

Introduction

For if...our youth seriously listen to such unworthy representations of the gods...hardly will any of them deem that he himself, being but a man, can be dishonored by similar actions; neither will he rebuke any inclination which may arise in his mind to say and do the like.

Plato, *The Republic*, c. 386 B.C.E.

As soon as he saw the blood [of the gladiator], he at once drank in savagery and did not turn away. His eyes were riveted. He imbibed madness. [H]e found delight in the murderous contest and was inebriated by bloodthirsty pleasure. He was not now the person who had come in, but just one of the crowd which he had joined...He looked, he yelled, he was on fire, he took the madness home with him...

Augustine, *Confessions*, c. 400

And so this miracle playing not only reverseth faith and hope but very charity by the which a man should repent his own sins and those of his neighbors...for it withdraweth not only one person but all the people from deeds of charity and of penance into deeds of lust and liking and of feeding their senses.

Anonymous Wycliffite author,
Miracle Plays, c. 1360

[A]s the style and subject matter of stage-plays is scurrilous and obscene, so likewise it is bloody and tyrannical, breathing out malice, fury, anger, murder, cruelty, tyranny, treachery, frenzy, treason, and revenge...which efferate and enrage the hearts and minds of actors and spectators; yea, oft times animate and excite them to anger, malice, duels, murders, revenge, and more than barbarous cruelty, to the great disturbance of the public peace.

William Prynne, *Histriomastix*, 1633

Where once the dime and nickel novels suggested ways of crime to unbalanced youth, the motion picture has come to make a more ready and

more potent appeal. The printed word is never so ardent with an impressionable mind as the acted word.

Richard Barry, *Pearson's Magazine*, 1911

What the studies say, quite simply, is that the boundary between fantasy violence [on television] and reality...can become very blurred for vulnerable children.

President William Clinton,
televised speech, 1999

Imagine you were asked to create a profile of the prototypical spectator using the above five epigraphs. Demographically, the subject is young and most likely male. Intellectually and experientially, he is neither too bright nor too worldly. Emotionally, he is immature, with a tendency towards extremes of emotion and behavior. He finds it difficult to distinguish between representation and reality, more often attaining catharsis through projection and identification than through lived experience. These qualities make him susceptible to wild emotional vacillations, misprision and injury. In short, he is a potential danger to himself and to others.

Of course, creating a profile from these fragments that span over two millennia is ridiculous. It is impossible to assemble any sort of accurate representation from them. But in many cases, at least up until the twentieth century, such didactic evidence is all we have. Unlike the spectacles they watched, those who witnessed the plays, pageants, public trials, executions, coronations and funerals of the past have largely formed the faceless backdrop of historical inquiry. In part this lacuna is due to a scarcity of records – actual descriptions of spectators at state, religious and entertainment productions are few and far between. Exerting an even greater influence on the study of spectators and

spectatorship, however, is the widely-held prejudice that the spectator is the product of modernity and its concomitant technologies of representation: photography, film, television and most recently the computer.¹ In her history of spectatorship studies, Michelle Aaron places what she calls “the birth of the spectator” in the late 1960’s, and specifically in the context of post 1968 France.² While some theorists place the origins of spectatorship as a topic of inquiry slightly earlier, there is, in general, a critical consensus that spectatorship as a discourse did not come into being before the twentieth century.³

But whereas formal theoretical approaches to and detailed statistics about spectatorship may be the twentieth century’s domain, discourses on the topic are not. Meditations upon the dangers of looking (especially the sort associated with entertainment spectacle) exist in abundance throughout the history of Western culture. While the six epigraphs with which I begin frame their anxieties about spectators through their unique historical and cultural contexts, certain constants emerge: the spectator is male, young, inexperienced, highly impressionable and potentially dangerous. These are not, however, qualities we can assign to actual historical viewing subjects; that is to say, the spectator of Augustine’s gladiatorial arena is not the same as Clinton’s “vulnerable child” who conflates video-game violence with the act of shooting high school classmates. Rather, such qualities stand in for the spectator these writers imagine, project, and sometimes fear. While “real” spectators may be historically contingent and temporally circumscribed, ideas about them can (and do) cross such boundaries, accruing various resonances along the way. These ideas form a different sort of spectatorial presence, one that is discursive rather than material. Often indiscriminately conflated with the real bodies and psyches that attend the theater, sports arena or movie multiplex,

the discursive spectator is a repository of a culture's actual viewing practices and anxieties about them. And, while entertainment technologies and viewing practices have changed dramatically between Plato and postmodernism, anxieties about spectatorship have remained remarkably consistent. The discursive spectator, then, provides a starting point for tracing a genealogy of spectatorship, for which the twentieth century is only the most recent part.

In this dissertation, I explore one moment and place in that genealogy, that of early modern England. Walter Benjamin has argued that the rise of film in the twentieth century both responded to and caused "profound changes in the apperceptive apparatus."⁴ Sixteenth-century England also witnessed a surge in a particular form of mass entertainment: professional drama.⁵ I argue that as the commercial theater developed and prospered, a cultural need arose to find new ways to describe the sort of looking that playgoing encouraged. The discourses that evolved in response produce what I call the discursive spectator – a figure generated by more through early modern cultural practices than by an empirical attempt to document those who attended the theater. Finally, I claim that the early modern discursive spectator did not merely develop alongside the phenomenological one, but played as significant a role in shaping early modern viewers and viewing practices as did changes to staging technologies, exhibition practices and generic experimentation.

As my opening epigraphs suggest, I am not making the case that the early modern period marks the origin of either the spectator or theories of spectatorial dynamics. Renaissance England did, however, produce a great deal of writing on the theater and its effects on audiences. While theater had been a part of English culture at least since the

early twelfth century, the sixteenth saw massive changes in how theatrical performance was produced and regulated, including the building of London's first amphitheaters, the proliferation of professional playing companies and the imposition of laws regulating them. The years between 1576 and 1642, therefore, are some of the earliest for which we have an abundance of materials that refer (directly and indirectly) to the spectator.⁶ Some of this archive looks back to the past to conceptualize the spectator, particularly that which seeks to make a case against the theater. Jonas Barish calls a particular section of avid puritan William Prynne's *Histriomastix* "overflow[ing] with an inky gutter of references to Tertullian, Cyprian, Chrysostom, Augustine and 'sundry' other Fathers."⁷ That Prynne and other antitheatricalists used various medieval philosophers (who in turn had relied on classical ones) to convey the idea of the vulnerable spectator is not surprising, but it suggests that early modern critics of the theater thought of the spectator as a transhistorical entity. Other writings, however, suggest an impulse towards the new in describing the spectator. When Philip Sidney revised and expanded *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* sometime around 1580, he introduced a new term to describe the "beholder" of an action: "[He] thought no eyes of sufficient credite in such a matter, but his owne; and therefore came himself to be actor, and *spectator*" (my italics).⁸ Poised somewhere between ideas inherited from the classical and medieval past and concepts emerging from its own cultural moment, the early modern discursive spectator is a dynamic matrix where corresponding and conflicting discourses about the nature of spectators and spectatorship become legible.

It is not only the body of writing on the theater that makes the early modern period so important to the study of spectatorship, but how that culture theorized the

human body itself. Humoral theory held that the body contained four basic types of fluids (blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile), and that a sound mind and body were ones where these substances were properly balanced. This fluid body was also believed to be particularly susceptible to outside influence. In a recent essay, John Sutton points out that “English bodies, and in particular English minds, were extremely porous. Overly vulnerable to the idiosyncratic impressions of a hostile world, the Englishman’s bodily and cognitive processes alike were thus prone ‘to absorb foreign vice indiscriminately.’”⁹ It thus is not surprising that anxieties about English psychic and physiological susceptibility appear in anxieties about theatrical spectatorship as well; for example, Anglican minister Henry Crosse states that the theater inserts “fiction, lies and scurrilous matter...into the hearts of the assistants, whereby they are transformed into that they see acted before them.”¹⁰ Although modern medical science has long since undermined humoral theory,¹¹ the spectator’s “porous” psyche is with us still, always impressionable, always a potential catalyst for the collision between the asymptotes of fiction and reality. By looking more closely at this period where the spectator’s body and mind were considered equally penetrable by outside influences, I hope to foster a greater understanding of spectatorship’s theoretical lineage, one that precedes modern discourses (such as psychoanalysis and/or structuralism) and technologies (such as the moving camera).

The rise of the English professional theater is a gradual process that takes place over a span of some one hundred and fifty years; English writing about the theater and those who watched it similarly was a work-in-progress.¹² I do not claim, therefore, that the early modern period had “a” theory of spectatorship, but instead seek to identify

certain recurrent ideas about spectators and spectatorship and trace how they develop and change over a period of about thirty years. The late sixteenth century saw massive changes to London's theatrical landscape. Including those previously mentioned (the building of the amphitheaters, establishment of professional playing companies and laws regulating theatergoing), there was a surge in dramatic material as playwriting became a viable (and apparently attractive) profession. However, while I begin with an overview of this period, the dissertation focuses primarily on the first decades of the seventeenth century. I contend that changes occurring in staging conventions, playing venues and the system of theatrical patronage during these years reveal an increased awareness of and attention to the spectator. James I's queen, an avid patron of the arts, ran a court newly devoted to the production of entertainment spectacle. Under Anna's supervision, the court masque developed into a multimedia event that featured dazzling visual effects, ones that were eventually exported onto the public stage. With the reopening of the boys' companies at Paul's and Blackfriars at the turn of the century, the occupation of the Blackfriars by the King's Men in 1608 and the building of the Cockpit in 1616, more variety (in terms of both genre and venue) became available to playgoers. Although royal patronage was still a major means of financial support for the playing companies, customer revenue became increasingly important to their survival.¹³ As competition for playgoers became more intense, schemes for attracting audiences diversified. Generic experiment accelerated, as playing companies attempted to attract particular "types" of audiences. The satiric, bawdy and often metadramatic plays featured by the children's companies, for example, targeted a more select audience, or, in more mercenary terms, one that could afford to pay three times as much for admission.¹⁴ Cultivating a more

“sophisticated” audience, however, had its drawbacks; one less-desirable epiphenomenon of the satiric trend was audience backlash. As Andrew Gurr has pointed out, jokes made at the expense of other playing companies, public figures and even the audience itself “localized the battlefield...by turning the device against the playwrights themselves.”¹⁵ Besides ushering in important changes to staging practices and exhibition venues, then, the early seventeenth century comprises a particularly vibrant moment in what David Bevington and Milla Riggio have called “the artist’s push-pull relationship with his audience.”¹⁶

For all of these reasons, my analysis focuses on the early seventeenth century. In particular, I focus on two genres that become cynosures for experiments in form and staging and emerge as highly popular in the seventeenth century: the dramatic romance or tragicomedy and the court masque. Noting its propensity for self-reflexivity, Arthur Kirsch has said that the hallmark of seventeenth-century tragicomedy is “the creation of a particularly self-conscious relationship between the audience and the play.”¹⁷ Jacobean masque exhibits a similar self-consciousness toward its audience. Designed for the perspective of a single and singular spectator (the king) and, as Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong have claimed, a metacommentary upon “the age’s wonder at the infinite possibilities of machinery, scenic or otherwise,” the masque powerfully imagines and projects its own audience. Not only are these two genres particularly rich sites for an excavation of the early modern discursive spectator, but by analyzing *how* these works attempt to negotiate and influence their own audiences both onstage and off, we can better understand the works themselves. In other words, the concern exhibited by seventeenth-century tragicomedy and masque about their audiences is not simply a

reflection of larger cultural concerns about the spectator or a by-product of their generic conventions. Rather, this concern is an essential element of these genres, one that plays a significant role in their development and reception during the period. The plays and masques I discuss tended to polarize opinion; for example although Jonson excoriated *Pericles* as “a mouldy tale” it apparently was a great popular success.¹⁸ These instances of extreme popularity and/or failure are moments where the discursive spectator and the real one come into close proximity, sometimes merging in a harmonious whole, sometimes clashing violently as the real spectator, faced with a representation that he does not (or does not wish to) recognize, emphatically says “That’s not me.”

Thus far, I have emphasized the contributions I hope this project will make to the broader field of spectatorship studies. There are, however, several ways it contributes to the field of early modern literary and cultural studies. Most of the scholarship on early modern audiences has been focused either on demographics (who went where) or has tried to understand, even recreate, what audiences actually thought and felt when watching drama (particularly Shakespeare). Scholars such as Alfred Harbage, Ann Jennalie Cook and Andrew Gurr have painstakingly stitched together the few scraps of extant evidence to provide a sense of who might have attended one of Shakespeare’s plays at the Globe or one of Marston’s at Paul’s.¹⁹ While their work provides an invaluable snapshot of these audiences of the past, it does not account for the ways that the spectator is as much a cultural idea as a material presence.²⁰ Another category of analysis looks to flesh out “how” early modern audiences experienced what they saw by exploring staging conventions, stage properties, costume, spatial orientation and non-linguistic forms of communication (such as allegory and symbolism).²¹ Studies of this

type offer ways to better understand the varied communicative mechanisms of early modern drama and can provide insight into how viewing is historically contingent. Too often, however, this body of work exhibits a slippage between exploring how something like staging conventions or allegory was *intended* to work upon audiences and the assumption that it was successful in doing so.²²

A useful recent example of this second type of criticism is Jeremy Lopez's recent book *Theatrical Conventions and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama*. Lopez also wants to push audience studies beyond the limits of demographics, saying that this approach becomes "unnecessarily paralyzing, making it seem as though we cannot talk about the effects of a play on an 'audience' until we understand the exact composition of that audience."²³ His assessment of the limitations of these "hard science" approaches is a potentially useful corrective, but too often Lopez conflates what a play is trying to communicate with what it succeeds in communicating. Claiming that "Elizabethan and Jacobean drama seems to be very sure of the response it wants from its audience at any given moment," he later extends this concept into the realm of how real audiences responded:

Twenty-eight purple lines into his Hecuba-speech in *Hamlet*, the Player is interrupted by Polonius: 'This is too long' (2.2.456). The audience, having been taught that nothing that Polonius says can be taken seriously, laughs...It is notable that the audience has this kind of laugh at this point because it is prepared for quite the opposite reaction.²⁴

Lopez might be right in his assumption that audience would have laughed at this point in *Hamlet*. But, as he points out earlier in the book, we don't and can't *know* what early modern spectators thought and felt or how they reacted while watching this scene.²⁵

While this sort of fluidity is part of Lopez's project to "explain how Elizabethan and

Jacobean drama works, what it assumes of its audience and how its audience experiences it and responds to it,” his assumption that the spectator that any given play wants is the one it gets is problematic. Unwittingly, he seems to have resurrected the idea of the passive spectator, who is imprinted with whatever message the play (or text or film) wants to send, an idea that undermines his stated goal of “better understanding the audiences of the English Renaissance.”²⁶ By introducing the discursive spectator as another category of inquiry, I hope to provide a means of better accounting for the difference between the spectator projected by a play or text and the one that actually experiences it.

A different approach to understanding early modern spectatorship is pursued by Barbara Freedman in her 1991 study of the early modern gaze.²⁷ Freedman’s multifaceted approach draws upon multiple methodologies; among them, she names feminism, deconstruction, cultural materialism and psychoanalysis.²⁸ She also draws heavily on film studies, particularly apparatus theory,²⁹ and situates her claims via a history of Renaissance optics. Freedman argues that the “Elizabethan world picture...depends on what we might term a spectator consciousness, an epistemological model based upon an observer who stands outside of what she sees in a definite position of mastery over it.” She proceeds to focus on Shakespearean comedy as a “countertradition devoted to the subversion of a spectator consciousness...[by] staging blindness and erring as forms of insight.”³⁰

Freedman’s method of inquiry comes closest to the one I employ in the dissertation in that she intuits that the spectator is as much a product of ideas as of phenomenological experience. Challenging Stephen Greenblatt’s claim that the structures

of Renaissance identity renders psychoanalysis “marginal or belated” as an heuristic tool for the period’s literature, Freedman makes a strong case for the efficacy of psychoanalysis via history. In her first chapter, she points out that Italian humanists made a clear distinction “between the eye, which sees, and the mind’s eye, which sees that it can never see itself seeing,” a distinction which she likens to the split subject of psychoanalysis.³¹ And, while she uses methodological tools sharpened by film theory, she does not buy into such theory wholesale. Her critique that film theory has been overly invested in the binary of the real and the projected, and has therefore neglected the ways in which the theatrical and cinematic gaze might be related, is one that this project takes very much to heart.

My work on early modern spectatorship, however, diverges from Freedman’s in two significant ways. The first is to extend her critique of apparatus theory to its myopic focus on the visual. Often, apparatus theorists treat film as if it is *only* visual technology, overlooking the potentially subversive or contradictory effects of sound, including film score, language, ambient noise and sound effects. While some film scholars have challenged this bias, there is still a pronounced tendency to talk about cinema as a primarily visual medium.³² It is a bias, however, that Freedman seems to accept, reading Elizabethan entertainment culture as one similarly focused on the visual. While Freedman’s study predates that of scholars whose work has fleshed out the sensory landscape of the early modern theater,³³ there is ample textual evidence that the theater was an experience in which the ear was at least as important as the eye. Often, theatrical spectatorship was described through sensory synecdoche, as if to suggest that the theater’s communicative potency was such that the division between the senses melted

away. In his antitheatrical treatise, *The School of Abuse*, Stephen Gosson states that the theater “set[s] abroad strange consorts of melody to tickle the ear; costly apparel to flatter the sight; effeminate gesture, to ravish the sense; and wanton speech to whet desire to inordinate lust.”³⁴ Rather than limiting my analysis to issues of the gaze, I look at Renaissance spectatorship as an act that was thought to engage the full palate of the senses.

My use of history also differs significantly from Freedman’s. While *Staging the Gaze* historically situates its theory of the gaze early on, its later readings of Shakespeare’s plays seem less interested in continuing the negotiation between history and theory. This “dropping out” of historically contingent ideas and language makes it seem at times as if the historical background Freedman puts forth is only there to get the monkey of historicism off her back. It also occasionally places Freedman’s insightful readings in the service of a theoretical *telos* that she initially takes some pains to distance herself from: that psychoanalysis is the most accurate lexicon for expressing and understanding Renaissance spectatorship. In doing so, Freedman elides important details of how the early modern cultural imaginary thought about and represented spectatorship and spectators.

Because of their dominance of the field, it is practically impossible to discuss spectatorship without invoking film studies (the area in which the most work on the topic has been done) and psychoanalysis (which strongly influenced that discipline, particularly its seminal work on film spectators). It is, however, possible to use the tools offered by both to flesh out a critical vocabulary that expresses how those who attended, wrote for and about, and were otherwise involved with the early modern English theater

imagined the dynamics of spectatorship to function. This methodological approach has its own set of potential pitfalls, among the greatest of which is sounding as though I am trying to proffer an “authentic” rendition of what spectatorship “was like back then.” Rather, I am trying to listen for murmurs (such as can be found in treatises, letters, diary accounts, and the plays and masques themselves) that might lead to greater insights about how early modern subjects imaginatively constructed theatrical spectators, and what, if any, effect such discursive constructs had upon “real” viewing practices. Along these lines, I have tried as much as possible to use terms that were operative in the period and that most closely approximate the pith of what is being expressed. For example, I use the term “discursive” rather than “theoretical” spectator throughout the dissertation. Although both terms were used in the seventeenth century, according to the *OED*, the primary use of “theoretical” was “of or pertaining to contemplation, contemplative,” while one of the primary meanings of “discursive” was “a subject of ‘discourse’ or reasoning (as distinguished from a subject of perception).”³⁵ This method is far from perfect; sixteenth- and seventeenth-century discourses about spectators and spectatorship were inchoate, reflective of the rapid changes that the theatrical landscape underwent, and fluid enough to accommodate such changes. However, by seeking to discern what the period has to say about spectatorship and framing that information in ways that attempt to use language that allows for all of the strangeness and familiarity of those ideas, I hope to provide insights into how early modern spectatorship was thought to function, as well as how these ideas might inform our own spectatorial moment.

I begin by laying out an investigative framework for some of the dominant ideas about spectatorship during the Elizabethan period. Chapter One, “Towards a Theory of

Spectatorship: 1577-1603,” focuses on the final decades of the sixteenth century. I contend that these rapid and momentous changes that occur in England’s entertainment culture during this period result in an expansion of discourses about the spectator; for example, this period marks the rise and apex of fierce debates over whether theatergoing corrupted the “simple gazer.”³⁶ By surveying a variety of texts (sermons, legal documents, treatises, essays, poetry and drama) that reference or explicitly deliberate upon the spectator, I identify three pervasive suppositions circulating during the late sixteenth century: a) that the interpretative exchange that occurs between the play and the spectator is often understood as a violent, even traumatic interaction; b) that spectatorship, as a communal act, produces creative energy that mimics the generative force usually associated with the divine; and c) that spectatorship is not governed by the sensory binary of aural/visual, but is an experience that activates multiple sense perceptions.

Using these Elizabethan discourses as an investigative framework, I look at how the burgeoning fascination with the spectator that occurs in the seventeenth century plays a significant role in developing two genres that emerge as highly popular: the dramatic romance and court masque. In each of the subsequent chapters, I follow the development of and changes to the suppositions outlined in the first chapter. Chapter Two, “The Shattering of the Spectator: Misprision, Alienation and Identification,” examines Francis Beaumont’s burlesque of romance, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* in light of its “theory” of spectatorship. A metadramatic satire of the spectator’s role in creating performance and an utter failure at its premiere, the play has been studied primarily as a reliquary of audience response and tastes during the early seventeenth century. Rather than seeing the play as one

for which the audience was “not ready” or one that offended them, I argue that despite its satiric tone, the play is one of the clearest articulations of the psychic violence inherent in drama’s (and especially satire’s) communicative processes. I end with a brief exploration of the Poetomachia or War of the Theaters, and how this performative phenomenon may have facilitated an articulation of spectatorship’s violent undertones in Beaumont’s ill-fated play.

If Beaumont’s play dramatizes the conflictual aspects of spectatorship, Shakespeare’s romances model a type of spectatorship characterized by careful attention and discerning judgment. My third chapter, “A Modeled Audience: Fashioning the Spectator in Shakespearean Romance,” argues that rather than portraying or projecting the resistant spectator, the first three of Shakespeare’s romances work to harness the generative energy produced by the theater audience to “productive” interpretative practice. *Pericles* consistently undermines visual spectacle (such as where Marina is “cried” rather than paraded through the streets of Mytilene) to encourage a perceptual engagement that is carefully balanced between eye and ear. *Cymbeline* models two potential ways (one productive and one destructive) of engaging with performance via Imogen’s and Posthumus’s different interpretations of and reactions to Iachimo’s theatrics. *The Winter’s Tale* revisits the figure of the destructive spectator, one whose unlimited agency destroys the very world he has created. Rather than the didactic model employed in the first two romances, where certain characters advocate for one kind of spectatorial engagement or represent how to perform it, *The Winter’s Tale* contemplates, and ultimately pays tribute to, the spectator’s role in the creative process.

Whereas my third chapter provides a synchronic exploration of how Shakespeare’s romances reimagine and negotiate the spectator, Chapter Four “The

Language of Looking: Making Sense in Jonsonian Masque,” traces changes occurring within the descriptive lexicon of spectatorial processes over a thirty-year period. I revisit the archive of the Jacobean court masque, a site often seen as a flashpoint for the evolution of a more spectacularized theatrical practice and visually-oriented spectator. Critics have tended to focus on Inigo Jones’s innovations in set design and lighting as the primary catalyst for this turn. Jones’s stagecraft, however, was not exported onto the public stage until the 1630’s (and not consistently until the Restoration); changes in descriptions of viewers and viewing practices are evident in the first decade of the seventeenth century. I argue that Jones’s collaborator and artistic rival, Ben Jonson, played the more significant role in generating these discursive changes. The concatenation of Jonson’s practical need to find a descriptive lexicon for Jones’s stagecraft and his anxiety that the masque’s spectacle consistently trumped its poetry generates one of the more profound changes to the seventeenth-century discourse on spectatorship: the representation of looking and listening as separate, even oppositional, interpretative activities.

During the dissertation’s early stages, someone asked me: “How are you going to select texts? I mean, doesn’t *all* drama reference its audience?” My answer was (and still is) that I certainly believe so. All drama (and novels and films) conceive of their audience and, to a degree, participate in their conception. My argument here turns upon the understanding that these projections play an important role in shaping spectators’ viewing and reading practices, which in turn influence the way dramatists (and authors and filmmakers) imagine their audience. The circulatory passages through which these ideas and practices flow is where the discursive spectator lives and breathes, the place where it

forms the connective tissue between ideas and anxieties about the spectator, and real viewing subjects.

The texts I chose to explore in depth are ones that reflect this reciprocity most clearly. Beaumont's play is one of most extended commentaries on spectatorship in the period. Not only does *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* explicitly dramatize the act of playgoing, it depicts the sort of spectatorial resistance that had occurred in recent theatrical history, during the Poetomachia. Whereas Beaumont satirizes the romance genre, Shakespeare took it very seriously; *Pericles*, his first foray into the genre, proved a tremendous success.³⁷ *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale* were among the first plays he wrote for the King's Men's new residence at the Blackfriars. Whether Shakespeare attempted to address the clientele found at the hall playhouses cannot be known, but *The Winter's Tale's* conclusion surely suggests an awareness of the audience's almost alchemical role in the creation of drama. Jonson displayed rather less optimism about the "average" theatergoer's ability to appreciate his work; as Richard Dutton has pointed out, he spent much of his career "looking for his ideal consumer."³⁸ He may have hoped to find it at court—the milieu in which he had the greatest and most extended success—for he self-consciously fashioned the masque genre as an instrument for inculcating "learning and sharpness" in his audience.³⁹ More so than his plays, Jonson's masques demonstrate the attempt to negotiate between the "understanding" spectator he desired to cultivate and the obtuse one with which he feared he was saddled.⁴⁰

If the dissertation were a film, it would begin with an establishing shot, move quickly to the detail offered by a close-up, and then gradually zoom out again to show the broader discursive terrain of early modern spectatorship. The chapters follow this

trajectory—the first provides an overview of various sixteenth century discourses about the spectator; the second, an analysis of a single seventeenth-century play; the third, an exploration of a single author’s work in one particular genre; and the final chapter traces the history of a type of entertainment spectacle that reached its zenith during the seventeenth century. Shifting between a “wide angle” perspective and a “telephoto” one has allowed me to move between a consideration of pervasive cultural discourses about the spectator and the role these discourses played in shaping the work of individual dramatists. In addition, these movements underscore the fact that the discursive spectator consists of multiple and often contradictory ideas gleaned from various sources. That is, if the spectator is not, as I argue here, the product of modernity, neither is it a cohesive entity rolling through history like a teleological juggernaut that finally becomes the Adornian spectatorial subject. Why the spectator has been represented through the constants of instability, vulnerability and malleability throughout Western history remains a question. Rather than seeking to answer it, I explore in the chapters that follow how the discursive spectator influenced the culture of early modern England, and how it was influenced by the dramatists whose business it was to communicate with the wide variety of people who attended London’s theaters.

¹ This bias comes out of Frankfurt School theories of mass culture, such as those proposed by Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer and Walter Benjamin. See, especially, Adorno and Horkheimer’s “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception” in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 120-166 and Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1955). This idea has been perpetuated by film theory, particularly by apparatus theorists such as Christian Metz in *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and Cinema*, trans. Celia Britton, Annwyl Williams, Ben Brewster and Alfred Guzzetti (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982) and Laura Mulvey in “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” *Screen* 16 (1975), 6-18. However, scholars of the early modern theater often accept the idea that the spectator is a “modern” entity as well; see for

example, Andrew Gurr's *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1.

² Michelle Aaron, *Spectatorship: The Power of Looking On* (London: Wallflower, 2007), 3. Aaron claims that the spectator is the child of two parents: the political upheavals in France in May of 1968 and the rise of Structuralism in the academy.

³ Roberta E. Pearson and William Uricchio, for example, claimed that the "magic bullet theory," which holds that the spectator has no defenses against being imaginatively permeated by what s/he sees, was "first formulated in the early stages of mass-communications research in 1940's." See "'The Formative and Impressionable Stage': Discursive Constructions of the Nickelodeon's Child Audience" in *American Movie Audiences: From the Turn of the Century to the Early Sound Era* (London: British Film Institute, 1999), 67. More often, however, this assumption is tacit rather than explicit; for example, Will Brooker and Deborah Jermyn's *The Audience Studies Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003) begins with writings from the 1950's onwards.

⁴ Benjamin, op.cit., 240. Michael O'Connell makes a similar comparison in his book *The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm and Theater in Early-Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). Although his primary interest is in the link between the early modern iconoclastic tendencies and the rise of the professional theater, he compares the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to our own saying that "I want to propose that this tension [between word and image] becomes conflict when technologies of representation are in a state of transition, when we become acutely aware of, and correspondingly anxious about, the power of one in relation to the other" (5).

⁵ The bias that the spectator is the product of the twentieth century goes hand-in-hand with the concept that mass culture only becomes fully realized once it is disseminated by twentieth-century technology. For an alternative reading, see José Antonio Maravall's *The Culture of the Baroque*, trans. Terry Cochran (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

⁶ I use 1576 as my starting date, as it is the year the first amphitheater was built (James Burbage's Theater), which marks the beginning of the period where professional playing would explode into an early modern English cultural phenomenon, one that I would call a form of mass culture.

⁷ Jonas Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1981), 92.

⁸ Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia, Vol. I*, ed. J.A. Van Dorsten (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 45.

⁹ John Sutton, "Spongy Brains and Material Memories" in *Environment and Embodiment in Early Modern England*, eds. Mary Floyd-Wilson and Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 15. (Sutton quotes Mary Floyd-Wilson's *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 14, in the citation I use). In the introduction to the collection, Floyd-Wilson and Sullivan identify the model Sutton discusses here as the "exchange model," and cite Gail Kern Paster and Michael Schoenfeldt among its most recent scholarly proponents. See Paster's *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993) and Schoenfeldt's *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert and Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). For the relationship between antitheatrical anxiety and humoral theory, see also Barish and O'Connell, 14-35, op. cit.

¹⁰ Henry Crosse, *Virtue's Commonwealth*, in *Shakespeare's Theater: A Sourcebook*, ed. Tanya Pollard (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 191. Crosse may have been a Puritan, but according to Pollard, little definitive information about him is available.

¹¹ Schoenfeldt's argument in *Bodies and Selves* makes the important distinction that while medical science has discounted humoral theory, it is still very much alive in the discourse of bodily experience: "We still get choleric, feel phlegmatic or sanguine or melancholy" (6). Insofar as humoral theory provided a way for early modern commentators to articulate the psychic exchanges that occur when someone watches a play, it is a discourse that has also survived, I believe, in contemporary discourses about spectatorship.

¹² There is no clear consensus on when English professional theater began. Wickham places it in the early part of the sixteenth century, but sees it as a solidified practice by 1531, whereas *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Drama*, eds. A.R. Braunmuller and Michael Hattaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), places it slightly earlier, using 1497 as the start date for its chronological table. See *English Professional Theater, 1530-1660*, eds. Glynne Wickham, Herbert Berry and William Ingram (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

¹³ Regarding the shift from royal patronage to commercial viability, see Suzanne Westfall, "The useless dearness of the diamond: theories of patronage theater" (13-42) and Alexander Leggatt, "The audience as patron: *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*" (295-315) in *Shakespeare and Theatrical Patronage in Early Modern England*, eds. Paul Whitfield White and Suzanne R. Westfall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

¹⁴ Andrew Gurr states that while admission to the Theater cost one penny, the minimum price at the Blackfriars was between three and sixpence. Boxes could cost five times as much in the hall playhouses as they did at the amphitheaters. See Gurr, 31.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 185.

¹⁶ White and Westfall, 131.

¹⁷ Arthur C. Kirsch, *Jacobean Dramatic Perspectives* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1972).

¹⁸ See the Introduction to the Arden 3 *Pericles*, ed. Suzanne Gossett (London: Thompson Learning, 2004).

¹⁹ See Harbage, *Shakespeare's Audience* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941); Cook, *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London, 1576-1642* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981) and Gurr, *op. cit.*

²⁰ I would also include in this category Michael Neill's "'Wit's Most Accomplished Senate': the Audience of the Caroline Private Theaters," *Studies in English Language* 18 (1978), 341-60; Richard Levin's "Women in the Renaissance Theater Audience," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40 (1989), 165-74; William Ingram's *The Business of Playing: the Beginnings of the Adult Professional Theater in Elizabethan London* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992); Mary A. Blackstone's and Louis Cameron's "'Towards 'A Full and Understanding Auditory': New Evidence of Playgoers at the First Globe Theater,'" *Modern Language Review* 90 (1995), 556-71; and Jean E. Howard's essay "Women as spectators, spectacles and paying customers" in *Readings in Renaissance Women's Drama: Criticism, History, and Performance, 1594-1998*, eds. S.P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 81-86.

²¹ See, for example, Muriel Bradbrook, *Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960); Alan C. Dessen, *Elizabethan Drama and the Viewer's Eye*, (Chapel

Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977) and *Elizabethan Stage Conventions and Modern Interpreters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Robert Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); Michael Hattaway, *Elizabethan Popular Theater* (London and New York: Routledge, 1982); Ralph Berry, *Shakespeare and the Awareness of the Audience* (London: MacMillan, 1985); Marion Lomax, *Stage Images and Traditions: Shakespeare to Ford* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Bruce Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, eds. Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Ruth Lunney, *Marlowe and the Popular Tradition: Innovation in the English Drama before 1595* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002); Jeremy Lopez, *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) and Matthew Steggle, *Laughing and Weeping in Early Modern Theaters* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

²² Some widespread examples of this tendency are found in Dessen, Berry and Lopez, op. cit.

²³ Lopez, 17.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁵ Lopez admits: “[W]e do not have very much evidence about how audiences felt about specific plays or specific moments in specific plays” (19).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁷ Barbara Freedman, *Staging the Gaze: Postmodernism, Psychoanalysis and Shakespearean Comedy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁹ Like Freedman’s own methodology in her book, apparatus theory uses ideas informed by cultural materialism, semiotics, psychoanalysis and later feminism. It proposes an institutional model of spectatorship, where the spectator’s viewing processes become shaped by technological apparatuses of film, such as camera angle and editing practices. It further argues that film is inherently ideological and that its very way of showing communicates ideology to spectators in ways that are invidious because they conceal rather than reveal themselves. Freedman discusses the theories of two of its most important proponents, Christian Metz and Laura Mulvey, to shape the theory of spectatorship she puts forth in her argument.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 16. In Freudian terms the “split subject” refers primarily to the heterogeneous nature of the psyche (id, ego, superego). The Lacanian split subject is born out of the mirror-stage, where the infant recognizes his image in the mirror and perceives it as a more perfect and holistic version of the self. Freedman sees the Lacanian split subject as related to the way Shakespearean comedy deconstructs the spectatorial subject’s perceived position of mastery through misrecognition (see pages 52-66).

³² This tendency has been abated by a number of important studies on sound and film, such as *Film Sound: Theory and Practice*, eds. Elizabeth Weis and John Belton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); Rick Altman, *The American Film Musical* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); Sara Kozloff,

Invisible Storytellers: Voice-Over Narration in American Fiction Film (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: the Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988); *Sound Theory/Sound Practice*, ed. Rick Altman (New York: Routledge, 1992); *Hearing the Movie: Music and Sound in Film History*, eds. James Buhler, David Neumeyer and Rob Deemer (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Rick Altman, *Silent Film Sound* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); Britta Sjogren, *Into the Vortex: Female Voice and Paradox in Film* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006); and most recently, *Lowering the Boom: Critical Studies in Film Sound*, eds. Jay Beck and Tony Grajeda (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008).

³³ See, for example, Smith, op. cit.; *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture*, ed. Elizabeth D. Harvey (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003); Gina Bloom, *Voice in Motion: Shaping Sound in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); and Carla Mazzi, *The Inarticulate Renaissance: Language Troubles in an Age of Eloquence* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

³⁴ Stephen Gosson, “The School of Abuse” in *Shakespeare’s Theater: A Sourcebook*, ed. Tanya Pollard (Malden: Blackwell, 2004).

³⁵ *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/o/oed/>. All quotes from the *OED* taken from this edition.

³⁶ Gosson in Pollard, op. cit., 23.

³⁷ *Pericles*’s popularity has largely been surmised from contemporary comments about the play; for example, Chambers cites an anonymous pamphlet called *Pimlico, or Run Red-cap* to illustrate the play’s success: “Amazde I stood, to see a Crowd / Of Ciuill Throats stretchd out so lowd; / (As at a *New-play*) all the Roomes / Did swarm with *Gentiles* mix’d with *Groomes*, / So truly that I thought all These / Came to see *Shore* or *Pericles*.” E.K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*, 2nd volume (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930), 217.

³⁸ Richard Dutton, *Ben Jonson: Authority: Criticism* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 109.

³⁹ *Hymenai*, Preface, line 18, in *Ben Jonson: The Complete Masques*, ed. Stephen Orgel (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969), 76.

⁴⁰ I reference the subtitle to *Love’s Triumph Through Callipolis*, which was Jonson’s final masque. On the title page, he provides the following subtitle: “To Make the Spectators Understanders.”

Chapter One

Towards a Theory of Spectatorship: 1577-1603

Near the turn of the 20th century, a young Russian journalist began a short piece he was writing for the *Nizhegorodski listok* newspaper with the following description:

Last night I was in the Kingdom of the Shadows.

If only you knew how strange it is to be there. It is a world without sound, without colour. Everything there—the earth, the trees, the people, the water and the air—is dipped in monotonous grey. Grey rays of the sun across the grey sky, grey eyes in grey faces, and the leaves of the trees are ashen grey. It is not life, but its shadow, it is not motion but its soundless spectre.¹

His observations may strike a familiar note with those acquainted with the maladies commonly associated with modernity: a flattening of human experience by the repetitive nature of the industrialized landscape and workplace, a deadening of perception due to the sensory overstimulation of urban life and an evacuation of individual subjectivity into the hegemonizing engines of mass labor and culture. But, although written by the young Maxim Gorky (who became one of Russia's most outspoken voices against some of these pressures) at the height of the industrial age in tsarist Russia, it is not a day-in-the-modern-life account. It is a review of the newest invention from the Continent, the Lumière cinematograph, exhibited at the Nizhni-Novgorod fair of 1896. From Gorky's description, this particular novelty doesn't sound as though it would have much of a draw – why would people want to go see a washed-out version of the world they daily occupied?² Evacuated of sound, color, scent and taste, Lumière's depiction horrifies

Gorky; it is the lifeless effigy of an already-diluted existence. Nor does it offer as compensation any sort of window into other worlds or places, no foreign lands or fantastical fictions. Instead, it depicts what for many would be familiar scenes: city streets bustling with people and carriages, trains rushing to various destinations, and a group of men at a bar drinking and playing cards. The only thing it does offer, it seems, is the thrill of a witnessing yet another new technology, or, perhaps, the satisfaction of affirming humankind's inexorable march towards "progress" regardless of its utility or value to the very people it wants to impress.

Despite what sounds like a less-than-scintillating display, Gorky is moved by what he sees. After his initial description, in which the word "grey" predominates, Gorky makes a rather surprising about-face: "The extraordinary impression it creates is so unique and complex that I doubt my ability to describe it with all its nuances."³ It soon becomes clear that despite this new medium's communicative limitations, it creates a surprising and novel *vraisemblance*:

Suddenly something clicks, everything vanishes and a train appears on the screen. It speeds straight towards you—watch out! It seems as though it will plunge into the darkness in which you sit, turning you into a ripped sack full of lacerated flesh and splintered bones, and crushing into dust and into broken fragments this hall and this building, so full of women, wine, music and vice...

This mute, grey life finally begins to disturb and depress you. It seems as though it carries a warning, fraught with a vague and sinister meaning that makes your heart grow faint. Strange imaginings invade your mind and your consciousness begins to wane and grow dim...⁴

Contrasts abound in Gorky's account, and yet now, with all the acuity of hindsight, they seem perfectly reasonable. He is, of course, watching an early version of "the movies," a two-dimensional, mobile and highly selective narrative form that came to prominence in

the early part of the twentieth century. But Gorky, of course, did not know this. For him, it was not only a terrifyingly “real” experience, but one that somehow, much like the joke in Freud’s explication of the *unheimlich*, made what was familiar rarefied and strange. Even more confusing to the young writer, it seems, was the fact that although this new technology communicated only through the visual codes of movement and shading, it causes him to imagine pain, experience fear and become absorbed in such a way that he can only describe it through the metaphor of losing consciousness.

Let us move backward some three hundred years and some 1,326 miles to Elizabethan London near the close of the sixteenth century. Despite an abundance of fairs, there is no cinematograph, no newspaper and no modernity crisis. There is, however, a form of mass entertainment precipitously on the rise, one that is causing a good deal of concern among certain strands of the populace:

For the strangest comedy brings the greatest delectation and pleasure. Our nature is led away with vanity, which the author perceiving frames himself with novelties and strange trifles to content the vain humors of his rude auditors, feigning countries never heard of; monsters and prodigious creatures that are not...[I]f they write of histories that are known, as the life of Pompey, the martial affairs of Caesar, and other worthies, they give them a new face, and turn them out like counterfeits to show themselves on the stage. It was therefore aptly applied of him who likened the writers of our days unto tailors, who having their shears in their hand, can alter the fashion of any thing into another form; and with a new face make that seem new which is old.⁵

Of course, the differences between these two descriptions are more numerous than their commonalities. Rather than describing a world shrouded in grey, sometime-actor, playwright and moralist Anthony Munday describes the rapidly-growing “craze” of professional theater as something that teems with vitality. In addition, while the cinematograph is an almost entirely new entertainment technology at the turn of the

twentieth century, plays at the end of the sixteenth are not. Those individuals inhabiting early modern London, whether native-born or migrant, certainly had been exposed to some form of “pleying”: morality and “miracle” plays, interludes and other forms of drama had been popular in England for hundreds of years. Finally, there is a major (and somewhat surprising) discrepancy between the two accounts in terms of how they discuss the figure of the author, or, more accurately, the Author. That there is such a difference is not in itself surprising; the large temporal gap that separates the passages encompasses many changes in concepts of and discourses about subjectivity and authorial persona. More unexpected is the fact that the figure of the Author appears in the sixteenth-century account rather than the *fin de siècle* one. Almost completely absent in Gorky’s account, the Author is a major focus in Munday’s: “The writers of our time are so led away with vainglory that their only endeavor is to please the humor of men, and rather with vanity to content their minds. The notablest liar is become the best poet; he that can make the most notorious lie, and disguise falsehood in such sort that he may pass unperceived, is held the best writer.”⁶ Whereas Gorky sees Lumière as the “inventor” of the *technology* of the spectacle he witnesses rather than the creative force behind the choice and sequencing of the images he sees, Munday describes the playwright as the individual largely responsible for shaping the audience’s experience. Part illusionist and part master craftsman, the playwright Munday describes prefigures the modern literary author that Barthes identifies and deconstructs, or the director-as-dictator that Truffaut comes to call the *auteur*.

I raise these differences in order to tease out some larger strands of concern that these historically distant commentaries share. Although new in quite different ways, both

Gorky's and Munday's descriptions discuss forms of entertainment that are novel to the culture that produces them. The cinematograph is new in that it introduces the quality of movement to photographic representation; the late sixteenth-century theater is new in that it presents dramatic material, most of it secular, written by professional writers and acted by professional actors for profit. Both mediums, while often touted as potentially edifying and/or educational by their supporters, are designed principally for entertaining groups of people. Finally, both writers see these forms of entertainment as having the ability to mesmerize, even trick their audiences into confusing the fictional with the real; the two-dimensional image bleeds into the thing itself, the fictional recreation is taken as historical fact. This "newness" raises particular anxieties for these two social critics. One is centered on perception: both Gorky and Munday attempt to understand how the spectacles created by the cinematograph and the professional theater communicate with and influence those who watch them. The other apprehension concerns a problem of expression: both critics endeavor to find language that adequately represents both the experience these new diversions create and the sort of looking they invite, even produce. A pattern begins to emerge that links these two writers, separated indelibly by time and space, in that both bear witness to moments where a cultural need has arisen to find new ways to think and talk about the act of spectatorship.

The link I have outlined here is, no doubt, a tenuous one: large, loose and, some might even say, naïvely ahistorical. I begin with this connection across time, however, to challenge the widely-accepted critical stance that "spectatorship" is a product of twentieth-century viewing technologies, and that the figure of "the spectator," so widely theorized in film and media studies, did not exist before it was created and manipulated

by the scopic economy modern technologies produce. From the “hypodermic” model of spectatorship first put forth by the Frankfurt school, where ideology is “injected” into the masses through largely invisible-yet-omnipresent viewing technologies, to more recent schools of thought that offer alternatives to the spectator-as-automaton (such as the uses and gratifications model), few theorists have challenged the idea that “the spectator” is a product of modernity.⁷ In many ways, the anecdote with which I began seems to support this critical stance. Gorky’s review prefigures many of the ways that theorists such as Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer talk about film’s place in the “culture industry,” in that they see film as one of the primary technological and discursive mechanisms that helps form and reify the modern subject. Like narrative film, the Lumieres’ early version of moving pictures promotes a sense of isolation and fragmentation in the viewer, while showing him or her something that seems larger than life. However, the opinion that the spectator is imaginatively and perceptually paralyzed through the scopic mastery of film technology is not limited to theorists of modernity and postmodernity. Theater historian Andrew Gurr sees these qualities as ones that constitute the essential differences between early modern audiences and those of today. Claiming that these disparities can be summarized through the etymological difference between “spectator” and “audience,” Gurr makes a case for why the terms should not be used interchangeably when referring to early modern playgoers:

“Audience” is a collective term for a group of listeners. A “spectator” is an individual, seeing for him or herself. Modern playgoers are set up, by their physical and mental conditioning, to be solitary spectators, sitting comfortably in the dark watching a moving picture, eavesdroppers privileged by the camera’s hidden eye. In fundamental contrast, the early modern playgoers were audiences, people gathered as crowds, forming what they called assemblies, gatherings or companies. They sat or stood in

a circle round the speakers who were enacting what they came to hear and see. An audience comes to hear, and therefore it clusters as closely as possible around the speaker. Spectators come to see, and so they position themselves where they can confront the spectacle.”⁸

Despite the fact that he later acknowledges the use of the term by early modern writers, Gurr makes the case here that “spectator” is, by definition, an anachronism when talking about early modern theatergoers. Alienated and decontextualized, Gurr’s spectator bears more than a passing resemblance to Gorky’s encounter with his first film, whereas Gurr’s audience is a community of listeners, who enjoy a “direct relationship” with the drama and dramatists of their time.⁹ Later, in a segment entitled “Audiences or Spectators,” he returns to this question of terminology. Stating that while neither term adequately expresses “the feast of the senses which playgoing ought to provide,” Gurr prefers “audience,” claiming that it emerged victorious during the very period at stake in his book: “[T]he triumph of the collective ‘audience’ over the individual ‘spectator’ tells us quite a lot about the mental equipment of the crowds at the Shakespearean playhouses.”¹⁰

There is little question that there are considerable differences between early modern viewing practices and our own. Chief among these are the technologies of looking produced in the twentieth century by film, television, and most recently, the computer. Like many cultural theorists, Gurr understands twentieth-century spectatorship as image- rather than language-driven, fostering a sense of private, even voyeuristic, looking and interactive only in a virtual sense. And, if “audience” was the preferred term of early modern commentators on theatergoing, “spectator” is the darling of twentieth-century theorists of looking. For Gurr, “spectator” not only emphasizes a primarily visual sort of interaction, it also infers the theoretical apparatus that grew up around visual

technologies of the twentieth century. In doing so, “spectator” also carries resonances of other critical discourses belonging to modernity: mass culture, psychoanalysis, cultural materialism and especially modern subjectivity, which, as any good historicist knows, is a problematic term when discussing the early modern period.

Considering all of the contemporary baggage that “spectator” carries, Gurr’s cautionary stance regarding terminology seems warranted; however, he may be throwing the baby out with the bathwater. His claim that the collective term “audience” triumphed over the solitary “spectator” in early modern references is only partly accurate. While “audience” may have been used more *frequently* than “spectator,” both are found regularly in writings about the stage and other forms of early modern spectacle, a fact that Gurr himself acknowledges.¹¹ The term first appears in the sixteenth century: the O.E.D. cites Philip Sidney as the first anglophone author to use “spectator” in *The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia*.¹² It appears with greater frequency as the late sixteenth century (and playgoing culture) progresses, and, by the end of the first decade of the seventeenth, is used regularly to refer to theater audiences and other groups gathered together for the purpose of looking. For early modern writers who settled on “spectator” as another way of representing the “audiences,” “beholders” and “onlookers” of their culture, this term did not evoke the same sorts of meaning that Gurr assigns it from his twentieth-century critical perspective. But how did it function for them? Gurr suggests that it filled a particular need in the vocabulary of playwrights concerned with the interpretative tension between looking and listening. The term was, he claims, often used with derision by poets who felt that their linguistic achievements were being eclipsed by the visual side of stagecraft. Citing Jonson as chief among detractors of those who come primarily to look

rather than listen, Gurr states “Every time Jonson called his auditors ‘spectators’, as he almost invariably did, he was covertly sneering at the debased preference for stage spectacle rather than the poetic ‘soul’ of the play, which he claimed they could only find by listening to his words.”¹³ Jonson, of course, is something like an early modern version of Mikey from the Life cereal commercials of the 1970’s—he hates everything—and therefore is not the most objective of cultural witnesses. But Gurr claims that Jonson is by no means the only critic of the “barren spectators”; apparently, many of Jonson’s contemporaries shared the view that poetry was losing out to spectacle.¹⁴

In claiming, however, that even in the early modern period the term “spectator” was tied inextricably to the visual, Gurr contradicts his initial claim about the difference between Renaissance audiences and contemporary ones. If early modern playgoers “were audiences,” and an audience “comes to hear,” why did there emerge a need for a term that separates lookers from listeners? Neither Sidney nor Edmund Spenser, two of the earliest English writers to use the term, wrote for the stage. It is, therefore, unlikely that the competition between sight and hearing that obsessed Jonson and his contemporaries would have held the same charge for them.¹⁵ Gurr himself expresses some confusion over Sidney’s use of “spectator,” since he assumes the poet would naturally privilege hearing over seeing: “Curiously the first writer to use the term ‘spectator’ appears to have been that most critical of educated and gentlemanly playgoers, Philip Sidney.”¹⁶ Gurr does not delve further into this question, making it seem as though “spectator” was perhaps simply another neologism generated during a particularly fecund epoch for the English language. However, I would argue that “spectator” is neither just a writerly synonym nor a term coined to designate a particular sort of playgoer. Unlike other

neologisms of the period that spring fully formed into the English language, “spectator” is a translation, and a very literal one at that. Before Sidney’s rendition, the Latin *spectator* was usually translated as “beholder” or “looker-on.”¹⁷ In an account of the festivities orchestrated for the Duc d’Alençon’s visit to Antwerp in 1582, Arthur Golding translates those that stand and watch the extravagant spectacles as “beholders.” Sidney uses “beholders” seventeen times in the *Arcadia*, whereas “spectator” appears only twice. The question is: why did it appear at all? What sort of conceptual work is Sidney trying to accomplish through the introduction of this term?

In multiple ways, this inquiry speaks to a concept at the heart of my project, which is to explore what, exactly, *is* the difference between “an audience” and “spectators”? Whereas many theorists of spectatorship use these terms synonymously, I want to pressure the differences between them, especially those suggested by early modern usage. I propose that when early modern writers talk about “spectators” in conjunction with the theater, they are speaking of a hypothetical entity, an anonymous prototype that they use to help them imagine what occurs between onlooker and staged spectacle at a play. An “audience” refers to physical bodies, or, as marketing directors for performing arts organizations call them, “butts in seats.” At times these two terms intersect; some early modern writers do use them interchangeably, or to create a sense of play between the real people who attended London’s theaters and the fictionalized, often hyperbolic versions of them that appeared in their plays. But even when used with some fluidity, these two terms contain different resonances, ones that I will try to sound out over the course of this study. When I use the term “spectator,” however, I generally refer to a discursive entity rather than a material or phenomenological one.

One cannot, with any pretense of accuracy, canvass all of the ways in which Tudor-Stuart England thought about the large and unwieldy category of “the visual,” “theatrical” or even spectatorship itself in a single study. With that caveat in mind, the remainder of this chapter attempts to shape a working definition of the theatrical spectator and the dynamics of looking associated with this figure. By exploring at a variety of written materials (including representations found in plays, poems and social satire and descriptions from pro- and antitheatrical polemics), I trace certain discursive threads that begin to take shape around the phenomenon of the sixteenth-century professional theater. Through an analysis of several of the dominant issues, images and anxieties that concatenate around the figure of the spectator, this chapter examines several suppositions about spectatorship that emerge during the final decades of Elizabeth’s reign. These include the following formulations:

- Spectatorship is a dynamic exchange between the play and the spectator, one that encompasses both active and passive modes of looking. This interaction is often represented as a violent, even traumatic one.
- Spectatorship is capable of forming a sense of collective experience and community. The energies generated by this interpretative community are believed to contain a creative spark that imitates or mimics the divine.
- Spectatorship is not an experience relegated to the sensory binary of aural/visual, but is imagined and articulated as one that activates multiple senses for the spectator.

Before examining these three suppositions in greater detail, I want to emphasize that they do not exist in isolation, but are interconnected under a larger concern that early modern society had about the spectator, one that is still highly topical at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Each of these concepts represent an initial attempt by early modern writers to articulate the theater’s unique ability to create something that could a) seem

more real to the spectator than reality itself, and b) cause the spectator to want (or even at times attempt) to inscribe this alternative reality onto the world in which he or she lived. In other words, what was it about the particular interaction between theatrical performance and the theatrical spectator that opened up a space where the imaginary could, even if only temporarily, become confused with or mistaken for the real? To use a contemporary analogy, film and television are often seen as particularly effective mechanisms for the dissemination of ideology because of how they manipulate the viewer's point-of-view. Techniques such as continuity editing, camera angle and film speed create a uniquely "real" experience for the spectator, one that is designed to enhance perceptual experience and detail. But the early modern professional theater, using what we would today call "minimalist" sets and other non-realistic conventions (such as having boys play women and the doubling and tripling of roles), would seem to provide clear signposts of the theater's fictionality. As Philip Sidney points out in his *Defense of Poesy*: "What child is there that, coming to a play and seeing *Thebes* written in great letters upon an old door, doth believe that it is Thebes?"¹⁸ Clearly the potency of the theatrical experience for the early modern spectator was not based on the sort of verisimilitude created by modern viewing technologies. Was it, then, that the theater engaged the spectator's imagination through completely different channels, or was it that verisimilitude itself meant something different to the early modern spectator?

The three concepts of spectatorship outlined above are a starting point for exploring these questions. Although we cannot accurately reconstruct the experience of the early modern spectator, we can assess how those who thought and wrote about this figure imagined and tried to articulate the spectatorial experience. Many of the

individuals writing about the theater (whether for or against) were themselves spectators; certainly Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights attended the theater, and many of the “antitheatricalists” were former playwrights and actors. And, while my project seeks to articulate an early modern theory of spectatorship that is my own, the ideas from which it is constructed are theirs. Found in a range of late sixteenth-century writings on and for the theater, these texts grapple with the nascent figure of the spectator and the new experiences of looking that developed alongside the rise of the professional theater in early modern England. For those writing against the theater, the sorts of interpretative exchanges that occurred in the playhouse were seen as potentially subversive and ultimately detrimental to the individual and society. For those invested in and writing for the stage, this dynamic not only was celebrated but also, as my later chapters explore, was a source of anxiety, as the energies generated when spectators and drama met in the theater were not easily predicted or controlled. Before turning to those writers who were engaged actively in this debate, I first return to the site where the term “spectator” emerges: a prose romance penned by one of the most spectacular figures of the Elizabethan court.

The active/passive spectator and the rhetoric of violence

Although Philip Sidney was, as far as we can tell, responsible for introducing “spectator” into English parlance, his initial use of the term seems to come out of nowhere. Like most of the writers in the 1580’s, Sidney relies mostly upon “beholders” to describe the onlookers of an event or action in the *Arcadia*.¹⁹ However, his first use of “spectator” coincides with a narrative detour in which Sidney attempts to describe a

rather complicated dynamic, one that involves a type of looking that is generated by a singular perspective and charged with psychic drama. He tells the tragedy of Leonatus, King of Paphlagonia, who loses his kingdom through the treachery of his bastard son, Plexirtus. The tale of the betrayal and overthrow is told in flashback by the usurped king; the “real-time” action begins when Plexirtus discovers that his father and younger (and legitimate) brother are still alive and have reunited. In something of a panic, Plexirtus sets out to find and kill them:

But by and by the occasion was presented: for *Plexirtus* (so was the bastard called) came thether with fortie horse, onely of purpose to murder this brother; of whose coming he had soone advertisement, and thought no eyes of sufficient credite in such a matter, but his owne; and therefore came himself to be actor, and spectator.²⁰

Sidney’s locution here is complex. Initially, it seems as though *spectator* is used in clear counterpoint to *actor*: it designates the passive side of this equation, that aspect of individual consciousness that can be altered, even overcome by what is seen. As both *actor* and *spectator*, Plexirtus should form a holistic spectatorial entity, an interpretative version of Aristophanes’ sexually unified originary beings.²¹ Instead, the two terms butt up uncomfortably against one another in the phrase, creating a sense of fragmentation rather than unity. In part, this dynamic is generated by the narrative itself. We already know that Plexirtus is a study in contradictions: he seems loyal, humble and temperate, but is in reality treacherous, proud and relentlessly ambitious. But the interpretative yin and yang that Sidney seems to want to portray here feels odd, in large part because he tries on the new term “spectator” rather than using the tried-and-true “beholder,” a substitution that hints at a desire to represent something *other* than neatly opposing modes of interaction. What that is, exactly, is unclear. In this case, both *actor* and

spectator are connected through the visual. Plexirtus does not merely set out to get rid of his annoying little brother, but because he “thought no eyes of sufficient credite in such a matter, but his owne.” In other words, he sets out to see what he needs to see. Plexirtus is *actor* in that he seeks to confront the sight of his younger brother’s material reality; he is *spectator* in that it is only by visually encountering his brother that all he signifies to Plexirtus (instability, illegitimacy, and exposure) is made manifest. Visuality becomes the phenomenological channel that bridges the active and passive modes which *actor* and *spectator* seem to occupy in this passage. Perhaps, as Gurr claims, the emergence of “spectator” is tied to a corresponding rise or reaffirmation of sight as the preeminent sense through which individuals came to know the world in the late sixteenth century. However, the question remains: why did Sidney not simply use the more customary “beholder,” a term that would have evoked visual experience equally well?

One possibility is that Sidney is attempting to express a relationship between acting and looking that does not break down along oppositional or complementary polarities, but is organized rather less neatly. His claim that Plexirtus became “actor, and spectator” is preceded by the equally enigmatic lead-in phrase: “*and therefore came him selfe to be actor, and spectator*” (my italics). On one hand, Plexirtus’s “coming to be” is literal, in that he comes in his own person to see for himself what he has heretofore only heard. On the other, the phrase “came him selfe to be” gives the figurative sense that a transformation has taken place in Plexirtus, not one that is physical or moral, but experiential. Plexirtus’s actions here follow a specific, if empirically topsy-turvy, trajectory in this passage: he does not see and then desire, but desires and then sees. The reverse cause-and-effect described here seems to initiate a particularly powerful

generative force, one that, to use Stephen Greenblatt's phrase about subjectivity in the period, is "resolutely dialectical" in nature.²² When Plexirtus comes to be actor and spectator, he undergoes a transformation that is neither enacted upon him by outside forces (such as God or nature) nor completely generated by his imagination or psyche. Rather, the act of "coming of himself to be" is not simply being active and/or passive in turn, but being both simultaneously. It is a chaos of agency, a collision of imaginative and experiential selves, a doing and a being done to. Rather than expressing polarities of experience (active/passive), Sidney struggles to express what happens when these seemingly divergent energies are yoked together, a struggle revealed in the very structure of the phrase. Plexirtus's active transformation (the creation of himself as both actor and spectator) is described through the passive voice: he "comes to be". When Sidney transports the term "spectator," then, from one language to another virtually unchanged, it is not because he is running low on vocabulary, but because he is trying to communicate something more turbulent and more subjective than "beholding" would designate.

It is somewhere out of this primal chaos of *dasein* that the sixteenth-century idea of the spectator emerges. In 1584, when Sidney grasps for a signifier that encapsulates how the dynamics of observation and the way people think about them are changing, the spectator is still inchoate in form and concept, but rapidly materializing in various discourses found in the period. Sidney's use of the term, although somewhat quixotic, is echoed by several other writers towards the close of the sixteenth century. In his epic romance *Vertue's History*, Francis Rous describes a scene of exquisite horror: "Of bloody gusts, and those vermilion swordes, / Which dide themselues in brothers broken hearts, /

How swimming blood in streets made flowing fords, / And ruthfull turmoyles rose in
diuers parts / I meane to sing....”²³ He then calls upon a nameless “spectator” to avenge
these wrongs: “Which while these things were done spectator (*sic*) stoode: / Lift up
blacke Nemesis thy glowing eyes....” Again, the observer described here is one who is
called to occupy the positions of both actor and spectator. Even closer to Sidney’s usage
is the example found in Samuel Daniels’s *Poetical Essays*: “O faithlesse Cosen, here
behold I stand / Spectator of that act my selfe haue plaid....”²⁴ Daniel’s speaker addresses
his cousin who has betrayed him (“thou dost me wrong / T’usurpe the government I held
so long), and, while the narrative situation is a reversal of Plexirtus’s, his spectatorial
positioning is similar, in that it is only in the seeing of his betrayer that the reality of his
new identity (betrayed, powerless) becomes fully realized.²⁵

There is another connection between these examples, however: they all describe
acts—whether intended or performed—of violence. Sidney’s spectator sets out to see,
then murder, his father and brother; Rous’s witnesses a bloodbath, and Daniels’s has been
betrayed and overthrown by a family member. These scenarios do not simply describe
instances of witnessing violence; they suggest a process whereby what the subject sees
initiates in him a psychic trauma. When Plexirtus sees his father and brother, he is forced
to see himself as a traitor and parricide rather than as a legitimate ruler. Rous’s spectator
does witness actual violence, an experience which turns him into “Nemesis.” And
Daniels’s uses the term “spectator” to describe the moment where Richard II realizes that
he is no longer King of England—the moment that Shakespeare portrays by having
Richard call for a looking-glass, because he cannot imagine that he will recognize himself
bereft of his majesty. In addition to describing an action that demands a play between

active and passive modes of interaction, it seems that “spectator” also suggests a viewing subject that is altered by what he sees, not gently or subtly, but suddenly and violently.

While none of the above examples reference the theater, each seems to be trying to express a sort of looking that produces similar cathartic effects to those thought to be achieved by dramatic performance. These writers’ use of the newfangled “spectator” suggests that they are struggling to articulate new perceptions of what a “beholder” actually was. Whereas Sidney, Rous and Daniels seem to describe an interpretative site involving concurrent modes of active and passive interpretation that result in psychic trauma, others try to elucidate the convergence of individual and group consciousness that the theater could facilitate. This play between individual and communal forms of address was not unique to the theater, but was related to that which took place in various other contexts, such as public executions and the Anglican mass. Indeed, one of the most common complaints that city magistrates and clergy alike made against the theater was that it drew people from the churches and into the theaters, a charge that was taken seriously enough to result in Elizabeth’s banning of plays on Sundays in 1569. Of equal concern was the fact that the theater, like the mass, harnessed the combined energies upon which it drew in ways that could animate narrative to the point where it came dangerously close to reality. This generative potency was one point on which both late sixteenth-century protheatrical and antitheatrical treatises concur. And, although they differed on whether this was a quality to celebrate or fear, both see the spectator as the catalyst that ignites the spark of life inherent in stage drama, an ability that imitates, even challenges, the prerogative of divinity itself.

Words meet flesh: communities of theatrical looking

In part, it was the stage's ability to tap into the imaginative potency inherent in an audience that made it a cause for concern for civic and ecclesiastical authorities. However, a more obvious problem, also voiced by both groups, was the theater's ability to draw crowds out of the churches and into the playhouse. Complaints of this nature can be found in the *Stationer's Register* from the 1590's, stating that plays withdrew "all sorts in general from their daily resort to sermons and other godly exercise."²⁶ One of the most precise articulations of this cultural anxiety is found in a 1577 treatise by Anglican preacher John Northbrooke. Written as a polemic against idle pastimes in general, Northbrooke sees theatergoing as particularly vile in that it provides a source of direct competition with the Church:

And by the long suffering and permitting of these vain plays, it hath stricken such a blind zeal into the hearts of the people that they shame not to say and affirm openly that players are as good as sermons, and that they learn as much or more at a play than they do at God's word preached. God be merciful to this realm of England, for we begin to have itching ear, and loath that heavenly manna, as appeareth by their slow and negligent coming unto sermons and running so fast, and so many, continually unto plays.²⁷

Like many of the grievances raised against the theater, this one is rehashed for over thirty years by various antitheatrical polemicists. And, like Northbrooke, these other critics tend towards the biblical bombast found in this passage. While some scholars have claimed that the "plagiaristic" nature of the antitheatricalists' writings makes them unworthy of serious consideration, these iterations provide significant cultural information, especially if we look at what is repeated.²⁸ For example, the "heavenly manna" metaphor found in the above passage is, certainly, not original; complaints against the theater were often

formulated through biblical imagery and highly stylized rhetoric. But in claiming that the English “loath” the heavenly manna that is the word of God, Northbrooke parallels the intractable Elizabethans with the ungrateful Israelites, who, when God fed them with heavenly food while they wandered the desert, complained of the monotony of their divinely-provided diet: “And the mixed multitude that was among them fell to lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? / We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: / But our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.”²⁹ Like the Israelites before them, the English risk God’s favor by pursuing of the spices of life, and value earthly pleasures (even those enjoyed under the yoke of physical or spiritual enslavement) over freedom.

In inferring this connection between the English and the Israelites, however, Northbrooke gestures towards something that exists at the core of the way that early modern culture imagined theatrical spectatorship. By comparing the English, who run from the church and into the theater, to the Israelites, who eschew the food of God and long for well-fed slavery, Northbrooke delineates English theatergoers as a unique community of believers, even if their belief approaches heresy. This kinship is linked not only through ties of race, culture, nation and religion, but forged anew through a “blind zeal” for the theater. Northbrooke’s articulation of the theatergoing public as a community is reinforced through his portrayal of England’s playgoers as a people who speak and think as one: “they shame not to say and affirm openly that players are as good as sermons, and that they learn as much or more at a play than they do at God’s word

preached.”³⁰ The fact that a similar dialogic form is used in the biblical passage from which Northbrooke’s metaphor derives (the Israelites are depicted as collectively voicing their complaint) does not, I would argue, render it unimaginative or derivative. Rather, Northbrooke selects material that reflects something about the spectator that he intuits, but cannot quite express.

The theater’s popularity, however, raised a more profound metaphysical issue than the fact that it resulted in poor church attendance. The communal force that Northbrooke suggests in his early treatise was noted by both the theater’s proponents and detractors. Whereas the antitheatricalists saw this force as one that needed rechanneling back into the devotional sphere, those who wrote for the stage tended to imagine it as a force which could make or break the theater’s creative and financial success. Whether playwrights imagined their playgoers primarily through these mercenary terms is unclear; however, they often articulated the spectatorial energy generated between audience and performance as one that contained something far more ineffable and potent. Thomas Nashe’s 1592 social satire, *Piers Peniless his Supplication to the Devil*, suggests just how powerful a community of spectators could be: “How it would have joyed brave Talbot, the terror of the French, to think that after he had lain two hundred years in his tomb, he should triumph again on the stage and have his bones new embalmed with the tears of ten thousand spectators at least (at several times), who, in the tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding!”³¹ Nashe describes a traditionally Aristotelian *catharsis* here in that he describes a spectacle (the bleeding Talbot) that creates a burst of emotion in the onlookers, but these spectators also play a large role in

creating what they see. In Nashe's rendition, the spectators' collective response reanimates the body of a national hero. While Nashe is careful not to extend the "miracle" of Talbot's revivification beyond the sphere of theatrical make-believe (as Shakespeare later will with Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*), his metaphor of the body "new embalmed" with the spectators' tears smacks as much of baptism as of funerary rite, of bestowing new life as of raising specters from the past.

It is significant that while Nashe speaks as a proponent of the theater, he also partakes in devotional imagery to craft its defense. Drawing subtly on the iconic image of the wounded-then-resurrected body as a metaphor for the potency of the theatrical experience, Nashe may simply be throwing the antitheatricalists' high-flown rhetoric back in their teeth. Certainly it is a choice that bears the mark of the satirist. Entitled "The Defence of Plays," this segment of *Piers Penniless* responds directly to the flurry of antitheatrical tracts generated during the last two decades of the sixteenth century. Although Nashe stops short of a definitive reference to the paradigm of Christian martyrdom, his description of "Talbot" through terms that emphasize both corporeal ephemerality (entombment, embalment, bones and blood) and the capability of transcending such limitations (triumph, joy, and new life) contains resonances from biblical renditions of Christ's burial and resurrection. What better way to contest, even enrage, moralist critics of the theater than this skillfully veiled blasphemy used in praise of the theater, and, moreover, by using an image saturated with popish resonances?

There may, however, be something at work here other than Nashe's wit. The Christian echoes found in this passage owe more to the Church's performative traditions

than its scriptural ones. Although all of the four gospels contain a scene where the Marys go to anoint Jesus' body (only to find it missing), this moment is glossed over rather quickly in each.³² This narrative was, however, a popular one within the tradition of liturgical drama, where it was elaborated upon and expanded to include responses from the congregation. Consider this version from a twelfth-century Easter mass:

To them let the deacon representing the angel answer, saying:

Whom do you seek, O trembling women, weeping at this tomb?

And they to him:

We seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified.

To them let him add:

He is not here whom you seek, but going quickly tell his disciples and Peter that Jesus is risen.

After this, as they draw near, let him rise and raise up the curtain and expose the sepulchre to view, and say to them:

Come and see the place where the Lord had been laid, alleluia, alleluia...

This said, let the whole community sing together, saying:

Tell us, Mary, what did you see on the way?

And let one of the three who visited the sepulchre say in a clear voice:

I saw the sepulchre of the living Christ, and the glory of his rising.³³

Of course, it is unlikely that Nashe had any familiarity with this particular text, or with liturgical drama at all – it seems to have largely disappeared from the Mass even before the English Reformation.³⁴ However, Nashe's portrayal of Talbot's onstage revivification shares something with the *Visitatio Sepulchri* other than tearful onlookers and a martyr that triumphs over death – both illustrate an innate understanding of the importance of the

spectators' role in the (re)generative process itself. In each case, of course, this process is imaginative. The spectators witness only a re-creation, rather than an actual creation. This caveat, however, should not lessen the force generated by this act: as David Bevington points out, liturgical dramatization "was not intended as a mere imitation of an action, but as a demonstration of the living reality of Christ's resurrection."³⁵ In order for this demonstration to work, however, the presence of the congregation was essential. Comprised of both imagination and faith, their participation *is* "the living reality" found in the ritual. Nashe describes his theatrical spectators through similar, if more secular terms. Like the congregants who come to witness and participate in the ritual reenactment of Christ's death and rebirth, Nashe's spectators come to see the dead Talbot live, speak, and indeed, die again. And, although one instance constitutes a religious ritual and the other an afternoon's entertainment, in both cases it is the convergence of the spectators' shared emotion and cultural beliefs that transforms a simple mimetic act into something that contains the spark of life itself.

That the professional theater became a site where certain cultural conflicts previously negotiated largely through Catholic ritual were revisited and reevaluated has been argued previously.³⁶ However, the ways in which these changes affected the act of interpretation itself has not been sufficiently explored. Part of the communicative need that the term "spectator" attempts to fill is the idea of an individual engaged in a secularized hermeneutic, one who could both partake in the emotion generated through the shared presence of other spectators, but also engage in a unique "individual" experience. It was this combination of communal focus and individual desire thought to

be at play within the spectator that made theatergoing seem such a potentially dangerous activity.

Thomas Kyd's narrative framing of his highly popular play, *The Spanish Tragedy*, suggests this dynamic. When the ghost of Andrea and Revenge sit down to watch "the miserie" of the play unfold, they join the interpretative community of the play's audience. They are also individual forces that create meaning inside the play, in that they participate in its creation both structurally and narratively. Kyd experiments with the inside/outside frame created by these two characters throughout the play. Like any bored onlooker, Revenge falls asleep during the lengthy third act, and Andrea throws a fit when he thinks that things are not going quite the way he wants them to: "Awake, Revenge, or we are woe-begone!" (3.15.17)³⁷ In creating this layered effect, Kyd comments on the role of the spectator in the creation of what takes place onstage, a role shaped partly by collective participation and partly by individual desire. Although Andrea and Revenge share the audience's spectatorial position as the drama is played, they also ostensibly motivate and orchestrate the particular set of events they observe. It is, the play leads us to believe, Andrea's desire for divine justice that sets the revenge-plot in motion, a call answered by none other than Revenge: "Be still Andrea; ere we go from hence, / I'll turn their friendship to fell despite / Their love to mortal hate, their day to night..." (1.5.5-7).³⁸ How, exactly, Revenge accomplishes this is left unclear, as the play does not show him doing anything except watching and taking catnaps—it seems that his very presence is sufficient to set events in motion. Through the act of looking, Andrea and Revenge can

bring to life “the mystery” and the tragedy of life, or, when metadramatically considered, the play itself.

I am not suggesting that this framing device is crafted merely (or even primarily) as a meditation on the spectator. Seneca’s *Thyestes*, which clearly influenced the content and structure of Kyd’s play, also begins with a post-mortal conversation between a ghost and a personified minor deity.³⁹ Tantalus is dragged from his insatiate existence in Hades by Megaera, one of the Furies. She commands Thyestes to “vexe” his mortal house with “rage of furies might.”⁴⁰ Tantalus is a completely unwilling participant; at first, despite Megaera’s command, he tries to flee back to his lake of eternal torment. Finally, tortured into submission, he enters his grandson’s house to continue the cycle of despair that his own actions initiated long ago.⁴¹ Numerous differences exist between the Senecan narrative and Kyd’s play. Rather than remaining onstage to watch and comment upon the action, Tantalus and the Fury disappear after the first scene and do not return. Tantalus is also forced to participate in a divine act of vengeance against his family rather than being granted the honor of watching his own personal vendetta acted out in the mortal realm. Kyd’s alterations to Seneca’s model cannot, of course, be traced to a single influence or cause, but I would argue that the changes he makes to the roles of the immortal characters are influenced by shifting ideas about spectatorship in the period. In extending the role of the framing narrative to one that remains physically and dialogically present for the entirety of the play, Kyd comments upon the nature of the early modern theatrical space itself. But his commentary is not about the stage, exactly; that is, it is not about what can be created upon the central platform at the Curtain or the Rose. Rather, Kyd dramatizes

an extradiegetic space, one related to the new and relatively uncharted territory evolving for the theatrical spectator. Occupied by Andrea and Revenge, this spectatorial terrain is essentially a medial one. It is neither heaven nor hell; it calls neither for direct action nor quiescent acceptance from its participants. Shaky ground though it may seem, this emergent space is imagined as offering a certain amount of fluidity in terms of spectatorial positioning. In it, one can be (in Sidney's terms) both actor and spectator, or, in Kyd's implicit articulation, both a member of the community of interpreters (the audience) and a unique interpretative subject (the spectator).

Gluttonous eyes and ticklish ears: the spectator's synaesthesia

Northbrooke's early attack on the professional theater spearheaded a veritable deluge of similar critiques. As the sixteenth century came to a close, these focused less on the general evils committed by London's people and more on the theater. As Jeremy Lopez has pointed out, one of the most pervasive rhetorical devices for critiquing the theater was the dietary metaphor.⁴² For example, Northbrooke succinctly metaphorizes Scripture as "manna from heaven," and earlier in his treatise he represents the problem of church attendance as a sort of a feast/famine binary: "[T]he Church is always empty and void, the playing place is replenished and full: we leave Christ alone at the altar, and feed our eyes with vain and dishonest sights, and with filthy and unclean plays."⁴³ His use of the idiomatic expression "feed our eyes," is particularly apt considering the subject matter. After all, Christ himself used a gastric metaphor to express the most profound of metaphysical transformations, when he tells his bewildered disciples: "Take, eat; this is my body."⁴⁴ In describing the flock's departure from Christ's altar to feast upon the

epicurian pleasures offered by the professional theater, Northbrooke draws attention to the communal nature that both the liturgy and the theater were understood to share, but positions them as antithetical.⁴⁵ The fellowship offered at the modest table of Christ, is, in effect, broken by the desire to feast in gluttony at the trough of the professional stage. At the same time, Northbrooke plays off a sensory prejudice extant since antiquity, which considers sight and hearing as “higher” planes of sensory experience, while taste and smell are “lower” forms.⁴⁶ By aligning theatrical and gustatory experience, Northbrooke reinforces his initial condemnation of the theater. Not only does it lead one away from the divine realm and into the merely appetitive, but it does so by appealing to the lowest rungs of the sensory register.

In conflating high (sight) and low (smell and taste) sensory experiences, Northbrooke initiates a mixed metaphor that becomes something of a touchstone in antitheatricalist discourse. Stephen Gosson offers a more elaborate version in his 1579

The School of Abuse:

There set they abroach strange consorts of melody, to tickle the ear; costly apparel to flatter the sight; effeminate gesture to ravish the sense; and wanton speech to whet desire to inordinate lust. Therefore of both barrels, I judge cooks and painters the better hearing, for the one extendeth his art no farther than to the tongue, palate, and nose, the other to the eye; and both are ended in outwards sense, which is common to us with brute beasts. But these by the privy entries of the ear slip down into the heart, and with gunshot of affection gall the mind, where reason and virtue should rule the roost.⁴⁷

Like Northbrooke, Gosson begins with a common sensory idiom to begin his metonym of the professional theater. He also brings together taste and sight by yoking together cook and painter, in order to emphasize the theater’s power to appeal to man’s baser sensory

appetites. There are, however, two key differences between the metaphors. The most immediately obvious is the extreme to which Gosson takes his comparison; it is a synaesthetic maelstrom compared to Northbrooke's brief and tidy idiom. In Gosson's account, sight and hearing are nearly personified: melodies "tickle" the ear, the sense is "ravished" and sight is lent a sort of consciousness, in that it can be "flattered." Later, he claims, "I judge cooks and painters the better hearing," a somewhat bewildering (if surprisingly playful) way of describing a rather puritanical anxiety about the theater as a sort of *Hamlet*-like poison poured into the ear. Less immediately apparent is Gosson's downgrading of sight in the sensory hierarchy to a rung somewhere closer to the ones that taste and smell occupy. Claiming that those arts directed at taste, smell and sight have, as their end point, the stimuli of the "outward sense" at which they are directed, Gosson states that it is drama's use of language that makes it particularly dangerous. In targeting the ear, playwrights wield a weapon that is far more subtle and dangerous, as it is through this orifice that they gain access to the deep recesses of the spectator's heart and mind. Whereas Northbrooke understands the eye as the primary portal through which temptation and corruption enters the spectatorial vessel, Gosson sees the ear as the more vulnerable aperture.

Perhaps these discrepancies result from the different foci of the two passages. Northbrooke expresses a distinctly religious concern posited through Christian imagery, whereas Gosson addresses a more nationalistic and gendered set of anxieties through secular terms: "Our wrestling at arms is turned to wallowing in ladies' laps; our courage to cowardice; our running to riot, our bows to balls, and our darts to dishes. We have

robbed Greece of gluttony, Italy of wantonness, Spain of pride, France of deceit, and Dutchland of quaffing.”⁴⁸ Perhaps they are related to Gurr’s claim that the late sixteenth-century stage was a place where English culture began transitioning from one that was equally sensitive to aural and visual stimuli, to one that, at least within the realm of the theater, privileged sight over sound. Neither of these explanations, however, adequately addresses the way in which these two writers commingle sight and hearing with taste, smell and touch in order to illustrate the mechanisms of engagement that the theater exploits. Rather than describing the theatrical experience as one that pulls the spectator between the poles of aural and visual experience, Northbrooke and Gosson imagine it as a site of sensory interplay, even chaos, one that Carla Mazzio aptly designates as “synaesthetic disorder.”⁴⁹ Although the antitheatricalists do imagine this sensory intermingling as a sort of “disorder” fostered by the theater, they do not imagine it as a distressing experience for the spectator. Instead, it seems that they see it as an encounter that allows for a vertiginous loss of self in a somatic tangle, one they fear the spectator finds uniquely pleasurable.

Mazzio reads this sensory phenomenon as related to the overlooked significance of touch in early modern scholarship, claiming that touch “disrupted the boundaries between the senses themselves.”⁵⁰ Making the argument that Gosson’s metaphor can be unpacked if we consider touch as its connective tissue, Mazzio contributes to a larger scholarly discourse surrounding sensory hierarchies in the Renaissance, which have gone some way towards excavating the ways that the “lower” senses of touch, taste and smell dictated lived experience in the early modern world.⁵¹ These studies provide a useful

corrective to the often *a priori* scholarly assumption that one's world view in the early modern period (as well as in our own) is dictated mostly by what one sees. It is worth asking, in addition, whether the sensory commingling that Northbrooke and Gosson describe is something that they believe exists in the actual experience of theatergoing. Did they actually understand the combination of verse, singing, costume, gesture, vocal inflection, stage properties, live bodies, and that elusive thing we call imagination, as conspiring to create a truly *multisensory* experience? If not, what is it about the theater that allows for a more free passage between the senses, one that, if not phenomenologically, then imaginatively facilitates such sensory exchanges, interactions and hybridities? Or, if neither of these possibilities constitute how the early modern cultural imaginary understood the act of theatrical spectatorship, what is it about the multisensory metaphor that, for many of the antitheatricalists at least, captures something essential about what happens to the spectator when he or she engages with a play?

The multisensory metaphor is a difficult one to parse, in part because it is both highly literal and highly figurative. The word "metaphor," from the Greek *metapherein*, means "to transfer." In this sense, the antitheatricalist metaphor functions straightforwardly, in that it transfers the sensibilities of one organ of perception to another: the ear feels, the eyes taste.⁵² In this respect, Mazzio's claims about touch are persuasive – the senses become so close that they actually make linguistic and (perhaps) experiential contact. Metaphor, however, is more than a mere figurative conduit; it is often used to express evanescent, difficult, or as yet unarticulated concepts – as one critic has eloquently put it: "Metaphor is the dreamwork of language."⁵³ This innate ambiguity

makes metaphor an especially apt vehicle for describing an event that cannot be seen, but only intuited, or felt. After all, the antitheatricalists are trying to put into language, to *make visible*, what occurs within the spectator when he or she watches a play – an interaction that can only be known, or even spoken about, through approximations.

The real “work” that the multisensory metaphor performs within late sixteenth-century antitheatricalist discourse, then, happens somewhere between its figurative role and its literal construction. When Northbrooke speaks of visual gluttony or Gosson about ears that feel and palates that hear, they do not, I think, imagine an exact sensory substitution experienced by the theatrical spectator. Nor, I think, do they imagine a sort of sixteenth-century version of “smellelevision”; that is, they do not imagine all of the senses are equally engaged when watching a play. But it is important not to dismiss the metaphor as simply a colorful turn of phrase that becomes picked up as a sort of rhetorical banner under which early modern cultural critics of the theater mobilize. Instead, its pervasiveness within this discourse comes from a motivation similar to the one that moved Sidney to find a new term for “beholder”; like him, they are searching for a new way to talk about the sort of spectatorial interaction that the theater demands from its audience, or, perhaps more accurately, to talk about the way the theater is reshaping the experience of looking. Gosson and Northbrooke attempt to articulate a mode of experience that is not confined to the realm of the visual, but one that *seems* all-encompassing while it is being experienced. The antitheatricalist metaphor, then, functions both figuratively *and* literally. It is figurative in that the sensory fluidity it describes represents the sort of unbounded involvement of the spectator in what he or she

sees; it is literal, in that within this state of imaginative rapture, the senses may be experienced by the spectator enveloped in the centripetal vortex of a tragedy or the effervescent thrall of a comedy as overlapping, fungible, even seamless.

In the antitheatricalists' view, when the theatrical spectator watches a play, he or she enters into a state of perceptory disorder, one that ambiguates sensory experience instead of clarifying it. When taken to its most extreme conclusion, this commingling can actually blur the boundaries between imaginary and real, moral and corrupt, and, most perilous of all, God and man. But their descriptions of the imaginative chemistry that occurs between spectacle and spectator rarely rely upon *actual* descriptions of audiences at plays. Instead, the antitheatricalists invoke what they see as a very real danger posed by the theater through metaphorical signification. This choice, I think, reveals something vital about how the late sixteenth-century cultural imaginary is thinking about and beginning to develop a language specifically for the sort of interaction that occurs between spectator and performance at the theater. While "hearing," and especially "sight," are invoked by observers of the theater as the principal sensory mechanisms associated with spectatorship in the period, they are commonly used to connote a wider sensory realm, one that encompasses *all* the senses. While the sort of "looking" or "hearing" that occurs at a play may begin with the sensory stimulation of eye and the ear, that is not their imagined end. Rather, the initial auidial and visual stimuli provided imaginatively invoke others for the spectator, so that theatergoing, uniquely, creates a "multisensory" experience. This sort of sensory chain reaction, where the senses become

imbricated to the point where they are nearly indistinguishable, is perfectly demonstrated in the opening to *Twelfth Night*:

If music be the food of love play on
Give me excess of it that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken and so die.
That strain again—it had a dying fall.
Oh, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odor. Enough, no more (1.1.1-7)

Hearing bleeds into taste, which metamorphoses into scent, until the multiplicity and abundance of the experience becomes almost too much for Orsino to bear. While Shakespeare uses this multisensory “image” as a means of depicting romantic love (or, in this case, infatuation), it simulates the sort of all-encompassing immersion that both the antitheatricalists and protheatricalists understood the spectator to experience.

* * * * *

Besides providing insight into how the sort of looking that the theater encouraged was different than merely seeing, the multisensory metaphor illustrates another, albeit related, strand of thinking about sixteenth-century spectatorial dynamics. Like the play between active/passive and communal/individual that the theater facilitated in the spectator, the multisensory metaphor suggests the possibility of movement between phenomenological (what one sees or hears) and associative (other sensory experiences seeing and hearing can invoke) modes of experience. In doing so, it exposes another space where the theaters’ detractors understood the spectator as particularly vulnerable. Not only does the theater erode the boundaries between perceptory modalities, it facilitates a possible further categorical breakdown, between the real and the imaginary.

Both religious and civic voices united in this particular complaint against playgoing, in that both claimed that life indeed often imitated art. In addition to addressing the problem that the theater lured men away from work and God, a Lord Mayor's petition against playgoing, dated 25th February, 1592, states: "the youth is greatly corrupted and their manners infected by the wanton and profane devices represented on the stages."⁵⁴ Unlike earlier critics such as Plato and Augustine, who believed that the emotions generated by the theater were dangerous because they derived from an imitative source rather than from one of transcendent truth, sixteenth-century commentators feared that the theatrical experience could (and ultimately would) cause the spectator to lose the ability to separate the fictional from the factual. And, while these anxieties were consistently posited through the language that emphasized the spectator's vulnerability and intellectual and moral frailty, such phrasing often was juxtaposed with the language of agency and imaginative fecundity. Anthony Munday's *A Second and Third Blast of Retreat From Plays and Theaters* illustrates this paradox of spectator as an entity both vulnerable to influence and willful in his or her inscription of individual desire:

This inward fight hath vanquished the chastity of many women; some, by taking pity on the deceitful tears of the stage lovers, have been moved by their complaints to rue on their secret friends, whom they have thought to have tasted like torment; some, having noted the examples how maidens restrained from the marriage of those whom their friends have disliked have learned a policy to prevent their parents, by stealing them away; some seeing by example of the stage player one carried with too much liking of another man's wife, having noted by what practice she hath been assailed and overtaken, have not failed to put the like in effect in earnest, that was before shown in jest.⁵⁵

It is the inward fight that vanquishes: the imaginative self battles the moral one on the field of the playhouse. The spectator can take what he or she sees and make it reality; the

chaste woman becomes whore in an instant; the jest written for a simple laugh turns deadly serious. Like Nashe's semi-ludic (and semi-horrific) image of the bleeding Talbot, in Munday's account we see a world where the impossible can occur in a moment's time, and sometimes even the participants are not entirely aware of what they do. It is no accident that Gosson, himself a former playwright, references the Christian doctrine of free will in his refutation of stage playing. Chastising those women who display themselves in the dangerously public space of the theater, he warns: "Thought is free; you can forbid no man that vieweth you to note you, and that noteth you, to judge you for entering to places of suspicion."⁵⁶ While his anxiety about women's mobility outside the patriarchally controlled sphere of the home is not unique to his critique, Gosson's opening gambit of "Thought is free," articulates a new danger generated by the collision of theatrical spectacle and spectator. It is no longer free will that leads "the simple gazer" astray, but "free thought" or interpretative license.

That the theater could open up a space of phenomenological instability was an idea shared by the theater's proponents. While the antitheatricalists understood this potential as one that placed the spectator in spiritual and sometimes physical jeopardy, those on the opposing side claimed this quality was what made the theater an ideal mechanism for disseminating social, moral and civic values to a wide audience. Replying to Gosson's *School of Abuse*, Thomas Lodge claims that the longstanding aim of theater is to provide a mirror through which men are shown their worldly infirmities, and in doing so, it opens the door for self-reproachment and reform: "For, sayeth [Horace], there was not abuse [depicted in plays] but these men reprehended it. A thief was loath to be seen on their spectacles; a coward was never present at their assemblies; a backbiter

abhorred their company; and... a harlot would seek no harbor at stage plays, lest she should hear her own name grow in question....”⁵⁷ Philip Sidney offers a similar defense of the theater, stating that its mimetic powers naturally created analogies between the macrocosm of character typologies and the microcosm of spectator as individual-in-the-world: “the comedy is an imitation of the common errors of our life, which he representeth in the most ridiculous and scornful sort that may be, so as it is impossible that any beholder can be content to be such a one.”⁵⁸ As late as 1612, Thomas Heywood is still defending his craft using similar logic, if more high-flown terminology: “[S]o bewitching a thing is lively and well-spirited action, that it hath the power to new mold the hearts of the spectators and fashion them to the shape of any noble and notable attempt.”⁵⁹

It may seem as though the agential and sensory confusion particular to drama are disruptions that speak only to *how* the theater communicates with its audience. But both antitheatricalist and protheatricalist ideas about the spectator link the concepts of sensory and subjective fluidity through the rhetoric they use to describe these interpretative phenomena. Although each uses different formulations to describe how theatrical spectatorship “worked” – how it communicated with or to its audiences, preyed upon or activated their imaginations, and authorized or damned them – they express and/or explain these dynamics both through metaphor and *as* metaphor. Sometimes, as in the case of Northbrooke’s and Gosson’s sensory metonym, metaphor is used both as the rhetorical mode of expression and as a crucial component of the thing being expressed. Others see it as a major key in which drama plays upon the instrument of spectatorial imagination. Munday, Lodge and Sidney all see metaphor as a mode intrinsic to both

dramatic communication and spectatorial interpretation, in that what is shown through the world onstage is then transferred by the individual to him or herself and/or the world that he or she occupies. The clearest articulations of this principle, however, are found in the writings of early modern playwrights themselves. As early as 1566, George Gascoigne prefaces his *Supposes* by providing the law students for whom it was written with an “explanation,” not only of his play but of drama in general: “But, understand, our Suppose is nothing else *but a mistaking of the imagination of one thing for another*” (my italics).⁶⁰ Thirty years later, Shakespeare opens his final play of the *Henriad* by similarly addressing the Bankside audiences: “And let us, ciphers to this great account / On your imaginary forces work. / Suppose within the girdle of these walls / Are now confined two mighty monarchies...”.⁶¹ This “metaphorical principle” then, is one inextricably linked to the period’s ideas about how theatrical spectatorship functioned, and why it was so potent, addictive and potentially dangerous to both individuals and society itself.

As the sixteenth century moved toward a close, the theater’s cultural foothold became more secure. Correspondingly, the antitheatricalist movement diminished to the point of near-silence. With two notable exceptions, post-Elizabethan treatises against the theater go out with more of a whimper than a bang. The two tracts extant from the Stuart period (I.G.’s 1615 *A Refutation of the Apology for Actors* and William Prynne’s 1633 *Histriomastix*), while similar in style and form to those written in the last decades of the sixteenth century, demonstrate some shifts in how the construction of the spectator is delineated within the seventeenth-century cultural imaginary. While not interested in precise demographic specimens, these later treatises describe spectators that are already becoming taxonomized through stereotypes. Whereas Northbrooke and Gosson describe

the theater's siren call ensnaring the elusive essence of men's souls, I.G. and Prynne portray a character that sounds suspiciously like the ubiquitous groundling. I.G. claims that early modern theater audiences are made up of "in general the vulgar sort," while Prynne delineates them more specifically as "the ordinary spectators: what are ridiculous, foolish...persons".⁶² Such typecasting was not limited to antitheatricalist discourse; playwrights took full advantage of circulating spectatorial stereotypes to create cutting-edge humor that walked a fine line between satirical in-jokes for and outright mockery of their audiences.⁶³

As literary representations of the spectator transitioned from elusive substance to stock characters, other changes appear as well. The idea that the spectator was a site where certain experiential polarities (such as active/passive and collective/singular), as well as the full spectrum of the senses were engaged simultaneously does not disappear during the seventeenth century, but other competing, even contradictory, models develop alongside this earlier one. For example, the multisensory metaphor becomes largely condensed during the seventeenth century. Instead of describing the theater as a place where the senses conjoin in cacophonous harmony, playwrights and antitheatricalists begin to articulate the spectatorial experience as one dominated by the eye and ear. I.G. condemns "the profane spectacles presented in the theaters, to the as (*sic*) profane sights of all that go to be spectators of them," and Prynne separates the dangers of the playhouse into that which hurts the eyes (such as viewing lewd, impious or tyrannous acts and effeminate and lavishly dressed actors) and that which injures the ears (blasphemy, obscenities and love-songs).⁶⁴ But while the earlier synaesthetic metaphor fades, the premise behind it—that the theater has the power to construct an experience for the

spectator that causes the line between imaginative and physical perception to bend, if not quite break—does not. Unlike Gurr, who sees the sensory division of sight/sound as a place of contest between poetry and spectacle, I see these later paraphrases of the multisensory metaphor as an impulse to control the evanescent spectator and the unwieldy interpretative energies this figure was thought to be capable of generating.

The following chapters focus on how a particular group that had a vested interest in the spectator imagined and attempted to shape this figure. Like the antitheatrical polemicists, early modern playwrights exhibited an anxiety that the spectator could not be known or effectively controlled. But they also demonstrate a desire to encourage and harness this energy, for it was, finally, the lifeblood of their trade. Whereas late sixteenth-century writers focused primarily on “what” and “how” questions about spectatorship (such as what made theatrical spectatorship a unique type of interaction and how the theater communicated with the spectator), by the seventeenth, playwrights were experimenting with ways of influencing and shaping real spectators via their product. The discursive spectator, therefore, has a stronger presence in drama during seventeenth century than it had previously, particularly in two genres: the dramatic romance and the court masque. While not new, these forms are rich sites of generic and formal experimentation during the seventeenth century’s early decades; both also reached new heights of popularity in that period. But before turning to the work of two playwrights whose work in these genres were popular successes, I look at one of the period’s documented failures, Francis Beaumont’s *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*. Beaumont’s play holds a mirror up to the early modern audience, by dramatizing the behaviors of two citizens attending the theater. Harmless though this might seem, Beaumont’s biting

satirical portrayal was not met favorably – the dedicatory epistle written for the play’s publication claims that it was “utterly rejected” at its premiere. *The Knight* offers a rare extant instance of an early modern play that both takes the spectator and spectatorial resistance as its principal subject and is met with actual resistance from its audience. As such, the play is the site of a collision between the discursive and the phenomenological spectator, one that bears traces of the subjective conflict that *The Knight* parodies: the moment where the real viewer is faced with a reflection over which s/he has no immediate control and does not recognize.

¹ Maxim Gorky, untitled, in *In the Kingdom of the Shadows: a Companion to the Early Cinema*, eds. Colin Harding and Simon Popple (Madison: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996), 7-11.

² Tom Gunning provides a very plausible and widely-accepted answer to this question in his essay, “The Cinema of Attractions,” which argues that early film audiences were eager to experience the technological “thrills” of modern life as a means of compensating for, even escaping the monotonies imposed upon the working class by industrial life. However, although one could make this argument for Gorky’s description of his experience of the cinematograph, what predominates upon an initial reading is how devoid of energy and life it is. See Gunning’s “The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde” in *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*, ed. Thomas Elsaesser (London: British Film Institute, 1990), 56-62.

³ Gorky, 8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁵ Munday, in Pollard, *op. cit.*, 78.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ In addition to Frankfurt school theorists such as Adorno, Horkheimer and Benjamin, the hypodermic model of spectatorship is foundational to the theories put forth by film scholars associated with apparatus theory, such as Christian Metz and Laura Mulvey. Initial hypotheses about the uses and gratifications model were put forth primarily by sociologists; see, for instance, Paul F. Lazarfield, B. Berelson and H. Gaudet, *The People’s Choice: How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944) and E. Katz and Lazarfield, *Personal Influence* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1955).

⁸ Gurr, *op. cit.*, 1. Although Gurr begins by comparing early modern and modern *playgoers*, he moves quickly to associating modern spectators with film, saying they are “eavesdroppers privileged by the camera’s hidden eye.” His elision of film and theater here illustrates one of the biases I wish to challenge in this dissertation, which is that studies of spectatorship (and even the term “spectator” itself) has been overdetermined by the work done in film studies.

⁹ Ibid., 4.

¹⁰ Ibid., 102.

¹¹ A search in EEBO between the dates 1580 and 1620 revealed 204 instances of some form of “spectator” and 444 instances of “audience.” While this fact does appear to support a preference for the term “audience,” it could also be explained by the fact that “spectator” only begins to be used as an English term towards the end of the sixteenth century. There is also a large increase in the usage of “spectator” during the seventeenth century. For example, between 1580 and 1600, EEBO gives only 56 instances of the term; between 1600 and 1620 it has increased to 349 instances, and between 1620 and 1640 there are 853 instances. While the term “spectator” continues to increase in usage throughout the Tudor-Stuart period, the term “audience” shows a rather different pattern. Although there is a marked increase between 1580 – 1600 (652) and 1600 – 1620 (1121), usage actually decreases between 1620-1640 (864).

¹² The *OED* gives the date 1584 for the *Arcadia*; most sources cite 1590 as the date of first publication.

¹³ Gurr, 102-3.

¹⁴ Ibid., 104. Gurr includes Heywood, Dekker, Marston, Beaumont and Webster among those playwrights who shared (at least in part) Jonson’s negative opinion of “spectators.”

¹⁵ According to the *OED*, Spenser is the second author to use the term “spectator” in 1595, in Sonnet 44 of his *Amoretti*.

¹⁶ Gurr, 109.

¹⁷ For example, Richard Huloet’s 1572 English/Latin/French dictionary translates it as “beholder.”

¹⁸ Philip Sidney, *A Defence of Poetry*, ed. J.A. Van Dorsten (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966) 45.

¹⁹ For example, in Book I, he uses “beholders” to describe the onlookers of the “portrait pageant,” held by Phalantus of Corinth to choose the most beautiful of eleven noble women.

²⁰ Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia*, op. cit.

²¹ I refer here to the myth of Aristophanes that appears in Plato’s *Symposium*. Aristophanes tells the story of the origins of the world, which was populated by three “sexes”: male, female and bisexual. Each one had two sets of everything: faces, limbs and genitals, and were therefore “complete” within themselves. However, they grew ambitious, and to prevent them from challenging the gods, Zeus split them in halves. This catastrophe is the origin of love, in that each of us goes through life searching for the individual that will again make us whole.

²² Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 1.

²³ Francis Rous, *Thule, or Vertue’s History: To the honorable and vertuous Mistris Amy Audely. By F.R. The first booke.* (1598). <http://ets.umdl.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=eebo;idno=A11081.0001.001>

²⁴ Samuel Daniel, *The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Samuel Daniel*, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (New York: Russell & Russell, 1963), 78.

²⁵ While these writers used “spectator” to describe someone simultaneously engaged in both active and passive modes of interaction, others paired it with the locale that the term would become most commonly associated with in the seventeenth century: the theater. This usage was not always literal. In Sonnet 44 of the *Amoretti*, Spenser introduces the term in his version of the recurrent metaphor of the world-as-theater: “My love like the Spectator idly sits / beholding me that all the pageants play.” Often, such references contained adjudicatory supplications to patrons, such as Nicholas Breton’s plea that opens his *Pasquils fooles-cap*: “I haue found you a kinde *Spectator* of my *Labours*, so let mee entreat you, at my hands to accept this treatise, with a foolish *title*” (original italics). Edmund Spenser, *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*, eds. William Oran, Einar Bjorvand and Ronald Bond (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 94 and Nicholas Breton, *Pasquils fooles-cap sent to such (to keepe their weake braines warme) as are not able to conceiue aright of his mad-cap*. (1600). http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.882003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_val_fmt=&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:150807

²⁶ *Stationer’s Register*, 16 April, 1591.

²⁷ John Northbrooke, “A Treatise Against Dicing, Dancing, Plays, and Interludes, with Other Idle Pastimes” in Pollard, 8.

²⁸ Jonas Barish and, more recently, Jeremy Lopez, have discussed the rhetorical and metaphorical redundancy of the antitheatricalists’ prose. Barish points out that “They repeat themselves, and each other, without shame or scruple” (88) and Lopez says that “because the antitheatricalists tended to repeat and plagiarize each other’s arguments, it can be difficult to take them seriously” (20). While it is clear that the antitheatricalists engaged in a good bit of “borrowing” from each other, I don’t think this is grounds for taking them or their arguments less seriously. For my own purposes, I will look at *what* they borrowed and chose to repeat. Like Lopez, I believe that what the antitheatricalists choose to repeat contains more significance than the fact that they do. However, while Lopez looks at the ways that these seeming redundancies testify to particular facets of early modern audiences’ actual experience with and at the theater, I am interested in how they contribute to the discursive spectator.

²⁹ Numbers 11: 4-6.

³⁰ A similar device is, of course, used in the biblical passage I cite, where the Israelites actually *speak* as one, but this does not diminish the effect of communality that Northbrooke creates through his rhetorical and conventional choices; it is not, in other words, simply lazy and repetitious proselytizing.

³¹ Thomas Nashe, “Piers Penniless his Supplication to the Devil,” in *Thomas Nashe: The Unfortunate Traveler and Other Works*, ed. J.B. Steane (London: Penguin, 1972), 113. Nashe’s satire also contains the first instance I have found in which “spectator” is used to refer to literal theatergoers.

³² The account of the women’s visit to Christ’s tomb occurs in Matthew 28.1-2; Mark 16.1-4; Luke 24.1-3 and John 20.1. John differs from the synoptics in that only Mary Magdalen visits the tomb.

³³ *Medieval Drama*, ed David Bevington (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975), 36. This particular version of the *Visitatio Sepulchri* is from the twelfth-century St. Lambeth MS, but there are examples of this particular narrative dating back to the ninth century. As Bevington points out, liturgical drama had its roots in the mass itself, and a definitive point of origin for some of the more extended dramatizations that often took place during Easter week is difficult to pin down.

³⁴ Bevington notes that sometime between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, liturgical drama began transitioning into the more populous cycle drama, but notes that this was neither a smooth nor absolute

change. Both likely coexisted during the Middle Ages, and many intermediate, even interdependent forms existed during this period. See *Medieval Drama*, 227-41.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁶ This argument has been most fully explored by Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy, Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1984) and C.L. Barber, in his posthumously published *Creating Elizabethan Tragedy*; ed. Richard Wheeler (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

³⁷ Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*, ed. J.R. Mulryne (London: Methuen, 2007), 76.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 75.

³⁹ There has been a great deal of scholarly debate in the last thirty years over how much (if at all) Seneca influenced the genre of early modern revenge tragedy; however, most critics of *The Spanish Tragedy* agree that *Thyestes* has at least some influence on the play's structure and, to a lesser degree, its content. See, for example J.R. Mulryne's assessment of the play's Senecan influences in the introduction to the most recent New Mermaids edition cited above.

⁴⁰ Seneca, "Thyestes," in *Seneca, His Tenne Tragedies*, ed. Thomas Newton (New York: Knopf, 1927), 55.

⁴¹ Tantalus is punished in the underworld for having served the gods a banquet made from his son, Pelops, an act which resulted in the cursing of the House of Atreus.

⁴² Lopez argues that the presence of "at least one metaphor involving food" in the antitheatricalists' shared parlance had a variety of resonances: "eating, like playing, and especially eating excessively, is time spent indulging oneself when one could be serving or helping others; food, like the sumptuous variety of sensory experience at plays, provides the potential for surfeit, which is gluttony; eating, like playgoing, requires leisure time, which can lead to idleness; food nourishes the body as the word of God nourishes the soul, and as one destroys the body by feeding it improperly (or starving it), so one destroys the soul by indulging in things contrary to (or lacking) the word of God" (29). I think that underneath the surface critiques couched in the dietary metaphor, however, lies a tacit acknowledgement of the theater's sensory appeal, as my reading will show.

⁴³ Northbrooke, in Pollard, 6.

⁴⁴ Matthew, 26:26.

⁴⁵ Caroline Walker Bynum delineates the way in which devotional practice in medieval and early modern Europe understood the communal table as a celebration, both metaphoric and literal, of Christ's final meal with his disciples and subsequent sacrifice. See *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

⁴⁶ For more on the history of the sensory hierarchy in Western culture see, for example, John I. Beare's *Greek Theories of Elemental Cognition from Alcmaeon to Aristotle* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906) and David Summers's *The Judgment of Sense: Renaissance Naturalism and the Rise of Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁴⁷ Stephen Gosson, "The School of Abuse" in Pollard, op. cit. 5.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁴⁹ Carla Mazzio, “Acting with Tact: Touch and Theater in the Renaissance,” in *Sensible Flesh*, ed. Elizabeth D. Harvey (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 179. About the multisensory metaphor, Mazzio says that “it is actually the sense of touch that consistently informs both modes of sensory reception in antitheatrical treatises...” (178). But whereas Mazzio argues that it is touch specifically that “disrupts the boundaries between the senses themselves,” I would argue that there is something about the interaction between the spectator and the theatrical spectacle that causes the antitheatricalists to attempt to articulate such a linguistic figuration – one that implies the sort of contact that Mazzio wants to emphasize in her essay.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ The first full-fledged study to attempt to shift critical attention from sight and onto other senses was Bruce R. Smith’s *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O Factor*, op. cit. See also Elizabeth D. Harvey’s introduction to *Sensible Flesh*, op. cit.; Gina Bloom, op. cit.; Richard Halpern’s *Shakespeare’s Perfume: Sodomy and Sublimity in the Sonnets, Wilde, Freud and Lacan* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002) and Holly Dugan’s *The Ephemeral History of Perfume: Scent and Sense in Early Modern England* (Dissertation Abstracts International, Section A: The Humanities and Social Sciences, vol. 66, no. 8, pp. 2939, February 2006).

⁵² Aristotle classified this type of metaphor as “species-species,” in that it involved a comparison between two related entities (in this case the senses). Most critics would now classify this type of comparison as metonymy rather than metaphor.

⁵³ Donald Davidson, “What Metaphors Mean” in *Critical Inquiry* 5 (1978): 31-47.

⁵⁴ *Stationers Register*, 25 February, 1592.

⁵⁵ Munday, in Pollard, 76.

⁵⁶ Gosson, in Pollard, 29

⁵⁷ Thomas Lodge, “A Reply to Stephen Gosson’s School of Abuse,” in Pollard, 52.

⁵⁸ Sidney, *Defense*, op. cit., 47.

⁵⁹ Thomas Heywood, “An Apology for Actors,” in Pollard, 221.

⁶⁰ George Gascoigne, “Supposes” in *Drama of the English Renaissance I: The Tudor Period*, ed. Russell A. Fraser and Norman Rabkin (New York: MacMillan, 1976), 102.

⁶¹ William Shakespeare, *King Henry V*, Arden, 3rd series, ed. T.W. Craik (London: Thompson Learning, 1995).

⁶² Munday also references “real” scenes from the theater, but is more concerned with women who attend and are naively seduced by “secret friends” than by specific social types. See Jean Howard for a feminist-materialist reading of Munday’s anxiety in “Women as Spectators, Spectacles, and Paying Customers” in Cesarano and Wynne-Davies, op. cit.

⁶³ Ben Jonson, for example, playfully courts his varied audiences in the prologue to *Epicoene*; saying that his play holds something for “ladies: some for lords, knights, squires; Some for your waiting-wench and city wifes; Some for your men, and daughters of Whitefriars.” At the other extreme, Francis Beaumont’s

The Knight of the Burning Pestle is an extended satire of a particular stereotype (the merchant-spectator), one that apparently was not appreciated by actual early modern audiences, as the play was an unqualified commercial failure, according to the publisher's letter that appeared with the play's first printed edition in 1613.

⁶⁴ Pollard, 257.

Chapter Two

The Shattering of the Spectator: Misprision, Alienation and Identification in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*

In short, he so immersed himself in these romances that he spent whole days and nights over his books; and thus with little sleeping and much reading, his brains dried up to such a degree that he lost the use of his reason. His imagination became filled with a host of fancies he had read in his books—enchantments, quarrels, battles, challenges, wounds, courtships, loves, tortures, and many other absurdities. So true did all this phantasmagoria from books appear to him that he counted no history in the world more authentic.¹

-Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*

Perhaps it will be thought to be of the race of *Don Quixote*...I have no doubt but that [the two texts] will meet in their adventures, and I hope that the breaking of one staff will make them friends; and perhaps they will combine themselves, and travel through the world to seek their adventures.²

-Walter Burre, Dedicatory Epistle,
The Knight of the Burning Pestle

I begin with a connection forged by a London publisher between one of the early modern literary scene's greatest popular successes and one of its dramatic (in both the generic and spectacular sense of the word) failures. Despite the discrepancy in their reception, Burre's comparison of *Don Quixote* and *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* is an apt one. Beaumont's play satirizes audience "participation," via the story of a Citizen and his wife who interrupt and demand something other than the city comedy they are about to see. With the help of their apprentice, Rafe, whom they suggest for the lead in "their" play, the citizen couple is able to stage a competing narrative that is performed in tandem

with the originally-intended play, *The London Merchant*. Several of *The Knight's* scenes suggest *Don Quixote's* influence, such as the mirroring of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza through the Citizen and his apprentice, and the Knight's onstage confrontation with Barbaroso, the barber-giant.³ Both satirize the romance genre (particularly its devotees) and, on a metatopical level, poke fun at the idea of the overly-credulous spectator/reader. But despite firmly positing this figure as ludic, neither narrative can quite escape the more sinister shadow it casts. Don Quixote may be a charming eccentric whose misprisions are laughable, but he attempts to reinscribe the world according to his own fantasies. The Citizen may be a disgruntled and unrefined citizen playgoer who misreads the urbane drama found at the childrens' theaters, but he tears the world of the play he attends asunder, like a spectatorial version of Tamburlaine at Damascus. Comedy is, in a sense, always a deconstructive force; as Andrew Stott has noted, part of what makes comedy funny is the violation of social and cultural norms, and satire in particular handles its subjects with an oft-brutal hand.⁴ As Herbert Blau, paraphrasing Freud, points out in *The Audience*, wit can be "a self-gratifying conspiracy, and part of the disreputable mural of displaced aggression in the unconscious."⁵ In other words, although *Don Quixote* and *The Knight* parody audience participation, they also reflect the darker side of the glass: the violent potential thought to lie within the viewing subject.

It is through this link between psychic and material violence that I wish to reconsider *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*. Mostly explored as a test case for audience preferences in the period, *The Knight* is also a site where the relationship between what one sees and what one does plays out in more complex ways than it does in the oft-repeated early modern cultural anxiety that what the spectator sees, the spectator will

likely do.⁶ Rather than considering *The Knight* as a reliquary of “real” audience response or even as an accurate measure of the coterie audience’s tastes, I examine the play as an invaluable archive for understanding why spectatorship was often linked with violence in the period, as well as why the interaction between spectators and performance was imagined as a turbulent one. In dramatizing spectatorship through the characters of the Citizen and his wife, *The Knight* comes close to making legible some of the unseen cognitive and affective processes that can occur while watching a play. In particular, I look at how two “effects” that theater uses to communicate with its audience – alienation and identification – are imagined in *The Knight* as psychological disruptions produced by the play’s interaction with the spectator.⁷ As represented in the play, theatergoing does produce violence, but not the violent acts of treason, unbridled licentiousness and/or physical aggression commonly cited in antitheatrical writings. Rather, the theater can create a psychic dissonance in the spectator, resulting in subjective disorientation, even trauma.

Related to my argument in this chapter is the unwieldy issue of early modern subjectivity. It is a commonplace of early modern literary and cultural studies that the roots of modern selfhood emerged during the Renaissance. The nature of this proto-modern self, how it was formed, and its relationship to earlier models of selfhood are still being debated. The Greenblatian model of an esemplastic subject that gained an awareness of the potential for self-fashioning has been challenged in the past few decades not only by medievalists who reject its othering of the previous period, but by alternative theories seeking to problematize the concept of a subject who is self-consciously aware of his potential to create a coherent and self-determined identity.⁸ Among the most

significant is Cynthia Marshall's *The Shattering of the Self: Violence, Subjectivity and Early Modern Texts*, in which she argues that rather than a tendency to self-consciously construct a holistic identity, the early modern subject was defined by a dynamic of self-negation or shattering. Challenging the historicist model of subjectivity, Marshall uses insights afforded by psychoanalytic paradigms to argue that self-shattering offered a different (masochistic) pleasure and power than that imagined by historicist paradigms of self-construction. Marshall supports her claims using examples culled from various literary genres: Petrarchan love poetry, martyrology, and revenge tragedy. In particular, she emphasizes the role of literary and dramatic violence in reflecting and facilitating the *pleasure* of self-fragmentation: "If we understand literary and dramatic texts to engage the subject by offering fresh scripts for fantasy...[i]t would seem, in fact, that violent spectacles are provocative to the extent that they challenge viewers to explore subjective identities different from their own."⁹ Rather than seeing this exploration of alternative identities as fodder for the new historicist claim that early modern subjects developed a sense of identity as constructed rather than essential, Marshall's use of the pleasure principle and masochism offers the alternative possibility that this play of identities signifies a tendency, even desire, *not* to form a unified sense of self.

Whereas Marshall focuses on violent spectacles (both printed and staged) as the lynch-pin for her argument about the masochism inherent in early modern subjectivity, *The Knight* suggests that, in terms of drama at least, tragedy was not the only source of psychological disturbance for Renaissance spectators. Instead, it indicates that one of the most pointed sources of subjective trauma was the experience of misprision. Often used

as a synonym for “misrecognition,” my use of misprision here seeks to bring out the resonances of something being radically misjudged or mis-prized. This misjudgment happens not on the part of the spectator, but, in the case of *The Knight*, happens to the spectator. Misprision occurs at moments of representational incongruity, where the viewing subject is exposed to unflattering staged representations (such as a stereotype) of an identity category that s/he understands her/himself to belong. In the chain of events *The Knight* imagines as occurring between perception and response, misprision precedes both alienation and identification. Alienation is produced when the Citizen witnesses multiple theatrical (mis)representations of his class and profession which do not correspond with how he sees himself.¹⁰ Identification is a necessary step in producing empathy in the spectator, but when taken to an extreme can cause the spectator to mistake fiction for reality, as it does with both the Citizen and his wife. In the case of alienation, the prick of misprision (“This is not me”) leads to rejection of the offending image and then to the spectator’s attempt to regain representational control by creating his own narrative. In the case of identification, the jolt of recognition (“This is me”), leads to the dissolution of the spectatorial self into the representational other and to an involvement with the narrative event that crosses the threshold between imaginative and physical participation.

My reading of how *The Knight* dramatizes processes of spectatorial engagement opens up a slightly different possibility regarding the early modern “take” on subjectivity, one that is expressed theatrically and related to ideas about spectatorship in the period. First, self-shattering and self-fashioning do not appear to be different or isolated modes of

subjective experience but mutually constitutive ones. It is the theater's demolition of his self-image that spurs the Citizen to construct one of his own making, producing the desire to set the record straight, so to speak.¹¹ And, although it is inflicted by the theater, the experience of "shattering" is one which the Citizen seeks: he claims to have seen his profession unfairly distorted upon the stage for "seven years" (6). Self-shattering, then, may not be driven by the pleasure principle (as Marshall claims), but may instead be a psychic stimulus that impels the subject towards self-fashioning.

Before turning to the play, I want to clarify my use of the terms alienation and identification in this chapter. Raymond Williams has called alienation "one of the most difficult words in the language."¹² Having accrued specific sociopolitical and psychoanalytic meanings in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the term has become unwieldy and nebulous in contemporary parlance, often signifying any experience of estrangement.¹³ In early modern usage, "alienation" was almost as polysemous as it is now. Most commonly used to connote man's estrangement from God, it encompassed several secular resonances as well.¹⁴ The *OED* cites "The action of estranging, or state of estrangement in feeling or affection" as the most common usage by the seventeenth century, but other variants included "the action of transferring the ownership of anything to another," "the taking of anything from another," and "the withdrawal, loss, or derangement of mental faculties; insanity."¹⁵ While the term was not yet used in conjunction with the theater, all of these experiences (self-estrangement, transference, loss and, if not derangement, an alteration in mental state) are portrayed as constitutive of the viewing experience of *The Knight's* dramatized spectators. My use of the term here implies that although the theatrical experience had yet to become

linguistically yoked to alienation (as it later would with Brecht), there is an emergent cultural awareness of it as part and parcel of the spectatorial experience. When I use alienation in conjunction with *The Knight* I want to invoke the more hazy resonance of estrangement and the more tangible one of something being taken away, especially with regard to identity or sense of self.

Identification is a no less slippery and historically unwieldy catchall term.¹⁶ Most strongly associated in current parlance with psychoanalysis, the *OED* cites only one meaning as current in early modern usage—“The making, regarding, or treating of a thing as identical *with (to)* another, or of two or more things as identical with one another”—and there is no evidence of it being used before the seventeenth century.¹⁷ Like “alienation,” identification had a connection both to the material and emotional planes of existence. It could signify either phenomenological perception (these two objects are alike) or a spiritual sense of communion with another being or God.¹⁸ Again, it was not used specifically in conjunction with the theater or spectatorship; such connections would only be made post-Freud by Brecht. However, both as a term and a concept, “identification” provides an incisive investigative tool for exploring the often-inchoate connections made in the early modern period between theatrical spectacle and spectator, between acts of viewing and acts of violence, and between play world and real world. In my analysis of *The Knight*, I focus on two subspecies of spectatorial identification, which I categorize as surrogation and contagion. Surrogation occurs when the subject uses or imaginatively adopts an alternate to act and/or speak for him or her over an extended period of time. Contagion occurs when the subject sees a character or

event that “strikes” him or her as particularly emotionally resonant, forging an intense identificatory link for a brief period of time.

Both surrogation and contagion are related to the idea of “overidentification,” a term used by Mary Ann Doane to describe the (female) spectator’s inability to distance the self from the cinematic image.¹⁹ As Doane describes it, overidentification is the flip side of alienation (the inability to feel connected to someone or something). In *The Knight*, however, alienation and identification resemble one another in that both are subjectively divisive mechanisms. Alienation results from the spectator-subject’s confrontation with a representation at odds with his or her self-image; identification, from being faced with an image that comes too near, one that forces open the barriers between self and other. The play itself mirrors such divisions, structured as it is through parallel narrative. *The Knight* opens with a boy coming onstage to deliver a rather potted prologue. Almost immediately, he is interrupted by an angry audience member, who complains bitterly upon hearing the title (*The London Merchant*) that he is tired of seeing plays that do little but “have girds at citizens.” After some negotiation, the company reluctantly agrees to put on a sort of hybrid production. One half of it consists of the original play, the other, the play that the citizen-protester (a grocer by trade) wishes to see. At his wife’s suggestion, he nominates his apprentice, Rafe, to play the role of the grocer-knight in the parallel play, which they name *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*. The plays are then performed in a rather haphazard, interspersed manner. *The London Merchant* is a citizen comedy about Jasper, a merchant’s apprentice who falls in love with his master’s daughter, Luce. Her father, who has already agreed to give her in

marriage to the more affluent and socially superior Master Humphrey, dismisses Jasper when he discovers the budding romance between his apprentice and daughter. Jasper goes home to his parents (the Merrythoughts), where his good-for-nothing father gives him what little money he has, an act that causes Mrs. Merrythought to leave him. Jasper and Luce then try to elope, but they are soon caught and must enact a faux-death scene (a parody of the Romeo and Juliet double suicide) in order to get her father to reconsider. The play ends happily, with multiple reconciliations (the young couple, Jasper and Luce's father and the Merrythoughts) and the betrothal is sealed.

If *The London Merchant* enacts the staples of city comedy, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* is more of a series of "tableaux" taken straight from the pages of popular romance narratives. As the Citizen-knight, Rafe tries to save a damsel in distress (who happens to be Mrs. Merrythought after she has left her husband), takes on a "giant" (actually a barber) holding multiple prisoners, earns the love of the King of Cracovia's daughter, and finally enacts a melodramatic death scene worthy of D'Amville's in *The Atheist's Tragedy*.²⁰ The play ends, and the Wife addresses the audience, thanking them for their patience. It is a rather flat ending for a play that begins with the outraged outburst of a malcontented customer. But in suggesting that things go on much as they were before the play, the ending underscores the fact that the connection made in *The Knight* (and in early modern culture more generally) between spectatorship and violent emotions and acts was less about what the spectator might do in the real world than about articulating how certain spectatorial processes functioned.

To thine own censure: alienation and aggression as audience response

As Jeffrey Masten has pointed out, the first quarto of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1613) introduces the play via a complex genealogical narrative.²¹ Publisher Walter Burre constructs the dedicatory epistle through terms that prefigure the *bildungsroman*: the play is an “unfortunate child” whose parents immediately expose him to the “wide world” because he “was so unlike his brethren” (4-5). The newborn play barely survives this harsh treatment, nearly being “smothered” by rejection. Finally, the “ragged” infant is rescued and “fostered” by Burre, who keeps it in his care until it can “speak for itself.” After several years, it is “desirous to try its fortune in the world”; however, should the play fail in the world of publishing as it has in the theater, Burre claims that “it hopes his father will beget him a younger brother, who shall revenge the quarrel.” Masten cites the play’s complex parentage (authors, publisher, theater manager and audience), as a paradigmatic example of the essentially collaborative nature of early modern drama. In doing so, however, he elides the violent nature of *The Knight’s* nativity. In framing the satiric play as one with tragic origins and a potentially brutal future, Burre tacitly engages, both linguistically and narratively, with the play’s complex communicative dynamics. Moving between figurative and real violence, repression and authorization, and audience and actor, *The Knight* may seem as if it is governed by a mediating dynamic, one that wants to posit a world of both/and rather than either/or. However, in traversing such affective (humor and trauma), agential (silenced and empowered) and subjective (actor and spectator) ground, the play accentuates rather than bridges the fault lines between these polarities. Burre’s rendition of the play’s origins reflects these schisms by telling it as a story of violent reception and rejection, near-

destruction, and finally, a search for acceptance that may only be attainable via a proxy. Punctuated by language such as “exposed,” “smothered,” “antipathy,” “misprision” “revenge” “challenge,” and “breaking,” the introductory epistle not only sets the scene of *The Knight’s* commercial failure, but also introduces the idea that the synergy generated by spectators, actors and playtext during a performance is a tumultuous rather than harmonious interaction.

While clearly written in the satiric vein, *The Knight* does not, as many critics have surmised, merely nip at the heels of certain socioeconomic types, such as London’s emerging bourgeoisie, rowdy (if resilient) apprentices, and playwrights who pander excessively to popular tastes. The play’s presentation of “types” commonly found among playgoers is not unique; similar send-ups are found in much early seventeenth-century city comedy and prose satire.²² Of greater interest is how *The Knight* represents the ways in which the theater accesses and engages the spectator’s imagination, a process marked by violence and cognitive dissonance rather than the lulling seduction imagined by the phrase “willing suspension of disbelief.”²³ I do not argue, however, that the play consciously seeks to reveal these communicative and affective apparatuses; rather, it brings them precipitously close to articulation via the characters’ actions and the play’s structure. These two components function almost like a diegetic id in *The Knight*: through them the aggressive energies imagined to fuel spectatorial dynamics are given voice.

Like the dedicatory epistle, the play is scaffolded by acts of aggression, but within the dramatic text these are acted out (both structurally and narratively) rather than described. In fact, the play wastes no time in introducing the irruptive dynamics that characterize it throughout. The boy who enters to deliver the prologue gets through only

three lines of introductory verse before the Citizen vociferously interrupts him. Bellowing forth a version of the militant protester's battle cry: "Down with your title, boy; down with your title!" (Ind. 9), he claims that his anger derives from the fact that this playhouse has marked London's citizens as targets for disrespect, even mockery. What causes him finally to act upon his frustration, however, is rather more complex: "This seven years there hath been plays at this house; *I have observed it*, you have still girds at citizens, and now you call your play *The London Merchant*" (Ind. 6-9, my italics). The Citizen's locution emphasizes his status as eyewitness, suggesting that the aggressive act of stopping the play releases of a long-suppressed subjective trauma. "On this stage," he seems to say, "I have many times witnessed violence done to my self-perception, via the misrepresentation of a figure with which I identify or understand as a reflection of myself." Akin to the alienation produced in the Lacanian mirror-stage, where the child sees a more perfect version of himself in his reflection, this moment contains a crucial departure. The Citizen cannot (or will not) overcome the violence of fragmentation by accepting identification with what he sees; instead, he rejects it completely. The surrogate he proposes is not a versimilar image of the London tradesman, but one steeped in the romantic ideals of nobility, chivalry and self-sacrifice.²⁴ The representational incongruities found in his attempt at dramatic self-fashioning, however, does not negate the fact that by refusing the image set before him and attempting to construct his own, the Citizen performs the sort of resistance that usually, when it occurs at all, manifests itself within the invisible and silent confines of the individual imagination.

The Induction's confrontational dynamics are not limited to the shredding of the original play's diegetic fabric; the Citizen also violates the performance space. His first

act in the play is not linguistic but kinetic – he climbs onto the stage from “below” as if confronting the offending material requires both physical and verbal action. While the space of the stage in the hall playhouses was, in a sense, always transgressed by the practice of “stool-sitting,” where certain members of the audience would seat themselves upon the stage platform, the Citizen’s incursion into both narrative and performance space constitutes a conscious attempt to bridge the alienation he feels (or has felt previously) from his own theatrical representation.²⁵ It is not until some fifty-one lines later that he calls for stools so that he and his wife can be seated on the stage, suggesting that during the majority of his confrontation with the Boy (lines 4-55), he stands and faces him in a posture of conflict. Such positioning would also serve to (re)produce the divide between the majority of the “real” audience watching the play from the dramatic action, creating a visual metaphor for the sort of estrangement that the Citizen protests. By the time he and his wife are seated, the Citizen has successfully renegotiated what he is going to see, suggesting, perhaps, that his move to this more marginal area indicates a willingness to return to the customary sphere of participation. However, in doing so, the couple performs another sort of transgression: women did not usually sit on the stage.²⁶ Additionally, according to early modern accounts of the practice of stool-sitting, many of those who did so were prone to “pulling focus,” through exaggerated reactions to the play and ostentatious displays of fashion.²⁷ Even when not engaging in intentionally disruptive behavior, the stage spectators’ bodily presence often intruded upon the production, a problem to which Ben Jonson refers in *The Devil is an Ass*: “This tract / Will never admit our vice because of yours / Anon, who worse than you, the fault endures / That you yourselves make? When you will thrust and spurn / And knock us o’ the elbows and bid,

turn” (Prologue, 8-12).²⁸ Rather than a sign of acquiescence, the Citizens’ seating of themselves upon the stage indicates their status as permanent disruptive signifiers, ones that have altered and will continue to mediate *The Knight* and the audience’s experience of it.

Although the Citizens take control of the play, their victory is only partial. Rather than disposing with the original concept entirely (the city comedy), the company moves haphazardly between the two narratives. Transitions between the plays consist mostly of the couple’s vocal demands to see more of “their” production. Some of these interruptions take the form of innocuous commentary, “How likest thou this, wench?” (2.91), but the majority devolve into physical threats made against the playhouse or players: “Sirrah, you scurvy boy, bid the players send Rafe, or by God’s—and they do not, I’ll tear some of their periwigs behind their heads” (Int. 1, 11-13). The Citizen’s recourse to intimidation tends to occur when the stage action moves too far afield from the couple’s desires—a visceral reaction, perhaps, to the loss of control entailed by *The London Merchant’s* inexorable progress despite the Citizens’ multilateral resistance strategies.²⁹ At other times, however, the Citizen’s acrimony seems directed at a different sort of disenfranchisement, one connected to the deeper, more originary anguish that the play illustrates in its first scene. In Act 4, the Citizen demands an elaborate romance scenario as a vehicle for Rafe and is met not only with resistance but with condescension:

Boy: Sir, if you will imagine this to be done already, you shall hear them talk together. But we cannot present a house covered with black velvet and a lady in beaten gold.

Citizen: Sir, boy, let’s ha’t as you can then.

Boy: Besides, it will show ill-favoredly to have a Citizen's prentice to court a king's daughter.

Citizen: Will it so, sir? You are well read in histories! I pray you, what was Sir Dagonet? Was he not prentice to a Citizen in London? Read the play of the *The Four Prentices of London* where they toss their pikes so. I pray you, fetch him in, sir; fetch him in (42-52).

What piques the Citizen's anger is not the company's refusal to comply with his vision for the scene, "We cannot present a house covered with black velvet and a lady in beaten gold," but the Boy's refusal to comply with his vision of himself: "It will show ill-favoredly to have a grocer's prentice to court a king's daughter." The first rebuff still allows for creative authority – the Citizen is told only that he will have to imagine (hence mentally create) the material setting of what he wants to see. The second, however, abruptly shut downs both his imaginative agency and his identificatory fantasy by shutting down the subversive play of identity the performance has heretofore allowed. This sudden intrusion of "real" social limitations (a grocer's apprentice cannot court a king's daughter) into the more flexible parameters of the play-world delivers a jolt that converts the Citizen's willingness to collaborate into angry opposition. Unlike the resistance he musters when his creative will is thwarted (surly threats and bullying), here he initiates a full-stop refusal of the representation with which he is confronted, a response that recalls his actions in the Induction.

While both sorts of resistance the Citizen mounts constitute spectatorial defiance, they are not the same. The Citizen's threats posit a performative self, one that participates (albeit disruptively) in the discourse set up by both the fictional world of the play and the larger theatrical community (spectators, playwrights and players), but does not extend beyond it. His response *is* defiance, his aggression confined to a linguistic exchange that

deals exclusively with and takes place within the theater. But his actions in the Induction and the Act 4 confrontation are motivated by something extratheatrical: a need to resist something that comes dangerously close to the Citizen's self-image, something that threatens dissolution of the self rather than a construction of it. At such moments, the Citizen moves from the language of intimidation to that of alteration. He first forces a change of course for the play's narrative, and, in the later scene, challenges the social narrative that the play attempts to impose upon his protagonist (and by extension, him). Using the violent image of the apprentices "tossing their pikes" from Thomas Heywood's 1594 *The Four Prentices of London*, the Citizen authorizes his projected self-image using a theatrical rather than sociological or historical archive. In doing so, he performs a different act of aggression, one that mimics the sort he imagines the play (or the theater more generally) to have performed upon him.³⁰ The Citizen's primary complaint against the entire "citizen play" genre is that, by presenting him with an image of himself with which he cannot identify, it has subjected him to a sort of spectatorial alienation. He counters this experience by insisting upon an alternative version—a *bricolage* of fragments (images, narratives and language) left in his memory from previous theatrical experiences. While some of this material, such as the militant apprentices from Heywood's play, provides the Citizen with positive identificatory templates, some of it must, by default, come from the flotsam left in the wake of the multiple misrecognitions he has witnessed over the course of years. The process through which the Citizen constructs his counterimage, then, does not establish or recover some sort of originary identity, but suggests a tenuous, post-traumatic piecing together of self.

The process I have articulated here is related to the one that Marshall identifies as shaping early modern subjectivity more generally: “What a culture in its official versions of itself is suturing together and publicly solidifying—such as the outlines of the individual subject in early modern England—texts designed for entertainment or meditation might be busily undoing...the formation and dissolution of the self are locked in a profoundly paradoxical tension” (2, 41). That such doing and undoing also was occurring within those texts themselves suggests how spectatorship was imagined as a process with the potential to cause self-shattering. *The Knight’s* seemingly throwaway reference to Heywood’s *Four Prentices* illustrates this dynamic. The Citizen’s brief reference to the pike-tossing apprentices comes from a scene where two brothers (one a Citizen’s apprentice and one a goldsmith’s) meet abroad after being separated during their service in the First Crusade. Since each believes the other is dead, they do not recognize each other and end up fighting in single combat for their respective lieges. The “tossing of pikes” that the Citizen uses to conjure up images of solidarity and valor actually precedes a critical rift in Heywood’s play, where the brothers viciously turn upon one another, intent upon destroying that which is nearest to their own selves because they have fallen so deeply under the sway of their new identities as men of courage and military prowess. In referencing this scene, the Citizen (and the play) suggests that the construction and destruction of identity are inextricably bound up. Further, they imply that as one forges new avenues of identification, even those constructed from the baseless fabric of theatrical representation, one risks losing a vital part of oneself through an act of willful forgetting.

As mentioned previously, the play's structure replicates this creative-destructive dynamic, seeming to turn against itself just as it begins to get going. From the Citizen's first interruption of *The London Merchant* to the multiple interjections made by him and his wife to the awkward segueing between the parallel plays, *The Knight* seems to want to disrupt any possibility of forming the sort of cathexes with its own audience that the Citizen so desperately wants to cultivate. Much of the time, it is difficult enough to follow *The Knight's* dizzying moves between metatheatrical planes and episodic dramatic narratives, let alone settle into any sort of deep involvement with what is happening onstage. The play's fractured rhythms produce yet another level of alienation, this time a more Brechtian type than is depicted via the Citizen. By corraling its "real" spectators firmly in the metaspectatorial realm, one where they are pushed to focus more on themselves than on what occurs in the play, *The Knight* offers little room for either interpretative agency or affective investment.

It may seem as though by making this claim, I stand in agreement with those critics who claim that *The Knight* was a commercial failure largely because its audience was "not ready" either for the self-reflexive viewing practices it demands or the sophisticated commentary on the nature of spectatorship it offers. While I am not particularly concerned with why *The Knight* was a commercial failure, it is worth saying that the play's purposeful alienation of its audience is more complex than simply a means of appealing to a "refined" coterie audience at the expense of one thought to be less so.³¹ Twice in the play, the Boy addresses the "real" audience: once at 3.298, "I pray, gentlemen, rule him," and once at 4.53, "It is not our fault, gentlemen." While these "asides" could be seen as attempts to include the audience, they function equally

effectively as a means of silencing them. In asking the gentlemen to intervene in the contest of wills between the company and the couple, the Boy places the real audience in a double bind. On the one hand, the Citizens are ruining (or at least altering the experience of) the play they paid to see. Audience intervention was not uncommon in the early modern theater, particularly when one of the spectators was acting disruptively, a reality that Thomas Heywood both warns about and satirizes in *The Gull's Hornbook*: "But if the rabble, with a full throat, cry: "Away with the fool!" you were worse than a madman to tarry by it; for the gentleman and the fool should never sit on the stage together" (52). In the case of *The Knight*, however, any intervention by "real" spectators would inevitably associate them with the Citizen and Wife, two characters whom the play holds up as targets of ridicule because of their spectatorial naiveté and lack of theatrical etiquette. Later, when the Boy states "it is not our fault, gentlemen," a comment that follows closely upon his Act 3 plea for help, his abdication of responsibility for what is happening onstage seems to implicate not only the Citizen and his wife but the play's entire audience. If it is not the company's fault, whose is it? The citizen couple's? The protocapitalist system of theatrical patronage where audiences arguably have a "right" to interfere with a production, because they are paying for it? Or does the play insinuate that the audience has a responsibility not only to exhibit a modicum of self-control, but to police each other? If so, whose behavioral standards should set the precedent and why? If one of the real spectators *were* to do something, wouldn't they simply be replicating the very behavior they were opposing? Despite its exploration of spectatorial agency, the play does not make a space for the real spectators' voice(s), but places them in a similarly disenfranchised position as that to which Citizen claims to have been subject in play's

opening. It is not, perhaps, that the early seventeenth-century audience did not “get” what *The Knight* was trying to communicate, but that they got it all too well.

To see feelingly: surrogation and contagion as identificatory metaphor

Alienation and aggressive resistance do not comprise the full spectrum of what *The Knight* has to say about spectatorial dynamics. The play also explores the question of how the viewer becomes sutured to dramatic narrative, a process that lies at the heart of anxieties surrounding the spectator’s vulnerability to psychic influence.³² As mentioned earlier, these processes are dramatized through forms of identification, ones I categorize as surrogation and contagion. Like alienation and violence, surrogation plays a crucial role in the story of *The Knight’s* early years as told in the epistle. After being preserved by Burre (who presents himself as *The Knight’s* foster-parent), the play goes out to “try his fortune in the world” again. Should it fail, however, the epistle mentions a possible Plan B: “If it be slighted or traduced, it hopes his father will beget him a younger brother, who shall revenge his quarrel, and challenge the world either of fond and merely literal interpretation or illiterate misprision” (21-22). Not merely an act of substitution where the younger brother simply shoulders the struggles of the elder, *The Knight’s* surrogate-sibling must somehow demonstrate his brother’s “true” nature by making “the world” see the error of its earlier judgment. How, exactly, that will occur remains unspecified, but Burre’s language suggests a sort of chivalric tournament, in which the winner’s point-of-view will, by fiat, be accepted.³³ While this image sorts well with the epistle’s depiction of a literary landscape filled with capricious judgments and harsh competition, the end result of the contest is not a genuine appreciation of the original play. Rather, the

“younger brother” acts as a proxy for *The Knight*, one that speaks and acts for the elder by being something *other* than, or supplemental to, him. Whereas the epistle consistently describes *The Knight* through terms that invoke the orphan, the urchin and finally, the “masterless man” or vagabond, it imagines his surrogate-sibling as the chivalric champion or knight. The substitution portrayed here resembles the sort of identification that the Citizen achieves through his apprentice in the play: it is not an exacting replication of the empirical self, but an idealized projection of how the subject imagines himself and/or desires to be.³⁴ This alternate self moves easily through social barriers (such as status or popularity) that the original subject cannot. In both cases, however, the surrogate is not completely different or disconnected from the subject, but shares with it a vital connection: the two plays share a father and Rafe and the Citizen share a profession. As a form of spectatorial identification, surrogation seems to require both the components of recognizable similitude with the viewing subject and sufficient difference that it allows for possibilities or mobility that would, in world of daily existence, be impossible.

The Knight's unique call to spectatorial action (a grocer who has seen citizens mocked onstage multiple times), is paralleled by its provision of a unique object of spectatorial identification. Rafe, who is both the Citizen's apprentice and surrogate child to the couple, plays the character of the grocer-knight in the parallel narrative.³⁵ Although the Wife nominates him for this dubious honor and suggests most of the scenes in which he is featured, the Citizen evinces a more profound investment in the quality of Rafe's performance: “In Rafe; in Rafe, and set out the Grocery in their kind, if thou lovest me” (Ind. 88-89). In part, the Citizen's interest in Rafe's onstage success comes from his desire to see his profession “properly” represented. By turning in a good performance,

Rafe will doubly testify to the overall excellence of the citizens both by portraying a grocer doing “admirable things” and by displaying professional versatility. But Rafe is also the Citizen’s apprentice and foster son, thereby already a financial and filial extension of him. As such, Rafe is more than just a figure that the Citizen can manipulate to serve his identificatory needs within the theater; he is one that already bears his imprint. However, much as is the case with *The Knight’s* younger sibling depicted in the play’s epistle, Rafe is not an exact replica of the Citizen, and these differences make him an ideal representational surrogate. His youth and versatility provide him access to the stage; and within that theatrical space, Rafe has a mobility that the Citizen does not, one that allows him to embody successfully the odd amalgam of everyday tradesman and mythological figure that the Citizen imagines as his representational ideal.³⁶

In general, the surrogate-identification the Citizen forges with Rafe does not cross into the psychic territory where identity itself is compromised or conflated. Such episodes tend to arise in moments where onstage events threaten to veer out of the Citizen’s control. Only once do the boundaries between the Citizen and his onstage surrogate appear to dissolve, when the Wife requests that Rafe to act out a scene from the military drills and mock battles held at London’s Mile End. Unlike the chivalric narratives, this one involves the Citizen’s personal history. Upon hearing the drums offstage, the Citizen lapses into a nostalgic recollection of his own days of participating in such drills: “I was there myself a pikeman once, in the hottest part of the day, wench; had my feather shot sheer away, the fringe of my pike burnt off with powder, my pate broken with a scouring-stick, and yet I thank God that I am here” (5.75-78). The floodgates of memory opened,

the Citizen's past comes rushing into the theatrical present, creating a palpable affective experience:

Ran, tan, tan, tan; ran, tan. O, wench an thou hadst but seen little Ned of Aldgate, Drum Ned, how he made it roar again, and laid on like a tyrant and then stroke softly till the ward came up, and then thundered again, and together we go. 'Sa, sa, sa bounce', quoth the guns. 'Courage my hearts', quoth the captains. 'Saint George', quoth the pikemen, and withal here they lay, and there they lay, and yet for all this, I am here, wench (5.80-87).

There is a temporal collapse in this passage, suggesting a slippage in the Citizen's perception of then and now.³⁷ He begins by narrating an episode from his past, but then moves into the present tense: "Drum Ned, how he made it roar again, and laid on like a tyrant...and together we go." Later, he repeats the statement with which he ends his first reminiscence: "I am here." While this declaration ostensibly refers to the Citizen's having survived the skirmish, its repetition and placement in the second passage makes it seem more like a subliminal utterance, one that reveals a disturbance in both the Citizen's temporal and subjective orientation. His assertion "I am here" is preceded by fragments of memory ("withal here they lay, and there they lay") suggesting a sudden reinhabiting of his past; the "here" of that moment travels forward into the present with dizzying speed. But, of course, the Citizen is not physically present in the "there" of his past, he is in the "here" of the theater, watching a dramatic reenactment performed by his onstage surrogate. "I am here," then, takes on another resonance: the boundary between subject and identificatory object has dissipated – the Citizen reexperiences emotions from his own past that are accessed via his surrogate self. As Pontalis and LaPlanche point out, identification, in its broadest sense, encompasses the concept of empathy – that emotional mechanism that allows one to access the inner experiences of another. However, what

occurs here offers a slight twist on this formula. The Citizen does not feel what Rafe feels, but accesses an emotional state *through* him, one that, like the vengeance enacted by *The Knight's* younger sibling in the epistle, requires the surrogate self as the point of access.

That the most profound instance of surrogation comes during the onstage rendition of an actual confrontation from the Citizen's past reveals an important aspect of how the play expresses the psychic disturbance inherent in spectatorship as actual violence. When the Citizen fends off alienation by conjuring up the image of the apprentice-warriors from Heywood's *Four Prentices*, he references a scene that also engages profoundly with issues of surrogation. Each brother "represents" both his individual captain and army in the combat; each is therefore a sort of animated signifier of multiple categories of identity (rank, nation and masculinity). Before commencing the contest, each announces himself using a superlative epithet of mythological military prowess (the first brother claims that "brave Hector I resemble," while the second calls out, "I, Achilles"), suggesting a further layering of identity that facilitates their surrogate roles. Equally matched on the battlefield, they must be forcibly separated before they annihilate one another. It is this final image of the brothers, somehow unrecognizable to one another and yet eerily familiar ("That yong Knights face, me thinkes, I well should know" [1023]); standing bristling in opposition yet finally almost inextricable, that summarizes the complexity and struggle inherent in surrogate identification. Violence, then, functions as a metaphoric articulation of a spectatorial process that has the potential to collapse and reassemble the viewing subject anew.³⁸

Whereas *The Knight* portrays surrogation as a suturing process willed by the spectator (the Citizen seeks out, even constructs, a surrogate stage identity), the process of identification I name “contagion,” involves something happening “to” the viewer. It is the sort of identification most often cited in antitheatricalist polemic and satire (such as *Don Quixote*), which imagine fictional narrative as a disease that “infects” the spectator’s mind. *The Knight* dramatizes this identificatory dynamic through the interpretative practices of the Wife, a somewhat unsurprising move as antitheatrical discourse usually cited women and the lower classes as particularly vulnerable to the theater’s powers of suggestion. However, the Wife does not, finally, fall into the trap feared by such critics, but reinhabits her “real world” identity with ease at the play’s end. This “unspectacular” ending indicates that the ending is not merely a satiric commentary on the mundane stuff of which the citizen spectator is made; rather, the Wife’s imperturbability suggests something essential (but often overlooked) in both early modern and current attempts to articulate how spectatorship works. Critics tend to focus on the antitheatricalist claim that watching acts of violence or lasciviousness in the theater could psychically damage the spectator, causing (or licensing) him or her to reinscribe such acts in the lived world. However, by taking a step back from the end result imagined in this chain of interpretative events, one can see a profound psychological violence that occurs at an earlier phase—that done internally to the viewing subject through processes (such as alienation and identification) that narrative (whether filmed, textual or live) cultivates.

When first introduced in the play, the Wife seems impervious both to violent spectacle and to the sort of emotional involvement with the narrative exhibited by her husband. While Rafe also caters to the Wife’s spectatorial desires, he provides

imaginative rather than identificatory satisfaction. This divergence is humorously suggested in the Wife's passing comment about Rafe's past kindnesses to her: "I shall never forget him when we had lost our child...and Rafe was the most comfortablest to me. 'Peace mistress,' says he, 'Let it go; I'll get you another as good'" (2.352, 355-57). While this reference bawdily suggests an unwitting Oedipal surrogation, the Wife does not identify emotionally with Rafe's onstage character. More dramatically naïve (as she has never been to the theater before), and less angry than her husband, the Wife has not been traumatized by repeated misrepresentations and does not resort to threats and insults when the stage action resists her fancies.

Despite this lack of experience, the Wife has very clear ideas about what she wants to see. Soon after her husband's dissenting outburst in the Induction, she suggests a narrative device to start things off: "Let him kill a lion with a pestle, husband; let him kill a lion with a pestle" (42-43). Although this scene is never performed, it sets a precedent for the wife's tastes in entertainment. Unlike her husband, who wants to see a Citizen do "admirable things" (Ind. 34), his wife yearns for scenes that would, in twenty-first century entertainment taxonomies, fit the genre of action film. She calls for numerous fight scenes: "Call Rafe again, George, call Rafe again. I prithee sweetheart, let him come fight before me, and let's ha' some drums and some trumpets and let him kill all that comes near him" (2.135-38), and eggs their grocer-hero on by shouting out "Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, Rafe" (2.351). Finally, at the play's end, it is the Wife who insists on seeing the demise of Rafe's character: "Now, good husband, let him come out and die" (5.283).

While reminiscent, perhaps, of the entertainment preferences exhibited by spectators who frequented the bear pits, the Wife is not simply the stereotypical bloodthirsty viewer hungry for spectacle. During a scene from *The London Merchant*, where Jasper pretends he is going to kill Luce for revenge, the Wife becomes so unsettled that the line between play and real violence dissolves: “Away, George, away, raise the watch at Ludgate, and bring a mittimus from the justice for this desperate villain....O, my heart, what a varlet’s this to offer manslaughter upon the harmless gentlewoman” (3.92-96). Later, she becomes enraged while witnessing the indolent Mr. Merrythought callously bar his wife and young son from their home: “Marry, if he be [serious], George, I’ll make bold to tell him he’s an ingrant old man to use his bedfellow so scurvily” (3.530-31). In each case, what sparks the Wife’s empathy is the sight of a woman being mistreated. The identificatory cause-and-effect relationship here suggests a dynamic along the lines of Doane’s overidentification, where the female spectator cannot separate herself from the female image.³⁹ However, these instances are the *only* times the Wife exhibits any interest in the female characters; otherwise, she is almost wholly focused on Rafe. It is, of course, possible that such scenes reenact some sort of personal trauma for the Wife, but the play does not make this clear. Instead, *The Knight* emphasizes the emotional force with which the Wife is struck when such moments occur; her reactions indicate that they take hold of her with the force and speed of a lightning bolt. They have the physical effect of such a blow as well. After witnessing Jasper threaten Luce with death, she tells her husband: “By the faith o’ my body, 'a has put me into such a fright that I tremble, as they say, as 'twere an aspen leaf, Look o’ my little finger, George, how it shakes” (3.130-33). Emotional response crosses into the realm of physical symptom

here, as the Wife claims she has been corporeally damaged by the experience: “Now i’ truth, every member of my body is the worse for it” (3.133-34). Her response to Merrythought’s ill treatment of his spouse causes her less physical distress, but also proves less easy to dismiss from her imagination: “Get me some drink, George, I am almost molten with fretting. . . . This old fornicating fellow will not out of my mind yet” (3.561-62; Int. III.3-4).

While such physical manifestations serve to illustrate the strength of her emotional responses, they also raise the specter of contagion, a popular antitheatricalist metaphor for describing the theater’s effects upon spectators. John Rainolds warns against “the contagion of theatrical sights,” and Prynne called plays “fatal plagues.”⁴⁰ In *A Second and Third Blast of Retreat from Plays and Theaters*, Anthony Munday offers an example of what contagion identification could inflict upon the unwitting spectator: “Some citizens’ wives upon whom the Lord for example to others hath laid his hands, have even on their death beds with tears confessed that they have received at those spectacles such filthy infections as have turned their minds from chaste cogitations.”⁴¹ Others have noted the frequency with which the antitheatricalists concatenate disease and theatergoing, but have focused more on the historical than theoretical implications of this tendency.⁴² I submit that the antitheatricalist metaphor and the Wife’s commentary illuminate another way in which spectatorial identification was imagined to transpire. Unlike surrogate identification, where the viewer imagines him or herself into a character, contagion identification involves the spectator being struck with an image or scenario that causes a particularly potent empathic response. Invisible, targeting select groups, and difficult to discern until it has gone “too far” (i.e., is manifested through

actions taken in the real world), this type of identification mimics the processes of disease itself. As suggested by the Wife's claim that Merrythought's behavior will not "out" from her mind, contagion identification can permanently alter the subject, leaving behind images and/or emotional residue that become incorporated into the subconscious. In the antitheatricalist metaphor, however, the sort of subjective violence done to the spectator is always taken a step further, always finding expression in the lived world. Says Munday: "by them [these spectacles] they have dishonored the vessels of holiness, and brought their husbands into contempt, their children into question, their bodies into sickness and their souls to the state of everlasting damnation."⁴³ There is, of course, a logical and evidentiary leap made here. Munday never really specifies *how* this poor woman goes from watching a play to committing the litany of abuses of which he accuses her; that is, the subjective mechanism that causes her to reinscribe playacted fiction in "real life" remains inchoate. Nor do the antitheatricalists ever cite actual cases where such transference has occurred, but frame their examples using the rhetoric of cultural lore: "What I shall speak of the abuse by plays of my own knowledge, I know may be affirmed by hundreds."⁴⁴ *The Knight* itself gives no indication that the Wife's behavior towards her husband or in the world more generally will change – in the Epilogue, she cheerfully thanks the "gentlemen" (audience) for their patience towards Rafe and invites them over for a drink and a smoke. The play is done, the couple goes home, and life continues as it was.

The Knight's ending raises a larger question about both the nature of spectatorship and early modern strategies for representing it. If the early modern cultural anxiety that there is a causal relation between going to the theater and enacting violence is not a

sociological, empiricist claim, then what might it represent? I have suggested that this idea performs a sort of surrogacy itself, where “real” physical violence functions as a figurative stand-in for the more slippery and ineffable processes through which theatrical performance and viewing subject negotiate one another. There is, however, another possibility. The dynamics of self-shattering and reassemblage that are part of spectatorial identification are dangerous, but not necessarily because they refashion the spectator into an instrument of violence or intemperate sexuality. They are dangerous, rather, because they cannot be observed nor adequately controlled—a reality equally apparent in the act of protesting a play as in something as consequential as parricide. By extending what is essentially an interior process (the interaction between theater and individual imagination) into the world of visible and tangible action, an illusion of control is created, even if the consequences are imagined as devastating ones. A certain satisfaction is evident in Munday’s tale of the ruinous woman who lays to waste everything in her path. Her destruction (as well as that of her husband and children) seems almost trifling compared to what Munday’s polemic attains through it – a spectacle of self-undoing that can be used, ideally, as a disciplinary mechanism for those theatergoers whose “damage” remains secreted away in the recesses of their subconscious. This desire to “bring to light” recalls Leontes’s actions that set *The Winter’s Tale* in motion. His fanatical need to discover and expose his wife’s “sins” is born from a profound need to make visible something that he intuits, but cannot witness or even verbalize except via the clichéd trope of adultery. But it is only by translating the “nothing” of his fears into the “something” of actions that he can attempt to control it at all. The “real” acts of violence often imagined as the inevitable *telos* of repeated spectatorial engagement in the period,

then, reveal something inherent in concerns surrounding the inability to control interpretative practices—an arena in which, as *The Knight* would have it, anything can happen. In depicting a spectator who makes his or her imaginative life visible (hence known) by acting it out in the world, both playwrights and those opposed to the theater fashion a discursive spectator who is far more easily manipulated and controlled than the real viewing subjects who attended the theater.

The Limits of the Representational and the Real

The wise and many-headed bench that sits,
Upon the life and death of plays and wits,
(Composed of gamester, captain, knight, knight's man,
Lady or pusill, that wears mask or fan,
Velvet or taffeta cap, cauked in the dark
With the shop's foreman or some such brave spark,
That may judge for his sixpence) had, before
They saw it half, damned the whole play and more:
Their motives were, since it had not to do
With vices, which they looked for and came to.
I, that am glad thy innocence was thy guilt,
And wish that all the Muses' blood were spilt
In such a martyrdom, to vex their eyes,
Do crown thy murdered poem: which shall rise
A glorified work to time, when fire
Or moths shall eat what all these fools admire.⁴⁵

Ben Jonson's commendatory epistle to John Fletcher's 1608 *The Faithful Shepherdess* suggests it met a fate similar to that of *The Knight*. Whereas Burre's dedicatory epistle for the printed text of *The Knight* lays the blame for its failure upon the "the wide world," Jonson directly accuses the audience of destroying Fletcher's fledgling play. In doing so, he resurrects some of the violent imagery often paired with spectatorship: the play is a "murdered poem," and Jonson wishes for a mass slaughter of the Muses themselves in order to "vex the eyes" of those who have brutalized Fletcher's

work. Moreover, these brutal acts come out of a mindless and inexorable process – the audience does not look and then judge, but comes with preconceived ideas of what they will see and then inscribes this vision on the play through their vehement response. As Nathan Field puts it in his own commendatory verses for *The Faithful Shepherdess*, the audience is “a monster [with] a thousand hands” (33).

I have been arguing for a reconsideration of the oft-made connection between violence and spectatorship in early modern England as part of a discourse that attempts to explain and render discernible the interpsychic processes intrinsic to spectatorial engagement. In moving beyond the idea that this connection documents actual behaviors generated by the theater, I do not wish to imply that the relationship between violence and spectatorship was an entirely representational one. While antitheatricalist polemic had waned by the first decade of the seventeenth century, those working in the theater had good reason to agree with the premise that playgoing generated violent and unpredictable behavior in the spectators. By 1600, a new trend was rapidly gaining popularity in the recently-reestablished childrens’ companies: drama that metatheatrically mocked the plays, playwrights and audiences of rival companies. The War of the Theaters began as a public trading of insults (a practice that became known as railing) between rival playwrights Ben Jonson, John Marston and Dekker delivered via their plays written for the rival boys’ companies of the Blackfriars and Paul’s.⁴⁶ Many scholars have speculated that these skirmishes were more of a publicity stunt than a genuine quarrel, generated to attract a more educated and sophisticated spectator than those commonly found in the amphitheaters.⁴⁷ However, while the War and the satiric plays it generated may have been intended to cater to a more cultured audience, its trademark

internecine sniping gave rise to an undesirable behavioral epiphenomenon: spectators that sought to interrupt (or utterly ruin) a play through catcalls, distracting gestures and overall bad behavior. While such conduct did not entail the sort of criminal violence or sexual incontinence imagined by the antitheatricalists, it was perceived as a personal attack by many playwrights. That audiences could (and did) inflict such personal and artistic injury is evident from the numerous extradiegetic attempts by playwrights to mediate or control such behavior, either through desperate pleas to the “gentle audience” for cooperation or by taking a defiant stance against such interlocutors: “Nay say some halfe a dozen rancorous breasts / Should plant them-selves on purpose to discharge / Imposthum’d malice on his latest Sceane / Shall his resolve be struck through with the blirt, / Of a goose breath?”⁴⁸ Rather than engaged in an act of mutual creation, audience and playwright here are positioned at an interpretational impasse, one traumatic enough that it causes “real” violence to manifest in the space where text and performance meet.

With regards to questions of spectatorship in the period, this moment may also delineate the place where historical and theoretical inquiries meet. Theater historians have tended to see The War of the Theaters as the moment where a more metatheatrical, self-conscious drama came into vogue.⁴⁹ However, the War also marks a cultural moment of deep uncertainty about and experimentation with the roles of playwright and spectator and the relationship between them. Alfred Harbage identified these tensions as generated by the playwrights’ conflicted understanding of their social positioning in a culture that did not know where to place them: “[The playwright] is detached from his class but without the means to become fully accredited in any higher class, yet with heightened aspirations; discontent and disillusion stalk him from the moment he steps out into the

world.”⁵⁰ Michael Shapiro sees the War as an opportunity for theater audiences (particularly aristocratic ones) to extend the self-dramatization “that has always been a part of European aristocratic life” into the bourgeois sphere.⁵¹ Underlying both scenarios, however, is the idea that an internal conflict or desire for recognition is expressed through a series of aggressive (and seemingly willful) misprisions. Playwrights divide their audiences into two distinct taxonomies: the naïve and gullible amphitheater attendee who, like Verdant lying dazed in Acrasia’s lap, is hypnotized by theatrical illusion, and the coterie viewer who is acute, sophisticated and difficult to please. Audiences manifest an agency that seems to have more to do with a complex staking out of spectatorial identity than with what they see performed upon the stage. The War, then, seems to occasion a moment in the history of early modern theater where “real” spectators and cultural ideas about them come into close proximity. Such a near-collision would generate new frictions, ones that bring certain ineffable facets of spectatorship that simmer beneath the realm of consciousness dangerously close to the surface. It is perhaps only at such moments that a play like *The Knight* could be written and recognized by its audience as something uncomfortably aggressive—not in its satire, but in its near-illumination of those aspects of spectatorship that may reside more comfortably in what Laura Mulvey has called “the half-life of the imaginary.”⁵²

¹ Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, trans. Walter Starkie (New York: Signet, 1957), 58.

² Francis Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, ed. Sheldon P. Zitner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 36. All quotes from the play taken from this edition.

³ In *Don Quixote*, of course, the barber and the “giants” are separate entities. It is unlikely that Beaumont had read *Don Quixote* before he wrote *The Knight*, as it was not translated into English until 1612. More likely, he had heard of it and knew something of its contents.

⁴ Andrew Stott, *Comedy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 8. Renaissance dramatic satirists were most influenced by Juvenalian satire, which is far more biting than the other classical model (Horatian satire). See Gilbert Highet, *The Anatomy of Satire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962) and Dustin Griffin, *Satire: A Critical Introduction* (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1994), 10-24.

⁵ Herbert Blau, *The Audience* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 157.

⁶ Theater historians especially have been interested in the question of “why” *The Knight* failed in the theater. Because of its later success in the Restoration and beyond, most critics have concluded that its metatheatrical exploration of the nature and agency of the spectator was either “too advanced” for the audience in 1607 (the likely date of its first performance), or that the play, which satirizes a Citizen and his wife, offended certain members of the citizen class in attendance. See for example, Andrew Harbage, *Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions*, (New York: Macmillan, 1952); Michael Shapiro’s *Children of the Revels: The Boy Companies of Shakespeare’s Time and Their Plays* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1977); Lee Bliss, *Francis Beaumont* (Boston: Twayne Press, 1987); Alexander Leggatt “The Audience as Patron: The Knight of the Burning Pestle,” op. cit. and Gurr, op. cit.

⁷ While both terms are associated with modern theories of spectatorship and/or readership (most notably Brecht’s and Freud’s), both were circulating in the early modern period, although not specifically in conjunction with the viewing practices associated with the theater. The *OED* cites 1430 as the first appearance of “alienate,” which it defines as “Estranged, withdrawn or turned away in feeling or affection.” “Identification” is cited from 1644 and defined as “the making, regarding, or treating of a thing as identical with one another, or of two or more things as identical with one another.”

⁸ See, for example, Joel Fineman, *Shakespeare’s Perjured Eye: The Birth of Poetic Subjectivity in the Sonnets* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Lee Patterson, “On the Margin: Postmodernism, Ironic History and Medieval Studies,” *Speculum* 65 (1990): 87-106; David Aers, “A Whisper in the Ear of Early Modernists; or, Reflections on Literary Critics Writing the ‘History of the Subject’ in *Culture and History, 1350-1600: Essays on English Communities, Identities and Writing*, ed. David Aers (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992), 177-202; Katharine Eisaman Maus, *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995); Marshall Grossman, *The Story of All Things: Writing the Self in English Renaissance Narrative Poetry* (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 1998) and Elizabeth Hanson, *Discovering the Subject in Renaissance England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁹ Cynthia Marshall, *The Shattering of the Self: Violence, Subjectivity and Early Modern Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 46.

¹⁰ The Citizen’s experience in the play is similar to the one Steven Mullaney describes in his essay “Brother and Other, or The Art of Alienation.” During Frobisher’s final voyage to the New World, an Inuit is confronted with a painting of a fellow tribesman (depicted in Elizabethan dress) who had been brought to England after Frobisher’s 1577 expedition. According to the eyewitness, the Inuit believes that the representation is real and attempts to communicate with it. When he is shown that it is merely a painting, he evinces anger and shame at having been tricked. Mullaney reads this response as a traumatic response to an alienation caused by a sudden and painful jolt to the Inuit’s self-perception: “The internal distantiating experienced by Frobisher’s Eskimo creates a theater of and within the self, in which he views himself through the eyes of a judgmental and superior Other.” See *Cannibals, Witches and Divorce*, ed. Marjorie Garber (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 69.

¹¹ There are other dramatic moments which could be seen as self-fashioning that I see as a response to correct what the subject feels is a misperception of him or herself. In *King Lear*, for example, when Edmond asks: “Why ‘bastard’? Wherefore ‘base’?” (1.2.6), he is challenging a commonly-held perception

of bastards that conflicts with how he sees himself. It is significant that at the end of this passage, Edmond appears to arrive at the decision to “reauthorize” himself: “Edmond the base shall top th’ legitimate. I grow, I prosper” (1.2.20-21).

¹² Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana, 1976), 29.

¹³ Williams cites Hegel, Marx and Lacan as those primarily responsible for the term’s proliferation of meaning in the respective disciplines of philosophy, economic theory and psychoanalysis. Hegel’s use of the term is probably the most difficult to pin down; an approximate meaning is the removal of the self from epistemology or from the understanding/experience of knowledge (which Hegel understands as emanating wholly from the self). For Marx, alienation signified the pulling apart of things that naturally belonged together (such as the worker from his labor product or from his sense of himself as a human being), and was an inevitable result of capitalism. For Lacan, alienation was the disjunct that occurred during the mirror-stage, where the infant recognizes herself in the mirror for the first time and perceives that reflection as a more perfect version of the self. Williams also claims, however, that the “popular” usage of *alienation* comes closest to Durkheim’s concept of *anomie*, where the subject becomes alienated from the world more generally due to the breakdown of social norms.

¹⁴ In his genealogy of alienation, Nathan Rotenstreich points out that its early usage in Western thought connoted a positive rather than negative state of being. Plotinus understood it as akin to “true contemplation,” a state of being where as one becomes estranged from the self, he becomes subsumed by God. Therefore, alienation from the earthly self means a reincorporation into a more perfect and originary self, a precondition for unity with God. Rotenstreich claims that the concept begins to metamorphose in the nineteenth century; however, according to the *OED*, alienation had taken on both negative and secular resonances by the fifteenth century. See Rotenstreich, *Alienation: The Concept and its Reception* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989), 3-8.

¹⁵ By the nineteenth century, the latter three meanings had fallen out of use, although we can, perhaps, see footprints of both Marxist and psychoanalytic applications of the term in the expressions of expropriation (which in Marxist thought signifies the alienating effects of capitalism on the relationship between workers and their labor and sense of self) and transference (which in psychoanalysis signifies the shifting of attachment from one person or object to another).

¹⁶ Diana Fuss admits to the impossibility of pinning down either a clear “meaning” for the term or a definitive explanation of the process, calling it “both voluntary and involuntary, necessary and difficult, dangerous and effectual, naturalizing and denaturalizing” See *Identification Papers*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 10.

¹⁷ Freud first delineated identification as a psychic mechanism. He saw it as a process by which the subject assimilated particular traits of a (significant) other, which would then serve to transform the subject either wholly or partially. The term has since proliferated in meaning, especially in psychoanalysis and literary criticism. For a review of “identification’s” various exfoliations, see Fuss, *op. cit.*, 1-56.

¹⁸ The intuitive or interior sense of “identification” was most often used as a means of expressing man’s ideal relationship to God, as seen in this example from Donne’s sermons XXIX: “all should be God, even the Devill himselfe, how much more may we conceive an unexpressible association, (that’s too far off) an assimilation, (that’s not neare enough) an identification, (the Schoole would venture to say so) with God in that state of glory.” See *Early English Books Online*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text>.

¹⁹ Mary Ann Doane, “Film and Masquerade: Theorizing the Female Spectator” *Screen* 23: 3-4 (September-October 1982): 74-87.

²⁰ D'Amville smashes his skull with an axe, but is still able to deliver a long death speech.

²¹ Jeffrey Masten, "Beaumont and/or Fletcher: Collaboration and the Interpretation of Renaissance Drama," *English Literary History* 59 (1992): 346-47.

²² For example, Dekker's *The Gull's Hornbook* (c. 1609) contains an extended parody of a hall theater audience in the chapter "How a Gallant Should Behave Himself in a Playhouse." Other examples include Jonson's satire in *Bartholomew Fair* (1614) and Dekker's prologue to *If This Be Not a Good Play Then the Devil is in It* (1611).

²³ Although this phrase was coined by Coleridge in 1817, it is clearly an idea that had currency before this period. Horace's *Ars Poetica* references a similar imaginative mechanism, and many of the prologues to early modern plays suggest it, such as that of *Henry V*: "O, pardon! since a crooked figure may / Attest in little place a million; / And let us, ciphers to this great accompt, / On your imaginary forces work."

²⁴ The Citizen's representational self-construction here is reminiscent of Laplanche and Pontalis's analysis of the relationship between Freud's concept of the ego-ideal and identification: "[T]he ego-ideal is composed of identifications with cultural ideals that are not necessarily harmonious." See J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Norton, 1973), 208. To place this idea in a historical context, the Citizen's ideal image of himself is constructed out of certain images gleaned from his profession (the pestle, for example) and those taken from the literary tradition of romance and (perhaps) those being culturally circulated through the chivalric revival initiated by Prince Henry.

²⁵ Stage sitting was a practice limited to the hall playhouses, and constituted a complex display of spectatorial performativity, which could include drawing attention to oneself by occupying the physical space of the performers, wearing ostentatious clothing and providing audial and gestural "commentary" on the play. This practice is satirized in Dekker's *The Gull's Hornbook*; for a historical analysis, see Gurr, 34-37.

²⁶ Gurr, 36.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 46-47.

²⁸ Ben Jonson, *The Devil is an Ass and Other Plays*, ed. Margaret Jane Kidnie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

²⁹ The other moments in the play where the Citizen threatens violence are at 1.205-06; 2.14-16, 273-4; Int. 2.5-8 and 4.15-20.

³⁰ This other type of violence is, I believe, related to the sort that Leo Bersani describes as "psychic dislocation of mobile desire." The Citizen's desire to see himself represented in a certain way manifests most profoundly through representational violence (which Bersani calls "noncatastrophic violence"), rather than real violence (the sort exhibited in his initial interruption of the play and later threats against the players) because representational violence allows for both the expression of his alienation and a preservation of the experience of watching his surrogate self onstage. See Bersani, *The Freudian Body: Psychoanalysis and Art* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1996), 70-78.

³¹ There is some disagreement about the constitution of the coterie audiences. Harbage, for example, believed them to be people with more disposable income and sophisticated tastes than those who attended the amphitheaters, while Shapiro, following Lawrence Stone, argues that both those attempting to shore up their aristocratic status and those trying to establish it would have been present in equal numbers. More

recent studies include Mary Bly's *Queer Virgins and Early Modern Queans on the Early Modern Stage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), which focuses more on how the Whitefriars company in particular fostered a sense of community via their use of homoerotic puns.

³² Lacan first used the term "suture" in "What Is a Picture?" in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1981). He employs it to describe a "pseudo-identification that exists between... the time of terminal arrest of the gesture (the object being looked at) and... the moment of seeing" (117). It has since been used in film theory to describe, in the broadest sense, the way in which film "absorbs" the viewer via editing practices, or how the film is "stitched" together. For a discussion of how suture works in film, see Slavoj Žižek's, *The Fright of Real Tears: Krzysztof Kieślowski Between Theory and Post-Theory* (London: British Film Institute, 2001).

³³ This image may have had particular currency in 1613 when *The Knight* was first printed, due to the chivalric revival initiated by Prince Henry. Regarding the issue of surrogation, this connection becomes even more pertinent. Historians have claimed that, unlike his father, Henry enjoyed immense, almost iconic, popularity among his subjects, an affective bond James both envied and feared. In terms of my argument here, the relationship between Henry and his father evokes the sort of surrogacy with which I see *The Knight* engaging. Often referred to as "England's hope," Henry came to stand in for the sort of prince that England longed for but did not have in James. See Roy Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales and England's Lost Renaissance* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), 14-15.

³⁴ Joseph Roach likewise makes the point that the "fit" of the surrogate "cannot be exact." While he is interested in cultural memory, he argues that the process of surrogation must allow for flexibility and change because collective memory is selective, imaginative and perverse, qualities that could easily be assigned to the Citizen as stand-in for the early modern spectator. See *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

³⁵ That there is a genuine affection between the couple and the apprentice is clear – the Citizen and Wife show pride in his amateur thespian achievements and coddle him when things go amiss in the play ("How dost thou Rafe? Art thou not shrewdly hurt? There is some sugar-candy for thee" [2,334-36]).

³⁶ The Citizen's idealized theatrical self-representation differs from the Freudian ego-ideal in that it comes from theatrical rather than generative origins. Rafe's "role" is constructed from models of "perfection" the Citizen culls from the stage rather than ones delivered via his parents, an interesting commentary on how playwrights imagined their role in "creating" the early modern spectator.

³⁷ This sort of temporal fluidity is also related to modern theories of trauma, where the victim relives the traumatic experience again and again. See Freud's "Beyond the Pleasure Principal" in *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay (London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1989), 594-625. More recent studies of trauma include Robert Jay Lifton, *The Broken Connection: On Death and the Continuity of Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979); Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989); Geoffrey Hartman, "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies," *New Literary History* 26 (1995): 537-63; Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996) and Shoshana Felman, *The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2002).

³⁸ Fuss makes the point that metaphor uses exactly the sort of substitution that occurs in identification. See *Identification Papers*, 5.

³⁹ In Doane's argument this dynamic occurs because woman's subjectivity is largely constructed around the status of object. This sort of visibility (let alone subjective understanding), however is historically contingent; Doane traces it to women's increased visibility in the American workplace and arena of higher

education during World War II. See Doane, *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940's* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 1-13.

⁴⁰ John Rainolds, "The Overthrow of Stage Plays" (1599), and William Prynne "Histriomastix" (1633) in Pollard, op. cit., 177 and 283.

⁴¹ Anthony Munday, "A Second and Third Blas of Retreat from Plays and Theaters" (1580), in Pollard, op. cit., 70.

⁴² For example, Leeds Barroll in *Politics, Plague and Shakespeare's Theater: The Stuart Years* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991) has read this rhetoric as reflective of the cultural anxiety that the theater was a hotbed of disease, such as plague and syphilis. Tanya Pollard has explored the way that both dramatists and antitheatrical writers made use of the language of disease and poison, and linked this tendency to anxieties about changes to medical science and treatment during the period. See "'No Faith in Physic': Masquerades of Medicine Onstage and Off" in *Disease, Diagnosis and Cure on the Early Modern Stage*, eds. Stephanie Moss and Kaara L. Peterson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 29-41. Even Cynthia Marshall, whose work powerfully informs my own in this chapter, does not take the contagion metaphor much further than to say that it illustrates the early modern beliefs about the physical and mental instability of humans in general. See *Shattering*, 17-20. Jonathan Gil-Harris's *Sick Economies: Drama, Mercantilism and Disease in Shakespeare's England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), which looks at how the language of disease is used to express certain cultural anxieties about the expanding "global" nature of English mercantilism, comes closest to approximating the way I imagine the antitheatricalists' used the language of disease to express how the theater acted upon the spectator's imagination.

⁴³ Munday in Pollard, op. cit., 70.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ John Fletcher, *The Faithful Shepherdess*, ed. Florence Ada Kirk (New York: Garland, 1980), 7.

⁴⁶ Dekker dubbed the War the Poetomachia, or the Poet's War; I believe the first person to use the term "war of the theaters" was Chambers. See, E.K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923), 381.

⁴⁷ See for example, Harbage, *Shakespeare and The Rival Traditions* (New York: MacMillan, 1952), 90; Shapiro, op.cit. 229 and Gurr, 55, 101 and 185.

⁴⁸ John Marston, "What you will," in *The Plays of John Marston*, ed. H. Harvey Wood (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1934-39). Shapiro elucidates the multiple techniques that playwrights used to attempt to control their audiences in *Children of the Revels*, 74-79.

⁴⁹ See Chambers, Vol. 3, 252.

⁵⁰ Harbage, 98.

⁵¹ Shapiro, 69.

⁵² Mulvey, op. cit., 18.

Chapter Three

A Modeled Audience: Fashioning the Spectator in Shakespeare's Romance

Among Shakespeare's plays, it seems that none serve to smash the so-called "fourth wall" between audience and performer more completely than *Othello*. While the phrase "breaking the fourth wall" usually refers to intradiegetic allusions to a play's audience or fictionality, *Othello* reverses this process in that it tends to incite onlookers to traverse the boundary between the representational and the real.¹ Testimonials regarding the play's power to turn its spectators' suspension of disbelief into a conviction they are witnessing reality abound, not only from the seventeenth century but over the four hundred years that the play has been performed. In 1610, Henry Jackson testified to the verisimilitude of Desdemona's death scene by conflating the boy playing the role with the character herself, "[W]hen she was killed, she was even more moving, for when she fell back upon the bed she implored the pity of the spectators by her very face," and Samuel Pepys recorded in his 1660 diary that "a very pretty lady that sat by me, called out, to see Desdemona smothered."² Even within the performance tradition that exists among actors, there is an old tale that refers to "the good lady in the gallery, who called out to the actor playing Othello: *Look out, you damned fool, use your eyes!*"³ Desdemona's murder scene is not without precedent; all of Shakespeare's tragedies (not to mention those of his forerunners and contemporaries) make much of the spectacle of violence, from Lavinia's rape and mutilation in *Titus Andronicus* to *Hamlet's* mercilessly

bloody climax. Yet none seem to prove as transhistorically consistent in generating a powerful emotional response from its audience as does *Othello*.⁴

Perhaps the unfailing sense of horror provoked by the play's ending has something to do with the way that Shakespeare stages the scene of Desdemona's murder. Beginning with Othello's entrance into his wife's bedroom while she is sleeping, Desdemona's vulnerability could hardly be greater. In addition, the conjugal space of the bedroom invokes an intimacy gone horribly wrong, one that instead of representing the couple's marital harmony becomes a place of stealth, silence and death. Unlike the murders or deaths in the majority of Shakespeare's tragedies, which are witnessed by onstage spectators as well as offstage ones, Desdemona's murder takes place with only the audience as onlookers, thereby encouraging in them an extreme feeling of helplessness. After all, they are the only ones who *could* do something at the moment she is killed.

Whether Shakespeare was aware of the dramatic efficacy of *Othello*'s final scene, he revisits it in another play several years later. Although the bedroom scene in *Cymbeline* has a much different outcome, it contains echoes of the earlier tragedy that likely would not have been missed by some among Shakespeare's audience. A surviving seventeenth-century account of *Cymbeline* touches, however, only briefly on the scene as an unspectacular moment in its narrative progression: "In the deepest of the night, she being asleep, he opened the chest and came forth of it. And viewed her in bed and the marks on her body...." More troublingly, one twentieth-century critic claims that in each of the four performances of *Cymbeline* he has seen, Iachimo's entrance into Imogen's darkened bedroom caused the audience to laugh rather than tremble.⁵

There are, of course, many possible explanations for the discrepant reactions to these two scenes, the most obvious being the fact that one ends in the death of the heroine while the other results merely in petty theft. But there is also something very different in the way that these two dramatic tableaux communicate with their audiences. The helplessness experienced by playgoers watching *Othello*'s final scene does not come about all at once; it is the bitter end of a destructive trajectory that they have watched develop over the course of the play. From its first lines, *Othello* provides the audience with insight into Iago's malevolent determination; they then watch it mature and develop into fully-fledged psychological warfare on several characters whose innocence has also been established. *Cymbeline*, however, follows a much less driving course. The audience cannot be certain which way it will ultimately turn, thereby relieving them of some of the feelings of responsibility aroused in *Othello*. In other words, where *Othello* corrals its audience emotionally *Cymbeline* provides a gentler sort of guidance, one that privileges discerning and measured spectatorial engagement over unmitigated emotional submersion.

The sort of interaction between audience and performance that *Cymbeline* invites is not unique to this particular play, but shared by the first three of Shakespeare's romances.⁶ Whereas Shakespeare's tragedies explore drama's potential for concentrating an audience's energy along certain emotional paths, his romances foreground the audience's importance to the creation of the dramatic product itself. In doing so, these plays imagine spectatorship as a circulatory system, rather than the one-way street or ricochet models often imagined by early modern and contemporary theorists alike.⁷ On the narrative plane, the generative potential inherent in the acts of observation and

interpretation are represented through repeated images (such as the female body on display), relationships (such as the father-daughter dyad) or situations (such as the fragmented family). On the broader, thematic level Shakespeare employs three communicative modalities – the didactic, the exemplary and the meditative – to enunciate (and perhaps inculcate) the qualities possessed by a knowledgeable and productive audience.

While the project of what I call “spectatorial fashioning” does not progress seamlessly over the course Shakespeare’s first three romances, the way they approach, ruminate upon and represent issues of spectatorship are similar. *Pericles* makes the most use of the didactic model (where certain characters either advocate for a particular type of spectatorial engagement or represent how to perform it) by emphasizing throughout that careful attentiveness, particularly to the audial realm, is essential to genuine understanding. This interpretative method suggests that the immediacy of visual pleasure can (and should) be tempered by the more considered and rational information provided by spoken (or sung) language. The play underscores and privileges this interpretative process via a hero through whom sight’s potential to mislead is explicitly dramatized (*Pericles*), a ubiquitous narrator-guide (*Gower*), and a spectacle that resists visual interpretation (*Marina*). *Cymbeline* further illustrates the importance of careful and attentive engagement with what is perceived by dramatizing two potential ways (one productive and one destructive) of engaging with performance. Using the oddly-triangulated relationship between *Imogen*, *Posthumus* and *Iachimo*, the play sets up the lovers’ very different interpretations of *Iachimo*’s various performances as demonstrations of how the conscientious spectator must make choices about how and

where to invest his or her focus and the possible consequences of failing to do so. Like *Pericles* and *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* is concerned with interpretative choices and their consequences, but rather than attempting to illustrate the right and wrong way of making them, the play probes the limits of the audience's ability to create or destroy that with which they engage. Shakespeare collapses these antithetical possibilities into a single character, Leontes, and in doing so moves away from a more didactic model of expression to one that contemplates, and ultimately pays tribute to, the spectator's role in the creative process.

This chapter examines how these plays "speak" or theorize the spectator as conceived by another early modern playwright who was working to communicate with the diverse group of people that made up London's theatrical audiences. But the spectator envisioned by Shakespeare's romances tells us more about how this figure assumes a more coherent form in the early seventeenth century than it does about a particular development in playwright's career. While romance was popular in the Elizabethan period, it experienced an efflorescence during the Jacobean era, one that, as Lee Bliss has put it, resulted in an almost kaleidoscopic profusion of the form.⁸ That the genre's popularity increases during the seventeenth century is not mere coincidence. As Frederic Jameson has noted, romance often reemerges to satisfy a cultural need to "express a transitional moment, yet one of a very special type; its contemporaries must feel their society torn between past and future in such a way that the alternatives are grasped as hostile but somehow unrelated worlds."⁹ Critics have tended to see romance's rise in popularity as responding to transitions within Shakespeare's psyche or in the larger sociocultural world he inhabited, but have not considered whether romance reflects

changes in ideas about audiences themselves.¹⁰ Outside of the early modern period, the genre of romance has been consistently linked to issues of audience and reception, especially regarding how audiences are gendered (for example, the connection between the eighteenth and nineteenth century Gothic novel and the development of a specifically female readership or that between the emergence of film melodrama and female audiences in the early twentieth century).¹¹ Such arguments often hinge on the reader's or viewer's processes of identification: the female spectator is able to locate something in these particular genres with which she can make a powerful emotional connection. As André Green has put it, a text/drama/work of art generates this intimacy through a "spectacle that [makes] an affective matrix in which the spectator sees himself involved and feels himself not only solicited but welcomed, as if the spectacle were intended for him."¹²

Feminist critics have pointed out the manifold problems in using "female identification" as a category of analysis in genre studies.¹³ However, the concept of identification in general is useful for inquiring into the relationship between Shakespeare's romances and changes in the seventeenth-century imaginary regarding the spectator. Although critics have not seen this relationship as one that gives shape to the genre itself, several have noted that the romances create a different sort of psychological relationship with their audiences than does comedy or tragedy.¹⁴ Maurice Hunt, for example, notes that tragicomedy plays upon the spectator's ability to follow, guess, and finally solve: "[T]he primary attraction of this kind of tragicomedy had become playgoers' curiosity over how the dramatist would solve tragic complications, their listening for clues by which they might hypothesize the solution, and their delight and

admiration once the discoveries occur.”¹⁵ But the level of attentiveness and involvement that Hunt imagines here does not just “happen” to early modern audiences simply because they watch a lot of tragicomedy. Rather, Shakespeare’s early experiments with the form work to cultivate this sort of looking, and, as I will argue, project a spectator ready and willing to invest the energy that such mental processes as attentiveness and deduction require. But in order to put forth this image Shakespeare must articulate what constitutes active looking and how it can be accomplished – a task towards which he turns in *Pericles*.¹⁶

Did you ever hear the like?: sense education in *Pericles*

The sort of anxiety that the visual sense could and often did provoke in the early modern cultural imaginary is suggested by the widespread popularity of the Diana and Actaeon myth. While not solely about seeing, the myth’s core moment, which depicts the voyeuristic possession of a forbidden sight, fascinated Renaissance writers and artists.¹⁷ Book Eleven of *Orlando Furioso* briefly references it, distilling it to the images of Actaeon’s transformation and Diana’s exposure: “Look how *Diana* is painted in tables / Among the rest of *Ovids* pleasant fables. / Of whose sharpe doome the Poet there does tell / How shee with hornes Actaeon did invest / Because he saw her naked at the well.”¹⁸ In his sonnet sequence, *Parthenophil and Parthenophe*, Barnabe Barnes laments the young hunter’s fate, suggesting the dangers that could spring, unawares, upon the reckless gazer: “With poore *Actaeon* overthrowne / But for a looke.”¹⁹ Even chroniclers used Actaeon as shorthand for those who see or pry into what should be kept secret: “*Brithnod* Provost of Winchester...is said to have béene murdered by Elsticha the

Quéene of King *Eldired*, causing bodkins to be thrust into his arme holes, because like an unhappy *Actaeon* he had séene her in a certaine wood busie about sorcerie.”²⁰

However, in Ovid’s rendition of the tale, Actaeon is not only punished for what he sees, but because of what he might say. He not only looks upon a forbidden sight; he can disseminate it by telling others. Of the two crimes, the myth portrays the anticipated one as more offensive to Diana, for in punishing Actaeon she not only takes away his sight but his voice: “But when he saw his face / And horned temples in the brook, he would have cried ‘Alas!’ / But as for then no kind of speech out of his lips could pass.”²¹ Often read as being primarily about seeing, the myth of Diana and Actaeon places equal (if not more) emphasis on the act of telling. As Nancy Vickers has pointed out, it is Diana’s “pronouncement” (her spoken curse) that initiates Actaeon’s metamorphosis. Even the curse itself mentions seeing only briefly, dwelling instead on the act of telling as she mocks her victim: “Now make thy vaunt among thy mates, thou saw’st Diana bare, / Tell if thou can, I give thee leave. Tell hardly, do not spare” (3.227-28). The tacit connection established here between the visual and the vocal implies that they always work in tandem; that is, if one sees something rare, hidden or extraordinary one will inevitably tell. But this equation also suggests that there is something about sight itself that predisposes the viewer to impulsive action, as if sight has the capacity to pervade every corner of the viewer’s imaginative and cognitive space, thereby necessitating the sort of release that telling can provide.

Pericles displays a similar anxiety in its opening scene. The play begins with Pericles’s attempt to win the hand of the King of Antioch’s daughter. In order to do so, he must solve a riddle, a task which he easily completes. Unfortunately, in reading the riddle

correctly, Pericles discovers a forbidden secret – Antiochus’s incestuous relationship with his daughter – and sets off the mechanism for his own destruction. Once Antiochus realizes that Pericles has seen the truth embedded in the riddle, his immediate reaction is to silence him:

He hath found the meaning, for the which
We mean to have his head.
He must not live to trumpet forth my infamy,
Nor tell the world that Antiochus does sin
In such a loathed manner;
And therefore instantly this prince must die,
For by his fall my honour must keep high. (1.1.144-150)

Like Diana, who seems far more intent on punishing Actaeon for what he might do (divulge what he has seen) than what he has done (stumbled upon her naked), Antiochus evinces little shame that Pericles has realized his transgression but chafes at the thought of Pericles exposing him. And, like Actaeon in the myth, Pericles goes from being the pursuer (of a wife and a dynasty) to being the prey. This transformation is underscored by the metaphors Antiochus uses to command Pericles’s destruction, ones that imagine him as a hunter’s prize: “As thou will live [Thaliard], fly after, and like an arrow / Shot from a well-experienced archer hits / The mark his eye doth level at, / So thou never return until thou say, / ‘Prince Pericles is dead’” (1.1.162-66).

Pericles, however, does not die. As a tragicomic hero, he cannot. Unlike the myth, *Pericles* makes pellucidly clear who is right and who is wrong – the good must be rewarded and the evil punished. But Pericles does undergo a metamorphosis over the course of the play, one that, like Actaeon’s, is linked to being silenced.²² Pericles begins the play as a fairly verbose character, speaking ninety-six lines in Act 1, Scene 1, and ninety in 1.2. In the shipwreck scene of 2.1., he speaks seventy-seven lines, and in his

second (and more successful) wooing of Thaisa in 2.3. and 2.5, he speaks only fifty-two. This gradual decline in Pericles's lines coincides with his turn towards inwardness within the diegesis. As Pericles is hit with one misfortune after another, he gradually withdraws from a social and rational existence, to one that mimics death itself. At Simonides's court, despite his victory he is pensive and lugubrious ("Yon knight doth sit too melancholy" [2.3.52]), no longer the confident young man seen at Antioch. After Thaisa's supposed death at sea, he leaves his infant daughter in the care of foster parents, severing the only familial bond he has. He makes a vow not to cut his hair until his daughter's wedding day, even though he will "show ill in it"—a vow that physically marks his repudiation of the world of appearances. Finally, upon learning of Marina's supposed death, he fully removes himself from the world of the living. He condemns himself to a self-imposed exile of sorrow, physical deprivation and silence: "Sir, our vessel is of Tyre, in it the king / A man who for this three months hath not spoken / To anyone, nor taken sustenance / But to prorogue his grief" (5.1.19-22).

But whereas Actaeon's silencing is permanent, Pericles regains his voice and his life. Both are restored to him through familial and divine intervention, administered by his daughter and, in an odd reversal of the myth, Diana.²³ Whereas Actaeon's silencing leads almost immediately to his death, Pericles continues to engage his world, not through sight or speech but through hearing. In fact, it is this particular sensory channel that returns him to the world of the living: he exhibits signs of life only once he hears Marina speak.²⁴ It is not, however a mindless sort of hearing (a mere physiological response to sound), that Pericles demonstrates – he does not react when Marina sings for him (5.1.73), nor when Lysmiachus addresses him (32-33). Instead, he selectively

a more careful and attentive viewer. For example, *Pericles* consistently emphasizes hearing over seeing, a tactic by which the play suggests that looking is dangerously unreliable in the absence of listening. Besides demonstrating this principle through the diegetic arc of Pericles's physical and spiritual journey, the play contains other, more local examples of it, such as Gower's stewardship of the narrative and Marina's episodes in Mytilene's brothels. In providing these examples, *Pericles* creates a doubly-reinforced structure that encourages the spectator toward an interpretative practice that is measured and thoughtful rather than enthralled.

Arguably, the most crucial element in the play's didactic structure is its use of an extradiegetic narrator. One of the few Jacobean plays to use this device, Gower paves the narrative fissures opened up by the play's complete disregard of the Aristotelian unities and provides interpretative guidance for the audience.²⁶ Gower possesses a sort of deific authority in the play – he is both the author of one of its originary sources and, by Shakespeare's day, already an English literary icon. His cultural status lends an undeniable authority to his interpretative role, one that reaches beyond the bardic function he claims for himself at the play's opening—"And that to hear an old man sing / May to your wishes pleasure bring" (1.0.13-14)—and the gratification with which he is supposed to provide the audience becomes tinged with a hint of decree.²⁷ Although couched in deferential language, Gower's relationship to the audience doesn't simply facilitate the audience's perception; it provides instruction on the art of perception.

Gower, then, sets up not only the "what" of *Pericles*' story, but how it should be experienced. The play's first two lines subtly begin to lead the audience's attention along certain sensory paths: "To sing a song that old was sung / From ashes ancient Gower is

come” (1.0.1-2). Like the mythical phoenix, Gower’s return is a rebirth, not only of himself but of *Pericles* and the oral tradition which he invokes. The opening lines’ odd locution prioritizes the “song,” both in presenting it syntactically to the audience before Gower himself and by clearly stating that he returns specifically to perform it. In doing so, Gower introduces a concept that will be emphasized continually over the course of the play: the privileging of sound over sight.

But *Pericles*’ privileging of the audial here is not merely a technique to instill a sense of attentiveness in the spectator; it is also one of the ways the play problematizes, even undermines, pleasure derived purely from what one sees.²⁸ After Gower’s initial invocation, he begins to set the scene at Antioch, where what is most pleasing to the eye can be damming to the soul:

This king unto him took a fere,
Who died and left a female heir
So buxom, blithe and full of face,
As heaven had lent her all his grace,
With whom the father liking took
And to her incest did provoke.
Bad child, worse father, to entice his own
To evil should be done by none. (1.0.21-28)

While arguably necessary to set the stage for *Pericles*’ arrival in Antioch, Gower’s pre-emptive revelation of the incest secret not only steals a bit of the scene’s dramatic thunder, it also compromises the moment where the “buxom, blithe and full of face” princess appears onstage. Rather than allowing the audience to experience the celestial beauty of Antiochus’ daughter before they discover her inner corruption, as *Pericles* does, Shakespeare frustrates this possibility, creating instead a spectatorial experience that merges the polarities of delectation and disgust.²⁹ Although *Pericles*’ intended bride is the most obvious signifier for this sort of spectatorial mixed message, the entire scene

presents numerous visual challenges. At the end of his introductory monologue, Gower points out the row of impaled heads that surround the stage and he promises that the dramatic action will now begin. The verbal (and in the case of modern editions, gestural) emphasis Gower places on the grisly spectacle of the beheaded suitors coincides with his relinquishing of narrative control, thereby imbricating the audience's first moment of unmediated experience of the play with the horror of the scene.³⁰ As in his invocation of the princess, Gower merges his invitation to spectatorial pleasure with visual antipathy.

After the rather fully-fleshed spectacle of the opening, the play seems to shy away from such displays.³¹ The devastating famine at Tarsus is depicted through the lachrymose musings of the country's symbolic parents (the governor Cleon and his wife Dionyza), a rendition that reads more like a private moment of grieving than a scene of national disaster: "My Dionyza, shall we rest us here / And by relating tales of others' griefs / See if it 'twill teach us to forget our own?" (1.4.1-3). In the tournament scene at 2.2, although the knights are shown displaying their devices, the actual event itself is marked only by a single stage direction: "*Great shoutes, and all cry, the meane Knight*" (2.2.58).³² Finally, in what Marian Lomax notes as a missed opportunity for a dazzling *coup de theatre*, the spectacular demise of Antiochus and his daughter are rendered through Helicanus's secondhand report, rather than as satisfying spectacle.³³

As the play progresses, however, situations arise in which the visual and the verbal actually contradict one another, thereby bringing these two perceptual modalities into conflict. This tension reaches its apex in the brothel scenes of Act Four, where a sixteen-year old virgin acts as a chastening force in a world overrun by excessive male heterosexual desire.³⁴ Unlike similar tragic Shakespearean narratives, *Pericles* does not

allow this issue to play out to its fatal end, but resolves it through the figure of Marina, who is able to convert male sexual energy into chaste devotion. Ostensibly, she accomplishes this through her highly polished rhetoric and vigorous logic; she persuades by speaking to men in their own language. However, Shakespeare structures the scenes in Mytilene so that Marina is protected from both the voracious appetites of the men who seek her sexual favors and from the audience's scrutiny. Unlike some of her tragic counterparts, Marina reverses the early modern precept that women are better seen than heard: she is one of the most visibly inaccessible heroines found in the Shakespearean corpus. As such, both she and the play itself frustrate the intradiegetic and extradiegetic gazes by diverting them through linguistic distraction and by concealing the object of desire.

Considering the amount of sexual pressure exerted on Marina during the play's latter half, it is surprising that the language through which she is described tends to circumvent her physical appearance. Unlike Imogen or Hermione whose appearance and alleged licentiousness are explicitly imagined and/or described, Marina is not the subject of linguistic voyeurism.³⁵ But this lack of corporeal description extends further than the scenes in which Marina is sexually vulnerable; she enters the play and her world in primal darkness: "A terrible childbed hast thou had, my dear / No light, no fire" (3.1.56-57). Her father leaves the newborn in a foreign country to be raised by surrogates, creating a situation where he does not recognize her sixteen years later, because, in a sense, he has never seen her. In a divergence from both Gower's and Twine's earlier versions of *Pericles*, the brothel-keepers do not parade Marina through the streets in an act of live advertisement; instead, Bolt cries her description through the market, saying he

has “drawn her picture with my voice” (IV.ii.92).³⁶ Even the most vivid physical description of her (given by Pericles in the reunion scene of Act 5) is rendered not through flesh-and-blood terms, but through a comparison to her mother:

My dearest wife was like this maid, and such a one
My daughter might have been. My queen’s square brows,
Her stature to an inch, as wand-like straight,
As silver-voiced, her eyes as jewel-like
And cased as richly, in pace another Juno. (5.1.98-102)

Rather than conveying an individualized image of the young woman, Pericles’ mediated description has an almost idolatrous feel. Instead of seeing his daughter for the first time, he recreates her as a funerary monument to his dead wife, even recycling some of the language that Cerimon used to describe Thaisa earlier: “Her eyelids, cases to those heavenly jewels / Which Pericles has lost, begin to part / Their fringes of bright gold” (3.2.98-100). Just as the play’s opening impedes spectatorial pleasure by merging moments of potential narrative or visual gratification with contradictory ones, here Marina’s presence is eclipsed by the comparison to and absence of the original – her mother. Framed as a simulacrum, Marina’s beauty activates only memory and mourning in her father, thereby demonstrating a chastened, benign version of the perverse desire aroused by another father’s appreciation of his daughter’s charms seen earlier in the play. This invocation and revision of the opening scene at Antioch offers an alternative to the corrupted and ultimately cataclysmic visual pleasure with which *Pericles* begins, thus suggesting a mode of looking that finds its terminus in imaginative and associative satisfaction rather than in the physical realm.

But if *Pericles* recuperates female beauty as a positive site of spectatorial engagement through Marina, it does so only by positing her through rhetoric that takes

emphasis *off* of her physical presence (such as the example above, where her father describes her as an effigy) or by rendering scenes in which she would be the central spectacle through oral description. Like the scene where Marina is described rather than shown to potential customers, a later episode where she converts a crowd of potential buyers into devout believers is told by two nameless witnesses as a sort of flashback:

1 GENTLEMAN: Did you ever hear the like?

2 GENTLEMAN: No, nor never shall do in such a place as this,
she once being gone.

1 GENTLEMAN: But to have divinity preached there – did you
ever dream of such a thing?

2 GENTLEMAN: No, no. Come, I am for no more bawdy houses.
Shall's go hear the vestals sing?

1 GENTLEMAN: I'll do anything now that is virtuous, but I am
out of the road of rutting for ever. (4.5.1-9)³⁷

Critics have often commented on Marina's near-divinity, but there is an important difference between this rendition of the miraculous and those told in English hagiographies.³⁸ Whereas ordinarily the scene of the miracle is one that strongly evokes the holy figure's presence in scriptural or hagiographic episodes, here it is related to the audience as a third-person, eyewitness account. While the two proselytes successfully convey a sense of Marina's potent reformative abilities, they describe almost nothing physical about the scene; instead, they focus on descriptions of language and sound. The first Gentleman asks his counterpart if he has *heard* rather than seen "the like," and afterwards they decide to buttress their newfound righteousness via an audial route – by going to hear the vestals sing. Even the first Gentleman's mention of dreams – usually associated more with images than with sound – is preceded by a phrase that emphasizes

listening rather than looking: “But to have divinity preached there – did you ever dream of such a thing?” Despite the fact that this scene depicts the successful containment of unruly male sexuality by Marina, she is never placed at a greater level of remove from the audience than at this moment in the play. This resistance suggests that underlying *Pericles* is an anxiety that despite the play’s good guidance, the spectatorial pull towards visual pleasure (in lieu of more comprehensive engagement) is always something that must be countered, even, at times, altogether avoided.

Although *Pericles* circumvents scenes that would place Marina as the central object of the desiring gaze of a crowd of potential customers, it does dramatize two instances where Marina is clearly being considered primarily as a sex object. In these cases, Marina herself becomes an instrument of spectatorial discipline. Like the play itself, Marina impels her onlookers towards another, more complex way of interpreting what they see by redirecting their focus on her physical presence through language. And, while Shakespeare’s *Pericles* stays true to its source material in portraying Marina as an unassailable presence, she serves as a force of conversion rather than an empathic representation of female helplessness. Whereas in Gower’s and Twine’s accounts, Marina appeals to her would-be assailants through more traditionally feminine methods (such as tears, self-abasement and entreaties for mercy), Shakespeare’s heroine forcefully turns their attention away from her and towards themselves, a dynamic that ultimately results in a form of masculine self-disciplining. Consider the heroine’s plea to Lysimachus as told in Twine’s *Patterne of Painfulle Adventures*:

When shee was come thither, Athanagoras the Prince
disguising his head and face, because hee woulde not be knowne,
came first in unto her, whom when Tharsia sawe, she threw her
selfe downe at his féeete, and saide unto him: for the love of God,

Gentleman, take pittie on me, and by the name of God I adjure you and charge you, that you do no violence unto me... With these or such like wordes declared shée her heavie fortune, eftsoones sobbing and bursting out into streames of tears, that for extreme grieffe she could scarsly speake.³⁹

During this scene, Tharsia declares the whole of her history, revealing herself completely to Athanagoras, who has come to “gather the floure of her virginitie.” Luckily, her vulnerability moves the prince, who “let fall a few tears, and departed.” Marina, however, makes no such appeal; she commands Lysimachus with an authority that belies the precariousness of her situation: “If you were born to honor, show it now; / If put upon you, make the judgment good / That thought you worthy of it” (4.5.96-98). Rather than appealing to his sympathy through the spectacle of her grief, Marina redirects Lysimachus’s attention towards his own actions, aristocratic honor and masculine reputation.

Gower’s Tharsia exhibits similar behavior when confronted with her keeper (the analogue of Bolt in *Pericles*) who has been commanded to take her maidenhood: “And thus sche kepte hirself fro schame, / And kneleth down to therthe and preide / Unto this man....”⁴⁰ Again, the protagonist wins the day through submission; she makes her keeper cognizant of the power he has over her, thus inspiring his pity. Marina, however, takes Bolt to task in no uncertain terms:

Thou hold’st a place for which the pained’st fiend
Of hell would not in reputation change.
Thou art the damned doorkeeper to every
Coistrel that comes enquiring for his Tib.
To the choleric fisting of every rogue
Thy ear is liable. Thy food is such
As hath been belched on by infected lungs. (4.5.166-72)

Marina's tirade seems an unlikely gambit; however, it works. Putting Bolt on the defensive (he responds with "What would you have me do?"), Marina once again successfully removes herself as the object of his attention and replaces it with self-scrutiny.

While this disparity between Marina and her earlier incarnations could be seen as a Shakespearean idiosyncrasy, this is not so. Another character written by the playwright some several years earlier shares both Marina's unrelenting chastity and her experience of being the object of intense and unwanted sexual attention – Isabella in *Measure for Measure*. Unlike her romance counterpart, however, Isabella is less successful in diverting the erotic pressure placed upon her. When her pursuer Angelo makes it clear that the only way for her to save her brother's life is to yield to him sexually, her answer is as decisive as Marina's, but couched in different terms:

[W]ere I under terms of death,
The impression of keen whips I'd wear as rubies,
And strip myself to death as to a bed,
That longing have been sick for, ere I'd yield
My body up to shame. (2.4.100-105)

Instead of displacing Angelo's focus onto himself, Isabella unwittingly intensifies its concentration on her. Although trying to illustrate her dedication to chastity, she fills her denunciation with corporeal imagery. Ostensibly she intends to invoke images of physical self-discipline in order to cool Angelo's lust; however, she unwittingly conflates the metonym of the martyred body with that of her actual (and proximate) one, thereby fanning the flames of his fantasy. The insistence on Isabella's physical body persists in her responses later in this scene: women are as frail "as the glasses where they view themselves" (125) and "as soft as our complexions are / And credulous to falseprints"

(129). Unsurprisingly, Angelo fails to see the error of his ways, experiencing remorse only once he has slaked his lust.

If Marina's ability to transform the indiscriminate spectatorial gaze into one that is more self-reflexive and self-governing is not something with which Shakespeare endows all of his heroines, is it a quality found in his romance heroines? Although Imogen and Hermione share certain characteristics with Marina in that they are described through similar ornamentally aureate terms, neither displays quite the same powers of deflection. Imogen and Hermione come under intense visual scrutiny within their respective narratives, in episodes that coincide with moments of extreme peril: Imogen is visited in her bedroom by a virtual stranger in the dead of night and Hermione is on trial for adultery and treason. Imogen is particularly vulnerable: she is preyed upon while asleep, a situation in which she (as the the object of Iachimo's gaze) cannot be anything but passive. Although Imogen's vulnerability in her bedroom scene resembles Marina's in the brothel in that both episodes place the heroine under the threat of sexual assault, there is a key difference between them. Whereas in *Pericles* sexual predators seem ready to carry out the threat of rape, in *Cymbeline*, this threat is offset by the fact that it comes from a character whose dramatic impotence has already been exposed. This distinction highlights one of the principal differences between the way in which *Pericles* and *Cymbeline* address the spectator: whereas *Pericles* explicitly instructs the audience via its characters, *Cymbeline* provides them with information that can unlock the play's complicated narrative and thematic schema, provided they know where to look.

Sufficient testimony: performing proof in *Cymbeline*

If one were to choose a twenty-first century analogue to *Cymbeline*, the closest approximation might be the Hollywood summer blockbuster. Although surprisingly free of nautical disasters, Shakespeare's second romance includes a little something for everyone: filial betrayal, an evil stepmother, a royal kidnapping, a voyeuristic bedroom scene, an escaped cross-dressed princess, a murdered prince, an international conflict and finally, a happy ending. What it does not have, however, is an adequate romantic hero. Although we are told at the play's opening that Posthumus "is a creature such / As, to seek through the regions of the earth / For one his like; there would be something failing / In him that should compare" (1.1.19-22), he never quite lives up to this fanfare.⁴¹ Many of *Cymbeline's* commentators have noted Posthumus' heroic inadequacy. In the Arden edition of *Cymbeline*, J.M. Nosworthy calls him "one of the dullest of Shakespeare's heroes" (lix), and in his rewrite of the play's ending, George Bernard Shaw portrays a rueful rather than joyful Imogen reuniting with her husband: "I must go home and make the best of it / As other women must" (149).⁴²

While most of Posthumus' detractors cite the ease with which his faith in Imogen is destroyed as incontrovertible evidence of a weak character, I would argue that it is not anything that Posthumus *does* that makes him a less-than-compelling hero; instead, it is what he does not do. Throughout the play, Posthumus seems oddly evacuated of agency. He excels at displaying extreme emotions (such as rage and despair), but when faced with turmoil he rarely takes matters into his own hands, choosing instead to let others direct his actions or complete them in his stead. Early in the play, Posthumus is contradictorily commanded by the queen, Imogen and Cymbeline in quick succession; in each case, he meekly obeys their command. Later, when he has fallen under the spell of Iachimo's false

reportage, he orders his wife's death from afar, leaving it in the hands of his servant rather than seeing to it himself. Even when he decides that he can no longer live with the burden of Imogen's murder on his conscience, he does not take his own life but wanders around a battlefield attempting to get killed (and does not even succeed at that). When weighed against almost any of Shakespeare's other male protagonists, whether tragic or comic, Posthumus is found wanting; in short, he is a bit of a dud.

Imogen, however, is a different story. With the most lines in *Cymbeline* (and more than any other Shakespearean romance heroine), Imogen dominates and animates the play.⁴³ Whether openly defying her father in word and deed, repulsing the unwanted attentions of her stepbrother or donning masculine guise in order to seek her deluded husband, she engages her world with a dynamism that no other character in the play approaches. Vitality emanates from nearly every aspect of her character, including the small details: unlike Shakespeare's other romance heroines, we are made privy to Imogen's little foibles and human concerns. She experiences jealousy, frustration, even despair; she suffers the physical pangs of hunger, and loves perhaps not wisely but too well. Action does not, however, become a substitute for thought in her character: as evinced on multiple occasions throughout the play, Imogen's powers of perception rival, even surpass, the strength of her will.⁴⁴

The third term in this somewhat odd couple is Iachimo. Lying somewhere in between Posthumus' overemotional passivity and Imogen's reflective vibrancy, Iachimo possesses the ability to play to both of their weaknesses as it suits him. Like some of Shakespeare's other Machiavellian antagonists to whom he has been compared, Iachimo is a consummate performer – he watches and waits in order to effectively manipulate the

homosocial gathering, giving it a more casual tone. More telling is the way these characters articulate different understandings of their various subjectivities. Iago and Edmond use the language of selfhood and self-engendering; each sees himself as the agent of a new reality, one that will swing the balance of social and sexual power in his favor. Iachimo, however, draws on the language of commodity and exchange; his own self-image seems less at stake, or at least constructed quite differently than Edmond's or Iago's. In focusing on the end (what he will get) rather than the means (how he will go about getting it) Iachimo's interests appear to reside primarily in what he can gain materially, sexually and egotistically rather than in altering the world he knows or in imagining the effects of accomplishing such a change on his sense of self. However, although Iachimo foregrounds his potential profit in this passage, he does reveal a crucial facet of his self-image and hence his character in that he imagines himself as an illusionist. He never states what he will *do*, only what he will attempt, "*If I bring no sufficient testimony,*" and then promises nothing more than to return with a good story, one that if well-delivered as a form of "entertainment" will ensure his success. Unlike Iago and Edmund, who must take on both acting and action in order to prosper, Iachimo needs only to give a convincing performance in order to get what he wants.

But what does he want, exactly? Iago's and Edmond's motives seem complex and multifaceted; they articulate them with a force and vision that Iachimo lacks (or at least withholds). The forceful emotional undercurrents that connect the earlier villains to their victims do not exist between Iachimo and Posthumus; they barely know one another, and although the conflict between them arises and accelerates with astonishing rapidity, it feels inorganic and barren. Nor does Iachimo really want Imogen. Although Iachimo acts

as though he is going to act out the role of Tarquin (whom he actually invokes as he approaches the sleeping princess) in the bedroom scene, all that is actually taken is a trinket and a good bit of the audience's time. In fact, despite the similarities in settings, Iachimo so little resembles his countryman here that according to Alexander Leggatt, a common audience reaction to the sight of Iachimo creeping forth from the trunk is laughter.⁴⁶

Leggatt attributes this response to the humorous visual effect created by Iachimo's "popping up" out of the chest, but I believe it is linked as well to an essential facet of both Iachimo's character and the play itself. *Cymbeline* has proved a notoriously difficult play to decipher; indeed, some of the most trenchant essays on the play have explored this quality of elusiveness.⁴⁷ What makes *Cymbeline* so difficult to interpret, however, is also what allows an audience to recognize humor in what ordinarily would register as a decidedly ominous scene. *Cymbeline* is, in large part, a play about the act of performance itself – a metacommentary on its possibilities, effects and limits. As such, it makes particularly rigorous demands on its audience in terms of focus – it is not a play that carries one along with its narrative or emotional force, but instead presents the spectator with material with which he or she must continually grapple, consider and evaluate. Unlike *Pericles*, where Shakespeare attempts, through both Gower and Marina, to direct *how* the audience engages with the play, in *Cymbeline* the audience must make choices about how and where to focus its attention – and these are choices with consequences. If spectators allow the play's momentum to carry them passively through the experience, they will be unable to access the play's structural complexity and thematic multiplicity. If, however, they actively and discerningly look and listen, they

will be able to laugh at Iachimo crawling from his discommodious hiding place, because they will have already figured out that, unlike other Shakespearean villains, Iachimo uses the malevolent acts he proposes not in the service of ambition, revenge or material gain, but in order to create persuasive settings for his various performances.

While Shakespeare does not provide the same sort of spectatorial guidance that he does in *Pericles*, *Cymbeline* is not without its metadramatic models for looking. One of the most important ways that the play elucidates different types of viewing practice is through the triangular relationship between Posthumus, Imogen and Iachimo. Using Iachimo as a sort of personification of “Acting,” Shakespeare occupies a large portion of the play with his emotive displays intended for both Posthumus and Imogen. As the audience watches their individual reactions, it witnesses two distinct models of spectatorship embodied through these characters’ responses to Iachimo, one emotional and unfiltered, the other cautious and observant.

In her essay on the structural and thematic function of misperception in *Cymbeline*, Cynthia Lewis claims that one of Posthumus’ defining characteristics is his “extraordinary perceptiveness”; however, it fails him miserably when it comes to Iachimo.⁴⁸ His vulnerability in this regard comes about largely because he takes Iachimo at his word rather than heeding the details of what he says. This chain of misinterpretation begins early in the play, when Iachimo begins leading Posthumus into believing that the wager between them is actually over the strength of Imogen’s virtue, whereas in reality, his true interests lie elsewhere:

You may wear her in title yours: but you know strange
fowl light upon neighboring ponds. Your ring may be
stolen too: so your brace of unprizable estimations, the
one is but frail and the other casual; a cunning thief, or

a (that way) accomplished courtier, would hazard the winning both of first and last. (1.4.85-90)

In shifting the focus from Imogen's chastity to Posthumus' claims about it, Iachimo subtly redirects the course of the dispute. Imogen's importance wanes here (she is merely a titular possession in this passage), suggesting that Iachimo's stakes in the matter have far more to do with taking Posthumus down a peg than compromising his wife's integrity.⁴⁹ Refashioning the ring analogy he earlier used to make a point about Imogen's purported physical and spiritual perfection—"If she went before others I have seen, as that diamond of yours outlustres many I have beheld, I could not believe she excelled many" (1.5.60-71)—Iachimo now pairs it instead with Posthumus' "brace of unprizable estimations," a substitution that becomes especially significant at the end of the passage. While his statement that either thief or courtier "would hazard the winning of both" appears to refer to Posthumus' diamond and his wife, Iachimo actually pairs Posthumus' ring with his pride. His reference to the courtier invokes a figure who wields exquisite skill with both women and words – one who is an adept performer. In playing to Posthumus' tedious display of hubris, Iachimo seems to sense that the key to winning the wager lies not in seducing Imogen, but in delivering a convincing performance of having done so.

Caught up in his own display of superiority at this moment, Posthumus does not catch Iachimo's shift in terms, but sticks resolutely to the original tenure of their argument: "Your Italy contains none so accomplished a courtier to convince the honor of my mistress" (1.4.91-92). In failing to attend to the particulars of Iachimo's language, Posthumus makes a fatal mistake – he concerns himself with Imogen's vulnerability

rather than realizing his own. Upon proposing the challenge, Iachimo clearly states that it is made “rather against your confidence than her reputation” (107-8), but Posthumus only perceives a further threat to Imogen’s honor: “You are a great deal abus’d in too bold a persuasion, and I doubt not you sustain what you’re worthy of by your attempt...a repulse” (111-12, 115), and when Iachimo finally lays the wager, he does so using evasive language that does more to prey upon Posthumus’s anxieties than actually seal the bargain:

By the gods, it is one. If I bring you no sufficient testimony that I have enjoy’d the dearest bodily part of your mistress, my ten thousand ducats are yours, so is your diamond too: if I come off, and leave her in such honor as you have trust in, she your jewel, this your jewel, and my gold are yours: provided I have your commendation for my more free entertainment. (1.4.145-52)

This ambiguous passage, variously glossed in different editions of the play, is purposefully obscure.⁵⁰ Iachimo never actually claims that he will seduce Imogen or even make the attempt. Instead, he bases the wager on the strength of his “sufficient *testimony*,” something that while ostensibly based in fact, ultimately hinges on how well it is delivered. Even when he describes what would constitute a victory on his part he does so through equivocations, saying only that if he “comes off,” and “leaves her in such honor as you have trust in,” he wins. Although “come off” carries all the resonances of a classic Shakespearean pun, the remainder of the clause is, I would argue, less ironic. As Iachimo has realized, winning the wager does not necessitate Imogen’s corruption – he can indeed “leave her in such honor” as Posthumus trusts in, because ultimately the wager is not a test of Imogen’s honor, but of Iachimo’s abilities as a performer.

Whether an audience would pick up on these linguistic subtleties is unclear, but the play also provides structural cues to heighten the audience’s awareness that all is not

what it seems. Although this passage begins the scene's dénouement, it is not a wholly satisfying dramatic moment. As the emotional stakes reach their apex, thereby accelerating the dramatic pacing, Iachimo's obfuscating prose serves to slow it down. This paradox creates a sort of dramatic rupture which sunders the audience's experience between the emotional release of identifying with the events unfolding onstage and the intellectual tension of analysis. The spectator must choose whether to give way to the emotional momentum generated by this scene, as Posthumus does within the narrative itself, or to step back and consider the implications of what Iachimo has actually said. Either way there is a trade-off: one either glosses over salient information or has to curb their viewing experience, as the play leaves little room for perceptivity and passion to work in tandem here. However, I would not say that the two choices are given equal weight. As the play will continue to show by means of Posthumus and Imogen, watching a performance can be deadly serious business – one that should not be engaged in lightly or recklessly, but with discretion, even vigilance.

Unfortunately, Posthumus continues to let his emotions overtake his reason in his next encounter with Iachimo. Initially displaying a healthy skepticism towards his rival's claims of success, Posthumus is soon overwhelmed by the barrage of imagery Iachimo provides as fuel for his already-kindled fears. Although he resists the connection that Iachimo attempts to forge between his knowledge of Imogen's chamber and knowledge of Imogen herself, these descriptions pave the way for Iachimo's later *coup de théâtre*. By spending so much time on the details of her bedroom, Iachimo leads his rival's imagination there, so that when he presents his more censorious proofs he has Posthumus exactly where he wants him:

The chimney
Is south the chamber, and the chimney-piece,
Chaste Dian, bathing: never saw I figures
So likely to report themselves; the cutter
Was as another nature, dumb; outwent her,
Motion and breath left out.

(2.4.80-84).

Iachimo takes special pains to emphasize the power of representation here. While the tension between the power of nature and art thematically links all of Shakespeare's romances, it here reinscribes a tension unique to *Cymbeline*. Iachimo's privileging of the artisan's craft and product over nature serves as an analogy for his own performative power in this scene – he too can create something that convinces as well as (or better than) the real thing. However, Shakespeare pairs this assertion of dramatic potency with an image that warns against passively accepting Iachimo's terms by raising the specter of undisciplined looking – that of Diana bathing. Unlike in *Pericles* where Actaeon haunts the narrative, here there is no direct mention of him. His omission leaves a noticeable lacuna in the tableau, one that, as Jonathan Bate has pointed out, is filled by both Iachimo and his audience, who has been asked to imaginatively see what Iachimo describes.⁵¹ But Actaeon's moment of visual gratification is dearly bought; occupying his spectatorial position, even imaginatively, is a risky business. By invoking this myth at this moment, the play again suggests the hazards of indiscriminate watching.⁵²

If this reference escapes the viewer's notice, however, there is always the negative example of Posthumus from which to learn. He tragically misreads Iachimo's intentions, believing that he offers his extravagant descriptions as proof rather than as setting. By the time Iachimo presents his evidentiary trump cards (the bracelet and the mole), Posthumus is too far gone to retreat to the higher ground of objectivity. Though warned by Philario

not to jump to conclusions—“Sir, be patient: / This is not strong enough to be believed / Of one persuaded well of” (2.4.130-32)—Posthumus cannot stop his mind from following the avenue down which Iachimo has led it. By the time Iachimo gets to the corporeal “proof” of Imogen’s birthmark, it is not even necessary, as Posthumus has already arrived at the scene of the purported crime: “This yellow Iachimo, in an hour, was’t not? / Or less at first? / Perchance he spoke not, but / Like a full-acorned boar, a German one, / Cried “O”! and mounted...” (2.4.166-169). And, while he is not, like Actaeon, physically rent asunder in punishment for his imaginative indulgence, its consequences will emotionally eviscerate him, setting him apart for the remainder of the play, at least until he learns another way of seeing.

What Posthumus must learn over time, Imogen seems to understand instinctively. Although similarly exposed to Iachimo’s chicanery, she never allows herself to become so fully absorbed by his theatrics that they overwhelm her rational capacities. Nor is Imogen a cynically detached onlooker – Iachimo’s story elicits her genuine emotional response. But whereas Posthumus seems all too ready to sacrifice his facts to Iachimo’s fictions, Imogen never becomes so immersed in his narrative that she forgoes either her percipience or her faith in what she holds most dear. Her ability to resist Iachimo’s sexual advances ultimately seems less surprising than her ability to see through his performance, especially since up until this point Iachimo has shown himself a consummate charlatan. In depicting this particular quality *Cymbeline* does more than reaffirm the stuff of which Imogen is made: the first exchange that takes place between her and Iachimo in Act 1 both illustrates the emptiness behind Iachimo’s purported motives, and more

significantly, provides the audience with another interpretational model, one that achieves harmony between the emotional and rational modes of experience.

Imogen's more measured interpretative method is underscored further by Iachimo's predilection for the melodramatic in this scene. Unlike his interactions with Posthumus, which were characterized by dexterous linguistic control, Iachimo's delivery here consists of gross overstatement and ludicrous posturing. Early in the scene he addresses the audience in an aside, a dramatic technique often used to create a sense of intimacy between audience and character. Here, it sounds bombastic and strained:

All of her that is out of doors most rich!
If she be furnished with a mind so rare,
She alone is th' Arabian bird; and I
Have lost the wager. Boldness be my friend!
Arm me, Audacity, from head to foot,
Or like the Parthian, I shall flying fight,
Rather directly fly. (1.7.15-21)

Rather than providing the audience with any forthright insight into his state of mind or ironic commentary about the situation in which he finds himself (two common types of Shakespearean asides), Iachimo creates an entirely different setting and context for himself and the audience. His extended metaphor shifts the locale from the bedchambers of Britain's heir to epic battlefields where empires rather than individuals clashed, and refashions himself as a highly mobile and elusive Parthian warrior.⁵³ It seems that before Iachimo can attempt his seduction of Imogen, he has to "plume up his will" (as Iago says) by creating a grandiose setting for himself from which to stage his conquest. Unlike Iago, who shores up his confidence by conceiving of and enacting the "double knavery" of setting up Roderigo and Othello, Iachimo must instead create a degree of remove from

his situation and intended actions; it is only once he imagines it as a fiction in which he plays a role that he is able to push ahead with his plans.

But why does Iachimo exhibit such performance anxiety at this moment in the play? The crisis of confidence he articulates not only seems premature, it is a far cry from the brash and self-assured man of the world that he earlier played for Posthumus and others. While his reaction could be read as the humbling effect of Imogen's presence, it takes hold of him a little too quickly to be convincing as grounds for such instant pessimism. Why is he ready to give up before he has even made the attempt? The answer, I believe, lies in the fact that the rhetorical and metaphorical extremity Iachimo exhibits flows from a different sort of desire. The ease with which he acknowledges the possibility of failure is deceptive, especially considering the tenacity he displayed in the wager scene: "Signior Iachimo will not from it" (1.5.169). The key to deciphering his reaction, however, lies not in the idea of failure itself, but what he imagines himself failing at. Iachimo's personal stakes in this endeavor do not, finally, depend on his erotic or material success (he displays remarkable indifference towards both), but on his performative accomplishments. Significantly, when he faces the possibility of failing in his task, his method of bolstering his flagging confidence is to step his performance up a notch – this second half of this speech would better suit the Marlovian hero than the machiavel.

Unfortunately, Iachimo fails in the role he cares about most – that of consummate actor. While one might expect a command performance from Iachimo at this crucial moment in the play, he bombs badly. All of the topical maneuvering and sinewy phrasing that successfully ensnared Posthumus earlier are nowhere evinced; instead, Iachimo's

presentation resembles an overdone version of Herod. There is nothing organic about his initial attempt to seduce Imogen: he breaks awkwardly into posturing almost immediately after she greets him, and then proceeds to unleash a metonymical maelstrom upon his captive audience:

What! are men mad? Hath nature given them eyes
To see this vaulted arch, and the rich crop
Of sea and land, which can distinguish 'twixt
The fiery orbs above and the twinned stones
Upon the numbered beach, and can we not
Partition make with spectacles so precious
'Twixt fair and foul? (1.7.32-38)

This odd amalgam of heroic language and underhanded intent pushes this moment towards the edge of parody. His language and purpose at odds, Iachimo himself becomes tinged with a hint of the absurd, which noticeably attenuates the sinister note he sounded earlier in the play. Instead of playing out the menacing scenario the audience has been led to expect, Iachimo never gets beyond exposition in this scene. In fixing him firmly in the language of bombast, Shakespeare eases the dramatic tension, placing the focus on the details of the exchange rather than its (potentially) tragic trajectory.

In addition to playing up Iachimo's operatic qualities, Shakespeare also emphasizes Imogen's interpretative acuity. Her initial reaction to his euphuistic advances is a sort of bemused astonishment: "What, dear sir, / Thus raps you? Are you well?" (1.7.50-51), and even when he finally manages to instill doubt in her mind, "My lord I fear / Has forgot Britain" (112), she refuses to give in to her emotions, maintaining a degree of objectivity in the face of what she most fears. Her restraint finds linguistic emphasis in her metonymical self-designation: she does not say "My lord has forgotten me," or even "his lady," but instead refers to herself as "Britain," indicating that even at

her most emotionally vulnerable moment, she assesses Iachimo's story at a degree of remove. Upon seeing her waver, Iachimo attempts to push his advantage, but rather than allow him any further opportunity, Imogen closes the gateway to her imagination: "Let me hear no more" (117). Her sensory self-restraint keeps her from being carried away by Iachimo's narrative, which in turn allows her to realize the fundamental hollowness at the heart of both his performance and character: "Away, I do condemn mine ears, that have / So long attended thee. If thou wert honorable, / Though wouldst have told this tale for virtue, not / For such an end as thou seek'st, as base, as strange" (141-44).⁵⁴ In the face of her interpretative accuracy, Iachimo is forced to give up his original gambit, lamely withdrawing into the rhetoric of apology and panegyric: "Blessed you live long! A lady to the worthiest sir that ever / Country called his; and you, his mistress only / For the most worthiest fit. Give me your pardon" (159-62). No longer in control of his audience, Iachimo's confidence immediately withers; he makes a quick exit from Imogen's chamber, only returning once he is certain he risks no further exposure to her scrutiny – in the middle of the night when she is fast asleep.

While the bedroom scene in *Cymbeline* contains echoes of related and more tenebrous episodes found in other Shakespearean narratives, the power dynamic between Iachimo and Imogen is different than those that exist between subject and object in *Lucrece* or *Othello*. Although each sequence begins with the looking, active male subject gazing upon the female body in repose—the reduction of woman to the status of object—*Cymbeline* is not the inevitable outcome of the victim/perpetrator dynamic that has been looming for some time. When Iachimo first appears in Imogen's chamber he is the one on display, a role reversal that inverts the more familiar positioning of male subject/female

object. In addition, Imogen does not merely observe Iachimo; she sees through his pretext by reading his subtext, thereby gaining control over both him and the situation in which he places her. By the time he enters Imogen's chamber the second time, Iachimo's potency has been severely compromised – a fact that is underscored by his entrance from the nether regions of the trunk. Besides the obvious symbolism inherent in Iachimo's positioning here, Shakespeare also invokes an image culled from the tradition of the morality play – that of a devil emerging from the depths of hell. A ludic rather than macabre figure, the devil's entrance often signals a moment of comic relief, even as it provides the dramatic ingredients of temptation and deception essential to the psychomachic plot.⁵⁵ It is the potential for physical comedy provided by this entrance that Leggatt cites as the reason why an early modern audience might laugh; however, there are ideological associations that could promote such a reaction as well. In morality plays, the vice figure operates within the limits of a dualistic universe; he must eventually give way to the telos of Christian salvation mandated by divine will. A medieval audience would have understood this instinctively – they knew the end even as they watched the beginning – for them, dramatic intrigue would have existed in the details of the narrative journey rather than its destination. And, although *Cymbeline* does not, finally, fall into the category of the miracle play, many critics have convincingly demonstrated its debt to the genre.⁵⁶ Shakespeare's visual reference, then, to this particular branch of *Cymbeline's* lineage could have aroused certain interpretative associations for an early seventeenth-century audience still fluent in the symbolic language of the morality tradition. Iachimo's uncharacteristic entrance would have referenced not only the humor associated with the devil, but also his ultimate powerlessness. In making this metareference to *Cymbeline's*

dramatic heritage, the play supplies its audience with a key to deciphering both his villain and his play; unlike his tragic narratives this scene recalls, *Cymbeline* will finally turn towards order, mercy and salvation. But more importantly, the play comments on the spectators themselves, encouraging them to push beyond the role of passive onlookers and become active, discerning interpreters, to rely on what they know rather than blindly going along with what they see.

Great creating nature: the spectators' generative potency

It is, of course, impossible to gauge with any accuracy what effect the interpretative guidance provided in *Pericles* and *Cymbeline* had upon early modern audiences. There is, however, one surviving seventeenth-century account of a performance of the play, which provides insight into the way that one early modern spectator engaged with *Cymbeline*. Sometime in 1611, Simon Forman saw the play at the Globe, and despite the plot's labyrinthine design, he shows remarkable agility in following it:

Remember also the story of Cymbeline, king of England, in Lucius' time. How Lucius came from Octavius Caesar for tribute; and, being denied, sent Lucius with a great army of soldiers, who landed at Milford Haven, and after were vanquished by Cymbeline, and Lucius taken prisoner. All by means of three outlaws: of which two of them were the sons of Cymbeline, stolen from him when they were but two years old by an old man whom Cymbeline banished. He kept them as his own sons twenty years with him in a cave.

And how one of them slewe Cloten, the Queen's son, going to Milford Haven to seek the love of Imogen, the King's daughter, whom he had banished also for loving his daughter. How the Italian that came, from her love, conveyed himself into a chest; and said it was a chest of plate sent, from her love and others, to be presented to the King. In the deepest of the night, she being asleep, he opened the chest and came forth of it. And

viewed her in bed and the marks on her body; took away her bracelet, and after accused her of adultery to her love.

In the end, how he came with the Romans into England and was taken prisoner. And after revealed to Imogen, who had turned herself into man's apparel and fled to meet her love at Milford Haven and chanced to fall on the cave in the woods where her two brother were. How by eating a sleeping dram they thought she had been dead, and laid her in the woods, the body of Cloten by her, in her love's apparel that he left behind him. And how she was found by Lucius, etc.⁵⁷

Although he narrates the play's events out of sequence, Forman captures many of its details. The ones he omits are telling. Posthumus becomes a nameless placeholder in the narrative (Forman simply calls him Imogen's "love"), and Iachimo is rendered similarly anonymous, referred to only as "the Italian." Besides rechristening both characters with stock designations, Forman seems to consider them merely supporting characters, only mentioning them insofar as they relate to or interact with Imogen; he deletes Posthumus from the heroic group that secures Britain's victory at the play's end, and his only significant mention of Iachimo is in his description of the bedroom scene. Nor does Forman remember this scene as particularly ominous, dwelling primarily on the chest trick and mentioning only that Iachimo "viewed [Imogen] in bed, and the marks on her body [and] took away her bracelet." In focusing on Iachimo's rather slapstick entrance and mundane activities in the bedroom rather than his earlier, focused malevolence, Forman portrays him more as a *zanni* figure from the *commedia del arte* tradition than a fully fledged Shakespearean villain.⁵⁸ Even though both Posthumus and Iachimo occupy a good deal of narrative space in *Cymbeline*, Forman seems to sense their innate lack of substance. His perceptiveness regarding these two characters suggests a spectator who has gotten what the play wants him to get – that if looking does not involve making interpretative choices, it is a barren activity.

The particular shape of Forman's account could as readily be attributed to his particular spectatorial idiosyncracies – perhaps he was sensitive to visual and narrative detail and horrible with names. However, after attending a performance of *The Winter's Tale* in the same year, Forman writes a somewhat different sort of account:

In *The Winter's Tale* at the Globe 1611 on the 15 of May Wednesday, observe there how Leontes the King of Sicilia was overcome with jealousy of his wife with the King of Bohemia, his friend that came to see him, and how he contrived his death and would have had his cup-bearer to have poisoned, who gave the King of Bohemia warning thereof and fled with him to Bohemia.

Remember also how he sent to the oracle of Apollo, and the answer of Apollo, that she was guiltless and that the King was jealous, etc., and how except the child was found again that was lost the King should die without issue, for the child was carried into Bohemia and there laid in a forest and brought up by a shepherd. And the King of Bohemia his son married that wench, and how they fled into Sicilia to Leontes, and the shepherd having showed the letter of the nobleman by whom Leontes sent away that child, and the jewels found about her, she was known to be Leontes' daughter, and was then sixteen years old.

Remember also the rogue that came in all tattered like colt-pixie, and how he feigned him sick and to have been robbed of all that he had, and how he cozened the poor man of all his money, and after came to the sheep-shear with a pedlar's pack and there cozened them again of all their money, and how he changed apparel with the King of Bohemia his son, and then how he turned courtier, etc. Beware of trusting feigned beggars or fawning fellows.

Forman's recounting of this performance is more sequentially accurate than that found in his description of *Cymbeline*, but it is also less controlled. His account here seems vague and unfocused, leaving out entire diegetic segments and constantly attempting to restart its descriptive momentum by repeating the hiccup-like introductory phrase, "Remember also." Nowhere does Forman mention the play's spectacular ending, concluding his synopsis instead with the comedic subplot of Autolycus.⁵⁹ While one critic has claimed that Forman's description "tells us less about the play's merit than it does about the

playgoer's pedestrian morality," this is not necessarily the case.⁶⁰ Forman's inability to represent certain moments in the play (especially the end) may be related to the same element that facilitated his elucidation of *Cymbeline*: how the play imagines the spectatorial role itself. Unlike *Cymbeline*, which contains clear models of positive and negative ways of interacting with what one sees, *The Winter's Tale* is more interested in exploring how the act of interpretation itself contains both tremendous creative and destructive potential. Forman seems to omit narrative moments where the extremes of creation and/or destruction are being played out, such as the scenes of Hermione's accusation and trial and her reanimation and reunion with her family. Perhaps instead of being morally defunct, Forman gets caught between the spectatorial rock and hard place set up by *The Winter's Tale*. Several of the play's most dramatic scenes beg the question: when does interpretation cross the threshold of fruitful and necessary participation and become an overly controlling, manipulative, even dangerous intrusion?

Although *The Winter's Tale* contains multiple scenes where looking itself is dramatized, the play contains few examples where it results in productive rather than destructive consequences. The one clear exception to this is the play's final scene, which enjoins both the onlookers on and off the stage to look upon the statue of Hermione, "and say 'tis well'" (5.3.20). But even though this episode is exceptional in tenor and approach, it is not a wholly unique moment in the diegesis. Leontes' queen is the object of intense spectatorial focus twice before: once, when Leontes first publicly accuses his wife ("You my lords / Look upon her and mark her well..." [2.1.64-65]) and again during the trial scene ("It is his Highness' pleasure that the Queen / Appear in person here in court" [3.2.8-9]). In all three cases the gaze demanded is an adjudicatory one; however, in

the first two instances the stakes are far higher for both the audience and Hermione. Rather than being asked to appreciate a work of art (both the statue and the end of the play itself), the audience is directed to try and see something that cannot be visibly perceived: the guilt or innocence of the accused. By placing them in this position, the play makes the spectators complicit in Hermione's fate – and, as Katharine Eisaman Maus points out, allies them with Leontes and his volatile emotions – an uncomfortable position to say the least.⁶¹ In forging these identificatory paths between the playgoer and Leontes, *The Winter's Tale* portrays the act of looking as an uncomfortable, even anxiogenic activity. It carries the risk of misprision (such as Leontes' misreading of the gestures and words exchanged between Polixenes and Hermione), engendering violent passions (such as unrestrained jealousy and rage), and causing profound social and familial ruptures. Rather than simply an act of observation, spectatorship in *The Winter's Tale* is something generative of both positive and negative effects, and thus potentially dangerous. Given the consequences of Leontes' constant surveillance of Hermione's actions, language and gestures at the beginning of the play, is it any wonder that Forman might ignore, even refuse, Paulina's injunction at the play's close to "Behold, and say 'tis well"?

Unlike Shakespeare's first two romances, which attempt to fashion a spectatorial subject who actively engages with what he or she observes yet uses discernment and self-discipline in doing so, *The Winter's Tale* teaches through negative example. Whereas both *Pericles* and *Cymbeline* contain characters that either provide narrative guidance for or paradigmatic models of productive interaction with spectacle and performance, the centripetal force that drives *The Winter's Tale* is generated by a single individual, one for

whom attentive watching and active interpretation become dangerously procreant acts. As the character through whom the spectatorial role is dramatized, Leontes seems to illustrate the negative consequences that can result from dynamic engagement with what one observes. Such a reading, however, does not take into account the importance of his role in restoring what he has destroyed: his and his queen's life. Rather, Leontes engages in the full range of dynamic potential inherent in the act of looking, one that can create or destroy depending on how this energy is channeled, directed and finally put to use.

While the figure of the jealous lover is a commonplace in early modern drama, none irrupt into the diegesis as suddenly and capriciously as Leontes. Unlike the slow burn of Othello's early suspicions about Desdemona or the patient agony of John Frankfort as he waits for the "ocular proof" of his wife's infidelity in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, Leontes' envy emerges fully formed and at the height of its furor. Its origins, however, are uncertain. Ostensibly, Leontes has gathered evidence against his wife and best friend by carefully observing them together during the "nine months of the watery star" in which Polixenes has been a guest. But despite his mention of "paddling palms and pinching fingers"(1.2.115), Leontes' proof is rather sparse; certainly it is insufficient to justify his conviction that Hermione has been unfaithful and his later public condemnation of her. Although perhaps not as dramatic onstage as the killing rage that overtakes Othello, Leontes' jealousy is, in some ways, even more terrifying because of its profound irrationality; the audience, like Hermione, is totally unprepared for it.

While the play does not provide a definitive origin for Leontes' mania, its etiology has remained somewhat of a hermeneutic holy grail for Shakespeare scholars. Often seeing it as one of the keys to the play's thematic and subtextual foundations,

critics have used Leontes' emotional surge as the jumping-off point for highly divergent analyses of both *The Winter's Tale* and of various early modern historical and cultural phenomena.⁶² But this desire to discover the source of Leontes' groundswell of passion does not, I believe, come only from a scholarly impulse to untie the Gordian knot of the play in order to use it as argumentative support, but instead reflects a need articulated by the play itself. Leontes is as uncertain about the origins of his feelings as are the play's viewers and readers, and he is equally unwilling to accept that they come rushing from the abyss of nowhere, generated by nothing. Unlike most of his interpreters, however, Leontes refuses to see his delusions as the product of his own mind; instead, he names a different progenitor:

Affection! thy intention stabs the centre:
Thou dost make possible things not so held,
Communicat'st with dreams; – how can this be? –
With what's unreal thou coactive art
And fellow'st nothing; then 'tis very credent
Thou may'st co-join with something; and that thou dost,
(And that beyond commission) and I find it,
(And that to the infection of my brains
And hardening of my brows). (1.2.138-146)

This speech, glossed in the Arden 2 edition of the play as “one of the obscurest passages in Shakespeare,” sounds at first like the barely sensible ramblings of a tortured mind. Yet, Leontes' rant actually mimics logical analysis in that it attempts to parse the imaginative processes that forge an individual's perception of his or her world.⁶³ While it follows a diagnostic path, Leontes' disquisition ultimately fails to lead anywhere because he begins in the wrong place. Instead of recognizing the origins of his “Affection” as parthenogenic, he addresses it directly, as though it is something that acts upon him rather than something he generates. His break into apostrophe at this moment feels more epic

than antecedental, not unlike the poet's call to his muse just before divesting himself of his creative burden.⁶⁴ But where the poet plays an active role in the vatic process, Leontes severs himself from the creative act he describes: it is not he but Affection that communicates with dreams to forge visions, that is "coactive" with "what's unreal" and that "cojoins with something." Towards the end of the passage, Leontes envisions himself finding the progeny of Affection and "something," which in turn infects his brains and hardens his brows. In this vague yet causal scenario Leontes is a victim – a helpless bystander who witnesses the birth of his own misery.

Paradoxically, Leontes spends tremendous energy animating and advancing this vision of himself as passive victim, and in doing so, he plays out the active role he attempts to deny. He imagines his vulnerability as perceptible to everyone: "They're here with me already; whisp'ring, rounding" (1.2.217), and then demands that Camillo accept his accusations against Hermione as truth: "My wife's a hobby-horse, deserves a name / As rank as any flax-wench that puts to / Before her troth-plaint: say't and justify't!" (1.2.276-78) When Camillo refuses to give him the validation he longs for, Leontes responds with desperation:

Is whispering nothing?
Is leaning cheek to cheek? Is meeting noses?
Kissing with inside lip? stopping the career
Of laughter with a sigh (a note infallible
Of breaking honesty)? horsing foot on foot?
Skulking in corners? wishing clocks more swift?
Hours, minutes? noon, midnight? and all eyes
Blind with the pin and web, but theirs; theirs only
That would unseen be wicked? is this nothing?
Why then the world, and all that's in't is nothing,
The covering of the sky is nothing, Bohemia nothing,
My wife is nothing, nor nothing have these nothings,
If this be nothing. (1.2.284-296)

What begins as a catalogue of circumstantial evidence ends in a denunciation of everything – family, world, existence.⁶⁵ Yet, it is also the first intentionally generative act Leontes performs in the play. Whereas earlier he imagines himself as stumbling upon the image of Hermione and Polixenes betraying him, he now willfully inscribes it on his world. In order to do this, however, he must first undo the existence he knows – hence his first act of making is one of unmaking. In an inversion of the Genesis creation myth where God creates the world in seven days, Leontes dismantles the very framework on which his life is based. This is emphasized by his repetition of “nothing” seven times; even the conditional “if” in the final clause does little to mitigate the effect of his pronouncement.⁶⁶ The chaos and instability hinted at by Leontes’ earlier, volatile anger now becomes focused and fully realized: the passive recipient of possibility has become the author of a new reality.

This concept of authorizing and reauthorizing is connected to how spectatorship is articulated in *The Winter’s Tale* in that the play explores the power intrinsic not only to the artist’s imagination and product, but to the audience’s as well. It is significant that when Leontes comes to arrest Hermione, he interrupts a scene of storytelling – his young son has just begun whispering a story in his mother’s ear. The “sad tale best for winter” presages and becomes *The Winter’s Tale*, but only after the creative force of Mamillius’ story collides with that of his father’s imagination – a sort of Newtonian version of the kinetics of drama. When considered metadramatically, this interaction suggests a different sort of relationship between playwright and audience than do Shakespeare’s first two romances, one that is symbiotic rather than didactic. *The Winter’s Tale* concerns itself less with didactically shaping the spectatorial process than with illustrating the

responsibility that comes with sharing in the generative role. If participation in this symbiotic process is taken seriously and performed diligently, the audience will contribute to the creation of something that resonates with the echo of life itself; if enacted carelessly or intemperately, this same audience can extinguish the vital spark essential to the dramatist's art.

While these two modes of spectatorial participation represent only the most extreme of possibilities, the play itself contains few examples of an interpretative middle ground. Besides making Leontes the centripetal force that drives the majority of play, Shakespeare uses the existential polarities of life and death as metonymy for the spectator's role in the creation or destruction of what he or she sees. This aspect of the relationship between audience and performance is symbolically expressed in two pivotal events in which Leontes plays a principal role: the death of his son and the resurrection of his wife. Leontes' relationships with Mamillius and Hermione elucidate the antipodal consequences of the two types of spectatorial participation that *The Winter's Tale* offers: imaginative, receptive participation in what one sees or incautious, willful misprision. In the case of Mamillius's death, Leontes is the primary agent of his son's destruction in that he invalidates and ultimately obliterates the world his son occupies both materially and psychically. Like the winter's tale begun for pleasure, Mamillius's life is a unique and ephemeral moment in the play, one that cannot withstand the force of Leontes's violent revisions. Because Leontes does not recognize that his imaginative creation and his bodily issue cannot coexist, he destroys that which he should nurture and preserve – his progeny. In the case of Hermione, however, although Leontes causes her suffering and “death” in the play's first half, by the end he has reformed his interpretative ways. Rather

than blindly imposing his own (mis)interpretation on others, Leontes allows himself to share in Paulina's imaginative creation while still retaining an active role in its realization. Indeed, the success of the scene (for both the on- and offstage audiences) requires Leontes's participation; it is not until he expresses desire to witness and hence believe in Paulina's magic that Hermione is reawakened: "What you can make her do / I am content to look on, what to speak / I am content to hear...Proceed. No foot shall stir" (5.3.91-93; 97-98). After plumbing the representational depths of the negative potential of spectatorial agency, the play concludes with an affirmation of the spectator's creative potency by emphasizing the collaborative aspect necessary to bring a work of art into the world of the living.

The collaboration that occurs in this final scene is not contained within the diegetic parameters of the play, but extends to the audience watching it as well. While the final scene of *The Winter's Tale* can be understood as one of revelation (Paulina has kept Hermione alive and secure all these years, and the two of them stage her dramatic homecoming), it is more often read as a scene of regeneration. Leontes' part in his wife's reanimation is only one ingredient; the scene demands the collective wonder of all of its onlookers to bring her back to life. Just before Paulina "makes" Hermione's image move and finally speak, she commands not only the attention of her audience, but something far more difficult: "It is requir'd / You do awake your faith. Then all stand still: / Or—those that think it is unlawful business/ I am about, let them depart" (5.3.94-95). In this address, the small personal audience hand-selected to see Hermione's image merges with the larger anonymous one seeing the play: Paulina's mandate of faith yokes them together in order to dissolve the boundary between life and death, the imaginary and the real. This

harmonizing of spectatorial energies knits together the fissures rent in the narrative fabric by Leontes' earlier imaginative frenzy, and the play concludes by offering a utopian vision of unity: marital, familial and artistic.

The play's final tableau contains traces of a mythical scene that represents one of the most seminal tributes to the generative potential of the spectatorial imagination found in Western literature. In the Ovidian tale of Pygmalion, a young man creates his vision of female perfection and then finds it becomes more and more real to him under his gaze.⁶⁷ Although the final transition from art to life requires divine intervention, it is Pygmalion's imagination that begins the animating process; Galatea becomes real to him well before she turns to flesh and blood. But the fusion of art and life is not the only synthesis found in this particular story. Ovid's fascination with hybridity (male and female, plant and animal, god and mortal) is represented doubly in the myth – he combines the functions of creator and admirer, of storyteller and spectator in Pygmalion. Shakespeare's allusion to Ovid's tale of imaginative collaboration between these different creative modes is not simply a dramatic and visual nod to the story of the statue that comes to life, nor, I would argue, is it solely a testament to the generative powers of art and the artist. It is an invitation to the audience he has worked to sculpt, to join with him in the creation of something unique if ephemeral – the life of a play.

¹ This dramatic phenomenon is almost a reversal of Brecht's theory of alienation, which involves forcing the audience into an awareness of a play's fictionality or constructedness as an essential part of the theatrical project. In this regard, *Othello*, a play set in foreign places and having an exoticized subject as its central figure makes the strange familiar through an appeal to the universal (the empathic).

² Both quotations taken from Gāmini Salgādo's *Eyewitnesses of Shakespeare: First Hand Accounts of Performances 1590-1890* (London: Sussex University Press, 1975) 30; 49.

³ Robert Speaight, *Nature in Shakespearean Tragedy* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1955), 70.

⁴ A good contemporary rendition of *Othello*'s ability to involve its viewers is found in the penultimate scene of Richard Eyre's 2004 film *Stage Beauty*. Set in Restoration England, the film depicts a fictional take on how women came to act on the professional stage. The scene to which I refer depicts Desdemona's death scene played by the current (female) star of the stage and a former renowned Desdemona, Ned Kynaston, playing Othello. While the film suggests a disturbing gender absolutism (Shakespeare can really get to you when men play men and women play women), it provides a good example of how, even in the twenty-first century, we imagine *Othello* as the most "involving" of the tragedies.

⁵ Alexander Leggatt, "The Island of Miracles: An Approach to *Cymbeline*," *Shakespeare Studies* 10 (1977): 195.

⁶ When I refer to Shakespeare's "romances" in this chapter, I refer only to the first three. While I differ from many critics in doing so (especially, perhaps, the composers of the First Folio, who did not include *Pericles* among Shakespeare's works), I do so because, as in so many other respects, *The Tempest* differs from the earlier romances in terms of its depiction of interpretative dynamics. The most obvious difference is that there is far less "play" in the spectatorial relationships depicted. Prospero is, in general, in full control of his various audiences within the play (with, perhaps, the notable exception of Miranda); he is more a proto-*auteur* than a figure who must negotiate with his audience in order to produce certain desired outcomes. Related to this portrayal is the fact that the play itself has a more clearly-defined trajectory from the outset (cf. Prospero's first lines to his daughter: "Be collected; / No more amazement. Tell your piteous heart / There's no harm done" (1.2.13-15)). Unlike the first three romances, which constantly threaten to veer into the tragic vein, *The Tempest* never really approaches tragedy for anyone other than Caliban.

⁷ Spelled out, such theories tend to imagine spectatorship as consisting either of ideology imposed on a passive and compliant audience or that any spectacle containing a communicative imperative (whether ideological, moral or aesthetic) always already creates interpretative resistance. The first of these theories is the more transhistorically tenacious one, as early modern antitheatricalist writers commonly expressed anxiety over the theater's power to "rewrite" the moral template of the viewer. The second of them is a modern response to such "hypodermic" theories; it is related to Foucault's seminal claim about the nature of power, that "there are no relations of power without resistance." See *Power/Knowledge – Selected Interviews and Other Writings* ed. Colin Gordon, (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980), 142. Foucault elucidates this connection more thoroughly in *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1, An Introduction*, (New York: Vintage, 1978), 56-69. For an overview on how this idea has been applied to twentieth-century studies of film spectatorship, see Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, "How Films Mean, or, From Aesthetics to Semiotics and Half-Way Back Again" in *Reinventing Film Studies*, eds. Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams (London: Arnold Press, 2000), 8-17.

⁸ Lee Bliss, "Romance and the Heroic Plot" in *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Drama*, 2nd ed., eds. A.R. Braunmuller and Michael Hattaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 225. One of the most pertinent ways that dramatic romance proliferated was through the popularization of tragicomedy. Although used loosely as a term in the sixteenth century (as evinced by Sidney's famous phrase, "mongrel tragic-comedy," its emergence as a more clearly-defined form is usually traced to John Marston's 1604 *The Malcontent*, which was entered at the Stationers Register as a "Tragedycomedia." Bliss traces this denomination to the English translation of Giovanni Battista Guarini's *Compendio della poesia tragicomica*, published in 1603. However, almost all of the Jacobean playwrights tried their hand at this genre; for some (most notably Fletcher and Shirley), it became a preferred compositional form.

⁹ Frederic Jameson, "Magical Narratives: Romance as Genre" *New Literary History*, 7.1. (Autumn 1975), 158.

¹⁰ The most famous "author-centric" theories of Shakespeare's romances (both positive and negative) come from the Victorians, most famously Dowden and Strachey. Variations on historicist readings of the romances reflecting the socioeconomic and/or cultural currents of the seventeenth century include Norman

Sanders's "An Overview of Critical Approaches to the Romances" in *Shakespeare's Romances Reconsidered*, eds. Carol McGinnis Kay and Henry E. Jacobs (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), 4; Andrew Gurr's "The Bear, The Statue, and Hysteria in *The Winter's Tale*, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 34 (1983), 420-5; David M. Bergeron's *Shakespeare's Romances and the Royal Family* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1985); John Gillies' "Shakespeare's Virginian Masque, *English Literary History*, 53 (1986), 673-708; William Proctor Williams's "Not hornpipes and funerals: Fletcherian tragicomedy" in *Renaissance Tragicomedy: Explorations in Genre and Politics*, ed. Nancy Klein Maguire (New York: AMS Press, 1987), 20-37; Leah Marcus's *Puzzling Shakespeare: Local Reading and Its Discontents* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Steven Mullaney's "All That Monarchs Do: The Obscured Stages of Authority in *Pericles*" in *The Place of the Stage: License, Play and Power in Renaissance England* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1988), 137-42; J. Leeds Barroll, op. cit., and Velma Bourgeois Richmond's *Shakespeare, Catholicism and Romance* (New York: Continuum, 2000).

¹¹ On the subject of the gothic romance and female readers, see Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977); Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979) and George Haggerty's *Unnatural Affections: Women and Fiction in the Later 18th Century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998). On the subject of melodrama and female film audiences, see Mary Ann Doane's *The Desire to Desire*, op. cit.; Shelley Stamp's *Movie-Struck Girls: Women and Motion Picture Culture After the Nickelodeon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000) and Ben Singer's *Melodrama and Modernity: Early Sensational Cinema and its Contexts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

¹² André Green, quoted in Ruth Nevo, "The Perils of *Pericles*" in *Shakespeare: The Last Plays*, ed. Kiernan Ryan (London: Longman, 1999), 61-87.

¹³ Showalter, Gubar and Gilbert (following such critics as John Stuart Mill, George Henry Lewes and Virginia Woolf) have all argued that female identification is a problematic process (especially in their period of inquiry) as the images, scenarios and themes available even to women writers are derived primarily from a patriarchal literary heritage. Another (albeit related) line of reasoning, such as that put forth by Mary Ann Doane, is that by categorizing women as more likely to become emotionally involved (with other people, with fictional representations, etc.) it reifies certain of Freud's more problematic (and misogynist) theories, such as the Oedipal theory, which suggests that women must always identify themselves with the concept of lack.

¹⁴ See, for example, Barbara Mowat's study, *The Dramaturgy of Shakespeare's Romances* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1976), especially the Prologue where she discusses the centrality of Kenneth Burke's theories of audience psychology to her own work. See also Barber, op. cit.

¹⁵ Maurice Hunt, "Romance and Tragicomedy" in *A Companion to Renaissance Drama*, ed. Arthur F. Kinney (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 395.

¹⁶ Regarding the long-standing debate about whether Shakespeare wrote *Pericles*, my reading here assumes that he wrote at least part of it, a conclusion upon which now most scholars of the play agree. For a history of the debate, see David Skeele's introduction to *Pericles: Critical Essays* (New York: Garland, 2000), 2-6.

¹⁷ For an excellent survey of the myth's use in both painting and literature from antiquity to the Renaissance and the various connotations it accrues in different historical periods, see Leonard Barkan, "The Myth as Synthesis," *English Literary Renaissance* 10 (1980), 317-59 and *The Gods Made Flesh: Metamorphosis and the Pursuit of Paganism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

¹⁸ Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, trans. John Harington, 1607.

¹⁹ Barnabe Barnes, *Parthenophil and Parthenope* (1593), ed. Victor A. Doyno (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971), 261. Barnes also uses Actaeon in his treatise, *Foure Bookes of Offices Enabling Privat Persons for the Speciall Service of all good Princes and Policies*, saying: “These (princely flatterers and false favorites) are those hounds which mythologically devoured *Actaeon* when after the murtherous pleasures and concupiscence of his eyes and flesh, he was transformed into a fearfull beast...”

²⁰ Francis Godwin. *A catalogue of the bishops of England, since the first planting of Christian religion in this island together with a briefe history of their liues and memorable actions, so neere as can be gathered out of antiquity* (London, Printed for Thomas Adams, 1615).

²¹ Ovid. *Metamorphoses*, trans. Arthur Golding (1612), ed. Madeleine Forey (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 99.

²² Other critics have noted Pericles’s “growth” over the course of the play. Some, like Howard Felperin have understood this development as spiritual, while others such as C.L. Barber, Janet Adelman and Coppélia Kahn have seen it as psychological. See Felperin, *Shakespearean Romance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972) and Barber, op. cit., Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare’s Plays, Hamlet to the Tempest* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992) and Coppélia Kahn, *Man’s Estate: Masculine Identity in Shakespeare* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

²³ As Caroline Bicks and F. Elizabeth Hart have argued, the Diana of *Pericles* is not the Diana of Ovid. Both Bicks and Hart point out that the Diana of Ephesus was a figure associated with childbearing, fertility cults and certain hybrid forms of Christianity that developed in the East. However, although both make convincing arguments about this alternative Diana, I think, considering the frequency with which the Ovidian Diana appears in Renaissance literature, visual art and mythography, that any invocation of Diana would likely raise the Ovidian myth in the minds of early modern spectators. See Caroline Bicks, “Backsliding at Ephesus: Shakespeare’s Diana and the Churching of Women” in *Pericles, Critical Essays*, ed. David Skeele (New York, Garland, 2000), 205-27 and F. Elizabeth Hart, “‘Great is Diana’ of Shakespeare’s Ephesus,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 43 (2003), 347-74.

²⁴ My reading here contradicts Stephen Orgel’s in “The Poetics of Spectacle,” *New Literary History* 2 (1971): 367-89, where he claims that “Pericles believes Marina not because of what he hears from her, but because of what he sees” (383), pointing out that it is Marina’s resemblance to Thaisa that causes him to believe she is his daughter. I would argue that while it is Marina’s resemblance to his wife that first begins to awaken the possibility of hope in Pericles, it is her recounting of her life’s story, and most significantly, the moment she names her father, that he actually *believes* she is his daughter.

²⁵ Thaisa is also restored to these worlds, as she has been living as a votaress in Diana’s temple – her silence, like Pericles’s has been enacted both at the level of the play’s characterological structure (she does not speak after 3.4 until the end of the play) and within the narrative.

²⁶ Although other seventeenth-century plays have extradiegetic narrative insertions (such as Time in *The Winter’s Tale*) none play as much of a role nor are as fully fledged as characters as the Gower-narrator.

²⁷ All quotes taken from the Arden 2 edition of *Pericles*, (ed. Susanne Gossett, London: Thompson Learning, 2004).

²⁸ This phrase is almost inevitably linked to Laura Mulvey’s seminal essay on spectatorship and classical Hollywood film, and indeed several critics have used this essay as a means of fleshing out claims or theories about early modern spectatorship and/or voyeurism (see, for example, Nancy Vickers, “Diana Described: Scattered Women and Scattered Rhyme,” *Critical Inquiry*, 8.2 (1981), 108; Barbara Freedman’s *Staging the Gaze*, 69, 117, 151; Coppélia Kahn in *Roman Shakespeare: Warriors, Wounds and Women*, (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), 31-32 and Evelyn Gajowski in “Sleeping Beauty, or ‘What’s

the Matter?": Female Sexual Autonomy, Voyeurism, and Misogyny in *Cymbeline*" in *Re-Visions of Shakespeare: Essays in Honor of Robert Ornstein*, ed. Evelyn Gajowski (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004), 97. However, Mulvey's theory of visual pleasure relies heavily on apparatus theory (the premise that film is inherently ideological in that it works to construct a viewer through its technological ability to manipulate point of view and promote identification with particular characters) and Lacanian psychoanalysis; in short, she is interested in a late twentieth-century, Western, heterosexual spectator in this analysis. Because of the historical and technological specificity of Mulvey's theoretical claims in *Visual Pleasure*, it is important not to use her paradigms in an overly facile manner – that is, they are not transparencies that can be used to decipher the spectatorial dynamics of any given historical moment. However, Mulvey's essay does contain certain important (if rather broad) reminders useful for any exploration of *staged* visual pleasure: first, that it is intentionally constructed to obtain a particular response from the viewer, second, that representations of such pleasure are created through a matrix of historical and cultural ideology about what is visually pleasing and an individual's (or a group of individuals) particular vision of the same, and finally, that while these representations do not guarantee a homogenous response from the audience, if repeated over time within a single work (such as the predominantly subjective camera in *Vertigo*) or in a series of works (such as the subjective camera being always associated with the point-of-view of the male hero in Hitchcock's works) can become codified *as* pleasurable for an audience. It is in this sort of "training" of an audience in which I am most interested in my exploration of the romances, but focus more on the ways in which Shakespeare both attempts to shape his audience and imagines their often necessary, even desirable, resistance.

²⁹ Although the audience's foreknowledge of the situation at Antioch allows them to share in Gower's omniscience and thereby arguably provides a sense of spectatorial agency, it also commences an attempt to influence how the audience sees various characters and events. While this is similar to William H. Matchett's claim that Shakespeare had learned by this point in his career to "manipulate audience response," I see this disciplinary dynamic of the romances as a by-product of such confidence, one that critiques the concept of the playwright as fully in control of his own creative processes. See "Some Dramatic Techniques in *The Winter's Tale*" *Shakespeare Survey*, 22 (1969), 93-107.

³⁰ In the first Quarto printing in 1609 this stage direction did not exist (the *Riverside Shakespeare* attributes its first appearance to Round's version in Henry Irving's 1900 edition of the complete works); however, most modern editions include a version of it. The greatest disparity is where the SD is placed. The Oxford and Norton editions place it after line 39 of Gower's speech: "So for her many a wight did die," whereas the Riverside and Arden place it after line 40: "As yon grim looks do testify." To place it in between the two lines where Gower is actually referencing the dead suitors would make for a more visually dramatic moment; however, its placement after line 40 draws attention to the transition between Gower's narration of past events into the present-day action of the play itself. As I will argue, this transition is a significant one, as it marks the first unmediated contact between the audience and the play.

³¹ Of course, this would depend entirely on the production – any scene contains multiple staging possibilities. However, unlike the opening scene, which contains a SD indicating the presence of visual spectacle (the heads on display), the other scenes I mention here seem designed to avert their spectacular possibilities.

³³ Marion Lomax, *Stage Images and Traditions: Shakespeare to Ford* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 78. Lomax states that "If he had wished, Shakespeare's theater could have presented the deaths of Antiochus and his daughter as a gripping piece of spectacle," noting that a similar stage effect was used for Greene and Lodge's *A Looking-Glass for London and England* in the early 1590s.

³⁴ For example, Gower appears six times (modern editions have him beginning each act, although these distinctions are not marked in the 1609 Quarto); as I previously mentioned, this is an unusually large amount of stage time for an extradiegetic character. He continues to both instruct the audience on how to experience the play: "Be quiet then, as men should be"(2.0.5), and to emphasize the binary of good versus

evil, thereby retaining the moralistic overtones of the prologue. Within the play itself, there is the early example of Pericles at Antioch, who is thoroughly warned by Antiochus about the danger in which he is about to place himself: “Yon famous princes, like thyself...with dead cheeks advise thee to desist...” (1.1.35, 40), but cannot resist the allure of his daughter’s beauty, and therefore continues with his suit, despite the verbal and visual warnings that surround him. Other examples include Helicanus’ refusal to read Pericles’ displeasure in his “looks” when he criticizes him at 1.2.34, and Dionyza, who betrays Pericles, despite her husband’s earlier pledge to him: “The which any shall not gratify / Or pay you with unthankfulness in thought, / Be it our wives, our children or ourselves, /The curse of heaven and men succeed their evils!” (1.4.99-102).

³⁵ Although Hermione is not a victim of sexual predation the way Marina, Imogen and even Miranda are, she is put on display throughout the play, from Leontes’ initial confrontation with her in front of her ladies, her son, and members of the court, to the trial scene where she is publicly charged with adultery, and culminating with the final scene of the play.

³⁶ John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, ed. Russell A. Peck (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 448 and Laurence Twine, *The Patterne of Painfull Adventures: Containing the most excellent, pleasant, and variable historie of the strange accidents that befell vnto Prince Apollonius, the Lady Lucina his wife, and Tharsia his daughter. Wherein the vncertaintie of this world, and the fickle state of mans life are liuely described* (1594). <http://wwwlib.umi.com/eebo/image/13020>.

³⁷ This scene contains resonances of John 6.1-13, where Christ multiplies the loaves and fishes: “When the people saw the sign he had done, they said, “This is truly the Prophet, the one who is to come into the world,” and conversion scenes were prevalent in popular hagiography.

³⁸ For Christian readings of Marina and *Pericles* in general, see G Wilson Knight, *The Crown of Life: Essays in Interpretation of Shakespeare’s Final Plays* (London: Oxford University Press, 1947); Northrop Frye, *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976); Robert S. Miola, *Shakespeare and Classical Comedy: The Influence of Plautus and Terence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) and Maurice Hunt, “Shakespeare’s *Pericles* and the Acts of the Apostles,” *Christianity and Literature*, 49 (2000), 295-309.

³⁹ Twine, *Painful Adventures*, 137. In both Twine and Gower, Marina is called Tharsia, and Lysimachus, Athanagoras.

⁴⁰ Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, 449.

⁴¹ All quotes from the Arden 2 edition of *Cymbeline*, ed. J.M. Nosworthy (New York and London: Routledge, 1969).

⁴² George Bernard Shaw, *Cymbeline Refinished* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1947). Also see W.W. Lawrence in *Shakespeare’s Problem Comedies* (New York: MacMillan, 1931), 203; Bertrand Evans in *Shakespeare’s Comedies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), 262 and Cynthia Lewis in “‘With Similar Proof Enough’: Modes of Misperception in *Cymbeline*,” *Studies in English Literature*, 31, 2 (Spring 1991): 350 for defenses of Posthumus and/or justification of his behavior in the play.

⁴³ Imogen has 605 lines. When compared to Marina (186 lines), Hermione (211 lines) and even Miranda (142 lines) this makes her by far the most thoroughly “voiced” of Shakespeare’s romance heroines.

⁴⁴ Specific examples of Imogen’s perspicacity tempering her will/emotions include her treatment of her stepmother, whom she despises. Unlike other characters (such as her father and Cloten) with whom Imogen pulls no punches in terms of telling them what she thinks/feels about them, she plays politic with the Queen, as she understands the genuine threat of her underhanded maliciousness: “O / Dissembling

courtesy! How fine this tyrant / Can tickle where she wounds!” (1.1.85-86). Other examples include her ability to moderate her grief over Posthumus’ purported betrayal so that she eventually sees through Iachimo’s ploy and her ability at the play’s end to keep her emotions in check so that she can orchestrate a situation where the truth about her innocence emerges.

⁴⁵ See Knight, 142.

⁴⁶ Leggatt makes the following claim: “I have seen four productions of *Cymbeline*, and on each occasion Iachimo’s emergence from the trunk was greeted with laughter. For a modern audience, he suggests a jack-in-the-box; for a Jacobean audience, he would probably have suggested a comically old-fashioned devil popping up through the trap door.” See “The Island of Miracles: An Approach to *Cymbeline*,” op. cit., 195.

⁴⁷ For example, see Brook Thomas, “*Cymbeline* and the Perils of Interpretation” *New Orleans Review* 10, 2-3 (Summer-Fall 1983): 137-45 and Cynthia Lewis, “‘With Simular Proof Enough’: Modes of Misperception in *Cymbeline*” *Studies in English Literature*, 31, 2 (Spring 1991): 343-64.

⁴⁸ Lewis, p. 349.

⁴⁹ Coppélia Kahn in both *Man’s Estate*, and more specifically in *Roman Shakespeare: Warriors, Wounds and Women* (Routledge: London and New York, 1997) explores the dynamic and function of such male-male competition within Shakespeare’s plays and early modern culture. However, although the relationship between Iachimo and Posthumus is definitely a competitive one, I am more interested in the terms through which this particular competition is staged, and what that represents in terms of the metatheatrics of the play itself rather than the cultural function of masculine rivalry.

⁵⁰ For various interpretations of this passage, see J.M. Nosworthy in the Arden 2 edition, Jean Howard in *The Norton Shakespeare*, eds. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard and Katharine Eisaman Maus (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997); Stanley Wells in *The Complete Oxford Shakespeare*, eds. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) and Peter Holland in *The Complete Pelican Shakespeare*, eds. Stephen Orgel and A.R. Braunmuller (New York: Penguin, 2002).

⁵¹ Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 217. Bate’s reading is more positive than my own, as he sees this moment “effect[ing] in the audience’s mind what *The Winter’s Tale* feigns to deliver in performance: the metamorphosis of art into life.”

⁵² Actaeon is not always a part of the Diana bathing scene; however, this particular view of the virgin goddess was a sight that was not supposed to be seen, regardless of who was doing the looking. See, for example, *The Faerie Queen*, III.vi.19-21, where Venus surprises Diana while she is bathing. Despite the fact that Venus is a fellow-goddess, Diana is clearly displeased.

⁵³ Nosworthy makes note of Iachimo’s particular choice of the Parthian warrior in this passage as well, explaining that “their [fighting] method was to discharge darts upon their enemy, then to evade close contact by rapid flight during which they shot their arrows backward” (p. 32, note 20). Nosworthy sees this comparison as relevant only to Iachimo’s plan of attack; that is, if Imogen will not respond to his direct assault, he will pursue her through indirect means (or simply give up).

⁵⁴ Interestingly, Iachimo relies on the image of profound vacuity in his attempt to convince Imogen of Posthumus’ newly-formed and unnatural desires for the base and tawdry: “Sluttery, to such neat excellence oppos’d / Should make desire vomit emptiness... (1.7.44-45); however, this barrenness more accurately describes Iachimo’s own motives here.

⁵⁵ For a historical account of both the humorous “devil” figure in miracle plays and the vice figure of morality plays, see David Bevington’s *From Mankind to Marlowe: Growth of Structure in the Popular Drama of Tudor England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962).

⁵⁶ See, for example, Knight, op. cit., R.S. White, *Let Wonder Seem Familiar: Endings in Shakespeare’s Romance Vision* (London: Athlone Press, 1985); Cynthia Marshall, *Last Things and Last Plays: Shakespearean Eschatology* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991) and Velma Bourgeois, *Shakespeare, Catholicism and Romance* (New York: Continuum, 2000).

⁵⁷ Both of Forman’s quotes are taken from *The autobiography and personal diary of Dr. Simon Forman, the celebrated astrologer, from A. D. 1552, to A. D. 1602*. From the unpublished manuscripts in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Edited by James Orchard Halliwell, esq. London: 1849.

⁵⁸ As Winifred Smith puts it, “the Zanni, however, was a Mask, or rather an infinite variety of Masks. Always of humble station, usually the servant and confidant of a principal character, sometimes a rascal, sometimes a dunce... almost always the chief plotweaver,—his main function was to rouse laughter, to entertain at all costs.” While not a perfect fit for Iachimo, the chameleon-like qualities and desire to “entertain” are consistent with him. In addition, he pretends to be Posthumus’s servant when he visits Imogen, and certainly is the play’s main “plotweaver.” See Smith, *The Commedia Dell’Arte* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1912), 9.

⁵⁹ In his elision of the play’s final scene, Forman demonstrates a quite different sense of what is important than do its contemporary critics, who are endlessly fascinated by the statue scene, as Stephen Orgel notes in *Imagining Shakespeare* (New York: Palgrave, 2003): “For audiences and critics since the nineteenth century, the statue has been both emotionally central and dramatically essential...” (125).

⁶⁰ Maurice Hunt, “The Critical Legacy,” in *The Winter’s Tale: Critical Essays*, ed. Maurice Hunt (New York: Garland, 1995), p. 3. See also Orgel, *Imagining*, 126-27, who also notes that Forman omits the play’s ending and places it in historical context by adding that of the twenty extant seventeenth-century references to the play “not one refers to the statue of Hermione.” Orgel goes on to claim that this citational lacuna is likely caused by the fact that this scene simply did not capture the imagination of the early modern spectator; however, I see it as the result of the way in which the play portrays the act of looking itself.

⁶¹ See Katharine Eisaman Maus, “Horns of Dilemma: Jealousy, Gender and Spectatorship in English Renaissance Drama,” *English Literary History* 54 (1987): 561 – 83. Maus makes an explicit connection between the etiology of the cuckold’s jealousy and the early modern spectator’s theatergoing experience: “[T]he dynamics of sexual jealousy provides a complex analogy to the theatrical performance and response in a culture that tends to conceive of theatrical experience in highly erotic terms and of certain sexual impulses as highly theatrical in character” (563).

⁶² For a sample of various readings of Leontes’ jealousy, see Knight, op. cit., 76-128; F.D.J. Hoeniger, “The Meaning of the Winter’s Tale” *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 10, (1950): 13-26; Northrop Frye, “Recognition in *The Winter’s Tale*” in *Essays on Shakespeare and Elizabethan Dramain Honor of Hardin Craig*, ed. Richard Hosely (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1962), 235-46; Peter Lindenbaum, “Time, Sexual Love and The Uses of Pastoral in *The Winter’s Tale*” *Modern Language Quarterly*, 33:1, (1972): 3-26; Carol Thomas Neely, “*The Winter’s Tale*: The Triumph of Speech” *Studies in English Language*, 15:2 Spring (1975): 321-38; Russ McDonald, “Poetry and Plot in *The Winter’s Tale*” *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 36 (1985): 315-29; Kay Stockholder, *Dream Works: Lovers and Families in Shakespeare’s Plays* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987) and Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin from Hamlet to The Tempest* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 222.

⁶³ For example, see Mark van Doren, who calls it “the passage no one has been able to read,” in *Shakespeare* (New York: H. Holt & Co., 1939), 316. For other readings of the speech, see C.D. Steward,

Some Textual Difficulties in Shakespeare (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1914), 96-109 and Harold Clark Goddard, *The Meaning of Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 651.

⁶⁴ The most familiar examples of this are the Homeric and Virgilian injunctions found at the commencement of *The Iliad* and *The Aeneid*, but for late medieval and early modern examples, cf. the opening of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* and the opening of *The Faerie Queene* and *Paradise Lost*.

⁶⁵ Janet Adelman sees this as the "something" which couples with Leontes' affection to create a new world over which he has control. See Adelman, *op. cit.*, 222.

⁶⁶ Actually, God creates the world in six days, resting on the seventh: the passage seems to follow this idea. The first six "nothings," do the work of dismantling Leontes' world, and on the final anaphora, the passage and the act of destruction rest.

⁶⁷ This connection has been made by other critics. See, for example, Leonard Barkan in "Living Sculptures': Ovid, Michelangelo and *The Winter's Tale*," *English Literary History* (1981), 639-67; David Armitage in "The Dismemberment of Orpheus: Mythic Elements in Shakespeare's Romances," *Shakespeare Studies* (1987), 123-33 and Bate, 234-38. While these readings each offer different perspectives on how the myth is adapted by Shakespeare (or, in the case of Armitage, how other classical myths are equally formative for the end of the play), none have considered how the Pygmalion myth can be seen as a commentary on the spectator's potency. For the most part, critics tend to lean heavily on Pygmalion's role as artist, thereby making the natural parallel with Shakespeare; for example, Bate claims that "In emphasizing art, Shakespeare is following Ovid, whose principal innovation in the myth was to make the man who desires the statue not a king but the sculptor himself" (234). Such readings can, however, obscure Pygmalion's role as spectator in the myth. After he creates the statue, he embarks upon a long period of contemplating it, and it is this sort of devoted attentiveness for which Venus rewards him rather than for the making of the statue itself.

Chapter Four

The Language of Looking: Making Sense in Jonsonian Masque

Before Prospero begins the celebratory masque he has orchestrated for his daughter's betrothal to the future King of Naples, he instructs his audience how they should direct their attention: "No tongue, all eyes. Be silent!" (4.1.59)¹ While his warning may seem like the early modern equivalent of the cell-phone announcement that precedes modern-day theatrical performances, it is more than just an injunction of spectatorial etiquette. Prospero does not merely tell the audience to be quiet; he foregrounds the spectacular element of the performance by tuning their perceptive apparatus to the visual register. While Prospero's mandate could be paraphrased as "No talking, pay attention," its delivery seems to demand not only attentiveness but a siphoning of all sensory channels into the conduit of the eyes. The imperative "all eyes" is bounded by dismissals of sound (no tongue, be silent), and listening as a mode of attentiveness is bypassed completely. And, while the line itself is a veritable spondaic onslaught, making it difficult to place audial emphasis on any particular word, "all eyes" hovers in the privileged center. In masque, centrality is imperative to both form and meaning. It is the position of privilege and authority, the vanishing point that is the spectacle and from which the spectacle can best be seen, the "I" which sees all, embodied in the person of the king. By privileging sight as the preeminent sensory channel at this moment in the play, Prospero suggests an interpretative practice associated specifically with the masque.

We know of course that Jacobean masque was not an entirely visual event. The masque in *The Tempest*, for example, contains some sixty-two lines of dialogue, an epithalamial song, music and dancing; in other words, one cannot really “attend” a masque only with one’s eyes. An earlier episode in the play presents a similar, if sensorily opposite, example of interpretative privileging. When Prospero divulges the truth of their identity to his daughter, he does so through oral narrative. Beginning with an admonition to Miranda (and to those in the theater) to “ope thine ear. / Obey and be attentive” (1.2.37-38), Prospero performs the story of their past. Whereas in the masque episode attention is yoked with sight, here it is harnessed to listening – Prospero commands his daughter to “hear” four times during his tale.² His emphasis on hearing may seem natural; this is, after all, a storytelling event. However, just as the masque is not simply a visual expression, Prospero’s narrative is not an entirely aural one. His account is shot through with graphic detail, often overwhelming him to the point that he slips between past and present: “In few, they hurried us aboard a bark, / Bore us some leagues to sea, where they prepared / A rotten carcass of a butt, not rigged, / Nor tackle, sail nor mast – the very rats / Instinctively have quit it” (1.2.144-48). His temporal confusion suggests the familiar phrase of the trauma victim: “It’s as though it’s happening again right before my eyes.” The powerful visual imagery that Prospero uses to relate his memories is reflected even in how he awakens his daughter’s empathic receptors. Before embarking on his narrative, he asks Miranda to try and remember their life before they came to the island, a request that hinges on her ability to access her eidetic past: “What *seest* thou else in the dark backward and abysm of time?” (1.2.49-50, *my italics*). Despite the fact that it is being told (just as the masque is something that is

shown), Prospero's story does not engage only a single sense, nor even a predominant one. Rather, once it is received by the ear it enters the complex matrix of the imagination – a mechanism in which, as the early modern antitheatricalists understood, the senses could become imaginative catalysts for one another, thereby producing the experience that I have earlier called the multisensory.

I do not wish to claim that Prospero or Shakespeare understands either of these sorts of performances as only engaging (or even primarily engaging) a single sense. Rather, Prospero seems intent upon guiding his audience along certain sensory paths – an impresario-like role that Shakespeare used in *Pericles*. But whereas Gower consistently encourages listening over looking, thereby creating a sort of interpretative morality in the play, Prospero's sensory privileging seems dictated by genre. A masque must be looked at; a story, heard. This functional disjunction, I believe, reflects a shift that occurs in the seventeenth-century discourse about how the spectator "takes in" or processes different sorts of entertainment events. That such division in *The Tempest* revolves around these two particular sorts of entertainments – one narrative, one spectacular – is not surprising. It reflects an interpretative division, a severance of sight from sound, that was articulated by one author in particular and circulated among many of the most influential and prolific writers for both court and popular stage—a schism opened by the yoking together of Ben Jonson's and Inigo Jones' creative powers in the service of the Stuart court.

While these artists' collaboration and conflict is well-trod critical ground, scholars have tended to understand Jones as the visual innovator and Jonson as the verbal one; Jones as the scenic visionary whose stagecraft changed both how theater was produced and experienced, and Jonson as the underappreciated poet who fought against the tyranny

of spectacle throughout his career.³ While both these claims are true to a large extent, this division may not be the best way to understand the gradual shift towards the spectacular in seventeenth-century entertainment culture. That there is such a shift is well-documented. Even critics who do not see Jones's and Jonson's work as perpetually at odds agree that as the seventeenth century progressed theater took what we might call a visual turn; as Stephen Orgel has noted, "[Painting and carpentry] were about to become the soul of drama too."⁴ Andrew Gurr sees audience preference (rather than the Stuart court's taste for spectacle) as the catalyst for the theater's move towards spectacularity. Claiming that amphitheater audiences tended towards "a debased preference for stage spectacle rather than the poetic 'soul' of the play," he sees this preference being solidified through Jones's innovations in set design.⁵ However, Jones's major innovations – the introduction of the proscenium arch and stage machinery such as the *machina versatilis* and the *scena ductilis* that allowed for sets to move without visible assistance – were, until the Restoration, seen primarily by small, elite audiences rather than the larger public ones.⁶ Additionally, as Steven Orgel and Roy Strong have shown, even the privileged few that did see Jones's masques did not become instant devotees of his work. After seeing the 1605 *Masque of Blackness* (the first collaboration between Jonson and Jones), Dudley Carleton noted its lack of verisimilitude: "The Indecorum was, that there was all Fish and no Water."⁷ Samuel Daniel's published text of his 1610 *Tethy's Festival* contains equal parts poetry and admiring descriptions of Jones's settings, but an account by one spectator does not mention staging at all, focusing solely on the dancing and the royal participants.⁸ And, although the Venetian ambassador thought that Jones's designs for *The Lord's Masque* (1613) were "very beautiful," even "ingenious," John Chamberlain

dismissed them: “That night was the Lord’s maske whereof I hear no great commendation...”⁹ Finally, although Gurr cites 1599 as the point where “the difference between hearing and seeing an actor or an action had registered itself firmly,” Jones’s stagecraft would not be exported onto the public stage until the 1630’s, and not consistently until the Restoration.¹⁰ The problem, then, with focusing on Jones as the primary force that “changed the characters of both plays and masques by transforming the *audience* into *spectators*”¹¹ is that this explanation neither adequately explains *how* such a change occurred within seventeenth-century playgoing culture, nor the discursive channels through which such an idea traveled and took hold.

This chapter argues that in order to approach an understanding of the myriad factors that contributed to the seventeenth century’s gradual privileging of the eye over the ear, one must look not only at changes in the representational strategies of spectacle but those occurring to language used to describe the act of looking as well.¹² The scholarly tendency to focus on Jones and his stagecraft as the primary catalysts for the theater’s increased reliance upon spectacle has obscured the role that discourse played in producing such changes. In addition, it tends to imagine a cause-and-effect model for early modern spectatorship similar to the one suggested by apparatus theory in film studies, which posits that technology shapes viewers and discourse merely adapts in response. The early seventeenth century, I believe, provides a precise example of the role of discourse in shaping interpretative practices and the phenomenology of theatergoing. Although the shift in language about spectatorship occurs alongside the new technologies of spectacle, the wider cultural circulation of “the spectacular” occurs first through discourse and only later through staging technologies.¹³ Using the example of the

masque, I revisit the question of *how* these court entertainments influenced viewers and viewing practices in the seventeenth century. Specifically, I look at the confluence of Jonson's desire to please and influence his audience, his practical need to find a descriptive lexicon for Jones's stagecraft, and his anxiety that his collaborator's spectacle was consistently trumping his poetry. This concatenation of artistic and professional ambitions, fears and frustration, I argue, produces a profound change to seventeenth-century representations of spectatorship, which comes to distinguish looking and listening as separate, even opposite interpretative activities. And, just as the conventions of masque staging begin to migrate into popular drama, so too does this way of representing the act of spectatorship, producing over time a new language of looking. This discourse about spectatorship, one fashioned largely by Jonson and picked up by other dramatists of the period, plays at least as significant a role in shaping seventeenth-century spectators *and* audiences as does Jones's development of early modern technologies of spectacle.

But how do such discursive transmissions work? Even if most Londoners could not actually see a masque designed by Jones, they would have had secondhand forms of access.¹⁴ As the masque in *The Tempest* shows, the form itself was circulating, both representationally and metatopically, in the medium of popular drama. In addition, the very ephemerality of the court masque made it a noteworthy occasion. Usually performed only once to mark the occasion of a holiday or a rite of passage for Jacobean England's version of the glitterati (the royal family and high-ranking nobles), court masques would have generated a certain amount of buzz. When Chamberlain scoffs at *The Lord's Masque*, he does so based on such secondhand information. Saying that he has *heard* no

great commendation of it, Chamberlain's claim indicates that its performance was being described and discussed in various circles. James Shirley dramatizes just such a moment of discursive transmission in his play *Love's Cruelty*, as Hippolit describes the experience of seeing a masque to one of the uninitiated:

HIPPOLIT: A scene to take your eye with wonder, now to see a forest move, and the pride of summer brought into a walking wood; in the instant, as if the sea had swallowed up the earth, to see waves capering about tall ships...In the height of this rapture, a tempest so artificial and sudden in the clouds, with a general darkness and thunder, so seeming made to threaten, that you would cry out with the mariners in the work, you cannot escape drowning, in the turning of an eye, these waters ravish into a heaven, glorious and angelicall shapes presented, the stars distinctly with their motion and music so enchanting you...

EUBELLA: Fine painted blessings! (2.2.19-33)¹⁵

Unlike its performance life, the masque's discursive incarnation is not produced by designers, choreographers and musicians, but by spectators and playwrights. Masques could be "broadcast" through such channels as conversation, gossip and news; they could be (re)presented on the public stage by playwrights who drew upon their images, settings and language.

It was not solely images from and language about the masque that permeated the seventeenth-century performance lexicon. In the above quote, Shirley dramatizes the experience of seeing the masque as something that happens *to* the spectator. The scene "takes" his eye with wonder, and the whole experience produces a vertiginous sort of sensory "rapture." The spectator cries out to the actors that they cannot escape drowning, but this response is generated by more than an empathic identification with their plight. He himself is drowning in the deluge of images pouring over him; he is lost somewhere

in the fissures between reality and fiction that performance can expose. As the preeminent masque writer of the late Caroline period, Shirley may be doing a bit of self-promotion here, but his claims are not new ones. As I argue in Chapter One, the theater's ability to ravish the spectator is what made it so dangerous, and Shirley's description here recalls the invective of late sixteenth and early seventeenth century antitheatricalist polemic. There is, however, a notable difference. While the antitheatricalists describe spectatorial intoxication as an experience that involves all of the senses, Shirley's focuses only upon sight. In *Love's Cruelty*, the organ of intake has become aligned with the spectator's experience of the performance – ravishment is equated with seeing. This formulation resembles the earlier one from *The Tempest*, where certain types of performance (as well as the spectator's experience of them) become yoked to particular senses, but thirty years separate the two plays. In 1631, Shirley may have written *Love's Cruelty* with a mind towards employing rather than simply representing Jones's stagecraft, but in 1611 it is unlikely that Shakespeare would have done so.¹⁶ Before Jones's spectacular devices became conventionalized as part of the staging practices of the professional stage, changes were occurring within the representational lexicon used to describe the spectator's experience.

The masque, then, likely played an important role in developing a different sort of theater and theatergoer in the seventeenth century. In its first decades, however, these were discursive rather than technological changes and the conduit through which they were circulated was not Jones, but Jonson. Both court poet and professional playwright, Jonson occupied a uniquely transitive position between the theatrical worlds of the court and the professional stage during the years between 1605 and 1631. Of equal significance

is Jonson's vexed relationship with his audiences, both court and popular. Much of his work testifies to a desire to appeal to, even shape, an ideal spectator, as Richard Dutton has pointed out: "In all [his] formalist discussions of generic definition and dramatic properties... we find Jonson implicitly looking for his ideal consumer, the individual understander."¹⁷ That he found such individuals rarely, if ever, is suggested by the polarity evident in his manner of address to the spectator in his plays and masques, which was usually divided between wistfully optimistic praise and derisive scorn (and these often appearing almost side-by-side).¹⁸ While it is impossible to know what Jonson's "real" feelings about his audiences were, it seems clear that few playwrights thought about them more. Before looking at the evolution of representation in Jonson's early masques for the Stuart court, however, I examine some of the literary templates available to him: the masques of the late Elizabethan period. By doing so, I illustrate how Jonson adapts the representational strategies available to him (particularly those involving the senses), both in response to Jones's scenic innovations and his own anxieties about the importance of his creative role in the masque.

The eye of man has not heard: early masque and the multisensory mode

Although the term "masque" is commonly associated with the entertainments of the Stuart court and its attendant writers, designers, musicians and dancing masters, the form itself has a much longer history. Chambers has suggested a possible folk origin, citing an English pagan ritual in which a sacrificed animal would be carried around a village by masked bearers so that the entire community could share in the presence of the divine object.¹⁹ By the fourteenth century, mummings (visits from disguised visitors who

would role-play with the king and court) were common, but Chambers does not locate anything that could accurately be called a “masque” until the reign of Henry VII.²⁰ The form undergoes various changes throughout the sixteenth century. The element of disguised courtiers is added during Henry VIII’s reign, a more dramatic structure is implemented during Edward VI’s and, in the Elizabethan period, masques begin appearing in print.²¹ Among the earliest for which a text survives is an entertainment devised for Elizabeth’s 1575 summer visit to Kenilworth Castle. Printed in the following year by its author, George Gascoigne, the text shares certain descriptive conventions with Jacobean masque, such as interspersing extradiegetic or “eyewitness”-type description with masque-text in the printed version. A major difference, however, is what Gascoigne describes in these asides. Unlike the Stuart masque writers, who use these intertextual additions to provide detailed accounts of setting and costume, Gascoigne spends little time on Kenilworth’s *mise-en-scène*. In his initial description of the event, he pays only the most perfunctory attention to visual detail:

Her Majesty passing on to the first gate, there stode in the Leades and Battlements therof, sixe Trumpeters hugelie advanced, much exceeding the common stature of men in this age, who had likewise huge and monstrous Trumpettes, counterfettet, wherein they seemed to sound...And when her majestie entered the gate, there stoode *Hercules* for Porter, who seemed to be amazed at such a presence, upon such a sodain, proffered to stay with them. And yet, at last being overcome by viewe of the rare beutie and princelie countenance of her Majestie, yeelded himself and his charge, presenting the keyes unto her highness with these words....²²

Gascoigne paints this opening tableau through broad strokes. Aside from scale (the size of the trumpeters), and Elizabeth’s celestial beauty, there is little visual specificity. Color, costume, patterns are all glossed over, a stark contrast to the tendency of Jacobean masque writers to obsess over the details such as the sheen of a certain type of pearl:

“And for the front, ear, neck and wrist, the ornament was of the most choice and orient pearl, best setting off from the black.”²³ Gascoigne’s later descriptions similarly gloss over the visuals accoutrements of the Kenilworth pageantry. A “Savage man,” who opens part of an entertainment by surprising the queen as she returns from a hunt, is described only as “all clad in Ivie.”²⁴ The subsequent “Ladie of the Lake” episode, which includes the appearance of multiple deities and special effects where people seemed to “go upon the water,” contains only a slightly more exacting description: “*Protheus* appeared, sitting on a *Dolphyns* backe. And the *Dolphyn* was conveied upon a boate, so that the Owers seemed to bee his Fynnes.”²⁵

This disinclination in regard to the visual register when describing performance is not unique to Gascoigne. In a letter to Mr. Humfrey Martin, Robert Laneham, a London mercer, penned what was almost a blow-by-blow account of the Kenilworth entertainments. While he provides rather more visual detail than Gascoigne – he notes that Proteus’s dolphin was “from hed to tayl waz...four & twenty foot long” – he spends far more time describing the musical interlude:

July 18. Music from the Dolphin. Knights made a delectabl ditty of a song... compounded of six severall instruments al covert, casting soound from the Dolphin's belly within; Arion, the seauenth, sitting thus singing (az I say) withoout. Noow syr, the ditty in miter so aptly endighted to the matter, and after by voys so deliciously deliverd: the song by a skilful artist intoo hiz parts so sweetly sorted: each part in hiz instrument so clean & sharpely tooched, every instrument again in hiz kind so excellently tunabl: and this in the eevening of the day, resoounding from the callm waters: whear prezens of her Maiesty, & longing too listen, had vtterly damped all noyz & dyn; the hole armony conueyd in tyme, tune, & temper, thus incomparably melodious: with what pleazure (Master Martin), with what sharpnes of conceyt, with what lyuely delighte, this moought pears into the heerers harts, I pray ye imagin yoor self az ye may; for, so God iudge me, by all the wit & cunning I haue, I cannot express, I promis yoo...As for me, surely I was lulld in such liking, & so loth too

leauē of, that mooch a doo, a good while after, had I, to fynde me wher I
waz.²⁶

Laneham's lengthy description of the masque's music may seem to suggest a sensory privileging similar to that for which Andrew Gurr and Bruce Smith have argued: unlike modern spectators, early modern audiences were more attuned to the aural than the visual. Equally telling, however, are the terms Laneham uses to represent the effect of music upon him. Rather than relying on terms that privilege a particular sense, Laneham turns to the multisensory mode of evocation. Laneham is a listener with a palate as well as an ear; voices are "deliciously deliverd" and sounds "sweetly sorted" in his recounting. He goes on to describe the instrumentals as "sharpely touchd," a representation that evokes multiple imaginative, sensory and sensual possibilities. As the musician touches his instrument to make music, the sounds "sharpely" touch the ear of the listener. Towards the end of the passage, Laneham describes the music as peering into the very heart of the auditor, as though attempting to describe a sensory rapture that a single perceptual mode could never encompass. As in earlier examples of the multisensory, the senses are not here articulated as separate and distinct phenomena, but as imbricated and fungible components of a larger, more complex one.

The multisensory mode is not unique to Laneham's description of the Kenilworth entertainment, but also permeates the masque-text itself. At the commencement of the "savage man" episode, Gascoigne uses it to underscore the wonder evoked through Elizabeth's presence. At times, he invokes the multisensory through metaphor, such as when the Savage Man pairs the visual experience of seeing the Queen and her ladies with the palpable one of heat: "And since I see such sights, / I meane such glorious Dames, / As kinde might in frozen brestes, / A furnace full of flames."²⁷ At other times Gascoigne

uses it in a less structured fashion. Towards the end of the Savage Man's monologue, he strings together a series of variously-appointed sensory illuminants, calling on the ears to help him decipher a visual query and receiving audial information through tactile mechanisms: "[W]hat shall I do, / what sunne shal lend me light? / Wel Eccho, where art thou / could I but Eccho finde, / She would returne me answere yet / By blast of every winde."²⁸ The source of authority on which the Savage Man calls is an odd one. Besides the fact that he calls upon Echo (voice) to be the "sun" that "lends him light," she cannot provide him with answers; she can only repeat what she hears. The Savage Man's call to Echo, then, emphasizes sound *itself* rather than language, a detail that complicates the metaphor. Rather than creating a strictly figurative parallel where the "sunne/light" and "Eccho" stand in for visual and audial epistemologies, the metaphor posits an actual sensory exchange where sound is called upon to provide an answer to what began as a visual problem (the identity of the "glorious Dames").²⁹ Finally, the Savage Man imagines receiving Echo's answers "by blast of every winde," a phrase that invokes the harsh tactility of a blow as much as sound. In this example, the multisensory functions less as a self-conscious rhetorical strategy and more as an organic expression of how sense perception is experienced – not as disparate sensations but as a fluid continuum where barriers between sound, sight and touch seem hardly to exist.

Both variations of the multisensory mode are also found in Sidney's 1578 masque *The Lady of May*. Written as an outdoor entertainment for the queen, the masque presents an abbreviated version of a nuptial comedy. Pursued by two suitors, the Lady of May cannot bring herself to choose between them, and so the quandary is delivered up to Elizabeth's wisdom. The masque begins with the queen being supplicated by the girl's

mother, who describes the experience of Elizabeth's presence as a metaphorical banquet of the senses: "So dare I wretch my bashfull feare subdue, / And feede mine eares, mine eyes, my hart in you."³⁰ Later, once the conflict is resolved with Elizabeth's help, the Lady praises her royal benefactor through lines that again suggest a more organic form of sensory interpenetration: "Thus joyfully in chosen tunes rejoyce, / That such a one is wittnesse of my hart, / Whose cleerest eyes I blisse, and sweetest voyce, / That see my good and judgeth my desert."³¹ While these lines can be read as promoting proper sensory alignment in that it is Elizabeth's eyes that see the Lady's "good" and her voice that pronounces judgment, the syntax challenges such a linear reading. By ending the second line with "voyce" and beginning the subsequent one with "That see," sense organ and sensory function are rendered ambiguous in the passage. Additionally, the singular form of the verb "see," while in agreement with "cleerest eyes," also offers the possibility of including "voyce" as part of its subject; both eyes and voice are represented as equal collaborators in the acts of seeing and judging.

The distinction between metaphorical and more "literal" uses of the multisensory mode illustrates a fine difference in the way that it functioned in the later part of the sixteenth century. The multisensory mode was not only a representational strategy; it was a statement about the phenomenology of sensation itself. That is, writers used it both as a figurative way of depicting the ineffable or overwhelming, but they also understood it as the *effect* of such transcendent encounters upon the spectator/listener. Laneham wants to describe music but also to convey how it works upon the hearer; Gascoigne and Sidney attempt to represent both the Queen's presence and the experience of being in it. Able to signify this dual sort of ineffability (both the sort immanent in the object of admiration

and in the experience of it), the multisensory mode is a particularly apt form of expression for the masque. Designed for and around the monarch, the masque directs its action towards its most important spectator, but in doing so places her at the heart of the spectacle. It must represent (through laudatory description) *and* present (through encomial address) the monarch; it must illustrate her celestial qualities and highlight the potency of her presence.

Seventeen years later, the multisensory mode is still serving this intricate function, but there is already a noticeable turn towards sensory parsing. Francis Davison's 1595 Shrovetide court entertainment, *The Masque of Proteus*, tells the story of Proteus's capture by the revels' master-of-ceremonies, the Prince of Purpoole. To obtain his freedom, Proteus must deliver the Adamantine Rock (a giant lodestone set under the Arctic pole) to the prince, so that he can control the seas. There is a catch: Proteus will relinquish the rock only if the prince shows him "a power, / Which in attractive virtue should surpas / The wondrous force of his Ir'ne drawing rock."³² This "force superior" is, of course, Elizabeth. As in the Kenilworth entertainments and Sidney's masque, *Proteus* spends a good amount of time focused on the queen. Using the synaesthetic superlatives associated with the multisensory-as-metaphor, Davison articulates Elizabeth's physical presence and beauty as physical contact, saying that it "truly touches" the hearts of men, and her virtue is rendered as a visual object, the "shining sunne" that banishes "shadowes."³³ The multisensory-as-experience, however, seems largely to have disappeared. Instead, *Proteus* exhibits a nascent inclination towards directing the audience's senses towards their "proper" targets: sights are seen and sounds are heard. Told by the prince's squire, the backstory of the Purpoole's struggle with Proteus consists

mostly of graphic descriptions of Proteus's shape-shifting efforts to escape. In an attempt to distract his captor, he transforms into a chest of jewels, a beautiful woman and finally, an image of the Prince himself, "mangled and pierst with many a grisly wound" (81). Although Davison exhibits a far greater investment in visual detail than his predecessors, the tale is both introduced and interrupted by requests from one of the characters to "tell" the story so that they "long to heer" an insertion that emphasizes the oral performance of the Prince's squire rather than the visual intensity of the narrative. But these interspersions of audial emphases within what is essentially a visual tale are as close as *Proteus* ever comes to invoking the experiential multisensory. Later, after Proteus has chronicled the Rock's virtues, the Prince's squire prepares him for the experience of the greater magnetism of Elizabeth, telling him to "calme awhile your overweening vaunts / Prepare beleefe & doe but *use your eyes*" (81, my italics). Whereas in the Kenilworth entertainment and *The Lady of May*, a single sense seemed incapable of encompassing the "experience" of Elizabeth, *Proteus* suggests that vision is the preeminent sensory channel through which to know her.

We do not have other extant masques from the period, so it is impossible to say whether or not the decreased tendency to use the multisensory is an idiosyncrasy of Davison's or whether it reflects a change in the form.³⁴ However, both Enid Welsford and Stephen Orgel have claimed that *Proteus* "brings us to a turning point in the history of the masque."³⁵ Whereas Welsford makes this claim based on *Proteus's* sequencing (how it organizes dialogue, song and dance), Orgel sees stagecraft as the axis for this turn: "*The Masque of Proteus*, with its fixed stage and its unified setting, is the first English masque to conceive, in however small a way, of the masquing hall as a theater."³⁶ Although

containing nowhere near the fantastical setting of Stuart masque, *Proteus*, with its “special effects” and raised platform stage, suggests the sort of stagecraft that will later dominate such court entertainments.³⁷ It may be that the tendency to separate the visual from the aural in *Proteus* is part of a representational attempt to “show” or showcase some of the masque’s innovations in staging. The need to do so would not have been merely a matter of pride or proof of skill. As masques became more visually elaborate, they correspondingly became more difficult to record or, more accurately, to preserve. Unlike plays, where each performance might be ephemeral but was nonetheless repeated, masques were conceived as one-time events. As such, their writers often expressed concerns that they needed redemption from the “common evil” of oblivion.³⁸ The masque that was prepared for publication, then, is not solely the labor of the author, but of the archivist as well, and accuracy becomes especially crucial in such labor. Simply transcribing the text will not do; the entire multivalent event must be “shown” to the reader in order to undertake any sort of conservation of the whole. Aligning sense and stimuli on the page is one way that masque authors could communicate the sensory multiplicity of the masque-event with accuracy. By clearly delineating the visual, the vocal, the musical and the kinetic, masque-authors could both display the sensory multiplicity of the event and provide an organizational schema for representing the masque-experience.

In the case of the most prolific of the Jacobean masque-writers, however, an additional motive existed. Jonson’s need to impose control over his work has been widely commented upon.³⁹ For the most part, this characteristic has been read in terms of understanding Jonson’s relationship to changing ideas about the figure of the author, the

concept of drama as literature, and his vexed relationship with his audiences. However, this Jonsonian trait also played a vital role in refashioning the lexicon surrounding sensory, hence spectatorial, processes. As critics have argued, one of the ways that Jonson constructs a sense of authorial control in the masque-text is by imagining and representing it as a homogenous *literary* entity, in that he begins to conceive of the masque as something that is as much a text as a performance event.⁴⁰ Whereas early Jonsonian masques exhibit descriptive and formal tensions, later ones feel holistic, hermetic, complete. Or, at least they do in terms of their textual life. For in order to create the literary masque, Jonson must find a way to exact representational control over the profuse (and, at times, chaotic) energies generated by the performed one. As I have shown, one prevalent use of the multisensory mode is to depict experiential excess, moments where the effect of something (like the queen or music), overwhelms both the spectator and the capacity of language to represent it. For Jonson, the inadequacy of language is not something to be celebrated, but feared; in addition, it represents a particularly pressing problem for him with regard to his early masque-writing career. Although in his early years as court poet Jonson had not yet developed a lexicon to express Jones's innovations in stagecraft, for him to use the multisensory mode to describe his collaborator's work would suggest that it transcended language itself, or worse, that Jonson was not up to the representational task. Part of the project of gaining control (over the text, the masque-spectacle and Jones himself), is to convey the masque-experience *as* controlled, ordered, intelligible and representable. The intrinsic abundance of the multisensory mode becomes problematic for, even antagonistic to, Jonson's authorial enterprise, and ultimately cannot be a part of it.

Jonson development of a language that allows him to “authorize” the masque is a polymorphic process that occurs over the thirty years he occupies the post of court poet. In terms of the multisensory mode, however, a clear shift occurs within the first decade of his collaboration with Jones. Rather than articulating the spectator’s interaction with what is seen as something that can (and often does) involve multiple senses simultaneously, Jonson depicts the spectator’s senses as responding to their logical determinants. Pairing descriptions of sets and costume with injunctions to the reader/spectator to “look” or “see,” and emphasizing song and music through references to the ear, Jonson carves out a more ordered sensory universe. In the subsequent section, I look at Jonson’s early work for the Stuart court and analyze how and where he separates out the senses. For earlier masque writers, the multisensory mode had offered multiple experiential possibilities: sound can be like taste, sight can be felt. But the sensory palate that Jonson puts forth in his texts, looking is looking and hearing is hearing: a demarcation that not only emphasizes the singularity of each mode of experience, but finally, their incompatibility.

Jonson’s “invention”: the language of looking

How do we know that Jonson ever engaged with the multisensory mode at all? To answer this question, we must look at the work he did for the court prior to his collaboration with Jones. Jonson penned two of the celebratory pageants held in honor of the royal family’s arrival in London and the various rituals of instatement surrounding James’s accession to the English throne. The first of these, entitled “Part of King James’s Entertainment in Passing to his Coronation” in the 1616 folio, was performed as part of the king’s civic processional en route to his coronation. While related, civic pageantry

and court entertainments were not the same. The streets of London were a far cry from the country estates of the nobility; therefore space and design possibilities were limited. Court entertainments contained long intervals of music and dance, but civic pageants had little, if any. Dialogue in the latter tended towards lengthy encomial orations directed towards the monarch rather than providing a narrative framework for the event, and, perhaps most importantly, the audience for civic pageants was larger and far more diverse. Certain elements nonetheless testify to a kinship between masque and civic pageantry, particularly those of address, rhetoric and dominant representational modes. In civic as well as court entertainments, the monarch is the primary addressee, the vanishing point where the subject of the entertainment and its reason for being converge. While there are occasional comic interludes that might be spoken in dialect, rhetoric tends towards the formal and ceremonial. For the most part, representation occurs through analogy rather than verisimilitude: allegory and emblem are central to the transmission of meaning in both forms. And, although the audience for civic entertainments was larger and more heterogeneous, Jonson did not make concessions to the masses: “[These shews...[are] to be so presented, as upon the view, they might, without cloud or obscurity, declare themselves to the sharp and learned: and for the multitude, no doubt but their grounded judgments did gaze, said it was fine, and were satisfied.”⁴¹

The models upon which Jonson would have drawn, then, were those set down by his Elizabethan predecessors. Like them, Jonson makes use of the multisensory mode, particularly when addressing the king. Note the synaesthetic tendency of Genius’s salutatory address to James from *The King’s Entertainment*:

Let thronging joy, love and amazement meet.
Cleave all the air with shouts, and let the cry,

Strike through as long, and universally,
 As thunder; for thou now art blissted to see
 That sight for which thou didst begin to be,
 When Brutus' plough first gave thee infant bounds,
 And I, thy Genius, walked auspicious rounds,
 In every furrow then did I forelook,
 And saw this day marked white in Clotho's book.
 The several circles both of change and sway,
 Within this *Isle*, there also figured lay;
 Of which the greatest, perfectest and last
 Was this, whose present happiness we taste. (281-93)

The multisensory mode is evident at several moments here: voices cleave and strike the air, and England tastes the happiness of the arrival of both James and the nation's foretold destiny. Multiple other examples appear in Jonson's early representations for and of England's new king and royal family. Written to commemorate James's first parliamentary session, Jonson's "Panegyre" uses the multisensory mode to communicate the effect of the king's presence upon his people: "With these he passed, and with his people's hearts / Breathed in his way; and souls, their better parts / Hasting to follow forth in shouts and cries, / Upon his face all threw their covetous eyes" (31-34). In "The Entertainment at Althorpe," performed in honor of Anne and Henry's entry into England, Jonson addresses Henry as his "dear lord, on whom my covetous eye / Doth feed itself, but cannot satisfy" (305-06). And, in a masque-like entertainment that Jonson composes for William Cornwallis's reception of James and Anna in 1604, he articulates the effect of the royal couple as an overwhelming olio of sensory delights:

If all the pleasures were distilled
 Of every flower in every field
 And all the Hybla hives do yield
 Were into one broad mazer filled;
 If thereunto added all the gums
 And spice that from Panchaia comes,
 The odour that Hydaspes lends
 Or Phoenix proves before she ends;

If all the air my Flora drew,
Or spirit that Zephyre ever blew:
Were put therein; and all the dew
That ever rosy morning knew;
Yet all diffused upon this bower,
To make one sweet detaining hour. (116-129)

Some eight months after this event, Jonson would embark upon what was his most significant royal commission to date: a masque for the court's Twelfth Night celebration. It was a landmark for both Jonson and the masque form, as it marks the point where the influence of Anna, James's queen, and his master carpenter begin to exert their influence on both. For the masque, it meant a blossoming of the form's popularity and expressive capabilities; for Jonson, it meant a curtailing of his creative control, at least to his mind.⁴² For, in the civic and outdoor entertainments that precede his major works for the court, Jonson seems confident about his role as their "inventor." Although the civic pageants for James's coronation were orchestrated by Stephen Harrison (Dekker names him "the Chief Joiner" in his account of the pageants), Jonson never mentions him.⁴³ Nor does Jonson refer to himself in these entertainments; rather, his narrative voice suggests an abstract, omniscient presence: "Thus far the complemental part of the first; wherein was not only labored the expression of state and magnificence, (as proper to a triumphal Arch) but the very site, fabric, strength, policy, dignity and affections of the City were all laid down to life" (243-247). In Jonson's early masques, however, he strikes a considerably different tone. Often mentioning Anna and especially Jones, Jonson carves out the masque-text as though it were Lear's map, anxiously staking out his creative territory as distinct from that of others. The published text of *The Masque of Blackness* (1608) begins with a statement about Jonson's ingenuity in negotiating the queen's imaginative input: "Hence, because it was her majesty's will to have [herself and her

ladies] as blackamores at first, the invention was derived by me, and presented thus” (20-22).⁴⁴ He then embarks upon a fifty-eight line description of Jones’s sets and costumes, a far cry from his concise description of the *mise-en-scène* in *The King’s Entertainment*: “The *Scene* presented itself in a square and flat upright, like to the side of a City: the top thereof, above the Vent and Crest, adorned with houses, towers and steeples, set off in prospective” (1-4). Although he credits Jones with the “bodily part” of *Blackness*, Jonson makes it clear that he played a vital role in the masque’s visuals as well as its poetry: “Here the tritons sounded, and they danced on shore, every couple as they advanced severally presenting their fans, in one of which were inscribed...a mute hieroglyphic expressing their mixed qualities. (Which manner of symbol I rather chose than *imprese*, as well as for strangeness as relishing of antiquity)” (244-48).

The crisis of confidence suggested by Jonson’s authorial tenor here is reflected in other idiosyncrasies unique to his early collaborations with Jones. His narrative persona seems split; rather than the commanding, impersonal voice that dominates the Stuart entertainments, Jonson here shifts between what we might call an narrator-persona and an eyewitness one:⁴⁵

First, for the scene, was drawn a Landtschap consisting of small woods, and here and there a void place filled with huntings; which falling, an artificial sea was seen to shoot forth, as if it flowed to the land, raised with waves which seemed to move, and in some places the billow to break, as imitating that orderly disorder which is common in nature. In front of this sea were placed six tritons in moving and sprightly actions, their upper parts human, save that their hairs were blue, as partaking of the sea color, their denisent parts fish, mounted above their heads, and all varied in disposition. From their backs were borne out certain light pieces of taffeta as if carried by the wind, and their music made out of wreathed shells. Behind these a pair of sea-maids, for song, were as conspicuously seated; between which two great sea-horses, as big as the life, put forth themselves, the one mounting aloft and writhing his head from the other, which seemed to sink forward (so intended for variation, and that the

figure behind might come off better); upon their backs Oceanus and Niger were advanced. (*Blackness*, 23-39)

At the beginning of the passage, Jonson's narrator-persona is foremost. Speaking in this authoritative voice, Jonson does not subjectively recount the effect of the spectacle on him (The first thing I perceived...), but dictates the manner in which it will be experienced: "First, for the scene..." He concludes the description of the "landtschap" with an interpretation of its symbolism, "as imitating that orderly disorder which is common in nature," a move that suggests the privileging of the interpretative gaze over the phenomenological one.

Soon after, however, the narrator-persona begins a gradual shift towards the stance of the eyewitness. The next sentence consists mostly of straightforward reportage. Perhaps there is a hint of interpretation in the phrase, "as partaking of the sea color," which punctuates the previously-mentioned color of the tritons' hair, but it is otherwise unadorned by subjective interjections. The subsequent description, "From their backs were borne out certain light pieces of taffeta as if carried by the wind, and their music made out of wreathed shells," has an element of fancy, even wonder to it; the movement of gauzy fabrics evokes the elements themselves and shells seem to make music. Finally, the description reaches a visual crescendo and interpretation goes by the wayside, bowled over, it seems, by theatrical spectacle: "[T]wo great sea-horses, as big as the life, put forth themselves, the one mounting aloft and writhing his head from the other, which seemed to sink forward..." The descriptive control exhibited in the earlier part of the passage seems to have slipped from the narrator's grasp. There is a touch of the breathless in clauses like "as big as the life" and the somewhat awkward rendering of the sea-horses' maneuvers. This sense of immediacy is compounded by the change in verb

tense: these lines are the only ones in the passage not written in passive voice. It is almost as if Jonson, overwhelmed by *Blackness*'s visuals, attempts to mimic the rapidity with which visual stimuli can communicate with the spectator. Even the parenthetical addendum (which, for a moment, seems as though it will turn towards interpretation rather than looking), ends up interpreting the spectacle through its own, visual terms rather than through the symbolic ones used earlier: "the one mounting aloft and writhing his head from the other... (so intended for variation, *and that the figure behind might come off better*)" (my emphasis). The authority of the narrator-persona gives way to the wonder of the eyewitness; the astute commentator becomes the astonished viewer.

The movement from descriptive control to difficulty outlined here is a reversal of that noted in Jonson's poetry by Stanley Fish, who argues that Jonson feigns artistic struggle in order to make his eventual achievement shine all the brighter: "[In] the beginning of a Jonson poem...one often finds a meditation on the difficulty of beginning, a meditation that will typically take the form of a succession of false starts after which the poem stumbles upon its subject, having in the meantime consumed up to a third of its length in a search for its own direction."⁴⁶ In the early masques, however, such descriptive stumbling is not feigned, but genuine. The "eyewitness-persona" that emerges in *Blackness* and continues to appear in all of the Jonson-Jones collaborations through *Oberon* (1611) materializes at moments of representational duress; that is, Jonson uses it to try and describe the indescribable. In part, this adaptation speaks to a practical need, in that Jonson does not yet have the language to express Jones's technological innovations with efficiency.⁴⁷ If we take seriously the widely-held critical opinion that the masque's principal dynamic is the resolution of discord, it seems logical that there would be a

concomitant impulse to bridge the linguistic gulf opened by new technologies of entertainment spectacle.⁴⁸ In the early masques, the eyewitness-persona provides Jonson with a means of filling in these representational fissures; that is, if he cannot quite describe the effect of seeing the *machina versatilis* or the *scena ductilis*, he can at least communicate the experience of someone who *did* see it by assuming the stance of the eyewitness. But while the eyewitness-persona may provide a remedy for certain representational problems, it creates others. For the experience that Jonson ends up communicating through the eyewitness-persona is that of wonder – not at the poet’s eloquence, but at Jones’s visionary, marvelous and inexpressible designs.

Jonson’s two aims—his need for adequate terminology to describe Jones’s art and the desire to stake out territory for his own—are contradictory. And it is at their crossroads that we catch a glimpse of Jonson’s vision of artistic control: a creative nirvana where the communicative resources of the poet never fail and the audience consists of understanders rather than spectators. Several critics have argued that while Jonson could not realize this ideal in the masque’s performance incarnation, he approaches it in the literary one.⁴⁹ Certainly the published text of the masque was the arena in which Jonson had the greatest control; he could erase, minimize and exaggerate as he wished, regardless of what actually happened in the performance.⁵⁰ Regardless of whether Jonson began imagining and crafting the masque primarily *as* a literary entity, it is clear that he gains greater authorial purchase on the form. Within the first five years of his masque-writing career, Jonson established conventions for the masque (such as the antimasque) that would be adopted by other authors, both his contemporaries and those who followed him. In addition, Jonson pares away the extradiegetic epiphenomena (such

as the eyewitness-persona and prolix descriptions of set and costumes) that convey his early compositional and collaborative efforts.

But among the most significant alterations to Jonson's representational strategies is an emerging tendency to mark the spectator's experience of the masque as one that occurs through disparate sensory channels. Returning to *Blackness* for a moment, Jonson initially seems to want to shrug off the importance of the masque's visuals, "So much for the bodily part, which was of Master Inigo Jones his design and act" (78-79). Much of his fifty-nine line description, however, reads like an obsessive meditation on its visual impact:

These thus presented, the scene behind seemed a vast sea, and united with this that followed forth from the termination or horizon of which (being the level of the state, which was placed in the upper end of the hall) was drawn, by the lines of perspective, the whole work shooting downwards from the eye; which decorum made it more conspicuous, and caught the eye afar off with a wandering beauty. To which was added an obscure and cloudy night-piece that made the whole set off. (65-71)

Jonson underscores the visual on several levels here. The most obvious is the barrage of optical language: Jonson constructs his description through references to perspective, lines, horizon, presentation, trajectory and contrast. Homophones, such as "scene" and "sea" stress Jonson's fixation on the visual, an emphasis further accentuated by his repetition of the organ of sight itself. While the interchangeability of "I" and "eye" is a popular early modern trope, there is little in this passage of the subjective *jouissance* usually suggested by such wordplay. Instead of simply standing in for the viewing subject, the "eye" seems to engulf all traces of it, situated, as it is here, in a world of geometry and composition rather than one of interpretation and meaning.

While Jonson situates Jones's contribution squarely in the visual realm, he posits his own as belonging to the audial. After finishing his account of the *mise-en-scène*, he turns abruptly to describing the subsequent part of *Blackness* primarily through sound: "By this, one of the tritons, with two sea-maids, began to sing to the others' loud music, their voices being a tenor and two trebles." Engaging a sonic lexicon of volume and tone, Jonson forges an associative connection between his poetry and the ear, a dynamic reinforced by *Blackness*'s first spoken lines: "Sound, sound aloud / The welcome of the orient flood / Into the west" (76-78). He introduces two other songs using similar descriptive emphases, "[T]hey were again accited to the sea with a song of two trebles, whose cadences were iterated by a double echo" (276-77), as well as mentioning the organ of reception in the song itself: "If you do not stop your ear / We shall have more cause to fear / Sirens of the land" (271-73).

Jonson's move to distinguish his artistic product from Jones's using a sensory armature that divides sight from sound is inchoate in *Blackness*. A more self-conscious attempt is made in Jonson's next masque for the Stuarts. Performed in 1606 as part of the festivities celebrating the marriage of the young Earl of Essex, Robert Devereux, to Frances Howard, daughter of the Earl of Suffolk, *Hymenai* trumped Jones's previous attempt in terms of spectacular effects: "Ben Jonson turned the globe of the earth standing behind the altar, and within the Concave sate the 8. men-maskers."⁵¹ Perhaps the indignity of being asked to perform as a glorified stage hand was too much for Jonson; at any rate, he prefaces his printed version of the masque with a personalized defense of poesy:

This it is hath made the most royal princes and greatest persons, who are commonly the personators of these actions, not only studious of riches and

magnificence, in the outward celebration or show, which rightly becomes them, but curious after the most high and hearty inventions to furnish the inward parts, and those grounded upon antiquity and solid learning; which though their voice be taught to sound to present occasions, their sense or doth or should always lay hold on more removed mysteries. And howsoever some may squeamishly cry out that all endeavor of learning and sharpness in these transitory devices, especially where it steps beyond their little or (let me not wrong 'em) no brain at all, is superfluous, I am contented that these fastidious stomachs leave my full tables and enjoy at home their clean empty trenchers, fittest for such airy tastes, where perhaps a few Italian herbs picked up and made into a salad may find sweeter acceptance than all the most nourishing and sound meats of the world. For these men's palates let me not answer, O muses. It is not my fault if I fill them out nectar and they run to metheglin. (9-27)

Jonson's self-justification appeals to multiple sensory registers. Addressing the visual first, Jonson points to the "riches and magnificence" in the "outward celebration and show" of the masque. He then moves to aural description, articulating the masque's poetry as both the "voice" that "sounds to present occasion" and that which can reveal "more removed mysteries." There is a brief nod to the tactile in the mention of the "sharpness" of the masques' "devices," and then Jonson turns towards his extended metaphor on taste, in which he imagines his detractors as gastronomic gulls seduced by "airy" foreign flavors that provide little sustenance. Moving easily between sight, sound, touch and taste, Jonson calls upon almost the entire sensory spectrum to mount a defense of his work. In doing so, Jonson champions it doubly, as the multisensory mode often connotes an experience that surpasses representation. Jonson's choice of it here suggests he wants to lend his work an empyrean status, to claim for it a sublimity that cannot be captured through mere prose. But this particular use of the multisensory mode contains a notable difference from his earlier use. The multisensory usually expresses an intermingling of the senses, but here they appear in sequence rather than as imbricated. Indeed, the whole passage seems driven by a desire to taxonomize experience, for in

addition to disarticulating the senses, Jonson parses experiential modalities as well: “It is a notable and just advantage that things subjected to understanding have of those which are objected to sense; that the one sort are but momentary and merely taking; the other impressing and lasting... So short are the bodies of all things, in comparison of their souls” (1; 4-5). Just as Jonson imagines the masque as comprised of various sensory parts rather than as the sum of them, here he anatomizes its communicative apparatus through binaries: subjected/objected, understanding/sense, lasting/momentary, and finally, soul/body.

Jonson’s dissection of the masque in *Hymenai* reflects his desire for individual recognition in a form that resembles a work of tapestry: the individual threads of set, music, choreography and language mean little without each other. But the linguistic strategies he adopts herald a change to the language of sensory experience that extends beyond the purview of Jonson’s artistic self-fashioning. Perhaps the most significant change appears in Jonson’s descriptions of James within the masque-text. Unlike some of his earlier entertainments for the Stuarts, Jonson refers only briefly to the monarch in *Blackness*: “This sun is temperate and refines / All things on which his beauty shines” (242-43). However, his opening description of the masque’s *mise-en-scène* references the king, via its frequent mention of the metonymized “eye” that is “caught” by the set’s “wandering beauty” (76). In the genre of court masque, the “eye” does not represent the viewpoint of just any spectator, but that of the king’s. In part, this association comes from the fact that all court masques project the monarch as their ideal spectator, but here the connection is especially close. *Blackness* was the first court masque held at Whitehall, and the Banqueting House was spatially organized to facilitate the king’s perspective.⁵²

Correspondingly, Jones's set was intended to cater to the best seat in the house, and it was from this perspective that his designs were imagined and carried out.⁵³ The "eye" from which "the whole work shoots downwards" is James's eye; metonymically, however, it is also James himself. That Jonson (whether consciously or not) should make such a connection is not extraordinary: as God's agent on earth, James was often portrayed as omnipresent and all-seeing.⁵⁴ But in the context of representations of the monarch in masque, it is worth noting. In Elizabethan and earlier Jacobean entertainments, the monarch's presence, transcendent and ineffable, was described through the multisensory mode and as producing this effect in the spectators. Although Jonson is not directly articulating the effect of the king's presence here, he implies it, and in doing so suggests that the eye, by itself, is a sufficient representational reliquary for the monarch himself.

Whereas in *Blackness* Jonson symbolizes the monarch as an eye, in *The Masque of Beauty* (1608) and *The Haddington Masque* (1608), he makes him the object of the eyes of many. In *Beauty*, we find James poised somewhere between looking subject and looked-at object:

Boreas. Which among these is Albion, Neptune's son?
Januarius. What ignorance dares make that question?
 Would any ask who Mars were in the wars?
 Or which is Hesperus among the stars?
 Of the bright planets, which is Sol? Or can
 A doubt arise 'mong creatures, who is man?
 Behold whose eyes do dart Promethan fire
 Throughout this all; whose precepts do inspire
 The rest with duty; yet commanding, cheer;
 And are obeyed more with love than fear. (20-29)

Among Jonson's masques, *Beauty* is unique in that it opens with the encomial address to the king. Typically, the masque builds *towards* this moment. As both the symbol for and

realization of order and beneficence, the “natural” place to draw attention to the king is after the resolution of conflict with which Jacobean masque usually begins.⁵⁵ *Beauty*, however, places James at the center of the spectacle – in performance, these words would have been the first ones spoken, directing the spectators’ gaze upon him.⁵⁶ On the page, this passage directly follows Jonson’s extradiegetic description of setting and costumes, a placement which allows for an elision between scene and king where both are rendered as spectacle. In either case, the language itself reinforces such connections. Boreas begins by seeking out the king, and is answered through analogue, a type of representation that may follow the convention of depicting the sovereign as inexpressible. However, by presenting each component of the epic simile as a test of visual identification (could you pick out the brightness of Hesperus among the stars or discern a human form among animals?), Jonson crafts the entire metaphor using sight as the connective tissue. Finally, when Januarius discloses the sought-after presence, he does so with a command to look: “Behold whose eyes do dart Promethan fire.” This revelation is not, finally, an overt objectification of James; after all, his are the eyes that “dart Promethan fire” at the beholder. But it is a rendition of the king constructed almost wholly through the visual imaginary. Jonson’s subsequent masque, *Haddington*, contains a similarly visual image of the king, by drawing attention to the visual symbols of his earthly power: “Look on this state, and if you yet not know / What crown there shines, whose scepter here does grow” (180-81). In both the 1608 masques, then, Jonson crafts the image of the monarch as and through spectacle.

The parsing of sensory experience seen in Jonson’s description of the masque and the monarch and seem to crystallize into convention three years later, in a Christmas

masque commissioned by Prince Henry. Performed on New Year's Day of 1611, *Oberon, The Fairy Prince* marks the first of Jonson's masques to reduce extradiegetic description to a minimum and silence the eyewitness-persona, indicating perhaps that he had hit upon a formula which satisfied his authorial ambitions for the form.⁵⁷ All Jonson's masques that follow *Oberon* bear an unmistakable similarity to it in terms of structure and narrative tendencies, indicating that it became a prototype on which he modeled future entertainments.⁵⁸ Stephen Orgel sees *Oberon* as the work in which poet and architect attain "a new sort of unity."⁵⁹ In one area, however, *Oberon's* fault lines are more apparent than in the earlier masques, in that it scores deeper lines between the senses, a tendency apparent in the treatment of the antimasque.

Jonson's first fully realized antimasque occurs in his 1609 *Masque of Queens*. The device (a witches' sabbath) portrays a world on the brink of destruction as the hags attempt to call evil back into the post-salvific world: "Old shrunk-up Chaos, and let rise / Once more his dark and reeking head / To strike the world and nature dead / Until my magic birth be bred" (295-99). The hags' dialogue is riddled with sensory conflation, perhaps as a means of heightening the scene's chaotic feel; they "strike another heat" (8) to call their leader, who speaks a charm that "cleaves the ground" (308). But, except for one brief and playful example, *Oberon's* antimasque uses language that renders verbal and visual as distinct: "Chromis! Mnasil! None appear? / See you not who riseth here? / You saw Silenus late I fear / I'll prove if this can reach your ear...Aye, this sound I better know: / List! I would I could hear mo" (5-8; 25-26).⁶⁰ In addition to presenting looking and hearing as discrete and sequential experiences, *Oberon* contains multiple sensory imperatives, much like those found in *The Tempest*. For the most part, these are

commands to look rather than to listen. Silenus (the satyr's leader) thrice orders his followers to "see" or "look"; each time, the order precedes a particularly spectacular event in the masque: the scene changes from sylvan grove to "glorious palace" (100-109) and the entrance of the "nation of fays" (the dancers) and Oberon in his chariot (213-18).⁶¹ It is as though Jonson, looking to excise the extradiegetic descriptions of Jones's set, exports them into the masque-script. While not descriptions, the injunctions to "see" and "look" function as shorthand for Jonson's earlier attempts to describe Jones's extraordinary stage mechanics. As such, they also signify the sort of wonder formerly captured by the eyewitness-persona – the wonder of the masque-spectator. While Jonson likely wanted to downplay these phenomena by minimizing (and finally expunging) any reference to them, by collapsing them into sensory commands he actually gives them greater emphasis in the masque's performance. That is, such imperatives cannot help but direct the spectators' attention towards Jones's devices, which produce wonder primarily through visual spectacle.

But while *Oberon* presents the sort of wonder associated with the masque-spectacle as largely visual, it does not portray the king through such limited means:

Melt earth to sea, sea flow to air,
And air fly into fire,
Whilst we in turn to Arthur's chair
Bear Oberon's desire,
Than which there nothing can be higher,
Save James, to whom it flies:
But he the wonder is of tongues, of ears, of eyes.

Who hath not heard, who hath not seen,
Who hath not sung his name?
The soul that hath not, hath not been;
But is the very same
With buried sloth, and knows not fame,

Which doth him best comprise:

For he the wonder is of tongues, of ears, of eyes. (220-33)

Here, Jonson appears to reengage the multisensory mode to extol the king and the effect of his presence, but with a crucial difference. Whereas the Elizabethan and early Jacobean descriptions of the sovereign imagine a confluence of the senses, *Oberon's* enumerates them, forcing them apart. No longer imagined as an entity that simultaneously occupies the observer's every perceptual channel, the sovereign's presence is articulated as an ordered and sequential experience. A similar rendition appears in *The Gypsies Metamorphosed*, Jonson's 1621 revision of *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue* (1618), which plays out like an extended version of the encomium in *Oberon*: "Let us alone; bless the sovereign and his senses. / We'll take 'em in order, as they have being; and first of seeing" (1234-36). The verse goes on to enumerate and "bless" all five of the monarch's senses, a division textually emphasized by Jonson's numbering of them on the page – the only time he uses such a strategy in all of his printed masques.

Although Jonson uses the multisensory mode in conjunction with the king in both masques, he depicts the senses as disparate, self-contained, and systematic. But we should not imagine this simply as a change in the descriptive lexicon of the monarch. Like Jonson's compression of his descriptions of Jones's stagecraft, his renditions of James suggest a transformation of the representation of wonder itself. Nowhere is this expressed more explicitly than by Wonder herself in Jonson's aptly-named *The Vision of Delight* (1617). Reacting to her first sight of the bower of Zephyrus, Wonder manages to express the inexpressible: "Wonder must speak or break: what is this? Grows / the wealth of nature here, or art?... I have not seen the place could more surprise; / It looks methinks like one of Nature's eyes, / Or her whole body set in art. Behold!" (132-33; 150-152).

Although there are brief mentions of other sensory stimuli in the twenty-four line passage, it is largely a one-dimensional ekphrasis, constructed almost wholly through visuality.⁶²

I have suggested that Jonson's impulse to separate out the strands of sensory experience in his masques comes largely from of his anxiety regarding the significance of his contribution to the form. From the much-cited prologue to *Love's Triumph Through Callipolis* (1631) entitled "To Make the Spectators Understanders," to his epistolary praise of Katherine, Lady Aubigny as one who spurns the fashionable "spectacles and shows," it is clear that Jonson wants both his readers and spectators to "see" the importance of his language. In depicting the visual as distinct from the olfactory, the tangible and, most significantly, the audial, Jonson makes a distinction between these forms of engagement, ostensibly in order to emphasize his own art. Paradoxically, that is not always what happens, as Jonson often ends up giving short shrift to his part of the pie – the realm of the audial. In part, this imbalance is a result of practical necessity. Jonson's expurgation of the descriptive asides that permeate his early masques leaves very little descriptive information in the printed version. Even as text, the masque must hang on some sort of descriptive scaffolding or it is merely a skeleton. Jonson's solution is to export much of the description into the dialogue; however, this strategy results in much of the dialogue being focused on Jones's "carpentry." Some of this emphasis may be tongue-in-cheek on Jonson's part; for example, Wonder's speech not only describes Zephyrus's bower, but Jones's set as well. One could imagine Jonson *purposefully* making this description brittle and one-dimensional – so goes Jones and his work, so goes the description. However, while Jonson's "understanders" might pick up such subtleties

(especially those inclined to purchase the printed copies), it is far more likely that, for those watching the performance, such emphases would only serve to draw further attention to the elaborate staging. In other words, Jonson's language begins speaking for Jones's mise-en-scène, which already is speaking for itself. In the process, the experience of wonder derived from the complex interaction between audience and masque begins to be expressed as sensorily disparate and predominantly visual rather than as multisensory.

* * * * *

At the end of his career, Inigo Jones famously said that masques were “nothing but pictures with Light and Motion.”⁶³ He makes no mention of poetry or song. By 1640, the year in which Jones designed his last entertainments for the court, he may have been right. One of his final collaborations, *Salmacida Spolia* (1639), has 496 lines: only seventy-two are dialogue. As in Jonson's early masques, there are large descriptive portions, but these are written by Jones. Even those masques that contained large amounts of dialogue and speeches, however, did not necessarily challenge Jones's claims. In the surviving account of James Shirley's verbose masque *The Triumph of Peace* (1634), one spectator claimed that “The shew [of the masque] through the streets was glorious, and in the nature of a triumph,” and another that “the display at the palace with a numerous, stately and glittering cavalcade, by their dresses, liveries and devices, attracted a great crowd, exciting the curiosity and applause of all the people.”⁶⁴ There is no mention in either account of music, dancing or Shirley's poetry. And, the masque's principal spectators, Charles I and Henrietta Maria, are described by Shirley through a single sense; he articulates the effect of their presence as “too much sight” (line 576).

It seems clear that Jonson's linguistic fashioning for the masque permanently influenced the form. More challenging is the question of what role these alterations to the language of looking played in shaping ideas about spectatorship in the period. While it would be overstating the case to say that Jonson's representational innovations determined the shape that discourses about spectators and spectatorship were to take, his language did far more than reflect them. Near the end of Jonson's masque-writing career, one of the so-called "Sons of Ben," Peter Hausted, staged an adaptation of his *Epicoene* at Cambridge in 1632. In defense of his choice to keep scenery to a minimum, he writes: "I doe confesse we did not goe such quaint ways as we might have done; we had none of those *Sea-artes*, knew not how, or else scorn'd to plant our *Canvas* so *advantageously* to *catch* the *wayward breath* of the *Spectatours*; but freely and ingenuously labourd rather to *merit* rather than *ravish* an *Applause* from the *Theater*."⁶⁵ That Hausted demeans the scenic aspect of drama is predictable – as one of Jonson's poetic disciples, he likely shared his opinions on the theater's increasing reliance on spectacular stagecraft. More significant are the terms through which Hausted imagines the theatrical experience. In claiming that he and his fellows "labourd" to merit applause rather than "ravish" applause he aligns the linguistic/poetic with reason or judgment and the visual with an overwhelming sort of passion, a forgetting of the self. In this case, the visual and verbal have been fully severed; rather than imagining theater as an entity that produces wonder by creating an illusion that evokes all the senses in the spectator, here it is only the visual that generates the marvelous.

The effects of such changes on actual spectators is difficult to trace, but the following account of William Strode's 1636 play, *The Floating Island*, suggests that

spectators were also learning to associate the magic of the theater with what we would now call special effects:

It was acted on a goodly stage reaching from the upper end of the Hall almost to the hearth place, and had on it three or four openings on each side thereof, and partitions between them, much resembling the desks or studies in a Library, out of which the Actors issued forth. The said partitions they could draw in and out at their pleasure upon a sudden, and thrust out new in their places according to the nature of the Screen, whereon were represented Churches, Dwelling houses, Palaces, etc. which for its variety bred very great admiration. Over all was delicate painting, resembling the Sky, Clouds, etc. At the upper end a great fair shut [shutter] of two leaves that opened and shut without any visible help. Within which was set forth the emblem of the whole Play in a mysterious manner, Therein was the perfect resemblance of the billows of the Sea rolling, and an artificial Island, with Churches and Houses waving up and down and floating, as also rocks, trees and hills. Many other fine pieces of work and Landscapes did also appear at sundry openings thereof, and a Chair was also seen to come gliding on the Stage without any visible help. All these representations, being the first...that were used on the English stage.⁶⁶

Highly attuned to visual detail, eloquent and extremely thorough, Antony à Wood's summary of Strode's drama does not even mention the playtext. Instead, he reads and remembers every particular of the staging, every detail of the set. In *Ben Jonson: The Complete Masques*, Orgel cites Wood's account, saying that "Jonson might have observed, vindictively, that Wood scarcely sees the play for the scenery."⁶⁷ It is less likely, I think, that he would have imagined the importance of his own role in shaping a spectator like Wood's viewing practices and the language through which he articulated them.

¹ *The Tempest*, Arden 3, eds. Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan (London: Thompson Learning, 1999). All quotes from *The Tempest* taken from this edition.

² These instances are found at 1.2.49, 106, 135 and 170.

³ Among the scholars who have argued for this sort of Jonsonian narrative are Enid Welsford, *The Court Masque: A Study in the Relationship Between Poetry and the Revels* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1962);

Steven Orgel, *The Complete Masques* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969) and *The Illusion of Power: Political Theater in the English Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975); D.J. Gordon's "Poet and Architect: The Intellectual Setting of the Quarrel between Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones," in *The Renaissance Imagination: Essays and Lectures by D.J. Gordon*, ed. Stephen Orgel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975); Stanley Fish, "Authors-Readers: Jonson's Community of Same" in *Representing the English Renaissance*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) and Andrew Gurr, op. cit.

⁴ Orgel, *The Complete Masques*, 38.

⁵ Gurr, 103. Gurr is paraphrasing Jonson here, but it is fairly clear that he shares this opinion on some level given his later lament regarding the state of contemporary spectatorship: "The Elizabethan 'company' has gradually become a set of isolated watchers, their minds set in the two dimensions of scenic staging rather than the Elizabethan three" (116).

⁶ The *machina versatilis* (also called *perikatoi*) was basically a mechanized pivot upon which pieces of scenery could turn, hence change without the use of stagehands. Two particularly notable examples occur in *Hymenai* (1606) and *Oberon* (1611). In *Hymenai*, the *machina versatilis* is used to rotate a painted globe rotated 180° inside of which sit eight men, "the first *Masque*" (99). In *Oberon*, the device is used to transform the satyr's grove into Oberon's palace. The *scena ductilis* consisted of a series of grooves in which painted flats were placed in a series. To change the set from one scene to another, all that was required was for the stagehands to pull the foremost flats into the wings, thereby revealing what was behind them. For a detailed explanation of these devices, see Allardyce Nicoll, *Stuart Masques and the Renaissance Stage* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1938), 54-63.

⁷ Steven Orgel and Roy Strong, *Inigo Jones and the Theater of the Stuart Court* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 89. All quotations from masques between the dates of 1605 and 1631 taken from this edition unless otherwise noted.

⁸ Ibid, 192.

⁹ Ibid, 242.

¹⁰ Gurr, 110. I would argue that this division happens slightly later than 1599, taking place during the first decade of the seventeenth century. In 1603 Shakespeare still uses the multisensory in Orsino's first speech in *Twelfth Night*, and Henry Crosse's 1603 treatise, *Virtue's Commonwealth* continues to use the multisensory mode to explain what happens to the spectator at the theater: "[A]t a play, the whole faculty of the mind is altogether bent on delight, the eye earnestly fixed upon the object, ever sense busied for the time, the ear narrowly waiteth to catch that is uttered, sending it to wit; wit to reason; reason to memory..." (Pollard, op. cit., 194). However, by the time Heywood writes his *Apology for Actors* (published 1612), he describes the spectatorial experience as one that is primarily visual: "A description is only a shadow received by the ear, but not perceived by the eye; so, lively portraiture is merely a form seen by the eye...But to see a soldier shaped like a soldier, walk speak and act like a soldier; to see a Hector all besmeared in blood...a Troilus returning from the field in sight of his father Priam...to see as, I have seen, Hercules in his own shape hunting the boar, knocking down the bull, slaughtering Diomedes, wounding the Stimphalides, killing the Centaurs, pashing the lion, squeezing the dragon, dragging Cerberus in chains, and lastly, on his high pyramids writing *Nil ultra*: oh, these were sights to make an Alexander" (Pollard, op.cit., 221).

¹¹ Orgel and Strong, 7.

¹² Gurr makes a similar case when he says that “Long before the proscenium arch’s two-dimensional staging and fixed sets the eye was bound to overcome the ear” (107). However, he does not investigate the origins of this idea in the period.

¹³ In this chapter, when I refer to “the spectacular” I mean that part of stagecraft that produces wonder through visual effects. While the seventeenth century was not the only period in English drama to have “special effects” (we need only think of the devil’s trapdoor in morality drama or John Dee’s “flying machine” from the sixteenth century), it is during this period that they begin to become conventionalized and more widespread.

¹⁴ Allardyce Nicholl assumes that Shakespeare would have witnessed at least one masque firsthand in order to produce the detailed rendition found in *The Tempest*; however, this would not have necessarily been so. To assume that Shakespeare had to have *seen* a masque in order to reproduce one assumes that the visual imaginary is the dominant one, and that by hearing (or reading) accounts of court masques, Shakespeare and other playwrights could not have reproduced them onstage. See Nicholl, 19.

¹⁵ James Shirley, *Love’s Cruelty, a Critical Edition*, ed. John Frederick Nims (New York and London: Garland, 1980).

¹⁶ *The Tempest* was most likely first performed before the King at Whitehall in 1611, as part of the Princess Elizabeth’s wedding celebrations.

¹⁷ Dutton, op. cit., 109.

¹⁸ For example, see “To the Reader” in *The Alchemist*, the Induction to *Bartholomew Fair* and, perhaps most famously his justificatory induction to *Love’s Triumph Through Callipolis* (1631), aptly entitled “To Make the Spectators Understanders.”

¹⁹ E.K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage, Vol. I* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), 400.

²⁰ Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage, Vol. I*, op. cit. Chambers offers what is still, I believe the most comprehensive history of the form in Book I, “The Court,” 149-212.

²¹ Orgel, *The Jonsonian Masque* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 37. Orgel, following Chambers, cites George Gascoigne’s 1572 masque for the double wedding of the Lord Montague’s son and daughter as the earliest surviving example of a masque in print.

²² *The Complete Works of George Gascoigne, Volume 2*, ed. John W. Cunliffe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910), 92.

²³ “The Masque of Blackness,” lines 67-68.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 101.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 104.

²⁶ *Early English Books Online* <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/textidx>. Orgel also quotes part of this passage in *The Jonsonian Masque*, as a means of pointing out how song is one of the ways that masque stages the resolution of discord, a central concern of the genre, See *The Jonsonian Masque*, op. cit., 43.

²⁷ Gascoigne, 96. Gascoigne credits this portion of the entertainment to himself, mentioning that they were done “upon a very great sudden.”

²⁸ Ibid, 96-97.

²⁹ A similar example of the multisensory can be found in a later episode, where Diana warns her nymphs about Cupid and his knights: “In sweetest flowres the subtyll Snakes may lurke: / The Sugred baite oft hides the harmefull hookes, / The smoothest words, draw wils to wicked worke, / And deepe deceipts, do follow fairest lookes.” (108).

³⁰ *Complete Works*, vol. 2, 330.

³¹ Ibid, 338.

³² *Gesta Grayorum*, ed. Desmond Bland (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1968), 82.

³³ Like much of the descriptive apparatus surrounding Elizabeth, the multisensory may have hardened into convention by this point in the reign. Louis Montrose designates the period when she was definitively past childbearing age as the point when descriptive conventions begin to solidify around the multiple images used to signify her chastity (such as Diana, the Spenserian Eliza, and Daphne). See *The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and the Cultural Politics of the Elizabethan Theater* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 155-56.

³⁴ A somewhat earlier example, however, is found in Marlowe’s *Edward II* (c.1592). Gaveston describes the sort of entertainments he will arrange for Edward upon his return to London – “pleasing shows” that sound quite a bit like court masque. The twenty-line description at 1.1.50-70 is highly multisensory, a quality that enhances the sensual quality of Gaveston’s and Edward’s relationship. Like Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Edward II* was written for the public theater, thereby lending some weight to the idea that changes to the multisensory mode were, even before the Jones and Jonson collaboration, reflecting something about the masque form’s increasing reliance on *mise-en-scène*.

³⁵ Enid Welsford, op. cit., 163.

³⁶ *The Jonsonian Masque*, 9.

³⁷ Ibid. *Proteus* had as its centerpiece a large “rock” that concealed the masquers. As Orgel points out, it was probably a large painted canvas.

³⁸ *The Masque of Blackness*, line 12. Samuel Daniels also writes in the introduction to his masque *The Vision of Twelve Goddesses* that “these ornaments of delight and peace...deserve to be made memorable.”

³⁹ Among the most well-known of these commentaries are Orgel’s in *The Jonsonian Masque* and more particularly in “What is a text?” in *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama*, 24 (1981), 3-6; Peter Stallybrass and Allon White’s *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 27-79; Stanley Fish’s “Authors-readers: Jonson’s community of the same” in *Representations* 7 (1984), 26-58 and Richard Helgerson’s *Self-crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton and the Literary System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

⁴⁰ Jerzy Limon calls the version that was preserved for posterity the “literary masque,” a form he distinguishes from the performed one. Following Orgel (and to some degree Welsford) Limon claims that Jonson’s major contribution to the masque-form was his development of the literary masque; that is, Jonson leaves his mark on the form by making it as much a literary as a performance entity. While I do not disagree with this claim in principle, by making it all three critics allocate to Jones a sort of control over the form that I am not convinced he has. My own argument suggests that his attempts to exert a sort of linguistic control over the form results in some arguably less-desirable epiphenomena (at least from

Jonson's point-of-view), such as a more visually-oriented spectator. See Limon, *The Masque of Stuart Culture* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990).

⁴¹ From "Part of King James's Entertainment in Passing to his Coronation," in *Ben Jonson*, Vol. 7, ed. C.H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), 83-109, lines 265-67. All quotes from Jonson's entertainments other than masque are taken from this edition. In most cases, I have modernized the spelling to go along with Orgel's orthographical emendations of the court masques in *Inigo Jones and the Theater of the Stuart Court*.

⁴² As Orgel and Gordon both have argued, in reality the opportunity afforded by working with the creative energies of Anna and Jones undoubtedly played a major role in Jonson's artistic development.

⁴³ Thomas Dekker, *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, ed. Fredson Bowers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953-61), 16.

⁴⁴ *Blackness* was, of course, first performed in 1605.

⁴⁵ Limon reads these two personae as a by-product of the way Jonson conceives of the masque-form itself, calling the early masques "journalistic" and the later ones "literary." Again, Limon's reading assumes that Jonson *attains* the sort of control he seeks over the form.

⁴⁶ Fish, *op. cit.*, 231-263.

⁴⁷ In *The Complete Masques*, Orgel states that "Inigo Jones's masque settings were making the most far-reaching statements about the nature of the theatrical illusion," a comment with which I agree. Although Orgel does mention that "English audiences were not yet educated enough to appreciate what [Jones] was doing," he does not extend this claim to Jonson.

⁴⁸ This claim is practically a critical tenet, since Orgel's revision of Enid Welsford's claims that the antimasque was conceived primarily as a way to cater to popular demand. See Orgel, *The Complete Masques*, 10-11.

⁴⁹ Several critics have made this argument. See, for example, Dolora Cunningham in "The Jonsonian Masque as a Literary Form," in *Ben Jonson; A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Jonas Barish (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963); John C. Meager, *Method and Meaning in Jonson's Masque* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966); Dutton, *op. cit.*; Jerzy Limon, *op. cit.*; Orgel, *The Complete Masques* and *The Jonsonian Masque*, *op. cit.*; and Welsford, *op. cit.*

⁵⁰ Jerzy Limon makes this claim explicitly, stating the example of *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue* (28-29). According to the letter of Orazio Busino, James was incredibly bored by the masque, calling out: "Why don't they dance? What did you make me come here for? Devil take all of you, dance!" Not surprisingly, this episode does not appear in the published version of *Pleasure Reconciled*.

⁵¹ John Pory to Sir Robert Cotton, quoted in Orgel and Strong, 105. Jones's *mikrokosmos* or rotating globe is thought by some critics to have inspired Prospero's "Revels" speech. See, for example, Ernest B. Gilman, "'All eyes': Prospero's Inverted Masque," in *Renaissance Quarterly*, 33:2 (1980): 214-230.

⁵² See page 89 in Orgel and Strong, where they cite some of the preparations that were recorded by Andrew Kerwyn, paymaster of the Works.

⁵³ See Orgel, *The Jonsonian Masque*, *op. cit.*, 18.

⁵⁴ For a specific Jonsonian example, see his "A Panegyre," in Herford, *op. cit.*, 113.

⁵⁵ Except for *Beauty*, this tendency holds true even in Jonson's masques that precede his introduction of the antimasque. In *Blackness*, the first (brief) homage to James comes at line 190, (a longer and more explicit one is found in lines 230-244). In *Hymenai*, there is a brief reference to the James and Anna at lines 84-88; the major encomium, however, ends the masque (874-86).

⁵⁶ Like *Blackness*, to which *Beauty* is the sequel, it was commissioned by Anna, so there is no particular thematic exigency for the immediate focus on James.

⁵⁷ The few descriptive asides that appear in *Oberon* are written in what I have earlier called the narrator-persona, which is the more authoritative, impersonal voice found in Jonson's early entertainments for the Stuarts. That is, there is no descriptive language that expresses a subjective point-of-view and no first-person references.

⁵⁸ Among these are the inclusion of the semicomical antimasque and the movement from chaos to order within the narrative trajectory. See Orgel, *The Complete Masques*, 16.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 18.

⁶⁰ This comes during the satyrs' dialogue at lines 123-24: "Nor sense, I fear; / For they sleep in either ear."

⁶¹ The specifics of these moments are as follows: the first command to "Look!" precedes the "opening" of a rock which reveals Oberon's palace, accomplished by means of the *scena ductilis*. The second emphasizes the spectacular design and lighting of Oberon's palace, "Look! does not this palace show / Like another sky of lights?" (101-02), and the third precedes Oberon's (played by Prince Henry) entry in a chariot "drawn by two white bears" (230-31).

⁶² In the passage Jonson touches briefly upon taste, sound and scent. At line 138, he mentions "the sweet and fruitful dew"; at 148, he references the sound of the pheasant's call and at 156, he makes an odd reference to casting "a kind and odoriferous shade." The rest of the passage is filled with elaborate visual references, such as "purple-swelling nectar" (137), the "gaudy peacock" (144) and Minerva's needle that embroiders "th' enamored earth with all her riches" (141).

⁶³ Orgel, *The Complete Masques*, 15.

⁶⁴ Shirley's masque contains nearly 500 lines of dialogue, as compared to Davenant's 72. Quotes from spectators of *Triumph of Peace* (1634) are from Orgel and Strong, 538.

⁶⁵ Orgel and Strong, 8.

⁶⁶ Quoted in Herford, vol. 10, 410-11.

⁶⁷ Orgel, *The Complete Masques*, 39.

Conclusion

The Oracle Effect

Around the time that he was differentiating between looking and hearing in his masques, Jonson distinguishes between their practitioners in one of his more popular stage comedies. The Induction to *Bartholomew Fair* (1614) sets forth an “Articles of Agreement” between the author and the audience—a contract that stipulates what the audience can expect from the play and what the author can expect from the audience. Jonson addresses the audience three times in the Induction, but never as a collective. Instead, he uses the terms “spectators” and “hearers” in tandem.¹ But Jonson does not merely separate the lookers from the hearers, he makes explicit the difference between them: “It is covenanted and agreed, by and between the parties abovesaid, that the said spectators and hearers, as well as the curious and envious as the favoring and judicious....”² Jonson aligns “spectators” with the “curious and envious” and hearers with the “favoring and judicious,” a parallelism that suggests the first are reactionary and capricious, while the second are contemplative and appreciative. This division is underscored by Jonson’s later portrayal of the foolish puritan Busy as an individual who speciously critiques the theater as if it were solely a series of images: “I will remove Dagon [the puppet] there, I say, that idol, that heathenish idol, that...beam in the eye” (5.5.4,7). Finally, in the Epilogue, Jonson depicts the King as the true arbiter of the play’s merit, because he will judge it more by what he has heard than what he has seen: “Your

Majesty has seen the play, and you / Can best allow it from your ear and view... You can tell / if we have used that leave you gave us well; / Or whether we to rage and license break / Or be profane, and make profane men speak” (1-2; 5-8). In placing the King’s hearing of the play foremost and suggesting that his judgment of the play will be based on what the characters say, Jonson places the sovereign (God’s judge on earth) firmly in the category of hearer.

By 1631, when Jonson places the intertitle “To Make the Spectators Understanders” beneath the title of *Love’s Triumph Through Callipolis*, he may have given up on the idea that the audience contained *any* hearers. While it is impossible to ascertain whether he was correct, in coming to represent looking and listening as disparate, even antithetical activities, Jonson assumes a role in the conceptualization of the spectator as a passive entity that allows him or herself to be swept along by spectacle rather than engaging in the rigors of intellectual interpretation. This distinction is given a moral cast in John Milton’s 1634 masque, *Comus*, which narrates the rabble-rousing god of festivity’s attempt to seduce a young and virtuous maiden. Comus attempts to “charm” the Lady by whisking her off to a palace of sensuality, where he encourages her to “see...all the pleasures / That fancy can beget on youthful thoughts” (668-69).³ The Lady’s ability to preserve her chastity is directly related to her ability to resist visual temptation; she tells Comus that he “canst not touch the freedom of [her] mind” (663) because he cannot charm her judgment as he does her eyes (758). It is somewhat ironic that the Lady crafts her critique of Comus through these terms, considering that she is a character in an event designed to charm the eyes of the spectators. However, in crafting her defense as a critique of visual pleasure, Milton follows Jonson’s concept of the

masque as a platform that could be used to encourage, even shape, spectators into understanders. In doing so, it also follows the assumption that the spectator *needs* to be led away from passive (if pleasurable) looking and towards active interpretation.

In 1642, London's theaters were closed and would remain so for eighteen years. While there were no playgoers during this period, the term "spectator" continued its ascendancy in terms of usage. An EEBO search for the term between 1620 and 1640 reveals 347 instances of its use; between 1640 and 1660, this number nearly doubles (615). How "spectator" is used, however, becomes somewhat more fixed during the years of the theaters' closing. Gone is the interplay between active and passive that Sidney tried to evoke in his initial use of the term; instead, it is used regularly to denote an individual who looks on passively but never acts. Peter Heylyn makes this distinction in his 1660 history of the English Church's reformation, saying that at Anne Boleyn's execution, "some few [were] permitted to be present, rather as witnesses than spectators of her final end."⁴ Similarly, Richard Allestree's conduct manual *The Gentleman's Calling* uses "spectator" to denote an impotent onlooker: "If he have no power to assist him, is (sic) onely a spectator, not a reliever of his suffering."⁵

Even more common, however, was the concatenation of the passive spectator and the omniscient creator. Possibly coined as a response to the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, the "idle spectator" becomes a figurative antonym for God. In a sermon at Westminster Abbey in 1647, Nathaniel Hardy stated: "God is...not an idle spectator or bare permitter."⁶ Anthony Burgess's treatise on original sin repeats this claim, "we do not make God an idle Spectator, as it were, of Adam's fall,"⁷ as does Henry Hammond in his treatise on grace: "God is no helpless spectator."⁸ The metaphor of God-as-spectator was

not new. In the early decades of the seventeenth century, however, it was more often presented as a metaphor of similitude rather than contrast, such as in Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*: "God is a Spectator of all thy miseries, he sees thy wrongs, woes and wants, and can helpe thee in an instant, when it seems to him good."⁹ It is not that the figuration of God changes in these examples; rather, it is the concept of the spectator, who metamorphoses from a potent figure of authority to a colorless, feeble shadow that is the antithesis of great creating nature itself.

This spectator is a far cry from Beaumont's fiery grocer-spectator or Shakespeare's deeply faithful onlookers that play such a significant role in Hermione's awakening. Nor does it seem to have much to do with the varied and often-vocal audiences who attended the early modern theater. Then again, they were no longer there. Whatever and whomever Tudor-Stuart spectators had been, they were, as a material presence, gone after 1642. During the period when the theaters were closed, the early modern theatrical spectator existed primarily *as* a discursive form – as memory (both individual and cultural) and in those few accounts that had been set down. This pallid, two-dimensional onlooker for which the term "spectator" comes to stand must, at least in part, be constructed from images and language generated during the prewar period—images and language that were, as I have argued, moving towards depicting the spectator as a more visually-oriented and passively entertained figure.

I do not wish to pin the sum total of changes that occur to ideas about spectators and spectatorship in seventeenth century on the playwrights and masque-writers of the period. It is, however, a widely-held critical assumption that English theater audiences change during this period; for example Susan Bennett in *Theater Audiences* claims: "[I]n

the seventeenth century, however, there is a move towards...audiences becoming increasingly passive and increasingly bourgeois.”¹⁰ Of course, the language of representation alone cannot drive such change; cultural pressures such as changes to class structures, staging conventions and the theaters themselves must have played large roles as well. But I emphasize language here because it has been the silent partner in the construction of the spectator, both in the early modern period and in our own. That the discursive spectator should play a role in shaping the real one should not come as a surprise. As postmoderns, we have become accustomed to language’s power in constructing the world we inhabit. This understanding is not limited to academia, but extends more broadly across contemporary culture. My students know that they are not supposed to call people names based on their race, religion, class or sexual orientation, even if many of them don’t fully understand why. They have some vague sense, however, that it has something to do with what Foucault made explicit in his claim that power relations produce speaking (empowered) subjects; that when they speak a name intended to shame or derogate they participate in what Bourdieu calls the “oracle effect,” a situation in which “someone speaks in the name of something *which he brings into existence by his very discourse*” (my italics).¹¹

Despite this awareness that pervades the scholarly and mundane realms of existence, there has been little recognition of the possibility that how we talk, write about and otherwise represent spectators plays a role in creating real viewers. If we write books and film scripts, conduct interviews and studies, broadcast news reports and talk with our friends about the “fact” that watching violent films or television shows makes one (especially if one is a young man) more prone to violent acts, do we help bring into

existence those who, like Dylan Klebold and Seung-Hui Cho, cross the currents of fiction and reality to produce breathtakingly horrible acts of violence? I ask this question not to call for a shutting down of such discourse but as a call to better understand its origins. It may seem as though a study that focuses primarily on the discursive spectator is little more than smoke and mirrors; as a colleague once said, “Oh, I get it. You’re working on fake people.” Considering the fact that the discursive spectator has lingered in the Western cultural imaginary for millennia and remains a force to be reckoned with in our own hypermediated cultural moment, I would argue that it is quite real indeed and far too important to be hidden in the shadows of critical inquiry.

¹ Ben Jonson, “Bartholomew Fair” in *Ben Jonson: The Alchemist and Other Plays*, ed. Gordon Campbell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

² Jonson’s use of “curious” here has several possible connotations. As it is paired with “envious,” it likely connotes one of its less-flattering (and now obsolete) meanings. The *OED* cites as one of the more frequent usages in the period, “anxious, concerned or solicitous.” When placed in contrast to “favoring and judicious,” “curious” might also denote an audience member who tries to find problems with the play; for example, in the Induction Jonson mentions those who come to the theater to “censure by contagion, or upon trust, from another’s voice, or face...” (Ind. 88-89).

³ John Milton, “Comus” in *The Complete Poetry of John Milton*, ed. John T. Shawcross (New York: Doubleday, 1990).

⁴ Peter Heylyn, *Ecclesia Restaurata, or, The history of the Reformation of the Church of England* (1660), *Early English Books Online*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo>. (12 July 2009).

⁵ Richard Allestree, *The Gentleman’s Calling* (1660), *Early English Books Online*, op. cit.

⁶ Nathaniel Hardy, *The arraignment of licentious liberty, and oppressing tyranny in a sermon preached before the right honourable House of Peers, in the Abbey-church at Westminster, on the the day of their solemn monethly fast* (1647), *Early English Books Online*, op. cit.

⁷ Anthony Burgess, *A Treatise of Original Sin* (1658), *Early English Books Online*, op. cit.

⁸ Henry Hammond, *A pacifick discourse of God’s grace and decrees in a letter of full accordance* (1660), *Early English Books Online*, op. cit.

⁹ Robert Burton, *The anatomy of melancholy what it is. With all the kindes, causes, symptomes, prognostickes, and severall cures of it. In three maine partitions with their severall sections, members, and*

subsections. Philosophically, medically, historically, opened and cut up (1621), *Early English Books Online*, op. cit. Other examples of the God-as-spectator metaphor include William Cowper's *A holy alphabet for Sion's scholars* (1613): "We know, that in afflictions it is some comfort How God is a spectator and partaker with us in all our afflictions"; William Fuller's *The mourning of Mount Libanon: or, The temple's teares* (1628): "Remember, that God is his spectator and angels auditors"; and John Stoughton's *Choice Sermons preached upon selected occasions, in Cambridge*, (1639): "The Church of God is an honourable stage, God, and Men, and Angels, are judicious spectators."

¹⁰ Susan Bennett, *Theater Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 3.

¹¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. John B. Thompson, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).