

THOMAS NASHE AND EARLY MODERN PROTEST LITERATURE

A dissertation

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ABSTRACT

Thomas Nashe's innovative style, comedy, and contributions to topical Elizabethan satire have historically distracted readers from recognizing his serious subtexts of sociopolitical protest. This dissertation argues that Nashe's renowned polyvocality disguises these subtexts by enacting a social and intertextual extension of rhetorical invention that is best expressed as "conversation." Only by re-situating Nashe's work amidst its classical, late medieval, and contemporary conversational networks may we grasp his paradoxically conservative attitude toward radicalizing English literature and society. Drawing on these contexts, each chapter demonstrates how Nashe's works protest the inequities arising from a crisis of English identity and rhetoric for which he holds the Crown partially responsible.

Chapter One, "In the Authours Absence": Rhetorical Usurpations of Authority by Richard Jones and Thomas Nashe," analyzes shared practices which help both printers and writers authorize their literary products and, occasionally, rhetorically hijack others'. The second chapter, "At the Crossroads: Classical and Vernacular English Protest Literature in *Pierce Penilesse*," examines Nashe's discursive translations of classical, late medieval, and contemporary rhetorical gestures that protest a crisis of English rhetoric and identity. The third chapter, "Red Herrings and the 'Stench of Fish': Subverting Praise in *Lenten Stuffe*," upends critical assumptions that Nashe's encomium of the red herring and town of Yarmouth is sincere by revealing a revisionary English chronicle history in conversation with Erasmus' "A Fish Diet" that protests a long history of Crown inequity. Chapter Four, "'Cupid's golden hook': Discord and Protest among Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-century Versions of 'Hero and Leander,'" offers the first comprehensive analysis of the interplay among Christopher Marlowe's "Hero and Leander," Nashe's adaptation of the lovers' story in *Lenten Stuffe*, and Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*. In conversation, these works convey a central theme of rupture, specifically the disjunction of classically inspired amity.

Situating Nashe's literary contributions in their conversational networks clarifies his pivotal role in the emergence of early modern English literature while illuminating some of the ways conversation functions as a compositional methodology in the sixteenth- and seventeenth centuries.

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INTRODUCTION

“FISHING BEFORE THE NETTE”: NASHE’S CONVERSATIONAL NETWORKS

Be of good cheere, my weary Readers, for I haue espied land, as *Diogenes* said to his weary Schollers when he had read to a waste leafe. Fishermen, I hope, wil not finde fault with me for fishing before the nette, or making all fish that comes to the net in this history – Thomas Nashe, *Lenten Stuffe* (III.223)¹

In fact, the whole thing boils down to this (whether it is a matter of art of observation or experience): knowing the areas where you must hunt for, and track down, what you are trying to find. Once you have surrounded the entire place with the nets of your thought, at least if practical experience has sharpened your skill, nothing will escape you, and everything that is in the subject matter will run up to you and fall into your hands. – Cicero, *On the Ideal Orator* (2.Pr.147)

Thomas Nashe’s comic notoriety continues to obscure his networks of serious sociopolitical protest.² We are stuck, seemingly, with C.S. Lewis’ 1954 description of Nashe’s phrasing as a “clown’s red nose,” and his observation that Nashe is “the perfect literary showman [but] he tells no story, expresses no thought, maintains no attitude” (*English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* 411-416).³ H. Marshall McLuhan’s 1943 comment remains operative: “Nashe has never been considered on his own terms, and today he is praised for reasons which would have baffled and annoyed him” (*Classical Trivium* 4).⁴ For McLuhan, considering Nashe on his own terms requires situating him in the context of his conservative classical education.⁵ McLuhan fulfills his subtitle’s promise to establish *The Place of Thomas Nashe in the Learning of his Time*. Yet he also acknowledges the impossibility of surveying Nashe’s work “without

acquiring a vivid sense of its largely unexplored character” (252). Before embarking on our expedition, I suggest we abandon images of Nashe as a scraggly, gap-toothed hack, and re-imagine him as a serious critic of Elizabethan society and politics. This dissertation argues that Nashe’s renowned “polyphonic” style enacts a social and intertextual extension of rhetorical invention that is best expressed as “conversation.”⁶ My study contends that, to consider Nashe on his own terms, we must re-situate his work amidst its larger classical and contemporary conversational networks. By engaging Nashe’s works with their many interlocutors, previously occluded subtexts of protest become clear; at stake is a crisis of English identity and rhetoric that emerges from the inequities arising from sixteenth-century print culture, the sectarianism arising from the Humanist v. Ramist debate, and the arbitrariness of Crown politics.⁷

This dissertation casts a large net over a representative selection of Nashe’s writing in order to both demonstrate and study his discursive conversational exchanges.⁸ My approach to “conversation” in Nashe’s works has been largely informed by his intertextual confluences of ancient and contemporary sources; I borrow “network” from his classically-inspired fishing metaphors in *Lenten Stuffe* (III.223). Each chapter evaluates Nashe “on his own terms” by showing how his multivalent rhetorical gestures dramatize his adherence to conservative humanist philosophy, his negotiations for literary authority, and his protest of the arbitrary nature of Crown law. Although my conception of conversational network is securely fastened to the literary, social, and historical contexts from which it emerges, we can also draw productive analogues from

modern theories of linguistics, cognition, hermeneutics, and conversation. From the perspective of these twentieth- and twenty-first century approaches to language and interpretation, we can better grasp how conversation emerges as an early modern compositional methodology that anticipates our own modernity.⁹

Critical Contexts

Most analyses of early modern “conversation” focus primarily on prescriptions for social conduct. For example, both Peter Burke’s 1993 *The Art of Conversation* and Anna Bryson’s 1998 study, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England*, find analogues to eighteenth-century conduct manuals in works including George Pettie’s 1581 translation of “The Ciuile Conuersation,” and Baldassare Castiglione’s *The Courtier*.¹⁰ Picking up where Burke and Bryson leave off, Lorna Hutson examines conversation as an articulation of not social, but rhetorical decorum in her 2002 article “Civility and Virility in Ben Jonson.” More recently, Zachary Lesser and Benedict S. Robinson’s 2006 collection of essays, *Textual Conversations in the Renaissance: Ethics, Authors, Technologies*, has departed from defining “conversation” in terms of interpersonal conduct and manners.¹¹ Lesser and Robinson recognize that “Renaissance reading practices were active and engaged, and such conversations were two-way: the humanists did not merely read the ancients, they responded to them” (1). The conversations discussed in this collection, much as those engaged throughout this dissertation, are primarily

“*textual* conversations, practices of reading and writing conceived as dialogue” (3).¹² For instance, the first essay, Arthur F. Kinney’s “The Art of *Conversazioni*: Practices of Renaissance Rhetoric,” discusses the self-fashioning properties of conversation insofar as it “educates man, [and] teaches him discernment.”¹³ But Kinney also recognizes the instability language brings to conversation; language is “itself a construction, formed by various forces in which various meanings (perhaps even contradictory meanings) reside” (16). Kinney’s realization that language is both a social construct and a tool for creating knowledge is indebted to the same classical sources Guazzo consults, as well as his preceding work in the field of cognitive literary studies.

In his book, *Shakespeare’s Webs: Networks of Meaning in Renaissance Drama*, Kinney borrows a primary precept among cognitive theorists that knowledge is “constructed.”¹⁴ As Jean Piaget’s groundbreaking studies in cognition have shown, we assimilate new information with prior knowledge, then accommodate it into existing schema, and forge networks through rehearsal.¹⁵

Kinney contributes an analogue to Piaget’s formula:

Such a network can also be viewed as a web that is spun from one or more concepts in the brain that, too, is subject to alteration over time and over change of evidence. The associative network...is driven by human perception much as a spider instinctively spins its own web” (xix).

Piaget, and “Neo-Piagetians” including Robbie Case and Kurt Fischer, would argue that this web is built from concrete objects. In keeping with these theories of concrete mental operations, Kinney’s study analyzes how Shakespeare’s use of mirrors, books, clocks, and maps helps both the characters and the audience construct their understandings of the emotional, political, and social stakes of a

given work. But Kinney's "Art of *Conversazioni*" synthesizes the interplay of cognition and conversation along the lines of Lev Vygotsky's recognition that language is also an "object" that we act upon to create knowledge.

Vygotsky adapts Piaget's constructivist approach and contends that language is a primary cultural medium through which knowledge is produced. One of Vygotsky's foundational arguments is that cognitive development occurs when "intermental" speech becomes "intramental." As Patricia H. Miller explains, "Intermental processes are transformed during the internalization process. The process is active, not passive" (382). That is to say, knowledge is produced when subjects translate external conversational exchanges into inner speech. Essentially, Vygotsky theorizes conversation as a means of cognitive development.¹⁶ By invoking Vygotsky, I should like to recognize a previously unacknowledged relationship between extant theories of conversation and cognition. This relationship finds additional analogues among McLuhan's media studies, Hans Georg Gadamer's contributions to hermeneutics, and Gérard Genette's work in linguistics.¹⁷

McLuhan's dissertation remains a formidable bulwark of Nashe studies and inspired his well-known aphorism: "the medium is the message" (*Understanding Media* 7).¹⁸ W. Terrence Gordon explains that, to apprehend this dictum, we must "make the leap with McLuhan from media of communication to any technological extension of the human body" (*Escape into Understanding* 174). McLuhan's claims resonate with Vygotsky's and, as we make this leap, we can identify correlations within Gadamer's and Genette's contributions to

hermeneutics and linguistics. Gadamer's and Genette's theories bear strong conceptual resemblances to McLuhan's argument that "each language is a kind of corporate mask or vortex of energy to which countless millions of lives have contributed, and so it is with each of our media" (qtd. Gordon 174). The "both/and" interpretation of "medium" and "message" conveys the social production of language and construction of knowledge. This both/and exchange extends to my discussion of conversation's compositional role among Nashe and his interlocutors' work.

Gadamer's theorization of "hermeneutic conversation" develops – intentionally or not – McLuhan's famous aphorism and supports my use of "conversation" to designate a compositional practice. According to Gadamer:

Texts...are to be understood; and that means that one partner in the hermeneutical conversation, the text, speaks only through the other partner, the interpreter. Only through him are the written marks changed back into meaning...It is like a real conversation in that the common subject matter is what binds two partners, the text and the interpreter, to each other. (*Truth & Method* 388)

Gadamer's explication clarifies the role of the active reader in early modern conversations. Without such a reader, of course, the text stands alone like the proverbial tree in the forest and falls unheard. As Gadamer argues, "the text brings a subject matter into language, but that it does so is ultimately the achievement of the interpreter. Both have a share in it" (388). Gadamer's articulation of reading as interpretation, as a form of composition by which the active reader constructs meaning, engages both the reader/writer of the text and all the readings/writings that have come before the text. Gadamer explains: "a reading consciousness is necessarily a historical consciousness and communicates

freely with historical tradition” (391). Structurally, Gadamer’s “hermeneutic conversation” provides a skeleton analogy to Nashe’s conversational exchanges. We can put flesh on this skeleton by turning to Genette’s concept of hypertextuality.

We know from surfing the internet that “hypertext” represents a link – a jump – from one signifier to a related screen. For Genette, the “hypertext” is always a derivative signifier that links to an earlier or more comprehensive one. Genette defines the relationship of the hyper- and hypo-texts accordingly:

Let us posit the general notion of a text in the second degree: i.e., a text derived from another preexistent text. This derivation can be of a descriptive or intellectual kind, where a metatext (for example, a given page from Aristotle’s *Poetics*) “speaks” about a second text (*Oedipus Rex*). It may yet be of another kind such as text B not speaking of text A at all but being unable to exist, as such, without A, from which it originates through a process I shall provisionally call *transformation*, and which it consequently evokes more or less perceptibly without necessarily speaking of it or citing it. (*Palimpsests* 5)

Metaphorically, Genette has painted a scene of texts “speaking” to one another, or texts in conversation. But if we step away from our own modernity and revisit Genette’s schematic representation of a text “in the second degree,” we hear echoes of the classical practices of *imitatio*. Incidentally, Genette acknowledges that if he were to incorporate classically inspired *imitatio* into his larger construct of the *architext*, he would have to account for the “supplementary stage and a mediation that are not to be found in the simple or direct type of [intertextual] transformation” (6). Conversational networks emerge precisely from this “supplementary stage” and from the space of mediation.

From this interdisciplinary network of linguistics, hermeneutics, cognition and conversation, we are poised to recognize Nashe's radicalization of conversation as a compositional methodology. In sum, conversation performs a linguistic exchange that is closely aligned to ancient practices of *imitatio*. By imitating the masters, the student acquires rhetorical, historical, and moral knowledge.¹⁹ Erasmus' *Colloquies* illustrates humanist-inspired imitation; this text was of central importance in Elizabethan pedagogy. These colloquies are modeled on Socratic dialogues and dramatize "conversation" as a dialectic model of eliciting knowledge.²⁰ Nashe's many speakers and interlocutors can sometimes make his conversations sound like cacophony, but he does not depart from Erasmus' classically inspired model. Instead, Nashe multiplies his predecessors' rhetorical techniques. Despite his inventiveness, Nashe's rhetorical method is essentially conservative. He is as staunchly aligned with humanism as he is opposed to Peter Ramus's "new" scholasticism.

At the crux of the Humanist v. Ramist debate is rhetoric's viability as a source both of invention and of individual and civic virtue. McLuhan associates Nashe with conservative humanism and argues that this position aligns Nashe with "patristic theology," a restoration of eloquence to the Church Fathers that incorporates St. Augustine's ideal theologian with Cicero's ideal orator: "*vir doctissimus et eloquentissimus*" (a man most learned and eloquent) (7). Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine elaborate the humanist position: "Excelling in the liberal arts or *bonae artes* in sixteenth-century England signifies more than simply academic distinction. It is recognized as a means of access to prominent civic

position, to the Elizabethan court, to power and influence” (*From Humanism to the Humanities* 185). For Nashe and his conservative colleagues, the integrity of rhetoric is inseparable from virtue. Ramus and his followers deny this precept and reduce the original five parts of rhetoric to two: elocution (style) and delivery. Ramus re-allocates the remaining three parts, invention, disposition, and memory, to the dialectic, or the “art of reasoning.”²¹ Grafton and Jardine summarize

Ramus’ method:

The crucial plank in the Ramist programme [is] its assumption that the aim of classical education is to produce effective writers and active participants in civic life, rather than original scholars and philosopher kings. To that purpose Ramus and his followers were willing to sacrifice the individuality of the ancient writers they studied – were willing, indeed, to ignore the contexts and intentions of the central classical texts (197).

We should also recognize that Ramus’ “short cuts” to rhetoric give rise to Biblical revisionism and the proliferation of sectarianism throughout Europe and England.²² Throughout his works, Nashe aggressively mocks all who follow “such Rams horne rules of direction” (I.48).

“On his own terms”

I chose the first of my epigraphs from Nashe’s last pamphlet, *Lenten Stuffe*, because it imparts an epitome of Nashe’s compositional method: “Fishermen, I hope, wil not finde fault with me for fishing before the nette, or making all fish that comes to the net in this history” (III.223). In conjunction with Cicero’s hunting metaphors and nets of thought, Nashe appears to be rephrasing a classical commonplace (see 2.Pr.147). Yet Nashe also re-contextualizes his source

so that it can rhetorically multitask; his short epigraph additionally gestures towards modesty, masquerades as thematically appropriate, and postures defensively as he implicates his readers in his larger protest of Crown inequity.

When Cicero describes surrounding a “place” with nets of thought, he analogizes the rhetorical practice of building arguments by networking *loci communes*, or “commonplaces.”²³ In classical pedagogy, students would memorize Aristotelian-inspired “commonplaces,” or parts of arguments, to have at hand when confronted with a specific legal case. Cicero suggests abstracting Aristotle’s commonplaces to make them more plentiful and flexible so that an orator may call upon them in the contexts of multiple arguments. For Cicero, to surround “the entire place with the nets of your thought” means to think about every possible side of an issue. If one has dutifully studied his commonplaces, the subject matter should then be close at hand; the speaker can generate an eloquent invention, a persuasive argument. Much as Cicero abstracts and expands Aristotle’s construction of “commonplaces,” Nashe translates the “nets” of his thought into the “entire place” – the site of exchange between reading and writing – the site of conversation.

Nashe’s net-work surrounds not only Cicero’s “entire place” with his thought, but presents readers with a site of hermeneutic negotiation. Addressing his “weary Readers,” Nashe gestures toward modesty by suggesting that his (mock) encomium of the red herring and revisionary English chronicle history have tired his audience. Nashe continues this pose as he represents reading as “fishing”; his mock-deference to “fishermen” implies that these readers might

also be literary colleagues in a position to “find faulte.” This juxtaposition of “weary Readers” and “Fishermen” also generates an analogous relationship that Nashe complicates by positing himself as a fisherman “fishing before the nette.” These fishing metaphors thematically “work” with Nashe’s story of the red herring’s evolution, but they also reveal his self-conscious attempts to control, even at the risk of self-destruction, the conversations produced by his text.

As Nashe casts his line “before the nette,” the “subject matter” of the commonplace is metamorphosed into the interpretive perspective readers bring to it. Ultimately, Nashe metaphorically metamorphoses both readers and writers into “all fish that comes to the net in this history.” Thematically, Nashe’s “fish” comprise “this history”: he has captured them and translated them into the text of *Lenten Stuffe*. At the same time, we readers have come to Nashe’s net and have been – wittingly or no – translated into his school of fish. Nashe’s convoluted trajectory of metaphors casts his fish in and out of temporality – before and after history – to ultimately convey a passing through the interstices of his net. These interstices, or spaces, articulate the “nette” and Nashe’s defensive approach to conversational hermeneutics.

As I shall argue throughout, most of Nashe’s rhetorical innovations simultaneously disguise and disclose the subtexts of protest among his works. Although it has become conventional to treat the printer/writer relationship as either piratical or collaborative, the first chapter, “In the Authours Absence’: Rhetorical Usurpations of Authority by Richard Jones and Thomas Nashe,” strikes out to examine shared practices which help both parties authorize their

literary products and, occasionally, rhetorically hijack others'. Despite Crown laws privileging printers' textual rights, Jones's publications demonstrate a career-long anxiety about authorizing his literary products in the absence of their creators. When Jones publishes *Pierce Penilesse: His Supplication to the Devil* in this manner, Nashe protests by annihilating Jones's titular and prefatory contributions. But Nashe is no innocent victim. As close examination of his prefaces to Robert Greene's *Menaphon* and Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* demonstrates, Nashe is not above rhetorically usurping others' work in order to promote his own.

The second chapter, "At the Crossroads: Classical and Vernacular English Protest Literature in *Pierce Penilesse*," examines how Nashe translates classical, late medieval, and contemporary rhetorical strategies into protreptic English literature. Throughout *Pierce*, Nashe protests the influx of foreign influences in Elizabethan London, even as he humorously offers them as a foil for his underlying project of *translatio studii et imperii* (translation of learning and empire). This chapter pioneers a discussion of *Pierce's* stylistic and thematic indebtedness to Geoffrey Chaucer and Thomas Hoccleve as he recasts Juvenalian protest into English contexts. Furthering his imperial enterprise, Nashe manipulates our expectations of translation and imitation by offering excerpts from the *Amores* that conflate the senses of both his Ovidian source and Christopher Marlowe's English translation. Finally, Nashe's preposterous dedication to Edmund Spenser and Lord Burghley directly protests the Crown's parsimonious treatment of poets.

Chapter Three, “Red Herrings and the ‘Stench of Fish’”: Subverting Praise in *Lenten Stuffe*,” upends critical assumptions that Nashe’s encomia of the red herring and town of Yarmouth is sincere. Nashe revises English chronicle history to protest the Crown’s history of arbitrary legislation that has favored the wealthy town of Yarmouth at the expense of her “moath eaten neighbors,” notably his hometown of Lowestoft (III.174). Topical allusions to Nashe’s personal mistreatment by Crown authorities following his collaboration with Ben Jonson in the *Ile of Dogs* underscore his condemnation of political caprice. Finally, Nashe’s projections of Erasmus’s *Praise of Folly* and “A Fish Diet” into the controversies surrounding “Political Lent” transform his protest into something perilously close to sedition.

The last chapter, “‘Cupid’s golden hook’: Discord and Protest among Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-century versions of ‘Hero and Leander,’” affords the first analysis of a progressive conversation among Christopher Marlowe’s “Hero and Leander,” Nashe’s adaptation of the lovers’ story in *Lenten Stuffe*, and Ben Jonson’s puppet show in *Bartholomew Fair*. Nashe’s digression into Hero and Leander’s story transposes Marlowe’s portrait of Olympian hypocrisies into the contentions surrounding fishing politics on the Norfolk coast. Additionally, Nashe exploits Marlowe’s hermaphroditic imagery by transforming the lovers into asexually reproductive fish to protest the arbitrariness of natural and man-made laws. Jonson compounds Marlowe’s and Nashe’s subtexts of protest by conflating their versions of “Hero and Leander” with the classical ideal of friendship portrayed in Richard Edwards’ play, *Damon and Pythias*. In conversation, these

works convey central themes of rupture and the disjunction of classically inspired amity.

Each chapter argues that the interplay between Nashe's conversational networks represents his inventive and innovative contributions to English vernacular literature. Nashe's juxtaposition of Latin and English sources, translations, and rhetorical strategies does not separate, but unites form and content among his writings. Untangling these often multilingual intertexts is as difficult as it is rewarding. We must remember that Nashe's discursiveness emerges from a cultural climate of absolute and brutally enforced censorship. Indeed, Nashe recognized that "the times are dangerous" well before his friends were murdered, tortured, or imprisoned, and before his forced exile, shortly after which he died (I.182).²⁴ The proliferative nature of conversation permits Nashe to achieve plausible deniability – and as we will see, he succeeds – at least temporarily. But his networks also function offensively. Nashe's contemporaries, sharing his classical education, would likely be able to decipher the often scathing, and sometimes seditious protest encoded among his works. It was only a matter of time before Crown officials also decoded Nashe's often virulent political criticism.

NOTES

¹ Citations of Nashe's writings follow Ronald B. McKerrow's *The Works of Thomas Nashe* here and throughout.

² Generally speaking, Nashe's "political" phase of writing is thought to begin and end with the works the Crown solicited him to write on its behalf during the Martin-Marprelate controversy (see Bruster, "The Structural Transformation of Print" 54). This dissertation focuses on the protest emerging in Nashe's later, independent works. For a brief overview of the Martin Marprelate affair, see McKerrow (V.34-65). McLuhan also nods to Nashe's loathing of the Marprelate followers' and their misuse of rhetoric in *The Classical Trivium* (242). To date, Joseph Black's book, *The Martin Marprelate Tracts*, provides the most comprehensive discussion of this controversy.

³ Jonathan Crewe's argument that Nashe reverses the priorities of "theme" and "writing" augments Lewis' comment regarding the "purity" of Nashe's style (*Unredeemed Rhetoric* 1). More recently, Robert Weinmann and Peter Holbrook have pushed early discussions of Nashe's "themelessness" into persuasive arguments regarding Nashe's unorthodox rhetorical practices. Additionally, David J. Baker, Laurie Ellinghausen, Steve Mentz, and Maria Teresa Micaela Prendergast each treat Nashe as a learned stylist and skilled personal satirist, but do not examine the underlying content within Nashe's works.

⁴ Few have followed McLuhan's lead, partly because his work was sequestered in the Cambridge University Library MS room and citations from it were not permitted until 2006. As of my visit on 19 July 2010, twenty-two people had signed out the text. With a few exceptions (notably Neil Rhodes and Arthur F. Kinney), Nashe scholars for the past half-century have been working without the benefit of McLuhan's intellectually rigorous contributions.

⁵ McLuhan's dissertation rightly commends Nashe for "fidelity to decorum even in small matters," while recognizing Nashe's innovative translations of conventional rhetorical techniques (*Classical Trivium* 245; 243).

⁶ Later, in *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making and Unmaking of Typographic Man*, McLuhan describes Nashe's prose as "oral polyphony" (242). For an elaboration of McLuhan's description of "polyphony," see Rhodes, "Orality, Print and Popular Culture" (43-44).

⁷ By "protest," I refer to the primary definition of the verb: "To petition, advance a claim; to put forward a protestation. To protest for remedy of law" (*OED* v.1 a). We should not confuse Nashe's political protest with the reformative and sectarian connotations of "Protestant." As McLuhan has clearly established, Nashe consistently denounces religious sectarianism throughout his career (see *Classical Trivium*). From all accounts, Nashe appears to have been a conservative Anglican. Ben Jonson's elegy additionally suggests Nashe "diedst a Christian faithfull penitent" ("Nashe's Epitaph" 25, rpt. in Duncan-Jones).

⁸ Some might argue that Nashe's epistolary dedications to *Menaphon* and *Astrophil and Stella*, *Pierce Penilesse*, and *Lenten Stuffe* are not exactly "representative" of Nashe's works. Modern readers might know him best for his

anti-Marprelate tracts, his quarrel with Gabriel Harvey, and his proto-novel, *The Unfortunate Traveller*. The works I discuss here are, however, “representative” of Nashe’s rhetorical innovations and contributions to English vernacular literature insofar as they sketch a portrait of Nashe’s literary development that is largely independent of either Archbishop Whitgift’s agenda or personal revenge. Finally, as *The Unfortunate Traveller* is quite popular among Nashe’s critics, I am temporarily casting the spotlight elsewhere so that we may return to that work with fresh perspective.

⁹ McLuhan also translates Nashe’s polyvocality as a form of proto-modernity when he describes his prose as “a Louis Armstrong trumpet solo” (*Gutenberg Galaxy* 242). Further, Rhodes has argued that “Nashe’s awareness of the semiotic possibility of print is not limited to the simulation of oral forms of expression...in *Have With You* he uses a block of Roman capitals to recreate one of Harvey’s ‘sentences’ in marketplace terms as a dyers sign...If we give due credit to the resourcefulness of Nashe’s manipulation of the media then its true analogue would be the message board in Facebook” (“Orality, Print and Popular Culture” 37).

¹⁰ Pettie’s translation of Stephano Guazzo’s text has yet to be thoroughly examined as a source for sixteenth-century prose and dramatic literature. To my knowledge, no one has discussed the possible textual precedents for William Shakespeare’s “To be” soliloquy in *Hamlet*, and Polonius’ advice to Laertes in Pettie’s *Preface* (see “Ciuite Conuersation”; 1.3.55-81; 3.1.58-62).

¹¹ Although Bruster tacitly reserves the phrase “conversational settings” for the eighteenth-century, he recognizes early modern print culture “as a medium for the articulation of controversial views” (63). At this dissertation’s inception, Bruster’s important work on “embodied writing” initiated my interest in examining Nashe’s work in the context of my own nascent conception of “conversation” (50). Additionally, J.J.M. Tobin’s series of articles in *Notes and Queries* identifies numerous instances in which Nashe “jumpstarts” Shakespeare’s imagination (“Have with you to Athens’ wood” 35). Tobin’s essays continue to inspire my own approach to Nashe and his textual interlocutors.

¹² See also Katherine R. Larson’s *Early Modern Women in Conversation*. Larson primarily analyzes “conversation” in the epistolary exchanges among Margaret Cavendish and Mary Sidney’s social circles.

¹³ My use of “self-fashioning” here and throughout follows Stephen Greenblatt’s *Renaissance Self-Fashioning from More to Shakespeare*.

¹⁴ Cognitive literary studies may owe their largest debt to Mary Thomas Crane’s *Shakespeare’s Brain*. Recently, Evelyn B. Tribble’s *Cognition and the Globe: Attention and Memory in Shakespeare’s Theatre* has pushed these studies into the realm of extended mind theory. Tribble’s work is provocative, but raises issues that are simply too broad for the purposes of my argument. Similarly, Bruno Latour’s provocative concept of network theory extends beyond the scope of my inquiry (see *We Have Never Been Modern*).

¹⁵ My discussion of cognitive theorists and theories is largely indebted to Patricia H. Miller’s *Theories of Developmental Psychology*, Barbara Rogoff’s *The*

Cultural Nature of Human Development, and Gareth Matthews' *The Philosophy of Childhood*.

¹⁶ Vygotsky's conceptualization of the "Zone of Proximal Development" reiterates the crucial role of conversation in the production of knowledge (see Miller 377-383).

¹⁷ Coincidentally, we can draw another loose associative network among Nashe, Vygotsky, and McLuhan. Nashe and Vygotsky share a similar personal history; both generated propaganda supporting the respective sociopolitical and, in Nashe's case, religious agenda of their governments. And, both were ultimately persecuted by their leaders, their works deemed dangerous, and banned long after their premature deaths. The Stalinist regime initially supported Vygotsky's post-doctoral project to foster literacy among Russian peasants and spread communism. Yet when Vygotsky protested an egalitarian model of the distribution of intelligence (eg. the capacity to hold knowledge) and recognized that some subjects have more learning "potential" than others, he was accused of elitism and vilified by the Communist Party. Although Vygotsky managed to publish his major work, *Thought and Language* in 1934, he died that year of tuberculosis. Vygotsky's contributions to cognitive theory were likely informed, at least in part, by his doctoral dissertation on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Finally, we have yet to probe the coincidence of how Vygotsky's and McLuhan's respective studies of Shakespeare and Nashe led to their revolutionary analyses of the reciprocal relationship among humans and their technologies; notably language and print culture.

¹⁸ After his schooling at Cambridge, the Canadian-born McLuhan relocated in the U.S., Gadamer worked in Germany, and Genette in France. The geographical distances separating these roughly contemporary literary theorists appear to have, for the most part, prohibited our recognition of similarities among their approaches. All are engaged in exchanges stemming from emergent theories of structuralism and hermeneutics in the context of the growing influence of mass media. Recent studies such as Rhodes' 2009 chapter subtitled "McLuhan and Nashe," Jeff Malpas and Santiago Zapala's 2010 *Consequences of Hermeneutics*, and Marko Juvan's 2009 *History and Poetics of Intertextuality* indicate the ongoing relevance of these theories.

¹⁹ See: Thomas M. Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry*.

²⁰ In practice, Erasmus' *Colloquies* were also a model for learning Latin. Students would translate the original Latin into English, and then translate their English transcription back into Latin. Erasmus also provides "*Formulae*," or socially decorous conversational commonplaces. For example, to one sneezing, Erasmus lists four appropriate commonplaces one should imitate: "Prosperity and luck! God keep you! *Prosit!* God save you!" (*Colloquies* 560).

²¹ For a comprehensive study of the evolution of Peter Ramus in the learning of his time, see Walter J. Ong's *Ramus: Method and the Decay of Dialogue*. Ong was McLuhan's student and we can see the influence of his mentor in his contributions to the school of orality.

²² Hardin Craig has famously called Ramus “the greatest master of the short-cut the world has ever known” (*The Enchanted Glass* 143).

²³ Ernst Robert Curtius prefers the Greek *topos* to “commonplace” (70). Both commonplaces and *topoi* are arguments, “intellectual themes, suitable for development and modification at the orator’s pleasure” (*European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* 70). Richard E. Hughes and P. Albert Duhamel’s collection of essays, *Rhetoric and the Principles of Usage*, provides an excellent overview of Aristotle’s approach to rhetoric and includes examples from canonical works of American and British literature.

²⁴ I refer primarily to Christopher Marlowe’s murder, Thomas Kyd’s torture and imprisonment, and Ben Jonson’s imprisonment following his collaboration with Nashe on *Ile of Dogs* that I discuss at more length in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER ONE

“In the Authours Absence”: Rhetorical Usurpations of Authority by Richard Jones and Thomas Nashe

Gentlemen, I present you here, in the Authours absence, with sundrie fine devices, and rare conceytes – Richard Jones, Preface to Nicholas Breton’s *Bowre of Blisse*

A.W. Pollard’s 1917 title, *Shakespeare’s Fight with the Pirates and the Problems of the Transmission of His Text*, conjures up an exciting image of William Shakespeare battling a crew of eyepatch-wearing thugs trying to steal “his” text. Although the notion of single authorship in early modern drama has long since been challenged, Pollard’s early argument invites us to revisit the construction of authorship in sixteenth-century print culture and explore how literary authority was negotiated among writers, printers, and the Crown Stationers. Currently, we tend to celebrate the collaborative exchanges between printers and writers.¹ But amicable, or even what Stephen B. Dobranski calls “loose,” collaboration is not at stake in the textual practices of Thomas Nashe and his sometime printer, Richard Jones (*Readers and Authorship* 12). When Jones produced the first edition of *Pierce Penilesse: His Supplication to the Devil* “in the authours absence,” Nashe did not take kindly to this usurpation of his authority (I.151).² This chapter offers Nashe’s and Jones’s epistolary and paratextual exchanges surrounding *Pierce* as an ideal opportunity to untangle discrete self-authorizing strategies from the respective standpoints of a prolific stationer and a best-selling writer.³ Additionally, I will analyze Jones’s and

Nashe's approaches to self-authorization when the text is produced either without the author's knowledge, or as the case is in Nashe's epistle to Robert Greene's *Menaphon*, in spite of the author's presence.

Literary "authority" is relative in this atmosphere of censorship.⁴ Under Elizabeth, printers were required to register every text with the Crown Stationers. No legal rights were allocated to the author, the writer, of a given work until 1709.⁵ The printers' control over all creative productions led to innumerable disputes about textual ownership and to many instances of textual piracy – Thomas Newmans's unregistered, and therefore unauthorized, first edition of Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* is but one example. Although writers have a degree of what Gary Taylor calls "proprietary pronomial authority," name recognition that increases marketplace sales, authorship is ultimately negotiable ("Making Meaning Marketing Shakespeare" 60). Prefaces and paratexts emerge as primary sites to negotiate literary authority – artistic and material. For instance, Jones's opening contributions to the *Tamburlaine* plays, Nicholas Breton's *Bowre of Blisse*, and Nashe's *Pierce* all manifest his bids for both literary and material authority. Nashe's prefaces to Greene's and Sidney's works are far more complicated. On the one hand, Nashe capitalizes on his predecessors' reputations to legitimize his own literary project. On the other hand, Nashe exploits these primary works in order to promote himself and protest Peter Ramus' increasing popularity.

The first part of this chapter analyzes Jones's prefatory bids for authority in the *Tamburlaine* plays, Breton's *Bowre*, and Nashe's *Pierce*. Most recently,

Kirk Melnikoff has reconsidered Jones's career as a literary taste-maker, but I shall put additional pressure on Jones's treatment of the author's absence as a rhetorical strategy to control his self-presentation in the text.⁶ The next section demonstrates how Nashe's prefatory exordia to *Menaphon* and *Astrophil and Stella* unequivocally usurp Greene's and Sidney's literary authority.

The final portion argues, for the first time, that Nashe's bleak, yet intertextually dense revisions of Jones's prefatory contributions to *Pierce* function to strategically re-authorize his work. At the same time, I revisit Marshall McLuhan's blanket observation that "Nashe's writings present an almost uninterrupted texture of patristic implication" (*Classical Trivium* 213). My critical project in this last section is to begin to answer McLuhan's long-buried call to examine the intellectual and literary properties of Elizabethan literature insofar as they are embodied in Nashe's work.

"Bold to publish"

Jones's prefatory contributions to the *Tamburlaine* plays, Nicholas Breton's *Bowre of Blisse*, and Nashe's *Pierce* materialize the printer's efforts to negotiate his authority in the author's absence. Each case offers an opportunity to examine the degree to which the printer can assemble conversational and economic control of others' literary productions. Although Melnikoff celebrates Jones's textual contributions and calls him a "conscious literary pioneer," this section analyzes the degree to which we might call him a literary pirate (209). My

object is not to vilify Jones, as Pollard might, but to historically situate his self-authorizing strategies. In spite of Jones's record of legal scuffles, he is technically within his rights to publish and profit from each of the foregoing texts. Yet Jones's sometimes long-winded *exordia* and excessive modesty betray anxiety about his textual authority. Jones's treatment of Marlowe, Breton, and Nashe demonstrate how registration with the Stationers' Company does not necessarily translate into literary authority; such authority is also determined by the reading audiences' "learned censures" (Ep. *Tamburlaine* A₂).

Working in the late 1470's, William Caxton's printed texts were not subject to the Stationers' approval, yet he offers Jones and his contemporaries rhetorical paradigms for authorizing his work. Caxton's most defining feature is, arguably, his prefatory deployment of modesty topoi. For instance, Caxton's preface to his 1490 translation of the *Eneydos* begs his audience's pardon: "I praye all theym that shall rede in this lytyl treatys to holde me for excused for the translation of it" (*Prologues and Epilogues* 109). Caxton lowers the audience's expectations of the work by calling it a "lytyl treatys" and suggesting his translation requires making excuses. But Caxton's modesty is also, as Jocelyn Wogan-Browne explains, designed to promote his work: "Linguistic and authorial modesty topoi can function as inverted self-advertisement and also as part of a broader literary reflection on the complex position occupied by English literature" (*Idea of the Vernacular* 10). Wogan-Browne speaks primarily to the emergence of "vulgar," or English, texts in the fourteenth- and fifteenth-centuries,

but Jones's continued use of these conventional topoi set Caxton's work as precedent for Elizabethan printers' prefatory negotiations for authority.

The publication history of the *Tamburlaine* plays presents a point of departure for analyzing Jones's self-authorizing strategies in the absence of a named writer. On 14 August 1590, Jones enters "The twooe commicall discourses of Tomberlein Cithian shepparde" into the Stationers' Register (Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage* 3.421). Later, Jones's title page to *Tamburlaine* advertises "two tragicall discourses" and his epistolary address to "Gentleman Readers" prepare us for changes to the play's content. Posturing modestly, Jones invokes his readers' "learned censure" and petitions them for protection:

Great folly were it in me, to commend vnto your wisdomes, either the eloquence of the Authour that writ them, or the worthinesse of the matter it selfe; I therefore leaue vnto your learned censures, both the one and the other, and my selfe the poore printer of them vnto your most curteous and fauourable protection; which if you vouchsafe to accept, you shall euer more binde mee to imploy what trauell and seruice I can, to the aduancing and pleasuring of your excellent degree.

Yours, most humble at commaundement, —R. I. Printer (Ep. *Tamburlaine* A₂)

Jones's entreaty is two-pronged; he wants to avoid Crown censorship and his readers' censure. Obscuring his implicit desire for financial reward, Jones posits himself as a servant devoted to his audience. Finally, Jones exploits what we shall see is an often used metaphor of "binding" to elevate the status of his pamphlets and secure his audience's support. As we know, most printed works during this period were not "bound," but produced as pamphlets. Jones's repeated use of the word "binding" appears to be an attempt to associate himself and his wares with bound folios, then luxury items in the Paul's marketplace.

Jones's contrived humility functions defensively as he dissolves the boundary among printer, editor, and literary critic by expunging *Tamburlaine's* "graced deformities" that were "shewed on the stage" (Ep. A₂). As Melnikoff has shown, Jones's editorial treatment of *Tamburlaine*, while not unprecedented, is uncharacteristic of then-conventional printing practices (see "Jones's Pen and Marlowe's Socks"). Jones positions himself as an arbiter of literary taste as he explains the emendations he has made to this "honorable & stately" history. The phrase "mixture in print" refers not to a meeting of stage and page, but a disavowal of the former for the glorification of the latter (Ep. A₂).⁷ Melnikoff rightly contends that Jones was "very likely fashioning his *Tamburlaine* for the established print market of collected poetry and chivalric literature...A valorization of printed drama was an unforeseen byproduct" (209).

Jones's excision of "fond and friuolous Iestures" and digressions in the *Tamburlaine* plays has additionally suggested to earlier critics such as Alexander Dyce, Arthur Henry Bullen, and Una Ellis-Fermor that the printer intended to preserve the "Marlovian" appeal of the play (see Melnikoff 186). Yet *Tamburlaine's* title page carries no mention of Marlowe, or any writer.⁸ Instead, Jones's title page implicitly distributes authority and ownership between the "right honorable the Lord Admyrall" and himself.⁹ At this point in dramatic history, Jones need make no claim for the author's absence because the performance bears no single author. Jones capitalizes on the rising popularity of Elizabethan drama by translating plays for a reading audience.

Conversely, Jones's prefatory epistle to *Brittons Bowre of Delights. Contayning Many, most delectable and fine deuices, of rare Epitaphes, pleasant Poems, Pastorals and Sonets. By N.B. Gent* immediately and deferentially acknowledges "the authours absence." In Breton's case, Charles Nicholl explains we should "read ignorance" for "absence" (*Cup of News* 85). Breton, under the patronage of Mary (née Sidney) Herbert, complains in his 1592 preface to *The Pilgrimage to Paradise* that Jones's edition of the *Bowre* was "donne altogether without my consent or knowledge," nor, as Nicholl explains, were all of the poems Breton's own work (qtd. Nicholl 85). Although Jones's 3 May 1591 registration of the *Bowre* with the Stationer's Company legally authorizes this venture, his obsequious treatment of Breton and excessive modesty in his *exordium* convey the riskiness of his undertaking.

Jones's epistle commences with lavish praise for the "sundrie fine Deuices and rare conceytes" the text offers (*EEBO* np). Additionally, Jones's assiduous deference extends not only to the "well-penning" of the work at hand, "but specially, for the Subiect and worthinesse of the persons they do concerne) though (happly) you esteeme the rest of lesse regard: I then haue my desire, and count my labour and charges well bestowed." Distinguished from "the authour," "the persons" plausibly refer to the powerful Pembroke coterie.

Anticipating accusations of profiteering, Jones offers a supplication from which he clarifies his position:

I am (onely) the Printer of them, chiefly to pleasure you, and partly to profit my selfe, if they prooue to your good liking: if otherwise, my hope is frustrate, my labour lost, and all my cost is cast away. Pardon mee, (good Gentlemen) of my presumption, & protect me, I pray you, against

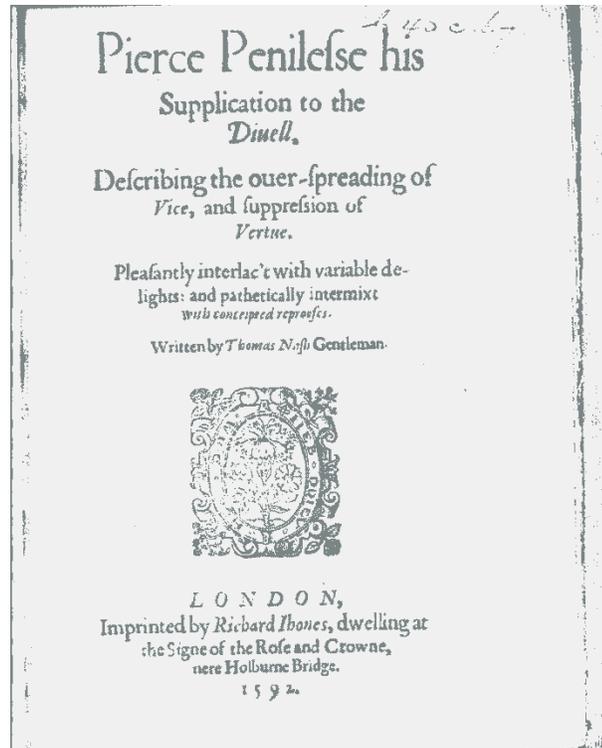
those Cauellers, and findfaults, that neuer like of any thing that they see printed, though it be neuer so well compiled. (np)

Jones acknowledges that no matter how effective his posturing, this case is always already a “bad” one because he stands to profit financially.¹⁰ Perhaps anticipating backlash from his audience, Jones recasts “profit” as reimbursement for his “labour” and “cost.” Jones’s *exordium* in the Breton epistle directly negotiates economic authority; he hopes to secure his profits by eliciting his audience’s pathos. Also, as in the *Tamburlaine* epistle, Jones begs pardon and protection from “findfaults” among his audience. Finally, Jones offers himself for sacrifice, suggesting that if “you happen to find any fault, impute it to be committed by the Printers negligence, then (otherwise) by any ignorance in the Author.” Overall, this epistle carefully negotiates “authority” such that Jones may simultaneously profit and achieve plausible deniability. Despite Breton’s disavowal of Jones’s publication, the printer suffered no material consequences for his risky undertaking and appears to have maintained control of this text.

Jones’s self-authorizing strategies in Nashe’s *Pierce* are less deferential than those in Breton’s *Bowre*, despite documentation suggesting the printer’s suspect appropriation of the manuscript. Jones enters *Pierce* into the Stationer’s Register on 8 August 1592, the day after Abel Jeffes is “com[m]itted to ward” for “printing a book w[ith]out authority contrary to our mr. his comaundemt, and for yt he refusd to deliu’ the barre of his presse neither would deliu’ any of the Booke to be brought to the hall accordige to ye decrees. and also for yt he vsed violence to our officer in the serche” (Greg, *Records of the Court* 42). As we know, Jeffes printed the second edition of *Pierce*, and it seems Nashe also

intended that he produce the first. Although there is no record of a dispute between Jones and Jeffes over *Pierce*, the fact that other printers appear to have taken advantage of Jeffes's legal trouble is suggestive. For instance, John Henry Jones has recently traced a network of contention among Jeffes, Thomas Orwin, and Thomas White disputing rights to the *History of the Damnable Life and Deserved Death of Doctor John Faustus* and *The Spanish Tragedy* around the same time as this scuffle surrounding *Pierce*.¹¹ Jones also uses the word "piracy" even in this modern text to describe questionable practices in the printing industry (49). Jeffes's record is far from clean, but Richard Jones is not exempt from contemporary accusations of piracy; he is cited on 16 November, 1590, for misappropriating a text titled, "the pathway to Readinge or the neweste spelling A.B.C.," from Robert Dexter (Greg 86).¹²

Despite his dubious registration of *Pierce*, Jones confidently proclaims his authority on both the title page and in his dedicatory epistle.



Lorna Hutson suggests that Jones's long title revises Nashe's "unusually stark title page," which the "unpretentious printer named Abell Jeffes" had apparently agreed to print ("Pierce Penilesse" 187). The final section of this chapter will argue that Nashe's "stark" choice functions as a confutation of what Hutson describes as Jones's "coy '*Circumquaque*' of his own invention, to reassure Gentleman Readers" (198).¹³ Indeed, Jones's epistle appears designed to authorize his production:

The Printer to the Gentlemen *Readers.*

Gentleman:

In the Authours absence, I haue been bold to publish this pleasaunt and wittie Discourse of *Pierce Penilesse his Supplication to the Diuell:* which Title though it may seeme strange and in it selfe somewhat preposterous, yet if you vouchsafe the Reading, you shall finde reason, aswell for the Authours vncouth nomination, as for his vnwonted beginning without Epistle, Proeme, or Dedication: al which he hath inserted conceitedly in the matter; but Ile be no blab to tell you in what

place. Bestow the looking, and I doubt not but you shall finde Dedication, Epistle, & Proeme to your liking.

Yours bounded in affection:

R. I. – Pierce Penilesse, 1st ed., 1592 (I.150)

Jones's epistle rhetorically licenses his boldness by presenting himself in the know as to Nashe's breach of conventional prefatory strategies. Hutson's assessment of Jones's motivation for disclaiming Nashe's "preposterous" placement of dedicatory matter at the end, rather than the beginning of his text, is partially correct. Hutson suggests "this unscrupulous publisher had business sense enough both to appreciate the potential popularity of Nashe's witty reversal of convention, and to judge that readers would need some kind of introductory apology to give them the confidence to persevere with it" (188). Yet as Andrew Wallace has clearly demonstrated in "Reading the 1590 *Faerie Queene*," Nashe imitates Edmund Spenser's placement of dedicatory epistles at the end of the poem to mock the poet and his printers (I.150).¹⁴ Jones's insertion of this epistle at the beginning of the text upsets Nashe's program and usurps his authority.

Despite Jones's lack of deference toward Nashe, we find the stationer courting an elite readership of "gentlemen" both in the epistle and on the title page. Jones advertises *Pierce* as "Written by *Thomas Nash*. Gentleman" and gives Nashe a bump in social status since the 1589 title page of John Charlewood's edition of *The Anatomie of Absurditie* (I.149). Charlewood's attribution simply reads: "Compiled by T. Nashe" (I.3). Calling Nashe a "Gentleman" may have scandalized some, but as Laurie Ellinghausen observes, "in theory" his Cambridge University education confers "genteel status" and legitimizes his title

(*Labor and Writing* 47).¹⁵ Undoubtedly, Jones attempts to confer similar status upon himself by association. Finally, Jones recalls the “binding” metaphor that contributes to his authority in the *Tamburlaine* plays and *Pierce* in his signature: “yours bounded in affection.” Jones assumes conversational control here and in the *Tamburlaine* and Breton prefaces by effectively having the last word. But as I will demonstrate shortly, Jones fails to retain control of *Pierce* when Nashe obliterates the sum of his contributions.

Jones’s sometimes excessive modesty, elaborate title page advertisements, and explanatory epistles betray his awareness that Crown authority does not translate into commercial authority. The printer’s project is divided: first he must convince the Crown of a text’s value in order to register it and then he must persuade the reading public that it is worth buying.¹⁶ Jones’s treatment of Breton’s work is especially impressive because, despite Breton’s protests and his alliance with the powerful Countess of Pembroke, this work is permitted to stand. The following section reveals that Nashe will not be so lucky when he contributes to Thomas Newman’s pirated edition of Philip Sidney’s *Astrophil and Stella*. As we will see, Nashe exploits the opportunity his prefatory vehicles to both Robert Greene’s *Menaphon* and *Astrophil and Stella* offer in order to advance his own agenda.

“Playing the dolt in Print”

When Nashe learned that *Pierce Penilesse* has been printed and is “hasting to the second impression,” he berated both Jones and Jeffes: “he that hath once broke the Ice of impudence, need not care how deepe he wade in discredit” (I.153). But he soon implicates himself as he regrets “playing the dolt in print” (I.154).¹⁷ Nashe may regret rhetorically hijacking Greene’s *Menaphon* and Sidney’s *Astrophil and Stella*, but not for aesthetic reasons. As I shall demonstrate, Nashe suffers a public backlash for his prefatory contributions to both works. Sustained analysis also reveals that Nashe’s epistle to Greene’s poem is not composed of the “well-turned prefatory comments” of conventional readings such as Nicholl’s, but comprises a curious stream of invective directed toward “mechanicall mates” and “alcumists of eloquence” (*Cup of News* 51; III.311). Nashe continues in a similar vein when he contributes an epistle to Thomas Newman’s pirated version of Sidney’s *Astrophil and Stella*. In the Sidney preface, Nashe exploits the opportunity which “talking all this while in an *other mans doore*” offers to again subvert encomium and, in this case, cast aspersions on the integrity of the poet and his circle.¹⁸ Insofar as Nashe respectively exploits the author’s absence, or in Greene’s case, friendship, he thoroughly overgoes Jones. Nashe usurps the authority of these primary texts to protest both the growing popularity of Ramist literary endeavors and to advertise his own works for sale in St. Paul’s churchyard.

Nashe's brief treatment of Greene's work in the *Menaphon* epistle is generally read as an instance of "Nashe being Nashe." That is to say, Nashe exploits the opportunity this paper stage presents to promote himself and his work. But we need to put more pressure on Nashe's underlying moral agenda. McLuhan correctly, albeit reductively, summarizes the Greene epistle: "Nashe has two themes: the defense of poetry against ignorance, and the defense of theology and preaching against the same. In fact, this is one theme, as our long consideration of the patristic union of poetry, eloquence, and theology has shown" (217). McLuhan uses the word "patristic" to signify Nashe's ongoing alliance with the classical humanist teachings he learned at his and Greene's alma mater, St. John's College, Cambridge. Nashe's theological and rhetorical conservatism opposes the Ramists. As we know, Ramus' innovations of rhetoric were enthusiastically adopted by Puritans who favored a plain style of language. The problem for Nashe is that style and theology are inextricable. As McLuhan explains,

Patristic, grammatical exegesis of Scripture depended, and will always depend, on acknowledge of the original tongues of Scripture, whereas Ramistic rhetorical exegesis not only dispensed with linguistic erudition, but was hostile to it. The rhetorician simply whittled away all the figures from a text, delivering a simple abstract statement which was as useful in one language as in another. It must be seen that the scholastic Ramus turned rhetoric to the task of destroying rhetoric in order to see why, from the viewpoint of a patristic humanist, he and his followers represented the new barbarism of "drifat duncerie." This is the background for Nashe's contempt. (*Classical Trivium* 218-219, n.19).

Among Ramus's followers are Nashe's notorious enemies Gabriel and Richard Harvey.¹⁹ McLuhan argues that the Nashe-Harvey quarrel is a direct outgrowth from the enmity between the Erasmian-inspired humanists and the Ramus-

inspired Scholastics. For the purposes of my treatment of Nashe's rhetorical hijacking of Greene and Sidney's texts, we must realize that from Nashe's perspective, Ramus represents a division – a schism – between religion and pedagogy that results in the prioritization of appearance at the expense of inward learning and faith (see McLuhan, *Classical Trivium* 209-214).²⁰ As Ellinghausen explains, for Nashe, “learning *can* function as merely outward show, but the *correct* use of learning proceeds from an inward, ineffable quality that keeps learned shows from functioning as empty signs” (42). Nashe is at pains throughout his career to represent “this ineffable quality” rhetorically, especially insofar as it stands in contrast to the “empty signs” which (for Nashe) analogize Ramist logic.

Nashe's invocation of his and Greene's *alma mater* in the address and body of the *Menaphon* epistle demonstrates Nashe's fealty to its conservative humanist teachings and functions as a self-authorizing tactic:

Yet was not knowledge fully confirmed in her Monarchy amongst vs, till that most famous and fortunate Nurse of all learning, Saint *Iohns* in *Cambridge*, that at that aboue all other houses, Halles, and hospitals whatsoever, that no Colledge in the Towne was able to compare with the tithe of her Students. (III.317)

Maria Michaela Teresa Prendergast offers an excellent discussion of Nashe's treatment of St. John's as a midwife to knowledge in the context of popular discussions surrounding the reproductive metaphors associated with sixteenth-century print culture (see *Railing, Reviling, and Invective* 75-102). I would add that Nashe's situation of John's “aboue all other houses” in both knowledge and wealth emphasizes the College's authority, and by extension, Nashe's. Nashe's

address to the “Gentlemen of Both Universities” and his alliance with St. John’s marshals his authority so he may levy virulent invective against the unlearned poets and playwrights competing in the literary marketplace. Greene does not escape unscathed.

Buried amidst the twenty-four pages of McKerrow’s edition we find a single sentence expressly referring to Greene:

To leaue all these to the mercy of their Mother tongue, that feed on nought but the crums that fall fro[m] the Translators trencher, I come (sweet friend) to thy *Arcadian Menaphon*, whose attire (though not so stately, yet comely) doth intitle thee aboue all other to that *temperatum dicendi genus* which *Tully* in his Orator termeth true eloquence. (III.312)

Nashe’s apposition of crumb feeders with Greene’s *Menaphon* offers equivocal praise at best. Arguably, Nashe is opposing the two, but even cursory reading suggests that commending Greene’s text is not Nashe’s priority. Much as Jones’s parenthetical comments in both *Tamburlaine* and *Pierce* offer interpretation and judgment of the works, Nashe’s enclosed asides locate Greene’s style in the middle of the Ciceronian hierarchy. At the same time, Nashe advertises his own learning by deliberately misappropriating Cicero.

Nashe’s comparison of *Menaphon*’s “attire” to the “*temperatum dicendi genus*” is not encomiastic, but as Jonathan V. Crewe has argued, represents a damning of “his ‘sweet friend’ with faint praise” (III.312; *Unredeemed Rhetoric* 28). Cicero does not assign the “*temperatum*” genus, or middle style, to “true eloquence.” According to Cicero, “The man of eloquence whom we seek, following the suggestion of Antonius, will be one who is able to speak in court or in deliberative bodies so as to prove, to please and to sway or persuade. To prove

is the first necessity, to please is to charm, to sway is victory” (*Orator* XX.69). Ciceronian eloquence translates as a tripartite mastery of these three styles of oratory.²¹ Nashe’s comment about Greene’s perfection of the charming Middle Style is a backhanded compliment exposing the poet’s limited prowess with the other two: proof and persuasion. But just as Nashe’s praise of Greene is faint, so is his criticism; Nashe’s real targets are those who separate “arts from eloquence” (I.45).

Nicholl has argued that Nashe’s epistle to Greene’s *Menaphon* “takes up the cudgels against Greene’s rivals,” but if this assertion is correct, then Greene and Nashe must share a similar sense of enmity toward the Ramists (*Cup of News* 51). Nashe’s attack begins early in the epistle:

I am not ignorant how eloquent our gowned age is grown of late; so that euey mechanicall mate abhorreth the English he was borne too, and plucks, with a solemne periphrasis, his *vt vales* from the inke-horne: which I impute, not so much to the perfection of Arts, as to the seruile imitation of vaine glorious Tragedians...But herein I cannot so fully bequeath them to folly, as their ideot Art-masters, that intrude themselues to our eares as the Alcumists of eloquence (III.311)

The apparent contradiction posed by a “gowned” age of “eloquence” characterized by “mechanicall mates” plucking commonplaces subtly captures the antagonism between the old and new schools of thought vying for dominance in the Universitites. This “seruile imitation,” Nashe suggests, mocks classical *imitatio*, the pedagogical practice by which the student imitates classical Latin or Greek masters. Learning through imitation teaches students mastery of both the subject and the morals contained therein.²² Nashe’s pejorative allusion to *imitatio*

implicates playwrights who have not digested their sources, but who instead ape contemporary trends.

Simultaneously, “alcumists of eloquence” implies fraudulence and is directly opposed to classical humanism. Nashe’s jab at “alcumists” here and in the epistle to *Astrophil and Stella* is fairly obvious and similar to his disdain for “mechanicall” mates, or printers and writers who reproduce and multiply “art”: they counterfeit the counterfeit.²³ Additionally, Nashe’s “alcumists” are those who follow “*Peter Ramus sixteen yeeres paines*” and “praised his petty Logicke” (III.313).²⁴ A primary problem this method poses for Nashe and other conservative humanists, including Ascham and Cheke, is that this stripping of figure and other rhetorical devices disintegrates linguistic and moral integrity and, finally, encourages interpretive chaos.

Because Nashe was paid earlier in his career by Archbishop John Whitgift to attack “Martin Marprelate,” we understand why he attacks Ramus’s advocates.²⁵ But we might ask: why here? Why does Nashe barely gloss a work he has been enjoined to praise? Robert W. Maslen acknowledges the competitive rivalry between Nashe and Greene, but maintains Nashe’s “loyalty” to Greene in the preface to *Menaphon* (“Greene and the Uses of Time” 163). Nonetheless, this preface is clearly parenthetical to Nashe’s economic project: advertising his *Anatomie of Abusurditie* for sale in St. Paul’s marketplace. Greene’s name is well known at the time of Nashe’s debut publication and Nashe appears to have taken advantage of the opportunity to publicly associate himself with his Cambridge colleague. At the epistle’s close, we witness Nashe slip into the very kind of

“Mountebanks Oration to the Reader” he condemns Jones for putting on the title page of *Pierce* (I.153):

It may be, my *Anatomie* of *Absurdities* may acquaint you ere long with my skill in surgery, wherein the diseases of Art more merrily discovered may make our maimed Poets put together their blankes vnto the building of a Hospitall. If you chance to meet it in *Paules*, shaped in a new suite of similtudes, as if, like the eloquent apprentice of *Plutarch*, it were propped at seuen years end in double apparel, thinke his master hath fulfilled couenants, and onely cancelled the Indentures of dutie. If I please, I will thinke my ignorance indebted vnto you that applaud it. (III.324-325)

Nashe spends the bulk of his literary career exposing the “diseases of art,” the disintegration of the trivium by Ramus; his *Anatomie* continues in a similar vein. The *Anatomie* was entered in the Stationers’ Register on 19 September 1588 and Greene’s *Menaphon* on 23 August 1589; both works appear to have been printed during the early spring of 1589 (see McKerrow IV.1; III.300). Conventionally, a prefatory epistle contributes to a work’s authority, but Nashe’s preface hijacks Greene’s text in order to promote both his anti-Ramus agenda and his career.

Nashe’s preface to Sidney’s *Astrophil and Stella* provides another vehicle for Nashe to usurp authority and advance his agenda in the guise of encomium from, in this case, the most famous poet of the age. As Nicholl comments, “in terms of prestige this was every bit as effective as his earlier appearance at the prow of Greene’s *Menaphon*. Sidney was still, five years after his death, a magic name” (*Cup of News* 82). Nashe’s contribution to Newman’s pirated edition of Sidney’s work suggests he has no qualms capitalizing on this magic. Newman prints a found copy of Sidney’s manuscript along with twenty-eight poems attributed to Samuel Daniel. According to Nicholl, the short story is that Daniel cried piracy and his patroness, Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, pulled

strings to have the book impounded on 18 September 1591 (83). Still, Newman was permitted to issue a second edition of both Sidney's and Daniel's work. The subsequent version's most noteworthy change is the expurgation of Nashe's epistle.

Pollard's early accusation that Nashe summarizes the poem with "annoying glibness" is but one clue that Nashe's encomiastic epistle is not what it seems (*Astrophil and Stella* xxviii). Steve Mentz has more recently argued that "Nashe's Sidneolatry does not bear close scrutiny" ("Selling Sidney" 166). But while Mentz contends that Nashe's primary purpose is to exploit "the dead poet's star power for a boost," he does not discuss the degree to which Nashe undermines Sidney (169). Equivocation begins with Nashe's opening sentence: "*Tempus ades plausus, aurea pompa venit, so ends the Sceane of Idiots, and enter Astrophil in pompe*" (I.329). Alluding to an elegy in Ovid's *Amores* in which the speaker bets a horse for his mistress, Nashe's opening can be literally translated: "Time comes we clap, the gold procession comes." Nashe likely appreciates Ovid's pun on "aurea" as "aura," or breeze, to suggest that this procession is not one of gold, but wind. Marlowe spreads this translation over two lines: "Now comes the pomp; themselves let all men cheer: / The shout is nigh, the golden pomp comes here" (3.2.43-44). In other words, Nashe allusively instructs readers to applaud while at the same time suggesting that this "gold procession" follows a "sceane of idiots." Nashe's denigration of this pageantry and its association with Sidney is suspicious, especially in the context of the Ovidian discussion of horses and their bloodlines. As we know from "The

Defence of Poetry,” horses and horsemanship comprise some of the Sidney’s favorite metaphors associating the poet with an Orphic tamer of wild beasts (ed. Vickers 338-339).²⁶ But Ovid’s speaker is “not keen on bloodstock” or interested in the “noble horse” (Melville 3.2.1; Marlowe 3.2.1). Nor, I would argue, is Nashe.

Invoking youth to excuse his “presumption,” Nashe’s admiration for Sidney’s poetry appears sincere: “And here peradventure my witles youth may be taxt with a margent note of presumption, for offering to put vp any motion of applause in the behalfe of so excellent a poet” (I.329). Yet Nashe’s praise is short-lived; he quickly digresses into a dubious rendering of Aesop’s fable of the cock and the pearl: “the cockscombs of our daies, like *Esops* Cock, had rather haue a Barly kernel wrapt vp in a Ballet then they wil dig for the welth of wit in any ground that they know not” (III.329-330). To be fair, Nashe may be chastising the “Midasses” he insults earlier in this paragraph, but these “cockscombs” also clearly reference Sidney’s “keepers” in the following lines: “which although it [wit] be oftentimes imprisoned in Ladyes casks, & the president bookes of such as cannot see without another mans spectacles, yet at length it breakes foorth in spight of his keepers, and vseth some priuate penne (in steed of a picklock) to procure his violent enlargement” (I.330). This telltale phrase, “in spite of his keepers” appears to be verbal parry at the Ramists among the Sidney circle.²⁷ Following his 1572-1575 continental tour, Sidney visited with Ramus’ printer, Andre Wéchel. According to Walter Ong, “Sidney seems to have done much to direct the flood of works pouring from the Wéchel presses into England and

ultimately into Ireland as well” (302). Thus closely aligned with Ramus, Sidney becomes a target for Nashe. I suggest Nashe leapt at the opportunity to exploit Sidney’s association with Ramus in order to again criticize the logician and his followers (see I.323).

Nashe neatly parallels his early association of Sidney and gold in his closing lament of “this golden age” (III.333). Because Sidney’s name remains “magical” among modern readers, we instinctively assume that Nashe’s repeated juxtaposition of the poet with “gold” is celebratory. Nashe’s text suggests quite the opposite:

Such is this golden age wherein we liue, and so replenish with golden
Asses of all sortes, that, if learning had lost itself in a groue of
Genealogies, wee neede doe no more but sette an olde goose ouer halfe a
dozen pottle pots, (which are as it were the egges of inuention,) and wee
hall haue such a breede of bookes within a little while after, as will fill all
the world with the wilde fowle of good wits; I can tell you this is a harder
thing then making golde of quicksiluer, and will trouble you more than the
Morrall of *Aesops* Glowe-worme hath troubled our English Apes, who,
striuing to warme themselues with the flame of the Philosophers stone,
haue spent all their wealth in buying bellowes to blowe this false fyre.
(III.333)

What remains in “this golden age” is fool’s gold. The eggs of the old goose are not golden, but hatch “a breede of bookes” filling the world with the “wilde fowle of good wits.” Additionally, “our English Apes” are not more than alchemists, their “philosopher’s stone” recalling those left to the “mercy of their mother tongue, that feed on nought but the crums that fall fro[m] the Translators trencher” (III.312). These are exactly the “seruile imitators” and “alcumists of eloquence” whom Nashe lashes out at in the *Menaphon* epistle (III.311). Nashe emphasizes his tone of disgust by drawing analogies between the reproduction of

books (alchemy) and the suggestively mixed breeding (species) of geese, wild fowl, worms, and Apes.

Coterminously, by denigrating these monstrous progeny, Nashe embodies opposition. Although Nashe is prefacing one of this wild breed of books, he rationalizes his hypocrisy by claiming he has only been “talking all this while in an other mans doore” (III.333). Nashe paradoxically legitimizes his rhetorical usurpation of Sidney’s work and promotion of his own agenda by stepping outside of his own rhetorical frame. Despite Nashe’s metaphorical extraction of himself from his argumentative vehicle, this is Sidney’s “doore” and the Countess of Pembroke disciplines Nashe for loitering.

Nashe will also be publicly punished when Richard Harvey attacks him by name in his 1590 epistle to *The Lamb of God*. Although Harvey may refer to parts of Nashe’s *Anatomie*, he clearly references the foregoing epistles:²⁸

It becummeth me not to play that part in Diuinitie, that one *Thomas Nash* hath lately done in humanitie, 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? [...] Iwis this *Thomas Nash*, one of whom I neuer heard of before [...] sheweth himself none of the meetest men, to censure Sir *Thomas Moore*, Sir *Iohn Ceeke*, Doctor *Watson*, Doctor *Haddon*, Maister *Ascham*, Doctor *Car*, my brother Doctor *Haruey*, and such like; yet the iolly man will needs be playing the douty *Mar-tin* in his kinde, and limit euery man’s commendation according to his fancy. (McKerrow V.179-180).

As even this brief discussion of Nashe’s prefaces to *Menaphon* and *Astrophil and Stella* indicates, we cannot confute Harvey’s accusation that Nashe censures “his betters at pleasure.” Indeed, the “Poets” to whom Harvey refers almost certainly include Sidney and perhaps also Greene. Harvey’s later allegation that Nashe censures More, Cheke, and Ascham, however, is clearly a misreading. In his

epistle to Greene's poem, Nashe unequivocally celebrates these men for their learning.²⁹

Nashe's self-reproach in his epistle to Jeffes appears sincere when he claims to have "growne at length to see into the vanity of the world more than euer I did, and now I condemne myself for nothing so much as playing the dolt in Print" (I.154). Yet Nashe is not so much apologetic for hijacking Greene's and Sidney's works as he is sorry that his public scoldings are paid back in kind. As Nashe's later appeal to William Cotton demonstrates, his ambition to write "for the stage & for the presse" does not wane over the course of his career (V.194).³⁰ I would argue that Nashe's sycophantic praise of Sidney at the beginning of *Pierce* constitutes a public apology – one rendered necessary by the Sidney family's extraordinary influence.³¹ Lastly, as the following section demonstrates, Nashe is a quick learner. Echoing the Countess of Pembroke's excision of Nashe's contribution to Newman's pirated version of Sidney's poem, in the second edition of *Pierce*, Nashe suggests Jones has committed a similar offense when he instructs Jeffes to cut Jones's "long-tayled Title, and let mee not in the forefront of my Booke, make a tedious Mountebanks Oration to the Reader" (I.153).

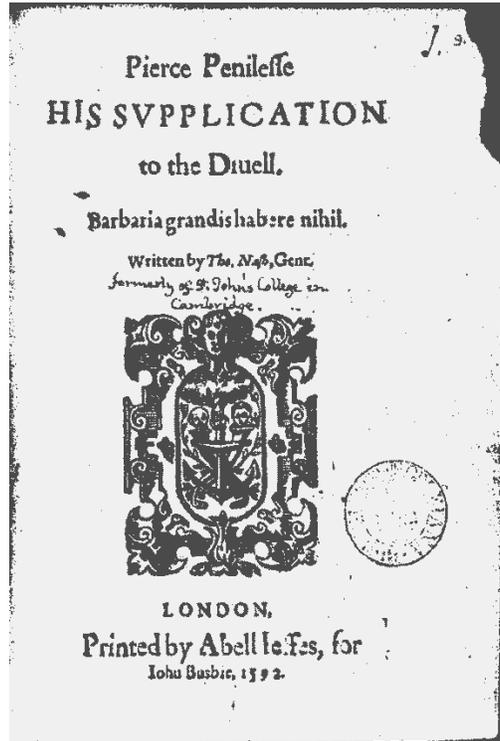
"Now poverty great barbarism we hold"

Contrary to Hutson's statement that "Nashe wanted above all to avoid setting out the book's whole intent in a prefatory epistle," he does just that by

replacing Jones's "long-tayld title" with his Ovidian epigraph: "*Barbaria grandis habere nihil*" (187; I.151).³² Borrowed from Ovid's *Elegies*, Marlowe's translation of the line, "now poverty great barbarism we hold," is not, as McKerrow suggests, conventional or laudatory (*Complete Poems* 3.7.4.9; IV.87 n.4).³³ Instead, this Latin subtitle intertextually embodies Nashe's interrogation of the rupture of word and wit and its reproduction in sixteenth-century print culture. We recall Nashe's disdain for "seruile imitators" and his annihilation of the golden age in the Greene and Sidney prefaces. Additionally, Nashe's epistle to Jeffes represents a two-fold attempt to regain authority. First, Nashe eradicates Jones's contributions to reassert his literary authority of *Pierce*. Second, in this subsequent edition of *Pierce*, Nashe tries to extricate himself from the vicious circle of linguistic alchemists ("mis-interpreters") by posturing as "another metal" (I.155). And, if he is ineffective, Nashe threatens his readers with violence.

My insistence that Nashe, and not Jeffes, chooses the Ovidian epigraph is motivated partially by its annihilation of Jones's promise of a text "pleasantly interlac'd with variable delights" (I.149). As Leo Kirschbaum observes, printers conventionally replace the legend, or otherwise update title pages in second pressing "to sell the new edition by crying down the old" (Is *The Spanish Tragedy* "a Leading Case?" 509). Nashe is well versed in this practice. The preface to *Menaphon* advertises the novelty of his *Anatomie*'s second edition; Nashe tells readers that if they "chance to meet it in *Paules*" they will find it "shaped in a new suite of simultudes" (I.324-325). Later, in *Pierce*, Nashe mocks the insatiable desire for novelty at the Booksellers: "Newe Herrings, new, wee

must crye, euery time wee make our selues publique, or else we shall bee christened with a hundred newe tytles of Idiotisme” (I.192). Nashe’s replacement of Jones’s “long-tayl’d title” and his epistle to Jeffes disparages the first edition and markets the second as something not only new, but different. Jones had countered Pierce’s “supplication to the devil” with the then-conventional titular promise of “variable delights.” As we see, Nashe’s eradication of these delectations and his replacement with a doom-laden Latin epigraph undermine Jones’s advertising strategies:



Finally, to an *au courant* literary audience, Nashe’s gloomy promise of poverty and barbarism is itself a strategic marketing strategy which capitalizes on the popularity of Greene’s *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, performances of Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus*, and the circulating manuscript of P.F.’s *History of the*

Damnably Life and Deserved Death of Doctor John Faustus (or, *English Faust Book*).

In the context of Ovid's poem, Nashe's motto alludes to the divisions between the cultured and uncultured, wealth and poverty, and, revisiting the Greene and Sidney epistles, wit and learning, to adumbrate *Pierce's* overarching complaint that the seven deadly sins have overtaken Elizabethan London. Although Nashe surely read Ovid in Latin, in the context of *Pierce*, he also invokes the sense of Marlowe's English translation. Marlowe's version departs significantly from Ovid when emphasizing divisive imagery in the contexts of contemporary religion and print culture. A fuller citation of Marlowe's translation foreshadows *Pierce's* supplication:

What man will now take liberal arts in hand,
Or think soft verse in any stead to stand?
Wit was sometimes more precious than gold,
Now poverty great barbarism we hold. (7.1-4)

The "poverty" of the Ovidian age, like Nashe's portrayal of the Elizabethan one, results from the worship of gold at the expense of wit. Nashe elaborates this sentiment in the opening verse to *Pierce*:

*Ah worthlesse Wit, to traine me to this woe,
Deceitfull Artes, that nourish Discontent:
Ill thriue the Follie that bewicht me so;
Vaine thoughts adieu, for now I will repent.
And yet my wants perswade me to proceede,
Since none takes pitie of a Scollers neede.* (I.157)

"Wit" connotes the ability to translate "deceitfull artes" into that "inward, ineffable quality" which Ellinghausen argues preserves learning from being merely an "outward show" (43).

Ovid's poem and Nashe's pamphlet combine to convey a sense of innate dis-integration and multiplicity which this re-printed edition of *Pierce* epitomizes. On the surface, the Ovidian speaker loses his love to a "rich chuff," but Marlowe's imagery aptly captures Nashe's anxiety about Elizabethan print culture:

When our books did my mistress fair content,
I might not go whither my papers went.
I here and there go, witty with dishonor.
See a rich chuff, whose wounds great wealth inferred,
For bloodshed knighted, before me preferred! (3.7.9)

These lines evoke a cycle of intercourse and separation associated with material literary circulation in Elizabethan England. Also, the choice of "books" and "papers" seems to be peculiar to Marlowe's translation. A.D. Melville chooses "works" in the latest Oxford edition of Ovid's *Elegies*, but he does not mention their materiality.³⁴ In the context of Jones's publication of *Pierce*, we might read this image of a wit separated from his "books" and "paper," compounded with a rich "chuff" who profits from the speaker's loss, recalls the practices of Elizabethan printers producing texts "in the authours absence."

Ovid's lament closes with a supplication which Nashe will echo: "O for some god who's just, / To take sure vengeance for a slighted lover, / And turn that ill-won wealth of theirs to dust!" (Melville 64-66). Marlowe's translation follows Ovid's sense: "If of scorned lovers god be venger just, / O let him change goods so ill got to dust" (65-66). Nashe answers the sense of these last lines in his subtitle to *Pierce*: "His Supplication to the Devil." The devil is, of course, both the cause and the symptom of the post-lapsarian world; Nashe represents him

throughout *Pierce* as inextricable from the literary marketplace. In one instance, Nashe associates the devil with a Midas-like scrivener: “hee is as formall as the best Scrivener of them all. Marry, he doth not vse to weare a night-cap, for his hornes will not let him” (I.162). Later in *Pierce*, Nashe portrays the deadly sin of “Sloth” as a stationer (I.209). In all, Nashe’s motto blatantly confutes Jones’s “laudatory” (as McKerrow would have it) promise of a “pleasantly interlac’d” text with “variable delights” and intertextually transforms our “rich chuff” (Jones?), and his ill-gotten goods (profits from *Pierce*) to dust.

Following this motto, Nashe’s “priuate epistle of the Author to the printer” postures brilliantly as a purloined letter. Jeffes’s publication of this correspondence echoes Jones’s piracy of *Pierce* while providing Nashe with a foil of modesty from which to conduct his *exordium* in ideal conditions. Much as Breton was unaware that his *Bowre* would be printed, Nashe appears legitimately ignorant of Jones’s appropriation of his manuscript. Unlike Breton, Nashe reveals that he had been preparing “for *Pierce Penillesse* first setting forth,” but “fear of infection detained mee with my Lord in the Countrey” (I.153). This disclosure of Nashe’s intentions, whether fictional or not, makes his case against Jones’s edition more persuasive. Readers of the epistle are persuaded of the inferiority of Jones’s “vncorrected and vnfinished” version in contrast to Jeffes’s “authorized” edition.

The “obscure imitators” who have followed in *Pierce*’s pirated wake are symptomatic of Nashe’s representation of divided wit. In this case, “Nashe” has been dissevered and reproduced. This identity crisis is also a metaphor for the

reproduction of printed texts; Nashe is enraged that “obscure imitators” are profiting from his labor.³⁵ Furthermore, Nashe’s popularity has also led his name to be appended to *Greens groats-worth of wit*, an accusation he vehemently denies:

God neuer haue care of my soule, but vtterly renouce me, if the least word or sillable in it proceeded from my pen, or if I were any way priuie to the writing or printing of it. I am growne at length to see into the vanity of the world more than euer I did, and now I condemne myselfe for nothing so much, as playing the dolt in Print. Out vpon it, it is odious, specially in this moralizing age, wherein euery one seeks to shew himself a Polititian by mis-interpreting. (I.154)

Invoking God, Nashe calls upon the highest of authorities to persuade his audience of his credibility. Again Nashe invokes separation as he describes this “moralizing” age characterized by misinterpreting politicians. For Nashe, interpretation is yet another manifestation of the insidiousness of linguistic alchemy. Despite his best efforts, Nashe understands that he is always already in a position to be misunderstood. Nashe’s anxiety surrounding interpretation is grounded in his awareness that printed texts in circulation are repeatedly subject to the heteroglossic nature of language. From this context, I suggest that what McLuhan and Neil Rhodes respectively refer to as Nashe’s “polyphony,” and his “polyvocal” linguistic representations, function on one level of interpretation to present multiple interlocutors as a counterbalance to his innumerable readers (*Gutenberg Galaxy* 242; “Orality” 44). Nashe’s “polyvocality,” then, might be read as a strategy designed to control the conversational exchanges surrounding his work.

The remainder of Nashe's epistle reiterates this sense of textual self-consciousness. Despite rhetoric's promise that *vir bonum dicendi peritus*, Nashe recognizes that, in print culture, being a "good man who speaks well" does not protect one from slander.³⁶ Painfully aware of *Pierce's* ultimate subjectivity, Nashe realizes he cannot gain control of "mis-interpreters" by over-going his rhetorical masters and railing: "there is nothing that if a man list he may not wrest or peruert: I cannot forbid anie to thinke villainously, *Sed caueat emptor*, Let the interpreter beware; for none ever h[e]ard me make Allegories of an idle text" (I.154-155). Nashe's final bid for control over the extant and future spurious (or not) explications of his text manifest violent intimidation. Offering to punish mis-interpreters and haunt them everlastingly as "their euil Angel," Nashe recognizes his post-lapsarian, inherently schismatic identity (I.155).³⁷

As Nashe makes painfully clear in his earlier epistles and through his Ovidian epigraph, sixteenth-century England is not a "Golden Age." For Nashe, linguistic alchemy does not only depreciate the integrity of theology, pedagogy, and eloquence, but its base "metal," or "mettle," the "stuff" of which a person is made (*n. 1. OED*). Nashe elaborates in *Pierce*, "this is an yron age, or rather no yron age, for swordes and bucklers goe to pawne a pace in Long-Lane: but a tinne age; for tinne and pewter are more esteemed than Latine. You that bee wise, despise it, abhorre it, neglect it; for what should a man care for gold that cannot get it?" (III.182). As McKerrow points out, "Latin" puns on "latten, a kind of brass," but in the context of his sustained interrogation of "seruile imitators," the depreciation of language and metal/mettle, for Nashe, go hand in hand: "I am of

another metal, they shall know that I live as their evil Angel, to haunt them world without end, if they disquiet me without cause.” (III.154; IV.111.n.13).

For Nashe, Gutenberg technology is analogous to linguistic alchemy, reproducing the schismatic nature of language. Language would have been a superfluity in Eden, but in sixteenth-century Europe, it is reproduced at an unprecedented rate. Nashe’s invocation of Ovid’s lament criticizes Elizabethan print culture and overgoes Jones’s promise of a delightful tale of virtue and vice by rhetorically realizing that he “has broken the ice of impudence,” “played the dolt in print,” and therefore engaged in the very practices he denounces (I.149-151). Although Nashe offers his personal poverty as a rationale in his opening verse, his titular revision emphasizes Pierce’s protest: he is a “single-soald orator” who has “sold” his “soul” and is down to one shoe (I.165).

The central differences between Jones’s and Nashe’s self-authorizing strategies can be seen in the kinds of authority with which each rhetorically aligns himself. Jones takes advantage of Crown allocated authority and compounds it by capitalizing on the “author’s absence” to persuade readers to buy his products. Without the benefit of Crown protection, Nashe is always potentially subject to censorship and persecution. To strengthen his position, then, Nashe not only invokes the same kinds of classically-inspired rhetorical strategies as Jones does, but also he aligns himself with the authority of classical humanism. Literary authority emerges from the conversational negotiations among printers, writers, and readers; its allocation is often as fluid as the exchanges that produce it. Yet as Jones’ and Nashe’s self-authorizing strategies suggest, in practice, sixteenth-

century literary authority is a matter of conversational control. The next chapter further examines Nashe's conversational manipulations of classical, late medieval, and contemporary sources as he strives to overcome English "barbarism."

NOTES

¹ Lukas Erne has recently proffered a provocative argument that even modern editors of authors, notably Shakespeare, should be considered “collaborators.” See *Shakespeare’s Modern Collaborators*. Also see: Diana Henderson, *Collaborations with the Past: Reshaping Shakespeare across Time and Media*.

² Moving forward, I use the modern spelling of the phrase “in the author’s absence” unless quoting directly.

³ Bruster includes *Pierce* in his catalogue of Elizabethan “best-sellers.” Five editions of Nashe’s text were produced between 1592-95 (57).

⁴ For histories of the Stationers’ Company and the tensions among printers and writers during the 1600’s see: Cyprian Bladgen, *The Stationers’ Company: A History, 1403-1959*; Leo Kirshbaum, *Shakespeare and the Stationers*; and Cecil Bathurst Judge, *Elizabethan Book-Pirates*.

⁵ Severally, Jonathan V. Crewe’s *Trials of Authorship*, Kevin Dunn’s *Pretexts of Authority: The Rhetoric of Authorship and the Renaissance Preface*, and Dobranski’s *Readers and Authorship in Early Modern England* have inspired my approach to analyzing Jones’s and Nashe’s self-authorizing techniques. Following Crewe, I treat both Jones’s and Nashe’s representations of authority as “always on trial, subject to critical denial or self-erasure” (15). Dunn independently develops this metaphor of authorship “on trial” while demonstrating how “the centrality of the courts for Roman life became a legacy for European rhetorical practice” (3). In the context of classical oratory and Roman legal practices, “authority” is granted to the most persuasive speaker. In the context of Jones’s and Nashe’s authorizing and re-authorizing strategies, “persuasion” and henceforth, artistic “authority” emerges as a matter of conversational control. Despite stationers’ legal superiority, the reading public also participates in allocating authority. Dobranski recognizes reader participation in his social, cooperative model of authority dependent on the “co-laboring” of writers and readers.” (*Readers and Authorship* 17). Yet whereas Dobranski represents the “social enterprise” of writing in a primarily cooperative spirit (see 12), such as Nashe’s later relationship with his printer, John Danter, I focus here on the sometimes adversarial between printers and writers: Jones and Nashe are exemplary.

⁶ See Melnikoff, “Jones’s Pen and Marlowe’s Socks: Richard Jones, Print Culture, and the Beginnings of English Dramatic Literature.”

⁷ Jones’s self-conscious presentation of dramatic texts such as *Tamburlaine* as “literary” is just ahead of a common trend in this direction that Zachary Lesser and Peter Stallybrass identify as gaining momentum between 1594-1599 (“First Literary Hamlet” 385).

⁸ For an excellent discussion of the recovery of “authority” in anonymous texts, see Marcy North. *The Anonymous Renaissance: Cultures of Discretion in Tudor-Stuart England*.

⁹ Jones's omission of Marlowe's name could suggest the unlikely possibility that Marlowe did not write the *Tamburlaine* plays. Robert Greene's mention of that "atheist Tamburlaine" in the context of "Merlin" and "blank verse" has long been read as an identification of Marlowe's authority (Ep. "Perimedes the Blacksmith" 3). But Thomas Middleton's association of Nashe with the *Tamburlaine* plays in his 1604 pamphlet, "The Black Booke" (213.415-418) led editor Edmund Malone to attribute these works accordingly (see McKerrow V.140). Neither printers nor editors acknowledged Marlowe as a candidate for the *Tamburlaine* plays until William Oxberry's 1820 edition (see J.S. Cunningham, *Tamburlaine the Great* 8).

¹⁰ Quintilian explains the importance of how the speaker presents his personal motivation in any given case: "Just as the authority of the speaker carries greatest weight, if his undertaking of the case is free from all suspicion of meanness, personal spite or ambition, so also we shall derive some silent support for representing that we are weak, unprepared, and no match for the powerful talents arrayed against us... For men have a natural prejudice in favour of those who are struggling against difficulties, and a scrupulous judge is always specially ready to listen to an advocate whom he does not suspect to have designs on his integrity" (*Institutio Oratoria* IV.1.8-9).

¹¹ John Henry Jones describes the legal scuffles ensuing from Jeffes' commission to ward in *English Faust Book* (45-52).

¹² According to Jones' 1592 chronology of events, Jeffes appears to have pirated Thomas White's legally registered (3 April) "Arden of Kent" when he publishes "Arden of Faversham" (before 22 July) (48).

¹³ Hutson borrows "Circumquaque" from *Pierce*. Nashe's neologistic conflation of Latin prefixes suggests "digression" and "circumlocution" to McKerrow (V. 238). A literal translation suggests more of an indefinite runabout ("circum": around; "qua": which way?; "que": some time or another, indefinite (*New College Latin and English Dictionary*). In the context of *Pierce's* preposterous closing epistle, Nashe's invention of "circumquaque" appears specially designed to counteract Jones's self-authorizing strategies as he attacks printers for giving readers the runabout: "Not a base Inck-dropper, or scuruy plodder ... comes off with a long *Circumquaque* to the Gentlemen Readers, yea, the most excrementorie dishlickers of learning are growne so valiant in impudencie, that now they set vp their faces (like Turks) of gray paper" (I.240).

¹⁴ Wallace argues that Nashe is jesting at the expense of the 1590 edition of the *Faerie Queene* that prints Spenser's epistle to Raleigh at the end of the text. Nashe also teases Spenser for forgetting to include Lord Cecil Burghley among his dedicatees. At the conclusion of *Pierce*, Nashe offers his own dedicatory poem to Elizabeth's chief advisor (I.244).

¹⁵ Ellinghausen continues to argue that in practice, a University education makes no such guarantees.

¹⁶ I would argue that "value," in the context of the Stationers' Company relationship to the Crown, is a euphemism for "not-seditious," or "not promoting treason."

¹⁷ Nashe may also be referring to his *Anatomie of Absurditie*, published shortly before the Greene preface. Although this pamphlet was published anonymously, as Richard Harvey's comments in *The Lamb of God* suggest, his contemporaries were in no doubt as to who wrote it. At this point in time, only the epistles to Greene's *Menaphon* and Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* bear Nashe's name.

¹⁸ Wendy Wall presents Nashe's treatment of Sidney as a "protest against coterie circulation through a set of bizarre and contradictory sexual metaphors" (*Imprint of Gender* 170). Nashe is well versed in the sexual and reproductive metaphors associated with print, but Wall's argument is complicated by his clear engagement in coterie culture. For instance, Nashe's infamous "Choise of Valentines" (aka "Nashe's Dildo") was initially circulated among Lord Strange's circle and never published during his lifetime. McKerrow attributes this poem among Nashe's doubtful works and argues that neither of the two nineteenth-century compilations of Nashe's works, William Beloe's in 1807, and C.H. Cooper's in 1861, are "of any critical value" (V.136). But now there is general agreement that McKerrow was merely uncomfortable with the poem's content. Shakespeare's eighteenth-century editor, Edmond Malone, was not so squeamish. Malone's bound edition of *Pierce Penilesse* includes the editor's hand-written notes regarding works that might be attributed to Nashe, as well as Nashean apocrypha and a copy of "The Choice of Valentines." These notes and transcription are sequenced with the original pen and ink drawing of Nashe from which his woodcut was made. The drawing's caption reads: "Thomas Nashe, 1597. From this drawing Thom the Print[aller] got an engraving made" (Mal. 566).

¹⁹ For a discussion of Gabriel Harvey and Ramism, see Walter Ong, *Ramus* 302-303.

²⁰ Condemnation of these "alchemists of eloquence" is a constant theme throughout Nashe's career. For instance, in *Have With You to Saffron Walden*, Importuno suggests the fraudulent nature of alchemy: "the fire of Alchumie hath wrought such a purgation or purgatory in a great number of mens purses in England that it hath clean fir'd the[m] out of al they haue" (III.52). Additionally, Nashe disparages the artificial, "mechanicall," manufacturing associated with both practical and rhetorical alchemy. In his epistle to the reader in *Strange News*, for example, Nashe aligns himself with contemporary conventions associating art and alchemy: "What euer they be that thus persecute Art (as the Alcumists are said to persecute Nature) I would wish them to rebate the edge of their wit, and not grinde their colours so harde [...] let them not, with our forenamed Gold-falsifiers, seeke for a substance that is blacker than black (I.261). Also see: *Lenten Stuffe* (III.220).

²¹ Stanley F. Bonner explains this premise: "Cicero himself brought the three styles into relation with the three functions of the orator, recommending use of the easy, conversational Plain style to instruct, the pleasant, smoothly-flowing Middle Style to charm, and the striking, impressive Grand Style to stir" (*Education in Ancient Rome* 80).

²² See Roger Ascham “On Imitation,” *English Renaissance Literary Criticism*, ed. Brian Vickers (140-161).

²³ Later in *Pierce*, Nashe calls these scholars “Diunitie Dunces” and writes that “those yeares which should bee employed in *Aristotle* are expired in Epitomes, and well too, they may haue so much Catechisme vacation, to rake vp a little refuse philosophy” (III.318).

²⁴ Wilbur Samuel Howell glosses what Nashe describes as Ramus’s “petty Logicke,” “[Ramus] ordained that logic should offer training in invention and arrangement, with no help whatever from rhetoric” (*Logic and Rhetoric* 148). As we know, Ramus prioritizes the logical, dialectic properties of the trivium at the expense of rhetoric.

²⁵ See Introduction, n.1.

²⁶ In the opening of his *Apology*, Sidney confesses, “if I had not been a piece of a logician before I came to him, I think he would have persuaded me to have wished myself a horse” (ed. Vickers 337). Sidney also invokes this equine metaphor throughout *Astrophil & Stella* via the repetition of references to horsemanship, bits and saddles “golden bit” (30.9); “unbitted thought” (38.2); “horsemen/horsemanship” (41.5; 49 *throughout*); “saddle” (49) (ed. Richard S. Sylvester).

²⁷ Sidney’s “keepers” surely included his sister Mary Herbert and friend Fulke Greville. Although Mary’s position on the teachings of Ramus appears not yet to have been discussed, his friendship with her brother would likely have made her sympathetic. As for Greville, Francis Bacon recommended he read Ramus for logic early in his career and, according to Marie Helen Buncombe, Greville found “the pedagogical reforms of Ramus seemed especially useful”; he became “part of a group of [Ramist] sympathizers” (see *Francis Bacon*, ed. Brian Vickers 2002; “Fulke Greville’s “A treatie on humane learning” 175). Also see McLuhan’s discussion of the relationship between Sidney and Ramus: 170; 210; 236-7.

²⁸ McLuhan claims that it was the preface to *Menaphon* that brought about Richard Harvey’s “quick retort,” but the earlier publication of Nashe’s *Anatomie* complicates his assertion (*The Classical Trivium* 216).

²⁹ Cheke and Ascham were also St. John’s alumni. Nashe makes no mention of either Richard or Gabriel Harvey by name until the 1592 publication of *Strange Newes*. Nashe does allude to both brothers at length and in no uncertain terms in *Pierce*, but names neither (see I.192-199).

³⁰ Nashe applies to Cotton to help him return from exile following the infamous *Ile of Dogs* affair (c. 1596). For further discussion of Nashe’s role in the *Ile of Dogs* scandal, see Chapter 3.

³¹ Ellinghausen implies that Nashe’s inversion of *Astrophil and Stella* pays homage to Sidney, but I would argue that he is simply covering his bases. Arguably, Nashe’s inverted representation could be designed to rebuke the poet further.

³² McKerrow argues that Nashe may not have chosen the epigraph because: “Though Nashe, as we have seen, gave directions to the printer about the

title page, he says nothing about any motto. Are we to suppose that this too might be chosen by the printer, as much of the laudatory wording of title-pages probably was? They were really advertisements, and were apparently posted up as such” (IV.87 n.4). Hutson argues that the stark prefatory materials combined with the late-day epistles and dedications in *Pierce* contribute to Nashe’s intention which is “to shock readers into thinking for themselves. The idea was that the reader should have to make his way unaided through the text before receiving any direct address from its author” (176). But Nashe’s actions appear inspired by Aristotle, who, as Dunn explains, “sees the ideal forensic exordium in terms of the dramatic prologue, as a “plot” summary to orient the listeners” (5). Lesser and Stallybrass’s argument that the presence of a commonplace or proverb on a title page often indicates an author’s (writer’s) participation in the printing of their work additionally supports recognizing Nashe’s active involvement in the second edition of *Pierce* (“First Literary Hamlet” 403). Finally, in the absence of evidence suggesting otherwise, I maintain that this epigraph is of Nashe’s choosing.

³³ McKerrow identifies this as 3.8.4, but I follow Marlowe’s translation of the elegies primarily on account of their contemporaneity with Nashe, and by reason of Marlowe’s provocative modernizations, of which this particular elegy is exemplary. (IV.87 n.4). When comparing Marlowe and “Ovid,” I refer to A.D. Melville’s Oxford translation. Hutson also offers Marlowe’s translation and no other (187).

³⁴ Melville’s translation reads: “My genius in disgrace drifts to and fro” (3.8.6).

³⁵ Nashe’s vexed attitude toward the “labor” of writing in print is much discussed. Ellinghausen, Mentz, Stephen Guy-Bray, and others have discussed the tension in Nashe’s representation of writing as “day-labor,” or an intellectual effort corrupted by the connotations of the print trade, or craft (I.180). But Quintilian demonstrates that “labor” has been associated with intellectual efforts for centuries. Speaking to his decision to treat the parts of the *exordium* as a whole, Quintilian comments: “I have ventured to treat them altogether and foresee such infinite labour that I feel weary at the very thought of the task I have undertaken. But I have set my hand to the plough and must not look back. My strength may fail me, but my courage must not fail” (IV.Pr. 7).

³⁶ This line is often translated as “a good man who speaks well,” or “a good man, skilled in speaking.” This phrase represents the version of rhetoric wherein moral goodness and speaking well are inextricable. One studies rhetoric through *imitatio*, again, a practice of imitating both the words and deeds of the ancients.

³⁷ Nashe also, quite obviously, alludes to the “evil angel” in Christopher Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus*.

CHAPTER TWO

At the Crossroads: Intersections of Classical and Vernacular English Protest Literature in *Pierce Penilesse*

Thomas Nashe's repeated imagery of crossroads in *Pierce Penilesse, His Supplication to the Devill* perfectly evokes his interweaving of classical and contemporary sources to generate a distinctly English form of protest literature. Nashe's Ovidian epigraph, "*barbaria grandis habere nihil*" ("poverty great barbarism we hold"), on *Pierce's* title page not only foreshadows his critique of Elizabeth's England as a "tinne age," but also exemplifies the rhetorical and thematic intersections of classical Latin and vulgar English works that situate his project as one of *translatio studii et imperii*, or "the translation of learning and empire" (I.151; III.182; *Elegies* 3.8.4). Although Jocelyn Wogan-Browne argues that the adaptation of classical sources into early English poetics is "so deeply written into literary culture that writers might not even have registered it consciously," Nashe appears painfully aware of "the double sense of dependence on and difference from Latin thought and literature" (*Idea of the Vernacular* 4.1 318). This chapter establishes and traces a selection of *Pierce's* conversational networks in order to demonstrate how he deploys macaronic intertexts to protest a crisis of English rhetoric and identity.

Historically, Nashe's critics have expended a good deal of energy trying accurately to describe his satire as following one or another classical style, but little attention has been directed toward his equal indebtedness to native models

already marked by polyvocality.¹ Jenny Mann has lately argued that sixteenth-century English rhetoric is always already caught in an “agonistic drama of translation – a drama in which efforts to achieve classical eloquence seem only to confirm English barbarity” (*Outlaw Rhetoric* 20). As much as Nashe recognizes this double bind, he energetically attempts to overgo English “barbarity” by marshaling every rhetorical device that he can – and then reinventing them.

The first section of this chapter argues that Pierce’s “mad supplication” translates the self-fashioning properties of poetry into prose by transposing Juvenal’s satirical program into the context of sixteenth-century London.² When Juvenal writes “*dificile est saturam non scribere*,” or “it is difficult not to write satire,” he responds to a Roman city-state riddled with hypocrisy, political corruption, and bad poetry. Juvenal faults patrons and politicians – often one and the same – for not protecting Roman culture from what he views as an incursion of Greek culture. Throughout *Pierce*, Nashe protests the influx of foreign influences in Elizabethan London, even as he humorously offers them as a foil for the city’s native vices. Nashe’s animosity toward the “Logicke Schooles,” such as those of Peter Ramus, is analogous to Juvenal’s toward Greek influences (I.196). Arthur F. Kinney has argued that Nashe’s invocations of classical oratory and satire in *Pierce* makes the text “one of the significant Tudor declarations of a humanist poetics” (*Humanist Poetics* 311). But we have yet to discuss in any kind of detail how Nashe manipulates Juvenal’s rhetorical strategies in order to advance his protreptic agenda.

We often treat Nashe's polyvocality as a hallmark of his inventive appropriation of classical sources, but he partially owes this innovation to his vernacular predecessors. The second part of this chapter traces, for the first time, *Pierce's* indebtedness to the complex deployment of discrete rhetorical gestures in Geoffrey Chaucer's *Complaint to his Purse* as well as Thomas Hoccleve's *La Male Regle de T. Hoccleve*. Thematically, all three works protest their authors' mistreatment by patrons and, by extension, the English Crown. Formally, these late medieval vernacular poems furnish precedents for Nashe's polygeneric defensive postures, specifically insofar as he manipulates expectations associated with complaint, supplication, consolation, and advice to disguise subtexts of satire and protest.

The final portion demonstrates Nashe's "double sense" of the English language's dependence on and difference from Latin sources by networking his classical, late medieval, and contemporary influences in a manner that suggests each may be on a par with the other. Additionally, I will analyze Nashe's epistolary nod to Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* to study further his underlying project of *translatio studii et imperii*. Kirk Freudenberg's assertion that Juvenal's program echoes Quintilian's earlier argument, "*satura quidem tota nostra est*," or "satire at least is totally ours," resonates with Nashe's literary agenda in *Pierce* ("Making Epic Silver" 80; *Oratoria* 10.1.93). For Quintilian and Juvenal, satire is "ours" insofar as it is a Roman invention and not a Greek import. As Nashe juxtaposes Latin and English intertexts to protest the Crown's failure to

remedy both foreign and native corruption in sixteenth-century London, he offers his own solution: a vernacular humanist poetics that, at least, is “ours.”

“It is difficult not to write satire”

Nashe’s introduction and conclusion of *Pierce* with imagery of a “cross waies,” directly recalls Juvenal’s exclamation: “Surely I’m allowed to fill a roomy notebook while standing at the crossroads, when an accessory to fraud is carried past on as many as six necks already” (I.158, 159, 241; *Satires* 1.63-65). In Juvenal’s programmatic first Satire, patrons have failed the arts – and here we should recall that in Latin, Juvenal’s “crossroads” translate as “*quadrivio*”; he likely puns on “*quadrivium*” to convey his anxiety about the fate of the arts. *Juvenal 7* recapitulates this apprehension by posing a question that is anything but rhetorical: “*Fidimus eloquio?*” or “Do we put our faith in eloquence?” (7.139). Juvenal and Nashe might answer with a conditional “yes.”

We might argue that Juvenal and Nashe are simply invoking modesty topoi when they decry their productions as waste paper. Juvenal argues that “it’s a stupid act of mercy, when you run into so many bards everywhere, to spare paper that’s bound to be wasted anyway” (1.17-18). But is not Juvenal also wasting paper? And Nashe, echoing his predecessor, asks: “Who can abide a scurvie pedling Poet to plucke a man by the sleeue at euerie third step in *Paules Churchyard*, & when he comes in to seruey his wares, theres nothing but purgations and vomits wrapt up in wast paper” (I.239)? If we are reading waste

paper, then are we not implicated by association? My questions are not rhetorical, but designed to expose how Juvenal, and after him, Nashe, participate in the culture each satirizes. In doing so, both satirists unsettle the notion of moral authority in order to situate themselves at a safe vantage point from which to criticize not only the masses, but also patrons and princes.

At this crossroads of learning and satirical (mis)representation we also discover that Juvenal's "accessory to fraud" implicates patrons and politicians alike; they are often one and the same. Juvenal associates his "accessory" with "the languid Maecenas," a well-known Roman patron of the arts (1.66). And the "fraud" is perjury; as Juvenal explains, this languid character is "*signator falsi*," or in Susanna Morton Braund's translation, "someone who's turned himself into a wealthy toff with a brief document and a moistened signet ring" (1.67-69). The perjurer/patron remains in the place of the subject as Juvenal segues into a discussion of the (lack of) generosity of those who wear "the broader purple stripe," the senators (1.106). Juvenal reiterates this chain of association among perjurers, patrons, and politicians in the first line of *Satire 7*: "The hopes and incentives of literature depend on Caesar alone." Braund misses Juvenal's irony when she comments that "this is a new, calmer persona who is even capable of optimism – for a moment – concerning the prospects for poets of patronage by the emperor, even if his usual pessimism of satire then takes over" (*Juvenal and Persius* 296). Yet just a few lines later, Juvenal again associates the patron (Caesar) with perjury and divine hypocrisy: "Let me tell you the ruses adopted by the patron you cultivate, abandoning the temple of Apollo and the Muses, so he

doesn't have to give you anything" (7.36-37). If we step forward a few centuries into Nashe's shoe (he has only one when writing *Pierce*) and interpret this line from an Elizabethan perspective, we might view the patron's abandonment of Apollo as his abandonment of God and poetry; now we realize why Pierce is writing a supplication to the devil in the first place.³

Nashe extends the implications of Juvenal's conflation of patron and perjurer to England by borrowing from Marlowe's English translation of Ovid's *Amores* to personify the Knight of the Post. Although I will discuss Chaucer's allusion to this same elegy in the next section, we might already enjoy the aptness of Nashe's borrowing from Marlowe's version: "Knights of the post of perjuries make sale, / The unjust judge for bribes becomes a stale" (1.1.0.37-38).⁴ A.D. Melville translates Ovid's sense of *periuria* formally: "It's not right to be bought and bear false witness, / Nor for a judge to give his palms to grease" (1.10.37-38). In contrast to Ovid's general proclamation, Marlowe's colloquialism generates a sense of topicality, its irony magnified by the perjurer's association with prostitution:

'Tis shame sold tongues the guilty should defend,
Or great wealth from a judgment seat ascend;
'Tis shame to grow rich by bed merchandise,
Or prostitute thy beauty for bad prize. (1.10.38-41)

Marlowe translates Ovid's "*turpe*," sometimes construed as "base," as "shame," and moves beyond description to judgment (1.10.39-41).⁵ Moreover, Marlowe's repetition of "shame" allocates it equally among perjurer, pimp, and prostitute. *Pierce* multiplies the complications characterizing the relationship among these

unsavory characters in what we shall see are continued confluences of classical and vernacular sources.

Juvenal's most vicious attack on perjury occurs in *Satire 9*, his only dialogue; Nashe will appropriate his predecessor's thematic and rhetorical concerns throughout *Pierce* and the Knight's exchanges. Juvenal introduces readers to Naevolus ("Mr. Warty"), a gigolo who complains about his patron Virro's shoddy treatment. Of course, as Ralph M. Rosen points out, the great irony here is that Naevolus' satire of Virro's skin-flint patronage sets readers up to side with a prostitute who "offers no apologies for a lifestyle that is portrayed as, at the very least, indecorous, if not morally reprehensible" (*Making Mockery* 217). Simultaneously, Juvenal retains the role of satirist by turning the tables on Naevolus and illustrating his depravity throughout their conversation. Rosen remarks that "it becomes almost impossible to decide who is the actual target of blame; is it Naevolus, the obscene, squalid gigolo, or his venal, selfish, sexually dysfunctional patron, Virro?" (217). Juvenal demonstrates, as Rosen additionally observes, how the satirist "must at some level *become* what he attacks" (225). As we will see, Nashe adopts Juvenal's technique throughout *Pierce*.

Although Nashe's defense of the theatres in *Pierce* has frequently been discussed, the seditious subtext underlying his invocation of "*Augustus* time (who was the Patron of all wittie sports)" and "Caesar" has yet to be recognized (I.214). *Pierce*, much as Juvenal's Naevolus, sounds perversely logical when he argues that after going to the tavern, the whorehouse ("the signe of the smock"), and gambling: "What shall hee doo that hath spent himself? where shall he haunt?"

Faith, when Dice, Lust, and Drunkenesse, and all haue dealt vpon him, if there be neuer a Playe for him to goe too for his pennie, he sits melancholie in his Chamber, deuising vopn felonie or treason” (I.214). Nashe’s following apostrophe indirectly addresses his Queen: “*It is good for thee, O Caesar, that the peoples heads are troubled with brawles and quarrels about vs and our light matters: for otherwise they would looke into thee and thy matters*” (I.214-215). Nashe advises Elizabeth I that it is in her best interests to protect the theatres – otherwise her subjects might start questioning her and “her matters.”⁶ Next, Nashe appears to back away from topicality: “Here I haue vsed a like Method, not of tying my selfe to mine owne Countrie, but by insisting in the experience of our time” (I.215). Yet by gesturing toward generalization, Nashe paradoxically invokes his “owne Countrie” and directs his criticism homeward.

Whereas Juvenal’s dialogue with Naevolus confuses satirist and target, Pierce’s autobiographical conflation with “Nashe” creates similar difficulty for readers trying to deduce who and what we are supposed to laugh at. Pierce’s vivid and psychologically complex first person narration, punctuated by biographical recollections from Nashe’s life, such as his St. John’s, Cambridge, education, and Richard Harvey’s naming of him in the *Lamb of God*, elides speaker and author (I.195; 198). There are no clear markers in the text to tell us when Nashe is serious, or Pierce is joking, or vice versa. The quandary readers face choosing which “protagonist” to identify with contributes to the interdependence of comedy and satire. Whereas Nashe initially compromises Pierce by making him Lucifer’s supplicant, he imperils readers by forcing them to identify with the

patron/perjurer/pimp/prostitute/devil's chief advisor, the Knight of the Post. As readers, we find ourselves agreeing with the Knight that Pierce has proffered "the maddest Supplication that euer I sawe" (I.217).

But following the Knight's long disquisition on devils, we are reminded that we are also Nashe's advocate through direct address: "Gentle Reader" (I.239). Nashe's epistolary interjection functions as yet another transgression of the imaginary line between moralist and target. By shifting his closing address, Nashe situates readers as interlocutors who are implicated in his own, in Pierce's, and in the Knight's transgressions. But we can also be redeemed along with the Nashe-Pierce speaker by realizing that he and we have turned away from offering a supplication to the devil – at least temporarily.

Amidst the comedy and these discursive narrative strategies, we easily miss Pierce's tacit shift from offering himself as the Devil's supplicant to becoming Lucifer's "bounden execrator" (I.217). Through this signature, we witness Pierce cursing Lucifer and not, as we have tacitly believed, positing himself as cursed. By the time Pierce signs his "supplication," he has abandoned despair. Although Kinney does not directly recognize Pierce's shift from supplicant to execrator, he rightly observes that "Nashe means to make humanist thought and humanist rhetoric instruct men by imitatio: we must learn from such a figure as Pierce to replace the Knights of the Post with Henry Smiths" (313). Pierce's despair first prompts him to go meet the Devil at the crossroads (do you hear Robert Johnson's blues guitar in the background?), but once there, he writes his way out of despair by writing satire. Despite Pierce's ranting about Envy's

patronage of the ill-mannered French, Spanish, Dutch, and murderous Italians, Nashe suggests that satire, perhaps even (especially?) that which undercuts the “Caesar” (Elizabeth), is “at least ours” (I.183-187). Freudenberg argues that Juvenal’s outrage is prompted by his preference for a Roman satirical poetics (see “Making Epic Silver”). Nashe appears similarly motivated and faces the added challenge of articulating his rhetorical project in a comparatively new vernacular language.

Purses Penillesse

To understand fully Nashe’s rhetorical innovations in the context of English humanist poetics, we must recognize his indebtedness to late medieval experimentation. Until quite recently, our scholastic habit of strict periodization has contributed to our neglect of the sometimes intimate conversational exchanges among fourteenth-, fifteenth-, and sixteenth-century English literature. Even a relatively brief analysis of Chaucer and Hoccleve’s treatments of their penniless purses demonstrates how applying fixed generic distinctions prohibits realizing the multivalent effects of formal and thematic intertextual intersections among these works. After rehearsing conventional (mis)understandings of periodized complaint and satire, this section will examine the interplay of formal gestures between *Chaucer’s Complaint to His Purse* and Hoccleve’s *La Male Regle de T. Hoccleve*. My goals are first to recognize discrete vernacular practices whereby the poets multiply generic postures and personas to both disguise and disclose

subtexts of satire and protest; and, second, to lay a foundation from which to establish a literary genealogy from Chaucer, to Hoccleve, and to Nashe.

Historically, complaint and satire have been delineated by a vague rubric wherein the former addresses the spiritual ills of society and the latter targets individual shortcomings.⁷ Kirk Combe has argued that both complaint and satire “protest current policy and urge the reform, or at least the altering, of present conduct in some way, notable contrasts in style and tone, in the use of persona, and in the ultimate objective of the remonstrance divide complaint and satire” (“New Voice of Political Dissent,” *Theorizing Satire* 76). The typical persona of complaint, according to Combe, is a “simple, honest, rural fellow,” like the plowman in *Piers Plowman*, who “sadly shakes his head and hopes that God can sort out the current state of English forensic enterprise” (Combe 78). The chief difference between complaint and satire is generally thought to be the latter’s elision of distinction between the moralist and the target such that readers and listeners are always already implicated in the satirist’s reformative project.⁸

Most studies of the evolution of these genres in English vernacular literature posit complaint as a medieval genre and satire as a Renaissance innovation (eg. mid-to-late 1500’s). But as John Desmond Peter’s *Complaint and Satire* suggests with each generic distinction he draws, there are many crossovers that complicate strict periodization. Part of this confusion may be symptomatic of W. Scott Blanchard’s observation that “genre theory” among early vernacular writers “was not nearly as developed as ours” (W. Scott Blanchard, *Scholars Bedlam* 19). But I would argue that since “genre” was not a priority for early

English vernacular writers, we should resist the urge to impose taxonomic certainty on an historical period characterized primarily by literary experimentation.

Chaucer's *Complaint to his Purse* illustrates how the poet synthesizes complaint, supplication, and advice to levy a subtext of Crown satire and protest.

The poet's conflation of "purse" and "lady" is immediately humorous:

To yow, my purse, and to noon other wight
 Complayne I, for ye be my lady dere.
 I am so sory, now that ye been light;
 For certes but yf ye make me hevvy chere,
 Me were as leef be layd upon my bere;
 For which unto your mercy thus I crye,
 Beth hevvy ageyn, or ells mot I dye. (1-7)

Chaucer plays with the *double entendre* of "light" and "heavy" as he describes the betrayal of his "purse," "my lady dere." The speaker argues that he will die unless his lady "beth hevvy ageyn." "Purse's" sexual innuendo runs parallel to this play on "light" as loose or promiscuous, and "heavy" as faithful, full, and rich. The resulting humor validates reading this piece as a parody of a lover's complaint, just as Laila Z. Gross does in the *Riverside Chaucer* (636).

But the variety of critical responses to Chaucer's short works suggests this "complaint" may be more complicated than Gross suggests. Derek A. Pearsall claims that the "monotony and superficiality of theme" of Chaucer's shorter complaints "need, more than any other poetry, their social context in the courtly 'game of love' to be appreciated" (*Old English and Middle English Poetry* 220). Pearsall implies that modern readers simply cannot grasp the complexity of these poems because we lack context, or, less generously, because these poems are a bit

thin on the surface. More recently, Tony Davenport has countered Pearsall's assessment and argues that "such poems display familiarity with a poetic tradition already comfortable in complexity of effect" ("Fifteenth-century Complaints and Duke Humphrey's Wives" 132). For example, this poetic tradition is already comfortable with the rhetorical complexity of Ovid's poetry. As we know from John Fyler's *Chaucer and Ovid*, Chaucer shares deep affinities with the *Amores* poet and, from him, "adopts a cast of mind" (17). This "cast of mind" is a double one, articulated in Chaucer's playful, unreliable narrator who "refuses to be a clear medium for the poem he recites" (Fyler 19).

Chaucer's playing on "purse" doubles both the subject of the poem and the addressee while reflecting the narrator's double cast of mind. On the poem's surface, the narrator complains that his purse/lady has been light/unfaithful. This interplay of love and money thematically echoes Ovid's *Amores* 1.10.⁹ In this Ovidian context, the narrator may be complaining that his anthropomorphized purse has emptied his wallet. Concurrently, the speaker's apologetic pleas for "mercy" and "curtesye" are self-implicating (6; 20). John Kerrigan's comments about William Shakespeare's *A Lover's Complaint* resonate with the complexity of *Purse's* speaker: "The conventions of the genre encourage us to credit the speaker, yet a vehemence so self-undoing promotes us to deduce...deception" (59). In *Purse*, the narrator's self-undoing implies not only that he may have been deceived by his "purse," but also that he shares the blame. The poem's self-mocking tone is both amusing and morally unsettling.

These elements of comedy and moral uncertainty also contribute to the satire emerging from the specificity of Chaucer's final epistle. Taking poem and *envoy* together, Chaucer's "complaint" in *Purse* crosses the bounds of generic convention insofar as the poem functions as a legal petition similar to "the Bill of Complaint" in *Complaint to Pity* (56).¹⁰ The *envoy* reiterates the sense of petition in the refrain, "or ells mot I dye," and criticizes Henry IV's failure to remit the past due payments of Richard II.¹¹ Chaucer's address to Henry IV celebrates the King's conquest and conveys the poet's expectations of his new ruler – the tacit conditions under which his subjects will obey. Here is the *envoy* in its entirety:

O conquerour of Brutes Albyon,
Which that by lyne and free eleccion
Been verray kyng, this song to yow I sende,
And ye, that mowen alle our harmes amende,
Have mynde upon my supplicacion. (22-26)

Chaucer first validates Henry IV's questionable ascendance as "by lyne and free eleccion." The poet then forces the new King to recognize that it is his job to "amend" the "harmes" his people have suffered during both the previous reign and the transition. Finally, the *envoy* argues that granting Chaucer's "supplicacion" would be a step in the right direction.

Addressed to the "conquerour of Brutes Albyon," Chaucer's *envoy* postures defensively by establishing distance between the speaker and the subject. Granted, this conqueror is a transparent stand-in for Henry IV, but the *envoy* offers a relatively safe rhetorical position from which to proffer advice to princes. As Judith Ferster explains, the advice topos "moves between supporting the ruler by providing him with all the knowledge he needs to win others' obedience and

doubting whether that knowledge can or should be communicated. It also slides between supporting the ruler in his quest to subjugate others and its own quest to subjugate him” (*Fictions of Advice* 88). Ferster additionally reminds us that “the ‘God-giveness of kingship’ helps to authorize vernacular authors. At the same time, the shaky Lancastrian dynasty needs the authority of vernacular literature to make it legitimate” (140). Yet criticizing kings is risky business. Therefore, writers of this period, and Nashe’s, “camouflage” their “criticism and ideological resistance” to the Crown (Ferster 4). If we return to Pearsall’s criticism of Chaucer’s corpus of complaint, then, we might deduce that it would be impolitic to offer the social contexts that might counter the “monotony” of these poems.

Chaucer’s editors agree that this poem has been “written out of genuine financial need” and that the intersection of the closing mirror to princes and the playful opening complaint generates a moment of recognition, a polite, sincere protest of the poet’s treatment by his monarch and patron (George B. Pace and Alfred David, ed., *The Minor Poems* 121). But Chaucer’s deft accretion of polygeneric expectations, narrative uncertainty, and moral chaos also creates comedy. The poem’s humor takes the edge off of the underlying criticism so that it may be well-received by the King without a loss of face. We might argue further that the Ovidian flavor of the initial parody, the duplicity of both persona and addressee – including the invocation of the King – intersect and evoke a satirical subtext.¹² As we shall see, Hoccleve follows his “reuerent fadir...master dere[’s]” polyvocal maneuvers and generic conflations to again criticize Henry IV for not meeting his financial obligations (*Regiment of Princes* 1961).

Many of Hoccleve's short poems have been identified as direct descendants of Chaucer's *Purse*; I would add to these Hoccleve's earliest well-known poem, *La Male Regle de T. Hoccleve*.¹³ The poem poses as an autobiographical, penitential complaint addressed to the god of "Helthe." Whereas Chaucer conflates a lady with his purse, Hoccleve's complaint elides his health with his "tresor," or personal wealth: "syn [th]at my seekenesse / As well of purs and body" (337-338) Although far longer than Chaucer's brief *envoy*, Hoccleve's poem similarly moves from complaint to supplication before directly addressing the Crown Treasurer and the King.¹⁴ Much as we see in Chaucer's *Purse*, at the crossroads of Hoccleve's complaint and supplication we find a mirror to princes: in both cases, it is Henry IV.

At the beginning of the poem, Hoccleve postures as a penitent: "Now youthe, now thow sore shalt repente" (87), and attributes his "penylees maladie" (130), as well as his "seekenesse" of "purs and body" (337-338) to his own "misreule" (90). Yet as the poem proceeds, Hoccleve's fond recollections of "Venus femel lusty children" and "sweet wyn" undercut his repentant tone (138; 145). Additionally, Hoccleve twice rationalizes his youthful mischief by arguing that others, specifically "Prentys and Arondel," also behave badly:¹⁵

But often they hir bed louen so wel
 [Th]at of the day it drawith ny the pryme
 Or they ryse vp. Nat telle I can the tyme
 Whan they to bedde goon, it is so late.
 O helthe lord, thow seest hem in [th]at cryme,
 And yit thee looth is with hem to debate. (323-329)

Hoccleve sounds more like a tattletale than a spiritual complainant. Why, Health, he asks, do you condemn me and not these two guilty roustabouts? Hoccleve

underscores the insincerity of his repentance by admitting that he only writes this poem: “Syn [th]at my seeknesse / As wel of purs as body hath refreynd / Me from taurne and other wantonnesse” (337-339). As though he realizes his readers may be skeptical, Hoccleve addresses himself in the third person, “be waar, Hoccleue,” and returns to the business at hand: relocating the blame for his conduct to a higher authority (352).

Again Hoccleve claims that “my body and purs been at once seeke”; this time it is not because of his own misrule, but the Crown’s, specifically its Treasurer, Lord Fourneval’s (409). Hoccleve transfers the burden of penitence from himself to “my lord the Fourneval...my noble lord [th]at now is tresoreer,” and projects “misrule” on to his monarch (417-418). Hoccleve addresses “thyn hynesse”:

From thyn hynesse haue a tokne or twe
 To apie me [that] is due for this yeer
 Of my yearly ten pounds in th’eschequeer,
 Nat but for Michel terme [that] was last.
 I dar nat speke a word of ferne yeer,
 So is my spirit simple and sore agast. (416-424)

In sum, Hoccleve criticizes the King and his treasurer for failing to pay his salary for two years. Hoccleve’s shift from apostrophe to complaint, advice, and direct address of the Lord Treasurer and the King makes tricky defensive moves.

These intersections of penitence and complaint might suggest that Hoccleve’s poem functions in the vein of Boethian consolation. Boethian-inspired consolation plots are characterized by “displacement...the primary subject is the narrator’s restless state of mind, which may, in turn, reflect upon some unstable social situation. The plot is the narrator/dreamer’s search for repose, a search

which, given the contingencies of time, can never be completed with full satisfaction” (Russell A. Peck and Andrew Galloway, *Confessio Amantis* 17). Ethan Knapp argues that “by reversing the causal sequence between coin and confession, between poverty and penance, Hoccleve has come full circle and reentered the beginning of his penitential narrative” (*Bureaucratic Muse* 38). Knapp suggests that the Boethian elements of Hoccleve’s narrative confirm the sincerity of his repentance (see 38-39).

The difficulty with these Boethian interpretations is that Hoccleve repeatedly undercuts penitence. Lee Patterson comes closer to the mark, commenting that “the specifics of his condition as a Privy Office clerk dependent on an unreliable Exchequer...[is] unproductive: unable to submerge himself into the universalized humanity that is the proper object of philosophy and theology, he remains immune to consolation” (*Acts of Recognition* 87). Also lacking is the proper object of a reliable narrator. Although this consolation plot is characterized by multiple narrative voices, at least one must be reliable. As Fyler explains, consolation requires “an authoritative voice, implied or real, against which we can measure the narrator’s failures or understanding and gradual spiritual process” (*Ovid and Chaucer* 19). Hoccleve, much as Chaucer before him, destabilizes authoritative integrity by compounding narrative unreliability with confusion surrounding the poem’s subject. Finally, Hoccleve’s petition, much as Chaucer’s, begs not for philosophical, but material comfort.

Hoccleve’s closing intersection of autobiography, repentance, and legal petition redirects subjectivity outward to implicate his addressee in his plight and

satirize the Crown's tardy reconciliation of debt. At this point in the poem, Patterson observes that Hoccleve offers "a cautionary example of misgovernance to Prince Henry" (85). The poem is both cautionary and cautious. Hoccleve's autobiography postures defensively, much as James Simpson describes the poet's later *Regiment of Princes*: "Hoccleve's very strategy of moving from complaint, to dialogue, and only then to royal address itself implies a discursive caution of a kind not to be found in the straightforward accounts of royal commission in, say, Lydgate's contemporary *Troy Book*" (*Reform and Cultural Revolution* 213). Hoccleve also enacts "discursive caution" through his protean self-referentiality, role-playing, defensive posturing, and what David Greetham frames as the "cross-referencing" of personal and didactic points of contact (*Textual Transgressions* 297). Hoccleve's manipulation of "T. Hoccleve" as the titular subject of *La Male Regle*, "helthe," and the first person narrator addressing the king, allows the speaker to slide in and out of personas and conceal the didactic nature of the text. Despite Hoccleve's prudence, *La Mal Regle* refers not only to the poet's "misrule," but also, punningly, to the Crown's.

In *Purse* and *La Male Regle*, we find native sources for what is often treated as Nashe's "invention" of polyvocality. Chaucer and Hoccleve subvert readers' expectations by combining gestures of complaint, supplication, and advice to kings that divert us from subtexts of Crown protest. As Greetham remarks, "The pose is all, for it provides the poet's invention with a respectable heredity, gives scurrility, obscenity, libel, or aesthetic deficiency a decent cover, and yet allows the work great freedom and independence through the apparent

artlessness and objectivity of the narrator” (*Textual Transgressions* 295).

Throughout *Pierce*, Nashe invokes Chaucer and Hoccleve’s polygeneric defensive postures and similarly protests the Crown’s treatment of poets. As the next section demonstrates, Nashe compounds his indebtedness to native literary experimentation by simultaneously invoking the senses of not only Ovid’s, but also Marlowe’s versions of the *Amores* in *Pierce*. Nashe’s classically inspired imitation of his contemporary, in the context of sometimes conflated allusions to Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* and Juvenal’s *Satires*, combine to reiterate his project of *translatio studii et imperii*.

“The hopes and incentives of literature depend on Caesar alone”

Notoriously, English Renaissance readers confused “*satura*,” or, mixed dish, with “satyr,” the mythological half-goat, half-human creature.¹⁶ Yet this accidental conflation is analogous to the linguistic species crossing suggested by Nashe’s inclusion of “*barbaria*” on his title page. In early modern England, “barbarism” can indicate an indecorous mixture of Latin and English. Nashe underscores the double sense of linguistic barbarism by thematically analogizing it with an influx of both foreign immigrants and their customs in sixteenth-century London. For Nashe, “barbarism” metaphorically characterizes the rhetorical and reformative stakes in *Pierce*.¹⁷ Finally, this section discusses how Nashe “Englishes” his web of conversational networks by conflating classical, late

medieval, and contemporary sources to convey both his imperial project and his imperial protest.

Nashe complicates his Ovidian borrowing of *Elegy 1.10* for his title page motto – the same Chaucer has alluded to in *Purse* – by taking Pierce’s antagonist, the Knight of the Post, from Marlowe’s Englished version of this poem. The sense of Marlowe’s translation aptly captures the sense of perjury (*periuria*) from the Latin original (1.10.37, ed. Grant Showerman), but it also stands out as a marked colloquialism. Anthony Ossa-Richardson has recently discussed what he calls, borrowing from Julia Kristeva, Nashe’s “free play with signs,” and argues that Nashe’s mis-translations of Ovid’s Latin are misappropriations manifesting a gap between the tenor of a given passage and its meaning (“Ovid and the ‘free play with signs’” 946). Ossa-Richardson’s focus is primarily *The Unfortunate Traveller*, but his argument also implicates Nashe’s general practices. Ossa-Richardson concludes that this dissonance results in the perversion and tearing apart of the foundations of knowledge (956). Yet Nashe’s manipulation of Ovidian source-material throughout his corpus, whether he filters through a Marlovian lens or no, speaks again to a form of imitation that tacitly puts Latin and English on a par with one another.

Coincidentally, this false witness that Nashe borrows from Ovid and Marlowe intersects with our Juvenalian perjurer/patron. Nashe’s tri-pronged allusion to Ovid and Marlowe in the context of Juvenal’s thematic preoccupation with patronage functions defensively to prohibit (some) readers from recognizing the serious criticism underlying proclamations such as, “This is the lamentable

condition of our Times, that men of Arte must seeke almes of Cormorantes, and that those that deserue best, be kept vnder by Dunces” (I.159-160). Again we find ourselves at a crossroads of iniquity and inequity.

Nashe’s nod to an Anglican Ovid also marks an intertextual intersection with Chaucer’s *Purse* that offers us a point of departure from which to explore the repeated iterations of literal and intertextual crossroads in *Pierce*. Most of us are familiar with Ovid’s comic instructions for falling in and out of love and the wondrous mythology of *The Metamorphoses*, but we may not be as familiar with Ovid’s underlying sociopolitical protest of Augustan Rome. Robert Hanning observes that Ovid was one of many poets who “registered dissent from the Augustan imperial agenda, with its stress on the extension, protection, and administration of a far-flung empire and its moral legislation intended to impose state control over marriage, childrearing and sexuality” (*Serious Play* 10). Ovid and his contemporaries wrote in response to an imperial agenda which sought to control both the public and private spheres of Roman life; intersections of politics and poetics naturally follow.

Pierce follows Chaucer’s-following-Ovid’s defensive use of distance – temporal and mythological – to disguise subtexts of Crown protest. Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* offers the poet a distancing mechanism from which he mocks Augustus’ fondness for Virgil’s myth of the founding of Rome (Fyler, “Ovid and the Ovidian Tradition”). Chaucer, as we have seen, addresses his *envoy* to “the conquerour of Brutes Albyon,” that is, the conqueror of England (22). The allusion to the Roman politician lends an ironic sense of epic gravitas to

Chaucer's short complaint, but it is also a pose from which the poet can advise – and criticize – his King for not honoring his debts.

Nashe's conflation of classical and vernacular distancing gestures extends to his defensive manipulation of personas in *Pierce*. "Pierce Penillesse," as we know, puns on "purse penillesse" and echoes Chaucer's and Hoccleve's multiplications and manipulations of poetic personas. Much as Chaucer's speaker occupies the vexed position of mocker and mockee in *Purse*, and as Hoccleve's health and wealth become indistinguishable, Nashe's *Pierce* straddles his creator's historicity and his fictionality. The closing address to "Gentle Readers" iterates Nashe-as-author and perpetrates confusion: "I dare say thou hast cald me a hundred times dolt for this senseles discourse" (I.239). We find support for reading this end matter in Nashe's voice by drawing a parallel to Nashe's self-description as a "dolt" in his letter to Jeffes, signed "Tho. Nash." (I.154; 155). Yet then we ask: which senseless discourse? Nashe's? *Pierce*'s? The Knight's? None makes much sense given the titular promise of a "supplication."

We are damned by whichever discourse we choose.¹⁸ If we choose to identify with *Pierce* and feel he speaks to us throughout his letter to Lucifer, we occupy the position of Lucifer as addressee. If we choose to identify with the Knight, then we are transposed as devil's advocates. Nashe creates a lose-lose scenario for both himself and his readers. *Pierce* compromises everyone by schizophrenically embodying Nashe-as-narrator, Nashe-as-*Pierce*, *Pierce*, and finally, the Devil's advocate.

This sense of narrative schizophrenia marks a direct, and heretofore unrecognized, invocation of Hoccleve's *La Male Regle* which may have the potential to save us from damnation. Thematically, T. Hoccleve and Pierce both blame youthful "follie" for their present penury and promise repentance before crossing penitence with petition to protest Crown injustices (*Male Regle* 40; *Pierce* 1.1.57.28). In addition to these thematic and verbal echoes, *Pierce* adapts Hoccleve's pseudo-Boethian plot to the project of sixteenth-century humanist poetics in his opening complaint:

Hauing spent many yeeres in studying how to liue, and liu'de a long time without mony: hauing tired my youth with follie, and surfetted my minde with vanitie, I began at length to looke backe to repentaunce, & adresse my endeours to prosperitie: But all in vaine, I sate vp late, and rose earley, contended with the colde, and conuersed with scarcitie: for all my labours turned to losse, my vulgar Muse was despised & neglected, my paines, not regarded, or slightly rewarded, and I (in prime of my best wit) laid open to pouertie. Wherevpon (in a malecontent humor) I accused my fortune, raild on my patrones, bit my pen, rent my papers, and ragdge in all points like a mad man...I began to complaine in this sort. (I.157)

The foregoing summarizes Hoccleve's postures of repentance, complaint, and consolation. Nashe's raging "like a mad man" is often read as an element of his penchant for railing; his psychological instability, however, also echoes Boethian convention.

As we have seen, Hoccleve's insincere repentance and material endgame contributes to his failure to "complete" his Boethian project. At first glance, we might argue that Nashe's comic moral chaos similarly undercuts the sincerity of his introductory repentance, complaint, and supplication. Nashe also follows Hoccleve's projection of blame for his condition; Pierce is distressed by the upheaval of the status quo, the dependence of art on "Cormorants," and his

overall complaint that the Seven Deadly Sins have usurped the virtue associated with the Seven Liberal Arts (I.160). But Nashe's dramatization of "madness" and moral chaos throughout *Pierce* repeatedly exercises both his and our virtue while offering a far more satisfying Boethian psychic journey than Hoccleve's.

Nashe's crossing of Boethian and "humanist" projects in *Pierce* conveys an agenda of sociopolitical self-fashioning that is underscored by his invocation of Spenser's English epic in his closing epistle. Were *Pierce* pricking on the plain along with Spenser's knights instead of slogging through London's courts and stews, his "quest" might be more readily perceptible. But having drawn the analogue, we might easily associate Redcrosse's battle with Error and the paradoxes of "waste paper" produced by print culture with Nashe and *Pierce*. Nashe's indebtedness to Spenser's pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins is fairly obvious and makes us wonder that few have commented on the apt associations we might draw among Archimago, Duessa, Orgoglio, and *Pierce*'s diatribe against the pride of the learned.¹⁹ Throughout *Pierce*, Nashe translates Spenser's "darke conceit" as a house of intertextual mirrors in which there is no escape from self-recognition (15).

In the context of Nashe's Juvenalian conflation of pimps, perjurers, politicians, and prostitutes, this closing epistle reveals itself as extraordinarily risqué. As the last chapter noted, at the end of *Pierce*, Nashe imitates Spenser's preposterous placement of dedicatory matter in the *Faerie Queene*. In particular, Nashe teases Spenser for omitting Lord Burghley among his 1590 dedicatees. Much as Spenser, Nashe couches homage to his Queen and her "glistening

attendants” (e.g. Burghley) in Roman history and myth: “Glistening attendants on the true *Diana*, that this my speech should be anie way iniurious to your glorious magnificence: for in you liue those sparks of *Augustus* liberalitie, that neuer sent anie awaie emptie...your plentiful larges, which make Poets to sing such goodlie himnes of your praise, as no eniuous posteritie may forget” (I.242-243).

Addressing “Diana’s” attendants in the context of his nod to Spenser’s dedicatory omission, Nashe implicates Lord Burghley. Yet Nashe’s description of the Crown’s largesse is not (for once) hyperbolic.

Following the 1590 publication of *The Faerie Queene*, Elizabeth awarded Spenser a £50 annuity. Lore has it that Burghley disparaged making payment and commented that £50 was a lot to pay for a poem. Yet Andrew Hadfield has recently suggested that Burghley may have advocated for Spenser, not as a poet, but as a useful political representative in Ireland (*Edmund Spenser* 236). Elizabeth was, according to Hadfield, “notoriously parsimonious and only awarded one other pension to a writer in her reign, the aged Thomas Churchyard, a prolific and loyal writer...Spenser’s pension was nearly twice Churchyard’s” (236). Nashe’s praise for “heauenlie Spencer” and his generous Crown patrons has generally been read as sincere. The *Faerie Queene* was hugely successful and we generally accept the fact that Nashe writes with an eye toward cultivating a wider pool of patrons for himself (I.243-244). But Nashe’s invocation of “Diana” and “Augustus,” in the context of his Juvenalian program undercuts encomium. Overall, Nashe implies that if we are dependent on Diana/Augustus/Caesar, we may as well write a supplication to the devil.

Continuing his mock-homage to Burghley, Nashe continues: “*Tantum hoc molior*, in this short digression, to acquaint our countrymen that liue out of the Echo of the Court, with a common knowledge of his inuauable vertues, and shew my selfe thankfull” (I.244-245). The first clause roughly translates as “so much great exertion,” and humorously points back to Nashe’s, plus Juvenal’s, Chaucer’s, and Hoccleve’s complaints about poetic labors which have gone unrewarded by Caesar and the Crown. These subtexts are reiterated as Nashe flatters Burghley and thanks him “for benefits receiued,” that is to say: nothing (I.245). We return to penniless purses as Nashe appears to adopt the inexpressibility topos: “since words may not counteruaile, that are the vusuall lip labour of euerie idle discourser, I conclude with that of Ouid: *Accipe per longos tibi qui deseruiat annos, / Accipe qui pura nouit amare fide.*” “Countervaile” paradoxically speaks to Nashe’s ongoing project – he counters and veils his agenda in densely multi-lingual intertexts.

In these final lines, Nashe returns to *Elegy 1.3*. Both Ovid and Marlowe’s speakers beg the mistress for gratification in exchange for poetic immortality. In the context of Nashe’s nods to Burghley, the poem’s mistress already indicates the Queen. But Nashe reiterates this association as he shifts from his Latin allusions to the *Amores* into English and continues his address: “And if my zeale and duty (though all to meane to please) may by any industrie be reformed to your gracious liking, I submit the simplicitie of my indeuors to your seruice, which is, all my performance may profer, or my abilitie performe” (I.245). Although Nashe could be addressing his readers, the mistress of the poem, his Queen, or all of the

above, his unctuous humility, combined with the subsequent return to *Elegy 1.10*, points back at the Crown. Nashe adeptly continues in Latin: “*Praebeat Alcinoi poma benignus ager, / Officium pauper numeret studiumque fidemque*” (I.245; 1.10.56-57). A.D. Melville translates these lines as: “Alcinous can give his fruit away. / A poor man’s coin is zeal and trust and service” (1.10.56-57). The rich Alcinous can afford to share his bountiful fruit, but he demands payment from the poverty stricken. Marlowe’s translation also speaks to Alcinous’ bounty at poor men’s expense, “all for their mistress” (I.10.58). As the poem continues, we discover that among these poor men is our poet (1.10.59-64). In sum, if “the hopes of literature depend on Caesar alone,” we are all in serious trouble. Nashe’s closing Ovidian nod further undercuts Caesar/Elizabeth by suggesting that it is “vile and hateful” to expect poets to give – and give – and not receive (see Melville 1.10.63).

Nashe’s insistent doubling of languages, allusions, literary gestures, and sources speaks both to his healthy respect for the Crown’s absolute power, and to his desire to protest a crisis of sixteenth-century English humanism.²⁰ Much as Juvenal, Nashe grapples with a sociopolitical culture that he represents as degraded, but is, at least, “ours.” Arguably, Nashe supersedes rhetorical barbarity not only by innovating existing rhetorical techniques, but by multiplying native and Latin sources to create a level – and fertile – playing field for English literature. Nashe’s macaronic intertexts function to complain, advise, beg, and motivate his Queen to make the right turn at the crossroads and support his discovery of the virtue-making properties of vernacular eloquence. As we shall

see, Nashe's *Lenten Stuffe, or the Prayse of the Red Herring* continues his project of imperial self-fashioning in the context of (revisionary) English chronicle history.

NOTES

¹ C.S. Lewis comments that “wherever it came from, the style which appears in *Pierce Penilesse* offered the Elizabethan reader a new sort of pleasure” (*English Literature* 411). G.R. Hibbard suggests *Pierce* shares with Lord Byron “the qualities of a medley poem,” informed by “the example of Juvenal” (*Thomas Nashe* 63). Lorna Hutson claims Nashe writes “Menippean prose,” but throws up her hands at the contradiction between Nashe’s apparently conservative experimentalism with a gallimaufry of forms and states: “Formalism offers no solution” (*Thomas Nashe* 172). W. Scott Blanchard also attempts resolve Nashe’s mixture of verse and prose by offering “Menippean satire” (*Scholars Bedlam* 19). Most recently, Maria Teresa Micaela Prendergast has sidestepped this problem by honing in on the “railing” qualities (a subset of satire) of Nashe’s work (see *Railing, Reviling, and Invective* 75-102).

² McLuhan notes sixty-nine shared points of contact between Nashe’s and Juvenal’s rhetorical techniques (*Classical Trivium* n. 19, 244-246). Arthur F. Kinney offers Juvenal’s “first satire on the depraved state of Rome and the seventh satire on the decline of learning and the loss of preferment” as models for *Pierce* (*Humanist Poetics* 313). Curiously, many recent discussions of emergent polemical, invective, and the railing literature of the sixteenth century demonstrate impressive scholarship, yet do not discuss Juvenal’s influence. See: Jesse Lander, *Inventing Polemic: Religion, Print and Literary Culture in Early Modern England* (2006), Joseph L. Black, *The Martin Marprelate Tracts: A Modernized and Annotated Edition* (2008), and Maria Teresa Micaela Prendergast, *Railing, Reviling, and Invective in English Literary Culture, 1588-1617: The Anti-Poetics of Print* (2012).

³ As McLuhan explains, for Nashe, abjuration of the Holy Trinity and conservative, patristic theology is not only analogous to, but also often indicative of (as in the case of Puritans) one’s abandonment of the Trivium (see *Classical Trivium*).

⁴ According to the *OED*, the phrase “Knight of the Post” (*n.*) was coined in 1580 by Edward Knight (*Triall of Truth*); Nashe’s *Pierce* is listed as the second instance of usage. No mention is made of Marlowe’s *Amores*.

⁵ See Grant Showerman’s choice of “base” (*Ovid* 1.10.39-40). A.D. Melville, however, follows Marlowe and chooses “shame” (1.10.39-40).

⁶ This latter phrase recalls Henry VIII’s “Great Matter” and seems to indicate the ongoing problem of succession haunting Elizabeth’s reign.

⁷ For instance, in *Complaint and Satire*, John Desmond Peter explains: “where Satire applies itself to the failings of individuals or groups who can usually be circumscribed, and sometimes identified, Complaint is far more categorical and concerns itself simply with Man and his perennial frailties” (59).

⁸ See Fredric V. Bogel, *The Difference Satire Makes* 32-33. Bogel’s study focuses primarily on Augustan satire, but his approaches to these later forms of satire remain useful in the context of early modern studies.

⁹ John Davies' epigram condenses the "plot" of this elegy: "*Ad puellam, ne pro amore praemia poscat,*" or, "to his girl, that she should not demand money for her love" (Orgel n.236). Davies' Latin epigrams appear in the 1603 printed edition of Marlowe's Englished version of Ovid's *Elegies* (*EEBO*). But, given that both the epigrams and this translation were named specifically in the 1599 Bishop's ban, they were clearly in circulation well before they were printed (see Nicholl 264). Stephen Orgel calls Davies' epigrams "scurrilous," yet he also includes them in his edition of Marlowe's poetry (xi).

¹⁰ *Pity's* shifting first and third person narrator presents a bleak portrait of the triumph of Cruelty over both compassion and the poet himself. The legal petition suggests a specific target, although unlike *Purse*, none is named (see Gross, *Riverside* 633).

¹¹ Pearsall offers a discussion of the confusion surrounding Chaucer's entitlements during the ascension of Henry IV to the throne in *The Life of Geoffrey Chaucer* (273-274).

¹² F. Anne Payne might argue that my discussion of Chaucer's polygeneric experimentation adds up to support her argument positing Chaucer as a "Menippean" satirist (see *Chaucer and Menippean Satire*). Yet we should hesitate to append a fixed label to a poet working in an explicitly experimental vein. We might also counter Payne's characterization by recognizing Juvenal's possible influence on Chaucer's work. Chaucer invokes Juvenal in *Troilus and Criseyde* (IV.197). Admittedly, Chaucer's first-hand knowledge of the satirist is questionable; this line could refer to Jean de Meun's mention of Juvenal in *Romance of the Rose* ("The Advice of Friend," 8681-8686).

¹³ Jerome Mitchell offers selected examples of Hoccleve's imitation of *Purse*, including: *Balade to My Lord the Chancellor*, *Balade to King Henry V for Money*, *Balade to My Maister Carpenter*, *Balade to My Gracious Lord of York*, *Balade to the Duke of Bedford*, and the *Balade and Roundel to Mr. Henry Somer* (*Thomas Hoccleve* 33).

¹⁴ To clarify, the Treasurer and King are not Hoccleve's patrons, but his employers. In his later *Complaint*, he imagines appealing to the King for patronage (in a not so subtle bid for the same).

¹⁵ M.C. Seymour glosses "Prentys and Arondel" as "younger contemporaries of Hoccleve, whose names recur in a petition to the Privy Council, dated 14 February 1430" (n. 321, 109).

¹⁶ Gilbert Highet offers an early, yet thorough, explanation of the history of this false etymology in *The Anatomy of Satire* (231-232). Although he discusses primarily Augustan satire, Richard Nash agrees that this false etymology can be useful. Nash argues that satire "performs a kind of border work, and does so repeatedly by invoking an antithesis between the social and the animal. It is one of the important paradoxes of satire that the figure of the satyr describes both the satirist and the object of satire" (*Theorizing Satire*, "Satyrs and Satire in Augustan England" 98).

¹⁷ See Ernst Robert Curtius for the role of barbarism in rhetoric (*European Literature in the Latin Middle Ages*). In some cases, “barbarism” can also refer to mixing Greek with English. See *OED* n. 1.

¹⁸ Cf. Thomas Middleton’s 1604 imitation of *Pierce Penilesse*, “The Blacke Booke.” Middleton concludes with the phrase: “*qui tacet consentire videtur*” (829-830). This Latin tag is spoken by “the black book” and is a legal maxim: “he who remains silent will be seen to consent” (G.B. Shand, n. 218).

¹⁹ McKerrow offers numerous notes identifying Nashe’s references to Spenser, but makes no reference to *FQ* in his discussion of Nashe’s sources (see IV.79-80; V.345). Hibbard argues Nashe’s treatment of the Seven Deadly Sins is inspired from medieval ideas of satire “still very much alive in Nashe’s day” (162). Hutson responds to Hibbard by arguing that “Pierce’s use of the seven deadly sins is less like homage to the homiletic tradition than like a grotesque dismemberment of the political reclassifying of deadly sins in the interests of economic individuality” (180).

²⁰ Ironically, Nashe’s project of *translatio studii et imperii* may have been initiated when Archbishop Whitgift engaged him to write propaganda against Martin Marprelate. For a comprehensive discussion of Martinism and the anti-Martinist campaign, see Joseph Black, *The Martin Marprelate Tracts* (xv-xciv).

CHAPTER THREE

Red Herrings and “the Stench of Fish”: Subverting Praise in Thomas

Nashe’s *Lenten Stuffe*

As good a toy to mocke an ape was it...and the ieast of a Scholler in Cambridge, that standing angling on the towne bridge there, as the country people on the market day passed by, secretly bayted his hook wyth a red Herring wyth a bell about the necke, and so coneuying it into the water that no man perceiued it, all on a sodayn, when he had a competet throng gathered about hym, vp he twicht it agayne, and layd it openly before them; wherent the gaping rurall foole...neuer sawe such a miracle of a red herring taken in the fresh-water before – Thomas Nashe, *Lenten Stuffe* (III.212)

Thomas Nashe’s final pamphlet, *Lenten Stuffe* epitomizes the idea of the “red herring” as a diversionary tactic drawing readers away from the real question at hand. Ostensibly, *Lenten Stuffe* represents payment of a debt Nashe incurred at Yarmouth. In lieu of money, Nashe offers “The Description and first Procreation and Increase of the town of Great Yarmouth in Norffolke: with a new Play neuer played before, of the praise of the RED HERRING.” Following a dedication to Humphrey King, Nashe’s epistle contextualizes the pamphlet as “a light friskin of my witte, like the prayse of iniustice, the feuer quartaine, *Busiris*, or *Phalaris*, wherein I follow the trace of the famousest schollers of all ages” (III.151). Here Nashe follows Erasmus’s prefatory catalog of authorities put forth in the *Praise of Folly* (9). Conventionally, this “curriculum catalog” sets the tone by invoking authoritative models that inform the author’s plan (see Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* 48-51). Erasmus and Nashe’s invocations of Isocrates and Lucian inform the satirical *modus operandi* of their texts, while the connotations of tyranny associated with the ancient kings Busiris and Phalaris

adumbrate a subtext that undercuts the encomia promised by both. Nashe draws attention to thematic subterfuge by additionally offering “the prayse of iniustice” as a “model” of his invention (V.377). In the context of Nashe’s recent exile and persecution by the Privy Council following *Ile of Dogs*, this juxtaposition of thematic praise and injustice surrounding the red herring foreshadows Nashe’s sustained criticism of arbitrary favor and inequity perpetuated by Crown authorities. Nashe’s chronicle of Yarmouth emerges as a vehicle for blasphemy.

Despite professing to have modeled *Lenten Stuffe* on the works of Bede, Stow, Hollinshed, Camden, and Vergil, Nashe again weaves a discursive conversational network of chronicle, autobiography, satire, and allegory that disseminates authority and complicates interpretation. In fact, its complexity has historically diverted readers from recognizing the critical subtext underlying *Lenten Stuffe*.¹ Currently, the consensus surrounding *Lenten Stuffe* seems much as Nashe’s biographer Charles Nicholl writes: “it is what it claims to be: ‘prayse of the red herring,’ the food that sustained him during the hard days of Lent in 1598” (*A Cup of News* 262).

But I contend that Nashe’s fiction of the herring’s ascension to a piscatorial monarchy is *not* what it claims to be. Nashe’s chronicle of Yarmouth presents a lively, yet strongly prejudiced, history of the town’s evolution. This chapter argues that Nashe’s chronicle of Yarmouth offers a subtext of dissident criticism directed at the Crown’s long history of securing — and benefitting from — Yarmouth’s wealth at the expense of her neighbors, primarily Lowestoft. Moreover, close reading suggests that the “debt” Nashe offers to repay is

disingenuous, and functions instead as payback for centuries of Lowestoft's political oppression. Ultimately, *Lenten Stuffe* interrogates a long history of inequity perpetuated by Crown authorities.

How have years of critical inquiry overlooked Nashe's seditious treatment of the Crown? Although herrings are the "stuff" of Lent, sixteenth-century connotations of "stuffe" also include: "hot air bath" and "vapours" (*OED*, *stuffe*, n. 2). "Stuffe"—in this vapourish, comedic sense—functions importantly for Nashe as a defensive posture. Of Erasmus's and Nashe's use of comedy to forestall social and political criticism, Walter J. Kaiser explains that it was "dangerous to be more explicit," and that "while nothing is sillier than to treat serious things triflingly, nothing is more graceful than to treat trifling things in such a way that you seem to be less than trifling" (*Praisers of Folly* 28). Furthermore, Nashe takes Erasmus's colloquy 'A Fish Diet' as a thematic basis for his social criticism. From this text, Nashe projects the Butcher and Fishmonger's debate surrounding the arbitrariness of Lenten laws onto his chronicle of Yarmouth and praise of the red herring.²

Nashe's "praise" of Yarmouth is historically dubious because he hails from Lowestoft, a town historically at "wrig wrag" with its rival Yarmouth (III.195). Furthermore, Nashe has spent two years in exile skirting Crown authorities for his participation in the allegedly seditious play *Ile of Dogs*. Throughout his chronicling of Yarmouth, Nashe diverts readers from realizing that the "ieast" played by a "Scholler in Cambridge" who "secretly bayted his hook wyth a redde Herring" is on them (III.212). By the time Nashe mockingly

apologizes for “fishing before the nette, or making all fish that comes to the net in this history,” readers have swallowed his hook, line, and sinker. Erasmus’s joke in “Fish Diet” is at the expense of the Fishmonger, but in *Lenten Stuffe*, Nashe elides his targets – geographical and political – through a subtext of outrage directed at the Crown’s authority.

“At Wrig Wrag”

In Nashe’s epistle to readers, his argumentative tone and low diction are immediately at odds with the title’s promise of “The Procreation and Increase of the town of Great Yarmouth” and “praise of the red herring”:

Nashes Lentenstuffe: and why Nashes Lentenstuffe? Some scabbed scald squire replies, because I had money lent me at *Yarmouth*, and I pay them againe in prayse of their towne and the redde herring: and if it were so, goodman Pig-wiggen, were not that honest dealing? Pay thou al thy debtes so if thou canst for thy life: but thou art a Ninnihammer; that is not it; therefore, *Nickneacaue*, I cal it *Nashes Lenten-stuffe*, as well for it was most of my study the last Lent, as that we vse so to term any fish that takes salt, of which the Red Herring is one of the aptest. (III.151)

Nashe’s derisory tone suggests that this “scabbed scald” — probably one of Nashe’s critics or enemies — has made an incorrect assumption about his motivation. This rationale for the pamphlet’s genesis is further subverted by Nashe’s use of the subjunctive: “if it were so,” and “were not that honest dealing?” Finally, the reader who finds this other speaker credible is treated to the scathing sobriquets “Ninnihammer” and “Nickneacaue.” A ninnihammer is a “blockhead,” and a “nikneacaue” is apparently one of Nashe’s superlative neologisms suggesting something like “blockheadest” (*OED*, *ninnyhammer*, n.).

By the time Nashe features the “Red Herring,” its veracity as the object of encomium has been corrupted by context. Although Henry S. Turner has rightly observed that Nashe’s “account rather reflects the pique of an exile out of favor” (“Nashe’s Red Herring” 542), modern Nashe scholars have not yet recognized Nashe’s vitriolic censure of Yarmouth’s excessive wealth in contrast to her “moath eaten” neighbors (III.174).

Our failure to recognize the subtext of censure in *Lenten Stuffe* is the mark of Nashe’s success as a diversionary tactician. One of Nashe’s favorite moves is *occupatio*; in other words, he delights in repeatedly telling readers what he is *not* doing:

Here I could breake out into a boundlesse race of oratory, in shrill trumpeting and concelebrating the royall magnificence of her government, that for state and strict ciuill ordering scant admitteth of any riuals: but I feare it would be a theame displeasent to the graue modesty of the discreet present magistrates; and therefore consultiuely I ouerslip it [...] [to] acquaint you with the notable immunities, franchises, priuileges she is endowed with beyond all her confiners, by the discentine line of kings from the conquest. (III.159)

Refusing to offer praise of Yarmouth, Nashe states that he could “concelebrate” Yarmouth, but he will not. Ostensibly, Nashe “overslip[s],” or omits, his “concelebration” of “royal magnificence” because it would not please the “graue modesty” of the “discreet present magistrates.” But Nashe protests too much as he repeats the near synonyms, “grave,” “modest,” and “discreet” to describe the current Crown officials. This repetition suggests that these magistrates would like nothing better than the fanfare of praise that Nashe ironically withholds. Moreover, Nashe’s choice of the word “concelebration” projects the idea of the priesthood onto the magistrates to suggest that they are like young priests and

newly ordained (*OED, concelebration, n.*). In the context of the English Reformation, this cynical truth conveys an undertone of sedition that reverberates throughout this passage and the larger work. Finally, Nashe offers a chronicle of Yarmouth's "notable immunities," "franchises," and "priuliges" that sound like praise; yet as Nashe leads us through this "discentine" line of kings, he emphasizes how Yarmouth's fishing liberties have been dispersed arbitrarily and at the expense of neighboring towns.

As Turner and R.C.L.Sgroi have established, Nashe's chronicle traces a history of piscatorial politics in Yarmouth. Yet closer examination casts suspicion on his treatment of the Crown itself. Implying that William the Conqueror was the first to give Yarmouth her "priuileges," Nashe's description of King John's extension of her "liberties" sets a queasy tone for the monarchs that follow:

King *Iohn*, to comply and keep consort with his auncestors in furthering of this new water-worke, in the ninth yeare of the engirting his annoynted browes with the refulgent Ophir circle, and Anno 1209., set a fresh glosse vppon it, of the towne or free burrough of Yarmouth, and furnish it with many substantial priuiledges and liberties, to haue and to holde the same of him and his race for fifty fiue pound yearely. (III.163)

Ronald B. McKerrow persuasively argues that the sources for this passage are Leland's *Collectanea* and Henry Manship's chronicle of Great Yarmouth (IV.381 n.32-35).³ Additionally, Nashe's lavish description of King John's ascension as "the engirting his annoynted browes with the refulgent Ophir circle" in the same sentence as the £55 fee per annum of "priuiledges and liberties" is suspect.

Arguably, Nashe raises his diction to observe the rhetorical decorum expected when speaking of kings. However, Nashe's double crowning, effected through "engirting," or circling, and the "Ophir," or golden, circle, and combined with

“refulgent” — a synonym for “radiant,” “resplendent,” and “lustrous” — parodies the elevated diction associated with kingship (*OED*, *refulgent*, adj.). “Praise” accrues skepticism in the context of King John’s reputation for despotism. For example, Manship parenthetically comments that John was “in his reign very disastrous” (*History of Great Yarmouth* 2). Raphael Holinshed’s chronicle is more comprehensive and even-handed than Manship’s, yet he still reproaches John for making decisions in “heate and furie,” and criticizes him for “banketting” and passing time “in pleasure with the queene his wife, to the great greefe of his lords” during the tempestuous winter of 1203 (*Chronicles* II.286-287). In closing, Holinshed reflects that John’s reign may have been more successful had he “not sought with the spoile of his owne people to please the imaginations of his ill affected mind” (II.337). Manship’s and Holinshed’s chronicles inform Nashe’s suggestion that King John’s arbitrary apportionment of liberties to Yarmouth contributed to the town’s undeserved rise to power. Nashe’s oblique criticism of King John is not personal, but political, and it prefigures his censure of the monarchs that follow.

Nashe emphasizes the Crown’s inconsistent adjudication of equity in his narration of Henry III’s self-contradictory rulings regarding Yarmouth’s deadly acts of piracy in 1240. Here, Yarmouth seamen violently attack neighboring vessels:

In a sea battle her shippes and men conflicted the cinque ports, and therein so laid about them that they burnt, tooke, and spoyled the most of them, [they] ranne crying and complying to King *Henry* the second; who...set a fine of a thousand pound on the Yarmouth mens heads for that offence, which fine in the tenth of his reigne hee dispenc’t with and pardoned. (III.163-164)⁴

Nashe's description of Yarmouth's piracy is brutal, and he suggests that the "offence" should have been punished. However, by including Henry III's retraction of Yarmouth's sentence, Nashe tacitly criticizes the erratic execution of reward and punishment perpetuated by the Crown.

Nashe's discussion of Yarmouth's arbitrary allocation of privileges by King John and Henry III culminates in Edward III's mandate giving the town permission to charge a toll for all fish brought into her harbor (Turner 18). Edward also awarded Yarmouth control of the Kirtley Road (the main route from the harbor to the countryside) and effectively granted the town a monopoly on the Norfolk coast fishing industry. Neighboring villages, notably Lowestoft, began what would be centuries of petitioning the Crown for relief from Yarmouth's tolls. Nashe emphasizes the disproportionate distribution of political liberties by contrasting Yarmouth's superfluous wealth to the dilapidation that characterizes her neighbors:

It were to be wished that other coasters were so industrious as the Yarmouth, in winning the treasure of fish out of those profundities...it would be as plentiful a world as when Abbies stode; and now, if there be any plentiful world, it is in Yarmouth. Her sumptuous porches and garnisht buildings are such as no port Towne in our Brittish circumference ...may suitably stake with. (III.171)

Nashe's double-edged rhetoric cuts deeply into the notion that Yarmouth's "industry," or labor, had much to do with the town's success. "Winning the treasure of fish" is not a result of hard work, but the luck of the monarch's favor. Nashe's irony resounds in the "plentiful world" that existed "when Abbies stode." Of course, Nashe exploits stereotypes of Catholic monks, notorious then

for great wealth in contrast to surrounding poverty. Nashe further betrays his “praise” when combining the adjectives “sumptuous” and “garnisht” to portray Yarmouth’s wealth in contrast to any other “port Towne in our Brittish circumference.” But the real enmity is between Yarmouth and Lowestoft. Nashe describes these towns “at wrig wrag,” sucking “from their mothers teates serpentine hatred from one another” (III.195). The image of these rivals nursing “serpentine hatred” from infancy decisively strips the gloss of praise from Yarmouth when we remember that Nashe hailed from Lowestoft. Edward III’s charter remains at the crux of this acrimony, and for the majority of Elizabeth’s reign, Lowestoft and her neighbors continued in vain to petition the Crown for relief.

Following his overview of Edward III’s legislation, Nashe traces the Crown’s continued generosity to Yarmouth through Henry V, Henry VI, Edward IV, Henry VII, and Henry VIII before returning readers to contemporary Elizabethan England: “His daughters Queene Mary and our *Chara deum soboles*, Queene Elizabeth, haue not withred vp their hands in signing and subscribing to their requests, but our virgin rectoresse most of al hath shoured down her bounty vpon them, graunting them greater graunts then euer they had” (III.165). Nashe’s censorious tone dominates his narrative. Neither Mary nor Elizabeth “withered vp their hands” offering aid to Yarmouth’s neighbors. Instead, Elizabeth allocates Yarmouth’s fishing guild “greater graunts then euer they had.” “If it were so” that *Lenten Stuffe* represents an encomium of Yarmouth, then Nashe’s representation of Elizabeth’s generosity could be read as proper homage to his queen. But this

pamphlet is titled *Lenten Stuffe*. Therefore, these “greater graunts” likely refer to the most controversial legislation of the fishing industry during Elizabeth’s reign: the implementation of Wednesday fish days, or “political Lent.” Political Lent is at the heart of a 1563 statute put forth to raise money to restore the navy under the guise of shoring up England’s fishing industry. The Crown’s logic was that by increasing the demand for fish, it could raise much-needed funds for new ships. Sgroi wryly observes that “a major consequence of the 1563 act was to raise the profile of fishing by forcing people to consume fish for their country even if they would no longer observe fish days for conscience.” But Sgroi misses Nashe’s dark joke when she comments on the propaganda war surrounding political Lent, claiming that Nashe “weighed in, on Yarmouth’s side” in *Lenten Stuffe*. Any sense that *Lenten Stuffe* represents the “celebration of the success of the herring industry at Yarmouth” is consistently subverted by the text itself (“Piscatorial Politics” 21). In the context of the subjective rulings of King John, Henry III, and Edward III, Elizabeth’s approval of “political Lent” epitomizes the corruption of both law and religion by the Crown that is, for Nashe, writ large.

However vexed Nashe’s political attitudes are, he is self-consciously aware of the Crown’s power. In varying degrees throughout *Lenten Stuffe* we find him carefully dispersing his own authority and assuming rhetorical disguises. For example, Nashe veils his criticism of “Crowners” in chorography:

The liberties of it on the fresh water one way, as namely from Yarmouth to *S. Toolies* in Beckles water, are ten mile, and from Yarmouth to Hardlie crosse another way, ten mile, and conclusiuey, from Yarmouth to Waybridge in the narrow North water tenne mile...and if any drowne themselues in them, their Crowners sit vpon them. (III.166-167)

Distracting readers by forcing them to imagine what ten miles one way or another represents, Nashe criticizes “Crowners” for having the audacity to “sit vpon” – to posthumously suppress – individuals who happen to drown in the ‘wrong’ place: Yarmouth. Nashe further undercuts Yarmouth, and by extension, the Crown, in his explication of the conditions under which he began this pamphlet: “I had a crotchet in my head, here to...run astray thorowout all the coast townes of England, digging vp their dilapidations... not for any loue or hatred I beare them, but that I would not be snibd, or haue it cast in my dishe that therefore I prayse Yarmouth so rantantingly” (III.167). From the context of the Crown’s disproportionate allocation of “liberties,” Nashe outlines the stark contrast between Yarmouth and the rotten dilapidation of the nearby coastal towns, among which, of course, is Lowestoft. Moreover, Nashe again derails his “praise” by qualifying it with the adverb “rantantingly.” Paula Blank argues that here Nashe “exposes the satirical nature of his own treatise.” If he praises Yarmouth, he does so “rantantingly” — in an exaggerated, entirely disproportionate manner” (*Broken English* 76). At the same time, Nashe does not want such “rantanting” praise cast in his dish. Lastly, if we have not gotten the joke yet, he directly reminds us that he is from “*Leystofe*, in which bee it knowne to all men that I was born,” no doubt sucking hatred of Yarmouth from his mother’s teat (III.205). Nashe’s joke is a dark one, and as we will see in the context of the *Ile of Dogs* and Erasmus’s “Fish Diet,” it will grow darker yet.

“Leude and Mutynous Behavior”

Nashe’s loyalty to Lowestoft is one source of motivation for this treatise detailing the Crown’s legislative inequities. But Nashe’s experience at the hands of Elizabeth’s Privy Council in 1597 following his contribution to *Ile of Dogs* also calls attention to the subtext of injustice running throughout *Lenten Stuffe*. On 15 August 1597, Privy Council minutes record the arrest of Nashe’s co-author of *Ile of Dogs*, Ben Jonson, and players Robert Shaa and Gabriel Spencer, for their participation in a play “contanyng very seditious and sclanderous matter” (“Privy Council Minute” qtd. in Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage* 4.323). On the same day Nashe’s lodgings were searched and his papers confiscated, but he was not to be found. According to the minutes, Crown officials were under orders to search out the remaining participants and mete out “soche punishment as their leude and mutinous behavior doth deserve” (4.323).⁵ Jonson, Shaa, and Spencer were released from prison on 8 October 1597. By 19 February 1598, the Council granted permission for the Lord Admiral and Lord Chamberlain’s companies to resume theatrical productions (4.325). The Privy Council’s aggressive closure of the *Ile of Dogs* is irregular, partly because there appears to have been no follow-through searching out the remaining participants, and also because it was the only play singled out following the 28 July blanket ban on London theatre productions. Causes cited for the 28 July closing of the theatres include plague, crime, idleness, and vagrancy, but there is no mention of seditious plays (see 4.321). William Ingram has persuasively argued that seditious content was not the cause of the *Ile*

of Dogs' closure. Instead, Ingram suggests that the Privy Council was more interested in the Swan Theatre's proprietor, Francis Langley, and his involvement with a stolen twenty-six and one-half carat diamond. Later in this section, I will put pressure on Nashe's curious invocation of a "Cornish diamond" that may, in small part, support Ingram's argument. Although the theatres were back in business within seven months, and Nashe's colleagues were released from prison after seven weeks, Nashe claims to have been subjected to two years of exile and forced unemployment, which, as he explains, "is as great a maim to any mans hapinesse as can bee feared from the hands of miserie; or the deepe pit of disparie wherinto I was falne, beyond my greatest friendes reach to recouer mee" (III.153). Overall, Nashe suggests that his punishment does not fit his alleged crime.

Because Nashe's punishment leads to "misery and despair," his opening remarks regarding his role in *Ile of Dogs* have unanimously been read as sincere. Most critics have joined Brian Vickers to become as dismissive of these "self-exculpating" remarks as they believe Nashe to be in the following lines ("Incomplete Shakespeare" 316):

That infortunate imperfit Embrion of my idle houres, the Ile of Dogs before mentioned, breeding vnto me such bitter throwes in the teaming as it did...I was so terrified with my owne increase (like a woman long trauling to bee deliuered of a monster) that it was no sooner borne but I was glad to run from it. (III.153-155)

Nashe's vivid portrayal of monstrous reproduction evokes connotations of Edmund Spenser's ink-spewing Error in Book One of *The Faerie Queene*. There is general agreement that on one important level of Spenser's allegory, Error is emblematic of the spewing of sedition and heresy so recently (in the sixteenth

century) facilitated by the advent of print culture. It follows that Nashe's self-juxtaposition with Error-like monstrosity suggests that he repents his error of judgment in the context of *Ile of Dogs*. But repentance does not follow. In fact, his striking image of a Spenserian version of Error is simultaneously undermined by the attached marginal note. Here, Nashe admits writing the induction and first act, but a cry of injustice resounds in the remainder of his explication: "the other foure acts without my consent, or the least guesse of my drift or scope, by the players were supplied, which bred both their trouble and mine to" (III.154). Displacing responsibility for "breeding" onto the players, Nashe suggests they were in error, not he. The overarching implication is that Nashe's punishment was disproportionate to his actions.

Nashe's punitive silencing is compounded by the Crown's tacit authorization for Nashe's enemies to publicly slander him, to "nibble about his fame like a miller's thumb" (III.153). For example, Richard Lichfield takes advantage of the opportunity to safely confute Nashe's defamation of his character in the epistle to *Have With You to Saffron Walden* with the mean-spirited 1597 pamphlet, *The Trimming of Thomas Nashe*. Lichfield clearly believes that his cruel payback will go uncontested; he writes of Nashe following his exile: "so thou art suffered to be quiet...thus thou art quite put downe" (D₂). Lichfield obviously capitalizes on "the machinery of suppression [that] rolled into action" against Nashe (Nicholl 243). However, Nashe's epistle suggests he has not only been "put downe" by Lichfield, but also by "the silliest millers thumbe." Scoufos and Nicholl have both correctly followed a chain of fishy puns from the

“millers thumb” through the goby, cobbo, and cob fishes to Lord William Cobham, Lord Chamberlain from August 1596 through March 1597, and claim he is Nashe’s “chief enemy in the affair” (Nicholl 252). But any suggestion that Cobham was directly involved in the Privy Council’s 28 July 1597 decision to close the theatres of London, or the injunction filed against *Ile of Dogs* on 15 August, is impossible; Cobham died in March of that year. Evidence suggests Nashe is sincere when he declaratively defers individual lambasting until his next pamphlet, “the *Barbers warming panne*,” promised to Lichfield as payback for *The Trimming* (III.153). Although Nashe’s allusions to Cobham may masquerade as personal satire, close analysis reveals that Cobham functions as a red herring. Uninterested in Cobham personally, Nashe invokes him only to exploit the Cobham family’s historical role in Crown politics and continue his interrogation of the Crown’s arbitrary mandates of justice.

When Nashe refers to the Cobham family’s “*Genethliaca*,” or genealogy, as “dropping” from his “inkhorne,” he takes advantage of another opportunity to criticize the Crown’s arbitrary disbursements of liberties (III.167). The Cobham family owe their peerage and power to their ancestor William the Conqueror’s generosity. By glossing the Cobhams’ inheritance of the “syluer oare of barony” and the lands to accompany it, Nashe draws an analogy back to Yarmouth, again suggesting that “winning the treasure” is not a reward for service, but a matter of luck, or, in the Cobhams’ case, the accident of birth (III.167; 171).

Again deploying *occupatio* to narrate how he does *not* describe the exploits of William the Conqueror, Nashe extends criticism to implicate the Crown's historical authority:

I smothered these dribblements, & refrained to descant how *William* the Conqueror, hauing heard the prouerbe of Kent and Christendome, thought he had wonne a country as good as all Christendome when he was enfeofed of Kent...a whole moneths minde of reuoluing meditation I raueling out therein, (as raueling out signifies *Penelopes telam retexture*, the vnweauing of a webbe before wouen and contexted;) pities me, it pities me, that in cutting of so faire a diamond of Yarmouth, I haue not a casket of dusky Cornish diamonds by me, and a boxe of muddy foiles, the better to set it forth. (III.167)

Nashe's contextualization of the first Norman King of England with his own inky "dribblements" parodies heroic chronicles like Holinshed's that highlight William's ferocity, as well as his thoughtful consideration of the people he brought under his rule (see Holinshed 2.1-26). Comically impugning his own potency in the context of his subject, Nashe concurrently undermines the seminal power of patrilineal authority through which the Cobhams derived their influence. Conflating the Cobhams with their ancestry, Nashe tacitly leverages the association into contemporary criticism at the same time as he rhetorically "unweaves" it. By burying his concatenation of the Cobhams with Crown authority in the depths of historical chronicle, Nashe creates a diversion to obscure the fact that ire, not admiration, informs this passage. Finally, Nashe's juxtaposition of the allusions to Cobham's ancestry in the context of "dusky Cornish diamonds" augments his earlier cry of injustice regarding his punishment following *Ile of Dogs*.

Nashe's wish for "Cornish diamonds" to portray "so faire a diamond of Yarmouth" further deconstructs "praise." McKerrow suggests that the reference is to counterfeit diamonds and might refer to "the fraudulent sale of Bristow diamonds set in gold for genuine ones" (IV.385 n.13). On the one hand, juxtaposing supposedly counterfeit diamonds and "muddy foiles" as tools to set forth this "diamond" of Yarmouth, Nashe undercuts encomia. On the other hand, by incorporating "Cornish diamonds," Nashe may also be returning his contemptuous representation of Crown authority to the then-present tense. Chambers offers a scenario that could help explain Nashe's sense of injustice: "Somewhere in 1594 a diamond, which had gone astray from the loot of a Spanish vessel, was shown in Finsbury Fields by a mariner to certain goldsmiths, who said that they had met him by chance at a play in the Theatre at Shoreditch" (2.396-397). This "theatre at Shoreditch" is the Swan Theatre where Langley produced *Ile of Dogs*. Ingram additionally observes that Langley is not mentioned in the 1597 Public Record Office documents for being involved in a seditious play, but instead because of this missing diamond. Cobham believed Langley had possession of the diamond and informed his son-in-law, Robert Cecil. Ingram suggests that Cecil put pressure on Langley to surrender the diamond by singling out the Swan's production of *Ile of Dogs* for immediate closure. According to the Privy Council documents, no other individual play, players, or playwrights were targeted under the broad 28 July order to close the theatres. Nashe's comparison of Yarmouth to a "duskie Cornish diamond" might suggest his awareness of the

scandal, and knowledge of the Crown's motivation to treat the *Ile of Dogs* players more aggressively than their colleagues.

From the context of Nashe's seditious representation of the Crown authorities in the context of allusions to the *Ile of Dogs* incident, his sardonic comment toward the end of *Lenten Stuffe* is provocative: "to draw on hounds to a sent, to a redde herring skinne there is nothing comparable" (III.221). If readers have not yet realized that Nashe's joke of a scholar baiting his hook with a saltwater herring to "catch" it triumphantly from the (freshwater) river Cam is on us, by now the red herring's emblematic representation of diversion is unequivocally clear. The red herring both draws "hounds to a sent" and simultaneously embodies the protean paradox of the literal and figurative "stuff" of Lent. The fish of Lenten time, the herring also represents the vapourish connotations of "stuff": it smells. Rhetorically, the red herring comically diverts readers from recognizing Nashe's underlying vituperation, even as his invocation of "hounds" points back to the *Ile of Dogs*. Nashe extends the fluidity of signification associated with the herring to continue his condemnation of arbitrary Crown authority in the context of his just-so story about how the white herring turns red, and is subsequently crowned and canonized. Nashe raises the pitch of his invective by eliding the "hounds" so easily seduced by the scent of a red herring with a king, a pope, and his prelates to represent their collective authority as a consummate joke.

“The Stench of Fish”

Nashe transposes the historical and topical strains of Crown inequity running through both the chronicle and autobiographical elements of *Lenten Stuffe* into the larger tension between human and divine authority through his invocations of Erasmus’s *Praise of Folly* and “Fish Diet.” Specifically, Nashe’s allusion to *Folly* further undermines the authority of kings. And, through subsequent nods to “Fish Diet,” Nashe translates Erasmus’s anxiety surrounding the Church’s interpretation of God’s laws into a burlesque of Crown authority. Although a strictly Biblical reading of this portion of *Lenten Stuffe* would be fruitful, for the purposes of this chapter, my investigation is limited to Nashe’s representations of divinity insofar as it is embodied by the English Crown. This development of the story of a Yarmouth fishmonger and his “miraculous” red herring transforms Nashe’s chronicle into a blasphemous allegory of English Crown politics. Ultimately, Nashe exploits Erasmian irony to portray the Crown as an epitome of caprice.

Nashe immediately establishes his indebtedness to *Folly* in his dedicatory epistle to “his worthie good patron, Lustie Humfrey” (III.147; also see V.337). Historically, Humphrey’s surname is “King,” and Nashe gives him a rhetorical second crown by calling him “King of Tobacconists *hic & ubique*” (III.147). King’s double crowning reads more like double clowning as Nashe regales us with tavern tattle and descriptions of his patron’s stinky feet (III.148). But then Nashe’s tone shifts when he “consecrates” this work to King’s “capering humor

alone” (III.149). The opposition between Nashe’s choice of “consecrate” and “capering” informs the following explication of the dedication: “A King thou art by name and a King of good fellowshipped by nature, whereby I ominate this Encomion of the king of fishes was predestinate to thee from thy swaddling clothes” (III.149).

Nashe’s use of “predestinate” works two ways. In one sense, Nashe mocks the Calvinist theory of predestination by coupling it with King’s absurd fate as the “King of Tobacconists.” But Nashe also foreshadows the intertextual interrogation of patrilineal authority suggested by his satire of the Cobham family’s ancestry as he leads us through the red herring’s ascendance to monarchy. King was foreordained to be a king through the same kind of wordplay Erasmus employs when he dedicates his *Morae* to More. Erasmus explains to his friend: “first, of course, your family name of More prompted me; which comes as near to the word for folly as you are far from the meaning of it” (*Folly* 1). Following Nashe’s logic, King was predestined to be a king in the context of Nashe’s intertextual juxtaposition with his real/fictional forerunner, Sir Thomas More/Folly. That is to say, King is no more predestined to be a “King” than More is to be foolish. King’s kingship and More’s folly are both due to the “accident” of *double entendre* that Nashe and Erasmus exploit for the sake of (skeptical) comedy.

Nashe’s allusion to *Praise of Folly* also imbues King, and the herring’s allegorical representation of the English monarchy that follows, with the derisive connotations Folly attributes to “real” kings:

Kings leave all these concerns to the gods... They believe they have played the part of a sovereign to the hilt if they diligently go hunting, feed some fine horses, sell dignities and offices at a profit to themselves, and daily devise new measures by which to draw away the wealth of citizens and sweep it into their own exchequer. (95)

At the heart of Folly's satirical attitude toward kings is that they are so "diligent" in their pursuit of pleasure that they exploit their authority for personal gain at the expense of their subjects. In *Lenten Stuffe*, Folly's observations are directly analogous to Nashe's representation of Yarmouth's "liberties" in contrast to her neighbors. The overarching effect of Nashe's prefatory invocation of Folly is to impregnate the authority of both his historical and his piscine kings with suspicion.

Nashe casts further skepticism on "Lustie Humfrey" (King), and the kings who follow, through the deceptively innocuous description of his stinky feet: "the chamber is not ridde of the smell of his feet" (III.148). In Nashe's text, stench becomes a metonymy for corruption in the context of both his fetid allegory of the rise of the red herring to monarchy and his allusions to "Fish Diet." Nashe's piscine allegory begins with his description of a Yarmouth fisherman, who "hauing drawne so many herrings hee wist not what to do withal, hung the residue that he could not sel nor sped" in his shed (III.204). Because it is cold, the fisherman leaves a hot fire burning in the shed, and when he returns, "his herrings, which were as white as whales bone when hee hung them vp, nowe lookt as red as lobster" (III. 204). Witnessing the herrings' metamorphosis, the fisherman and his wife "fell down on their knees and blessed themselus, & cride, a miracle, a miracle" (III.204). On a literal level, Nashe explains how the white

herring is accidentally smoked and becomes red. Yet allegorically, and in the context of the historical premise of *Lenten Stuffe*, Nashe's emphasis on the white/red binary the herring embodies suggests he might be recasting his chronicle of Yarmouth into the context of the English civil wars between the York and Lancastrian dynasties.

In Nashe's fictionalized allegory, the transformation of the herring through the smoking process does not change its essence. The fish remains both white and red, reflecting the merging of the York and Lancastrian dynasties with Henry VII's victory, and the succession of the Tudor monarchy up to Elizabeth. But Nashe metaphorically translates this victory as a miraculous accident: the herringman left his fish in a hot shed for too long. Although wars have often been won or lost by happenstance, Nashe's emphasis on the accidental metamorphosis of the herring, rather than the fisherman's skillful smoking, invests his invocation of English monarchs with deep skepticism. Moreover, the suggestion of accident in this history of the herring's ascension casts a subversive glance at the rights of succession. As we know, the problem of succession would continuously generate instability surrounding Crown politics until the eighteenth century. Because this problem was especially acute during Elizabeth's reign, Nashe's nod is unsurprising. The accidental piscine metamorphosis of the red herring emphasizes the precariousness of the monarch's position and informs Nashe's continuing depictions of the arbitrary nature of Crown authority.

Through the "miraculous" herring's encounters with the King of England, and later, the Pope, it becomes metaphorically invested with idolatry and

superstition. Nashe exploits these connotations to expose the capriciousness of Crown authority as the Yarmouth fishmonger presents the red herring to the English King: “The King was as superstitious in worshipping those miraculous herrings as the fisherman, licenced him to carry the[m] vp & downe the realme for strange monsters, giuing to Cerdek sands (the birth place of such monstrosities) many priuileges” (III.205-206). Like the historical Yarmouth fishermen, Nashe’s fictional Yarmouth, the “Cerdek sands,” and his piscator are granted “liberties” at the King’s discretion. By pointing to Yarmouth as the birthplace of monstrosity, Nashe fuses history and fiction to obliterate “praise.”

From this context, Nashe’s representation of a superstitious king worshipping a miraculous red herring can be interpreted as a loyal (to Elizabeth) Anglican rendering of a naive, idol-worshipping Catholic predecessor. Indeed, this scene of an English red herring king celebrated by the Catholic Church conjures Elizabeth’s sister, Queen Mary. Since Henry VIII created the Church of England, subjects have been forced to follow the monarch’s religion through multiple iterations of Christianity. Although Nashe’s allusion to Mary is likely a diversionary tactic designed to keep his distance from Elizabethan authorities, it also contributes to Nashe’s implicit criticism of the erratic trajectory of the English Reformation itself. On one level, Nashe exploits Catholicism for comedy’s sake: Nashe’s contemporary readers might laugh at their countrymen who also worship the “idol” of the red herring, and who pay the Yarmouth fisherman for the privilege. But on another level of interpretation, as in the herring’s continued adventures with the Pope, Catholicism itself functions as a red

herring. Nashe's burlesque of Catholic England ironically capitalizes on the fact that sixteenth-century English Anglicans are *supposed* to joke at the expense of those of the "old faith." But by juxtaposing the injudicious disbursements of "liberties" by both historical and fictional English kings, Nashe points to the pharisaical nature of Crown authority regardless of religion.

Nashe advances his allegory of the red herring in conversation with Erasmus's "Fish Diet" to demonstrate that kingly folly extends beyond capricious generosity toward (Yarmouth) fishermen to the arbitrary dispensation of Lenten laws. After the Yarmouth herringman profits from his "liberties" and wears "his monsters stale throughout England," he travels to Rome and shows his "miraculous" fish to the Pope. Much as the English King, the pontiff also worships the herring, including his stench: "I conceyted no lesse, sayde the Pope, for lesse than a king he could not be, that had so strong a sent, and if his breath be so strong, what is he himself?" (III.208). The Pope follows Nashe's prefatory logic metonymically linking stench and kings, established in the early dedication to Humphrey King. But Nashe also reminds us of the adjunct connotations of corruption through his allusion to "Fish Diet." Discussing the "stench of fish," Erasmus's Butcher argues that rotten meat is "sheer perfume" by comparison (*Colloquies* 316). Personally, Erasmus finds "the stench of fish" disgusting; he hates fish so much he received a dispensation from the Pope to eat meat on fasting days (*Epistles* 11-12).⁶ For Erasmus and Nashe, this "stench" additionally connotes the human corruption of divine will articulated by the fasting laws laid down by Church and Crown. From the context of Nashe's conflation of history

and fiction, the English Crown epitomizes both inconstancy and the abuse of power. These qualities inform both Erasmus's and Nashe's larger anxieties about man's adjudication of divine authority.

Underneath the fiction of the Butcher and the Fishmonger, Erasmus levels ironic criticism at the economic expediency that prompts the institution of fast days in "Fish Diet." Erasmus's colloquy is framed as a joke wherein the Butcher tells the Fishmonger that the Pope has lifted the regulations on fasting days; the implication is that the meat industry will now flourish at the expense of fishermen (*Colloquies* 315). Because fish is not considered nutritious, consumption is permitted throughout the calendar year. Thus, papal- and Crown-instituted fasting days are a boon to both the fishing industry and the presiding authority collecting taxes. Following Erasmus, Nashe aligns his subtext with the Butcher's in his debate with the Fishmonger, who bears a striking resemblance to Nashe's portrayal of the Yarmouth fisherman. Ironically, Erasmus's Fishmonger grounds his argument favoring fast days in his existing privilege, claiming that the "wisdom of princes and prelates permits us to sell our wares the year round, when you must observe fasts" (318). The Butcher recognizes the Fishmonger's fallacious reasoning and challenges him to defend his argument from the perspective of the Pope. Their Socratic exchange is lengthy, but throughout the Butcher exposes the Fishmonger's irrationality. For example, the Butcher asks how authority can maintain its integrity in the context of multiple interpreters and interpretations. The Fishmonger-as-Pope replies: "If the meaning generally accepted hasn't satisfied you, follow the authority of prelates. That's the safest

course” (329). Of course, “prelates” are multiple, and the Fishmonger’s response does not “answer” the Butcher. Erasmus’s Butcher further succeeds in tainting the authority of the (fictional) Pope with extreme skepticism by forcing him to admit that human translations of divine authority are often muddied by circumstance and self-interest (see *Colloquies* 326-342).

Nashe’s fictional Pope returns the arbitrary authority represented by his Erasmian forerunner to English allegory by recalling Henry III’s self-contradictory ruling regarding the Yarmouth pirates. In Nashe’s allegory, the herring’s stench grows so fetid that the Pope can no longer bear it. The Pope’s prelates rationalize the fish’s stench by arguing that because the smell is so terrible, he must be a dead king and worshipped accordingly: “*Vna voce* in this slene to Pope *Vigilius* they ran, and craued that this king of fishes might first haue Christian burial, next, that hee might haue masses sung for him, and last, that for a saint he would canonize him. Al these hee graunted, to be ridde of his filthy redolence” (III.210). At first, the Pope worships the herring for his smell, but later reverses his decision. The Pope’s authorization of the herring’s Christian burial, masses in his honor, and canonization has no basis whatsoever in canon law, but is instead motivated by his distaste for the dead fish’s “filthy redolence.” Nashe’s continuing satire of Lenten “stuff” through the Pope’s subsequent canonization of the red herring as “saint Gildarde” reiterates the arbitrary nature of the herring’s piscatorial ascension by recalling the historical liberties granted the fishing “guilds” of its native Yarmouth: “See if you can finde out such a saint as saint Gildarde; which in honour of this guilded fish the Pope so ensainted...but in the

mitigation of the very embers whereon he was sindged...hee ordained ember weekes in their memory, to be fasted euerlastingly” (III.211). Canonizing the herring as “saint Gildarde,” Nashe invokes a little-known Catholic saint for the sake of punning on “gild,” in the sense of golden riches, and the fishermen’s “guilds” of Yarmouth. Nashe’s subversive return to the subject of his encomium once more negates “praise.” Additionally, the Pope’s absurd allocation of fasting weeks to honor a fish recalls the controversy of political Lent and keeps the focus of Nashe’s criticism on the contemporary English Crown. Finally, the ridiculousness of this entire scenario elevates Nashe’s interrogation of the arbitrary nature of Crown authority into a joke which, for Nashe and his predecessor Erasmus, is serious business.

Nashe’s red herring fundamentally embodies both rhetorical diversion and the thematic subtext he occludes: his invective attack on the arbitrary nature of the Crown’s authority. Ironically, Nashe criticizes readers of his earlier works who have “fisht out such a deepe politique state meaning as if I had al the secrets of court or common-wealth at my fingers endes” (III.215). However, I would argue that, yet again, he protests too much. In *Lenten Stuffe*, the accrual of seditious criticism underlying Nashe’s chronicle, autobiography, and allegory is submerged in comedy, but rises to the surface when we heed his admonition to look “into the text it selfe” (III.215). Moreover, Nashe’s tone throughout conveys a sense that since he has already been punished for sedition, he may as well commit the crime.

Unfortunately, Nashe’s punishment was not limited to his two years of exile following *Ile of Dogs*. Within six months of the publication of *Lenten Stuffe*,

Archbishop Whitgift ordered “that all Nasshes bookes and Doctor Harveyes bookes be taken wheresoever they maye be founde, and that none of their bookes bee ever printed hereafter” (Stationer’s Register, III.677, qtd. in Nicholl 264). Whitgift’s censorship was not limited to Nashe and Harvey, but I believe that Nashe’s sustained interrogation of Crown authority in *Lenten Stuffe* and the subversion of “praise” embodied by the red herring certainly contributed to the “blanket suppression” of Nashe’s works (Nicholl 264). Although Nashe’s rhetorical diversions have historically convinced modern readers that *Lenten Stuffe* “is what it claims to be,” his aggressive denunciation of Crown authority appears not to have escaped Elizabeth’s chief censor.

By pushing past a critical history that dwells on Nashe’s themelessness, we recognize that underneath the comedy of *Lenten Stuffe* lies a subtext of outrage that incites controversy bordering on treason. Although Nashe portrays the world as “decayed and corrupt” in *The Unfortunate Traveller*, by redirecting his invective in *Lenten Stuffe* back to England, Nashe effectively commits literary suicide by Crown (Kinney 337). Indeed, Francis Meres’s sympathetic reference to Nashe during his exile in 1598 appears prophetic: “as Actaeon was woored of his own hounds: so is Tom Nash of his *Ile of Dogs*. Dogges were the death of *Euripides*, but bee not disconsolate gallant young *Iuuenall*, *Linus*, the sonne of *Appollo* died the same death” (*Palladis Tamia. Wit’s Treasury*. sig. Oo3^v, fol. 283^v. Printed in McKerrow V.148). Meres’s juxtaposition of Nashe and Juvenal speaks to their mutual inability to come to terms with the “outrages” around them (see Juvenal 1.51-52). But the prophecy is realized in Meres’s conflation of Nashe

and Linus. According to myth, Apollo's son Linus was killed by Hercules with his own lyre. Similarly, Nashe's Crown protest in *Lenten Stuffe* may have been the instrument of his own literary demise. Further, as the next chapter demonstrates, Nashe's protest of Crown caprice in *Lenten Stuffe* emerges in the middle of a conversational exchange between Nashe's, Marlowe's, and Ben Jonson's adaptations of Museaus's "Hero and Leander."

NOTES

¹ Stanley Wells argues *Lenten Stuffe* “is not in itself a highly controversial work. In plan it is as attractively dotty as anything he ever wrote; its ostensible theme is indicated by the subtitle” (20).

² Although this chapter focuses on Erasmus’s influence on *Lenten Stuffe*, Nashe’s sources are plentiful. As Kinney argues, Juvenal’s mock epic tale of the turbot in the fourth satire is an important source (see *Humanist Poetics*, 360). I also think that Nashe’s biblical allusions to Mark 1: 16-18 and Luke 5:2-10, as well as his nods to Aesop’s ‘Fisherman and the Fish’ fables are worth pursuing. See Aesop’s *Fables*, trans. Laura Gibbs, nos. 240 and 248; 118, 138.

³ Thomas Hearne reprinted Leland’s *Collectanea* in 1770. McKerrow establishes that Hearne’s text is a reprint of what Nashe refers to as the “Chronographical Latine table, which they haue hanging vp in their Guild hall” (see III.161; McKerrow IV.372). The final “Manship” manuscript was edited by C. J. Palmer and printed in 1847. McKerrow correctly claims that “Nashe’s description corresponds far more closely to [Manship] than to Hearne’s transcript of the Table. Not only does this manuscript add a number of details which are used by Nashe, but the coincidence of language is so striking that there can be...no doubt that the two accounts are very closely related” (IV. 373).

⁴ Curiously, neither McKerrow nor Nashe’s more recent editor, J. B. Steane, has caught Nashe’s mistake: “Henry the second” does not follow King John; Henry III does. I point to this error because the historical facts Nashe associates with “Henry the second” tie instead to Henry III’s reign. The “Cinque Ports” is an alliance of English coastal towns (Hastings, New Romney, Hythe, Dover, and Sandwich).

⁵ Although Nicholl cites Jonson’s release date as 3 October, I follow Chambers’ transcription of the Privy Council Minutes originally printed by Dasent.

⁶ Erasmus also received dispensations for his illegitimate birth and for the wearing of priestly apparel. These dispensations indubitably contributed to his lifelong interrogation of the arbitrary nature of Church mandates (see *Epistles* 14, 29, 108).

CHAPTER FOUR

“Cupid’s golden hook”: Discord and Protest among Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-century Versions of “Hero and Leander”

Thomas Nashe’s digressive imitation of Christopher Marlowe’s erotic poem “Hero and Leander” has generally been treated as an epitome of Nashe’s antic genius. C.S. Lewis contends that *Lenten Stuffe* is one of Nashe’s “best works,” and summarizes it as a “comic advertisement and a display of the skill that can talk on any subject.” Yet Lewis also believes that “our taste is a little offended” by Nashe’s transformation of Marlowe’s lovers into fish (*English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* 415). G.R. Hibbard situates Nashe’s “burlesque” of Marlowe’s poem as the “high-light” of this work and counters Lewis’ criticism by arguing: “To see what happened to “Hero and Leander” when it was vulgarized, it is only necessary to turn to Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, where it is debased into a crude puppet-show by the stupid citizen John Littlewit” (*Thomas Nashe* 246-247). Clearly, critical convention positions Nashe “between” Marlowe and Jonson, but to date we have not carefully considered the intertextual exchanges among these works.

Nashe’s translation of the lovers’ story in the context of sixteenth-century piscatorial politics has yet to be recognized as both an extension of Marlowe’s Mercury digression and a primary influence on Jonson’s play-within-a-play. Similarly, we have yet to discuss how Jonson’s recontextualization of Marlowe’s and Nashe’s versions of “Hero and Leander” with the puppets’ parody of John Edwards’ play, *Damon and Pythias*, distills a progressive subtext of social and political satire. In conversation, Nashe’s and Jonson’s versions of “Hero and

Leander” recapitulate Marlowe’s Mercury digression which predestines authority to caprice. Finally, all of these three versions of “Hero and Leander” emphasize discord at harmony’s expense and protest the rupture of classically inspired amity.

The conversation between “Hero and Leander,” *Lenten Stuffle*, and *Bartholomew Fair* formally turns on the dialectical nature of digression, and thematically exploits Ovidian mythology to undermine the doubled ideal of Neoplatonic *discordia concors* (harmonious discord).¹ All three versions represent Hero as “Venus nun” not to celebrate a “Venus-Virgo” idealization of love and chastity, but to exploit the comedy available in this contradictory imagery. Marlowe’s Mercury digression offers a foundational (albeit revisionary) history of classical myth which posits sexual desire as not only the agent of Hero and Leander’s destiny, but fate itself. Mercury’s rape of a maid in Ovid’s *Fasti* sets off a catastrophic chain of events that culminate in Marlowe’s whimsical subjection of the god of learning to the Mid-asses of the world. Immediately following his digression, Marlowe recapitulates this subtext of Olympian discord by associating Hero with Ovid’s story of Salmacis and Hermaphroditis.

Renaissance conceptions of the hermaphrodite paradoxically epitomize the harmony associated with Neoplatonism, as well as the omnipresent threat of its destruction. In one sense, the hermaphrodite represents an ideal union of “not only male and female, lover and beloved, but also materiality and spirituality” (Pescatori, “Myth of the Androgyne” 117). But hermaphrodites also convey the monstrous elision of sexual and species boundaries which Livy suggests violates natural laws distinguishing sex from sex, species from species (see *History of*

Rome 32.12). Such ambiguous figures threaten these “natural” laws which are largely reinstated by Church and State.² We can see how Marlowe’s and Nashe’s versions of “Hero and Leander” exploit the fluid duality of both Venus and the hermaphrodite to mock hypocritical expressions of erotic love and political harmony in Elizabethan society. Tellingly, Ben Jonson’s conflation of Marlowe’s and Nashe’s versions of “Hero and Leander” in *Bartholomew Fair* with *Damon and Pythias* exploits the puppets’ androgyny and extends his predecessors’ discordant portrayals of love and amity in early modern England.³

Because of the complexity of the conversation between Marlowe, Nashe, and Jonson, this chapter proceeds in three sections. First, I offer a reading of Marlowe’s “Hero and Leander” informed by Nashe and Jonson’s engagement with the poem. Close attention suggests Marlowe is less concerned with romantic love than he is with an interrogation of the (ir)rationality for the lovers’ tragedy. Specifically, Marlowe highlights the hypocrisy associated with both natural and man-made laws. In the second part, I demonstrate Nashe’s engagement with Marlowe’s poem and his transposition of Hero and Leander’s destiny onto English soil. Nashe translates Marlowe’s images of disjunctive unity directly into his chronicle of arbitrarily allocated economic “liberties” favoring Yarmouth’s fishing industry at the expense of Lowestoft’s. The final section analyzes Jonson’s incorporation of both Marlowe’s poem and Nashe’s variant of “Hero and Leander” with *Damon and Pythias*’ epitome of ideal friendship. Amidst Jonson’s intertextual cacophony lies his criticism of the hypocrisies and arbitrariness of political amity in Jacobean England.

“Desunt Nonnula”

Tempting as it may be to read Marlowe’s association of Hero with Venus and Ovid’s hermaphrodite as a Neoplatonically idealized androgyny unifying the (female) soul and (male) body (see Carter, *Ovidian Myth* 116), these similes figure disjunction and inform a paradoxically anti-erotic philosophical subtext. Arguably, the sexual instability of all of Marlowe’s main characters in “Hero and Leander” threaten both amity and *discordia concors*. For example, Marlowe describes Leander as “a maid in man’s attire” (83), and Neptune notoriously mistakes him for Jove’s Ganymede (641).⁴ Moreover, as Judith Haber has recently argued, Marlowe presents Neptune’s self-inflicted wound as an image of castration, “an image (but only an image) of a man who is both intact and lacking” (*Desire and Dramatic Form* 45). Yet, even if these hermaphroditic images are “only” images, their accrual in the figure of Hero is undeniable. Marlowe’s Mercury digression exploits Hero’s association with both Venus and Salmacis in order to criticize the endemic caprice of natural and man-made laws.

From his opening lines, Marlowe establishes Hero’s dual nature by introducing her with a superficial blazon which exploits the pun on “nun” (“none”) and foreshadows his sustained parody of idealized conceptions of Venus: “So louely faire was *Hero*, *Venus* Nun” (45). Whereas Museaus’ Hero harmonizes voluptuousness and chastity as Venus’ “youngest Grace” (Beauty), Marlowe regales readers with a detailing of Hero’s alluring clothes.⁵ Marlowe

immediately aligns her with wanton versions of Venus by describing how her “wide sleeues greene” tell the erotically charged story of Venus and Adonis (11-14), and continues to associate Hero with Venus through her choice of accessories:

Vpon her head she ware a myrtle wreath,
 From whence her vaile reach to the ground beneath.
 Her vaile was artificiall flowers and leaues,
 Whose workmanship both man and beast deceaues. (17-20)

Anticipating Cupid’s proto-Freudian projection of his mother upon Hero, Marlowe’s heroine wears Venus’ myrtle wreath symbolizing the duality of chastity and sexuality, war and peace. Recalling the vale where Adonis is seduced, Hero’s “vaile” also suggests a medieval nun’s headdress and arguably represents the *discordia concors* associated with Venus. But Marlowe strips Hero’s “vaile” of idealistic qualities by emphasizing its artificiality, its ability to deceive “both man and beast.” Finally, Marlowe’s blazon of Hero’s *accoutrements* emerges not a portrait of harmony, but one of cancellation: Hero’s clothes mark her as no nun.

Marlowe continues to associate Hero with self-cancelling virtue in

Leander’s sophisticated portrayal of her virginity:

This idoll which you terme *Virginitie*,
 Is neither essence subiect to the eie,
 No, nor to any one exterior sence,
 Nor hath it any place of residence,
 Nor is’t of earth or mold celestiall,
 Or capable of any forme at all
 Of that which hath no being, doe not boast,
 Things that are not at all, are neuer lost (269-276).

Leander posits Hero's worship of her virginity as analogous to "idoll" worship, or a worship of false gods. Additionally, Hero's virtue is fashioned in negativity; it "neither [is] essence" nor has "any place of residence." Calling Hero "a holy Idiot," Leander negates her "holy" status as Venus' nun by alluding to her anatomical "hole" and emphasizing the absence paradoxically representing her virtue. (303). Leander exploits this idealistic paradox in order to sabotage it by arguing that if she were to "abandon fruitless cold Virginitie...then shall [Hero] most resemble *Venus Nun*" (318; 320). Deftly shifting the association of nunnery from chastity to sexual desire, Leander situates Hero's duality in a scene of rhetorically doubled negativity which, despite his sophistry, does not result in a "positive," or singular, representation. Instead, Leander's doubling of Hero as "nun/none" anticipates her gradual metamorphoses into Ovid's sexually ambiguous Salmacis which begins when she swallows "*Cupids golden hook*" (333).

When Hero swallows Cupid's hook, Marlowe undermines her virtue by tacitly associating her with fish. As we know, in early modern England, the word "fish" connotes woman's leaky sexuality, female genitalia, and is sometimes a synonym for "whore." These associations prohibit idealizing Hero and Leander's courtship and recast their dalliance as "anti-erotic." In Neoplatonic contexts, the term "anti-erotic" is not used to condemn erotic love, but to criticize "low" eroticism, or sex for pleasure's sake. "Anti-erotic" love contrasts with idealized versions of erotic union stemming from reason and knowledge.⁶ Hero's struggle

between reason and desire escalates once she swallows the bait; she is both aware of Leander's sophistry and the rising power of her awakening sexual desire:

Thus hauing swallowed *Cupids* golden hooke,
 The more she striv'd, the deeper was she stroke.
 Yet euilly faining anger, stroue she still,
 And would be thought to graunt against her will.
 So hauing paus'd a while, at last shee said:
 Who taught thee Rhethoricke to deceiue a maid? (333-338)

Hero's concern is not about true (erotic) or false (anti-erotic) love, but instead about appearances. She "strives" to resist Leander even as she plots to control how any slippage on her part may be perceived. As a temporary solution, Hero rhetorically displaces the burden of the encounter onto Leander by accusing him of rhetorical "deception." The speaker "answers" Hero by transitioning into the Mercury digression. Ovid's story of Mercury in the *Fasti* has taught Leander how to exploit rhetorical sophistry to seduce and, failing seduction, to rape a maid. Marlowe supplements his digression with revisionary Ovidian narratives that emphasize the underlying hypocrisy of Neoplatonic idealism.

Marlowe's revisionary mythology in the Mercury digression depicts "alliance" more closely resembling the proverb, "the enemy of my enemy is my friend," than any kind of Pythagorean or Ciceronian ideal. At the crux of this long departure from Hero and Leander's story is a tale of desire and destruction. Mercury defies Jove while trying to seduce a maid and is thrust from Olympus. In order to regain his position, Mercury courts the "Adamantine Destinies" and forms an alliance through which they overthrow Jove and restore Saturn to reign. But as soon as he gets what he wants, Mercury "despises" the Destinies' love (460). Furious, the Fates break the alliance, restore Jove, and punish Mercury.

These shifting political alliances between Mercury and the Destinies, and later, the Destinies and Jove, are not determined by virtue and amity, but sexual desire and revenge. Finally, the maid who started all of this trouble disappears from the digression entirely, underscoring the irrationality informing this catastrophe of Olympian political order.

Marlowe continues to expose the hypocrisy underlying the arbitrary legitimization of “unnatural” laws by inventing a story about Mercury’s subjection to the Midas’ of the world.⁷ After restoring Jove to the Olympian throne, the Destinies furiously punish Mercury, ordaining

That he and *Pouertie* should always kis.
And to this day is euerie scholler poore,
Grosse gold, from them runs headlong to the boore.
Likewise the angrie sisters thus deluded,
To venge themselues on *Hermes*, haue concluded
That *Midas* brood shall sit in Honors chaire (469-474)

Because he “despised” the Destinies, Mercury is fated to kiss not pretty maids, but poverty; additionally, “euery scholler” must serve “*Midas* brood.” As David Riggs observes, “what especially galls the author of *Hero and Leander* is the impact of wealth on the world of learning. Not only do scholars labor under a sentence of poverty,” but “rich boors actually claim the places of honor that rightfully belong to the scholars” (*World of Christopher Marlowe* 303). By portraying the Destinies’ absurd elevation of Midas and the scholars’ subsequent subjection to these “rich boors,” Marlowe’s digression emphasizes the material injustice that can result from gods (or monarchs) behaving badly (Riggs 303).

Marlowe’s concurrent shift into the present tense, to “this day,” transforms pagan fiction into then-contemporary political commentary emphasizing the

material consequences of arbitrary authority. Claude Summers argues that Marlowe uses his “deliciously potted history of the ancient religion to attack indirectly the supernatural order of his own day by turning it on its head.” Summers additionally asserts that Marlowe’s “literal-minded” translation of Ovid “mocks his culture’s dominant practice of co-opting and Christianizing classical myth and literature” (“Hero and Leander” 138). Marlowe’s juxtaposition of Ovidian injustices with “this day” suggests that Elizabethan politics bear a closer resemblance to mythological antecedents than Marlowe’s moralizing or typologically allegorizing contemporaries may admit. I would also suggest that Marlowe draws at least a tenuous connection between Olympian and Elizabethan politics through his subsequent affiliation of the lovers with the Ovidian hermaphrodite.

Following this digressive account of Mercury’s eternal subjection to the Mid-asses of the world, Hero faints: “By this, sad *Hero*, with loue vnacquainted, / Viewing *Leanders* face, fell downe and fainted” (485-486). Leander is naked, of course, but the phrase “by this” references the digression as much as Leander’s nakedness. Indeed, Hero’s faint is in lock-step with the story she has just heard about anti-erotic love, arbitrary authority, and material consequences that do *not* follow; the scholars’ suffering for Mercury’s misdeeds is plainly unjust. At Leander’s kiss, Hero awakens more socially and sexually sophisticated than she was before the digression. Indicating her imminent association with Salmacis, Hero is initially concerned about being “counted light” and flees in order to maintain her chaste reputation (493). But Hero soon engages in a brief epistolary

correspondence that implicitly evokes Ovid's more sexually aggressive heroine and turns her into a "greedie louer" (see *Heroides*; 508). Still, Hero's apprehension resurfaces and she continues to oscillate until Cupid "fans the fire" (525):

Now waxt she iealous, least his loue abated,
Fearing, her owne thoughts made her to be hated.
Therefore vnto him hastily she goes,
And like light *Salmacis*, her body throes. (527-531)

Once Marlowe aligns Hero with Ovid's Salmacis, her attraction to Leander turns dark; she is "iealous" and "throes" herself on the object of her desire.

In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Salmacis rapes an actively resistant Hermaphroditus, and the gods, "pliant to her boone," reward her by manifesting their union eternally. Hermaphroditus, horrified that he has become "but half a man," then begs his parents, Venus and Mercury, to decree that all who enter their pool share his fate (IV.479-81). Ovid offers no rationalization for the Olympian legitimization of Salmacis' violent desires and reiterates this subtext of legislative caprice when Hermaphroditus' wish is granted. Marlowe, and subsequently, Nashe and Jonson, represent the intercourse between Salmacis' desire and Hermaphroditus' distaste as resulting in the perpetual reproduction of arbitrarily adjudicated justice. Hero's metaphorical association with Salmacis following the Mercury digression not only thwarts *discordia concors*, but may offer an alternate bastard-child to Venus and Mars' daughter Harmony. Hero's resemblance to Venus, informed by both her attire and the juxtaposition of her story with Mercury's, results in an image of hermaphroditic union tacitly reminding readers

that Harmony is, despite her Neoplatonic gloss, as much a product of illicit union as Hermaphroditus.

Marlowe underscores the hypocrisy of natural and man-made laws by conflating two allusions to Aesop in his description of Leander: “like *Aesops* cocke, this iewell he enioyed, / And as a brother with his sister toyed” (535-536). “Cocke” and “iewell” allude to Aesop’s much discussed story of the “Rooster and the Pearl.”⁸ Aesop’s generally accepted moral posits value as determined by desire for the object at hand; the Rooster does not value the manure-covered pearl, therefore it has none. In the context of this fable, Leander would *not* enjoy “this jewel” because it has no value to him. This intertextual devaluation of Hero’s “iewell” often leads readers to interpret the line: “like *Aesop*’s cock...as a brother with his sister toyed” as indicating Leander’s sexual ignorance; yet the suggestion, like the situation, is ambiguous.

Marlowe’s coterminous allusion to Aesop’s “Cat and the Rooster” implies that Hero and Leander’s “sibling play” is analogous to the predestined caprice of authority figures suggested by the Mercury digression. In Aesop’s fable, the Cat condemns the Rooster for committing incest with his mother and sisters. Debating the incest taboo, however, is not Aesop’s point. What matters is that the Rooster’s master licenses his breaking of the incest taboo for material gain. By eating the Rooster, the Cat emphasizes the unnaturalness of authorizing incest by doing what does come naturally: cats eat birds. Through these allusions, Marlowe suggests that hypocrisy is part of nature; and discord, not harmony, rules the day.

The connotations of disjunction carried in Marlowe's allusions to Aesop echo the critique of amity in the Mercury digression. Again emphasizing the schismatic effect of desire on political alliances, Marlowe metaphorically associates Hero's virginity with royalty:

Ne're king more fought to keep his diademe;
 Than Hero this inestimable gemme.
 Aboue our life we loue a steadfast friend,
 Yet when a token of great worth we send,
 We often kisse it, often look thereon,
 And stay the messenger that would be gon:
 No maruell then, though *Hero* would not yield (563-576)

Marlowe's alignment of this "gemme" (virginity) that he has previously devalued with a "token" of friendship suggests a rhetorical debasement of amity. The line, "aboue our life we loue a steadfast friend," sounds like proverbial wisdom; the word "yet," however, negates idealization and implies that even "steadfast" friendship can be thwarted by the sending of a "token." Because Marlowe's portrayal of the lovers is epitomized by Mercury's deceitful promises to the Destinies in exchange for divine favors, I suggest this "token" invokes what Tom MacFaul describes as the "purely transactional" nature of "the idea of amity that binds the nation together" (*Male Friendship in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* 116). This "token"— a metonymic representation that can never be the "thing" itself— explodes amity and the power associated with Hero's "diademe."

One of the most remarkable aspects of Marlowe's poem is that it provides no sense of closure. Romantic comedy all but insists on rough spots before the course of true love can run smooth, but the narrative arc of "Hero and Leander"

gives us something altogether different. Rather than ecstatic union, we find a pervasive sense of disjunction repeated in the self-cancelling images of “no-things.” Ironically, Edward Blount’s 1598 publication of the poem concludes with the line “desunt nonnulla,” or, “some things are lacking.” Pointing to the broader sense of what is “lacking” here, Haber observes that “the disruption of end-directive narrative is paralleled by, and indeed equivalent to, the disruption of end-directed sexuality” (43). Additionally, Marlowe disrupts the notion of *discordia concors* by invoking Venus and Mercury in the context of hermaphroditic imagery and exposes the inherent aberrance of natural and man-made laws. Marlowe’s topsy-turvy representation of Olympian politics manifesting desire as destiny formally thwarts any kind of Neoplatonic “love story” while simultaneously annihilating associations with stability or amity. Whereas Marlowe’s materialistic critique of “love” is obfuscated by titillating erotic moments and discursive distractions, Nashe translates images of hermaphroditic metamorphoses, as well as Marlowe’s representations of Mercury, Midas, and Aesop’s cock, directly into the political tension characterizing the enmity between Yarmouth and Lowestoft.

“The dint of destiny”

Invoking his “diuiner Muse, *Kit Marlow*,” Nashe exploits the disjunction associated with hermaphroditic metamorphoses to criticize the arbitrariness of desire and its “unnatural” manifestation in both the literary and fish markets in

Elizabethan England (III.195). Unlike Marlowe, Nashe does not limit hermaphroditic transformation to imagery or suggestive allusions, but metamorphoses Hero and Leander directly into fish. Although *Lenten Stuffe* masquerades as an encomium and chronicle of Yarmouth's fishing industry, Nashe's "praise" obscures a subtext of virulent invective directed against the Crown for perpetuating enmity and material inequity between Yarmouth and Lowestoft. Subsequently, Nashe localizes "Hero and Leander" on the Norfolk coast in order to recapitulate the disjunction Marlowe associates with political amity and erotic harmony in the context of sixteenth-century piscatorial politics. Following Nashe, I have organized my argument according to the most prominent shared points of contact between *Lenten Stuffe* and "Hero and Leander." First, I examine Nashe's nod to Marlowe's reinvention of Ovid's Midas and their shared use of hermaphroditic imagery. Next, I will analyze Nashe's treatment of Marlowe's allusions to Aesop along with the implications of Hero's swallowing of "Cupid's golden hook." Nashe's digressive rendering of the lovers' story, like Marlowe's, emphasizes the latent hypocrisy informing Neoplatonic and Elizabethan constructs of "harmony."

Nashe's segue from his chronicle of Yarmouth into his adaptation of "Hero and Leander" adds texture to Marlowe's digressive account of Mercury's subjection to Midas. Although Nashe later discusses the subjugation of Learning to Midas in his narration of Hero's dream, his first mention burlesques capricious authority:

That fable of Midas eating gold had no other shadow or inclusiue pith in it, but he was of a queasie stomacke, and nothing hee coulde fancie but

this newe found gilded fish....Midas, vnexperienst of the nature of it, (for he was a foole that had asses eares,) snapt it vp at one blow, & because, in the boyling or seathing of it in his maw, he felt it commotion a little and vpbraide him, he thought that he had eaten golde in deede, and thereupon directed his Orizons to Bacchus afresh, to helpe it out of his crop again. (III.193)

Nashe's emendatory myth suggests that Midas never ate gold, but craved instead this novel "gilded fish." On one level of interpretation, "gilded" connotes "gilded," or a "golden" fish – the red herring. When Midas eats the fish, he becomes ill and begs Bacchus to help him vomit. Insofar as Bacchus authorizes Midas' gratuitous gluttony, he epitomizes the kind of arbitrary authority which Nashe repeatedly condemns in *Lenten Stuffe*. But the sick-making properties of this "gilded" fish also cast suspicion on the fishing "guilds" of Yarmouth which regulate the herring trade. Nashe represents Yarmouth's fishing monopoly as having been arbitrarily sanctioned by Crown authorities from William the Conqueror's reign to the present. Throughout the chronicle portion of *Lenten Stuffe*, Nashe tacitly accuses Yarmouth of exploiting her "moath-eaten" neighbors, among them, his home town of Lowestoft (III.174).⁹ In the context of Norfolk coast fishing politics, Midas' greedy wastefulness of the herring analogizes Yarmouth's wealth in contrast to her poorer neighbors.

At the same time, Nashe's allusion to Midas expands Marlowe's portrayal of the lovers' subjection to the caprice of "this day" into the literary marketplace (Marlowe 470). Like Midas' herring, Hero and Leander are objects of consumption even before their piscine metamorphoses. Nashe speaks to the popularity of the 1598 printing of Marlowe's poem: "Twoo faithfull louers they were, as euerie apprentice in Paules churchyard will tell you for your loue, and sel

you for your mony” (195). St. Paul’s churchyard was dominated by booksellers; printers’ apprentices hawked their masters’ pamphlets and ballads outside the cathedral. Cynically, Nashe’s phrasing elides the discourses of love and profit from the outset (“tell you for your loue, and sel you for mony”). In the same paragraph, Nashe translates the politics of the marketplace into those of the English fishing industry; Leander is from Abidos in Asia, and Hero is from Sestos in Europe; “and their townes that like Yarmouth and Leystoffe were still at wrig wrag, & suckt fro[m] their mothers teates serpentine hatred one against each other” (III.195).

After establishing a setting of political conflict, Nashe introduces his heroine as having learned her Marlovian lessons about the hypocrisy of female chastity and the interdependence of desire and fate in both the mortal and immortal worlds. Playing on Marlowe’s line, “what vertue is it, that is borne with us” (278), Nashe’s Hero reflects:

Fate is a spaniel that you cannot beate from you; the more you thinke to crosse it, the more you blesse it and further it. Neither her father nor mother vowed chastitie when she was begote, therefore she thought they begat her not to live chaste, & either she must prove her self a bastard, or shew herselfe like them. (III.196)

Like Marlowe, Nashe ascribes the operations of “fate” to desire itself. Hero demonstrates awareness that her fate is tied directly to her parents’ carnal appetites and jokingly acknowledges the impossibility of extricating oneself from the ardor that initiates human reproduction. Despite the surface comedy, these connotations of desire and hypocrisy run throughout Hero and Leander’s piscine transformations.

Much as Marlowe's hermaphroditic imagery hampers the lovers' progress, Nashe's association of Hero with Salmacis impedes intercourse. Nashe's description of Leander through Hero's eyes directly echoes Marlowe's Ovidian allusion: "Of Leander...she likte well, and for all he was a naked man, and cleane despoyled to the skinne...O, ware a naked man...Were hee neuer so naked when he came to her" (III.196). Ovid's version reads: "When Salmacis behilde / His naked beautie, such strong pangs so ardently hir hilde, / That utterly she was astraught" (IV.426-428). Although Leander's nakedness is all that is necessary for Nashe's Hero engage in "scuffling or bopeepe in the darke," consummation is ambiguous (III.196). Perhaps because Ovid's *Heroides* have led readers to expect sexual intercourse, "scuffling" and "bopeepe" have traditionally been read as such, especially in the context of McKerrow's conclusion that Hero becomes pregnant.¹⁰ However, the *OED* has also cited Nashe's phrase as an exemplary derivative of the verb "to scuffle": "To struggle confusedly *together* or *with* another or others" (v. 3.1). "Bo-peep" is a nursery game of hide and seek (n. 1). Together, "scuffling" and "bo-peep" imply the kind of sibling play we find in Marlowe's poem (535-536). Nashe echoes Marlowe's lovers' "want" of organs and complicates the trajectory of heteronormative union. These images also augur Hero and Leander's later species transformation and posthumous subjection to Yarmouth and Lowestoft's political enmity.

But first, Nashe digresses (within his digression) to treat the duration of Leander's fatal swim as an opportunity to revisit Marlowe's portrayal of the

scholars' fate in the context of Aesop's fables. While Leander swims, Hero tries to sleep:

All that liue long night could she not sleepe, she was so troubled with the rheume; which was a signe she shoulde heare of some drowning: Yet towards cocke-crowing she caught a little slumber, and then shee dreamed that Leander and shee were playing at checkestone with pearles in the bottome of the sea. (III.197)

Nashe's representation of Hero and Leander playing jacks with pearls associatively continues Marlowe's conflation of Aesopian allusions. Nashe is similarly concerned about the hypocritical licensing of "unnatural" law – the incest taboo – by the cock's master. By the end of his digression, Nashe will translate the master's aberrant legislation into Hero and Leander's transformation into fish and, consequently, their subjection to Crown rule.

Nashe juxtaposes this accrual of Aesopian intertextuality with Marlowe's argument that scholars – like pearls before cocks – have no value in an economy driven by arbitrary law-making:

The rheume is the students disease, and who study most, dreame most...the blowing and blistring of our braines after our day labouring cogitations are dreames, and those dreames are reaking vapours of no impression, if our matelesse cowches be not halfe empty. Hero hoped, and therefore she dreamed (as all hope is but a dreame). (III.197)

McKerrow comments that he has not encountered the association of dreaming with scholarship elsewhere; Nashe seems to build on Marlowe's innovative narrative about Midas and scholars. If scholars are destined to serve the Midases of the world, then Nashe posits their dreams as only "reaking vapours." Nashe's parenthesis, "hope is but a dream," magnifies the futility implied in Marlowe's version. Hero's dream is, in equal parts, prophetic and fruitless; she awakens to

find Leander's corpse on the beach before throwing herself in after him. Nashe presents Hero's self-sacrifice as a consequence of her predecessor's swallowing of "Cupid's golden hook"; she is transformed into a red herring (Marlowe 333).

Proclaiming that "the dint of destiny could not be repald in the reuiuing of *Hero & Leander*," Nashe suggests that Hero and Leander's fate has been determined not necessarily by Museaus or Marlowe, but by the enmity between Yarmouth and Lowestoft. At the ostensible "end" of the lovers' narrative, Nashe recalls the beginning of Marlowe's poem: "For they were either of them seaborderers and drowned in the sea, stil to the sea they must belong, and bee diuided in habitation after death, as they were in their life time" (III.199). By recalling Marlowe's opening portrayal of Hero and Leander as "Sea-borderers, disjointed by Neptune's might," Nashe returns to Marlowe's Ovidian portrayals of supernatural hypocrisy and capricious desire in order to project them upon English piscatorial politics (3). In the context of Nashe's chronicle of the longstanding political enmity between Yarmouth and Lowestoft, the text metaphorically aligns "Neptune's might" with the Crown. According to Nashe, Crown legislated inequity between Yarmouth and Lowestoft is not a strictly Elizabethan problem, but reaches back to the reign of William the Conqueror. Still, Nashe argues, neither Queen Mary nor Elizabeth "withered vp their hands" to offer aid to Yarmouth's neighbors (III.165). Therefore, in the current political climate, the lovers in Nashe's version cannot be united because the local factions are divided. Hero and Leander's ultimate metamorphoses into the herring and ling

fish do not prevent the separation incurred by Leander's drowning, but reiterate division.

Hero and Leander's metamorphoses into fish also do not function like the transformations in Chapman's continuation of Marlowe's poem. Instead of following Chapman and transforming the lovers into birds so they may live on in unison, Nashe's fish compound Marlowe's disjunctive portrayal of love and amity in a definitively English context.¹¹ In the vein of Livy, Nashe puts pressure on the violation of natural law which intersexed and/or interspecies hermaphrodites represent. Describing "dread forms of animals," Livy discusses children of "uncertain sex" in the same passage as lambs born with pig's heads. Livy finally expostulates: "All these disgusting and monstrous creatures seemed to be signs that nature was confusing species; but beyond all else the hermaphrodites caused terror" (*History of Rome* 31.12.6-7). Livy is terrified that the breach of natural law exhibited by an intersexed or dual-species body will extend to the body politic. *Lenten Stuffe's* final metamorphosis of Hero and Leander speaks to this anxiety. Nashe does not emphasize the lovers' physical monstrosity, but rather the injustice manifest in their piscine subjection to English Crown politics:

Hero, for that she was pagled and timpanized, and sustained two losses vnder one, they footebald their heades together, & protested to make the stem of her loynes of all fishes the flanting Fabian or Palmerin of England, which is Cadwallader Herring, and, as their meetings were but seldome, and not so oft as welcome, so but seldome should they meete in the heele of the weeke at the best mens tables. (III.199)¹²

Nashe underscores the elusiveness of consummation in Marlowe's poem by prohibiting it entirely. As fish, Hero and Leander engage in external reproduction; the closest they may come to sexual intercourse is to "football" their heads

together. Finally, when the lovers do “meete,” Nashe puns on “meat” to posit Hero and Leander – yet again – as objects of consumption – as Lenten food, as Lenten “stuff.”

Nashe’s closing remarks about the fate of Hero and Leander suggests that the “contentions” between Yarmouth and Lowestoft are responsible for the lovers’ separation. Ultimately, Hero abandons Leander, and Nashe blames the towns’ political rivalry:

Louing Hero, how euer altered, had a smack of loue stil, & therefore to the coast of louing-land (to Yarmouth neere adioyning, & within her liberties of Kirtley roade) she accustomed to come in pilgrimage eury yeare, but contentions arising there, and shee remembering the euent of the contentions betwixt *Sestos* and *Abidos*, that wrought both *Leanders* death and hers. (III. 200-201)

Nashe’s mention of the Kirtley road confirms Hero and Leander’s repatriation in Elizabethan England, and they are now subject to the rules of the Crown, or on a smaller scale, the (disproportionate) fishing liberties allocated each to Yarmouth and Lowestoft. Quite simply, Yarmouth and Lowestoft’s political warring has become too much for Hero to bear. Further, Hero acknowledges that she and Leander were killed by precisely these “contentions.” The real “highlight” here is Nashe’s translation of Marlowe’s anti-erotic criticism of the material consequences of sexual desire directly into his chronicle of Crown-mandated inequity that has set Yarmouth and Lowestoft at “wrig-wrag” for centuries (III.162).

“Fresh herring”

Although Marlowe’s and Nashe’s works, historical personas, and political notoriety contribute to reading elements of their versions of Hero and Leander as “protest literature,” Jonson may initially seem to be the odd man out. Peter Lake summarizes conventional wisdom by arguing that if Jonson protests anything in *Bartholomew Fair*, it would be the theatre itself, “the tawdry vulgarity and shameless populism which he affected to despise” (*Anti-Christ’s Lewd Hat* 591). But the progressive intertextual conversation between Marlowe’s, Nashe’s, and Jonson’s works complicates standard readings of *Bartholomew Fair*. We also have yet to examine how Jonson’s conflation of these conversational exchanges with John Edwards’ dramatization of perfect friendship in *Damon and Pythias* colors the closing reconciliation of the fairgoers. I offer two correctives to modern criticism in this section.

First, I will demonstrate that Jonson draws as much from Nashe’s version of “Hero and Leander” as he does from Marlowe’s. James Savage’s 1973 recognition of “three fairly minute” points of contact between Nashe and Jonson’s versions of “Hero and Leander” has been long neglected, partly because of a damning book review.¹³ Despite Savage’s weaknesses, his unique approach to establishing a relationship between Nashe and Jonson merits a brief examination. Next, this section argues that Jonson’s conflation of “Hero and Leander” with *Damon and Pythias* directly engages with Nashe’s transposition of Marlowe’s lovers from Abydos and Sestos into the political tension raging between

Yarmouth and Lowestoft.¹⁴ For his part, Jonson exploits the intersections of arbitrary law making, gender, sex, and species we find in Marlowe's and Nashe's texts to undermine the ideal Edwards offers in *Damon and Pythias*. Whereas "amity" had been corrupted by Olympian and Crown politics in Marlowe's and Nashe's versions, Jonson's densely intertextual puppet show explodes the concept into a cloud of vapors.

Recently, Scott C. Lucas has argued, rightly I think, that Jonson protests too much when the Scrivener in the Induction to *Bartholomew Fair* cautions us not to view the play as "a mirror of magistrates," a generic posture which writers adopt to offer advice – and criticism - to kings. Lucas also asserts that Jonson's prohibition paradoxically implies a directive to read the play as "topically allusive in form and politically interventionary in purpose" (*A Mirror for Magistrates and the Politics of the English Reformation*).¹⁵ I would add that Jonson's epilogue, advising the King that he is the best judge of the play, reiterates this mirror/advice trope and validates considering what form "political intervention" may take in the play.

Critical attention to Jonson's puppet show has largely been concerned with Dionysius's confutation of Zeal-of-the-land-Busy at the expense of sustained analysis of how this character conveys his joint invocation of "Hero and Leander" and *Damon and Pythias*. Kenneth Gross comments that the play-within-a-play represents "at best the shreds of both of these works, since all characters in this puppet show have been converted into obscene, violent, and squeaking denizens of contemporary London" ("Puppets Dallying" 286). Scott Cutler Shershow,

William J. Slights, and Laura Levine all nod to the puppet Dionysius without discussing the implications of Jonson's allusion to the discourse of ideal friendship in the context of the Fair. Only Savage has suggested that Jonson borrows Dionysius from Nashe, yet he insists that these nods to *Damon and Pythias* are merely "of the same casual sort" (146).

Savage fails, however, to recognize the conversation at play among Marlowe, Nashe, and Jonson. Although Savage correctly notes that Jonson alludes to Nashe's version of Dionysius, his interpretation is incomplete. According to Savage, Jonson follows Nashe and mixes up two individuals, each named Dionysius:

Nashe has confused two entirely different men of the name Dionysius, one who was, according to Diogenes Laertius, the teacher of Plato, and the tyrant whose name is associated with the names of Damon and Pythias. Jonson's Dionysius was a schoolmaster in a Scrivener's gown, and a ghost besides. Nashe's playful account of how the subjects of Dionysius believed the red herring to be Jupiter in one of his many forms, and of how Dionysius disabused them of the belief – "flead him, and thrust him downe his pudding house at a gobbe" – leads him by his own strange logic, into an account of "howe the Herring first came to be a fish." (146)

Rather than confusing two versions of Dionysius in *Lenten Stuffe*, however, Nashe deliberately combines three.

Dionysius first appears in *Lenten Stuffe* immediately following Nashe's story about Midas and Bacchus. Bacchus and Dionysius are, of course, interchangeable names used respectively by Romans and Greeks. Nashe's "Dionysius" is already a conflation of the god who licenses Midas' behavior and the tyrant King. Although Savage argues that Dionysius "disabused" the

townspeople of their belief that the glorious red herring is really Jupiter, a full quotation from Nashe demonstrates otherwise:

Dionisius... thrust him down his pudding house at a gobbe: yet long it not prospered with him, (so reuengefull a iust Iupiter is the red Herring,) for as he tare him from his throne, and vncased him of his habiliments, so, in small deuolution of yeres, from his throne was he chaced, and cleane stript out of his royaltie, & glad to go play the Schoolemaister at Corinth, and take a rode in his hand for his scepter, and horne-booke Pigmeis for his subiects. (III.194)

Nashe does not confuse the tyrant king version of Dionysius with the Corinthian schoolmaster, but he does strip Bacchus/Dionysius of his divinity by echoing Midas' experience with the red herring. Just as Midas felt the herring "commotion a little and vpbraide him," the fish does not "prosper" with Dionysius. My guess is that Dionysius also vomits the fish. More importantly, Nashe traces the devolution of the pagan god to a mortal king whom "iust Iupiter" strips clean of his royalty. We come full circle when we recognize that Dionysius is now a Schoolmaster – a scholar – and thus subject to the rule of Midas.¹⁶ As we know from Marlowe's "Hero and Leander," the scholar is doomed to serve Midas, thus Nashe's invocation is not tangential, but consistent with his predecessor. Finally, in *Bartholomew Fair*, Jonson nods, not "casually," but deliberately to the implications of scholars serving the Midases of the world. Jonson figures Midas most directly in the character of Bartholomew Cokes.

Jonson juxtaposes pagan and Elizabethan authority by characterizing Cokes as Midas, licensed by Bacchus to consume indiscriminately and by the Fates to figure the disjunction between knowledge and desire. At the same time, we must remember, Apollo transforms Midas into an ass when he fails to

proclaim his preference for the god's music over Pan's in the *Metamorphoses*. Collectively, Midas figures the stupidity, hypocrisy, and arbitrary authority which Marlowe and Nashe also exploit.¹⁷ In *Bartholomew Fair*, Cokes embodies the fluidity of these Midasian connotations. First, Jonson materially figures Cokes' buying power into the license permitting him to marry Grace Wellborn. Yet Wasp suggests Cokes is too stupid to possess this license. Wasp takes the license from his master for safekeeping, explaining: "you are an ass, sir" (3.5.221). Later, possibly alluding to Shakespeare's "translated" Nick Bottom from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Jonson reiterates the association of Cokes with Midas when Edgworth "tickles him in the ear with a straw twice" to distract him so that he can steal his purse (SD 3.5.147). Finally, when Cokes appears eagerly anticipating the puppet show – if we have missed these allusions to the asinine figure of Midas – Jonson has him punningly exclaim: "mine ears long to be at it" (5.4.103). In conversation with Nashe and Marlowe, Jonson's extension of the Midas story through the characters of Wasp and Cokes burlesques Marlowe's explanation of how the scholars' subjugation to the rich Midases is "licensed by authority." At the same time, Cokes recalls Nashe's Dionysius, circularly doomed to serve his own idiocy (5.3.13).

The marital alliance between Cokes and Justice Overdo also makes us question the degree to which the licensing authorities may also be considered Midas-like. Keith M. Botelho explains that "the fair itself is a place of dangerous license for Jonson, where the attempts to impose order on this disorderly public space...proved fruitless because the many warrants that circulate freely authorize

behavior and actions that they were not intended to authorize” (*Renaissance Earwitnesses* 107). Most often, “license” represents an exchange of commodities, of wives, pigs, prostitutes, ballads, gingerbread, and even plays. As Richard A. Burt has established, “license” and “licentiousness” are commodified as “things” undifferentiated from the wares on sale at the Fair (see “Licensed by Authority”). Because Overdo’s wife is Cokes’ sister, Cokes (Midasian “license”) and Overdo (licensed authority) are related – by law. Jonson’s comic genius is on full display when he exploits this association in the context of Nashe’s gluttonous Midas. Cokes’ sister, Mistress Overdo, gets so drunk at the fair that she publicly vomits (SD 5.6.67). In this scene, regurgitation analogizes the derivation of “licentiousness” from “license.”

Jonson embodies the commodification of “license,” in all of its heteroglossic glory, in the puppets. Developing Nashe’s portrayal of Hero and Leander as objects for consumption on the literary marketplace, Leatherhead surveys the “license” Littlewit has taken in modernizing the play. Leatherhead explains that the puppets do not play “according to the printed book” that Cokes has (miraculously) read (5.3.99) because, as Leatherhead explains, “that is too learned and poetical for our audience. What do they know what Hellespont is, ‘Guilty of true love’s blood,’ Or what Abydos is? Or ‘the other Sestos hight’” (5.3.102-105). Levine rightly observes that these lines manifest Jonson’s indebtedness to Marlowe’s poem, but they additionally indicate Jonson’s shift into direct borrowings from *Lenten Stuffe*.

One of the most obvious indicators that he draws from *both* sources appears when he puns, suggestively, on “fish” and geographically establishes “Fish Street” as Smithfield’s prostitution row: “It is Hero....come over into Fish Street to eat some fresh herring” (5.3.143-4). Jonson’s juxtaposition of “Hero,” “Fish,” and “herring” recalls both Marlowe’s and Nashe’s hermaphroditic imagery and the sexual and species crossings signaling disjunction and inequity. But Jonson literalizes these subtexts by translating Hero, Leander, Damon, Pythias, and Dionysius into puppets.

As the production of “Hero and Leander” is about to get underway, Jonson deploys Cokes to compromise the love story and “pretty passages of friendship” to come. Upon seeing the puppets, Cokes exclaims: “I am in love with the actors already, and I’ll be allied to them presently” (5.3.122-127). Arguably, Cokes is already a puppet-like figure and, without his purse, is of equal stature with his new “friends.” Imitating Nashe’s reversal of servitude through his conflation of Bacchus/Dionysius figures, Jonson posits his Midas figure as a puppet engaged in the cyclical consumption which characterizes the Fair’s economy. Yet Cokes’ affiliation is at the same time painfully superficial and grounded in the arbitrariness of desire that Jonson, following Nashe, exploits to expose the hypocrisy of consumer-driven “amity” through his conflation of “Hero and Leander” with Edwards’ *Damon and Pythias*.¹⁸

Jonson’s synthesis of *Damon and Pythias* with “Hero and Leander” emphasizes the superficiality of alliances determined not by love, but mutual enmity. Hero’s presence on “Fish Street” casts her as a whore and foreshadows

her sexual interference with Damon and Pythias' friendship. Leatherhead narrates the scene which follows:

Now, gentles, to the friends, who in number are two,
 And lodged in that ale-house in which fair Hero does do:
 Damon (for some kindness done him the last week)
 Is come fair Hero in Fish Street this morning to seek
 Pythias does smell the knavery of the meeting,
 And now you shall see their true friendly greeting. (5. 4.207-212)

Puppet Pythias' greeting of "whoremasterly slave" suggests that the "kindness" Hero performed for Damon was to be his whore (5.4.213). Unlike Edwards' version wherein Damon and Pythias' only quarrel is who will die for whom out of devout friendly love, Jonson's friends fight about which of them lay with Hero.¹⁹ Leatherhead tries to interrupt their quarreling; Pythias calls him a pimp and Damon rejoins his friend to fight their now-common enemy. Damon and Pythias' exchange of "gramercy" and renewal of their "alliance" is effected by their shared enmity for first Leatherhead, and later Hero and Leander.

The puppets' later accusations that Hero is a "whore out of door" reiterate the association of Hero with a prostitute, but Jonson rhetorically fuses the identities of the puppets by making them verbally echo one another's nonsense speech. This fusion simultaneously mocks the "interchangeability" of true friends and ironically figures the disjunction between love and desire, license and licentiousness. Whereas Edwards' dramatization of friendship's epitome emphasizes the reproducibility of true friendship's virtues, Jonson emphasizes the reproducibility of vapors. The most comically potent lines begin when Leander cries: "A pox on your manners, kiss my hole here and smell" (5.4.129). Later, after Hero is kissing Leander, puppet Damon calls her a whore. Hero then exposes

her “haunches”; her ass-whore/hole kissing scene directly echoes Leander’s and verbally conflates the two characters.²⁰ Despite the erotic associations easily drawn from such a scene, I suggest that Hero’s open sexuality is not wholly at issue – she is, after all, a puppet. Instead, the real concern appears to be that she and her (literary) comrades – like Marlowe’s pamphlets and Nashe’s fish – are for sale at the Fair.²¹

Dionysius’s ghostly reappearance reinforces Jonson’s undercutting of amity throughout the play. Leatherhead presents the reformed tyrant king arising from the grave to chastise Damon and Pythias for fighting, but Dionysius does not resolve the puppets’ quarrel and restore amity. Instead, Busy interrupts and famously debates with Dionysius until Busy is “converted.”

For modern readers, Edwards’s conversion of the tyrant King Dionysius seems to happen quite quickly, but in actuality, it follows a protreptic two-hour dramatization of the virtues of amity. In contrast, Busy’s “conversion” results from exchanging insults with a puppet and appears absurd by comparison. We usually credit the antitheatricalists Stephen Gosson and Philip Stubbes for Busy’s Deuteronomy-inspired rant that men should not wear women’s clothing. But I would insist that Jonson also echoes Marlowe’s and Nashe’s deployment of gender and species crossing to implicate gods and monarchs on charges of injustice. The subtext of Busy’s argument – what is “profane” about the puppets – is the ambiguity of their gender. Although Levine has argued that “in the world the puppet presents to Busy...there is no “thing” under the sign, no genital under the costume for the sign to refer to,” we could argue that, as a puppet, Dionysius

is already double gendered (*Men in Women's Clothing* 89). Etymologically, “puppet” is a variant of “poppet” that has evolved from the Latin “pupa” meaning “girl” or “doll” (*OED*).²² Because “puppet” is consistently gendered feminine, Jonson’s use of the pronoun “he” to characterize Dionysius both pre- and post-revelation does not unilaterally negate the puppet’s gender, but actively doubles it.

Dionysius’ hermaphroditic puppet-genitals rebut Busy’s argument by rendering it moot. At the same time, Busy’s “conversion” implicates his Puritanism with all of the arbitrariness and hypocrisies associated with Marlowe’s and Nashe’s hermaphroditic figures. Jonson likely delighted in presenting the Puritan as a puppet vulgarizing Biblical integrity. Yet I believe that the most important component of Busy’s “conversion” is the restoration of not amity, but the status quo among the fairgoers.

It is tempting to read Overdo’s invitation to the fairgoers to join him at supper as a sweeping resolution of amity. Despite the fact that many of the characters in the play are momentarily leveled with one another – such as when Overdo was put in the stocks, or his wife appeared to be one of the pig-woman’s prostitutes – Busy’s “conversion” simply restores the fairgoers to their original social positions. Some might argue that Quarlous’s caution that Overdo must remember that he is “but Adam, flesh and blood,” converts the Justice much as Edwards’ Dionysius is converted by the show of friendship between Damon and Pythias (5.6.97). But unlike Edwards’s play dramatizing the virtues of friendship grounded in socio-political equality – including a King’s abdication of his throne

– throughout *Bartholomew Fair*, Jonson dramatizes the ubiquity of vice and suggests that the fairgoers – and the audience - are only equal in their greed and hypocrisies. Amity is dependent of the reproducibility of virtue, not vapors, and it is only the latter which we get in this final scene of Jonson’s play.

In conclusion, when Jonson asks King James to judge his play – amidst riotously erratic acts of authority – Jonson turns this “mirror of magistrates” onto his monarch. As we have seen, close analysis of Marlowe’s, Nashe’s, and Jonson’s treatments of “Hero and Leander” reveals a progressive portrayal of amity ruptured by arbitrary authority and deep-seated sociopolitical hypocrisies. Jonson’s addition of *Damon and Pythias* to the mix exposes the topical criticism that Lucas identified. King James may well have recognized himself in this mirror. Following a single performance, *Bartholomew Fair* was never again licensed for courtly entertainment (Burt 533).

Nashe and Jonson translate Marlowe’s satire formally and thematically in their digressive renderings of “Hero and Leander.” Unlike Museaus’ Leander, who shyly strives to “lay shame by and speak” (115), Marlowe’s sophister debases Museaus’ portrayal of Neoplatonic idealism. The modesty of Museaus’ protagonists, and their alliance with the idealistic paradox associated with Mars and Venus’ illegitimate daughter Harmony, stands in stark contrast to Marlowe’s exposure of the multivalent hypocrisy embedded in both *discordia concors* and amity (269). Nashe’s imitation of his “*diviner muse – Kit Marlow*” also emphasizes disjunction, injustice, and political caprice (III.195). The intra-textual dialectic between Nashe’s primary proposition (his (dis)praise of Yarmouth and

the red herring) and his imitation of Marlowe's poem networks the two narratives. Fishing "before the net," Nashe metaphorically hooks Marlowe's mighty line while preposterously catching his readers among the intertextual filaments (III.333). Finally, from this conversational network, Jonson exploits the anti-erotic discord underlying Marlowe's and Nashe's versions of "Hero and Leander" and compounds it by parodying *Damon and Pythias* in the puppet show. Jonson's achievement is the vaporization of amity and with it, any virtue associated with "licensed authority." Although Kiernan Ryan has called Nashe "manic digressive" ("The Extemporal Vein" 49), Nashe's Marlovian excursion bridges what we now recognize as a conversational gap between Marlowe and Jonson's mutual exploitation of the omnipresent hypocrisy associated with Neoplatonic harmony.

NOTES

¹ Digression, in the context of classical rhetorical theory from which Marlowe operates, is not a wandering off from a given subject, but a representation of the primary argument in an abridged or anecdotal form. See Quintilian (IV.3).

² For an excellent discussion on the multivalent symbolism of hermaphrodites in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries, see Kathleen Long, *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe*.

³ Friendship and political amity may seem like disparate concepts to modern readers, but Aristotle offers a summary of their interdependence: “City-states are held together by friendship, and lawmakers are more concerned about it than about the virtue of justice. For Concord seems something like friendship; but they see Concord above all else; and civil strife, which is enmity, they above all else expel” (*Nichomachean Ethics* 8.1.25).

⁴ Marlowe may be alluding to Petronius’ description of Giton in *The Satyricon*: “A boy who went into skirts instead of trousers, whose mother persuaded him never to grow up, who played the part of a woman in a slaves’ prison” (81).

⁵ Raphael’s painting “Scipio and the Three Graces” exemplifies Museaus’ portrait of Hero as beauty. This painting depicts the tripartite nature of Venus’ character: Chastity and Pleasure stand on either side of Beauty, the Grace that represents balance among the three. As Edgar Wind explains, the Graces “unfold the unity of Venus” and are the key to the “mystery” they seek to explain (*Pagan Mysteries* 80-81). One major problem posed by idealizations of Venus as both chaste and voluptuous is that her “unlawful” affair with Mars produced their daughter Harmony: “born from the god of strife and the goddess of love, she inherits the contrary characters of her parents: *Harmonia est discordia concors*” (81).

⁶ Leone Ebreo’s *Dialogues of Love* offers an excellent contemporary discussion of “erotic” and “anti-erotic” Neoplatonic love.

⁷ Excepting Nashe’s imitation, the only other version of Marlowe’s anecdote about the fate of Mercury and scholars that I have found is in Robert Burton’s seventeenth-century text, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. Here, Burton supports a misquotation of Marsilio Ficino’s *Liber de Arte Chemica* by quoting Marlowe’s poem: “And to this day is every scholar poor; / Gross gold from them runs headlong to the boor” (302).

⁸ See William P. Weaver, “Marlowe’s Fable: Hero and Leander and the Rudiments of Eloquence.” I follow Laura Gill’s 2002 Oxford translation of *Aesop’s Fables* here and throughout.

⁹ See Turner, “Nashe’s Red Herring,” and R. C. L. Sgroi, “Piscatorial Politics Revisited,” for excellent discussions of Nashe’s representation of sixteenth-century fishing politics.

¹⁰ Upon Hero and Leander's metamorphoses, Nashe informs us that Hero is "pagled and timpanized" (III.196). McKerrow glosses "pagled" as pregnant, and "timpanized" as swollen (IV.405 n.31).

¹¹ Chapman translates Marlowe's celebration of eroticism as a crime against marriage, but in his conclusion, he shows some sympathy for the doomed lovers and transforms them into "two sweet birds, surnamed th' Acanthides" (VI.276). By turning Hero and Leander into goldfinches, Chapman frees these pagan lovers of the Golden Age from the demands of marriage while retaining a hint of Christian moral condemnation (see *Christopher Marlowe: The Complete Poems*).

¹² "Palmerin" and "Cadwallader" confirm Nashe's shift from the poem's classical setting to a decisively English one. Fabian and Palmerin are "of England." Although McKerrow does not recognize the allusion to "Fabian," he claims that "Palmerin" additionally refers to an English translation Luis Hurtado's Spanish romance and "Cadwallader" invokes the last British King of England who died in 689 (IV.405 n.34; *Oxf Lit.* 2).

¹³ In his 1973 book, *Ben Jonson's Basic Comic Characters*, James E. Savage recognizes that Jonson's famous puppet-show in *Bartholomew Fair* draws not only from Marlowe's version of "Hero and Leander," but also Nashe's. Despite identifying a few minor, yet valid, verbal parallels between Marlowe's and Nashe's versions, Savage also made a number of mistakes and his claims to topicality in the context of Essex's divorce led to swift discrediting by Standish Henning's 1975 review in *Modern Philology* (see 418-419).

¹⁴ Savage identifies three points of contact between *Lenten Stuffe* and *Bartholomew Fair*: "The first is that [Jonson's] treatment of Dionysius... is closer to that of Nashe than to any other source he might have used, such as Edwards or Diogenes Laertius. The second is the association of Jonson's Hero with herring – "She is come over into Fish-street to eat some fresh herring." The third is the injection rather forcibly into his dialogue of the word "Fabian." Hero – as the herring – was "of all fishes the Flanting Fabian" (147).

¹⁵ At least one marked personal allusion in *Bartholomew Fair* is borrowed from Nashe's dedicatory epistle addressed to "his worthies good patron, *Lustie Humfrey*, according as the townsmen doo christen him, little Numps" (III.147). In the previous chapter, I noted Nashe's Erasmian punning on King's name to adumbrate his invective against the arbitrariness of Crown authority throughout *Lenten Stuffe*. Among Jonson's fairgoers, Wasp/Numps continues in the vein of both Marlowe and Nashe to expose the hypocrisies informing the performance of: "the ancient modern history of *Hero and Leander*... with as true a trial of friendship between Damon and Pythias, two faithful friends o' the Bankside" (5.3.7-11). Historically, Ben Jonson and Humphrey King are associated by virtue of the fact that they both wrote elegies following Nashe's death that were collected together in Henry Stanford's commonplace book. Stanford was associated with Nashe's sometime patron George Carey in 1596. The poems are written in his hand, found in the *Berkeley Bifolium* (see Duncan-Jones, "'They say made a good end'" 9). Jonson's final lines read: "Farewell greate spirite my pen

attird in blacke / Shall whilst I am still weepe & mourn thie lacke” (29-30). King’s verse might respond to Jonson’s: “Others with showers of teares will dew thie herse/ Ile wepe for the in wine & not in verse” (9-10).

¹⁶ Nashe may also be nodding to Ficino’s *Mystical Theology* in which Dionysius the Areopagite’s name, as Wind explains, “offered the occasion for describing as Bacchic the approach to God through a negation of the intellect... ‘The spirit of the god Dionysius,’ Ficino explained, ‘was believed by ancient theologians and Platonists to be the ecstasy and abandon of disencumbered minds, when partly by innate love, partly at the instigation of the god, they transgress the natural limits of intelligence and are miraculously transformed into the beloved god himself’” (64).

¹⁷ Midas is too stupid to realize the contest is fixed (Olympian gods always beat terrestrial deities) and his failure to engage in hypocrisy paradoxically emphasizes that of the townspeople who voted the “right” way. Apollo’s punishment offers another example of arbitrary authority; he shouldn’t have asked Midas’ opinion if he didn’t want it (see *Metamorphoses* XI.163-216).

¹⁸ Classical versions of the story of Damon and Pythias culminate in the virtuous friends’ influence on the state as it is represented by King Dionysius. Edwards’ “Pythagorean” example expands Iamblichus’ version by incorporating Cicero’s ideology of friendship. Representing Pythagorean friendship in a monistic context, Iamblichus broadly represents his predecessor’s ideal as a translation of the gods’ love for man among one another (see *On the Pythagorean Life*). Cicero later explains that “friendship was given to us by nature as the handmaid of virtue” (XXII 83.191) and that the antithesis of friendship is “fawning cajolery, or flattery” (XXIV 91-93.199). Edwards illustrates these precepts by positing the idealized Damon and Pythias in contrast to the parasitical relationship of Aristippus and Carisophus. Edwards’ plot is simple: Damon and Pythias are travelling and enter King Dionysius’s realm; the parasite Carisophus immediately accuses Damon of spying. Dionysius sentences Damon to death, but agrees to hold Pythias hostage while Damon returns to Greece to sort out his affairs. The friends are interchangeable: “when one is made away, they take another to kyll” (348). Conflict arises only when Damon returns to take his place and die, but Pythias argues that he would rather die for him: “Damon hath a frinde, / That loues him better than his owne life” (992-3). Ultimately, Dionysius is so impressed with their friendship that he pardons Damon and offers to be their friend. Dionysius, however, must first step down as King. Again, central to the classical ideal is that “likeness in both sex and status *is* (the only) political equality in period terms; on the basis of this likeness writers stress the making of a consensual and social bond or body that is not inherently subordinating” (Laurie Shannon, *Sovereign Amity* 3). Edwards’ Dionysius gives up his throne to study the precepts of friendship under the tutelage of Damon and Pythias.

¹⁹ In Edwards’ version, when Damon is falsely accused of spying in Dionysius’s court and sentenced to death, Pythias stands “surety” for his friend when he returns to their homeland to settle his affairs. Leaving his servant

Stephano behind, Damon says: “I tel thee once agayne, my friend and I are but one, / Wait upon Pithias, and thinke thou art with Damon.”

²⁰ Jonson’s play on “hole” additionally recalls Leander’s sophistry regarding Hero’s virginity in Marlowe’s version of “Hero and Leander” (269-276). This scene may also echo Chaucer’s fabliau, *The Miller’s Tale* when Alisoun offers her suitor Absolon a kiss while in bed with her lover “hende Nicholas”:

And at the window out she putte hir hole,
 And Absolon, hym fil no bet ne wers,
 But with his mouth he kiste her naked ers (3733-3735)

The joke in the *Miller’s Tale* comes to fruition when Absolon returns for another kiss – and revenge. Alisoun and Nicholas swap roles and he offers his posterior: Absolon, “redy with his iren hoot, / And Nicholas amydde the ers he smoot (3809-3810).

²¹ Shershow’s *Puppets and “Popular” Culture* discusses the puppets’ literal commodification: “At the fair itself the puppet was also a cultural site in which histrionic illusion merged with the commercial power of the marketplace” (48).

²² Shershow explores the implications of this feminine etymology at length (see *Puppets* 69-72).

AFTERWORD

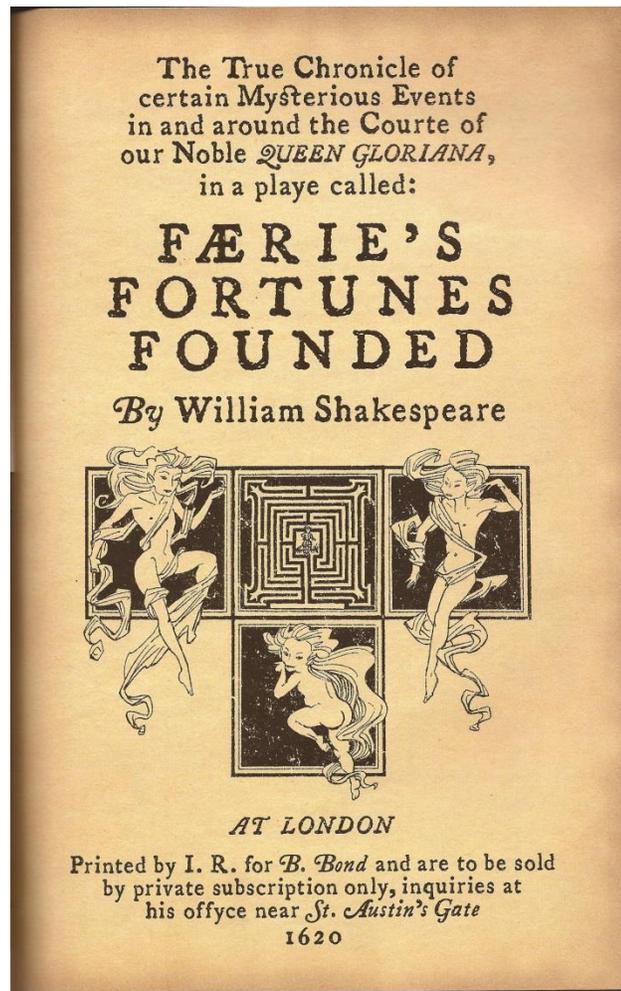
Nashe's Fortunes Founded



Amidst the medley of comic strips, graphic vignettes, ersatz advertisements, illustrated prose, and pornographic pull-outs comprising Alan Moore and Kevin O'Neill's 2007 edition of *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen: Black Dossier*, we find Nashe's Jack Wilton recast as Queen Gloriana's spymaster in *Faerie's Fortunes Founded*, a play attributed to William Shakespeare.¹ Between the title page and the dramatis personae, featuring Prospero, Orlando, Gloriana, Sir John Wilton, Sir Basildon Bond, as well as the gatekeepers, Master Shytte and Master Pysse, and the Faeries, Dogrose, Gorse, and Love-Lies-Bleeding, readers recognize allusions to Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Shakespeare's *Tempest*, *As You Like it*, *Love's Labor's Lost*, and *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Nashe's *Unfortunate Traveller*, and finally, Ian Fleming's *James*

Bond series. Moore and O'Neill's visual and verbal confluences of early modern and contemporary sources enact precisely my conceptualization of conversation as a compositional methodology and, moreover, they graphically locate Nashe's character at the crux of this conversational network.²

At first glance, the page discoloration, typeface, long advertisement, and layout of *Faerie's Fortunes Founded* seem "genuine"; a casual reader might momentarily believe this to be a title page of Shakespeare's era.³



But we quickly realize that what appear to be Scipio's three graces are translated in the nude with a hint of Japanimation.⁴ The anachronism of the design is emphasized by its imitation of a woodcut and the image of the maze at the center. Symbolically, the maze represents the play's core theme of espionage. Close examination of this maze reveals the figure of Gloriana's "prince of spies," Wilton at its center:



Sir John Wilton, Servant to the Crown (*Dramatis Personae*)

In the context of the direct invocation of the *Unfortunate Traveller*, Wilton's image bears a slight, if inverted resemblance to our extant woodcut of Nashe. Despite the farcical nature of their production, Moore and O'Neill's illustration places Nashe's work in the center of some of the most famous works of his day. Simultaneously, Moore and O'Neill suggest that Nashe's contributions remain pivotal for modern readers of this period.⁵

By positing Nashe in the context of his conversational networks, we can begin to grasp not only the subtexts of political protest in his corpus, but also we recognize how conversation functions as a compositional methodology in early modern England. Conversation extends what we conventionally think of as “source study” by treating multiple sources as the writer’s active interlocutors. Further, conversational exchanges such as Nashe’s demonstrate how writers of this period push the boundaries of conventional, diachronic imitation by conflating ancient and contemporary sources to lend a sense of immediacy to the subject at hand. Both in its own right as a paradigm of polyvocal literary innovation and in its influence on his contemporaries, Nashe's works offer an unequalled example of early modern conversation. I hope this dissertation provides occasion to continue in conversation surrounding Nashe’s contributions to English literature.

NOTES

¹ Jack Wilton is the lead character in Nashe's most well-known work to modern readers, his 1594 novel, *The Unfortunate Traveller*.

² In the play, Wilton supervises Gloriana's intelligencer network, including Basildon Bond and the new Italian recruits, Prospero and Orlando. Incidentally, Prospero's aliases include Faust and "Suttle"; Wilton adds to these the sign "two 'O's and a seven." These allusions additionally associate Shakespeare's wizard with Marlowe (*Doctor Faustus*), Jonson (*The Alchemist*), and Bond. Because close analysis of the content of Moore and O'Neill's play-within-a-comic book defies the scope of closing remarks, I limit this discussion to the graphic conversational exchanges on the title page.

³ Np., here and throughout. Page numbers in *Black Dossier* are few and not sequential.

⁴ This adaptation of the allusion to Scipio also corrupts the Neoplatonic ideal of Harmony and offers a complementary illustration of my argument in Chapter 4.

⁵ Located near the center of *Black Dossier*, *Faerie's Fortunes Founded* is contextualized with a gallimaufry of literary and visual narratives including (and by no means limited to) allusions to ancient mythology, the history of Britain, Margaret Cavendish's *The Blazing World*, John Cleland's *Fanny Hill*, memoirs of Wodehouse's Bertram Wooster, and a closing farce of superheroes and rocketships that must be viewed with 3-D glasses (included).

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