. 1, 15-16). But Asper's satirical

intentions are in one important (and obvious) respect different from the satirists whose attitude and language he appropriates: he resolves to “scourge those apes” dramatically, by “oppos[ing] a mirror / As large as is the stage whereon we act” to “the times deformity” (Ind. 116-18). This is not satire, per se, but *comical* satire: satire combined with comedy, a known and authorized form that dealt with types instead of real individuals and the common follies of the lower classes instead of the specific moral failings of the nobility. At several points during the play, Asper’s wise friend Cordatus interrupts the action to reassure Mitis that only the “malicious and absurd” wrestings of “narrow-eyed decipherers” would “make any exception” at the “opening of such an empty trunk” as Fastidious Brisk or object to the ridicule of Deliro and Fallace; their follies rather serve as a foil for the virtues of noble courtiers, wise citizens, and modest matrons. This defense offered Jonson a double protection against the charges of personation that were probably at the heart of the Bishops’ Ban, against both individual and general application: in theory, the comedic anatomy of a humourous courtier did not impeach the worth of any specific individual any more than the mockery of the illiberal Sordido glanced at farmers in general. What’s more, Jonson could claim that comical satire had classical precedent, as comedy itself “was at first nothing but a simple and continued satire” (Ind. 226-7, 239-40).⁵⁰ By putting a satirist onstage, then, Jonson could simultaneously defy the ban on satire and claim that he was merely purifying comedy by returning it to its original form.

Jonson’s well-known distinction between the true satirist (Asper), the envious backbiter (Macilente), and the opportunistic railer (Carlo Buffone) in *Every Man Out* is also part of his strategy to defend satire. As Campbell notes, Carlo Buffone is the railer, “an improper agent of satire” whose ridicule is “of the basest sort—unrestrained detraction,” animated neither by

⁵⁰ Ian Donaldson notes something similar: “Authentic comedy, in short—so Jonson’s own advocates insist from the sidelines—has its origins not in romance but in ancient satire” (*Ben Jonson: A Life* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011], 153).

envious indignation or reformatory zeal but by “idle amusement” and “empty display.”⁵¹ By figuring Carlo as a “public, scurrilous, and profane jester” whose “absurd similes will transform *any* person into deformity” (C.D. 19-20, emphasis mine), including his sometime benefactor Sir Puntarvolo and other members of the court, Jonson makes a careful distinction between the railer and the true satirist: it is the former, not the latter, who is willing to attack members of the social hierarchy and who therefore threatens the social hierarchy. Carlo must be physically silenced in order for his ribaldry to be restrained; the merely envious Macilente, on the other hand, is struck dumb at the mere sight of the monarch and (after “recovering heart”) awed into restrained subjection: “in her graces / All my malicious powers have lost their stings” (5.6.77.1-4, 83-4).⁵² For Jonson, this represented the true satirist’s subservient relationship to authority: the satirist may be malicious in reviling and purging the vices of the court, but he will always be restrained by virtuous authority. Still, even if Macilente’s detraction is limited to those who deserve it, his judgment is “dazzled and distasted” because he “want[s] that place in the world’s account which he thinks his merit capable of” (C.D. 6-9). His satire is ultimately selfish, as it is entirely motivated by envy for those whose “place and worship” (1.2.128) outstrips their “desert” (4.3.366). He takes pleasure in others’ pain, and is only able to rise comparatively in public esteem by bringing everyone else down to his level. Only Asper reproves vice and “control[s] the world’s abuses” (C.D. 2) out of moral and civic responsibility, creating the satirical scene and donning the disguise of an envious detractor out of hatred for the “monstrousness of time” (Ind. 64).

Against the prevailing opinion that had turned against and even banned satire, Jonson

⁵¹ Campbell, 64-8. As Campbell suggests, even here Jonson was following the verse satirists, who also attacked mere railers (67).

⁵² This is part of the original ending, which Jonson was forced to revise when a stage depiction of Queen Elizabeth provoked official displeasure. See Clare, *Art Made Tongue-Tied By Authority*, 96.

defiantly insists that satire is a cure for the humourous commonwealth. Whereas in *Every Man In* comic resolution had required, to a certain degree, the acceptance of others' "humours" as ineradicable aspects of their personalities, in *Every Man Out* humours are unnatural, a state of imbalance that occurs when "some one peculiar quality / Doth so possess" a man that it "doth draw / All his affects, his spirits, and his powers / In their confluxions to run one way" (Ind. 103-6). The world of the play is not vicious, as Asper initially suggests, but out of balance, filled with fools whose gravest sin is their inability to properly assess their own worth. By perceiving someone's humour, pushing it to its breaking point, and harshly exposing it such that the spectators—like Puntarvolo at the moment of Saviolina's humiliation—"laugh with judgement" (4.5.75), the satirist helps to restore humourous individuals to a more appropriate sense of their place in the social hierarchy: to an understanding of their worth as determined by merit rather than by popular opinion. The fools in *Every Man Out* thus experience not only what Bednarz calls "the *clarification* of self-knowledge"⁵³ but the *deflation* of self-knowledge. More than anything else, perhaps, this reveals Jonson's faith in satirical efficacy. Cordatus had warned Asper that his speech was "right *furor poeticus*," that the audience would suppose "that a madman speaks," and that it was useless to spend his breath "in these moods" unless it "had power / To melt the world, and mould it new againe" (Ind. 146, 149, 46-8). As the fools file offstage in silent humiliation, however, we are left with Asper's—and thus Jonson's—confident certainty that satire has the power to remake the world.

So too does Jonson defend satire by insisting that satire is the cure for a diseased theater. As critics have long noted, *Every Man Out* is hostile to romantic comedy: the marriage-plot that was so evidently an after-thought in *Every Man In*⁵⁴ has become a target for ridicule. Both

⁵³ Bednarz, *S&PW*, 33 (emphasis mine).

⁵⁴ In *Every Man In*, Lorenzo Junior's affection for Hesperida is a result of his esteem for Prospero, his best friend

Deliro, whose name reflects his delirious dotage on his undeserving and eventually adulterous wife, and Sir Puntarvolo, who courts his wife every morning as though he has never seen her before, must be purged of their humourous love. The scene with Puntarvolo is particularly damning. In an absurd mock romantic comedy, “a thing studied an rehearsed as ordinarily . . . as a jig after a play” (2.2.29-31), Puntarvolo approaches his castle as though he is a wandering knight and accosts his stranger-wife with overwrought Petrarchanism; from the balcony, she describes her absent/present lord in flattering terms according to a script of Puntarvolo’s “own penning.” It is a “tedious chapter of courtship, after Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere” (2.2.135), a scene designed to make the love-plot seem empty, useless, and stale.⁵⁵ By mocking the foolish romantic comedies Mitis so ignorantly and wistfully describes⁵⁶ as well as the “servile imitating spirits” who above all hoped to please (in Marston’s terms) “the common sort / Of thickskin’d auditors” (*Histriomastix*, 3.273), Jonson hoped to show that satire was the means by which the theater itself could be purged of its humours.

At the same time that he defended satire against the public audience who had turned against it, Jonson attacked the authority of the popular audience to judge his work. Asper mocks those members of the audience “Who, to be thought one of the judicious, / Sits with his arms thus wreathed, his hat pulled here, / Cries ‘mew’ and nods, then shakes his empty head”; he claims that those who have “neither art, nor brain” but make faces “to wrest and turn / The good aspect of those that shall sit near [them]” are “more infectious than the pestilence” (Ind. 159-61,

(and her brother); the wedding takes place offstage between acts and is not involved in any kind of reconciliation; and it is hardly even mentioned in the final act, a notable silence that extends to Hersperida herself.

⁵⁵ Both Grace Tiffany and Bednarz have written at length about Jonson’s attack on festive comedy and about Shakespeare’s response in *As You Like It*. See Grace Tiffany, “‘That Reason Wonder May Diminish’: *As You Like It*, Androgyny, and the Theater Wars,” *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 57:3 (Summer 1994), 213-39; Bednarz, *S&PW*, esp. Chapter 2. See also my discussion of Shakespeare below.

⁵⁶ “[T]he argument of his comedy might have been of some other nature, as of a Duke to be in love with a Countess, and that Countess to be in love with the Duke’s son, and the son to love the lady’s waiting maid: some such cross-wooding, with a clown to their servingman” (*EMO*, 3.1.407-11).

173, 180-3). Asper claims to welcome judgment of everyone—“Let me be censured by th’austerest brow,” he declares, and “Where I want art or judgement, tax me freely” (Ind. 58-9)—but it becomes clear that, like Jonson’s satirical predecessors, he only welcomes the judgment of “Attentive auditors, / Such as will join their profit with their pleasure, / And come to feed their understanding parts” (Ind. 199-201).

Yet even as Asper carries forward with the confident certainty that “happy judgements and composed spirits” will not “challenge [him] for taxing” such fools (Ind. 192-3), even as he seems to imply that the “Good men and courteous spirits” who will “cherish [his] free labours” and “love [his] lines” greatly outnumber the fools who will except against him (Ind. 133-4), Asper guards against the possibility that no such qualified judges exist. He therefore leaves Mitis and Cordatus as “censors” to sit onstage throughout the performance of his play so that they may “liberally / Speak [their] opinion[s] upon every scene / As it shall pass the view of these spectators” (Ind. 152-5). Throughout the play, Mitis helpfully voices the potential objections of the audience and Cordatus patiently answers him, training both Mitis and the audience beyond the stage to recognize and appreciate that Asper—and ultimately Jonson—has written a comedy according to Cicero’s definition: “*imitatio vitae, speculum consuetudinis, imago veritatis*; a thing throughout pleasant and ridiculous, and accommodated to the correction of manners.” If the “maker” has “failed in any particle of this,” Cordatus claims, Mitis and the audience “may worthily tax him, but if not, why, be you (that are for them) silent” (3.1.413-18). “Nay,” Mitis concedes to Cordatus earlier in the play, “you are better traded with these things than I, and therefore I’ll subscribe to your judgment” (2.2.325-6). Jonson, in other words, creates his own judge within his new comical satire and represents to the audience their own silent subscription. Unsurprisingly, Jonson determines that he had lived up to his own high standards, and that any

disagreement is the fault of the audience: “We hope to make the circles of your eyes / Flow with distilled laughter,” Asper declares, but “If we failed, / We must impute it to this only chance: / ‘Arte hath an enemy called ignorance’” (Ind. 214-17).

There are, however, significant problems with Jonson’s defense of satire in *Every Man Out*. First, putting the satirist onstage has the unintended consequence of revealing some of the “contradictions, confusions, and tensions” inherent in satirical attack that had remained half-hidden in formal verse satire. As Alvin Kernan suggests, by transforming the satiric mask of formal verse satire into a dramatic character, Jonson unintentionally subjects the satirist to the same type of moral judgment the satirist imposed upon others: “His speeches, attitudes, and gestures now have consequences, and he can be measured by the effects of which he is the cause. No longer can he merely rail and commend himself as the only absolute foe of vice because he does so. His railing becomes action which can be judged by its issue.”⁵⁷ Second, the effective castigation of fools in *Every Man Out* depends upon the scurrilous raillery of Carlo Buffone as much as it does the malicious attack of Macilente. As Richard Helgerson argues, for all Jonson does to separate the true satirist from the profane jester, the distance between them continually threatens to disappear.⁵⁸ Asper’s satirical outburst in the Induction sounds, as Cordatus suggests, like the ravings of a madman, and his palpable anger seems motivated, at least in part, by his envy for the popularity achieved by poetasters. Third, the public humiliation to which the fools are subjected in *Every Man Out* does not so much purge them of their humour as it does destroy the fools entirely. As Ann Barton notes, only a few characters declare any intention to live differently, none of their conversions is convincing, and in some cases—such as with Puntarvolo—the deflation of eccentric but harmless and entertaining humours seems not only

⁵⁷ Kernan, 142-3.

⁵⁸ Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates*, 137-8.

unnecessary but antithetical to dramatic success.⁵⁹ In the comical satires, Jonson the satirist always seems to be in tension with Jonson the dramatist.⁶⁰ Like any other satirist, of course, Jonson finds the objects of his attack “simultaneously loathsome and attractive”;⁶¹ this is what Tom Cain refers to as Jonson’s “fascinated disapproval” of anti-Augustan characters like Tucca in *Poetaster* and activities such as feasting and dressing-up.⁶² But this creates particular problems for drama, where the characters most deserving of the satirist’s scorn threaten to steal the show. Finally, in asking the spectators to make “lean Macilente as fat” with their applause “as Sir John Falstaff” (5.6.135), Jonson appeals for approval from the same popular audience whose judgment he has been so careful to de-legitimize, perhaps hoping that the popular audience at the newly-built Globe will be persuaded to reject their own judgment of the play in favor of Jonson’s self-assessment.

* * *

It is entirely possible, as Campbell, Kernan, and others have suggested, that Jonson was dissatisfied with the formal and aesthetic contradictions of *Every Man Out* and set out to improve upon the marriage of comedy and satire with his next play, *Cynthia’s Revels*. If so, Jonson must have been particularly aware of his failure to completely distinguish the profane railer from the true satirist, because in *Cynthia’s Revels* Jonson clearly hopes to prove that the true satirist is a good man. Criticus is so good, in fact, that he is less a Jonsonian self-representation than a

⁵⁹ Ann Barton, *Ben Jonson, Dramatist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 65-6, 71-2. Campbell similarly noted that Jonson struggled to create a dramatic plot out of the parade of fools that normally constitutes satire, as “Each fool is too much preoccupied with his own folly to involve himself in dramatic entanglements with the characters about him” (71).

⁶⁰ As Kernan argues, in his later satirical drama (e.g., *Volpone*, *The Alchemist*, *Bartholomew Fair*) Jonson “no longer tried to imitate the practices and organizational techniques of formal satire. The satirist is gone, though there are characters . . . in whom residual traces of the old satyr are evident” (164). Jonson resolved the tension between satirist and dramatist by removing the satirist (or authorial mouthpiece) from the action—in other words, by aligning the dramatist and the satirist entirely.

⁶¹ Kernan, 142.

⁶² Cain (ed.), *Poetaster*, 13.

Jonsonian ideal, a scholar and critic who has more in common with the gods than he does the foolish and self-obsessed courtiers hanging around Cynthia's court.

But the fact that Jonson appears to be defending his idealized satirist-hero from attack throughout the play indicates that Jonson may well have struck a nerve with *Every Man Out* and found himself—or at least imagined himself—to be the subject of criticism. As Grace Tiffany and James Bednarz have suggested, Shakespeare's *As You Like It* may have responded to the challenge Jonson's comical satire posed to festive comedy by doubling down on marriage as the key to reconciliation and healthy social reproduction.⁶³ Many critics have suggested that in *Jack Drum's Entertainment* Marston caricatured Jonson's disdainful judgment of other poets and playwrights in the foolish Brabant Senior, whose breezy dismissal of all "moderne witts" as "Apes & gulls, Vile imitating spirits, dry heathy Turffes"⁶⁴ does sound rather like a mocking echo of Jonson's Asper.⁶⁵ Jonson may also have been criticized in plays that have not survived, or even offstage, in the company of players with whom Carlo Buffone wryly suggested "our poet" would "once in a fortnight . . . make a good meal" and drink canary (*EMO*, Ind. 303-5). Perhaps Jonson found himself criticized in the literary/theatrical circles of the Inns of Court, to which Jonson was just beginning to find entrance. This is indeed the type of persecution to which Criticus is subjected, where the fools about Cynthia's court, envious of Criticus's learning and impatient of his disdain for their courtly affectation, resolve to "speak all the venom [they] can of him, and poison his reputation" by "giv[ing] out that all he does is dictated from other men" (3.2.34, 45).

⁶³ As I will suggest below, however, both Tiffany and Bednarz overstate Shakespeare's specific interest in Jonson.

⁶⁴ John Marston, *Jack Drums Entertainment: or The Comedy of Pasquill and Katherine*, in *The Plays of John Marston*, ed. H. Harvey Wood (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1939), 3.221. This edition does not have line numbers, so all references to the play will refer to volume and page number.

⁶⁵ Then again, if *Histriomastix* pre-dated *Every Man Out*, then Jonson's Asper would have sounded rather like Marston's Chrisoganus before Marston's Brabant Senior sounded like Jonson's Asper. As I will suggest below, furthermore, in many respects Brabant Senior has little to do with Jonson.

Whatever the case, *Cynthia's Revels* continues the attack on the diseased judgment of the audience that had served as part of Jonson's defense of satire in *Every Man Out*. Jonson was now writing for the (supposedly) more refined members of the private audience at the newly-opened Blackfriars theater, and in his Prologue he emphatically renounces "popular applause" and "foamy praise, that drops from common jaws."⁶⁶ Again he appears to embrace the judgment of the audience at the private theater: "If gracious silence, sweet attention, / Quick sight, and quicker apprehension / (The lights of judgement's throne) shine anywhere, / Our doubtful author hopes this is their sphere" (Pr. 1-4). But this is a big "if," and Jonson is "doubtful." In the Induction scene that precedes the Prologue, in fact, the Second Child attacks the very same infectious gallants that Asper had been on guard against at the public theater in *Every Man Out*:

Good, sir, but what will you say now if a poet . . . find God's tokens [signs of the plague] upon you that are of the auditory? As some one civet-wit among you that knows no other learning than the price of satin and velvets, nor other perfection than the wearing of a neat suit, and yet will censure as desperately as the most professed critic in the house, presuming his clothes should bear him out in't. Another, whom it hath pleased nature to furnish with more beard than brain, prunes his mustachio, lisps, and, with some score of affected oaths, swears down all that sit about him, 'that the old Hieronimo,' as it was first acted, 'was the only, best, and judiciously penned play of Europe.' A third great-bellied juggler talks of twenty years since and when Monsieur was here; and would enforce all wit to be of that fashion because his doublet is still on. A fourth miscalls all by the name of 'fustian' that his grounded capacity cannot aspire to. A fifth only shakes his

⁶⁶ Ben Jonson, *Cynthia's Revels*, ed. Eric Rasmussen and Matthew Steggle, in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), Prologue, 13-14.

bottle-head, and out of his corky brain squeezeth out a pitiful-learned face, and is silent. (Prael., 158-72)

The disease all of these members of the “fair society” at Blackfriars share is the same that had infected the audience of the public theaters: the misguided assumption that their fashionable attire, facial hair, vocabulary, melancholic poses, or even their age gives them the authority to judge the play before them. They are infectious because, like the mustachioed gentlemen with a penchant for *The Spanish Tragedy*, they attempt to pass their judgment off on those around them. But they lack the internal qualification that would give them authority to judge Jonson: they have more clothes, beard, stomach, or booze than brains.

The foolish courtiers in the audience parallel the foolish courtiers in play, who similarly censor what or whomever they encounter, despite their lack of learning. At times their judgment is harmlessly absurd, such as when Amorphus (the traveler) dismisses Lucian’s obviously fantastic *True History* as factually inaccurate: “I will believe my own travels before all the Lucians of Europe. He doth feed you with fictions and leasings” (1.4.17-18). More often, however, their foolish judgment is directed towards the only character in the play who actually has the learning and inward merit to censor the other characters: Criticus, the poor scholar whom Hedon derides as a “whoreson bookworm, a candle-waster” (3.2.2) and whom Anaides declares “understands no more than a schoolboy” (4.5.29). As with the fools in the audience, the authority of their judgment is undermined by their character—by their lack of learning or inward merit:

Criticus: But when I remember
 ’Tis Hedon and Anaides, alas, then,
 I think but what they are, and am not stirred:
 The one, a light voluptuous reveller,

The other, a strange arrogating puff;
 Both impudent and ignorant enough;
 That talk, as they are wont, not as I merit,
 Traduce by custom as most dogs do bark,
 Do nothing out of judgement, but disease,
 Speak ill because they never could speak well. (3.3.22-31)⁶⁷

The courtiers'—like the audience's—uninformed criticism of the satirist is thus a product of disease, not qualified judgment, and in fact it paradoxically becomes evidence of the satirist's ultimate merit: “so they be ill men, / If they spake worse ‘twere better, for of such / To be dispraised is the most perfect praise” (3.3.14-16). And Criticus, as a good Stoic, is able to remain impervious to the “lean idle sleights” of such “Poor piteous gallants”: “Why should I care what every dor doth buzz / In credulous ears? It is a crown to me / That the best judgements can report me wronged, / Them liars, and their slanders impudent” (3.3.3, 8-11).

Without any assurance that “the best judgements” would be in his audience, however, Jonson again defends his satiric enterprise by creating his own intra-textual judges. This time, however, the judges are gods, not men, and they judge the character of the satirist rather than the quality of his poetic creation. Mercury's assessment of Criticus is so idealized that it is worth quoting at length:

A creature of a most perfect and divine temper; one in whom the humours and

⁶⁷ Numerous critics have taken Hedon and Anaides to be satirical personations of Marston and Dekker, respectively, because Dekker quoted these lines in *Satiromastix* (1.2.153-8). It's tempting to consider the implications of Marston as a “reveller,” as it could point as much to Marston's involvement in the Inns of Court revels as well as his general behavior about town, and because it seems to lend credibility to those who want to read Quadratus's jovial hedonism in *What You Will* as a celebratory self-portrait. But in fact there's no compelling reason to associate these characters who are so clearly drawn from formal verse satires (Hedon, like Fastidious Brisk, as the gallant about town; Anaides, like Carlo Buffone, as the shameless detractor) with Marston and Dekker. Dekker may have quoted these lines to show Jonson's willingness to say anything in order to detract from those who criticized him rather than to draw direct personal parallels between Hedon and Crispinus or between Anaides and Demetrius.

elements are peaceably met without emulation of precedence. He is neither too fantastically melancholy, too slowly phlegmatic, too lightly sanguine, or too rashly choleric, but in all so composed and ordered as it is clear Nature was about some full work; she did more than make a man when she made him. His discourse is like his behaviour, uncommon but not unpleasing; he is prodigal of neither. He strives rather to be that which men call judicious than to be thought so; and is so truly learned that he affects not to show it. He will think and speak his thought both freely, but as distant from depraving any other man's merit as proclaiming his own. For his valour, 'tis such that he dares as little to offer an injury as receive one. In sum, he hath a most ingenious and sweet spirit, a sharp and seasoned wit, a straight judgement, and a strong mind, constant and unshaken. Fortune could never break him or make him less. He counts it his pleasure to despise pleasures, and is more delighted with good deeds than goods. It is a competency to him that he can be virtuous. He doth neither covet nor fear; he hath too much reason to do either – and that commends all things to him. (2.3.93-109)

As most critics have noticed, this is less a Jonsonian self-portrait than a description of his ideal poet. But it is also, importantly, a defense of the satirist against those who, like Mitis in *Every Man Out*, thought the satirist was humourous, rash, and “transported with the violence / Of [his] strong thoughts” (*EMO*, Ind. 45-6). Jonson's ideal satirist is balanced and composed, not humourous; deliberate and stoical, not rash; strong, sharp, and willing to speak his mind, not violent. Above all, Jonson's satirist is a virtuous judge of his own and others' merit. This is how Cynthia, both goddess and queen, judges Criticus: “Our eye doth read thee, now, our Criticus; / Whom learning, virtue, and our favour last, / Exempteth from the gloomy multitude” (5.3.31-3).

It is, of course, a supreme act of wish-fulfillment for Jonson to imagine the queen bestowing her favor upon his ideal poet/satirist, but it is also a central part of Jonson's defense of the satirist in *Cynthia's Revels*. The ideal Jonsonian satirist is an instrument of the monarch's authority. If Cynthia knows that "follies" have "crept into her palace" (4.6.40-1), she is only able to recognize them for what they are through the satirist's masque: as Criticus acknowledges, he is "the author in some sort, / To work [the fools'] knowledge into Cynthia's sight" (5.5.212-13). By giving Criticus the power to punish the fools he has exposed, furthermore, Cynthia both licenses the satirist as an officer of the state and condones satirical punishment as long as it falls within appropriate limitations: "Impose what pains you please. / Th'incurable cut off, the rest reform; / Remembering ever what we first decreed, / Since revels were proclaimed, let now none bleed" (5.5.183-5). And as in *Every Man Out*, Jonson again demonstrates his belief in satirical efficacy. The fools submit to Criticus' authority and, at the well of knowledge, will be "purged of [their] present maladies" in order to "become / Such as [they] fain would seem," cured of their humours as well as their diseased judgment and fit to return to Cynthia's presence (5.5.242-5).

The political alignment of the satirist with the monarch parallels Jonson's formal alignment of satire with the masque in *Cynthia's Revels*. No longer a purified form of comedy "accommodated to the correction of manners" (*EMO*, 3.1.416), satire has now become entertainment fit for a queen, both celebrating her virtue and upholding her power. There is of course a masque within *Cynthia's Revels*, part of the solemn revels that have been proclaimed to celebrate Cynthia's magnanimity and reassert her authority in response to the "black and envious slanders hourly breathed against her for her divine justice on Actaeon" (1.1.68-9). According to Criticus' invention, the characters come into Cynthia's presence disguised as their neighboring virtues: Philautia (Self-Love) comes in disguised as Storge (Natural Affection), Moria (Folly)

comes in disguised as Simplicity; Hedon (Pleasure) comes in disguised as Eupathes (Enjoying Good Things), Asotus (the Prodigal) comes in disguised as Eucolos (Benevolent), and so on. These disguises only serve to highlight their own foolishness, for when they unmask at Cynthia's behest they become painfully aware of their insufficiency and are eager to submit to Criticus' censure. As Criticus declares, "vice / Is like a fury to the vicious mind, / And turns delight itself to punishment" (5.5.217-19).

In fact, the entirety of *Cynthia's Revels* is a masque.⁶⁸ All of the characters are either gods or embodiments of abstract virtues or vices; even Criticus, the satirist-hero, is the embodiment of proper judgment. The long descriptions of characters by Mercury and Cupid fit more with masque than with comedy, as does the almost complete lack of a plot. The first four acts of the play are more or less an extended anti-masque, as the entire system of rewards has been turned upside-down. Criticus, "Who, like a circle bounded in itself, / Contains as much as man in fullness may" (5.3.19-20), lacks favor and is openly scorned by the foolish courtiers, who swell in self-importance as they wait for their pages to return from the Fountain of Self-Love. Lady Argurion—money—"affects not" young students, poets, or philosophers, but "loves a player well, and a lawyer infinitely, but your fool above all" (2.3.131-4). Even Arete—virtue herself—is so scorned at court that she is "scarce able to buy herself a gown" (Prael., 69). But Cynthia's entrance in the fifth act restores order and "Respect of majesty" (4.6.24): she castigates the fools for their "lewd boldness" and abuse of her lenity (5.5.141-5), represses dissent over her punishment of Actaeon, elevates virtue, and bestows her favor upon the deserving Criticus. By aligning satire with the court masque, Jonson figures the satirist as an instrument and an ally of the monarch, a defender of order, virtue, and majesty. He also implies that the only qualified

⁶⁸ This helps to explain why Bednarz's argument—that the Poets' War was a sustained negotiation between competing definitions of comedy—is insufficient.

judge of his work is the queen herself, when she sits in state at a court performance. Until then, his own judgment would have to suffice. “To crave your favours with a begging knee, / Were to distrust the writer’s faculty,” the Epilogue says. “I’ll only speak what I have heard him say: / ‘By God, ’tis good, and if you like’t, you may’” (13-14, 19-20).

As with *Every Man Out*, there are problems with Jonson’s defense of the satirist in *Cynthia’s Revels*. Criticus is obviously an idealized type, but it is difficult to avoid seeing him simultaneously as an authorial self-representation. Criticus, like Jonson imagined himself to be, is a neglected scholar-satirist; he fills largely the same role as Asper in *Every Man Out*; and his appeal for Cynthia’s favor mirrors Jonson’s own appeal for Elizabeth’s favor. Jonson carefully distinguishes between self-love and his Storge, or self-knowledge, but his depiction of the satirist as a virtuous and almost god-like judge threatens to collapse that distinction. As in Criticus’ masque, Jonson’s presentation of his own Storge looks a bit like Philautia in disguise, and Criticus’ stoic imperviousness to criticism looks like wishful thinking: the frequency with which Criticus asserts his ability to “shake [others’s] spite off with a careless smile” (3.3.2) suggests anything but stoic detachment. Even in his idealistic representation of the satirist as a good man, Jonson can never quite conceal the fact that the satirist is threatened by the objects of his derision.

More problematically, Jonson’s depiction of the satirist as an instrument of state power may unintentionally point to the monarch’s insufficiency. Although Arete claims that Cynthia holds “true intelligence what follies / Had crept into her palace” (4.6.40-1), the play itself seems to suggest that she depends upon the exposure offered through the satirist’s masque. Indeed, Cynthia is taken aback that such fools have infiltrated her court while her deserving followers, Arete and Criticus, have been neglected. Finally, more than one critic has noticed that the

Actaeon episode opens Cynthia to criticism as much as it demonstrates the satirist's ability to repress dissent. Mercury may dismiss Echo's complaint about Cynthia's cruelty as the impotent babbling of "idle worldings, merely made of voice," who "Censure the powers above them" (1.2.94-5), but Cynthia's defensive assertion that "A goddess did it, therefore it was good" (5.5.112) is hardly satisfying. To make matters more ambiguous, Actaeon's crime has all-too-clear parallels with that of the Earl of Essex: like the Earl upon his return from Ireland, Actaeon's crime was to "enter" Diana's "sacred bowers / And hallowed places with impure aspect / Most lewdly to pollute" (5.5.105-7). If *Cynthia's Revels* was performed after February 1601, then Cynthia's severe punishment of Actaeon would have unavoidably—and dangerously—reflected poorly upon Elizabeth's execution of Essex for treason.⁶⁹ Even as he attempted to depict the satirist as an instrument of state power, then, Jonson unintentionally revealed the inherently destabilizing aspects of satirical discourse.

* * *

Jonson's next play, *Poetaster: or The Arraignment*, is, as Tom Cain reminds us, about more than just the Poets' War. It is clearly a serious play about the poet in society, "the first and still one of the most powerful statements of an Augustan literary programme in English, and a comedy constructed with a deftness, intelligence and humour."⁷⁰ From the opening scene in Ovid's study until its final lines, *Poetaster* is about the power of poetry to reshape the world, uphold legitimate authority, and preserve the living spirit of the poet in immortality long after his body has died. It imagines a court comprised largely of poets, in which the emperor's "high

⁶⁹ As Janet Clare suggests, "The allegorical representation of Essex's fateful rebellion permits a degree of freedom in its telling and interpretation. Echo's pity for Actaeon coupled with Cynthia's preoccupation with the event and her resentful awareness that she has been harshly judged conveys an unease at the fate of the Queen's erstwhile favourite" (Janet Clare, "Jonson's 'Comical Satires' and the Art of Courtly Compliment," in *Refashioning Ben Jonson: Gender, Politics, and the Jonsonian Canon*, ed. Julie Sanders [New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998], 28-47; 37).

⁷⁰ Cain (ed.), *Poetaster*, 1.

grace to poesy” stands in opposition to “the dull detractions / Of leaden souls, who, for the vain assumings / Of some, quite worthless of her sovereign wreaths, / Contain her worthiest prophets in contempt” (5.1.33-7). Caesar Augustus dismisses “the discords of those jangling rhymers” as a threat to “all true arts and learning” (5.3.544-7), welcomes the “wholesome sharpness” of his poet-counselors far above the “servile fawns” of his flatterers and informers (5.1.94-5), and invites Virgil to sit at his right hand, Christ-like, as both laureate and surrogate (5.3.2-5). More clearly than any other play, *Poetaster* expresses Jonson’s conviction that a true poet must be a virtuous man, that true poetry is “of all the faculties on earth, / The most abstract and perfect” (5.1.18-20), and that of any man alive he is the most deserving of the laureate’s crown.

But *Poetaster* is also about the Poets’ War. Even as Virgil’s recitation of the *Aeneid* in front of Caesar in Act 5 is a transcendent moment, an illustration of the power of poetry to keep alive the images and ideals of an empire that had long since crumbled, it is also a moment entrenched in the lasciviousness and envy of Elizabethan society. The passage he reads addresses both Aeneas’s lust for Dido and the monstrousness of Rumor, both of which, as Gabriele Bernhard-Jackson notes, thematize Elizabethan threats to *Poetaster*’s Augustan ideals: “unregulated eros” and “unregulated report or hearsay.”⁷¹ Ovid’s worship of his beloved as a goddess and his conviction that “The truest wisdom silly men can have / Is dotage on the follies of their flesh” (4.9.108-9) leads him to abuse his poetic invention in a blasphemous and orgiastic banquet; his exile from Caesar’s court is difficult and even emotional, but it is ultimately a necessary protection against the contaminating potential of “amorous pleasures” (4.9.99). The threat of envy and detraction, malicious application and rumor is more widespread throughout the play, though it is primarily directed at Horace for his satires. *Histrion*, the actor, claims that Horace “has one of the most overflowing villainous wits in Rome” and will “slander any man

⁷¹ Bernhard-Jackson (ed.), *Poetaster*, 5.2.56n.

that breathes” (3.4.273-5); Tucca declares that Horace”carries poison in his teeth, and a sting in his tail” (4.3.98-9); and Lupus accuses Horace of libel for an unfinished emblem he has found in Horace’s study (5.3.35).

The historical event of Ovid’s banishment serendipitously reflected Jonson’s rejection of romance throughout the comical satires as well as the broader satirical rejection of Ovidian amatory in the late 1590s. More importantly, the envy and detraction aimed at Horace for his satires reflected the envy and detraction aimed at Jonson himself. And in fact most of the charges leveled against Horace in the play are not really the charges that Horace defends himself against in Satire 2.2, which Jonson would translate and insert into the play in the Folio edition. Nor are they even charges found in texts opposing satire throughout the 1590s—the profanity, unprofitability, and inefficacy of satiric speech, the immorality of the satirist himself, or the instability caused by satirical controversy. Instead, they are charges specifically leveled against Jonson. Horace is nothing but humours and observation,” Demetrius declares (4.3.89), and Tucca refers to him as “Humours, Horace, that goat-footed envious slave” (4.7.6-7). Demetrius taxes Horace “for his arrogancy and his impudence in commending his own things, and for his translating” (4.3.103-4), and for attacking his patrons behind their backs: “he keeps gallants company, / Whom I would wish in time should him fear, / Lest after they buy repentance too dear” (5.3.273-5). In *Every Man Out*, Asper was a representation of Jonson insofar as he was the authorial and satiric mouthpiece; in *Cynthia’s Revels*, Criticus was Jonson’s satiric ideal; but in *Poetaster*, Horace is Jonson, or at least as close to Jonson as a character bearing the name of the Roman satirist could be.⁷²

And even as the play attacks malicious interpretation, envy, and detraction in the abstract,

⁷² Unlike the historical Horace, who had fled from battle against Octavius Caesar and Mark Antony, the Horace of *Poetaster* is as valiant as Jonson imagined himself to be: “take heed how you give this out,” one of the Pyrgi warns Tucca; “Horace is a man of the sword” (4.7.13-14).

it also attacks Marston and Dekker. Marston had probably provoked Jonson's ire with *What You Will*, performed sometime in early 1601, which alludes to *Cynthia's Revels* on more than one occasion and mocks Jonson's arrogance and satirical raillery in the figure of Lampatho Doria. Lampatho is a poor scholar and a satirist, "an arrogant od impudent, / A blushles fore-head only out of scence / Of his owne wants" and his own rhetorical prowess: "Doth he once write, *O Jesu* admirable / Cryes out *Symplicius*: then *Lampatho* spittes, / And sayes faith 'tis good."⁷³ In *Poetaster* Jonson attacks Marston in the character of Rufus Crispinus, a parasite and poetaster who conspires to defame Horace. Curiously, Jonson figures Marston in contradictory terms, as both "plagiary" (4.3.83) and outrageous innovator. As a poetaster who steals Horace's poetry to pass it off as his own, Crispinus is one of the "servile imitating spirits" Jonson had attacked since the end of *Every Man In* as a threat to the material standing of true poets and as a threat to the general opinion of poetry itself. As a preposterous coiner of new terms, Crispinus threatens the Virgilian poetic ideal of matter before words (cf. 5.3.488). In the play's final scene, Crispinus is found guilty of calumny, given a pill to purge him of these "wild, outlandish terms" (5.3.486)—most of which have been traced to *The Scourge of Villainy*, *Jack Drum's Entertainment*, and *Antonio's Revenge*—prescribed a healthy diet of authors, and sent away to seclusion in a dark room as though he were criminally insane. Horace also sentences Demetrius—"a dresser about the town" (3.4.261) who has conspired with Crispinus and the adults players in the latter half of the play to defame Horace—for calumny, though he subjects Demetrius to a slightly lesser sentence than he had imposed upon Crispinus: Demetrius is merely sentenced to wear a fool's cap and coat.⁷⁴

⁷³ John Marston, *What You Will*, in *The Plays of John Marston*, Vol. 2, ed. H. Harvey Wood (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1938), 2.250, 2.246. As with *Histriomastix* and *Jack Drum*, this edition lacks line numbers.

⁷⁴ Critics of the play have universally associated Demetrius with Dekker—indeed, Dekker himself apparently did—but how he became involved is not at all clear. According to a critical tradition that dates back to Gifford, Jonson

Jonson also attacks the players of the adult acting companies performing at the public theaters (or “common” stages), who act as conspirators, along with Crispinus and Demetrius, in a plot to defame Horace. The source of Jonson’s antipathy for the players is not immediately clear. There had been hints in the earlier comical satires that Jonson was asserting control over his own drama as a “poet” in opposition to the disruptive improvisation of fools and the distracting fame of leading actors like Burbage and Alleyn. This connects to the frustrations of university-educated poets in the 1590s who found themselves writing for players—“Puppets,” in Robert Greene’s dismissive terms, “that spake from our mouths, those Anticks garnisht in our colours”⁷⁵—instead of patrons. Jonson’s move from the Globe to Blackfriars, where he would be guaranteed more or less complete control over the boy actors and every assurance that credit for a successful performance would be given to the playwright, was part of what Richard Helgerson has identified as a larger shift from a player’s theater to a poet’s theater.⁷⁶ But aside from a few

somehow learned that Dekker intended to write a play attacking him and therefore rushed to preempt the attack, finishing *Poetaster*, as Livor indicates in the Prologue, in a mere mere “fifteen weeks” (14). But several recent critics have questioned this narrative (Steggle, *Wars of the Theaters*, 52; Bergeron, 140; and Bernhard-Jackson [ed.], *Poetaster*, 7-8). Livor plainly refers to “fifteen weeks” as though it is a long time, not an unusually brief period, and nothing about the play suggests that it is rushed. Indeed, Jonson’s belabored Augustan play stands in stark contrast to *Satiromastix*, in which Dekker apparently improvised a response to Jonson by inserting characters from *Poetaster* into the subplot of a tragedy (or perhaps tragicomedy) about King William II and Sir Walter Terill. The idea of Jonson preempting Dekker in fact goes against everything we know about their composition speeds: whereas Jonson “scarce [brought] forth a play a year” (“Apologetical Dialogue,” 181), Dekker was incredibly prolific over a very short period of time, writing or collaborating on at least three plays in each of the years 1599 to 1601. What’s more, we have nothing at all in *Poetaster* to connect Demetrius Fannius to Dekker other than Tucca’s remark that Demetrius is a playwright whom the players have hired “to abuse Horace and bring him in in a play with all his gallants” (3.4.260-2), a role which Dekker subsequently filled by writing *Satiromastix*. It is possible—although no critic has, to my knowledge, suggested this—that Jonson revised *Poetaster* in the wake of *Satiromastix*, at the same time that he added the lengthy “Apologetical Dialogue.” This would help to explain the deep interconnections between the two plays, particularly the ways that Jonson’s earlier play seems to anticipate precisely the criticisms that will be made of him in the later one. Such a revision would not necessarily have been extensive, and we know of several different occasions when Jonson made such revisions before a play was published (e.g., *Every Man In*). It is also possible that the animosity between Jonson and Dekker was personal, involving the theatrical and social circles to which they both belonged. This is indeed the sense one gets from *Satiromastix*, which ridicules Jonson’s behavior in the theater and in society. The two clearly knew each other personally—they had collaborated (possibly with Marston) for Henslowe on *Robert II, King of Scots* in September 1599—and their animosity may have stemmed from something that happened offstage.

⁷⁵ Robert Greene, *Greene’s Groatworth of Wit, Bought with a Million of Repentance* (London, 1592), sig. E1^v.

⁷⁶ See Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), especially Chapter 5.

remarks connecting the public stage “on the other side of the Tiber” with a repertory full of “ribaldry” (3.4.153-9) and the actors themselves with the prostitution of boys (3.4.227) and women (3.4.249-54)—thus connecting the public stage with Ovidian amatory—the hostility towards the adult actors in *Poetaster* appears intensely personal. This is largely connected to their role as informers: in the Prologue, Livor imagines that “players” and “poet-apes” in the audience could help her to “wrest, / Pervert, and poison all they hear or see / With senseless glosses and allusions” (35-40), and later it is Aesop, a player, who suggests the libelous interpretation of Horace’s emblem to Asinius Lupus. This again seems to point to something offstage, something we do not or perhaps even cannot know. Perhaps, as David Riggs suggests, Jonson was still sensitive over the *Isle of Dogs* affair;⁷⁷ perhaps a player had informed against Jonson for potentially libelous remarks in *Cynthia’s Revels*; perhaps there was some animosity (as critics have long suspected) in Jonson’s departure from the Lord Chamberlain’s Men after *Every Man Out*.

What is clear is that Jonson figures his attack on Marston, Dekker, and the players as an act of self-defense. By ridiculing Marston as a plagiarist and poetaster, by ridiculing Dekker as a poor envious play-dresser, and by ridiculing the players as licentious and malicious informers, Jonson works to uphold his own satirical authority and to undermine the legitimacy of their judgment of him. If *Every Man Out* was a defense of satire and *Cynthia’s Revels* was a defense of the satirist, *Poetaster* was a defense of Jonson himself. Indeed, the original title of the play—*The Arraignment*—refers as much to Horace as it does to Crispinus and Demetrius, as much to Jonson as it does to Marston and Dekker.⁷⁸ Indeed, Jonson manages to turn the trial of Crispinus

⁷⁷ David Riggs, *Ben Jonson: A Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 76.

⁷⁸ Tom Cain suggests persuasively that the original title also points to “*The arraignment of 1601 – indeed, of the whole decade[:]* that of Essex and Southampton the previous February.” Asinius Lupus’s interrogation of Histrio in Act 4, Cain argues, would have been recognized by the Inns of Court audience as an allusion to Lord Chief Justice

and Demetrius into a trial of Horace, as Tibullus charges both specifically with “calumny”—the legal term for “*False* and malicious representation of the words or actions of others, calculated to injure their representations”⁷⁹—and then goes about to prove them guilty by proving that Horace is innocent of their accusations. As evidence, Tibullus reads poems taxing Horace by both Crispinus and Demetrius. The former, in perfect imitation of Marston’s fustian verse, declares that Horace’s “clumsy chilblained judgement . . . / Magnificates his merit, and bespawls / The conscious time with humorous foam,” brawling “as if his organons of sense would crack / The sinews of my patience” (5.3.243-7). The latter, in far simpler terms, labels Horace “A critic that all the world bescumbers / With satirical humours, and lyrical numbers / . . . And for the most part, himself doth advance, / With much self-love, and more arrogance” (5.3.260-1, 263-4). The question is not whether Crispinus and Demetrius wrote these lines; the question is whether or not they are accurate depictions of Horace.

Once again Jonson creates judges within his play in order to judge himself. The first is Caesar, a “Fair and just” opponent of those who fail to rule their lives by knowledge and reason, a determined advocate of “Sweet poesy,” “of all the faculties on earth, / The most abstract and perfect,” and a committed dispenser of rewards “As if his hand had eyes and soul in it: / With worth and judgement” (5.3.115, 5.1.17-19, 5.1.60-1). Seated in state, the ultimate chair of judgment, Caesar dismisses those who have attacked Horace as “despised objects” and “jangling rhymers” who “Bring all true arts and learning in contempt” (5.3.5545-9).

The second judge is Virgil: poet laureate, humanist counselor to Caesar, and true judge of

Popham’s interrogation of Augustine Phillips in the wake of the Lord Chamberlain’s Men’s performance of *Richard II* on the eve of the Essex rebellion. Jonson may well have been supportive of Essex; he was almost certainly critical of those who opposed Essex and informed against him. Cain, “‘Satyres, That Girde and Fart at the Time’: *Poetaster* and the Essex Rebellion,” in *Refashioning Ben Jonson: Gender, Politics and the Jonsonian Canon*, ed. Julie Sanders (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 48-70.

⁷⁹ *OED* 1, emphasis mine.

merit. Virgil defends “the wholesome, sharp morality / Or modest anger of a satiric spirit” against “the sinister application / Of the malicious, ignorant, and base Interpreter” (5.3.115-20). He finds Horace innocent of “impudence, self-love, and arrogance” in astoundingly impudent, narcissistic, and arrogant terms:

where there is a true and perfect merit
 There can be no dejection, and the scorn
 Of humble baseness oftentimes so works
 In a high soul upon the grosser spirit
 That to his bleared and offended sense
 There seems a hideous fault blazed in the object,
 When only the disease is in his eyes. (5.3.304-10)

Horace’s accusers only charge him with arrogance, in other words, because they do not share in his merit and therefore cannot recognize it in others. If *they* were to praise their own work the way Horace has, “In them it would appear inflation” (5.3.17). Horace’s own self-assessment, on the other hand, cannot be arrogance because it is accurate.

Virgil’s general defense of satire is in fact a judgment upon Horace. Unlike “fools or jerking pedants, / Players, or such like buffoonery wits” who “Tickle base, vulgar ears in their despite,” Horace’s “sharpness” is “most excusable” because it is “forced out of a suffering virtue / Oppressed with the licence of the time” (5.3.3324-30). Cleared of all charges, Horace is free to punish the poetasters who have “most ignorantly, foolishly, and . . . maliciously gone about to deprave and calumniate” his “person and writings” (5.3.188-9). Jonson has both answered his critics and prevented further censure by judging himself.

In his “comical satires,” Jonson thus translated many of the well-known aspects and

themes of the recently-banned formal verse satire to the stage. Although he attacked romantic comedy, players, and other playwrights, his most significant contribution to the controversy was not his redefinition of comedy but his defense of satire, the satirist, and himself against a popular audience who, he determined, had turned against all three. In doing so, he upheld satirical efficacy, the morality of the satirist, and satirical authority itself.

3. Judging Jonson? Marston's Satirical Skepticism

Nobody quite knows what to make of John Marston. His poetry is simultaneously pornographic and puritanical in its anger towards the ubiquitous lechery of mankind. His drama is too absurd to be tragic and too desperately serious to be comic. His language is overwrought and obscure, crabbed and jarring, garish and outlandish, yet still somehow musical, beautiful in its deliberate fustian ugliness. He seems at one moment a neo-Stoic and at another a whimsical Epicure. He claims to "beare the scourge of iust *Rhamnusia*" (*SV*, 1.0.1), the god of righteous indignation, yet he seems indifferent to the outcome of his whipping. He renounces satire on more than one occasion but returns to his cankered muse again and again. And as far as anyone can tell, he both idealized and despised his best friend and greatest enemy, Ben Jonson, with whom he collaborated frequently and quarreled endlessly.

The few critics who write about Marston come to wildly different conclusions.⁸⁰ Anthony

⁸⁰ Although there has been a recent resurgence of interest in Marston's drama and there are apparently plans for an Oxford complete works, I can count on one hand the number of monographs about Marston published since Finkelppearl's *John Marston of the Middle Temple* (1967). This may be influenced by the limited market for works of criticism that do not include "Shakespeare" in the title, but I think it is as much a result of Marston's tendency to alienate his readers. The Victorians found him perverted and immoral; more than one early twentieth century commentator wondered whether he were psychologically disturbed. This is really too bad. Of all the writers I have covered in this dissertation—and there have been a lot of them—Marston is the most engaging, surprising, perplexing, and endlessly fascinating.

Caputi insists that Marston is a neo-Stoic;⁸¹ Arnold Davenport claims he is clearly a Calvinist.⁸² Philip Finkelpearl claims that *What You Will* is one of the most pessimistic plays of the Elizabethan era;⁸³ Matthew Steggle finds in the play Marston's joyful exuberance and wholehearted embrace of Epicureanism, seen most clearly in the play's witty authorial mouthpiece, Quadratus.⁸⁴ Jonathan Dollimore and Rick Bowers both see Marston as a radical innovator of form, style, and language;⁸⁵ James Bednarz depicts Marston as a slavish imitator of Shakespeare.⁸⁶ Bednarz argues that in the Induction to *What You Will*, Doricus unequivocally speaks for Marston's viewpoint when he declares that the rules of art are based on pleasure, not pleasure on the rules of art;⁸⁷ Rebecca Yearling argues that Marston's endorsement of this view is at best equivocal.⁸⁸

Most of the critics who write about Marston come to him through his quarrel with Jonson. They go looking for the source of Jonson's remark to Drummond that "Marston represented him in the stage,"⁸⁹ and they find it, over and over again, in *Histriomastix*, *Jack Drum's Entertainment*, and *What You Will*. This frequently looks like an exercise in confirmation bias, as they overemphasize aspects of characters such as Chrisoganus, Brabant Sr., and Lampatho Doria that fit with Jonson and either downplay or ignore everything that does not. They also assume that the characters who castigate these personations of Jonson speak for

⁸¹ Anthony Caputi, *John Marston, Satirist* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1961).

⁸² See Davenport (ed.), *The Poems of John Marston*.

⁸³ See Finkelpearl, Chapter X.

⁸⁴ Matthew Steggle, "Varieties of fantasy in *What You Will*," in *The Drama of John Marston*, ed. T.F. Wharton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 45-59.

⁸⁵ Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*, 3rd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), esp. Chapter 2; Bowers, *Radical Comedy*, esp. Chapter 6.

⁸⁶ Bednarz, *Shakespeare and the Poets' War*, 158.

⁸⁷ Bednarz makes this argument in *Shakespeare and the Poets' War* and again, even more forcefully in his reply to Yearling: James Bednarz, "John Marston's Induction to *What You Will*," *Ben Jonson Journal* 17 (Nov. 2010), 293-308.

⁸⁸ Rebecca Yearling, "John Marston's *What You Will* and the War of the Theaters," *Ben Jonson Journal* 13 (2006), 109-23.

⁸⁹ Jonson, *Informations*, 218.

Marston in the same way Asper, Criticus, and Horace speak (with only slight qualification) for Jonson. They tend to read Marston, in other words, in the same way that they would read Jonson. But there are problems with this, as the characters who are supposed to be personations of Jonson frequently do not look very much like him at all. As Finkelppearl points out, “Brabant Sr. is shown to be a foolish gallant proud of his gentry, inadequate with words, and wealthy. He is not a writer, nor does he possess any of the distinguishing marks which make the portrait in *Satiromastix* so unmistakable.”⁹⁰ Quadratus, who scoffs at the Jonson-like Lampatho Doria in *What You Will* and is frequently held up as Marston’s authorial mouthpiece, probably has even less to do with Marston: his brand of festive Epicureanism is the subject of derision in Marston’s earlier satires, and upon closer inspection he appears to be a figure of temptation in a court gone to hell. In fact, a careful reading of Marston’s work reveals that Marston is far less interested in upholding his own viewpoint than he is in testing the limits of others’. If Jonson’s plays are statements, Marston’s are questions⁹¹—questions to which there are no answers and for which there are no authorial guides.

Paradoxically, those critics who read Marston the same way they would read Jonson focus on Marston’s opposition to Jonson at the expense of the extensive similarities between the two. Marston tends to be figured as Jonson’s opposite along whatever axis is most convenient. If Jonson ridicules “fantasticness” in *Cynthia’s Revels*, Marston embraces it in *What You Will*; if Jonson holds up his adherence to artistic principles as the baseline from which he demands to be judged, Marston holds up pleasure as the basis of comedy; if Jonson asserts the authority of the poet, Marston asserts the authority of the genteel audience. But in fact—as only a few readers have recognized—Marston has quite a lot in common with Jonson. Both are interested in

⁹⁰ Finkelppearl, 138 n19.

⁹¹ Here I am drawing on Joel Altman’s *Tudor Play of Mind: Rhetorical Inquiry and the Development of Elizabethan Drama* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

Stoicism, neither have much patience for puritans, both scorn the players and the common theaters, and neither particularly cares for the popular audience or popular “opinion.” Jonson and Marston almost certainly had a personal relationship as well, for even though Jonson in 1619 suggested that he had “many quarrels with Marston” and on at least one occasion “beat him, and took his pistol from him,”⁹² in 1599 Weever linked them together in a laudatory epigram:

“*Marston*, thy Muse enharbours *Horace* vaine, / . . . And thine embuskin’d *Iohnson* doth retaine / So rich a stile, and wondrous gallant spirit.”⁹³

Numerous such parallels can be drawn between their works. As I pointed out above, the Induction to *Every Man Out* echoes *Histriomastix*; the Induction to *What You Will*, in return, is incredibly similar to that of *Every Man Out*, as three characters debate the nature of comedy and the relationship between the playwright and the audience, one of whom slips into the familiar cadence of the railing satirist. And if Jonson’s *Every Man Out* is structured like Marston’s formal verse satire, Marston’s *Antonio and Mellida* is structured like Jonson’s *Every Man Out*.⁹⁴ characters reveal themselves as humourous and parade across the stage while Feliche, the stoic-satirist figure, mocks them. In this play Marston even mocks the same overwrought elocution that Jonson would later attack him for employing: the flatterer Forobosco speaks in obviously exaggerated terms, praising Rosaline’s “most graceful presence, applausive elocuty, amazing volubility, polished adoration, delicious affability,” and so on.⁹⁵ And like Jonson, Marston

⁹² Jonson, *Informations*, 216-17.

⁹³ John Weever, *Epigrammes in the Oldest Cut and Newest Fashion* (1599), ed. R.B. McKerrow (1911; repr. Stratford-Upon-Avon: Shakespeare Head Press, 1922), 6.11.1, 3-4. This epigram flips the conventional understanding of the relationship between Jonson and Marston on its head, as Jonson is clearly the “embuskin’d” tragedian, and Marston the Horatian satirist. One wonders if Jonson assumed the role of Horace in *Poetaster* as an act of defiant reappropriation. Weever also figures Marston as the more established writer, which undermines nearly everything Bednarz claims about Marston’s motivation for (supposedly) representing Jonson in *Histriomastix*.

⁹⁴ It is not ultimately clear which play was performed first. Jonson’s *EMO* was almost certainly performed at the Globe in the fall of 1599, and Marston’s *A&M* was probably performed in the same season at the newly-opened Paul’s theater.

⁹⁵ John Marston, *Antonio and Mellida*, ed. W. Reavley Gair (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991),

continually appeals to the judgment of a select, genteel audience, both in his formal verse satire and in his plays. In *The Scourge of Villainy*, Marston scorns “the blasting breath of each lewd Censurer” but welcomes those “diuiner wits, celestiall soules” who were worthy to judge his work” (*SV*, “In Lectores,” 58, 81); in the Prologue to *Antonio and Mellida*, he praises the “Select and most respected auditors” of the private playhouse (3); in the Prologue to *Jack Drum’s Entertainment*, he protests “all due respect and love / Unto this choise selected audience” (2.179); and in the Prologue to *What You Will*, he bows to “the faire proportion’d loves of witte, / To the just skale of even paized thoughts,” to “their gentle mindes, / That can as soone slight of, as finde a blemish” (11, 14-15). This sounds so much like Jonson, in fact, that W. David Kay wonders whether they quarreled because “they were competing in the same mode of literature and for the same audience.”⁹⁶

But there are, of course, differences between Jonson and Marston which extend beyond their competition for the genteel audience of the private theaters and beyond, in Kay’s terms, Jonson’s lack of tact.⁹⁷ The most significant difference in terms of the Poets’ War concerns their uses of and attitudes towards satire. While both men are interested in the literary and dramatic possibilities of satirical discourse, they disagree about the nature of the objects of their attack, about the relationship between satire and Stoicism, about the role of the satirist, and about the efficacy of satirical discourse. The radical skepticism that can be found in Marston’s poetic satires, as we shall see, has significant consequences for the way we should approach his early satirical plays and our understanding of his role in the Poets’ War.

2.1.110-12. Marston attacked overwrought language on a number of occasions. In *Certain Satires*, he mocked Hall for writing such obscure satire that even Oedipus would not be able to resolve such “*Sphinxian* riddles”: “O darknes palpable! Egiphts black night! / My wit is stricked blinde, hath lost his sight” (2.17, 21-2). In *The Scourge*, he mocks a character whose affectation exactly prefigures Jonson’s Clove in *Every Man Out*: “Here’s one, to get an vndereru’d repute / Of deepe deepe learning, all in fustian sute / Of ill-plac’d farre-fetch’d words attiereth / His period, that all sence forseweareth” (6.54-7).

⁹⁶ Kay, 54. David Riggs also recognizes this similarity (78), though he is clearly drawing on Kay.

⁹⁷ Kay, 54.

Although Jonson and Marston overlap significantly in terms of the objects of their attack—both lash out against the judgment of the popular audience, against the fools and fops and gallants strutting about town in their finery, against puritans, and against braggart soldiers—they figure these objects differently. Jonson’s Asper initially claims that the earth is “cracked with the weight of sin” and that he will “unmask . . . public vice” (*EMO*, Ind., 6, 20), but ultimately the objects of Jonson’s attack are not so much sins as humours, the puffed-up sense of self-worth on constant public display by posers and poetasters alike. Marston, on the other hand, is less interested in those “open naggs” whose private selves are already on public display than he is in the Janus-like figures whose public selves conceal their viciousness. “Come, come,” he urges his “humble Satyre,” “and snarle more darke at secrete sin, / Which in such Laborinths enwrapped bin, / That *Ariadne* I must craue thy ayde / To helpe me finde where this foule monster’s layd” (*CS*, 3.92-8). As all readers of Marston have recognized, the secret sin to which he returns again and again is lechery, the “all polluting euill” of “lewdnes” that has “Infect[ed] our soules” (*SV*, 3.119-20).

Whereas Jonson’s satirists triumphantly demonstrate their allegiance to reason over emotion and their ability to remain indifferent to detraction, Marston’s satirists repeatedly appeal to Stoicism as a lost or impossible ideal. Marston signs *Certain Satires* with “Epictetus,” the Stoic philosopher, and again in *The Scourge* declares “O *Epictetus*, I doe honour thee, / To thinke how rich thou wert in pouertie” (2.0.23-4), but at the same time he recognizes the absolute incompatibility of Stoic detachment and satirical engagement: “Let Custards quake, my rage must freely runne. / Preach not the Stoickes patience to me, / I hate no man, but mens impietie” (2.4-6). He looks back fondly upon those ancient days when “*Reason by prudence in her function / Had wont to tutor all our action*” (8.173-4), but he knows that he lives in a world

given over to “brutish pleasures” (*SV*, 11.213). In *SV* 11 he depicts the souls of England’s gallants starving and broken, “Scorn’d and reiected, thrust from out [their] seate[s],” crying out against their subjection to “filthy sensualitie,” and in vain “Egging” their masters “to proceed from this, / And get the substance of celestially blisse” (11.207, 231). In *SV* 8 the “chiefe preheminance” of “affection, will, [and] concupiscence” over reason is the universal condition of mankind:

What should I say? Lust hath confounded all,
The bright glosse of our intellectuall
Is fouly soyl’d. The wanton wallowing
In fond delights, and amorous dallying,
Hath dusk’d the fairest splendour of our soule:

Nothing now left, but carkas, lothsome, foule. (8.165-70)

Here the soul—“our Intellectual, / Compact of fire all celestially, / Invisible, immortal, and diuine”—has become fed up with its imprisonment in “Our aduerse body” and subjection to its “dungie, brutish, sensuall will,” and therefore has “closely slunk away,” leaving the body to be “ledde with senceless will, / (The which in reasons absence ruleth still).” Marston calls for “sacred *Synderisis*”—or conscience⁹⁸—to return and “Inspire our truncks,” but this is a recognizably hopeless appeal (8.185-214). The Stoic privilege of reason over emotion and the base desires of the body becomes an impossible ideal in a world so depraved that man’s “*Synderesis*” is “cold and dead” (*SV* 11.236).

Jonson and Marston also conceive of the role of the satirist in different terms. Like Hall’s satirists, Jonson’s satirists always occupy the moral and artistic high ground, from which they act

⁹⁸ “A name for that function or department of conscience which serves as a guide for conduct; conscience as directive of one’s actions” (*OED* “synterisis” 1a).

as judges of their own and others' merit. Their job is to purge fools of their humours by showing them how foolish these humours actually are, thus returning these fools to a better understanding of their own merit. Jonson's satirists judge but do not really punish; as Criticus explains, the vicious punish themselves: "vice / Is like a fury to the vicious mind, / And turns delight itself to punishment" (*CR*, 5.5.217-19). In Marston's depraved world there is no such high ground, and he repeatedly rejects others' claims to moral and artistic authority. This is in fact the source of Marston's quarrel with Hall, who in *Virgidemiarum* had not only claimed the moral authority to "Check the mis-ordered world" (1.1.24) and "wound, and strike, and pardon whom [he] list" (2.2.12) but also claimed the artistic authority to judge (and dismiss) the "worth-lesse Poetry" (1.1.26) of his peers. Marston attacks Hall for his judgment of "sencefull tollerable lines"—particularly religious poetry—which "better iudgements" had deemed "Exquisite": "Fie inconsiderate, it greueth me / An Academick should so senceles be. / Fond Censurer! Why should those mirrors seeme / So vile to thee?" (*CS*, 4.71-6). Marston associates Hall's antipathy to poetry with the more general puritanical opposition to fiction and poetry—"thus it is when pittty [i.e., 'petty'] Priscians / Will needs step vp to be Censorians" (*CS*, 4.103-4)—and he mocks Hall for assuming an impossible moral purity:

I cannot with swolne lines magnificate,
 Mine own poore worth, or as immaculate
 Task others rimes, as if no blot did staine,
 Nor blemish soile, my young Satyrick vaine. (*SV*, Proemium 2, 1-6)

Marston here mocks Hall's claim to moral authority and undercuts his own. He "adore[s]" the title of "Satyrist," but as a "dull-sprighted fat Boetian Boore," Marston can only "honour that Censorian seate" from afar (*CS*, 2.2-5). In a fallen world, in other words, the satirist himself is

fallen, and therefore cannot assume the moral authority to judge others. That authority rests with God alone.⁹⁹

Whereas Jonson's satirists judge and heal, Marston's satirists expose and punish. Marston figures the satirist as a "second *Theseus*" (CS 3.100), able to discover the monstrous Minotaur of dark and secret sin in its labyrinth, or, more frequently, as a second "*Lynceus*" (CS, "Author in Prayse," 31), able to see through walls, trees, and even the disguises used by the gods to conceal their "brutish lechery." "Walke but in duskie night, / With *Linceus* eyes, and to thy piercing sight / Disguised Gods will show, in pesants shape, / Prest to commit some execrable rape" (SV, 2.23-6, 29). The satirist's task for Marston is thus to "plow" up "The hidden entrailles of ranke villanie" (SV, 1.0.16-17) and to "scourge poluting beastlines" (SV, 3.0.2). But like Hamlet, who recognizes that as the "scourge" of the Danish court he is both the minister and the subject of divine punishment (3.4.157-9), Marston is aware that in punishing others he punishes himself. He knows that his subject-matter contaminates his poetry—"Out on this salt humour, lechers dropsie," he declares knowingly, "Fie, it doth soyle my chaster poesie" (SV, 11.153-4)—and that in exposing the secret sins of his fallen generation he necessarily exposes his own. By "wantonly display[ing] / The Salaminian titillations, / Which tickle vp our leud Priapians" in *The Metamorphosis of Pigmaliions Image*, Marston's "lines" are "Right in the swaggering humor of these times" ("Author in Prayse," 4-8)—guilty, that is, of the same beastly lechery and luxuriousness they attack.¹⁰⁰ The same is true of *The Scourge*: by attacking lechery, Marston knows, he both fills his poem with lechery and reveals his own damning fascination with it.

⁹⁹ In making this claim—for which there is little to no direct positive evidence—I am more or less agreeing with Finkelppearl's reading of Marston's Calvinism.

¹⁰⁰ Marston's denial that his mind was "ranck'd in *Pahian* showes" when he wrote *Pigmalion* has more to do with intent than with the culpability of his performance. He openly admits that *Pigmalion* is "nastie stuffe" and "maggot-tained lewd corruption," but he denies that he intended "some female soule to moue" or "in melting poesie" to "pamper itching sensualitie" (6.3-4, 18-20). The point, he claims, was "to note the odious spot / And blemish that deforms the lineaments / Of moderne Poesies habiliments" (6.24-6).

Finally, Jonson and Marston disagree about the efficacy of satirical discourse. Jonson's comical satires are as much demonstrations of satirical efficacy as they are fantasies of satirical wish-fulfillment. "Unless your breath had power / To melt the world, and mould it new againe," Cordatus warns Asper in the Induction to *Every Man Out*, "It is in vaine, to spend it in these moods" (46-8), yet Asper carries on, confident that his play will purge the world of its humours and, in the process, demonstrate his merit for service to the monarch. Marston is far more skeptical of the power of his breath to reshape the world. Even though he wishes "that a Satyres hand had force to pluck / Some fludgate vp, to purge the world from muck"—and even though he vows to "try"—there is never any sense of real satirical efficacy in Marston's poetry. Marston's satirists punish in the sense that they "awake impuritie" and force it to "view the vaile drawne from [its] villanie," but their desire to "turne *Apheus* riuer in / To purge this *Augean* oxstaule from foule sin" (*SV*, 3.0.17-22) is always an obvious impossibility. Even as Marston goes about to reveal hidden vice and scourge the world for its lechery, he is always painfully aware of the satirist's inability to effect the type of moral reform that he calls for. Marston knows that he (like Hall) will "as soon draw *Nilus* riuer dry, / As clense the world from foule impietie" (*CS*, 2.159-60).¹⁰¹

All of this has consequences for the way we read the plays by Marston that are typically associated with the Poets' War. *Histriomastix*, which has been read as a vehicle for an ambivalent portrait of Jonson,¹⁰² has nothing whatsoever to do with Jonson. Chrisogonus is not a

¹⁰¹ These lines are ambiguous: they may refer to Hall, whom Marston has been attacking throughout the poem, or they may refer back to Marston himself. Either way, however, such reflections on satirical inefficacy have a way of undercutting Marston's own satirical project.

¹⁰² Bednarz follows Small, Chambers, and others in suggesting that Marston revised an older six-act morality play, but he adds that Marston did so specifically "to serve as a vehicle for representing Jonson, a powerful precursor who had already established his reputation as a satirist in the Elizabethan commercial theater" (*S&PW*, 83). This claim depends upon tenuous evidence and obscures a number of important points about the play. First, it is not at all certain that Marston even wrote *Histriomastix*. Roslyn Knutson demonstrates that the play does not share a unique vocabulary with Marston any more than it does Elizabethan satirists more generally, that the reference that the

personation of Jonson; he is the disaffected and dislocated scholar driven to playwrighting, translating, writing satires, and otherwise “prostituting his pen” who appeared in numerous satires throughout the 1590s.¹⁰³ The play’s generally dismissive attitude towards players indicates that it was written before Marston became a professional playwright, and its concern with the plight of the scholar in a society that cares more for its “brutish appetite” than for “The love and knowledge of the liberall arts” (3.248) aligns the play with the academic drama of Cambridge and the Inns of Court.¹⁰⁴

Histrionastix is loosely based on a poem by the late medieval French poet Jean de Mehune, which George Puttenham translates in *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589):

Peace makes plenty, plenty makes pride;

reference to “Plato’s *Histrionastix*” in Jonson’s *Every Man Out* is not sufficient evidence to tie the play to Marston, and that the playwright of *Histrionastix* does not share habits of prosody, imagery, punning, or contemporary allusion with Marston (Knutson, “*Histrionastix*: not by John Marston,” *Studies in Philology* 98:3 [Summer 2001], 359-77). Even if Marston did write *Histrionastix*, it may not have been a revision of an older play (Finkelpearl, 119). Although Bednarz acknowledges that the tone of Marston’s writing is “notoriously difficult to ascertain” and in fact demonstrates his ability to tease out the subtleties and deliberately self-contradictory aspects of Marston’s satiric poetry (Bednarz, “Representing Jonson: *Histrionastix* and the Origin of the Poets’ War,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 54:1 [Winter, 1991], 1-30; 3), when it comes to *Histrionastix* he unproblematically associates Chrisoganus with Jonson.

¹⁰³ In 1598 and even 1599 Jonson was not yet known predominantly as a translator or satirist. He may have gained some notoriety for helping to finish Thomas Nashe’s aborted *Isle of Gulls* in 1597, but it appears that he was better known as a tragic actor and playwright: Francis Meres referred to Jonson as one of “our best for Tragedie” in *Palladis Tamia* (London, 1598; 283), and, as I pointed out above, John Weever termed him “[Marston’s] embuskin’d *Iohnson*” in an epigram (6.11.3). Notably, both Meres and Weever refer to *Marston* as a well-known satirist, which hardly suggests the type of emulative relationship Bednarz depicts. Bednarz buttresses his argument by noting that Marston’s friend and cousin Everard Guilpin had used the name “Chrisoganus,” or “Golden-Born,” in an epigram “to satirize Jonson as a ridiculously belligerent man who contorts his naturally ugly face into hostile grimaces before he appears in public” (“Writing and Revenge,” 26; see also D. Allen Carroll [ed.], *Skialetheia, or a Shadowe of Truth, in Certaine Epigrams and Satyres* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1974]). But even if Guilpin’s epigram preceded *Histrionastix*—which we do not know to be true—it’s likely that the belligerent and ugly man Guilpin referred to was not Jonson but Sir John Davies, who had a pock-marked face, awkward carriage, and clumsy gait, and who only a few months before the publication of *Skialetheia* had immortalized himself by marching up to his former friend Richard Martin during dinner at the Middle Temple and breaking his bastinado over Martin’s head (see Robert Krueger [ed.], *The Poems of Sir John Davies* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975], xxxiv-xxxv). Although Bednarz frequently likes to suggest that he has unanimous critical support for many of his claims, numerous scholars have doubted the identification of Chrisoganus with Jonson. W. David Kay, for example, notes that “Chrisoganus often sounds more like Marston than Jonson, and Marston’s opposition between Chrisoganus and the popular hack Post-haste (who seems to stand for Antony Munday) parallels Jonson’s own satire on Munday as Antonio Balladino in the revised version of *The Case Is Altered*” (Kay, 55).

¹⁰⁴ Certain aspects of the play—including the substantial number of acting parts, the lack of female parts, and the subject matter—would seem to tie it to the Inns of Court rather than the newly-opened boys theater at Paul’s (Finkelpearl, 120-1).

Pride brings quarrel, and quarrel brings war;
 War brings spoil, and spoil poverty,
 Poverty patience, and patience peace:
 So peace brings war, and war brings peace.¹⁰⁵

In *Histriomastix*, each abstract notion is represented by an allegorical monarch: Peace is succeeded in turn by Plenty, Pride, Envy, War, Poverty, and finally Peace again. The nobles are particularly susceptible to the changing times: Mavortius, for example, pursues pleasures (and scorns reprehension) during the time of plenty, closes his doors to his neighbors and dismisses his servants during the time of pride, drives himself mad with jealousy at the wealth and social mobility of merchants during the time of Envy, and finally impoverishes himself and his nation by going to war. The scholar, however, is immovable. Equipped with the learning to recognize the dangers of idle pleasures and the Stoic resolve to resist both Pride and Envy, Chrisoganus stands to the side of the changing times—sometimes literally, as in the beginning of the civil war, where the stage directions indicate that “the *Scholler*” escapes the confusion and alone remains onstage (3.291)—and castigates his countrymen for their impiety.

Histriomastix is more of a warning to a society that ignores the good counsel of the scholar than it is about satire *per se*. Chrisoganus only becomes a satirist because he is driven to reprehension, and he only attacks the players and their scrivener-playwright Posthaste because they undervalue his services and thus deny him the only financially viable form of employment available to a scholar and a poet. Such attacks against the socially inferior players for whom university-educated writers like Greene and Nashe “prostituted their pens” are typical in academic dramas and prose pamphlets about the plight of the scholar in society. If Chrisoganus can be accused of Pride or Envy, it is in keeping with Marston’s view of the culpability of the

¹⁰⁵ Quoted by Bednarz, “Representing Jonson,” 17.

satirist, as is the obvious ineffectiveness of his satirical railing throughout most of the play. In certain respects, however, *Histriomastix* is more optimistic than anything else by Marston. Not only does the scholar/satirist remain largely unaffected by changes in the world, but the entire play can be read as a lesson about heeding the advice of the scholar/satirist—a lesson that Mavortius has clearly learned at the end of the sixth and final act: “We followed beasts before but now a man” (3.296).

The next Marston play typically associated with the Poets’ War, *Jack Drum’s Entertainment*, was not printed until 1607, but the references to the leap year and to Kemp’s Morris date it fairly clearly to 1600, probably after Jonson’s *Every Man Out* but before *Cynthia’s Revels*. The play is generically confusing, to say the least. According to Caputi, *Jack Drum* distinguishes between true love and lust, with the capriciousness of Camelia and the foolish lust of her suitors set in opposition to the true love of the play’s central pairing, Pasquil and Katherine. But romantic comedy continually threatens to turn into tragedy when the obstacle to their romance turns out not to be her father’s disapproval—indeed, Sir Edward is all too happy to allow his daughter to choose her husband for herself—but an evil usurer-figure, appropriately named Mamon, who has no business thinking himself to be a rival for Katherine’s love. Allusions to *Romeo and Juliet* abound: not only is there a balcony scene, but the lovers’ singular focus on each other leads them to absurd and overwrought professions of their mutual love and a death wish if their love should fail, a wish that each at various points believes the other to have fulfilled. But what threatens to become tragedy in fact becomes farce when the lovers fail to command the attention of anyone else in the play, including Pasquil’s best friends and Katherine’s father, Sir Edward Fortune, whose festive spirit continually undermines his daughter’s tragic efforts.

Sir Edward Fortune's festivity initially seems laudable enough, as he offers a spirited defense of the old-fashioned aristocratic values of neighborhood and hospitality against the miserly impulses of Mamon the usurer, an obvious symbol of the nascent capitalism that threatened to undermine those values. But as the play continues, Sir Edward's proclivity for drinking and good cheer begins to appear more and more out of place, particularly when his response to his daughter's apparent death is to call for a cup of sack, song, and dance: "Oh no, but I have lost my child I feare / . . . Broach me a fresh Butt of *Canary* Sacke, / Lets sing, drink, sleep, for thats the best reliefe: / To drowne all care, and overwhelme all grieffe" (3.206). This becomes something of a pattern in the play: Sir Edward's response to misfortune is always to call for more wine, more dancing, and more good cheer. There are even moments when he has either forgotten that his daughter is still missing or does not much seem to care. "O there with thee my *Katherine* was wont / To sit with gracefull presence," he says to Camelia, surprised at the memory; "well let't passe: / Fetch me a Cup of Sacke" (3.234). Sir Edward's desire to consecrate every moment to mirth—which many critics, including Matthew Steggle, have seen as the moral center of both *Jack Drum's Entertainment* and Marston's next play, *What You Will*—begins to look more and more like a Jonsonian humour.

In fact, *Jack Drum's Entertainment* has much in common with Jonsonian humour comedy. The play is filled with humourous fools: Camelia, the capricious lover; Brabant Jr., who loves Camelia in spite of good reason; John Ellis, who also loves Camelia; Puffe, the pipe-smoking courtier who speaks nothing but fustian terms and is also in love with Camelia; Mamon, the miserly usurer who is in love with Katherine; and Mounsieur John fo de King, the randy Frenchman who hopes to take Winifred, Camelia's wily servant, to bed. All are purged of their humours, and in some cases they explicitly acknowledge that this is the case. Monsieur de King

realizes that he has been tricked by Winifred into carrying a sack containing Jack Drum instead of her to a secret rendezvous and exclaims, “Mor deu, he mon a mee, me ame trooke dead wit greife, de cock of my humore is downe, and me may hang my selfe vor a Vench” (3.222). Mamon’s fortunes are ruined, his house burns, and the last we hear of him is that he has been whipped and imprisoned in a dark room. Puffe realizes that his fashionable smoking and fashionable language has gotten him nowhere with Camelia: “I ha tane my leave of Sir *Edward*, bid adiew to love, my Mistresse is gone, my humour is spent, my joyes are at an end, and therefore Gentlemen, I leave love, and fall to the (*puffe*) Lawe” (3.210). John Ellis thinks he will marry Camelia and makes arrangements with Sir Edward, but instead he is ridiculed by Camelia, who has fallen in love with Planet. Brabant Jr. is put out of his humour when he sends his page to kill Planet, whom he believes has replaced him as a rival for Camelia’s love; when Brabant Jr. realizes that the page has not killed Planet and that his friend has remained loyal to him, he renounces his foolish love for Camelia. Camelia, finally, who has resisted the railings of the satirist-figure Planet, is purged of her humour when she wants to be married before her younger sister but nobody will take her. “[N]o bodie will have thee,” Sir Edward says, “this is the plague of light inconstancie” (3.237). If anything, Marston appears to be imitating Jonson’s first humour play, *Every Man Out*, which had in turn imitated Marston’s own satires.

But, true to form, Marston undercuts his own performance of a Jonsonian humour comedy. Included on the list of characters purged of their humours in *Jack Drum* is Brabant Senior, whom many critics have taken to be a personation of Jonson. As I noted above, Brabant Senior does not share many characteristics with Jonson: he is a wealthy elder brother and a gallant who “will not stick to spend some 20. pound / To grope a gull” (3.191), laughs at his own dumb jokes, and does not exactly have a way with words. Still, certain things about Brabant

Senior do appear to glance at Jonson. Brabant Senior is primarily interested in displaying and laughing at others men's humours—"You shall see his humour," he says of Puffe in his first moments onstage (3.193)—and he is as dismissive of "our moderne witts," including "the new Poet *Mellidus*" (i.e., Marston) as we would expect Jonson to be:

Brabant Jr: Brother how like you of our moderne witts? How like you the new Poet Mellidus?

Brabant Sr: A slight bubbling spirit, a Corke, a Huske.

Planet: How like you Musus fashion in his carriage?

Brabant Sr: O filthily, he is as blunt as Pawles.

Brabant Jr: What thinke you of the Lines of Decius?

Writes he not good cordiall sappie stile?

Brabant Sr: A surreinde Jaded wit, but a rubbes on.

Planet: Brabant thou art like a paire of Ballance,

Thou wayest all saving thy selfe.

Brabant Sr: Good faith, troth is, they are all Apes & gulls,

Vile imitating spirits, dry heathy Turffes. (3.221)

Brabant Senior is also dismissive of the repertoire at Paul's when Sir Edward praises the boy-actors and Planet praises the genteel audience: "they produce / Such mustie fopperies of antiquitie, / And do not sute the humorous ages backs / With cloathes in fashion" (3.234).

At the same time that it performs the work of comical satire, *Jack Drum* purges the Jonsonian humourist of his urge to purge other characters of their humours. Brabant Senior's plan to gull Monsieur de King backfires: he sends the randy Frenchman to his wife as though she is courtesan, thinking that the Monsieur will receive an earful and a beating from his faithful

wife, but is surprised and horrified to discover that his wife has welcomed the attention and that he has been cuckolded.¹⁰⁶ Planet, the play's resident scholar-satirist, dismisses Brabant Senior as a fool and castigates him for passing judgment on others as though he alone has the authority to judge:

Why doest thou not well deserve to be thus usde?
 Why should'st thou take felicitie to gull
 Good honest soules, and in thy arrogance
 And glorious ostentation of thy wit,
 Thinke God infused all perfection
 Into thy soule alone, and made the rest
 For thee to laught at? Now you Censurer
 Be the ridiculous subject of our mirth.
 Why Foole, the power of Creation
 Is still Omnipotent, and there's no man that breathes
 So valiant, learned, wittie, or so wise,
 But it can equall him out of the same mould
 Wherein the first was form'd. (3.240)

At the same time that *Jack Drum's Entertainment* presents itself as a Jonsonian-inspired humour play, then, it resists the very type of judgment that is at the center of Jonson's comical satire. If Marston does attack Jonson in *Jack Drum*, it is here, in Planet's dismissal of Brabant Senior's

¹⁰⁶ Critics from Chambers to Bednarz have noticed a parallel between this story and one that appears in Jonson's *Informations to Drummond*, where Jonson brags that he enjoyed a married man's wife for two years before he knew of it. But it's difficult to understand how this could be, as Bednarz so confidently assures us, a "jest at Jonson's expense" (*S&PW*, 143): not only is it unlikely that an anecdote Jonson told Drummond in 1619 was known well enough in 1600 for Marston to build a plot line around it, but the roles of Jonson and Brabant Senior are so completely reversed that it cannot serve as effective ridicule.

claim to artistic and moral authority and thus the authority to censure others. As in Marston's earlier satires, the authority to judge others' work rests with the educated elite; the authority to judge others' sins rests with Omnipotence alone.

It is thus tempting to follow Oscar Campbell and others who have read in *Jack Drum's Entertainment* the same type of distinction between the authentic satirist and the scurrilous railer that Jonson made so clearly in *Every Man Out*. Planet would stand for Marston as Brabant Senior would stand for Jonson: the former is a true satirist and a true critic, while the latter—despite Jonson's efforts to hold himself about the profane jesting of Charles Chester—is the scurrilous railer.¹⁰⁷ But in fact Planet cannot so easily be said to speak for Marston, as Marston undercuts Planet's claim to moral and artistic authority as well. Even as Planet criticizes Brabant Senior for laughing at the gulls, he is just as interested in following Brabant Jr. into the ordinary to laugh at them: "In, in, in, in," he says, "I long to burst my sides and tyer my spleene with laughter" (3.191). Planet scorns the language of love but proves he is more than capable of performing it when he woos Camelia in order to punish her. When she falls for him, his scornful laughter is horrifyingly cruel: "Ha, ha, I pree thee kneele, beg, blubber, Cry / Whilste I behold thee with a loathing eye: / And laugh to see thee weepe" (3.228). He claims to hate

these bumbaste wits,
That are puft up with arrogant conceit
Of their owne worth, as if Omnipotence
Had hoysed them to such unequald height,
That they survaide our spirits with an eye
Only create to censure from above,

¹⁰⁷ See Campbell, 163. Campbell insists, however, that Brabant Senior is not Jonson "but a satirist who misconceives his critical function by contaminating it with the laughter of a buffoon and the personal petulance of a detractor—such a person as Ben Jonson often seems to be."

When good soules they do nothing but reprove. (3.229)

But Planet seems entirely unable to recognize that this applies to himself more than it does to anyone else in the play. His presumptuous assumption of moral superiority parallels Brabant Senior's presumptuous assumption of intellectual superiority. Neither is ultimately capable of anything but reproof, and both serve as damning examples of the fact that satirical discourse had itself become what Sir Edward calls "Reprobate fashion": "each ragged clowt, / Each Coblers spawne, and yeastie bowzing bench, / Reekes in the face of sacred majestie / His stinking breath of censure" (3.182). Planet's harsh dismissal of Brabant Senior is thus a dismissal of himself. Skeptical of their ability to effect meaningful change and wary of the multiplication of satirical voices, Marston once again undercuts his satirists' satirical authority.

Marston's next play, *What You Will*, is his most significant contribution to the Poets' War, but it is even more bewildering in its refusal to offer a stable interpretative foothold. Its very title appears to wish the audience luck in figuring out what it means. In the Induction, the author's friend Phylomuse informs Doricus that the play is "perfectly" neither "*Commedy, Tragedy, Pastorall, Morall, Nocturnal or Historie*," but "even *What You Will*, a slight toye, lightly composed, to swiftly finisht, ill plotted, worse written, I feare me worst acted, and indeed *What You Will*" (2.233). This may be the only unimpeachable statement in the play, for what follows is a confusing and inconsistent mess. The central plot is a relatively thin Plautine misrecognition device in which a merchant, Albano, returns to Venice three months after being shipwrecked to discover that his wife, Celia, has plans to marry a French knight, Laverdure. Another suitor for her affections, Jacomo, plans to dress up a fiddler to look like Albano in order to disrupt the marriage, but when these plans are leaked, nobody believes that either the fiddler or Albano himself are the real Albano. This central plot is overshadowed, however, by the

subplot, or really by the extravagant figure of Quadratus: a fantastic, an epicurean, and a gallant whose calls for drinking and good cheer are only interrupted by his periodic verbal assaults on the humourous fools of the Venetian court—especially the envious, backbiting scholar-turned-satirist-turned-temporizer, Lampatho Doria.

Lampatho Doria clearly resembles Jonson: he dresses all in black, he is “taber-fac’d” (2.249), he is a “Jebusite” and an “Idolater” (2.248), he compliments his friends to their faces only to better insult them behind their backs (a charge that Dekker would repeat in *Satiromastix*), and he judges his own work with “faith ’tis good” (2.250). Many critics have thus understandably assumed that Quadratus, who attacks him, can be seen as “the play’s spokesman.”¹⁰⁸ With Quadratus as authorial mouthpiece, the play becomes a statement of Marston’s epicureanism and allegiance to the audience’s pleasure as the guiding principle of artistic creation. For Matthew Steggle, *What You Will* “directly contests the Jonsonian, will-driven, left brain version of creativity”; it revels in fantasy and upholds the importance of sensory experience; it is “lively, funny, and intellectually experimental”; it “shifts the responsibility for generic categorization onto the audience”; and above all, it “celebrates the imperfectly articulated, the irrational, and the playful, or, put another way, a sense of fun.”¹⁰⁹ Jonson had mocked the courtiers’ affected and exotic tastes for anchovies, macaroni, and caviar as a form of “fantasticness” in *Cynthia’s Revels*; Quadratus—and therefore Marston—complains that a man can “skarce eate good meate, / *Anchoves, caviare*, but hee’s *Satyred* / And term’d *Phantasticall*.” Jonson had mocked “fantasticness”; Quadratus—and therefore Marston—argues in its defense, claiming that it is the source of imagination, artistic creation, and even man’s communion with the divine: “It is the common passe, the sacred dore, / Unto the private chamber

¹⁰⁸ Bednarz, *S&PW*, 197.

¹⁰⁹ Steggle, “Varieties of Fantasy,” 45-59.

of the soule” (2.250). For James Bednarz, this proves that Marston accepts the “absurdity of desire—‘fantasticness’—as a universal condition of human experience with the joyful resignation of Desiderius Erasmus’s *Praise of Folly*.” What makes life bearable is not reason but “an ability to enjoy the irrational pleasures of the senses.”¹¹⁰

In this reading, Quadratus’s declaration that “all that existes, / Takes valuation from oppinion” (2.237) aligns comfortably with the position taken by Doricus in the play’s Induction. As opposed to Jonson’s aggressive antipathy towards the popular audience and insistence that “Attentive auditors” will take pleasure from his strict adherence to art and judgment (*EMO*, Ind. 199), Marston (as Doricus) rejects such “*Contempt / Gainst common Censure*”: “*Musike and Poetry* were first approv’d / By common sence,” Doricus asserts, “and that which pleased most, / Held most allowed passe: [know] rules of Art / Were shapt to pleasure, not pleasure to your rules” (*WYW*, Ind; 2.232-3). Marston thus emerges as a staunch defender of “opinion,” a proponent of “the enjoyment of theatrical pleasure,” and an advocate for the judgment of his audience, whom, Bednarz argues, he sees “as friends rather than adversaries.” Through Doricus, Marston attempts to “define an approach to life and drama that encourages greater tolerance.”¹¹¹

The main problem with this reading of *What You Will* is that it has far more to do with Jonson than it does with Marston. By making Marston out to be an advocate of opinion and the fantastic, Steggle and Bednarz (as well as others who see Quadratus as the play’s spokesman) put Marston into a position of direct opposition to Jonson, but they fail to align Marston with himself. At no point in any of his earlier writings had Marston shown even the slightest sympathy for either “opinion” or “fantasticness.” His dedication of *The Metamorphosis of Pigmaliions Image and Certain Satires* to “The World’s Mightie Monarch, *Good Opinion*,” for

¹¹⁰ James Bednarz, “John Marston’s Induction to *What You Will*,” *Ben Jonson Journal* 17 (Nov. 2010), 293-308, 305; Bednarz, *S&PW*, 172.

¹¹¹ Bednarz, “Induction to *WYW*,” 301.

example, is heavily sarcastic: “Sole Regent of Affection, perpetuall Ruler of Iudgement, most famous Iustice of Censures, onely giuer of Honor, great procurer of Aduancement, the Worlds chiefe Ballance, the All of all, and All in all, by whom all things are that that they are. I humbly offer thou my Poem.” In dedicating *The Scourge of Villainy* to “Detraction,” Marston had claimed that “*True iudgement, slight regards Opinion*” (17), a point which he reinforced by taking up a defiant stance against the idiots to whom he exposes “the sacred issue of [his] soule”: “What though I bare to lewd Opinion / Lay ope to vulgar prophanation / My very *Genius*. Yet know my poesie / Doth scorne your vtmost, rank’st indignitie” (6.107-10). So too had Marston previously attacked fantasticness, which he associated with the outward display, lewdness, and riot of young gallants, those who had “*Faire outward show, and little wit within*” (CS, 3.24). “Why thou art Bedlam mad, starke lunaticke, / And glori’st to be counted a fantastick,” his satirist declares to an inamorato, appalled; “O age! in which our gallants boast to be / Slaues vnto riot, and lewd luxury!” (CS, 3.38-9, 47-8).

Bednarz would answer this objection by suggesting that Marston “began to reject his own earlier violent rhetoric” from *Histriomastix* onward,¹¹² but this is clearly not the case. Not only is there ample evidence of violent rhetoric in both *Histriomastix* (even if it was written after *The Scourge of Villainy*, which it probably was not) and *Jack Drum’s Entertainment*, but there is more than enough to go around in the plays Marston wrote after *What You Will*, including *The Malcontent*. Nor, in fact, does Marston appear entirely ready to abandon either violent rhetoric or his opposition to “opinion” in *What You Will* itself. As Rebecca Yearling points out, neither the Induction nor the play itself represents “so unequivocal an attack on Jonson and his values as Bednarz would like”:

it is misleading to assume—as Bednarz does—that Doricus’s lines unequivocally

¹¹² Bednarz, “Writing and Revenge,” 35.

represent Marston's own attitude toward drama and the 'proper' relationship between a playwright and his spectators . . . the supposed author of *What You Will*—the man whom Phylomuse claims to know personally—is not the genial, audience-friendly individual that Doricus posits as the ideal, but is rather himself a Jonson-figure, a proud, self-sufficient writer who feels contempt for 'squinting Critickes, drunken Censure, splay-footed Opinion.' . . . This sense of ambiguity regarding the author's intentions and his attitude toward both the art of pleasing and the value of popular opinion continues into the play proper. *What You Will* is, as Ejner Jensen notes, a work about 'the power and importance of opinion in the world of men.' It presents a society in which seeming is more important than being, in which the worth of any object or person lies more in how it is perceived than in how it actually is.¹¹³

If anything, Yearling understates the case. The Induction to *What You Will* is less of "an unresolved debate" between two positions (dramatist's principles vs. audience's pleasure) than a correction of Doricus's misapprehension. Doricus has incorrectly assumed that the author's indifference to "drunken *Censure*" or the "Impostum'd malice" of "some halfe a dozen rancorous breasts" (2.232) indicates that the author rejects all forms of judgment that are not his own—that he, like Jonson, both overestimates the quality of his own work and assumes intellectual and artistic superiority over his audience. But in fact Phylomuse's rant against the likes of "*sineor Snuffe, Mounsieur Mew, and Cavaliero Blirt*"—whom Doricus also despises—indicates no such arrogance on behalf of the author or "rude skorne" for "the very face / Of better audience" (2.233). Instead, as the Prologue announces, the author navigates a middle course between rejecting "splayfooted *Opinion*" and thinking himself "so faire in his owne glasse."

¹¹³ Yearling, 111.

While he neither “labours” for “the favor of the rude” nor “strives” to “beare up with every saile, / Of floting Censure,” he does appeal to those “faire proportion’d loves of witte” who understand the impossibility of “bringing forth / A perfect feature” and can therefore “as soone slight of, as finde a blemish” (2.235).

Similarly, I would suggest that the play itself is less ambiguous about the value of popular opinion than it is consistently—if subtly and ironically—hostile. Giacomo’s remark that “Apparail’s growne a God” and that a man in “faire riche cloathes” can be “tane, reputed any thing” no matter what his interior worth not only echoes the sentiment of Marston’s earlier satires but feels, in the context of the play, like a surprisingly direct insight into the profound performativity of the Venetian court. As in so many other such satirical reflections (e.g., Jonson’s take on the popular audience at the London theaters in *The Case Is Altered*), Marston briefly drops the facade of the Italian setting in order to draw his satirical comparison to the London world he is already criticizing:

Apparail’s growne a God and does more neate,
 Makes men of ragges, which straight he beares aloft,
 Like patcht up scar-Crowes to affright the rout
 Of the Idolatrous vulgar, that worship Images,
 Stand aw’d and bare-skalp’t at the glosse of silkes,
 Which like the glorious Ajax of Lincolnes Inne,
 (Survai’d with wonder by me when I lay
 Factor in London:) lappes up naught but filth
 And excrements, that beare the shape of men,
 Whose in-side every daw would peck and teare,

But that vaine skar-crow cloathes intreates forbear. (2.260)¹¹⁴

There could hardly be a more damning critique of popular opinion, either in the Venetian world of the play or the London world outside of and in opposition to it: the vulgar idolize men by their appearance rather than their merit, greedily swallowing excrement like Sir John Harington's famous toilet. This sentiment is reinforced by Albano, who realizes that "*Opinion stamp[s] the currant passe, / Of each mans valew, vertue, [and] quality,*" and finds himself unable to persuade popular opinion that he is who he says he is. He recognizes that even if he "ingross'd the chocie commodities / Of heavens trafike" he would still be "a rascall" if he were "reputed vile" (2.269). He is ultimately only able to prove his identity at the conclusion of the play by circumventing opinion: he strips himself of his external garb—the source of so much external valuation in the play—in order to reveal a birthmark, and he whispers a secret to Celia that only she could know.

Quadratus, with his epicurean delight in pleasure and his breezy confidence in opinion—"all that existes, / Takes valuation from oppinion" (2.237)—is less a spokesman for the author than a spokesman for the fallen world of Venice. He is a libertine and a temporizer, a whimsical, capricious, and absurd gallant, the perfect subject of a Duke whose entire life is given over to riotous, libertine indulgence. Quadratus regularly advocates disdain for knowledge, honor, and virtue as "baites/ That tice mens hopes to sadder fates" (2.239), and his advice to Lampatho to "turne a *Temporist*" includes acquiring a "ten-pound Cure," affecting "some sect," gaining "some higher seate," and "sell[ing] your holy portion" (2.258-9). His defense of fantasticness—which Steggle and Bednarz take to be the moral center of the play—is, as Lampatho Doria immediately points out, itself "Most Phantasticall": whereas the soul's "synderesis" (which Marston had called for in *SV* 8 and 11) allowed man to imagine communion with the divine,

¹¹⁴ It's remarkable that Bednarz does not once mention this passage, considering how interested he is elsewhere in puns on "Ajax."

Quadratus claims that “Phantasticknesse” allows “th’inamorate” to recall “the absent beauties / Of his lov’d mistres” (2.250). Fantasticness does not really allow for artistic creation so much as it does human procreation: “By it,” Quadratus claims, “we shape a new creation, / Of things as yet unborne” (2.250). These are hardly Marston’s own positions. Instead, as Finkelppearl suggests, they are the carefree expressions of “an Epicurean ‘temporist,’ one who plays the game according to society’s rules in order to enjoy its luscious sweets.”¹¹⁵

Quadratus’ status as a libertine complicates but does not undercut the significance of his critiques of Lampatho Doria, for Lampatho himself is an inconsistent character. At his first appearance, Lampatho more or less parallels the portrait Dekker would give of Jonson as Horace in *Satiromastix*: he dresses in black, he devotes himself “to mouldy customes of hoary eld” in order to figure himself as a scholar (2.246), he has a parasite named Simplicius Faber who praises everything to come out of his mouth as though he speaks “*tones* of heauen it selfe” (2.246),¹¹⁶ and he flatters courtiers and potential patrons to their faces only to better ridicule them behind their backs. “Hee’s a *Hyena*,” Quadratus instructs Laverdure, “and with *Civitt* scent / Of perfum’d words, drawes to make a prey / For laughter of thy credit” (2.247). When Lampatho, in anger, threatens to “sowse [his] estimate” with a “*Satyre*,” Quadratus dismisses him both as an envious railer who overestimates his own merit and as an imitator of fashionable satirists: “Away Idolater, why you *Don Kinsayder* / Thou Canker easten rusty curre, thou snaffle / To freer spirits” (2.248). It is worth dwelling on the significance of this dismissal, for it may be the most puzzling line of the entire Poets’ War: a character in a Marston play insults a character

¹¹⁵ Finkelppearl, 171.

¹¹⁶ Simplicius, who has much in common with Asinius Bubo in *Satiromastix*, may very well personate a real-life figure, though I am not convinced by E.A. Honigmann’s suggestion that the two (along with Captain Shift of Jonson’s *Every Man Out*) are personations of John Weever (*John Weever: A Biography of a Literary Associate of Shakespeare and Jonson, Together with a Photographic Facsimile of Weever’s Epigrammes* [New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987], 42-9). See my footnote below.

who looks very much like Jonson by calling him “Don Kinsayder,” the pseudonym Marston had used for both *Pigmalion* and *The Scourge of Villainy*. Although Bednarz reads this as Marston’s repudiation of his former satirical persona, the point actually seems to be to figure Jonson as an imitator of Marston, an upstart satirist in a world where railing had become fashionable:

Lampatho: I raile at none you well squar’d *Syneor*.

Quadratus: I can not tell, tis now growne fashion,

Whats out of railyng’s out of fashion:

A man can skarce put on a tuckt up cap,

A button’d frizdo sute, skarce eate good meate,

Anchoves, caviare, but hee’s Satyred

And term’d *Phantasticall* by the muddy spawne

Of slymie Neughtes. (2.250)

While Marston thus mocks Jonson for his arrogance, his hypocrisy, and his back-biting, he also undercuts the claim Jonson had made to sole satirical authority in *Cynthia’s Revels* by depicting him as nothing more than a follower of the fashion for railing. So too does Marston mock Jonson for his claim to moral authority: Quadratus claims that he would “curbe [his] humors with well-govern’d check” if either “discreete *Mastigophoros*” or “the deere spirit acute *Canaidus*” should “menace” him, but he refuses to listen to “an arrogant od impudent, / A blushles fore-head only out of scence / Of his owne wants” who “baules in malignant questing / At others meanes of waving gallantry” (2.250).

But this ridicule of Jonson does not last beyond the second act. Lampatho Doria ceases to be a backbiting railer and instead becomes a scholar out of place in a corrupt court. For all of Quadratus’ conviviality, it is this Lampatho who delivers the best speech of the play, a polished

and pessimistic set-piece on his years wasted as a scholar while his dog—a spaniel conveniently named *Delight*—slept beside him: “[I] thought, quoted, reade, observ’d and pried, / Stufft noting bookes, and still my spaniell slept. / At length he wakt and yawned, and by yon sky, / For aught I know he knew as much as I” (2.258). Lampatho recognizes that his seven springs spent engrossed in “crossd oppinions bout the soule of man” (2.257) will get him nowhere in a “young, loose, and unknit” Venetian state that “Can relish naught, but lushious vanities” (2.259).

Like Chrisoganus in *Histrionastix*, Lampatho is an unemployed and under-appreciated scholar who is driven to satire, and he threatens to “Rip up and launce our times impieties” and “Stand like an executioner to vice” (2.265-6). But when he works himself into a satyr-like rage, he finds that his audience is all too willing to hear him. “Tis most gracious weele observe thee calmely,” Laverdure promises; “Hang on thy touns end, come on pree-thee doe,” Quadratus urges (2.266). In this moment, Lampatho realizes that railing has itself become both fashionable and dangerous:

This is the straine that chokes the theaters,
 That makes them crack with full-stufft audience,
 This is your humor onely in request
 Forsooth to raile, this brings your eares to bed,
 This people gape for, for this some doe stare
 This some would heare, to crack the Authors neck,
 This admiration and applause persues,
 Who cannot raile—my humors chang’d ’tis cleare.
 Pardon, Ile none, I prise my joynts more deare. (2.266)

Quadratus—whose name refers not to his moral uprightness but his imperviousness to reproof—wants to hear Lampatho rail, not because it will affect him but because he will enjoy it. Rebecca Yearling is thus right to suggest that Marston “questions whether social reform is actually *possible* in a community that has devoted itself wholeheartedly to folly.”¹¹⁷ But this had always been true of Marston’s satire. There is something even more pessimistic at work here, something which both continues and expands Marston’s critique of Jonson in *Jack Drum’s Entertainment*: the recognition that satire, which had long opposed itself to things overvalued by popular opinion, has itself become too popular.

Although Marston challenges Jonson’s claim to moral and poetic authority in *Jack Drum*, mocks Jonson’s self-assured self-assessment in *What You Will*, and ultimately questions the effectiveness of satire in a world given over to folly, he never really attacks Jonson personally to the extent most critics have assumed. If he does, as Jonson was to tell Drummond, “represent [Jonson] in the stage,” it is only briefly, in certain limited aspects of Brabant Senior and Lampatho Doria. What is important to take away from this analysis of Marston’s early dramatic work at Paul’s is that he participates in the debate about the politics and ethics of satire differently than Jonson does. Although both are interested in the dramatic possibilities afforded by satire, Jonson defends satire, the satirist, and himself against a world that had turned against satire and himself, whereas Marston—who had never been convinced by the satirists’ claim to efficacy or moral authority—undercuts his own satirists by associating them with the fashion for railing. As a result, Marston’s early plays lack any kind of authorial voice or moral center, a dramatic self-effacement unlike anything we see in Jonson’s plays.

¹¹⁷ Yearling, 117.

4. Judging Jonson: Dekker's *Satiromastix*

Thomas Dekker's *Satiromastix* seems cobbled together, as though Dekker appended his response to Ben Jonson's *Poetaster* to a play he were already writing. It feels like three plays in one: a tragedy (or tragi-comedy), a comedy, and a satire. In what purports to be the main plot, Sir Walter Terill slowly realizes that King William II will claim *prima nocta* privileges with his new wife; to save her innocence, the young bride's father gives her a potion and Sir Terill delivers her lifeless body to the king. Whatever expectations we may have that this will lead to the hunting "accident" that historically ended William II's life are dashed, however, when it turns out that the potion is a sleeping potion, not poison, the bride wakes up, and the king declares that he has been purged of his lascivious humour. In the comic subplot, several decayed knights compete for the widow Minever's affection (and, of course, fortune) by employing poets to praise her and insult one another; each also employs the same wily and witty Captain as an intermediary, who ultimately steals their money and Minever's heart. This Captain is none other than Jonson's own Captain Tucca, whom Dekker has appropriated from *Poetaster* in order to untruss the humourous and hypocritical railer, Horace, in the satirical sub-subplot. As Crispinus—along with Demetrius, also imported from *Poetaster*—explicitly suggests, Dekker "wed a Comickall euent, / To presupposed tragicke Argument." (5.2.113-14).

Whatever case critics have made for Jonson's supposed foreknowledge of Dekker's pending attack, it's clear that Dekker could not have begun writing the satirical sub-subplot of *Satiromastix* until he had seen *Poetaster*. Not only are all of the characters in this plot taken from Jonson's play, but the very structure of the response is dictated by the form of Jonson's original self-defense. Dekker's Horace claims to be persecuted by malicious interpreters who are envious of the company he keeps, tries to escape his encounters with the fast-talking Captain Tucca, and

finds himself arraigned for self-love and poetic self-aggrandizement in front of the monarch. So too does *Satiromastix* abound with mocking echoes of *Poetaster*. Just as Horace had declared that his emblem could not be libelous in *Poetaster* because he had signed his name to it, Sir Vaughan ludicrously declares that a sonnet written on his behalf is “no libell, for heere is my hand to it” (3.1.66). Horace self-damningly quotes from *Poetaster* when he claims “tis knowne that *Horace* is valliant, and a man of the sword” (4.2.50-1). And Horace echoes himself when he says he would “as soone speake blasphemie” as “breath out *Solaecismes*” (4.2.70-1). Even if Dekker had planned to “untruss” Jonson for his arrogant self-assessment in *Cynthia’s Revels*, and even if word somehow leaked that he planned to do so, there is no way that Jonson “rushed” to anticipate *Satiromastix* in a “mere” fifteen weeks: not only was Dekker capable of cobbling together a play in less than that time, but the attack on Jonson that survives in *Satiromastix* could not have been written before he saw *Poetaster*.

As I indicated above, it is not clear how or why Dekker became involved in the “terrible *Poetomachia*.” Unlike Marston, Dekker had no real stake in the ongoing debate about the ethics and efficacy of satirical discourse. Perhaps he wrote the play in conjunction with Marston. Scholars have long debated whether the “band of leane-witted *Poetasters*” with whom Dekker identifies in his dedicatory epistle indicates that the play was a collaborative effort, or whether the title “*Satiromastix*” is Marston’s invention. Still, nobody has identified any hand in the play itself other than Dekker’s. Perhaps, as Jonson had insinuated, Dekker had only been hired by the players to attack Jonson in order to draw a bigger crowd: in *Poetaster*, *Histrion* tells *Tucca* that the players have hired *Demetrius* “to abuse Horace and bring him in in a play” because “it will get us a huge deal of money . . . and we have need on ’t, for this winter has made us all poorer than so many starved snakes. Nobody comes at us: not a gentleman” (3.4.262, 264-7). According to this

explanation, the public theaters were losing out to the newly fashionable private theaters and their satiric repertoires, and a public send-up of England's own "Horace" would be sure to attract attention.¹¹⁸ Dekker's attack on Jonson was thus opportunistic rather than personal. As *Histrion* explains, Demetrius barely knows enough about Horace "to make a play of," but he "will devise enough . . . he has one of the most overflowing villainous wits in Rome. He will slander any man that breathes, if he disgust him" (3.4.269-70, 273-5).

Although Dekker's motivation for getting involved in the quarrel is not clear, what is striking about *Satiromastix* is how intensely personal it is. Dekker implies that he only attacked Jonson because Jonson had himself attacked his "best friends" behind their backs. "[B]e not you grieu'd / If that which you molde faire, vpright and smooth, / Be skrewd a wry, made crooked, lame and vile, / By racking coments, and calumnious tongues," Crispinus tells Horace early in the play,

But when your dastard wit will strike at men
 In corners, and in riddles folde the vices
 Of your best friends, you must not take to heart,
 If they take off all gilding from their pilles,
 And onely offer you the bitter Coare. (1.2.212-23)

To Horace's accusation that Crispinus and Demetrius envy him "Because [he] holde[s] more worthy company" than they do (4.3.210)—echoed almost verbatim from *Poetaster* (5.3.396-9)—Demetrius shakes his head sadly and reassures him that "we enuy not to see, / Thy friends with Bayes to crown thy Poesie":

¹¹⁸ More than one critic of the so-called "War of the Theaters" has suggested that the entire quarrel was manufactured in order to generate revenue. Although it is likely that Jonson's attacks on the public theaters attracted attention to the private theaters and that Dekker's response generated "a huge deal of money" for the public theaters, it seems unlikely that this was the sole or even the primary cause of the quarrel.

No, heere the gall lyes; we that know what stuffe
 Thy verie heart is made of, know the stalke
 On which thy learning growes, and can giue life
 To thy (once dying) basenes; yet must we
 Dance Antickes on your Paper. (4.3.217-23)

Satiromastix is filled with biographical details from Jonson's past, many of which clearly come from someone intimately associated with him. Dekker reminds his audience that Jonson was a bricklayer, that Jonson was a player before he was a playwright (and a bad one at that), that Jonson was involved in the *Isle of Dogs* fiasco, that Jonson killed a player in a duel, and that Jonson only saved himself from the halter by reading his neck-verse. These details resist Jonson's attempt to distinguish himself as a laureate satirist at the expense of his friends and fellow playwrights. They give new life to Jonson's "(once dying) basenes" and thus undermine Jonson's attempt to present himself as an upright, virtuous, morally pure, and socially superior judge of poets and men.

If in *Poetaster* Jonson put himself on trial and found himself innocent of "self-love, arrogancy, impudence, railing, filching by translation, etc." (5.3.93-4), in *Satiromastix* Dekker re-stages this trial and comes to the opposite conclusion. Horace is arrogant not only in his judgment of his own poetry—"Dam me ift be not the best that euer came from me, if I haue any iudgement," he declares of his epithalamium for Terril's wedding (1.1.36)—but also in his very appropriation of the name of a classical poet. Tucca calls him "a counterfeit Iugler, that steales the name of *Horace*" (5.2.245), and he famously comes onstage in the final act carrying portraits of both the "sweet visage of *Horace*" and of Jonson's oily, "hollow-cheekt," "perboylde-face" (5.2.254, 261). Despite Horace's laureate ambitions, the King has no idea who Horace is when

Sir Vaughan worries that Horace has “puzd and puzd about a hundred merie tales and lyce, into his great and princely eares” (2.1.105-6).¹¹⁹ Horace is impudent in “wriggl[ing] himselfe into great Mens famyliarity” (5.2.253) only to traduce them behind their backs: “tis thy fashion to flirt Inke in euerie mans face,” Tucca sneers, “and then to craule into his bosome, and damne thy selfe to wip’t off agen: yet to giue out abroad, that hee was glad to come to composition with thee” (4.3.77-9). And Sir Vaughan, who employs Horace to rail against baldness in the comic subplot, turns on Horace for railing in the satirical sub-subplot: “how chance it passes, that you bid God boygh to an honest trade of building Symneys, and laying downe Brickes, for a worse handicraftnes, to make nothing but railes; your Muse leanes vpon nothing but filthy rotten railes, such as stand on Poules head, how chance?” (4.3.156-60).

Dekker both echoes and inverts *Poetaster* by arraigning Horace in the final scene before the King. Like Jonson’s Caesar, King William is a friend to the poets: he believes that “*True Poets are with Arte and Nature Crown’d,*” and he instructs Crispinus to “Reach [Horace] a Poets Crowne (the honour’d Bayes)” if “a cleare merrit stand vpon his praise” (5.2.116, 119-20). Like Caesar, King William allows his deserving poet to judge the poetaster who has defamed him, and in instructing Crispinus to judge Horace according to wit and reason rather than passion, the King speaks to the same values that animated Jonson’s own poetry: “We make him thine *Crispinus*; wit and iudgement, / Shine in thy number, and thy soule I know, / Will not goe arm’d in passion gainst thy foe” (5.2.126-8). But just as Tucca had shown the disparity between Jonson’s idealized conception of himself as Horace and Jonson’s actual, pock-marked countenance by holding up two portraits, Dekker echoes Jonson’s poetic ideals in order to reveal

¹¹⁹ As Cyrus Hoy remarks, “So much for the imperial intimacy of Jonson’s Horace with Augustus Caesar in *Poetaster*” (Hoy, *Introductions, Notes, and Commentaries to texts in ‘The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker’* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980], 1.233).

his inability to live up to them.¹²⁰ Crispinus finds Horace guilty of wrongfully usurping “a Poets Crowne” and sentences him to be crowned with nettles instead of “the honour’d Bayes” (5.2.120). Horace is then forced to make a long list of promises, which themselves speak to Jonson’s distinctly unmeritorious behavior in the theater and in society: he must promise no longer to threaten to hang himself if anyone could write plays as well as himself; no longer to “bumbast out a new play” with old jests stolen from the Temples Revels (5.2.295-6); no longer to sit in the gallery and make faces at the actors as they perform his plays; no longer to “venter on the stage” when his play is over in order to attract attention (5.2.303); no longer to mock his patrons and social superiors; no longer to blame courtiers’ ignorance when his plays are “misliked at court”; and no longer to “fling Epigrams, Embleames, or Play-speeches about” when he dines in taverns amongst his betters (5.2.330). Again, these are specific accusations by someone who clearly knew Jonson’s behavior in the theater and in society very well. They serve to undercut the claim to moral and poetic authority that Jonson had made in *Poetaster*, and to bring him back down to earth from the airy position he had assumed in the Augustan court.

As Bednarz suggests, *Satiromastix* does not really condemn satire itself.¹²¹ Dekker does not imply that Horace stands for all satirists; as he says in his dedication of the play “To the World,” his lines are “free from conspiring the least disgrace to any man, but onely to our new *Horace*” (44-5).¹²² He does not seem to have any problem with “answer[ing]” Jonson “at his owne weapon” or with his appropriation of Jonson’s own creation, *Tucca*: it was not “much improper,” Dekker claims, “to set the same dog vpon Horace, whom *Horace* had set to worrie

¹²⁰ In making this claim, I agree with Bednarz (*S&PW*, 204), though our readings of *Satiromastix* are ultimately rather different.

¹²¹ Bednarz, *S&PW*, 204.

¹²² This inversion of the prototypical satirical apologia (which typically asserts the satirist’s right to attack vice in general and defends the satirist against private application) is fascinating on its insistence that its attack is directed at a single individual. It may, in fact, be unique in the early modern canon.

others” (“To the World” 18, 37-9). At no point in the play does Dekker ever really challenge the idea of satirical efficacy. The combination of Tucca’s verbal assault and Crispinus’ satirical judgment is enough to purge Horace of his satirical humour: instead of accepting the crown of nettles, Horace offers to untruss himself—to have his “Satyres coate pull’d ouer [his] eares, and bee turn’d out a the nine Muses Seruice” (5.2.227-8). And more importantly, Dekker clearly expected his own satire to have an effect. Perhaps he did not think he would ever entirely purge Jonson himself of his satirical humour, but he knew that if he could make enough people laugh at Jonson than Jonson would be forced to respond: “if you set your hands and Seales to this,” Tucca declares in the Epilogue, “*Horace* will write against it, and you may haue more sport” (20-2). Even as he strips Jonson of his satirical robes, Dekker imagines the exchange continuing indefinitely, a vision of perpetual satirical controversy that unwittingly echoes Martin Marprelate’s promise that the bishops “shall have as good as [they] bring”¹²³: “he [Horace] shall not loose his labour, he shal not turne his blanke verses into wast paper: No, my Poetasters will not laugh at him, but will vntruss him agen, and agen, and agen” (22-4).

Instead of condemning satire itself, *Satiromastix* condemns Jonson’s performance of satire. Horace echoes Jonson’s self-righteous self-defense when he declares that he “turne[d]” his “*Muse* into a *Timonist*” because he “Loath[ed] the general Leprozie of Sinne, / Which like a plague runs through the soules of men” (5.2.195-7), but it is clear throughout the play that this is far from true. Horace threatens to bring Tucca’s “humor ath stage” and “make him the most ridiculous” (1.2.132-3) because his patron/parasite, Asinius,¹²⁴ reports that Tucca has spoken ill

¹²³ Martin Marprelate (pseud.), *Epistle*, in *The Martin Marprelate Tracts*, ed. Joseph Black (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 12.

¹²⁴ As an unthinking commender of Horace’s work and a social hanger-on who simultaneously helps to support Horace, Asinius fills more or less exactly the same role as Simplicius Faber in Marston’s *What You Will*. Thus it is reasonable to assume—as most critics have—that Asinius and Simplicius are both based on a historical person. E.A.J. Honigmann argues in his biography of John Weever that these characters as well as Shift in Jonson’s *Every Man Out* are personations of Weever, who—like Asinius—was very short and was notoriously fond of tobacco (42-

of him behind his back, but Tucca has only spoken ill of Horace because Horace has himself attacked his friends behind their backs (1.2.322). Horace circulates epigrams about Tucca, Crispinus, and Demetrius among the gallants in order to “feast [his] Muse, whilst their owne starue” (2.2.45), then lies about it to Tucca’s face: “Dam me, if euer I traduc’d your name. / What imputation can you charge me with?” (4.1.157-8).

Dekker’s Horace/Jonson does not write satire because he loathes sin; he writes satire in order to “keep the world in awe” (2.2.60):

Tucca: A Gentleman, or an honest Cittizen, shall not Sit in your pennie-bench
Theaters, with his Quirrell by his side cracking nuttes; nor sneake into a Tauerne
with his Mermaid; but he shall be Satyr’d, and Epigram’d vpon, and his humour
must run vpo’t’h Stage: you’ll ha *Euery Gentleman in’s humour*, and *Euery
Gentleman out on’s humour*: wee that are heades of Legions and Bandes, and
feare none but these same shoulder-clappers, shall feare you, you Serpentine
rascall. (4.2.52-9)

Horace has sworn that his “aleageance to bright vertue” makes him “put on / The Office of an Executioner, / Onely to strike off the swolne head of sinne,” but instead he amounts to little more than a petty gossip. He has sworn that he whips none, but his “lashing iestes make all men bleed” (1.2.225-35); he has sworn that he does not brand, tax, or scourge particular poets or players, but in a company “of fiue hundred,” four hundred will “all point with their fingers / At one and the

9). But aside from a few teasingly elusive epithets, such as Tucca’s reference to Asinius as a “sheep-skin-weauer” in *Satiromastix* (1.2.294), there is not much more evidence in favor of the association, and there seems to be more than enough against it. Whereas Weever was well-educated and well known as a writer for his *Epigrammes*, Asinius is not only stupid but functionally illiterate: Sir Vaughan makes him swear that he will “not hyre *Horace*, to giue you poesies for rings, or hand-kerchers, or kniues which you vnderstand not, nor to write your Loue-letters; which you (in turning of a hand) set your markes vpon, as your owne: nor you shall not carry Lattin Poets about you till you can write and read English at most” (5.2.271-6). There is no evidence for Weever’s association with Jonson outside of these supposed personations, but Weever’s *Faunus and Melliflora* and *Whipping of the Satyre*—which both attack satire, and the latter of which attacks Jonson directly—give little reason to think that the two were close friends, let alone that Weever was known well enough as Jonson’s hanger-on to be brought on stage for it.

same man” (1.2.242-4). “Court, Citty, country, friends, / Foes, all must smart alike” (1.2.235-6): according to Tucca’s amazing catalogue, Horace has “entred Actions of assault and battery, against a companie of honourable and worshipfull Fathers of the law” (4.3.184-6); has “yelp[e]d, that Arrogance, and Impudence, and Ignoraunce, are the essentiall parts of a Courtier” (188-90); has cried “ptrooh at worshipfull Cittizens, and cal’st them Flat-caps, Cuckolds, and banckrupts, and modest and vertuous wiues punckes and cockatrices” (194-6); has “arraigned two Poets against all lawe and conscience; and not content with that, hast turn’d them amongst a company of horrible blacke Fryers” (197-9). This is not the moral reprehension of oppressed virtue, as Jonson had claimed, but the impudent scolding of a petty railer who arrogantly believes everyone else to be incapable of answering him. Jonson is not an “honest satire” but a hypocrite, a poetaster who fails to live up to his laureate ideals. “Should I but bid thy *Muse stand to the Barre*, / Thy selfe against her wouldst giue euidence,” Crispinus declares: “*Thy pride and scorne made her turne Saterist, / And not her loue to vertue*” (5.2.212-13, 216-17).

The satirical sub-subplot of *Satiromastix* is impressive in its “skewering of Jonson’s personal excesses”—“in the Elizabethan period,” Bednarz acknowledges, “only Thomas Nashe’s assault on Gabriel Harvey compares to it as a travesty of a contemporary writer”¹²⁵—and even if the central plot involving William Terril and King William II does little to hold our attention, Dekker’s Captain Tucca is a satirical tour-de-force who runs away with both the widow Minever and the show itself. This appears to be largely intentional: Dekker bowls Jonson over with Jonson’s own creation, a ball of popular, festive energy, while depicting both Crispinus and

¹²⁵ Bednarz, *S&PW*, 216. But Bednarz is wrong to suggest that *Satiromastix* is somehow a failure, a “weak response to Jonson that lost its battle by conceding too much to the project of humanist poetics” (224). Bednarz makes this claim in order to explain why Shakespeare needed to intervene with *Troilus and Cressida*, which, Bednarz argues, was written and performed after *Satiromastix* (late October 1601) but before Jonson’s “Apologetical Dialogue” (December 1601). By downplaying the significance of *Satiromastix*, furthermore, Bednarz is able to maintain that the primary intellectual debate of the Poets’ War was about comedy, not satire, and that it took place between Jonson and Shakespeare, not Jonson, Marston, and Dekker.

Demetrius as concerned rather than vindictive and as sincere in their desire for reconciliation. “We come like your Phisitions, to purge / Your sicke and daungerous minde of her disease,” Crispinus promises Horace; “In troth we doe,” Demetrius adds, “out of our loues we come, / And not reuenge” (1.2.247-50). Indeed, even as he replicates Jonson’s satirical practice, Dekker manages to maintain a careful distinction between himself and Jonson. Tucca dregs up the details of Jonson’s personal life, ridicules his appearance, mocks his poverty, and misrepresents his poetry, but Dekker is able to hold all of this at arm’s length because Tucca is, from the beginning, the product of Jonson’s own brain. So too, in fact, is Dekker’s Horace: some of the most damning lines of the play merely echo Jonson’s own lines in *Every Man Out*, *Cynthia’s Revels*, and *Poetaster*. By importing Jonson’s Horace into his own play, Dekker is better able to condemn Jonson of self-aggrandizement. And by accepting Jonson’s humanist conception of satire, Dekker is able to criticize Jonson’s failure to live up to his own ideals without falling into the same pyrronhist trap that had ensnared the anti-Martinists and Gabriel Harvey—that of discrediting the very notion of discredit that they were in the business of performing. Dekker denies Jonson’s claim to satirical authority without denying the very possibility of satirical authority itself.

But even if *Satiromastix* does not so much attack satire as Jonson’s performance of it, the play still participates in the ongoing debate about the ethics of satirical discourse. Even as *Satiromastix* is intensely personal in its response to Jonson, even as it is filled with details of Jonson’s biography, and even as Dekker attempts to limit his own satirical attack to “our new *Horace*,” Dekker cannot keep Horace from becoming representative of the fashionable satirist onstage. For although Horace is undeniably Jonson, one of Dekker’s central points is that Jonson is not Horace. Indeed, Tucca goes to great pains to point out that Jonson is a “counterfeit iugler”

who in fact neither resembles the historical Horace in his person or in his poetry. This creates a representational gap: the fact that Jonson is not Horace means that Horace can never entirely be Jonson, and there are moments in the play—though fewer, probably, than in any other satirical personation of the Elizabethan period—when Horace is less Jonson than he is a character in a play, forced to take part in and respond to the action unfolding before him. This is part of the burden of dramatic personation and of course of dramatic representation more generally, for a character onstage can never fully be what he represents. Dekker's critique of Jonson's satirical practice therefore necessarily includes others who try but fail to imitate Horace. Indeed, it begins to look impossible to imitate Horace adequately, for even as Dekker accepts Jonson's lofty Horatian and humanist poetic and satirical ideals, there are no characters who can live up to them. Crispinus and Demetrius refuse to concede moral authority to Horace, but they never claim to be better poets; Tucca is an effective satirist, but he is not a particularly good man. It thus becomes impossible to avoid the sense that the "disease" Crispinus offers to "purge" from Horace's "sicke and daungerous minde" (1.2.247-8) is satire itself. When Horace is finally untrussed of his borrowed—or perhaps stolen—satyr's robes, the robes remain onstage, unclaimed by anyone else. And there, the play seems to suggest, they should remain.

5. Anti-Satirical Satire

In denying Jonson's claim to moral and satirical authority, Dekker thus participated in the gradual transformation of English satire at the turn of the century, in which satire began more and more to turn against itself. This had always been an aspect of the larger debate I have been tracing about the ethics of satire in the long final decade of the Elizabethan era: the anti-Martinists satirically opposed Martin Marprelate's satire, and Gabriel Harvey was unable to keep

himself from satirizing Thomas Nashe even as he decried Nashe's satire. But the anti-Martinists were as interested in satire as Harvey was opposed to it, and whatever anti-satirical satire that emerged early in the decade was not deliberately—or at least not unselfconsciously—contradictory. Beginning with Marston's satirical refutation of Hall's claims to moral purity, however, satirists began more and more to satirize satire openly and deliberately. I would suggest that this is an inevitable result of satire's opposition to ideas, objects, or institutions that are overvalued in general and of early modern satire's opposition to popularity or popular "opinion" in particular: as satire itself became fashionable in the late 1590s, its practitioners began to police each other, mock their readers for their interest in mockery, and undercut their own satirical authority.

Thomas Middleton's (?) *Microcynicon* (1599), for example, contains much that we would come to expect in the formal verse satire of the 1590s: the satirist attacks the exchange, usurers, fashionable women, a coney-catcher, and a beautiful transvestite prostitute, all conspicuous markers of commodity culture in London. But in the sixth and final satire, the satirical gaze turns back upon the satirist himself. There is no first person narration to ground the reader; instead, the satire presents a dialogue between two voices, which gradually become recognizable as a satirist as a fool. "Twenty to one," the fool declares, "this fool's some satirist," and he sticks around to "Vex him that seems to vex all other men."¹²⁶ On cue, the satirist swells in a fit of rage, declaring that it is impossible to vex him, as "Not spite itself can discontent / My steeled thoughts or breed disparagement" (23-4), and declaring that he does not fear "the eyes of ire" (27) of those whom he has railed against. "A resolute ass!" the fool scoffs (29), undercutting the satirist's self-importance, and in the concluding lines the fool "stay[s] but till the Innocent get on" (36),

¹²⁶ Thomas Middleton, *Microcynicon: Six Snarling Satires*, ed. Wendy Wall, in *The Collected Works of Thomas Middleton*, ed. Gary Taylor and John Lavignino (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 6.12, 18.

alluding to the proverb that “the wise man must carry the fool upon his shoulders.”¹²⁷ In the last line, the satirist recognizes his own foolishness, as “pack, good foolish ass, and so I leave thee” (38) is apparently addressed to himself.¹²⁸ Thus, as Middleton sagely reminds his reader in the “Epilogue to the last satire,” the wise often “Stumble and fall into fool’s paradise, / For jocund wit of force must jangling be” (2-3). The satirist and the fool are barely distinguishable from one another. In railing against folly, the satirist has proven himself little better than a fool.

Even more ironic in its satirical opposition to satire—and considerably more puzzling in its performance—is John Weever’s *Faunus and Melliflora* (1600). In his *Epigrammes in the Oldest Cut and Newest Fashion* (1599), Weever had given no real sense of any objection to satire, though he did suggest in his dedication to the reader that he could not “yet vnderstand / The wittie, learned, Satyres mystery” (11), and his epigrams were certainly “farre differing from other wittes” (103) in their humble praise of courtiers and other poets. Still, there is nothing that can adequately prepare the reader for *Faunus and Melliflora*. The first half of the text is an unironically erotic narrative of the eponymous heroes, a prince and a nymph of Diana’s train who fall in love and, despite his father’s objection and Melliflora’s vow of chastity, run away together. The poem is filled with allusions to Shakespeare’s *Venus and Adonis* as well as Marston’s *Metamorphosis of Pigmalion’s Image*. Like the latter, it teases the reader with its pseudo-pornographic half-glimpses of unmentionable pleasures, such as when the “wanton wind” plays with Melliflora’s skirt: the wind would “come, and go, heaue up, throw downe, to show / Twise-wounded *Faunus*, what he did not know . . . But what he saw, tis needless for to say, / Heere shall your thoughts, and not my pen bewray” (452-60). Irritated at Venus for her role

¹²⁷ Wall, 31-2n.

¹²⁸ Wall seems to confuse who is speaking in the final lines, as she suggests that the Innocent (i.e., the fool) “probably has the last word in sending the Satirist away,” but acknowledges that “the speakers in these lines cannot with any certainty be assigned” (35-8n).

in all of this, Diana transforms Melliflora's unborn son into a disgusting satyr (1033-6) and asks Jove to ensure "That *Faunus* late transformed sonnes Satyres . . . Should euermore be vtter enemies, / To louers pastimes, sportfull vneries" (1067-70). "If this praise-worthy be," Weeuer's narrator continues ambiguously, he would praise Hall's "Satyre Academicall" above Marston's "*Rhamnusia* Scourge of Villanie," whose "censuring vaine" and "enuious biting" he was "borne to hate" (1079-86). There the first part of the poem ends—with Weeuer's depiction of the satyr as a monstrous offspring, his ambiguous praise for Hall, and his direct attack on Marston, whose poetry he has clearly read and imitated.

What follows is an abrupt and vexing transition from Ovidian erotic narrative to satirical anti-satire.¹²⁹ In order to "shew the Satyres enmitie, / Which *Brutus* left behind in *Italie*" (1087-8), Weeuer translates the first satire of Horace, the first satire of Persius, and the first ten lines of the first satire of Juvenal, only to break off, claiming that Venus, "hearing glowming *Iuuenall* threaten so great a punishment," has requested that he leave Juvenal "in his English tongue vnperfect" for awhile longer. The original poem resumes, and now Venus, "Hearing before the Satyres enmitie, / Gainst her proceedings and her deitie," thrusts herself into bawdy poems and elegies until some of her followers delivered "this boone": "That all the Satyres then in England liuing / Should sacrificde be in the burning fire . . . And from their Cyndars should a Satyre rise, /

¹²⁹ Davenport, who edited *Faunus and Melliflora* (as well as so many other Elizabethan satires), suggests that the "transition from erotic narrative to mythography is so forced and awkward that one is led to conclude that Weeuer had no such ending in mind when he wrote the greater part of the poem." Instead, Davenport suggests, Weeuer had two unfinished works in hand in June 1599, both of which were proscribed by the Bishops' Ban, which he combined together. "It is quite credible that Weeuer should have attempted to evade the ban by cobbling together his two works in such a way that the erotic poem might pass as a mythological account of the origin of satire and the satires themselves be presented as a deprecation of satire" (vi). Although this is certainly credible, it is not the only plausible explanation, as there are other works that similarly combine Ovidian erotic narrative with satire, including Marston's *Metamorphosis of Pigmalion's Image and Certaine Satires*, which *Faunus* echoes so frequently. Guilpin's *Skialetheia* similarly shifts self-consciously from bawdy epigram to moral censure, announcing that his reader "canst not misuse, / More then I will will, these bastards of my *Muse*: / I know they are passing filthy, scuruey lines . . . I care not what the world doth think, or say, / There lies a morall vnder my leane play" (70.7-9, 19-20). Whatever the case, more work needs to be done on *Faunus and Melliflora*, which has never received more than passing mention in the critical literature.

Which their Satyricke snarling should despise” (1673-4, 76-7).

This phoenix-like scourge of satyrs who would emerge from the Bishops’ Ban and bonfire was apparently Weever himself, for in the following poem of some 150 lines, entitled “A Prophetie of this present yeare, 1600,” Weever attacks satirists—particularly Marston—from several different perspectives. In the first section of the poem, Weever instructs “fond Satyres, quipping Epigrammatists,” “Enuie-swolne *Cynickes*,” “Vnrigned routing hogges, otter-toothed *Rhamnusiens*” and so on to “stay” their “lashing hand[s], and ierking rimes” because “There is no lewdnesse in these *Halcyon* times” (1-9). Whatever allegiance Weever might be said to show for Hall¹³⁰ is undercut here by Weever’s ironic inversion of Hall’s ironic recantation of satire.¹³¹ Whereas Hall had suggested that satire was unnecessary because the world was free from sin—thus implying that satire *was* necessary, because the world was anything but free from sin—Weever turns this on its head: he can find no “odde toyish fopperies,” “No scripture iests, no heau’n prophaning oaths” in “*Paules*” or at playhouses or at revels or in dicing houses or at bear baitings (28-41) because satirists have effectively cured the world of sin. Gallus, Rubrine, Sylene, and Lucea—all figures from Marston’s satires—have all renounced their wonted ways (42-53) because they have been attacked in print: “No muddy mind no slimie dunghil slaue, / But hates with Pickt-hatch t’haue his name defaced, / Vices are loathd, and vertue is embraced” (56-8). Weever would repeat this critique in *The Whipping of the Satyre*: whereas Hall had implied that the continued existence of sin upheld the necessity of satire, Weever implies that the continued existence of sin is the clearest indication of satire’s inefficacy.

In the middle section of the “Prophetie,” Weever turns to a more serious critique of

¹³⁰ This is Arnold Davenport’s general reading of Weever; see “The Quarrel of the Satirists,” *Modern Language Review* 37:2 (April 1942), 123-30. As I will continue to show, however, even if Weever singled out Marston for castigation over Hall at the end of the first part of *Faunus and Melliflora*, his condemnation of satire becomes categorical and does not ultimately exempt Hall.

¹³¹ See Hall, *Virgidemiarum*, 6.1.

satire. He suggests that the satire is a “dishonor, and indignity, / Vnto a Poets great supremacy” both because satirists use lewd and foul terms—they have “dipt [their] pens in puddle beastliness”—and because by exposing secret sin satirists release sin into the world: “For whilst such couered sinnes you do vnvaile, / Crabde reprehension sets them but to sale” (71-3, 84-5). Satire is thus not just ineffective: in fact, it makes the world worse. The young “*Tusco*,” for example, could not decipher “a Satyres line” until “court-boy *Brisco*” comes by and “in a moment spide / Light in this darke line”; “I’me glad of this,” *Tusco* replies, “I thought there had not bin / Such nouell pastimes, such a new found sinne” (87, 93-7). Far from curing the “court-boy *Brisco*” of his sinful ways, the satirist instructs *Tusco* how to be more like the sinful *Brisco*.

Fascinatingly, however, in the poem’s final section Weever begins to participate in the very castigation of sin that he decries. After declaring that he would not “for a world of Indian treasury” so vilify the world (76-7), that his “retchlesse lines shall *Brisco* not countroule” (101), and that “Sinne’s like a puddle or a mattery sincke, / The more we stirre them, stil the more they stincke” (106-7), Weever claims that he *would* write satire if he could: “O could the circuit of my pulsive braine, / Harbour but in it such a cinicke straine, / I would haue scourge self-blind *Brauortian*” (108-110), a gallant who bestows lavish gifts on his courtesan in Newgate while his uncle starves in the Fleet. Weever then proves himself more than capable of a Marstonian “cinicke straine,” as he details the sins of a number of other figures about town whose crimes, he insists, he will not reveal: “This would haue fazd a Satyres pisse-stept whip,” he says of two men running after a courtesan in a coach; “They scape my ierking rime or iocund quip” (122-3). The list of crimes that Weever exposes even as he says he will not grows, and the refutation of what he claims not to be doing becomes dizzyingly paradoxical:

Though *Cudro* (not for kingdomes would I name him,

That were enough for euermore to shame him)

Maintaine his seruant, sister, and his whore,

And yet maintaine his sister and no more,

Should I vnvaile incestuous luxurie?

Nay rather Curtaine-ore such brothelrie. (124-9)

Even as he refuses to name *Cudro*, Weever names him and thus shames him—though, as “Cudro” is transparently not his real name, Weever does not actually name or shame anyone after all.¹³² Even as he declares that he will “Curtaine-ore such brothelrie,” Weever “vnvailes” it—though, as such an incestuous situation is unlikely, it is entirely possible that Weever “vnvailes” nothing after all. Even as he denounces satire for its foul terms and its propagation of sin, Weever employs those very terms and thus participates in the propagation of sin in an apparent echo of the ironic recantation of satire that he had before inverted. But in fact the irony here is even more complex, for if a satirist reveals his own knowledge of beastliness as he exposes others’—“What beastlinesse by others you haue showne,” he claims at the conclusion of the poem, “Such by your selues it’s thought that you haue knowne” (152-3)—then the beastliness Weever reveals about himself here is the extent of his familiarity with the satire he both attacks and echoes. He has drawn characters from Hall, from Guilpin, and in particular from Marston, and he has reproduced the beastly language of satire in order to argue back against it.

Weever’s next anti-satirical satire, *The Whipping of the Satyre* (1601)—probably

¹³² cf. Weever’s epistle “To the Vayne-Glorious, the Satyryst, Epigrammatist, and Humorist” in *The Whipping of the Satyre*, where he scoffs at the Epigrammatist for his creative license in naming imaginary persons: “verily you haue greatly troubled your selfe in naming certaine persons. Such a one you call Fabius, and another, Felix, anon comes me Rufus and Clodius, and such a company of Imaginarie persons and inuisible Ideas, to hold your worship talke, as would fat a man with laughter, or fill him with wonder. In the end, when your page hath playd the knaue with euery one a little, you turne ouer a new leafe, and cal for more company, with whom, lest any should suspect you to be no great scholler, you talke of the Intellectuall quintessence, Genius, and such great secrets of Art wonderfull luxuriously” (John Weever, *The Whipping of the Satyre*, ed. Arnold Davenport [Liverpool: University Press of Liverpool, 1951], 6).

published at about the same time Jonson's *Poetaster* was first performed—is perhaps the most thoroughly anti-satirical satire of the early modern period.¹³³ In the sense that it contains the entire debate about the ethics and politics of satire, it also may be the single most important text for understanding the Poets' War and for understanding Elizabethan satire more generally. For in fulfilling his promise to the allegorical embodiments of the church and state to “take vp *Satyre*”—who, along with the Epigrammatist and the Humourist, threatened, like the offspring of Spenser's Error, “viperlike” to “eate [their] bowels out” (93)—“and take down his pride” (150), Weever systematically deconstructs the principal arguments made on behalf of satire in the works of Hall, Marston, Guilpin, and Jonson. Weever freely acknowledges that England is “polluted with all wickednesse,” that “vice deserues to be combe-cut with blame” (663-4), and that the intentions of the Satirist, the Epigrammatist, and the Humourist might well be Christianly in that they “labour to repress / The course of sinne, and curse of sinfulness” (113-14). But Weever insists that these three have taken “vnchristian courses . . . / As loathes the eares of the offended wise” (841) in using such “offensiue speach” (728) to rail against sin: “Ye (God forgiue ye) mocke, deride, mis-call, / Reuile, scoffe, flout, defame and slaunder to” (625-6). This is a misuse of rhetoric—“If speaking ill deserues the bell of praise, / Downe with the Grammar, God be with *In speech*, / Rhetoricke adiuue” (349-51)—a “misimploy[ment]” of wit (“To the Vayne-Glorious,” 3), and an abuse of poetry: “O, is it not a worke of wickednesse, / To picke vp sinne, and packe vp villanies, / To flesh ones penne with fatte of filthinesse, / And heape together mens iniquities?” (187-90). The world is “sore with sinne,” but instead of “balme,” the satirist

¹³³ Although the title page suggests that the poem is by “W.I.,” Weever's authorship has been more or less accepted since Arnold Davenport supported Collier's attribution in his edition of *The Whipping*. Although the striking repetition of “Will” at several points in *No Whipping, nor tripping: but a kinde friendly Snippinge* (1601), which responds to *The Whipper*, seems to point to an author named “Will” (such as William Ingram, who was initially supposed to have written the poem), there is enough verbal and thematic continuity between *Faunus* and *The Whipping* to convince me that Weever was responsible for the latter.

“powres out blame thereon” (489-90).

Weever not only denies that such “worke[s] of wickednesse” could ever cure sin but continually mocks the idea that harsh mockery could be rhetorically effective. “Thinke you that foule words can beget faire manners?” he asks derisively in the prefatory epistle. “If you do, I will not bate you an ace of an asse: for experience giues you the lie to your face” (5). He scoffs at the idea that the satirist thinks that the “force of [his] perswasion” will “driue the diuell from possession,” and gloats in his own clever declaration that the satirist proves himself in the encounter “No notable, but a not able man” (224-5, 228).¹³⁴ It is preposterous for the satirist to think that “the vapour of his windfull words, / Would blow vp vices on their owne accords” (599-600), or that ill words could beget virtue:

O, is not this a vild praeposterous course,
 To weane from vice, and winne to vertuousnesse,
 Our sinnes are ill, but his offence is worse,
 That heapeth sinne on heapes of wickednesse:
 As though that bitter euill slaunderous speach,
 Were fittest method vertuous deeds to teach. (493-4)

Weever ridicules the idea that ridicule will serve as an effective deterrent for bad behavior again and again, perhaps concerned that his readers will miss the point. He imagines having a friend who has become a drunk, proud, and given to lechery, wonders what the best course would be to win him back to virtue, and at last determines to write down all of his vices “And goe and crye them all about the towne, / Setting him out for some strange manlike beast”: “My friend, you are a vild whoremongring knaue,” Weever declares, in perfect imitation of the satirists whose sinful

¹³⁴ Both *Faunus* and *The Whipping* are filled with such incessant, almost intolerable wordplay, which Davenport rightly points to as further proof of Weever’s authorship.

behavior he is in the midst of publishing, “A lecherous Rogue, a brabbling Qurreller, / A drunken Tos-pot, and a swearing Slaue” (547-52). Such a course of action, he determines, is “More like a fiend, then like a friend”; it will not “reclayme” his friend but “straight incense him . . . To badder course” (554-8).

Evident here as elsewhere in the poem is Weever’s insistence that satire works not as a “morall medicine” but as a “mortall poyson” (“To the Vayne-Glorious,” 6-7). “Is’t like,” he asks rhetorically, “the aire of three mens breaths at last, / Should purifie the sincke of all mens sinne, / When as their words, like lothsome vomite cast, / Not purifies, but putrifies within?” (859-62). Whereas Hall pointed to the continued existence of sin as proof of the necessity of satire, Weever points to the growth of sin as proof that satire was making things worse: “we may think there’s poyson foysted in, / Because the world swells bigger sin with sin” (173-4). Again, whatever their moral pretense, satirists have both fed on men’s inclination to sin and “feasted them with all varietie” (202), luring them to viciousness by instructing them about things they would not have otherwise known about: “Much paines you take in handling Lecherie, / Lauishing out such vilde lasciuious speach, / As would inuite one vnto Venerie, / Disclosing things that neuer Bawd could teach” (703-6).

Satirists frequently argued that they attacked vice, not individuals, and those who saw themselves depicted were simply guilty of the vice being attacked. “Art thou guiltie?” Joseph Hall asks: “complaine not, thou art not wronged: art thou guiltles? complaine not, thou art not touched” (“Post-script,” 98). Weever, on the other hand, insists that the satirist attacks everyone. “[Y]e took vpon you to taxe all the world,” he tells the Satyrist in his epistle, “like Augustus Cesar, making euery man subiect to your censure” (3). He tells the Satyrist that he deserves the same as a man who was “hang’d of late for libelling”:

For you before whole volumes foorth did bring,
 And whome you pleas'd, did liberally defame.
 For shall we his y right a Libell call,
 That toutcht but some? not yours, that aym'd at all? (331-6)

What is even more troubling about the satirist's non-discriminating attack against all men is that it includes those above the satirist on the social hierarchy: "There's no estate but vildly you impeach, / And lowdest lyes report in lewdest speach" (299-300). Indeed, if the satirist "meet[s] a Noble man or so, / Instead of reuerence (as becommeth vs)," the satirist "will abase him and abuse him to" (1015-17).

As a poison that leads men to vice rather than cures them of it and as an affront to the nobility, satire is not simply impotent or ineffective but is in a fact a threat to the church and state. This is rendered explicit in the allegorical frame of the poem, in which a religious pilgrim en route to Jerusalem overhears two sisters, who turn out to be the English Church and Commonwealth, discussing how they are pestered by the Satyrist, the Epigrammatist, and the Humourist; the younger of the two (the Commonwealth) in fact complains that nothing else "hath heapt such sorrowes in my brest, / As those" (83-4). By assuming the role of disciplinarian, Weever suggests, the satirist shows little faith in the laws of the realm or in his social superiors, whose responsibility he takes upon himself: "dare you vsurpe an office then, / Without the licence of her Maiestie, / To punish all her Subiects with the pen, / Against the Law of Ciuilitie?" (583-6). So too does the satirist's ambition "To censure men and their mis-gouernement, / Iudging the world before the latter day" usurp the authority of the "Sonne of God" (853-6). And by embroiling England in "ciuill iarres bred by vnciuilnesse" (658), the satirist undermines the peace and stability of the social order.

As Davenport suggests in his introduction to *The Whipping*, Weever almost certainly had three specific individuals in mind for the Satyrist, the Epigrammatist, and the Humourist.¹³⁵ The Satyrist is primarily Marston, to whom Weever alludes repeatedly throughout the first half of the poem, such as his echo of the opening of the seventh satire of *The Scourge of Villainy*: “But harke, I heare the *Cynicke Satyre* crie, / A man, a man, a kingdome for a man” (415-16).¹³⁶ The Epigrammatist, whom Weever associates with the Inns of Court (668), accuses of “vilde lasciuious speach” (704), and mocks for creating fictitious names such as Fabius, Felix, Rufus, and Clodius, may be Everard Guilpin, who was at Gray’s Inn and whose *Skialetheia* contained a good number of lascivious epigrams about characters with similar names.¹³⁷ The Humourist is certainly Jonson, whom Weever claims was in such dire need of “coyne” that he “made sale of [his] Humours to the Theater and there plaid Pee boh with the people in [his] humour, then out of [his] humour” (“To the Vayne-Glorious,” 7).

But any attempt to separate *The Whipping* into distinct accusations against individual authors ultimately breaks down. In his address to the Satyrist, for example, Weever frequently alludes to Hall as well as to Marston, such in his derisive echo of Hall’s ambitious “Defiance to Envy”: “he that mounts into the aire of Fame, . . . / Must take his rise low from humilitie; / And not with you, a Gooses quill to take, / Thinking with that, an Eagles flight to make” (271-6).¹³⁸ And whatever accusations Weever makes of the Satyrist apply to the Epigrammatist and the Humourist as well, as all three are involved in the same project:

It seems your brother *Satyre* and ye twayne,

¹³⁵ See Davenport (ed.), *The Whipping*, v-vii.

¹³⁶ cf. *The Scourge*, “A Cynicke Satyre,” which begins with an allusion to Shakespeare’s *Richard III*: “*A Man, a man, a kingdom for a man*” (7.1).

¹³⁷ Actually, Sir John Davies fits this description as well, and may have been better known for his epigrams than Guilpin.

¹³⁸ cf. Hall, “Defiance to Envy,” 37-42.

Plotted three wayes to put the Diuell downe;
 One should outrayle him by inuectiue vaine,
 One all to flout him like a countrey clowne;
 And one in action, on a stage out-face,
 And play vpon him to his great disgrace. (829-34)

Even if the Satyrist rails, the Epigrammatist jests, and the Humourist performs onstage, all three attempt to “purifie the sincke of all mens sinne,” all three censure other men, and all three ultimately “infect . . . most mens minds” with their speech (863). Weever does not privilege Hall or Jonson in *The Whipping*, as Davenport suggests.¹³⁹ This is an all-inclusive condemnation of satirical discourse, one that alludes to specific individuals and specific texts but makes no meaningful distinctions between them. And although *The Whipping* was not a dramatic production, its appearance in August of 1601—either a short time after *Poetaster* or immediately before it, depending on when *Poetaster* was first performed—places it squarely in the context of the Poets’ War, whose central ideological dispute involved the politics and ethics of satire. If *Satiromastix* attempted to ridicule Jonson’s claim to satirical authority by showing the extent to which he failed to live up to his Augustan ideals, *The Whipping*—which in fact predated *Satiromastix*—went further by mocking the legitimacy of satire itself.

But of course Weever paradoxically performs the very satirical discourse that he derides. He scoffs at scoffing, rails against railing, reproves reproof, ridicules ridicule, and taxes all satirists by claiming that satirists taxed all men. He derides satirists for comparing men to beasts by comparing satirists themselves to beasts. Even as he accuses satirists of revealing their fascination with lechery in their attack on lechery, Weever reveals the extent of his interest in and familiarity with satire: he has read these supposedly sin-filled, supposedly poisonous texts

¹³⁹ See Davenport, “The Quarrel of the Satirists.”

closely enough to quote them and to perform their rhetoric. Even as he hopes to persuade his readers away from satirical texts, his readers' comprehension of his own text depends upon their knowledge of those texts. By blaming satirists for blaming others, Weever proves that he himself is blameworthy. In the very process of attacking satirists for airing men's sins in print, he airs their sins in print. In the very act of attempting to silence satirists by accusing them of usurping the office of the magistrate, Weever too attempts to punish her majesty's subjects "with the pen, / Against the Law of all Ciuilitie" (585-6). In the very effort to condemn satirists for breaching the peace and uncivilly breeding "ciuill iarres," Weever perpetuates the satirical controversy that threatens the stability of the social order. And Weever finally recognizes that his own effort to satirize satirists will be just as rhetorically ineffective as the satirists' own efforts to persuade men away from vice and lead them to virtue: "This gentle dealing will ye little touch, / Proud-stomackt graceless Rake-hels as ye be. / Few minds their faults, and fewer mends the same, / Till punishment supplie the place of blame" (987-90).

In *No Whippinge, nor tripping: but a kinde friendly Snippinge* (1601), Nicholas Breton offered an earnest, careful, and rather bland response to Weever's *Whipping* and to satire more broadly.¹⁴⁰ Like Weever, Breton argues that satire is an unproductive use of wit: "If you will needes be merry with your wits," he counsels, "doe no more your spirits idly spend / With ierking, biting, skoffing, and such humors / As fill the world too full of wicked rumors" (393, 405-7). He suggests that finding fault in others is "a course of little charitie" (281), that by chiding others for their sins the satirist usurps "The Preachers charge," and that those "who an others office enters in, / May hope of loue, but shalbe sure of hate" (43-6). If a poet knows a fool, Breton cautions, "then let him leaue his folly, / Or be so stil, and with his humour passe" (113-

¹⁴⁰ The poem was published anonymously, but there is plenty of internal evidence to connect *No Whippinge* to Breton's *Pasquil's Mad-Cap*. See Davenport (ed.), *The Whipper Pamphlets* (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 1951), v.

14); if the poet sees a knave, “care not to know him” (120); if the poet knows “a drunkeard,” he should “loath his drunkenesse” but not “laie it open to his foes: / Least in describing his vngodliness, / [The poet] take [himself] too soundly by the nose” (141-4). By discussing such faults, the satirist necessarily sullies both himself and those who read him, as whosoever “toucheth pitch and tarre cannot be cleane. / A wilfull wit doth worke it selfe much woe” (631-2). Even more importantly, poets should not be concerned with the defects of “great one[s]”: “A Begger must not looke vpon a King. / Take heede, I say, is a most blessed thing: / Least if you run to farre in such a fit, / A foole may happe to hang for lacke of wit” (190-6). And like Weever, Breton suggests that satire is ineffective: “Those blinking wits do show their wils too blind, / That finding faultes so roughly fall vpon them, / To think to mend them with their railing on them” (600-2).

Breton’s *No Whippinge* is a poem of general counsel, urging poetically-minded wits and scholars to abandon the fad for satire and to write divine poetry instead. Throughout the poem there is a sense that those poets who rail against sin for money or fall out with one another in mutually incriminating satirical invectives threaten the status of poetry itself in a world still not entirely convinced of its value. Breton thus urges all poets to “agree together, / To run from hell, and fained *Helicon*; / and looke at heauen, and humly hie vs thither” (617-19). If all poets would “sing of heauen, and of the high-way thither,” then “God himself would blesse our soules enditing, / And al the world would loue a Poets writing” (808, 811-12). But even as he makes this appeal for divine poetry, Breton cannot entirely distance himself from the satire he critiques. His claim to have no real familiarity with satirical authors is obviously disingenuous (344-7), and in his continued apology for *Pasquils Mad-Cap* he both implicates himself as the author of satire and issues the same sort of defense we would expect to find in any other satire: “poore Mad-cap .

. . . cast his Cap, at sinne in generall,” he claims, and “meant no one particular to touch” (352-7).

Weever received a much bolder and more direct response to *The Whipping of the Satyre* in *The Whipper of the Satyre his Pennance in a White Sheete* (1601), probably by Everard Guilpin.¹⁴¹ As in *Skialetheia*, where Guilpin had argued that “The Satyre onely and Epigramatist . . . Keepe diet from this surfet of excesse” and “The bitter censures of their Critticke spleenes, / Are Antidotes to pestilentiaill sinnes” (“Satyre Preludium,” 65-7, 69-70), Guilpin here insists that “a true *Satyre*’s guyltles of transgression.”¹⁴² But Guilpin is not particularly interested in proving the morality of the satirist in *The Whipper*. Instead, he shifts the debate to a question that had emerged more out of Breton’s text than Weever’s: should the world be told of its sin? Weever had suggested that publicly decrying a man’s abuses about town and “Setting him out for some strange manlike beast” would “incense” that man “To badder course” rather than reclaim him from sin (547ff), but he had not, like Breton, advocated leaving a fool in his folly, a knave in his knavery, or a drunkard in his drunkenness. Still, Guilpin attacks Weever for advocating a libertarian attitude towards sin: “Do we not swimme in sinne? Are we not blind, / And howlerly bath vs in iniquitie? / And yet for all these imperfections, / We should be free from all corrections?” (195-8). By “reuil[ing] him that telleth man of sinne,” Guilpin fumes, Weever “foster[s] such as sinfull be” (55-6), and indeed “animate[s]” the world itself “to persist in sinne” (23). Whereas Weever had claimed that the continued existence of sin proved the inefficacy of satire, Guilpin charges that the world only continues to be sinful because Judas-figures like Weever work to undermine the “thoughts diuine” (12) of morally-upright satirists: “No maruell

¹⁴¹ The anonymous author of *The Whipper* identifies himself as Weever’s “Epigrammatist” in the course of the poem, which, as Davenport notes, was likely based on Guilpin. The speaker’s views on the morality of the satirist are also consistent with those expressed in Guilpin’s *Skialetheia*. See Davenport (ed.) *The Whipper of the Satyre his Pennance in a White Sheete: Or, The Beadles Confutation* (1601), in *The Whipper Pamphlets* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1951).

¹⁴² Everard Guilpin (?), *The Whipper of the Satyre his Pennance in a White Sheete: Or, The Beadles Confutation* (1601), in *The Whipper Pamphlets*, ed. Arnold Davenport (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1951), 228.

though the worldes Inhabitants / Sucke the 'nfectious blood of sinnes sweet lip . . . / When impecunious Asses beare such sway" (14-15, 18).

Guilpin's defense of satire is rooted in his conviction that neither the kind admonition of friends nor the stern commandments of pastors are rhetorically effective measures to keep sinful men from the horror of the hell that gapes for them. "[K]inde perswasions will not do, / Sung from the tongue of dulcet pietie," he claims; "Let irefull *Fury* whip and scourge them to, / Sounding their soules perpetuall miserie" (199-202). Even though "sacred Pastors take exceeding paine / To winne the wicked to a blessed life," their commandments are not strong enough to prevent men from doing their "willes": "still dissention sets vs all at strife: / They may command as God commandeth them / But we will do our willes: Why? we are men" (103-8). Far from seeing the satirist as a usurper of magisterial or clerical office, then, Guilpin views the satirist as a necessary complement to an otherwise insufficient ministry. This is reinforced in an imagined encounter with a man who has left Paul's because he did not like the sermon; whereas he was able to turn a deaf ear on the reprehension of the preacher, the man's conscience has been penetrated by the satirist: "since the *Satyrist* so playd on mee," he tells the speaker, "I can not brooke to heare of letcherie" (131-2).

But even as Guilpin argues for the morality and effectiveness of satire, he is forced to argue *against* the efficacy of Weever's anti-satiric satire. "[T]o thy Pen againe," he tells his fellow satirists, "Let not one priuat Nouice terrifie / With halting lynes, thy Yron lasting braine" (181-3). By asserting that one private pen cannot stop a satirist intent on writing satire, Guilpin undermines the very project that he urges the satirist to return to, in which a private pen attempts to stop sinners from committing sin. So too does Guilpin find himself tangled up in the same accusations against Weever that Weever and others had made against satirists, such as his

insistence that it is Weever who is perpetuating controversy: “*Verbosious* sir,” he terms Weever, “that with words will quell / Vndaunted spirites, you that keepe such coyle” (135-6). But—like Martin, like Nashe, and like Dekker—even as he hopes to silence Weever, Guilpin simultaneously imagines himself engaged in ongoing controversy with him:

Perhaps your wisdom will a lash impose
 Of fell correction, on my tender backe:
 Well if you do, you shall no labour lose,
 Ile take it well in woorth: but if you lacke,
 What so you chauce to lend without request,
 I will repay’t with double interest. (235-40)

Guilpin thus cannot entirely close off Weever’s accusation that satire perpetuates controversy. Still, Guilpin’s defense of satire—or at least his satirical rebuttal of Weever’s anti-satirical satire—is one of the most unapologetic statements on behalf of satire not only in the Poets’ War but in the Elizabethan era. Although Guilpin is nearly always uncritically associated with his friend and cousin, John Marston,¹⁴³ Guilpin is in fact much more willing to accept the morality of the satirist and much less equivocal in his endorsement of satire than Marston ever was.

It might seem that we are a long way from the so-called “War of the Theaters.” We are certainly a long way from the debate about the nature of comedy that Bednarz sees as central to the Poets’ War. But Weever’s *Whipping*, Jonson’s *Poetaster*, Dekker’s *Satiromastix*, Breton’s *No Whippinge*, and Guilpin’s *Whipper* all emerged within a few months of each other in late 1601, all addressed the politics and ethics of satirical discourse, and in many cases spoke directly to one another. Weever—who had probably not yet seen Jonson’s *Poetaster*—lumped Jonson the

¹⁴³ Guilpin’s only twentieth-century editor, D. Allen Carroll, is representative of this tendency: “The most striking impression one receives from Guilpin’s satires is the close affinity they have with Marston’s” (Carroll [ed.], *Skialetheia*, 8).

Humourist together with Marston and Guilpin in his condemnation of satire at the very moment that Jonson was busy trying to distinguish his own laureate satiric enterprise from the envious railing of the poetasters, Marston and Dekker. Dekker alluded to Weever's poem in *Satiromastix*, both distinguishing his own individual attack on Jonson from Weever's universal critique of satirists (which included Marston) and satire and, at the same time, drawing attention to the parallels between his work and Weever's: "Sirra stincker," Tucca says to Horace, "thou'rt but vntruss'd now, I owe thee a whipping still, and Ile pay it: I haue layde rodde in Pisse and Vingegar for thee: It shall not bee the *Whipping a' the Satyre*, nor the Whipping of the blinde-Beaere, but of a counterfeit Iugler, that steales the name of *Horace*" (5.2.241-3). Guilpin's *Whipper* does not allude directly to Jonson's drama, but in responding to Weever's *Whipping*, it offers a defense of satire that parallels Jonson's own: both insist that a good poet and good satirist must be a good man, and both insist that satire can cure folly and sin effectively by jolting its targets into self-awareness. Whatever boundaries critics have set up between drama and poetry in this quarrel and elsewhere are thus more porous than most of us tend to assume, as printed texts in circulation affected what was performed onstage and vice versa. The "War of the Theaters" was not limited to the theaters, nor was the Poets' War limited to a debate about poetry or comedy per se. This was indeed a "Satiromachia," a war whose primary focus—satire—was also the medium of its exchange.

* * *

The only "answer" Jonson "ever gave to" the "sundry impotent libels . . . cast out" against him and against *Poetaster* was a dialogue appended to the play, "only once spoken upon the stage" ("To the Reader," 3-5), in which, most critics now agree, Jonson probably acted the part of the Author. The "Apologetical Dialogue" is, in typical Jonsonian fashion, brashly

unapologetic, and in this, his only answer to the “libels” cast against him, he staunchly insists to his two interlocutors that he refuses to answer these “libels” at all:

Polyposus: Will you not answer then the libels?

Author: No.

Polyposus: Nor the untrussers?

Author: Neither.

Polyposus: You’re undone then.

Author: With whom?

Polyposus: The world.

Author: The bawd! (“Apologetical Dialogue,” 140-2)

Whereas Polyposus (“dull of perception”) worries that “the multitude” thinks Jonson is “hit and hurt” and that his “silence argues it in not rejoining / To this or that late libel” (27-30), Jonson insists that he remains as “unhurt of envy, as unhit,” out of “the reach of malice,” stoically able to “scorn the tongues of slaves.”¹⁴⁴ If he wanted to, of course, Jonson *could* “spurn or baffle” his slanderers, “or squirt their eyes / With ink or urine” (145-7), but to do so “were but a feminine humour, / And far beneath the dignity of a man” (165-6). On one hand, as Nasutus (“sagacious, witty”) acknowledges, “to revenge their injuries / Were to confess [he] felt ’em” (167-8); on the other hand, the poetasters—like the fools in *Cynthia’s Revels*—have already punished themselves enough: “I know within his guilty breast,” the Author declares, “Each slanderer bears a whip that shall torment him / Worse than a million of these temporal plagues” (162-4).

Jonson brushes off any responsibility for “all this tumult,” insisting that he had never written a play “More innocent or empty of offence” than *Poetaster*; its only fault, he claims, was that he had written it (56, 61). Those who claimed he “taxed / The law and lawyers, captains, and

¹⁴⁴ It might be worth noting that Jonson here turns Stoicism—the philosophy of slaves—on its head.

the players / By their particular names” (68-70) are “Fellows of practised and most laxative tongues, / Whose empty and eager bellies i’ the year / Compel their brains to many desp’rate shifts” (76-8). Jonson is the real victim, of course. He had been provoked “with their petulant styles / On every stage” for “three years” (83-5), and he, “at last, unwilling, / But weary . . . of so much trouble,” had decided to see “if shame would win upon ’em” (85-7). If he did mention the lawyers in the character of Ovid, he said nothing more than what the historical Ovid had said; if he did ridicule the captain, it had nothing to do with *true* soldiers, to whom he had written a laudatory epigram professing his identification with and love for them; if he did tax the players, it was only “some, and those so sparingly / As all the rest might have sat still, unquestioned, / Had they but the wit or conscience / To think well of themselves” (129-32). Jonson is thus not only the victim of ill will and slander, but of misinterpretation and stupidity: “impotent they / Thought each man’s vice belonged to their whole tribe” (132-3). Even though he insists earlier in this very dialogue that “his books have still been taught / To spare the persons, and to speak the vices” (71-2), here he implies that the players should have known that he only attacked particular individuals.

The “Apologetical Dialogue” is fascinating in its simultaneous employment of the defenses of satire that Jonson had used throughout his comical satires and the appropriation of the arguments Weever and others had used against satire. Whereas Jonson attacks the vice, not the person (except for a few particular players), his adversaries are “libelers” and “slanderers.” Whereas Jonson’s play decried the abuses of lawyers, soldiers, players, and poetasters to make them “sit down and blush” (94), “the whippers”—the term, whether intentionally or not, collapses Dekker and Marston with Weever, Breton, and Guilpin—reprehended vile crimes in order to feed the “greedy gullets” (34) of the popular audience who love to hear of sin: “I should

not then much muse their shreds were liked, / Since ill men have a lust t'hear others' sins" (44-5). Whereas Jonson's attack on vice reveals his morality, the whippers' attack on vice reveals their own viciousness: "not a crime there taxed but is their own / Or what their own foul thoughts suggested to them" (50-1). Whereas Jonson is capable of writing "iambics" that would "make the desperate lashers hang themselves" (148-9) and could "stamp / Their foreheads with those deep and pulic brands / That the whole Company of Barber-Surgeons / Should not take off with all their art and plasters" (151-4), his adversaries are capable of no such satirical efficacy: "'Tis a sweet madness runs along with them: / To think all that are aimed at still are struck" (36-7). And whereas Jonson wrote nothing which, "in the setting down, [he] could suspect / Might be perverted by an enemy's tongue" (65), his adversaries' satire is self-evidently full of "mere slanders," "enforced by such / As have no safer ways to men's disgraces / But their own lies and loss of honesty" (73-5). In responding to Dekker and Weever, then, Jonson both upholds and denies the morality of the satirist, both denies and upholds the satirist's guilt, and both upholds and denies satirical efficacy.

At the end of the "Apologetical Dialogue," Jonson renounces "the comic muse" that had "proved so ominous to [him]" (209-10) and announces that he will turn, instead, to tragedy. This is, in effect, the conclusion of the Poets' War. But on his way out, Jonson once more attacks the judgment of the popular audience that refused to recognize his "free merit": "But that these base and beggarly conceits / Should carry it by the multitude of voices / Against the most abstracted work opposed / To the stuffed nostrils of the drunken rout!" (192-5). Still refusing to be judged by his audience, still half-hoping that they will accept his own judgment of himself, he dismisses his audience onstage and off, interrupting himself mid-sentence in a feigned fit of tragic inspiration: "Leave me. There's something come into my thought / That must and shall be sung,

high and aloof, / Safe from the wolf's black jaw and the dull ass's hoof" (224-6).

Jonson was not done with satire—his Roman tragedy, *Sejanus*, is nearly as satirical as *Poetaster*, and his best satirical comedies were still to come—but he was done with humours comedy and comical satire. As Alvin Kernan suggests, after 1601 Jonson “no longer tried to imitate the practices and organizational techniques of formal satire”;¹⁴⁵ he removed the satirist from the stage, stopped trying to defend satire from its critics, and no longer created his own judges within his plays. His later satires, like *Volpone* and the *Alchemist*, lack the authorial guidance of the comical satires and, as a result, are much more morally ambiguous—much more like Marston's skeptical satirical drama.

6. Shakespeare and the Poets' War

William Shakespeare has been conspicuously absent from this account of the Poets' War. To what extent was he involved? A piece of theatrical gossip from a contemporary Cambridge comedy called *The Return From Parnassus, Part 2*, probably performed at Christmas 1601-2,¹⁴⁶ seems to indicate that he somehow got the final say. *2 Return* is the final installment of a trilogy which tracks the misfortunes of two undergraduates as they labor to climb Mount Parnassus (the repository of academic and poetic knowledge) and then struggle to find gainful employment in the world below; like other aspiring poets before them, they find that the world neither values learning nor learned men, and they reluctantly turn to the theater for relief. But it turns out that the players, Kemp and Burbage, have their own misgivings about employing scholars, even at “a low rate”: “Few of the vniuersity men pen plaies well, they smell too much of that writer *Ouid*, and that writer *Metamorphoses*, and talke too much of *Proserpina & Iuppiter*,” Kemp says.

¹⁴⁵ Kernan, 164.

¹⁴⁶ See Leishman (ed.), *Parnassus Plays*, 39.

“Why heres our fellow *Shakespeare* puts them all downe, I and *Ben Ionson* too. O that *Ben Ionson* is a pestilent fellow, he brought vp *Horace* giuing the Poets a pill, but our fellow *Shakespeare* hath giuen him a purge that made him beray his credit” (1766-74).¹⁴⁷

Shakespeare’s “purge” of Jonson has, without doubt, received more critical attention than any other aspect of the Poets’ War. Numerous plays and characters have been put forward as candidates, none of which are particularly convincing. In *Twelfth Night* (1601?), Malvolio seems to share some personality traits with Jonson, particularly his self-love and willingness to censure others’ behavior, and the trick played upon him by Maria certainly owes something to Jonsonian humour comedy. But the resemblance between Malvolio and Jonson is thin at best (Malvolio is “a kind of puritan”¹⁴⁸—or not¹⁴⁹—and a kill-joy), and the punishment he receives is clearly more than he deserves. Small, Bednarz, and others find a personation of Jonson in the character of Ajax in *Troilus and Cressida*, who is at various points envious of Achilles’ fame, exceedingly proud of his own abilities, and excessively violent in his rhetoric. Although Ajax claims to “hate a proud man” as much he hates “the engendering of toads,” Nestor points out in an aside that Ajax “loves himself” (2.3.152-3), and when Ajax, like Jonson, offers to “let [Achilles’] humour’s blood,” Agamemnon quips that “He will be the physician that should be the patient.”¹⁵⁰ Both Small and Bednarz suggest that the real “purge” of Jonson can be found in the association of Ajax with a jakes, such as in Thersites’ remark that “Ajax goes up and down the field asking for

¹⁴⁷ Leishman points out that Kemp’s views are not the views of the play, as Kemp is a player—and thus a rogue—and as Shakespeare is elsewhere chided for his choice of subject matter (59). Still, this does not mean, as Leishman suggests, that the playwrights were necessarily pro-Jonson; it seems unlikely, for example, that Judicio’s remark that Jonson is “the wittiest fellow of a Bricklayer in England” (*2 Return*, 293), which echoes Dekker’s criticisms in *Satiromastix*, would have been taken ironically.

¹⁴⁸ William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Greenblatt et al. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1997), 2.5.126.

¹⁴⁹ As Maria qualifies this statement almost immediately with “The dev’l a puritan that he is, or anything constantly but a time-pleaser” (5.2.131), several scholars have questioned the extent to which Malvolio is in fact a puritan.

¹⁵⁰ William Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, ed. Walter Cohen, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Greenblatt et al. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1997), 2.3.152-3, 200-1.

himself” (3.3.237). But the fact that this particular pun was popular, particularly in the wake of Harington’s *Metamorphosis of Ajax* (1596)—indeed, Shakespeare himself may have used it in *You Like It*—makes it less likely that it was specifically intended to refer to Jonson. In his envy, pride, and combativeness, furthermore, Ajax seems to mirror Achilles as much as anyone outside the play. The main criticism levied against Ajax—that he is stupid—has nothing to do with Jonson: even those writers who strongly objected to Jonson’s satirical project, such as Dekker, respected his intelligence. Ultimately, it seems difficult to believe that a handful of lines about Ajax in *Troilus and Cressida* would have made enough of an impact for Kemp’s throwaway reference to be readily comprehensible at Cambridge, even if—as is far from certain—*Troilus* was first performed before *2 Parnassus*.¹⁵¹

It is much more likely that Kemp’s comment refers to Dekker’s *Satiromastix*, which indisputably made Jonson “beray his credit,” rather than to a play we now recognize as Shakespeare’s.¹⁵² It may be, as Leishman suggests, that “for the majority of Elizabethan playgoers and play-readers, the Globe and the Chamberlain’s Men were as much ‘Shakespeare’s theatre’ and ‘Shakespeare’s Company’ as for us of today, and that, in their eyes, Shakespeare was . . . responsible for what was done at the Globe.”¹⁵³ It may be that, before *Satiromastix* appeared in print—in early 1602, after the first performance of the *2 Return*—Dekker’s authorship was not clear, and the Cambridge playwrights assumed that a play performed by the Chamberlain’s Men must have been written by Shakespeare. It may be that Shakespeare actually

¹⁵¹ The play must have been written after 1598 but before February 1602/3, when it was entered into the Stationer’s Register, though as Kenneth Muir suggests, most critics believe the play was privately performed at one of the Inns of Court during “the latter part of this period” (Muir [ed.], *Troilus and Cressida* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982], 7-8). Bednarz believes the play was written and performed after Dekker’s supposedly inadequate *Satiromastix* (late October or early November 1601) but before *2 Parnassus* (Christmas 1601/2). That leaves a very precise window of two to three months for composition, performance, and notoriety.

¹⁵² Bednarz’s objection that in *Satiromastix* Horace is not literally “purged” (*S&PW*, 22) hardly seems relevant; clearly the term was used frequently and loosely, and Dekker’s treatment of Horace would certainly have constituted the type of “purge” Kemp refers to.

¹⁵³ Leishman, 370.

collaborated with Dekker on the play, even though Dekker's name later appeared alone on the title page. It may be, as several scholars have suggested, that Shakespeare acted in *Satiromastix*, either as Horace or as Tucca, both of which, in different ways, could be said to offer Jonson a "purge." It may be that the Cambridge playwrights were simply wrong. Whatever the case, further deliberation about the source of Kemp's remark—or further search for allusions to or personations of Jonson in Shakespeare's plays—seems at best unproductive and at worst counterproductive, as it may obscure the ways in which Shakespeare's plays did participate in the Poets' War.

Whatever Bednarz's claims about Shakespeare's renown as an author of festive comedy, in the late 1590s Shakespeare was at least as well known as an author of amorous, Ovidian literature. Meres upholds Shakespeare "among ye English is the most excellent in both" comedy and tragedy "for the stage" (282), but he also claims "the sweete wittie soule of *Ouid* liues in mellifluous & hony-tongued *Shakespeare*, witnes his *Venus* and *Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, his sugred Sonnets among his priuate friends, etc." (281-2). In his epigram about Shakespeare, Weever barely acknowledges Shakespeare's dramatic output, and when he does he alludes only to *Richard III*; instead, he focuses almost entirely on Shakespeare's poetic creations who "burn in love," such as "Rose-checkt *Adonis* with his amber tresses, / Faire fire-hot *Venus* charming him to loue her, / Chaste *Lucretia* virgine-like her dresses, / Prowd lust-stung *Tarquine* seeking still to proue her" (4.22.5-8, 13). In *2 Return*, Shakespeare is of course held up as the playwright who "puts down" all of the university men in penning plays, but he is also praised for his poetic brilliance and condemned for his subject matter: "Who loues not *Adons* loue, or *Lucrece* rape?" *Judicio* asks. "His sweeter verse contaynes hart robbing lines, / Could but a graver subiect him content, / Without loues foolish lazy languishment" (301-4). While Shakespeare may have been

on Meres' list of England's "best for Comedy" (283), then, he was also importantly representative of the amorous poetry to which the satirists of the late 1590s were so vehemently opposed, those "fidlers," in Guilpin's terms, "whose oyle-uttred lines, / Are Panders vnto lusts, and food to sinnes" ("Satyr Preludium," 9-10).

Shakespeare was certainly aware of the general anti-romantic stance of the satirists, as he played with the idea in *Much Ado About Nothing* (1598). Benedick begins the play staunchly opposed to love; like a satirist, he "set up bills here in Messina, and challenged Cupid at the flight."¹⁵⁴ Beatrice describes Benedick's foolishness in terms of a impudent railer or a satirist:

Why, he is the Prince's jester, a very dull fool. Only his gift is in devising impossible slanders. None but libertines delight in him, and the commendation is not in his wit but in his villainy, for he both pleases men and angers them, and then they laugh at him, and beat him. . . . He'll but break a comparison or two on me, which peradventure not marked, or not laughed at, strikes him into melancholy, and then there's a partridge wing saved, for the fool will eat no supper that night. (2.1.118-23, 126-9)

In his slanderous villainy, his entertainment of libertines, and his willingness to "break comparisons" on a woman to her face, Benedick sounds remarkably like Charles Chester, who was apparently known for railing on on women to their faces¹⁵⁵ and whom Jonson probably personated as—and hoped to distinguish himself from—Carlo Buffone. But of course Benedick, who has wondered "that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he dedicates his behaviours to love, will, after he hath laughed at such shallow follies in others, become the

¹⁵⁴ William Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1997), 1.2.32-3.

¹⁵⁵ See Carroll (ed.), *Skialetheia*, 151. Guilpin refers to Chester in this capacity several times in his satires, such as his assertion that a satire is a "Chester to a painted face" in its opposition to sin ("Satyre Preludium," 86) and his suggestion that "*Chester*" would swear that a made-up woman "Lookt like an Elench, logicke sophistrie" (2.45-6).

argument of his own scorn by falling in love” (2.3.8-12), becomes the argument of his own scorn by falling in love. He sings ballads about Cupid, he writes sonnets in praise of Beatrice’s beauty, and he claims—as all lovers surely do—to outstrip those most famous of literary lovers: “in loving, Leander the good swimmer, Troilus the first employer of panders, and a whole book full of these quondam carpet-mongers whose names yet run smoothly in the even road of a blank verse, why they were never so truly turned over and over as my poor self in love” (5.2.26-30). In Benedick’s conversion, Shakespeare not only figures satirists as men who only scorn love because they have not yet found it, but also suggests that satire is not a particularly effective means of restraining lovers or love. “I may chance have some odd quirks and remnant of wit broken on me because I have railed so long against marriage,” Benedick remarks. “Shall quips and sentences and these paper bullets of the brain awe a man from the career of his humour? No. The world must be peopled” (2.3.207-14). At the end of the play, Benedick is even more specifically dismissive of satires and epigrams: “I’ll tell thee what, Prince: a college of wit-crackers cannot flout me out of my humour. Dost thou think I care for a satire or an epigram?” (5.4.98-100).

Shakespeare again explores the tension between the satirist and the lover in *As You Like It*, where he in fact stages an encounter between a representative of each type. In a brief but curious scene, Jaques—long recognized as a representative of the 1590s satyr-satirist¹⁵⁶—and Orlando—the youthful, Petrarchan lover—come onstage together only to tell each other they would rather be alone: “let’s meet as little as we can,” Jaques says; “I do desire we may be better strangers,” Orlando agrees.¹⁵⁷ As far as we know, they have only met briefly once before, when

¹⁵⁶ As Alvin Kernan notes, Shakespeare “set a satyr in the midst of the idyllic forest of romance” who “acts and thinks in a manner proper to his sixteenth-century representative, the melancholy satirist developed by the satiric writers of the preceding decade” (132).

¹⁵⁷ William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, ed. Jean Howard, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Greenblatt et al. (New

Orlando accosted the exiled courtiers with sword drawn in order to demand food, and although Jaques then provided his typically melodramatic response—“An you will not be answered with reason, I must die” (2.7.100)—there is nothing to prepare us for the intensity of their mutual disdain. Their antagonism, I would suggest, is only explicable as the encounter between “Signor Love” and “Monsieur Melancholy” (3.2.268-9). Jaques’ demands are those of the 1590s satirists. He asks Orlando to “mar no more trees with writing love-songs in their barks” (3.2.237-8), accuses him of “conn[ing]” his romantic verses “out of rings” (249-50), declares that “the worst fault” Orlando has “is to be in love” (258), and invites him to “rail against our mistress the world, and all our misery” (254-5). Orlando’s responses are those of a love-poet to a satirist. He asks Jaques to “mar no more of [his] verses by reading them ill-favouredly” (239-40), accuses him of relying on clichés every bit as much as love-poets (“I answer you right painted cloth, from when you have studied your questions” [251-2]), declares that he would not change his “fault” of being in love for Jaques “best virtue” (259), and refuses to “chide” any “breather in the world” other than himself (256). “I am weary of you,” Orlando tells Jaques (260), and the phrase seems to carry with it the exhaustion not only of love-poets but of the entire public audience for the moralistic opposition of satire to romance.

Although few would argue with David Bevington’s assertion that “the portrait of Jaques is clearly not intended as a particular hit at Jonson,”¹⁵⁸ a number of recent critics, including Grace Tiffany and James Bednarz, have read the play’s celebration of folly and festivity over satire as a response to Jonson’s new comical satire. According to Tiffany, Rosalind “represents and validates the Shakespearean mythic comic method and specifically rejects the detached,

York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1997), 3.2.235-6.

¹⁵⁸ David Bevington, “Shakespeare vs Jonson on Satire,” in *Shakespeare 1971: Proceedings of the World Shakespeare Conference*, ed. Clifford Leech and J.M.R. Margeson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 107-22; 118.

misogynistic, and isolating satiric approach of *Every Man Out of His Humour*,” both by vanquishing the satirical Jaques and by repudiating “the Ovidian/Petrarchan inclination” that, she suggests, “triggers the profound cynicism at the heart of humours satire.”¹⁵⁹ Bednarz argues that in *As You Like It* Shakespeare “answered Jonson’s objections to festive comedy” by countering “Jonson’s heuristic program with a skeptical humanism underwritten by Socratic ignorance and Erasmian folly” and by turning to the “pastoral element of festive comedy, with its bias toward nature, to counter Jonson’s conception of art.”¹⁶⁰ Both are entirely plausible claims. Critics have long seized on the fact that Shakespeare’s name does not appear on the list of “principal comedians” in the Folio version of *Every Man Out*—whereas it did for *Every Man In*—as evidence for Shakespeare’s disapproval of the play or disagreement with Jonson. Even if, as I suggested above, *Every Man Out* does not present quite the personal affront to Shakespeare as Bednarz and others have supposed, it is not only possible but likely that a writer as attuned to literary fashions as Shakespeare would have responded to Jonson’s defense of satire and translation of formal verse satire to the stage.

To Tiffany’s point, *As You Like It* resists the idea that love is a Jonsonian humour that can be cured. When Rosalind/Ganymede offers to “cure” Orlando of his love, s/he picks up right where Jaques left off, inhabiting the moralistic and socio-sexual position of a misogynistic satirist: “I thank God I am not a woman, to be touched with so many giddy offences” as her/his “old religious uncle” had “generally taxed their whole sex withal” (3.2.313-18). S/he claims that “Love is merely a madness” (359) and her/his feigned experience of “curing” love “by counsel” (363) looks something like the type of purged offered in a Jonsonian comical satire, in which s/he purportedly exaggerated the symptoms of this “mad humour of love” (374) until the

¹⁵⁹ Tiffany, 213-39; 219-22.

¹⁶⁰ Bednarz, *S&PW*, 106-7.

inamorato reached a breaking point. But Shakespeare comically undercuts this supposed “purge.” Rosalind/Ganymede’s (supposed) attempt to cure a lover in the past did not cure him but “drave [him] from his mad humour of love to a living humour of madness” (374-5). Love cannot be cured, because love is the universal human condition: as Rosalind/Ganymede explains, the reason why lovers are not “punished and cured” as madmen are “is that the lunacy is so ordinary that the whippers are in love too” (360-1). In fact, Rosalind/Ganymede has no intention of “curing” Orlando of his love, but rather wants to test, condition, and ultimately encourage him in his love. As Tiffany suggests, Rosalind wants to ensure that Orlando’s love at first sight is not fleeting. She hopes to move him from the immature Petrarchanism of his sonnets into the practical and active business of marital love: “The poor world is almost six thousand years old, and in all this time there was not any man died in his own person, videlicet, in a love-cause,” she tells him. “Men have died from time to time, and worms have eaten them, but not for love” (4.1.81-2, 91-2).

If anyone is humourous in *As You Like It*, of course, it is the melancholy satirist. Jaques absurdly claims to be able to “suck melancholy out of a song as a weasel sucks eggs” (2.5.11-12), and he explains to Rosalind/Ganymede that his “most humorous sadness” is “a melancholy” entirely of his own making, “compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects, and indeed the sundry contemplation of [his] travels” (4.1.15-18). He affects a position of moral superiority throughout the play, using his encounter with a wounded deer in the forest to “moralize” “most invectively” on the shortcomings of man in general and Duke Senior’s train in particular, “swearing,” in the words of the lord who overhears him, “that we / Are mere usurpers, tyrants, and what’s worse, / To fright the animals and kill them up / In their assign’d and native dwelling-place” (2.1.44, 58-63). His raillery is less the product of his oppressed virtue than of his

melancholy humour, which we can see when he asks Orlando to join with him in railing against “our mistress the world, and all our misery” (3.2.254-5). His stubborn refusal to join in the play’s final festivities makes the satirist’s isolation appear less moralistically defiant than willful.

To Bednarz’s point, in *As You Like It* Shakespeare does privilege “Socratic ignorance and Erasmian folly” over Jonsonian judgment. Jaques’ solipsistic moralizing is out of place in the pastoral world of Arden, and in his “sullen fits” (2.1.67) he has a habit of driving people away. Although his “Seven Ages of Man” speech (2.7) offers a profoundly cynical view of human existence that has resonated with audiences for centuries, it is remarkable that by its end nobody seems to be listening and that nobody ever responds. Touchstone, on the other hand, is foolish enough to know that folly—like love—is the universal condition of mankind: “as all is mortal in nature, so is all nature in love mortal in folly” (2.4.48-9). He quotes the “heathen philosopher,” Socrates—“I do now remember a saying: ‘The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man know himself to be a fool’” (5.1.27-9)—but makes no claim to be able to understand him. He “uses his folly like a stalking-horse, and under the presentation of that he shoots his wit” (5.4.95-6), but he offends no one. And, unlike Jaques, who wants everything to be “In good set terms” (2.7.17), Touchstone speaks “In mangled forms” (2.7.42), yet understands an essential truth about art that neither Jaques nor Jonson understands: “the truest poetry is the most feigning, and lovers are given to poetry; and what they swear in poetry may be said, as lovers, they do feign” (3.3.15-17).

Whereas the satirist’s inclination is towards isolation, the fool brings people together by allowing them to share in his foolish laughter. This even includes Jaques, who reports that when he heard Touchstone “moral on the time” he “did laugh sans intermission / An hour by his dial” (2.7.33). But in his subsequent ambition for a motley coat, Jaques fails to understand the fundamental distinction between the isolating sneer of the satirist and the communal laughter of

the fool. The former is both isolating and dehumanizing; if there is laughter at all, it is a laughing *at* rather than a laughing *with*. Jaques wants the freedom of speech accorded to the fool in order to “blow on whom [he] please[s]” (2.7.49), to assume a position of moral superiority by chiding others for their sins. Whereas Duke Senior’s pastoral exile allows him to find “tongues in trees, books in the running rooks, / Sermons in stones, and good in everything” (2.1.16-17), Jaques’ encounter with the natural world leads him to compare men to beasts and find men wanting: “Thus most invectively,” the First Lord reports of Jaques’ moralizing over the dying deer, “he pierceth through / The body of the country, city, court, / Yea, and of this our life” (2.1.58-60). The fool, on the other hand, plays with the language of Dukes and country swains alike, yet his leveling reminder that folly is the universal condition of mankind is humanizing rather than disparaging. The laughter of the fool is a laughing *with*; it allows for reconciliation, community, festivity, and social reproduction. This can be most clearly seen in Touchstone’s remark about seven justices who could not settle a quarrel until “one of them thought but of an ‘if’”: “Your ‘if’ is the only peacemaker; much virtue in ‘if’” (5.4.88-92). As Maura Slattery Kuhn demonstrates, Touchstone’s foolish “if” is at the heart not only of the marriage ceremony that follows—Rosalind’s “magic” amounts to getting Orlando, Phoebe, and Silvius to agree to a series of “if” statements—but of the play itself: “The many *If*s of the forest are amplified by the large *If* of the play. By virtue of *If*, a contract is drawn up between the players and the audience. If you will suspend your disbelief, you will be delighted by our play.”¹⁶¹

But whereas both Tiffany and Bednarz want to see Shakespeare responding specifically to Jonson in *As You Like It*, it is more likely that the play participates in the Poets’ War in broader terms, as part of the general re-evaluation of satire. The hyperbolic marriage scene at the conclusion of *As You Like It*, in which the goddess Hymen herself comes onstage to preside over

¹⁶¹ Maura Slattery Kuhn, “Much Virtue in If,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 28:1 (Winter, 1977), 40-50.

the nuptials of four different couples, certainly seems to answer the satirical challenge to romantic comedy, but Jonson was neither the first nor the only satirist to attack romantic poetry or comedy; Shakespeare, for his part, was not the first to defend it. Nor was *As You Like It* the first play in which Shakespeare explored the tension between the satirist and the lover. Certainly Shakespeare mocks Jaques' melancholy pose, his assumption of moral authority, and his impotent raillery (such as his desire to "rail against all the first-born of Egypt" [2.5.55]), but this has as much to do with the satyr-satirists on whom Asper is based as it does with Asper himself.

In *As You Like It*, Shakespeare in fact stages a brief version of the debate about the value of satire that was at the heart of the Poets' War. Jaques asks for "leave" to speak his mind such that he may "through and through / Cleanse the foul body of th'infected world, / If they will patiently receive [his] medicine" (2.7.59-61), and, like so many satirists before him, claims that he will attack the vice, not the person: "What woman in the city do I name, / When that I say the city-woman bears / The cost of princes on unworthy shoulders?" (2.7.74-6). Like Jonson's Macilente, who suggests that the "tainted few" in his audience would "like guilty children, / Publish their infancy before their time / By their own fond exception" (*EMO*, 5.6.111-13), Jaques argues that "they that are most galled with [his] folly, / . . . most must laugh," or else his folly will be "anatomized" (2.7.50-1, 56).¹⁶² Like Hall, who insists that the guilty have no recourse to complain about his satire because they are not wronged and that the innocent have no reason to complain because they are not touched, Jaques insists that his "tongue" cannot be accused of wronging any man for castigating sin: "If it do him right, / Then he hath wronged himself. If he

¹⁶² cf. Erasmus' good counsel to Maartin van Dorp in the letter prefacing *The Praise of Folly*: "If I find some accusation here of which I am not guilty, I take no offence, but think myself lucky to be free from failings which I see many people suffer from. If it touched on some sore place, and I see myself in the mirror, here to there is no call for me to be offended. If I have any sense, I shall conceal my feelings and not come forward to give myself away. If I am a virtuous man, I shall take the hint, and see to it that in the future no fault can be laid by name at my door like the one I see before me pilloried anonymously" (Erasmus, "To Maarten van Dorp, May 1515," in *The Collected Works of Erasmus*, vol. 3., trans. R.A.B. Mynors and D.F.S. Thomson [Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1975], 119).

be free, / Why then my taxing like a wild-goose flies, / Unclaimed of any man” (2.7.84-7). But the play generally sides with Duke Senior, who undermines Jaques’ claim to moral authority by pointing out that Jaques himself has been a libertine, and who denies satirical efficacy by suggesting that Jaques would simply add to the world’s disease:

Most mischievous foul sin, in chiding sin.
 For thou thyself hast been a libertine,
 As sensual as the brutish sting itself,
 And all th’embossed sores and headed evils
 That thou with license of free foot hast caught
 Wouldst thou disgorge into the general world. (2.7.64-9)

In Duke Senior’s terms, the speech of the satirist is a form of poisonous vomit, or—as melancholy was associated with black bile and with constipation—even an inverse form of defecation: instead of “cleansing the foul body of th’infected world,” Jaques offers to regurgitate his own infection, filling the world with waste. This may not be Shakespeare’s “purge” of Jonson—it is probably not even directed at Jonson—but it is certainly a stronger statement against satire than anything offered on the other side at any point in the play. And it is difficult not to notice that at the play’s conclusion, at the consummate moment of celebratory festivity, the satirist’s voluntary withdrawal is in fact Shakespeare’s own act of exclusion. When the social order has been restored under Duke Senior and reproduced in the union of his daughter and Sir Rowland’s son, the court will retain its fool but will be purged of its melancholy satirist.

* * *

Shakespeare’s only unambiguous reference to the Poets’ War is in *Hamlet*, in the passage I quoted at the outset of the chapter. The passage has occasioned some (further) debate about the

dating of the play, as most editors now suggest that Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet* in 1600,¹⁶³ as well as about the relationship between the three extant versions of the play, as the passage appears in abbreviated form in Q1, not at all in Q2, and in full in F.¹⁶⁴ Clearly, however, this passage cannot be dated any earlier than late 1601, after both *Poetaster* and *Satiromastix*,¹⁶⁵ for it is structured on key terms from these two plays. Jonson uses the word “common” in relation to the public theaters frequently in *Poetaster*, such as the Prologue’s reference to “that common spawn of ignorance, / Our fry of writers” (80-1), Ovid Senior’s reference to “the common players” (1.2.10), Ovid’s complaint about the “the jaded wits” writing for the “open theaters” who “run a broken pace for common hire” (1.2.199-200), and Tucca’s disingenuous disavowal of ever having referred to the public theater as “the common retreat for punks decayed i’ their practice” (3.4.253). The very idea that the adult players have been forced to travel out of the city—even though, as Hamlet says, “Their residence both in reputation and profit was better both ways” (2.2.317-18)—refers to Jonson’s suggestion in *Poetaster* that the boy companies were driving business away from the adult companies on the other side of the river: in *Poetaster*, Histrio acknowledges that he only plans to “abuse Horace” because “it will get us a huge deal of money . . . and we have need on’t, for this winter has made us all poorer than so many starved snakes. Nobody comes at us: not a gentleman” (3.4.265-7). Rosencrantz’s suggestion that gentlemen wearing rapiers are afraid of “goose-quills” (a typical figure for the pen of the satirist), finally, recalls Tucca’s claim in *Satiromastix* that even the “heades of Legions and Bandes” fear Horace (4.2.57-8).

¹⁶³ See Stephen Greenblatt (ed.), *Hamlet*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, 103.

¹⁶⁴ See Joseph Loewenstein, “Plays Agonistic and Competitive: The Textual Approach to Elsinore,” *Renaissance Drama* 19 (1988), 63-96. Loewenstein uses this passage to by and large uphold the theory that Q1 was based on memorial reconstruction, Q2 was set from the author’s foul papers, and F was set from a revised scribal transcript.

¹⁶⁵ Bednarz suggests that Shakespeare added the passage sometime in 1602. See his “Chronological Appendix” to *S&PW*, 275-6.

The passage has led more than one critic to exaggerate the sense of competition between the public and private theaters. Indeed, it probably forms the basis of Harbage's notion of "rival repertories," and it has led others to search for performances by the Lord Chamberlain's Men at Oxford and Cambridge in 1600-2, as though the fashionable "little eyases" had actually driven the public players out of London. But even as the passage acknowledges the threat posed by Jonson and his "eyrie of children," it belittles that threat. Guildenstern's remark that "there has been much throwing about of brains" (2.2.342-3) underscores the absurdity of the entire quarrel, and Rosencrantz's affirmation that the "boys carry it away," "Hercules and his load too" (344-6)—e.g., the Globe—would have been a particularly ironic and incisive remark to make in front of a large audience at the Globe, especially if the passage were added to an already popular play. Hamlet's questions, furthermore, highlight the self-defeating irony of Jonson's attack on the players: "What, are they children? . . . Will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players—as it is like most will, if their means are not better—their writers do them wrong to make them exclaim against their own succession?" (331, 333-6). In this moment it is possible to glimpse the logical continuities between private and public playhouses, as child actors would (and did) grow up to be adult actors. The divisions set up in this scene are thus not between private and public theaters but, as Rosencrantz acknowledges, between poet and player.

Interestingly enough, Hamlet himself reproduces these divisions in the following act, when he becomes a playwright—he has asked the players to insert "a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines" (2.2.518) into a "the murder of Gonzago" (515)—and instructs the actors on their performance. "Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you—trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier had spoke my lines"

(3.2.1-4). The list goes on at some length, and has always been read seriously, as though Hamlet provides insight into contemporary acting theory. But there is something peculiar about this particular set of instructions. First, Hamlet is already familiar with this particular group of actors, as they are the very “tragedians” he was “wont to take delight in” (2.2.315) in the city, and the First Player has already performed the stunning spontaneous delivery of “Aeneas’ tale to Dido” (2.2.427) that drives Hamlet to distraction and provokes his second soliloquy. In fact, as the group of traveling players represent, rather directly, the Lord Chamberlain’s Men themselves, Hamlet is instructing his own acting company on their performance in the midst of a play that they are already performing.

Second, the forty or so lines of instruction seem a bit much for a speech of “some dozen or sixteen lines” inserted into a play, particularly as it includes specific instructions for the clown, who, presumably, will not be making much of an appearance in *The Murder of Gonzago*, let alone in the speech Hamlet has written. And third, the details of Hamlet’s instructions sound remarkably like Jonson’s own complaints about contemporary acting in the theater:

O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious, periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise. . . . Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance: that you o’erstep not the modesty of nature. For anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is to hold as ’twere the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make

the judicious grieve; the censure of the which one must in your allowance
 o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. . . . And let those that play your clowns speak
 no more than is set down for them; for there be of them that will themselves laugh
 to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too, though in the mean time
 some necessary question of the play be then to be considered. (3.4.7-11, 16-25,
 34-40)

To my knowledge, no critic of the Poets' War has pointed out how closely all of the instructions in this passage parallel Jonson's own snide remarks about the players throughout his comical satires. Evident here is Jonson's disdain for the ignorance of public audience and embrace of the "judicious few," such as that expressed at the end of his "Apologetical Dialogue" appended to *Poetaster*: "if I prove the pleasure but of one, / So he judicious be, he shall b'alone / A theatre unto me" (213-15). Evident here is Jonson's insistence that English comedy follow Cicero, who, Cordatus reminds us, "would have a comedy be *imitatio vitae, speculum consuetudinis, imago veritatis*" (*EMO*, 3.1.414-15), and to be "near and familiarly allied to the time" (*EMO*, 3.1.410-11). And evident here is Jonson's antipathy to the improvisation of clowns, at whom he scoffs in *Every Man Out* and whom he eliminated from his comical satires.¹⁶⁶

It is possible—though not certain—that Hamlet's instructions to the players are not meant to be taken seriously, but rather comprise an in-joke for the turn-of-the-century audiences familiar with Jonson's dictatorial manner in the theater. If so, Shakespeare expresses a sentiment similar to Sir Vaughan's demand at the end of *Satiromastix* that Horace no longer "sit in a Gallery, when [his] Comedies and Enterludes haue entred their Actions, and there make vile and

¹⁶⁶ Although Shakespeare began writing for the witty, musical, and less improvisational Robert Armin in *As You Like It*, it's unlikely that by *Hamlet* he would have wholeheartedly rejected the histrionics of Will Kemp so soon after his departure. The improvisatory clowning of Kemp had been a significant part of the Lord Chamberlain's Men's repertory for the better part of the 1590s, including in Shakespeare's most famous character before Hamlet, Sir John Falstaff.

bad faces at euerie lyne, to make Sentlemen haue an eye to [him], and to make Players afraide to take [his] part” (5.2.298-301). This is hardly the “purge” that Kemp refers to in *2 Parnassus*, but it may be Shakespeare’s sly suggestion that in the “cuffs” between poet and players, he sides with the players.

* * *

Shakespeare’s *Troilus and Cressida* has often been read as the source of Shakespeare’s “purge” of Jonson. The Prologue who comes in “armed—but not in confidence / Of author’s pen or actor’s voice, but suited / In like conditions as our argument” (23-5)¹⁶⁷ clearly mocks that of Jonson’s *Poetaster*, and, as I have noted above, the arrogant figure of Ajax seems in some respects to resemble Jonson, particularly in his promise to “let [Achilles’] humour’s blood” (2.3.200) and in Thersites’ mocking suggestion that Ajax “goes up and down the field, as asking for himself” (3.3.237). But the satirical voice takes over the play, and there are nearly as many candidates for personations of Jonson as there are characters. Achilles, for example, resembles the Jonson of the “Apologetical Dialogue” in his wounded self-love and in his refusal to continue fighting; then again, the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus in certain respects mirrors that between Asinius Bubo and Horace in Dekker’s *Satiromastix*, in which case Patroclus (who performs satirical personations of the Greek leaders for Achilles’ delight) would represent Jonson. Thersites has often been taken as a representation of Marston, particularly as he is beaten by Ajax/Jonson in the same manner Jonson described beating Marston and taking his pistol in his conversations with Drummond,¹⁶⁸ but Thersites’ snarl could just as easily point to Jonson. It is even tempting to push the search for personations to the extreme, and to suggest that the Trojan War itself stands in some allegorical manner for the entire War of the Theaters: the quarrelsome

¹⁶⁷ This Prologue appears in F but not in Q.

¹⁶⁸ Jonson, *Informations*, 117.

Greeks, fractured by infighting, represent the private theaters; the more romantic Trojans represent the public theaters; and the bitter demise of the relationship between Troilus and Cressida, subsumed as it is by the war, represents Shakespeare turning his back on festive comedy. But the absurdity of this last suggestion should highlight the ultimate instability of the previous suggestions.

That being said, I do think the way *Troilus and Cressida* reflects upon satire serves as a coda to the Poets' War. The play is filled, of course, with the language of satire, and nearly every character at one moment or another ridicules, taunts, undercuts, or verbally attacks another. The satiric vision of the world which Shakespeare had cautiously rejected in *As You Like It* has here taken over. Thersites in some respects seems to dictate the overall attitude towards war, romance, and heroic ideals. But more importantly, the central question of the play speaks to one of the central concerns of the satirists of the 1590s: is a man's worth determined internally or externally, by merit or by opinion? This has enormous consequences for the series of exchanges that occur throughout the play: Greek and Trojan lives for Helen, Ajax for Achilles, Cressida for Antenor, Diomedes for Troilus, and so on. Whether or not the war is worth fighting depends on whether Helen's value is determined internally, by her inherent worth as a queen and as Menelaus' wife, or externally, by the popular opinion that has turned against her.

At different moments in the play, the very figures who had argued most strongly on one side of this question find themselves arguing just as strongly on the other side. Thus in his famous speech on "degree"—which has so often been taken as an expression of Shakespeare's own conservative view—Ulysses argues that Achilles "Grows dainty of his worth" because "opinion crowns" him "The sinew and the forehead of our host" (1.3.142-5) and that the only thing that can prevent a chaotic, self-consuming power struggle is adherence to the internal

valuation of the social hierarchy. But later, when he tries to convince Achilles to fight, Ulysses occupies the opposite position: a man cannot know his own worth, he argues, “Till he behold [his parts] formed in th’applause / Where they’re extended” (3.3.114-15). In the same breath, Achilles insists that worth is determined externally—no man “Hath any honour but honour for those honours / That are without him” (3.3.75-6)—and internally: “Fortune and I are friends. I do enjoy / At ample point all that I did possess, / Save these men’s looks” (3.3.82-4). Troilus vacillates on the question as well. At one point he argues that the “worth and honour of a king” (2.2.25) are internally determined, but he almost immediately contradicts himself: “What’s aught but as ’tis valued?” (2.2.51). Hector makes a strong argument against external valuation: “value dwells not in particular will,” he answers Troilus; “It holds his estimate and dignity / As well wherein ’tis precious of itself / As in the prizer” (2.2.52-5). But his actions defy his logic, as eventually he determines that the Trojans should hold on to Helen so that he can win public esteem on the battlefield (2.2.191-2).

The only one not caught up in these vacillations is the satirist, Thersites, who has an ability to cut through questions of merit and opinion in order to show things for what they really are. “Here is such patchery, such juggling and such knavery!” he declares, looking around the Greek camp. “All the argument is a whore and a cuckold—a good quarrel to draw emulous factions and bleed to death upon!” (2.3.63-6).

Certainly Shakespeare gives due credit throughout the play to the arguments against satire. Thersites attacks everyone, regardless of their social superiority. Ajax is an envious dog; Thersites is spiteful, envious, “rank” (1.3.72), a “whoreson cur” (2.1.39) and, by his own admission, “a rascal, a scurvy, railing knave, a very filthy rogue” (5.4.24-5). Ulysses and Nestor complain that Patroclus’ satirical performances (which they describe in specifically theatrical

terms) undermine their authority and “infect” (1.3.187) the troops, and clearly Thersites’ spiteful railing contributes to the infighting on the Greek side. Nowhere in the play does satire really offer to cure vice: Ajax’s desire to purge Achilles of his humour is undercut by Agamemnon, and Thersites himself thinks it is as likely that he will rail Ajax “into wit and holiness” as it is that Ajax will beat him “into handsomeness” (2.1.14-15). The speech of the satirist is ultimately “wit larded with malice and malice farced with wit” (5.1.51).

But the satirist is also capable of showing a man what he really is and of speaking certain uncomfortable truths about a man’s value. “Thou art here but to thrash Trojans,” Thersites tells Ajax, “and thou art bought and sold among those of any wit, like a barbarian slave” (2.1.44-6). “Agamemnon is a fool to offer to command Achilles,” he says, in a much darker rendition of Touchstone’s ability to universalize folly: “Achilles is a fool to be commanded of Agamemnon; Thersites is a fool to serve such a fool; and this Patroclus is a fool positive” (2.3.56-8). And he recognizes the failed romantic plot for what it really is: “I would fain see them meet, that that same young Trojan ass that loves the whore there might send that Greekish whoremasterly villain with the sleeve back to the dissembling luxurious drab of a sleeveless errand” (5.4.4-7). This catalogue reveals what most modern commentators on *Troilus and Cressida* have already agreed upon: Thersites may be despicable, but he is not necessarily wrong.

But at the same time that the satirist in *Troilus and Cressida* cuts through questions of merit and opinion in order to reveal the real value of a man, satire simultaneously devalues all of the ideals that make measures of value meaningful. Kingship, nobility, courtly honor, chivalry, romantic love, age, wisdom, wealth—the envy of the satirist consumes them all. If there is something inherently tragic about satire, it is here: satire only offers a downward trajectory. Eventually man becomes indistinguishable from beast: “Nothing but lechery!” Thersites

declares; “All incontent varlets!” (5.1.88-9). And when the satiric gaze has consumed everything else, it must eventually turn upon itself, as it does when Thersites encounters Priam’s bastard on the battlefield and must acknowledge himself for what he really is. In a sense, this is an encounter between Thersites and himself, as in his cowardly refusal to fight his mirror image he must confront and acknowledge his own illegitimacy. “I am a bastard, too” he says. “I love bastards. I am bastard begot, bastard instructed, bastard in mind, bastard in valour, in everything illegitimate” (5.8.8-10). In a play filled with images of self-consumption, it is ultimately the satirist who consumes himself by literally de-legitimizing himself. Rather than fight and “tempt judgment” (12-13), the satirist flees from the stage and from the play, with Priam’s bastard’s words at his heels: “The devil take thee, coward” (14).

7. Conclusion

The Poets’ War was in fact a “Satiromachia,” a fragmented and untidy re-evaluation of satire in the wake of the Bishops’ Ban of 1599. It was not limited to the theater; it included both poetry written before the ban—particularly in the sense that Jonson incorporated so many aspects of Marston’s formal verse satire—and poetry written about the same time as the two most important plays of the quarrel, Jonson’s *Poetaster* and Dekker’s *Satiromastix*. There remain many questions unanswered about chronology and about motivation, but we can make general claims about each author’s stance on satire. Jonson defended satire, the satirist, and himself from the popular audience by upholding satirical efficacy, the morality of the satirist, and his own satirical authority. Marston undercut satirical authority—both Jonson’s and his own—and associated Jonson with the troubling popularity of satire. Dekker denied Jonson’s satirical authority and began, if only incidentally, to turn satire upon itself, a position which culminated in

the anti-satirical satire of John Weever. Shakespeare, meanwhile, participated in the Poets' War as a kind of interested onlooker, staging the debate about satirical efficacy and satirical authority in both *As You Like It* and *Troilus and Cressida*. Ultimately, this reading of the Poets' War demonstrates the extent to which satire was itself a controversial form of discourse at the turn of the seventeenth century.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation came out of my conviction that theorists of satire were asking the wrong question: instead of asking what satire *is*, I thought, we should instead ask what it is that satire *does*. When the test-case for satire becomes Martin Marprelate instead of Alexander Pope, it becomes clear that aesthetic concerns are subordinated to the satirist's extra-textual rhetorical project. This is not to say that early modern satirists were not interested in stylistic innovation or formal conventions; certainly Martin Marprelate delighted in his own creative performativity, and the satyr-satirists of the late 1590s deliberately imitated the rough speech and obscure terms of the woodland creatures they saw as their satiric predecessors. But it is to say that early modern satirists acknowledged their rhetorical purposes much more explicitly than their eighteenth-century successors would. Martin was explicit about his intention to mar prelates; the anti-Martinists were explicit about their intention to make Martin odious to the realm; Nashe was explicit about his intention to persuade his readers to hate Harvey; and no matter how many contemporary and modern critics have doubted their sincerity, the satyr-satirists were explicit about their intention to make vice vicious. The most significant theoretical contribution of this dissertation is my assertion that *all* satire does persuasive work: even those satirical texts that only seem to punish in fact work to police, reinforce, and uphold hegemonic values threatened by residual or emergent counter-hegemonic forces. In fact, it is the particular nature of this persuasive work that, broadly speaking, constitutes a text as satire: satirical texts emerge at sites of antagonisms, use fictionalizing techniques to render an antagonist ridiculous or hateful, and elicit satirical responses.

The readings of the satirical controversies in this dissertation provide insight into both the controversies themselves and the nature of early modern satire. In the first chapter I argue that the Marprelate controversy came out of the presbyterians' objections to the condescending and playfully deconstructive ecclesiology of John Bridges, whose massive *Defence of the Government Established in the Church of Englande for Ecclesiasticall Matters* threatened to suffocate the presbyterian argument for reform. Bridges threatened to make the presbyterians look foolish; Martin therefore needed to turn Bridges into a fool. Paradoxically, Martin's satire both attempted to force the bishops to produce a serious, syllogistical response to presbyterian arguments for the necessity of the discipline and attempted to enact that discipline itself. The latter points to satire's disciplinary potential: by exposing individuals to public derision, satire can act as a public shaming mechanism, not only for those who have been targeted but also for the audience who looks on and hopes to avoid such targeting themselves. So too does this controversy demonstrate that the satirist renders his target simultaneously threatening and absurd, and thus legitimizes his target in the very process of undercutting it.

In the second and third chapters, I argue that the puzzling quarrel between Gabriel Harvey and Thomas Nashe did not revolve around different conceptions of authorship (i.e., amateur versus professional) but around different conceptions of poetic profitability in the nascent marketplace of print. Whereas Gabriel Harvey continually upheld the poetics of praise, an "economy of praise" in which poets would win praise for themselves by praising virtue and praising others, Thomas Nashe argued for the moral, political, and artistic profitability of blame. Harvey worried that such blame was inherently destabilizing and posed a threat to the moral, political, religious, and social order; Nashe insisted that artistic blame could be more effective at leading a reader or auditor to reject vice and embrace virtue than a preacher's unadorned

exhortations. These chapters ultimately point to the similarities satire produces between the satirist and the satiric target, and thus the threat the satirist poses to his own cause. Harvey could not discredit Nashe's blame without reproducing the very terms he hoped to resist; Nashe could not discredit Harvey's self-praise without praising himself. The very act of associating the satiric target with something blameworthy associates the satirist himself with the blameworthy satiric target. Harvey and Nashe remain stitched together in literary history, forever associated with the objects of their mutual derision.

In the final long chapter on the Poets' War, I argue that at the controversy was not about differing conceptions of comedy but about the value of satire in the wake of the Bishops' Ban. I suggest that in his three comical satires, Ben Jonson translated many of the characteristics of the formal verse satire that had been banned and burned and defended satire, the satirist, and himself against a popular audience that had (he felt) turned against, in turn, all three. John Marston, however, was far more skeptical of the efficacy of satire, and may have pushed back against Jonson for imitating his own (that is, Marston's own) earlier satirical poetry. Thomas Dekker, Thomas Middleton, and John Weever eventually turned satire against itself, ridiculing Jonson's claim to moral and satiric authority as well as the very idea of satiric efficacy. This chapter points to the relationship between satire and popularity: satirists always attack targets that are threatening precisely because they are too popular, and when satire itself became too popular, satire too becomes the target of satire.

What is perhaps most surprising is the fact that each of these satirical controversies eventually became *about* satire itself. Satire was a controversial form of discourse in the long final decade of the Elizabethan period: not only was it the *form* of controversy, but it became, over and over again, the *subject* of controversy. From the publication of the Marprelate tracts

through the Harvey-Nashe quarrel to the Bishops' Ban and the Poets' War, authors who had a vested interest in defending the social function of poetry disagreed about the value, politics, and ethics of satire. That this debate occurred even as satire became the most popular literary genre for a generation of writers coming of age in the 1590s, displacing the romance of Sidney and Spenser, helps explain the significance of the 1599 Bishops Ban and the impact satire would have on the theater over the following decade.

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