

‘All tragedies are fled from state to stage’: The
Ideals of Duty in Early Modern History Plays,
1561-1624

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ABSTRACT

This thesis demonstrates that duty is a central feature of the early modern history play. Specifically, it argues that history plays contribute to the on-going discussion throughout the period about monarchs and statesmen attempting to reconcile the idealized Ciceronian conception of duty with the cruel realities of the political world. History plays provide a space to test out these ideals and the vast majority elucidate that while these ideals are desirable, they are often impractical, and sometimes impossible, to abide by. The plays of the educational environments examined here (the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, the Inns of Court, and the English Jesuit colleges) often present audiences and readers with examples to imitate or avoid, but even in these didactically straightforward plays there is an acknowledgement of the burden of duty. The plays of the professional playhouses in London rarely seek to instill dutiful ideals in the audience; instead, they highlight the unresolved difficulties of duty and occasionally declare that ideals are incompatible with reality. Collectively, these various sites of performance indicate that duty was a particular concern of all history plays, but also that dutiful ideals were being constantly tested against reality. Thus, they challenged the ideal ethical framework which was inherited from the classical world. This study will not only develop a deeper understanding of how duty was conceived in the history play, and in early modern society, but will also develop a better understanding of how the various stages utilized dramatic and pedagogical techniques to explore issues of duty, often in remarkably similar entertaining and erudite ways. By examining plays from different sites, dramatists, and historical genres within the same study, it will be shown that history plays across the spectrum were engaged in the balancing act of instilling ideals of duty while also interrogating those ideals.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BL	British Library
<i>FV</i>	<i>Famous Victories</i>
<i>Gor</i>	<i>Gorboduc</i>
<i>1HIV</i>	<i>1 Henry IV</i>
<i>2HIV</i>	<i>2 Henry IV</i>
<i>HV</i>	<i>Henry V</i>
<i>JO</i>	<i>John Oldcastle</i>
<i>MfM</i>	<i>Mirror for Magistrates</i>
<i>MoA</i>	<i>Misfortunes of Arthur</i>
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
<i>RII</i>	<i>Richard II</i>
<i>REED</i>	<i>Records of Early English Drama</i>
<i>RT</i>	<i>Richardus Tertius</i>
<i>Theo</i>	<i>Theoctitus</i>
<i>Vort</i>	<i>Fatum Vortigerni</i>

NOTE ON TEXT AND CONVENTIONS

Original spelling has been preserved, including u/v and i/j; long s, however, has been modernized. Original punctuation and capitalization have also been preserved. All titles are given in modernized spelling or in their most recognizable form. Abbreviations and contractions have been expanded with italics where appropriate. Any of my own amendments to translations are noted. Dana F. Sutton's translations of Latin plays feature line numbers in Latin and act and scene references in English; I have provided both. All dates are given in the Julian Calendar, as they appear in the original sources.

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INTRODUCTION

Though some o' th' court hold it presumption
To instruct princes what they ought to do,
It is a noble duty to inform them
What they ought to foresee.¹

Delivered by Antonio at the start of John Webster's revenge tragedy *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613), these lines speak to a central concept that is represented in much early modern drama: the duty of a statesman. Antonio speaks of the hierarchy of power, specifically that it may be audacious to instruct royalty but that it is a "noble duty" to alert them to possible dangers. The necessity of counsellors aiding political stability by advising the monarch is also mentioned by Bosola, a more morally suspect character than Antonio, by way of a metaphor about an honest statesman to a king being "like a cedar planted by a spring; / The spring bathes the tree's root, the grateful tree / Rewards it with his shadow" (*Malfi*, 3.2.260-2). This imagery of the symbiotic natural world evokes the ideal reciprocal relationship between king and counsellor and would sit easily in a history play. Webster's play is, in one sense, a historical play: it is set in an actual royal court, is loosely based on historical events surrounding Giovanna d'Aragona, Duchess of Amalfi, between 1508 and 1513, and speaks to issues of corruption and abuse of power. However, issues of government and the dynamics of political power are rarely centre stage, with the play instead focusing on the private struggles of characters. Few people today would classify it as a history play. While it features a historical setting and broadly gestures to concerns of political duty, it never takes duty up as the driving force in the way that plays more widely recognized as histories typically do.

History plays being invested in exploring issues of duty can be traced through plays from the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, the Inns of Court, the English Jesuit colleges, and the playhouses in London alike. This thesis takes the 1561 performance of the Inns play *Gorboduc* as its starting point and the 1624 performance of the Jesuit play *Theoctistus* as its end point, although that was certainly not the end point of the history play itself. By examining plays from these different sites of performance this thesis will provide a new understanding of how duty is conceptualized in early modern history plays. It will demonstrate that history plays test the idealization of duty, which is espoused by Cicero and in Christianity, within real world political situations, exemplifying the difficulties and burden of duty. Moreover, the exemplary nature of history imbued the history play with a didactic quality which further enabled the genre to teach

¹ John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613), ed. by Brian Gibbons (London: Methuen Drama, 2014), 1.1.19-22.

audiences about how to navigate the clash between ideals and reality. The different performance sites feature integral differences both in their style of drama and audience composition but they are united in using the history play to present ideals of duty as exemplary while also simultaneously challenging them. While they often sought to teach audiences how best to achieve ideals, they also sought to educate them about the complexities, and sometimes even impracticality, of ideals of duty within the context of real political situations.

DUTY IN THE HISTORY PLAY AND BEYOND

Issues of duty are rife in early modern history plays, lying at the heart of plots concerning power struggles for the crown, sovereigns failing to balance their royal duties and personal lives, and the dynamics between counsellors and monarchs, amongst other narratives. Dramatists writing about kings and courts meant they were necessarily writing about political duty. Much like political thinkers, playwrights were interested in exploring conceptions of duty. Tudor and Stuart ideas of duty were based upon a mixture of Christian and classical thought. The Geneva Bible was the chief English Protestant Bible during the sixteenth century and was succeeded by the King James Bible in the seventeenth century. Romans 13 was crucial in shaping how duty was understood as it touched upon the relevant concerns of loyalty, conscience, and obedience. Essentially, subjects were to submit themselves to the will of the monarch and their magistrates because “they are God’s ministers, applying themselves for the same thing.”² People are instructed to “Give to all men therefore their duty: tribute, to whom ye owe tribute: custom, to whom custom: fear, to whom fear: honor, to whom ye owe honor” (Ibid, Romans, 13:7). Isaiah 49:23 was also crucial in framing the expected dutiful relationship between monarch and subject: “Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and Queens shall be thy nurses: they shall worship thee with their faces toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet” (Ibid, Isaiah 49:23). Subjects have a duty to be obedient to their monarch, while monarchs have a duty to protect their subjects. Duty for Catholics differed however, as they owed loyalty to the pope before the monarch. Still, the basic concept of duty to God overruling all else was mixed with Ciceronian duty, specifically that “our first duty is to the immortal gods; our second, to country; our third, to parents; and so on, in a descending scale, to the rest.”³ While Cicero’s polytheistic paganism was not wholly relevant to early modern Christians, the idea that duty to God (or “gods” for Cicero) must be prioritized certainly was. Cicero’s insistence that advantageous actions must be subservient to honourable actions also blended well with the

² *The Bible and Holy Scriptures conteyned in the Olde and Newe Testament* (Geneva: Rouland Hall, 1560), Romans 13:6.

³ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Officiis*, trans. by Walter Miller (Loeb; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913), I: 160.

tenets of Christianity. This thesis takes this mixed conception of duty as its definition, that duty to God and country takes precedence and so honourable behaviour supersedes advantageous action. Chapter 1 develops this definition, tracing the fluid but ubiquitous nature of duty through important classical and humanist thinkers.

Despite the hierarchy of duties which prioritizes God being a simple starting point, in reality duty was infinitely more complex. Rarely were ideal kings depicted in drama; more often playwrights presented their audiences with an exploration of the political and ethical complications surrounding duty which plagued kings and courtiers. This could be done through a variety of historical narratives. William Gager's *Dido* (1583) and Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* (1607) present romantic love interfering with political responsibilities; Ben Jonson's *Sejanus His Fall* (1603) and Matthew Gwinne's *Nero: Nova Tragædia* (1603) showcase lead characters devoid of concern for duty and the accompanying problems; Thomas Compton Carleton's *Fatum Vortigerni* (1619) and Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville's *Gorboduc* feature the breakdown of royal families and thus contrast competing conceptions of duty within the familial unit. Furthermore, plays tackled issues of duty in a multitude of ways. For instance, the majority of the plays just mentioned also feature prominent counsellors who are either integral to highlighting the dutiful ideals that their monarchs should heed or exist to exemplify the importance of kings learning how to properly interrogate counsel. The clash between the ideal application of duty and the difficulties of political reality is central to the majority of early modern history plays.

Given the role of counsel in the early modern polity, and in the history play, scholars have studied the duties of magistrates through the lens of counsel. Joanne Paul has identified that during the early modern period people were grappling with the paradox of counsel, essentially that "if counsel is obligatory, it impinges upon sovereignty. If it is not, it then becomes irrelevant and futile."⁴ Paul first explores the humanist model of counsel, in which "the prince is ruled by good counsel in order to preserve republican notions of liberty and political involvement in a monarchical context" (Ibid, p.39). This conception of counsel comes under pressure with the spread of Machiavellian political thought, which rendered counsellors less crucial as guides to action. How to distinguish good advice from bad and the dynamic between sovereign and advisor was continually under discussion, and the essays in the collection *The Politics of Counsel in England and Scotland, 1286-1707* (2016) trace changes in counsel.⁵

⁴ Joanne Paul, *Counsel and Command in Early Modern English Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), p.1.

⁵ Jacqueline Rose (ed.), *The Politics of Counsel in England and Scotland, 1286-1707, Proceedings of the British Academy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

Susan Doran's chapter, for instance, demonstrates that Elizabeth I "combined the imperial, humanist and prophetic-providential discourses of counsel" in fashioning her leadership style.⁶ Ivan Lupić maps the foundational role that counsel played in the development of drama, arguing that "[w]hen counsel appears in Renaissance plays, its significance needs to be considered in dramatic and not just in moral or political terms."⁷ Lupić's study not only connects drama and counsel, it also connects professional and academic plays which "prompts us to consider the history of English drama in the sixteenth century as an integrated tradition rather than a series of separate developments" (Ibid, p.4). This thesis continues this line of thought, demonstrating the interconnected nature of plays from different sites of performance. The plays are linked not only by an interest in duty, but also often by similar pedagogic and dramatic techniques. This project is also influenced by the work of Emma Buckley, who stresses that "[a]cademic drama did not only serve as an important creative precursor to the work of the great vernacular playwrights, but also continued to offer innovative, engaging, and quintessentially 'Elizabethan' theatrical responses to contemporary issues."⁸ Academic and professional plays were not the same, but they featured considerable overlap and should not be figured as two entirely separate traditions. Turning to duty beyond counsel, John Morrill, Paul Slack, and Daniel Woolf's edited collection *Public Duty and Private Conscience in Seventeenth-Century England* (1993) delves into duty from a historical perspective.⁹ This thesis builds upon these various works, looking at history plays to demonstrate that both professional and academic playwrights devoted a large amount of dramatic and intellectual energy to exploring the ideals and issues of duty.

The complication of duty not only within drama, but during the early modern period, was heightened because of the religious divide which occurred when Henry VIII separated the Church of England from papal authority. This meant that people had to make a conscious decision to either accept or reject this religious authority, even if the full details of the doctrinal disputes around which the labels of Protestant and Catholic were constructed were unclear. How a subject with an opposing confessional identity to their monarch should reconcile their

⁶ Susan Doran, 'Elizabeth I and Counsel' in *The Politics of Counsel in England and Scotland, 1286-1707, Proceedings of the British Academy*, ed. by Jacqueline Rose (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp.151-170 (p.169).

⁷ Ivan Lupić, *Subjects of Advice: Drama and Counsel from More to Shakespeare* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), p.4.

⁸ Emma Buckley, 'Matthew Gwinne's *Nero* (1603): Seneca, Academic Drama, and the Politics of Polity', *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*, 40.1 (2013), pp.16-33 (p.17).

⁹ John Morrill, Paul Slack, and Daniel Woolf (eds.), *Public Duty and Private Conscience in Seventeenth-Century England: Essays Presented to G.E. Aylmer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). For more on duty see e.g. J. H. Burns with the assistance of Mark Goldie (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought, Volume 1: The Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

duties to God and king was fraught with difficulty. In *Sir John Oldcastle* (1599) the titular Lollard proclaims to Henry V that his public duties to king and country do not conflict with his personal religious beliefs: “all is at your service. / But, for obedience to the Pope of Rome, / I owe him none.”¹⁰ However, in the post-Reformation context, many Catholics departed from a strict moral code, exemplified by Oldcastle, in order to survive. The Jesuits in particular turned to moral equivocation which involved verbally lying to Protestant powers while inwardly speaking truth to God. Writing in response to the Oath of Allegiance which was imposed in the wake of the Gunpowder Plot in 1605, the Jesuit Robert Persons recommended equivocation in limited circumstances, describing it as the use of ambiguous language and “when a speach is partly vttered in wordes, and partly reserued in mind.”¹¹ The Protestant cleric Thomas Morton treated moral reservation as a sin: “their deluding of an oath by a new tricke of equiuocation, as they (vnproperly) terme it. Others call it reseruation: but most fitly we may name it Collusion.”¹² The intensification of issues of religious conscience and the confessionalization of duty meant that people had to contend with different ways of figuring the hierarchy of duties. Duty to God was still prioritized, but for Protestants that meant following the monarch as God’s representative on earth, while for Catholics it meant following the pope. Religious schisms complicated matters further. Puritans believed the Church of England was still too similar to Roman Catholicism and saw it as their duty to push for further reform. Some Jesuits thought that the Catholics who wished for toleration and were willing to conform if they were allowed to practice their religion in private, in the words of Peter Lake and Michael Questier, “scarcely counted as Catholics at all.”¹³ Lake and Questier in their discussion of the Archpriest Controversy, a dispute which began in 1598 over the necessity of an archpriest to oversee the English Catholic clergy, identify that the controversy encompassed many of the central questions being debated. For instance, “the relationship between religious identity and political allegiance, and therefore the prospects for, and right limits upon, ‘toleration’; the right relation between the Church and the State and between evangelical zeal and the workings of divine grace, on the one hand, and the hierarchies of Church (and secular) government, on the other” (Ibid, p.23). These questions came to a head over the succession but before discussing duty within this context, this thesis turns to Elizabeth’s rule which itself prompted questions about duty.

¹⁰ I cite from Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge (eds.), *The Oldcastle Controversy: Sir John Oldcastle, Part I and the Famous Victories of Henry V* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 2.3.10-12.

¹¹ Robert Persons, *A Treatise Tending to Mitigation toward Catholicke-Subiectes in England* (Saint-Omer: F. Bellet Permissu superiorum, 1607), p.382.

¹² Thomas Morton, *An Exact Discoverie of Romish Doctrine in the Case of Conspiracie and Rebellion* (London: Felix Kyngston, for C. Burby and E. Weaver, 1605), p.40.

¹³ Peter Lake and Michael Questier, *All Hail to the Archpriest: Confessional Conflict, Toleration, and the Politics of Publicity in Post-Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p.14.

In a period already fiery with debate about royal legitimacy because of religious division, the ascension of female rulers added a gendered dimension to the disputes about a monarch's duty. For instance, the Scottish reformer John Knox believed that women were inherently unfit for rule: "I am assured that God hath reueled to some in this our age, that it is more then a monstre in nature that a woman shall reigne *and* have empire about a man."¹⁴ According to this viewpoint queenship was a paradoxical notion: if a woman were to handle the duties of monarchy then she would not be behaving in a womanly manner; if she behaved in the manner befitting her sex then she would not be suitable for rule. However, Doran has argued that "Elizabeth's gender created fewer problems for the queen than most [...] scholars have claimed" and that her "gender affected the style rather [than] the substance" of her reign.¹⁵ Elizabeth's gender informing her leadership style is mostly famously seen in her battle speech at Tilbury in 1588: "I may have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king."¹⁶ While this transcript may be inaccurate, it encapsulates the stylistic manner in which Elizabeth noted the issues of being a woman in power. Sophie Shorland asserts that Elizabeth actually turned her gender into an advantage as a propaganda strategy, using "the posture of 'womanhood and weakness' to excuse an unpopularly defensive foreign policy, in contrast to the aggressive policy a man in her position must apparently have undertaken."¹⁷ This consequently harmed James VI and I's persona because he failed to exhibit the war-hungry aggression expected of his gender. Elizabeth's womanhood posed the greatest issue to her duties as a ruler when it came to her refusal to marry and produce an heir, which was then compounded by her refusal to name a successor.

With the execution of Mary Stuart in 1587 the best claimant to the English throne seemed to be her son James VI, who was a Protestant male with legitimate lineage, but his claim was far from undisputed. As traced by Doran, he faced two major hurdles: "prejudices surrounding his Scottish birth; and the general perception of him in England as untrustworthy."¹⁸ There were also English candidates to compete with, such as Thomas Seymour, Katherine Grey's legitimate younger son, and the Protestant Henry Hastings, Earl of Huntingdon. Persons in *A Conference about the Next Succession to the Crowne of Inghlande* (1594) maintained that Scotland and

¹⁴ John Knox, *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstruous Regiment of Women* (Geneva: J. Poullain and A. Rebul, 1558), sig.A3^v-A4^r.

¹⁵ Susan Doran, 'Did Elizabeth's Gender Really Matter?' in *Queens Matter in Early Modern Studies*, ed. by Anna Riehl Bertolet, (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp.31-52 (p.33).

¹⁶ This version of her speech originally comes from Leonel Sharp's letter to the Duke of Buckingham written sometime before 1631. Anonymous, *Cabala, Mysteries of State and Government: in Letters of Illustrious Persons and Great Ministers of State* (London: G. Beddell and T. Collins, 1663), p.373.

¹⁷ Sophie Shorland, "'Womanhood and weakness': Elizabeth I, James I and Propaganda Strategy', *Renaissance Studies*, 34.2 (2019), pp.260-277 (p.262).

¹⁸ Susan Doran, 'Polemic and prejudice: a Scottish king for an English throne' in *Doubtful and Dangerous: The Question of Succession in Late Elizabethan England*, ed. by Susan Doran and Paulina Kewes (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), pp.215-235 (p.215).

England could not join because of “the auersion and natural alienation of that people, from the English, and their ancient inclination to ioyne with the French & Irish against vs, maketh it very probable” that a union would lead to “slaughter, bloodshed, and infinyt losses and charges of England.”¹⁹ Anti-Stuart sentiment was not limited to Catholics though and Paulina Kewes demonstrates that many English Protestants were doubtful of James’s commitment to ‘true religion’ because of his intimacy with Catholics Lords and toleration of Jesuits. Kewes argues that a key factor in turning this narrative was Persons’s tract because by favouring the Spanish Infanta the “opposition to the Stuart claim would be explicitly associated with Spain and Catholicism or, more precisely, militant Catholicism epitomized by the Society of Jesus.”²⁰ James’s claim was also boosted by the birth of his first son in 1594, which assured his legacy, and the English claimants either dying or lacking interest in pursuing the crown. The uncertainty caused by the succession is reflected in drama. *Gorboduc* deals explicitly with issues of succession in its depiction of Gorboduc splitting his kingdom between his two sons, Ferrex and Porrex, and the power struggle and national chaos this decision causes when both sons betray their duty. Twenty years later Gager’s *Dido* spoke to concerns of Elizabeth’s marital status: in comparison to Dido she is urged not to select a foreign husband, while in comparison to Aeneas she is urged to prioritize her duty to her people over her personal desires. Lake argues that “the rise of the history play [was] a function of the pervasive anxiety and concern prompted by the succession crisis” and so “after the accession of James I took the issue of the succession off the agenda, the genre of the history play lost a great deal of its popularity and allure.”²¹ However, history plays remained popular in the Jacobean and Caroline eras, and plays continued to respond to contemporary political situations. For instance, Thomas Middleton’s *A Game at Chess* (1624) dramatizes the foreign policy of James in regard to his attempt to wed his son, Prince Charles, to the Spanish Infanta.

History plays reflecting the issues of duty England was experiencing can be seen from the outset of the genre, not just from Elizabeth’s reign onwards. John Bale’s Henrician *Kynge Johan* (1539), which features the residual influence of the morality play alongside elements of the emergent history play, is largely focused on Johan’s duty to England. Englande appears as a poor widow character who tells Johan that the clergy, who follow the pope, are corrupt: “They forsake Godes word which is most puer and cleane, / And unto the lawys of synfull men they

¹⁹ R. Doleman [Robert Persons], *A Conference about the Next Succession to the Crowne of Inghland* (A. Coninx: Antwerp, 1594), pp.118-119.

²⁰ Paulina Kewes, ‘The Puritan, the Jesuit and the Jacobean succession’ in *Doubtful and Dangerous: The Question of Succession in Late Elizabethan England*, ed. by Susan Doran and Paulina Kewes (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), pp.47-70 (p.66).

²¹ Peter Lake, *How Shakespeare Put Politics on the Stage: Power and Succession in the History Plays* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), p.60.

leane.”²² This incites in Johan a clearer understanding of his monarchical duties, specifically championing the ‘true’ Protestant faith: “God hath sett me, by his apoyntment just, / To further thy cause and to mayntayne thi ryght” (*Johan*, ll.136–137). Nicholas Udall’s *Respublica* (1553), performed at Christmas before Queen Mary I, like Bale’s play uses the morality style to comment on the relationship between religion and politics, but it does so in favour of Catholicism as the ‘true’ faith. Bale’s play supports England’s break from Rome, while Udall’s reconnects the English monarch and the Catholic pope. The confessionalization of duty bled through into drama and this can be seen from Bale’s Henrician play through to the many Jesuit plays of the 1600s which related the histories of martyrs to instil Catholic values in the student audience. The history play was a medium through which ideals of civic duty could be instilled but it was also a medium which lent itself to a critical investigation of these ideals and an exploration of the problems of maintaining duty. András Kiséry asserts that much commercial drama was about “what it meant to be king, and what it took to be king” as well as “what it meant to be employed, and what it took to be employed” in politics as a profession.²³ Kiséry states that commercial plays did not compete with expert instruction; rather the “conversation-provoking publicity of performance supplemented and radically expanded the limited manuscript and broader print circulation of expert political knowledge” (Kiséry, p.7). Academic history plays were also involved in expanding the circulation of political knowledge, furnishing playgoers with the language of statecraft. In watching kings and courtiers in situations which tested their notions of duty, audiences were afforded the chance to judge their decisions and work through their own conception of duty. The history play, in short, was integral to the development of ideas about duty in early modern society.

Due to the dramatic medium being used, duty was explored on stage through a combination of exploratory instruction and popular entertainment. Peter Burke explains that in early modern Europe there was a cultural difference between “the majority, for whom popular culture was the only culture, and the minority, who had access to the great tradition but participated in the little tradition as a second culture.”²⁴ In the context of plays this meant that the common people, who were the majority, had access to the popular culture, i.e. the London playhouses, while the elite had access to popular culture as well as their own exclusive culture, i.e. academic drama. Popular drama was performed in the vernacular, while elite drama was often performed in Latin. Certainly the insularity of academic drama as opposed to the openness of professional drama, in terms of audience, is a defining difference between the two but this does not nullify

²² John Bale, *Kynge Johan in The Complete Plays of John Bale*, ed. by Peter Happé, 2 vols (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1985), ll.79–80.

²³ András Kiséry, *Hamlet’s Moment: Drama and Political Knowledge in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p.5.

²⁴ Peter Burke, *Popular Culture and Early Modern Europe* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), p.28.

their similarities, particularly in regard to entertaining and educational value. Therefore, it is crucial to understand what was ‘popular’ and ‘entertaining’ in early modern drama. The abundant employment of violence in early modern drama has long been recognized. Attila Kiss argues that “violence and horror, transgression and excess,” became “perhaps the most important constituents in the imagery and representational repertoire of early modern tragedy.”²⁵ Horror was present not only in tragedies, but also in the histories which proliferated. Plays were full of stabbing, maiming, braining, cannibalism, and rape, along with more inventive methods of murder and torture which involved poisoned bibles, hot pokers, and eye gouging. Revenge plots were common, as were ghosts and witches. Violence was not only relegated to plays, with Burke noting that “[i]f you wanted to see bear-baiting, clowns, cock-fights, fencers, a performing horse, not to mention plays, the places to go, in the late sixteenth century, were the Bell, the Cross Keys, and the Bel Sauvage, all in Gracechurch Street” (Burke, p.110). The spectatorship of real physical violence was a common public entertainment and so it is hardly surprising that plays sought to stage gore. Other popular, and less horrific, features of the repertoire included bawdy jokes, witty wordplay, and storylines with cross dressing, disguises, and mistaken identities.

The use of entertainment to aid pedagogy was, of course, a mainstay of early modern poetics. It follows Horace’s well-worn adage from *Ars Poetica*: “He has won every vote who has blended profit and pleasure, at once delighting and instructing the reader.”²⁶ Likewise, Philip Sidney in his *Defence of Poesie* (1595) claimed that poetry is a combination of philosophy and history, both of which are necessary to “delight to moue men to take that goodnesse in hand, which without delight they would flie as from a stranger; and teach to make them know that goodnesse wherunto they are moued.”²⁷ The elements of revelry present in drama, which of course have value on their own, could sweeten potentially dry didacticism. This dynamic is most evident in the plays put on by Oxford, Cambridge, and the Jesuits. The plays of the popular stage are less explicitly instructional, while those of the Inns of Court are less aesthetically driven. Still, all history plays featured this combination of pedagogy and entertainment, just in different measures. This study, while not comprehensive, provides an indication of how depictions of duty in drama developed from the 1560s through to the 1620s. This development is far from a straightforward linear story of simple to complex and didactic to ambiguous. Indeed,

²⁵ Attila Kiss, ‘Walking Anatomies: Violence and Dissection of the Early Modern Stage’ in *Early Modern Communi(cati)ons: Studies in Early Modern English Literature and Culture*, ed. by Kinga Földvary and Erzsebet Strobl (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), pp.222-242 (p.225).

²⁶ Horace, *Satires, Epistles and Ars Poetica*, trans. by Henry Rushton Fairclough (Loeb; London: W. Heinemann, 1926), p.479. “Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci, / lectorem delectando pariterque monendo”, l.343-344.

²⁷ Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesie* (London: Thomas Creede for William Ponsonby, 1595), sig.C2^v.

Theoctistus's 1624 message about Catholic duty is just as clear as *Gorboduc*'s 1561 message about royal duty, although the former play is more spectacular than the latter. The earliest history plays were usually didactically simplistic in their conception of duty, likely because of their roots in medieval morality plays. As the history play progressed this simplicity was not necessarily overridden, but there was more room for complexity when exploring and figuring duty, as demonstrated by *Henry V* in 1599 and *Nero* in 1603. History plays were born out of the needs of their sites of performance, the historical sources they utilized, contemporary political issues, and artistic vision, all of which combined and led to a multitude of interpretations of duty. In exploring the relationship between duty and the history play, it is crucial first of all to understand how exactly history was conceptualized in early modern England.

THE EARLY MODERN SENSE OF THE PAST

Early modern notions of historiography were complex and constantly changing but it is a topic which has been widely explored by scholars. Notable studies include Levi Fox's *English Historical Scholarship in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (1956), F. J. Levy's *Tudor Historical Thought* (1967), Margaret Aston's essay 'English Ruins and English History: The Dissolution and the Sense of the Past' (1973), A. B. Ferguson's *Clio Unbound: Perceptions of the Social and Cultural Past in Renaissance England* (1979), J. G. A. Pocock's essay 'The Sense of History in Renaissance England' (1985), Joseph M. Levine's *Humanism and History: Origins of Modern English Historiography* (1987), Richard Helgerson's *Forms of Nationhood* (1992), Donald R. Kelly and David Harris Sacks' (eds.) *The Historical Imagination in Early Modern Britain* (1997), Patrick Collinson's essay 'One of Us?: William Camden and the Making of History' (1998), D. R. Woolf's *The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture, 1500-1730* (2003), and Angus Vine's *In Defiance of Time: Antiquarian Writing in Early Modern England* (2010).²⁸ Woolf observes that during the sixteenth and

²⁸ Levi Fox, *English Historical Scholarship in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956); F. J. Levy, *Tudor Historical Thought* (San Marino, Calif.: The Huntington Library, 1967); Margaret Aston, 'English Ruins and English History: The Dissolution and the Sense of the Past', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 36 (1973), pp.231-255; A. B. Ferguson, *Clio Unbound: Perceptions of the Social and Cultural Past in Renaissance England* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1979); J. G. A. Pocock, 'The Sense of History in Renaissance England' in John F. Andrews (ed.), *William Shakespeare: His World, His Work, His Influence*, 3 vols. (New York: Scribner, 1985), vol. 1, pp.143-57; Joseph M. Levine, *Humanism and History: Origins of Modern English Historiography* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987); Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Donald R. Kelly and David Harris Sacks (eds.), *The Historical Imagination in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Patrick Collinson, 'One of Us?: William Camden and the Making of History', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th ser., 8 (1998), pp.139-63; D. R. Woolf, *The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture, 1500-1730* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Angus Vine, *In Defiance of Time: Antiquarian Writing in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). See also *inter alia* May McKisack, *Medieval History in the Tudor Age* (Oxford:

seventeenth centuries history turned “from the minor pastime of a small number of monastic chroniclers and civil officials into a major area of study and leisurely pursuit of university students, lawyers, aspiring courtiers, and ordinary readers, and thence into a much more broadly appealing genre that straddled the world of scholarship and literary culture.”²⁹ One of the largest influences on the popularity and conceptions of history was humanism. In his influential *De Oratore*, Cicero, whose works were central to humanist education, asserts that history is about recording the truth of events: “For who does not know history’s first law to be that an author must not dare to tell anything but the truth? And its second that he must make bold to tell the whole truth?”³⁰ He also declares (in an expression that would become axiomatic) that history “sheds light upon reality, gives life to recollection and guidance to human existence” (*Oratore*, p.255).³¹

However, early modern historians commonly broke this first law by inventing speeches and using factually dubious, and even mythical, sources. This was not necessarily seen as betraying the truth of history though, as ‘history’ often meant ‘story’, as evidenced by Thomas Elyot’s 1538 Latin-English dictionary which translates “Historia” as “a storye.”³² William Nelson confirms that the “blending or confusion of fiction and history was encouraged by the absence of a clear distinction between them, especially when history was understood as historians practised it, rather than as the naked truth they professed it to be.”³³ This led to legend being historicized, a notable example being Geoffrey of Monmouth’s twelfth-century *Historia Regum Britanniae*, which immortalized the Galfridian myth as part of Britain’s ancient past. Many accepted this account but, as Vine explains, Geoffrey’s history also “attracted extensive controversy in scholarly circles and its veracity was widely disputed,” even as “it continued to

Oxford University Press, 1971); Annabel Patterson, *Reading Holinshed’s Chronicles* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1994); Graham Parry, *The Trophies of Time: English Antiquarians of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Jan Broadway, *No History so Meete: Gentry Culture and the Development of Local History in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006); Kelsey Jackson Williams, *The Antiquary: John Aubrey’s Historical Scholarship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

²⁹ D. R. Woolf, *Reading History in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.7. See also D. R. Woolf, *The Idea of History in Early Stuart England: Erudition, Ideology and ‘The Light of Truth’ from the Accession of James I to the Civil War* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1990); D. R. Woolf, ‘From Hystories to the Historical: Five Transitions in Thinking about the Past, 1500-1700’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 68 (2005), pp.33-70.

³⁰ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Oratore*, trans. by E. W. Sutton (Loeb; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942), p.243, p.245. “Nam quis nescit primam esse historiae legem, ne quid falsi dicere audeat?”, p.242, p.244.

³¹ “testis temporum, lux veritatis et magistra vitae”, p.224.

³² Thomas Elyot, *The Dictionary of Syr Thomas Eliot Knyght* (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1538), sig.Ki^r.

³³ William Nelson, *Fact or Fiction: The Dilemma of the Renaissance Storyteller* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1973), p.93. For more on the interaction of history and fiction see Sacks and Kelley (eds.), *The Historical Imagination in Early Modern Britain* (1997).

exert a considerable influence on popular culture.”³⁴ Notably, Thomas Nashe disputed Arthurian legend, proclaiming the genre to be “fantasticall dreames”, but this did not deprive legend of its cultural impact.³⁵ Vine argues that while “sources of authority mattered for learned culture, they were much less important in popular culture. This perhaps explains why the Galfridian tradition and the *Golden Legend* both continued to have considerable popular currency long after scholars had thoroughly debunked them” (Vine, pp.116-7). The chivalric tradition continued to be popular partly because of its exaltation of England’s golden antiquity, a notable example being Richard Johnson’s *Famous Historie of the Seaven Champions of Christendom* (1596). Johnson details the heroic adventures of the patron saints of England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, France, Spain, and Portugal. The popularity of these narratives indicates not only a lack of concern for truth, but also a cultural interest in depictions of dutiful heroes. Plays based on British mythology, such as the multi-authored *The Misfortunes of Arthur* (1587) and Thomas Middleton’s *Hengist, King of Kent, or The Mayor of Quinborough* (1619-20), could achieve the same aims as ‘true’ history, but they were rarely as celebratory as Johnson’s retelling, casting off the idealized version of duty in favour of a more realistic representation.

Early modern historiography was heavily focused on utility. Anthony Grafton explains that humanist teachers and historians “saw themselves as the heirs of the Greek and Roman statesmen who had defined what history should be. They agreed, that is, that the historian should try to form readers for public life.”³⁶ Historical narratives were used for shaping young men into ideal public figures through the teaching of rhetoric and extraction of virtue. Thus, it did not matter that King Arthur’s exploits were mythical; it mattered that he exemplified dutiful chivalric virtues. Sir Thomas Elyot in *The Boke Named the Governour* (1531) centred history in teaching duty to statesmen: “Surely if a noble man do thus seryously and diligently rede histories, I dare affirme, there is no study or science for him of equal commoditie and pleasure, hauynge regarde to euery tyme and age.”³⁷ Historians were responsible for providing historical events which presented exemplary models of virtue to imitate and/or of evil to abhor. The bookseller William London succinctly outlines this in his 1657 *Catalogue*: “In History are

³⁴ Angus Vine, ‘Myth and Legend’ in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Culture in Early Modern England*, ed. by Andrew Hadfield, Matthew Dimmock & Abigail Shinn (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014) pp.103-118 (p.112). On the reception of the Galfridian myth see T. D. Kendrick, *British Antiquity* (London: Methuen, 1950); Arthur B. Ferguson, *Utter Antiquity: Perceptions of Pre-History in Renaissance England* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), pp.84-105 especially.

³⁵ Thomas Nashe, *The Anatomie of Absurditie* (London: I. Charlewood for Thomas Hacket, 1589), sig.Aiii^r.

³⁶ Anthony Grafton, *Bring Out Your Dead: The Past As Revelation* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2001), p.111. See also Anthony Grafton, *What Was History?: The Art of History in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

³⁷ Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Boke Named the Governour* (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1537), fol.38^v.

many Examples of Virtues, as Copies drawn for our imitation; as baits to allure us; And alas! no few of vice, as Sea-marks to warn us; as a glass to shew us the ugly deformity of sinne.”³⁸ As historical authenticity was not the primary objective, the inclusion of inaccurate speeches was often desired. These speeches played into the *vera lex historiae*, the true law of history, tradition which regarded the sense of the speeches as true, if not the exact words. Burke observes that “it was always possible to produce a ‘hortatory oration’. The reading public seem to have liked this; the evidence is the fact that anthologies of speeches from leading historians, ancient and modern, were published.”³⁹ For instance, François de Belleforest’s *Military Harangues* (1573) compiled speeches from famous histories and provided summaries of the effects they produced. There were of course other pedagogic usages of history which lay outwith the teaching of virtuous Christian morality. Grafton observes that at the start of the sixteenth century “Niccolò Machiavelli and Francesco Guicciardini had called into question the traditional humanist justifications for studying history. Both had insisted that one should draw only pragmatic, not moral lessons from the ancient past” (Grafton, p.113). Machiavelli and Guicciardini believed history should be used towards the development of more complex political behaviour, with an emphasis on pragmatism. In terms of duty, this meant a shift from Ciceronian idealism to a more realistic, but potentially unethical, dynamic which encouraged an ends justify the means mentality.

During the seventeenth century historians started to retire the invention of speeches and descriptions of battles, meaning that, in Nelson’s words, “the gap between their metier and that of the “poets” had widened to the point where one could no longer mix the genres without qualms” (Nelson, p.105). William Camden in his *Annals* (1615 and 1625) abandoned the liberties taken by other historians: “I haue thrust in no occasions, but such as were truly spoken; or those reduced to fewer words: much lesse haue I fained any.”⁴⁰ Camden thought artistic liberty detracted from what he perceived as the role of the historian, the relation of recorded facts. While the distinction between historians and poets may have been more pronounced, all historians dealt with how to artistically form their sources into narratives. Cicero understood that history depended on poetic arrangement: “Do you see how great a responsibility the orator has in historical writing?” (*Oratore*, p.243).⁴¹ Conversely, the poet often worked towards the didactic aims of history. Along with Cicero’s definition of history, another central tenet of

³⁸ William London, *A Catalogue of the Most Vendible Books in England* (London: s.n, 1657), sig.F4^r.

³⁹ Peter Burke, *The Renaissance Sense of the Past* (London: Edward Arnold, 1969), pp.106-7.

⁴⁰ William Camden, *Annales, the true and royall history of the famous emperesse Elizabeth Queene of England [...]* (London: George Purslowe, Humphrey Lownes, and Miles Flesher for Beniamin Fisher, 1625), ‘The Avthor To The Reader’, unpaginated. For the pre-eminent study of Camden’s *Annals* see Patrick Collinson, ‘One of Us: William Camden and the Making of History’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 8 (1998), pp.139-163.

⁴¹ “Videtisne, quantum munus sit oratoris historia?”, p.242.

humanism was taken from Aristotle's *Poetics*: "poetry is more philosophical and more elevated than history, since poetry relates more of the universal, while history relates particulars."⁴² Not all humanists saw poetry as lesser because it muddied historical truth; rather, to its defenders, it was greater because of its potential to improve upon history. This argument is repeated in Sidney's *Defence of Poesie*: "Poetrie euer sets vertue so out in her best cullours", whereas "Historie beeing captiued to the trueth of a foolish world, is many times a terror from well-doing, and an encouragement to vnbrideled wickednes" (Sidney, sig.D4^v). In other words, history, unlike poetry, fails to draw out the necessary doctrine from its examples. Therefore, to Sidney, poetry, including poetry based on historical subjects, is a better teacher of duty.

What is clear is that history and poetry, despite being increasingly separate categories, featured considerable overlap in execution and aim. Blair Worden confirms that "[i]f the oscillation of Renaissance writers between fact and fiction disconcerts modernity, it becomes intelligible once we recognize, in the history and poetry of that time, not distant or opposing activities but alternative and complementary means of instruction."⁴³ The fluidity between history and poetry is most clearly seen in the history play. Dramatists taking history as their subject meant that they partly took on the role of the historian, demonstrating the permeable boundary between poetry and history. Speaking of this hybrid status, Kewes confirms that "Renaissance poetry, drama, and prose historiography, which were often written by the same people, routinely shared aims and preoccupations."⁴⁴ As an example, Kewes points to Thomas Heywood, who wrote plays based on English, Roman, and contemporary history, the poem *Troia Britannica*, produced mayoral pageants which included Roman lore, translated Sallust, and wrote prose accounts of figures such as Elizabeth I. In his *An Apology for Actors* he claims that history plays "haue made the ignorant more apprehensiuē, taught the vnlearned the knowledge of many famous histories, instructed such as canot reade in the discouery of all our English Chronicles."⁴⁵ Historical drama, no less than historical prose, could serve the purposes of history.

DUTY ON THE ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC STAGE

⁴² Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. by Stephen Halliwell (Loeb; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 1451a35–1451b10.

⁴³ Blair Worden, 'Historians and Poets' in *The Uses of History in Early Modern England*, ed. by Paulina Kewes (San Marino, California: University of California Press, 2006), pp.69-90 (pp.73-4).

⁴⁴ Paulina Kewes, 'History and its Uses' in *The Uses of History in Early Modern England*, ed. by Paulina Kewes (San Marino, California: University of California Press, 2006), pp.1-30 (p.7).

⁴⁵ Thomas Heywood, *An Apology for Actors* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1612), sig.F3^r. By 'apprehensiuē', Heywood means intelligent, perceptive or quick. See "apprehensiuē", adj. 3 and 4. OED Online, March 2021. Oxford University Press. <<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/9809>>.

The principal choice for the sites of performance discussed in this thesis is their interconnected nature. The universities of Cambridge and Oxford, the Inns of Court, the English Jesuit colleges, and the professional London stage while usually discussed separately, and certainly holding important differences, are linked by their exploration of duty in the history play. It was common for university men to move to the Inns and so many students had experienced the drama of more than one academic institution. These students were also common theatre-goers and dramatists of the professional stage in London. Given the connections between these four sites it seems peculiar to draw strict lines between the types of drama they produced. This thesis also brings Jesuit colleges into the discussion by focusing on expatriate Jesuit playwrights at English colleges to demonstrate that the Jesuit stage was not severed dramatically as it was geographically. The focus on these locations is not to discount plays from places such as grammar schools or Scotland. However, not only are the links strongest between the plays from the chosen sites, but this thesis limits itself to a study of extant history plays. Examples of surviving Scottish plays are relatively rare. The earliest surviving plays known to have been written by a Scot are the historian and scholar George Buchanan's Latin tragedies, *Baptistes* and *Jephtes*, first performed in Bordeaux in the 1540s. Sarah Carpenter outlines the kinds of performance that took place before the Scottish Reformation, focusing on fragmentary evidence of religious celebrations and courtly spectacles because "[s]carcely any Scottish play-texts survive from before 1650."⁴⁶ John McGavin and Eila Williamson's upcoming *Records of Early Drama: South-East Scotland* will provide further vital evidence about theatre in Scotland. However, this thesis is unable to consider Scottish university and court plays because the texts did not survive. The same is true of the plays performed by boys in grammar schools; there are no extant history plays amongst the surviving plays. Early modern closet drama does feature instances of histories, notably Mary Sidney's *Antonius* (1592), Samuel Daniel's companion piece *Cleopatra* (1594), Elizabeth Cary's *Edward II* (written 1626; published 1680), and the Scottish dramatist and poet William Alexander's quartet *Croesus, Darius, The Alexandrian, and Julius Caesar*, which were published together as *The Monarchick Tragedies* (1604). While these plays deal with concerns of duty, they were not performed in a public context and their private nature causes them to be excluded from this study. Gwinne's *Nero*, while never performed, was written with the intention of being staged publicly, hence its inclusion in the Oxford chapter.

The sites of performance covered in this thesis all produced different styles of history play and while there is considerable overlap, the differences are integral to understanding their particular conceptions of duty and historical drama. The most obvious dichotomy is between the academic

⁴⁶ Sarah Carpenter, 'Scottish Drama until 1650' in *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Drama*, ed. by Ian Brown (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), p.6.

stages and the popular stage and the structure of this thesis reflects that dynamic, focusing on the academic institutions initially before turning to the more outlying professional playhouses. This means the structure of this study is not chronological, but the development of duty in drama was far from simplistically linear itself. This structure serves to highlight the kinship between the educational stages, in terms of instructive explicitness, before moving onto the less explicit, but no less educationally significant, professional stage. Of course, there are also significant differences between the pedagogic sites. Jesuit colleges were founded on the missionary religious ideals of St. Ignatius of Loyola and so were focused on instilling Catholic duty to battle corruption at royal courts. Inns students were closely linked with the government and the drama reflects this interest by focusing on the issues of giving and receiving royal counsel. The drama of Oxford and Cambridge had a less specific aim, teaching students, who had career aspirations in a variety of socially elite professions, about civic duty but also the ethical dilemmas which accompany political life. In some respects the drama of the popular stage is the outlier here, being commercially, not didactically, driven. However, the politically educative aspects of history in scholarly drama carried over in a less direct way to the plays put on for mass audiences. Jean E. Howard argues that commercial history plays let playgoers “experience a uniquely dialogic and complex exploration of political ideas that circulated in different forms in other quarters of the national culture.”⁴⁷ While the academic stage was often more direct, the popular stage investigated the clash between ideals of duty and the reality of vice in politics.

Burke summarizes that the elite “tradition was transmitted formally at grammar schools and at universities. It was a closed tradition in the sense that people who had not attended these institutions, which were not open to all, were excluded”, while the popular tradition “was transmitted informally. It was open to all, like the church, the tavern and the market-place.”⁴⁸ The London playhouses were open to anyone willing to pay the price of admission and so were ‘open’ in the way that elite drama was ‘closed’. Despite this gap, Frederick S. Boas notes that university students such as Marlowe and Greene, amongst others, carried their experience of academic drama “into the service of the London professional stage” and “[t]he nobles who, as undergraduate spectators or actors, had been familiarized with the learned drama became patrons” of public theatres.⁴⁹ Universities were hermetic in nature but the majority of commercial playwrights had attended Oxford, Cambridge and/or the Inns and they brought their exclusive experience of academic drama to a wider audience. Amy Lidster notes that stationers

⁴⁷ Jean E. Howard, ‘Dramatic Traditions and Shakespeare’s Political Thought’ in *British Political Thought in History, Literature and Theory, 1500–1800*, ed. by David Armitage (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp.129-144 (p.143).

⁴⁸ Burke, *Popular Culture* (1978), p.28.

⁴⁹ Frederick S. Boas, *University Drama in the Tudor Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1914), p.351.

often highlighted a play's "connection to aristocratic patrons and gentlemanly or university-educated writers", and this can be seen across numerous playbooks: "John Danter with *The Wounds of Civil War*, Edward White with *The Massacre at Paris*, William Jones with *Edward II*, and Thomas Woodcock with *Dido, Queen of Carthage*."⁵⁰ That many playwrights of the professional stage had these elite ties was a selling point, and their plays brought elite culture into the realm of popular culture. These playwrights often included references to classical history and mythology, taken from their humanist educations. Vine states that "[w]hile it is unlikely that audiences would have been expected to identify the sources of these allusions – only the small educated elite would have been able to do that – the frequency with which playwrights make them suggest that they were a staple of popular entertainment" (Vine, p.109). Traditionally there has been an insistence upon a stark distinction between the academic stage and the London playhouses, but they shared many creative and didactic similarities. Emily D. Bryan rightly declares that "the two institutions intersected powerfully in their deployment of mimesis as a cornerstone in the education and acculturation of young elite men in early modern England."⁵¹ This thesis will demonstrate that the pedagogy which is associated with academic theatre is often present in popular theatre. Speaking of the reverse dynamic, Kent Cartwright notes that "the separation that we moderns make between learned and popular drama may not have been drawn so sharply by Elizabethans" and that academic theatre is "rich exactly in the virtues that we attribute to popular theatre."⁵² These virtues, notably the entertainment value of elements such as graphic violence and the presence of ghosts, are often present in academic drama.

Academic drama was usually linguistically and physically inaccessible for the uneducated while the elite could imbibe both types of drama, but this thesis will show that a strict binary between popular and academic history plays does not withstand scrutiny. While the exclusivity of the audiences and the pedagogic explicitness are important distinguishing factors, the plays are unified by similar explorations regarding duty. All of the sites of performance in this study offered erudition and entertainment together, although in different measures, and by looking at them in the context of each other their important similarities will be elucidated, thereby reducing the perception of polarization between them. Furthermore, examining the interplay between these academic and non-academic performance spaces leads to a better understanding

⁵⁰ Amy Lidster, *Producing the History Play: The Agency of Repertory Companies, Stationers, and Patronage Networks in Early Modern England* (Unpublished PhD: King's College London, 2018), p.87 and Appendix B.

⁵¹ Emily D. Bryan, 'The Government of Performance: *Ignoramus* and the Micropolitics of Tudor-Student Relations' in *Early Modern Academic Drama*, ed. by Jonathan Walker and Paul D. Streufert (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), pp.87-113 (p.88).

⁵² Kent Cartwright, *Theatre and Humanism: English Drama in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.3.

of how pervasive the concept of duty was throughout the period and of how conceptions of duty could be directed, through history plays, towards specific audiences. By examining history plays from different sites, dramatists, and historical genres within the same study, both the cohesive nature of the history play, through the centrality of duty, and the idiosyncratic features of the different sites will be elucidated. Phyllis Rackin, speaking of popular theatre, states that the “the heterogeneity of the audience and the discursive instability of the new institution produced a polyvalent discourse that resisted the imposition of one single meaning.”⁵³ Similarly, Howard notes that “[l]ike a prism, Shakespeare’s plays are shot through with the political thought of his time; but [un]like a prism, they omit [*sic*] no single ray, but refract a multitude of colours.”⁵⁴ This also applies to the vast majority of early modern history plays. Certainly the ‘rays’ received and emitted from some plays are easier to pin down than others, such as those from the explicitly prescribed Jesuit plays. At the other end of the spectrum lie Shakespeare’s histories, which are not overtly polemical or directed. This thesis attempts to bridge the gap between the popular stage and the various academic stages, highlighting that the ‘rays’ they receive and emit are individual in some ways, for instance in their particular utilization of history and how they were directed towards the audience, but share commonality in others, specifically in their investigation of the ideals and issues of duty. Early modern historical drama provided a space in which to question and test notions of duty and this can be observed on the professional and non-professional stages alike.

A HISTORY PLAY BY ANY OTHER WORD

Before going any further, this thesis needs to pause to define the history play. For, as will be apparent by now, it is not using the term in the First Folio sense. Before beginning, it must be acknowledged that defining a literary genre is an abstract ideal and there will always be outlying and incongruous plays. Brian Walsh summarizes that “[t]he critic who polices the boundaries of the genre with a strict constructionist mindset inevitably becomes a Hercules fighting the hydra.”⁵⁵ A definition of the history play, while seeking to explain the kinship which exists between plays, must account for the impossibility of a perfect blanket definition. The working definition for this thesis is based upon Kewes’s argument that “we should be willing to consider any play, irrespective of its formal shape or fictional element, which

⁵³ Phyllis Rackin, *Stages of History: Shakespeare’s English Chronicles* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), p.27.

⁵⁴ Howard, ‘Dramatic Traditions and Shakespeare’s Political Thought’, (2006), p.129.

⁵⁵ Brian Walsh, ‘The History Play: Shakespeare and Beyond’ in *A New Companion to Renaissance Drama*, ed. by Arthur F. Kinney and Thomas Warren Hopper (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017), pp.371-387 (p.372).

represents, or purports to represent, a historical past, native or foreign, distant or recent.”⁵⁶ This inclusive definition is at odds with many of the previously developed scholarly definitions, some of which will now be traced in order to elucidate the reasons for adopting Kewes’s definition of the history play.

Many scholars have defined English medieval plays as histories and relegated plays which take foreign history as their subject to tragedy, creating an unnecessary sense of exclusion. For instance, G. K. Hunter claims that a history play is “about English dynastic politics of the feudal and immediately post-feudal period.”⁵⁷ Benjamin Griffin also focuses on English history but his parameter is “based upon the fact of the plot’s immersion in a historical continuum; this means that an aesthetic sense of either beginning or ending is frustrated.”⁵⁸ However, this definition is clearly also applicable to plays based on foreign histories. As Kewes points out, these definitions lead to “the history play” turning into shorthand for what is more accurately “the *English history play*” (Kewes, ‘Elizabethan History Play’, p.172). Some scholars go as far as to dismiss the plays written by anyone other than Shakespeare. Robert Ornstein contends that “[s]o preeminent was [Shakespeare’s] contribution that, if we omit his History Plays, the tradition very nearly ceases to be artistically significant.”⁵⁹ Ornstein not only ignores the many histories written by other public theatre dramatists, but also ignores the wealth of history plays performed on the academic stages, including Thomas Legge’s Cambridge-based *Richardus Tertius* (1579) which is peculiar considering it is the first play to use English history. Shakespeare was undoubtedly influential, but the idea that without his plays the genre would cease to be significant ignores the important contribution of other playwrights.

Shakespeare is often a focal point of not only definitions of the history play, but also studies of the history play. Some recent influential accounts include *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's History Plays* (2002) edited by Michael Hattaway, Janette Dillon’s *Shakespeare and the Staging of English History* (2012), and Ralf Hertel’s *Staging England in the Elizabethan History Play: Performing National Identity* (2014).⁶⁰ Some scholars have attempted

⁵⁶ Paulina Kewes, ‘The Elizabethan History Play: A True Genre?’, in *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works, vol. II: The Histories*, ed. Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp.170-93 (p.188).

⁵⁷ G. K. Hunter, ‘Truth and Art in History Plays’, *Shakespeare Survey*, 42 (1989), pp.15-24 (p.15).

⁵⁸ Benjamin Griffin, *Playing the Past: Approaches to English Historical Drama, 1385-1600* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001), p.73.

⁵⁹ Robert Ornstein, *A Kingdom for a Stage: The Achievement of Shakespeare's History Plays* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1972), p.7.

⁶⁰ Michael Hattaway (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's History Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Janette Dillon, *Shakespeare and the Staging of English History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Ralf Hertel, *Staging England in the Elizabethan History Play: Performing National Identity* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014). See also Warren Chernaik, *The Cambridge Introduction to Shakespeare's History Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Graham

to balance this emphasis on Shakespeare, such as Jean E. Howard in her 1999 essay ‘Other Englands: The View from the non-Shakespearean History Play’ and Walsh in his 2017 chapter ‘The History Play: Shakespeare and Beyond’.⁶¹ This thesis attempts to expand the canon further and shift the focus away from only the commercial stage. History plays have briefly been touched upon in studies of academic drama such as Boas’s *University Drama in the Tudor Age* (1914), Jessica Winston’s *Lawyers at Play: Literature, Law, and Politics at the Early Modern Inns of Court, 1558-1581* (2016), and William H. McCabe’s *An Introduction to Jesuit Theater* (1983).⁶² This thesis will build upon these crucial works by looking at the universities, Inns, and Jesuit colleges not only together and in comparison with each other but also alongside the London playhouses, thus being the first full length study which explicitly and in detail encompasses a selection of history plays from all of these sites.

Irving Ribner believes that the history play is a genre “which the Elizabethans themselves made no attempt to define”.⁶³ Teresa Grant and Barbara Ravelhofer challenge this idea, arguing that “playwrights wrote prefaces to, or included scenes in their plays, which gives us some indication that they did consider the ‘history’ play as a distinct genre” and more than that, “they also give us evidence that mixed genres were commonly accepted and that they were [...] more broad-minded than twentieth-century critics have suggested.”⁶⁴ Indeed, many English history plays do not fit within the genre, as described by many critics, perfectly. Christopher Marlowe’s depiction of the relationship between Edward II and his favourite, Gaveston, in *Edward II* (1592) has shades of tragedy but this does not preclude it from being a history. Like other histories, Marlowe’s play bent the past to comment on contemporary issues, with Kewes arguing that it “aims at a multiplicity of topical targets to raise a general question about the position of monarchy in a confessionally polarised world which, however, it refuses to resolve”.⁶⁵ Shakespeare’s *1 Henry IV* (1597) features many comical elements. Spectators could

Holderness, *Shakespeare’s History Plays: Richard II to Henry V* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992); and Ton Honselaars (ed.), *Shakespeare’s History Plays: Performance, Translation and Adaptation in Britain and Abroad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁶¹ Jean E. Howard, ‘Other Englands: The View from the non-Shakespearean History Play’ in *Other Voices, Other Views: Expanding the Canon in English Renaissance Studies*, ed. by Helen Ostovich, Mary V. Silcox, Graham Roebuck (Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 1999), pp.135-153; Walsh, ‘The History Play’ (2017); see also Dermot Cavanagh, *Language and Politics in the Sixteenth-Century History Play* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), which discusses both Shakespearean and non-Shakespearean plays.

⁶² Boas, *University Drama in the Tudor Age* (1914); Jessica Winston, *Lawyers at Play: Literature, Law, and Politics at the Early Modern Inns of Court, 1558-1581* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); William H. McCabe, SJ, *An Introduction to Jesuit Theater* (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1983).

⁶³ Irving Ribner, *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare* (London: Routledge, 1965), p.11.

⁶⁴ Teresa Grant and Barbara Ravelhofer, *English Historical Drama, 1500-1660: Forms Outside the Canon* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p.12.

⁶⁵ Paulina Kewes, ‘Marlowe, history, and politics’ in *Christopher Marlowe in Context*, ed. by Emily C. Bartels and Emma Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p.152.

laugh along with Falstaff while also being invested in Prince Hal's political journey. Roberta Barker centres her attention on Hotspur, arguing that his role moves "from tragic to comic to historical modes in order to accommodate shifting theatrical conditions and shifting constructions of heroism."⁶⁶ From this, she concludes that "it is possible to resurrect a performative figure that inhabited all three genres, becoming an example of Polonius's "tragic-comical-historical"" (Ibid, p.289). Not only does Hotspur as a character inhabit these genres, but the play itself also inhabits these genres, demonstrating the multivalent quality which histories could hold. In a similar vein to Grant and Ravelhofer, Freyja Cox Jensen states that "in the early modern period, boundaries were far less 'thick' than they seem today, and historical culture was remarkably flexible."⁶⁷ Modern categorisations of historical drama should likewise be flexible. Thus, the 'history' genre non-exhaustively includes English, classical, foreign, legendary, and recent history, and comedic and tragic elements do not exclude plays from also being histories.

It is particularly peculiar to exclude classical plays from the historical drama category since it was the Roman, not English, past which was prioritized at grammar schools and universities.⁶⁸ Vine confirms that for "English scholars and antiquaries, also brought up on a diet of classical authors, the island's Roman heritage seemed as familiar, if not more so, than much of its more recent past."⁶⁹ To base school learning so firmly on Roman history encouraged the educated class to absorb classical values. Jensen confirms that the inculcation of these ideals meant that English men "drew upon the political philosophy of Roman Stoic writers for the formulation of their own language of politics, using ideas from the late republic to build a theory of civic, Christian duty in a princely commonwealth" (Jensen, p.1). Young men were instilled with a combination of Christian values and classical duty to prepare them for their active civic duty to the commonweal. History plays, both classical and non-classical, often sought to instil similar notions of duty (and also often sought to interrogate them). Along with the classical, legendary, and English history plays previously mentioned, foreign and contemporary history plays also developed this preoccupation with duty. For instance, Marlowe's two-part *Tamburlaine the Great* (1587-1588) and George Chapman's contemporary French play *Bussy D'Ambois* (1607)

⁶⁶ Roberta Barker, 'Tragic-Comical-Historical Hotspur', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 54.3 (2003), pp.288-307 (p.289). For more on the comical elements in the play see C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and Its Relation to Social Custom* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), pp.219-251.

⁶⁷ Freyja Cox Jensen, *Reading the Roman Republic in Early Modern England* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012), p.16.

⁶⁸ As an illustration of this, Thomas Goodwin, the humanist headmaster of Abingdon School, put together a textbook of classical history, *Romanae historiae anthologia* (1614), which was originally intended specifically for his school but was reprinted often for wider use. For more on classical histories being read at the universities see Chapter 2, pp.56-7.

⁶⁹ Vine, *In Defiance of Time* (2010), p.18.

deal with the complexities of political duty in the context of conquest and court respectively. Plays can be counted as histories if they are based upon a recognizable historical past, whether it is channelled through the English Henry V, the mythical Arthur, the Roman Nero, or the Asian Tamburlaine.

This thesis resists privileging English medieval commercial plays in the historical canon and relegating all other plays to tragedy or declaring them unimportant. Rather than comparing plays against each other, Kewes's definition is based upon viewing "historical drama as one among a number of ways in which a society saturated in history, and turning to it instinctively to interpret the present, looked to the theatre for both instruction and entertainment" (Kewes, 'Elizabethan History Play', p.189). This interpretation accounts for the fluidity between history and poetry. Worden argues that "history and poetry came closest together [...] as instruments of political instruction" (Worden, p.77). Historical drama should not be viewed as a separate entity from other forms of printed or staged history, such as coronation pageants, poems, and prose historiography, but as part of how the early moderns conceived of and used history.

Furthermore, as history mutated, with Machiavellian realism creeping in, so did poetry. Worden highlights that "[t]he decline of the genre of chivalric fable, the growing psychological realism of the drama, the spreading unease at morally tidy endings" were developments which "carried into poetry the intellectual trends that were animating history too" (Ibid, p.92). Both Kewes and Worden demonstrate that historical drama contributed to early modern society's understanding of history. This thesis seeks to build upon this, demonstrating that historical drama also contributed to how early moderns conceived of duty.

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This introduction has demonstrated the need to explore duty in the history play, traced the early modern sense of the past, briefly explored the differences between the sites of performance, and defined the history play genre. The chapters that follow explore in detail how early modern history plays explored and presented ideals and issues of duty. Before discussing the sites of performance, though, Chapter 1 will examine early modern conceptions of duty, primarily through the lens of how Ciceronian idealism, Tacitean reason of state, and Machiavellian pragmatism were received in sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century England. Duty was an integral concept in the classical world and through humanism it became a defining principle of the early modern world as well. This chapter will demonstrate not only the ubiquity of duty but also its adaptability to different ethical frameworks, providing a springboard from which to develop an understanding of notions of duty within drama.

Chapter 2 turns to the University of Cambridge and Legge's *Richardus Tertius*, which is

notable for not only being the first play to employ English history but also for being an early iteration of the type of history play later seen on the commercial stage. It first traces the academic and recreational culture of both Cambridge and Oxford and then demonstrates how Legge's play combined the educational and entertaining aspects of university life. *Richardus Tertius* used history to instil notions of duty in the student audience and it did this by adapting elements of Seneca's tragedies. Legge's Ricardian play is thus a blend of humanist education, Senecan tragedy, and medieval festive entertainment; these influences function together to allow Legge to examine and inculcate dutiful values of Christian civic obligation through the negative example of Richard III and his advisors.

Chapter 3 focuses on drama from the University of Oxford, taking as examples Gager's *Dido*, performed in 1583, and Gwinne's *Nero*, printed in 1603. Both plays operate as forms of counsel, and while they are briefly directed to the monarch, they seek to teach the duties of statecraft to courtiers and students. *Dido*, staged for the visit of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and the royal guest Olbracht Łaski, is an example of how academic drama could be directed towards a specific elite audience. *Nero* serves as a contrast, in that it is tailored not to guests from the royal court, but to Oxford students with aspirations to court positions. The pairing of *Dido* and *Nero* is fruitful not only in examining how their counsel about duty was directed towards different audiences, but in examining their different dramatic techniques. While *Dido*'s extravagant effects are similar to court masques, fitting given the audience, *Nero*'s employment of vivid onstage deaths brings it closer in line with the drama of the professional stage.

Chapter 4 takes the drama produced at the Inns of Court as its subject, with an examination of *Gorboduc* by Norton and Sackville and *The Misfortunes of Arthur* by Thomas Hughes and other Inns men. The academic structure of the Inns differed from the universities and this chapter begins by outlining this before turning to the plays themselves, which take legendary material as their subjects and Senecan tragedy as their stylistic model to counsel Elizabeth and her court. *Gorboduc* is one of the earliest history plays and so demonstrates that duty has been a concern of the history play from the outset. *Misfortunes* is deserving of wider critical attention and is important in showcasing how this concern with duty was on-going not only in Inns drama, but also on-going in drama presented before the Queen. Both plays, directed towards this courtly audience, argue that rulers must work in collaboration with their counsellors.

Chapter 5 looks to the English Jesuit colleges on the continent, taking Carleton's *Fatum Vortigerni* and Joseph Simons's *Theoctistus* (1624) as its case-studies to demonstrate the differences between the techniques employed by earlier and later Jesuit drama to inculcate duty.

The chapter will first examine the setup of Jesuit colleges and will highlight the importance of drama in the curriculum as a pedagogic tool. *Fatum Vortigerni* is representative of earlier Jesuit drama, in that the educative Catholic morals are not dressed in elaborate stagecraft.

Nonetheless, it is more dramatically engaged than many of its counterparts and demonstrates similarities to commercial London plays. *Theoctistus* by contrast, while still promoting religious duty, does so through the spectacular stage effects which Jesuit plays became known for. Jesuit plays becoming more extravagant helped to engage people external to the colleges, thus spreading the message of Catholic virtue being essential to political duty to a broader, non-academic, audience as well as to the students.

Chapter 6 returns to England to examine the professional playhouses in London, where plays were performed to less specific audiences and this different cultural milieu will be explained. The plays of the popular stage were usually exploratory rather than didactically axiomatic like many of their academic counterparts. However, London playhouses still facilitated the development of political thought, especially in regard to duty. The number of surviving commercial history plays is vast and so this chapter focuses only on dramatic interpretations of Henry V, and Shakespeare's *Henry V* (1599) in particular. While Shakespeare is not representative of the whole commercial stage, his influential plays exhibit the complicated ways in which the duties of statesmen could be interrogated. By concentrating on Henry V this chapter is also able to look beyond Shakespeare to the more representative anonymous *Famous Victories of Henry V* (c. 1586-7) and Anthony Munday, Michael Drayton, Richard Hathwaye, and Robert Wilson's *Sir John Oldcastle*, which present more straightforward lessons about political duty.

Finally, the thesis ends with a short conclusion which draws these chapters together. This thesis demonstrates that the strand which links these plays is their testing of Ciceronian and Christian ideals of duty within the reality provided by historical narratives. It also demonstrates that the drama from these various sites has much more in common than previously thought, specifically in regard to their preoccupation with duty, but also in regard to their dramatic and pedagogical techniques. To understand the various ways in which duty was conceptualized we must read across these different sites. This thesis will illuminate both the centrality and malleability of duty as a concept not just to the history play but also to broader political thought in the early modern period. Ideals of duty are central to history plays and political thought, but more than that the interrogation and revelation of these ideals as being impractical is also central.

1. ON DUTY: THE PERCEPTION OF DUTY IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

In 1599 King James VI of Scotland wrote his manual on kingship, *Basilikon Doron*, to guide his eldest son, Prince Henry, through the difficulties of the public role. He emphasized, first and foremost, the necessity of religion in leadership: “ye shall know all the things necessarie for the discharge of your duetie, both as a Christian, and as a King; seeing in him, as in a mirrour, the course of all earthly things, whereof hee is the spring and onely moouer.”⁷⁰ The importance of both Christian and kingly duties is identified here, with God and the king ideally being mirrors of each other. This advice from a king elucidates just how important the concept of duty was in the early modern period. While it was rare for a king to write about his own perception of duty, it was most certainly not rare for the learned culture of the period to do so and the wealth of manuals set to this purpose highlights just how pervasive the concept of duty was. This chapter examines the various interpretations of duty during the early modern period, thus showing that duty was a concept that was being redefined across the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Early modern thinkers reshaped notions of duty by taking classical models, most commonly Cicero and Tacitus, and combining them with their own moral outlook, thereby adapting ideas of duty to their own times. Cicero and Tacitus were often blended with Christianity and/or reason of state, which refers to statecraft which is dictated by political aims rather than moral intentions and therefore sometimes leads to turpitude. The many different ways of defining duty during the early modern period attests to its importance as a concept but also to its malleability, in that it can be adopted into different ethical frameworks.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines duty as an “[a]ction, or an act, that is due in the way of moral or legal obligation; that which one ought or is bound to do.”⁷¹ The first recorded use of this meaning is from Geoffrey Chaucer’s *The Legend of Good Women* (1385), where in a revised prologue Alceste speaks of the obligations of lordship: “And that hym owith o verry duetee / Schewyn his peple pley n benygnete / And wel to heryn here excusacyounis.”⁷² While aligning duty with kindness, this also overlaps with the further definition of duty described as, “[t]he action which one’s position or station directly requires; business, office, function.”⁷³ This sense is first introduced in 1389 by the Gild of Garlekhith: “3er, and done þerto alle þe duytes

⁷⁰ James VI and I, *Basilikon Doron* in *The Political Works of James I*, ed. by Charles Howard McIlwain (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918), p.12.

⁷¹ “duty”, n., 4. a. OED Online, March 2019. Oxford University Press.
<<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/58732>> [accessed 20/03/2019].

⁷² Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Legend of Good Women* (1385) in *The Colledge Chaucer*, ed. by Henry Noble MacCracken (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1913), l.360-62.

⁷³ “duty”, n., 5. a. OED Online, March 2019. Oxford University Press.
<<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/58732>> [accessed 20/03/2019].

with-in þe tyme.”⁷⁴ Both definitions are preoccupied with what a person *should* do in relation to their moral, legal, or business obligations. Taking these definitions as the starting point, this chapter will seek to define what duty meant during the early modern period by looking at a variety of texts which are occupied with duty. It will trace the evolution in conceptions of duty from classical political and moral texts to their early modern counterparts. Strictly upholding duty was a pervasive ideal in ancient Rome, and humanism, which focused on the study of classical antiquity, brought the Ciceronian framework for duty into early modern consciousness. While Cicero’s *De Officiis* (44 BC) laid the groundwork for ideas about duty, how this text was perceived by humanists and combined with Christianity shaped perceptions of duty. Additionally, while Cicero was the most straightforward and influential writer on duty, he was not the only ancient writer whose works were rediscovered and used in this context, as Tacitus also became increasingly influential on early modern ideas of duty during the 1590s. Cicero’s idealistic guide to duty was the baseline but there was growing interest in Tacitus and his more pragmatic notions of duty in a realistic context. The lack of clarity over Tacitus’s opinions on duty led to a vast variety of interpretations of his works, something not seen with as much diversity in regard to Cicero’s works. The difference between Cicero’s axiomatic ideals and Tacitus’s variously interpreted ideas demonstrates the diverse range of possible explanations of duty. This is also developed by the darker takes on political duty, most notably in the form of Machiavelli’s *The Prince* (1532). During the early modern period historians, playwrights, and political thinkers were redefining what it meant to be a statesman and how to negotiate ideals of duty by using both classical and contemporary texts. This chapter will demonstrate the diversity of interpretations of duty, while also illuminating its ubiquity as a concept.

CICERONIAN IDEALISM

Cicero’s *De Officiis* was one of the most important political and philosophical classical texts to influence early modern England. T. W. Baldwin attests that although not commonly read by modern day audiences, “In Shakespeare’s day [...] *De Officiis* was the pinnacle of moral philosophy.”⁷⁵ It was first translated into English by Robert Whittington in 1534, who declared in his preface that both private citizens and public statesmen could benefit from reading it: “there is no maner of persones [...] not onely of private persones and cytezens but also of suche as be gouerners of cytes, regyons, nacyons, realms, and monarchyes whome these offyces do

⁷⁴ Toulmin Smith (ed.), *English guilds: the original ordinances of more than one hundred early English guilds: together with The olde Usages of the cite of Wynchestre; the Ordinances of Worcester; the Office of the Mayor of Bristol; and the Costomary of the Manor of Tettenhall-Regis: from manuscripts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Humanities Text Initiative, 1999), p.5.

⁷⁵ T. W. Baldwin, *William Shakespere's small Latine & lesse Greeke* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1944), p.590.

not instructe and enfourme.”⁷⁶ Many people had access to the text before 1534 though, as it was widely disseminated in the original Latin. Over 600 manuscripts survive and 34 Latin printed editions were published in the fifteenth century alone, establishing just how pervasive its textual tradition is. Marcia L. Colish states that “*De Officiis* was read and copied more frequently than any other single work of classical Latin prose in the Middle Ages and Renaissance.”⁷⁷ Colish further confirms that “Cicero’s influence outstripped that of all other classical authors on topics such as social utility, civic virtue, the application of moral rules to times, places, and circumstances, and the relations between virtue and expediency” (Ibid, p.83). Richard Cust also comments on the utility of *De Officiis*, declaring that it was a “handbook for the conscientious magistrate. It was familiar to every schoolboy as the principal text for learning Latin in the grammar schools and it was revered as a source of moral instruction.”⁷⁸

De Officiis is structured around a discussion of honourable actions (Book I), advantageous actions (Book II) and advice on how to reconcile the conflict between honour and advantage (Book III). Cicero advocates placing duty to country over personal desires, being both honourable and advantageous: “This, then, ought to be the chief end of all men, to make the interest of each individual and of the whole body politic identical. For, if the individual appropriates to selfish ends what should be devoted to the common good, all human fellowship will be destroyed” (Cicero, III: 26). The only thing more important than service to country is adherence to religion: “our first duty is to the immortal gods; our second, to country; our third, to parents; and so on, in a descending scale, to the rest.” (Cicero, I: 160). For Cicero, working towards the prosperity of the Roman Republic is what should occupy daily life, with religion being a constantly present background influence. Walter Nicgorski affirms that for Cicero “the political is quite inextricably bound up with the moral: to speak of political duties is, of course, to reveal their fundamental moral character. Moral duties can be said to comprehend and shape political duties.”⁷⁹ The political is not just an avenue through which moral virtue is performed, but an essential element of it and so *De Officiis* is deeply concerned with the duties of a statesman. That is not to say that the text ignores private citizens, but they receive far less attention. For instance, Cicero calls attention to the differences between duty for a magistrate and a private citizen:

⁷⁶ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *The three bookes of Tyllyes offyces*, trans. by Robert Whittington (London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1534), sig.b4^r.

⁷⁷ Marcia L. Colish, ‘Cicero’s *De Officiis* and Machiavelli’s *Prince*’, *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 9.4 (1978), pp.80-93 (p.81).

⁷⁸ Richard Cust, ‘The “public man” in Late Tudor and Early Stuart England’, in *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*, ed. by Peter Lake and Stephen Pincus (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp.116-43 (p.117).

⁷⁹ Walter Nicgorski, *Cicero’s Skepticism and His Recovery of Political Philosophy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp.113-114.

It is, then, peculiarly the place of a magistrate to bear in mind that he represents the state and that it is his duty to uphold its honour and its dignity, to enforce the law, to dispense to all their constitutional rights, and to remember that all this has been committed to him as a sacred trust. The private individual ought first, in private relations, to live on fair and equal terms with his fellow-citizens, with a spirit neither servile and grovelling nor yet domineering. (Cicero, I: 124)

Cicero establishes that people must consider what is right and dutiful for them in a specific situation, rather than looking to a vague concept of what is universally right. He teaches that a person does not deduce their duties by looking to the highest moral good, but rather by looking to what should be done in an individual situation as it relates to their person specifically. While the supreme good is central to moral action, quotidian morality is related to individual character and action. Therefore, the precepts he discusses are for the governing of everyday life, with duty being based upon what is both morally right and useful. If both of these are in agreement then duty is straightforward but it is when they conflict that issues arise. This conflict is regarded as a common experience but one which Cicero aims to resolve in his three books on the subject. The moral philosophy advanced in *De Officiis* is framed by its republican context and so while much attention is given to magistrates, citizens are not insignificant. Within the Roman Republic citizens were expected to prioritize their civic duty and Cicero's writings, responding as they were to the decline of the republic, sought to rectify the political situation in Rome through a nationwide re-centring of dutiful values.

Despite acknowledging the real life issue of reconciling conflicting duties, Cicero's solution is highly idealistic. His resolution is to make expedient actions subservient to morally right actions:

Thus there are many things which in and of themselves seem morally right, but which under certain circumstances prove to be not morally right: to keep a promise, to abide by an agreement, to restore a trust may, with a change of expediency, cease to be morally right. With this I think I have said enough about those actions which masquerade as expedient under the guise of prudence, while they are really contrary to justice. (Cicero, III: 95)

Essentially, Cicero's advice to resolve conflicting duties is to reframe how an individual categorizes those duties. An expedient action can only be dutiful if it is also morally right. Any action which is personally advantageous but to the detriment of the country is immoral: "for you would be acting against the state, which ought to be the dearest thing in the world to

you” (Cicero, III: 95). Moral worth is tied to political action. Colish confirms that, “For Cicero the *honestum*, or the common good, and the *utile*, or individual interest, cannot conflict because man is part of a larger social and moral whole, which makes radical individualism unacceptable as a basis for ethical action” (Colish, p.89). Cicero is therefore not an advocate for unadulterated pragmatism because everything must contribute to the highest moral goals, namely to the benefit of the polity. This harmony between public and private is predicated on the ideal that society is based upon the needs of the individual and the greater whole being reciprocal. This idealistic view leaves no room for the realities of discordant political life and the endless human capacity for self-interest, both of which characterize public actions as well as private ones. Written as a response to the immediate crisis which Rome was experiencing, *De Officiis*’s ideal conception of duty was put forth as an attempt to return the republican government to glory. Despite how unattainable his ideals are when faced with reality, and despite citizens having less political agency under a monarchical regime, many morally focused early modern minds adapted Cicero’s ideals into their own political philosophy.

Cicero’s high ideals for morality and politics align well with many of the religious and political texts of the early modern period. His prescription that duty to the gods comes before all else fits with Christian conceptions of duty of the time, despite the difference in religion. William Tyndale’s 1526 English translation of the Bible, for example, shares with Cicero a similar sense of duty being something one ought to do, regardless of the benefit to oneself: “Soo lyke wyse ye when ye have done all those thinges which are commaunded you: saye we are vnprofitable servautes. We have done: ye which was oure duetye to do.”⁸⁰ An even stronger affinity is seen in the Geneva Bible of 1560: “Feare God and kepe his commandments: for this is the whole dutie of man.”⁸¹ Both Cicero and Christianity place duty to the gods and God above all other duties. Joseph Hall, the Bishop of Exeter, in his ‘Description of a Good and Faithful Courtier’ argues that for men of royal courts, their duty to God should trickle down to their duty to the monarch: “Our courtier is no other than virtuous and serves the God of Heaven as his first Maker, and from Him services his duty to these earthen gods.”⁸² *The Books of Homilies* (1547, 1562, and 1571) also highlight the importance of duty to God and were written because of the need for local congregations to be taught Christianity in English. Before this church services were conducted in Latin, leading to what they perceived as a lack of true understanding for people without classical education. *The Homilies* provided parsons with a collection of sermons which could be relied upon to teach people theology. Homilies were intended to be delivered in

⁸⁰ William Tyndale, *The newe Testament* (Worms, Germany: P. Schoeffer, 1526), Luke 17:10.

⁸¹ *The Bible and Holy Scriptures conteyned in the Olde and Newe Testament* (Geneva: Rouland Hall, 1560), Ecclesiastes 12:13.

⁸² Joseph Hall, *Epistles, the second volume: containing two decads* (London: A. Hatfield for Eleazar Edgar & Samuel Macham, 1608), pp.101-2.

every church in England on the same Sundays of the year and it was thought to be vital for the moral health of the nation that these homilies were understood. One instance of duty to God being prioritized above all else is demonstrated in ‘An Homilie against disobedience and wylfull rebellion’:

Rebells therefore the worst of all Subiects are most redie to rebellion, as beyng the worst of all vices, and farthest from the dutie of a good subject: as on the contrary part the best subiects are most firme and constant in obedience, as in the speciall and peculiar vertue of good subiects.⁸³

This homily explains the limitlessness of submission expected by God to his ordained monarchs. It is not within the duty of a subject to rebel against a tyrannical leader and this point is emphasized by using notoriously villainous rulers from history who should still be obeyed: “Forsooth, Caligula, Clodius or Nero, who were not onely no Christians, but Pagans, and also either foolishe rulers, or most cruell tyrants” (Ibid, sig.Biii^f). It is not the place of subjects to decide which rulers are virtuous and which are evil; it is their duty to accept God’s decision regardless of how terrible the ruler is. This homily is just one expression, amongst many in the early modern period, of the divine right of kings, a political and religious doctrine which asserts that a monarch is not subject to earthly authority. A ruler derives the right to rule directly from God and so only God can judge them, meaning that any attempt by the aristocracy or general population to depose the monarchy is a sacrilegious act and, within a Ciceronian framework, one that is opposed to duty. This is one of the central concerns of Shakespeare’s *Richard II* (1595), in which Richard’s failing leadership prompts Bolingbroke to usurp him. Richard insists on the impossibility of defeating a divinely appointed king when he proclaims that “Not all the water in the rough rude sea / Can wash the balm off from an anointed king.”⁸⁴ This proclamation gains even more authorization when the Bishop of Carlisle calls Richard “the figure of God’s majesty, / His captain, steward, deputy elect, / Anointed, crowned, planted many years” (*RII*, iv.1.125-27). This highlights the importance of the divine right of kings, but the play also demonstrates the limitations of this concept as Bolingbroke successfully takes the throne.

While *The Homilies* were teaching duty to subjects, earlier in the century Desiderius Erasmus was teaching duty to rulers in *The Education of a Christian Prince* (1516). This educational how-to book for princes was intended to inform the behaviour of Prince Charles, later Charles

⁸³ Anonymous, *An Homilie against disobedience and wylfull rebellion* (London: Richarde Jugge and John Cawood, 1571), sig.Bi^f.

⁸⁴ William Shakespeare, *Richard II* (1595), ed. by Charles R. Forker (London: Bloomsbury, 2002), 3.2.54-55.

V, Holy Roman Emperor, King of Spain, and ruler of the Habsburg Netherlands. Erasmus's treatise on royal education was read not only by Charles, as it received four editions from Johann Froben, the Basel printer, in 1516 and further editions in 1518 and 1519. The number of editions in such quick succession speaks to the positive reception of the book, as does the historical evidence for its readership. Thomas More wrote to Erasmus, who was one of his close friends, to express how keen he was to have a copy of the book: "How I wish Christian princes would follow good instructions. Everything is upset by their mad follies. I am very desirous of having this book, for I am sure that like everything else of yours, it will turn out perfect."⁸⁵ In 1517 Count Friederich II of Bavaria set out a course of study for his nephew, Prince Philip, where he recommended the reading of *The Education of a Christian Prince* or a similar work for three hours every day.⁸⁶ In similar fashion, later in the century, around 1553-4, Catharine de' Médici had a French translation commissioned for the use of her sons.⁸⁷ As Queen of France from 1547 to 1559 and the mother of Kings Francis II, Charles IX and Henry III, she had extensive influence over the political culture of France. Erasmus's treatise on the integration of Christian values into leadership was clearly influential. His thesis focuses on the duties of a prince but also on the duties of the prince's teacher. He states:

The teacher should enter at once upon his duties, so as to implant the seeds of good moral conduct while the senses of the prince are still in the tenderness of youth, while his mind is furthest removed from all vices and tractably yields to the hand of guidance in whatever it directs. He is immature both in body and mind, as in his sense of duty.⁸⁸

Erasmus believes that the teacher and the education they impart play a critical role in the shaping of a desirable and dutiful prince. Without a proper education a prince may turn into a tyrant and cause chaos for the country. Central to this education should be Christianity: "Before all else the story of Christ must be firmly rooted in the mind of the prince" (Erasmus, p.148).

⁸⁵ P. S. Allen (ed.), *The Complete Letters of Erasmus*, Vol. II (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1910), Ep. 423, l.21-25. Translation by Lester K. Born.

⁸⁶ *Monumenta Germaniae Paedagogica*, vol. XIX, pp. 256-7: "Item nach dreyen Uren sol her Jorg seinen gnadn ein pros, als Erasmus Rotherdamium de Instituendo principe oder ainen andern auctorem, der seinen gnaden am dienstlichsten und nützlichsten ist, machen, dieselben seinen gnaden exponiren und verteutschen."

⁸⁷ Margriet Hoogvliet, 'Princely Culture and Catherine de Médicis' in *Princes and Princely Culture: 1450-1650*, Vol. I, ed. by M. Gosman, A. MacDonald, and A. Vanderjagt (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp.103-130 (p.109). For further examples of the use of *The Education of a Christian Prince* see Lester K. Born, 'Erasmus on Political Ethics: The Institutio Principis Christiani', *Political Science Quarterly*, 43.4 (Dec., 1928), pp. 520-543.

⁸⁸ Desiderius Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, trans. by Lester K. Born (New York: Norton, 1968, c1964), p.146. "Mature suum negotium aggrediatur institutor, ut teneris adhuc sensibus, semina uirtutum instillet: dum procul abest ab omnibus uitiiis animus, et in quemuis sequax habitum fingentis obtemperat digitis. Est sua et sapientiae infantia, quemadmodum et pietati." Born translates 'pietati' as 'duty', which also has connotations of piety.

With a strong sense of morality instilled in the mind of the prince, Erasmus turns to the specific duties of leadership. The overarching tenet of Erasmus's political theory is that duty to country should be prioritized: "It is the duty of a good prince to consider the welfare of his people, even at the cost of his own life if need be" (Erasmus, p.149). This echoes Cicero's guiding principle, a clear influence on Erasmus's works. Erasmus thought that "neither Homer's Achilles nor Virgil's Aeneas was better equipped" for political life than the man employing Cicero's *De Officiis* as a guide.⁸⁹ Erasmus extracts Cicero's morals from their republican context, absorbing the idea of duty to country into a monarchical context. Within a monarchical regime, this core duty translates into the belief that a prince should have no regard for his own personal ambition and should instead dedicate his life selflessly to the betterment of his people and to the upholding of Christian principles.

The statesman and scholar Thomas Elyot draws inspiration from Erasmus's work in his *A Boke Named Governour* (1531) which was dedicated to King Henry VIII. Resembling *The Education of a Christian Prince*, Elyot's book was intended to direct the education and morality of men destined for positions of authority. He recommends the reading of *De Officiis*: "the warke of Cicero, called in Latin De officiis, whereunto yet is no proper English worde to be gyuen, but to prouyde for it some maner of exposition, it maye be sayde in this fourme, Of the duetyes and maners apperteynyng to men."⁹⁰ He also acknowledges his debt to Erasmus: "there was neuer boke written in latin, that in so lyttell a portion, conteyned of sentence, eloquence, and vertuous exhortation, a more compen-dious aboundaunce" (Elyot, fol.39^v). His advice on educating rulers follows Erasmus's prescriptions, with statements outlining the importance of duty to the country and its people: "knowe also your office and duetie, [...] And that as obedience is due vnto you, so is your study, your labour, your industry with vertuous exaample, dewe to them that be subiecte to your autoritye" (Elyot, fol.165^v). The fashion for advice books for statesmen and rulers continued throughout the century and into the next. Another notable example is Edmund Bolton's *Nero Cæsar, or Monarchie Depraued* (1627), which is dedicated to King James VI and I, and recounts the history of Nero's tyrannous reign to make the same point as 'An Homilie against disobedience and wylfull rebellion'. Bolton was attempting to exemplify James's belief in the divine right of kings:

Nor was there cause to trouble your sacred Majestie with any but only Nero. For he is the man whom your most Princely detestation of his manners noted out unto mee, with the proper words of his merits, Villaine. Yet hee notwithstanding (for the great advantage

⁸⁹ Wallace Klippert Ferguson and D. F. S. Thomson (eds.), *The Correspondence of Erasmus: Letters, 142 to 297* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), no.152, p.31.

⁹⁰ Elyot, *A Boke Named Governour* (1537), fol.38^v-39^f.

of truth) will teach this pretious secret: *No Prince is so bad as not to make monarckie the best forme of government.*”⁹¹

Bolton’s history taught the political lesson that defence of the monarchical system was essential above all else. The worst monarch of all time was still not bad enough to warrant the anarchy of revolt. Alan T. Bradford elucidates that “[i]t was Nero who had given monarchy a bad name; the history of his reign was therefore the litmus test for the Jacobean doctrine of absolutism.”⁹² Bolton claims that the tyranny of Nero is still preferable to any other political system and so his reign stands as empirical proof of James’s ideological stance.

The Education of a Christian Prince, A Boke Named Governour, and Nero Cæsar, or Monarchie Depraued are all exemplars of the mirrors for princes genre, which comprises political writing in the form of textbooks. Aysha Pollnitz states that “liberal education, the study of classical languages, and literature that Renaissance pedagogues often referred to as *bonae litterae*, transformed the upbringing of royal children and helped to reshape the political and religious culture of early modern Britain.”⁹³ The desire to shape the monarchy through education resulted in many books being written to this effect during the early modern period. The multi-authored *Mirror for Magistrates* (1559), a compendium of monologues from political and historical figures, is indicative of this tradition. The use of historical material presented in poetic form and imbued with political and moral lessons propelled the *Mirror* to high regard. Six editions were produced between 1559 and 1610, each of which further expanded the collection of monologues. The popularity and accessibility of the text indicates the wide readership of the *Mirror*. In this way it differs from other texts in the mirrors for princes tradition as its authors imagined a broader audience than the primarily royal and noble readership characteristic of earlier mirrors for princes works. Originally intended as a continuation of John Lydgate’s colossal 36,000-line *Fall of Princes* (1431–8), which in turn took influence from Giovanni Boccaccio’s *De casibus virorum illustrium* (1355–1374), the *Mirror* was bound up with ideas of English historiography at the time. Primarily it followed the longstanding classical idea that the past could be used for guidance in the present, promoted by Cicero’s axiomatic expression that history “sheds light upon reality, gives life to recollection and guidance to human existence” (*Oratore*, p.225). Baldwin attests to this exemplary model of history in the preface of the *Mirror*: “For here as in a loking glas, you shall see (if any vice be in you) howe the like hath bene punished in other heretofore, whereby admonished, I trust it will

⁹¹ Edmund Bolton, *Nero Cæsar, or Monarchie Depraued* (London: Thomas Snodham and Bernard Alsop, 1627), sig.A3^v.

⁹² Alan T. Bradford, ‘Stuart Absolutism and the Utility of Tacitus’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 46.2 (Spring, 1983), pp.127-155 (p.140).

⁹³ Aysha Pollnitz, *Princely Education in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p.2.

be a good occasion to move you to the soner amendment.”⁹⁴ At the end of each poem the message is clarified and a warning is given and so the *Mirror*’s teleological format allowed it to be explicitly didactic. Harriet Archer argues that “[i]ts prose and verse narratives of composition frame a collection of complaints which are melting pots of *sententiae* and *exempla*, while each complaint is presented as an *exemplum* writ large.”⁹⁵ It is the nature of these “melting pots” which complicates the *Mirror*’s desire to present straightforward moral examples. The different compilers each added their own opinions, allowing the *Mirror* to be at times concerned with historiography, and at other times with topical significance.

The *Mirror* is not a straightforward guidebook, but it fostered thought about history and politics and, of primary concern here, duty. For example, Richard III ends his story, which was added in 1571, with an explicit condemnation of his own turpitude and the desire for his actions to be avoided by others: “See here the fine and fatall fall of mee, / And guerdon due for this my wretched deede, / Which to all princes a miroir now may bee.”⁹⁶ His argument is also woven throughout his story, such as when he describes the murder of his young nephews, the elder of which was supposed to be crowned king: “Both God, nature, duty, alleigaunce all forgot, / This vile and haynous act vnnaturally conspyred” (*MfM*, 1571, fol.145^r). He acknowledges that his villainous actions go against his duties to country, God, family, and even nature itself. Many of the lessons in the *Mirror* were aimed at magistrates and were, as Paul Budra explains, to be used as “a tool for self-inspection for the powerful; as its focus was historical and political, it was directing the powerful to study their own fates in those of their immediate, and conspicuously unsuccessful, predecessors.”⁹⁷ While some of the rulers and rebels present their tales with a simple message, this is not always the case, which prompted debate. Jessica Winston argues that “the authors turned a kind of writing designed to speak to power into one that depicted and fostered a conversation about power, about the obligations and responsibilities of those who rule the commonwealth.”⁹⁸ The *Mirror* encouraged participation in discourses about the management of the commonwealth, discourses which had previously been reserved for statesmen and scholars. Jack Cade’s relation of his story stands as an example of a narrative not forming a cohesive ethical framework. Cade denies the role of fortune in life, instead blaming people themselves for their downfalls: “For sure this hap if it bee rightly knowen, / Cummeth of our selues, and so the blame our owne” (*MfM*, 1559, fol.xliv^v). The prose

⁹⁴ William Baldwin, *A Mirror for Magistrates* (London: Thomas Marsh, 1559), sig.Ciii^{r-v}.

⁹⁵ Harriet Archer, *Unperfect Histories: The Mirror for Magistrates, 1559-1610* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p.3.

⁹⁶ William Baldwin, *A Mirror for Magistrates* (London: Thomas Marsh, 1571), fol.149^v.

⁹⁷ Paul Budra, *A Mirror for Magistrates and the de casibus Tradition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000) p.24.

⁹⁸ Jessica Winston, ‘A *Mirror for Magistrates* and Public Political Discourse in Elizabethan England’, *Studies in Philology*, 101 (2004), pp.381-400 (p.382).

surrounding his poem confirms this viewpoint: “whosoeuer rebelleth against any ruler, either good or bad, rebelleth against God” (*MfM*, 1559, fol.xlvii^r). However, it is then claimed that rebellion serves a higher power: “Although the deuill raise them, yet God alwayes vseth them to his glory, as a part of his Justice” (*MfM*, 1559, fol.xlvii^r). This prompts doubt over whether Cade is wholly responsible for his rebellious actions or whether he is merely a tool used by God. Similar to Cade, Thomas Mowbray feels shame over his failed duty to the king:

Thus where my duty bounde me to haue tolde
My Prince his fault, and wild him to refrayne,
Through flattery loe, I did his ill vpholde,
Which turnd at length both him and mee to payne (*MfM*, 1559, fol.xiii^r)

Mowbray’s narrative is centred on his regret over offering his king flattery and bending to the pressure to aid him in villainous plots, instead of pushing back and providing virtuous counsel. Cade is admonished for being a rebellious citizen while Mowbray is condemned for aiding King Richard II in his plot to murder Thomas of Woodstock. The *Mirror* could be used as a guide, encouraging people to do their duty, but it remained open to interpretation at the same time. These conversations about power were further aided by the growing interest in the exploration of how duty related to different methods of leadership, methods which sometimes strayed from virtuous behaviour. While the idealistic texts of writers such as Cicero and Erasmus were less open to interpretation and remained the moral standard for conceptualizing duty, they were read alongside the works of more ethically complex writers such as Tacitus, who offered a more pragmatic approach to implementing duty.

TACITEAN PRAGMATISM

Along with an interest in the idealism of Cicero and Erasmus was a growing interest in Tacitus’s less idealistic and more pragmatic approach. Cust summarizes that by the 1590s “Ciceronian optimism about the possibilities of promoting the common welfare was tempered by a more sceptical approach to politics” (Cust, p.118). These more sceptical ideas came into play but they did not obscure Cicero’s virtue-centred ideals. Similar to Cust, Peter Lake argues that “the line between a Ciceronian, virtue-obsessed, ‘before’, and a cynical, Tacitean and Machiavellian, reason-of-state-centred, ‘after’ becomes ever harder to draw.”⁹⁹ While the political conversation was being added to, there was not a sharp takeover of these pragmatic ideas. Instead, Ciceronian ideals and Tacitean pragmatism were in conversation with each other throughout the period. Burke attests to the growing popularity of Tacitus’s two major histories

⁹⁹ Lake, *How Shakespeare Put Politics on the Stage* (2016), p.37.

at this time: “the *Annals* and the *Histories* of Tacitus went through edition after edition (at least sixty-seven editions in the half-century 1600-49), in response to growing demand. At this time, Tacitus was viewed as a master of reason-of-state and the commentaries on him were in effect a parallel genre to the reason-of-state literature, and flourished at much the same time, c.1580-c.1680.”¹⁰⁰ These commentaries were not unified in thought however, and much debate took place, and still takes place, over the political position of Tacitus. He offers no axiomatic statements, like Cicero or Erasmus, and so while he provides a realistic picture of duty and life under corrupt rule, his histories are didactically misty. For instance, Tacitus’s description of Nero during the Great Fire of Rome reveals little of his own opinion: “a rumour had gone forth everywhere that, at the very time when the city was in flames, the emperor appeared on a private stage and sang of the destruction of Troy, comparing present misfortunes with the calamities of antiquity.”¹⁰¹ While this is clearly not a positive depiction of Nero, Tacitus’s claim that it is a rumour absolves him from blame. A more pointed criticism of Nero, and of the people surrounding him, comes when Tacitus puts words into Seneca’s mouth: “Who knew not Nero’s cruelty? After a mother’s and a brother’s murder, nothing remains but to add the destruction of a guardian and a tutor” (*Annals*, bk.15, ch.62). Tacitus points explicitly to the cruelty of Nero here but also places blame on the people who failed to stop his tyranny. Moments with this much clarity are rare throughout the *Annals* however, as most of the history is told in the detached style evident in the burning of Rome.

Despite the murkiness of Tacitus’s opinion, Justus Lipsius, the Flemish philosopher and humanist, sought to extract his teachings in his influential 1574 edition of the *Histories* and *Annals*. This is made evident in his dedication to Emperor Maximilian II where he discusses the value of Tacitus’s work:

everyone can be informed about the courts of princes, their inner lives, their plans, commands, and deeds, and, in most things the similarity with our own time being evident, his mind can grasp the truth that similar causes lead to similar outcomes. Under the Tyranny you will find flattery and

¹⁰⁰ Peter Burke, ‘Tacitism, scepticism, and reason of state’ in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700*, ed. by J. H. Burns with the assistance of Mark Goldie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) pp.479-498, (p.485). Burke differentiates between types of reason of state: “good reason of state is what serves the common good, bad reason of state is what serves the individual ruler” (p.481). Essentially, it is the employment of policy to benefit the state that is occasionally devious but should be limited by the laws of God.

¹⁰¹ Cornelius Tacitus, *The Annals & The Histories*, trans. by Alfred John Church and William Jackson Brodribb (London: Macmillan, 2003), *The Annals*, bk.15, ch.39.

accusations, evils not unknown to our own time; everything dishonest, nothing straightforward, and confidence not even safe with one's own friends¹⁰²

Lipsius believes that Tacitus's histories can be mined for timeless political lessons. Additionally, rather than Tacitus prescribing religious duty in politics like many others, he instead reveals the hidden malevolence that exists in "our own time", the early modern period, as well as in ancient Rome. Tacitus's influence spread throughout Lipsius's preceding works, and he combined this with his reading of Seneca. His *De Constantia* (1584), translated into English by John Stradling in 1594, is heavily inspired by Seneca and was a pivotal text in combining Stoic thought with Christianity, although there remained some irreconcilable differences, such as viewpoints on the morality of suicide. Lipsius used Seneca's philosophy as a solution to the political calamities which his time period was experiencing and which Tacitus had previously described. His prescription is essentially a summary of Stoicism: "Our mindes must be so confirmed and conformed, that we may bee at rest in troubles, and haue peace euen in the midst of warre."¹⁰³ He later quotes Seneca's *De Vita Beata* to bolster his argument that hardships can be endured: "We are hereunto adjured by oath, saith Seneca, even to endure mortalite, nor to be troubled with those things which it is not in our power to avoid. Wee are born in a kingdome, and to obey God is libertie" (*Constancie*, sig.F2^r).

Lipsius's *Politicorum sive Civilis Doctrinae Libri Sex* (1589) moves away from Senecan philosophy and instead focuses on Tacitean reason of state. Lipsius outlines this shift himself: "just as in *De Constantia* I equipped citizens for endurance and obedience, now to equip those who rule for governing" (*Politica*, p.231). Lipsius offers a pragmatic guide for statesmen and he focuses on the interaction and reconciliation of virtue and prudence. His most important advice comes in Book IV where he develops his theory of *prudencia mixta*, which recommends the mixing of virtue and deceit. This is necessary because most people do not abide by virtuous ideals: "For what kind of men are we living among? Cunning men, bad men: who seem to consist entirely of fraud, deceit and lies" (*Politica*, p.507). The only way to combat this is to mix subterfuge into ruling. He states that "[w]e want the Prince to be high and noble-minded: but still, it belongs to educated behaviour to mix the honourable and the useful" (*Politica*, p.509). To bolster this argument is a reference to Tacitus's *Agricola*, where prudence was successfully applied: "Agricola moderated his energy and restrained his ardour, that he might not grow too important, for he had learnt to obey, and understood well how to combine

¹⁰² Justus Lipsius, *Politica: Six Books of Politics or Political Instruction* (1589), ed. by Jan Waszink (The Netherlands: Royal Van Gorcum, 2004), pp.94-95.

¹⁰³ Justus Lipsius, *Two Bookes of Constancie*, trans. by John Stradling (London: Richard Johnes, 1594), sig.B1^v-B2^r.

expediency with honour.”¹⁰⁴ Vital to this combination of expediency with honour though is the maintenance of duty to country: “He is always performing his duty by acting in the interest of the people and the community” (*Politica*, p.509). Deceit is acceptable as long as it is employed for the benefit of the country. Next to this is a reference to Cicero’s *De Officiis*: “the good man will always perform his duty, promoting the general interests of human society” (Cicero, III: 31). Lipsius mixes Tacitus’s pragmatism with Cicero’s idealism, ultimately justifying expediency in the name of duty.

However, Tacitus was not the only figure associated with reason of state. Giovanni Botero’s *Ragione di Stato* (1589) was a foundational text in the development of the political theory. Written in reaction to the immorality associated with Machiavelli, Botero utilized his own experience in serving as counsellor to Cardinal Frederick Borromeo to assert that virtue is essential to statecraft. He agrees with the aims proposed by Machiavelli (maintaining the welfare of the country) but not with the methods (that vice is justified). In his dedicatory epistle he explains that “[i]f all animals have a natural instinct that inclines them to what is useful and holds back from what is harmful, should the light of reason and the dictates of conscience given to man to know how to discern the good and the evil, be blind in public affairs and defective in matters of importance?”¹⁰⁵ Essentially, Botero, like Lipsius, promotes combining reason of state with Christian ethics to achieve “what is useful” in “public affairs”. In the words of Alexandra Gajda, “the concern of Botero and Lipsius was with the character of the Christian prince, and the prudence he required to establish strong authority and civil peace”, and this need for prudence meant that “they consciously adopted and adapted insights that justified divergence from conventional ethical conduct.”¹⁰⁶ However, neither promoted the extent of divergence recommended by Machiavelli. Gajda goes on to explain that these discussions of statecraft and its relation to religious virtue enveloped some of the pivotal questions gripping the post-Reformation period: “Was it the role of the secular prince to enforce religious orthodoxy? And how could rulers maintain political stability over subjects divided by implacable confessional divisions?” (Ibid, p.292). Despite the difference in government regimes, many early modern thinkers turned to classical writers in attempting to answer these questions and others related to the duties of statecraft.

While Lipsius was essential in disseminating and discussing Tacitean works and ideas of reason

¹⁰⁴ Cornelius Tacitus, *The Life of Cnaeus Julius Agricola*, ed. by Sara Bryant (New York: Random House, 1942), ch.8.

¹⁰⁵ Giovanni Botero, *Botero: The Reason of State*, ed. by Robert Bireley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p.2.

¹⁰⁶ Alexandra Gajda, ‘The Gordian Knot of Policy: Statecraft and the Prudent Prince’ in R. Malcolm Smuts (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Age of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp.286-305 (p.290).

of state, he was not the only interpreter as English translations of Tacitus's work flourished in England. There were two main English translators of Tacitus, Henry Savile and Richard Grenway. Savile translated the *Histories* and *Agricola* in 1591, filled in the lacuna between the end of the *Annals* and the start of the *Histories* with his *The Ende of Nero and the Beginning of Galba*, and also added his own essay on the subject of Roman warfare. This translation went through another five editions by 1600, demonstrating the demand for an English version of Tacitus's works. In his translation Savile presents an argument in favour of rebellion against a tyrannous ruler. He justified Julius Vindex's uprising because it was, "not upon priuate dispaire to set in combustion the state, not to reuenge disgrace or dishonour, not to establish his owne soueraignty, things which haue mooued most men to attempt; but to redeeme his cuntrey from tyranny bondage, which onely respect he regarded so much, that in respect regarded nothing his owne life or security."¹⁰⁷ Savile frames this rebellion as an act of selfless duty for the good of the country. When this is compared to the Christian interpretations on the evils of rebellion, the deviance of Savile's path is clear, although some Christians did see resistance as legitimate, exemplified by Calvinist resistance theory.¹⁰⁸ Although his argument is based on the virtue of Vindex and his dutiful morals, he strayed away from the authoritative religious arguments made against rebellion by people like Erasmus. However, as argued by Kewes, Savile was not straightforwardly advocating rebellion: "The way Savile has structured the book, then, placing first his own piece fervently supportive of resistance to tyranny, induces the reader to maintain a double perspective on the story—identifying now with the various subjects of Rome [...] now with the Romans themselves."¹⁰⁹ Regardless of Savile's own reluctance to come down on a side, his texts could be mined in support of resistance theory.

Richard Grenway, who translated the *Annals* and the *Germania* in 1598, made similar arguments to Savile. Savile's text was combined with Grenway's in 1598 and subsequent editions, of which there were four. Like Savile, he also emphasized the utility of both Tacitus and history itself: "For if Historie be the treasure of times past, and as well a guide, as image of mans present estate, a true and liuely pattern of things to come, and as some terme it, the work-mistresse of experience, which is the mother of prudence: Tacitus may by good right challenge the first place among the best."¹¹⁰ His works were indeed used as a guide from which historical

¹⁰⁷ Henry Savile, *The Ende of Nero and The Beginning of Galba, Four Books of the Histories of Cornelius Tacitus, The Life of Agricola* (Oxford: Joseph Barnes and R. Robinson, 1591), p.6.

¹⁰⁸ For more on resistance theory see Roger Mason, 'Kingship, Tyranny and the Right to Resist in Fifteenth Century Scotland', *The Scottish Historical Review*, 66.182, Part 2 (Oct., 1987), pp.125-151; Caroline Erskine and Roger Mason (eds.), *George Buchanan: Political Thought in Early Modern Britain and Europe* (London: Routledge, 2016).

¹⁰⁹ Paulina Kewes, 'Henry Savile's Tacitus and the Politics of Roman History in Late Elizabethan England', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 74.4 (December 2011), pp.515-551 (p.530).

¹¹⁰ Richard Grenway, *The annales of Cornelius Tacitus. The description of Germanie* (London: Arn. Hatfield, for Bonham and Iohn Norton, 1598), preface.

examples could be extracted to instil prudence and pragmatism, most notably by Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex. It is widely believed that the preface to the reader, signed A. B., of Savile's translation of Tacitus was written by Essex. Ben Jonson attests to this: "Essex wrote that epistle, or preface, before the translation of the last part of Tacitus, which is A. B."¹¹¹ This preface reveals a desire for the text to be used for the learning of governance, with specific reference to dealing with evil counsel: "In Galba thou maiest learne, that a good Prince gouerned by euill ministers is as dangerous as if he were euill himselfe" (Savile, sig.¶3^f). Bradford speculates over how Essex and his circle may have used Tacitus: "Essex's connection – sometimes, though not always, through patronage – with such politic historians and admirers of Tacitus as Savile, Hayward, Bacon, and William Camden suggests that he might have encouraged the movement for ulterior political purposes" (Bradford, p.133). Bradford does not suggest that Essex used Tacitus as a guide to rebellion; rather, that he used him as a guide to understanding power. Essex stands as an example of a courtier employing Tacitus as a practical guide. The motivations for Essex's uprising remain clouded and so it is impossible to say whether he employed Tacitus to bolster his own sense of public duty to the country or as an encouragement of a more cynical and self-serving attempt to take control.¹¹²

The vague nature of Tacitus's own opinion in his narration on historical events lent itself to many varying interpretations. The Huguenot theologian and classicist Isaac Casaubon formed the opposite opinion to Lipsius and Essex on the moral worth of Tacitus. Quoted by Edmund Bohun in his English translation of *The Method and Order of Reading Histories* (1685) by Degory Wheare, the first professor of history at the University of Oxford, he argues that reading Tacitus without instruction would,

teach them the principles of Tyranny; for what can be more pernicious (especially to a Young Man) than the reading of those *Annals*? For as good Examples when they are frequently in sight improve a Man, without his observation, so ill Examples hurt us, for by little and little they sink into our minds, and have the effect of Precepts, being often read or heard.¹¹³

Casaubon believes that Tacitus's many examples of extreme tyranny will corrupt the reader. Far from being a guide through the horrors of politics, he believes that his history will add to the horror by creating more self-serving statesmen. This view that Tacitus will inspire tyranny

¹¹¹ Ben Jonson, *Conversations of Ben Jonson with William Drummond of Hawthornden*, ed. by Philip Sidney (London: Gay and Bird, 1900), p.40.

¹¹² For more on the Essex uprising see e.g. Evelyn May Albright, 'Shakespeare's *Richard II* and the Essex Conspiracy', *PMLA*, 42.3 (Sep., 1927), pp.686-720.

¹¹³ Degory Wheare, *The Method and Order of Reading Both Civil and Ecclesiastical Histories*, trans. by Edmund Bohun (London: M. Flesher for Charles Brome, 1685), pp.107-8.

seems to be the less frequently held one however. The courtier Robert Dallington, in *Aphorismes Ciuill and Militarie* (1613), for example, employed Tacitus along with Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch, and Sallust to explain political duty and how to navigate the dangers of court. Like Lipsius with his recommendation for *prudencia mixta*, Dallington seeks a middle way between morality and immorality:

All morallists hold nothing profitable that is not honest. Some Politicks have inverted this order and perverted the sense by transposing the termes of the proposition: holding nothing honest that is not profitable. Howsoever those former may seeme too straight laced, these surely are too loose. For there is middle way betweene both which a right Statesman must take.¹¹⁴

Dallington cites this as being taken from *De Officiis*, quoted as: “Nullum utile est quod non sit honestum” (Ibid, p.314). This corresponds to Cicero’s explanation that it is wrong to separate moral rectitude from expediency: “it is accepted that a thing may be morally right without being expedient, and expedient without being morally right. No more pernicious doctrine than this could be introduced into human life” (Cicero, II: 9). However, Dallington adapts this by combining Ciceronian duty with the Tacitean middle way. Dallington confirms that morality must be central to political life but concedes that occasionally immoral behaviour must be employed in order to be successful in statecraft. Dallington’s belief that a statesman must find a middle path includes a recommendation for dissimulation:

For vpon the Theater of publick employment either in peace or warre, the actors must of necessity weare vizardes, and change them in euerie Scaene. Because, the generall good and safetie of a State, is the Center in which all their actions, and counsailes, must meete: To which men cannot alwaies arriue by plaine pathes, and beaten waies. (Dallington, p.176)

Dallington uses a theatrical metaphor here to emphasize the necessity of politicians changing their behaviour depending on the situation. Just as an actor changes their clothes and takes on a role to suit a theatrical scene, so too must rulers and courtiers change their behaviour to suit a political scene. Cited below this aphorism are references, including “Tacit. an. 14. Hoc poni debet inter magna illa exempla, quae habent aliqua ex iniquo, quod aduersus singulos, vtilitate publica rependitur” (Ibid, p.176). This points to book 14, chapter 44 in Tacitus’s *Annals*: “There is some injustice in every great precedent, which, though injurious to individuals, has its compensation in the public advantage” (*Annals*, bk.14, ch.44). Tacitus here supports the

¹¹⁴ Robert Dallington, *Aphorismes Ciuill and Militarie* (London: R. Field for Edward Blount, 1613), p.314.

occasional necessity of injustice when the common good is concerned. Duty to England is prized above all else to Dallington and this means the occasional bending of moral rules.

The essayist Robert Johnson in his 'Of Histories' likewise recommends the reading of Tacitus for utility. He argues that while Livy has "a certaine kind of Maiesty linked with delight", which the reader's spirit is "rayseed to thinke of imitating", he fails to equip the reader "for the manage of ciuill actions."¹¹⁵ Johnson believes that for the practicalities of politics Tacitus is superior to all others: "In this ranke I preferre Tacitus as the best that any man can dwel vpon: Hee sheweth the miseries of a torne and declining state, where it was a capitall crime to bee vertuous" (Johnson, sig.D2^v). Though he does not specifically mention duty, it is clear that, for him, duty to the country should be highly prioritized and that Tacitus's works can aid in understanding how to remain dutiful in "a torne and declining" state. A more influential essayist also impacted by Tacitean ideology was the philosopher and statesman Sir Francis Bacon. Similar to Dallington, Bacon focuses on practical success and pragmatism. His essay 'Of Simulation and Dissimulation' in *Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall* (1625) sets Tacitus up as its foundation: "Tacitus saith; Livia sorted well, with the Arts of her Husband, & Dissimulation of her Sonne: Attributing Arts or Policy to Augustus, and Dissimulation to Tiberius."¹¹⁶ Bacon holds simulation, pretending to be what one is not, "culpable and, lesse politicke; except it be in greate and rare Matters" (Bacon, p.29). This dishonest behaviour is not morally ideal and so Bacon recommends using it sparingly. Edward Pudsley in his commonplace book copied seven pages worth of quotations from Tacitus on topics such as treason, policy, and flattery, along with extracts from plays by Jonson, Marston, Dekker, Lyly, Nashe, Chapman, Heywood, and Shakespeare. On flattery, he notes the pithy statement: "flattery in corrupt tymes is dangerous."¹¹⁷ Kiséry comments that in this commonplace book, "the stuff of politic history, Machiavellian and Tacitean thought, while avidly read, is thus assimilated to the conversation-oriented interests of a play-goer."¹¹⁸ This is evidence of political works being read beyond the centres of power, and in this specific case, with an attention to theatre's discussion of politics rather than to active use in politics. Malcolm Smuts argues that "the fashion for Tacitus guaranteed that courtiers would examine their surroundings through cynical eyes, forever ready to detect sordid intrigues and signs of spreading corruption."¹¹⁹ This is certainly evident in the number of guides written for statesmen which take inspiration from

¹¹⁵ Robert Johnson, *Essaies, or, rather Imperfect offers* (London: G. Eld for Robert Wilson, 1601), sig.D1^v-D2^f.

¹¹⁶ Francis Bacon, *Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall* (London: John Haviand, 1625), p.25.

¹¹⁷ Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Poet. d.3, fol.11^f.

¹¹⁸ Kiséry, *Hamlet's Moment* (2016), p.279.

¹¹⁹ R. Malcolm Smuts, 'Cultural Diversity and Cultural Change at the Court of James I', in *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, ed. by Linda Levy Peck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.99-112 (p.108).

Tacitus. Courtiers and writers were increasingly looking through cynical eyes, reshaping notions of duty to suit the hostile environment of early modern politics. This meant an increase in recommendations to follow behaviour traditionally deemed as immoral, but it was only recommended on the basis that villainy was employed sparingly in order to maintain duty to country.

MACHIAVELLIAN POLITICS

Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1532) fits into the genre of realistic guides to action but recommends acting immorally more often than Tacitus and his supporters. Machiavelli's contribution to the mirrors for princes genre was written in 1513 for the Italian statesman Lorenzo de' Medici, long before the works of Tacitus came into vogue. Machiavelli's work was a blend of his knowledge of history and his first-hand experience of Italian and foreign politics. Nicolai Rubinstein summarizes that Machiavelli was "[e]lected in 1498, after the execution of Savonarola, as second chancellor of Florence and then a secretary of the Ten, the magistracy responsible for the conduct of foreign and military affairs, he was employed in many diplomatic missions in Italy as well as in missions to the French king and the king of the Romans."¹²⁰

Machiavelli thus developed an extensive knowledge of how governments operated and he used this to produce a how-to book for succeeding in the political arena. *The Prince* is full of advice that largely discredits conventional Christian morality ruling political behaviour because "there is such a great distance between how we live and how we ought to live, anyone who sets aside what is done for what ought to be done learns more quickly what will ruin him than preserve him."¹²¹ Therefore, Machiavelli provides guidance for statesmen who wish to live as things are, not as they ideally should be. This leads him to some of his most famous pronouncements, for instance that a ruler should "not deviate from what is good if he can manage to do so, but know how to enter upon evil if that becomes necessary" (Machiavelli, p.61). However, it is beneficial to conceal immoral actions behind a veil of fake morality: "seeming to have [virtuous qualities] is useful; for instance, to seem merciful, trustworthy, humane, upright and devout" (Machiavelli, p.61).

Machiavelli's reputation as a villain was perpetuated by Innocent Gentillet's *Discours Contre*

¹²⁰ Nicolai Rubinstein, 'Italian Political Thought, 1450-1530' in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700*, ed. by J. H. Burns with the assistance of Mark Goldie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp.30-65 (p.42).

¹²¹ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (1532), ed. and trans. by Quentin Skinner and Russell Price (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p.53

Machiavel (1572), which distilled his ideas down to pure immorality.¹²² This version of Machiavelli's tenets circulated in England in French, Latin, and English and it was not until 1640, when the English translation of *The Prince* by Edward Dacres was published, that his actual doctrine reached a larger audience. The prevalence of the Stage Machiavel in Elizabethan theatre was already established by this point, with examples ranging from Balthazar in Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (c. 1582-1592) to Machiavel himself presenting the prologue in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* (c. 1589-1590). However, there is much evidence which supports an English audience for Machiavelli long before the publication of the English edition of *The Prince*. Printed Italian editions of his works began circulating in the 1580s, made by John Wolfe in England with false imprints. The first three of these, *I Discorsi* and *Il Principe* in 1584, with imprints 'Palermo' and *Arte della Guerra* with no date but with the same imprint, were unlicensed. Even earlier, in 1553, a French translation was published, dedicated to James Hamilton, 2nd Earl of Arran. There were also Latin and Italian editions of his works which travellers could have picked up while abroad. The first Latin edition was translated by Sylvester Telius and published in 1560 in Basel. Alessandra Petrina states that "by 1699 no less than 18 editions had been published."¹²³ Additionally, there are seven known manuscripts of *The Prince* translated into English which circulated and three manuscripts of *The Discourses*.¹²⁴ Petrina also presents evidence of the discourse surrounding *The Prince* in the sixteenth century. In a 1539 letter which accompanied the gift of an Italian copy of *Istorie Fiorentine*, Henry Parker, Lord Morley, told Thomas Cromwell to read the book along with *The Prince*, noting that it is "surely a good thing for your Lordship."¹²⁵ In 1574 Philip Sidney sent a letter to Hubert Languet, a French diplomat and writer who had correspondence with Pietro Perna, the printer of the first Latin version of *The Prince*. Sidney comments: "I never could be induced to believe that Machiavelli was right about avoiding an excess of clemency, until I learned from my own experience what he has endeavoured with many arguments to prove."¹²⁶ Petrina provides other examples of Englishmen discussing Machiavelli which "give us an idea of the popularity of

¹²² For more on the stage Machiavel see Victoria Kahn, 'Machiavelli's Afterlife and Reputation to the Eighteenth Century' in *The Cambridge Companion to Machiavelli*, ed. by John M. Najemy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp.239-255; N. W. Bawcutt, 'The "Myth of Gentillet" Reconsidered: An Aspect of Elizabethan Machiavellianism', *The Modern Language Review*, 99.4 (2004), pp.863-874; N. W. Bawcutt.

¹²³ Alessandra Petrina, *Machiavelli in the British Isles: Two Early Modern Translations of the Prince* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

¹²⁴ Felix Raab, *The English Face of Machiavelli: A Changing Interpretation, 1500-1700* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1964), p.53.

¹²⁵ James Gairdner and R. H. Brodie (eds.), *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII*, vol. XIV, part 1 (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1864), item 285.

¹²⁶ English translation by William Aspenwall Bradley (ed.), *The Correspondence of Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet* (Boston: The Merrimount Press, 1912), p.60. "Nunquam adduci poteram, ut crederem Machiavellum, bene de nimia clementia fugienda sensisse, donec usu idem mihi venerit, quod ille multis rationibus probare conatus est" from Albert Feuillerat (ed.), *The Complete Works of Philip Sidney: The Defence of Poesie, Political Discourses, Correspondence, Translations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923), pp.79-98 (this quotation p.90).

Machiavelli's books in Tudor England, a popularity that goes well beyond the stereotype of the wicked politician or of the 'Nicalao Maleuolo, great Muster maister of hell' evoked by Thomas Nashe" (Petrina, p.18).¹²⁷ There is therefore much evidence for the dissemination of Machiavelli's works in England, and moreover, for the critical analysis of and engagement with these works.

Machiavelli's advice is not dissimilar from the guidance often found in Tacitus, and exemplified in the works of Bacon and Lipsius. All of these writers recommend adherence to virtue and the employment of devious methods only when necessary. The difference is that they have different limits for what counts as necessary. Machiavelli hardly seems worthy of his exuberant devilish reputation, especially when compared to other, more accepted, political handbooks. In fact, Machiavelli seems to have taken influence from *De Officiis*, already established as the eminent guide on duty.¹²⁸ For instance, Machiavelli's advice that circumstance should impact behaviour, and therefore that a ruler needs to know when to be bad depending on the situation, is evocative of a Ciceronian argument:

occasions often arise, when those duties which seem most becoming to the just man and to the "good man," as we call him, undergo a change and take on a contrary aspect. It may, for example, not be a duty to restore a trust or to fulfil a promise, and it may become right and proper sometimes to evade and not to observe what truth and honour would usually demand. (Cicero, I: 31)

This is not to say that Cicero is an advocate of wicked methods in politics, as he maintains his earlier ideals: "For we may well be guided by those fundamental principles of justice which I laid down at the outset: first, that no harm be done to anyone; second, that the common interests be conserved" (Cicero, I: 31). By contrast, Machiavelli advocates violence: "a conqueror, after seizing power, must decide about all the injuries he needs to commit, and do all of them at once, so as not to have to inflict punishments every day" (Machiavelli, p.33). Machiavelli is overt in his belief that violence is sometimes necessary, where Cicero refuses to deviate from his ideal morality. However, while their methods may vary, the goal they both seek is mutual: the common good. Cicero comments that "the common interest be conserved" while Machiavelli in *Discourses on Livy* (1531) states that "it is not the private good but the common good that

¹²⁷ Nashe quotation from Ronald B. McKerrow and F. P. Wilson (eds.), *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958), p.183.

¹²⁸ For a detailed comparison of *De Officiis* and *The Prince* see Colish, 'Cicero's *De Officiis* and Machiavelli's *Prince*', (1978).

makes cities great.”¹²⁹ Both writers, dissimilar in terms of morality, are similar in their observance of duty to country. The ethics which they believe are necessary to guide public life differ, but not as dramatically as would be expected given their reputations. Cicero, the moral idealist, and Machiavelli, the cruel realist, both acknowledge the need for pragmatism and both cite the ultimate guiding force as duty.

As this chapter has shown, duty was a defining principle of both the classical and early modern worlds. Cicero’s *De Officiis* has long been established as the primary text for understanding duty in ancient Rome and in early modern England it was combined with the tenets of Christianity. For many educated people *De Officiis* was the foundational guidebook to moral philosophy and provided advice on how to operate on the political stage, but it was not the only book preoccupied with this purpose. Erasmus’s *The Education of a Christian Prince* was focused on specifically imbuing future kings with high moral principles and other guidebooks of this nature followed, including Elyot’s *A Boke Named Governour* and Bolton’s *Nero Cæsar, or Monarchie Depraved*. All part of the mirrors for princes genre, these manuals for leadership inspired literary works of the same nature. The popular *Mirror for Magistrates* presented a comparable ethical framework as a compendium of poetic monologues from historical figures. The polyvocal nature of this work, due to the number of compilers of the text as well as the number of voices within the text, encouraged discussions about duty to the commonweal. Tacitus and Botero were foundational in spreading ideas of reason of state to survive within politically difficult times. Lipsius, who was largely responsible for resurrecting Tacitus and bringing him back into public consciousness, read his works as examples of timeless political teachings. A notable difference between Tacitus and the previous works described is the lack of religious duty in favour of an emphasis on pragmatic survival. While both Cicero and Tacitus were pagan writers, Cicero much more easily fits into a doctrine centred on Christianity. Tacitus’s less idealistic and more revealing take on matters of state appealed to many people during the early modern period, evident in works by Dallington and Bacon, as well as in Essex’s utilization of Tacitus. There was a clear taste for a realistic take on how best to maintain duty within a hostile environment. The most influential guide of this nature was Machiavelli’s *The Prince*, which disregarded religious duty and instead described how to succeed within a ruthless political world. While *De Officiis* stands at one end of the ethical spectrum and *The Prince* at the other, these two texts and all the texts in between are focused on one guiding principle: that duty to the country must be prioritized. The duty of working towards the common good was essential in the early modern world; what differed was the means advocated to achieve this, and those means were interrogated and reshaped throughout the period.

¹²⁹ Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy* (1531), trans. by Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.157.

This preoccupation with duty extended further than moral guidebooks and histories, as is evident in the vast array of early modern plays which also explore issues of duty. The appeal of blending classical concepts of duty with humanist and Christian concerns to examine politics is most clear in history plays, the majority of which feature an examination of the ideals and difficulties of duty. J. H. Salmon argues that “[w]hen classical antiquity was employed as a screen to view the problems of the late Renaissance, Seneca and Tacitus came to be preferred to Cicero and Livy, and the shift in moral and political thought brought with it a change in literary taste.”¹³⁰ A shift this clear cut is not easy to identify, however, and playwrights blended a variety of sources in the creation of their histories, just as humanist writers blended their sources. What is clear is that just like the writers examined in this chapter, playwrights were also deeply concerned with the state of politics and the implications this carried for notions of duty. This preoccupation with political duty can be traced across the drama produced by the University of Cambridge, the University of Oxford, the Inns of Court, the Jesuit Colleges, and the professional playhouses in London. Chapter 2 will turn to the University of Cambridge, where Thomas Legge’s *Richardus Tertius* (1579), the earliest recorded play based on English history, was performed to an audience of young scholars. Many of these students likely had political aspirations and thus had an interest in how to resolve the clash between ideals of duty and the reality of vice in politics.

¹³⁰ J. H. Salmon, ‘Seneca and Tacitus in Jacobean England’ in *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, ed. by Linda Levy Peck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp.169-188 (p.169).

2. POLITICS, PEDAGOGY, AND THE PAST: THE HISTORY PLAY AT CAMBRIDGE

This chapter will examine how Thomas Legge's *Richardus Tertius* (1579) used history to critique and instill ideals of duty in the Cambridge student audience. Legge employed his historical play as a pedagogical tool to examine and inculcate dutiful values but it also served as entertainment, as a break from the academic rigor of the scholastic curriculum. Legge's play exists at the intersection of humanist university education, the dramatic theatricality of Seneca's tragedies, and the legacy of medieval festive entertainment. *Richardus Tertius* is credited by G. B. Churchill as being the first "real history-play, or "Chronicle History" written in England", by which he means the first play based on English history.¹³¹ While Legge did not yet have the prolific history plays of the popular stage in London to draw inspiration from, he went further than *Gorboduc* in his emulation of the theatrical elements of both Seneca and the medieval festive tradition, and thus provided a model for the history plays of the professional stage in later years. Specifically, Legge attempts to imbue his drama with the emotion and character which at the peak of early modern drama transformed Senecan archetypes into individual characters with emotional depth like Hamlet. The act of performance itself aids Legge's didactic intentions, with John H. Astington explaining that the "art of acting is to provide a physical something, visible, audible, and memorable, to give force and body to what on paper is merely 'a speech'".¹³² Memorable acting not only heightened the aesthetic quality of the play but also meant the educational message was more likely to be absorbed. Furthermore, university students were accustomed to watching and participating in festive drama and Legge's play would have been performed in the same physical space, thus tapping into the same mental space. Boas comments that scholars "needed some outlet for high spirits at holiday times" and so watched miracle and morality plays and took part in "mummings and disguisings, known in different forms as the Feast of Fools, the boy Bishop, the Christmas Prince, the Lord of Misrule."¹³³ Legge's fostering of theatrical elements does not divorce the play from its academic roots though. It was extremely long, written in Latin, and retained the didacticism expected of an academic play modelled on Senecan tragedy. Furthermore, plays were presented as co-curricular, in that they were not officially part of the curriculum but were an expected part of the university experience, to a scholarly audience who were trained in disputation and who were therefore educated to view performance critically and to judge moral issues. Legge's

¹³¹ G. B. Churchill, *Richard III before Shakespeare* (Berlin: Meyer & Muller, 1900), p.270.

¹³² John H. Astington, *Actors and Acting in Shakespeare's Time: The Art of Stage Playing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.18.

¹³³ Boas, *University Drama in the Tudor Age* (1914), pp.3-4.

blending of the pedagogical aspects of the play with more entertaining elements follows Horace's and Sidney's well-established proclamations of blending the usefulness of history with the pleasure of poetry in order to at once teach and delight.

In *Richardus Tertius* Legge seeks to delight and move his audience towards an understanding of the reality of dutiful ideals. The play uses Richard and his advisors as a cautionary tale to warn against behaving in a self-serving manner when tasked with protecting the welfare of the country. This warning was presented to an audience comprised of young male students, some of whom were destined for roles in government. The edifying focus of the play is centred on Christian morality and civic obligation being integral to political duty. The play acknowledges the vice which seems inherent to politics, but it does not recommend accommodating this vice in order to personally succeed. Richard and his avaricious advisors function as deterrents while the virtuous Richmond is a model of selfless dutiful behaviour. That Legge's play was performed within university grounds and to an audience composed of university students is crucial to understanding its conception of duty. Therefore, this chapter will begin by tracing the academic and recreational culture of both Cambridge and Oxford, before moving on to examine *Richardus Tertius*'s notions of duty in detail.

SCHOOLING AND AMUSEMENT AT THE ENGLISH UNIVERSITIES

Despite being separate institutions, Oxford and Cambridge functioned in largely the same manner. Speaking of Oxford, but applicable also to Cambridge, Stephen Porter explains that "Oxford had an important function in providing an education for many members of the social elite, the future administrators of church and state, the clergy, the bureaucracy, and the burgeoning professions."¹³⁴ The most common students were the sons of gentry and professionals, who were expected to obtain a university education to further enhance their elite career prospects at the royal court, in parliament, or in the law courts. Young men of the lower social class typically went to universities to gain the training and qualifications required to develop a career in the church, although the difficulties of financing this education, either through their own means or through a scholarship, meant that only a small amount of the plebeian population attended university. Of course, not all students fell into these typical career categorisations, and one important departure included the graduates who became professional playwrights, such as Christopher Marlowe, Robert Greene, Thomas Nashe, and Thomas Kyd. Known as the University Wits, they played a large part in the creation of dramatic popular

¹³⁴ Stephen Porter, 'University and Society' in *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume IV, Seventeenth-Century Oxford*, ed. by Nicholas Tyacke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp.25-103 (p.25).

culture and were undoubtedly influenced by their time at university. Christopher Marlow proposes that “these men were shaped to some extent by their time at university, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that their exposure to university drama had an influence, as humanists hoped it would, on the men that they became.”¹³⁵ This was applicable to all university graduates, but for the playwrights it meant that their humanist university experience was being shared with those who had no access to academia. Although this offered the common person a window into elite culture, they were not invited in, being both linguistically and socio-economically excluded from the gentlemanly culture of university and court. By the 1600s humanist education was so entwined with the idea of what a ‘gentleman’ was that young elite men attended university regardless of whether or not it would benefit their career. Henry Peacham in *The Compleat Gentleman* (1622) states: “Since learning then is an essentiall part of nobilitie, as unto which we are beholden for whatsoever dependeth on the culture of the mind; it followeth that who is nobly born and a scholler withall deserveth double honour.”¹³⁶ This guidebook, intended for the education of well-born sons, confirms that university was not always used as a path to a specific job, but as a path to higher social status too.

Both Cambridge and Oxford prioritised the humanistic learning of ancient languages and the acquisition of rhetoric, grammar, and logic through the study of Greek and Roman historians, poets, and politicians. These subjects provided the young male students a source of moral and political lessons. Mordechai Feingold explains that the value of studying subjects like ethics and rhetoric lay in them “being a practical art, an immediately applicable guide to virtuous living through [their] capacity to inculcate principles of private virtue and public duty.”¹³⁷ This pedagogic framework was intended to produce men who were virtuous and could use that virtue towards the public good. Richard Holdsworth, a Church of England clergyman, fellow of St John’s College, Cambridge, in the 1610s, and from 1637 to 1643 Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, wrote *Directions for a Student in the Universitie* (c. 1620), which was a detailed reading list for undergraduates over the four years of their course.¹³⁸ Cicero, Terence, Ovid, Virgil, Horace, and Erasmus are all stipulated to begin with. Holdsworth also recommends Thomas Godwyn’s *Romanae Historiae Anthologia* (1614), an account of Roman customs and ideals written to guide students at Abingdon School (where Godwyn was headmaster), and

¹³⁵ Christopher Marlow, *Performing Masculinity in English University Drama, 1598-1636* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), p.2.

¹³⁶ Henry Peacham, *The Compleat Gentleman* (London: John Legat for Francis Constable, 1622), p.18.

¹³⁷ Mordechai Feingold, ‘The Humanities’ in *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume IV, Seventeenth-Century Oxford*, ed. by Nicholas Tyacke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp.211-357 (p.313).

¹³⁸ Patrick Collinson, ‘Holdsworth, Richard (1590–1649), Church of England clergyman and college head’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, posted 03/01/08.
<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-13499> [accessed 08/06/20].

Justin's *Historia*, first printed in England as *Iustini ex Trogi Pompeii Historia Libri XLIIII* in 1572. In reading these texts, Holdsworth encouraged the practise of commonplacing: "observe also as you goe along all the useful phrases, & idiotismes."¹³⁹ The commonplacing of this mixture of political, literary, and historical texts gives a sense of both what university students read and how they read it. However, Holdsworth admits that few students "continue constant in it, or bring it to any perfection" because of "the toyle & the interuption it must needs creat to theyr studies, to rise evry foot to a great Folio book, & toss it and turn it for evry little passage y^t is to be writt downe" (Holdsworth, p.651). Reading lists from students at university, both before and after the publication of Holdsworth's *Directions*, also indicate an emphasis on ancient literature with a sprinkling of early modern texts. Feingold reports that Walter Browne, who graduated from Corpus Christi College in 1598, studied the ancient historians but also owned texts by Bodin, Vergil, Botero, and Guicciardini, "as well as three works by Machiavelli, [...] George Buchanan's *Rerum scoticarum historia*, John Selden's *Jani anglorum facies altera*, Samuel Daniel's *Historie of England*, a copy of the Magna Carta, John Norden's *Speculum Britaniae*, the *Mirroure for Magistrates*, Thomas Walsingham's *Historia brevis*, and John Hayward's *The first part of the Life and Raigne of King Henrie the IIII*" (Feingold, p.345). According to Feingold, most undergraduates "owned a couple of universal or Roman histories and the approved ancient histories. Many also possessed a methodological manual on the study of history" (Ibid, p.342).

Degory Wheare stressed the importance of guidance in *De Ratione et Methodo Legendi Historias* (1623), which was printed ten times in both Latin and English between 1623 and 1700. Wheare proclaims that three things are necessary for the reading of history to be fruitful:

- 1.) an established order, so that he does not read in a confused, vague, or desultory manner; 2.) intelligent judgement, so that he skillfully [*sic*] absorbs whatever he reads, and well discerns what things are to be selected;
- 3.) diligent industry, that he may systematically store up the things that he has picked out, of whatever sort, like a harvest into some barns.¹⁴⁰

Similarly, Bodin's earlier *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* (1566) espouses the necessity of guidance: "It is not enough to have a quantity of historical works at home, unless

¹³⁹ Richard Holdsworth, 'Directions for a Student in the Universitie' (1620) in H. F. Fletcher (ed.), *The Intellectual Development of John Milton*, Vol. 2 (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1961), pp.623-655 (p.638).

¹⁴⁰ Degory Wheare, *De Ratione et Methodo Legendi Historias* (London: Excudebat I. Haviland, 1623), sig.A1^r. Trans. by Dana F. Sutton <<http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/whear/>> [accessed 08/06/20]. "1.) Certus ordo, ne confuse, vage, aut desultorie legat; 2.) intelligens iudicium, ut quaecunque legerit, dextre capiat, et quae sunt eligenda probe discernat; 3.) diligens industria, ut electa cuiuscunque generis, velut annonam in horrea quaedam, ordine recondat."

one understands the use of each and in what order and manner each ought to be read.”¹⁴¹ The study of history was considered potentially risky because, as Feingold explains, “history was viewed as a repository for literary, moral, and political lessons; hence, the attitude of humanist theorists that history was both central to the curriculum and yet fraught with dangers for impressionable, unprincipled youth” (Feingold, p.331). The way to tackle these dangers was to guide students to the ‘correct’ lessons, through both printed manuals and teaching. This also laid part of the onus on the writers of history, as elucidated by Anthony Grafton: “Whether you were Protestant or Catholic, cleric or layman, engaged sixteenth-century jurist or dryasdust seventeenth-century polymath, if you chose to write an *ars historica*, you committed yourself to explaining how to learn the truth about the past, how to reduce its lessons to systematic form, and how to apply them to the present.”¹⁴²

Academic lessons were solidified further through rhetorically sophisticated oral debates called disputations. These usually took place weekly but larger colleges had them more frequently due to the amount of students, and so the boys of Trinity College, Cambridge, as H. F. Fletcher explains, “were divided into three groups for these disputations, one for Monday, another for Wednesday, and the third for Friday” and included “all fellows, bachelors, and masters, only the doctors of theology being exempt.”¹⁴³ That almost everyone in the college would watch the scholars verbally spar meant that disputations had an inherently performative nature. Indeed, performance was the very point of disputations as they were intended as practice for the rhetoric skills learned in the classroom. Conversing and debating in a public forum was a pressing skill to learn for any students who intended to take religious or governmental roles. The intrinsic performativity of this style of learning transformed a pedagogical exercise into, as Feingold states, “a form of entertainment” (Feingold, p.302). The boundary between what constituted education and entertainment was therefore fluid. This is compounded by the fact that disputations were put on as entertainment, along with plays, at formal occasions such as royal visits. While these presentations were used to demonstrate the academic rigor of the universities, they were also intended to entertain guests. During the 1605 procession of James VI and I to Oxford a day of disputations were held, which included:

An creber suffitus Nicotianae exoticae sit sanis salutaris? Neg.

[Whether the frequent smoking of exotic Tobacco is sound and healthy? Neg.]

¹⁴¹ “neque enim satis est magnum historicorum cumulum domi habere, nisi cujusque usus & quo quisque ordine ac modo legi debeat intelligatur.” Jean Bodin, *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* (Paris: Martin Iuuenum, 1566), p.15. Trans. by Beatrice Reynolds, *Method for the Easy Comprehension of History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1945), p.20.

¹⁴² Grafton, *What Was History?* (2007), pp.123-4.

¹⁴³ H. F. Fletcher (ed.), *The Intellectual Development of John Milton*, Vol. 2 (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1961), p.65.

An mores nutricum a puerilis cum lacte imbibantur? Neg.

[Whether morality is gained from imbibing breast milk during childhood? Neg.]¹⁴⁴

Disputations were not debates which sought to ascertain veracity as the right answer was predetermined, demonstrated above by listing ‘neg’ if it was incorrect, or ‘affirm’ if it was correct. That the answer was fixed further demonstrates that the value of disputations lay not in the exchange of intellectual positions, but in the performance of the argument. Indeed, Matthew Gwinne, a teacher and playwright at Oxford, who was defending the health benefits of tobacco and morals being gained from breastfeeding, revealed his true stance to the king afterwards.¹⁴⁵ The topic was likely chosen as a nod to James’s hostility towards smoking tobacco, outlined in his *A Counterblaste to Tobacco* (1604), and Gwinne’s knowledge of this probably encouraged his support of the king’s opinion. That disputations were presented to distinguished guests as entertaining performances indicates that these orations were not purely pedagogical. Feingold relates that “[w]hen Cosimo de’ Medici visited Oxford in May 1669 he was so entertained by the disputations of Henry Smith and John Milne of Queen’s that he disregarded the offers made by the vice-chancellor to leave before they ended” (Feingold, p.302). Disputations served the dual purpose of providing pedagogy *and* revelry, and this dynamic was not unfamiliar to scholars as academic plays were also performances which were intended for both amusement and scholastic enrichment.

While drama was never an official part of the curriculum, it was seen as co-curricular and played a large part in the recreational culture of the two universities. It was deemed so important that colleges began to preserve their interest in drama through statutes. At Cambridge, the St John’s College statutes of 1545 required the performance of at “least six dialogues, or festival or literary spectacles” between Christmas and Epiphany, and other plays from Epiphany to Lent.¹⁴⁶ Queens’ and Trinity both followed this precedent of requiring students to participate in comedies and tragedies, often stipulating two plays per year in Latin and two in Greek.¹⁴⁷ Similar statutes exist for Oxford, with Christ Church College officiating plays from 1554: “Of the which fowre playes, ther shalbe a comedy in Latyn And a comedy in

¹⁴⁴ John Nichols, *The progresses processions, and magnificent festivities of King James the First his royal consort, family and court: collected from original manuscripts, scarce pamphlets, corporation records, parochial registers, etc. [...]*, Vol. 1 (New York: Burt Franklin, 1967), p.534. Translation mine.

¹⁴⁵ Iain Wright, ‘Gwinne, Matthew (1558–1627), physician and playwright’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, posted 03/01/08.
<<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-11813>> [accessed 20/07/18].

¹⁴⁶ Alan H. Nelson (ed.), *Records of Early English Drama: Cambridge*, Vol. 1 (2 vols., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p.132.

¹⁴⁷ *REED: Cambridge*, Vol. 1, p.205, p.209.

greke: And a tragedy in latyn and a tragedy in greke.”¹⁴⁸ Marlow describes that “performances at both universities usually took place in college halls on specially constructed wooden stages that allowed for multiple exits and entrances through representations of stage houses” (Marlow, p.9). Performances met at the intersection between the academic and social cultures of the university, with plays taking place in the same physical space and at the same times as performances associated with the festive tradition from the medieval period. While plays were performed at festive occasions as entertaining pieces, they also held practical value by training young men for public life. John R. Elliott Jr. confirms that plays “were regarded as a branch of rhetoric, whose educational function was to hone the skills of the future preacher, orator, and statesman in the classical style.”¹⁴⁹ Academic plays, particularly history plays, undeniably had a large pedagogic component because they were produced within the environment of morally improving humanist education. Despite this, there were people who believed that drama was inherently corrupting. Notably, in 1591 the academic and churchman John Rainolds rejected an invitation to see William Gager’s Shrovetide plays at Oxford because drama,

Worketh in the actors a marvellous impression of being like the persons whose qualities they expresse and imitate: cheifly when earnest and much meditation of sundry dayes and weekes, by often repetition and representation of the partes, shall as it were engrave the things in their minde with a penne of iron, or with the point of a diamond.¹⁵⁰

Gager responded to this objection based on students learning the depraved behaviour of the villainous parts they played, instead arguing that drama improved students in a variety of ways:

To practyse owre owne style eyther in prose or verse; to be well acquainted with *Seneca* or *Plautus*; honestly to embowlden owre yuth; to trye their voyces, and confirme their memoryes; to frame their speech; to conform them to convenient action; to trye what mettell is in everye one, and of what disposition they are of; whereby never any one amongst vs, that I know, was made the worse, many have byn much the better.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ John R. Elliot Jr., et al. (eds.), *Records of Early English Drama: Oxford*, Vol. 1 (2 vols., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), p.96.

¹⁴⁹ John R. Elliott, Jr., ‘Plays, Players and Playwrights in Renaissance Oxford’ in *From Page to Performance: Essays in Early English Drama*, ed. by John A. Alford (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1995), pp.179-194 (p.180).

¹⁵⁰ John Rainolds, *The overthrow of stage-plays by way of controversy between D. Gager and D. Rainolds*, ed. by J. W. Binns (London: Johnson, 1972; Facsimile of 1599 edition), p.19.

¹⁵¹ William Gager, ‘Letter to Dr John Rainolds of July 31’, Corpus Christi College Archives, MS 352, pp.41-65. Ed. by Dana F. Sutton (University of Birmingham: The Philological Museum) <<http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/gager/prose/rainolds/text.html>> [accessed 25/08/20].

Gager justifies the performance of drama based on moral instruction and the practice of oratory and Latin. Rhetorical fluency was essential for a pleasurable performance but its practice also aligned with Quintilian's influential precept that a successful orator was "a good man skilled in speaking."¹⁵²

The debate regarding the ethical merit of drama is representative of dialogues that were on-going during the period. Stephen Gosson in *The School of Abuse* (1579) attacked plays for offering "straunge consortes of melody, to tickle the eare, costly apparel, to flatter the sight; effeminate gesture, to rauish the sence; and wanton speache, to whet desire too inordinate lust."¹⁵³ To Gosson the entertaining aspects of drama tempt spectators towards sinful behaviour. On the other end of the spectrum lies Thomas Heywood, who gives merit to university drama, "for the emboldening of their iunior schollers, to arme them with audacity against they come to bee employed in any publicke exercise, as in the reading of the Dialecticke, Rhetoricke, Ethicke, Mathematick, the Physicke, or Metaphysicke Lectures. It teacheth audacity to the bashfull Grammarian" (Heywood, sig.C3^v). Heywood particularly praises history plays because they "hath power to new mold the harts of the spectators and fashion them to the shape of any noble and notable attempt" (Ibid, sig.B4^f). Thomas Nashe also contends that history plays portray the valiant acts of England's heroes as models of excellence to inspire audiences; they "shewe the ill successe of treason, the fall of hastie climbers, the wretched end of vsurpers, the miserie of ciuil dissension, and how just God is euermore in punishing of murther."¹⁵⁴ Howard states that "the history play was privileged as a didactic and patriotic genre, one to which theater's defenders could point as an instance of theater's positive effects in giving to Englishmen moving representations of national heroes, a sense of the nation's past, and occasions for the production of patriotic fervor."¹⁵⁵ Geoffrey Fenton, who in 1580 embarked on a career as a civil servant, defends academic drama in his translation of Jean Talpin's *Form of Christian Policy* (1574): "Plaies of scollers exhibited for good instructions and exhortacions to virtue, and by which they are prepared to a boldnes of speache in all honorable assemblies, enhabling their tongues to readye and wel disposed eloquence."¹⁵⁶ Fenton believed that academic drama was justified because it was used for moral purpose and rhetorical exercise, but he disapproved of popular theatre because it promoted sin: "by these publike Plaies, many forbear to doo euill" (Ibid, p.145). Forbear now means to "abstain or refrain from (some action or procedure); to

¹⁵² Quintilian, *The Orator's Education*, ed. and trans. by Donald A. Russell (Loeb; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), p.197. "vir bonus dicendi peritus", p.196.

¹⁵³ Stephen Gosson, *The Schoole of Abuse* (London: Thomas Woodcocke, 1579), sig.B6^v.

¹⁵⁴ Thomas Nashe, *Pierce Penniless, His Supplication to the Devil* (London: Richard Jones, 1592), sig.F3^{f-v}.

¹⁵⁵ Howard, 'Other Englands', (1999), p.136.

¹⁵⁶ Geoffrey Fenton, *The form of Christain pollicie gathered out of French* (London: H. Middelton for Rafe Newbery, 1574), pp.146-47.

cease, desist” but during the early modern period it meant the opposite: “To bear, endure, submit to.”¹⁵⁷ These arguments for and against drama are united in their belief that theatre has, as Louis Montrose identifies, “the capacity to effect moral changes in its audience – whether for better or for worse. Plays might inspire, instruct, reform, delight, terrify, sadden, entrap, corrupt, infect, or incite.”¹⁵⁸ The arguments for the virtue of academic theatre in comparison to the sin of public theatre ignore the many connections between the two.

University authorities did not acknowledge these similarities though, instead agreeing with Fenton that popular drama was devoid of moral value and so they sought to prevent students from seeing drama outwith the university. An official order issued in 1574 decreed that students would be fined for attending entertainment at the Gog Magog Hills or any other venue near the university: “no scholler of what degree so ever he be, shall resorte or goe to anye playes or games either kepte at Gogmagog hilles or els where within fyve myles of Cambridg.”¹⁵⁹ In 1575 this order was reinforced by a letter from the Privy Council:

showes of vnlefull, hurtfull pernicious & vnhonest games, nere to that Vniuersitie of Cambridge, do consider that it cannot be, but a greate number of the yowthe and others of the same, may be thereby inticed from their ordinarie places of learninge, to be beholders, learners & practisers of Lewdnes, & vnlefull actes. (Ibid, pp.277–8)

The meaning of “games” is expanded upon by Simonds D’Ewes in 1620, when he reports in his diary that a famous bull “is to be baited at Hogmagog hills, and that all such exercises as bowling, running, jumping, shooting, and wrestling are to be practiced there for a month or six weeks, under the designation of the Olympic games” (Ibid, p.572). The University of Oxford reacted similarly to the distraction of plays and games, and in 1583 the register of Congregation and Convocation enacted a statute which declared that “no common stage players be permitted to vse or do anye such thinge within the precincte of the vniuersitye.”¹⁶⁰ This statute also includes an addendum written by the Chancellor, the Earl of Leicester, in which he explicitly separates academic and professional drama: “so wolde I not haue it meant theare bye that the tragedies commodies & other shewes of exercises of learninge in that kinde vsed to be sett forth by vniuersitye men should be forbedden but acceptinge them as commendable and greate furderances of learninge do wish them in anye wise to be continued at set times and incresed”

¹⁵⁷ “forbear”, v., 5 and 1. OED Online, July 2020. Oxford University Press.

<<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/72801>> [accessed 16/07/2020].

¹⁵⁸ Louis Montrose, *The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and the Cultural Politics of the Elizabethan Theatre* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp.49-50.

¹⁵⁹ *REED: Cambridge*, Vol.1, pp.271–2.

¹⁶⁰ *REED: Oxford*, Vol. 1, p.195.

(Ibid, p.195). Leicester emphasizes the pedagogical motive for academic plays; a motive which he believes is missing from professional plays.

Despite this hostility towards professional players, statutes were unable to prevent the mixing of academic and popular drama. There were of course the students-turned-playwrights who used their literary talents for the commercial stage, allowing a broader section of society a filtered version of academia. Furthermore, Jonathan Walker explains that “however elite and secluded they might be in their composition, performance, audience, and objectives – academic plays actively engage with urgent social, religious, and political questions of the period.”¹⁶¹ Although there were differences in staging, audience, and language, university playwrights and professional playwrights often dealt with the same issues. And like the plays of the popular stage in London, academic drama, asserts Walker, while “often instructive and thus purposive,” also “provides entertainment and recreation for players and playgoers alike” (Ibid, p.5). Thus, while university authorities only focused on the didactic value of plays, they undeniably also served a recreational purpose. The gap between academic drama and commercial drama is not as wide as it may initially seem. While enabling students to practice public speaking, language skills, and instilling humanist ideals of duty, drama could also be exploratory. Marlow explains that “[t]he plays that were performed in early modern Oxbridge colleges can be understood as artefacts through which young Tudor and Stuart men interrogated the subject positions that their culture constructed for them” (Marlow, p.6). Academic drama was not just about the learning of social and political roles, but the questioning of these roles too and this brought them closer to plays of the popular stage.

The dynamic between entertainment and education on the academic stage is well illustrated by the royal visits of Elizabeth I and James VI and I to the universities. Sarah Knight identifies that Oxford and Cambridge showcased “humanistic learning through their progress entertainments, alongside the standard progresses’ provision of hospitality and compliment, and so during these visits the universities sought to appeal directly to the monarch’s sense of erudition.”¹⁶² Both monarchs received tuition from humanist educators and so were aware that history could be didactically charged. Roger Ascham, Elizabeth’s tutor, asserts that Greek and Roman works enrich a learner’s rhetorical skill and morality: “The remembrance of soch a common welthe, vsing soch discipline and order for yougthe, and thereby bringing forth to their praise, and leaning to vs for our example, such Capitaines for warre, soch Councelors for peace, and

¹⁶¹ Jonathan Walker, ‘Introduction: Learning to Play’ in *Early Modern Academic Drama*, ed. by Jonathan Walker and Paul D. Streufert (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), pp.1-18 (p.2).

¹⁶² Sarah Knight, ““Goodlie anticke apparel”?: Sophocles’ *Ajax* at Early Modern Oxford and Cambridge”, *Shakespeare Studies*, 37, (2009), pp.25-42 (p.31).

matcheles masters, for all kinde of learninge.”¹⁶³ Elizabeth also clearly understood the entertainment value of drama, evidenced by her request to scholars for non-academic plays for the Christmas festivities at court in 1592. Previously university productions for royalty had been performed after a day of learned activities on university ground. Linda Shenk accurately summarizes that “[w]hen the crown turned to university men for diversion more than disputation, it undercut the humanist mythology of the scholar serving the state as a learned advisor.”¹⁶⁴ Asking these men, who served the court as advisors and ambassadors, to perform a comedy in English at court damaged their erudite identities as political intellectuals. This led to scholars reaffirming their political authority by presenting plays as royal counsel. Shenk confirms that “plays offered a venue for university men to counsel their monarch. In these performances of the 1560s, both Oxford and Cambridge sought to balance court-pleasing theatrical elements with material that retained a connection to learning’s association with political comment” (Ibid, p.23). Despite the cultivation of an erudite reputation through playwriting, occasionally the revelry and/or disorder of performances eroded this intent. For instance, during Elizabeth’s 1566 visit to Oxford a wall collapsed because of the number of people attempting to gain access, resulting in three deaths: “by the fall of the syde wale and a payre of stayres, and great presse of ye multitude 3. men were slayne.”¹⁶⁵ While death was not a common occurrence, rowdy behaviour was frequent enough that, as Elliott reports, “[s]word-bearing ushers called ‘whiflers’ were obliged to lock the rowdiest of them in the porter’s lodge, and to carry out others who had fainted or been trampled in the crowded hall” (Elliott, p.643). The occasionally blurred line between education and revelry sometimes resulted in disorder which hindered educational aims but Legge’s *Richardus Tertius* is never mentioned in this regard. Legge’s play presents a serious but emotionally appealing drama to an audience well versed in seeking morality from historical narrative.

LEGGE’S *RICHARDUS TERTIUS*

Thomas Legge entered Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, in 1552 and remained at the institution for the majority of his life, ultimately being appointed master of Gonville and Caius College in 1573.¹⁶⁶ He wrote *Richardus Tertius* in 1579 and *Solymitana Clades* in the early

¹⁶³ Roger Ascham, *The Scholemaster or Plaine and Perfite Way of Teachyng Children, to Understand, Write, and Speake, the Latin Tong* (London: John Daye, 1570), p.18.

¹⁶⁴ Linda Shenk, ‘Gown Before Crown: Scholarly Abjection and Academic Entertainment Under Queen Elizabeth I’ in *Early Modern Academic*, ed. by Drama Jonathan Walker and Paul D. Streufert (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), pp.19-44 (p.21).

¹⁶⁵ *REED: Oxford*, Vol. 1, p.141.

¹⁶⁶ C. N. L. Brooke, ‘Legge, Thomas (c. 1535–1607), playwright and college head’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, posted 23/09/04.

1580s. While *Solymitana Clades* employs graphic violence, *Richardus Tertius* follows Senecan tragedy by having violence occur offstage. With Seneca as his stylistic inspiration, Legge's historical material came from Thomas More's *History of Richard III* (1513) and its continuation in Edward Hall's *The Union of the Noble and Illustre Famelies of Lancastre and York* (1548), whose work was based in turn on the Latin *Anglica Historia* (1534) by Polydore Vergil. Richard S. Sylvester explains that More's work was first "issued by Richard Grafton in 1543 as a prose addition to John Hardyng's metrical chronicle. Grafton printed the *History* twice in that year, each time without acknowledging More's authorship of it."¹⁶⁷ His authorship was first acknowledged when Hall died in 1547, allowing Grafton to become his literary executor and More was credited in all subsequent editions of the *Union*. It was also printed by More's nephew, William Rastell, in 1557, likely deriving from a fair copy of More's work. While there are minor variations between all of these versions, most have at least two authorities, prompting issues in clarifying which version Legge was using at a specific time.¹⁶⁸ Legge only deviates from his historical guides three times: (i) in the princess wooing scene; (ii) with the heightened responsibility of counsellors; and (iii) in Richard's lack of physical deformity. These changes heighten the theatricality, the didacticism, or both.

The performance of *Richardus Tertius* necessitated a highly elaborate production involving roughly one hundred students and fellows in dramatic and musical roles, thus requiring a huge expenditure of time and money. While this expenditure signals that Cambridge authorities thought the play was important, it was still an outlier of university drama, which tended to treat the Roman, rather than the English, past. Churchill notes that "[t]o Legge, therefore, was due the turning of the drama in England in an entirely new direction. It was he who first perceived that English history as related by the chroniclers possessed as great a store of dramatic material as the classical saga" (Churchill, p.270). Legge's use of English history may well have influenced the professional stage, either through the performance itself or the manuscripts which circulated afterwards. Marlowe studied at Corpus Christi College until 1584 and so may have seen Legge's play and been inspired in his writing of *Tamburlaine* (1587-88), *Edward II* (1592), and *Dido* (1596). Similarly, Robert Greene, the writer of histories such as *The Scottish History of James the Fourth* (1590), George Peele, who wrote *Edward I* (1593), and Thomas Lodge, writer of *A Looking Glass for London* (1594), were students of Cambridge at this time and so likely had either direct experience or indirect knowledge of *Richardus Tertius*. The

<<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-16357>> [accessed 13/04/18].

¹⁶⁷ Richard S. Sylvester, *Complete Works of St. Thomas More, Vol. 2: Richard III* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), p.xx.

¹⁶⁸ For an analysis of the differences and similarities of these sources see Churchill, *Richard III before Shakespeare* (1900), pp.273-280.

possible impact of Legge's play on men who went on to write historical dramas has led Dana Sutton to title Legge "the father of the Tudor history play."¹⁶⁹ While Ribner concedes Legge's influence on the evolving history play, he claims that "*Richardus Tertius* is the product of a unique and relatively isolated tradition in the English drama, that of the academic stage, with its select audience and its classical models."¹⁷⁰ Although the play was a product of this exclusive environment, the academic stage was not entirely separate from the wider culture of drama in England. As noted, almost all commercial playwrights had a university education and many brought those educations into the service of their writing. Furthermore, both the academic and the popular stage were invested in using historical material to explore questions of political and moral duty and to entertain. The binary that is presented between the two stages does not stand up to scrutiny and Legge's play holds an important position in the development of the history play.

While Legge's play did not reach the same heights of notoriety as Shakespeare's *Richard III* (1593), it was still popular. Despite not being printed, Howard B. Norland states that, "the fact that eleven manuscripts of the text have survived suggests that it must have had an audience beyond those who attended the premiere performance."¹⁷¹ This is the largest number of surviving manuscripts for any early modern academic play and there were likely more manuscripts circulating contemporarily. The manuscript kept at the Northamptonshire Record Office (MS Finch-Hatton 320) belonged to the Finch-Hatton family who held the title of Earl of Nottingham. It is unknown how the family acquired the play but Sir Henry Finch, the lawyer and politician, was educated at Christ's College, Cambridge, between 1572 and 1576 before joining Gray's Inn.¹⁷² While Finch left Cambridge a few years before *Richardus Tertius*'s performance, he may have been interested enough in the drama of his alma mater that he sought a copy of the text. It is also unknown how the play was read, but that it was owned by a family involved in politics suggests its potential for utility in a political context. Furthermore, the manuscript now at the Bodleian Library (MS Tanner 306, fols.42-63) is in a commonplace book which contains various works on historical and political subjects. While only Action 1 is preserved, that it is organised amongst other political and dramatic works, such as two poems

¹⁶⁹ Dana Sutton, 'Justus Lipsius to Thomas Legge, January 1, 1585', *Humanistica Lovaniensia*, 40 (1991) pp.275-81 (p.276).

¹⁷⁰ Ribner, *The English History Play* (1965), p.66.

¹⁷¹ Howard B. Norland, *Neoclassical Tragedy in Elizabethan England* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2009), p.141.

¹⁷² Wilfrid Prest, 'Finch, Sir Henry (c. 1558–1625), author and lawyer', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, posted 23/09/04.

<<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-9436>> [accessed 09/04/21]; 'Finch, Henry', *History of Parliament*.

<<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/finch-henry-1558-1625>> [accessed 09/04/21].

written by King James VI and I and a copy of a speech written to welcome Queen Elizabeth to Wimbledon in 1599, suggests that it had a use beyond literary enjoyment.¹⁷³ This manuscript also reports that Legge's play was performed again at St. John's College in 1582 in the presence of Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex, which while unverified by any other source, indicates its possible influence on a prominent public figure and favourite of Elizabeth I. Essex studied at Cambridge between 1577 and 1581 and so may have even seen the original performance.¹⁷⁴ Another notable and potential audience member was Sir John Coke, a politician who sat in the House of Commons and acted as secretary of state from 1625 to 1640, who matriculated in 1576 and earned his MA in 1584.¹⁷⁵ In a letter he wrote to the Marquis of Buckingham in 1622, Coke professes that "I was not bred in servile or illiberal trades; the university was my nurse" and that "I never refused any service whatsoever to give God, my prince and my country a good account of my time; nor ever made the public a step to private ends."¹⁷⁶ Coke attributes his sense of civic duty to his university education and Legge's history play may have been part of that education.

Francis Meres, a churchman and author, included Legge in a list of the best tragedians, further demonstrating his influence beyond the university: "so these are our best for Tragedie, the Lorde Buckhurst, Doctor Leg of Cambridge, Doctor Edes of Oxforde, maister Edward Ferris, the Authour of the Mirroure for Magistrates, Marlow, Peele, Watson, Kid, Shakespeare, Drayton, Chapman, Decker, and Benjamin Johnson."¹⁷⁷ The courtier and author Sir John Harrington declared that the performance of *Richardus Tertius* "would moue (I thinke) *Phalaris* the tyrant, and terrifie all tyrannous minded men, from following their foolish ambitious humors, seeing how his ambition made him kill his brother, his nephewes, his wife, beside infinite others."¹⁷⁸ This comment attests not only to the play's high reputation but also to its value in deterring despotism. Legge's expansion of the roles of Richard's villainous counsellors presents a

¹⁷³ For more on the contents of the manuscript see Laura Estill, *Dramatic Extracts in Seventeenth-Century English Manuscripts: Watching, Reading, Changing Plays* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2015), pp.166-7.

¹⁷⁴ Paul E. J. Hammer, 'Devereux, Robert, second earl of Essex (1565–1601), soldier and politician', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, posted 04/10/08. <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-7565>> [accessed 16/07/20].

¹⁷⁵ Michael B. Young, 'Coke, Sir John (1563–1644), politician', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, posted 07/01/16. <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-5828>> [accessed 16/07/20]; 'Coke, John', *History of Parliament*. <<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/member/coke-john-1563-1644>> [accessed 11/02/21].

¹⁷⁶ William Dashwood Fane, *The Manuscripts of the Earl Cowper, K.G., Preserved at Melourne Hall, Derbyshire* (London: H.M. Stationery off., by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1888), p.121.

¹⁷⁷ Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia: Wit's Treasury* (London: P. Short for Cuthbert Burbie, 1598), p.283.

¹⁷⁸ John Harrington, *A Preface, or rather a Briefe Apologie of Poetrie*, prefixed to Lodovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso* (London: Richard Field, 1591), p.vi.

cautionary tale to urge against immorality in the role of royal advisor. Many of the students in the audience would have been aspiring statesmen and Legge's play presented them with lessons concerning the art of governing and civic duty. *Richardus Tertius* asserts that disregarding duty to the commonweal in favour of devious schemes which benefit the individual leads to discord not only for the welfare of England, but also ultimately for the individual.

THE CAUTIONARY EXAMPLE OF DEVIUS COUNSEL

Richardus Tertius opens with a Senecan stichomythic dialogue between Queen Elizabeth and the Cardinal Archbishop of Canterbury, immediately exemplifying to the audience that the play features the same didactic quality as a Senecan tragedy. Elizabeth fears for the security of her kingdom and expresses her worries to a confidant:

CARD. Do the nobles' sleeping hatreds still frighten you?

QUEEN. Old wounds are not healed at once.

CARD. With his death the King has sanctified this truce.

QUEEN. Uneasy truces are wont to die along with the prince that makes them.

CARD. The common welfare overcomes private hatreds.

QUEEN. Private ambition breaks the public peace.¹⁷⁹

The Cardinal attempts to console the Queen by declaring that civic duty to the nation overrides personal vengeance and so her son Edward will be safe from enemies. The Queen, drawing on England's rich past of royal betrayal, counters this by stating that individual ambition has often taken precedence over public welfare. This exchange foregrounds the major issue with ideals of duty, namely that in reality private ambition clashes with public duty. The Cardinal's counsel speaks of an ideal world; the Queen's rebuke speaks of the real world. Elizabeth is using history's example, while the Cardinal cannot see beyond the behaviour that is theoretically espoused as exemplary. Elizabeth's view agrees with Machiavelli's: "there is such a great distance between how we live and how we ought to live, anyone who sets aside what is done for

¹⁷⁹ Thomas Legge, *Richardus Tertius* (1579), ed. and trans. by Dana F. Sutton (University of Birmingham: The Philological Museum, posted 2003), <<http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/rich/>> [Accessed 23/09/20]. No archetypal manuscript exists; therefore Sutton argues that "an edition cannot be based on any single ms., or even on a few of them: it must be eclectic and consider the evidence of all ten independent witnesses" (Sutton, Introduction). The manuscripts are labelled thus: **A.** University Library (Cambridge) ms. MM4.40. **B.** Gonville and Caius College ms. 125.62. **C.** Clare College ms. K 3.12. **D.** Emmanuel College ms. 1.3.19. **E.** British Library ms. Harl. 2412. **F.** British Library ms. Harl 6926. **G.** Bodleian Library (Oxford) ms. Tanner 306, folios 42 - 63. **H.** Bodleian Library (Oxford) ms. Lat. Misc. e 16. **I.** Northamptonshire Record Office ms. Finch-Hatton 320. **J.** Folger Shakespeare Library ms. 1877.1. **K.** Huntington Library ms. 179. "CARD. Terrent adhuc sopita nobilium odia? / REG. Veterata non sanantur illico vulnera. / CARD. Sancivit icta morte princeps foedera. / REG. Cum principe mori dubia quaerunt foedera. / CARD. Privata vincit odia communis salus. / REG. Privata publicam quietam destruit Ambitio." (1.1.1.143-8).

what ought to be done learns more quickly what will ruin him than preserve him.”¹⁸⁰ This tension between what ideally should *be* and what in reality *is* fits with the overall educational message of the play. Legge shows the political world as it really is but still promotes virtuous duty rather than selfish vice, although duty must accommodate reality.

The verbal exchange here, but also the play as a whole, deals with debates of politics as if they were academic disputations. While responses in disputations were often lengthier, the stichomythic quality borrowed from Seneca adds another didactic layer. Students were trained to mine ancient works for didactic meaning, and Jensen confirms that “[s]tudents used Seneca’s moral and philosophical essays to gather perspectives on characters and events.”¹⁸¹ Seneca’s plays were also used towards this purpose and were familiar to university students. His tragedies were popular in England, with six complete Latin editions appearing between 1475 and 1492 alone.¹⁸² Various scholars translated Seneca’s tragedies into the vernacular, starting with Jasper Heywood’s *Troas* in 1559, *Thyestes* in 1560 and *Hercules Furens* in 1561. In 1563 Alexander Neville translated *Oedipus* and in 1581 Thomas Newton edited a single volume of translations called *His Tenne Tragedies*. Occasionally these translations sought to clarify the moral edification, as, for instance, Neville did with his *Oedipus*. In the chorus of the third act, which in the original describes the calamity of Cadmus, Neville explicitly holds Oedipus up as a *Mirror for Magistrates* style example against immorality: “Let Oedipus Example be of this vnto you all, / A Mirrour meete. A Patern playne, / of Princes carefull thrall.”¹⁸³ Students also saw Senecan tragedies on the stage, with *Troades* performed in 1551-2 at Trinity and in 1560 at Queens’, *Oedipus* performed in 1559-60 at Trinity, and *Medea* performed at Trinity in 1560-1 and at Queens’ in 1563. This exposure to Seneca combined with commonplace training meant that the vast majority of students would have been able to identify Legge’s Senecan borrowings and, more than that, may have sought to extract the moral value from his play in the way they did with Seneca’s plays.

The Queen’s fears are quickly realized as the soon-to-be Richard III and his followers, Buckingham, Lovell, and Catesby, endeavour to take the throne. Richard first turns a portion of the nobility against the royal family by vilifying Elizabeth and glorifying himself: “How much

¹⁸⁰ Machiavelli, *The Prince* (1988), p.53.

¹⁸¹ Jensen, *Reading the Roman Republic* (2012), p.84.

¹⁸² For more on Seneca’s print history see Anthony Grafton, ‘The availability of ancient works’ in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. by Charles B. Schmitt and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp.763-91.

¹⁸³ Seneca, *The Lamentable Tragedie of Oedipus*, trans. by Alexander Neville (London: Thomas Colwell, 1563), sig.Dii^v. By contrast, in Seneca, the lines read: “The kindred bands filled the plains, and this offspring, worthy the seed that had been sown, measured their life be a single day [Agmina campos cognata tenent, / dignaque iacto semine proles, / uno aetatem permensa die]”, Seneca, *Oedipus*, trans. by Frank Justus Miller in *Seneca’s Tragedies*, Vol. 1 (London: William Heinemann, 1917), p.491, l. 738-40.

ruin could the treacherous Queen have created, if my clever mind had not averted it!” (RT, 1.2.1.235-6).¹⁸⁴ He then seeks to gain the trust of Edward, which he does by emphasizing his loyalty and duty: “My irresistible nature has dedicated my loyalty to your bidding, and my noble birth forbids me to deceive the King, although in other matters my sense of public duty commands my faith” (RT, 1.2.2.383-7).¹⁸⁵ Similarly, in the presence of a crowd of citizens he puts on a charade of loyalty to the kingdom: “I shall remain withdrawn, safe from the injuries of envy. Blind ambition does not beset my mind. The duties of overseeing my kinsman’s kingdom weigh on me sufficiently” (RT, 2.3.1.2487-9).¹⁸⁶ In both of these situations he puts on a façade of being dedicated to his duty to king and country. The Cardinal foolishly continues to affirm to Elizabeth that Richard can be trusted: “Why do you deny an uncle his beloved nephew, an uncle to whom the greater part of England’s care is entrusted?” (RT, 1.4.3.1112-3).¹⁸⁷ The holy man trusts that Richard is prioritizing his dual duty to Edward as both familial protector and defender of the realm. However, Elizabeth is aware of the dissonance that Richard has created between appearance and reality and is thus distraught about Edward being placed in Richard’s care. She wails:

Oh sweet pledge of trust, second glory of the realm, your mother’s empty hope, for whom I shall foolishly pray in vain for your father’s glory, your grandfather’s long life, let God, the Ruler of the world, be your protector amid so many storms. Let the wind-driven sail reach port safely. Unhappy one, receive a sad mother’s kisses, planted on your lips. (RT, 1.4.3.1160-5)¹⁸⁸

This is greatly expanded from Legge’s source of More’s *History of Richard III*, where her parting words are reported as: “Farewel, my own swete sonne, God send you good keeping, let me kis you ones yet ere you goe, for God knoweth when we shal kis together agayne. And therewith she kissed him, & blessed him, turned her back and wept.”¹⁸⁹ Legge expands this to over forty highly emotive lines by turning to the dramatic model of *Troades*. Andromache, the wife of Hector, Prince of Troy, watches as her son, Astyanax, is sacrificed by her victorious foes:

¹⁸⁴ “Regina quantam mihi creasset tum luem / Perfida, malum mens nisi sagax averteret!”

¹⁸⁵ “Natura me tuis fidelem iussibus / Nescia resisti consecravit et dolos / Genus struere regale me regi vetat, / Cum caeteris commune persuadet fidem / Officium.”

¹⁸⁶ “Partim, Dei sed maximi nutu magis. / Nil scepra damnet regis, optimi viri. / Debet mihi nomen placare subditi.”

¹⁸⁷ “Cur patruo charum nepotum denegas, / Cui cura maior Angliae committitur?”

¹⁸⁸ “O dulcis pignus, alterum regni decus, / Spes vani matris, cui patris laudes ego / Demens precabor frustra, avi longos dies, / Patronus adsit tot procellis arbiter / Mundi Deus, tutoque portu colloceat / Impulsa vela. Maestae matris accipe / Infixa labris oscula infoelix tuis.”

¹⁸⁹ Sylvester, *Complete Works of St. Thomas More, Vol.2: Richard III* (1963), p.42.

O sweet pledge of love, O glory of our fallen house, last loss of Troy,
 thou terror of the Danai, thy mother's vain hope, for whom in my
 madness I used so oft to pray thy sire's war-earned praises, thy
 grandsire's years; God has denied my prayers.¹⁹⁰

Both mothers emphasize their sons' political importance, with Andromache calling Astyanax "O glory of our fallen house" and Elizabeth naming Edward the "second glory of the realm". Edward's right to the throne poses a direct barrier to Richard, while the young Astyanax is thrown from the walls of Troy because the Greeks feared he would attempt to avenge his father's death. The Tudor political myth was partly founded on the English claiming direct descent from the Trojans and Legge takes advantage of this link, expanding it through linguistic echoes, such as "empty hope", to more powerfully connect the Trojan prince Astyanax and Edward.¹⁹¹ Legge's usage of Seneca turns a dry passage from More into an emotional scene seeking to capture the attention of the audience. His replication of Seneca also prompts the student audience to search the work for instruction. Legge's imitation is not perfect though, as his mention of the grandfathers is inaccurate. Andromache's "thy grandsire's years" is in reference to the aged Priam but "grandfather's long life" does not fit Richard, Duke of York, who was only 48 when he died. Elizabeth's father, Richard Woodville, lived until 64 but did not have a great political standing so the reference is unlikely to be to him. Despite this clumsy imitation which muddies the historical narrative, Legge using Senecan drama as a model to expand the description he found in More enhances both the emotional value of the scene, through sympathy for Elizabeth, and the pedagogic value of the overall play, by inviting the spectators to examine the play like a Senecan tragedy.

Legge also includes other theatrical elements, such as Richard's coronation which populates the stage with an abundance of Lords, Dukes, Knights, gentlemen, ladies, soldiers, "*The King under a canopy betwixt two Bishoppes*", and features a song: "*During the solemnity of the Coronation lett this songe followinge be sunge with instruments. / THE SONG / Let us celebrate this festive day with conjoined hearts, the day on which the King is crowned. [...]*" (RT, 2.5.1.2736-8).¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Seneca, *Troades*, trans. by Miller in *Seneca's Tragedies*, Vol. 1 (1917), p.191. "O dulce pignus, o decus lapsae domus / Summumque Troiae funus, o Danaum timor, / Genetricis o spes uana, cui demens ego / Laudes parentis bellicas, annos aui / Medios precabar, uota destituit deus." l. 766-770.

¹⁹¹ On the Trojan legend in early modern England see *inter alia* A. E. Parsons, 'The Trojan Legend in England: Some Instances of Its Application to the Politics of the Times', *The Modern Language Review*, 24.3 (1929), pp.253-264; Herbert Grabes, "'Elect Nation': The Founding Myth of National Identity in Early Modern England" in *Writing the Early Modern English Nation: The Transformation of National Identity in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-century England*, ed. by Herbert Grabes (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001); and Alan Shepard and Stephen Powell (eds.), *Fantasies of Troy: Classical Tales and the Social Imaginary in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2004).

¹⁹² "Festum diem colamus assensu pari / Quo principis caput corona cingitur. / Decora regni possidet."

Of course, whether audience members were actually entertained is unknown. Norland concludes that Legge's "dependence on Senecan-style declamation by Richard and other characters impedes dramatic interaction, and the use of stichomythia to represent opposing perspectives à la Seneca smacks of artifice" (Norland, p.128). While contemporary accounts attest to the morally enriching elements of the play, whether it was well received as entertainment cannot be ascertained. What is clear though is that Legge endeavoured to make the play aesthetically appealing through theatrical elements. The coronation scene shows him attempting to engage the audience visually and his inclusion of music and songs, both at the end of this scene and at the ends of the other two Actions, demonstrates his aim to appeal to the audience's aural senses. The copyist of one of the manuscripts now kept at the British Library (MS Harl. 2412), William Collnam or Collman of Gonville and Caius College, preserved an imperfect transcript of the musical setting of the song *Preces Deo Fundamus*, performed at the end of the first Action, which he ascribes to "Mr. Bird."¹⁹³ Whether this is in reference to William Byrd, one of the most renowned musicians and composers of the early modern period, or simply a Cambridge contemporary with the same surname is unknown.¹⁹⁴ Regardless, the musicologist Edmond H. Fellowes argues that "[i]t is almost certain that Byrd was here writing for five voices; three voices would have been quite unworthy of the occasion, especially as a full choir was available with choristers and singing-men."¹⁹⁵ This attests to Legge's employment of theatrical features, and specifically in regard to music, to his emulation of the ecclesiastical music from the medieval festive tradition.

The main educational value of the play lies in the portrayal of evil counsellors, who are served to the audience as examples *not* to follow, in the vein of moral lessons from villains in works such as the *Mirror for Magistrates*. To achieve this Legge departs from his sources and expands the roles of Richard's henchmen. This intervention leads Churchill to conclude that Richard "has no thought of the energy with which Shakespeare's Richard is determined to rule Fortune" (Churchill, p.380). Shakespeare's thespian master dominates his play and this aspect is lacking from Legge's character, but while the play suffers dramatically, it is enhanced didactically. By distributing the evil in the play to multiple courtiers Legge warns his student audience, many of whom were destined for roles at the royal court or in government, about the dangers of statesmen not aligning their political and moral duties. The corrupt politicians function as negative examples, impressing upon the future politicians in the audience the importance of

¹⁹³ The ascription occurs, with a fragment of the song, on fol.75^v.

¹⁹⁴ For a discussion on the identity of the composer see John Harley, 'New Light on William Byrd', *Music & Letters*, 79.4 (Nov., 1998), pp.475-488.

¹⁹⁵ Edmond H. Fellowes, *William Byrd* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948, 2nd ed.), p.168.

focusing on the welfare of the nation. The idea to murder the young princes is not Richard's, but his advisor Catesby's:

Crime cannot be conquered save by another crime. Necessity makes
some evildoing honorable. The prey is captured in outspread nets;
both nephews are caught up as well as if they were bound in chains.
They will die at the Claudian Duke's slightest nod. (*RT*, 1.5.1.1296-1300)¹⁹⁶

The start of Catesby's justification is lifted from Clytemnestra in *Agamemnon*, who states that "through crime ever is the safe way for crime."¹⁹⁷ This line later appears in Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, when Hieronimo enters the stage with a book and quotes the line: "*Per scelus semper tutum est sceleribus iter.*"¹⁹⁸ However, there is a major difference between Hieronimo's use of the phrase, which is born out of grief over the unjust death of his son, and Catesby's, which is born out of unsympathetic political machination in service of a despot.

Catesby is not the only schemer though, as it is Lovell who counsels manipulation of the citizens through the use of a clergyman:

Nothing was ever more deceiving than falsified religion: superstition
easily tricks the mob. The devout mind will immediately be aroused if a
preacher, faithful to Scripture, in the midst of pouring sacred texts into
pious ears and explaining divine precepts to the congregation, announces
that the throne was once deceived by fraud, if he explains the besmirched
marriage, the injury suffered by this great house. (*RT*, 2.1.1.1988-95)¹⁹⁹

Lovell endorses religion as the perfect authoritative channel to give weight to Richard's besmirching of Edward's bloodline and therefore his right to the throne. Through the sermon of a respected minister, Richard's bid for the crown carries the weight of divine authority. It is Buckingham who suggests Dr. Shaa for the scheme: "His simulated holiness greatly beguiles the townsmen, but discreditable impulses easily find lodging in his mind" (*RT*, 2.1.1.1998-

¹⁹⁶ "Vinci nisi scelere novo scelus nequit. / Quoddam scelus honestum necessitas facit. / Plagis tenetur capta dispositis fera. / Quasi in vinclis uterque servatur nepos, / Levi peribunt Claudiani nutu ducis."

¹⁹⁷ Seneca, *Agamemnon*, trans. by Frank Justus Miller in *Seneca's Tragedies*, Vol. 2 (London: William Heinemann, 1917), p.11. "per scelera semper sceleribus tutum est iter", l.115.

¹⁹⁸ Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy* (c. 1582-1592), in *English Renaissance Drama: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by David Bevington, et al. (United States of America: W. W. Norton and Company, 2002), iii.13.6.

¹⁹⁹ "Falsis sacris nihil fallacius fuit. / Plebem facile mentita ludunt numina. / Animus statim devotus impetum dabit / Si praeco scripturae fidelis (dum sacra / Insculpit auribus piis oracular / Divina vel praecepta populo personet) / Commemoret olim fraude deceptos thronos / Lectique probrum, vulnus et clarae domus."

2000).²⁰⁰ This plan to feign devoutness aligns with Machiavelli's advice: "it is most necessary of all to seem devout" (Machiavelli, p.61). However, they fail to convince the public, with a representative Londoner proclaiming: "what naive man is unaware of these hidden deceits, of the uncle's thousand schemes?" (RT, 2.3.1.2520-1).²⁰¹ This serves to undermine the scheme to use religion, but regardless of the reaction of the public, Richard's command of the majority of the courtiers assures his takeover. That his control over the nobility holds more power than his lack of control over the masses further elucidates the important role of counsellors and instils that maintenance of duty is crucial. By crediting Catesby, Lovell, and Buckingham with these schemes, the role of Richard's villainy is reduced as he is shown as an opportunist feeding off the cunning of others. He does not stand as the leading man, directing others as he does in More's earlier history and Shakespeare's later play. As well as teaching boys about the importance of virtuous duty in their future political roles, Legge is also addressing the tension between the necessary performance required for civic life and the devious performance of evil counsellors. All public roles require some level of performance, hence universities training their students in the art of disputation, but there exists a friction between those who use performance in aid of duty and those who use it to aid themselves. *Richardus Tertius* cautions against this latter practice of performance, as the courtiers who act in service of selfish power seeking are eventually defeated.

Richard also devises deceitful plots and so he too functions as a negative *exemplum*, but he is almost always aided by his confidants. He decides to feign interest in the safety of the kingdom to ascertain whether various nobles are for or against Elizabeth's rule:

As if very anxious about public matters, I shall continually ask advice
from those whom I suspect. As I doubtfully set forth many matters
and we ponder secrets of state together, their secret opinions
will come to light. (RT, 1.5.1.1412-5)²⁰²

This scheme to beg false advice from the nobility to discern their loyalty is of Legge's invention. Richard's manipulation of the nobles is largely successful but he chooses Catesby to persuade Hastings, Catesby's master, who is open in his allegiance to the true monarch. In More's version, it is left uncertain if Catesby did this: "Catesby, wither he assayed him or assiaed him not, reported vnto them, that he founde him so fast, and hard him speke so terrible words, that he durst no further breke" (More, p.46). Legge's Catesby definitely never

²⁰⁰ "Hunc laude ditarunt frequentes literae. / Fucata cives sanctitas mire allicit, / Cuius tamen menti facile labes sedet."

²⁰¹ "Heu quis secretos nescit ignarus dolos / Et mille patrum machinas?"

²⁰² "Quasi publicis de rebus anxius nimis, / Quos suspicor sollicitus usque consulam. / Dum multa proponam dubius et volvimus / Secreta regni, mens patebit abdita".

approaches Hastings, seizing the chance to ensure his master's downfall because he fears his loyalty will be of less value if he convinces Hastings to aid Richard: "let him die so that my glory may grow. May a dire sword pierce his unfortunate guts! I shall pretend that he favours the little princes overmuch, that this stubborn man cannot be bent by any entreaty" (*RT*, 1.5.1. 1434-7).²⁰³ Legge seems to have composed this scene based on More stating that Catesby feared "lest their mocions might with y^e lord Hastings minishe his credence" (More, p.46). This enhancement of Catesby's inner psychology further demonstrates that a lack of duty is not a problem centred on one immoral character, in the form of Richard, but that this shunning of ideals is a widespread problem. By assigning the counsellors greater responsibility, Legge strengthens his *Mirror for Magistrates* style warning against men in political roles forsaking public duty in favour of personal advancement. Legge's expansion of Richard's confidants is also used in place of Shakespeare's Richard addressing the audience in soliloquy. It allows Legge's Richard an avenue to express his inner anxiety, something which he does often and from the outset: "Hope and fear distract my mind. My heart is tormented by the two possible outcomes" (*RT*, 1.5.3.1488-9).²⁰⁴ Richard's torn consciousness is characteristically Senecan. For instance, Medea expresses a similar mental struggle when she decides to murder her children: "Children that once were mine, do you pay penalty for your father's crimes. / Horror has smit my heart! My limbs are cold and my heart with terror flutters."²⁰⁵ However, Medea experiences this alone, while Richard has Howard and Catesby to assure him that he is in a strong position despite his ambition being constantly tracked by fear. This level of distress at such an early stage is ascribed to Richard by Legge; More does not report these feelings until after the murder of the princes: "after this abhominable deede done, he neuer hadde quiet in his minde, hee neuer thought himself sure" (More, p.87).

Richard's worry is amplified when he learns that the Queen may be arranging her daughter's marriage for political gain, but Catesby offers a solution: "If your wife should chance to die, you can prevail by marrying your niece yourself, and in this way the Earl's expectations will be shattered" (3.4.1. 3860-2).²⁰⁶ However, he struggles with the idea of murdering his wife:

Astonished upheaval churns my mind. It is seized by fear for the
kingdom, never able to rest. Now I can only cure this evil if I marry
my niece. But my wife is in the way. I am already familiar with evildoing.

²⁰³ "Pereat, ut nostra crescat gloria. / Infausta dirus rumpat ensis viscera. / Studere fingam regulis durum nimis / Flecti nec ulla posse pertinacem prece".

²⁰⁴ "Spes concutit mentem metusque turbidam, / Trepidumque gemino pectus eventu labat."

²⁰⁵ Seneca, *Medea*, trans. by Miller, *Seneca's Tragedies*, Vol. 1 (1917), p.305. "liberi quondam mei, vos pro paternis sceleribus poenas date. / Cor pepulit horror, membra torpescunt gelu pectusque tremuit." ll. 924-7.

²⁰⁶ "Si socia thalami forte moriatur tui, / Nepte statim pervince ducenda tibi / Illoque pacto fracta spes comitis erit."

Why do I hesitate to take off my wife with poison? Be bold, my mind.
Are you afraid of your sins? It is late for shame (*RT*, 3.4.1.3890-7)²⁰⁷

He claims that he is “seized by fear for the kingdom” but in reality he is seized by fear that he may lose control of the kingdom. Breaking his custodial duties to his young nephews caused him no grief but he struggles with breaking his marital duty to his wife. This struggle is forecast to the audience with Richard’s use of the first person when he addresses himself but the second person when he addresses his conscience. Richard has failed to repress his conscience throughout the play but here it emerges so powerfully that he distinguishes it from his own identity. As Robert J. Lordi observes, “duality is certainly apparent in this passage.”²⁰⁸ This duality again betrays Legge’s debt to Seneca, specifically to *Medea* when she poses rhetorical questions to her soul as if it were separate from herself: “Why soul, dost falter? Follow up the attack so well begun.”²⁰⁹ Both *Medea* and Richard disassociate from their consciences in order to drive their respective immoral desires for revenge and power forward. Richard’s vocal debate against his conscience serves to highlight further the conflict he is experiencing between what he wrongly desires and his rightful duty to his wife.

Despite his reservations, Richard poisons his wife and attempts to court the princess, creating a scene which is not in the histories but later appears in Shakespeare’s play to greater dramatic effect. Hall reports that Richard “beganne to cast a foolyshe phantasie to Lady Elisabeth his nece, making much suite to haue her joyned with him in lawfull matrimony.”²¹⁰ Nothing is said of a meeting between Richard and the princess but Legge took inspiration from this “phantasie” and combined it with a passage from Seneca’s *Hercules Furens*. Specifically, Legge drew on Lycus attempting to woo Megara in order to consolidate his rule through marriage. Megara bitterly rejects him: “I touch a hand stained with my father’s blood and – with my brothers’ double murder? Sooner shall the East extinguish, the West bring back, the day; sooner shall snow and flame be in lasting harmony.”²¹¹ Her words are echoed in the princess’s rejection of Richard:

²⁰⁷ “Animum tumultus volvit attonitus. Rapit / Regni metus, quiescere nec usquam potest. / Sanare nunc malum queo solum face / Neptem iugali si maritus iungerem. / Uxor sed obstat. Scelera novimus prius. / Quid coniugem cessas veneno tollere? / Aude, anime. Num peccata formidas tua? / Sero pudet, peracta”

²⁰⁸ Robert J. Lordi, ‘The Relationship of *Richardus Tertius* to the Main Richard III Plays’, *Boston University Studies in English*, 5 (1961), pp.139-53 (p.150).

²⁰⁹ Seneca, *Medea*, trans. by Miller, *Seneca’s Tragedies*, Vol. 1 (1917), p.303. “quid, anime, cessas? sequere felicem impetum.” l. 895.

²¹⁰ Edward Hall, *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of Lancastre and Yorke* (London: Richard Grafton, 1548), The III Yere of Richard III, fol. xlix^r.

²¹¹ Seneca, *Hercules Furens*, trans. by Miller, *Seneca’s Tragedies*, Vol. 1 (1917), p.33. “Egone ut parentis sanguine aspersam manum / fratrumque gemina caede contingam? Prius / extinguet ortus, referet occasus diem, / pax ante fida nivibus et flammis erit” ll.372-375.

Am I, to my misery, supposed to be your wife, staining my hands with
the red blood of those you have slain? Olympian Jupiter will sooner desert
his wife, the moon will rule the day and the sun the night (RT, 3.4.4.4171-6)²¹²

Both women begin their rebuff by drawing attention to their pursuers' blood stained hands and both use impossible astronomical situations to describe the impossibility of them accepting his marriage proposal: for Megara, "Sooner shall the East extinguish, the West bring back, the day", and for the princess, "the moon will rule the day and the sun the night". Lordi compares this scene to the wooing scene in Shakespeare, which "despite its obvious differences, some of which are a natural result of the different dramatic purposes of the scenes in the two plays – is remarkably similar in certain particulars to Legge's scene" (Lordi, p.143). Philip Schwyzer goes as far to suggest that Legge's Richard baring his chest to the princess's sword is "a theatrical moment which may lie behind the similar offer made by Richard to Anne in Shakespeare's play."²¹³ In both plays Richard's political proposal is abrupt, in both the princess bitterly rejects him, although in Shakespeare's version she eventually concedes, and in both he offers his chest to her sword. Legge's Richard does this without romantic flourish: "Shall I weep over their death? Tears accomplish nothing. So what do you want me to do?" (RT, 3.4.4.4196-7).²¹⁴ Shakespeare's Richard uses his dramatic flair to impress upon Anne his adoration of her:

Nor when thy warlike father, like a child,
Told the sad story of my father's death
And twenty times made pause to sob and weep,
That all the standers-by had wet their cheeks
Like trees bedashed with rain—in that sad time,
My manly eyes did scorn an humble tear;
And what these sorrows could not thence exhale
Thy beauty hath, and made them blind with weeping.²¹⁵

In contrast to Legge's Richard bluntly saying he will not cry, Shakespeare's Richard uses his previous inability to cry to contrast with his current and unprecedented weeping over Anne's beauty. He uses his thespian talent to achieve his goals in a way that Legge's Richard is incapable of doing. Despite the similarities in this scene, it is unlikely that Shakespeare had

²¹² "Egone manus misera coniunx meas / Rubente mortuorum sanguine imbuam? / Olympus ante uxori deerit suae / Lunaque gubernabit diem noctemque sol. / Prius Aetna gelidas emittet flagrans aquas / Nilusque vagus ignitas laminas vomet."

²¹³ Philip Schwyzer, *Shakespeare and the Remains of Richard the III* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p.197.

²¹⁴ "Num flebo mortuos? Nihil lacrymae valent./ <Itaque> quid vis facerem?"

²¹⁵ William Shakespeare, *Richard III* (1592), ed. by James R. Siemon (London: Bloomsbury, 2009), 1.2.164-171.

first-hand knowledge of Legge's play, as this is the only scene which is borrowed, indicating that it is more likely that he heard of the play through his contemporaries, some of whom studied at Cambridge and may have seen *Richardus Tertius*.²¹⁶ Regardless, this scene serves as an example of the stark differences between Legge's Richard and Shakespeare's Richard, primarily their varying linguistic, theatrical, and manipulative abilities. Shakespeare's Richard was created for an audience with an appetite for evil showmanship, whereas Legge's was created for an audience who were learning about the political world and their duty within that world. Whereas Shakespeare's Richard is depicted as villainous but delightful, Legge's Richard is a model of shunned duty which is to be abhorred. Legge's king lacks the engrossing nature of his stage Machiavel counterpart but this allows him to stand all the clearer as an example of caution about the dangers of abandoning duty to country.

In contrast to the negative example of Richard stands the positive example of Richmond. Legge creates a speech to legitimize Richmond's quest for the crown: "Forgive me, my nation, if I wage this dutiful war. A King is murdered, a Nero usurps the kingdom. A tiny boy died together with his royal brother, and only the holy shrine gives protection to the Queen. I have arrived, the loyal avenger of royal blood" (*RT*, 3.5.2.4307-11).²¹⁷ Richmond emphasizes that the war he is waging is "dutiful" ("pius"), and that he is acting for the benefit of the people with divine sanction. That the Tudors were descendants of the Trojans was a keystone of the Tudor myth and Richmond, the initiator of this dynasty, using "pius" here more strongly aligns him with the standard epithet for Aeneas in the *Aeneid*. Legge creates another speech for Richmond, this time in the form of a prayer to God before the Battle of Bosworth Field. Hall's version reads: "He kneled doune and rendred to almightie God his hartly thanks *with deuoute & Godly orisons*, besechyng goodnes to sende hym grace to auance & defende the catholike faith & to mayntaine iustice & cocorde amogest his subiectes & people" (Hall, fol.lviii^r). Legge's equivalent speech blends this Christian sentiment with Senecan influence:

A Henry will always defeat a Richard. But, ruler of the shining heaven,
Whom the earth and the vast fabric of the universe worship, as long
as my body feeds on air and the jealous Sisters do not bring my life's
last day to its close, I shall sing Your perpetual praises and render

²¹⁶ For more on this see Ribner, *The English History Play* (1965), pp.112-3.

²¹⁷ "Dirumque principis nefas bellum vocat. / Rex est peremptus. Occupat regnum Nero. / Cum rege fratre parvulus periit puer / Solum tuentur templa reginam sacra. / Regum cruoris ultor adveni pius."

due thanks, mighty God. In Your mercy You have given me this beast
to be dominated, a plague, alas, to his citizens. (*RT*, 3.5.5.4626-35)²¹⁸

Richmond mixes mention of the Christian “almighty God” with the classical power of the “jealous Sisters”, referring to the Three Fates, Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, from classical mythology who spin the threads of human destiny and choose when they will be cut. In Senecan tragedy there is a distinct lack of justice, with Atreus gloating over feeding Thyestes his own sons and Hercules awaking to the realisation that he has murdered his wife and children. There is no feeling of satisfaction that virtue has vanquished wickedness. But *Richardus Tertius* ends with Richard receiving retributive justice in the form of the heaven-sent Richmond, precisely because of the added Christian dimension in Legge’s play. More’s history, the primary source for most of the play, sought to enhance the legitimacy of the currently ruling Tudors and so it is inherently anti-Ricardian. More describes Richard as not only morally corrupt but also misshapen in appearance in order to further vilify him: “little of stature, ill fetured of limmes, croke backed, his left shoulder much higher than his right” (More, p.7). Legge dispenses with his malformed appearance, thus making him more realistic, but retains the ending of Richmond, the divinely ordained hero, saving the nation. This justice from a providential source falls in line with the Tudor version of history but it also aligns with the overall message of the play. Richmond stands as a paragon of Christian virtue and a tool of God’s divinity, and thus he is the perfect model for dutiful behaviour. His duty is founded in religious morality and is used towards the political wellbeing of the nation. His success against Richard therefore signals that virtuous Christian duty is not only right but also effective, thus encouraging the university students watching to replicate his version of political duty which figures morality as a prerequisite.

Richardus Tertius exemplifies how academic plays mixed theatrical elements with history in order to better capture the audience and turn their attention to lessons about duty. Where Legge thought his historical sources lacking he expanded them for both aesthetic and educative effect, relying on Senecan tragedies for his development of the emotional elements and of the larger roles of Richard’s advisors. The play’s didacticism operates in a similar manner to the cautionary tales of the *Mirror for Magistrates*, with Richard and his villainous henchmen being presented as models not to follow. Richard gains the throne largely through the aid of corrupt political counsel and as many of the students in the audience sought political positions, how to give counsel was a pressing concern. The play depicts immoral and self-serving counsel as

²¹⁸ “Henricus audebit Richardum pellere. / At tu, nitentis o gubernator poli, / Quem terra colit et vasta mundi fabrica, / Dum corpus aura vescitur nec ultimum / Diem fati claudunt sorores invidae, / Teneros levis dum nutrit artus spiritus, / Te laude perpetua canemus, debitas / Tibi afferemus gratias, potens Deus. / Tu belluam meis domandam viribus / Mitis dabas, heu civibus pestem suis.”

ultimately fruitless and so serves as a lesson to employ dutiful Christian virtue. Legge tailored the play to propagate this message of morality being integral to statecraft, taking the historical material which presents Richard as a solo villain and expanding the villainy to include his counsellors. Where Shakespeare's stage villain Richard guides others, Legge's Richard is guided *by* others. Legge's 'weaker' version of this character serves to elucidate the influence of wicked counsellors. While this may mean that the play is less entertaining than the histories of the professional stage, it strengthens the moral warning to the students against the breaking of their future duties as public men, particularly duties pertaining to counsel. Legge's emulation of Seneca, both stylistically and linguistically, would have encouraged the student audience to examine the play for moral and political lessons in the way they were taught to do with Senecan tragedies, and other ancient texts. Legge's imitation of Seneca, along with his invocation of the festive tradition through visual and aural stimulus, also developed the theatricality of the play. He attempts to blur the line between stage and classroom, offering both delightful spectacle and educational instruction. As we shall see in the next chapter, the unclear boundary between entertainment and pedagogy on the Cambridge stage was also present on the Oxford stage. Oxford playwrights went further than Legge in their attempts to inject their history plays with entertaining elements, by drawing on court masques and the popular stage.

3. ENTERTAINMENT AND ERUDITION: HISTORIES AT OXFORD

This chapter turns to the drama of the University of Oxford, taking William Gager's *Dido* (1583) and Matthew Gwinne's *Nero* (1603) as examples of how pedagogy and theatricality were combined to examine the duty of monarchs and counsellors. *Dido* drew upon both popular and elite forms of entertainment, whereas *Nero* more heavily drew on popular theatrical traditions. Dealing with the ill-fated relationship between the Carthaginian Queen Dido and the Trojan leader Aeneas, *Dido* took part in on-going conversations about Elizabeth's marriage negotiations, as well as more broadly discussing a ruler's royal duty. *Nero*, while also commenting on a ruler's duty through the negative example of the titular character, more heavily focuses on the difficult role of counsellors. Both plays were written for elite and scholarly audiences and so they operate as counsel for both counsellors and students. Paulina Kewes explains that "[i]n order to do justice to the political punch of early Elizabethan drama, therefore, we need to excavate several neglected plays which placed the process of giving and receiving counsel centre-stage."²¹⁹ Both *Dido* and *Nero* pack a political punch by placing the giving and receiving of counsel centre-stage. Both plays operate as forms of counsel themselves, and while they are briefly directed to the monarch, they are more specifically tailored to courtiers and students. In this way, and like Legge's *Richardus Tertius*, they fit into the mirrors for princes genre, texts intended to instruct leaders on political conduct, but they are geared towards broader, although still elite, audiences. Furthermore, while both plays offer instruction to some degree, they are more concerned with examining the complexities of political duty.

That *Dido* and *Nero* are products of their academic environments does not mean they are dramatically stilted. Emma Buckley argues that academic drama "ostentatiously differentiated itself from the popular theatre, consistently stressing the educative, character-forming role of dramatic performance for its elite participants, who were destined after university for service to crown or church", but that it would be a mistake to assume that "university plays are less creative than their counterparts in the popular theatre."²²⁰ *Dido* and *Nero* are examples of academic plays exhibiting the creativity which is associated with popular plays. Gager and Gwinne feature popular dramatic elements, such as ghosts, excessive violence, and graphic deaths. Gager goes further than the popular stage in his inclusion of lavish stage effects which

²¹⁹ Paulina Kewes, "Jerusalem thou dydst promyse to buylde vp": Kingship, Counsel, and Early Elizabethan Drama' in *The Politics of Counsel in England and Scotland, 1286-1707, Proceedings of the British Academy*, ed. by Jacqueline Rose (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp.171–92 (p.175).

²²⁰ Buckley, 'Matthew Gwinne's *Nero* (1603): Seneca, Academic Drama, and the Politics of Polity', (2013), p.17.

are reminiscent of courtly masques. Both playwrights follow Horace's adage of blending delight and instruction to enhance the didactic payoff. They sought to make their dramas enjoyable partly because they were intended as entertainment, but also (and perhaps more importantly) because it meant that the audience would likely be more receptive to their educational messages. The courtiers and scholars who were watching *Dido* or reading *Nero* were trained through their humanist educations to mine works, especially classical works, for wisdom that could be turned to action. This idea of active participation was common during the early modern period, as demonstrated by Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton's analysis of Gabriel Harvey's reading of Livy. They state that "Renaissance readers (and annotators) persistently envisage action as the *outcome* of reading – not simply reading as active, but reading as trigger for action."²²¹ Therefore, the elite spectators and readers would have been attuned to the pedagogical methods being used in these classical history plays, but more than that, they would have been reading and watching as a "trigger for action". Both plays broadly function like Legge's *Richardus Tertius*. They use historical narratives towards the interrogation and inculcation of dutiful values and they are aimed at a specific scholarly audience. Gager and Gwinne employ the same recognizable erudite elements, such as classical sources and Latin, and they combine this with dramatic spectacle, Senecan, popular, and (in the case of *Dido*) elite, to provide counsel more effectively to their audiences and readers. In this way, both *Dido* and *Nero* contribute to the political conversations taking place in England about the difficulties of a monarch's and a counsellor's duty.

***DIDO*: POLITICAL LESSONS FOR STATESMEN AND STUDENTS**

In May 1583 Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and Chancellor of the University of Oxford, wrote to Robert Hovenden, the Vice Chancellor, to notify him of his imminent arrival along with a distinguished visitor, Olbracht Łaski, Voivode of Sieradz in Poland. Writing in his capacity as both the Chancellor and favourite of Queen Elizabeth, he declares that this guest is to be treated to a program of activities befitting a royal progress:

you must vse all sollennitye of disputations oracions & readinges as
you did at her *maiesties* beinge with you *Youre* scaffoldes must allso be
sett vpp for disputations as they weare for so wold her *highnesse* haue
it I wish lattin sermons to be *prouidid* for [...] you will carefullye applye

²²¹ Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, "Studied for Action": How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy', *Past & Present*, 129 (Nov., 1990), pp.30-78 (p.40).

youre selues to the satisfinge of her maiesties pleasuer in this be halfe
and with *yat* regard which the respect of your one reputacion requiret.²²²

Holding positions of esteem at both the university and court, Leicester acts as the intermediary between the two. The reference to Elizabeth's visit to Oxford in 1566 sets the high standard which is to be met.²²³ He impresses upon the Vice Chancellor the necessity of treating Łaski as if he were the monarch, thus requiring the university to put on lavish entertainment. Elizabeth Sandis notes that this hosting held a dual purpose: "on the one hand, the task is to fulfil Queen Elizabeth's commands, [...] on the other hand, if the University is successful in playing the part of host to this favoured guest, its own reputation will be upheld."²²⁴ The relationship between court and university was mutually beneficial, with the court using the university's resources to impress guests and the university enhancing its importance by providing this service.

William Gager wrote the comedy *Rivales* and the historical tragedy *Dido* for Łaski's visit. Gager graduated BA in 1577 and MA in 1580 from Christ Church, Oxford, and stayed on to study for a Bachelor of Civil Law (BCL) and then the Doctorate (DCL).²²⁵ He was well-known as a Latin poet and playwright, earning a place on Francis Meres's list of the best comedians: "Doctor Gager of Oxforde, Master Rowley, [...] Greene, Shakespeare, Thomas Nash, Thomas Heywood, Anthony Mundaye [...]"²²⁶ Meres was not alone in his estimation of Gager, as his *Meleager* (1582) was such a success that it was performed again in 1585 in the presence of Leicester, the Earl of Pembroke, and Sir Philip Sidney. In his writing of *Dido*, Gager may have been aided by George Peele and Richard Eedes. Peele was certainly involved in some way, likely with the technical arrangement of the play, as according to Christ Church's disbursement book he was paid £20 "in respect of the playes & intertaynment of the Palatine laskie."²²⁷ The involvement of Richard Eedes, a contemporary Christ Church playwright, is less certain, but Sutton advances the possibility that because the drama was produced on such short notice, "it

²²² REED: *Oxford*, Vol. 1, p.185.

²²³ For an overview of Elizabeth's 1566 royal progress to Oxford see Jayne Elisabeth Archer, Elizabeth Goldring and Sarah Knight (eds.), *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Paulina Kewes, "'Plesures in lernyng" and the Politics of Counsel in Early Elizabethan England: Royal Visits to Cambridge and Oxford', *English Literary Renaissance*, 46 (2016), pp.333-75.

²²⁴ Elizabeth Sandis, 'Playing Virgil at Short Notice: Oxford University Entertains a Special Guest with William Gager's *Dido* in 1583' in *Economics of Poetry: The Efficient Production of Neo-Latin Verse, 1400-1720*, ed. by Bernhard Schirg and Paul Gwynne (Switzerland: Peter Lang Ltd, 2018), pp.361-383 (p.364).

²²⁵ J. W. Binns, 'Gager, William (1555-1622), Latin playwright and poet', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, posted 23/09/04.

<<http://www.oxforddnb.com/abstract/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-10277>> [accessed 15/12/20].

²²⁶ Meres, *Palladis Tamia* (1598), p.283.

²²⁷ Quoted in Thomas John Manning, *The Staging of Plays at Christ Church, Oxford, 1582-1592* (Unpublished PhD: University of Michigan, 1972), p.133.

would be somewhat strange if no help were asked from Eedes, especially because he was Gager's senior by three years and the particular friend of the Dean of Christ Church, Dr. Tobie Mathew."²²⁸ Gager's primary authorship is confirmed by the portions of the play which are preserved in his commonplace book (BL, MS Additional 22583).

Łaski was an unexpected political ambassador at court, in that his visit was not prearranged and his intentions were unclear, but he quickly won over Elizabeth. William Camden reports that "the Queene with much bounty and loue receiued him; the Nobles with great honour and magnificence entertained him; and the Vniuersitie of *Oxford* with learned recreations, and diuers pastimes delighted him."²²⁹ Sir Francis Walsingham testified that the Queen "taketh great delight to talk with him, and hath already, in one week since his coming, given him her presence twice. And her Majesty meaneth this next week to carry him to Nonsuch, and some other places, where he shall be feasted and entertained according to his quality."²³⁰ While conducting a séance the occultist John Dee, a new friend of Łaski's, reported that a spirit said that "the Queen loveth him faithfully, and hath fallen out with Cecil about him: Leicester flattereth him."²³¹ Whatever the reason for his visit, Sandis identifies that Oxford's "own expenditure on Łaski's visit was immense and reflected the political value of pleasing a court favourite who was held to have some strategic importance in foreign affairs" (Sandis, p.381). Gager's decision to dramatize Dido's story is itself politically suggestive. Kewes comments that *Dido* glances "at the crisis that engulfed the country in 1579–1581, when Elizabeth seemed on the cusp of marrying a foreign papist, Francis duke of Anjou, heir to the French throne" (Kewes, 'Plesures', p.357). More than that though, Kewes argues that it is possible "that the organizers' decision to put on *Dido* had as its aim not only entertainment and edification of the royal guest, but also gratification of their Steward [Leicester]" (Ibid, p.357). The foreign Aeneas abandoning Dido could be employed to cast criticism on a foreign match for Elizabeth and support for the home-grown Leicester.²³² Deanne Williams attests to the fact that as "the patron and audience of Latin plays, and an avid participant in Latin conversations, Elizabeth would have been familiar with the on-going learned debate about Dido."²³³ Łaski and Leicester,

²²⁸ William Gager (and Richard Eedes or George Peele?), *Dido* (1583), ed. and trans. by Dana F. Sutton (University of Birmingham: The Philological Museum, posted 2005, revised 2019), 'Introduction'. <<http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/gager/plays/dido/index.html>> [Accessed 11/12/20].

²²⁹ Camden, *Annales* (1625), Book 3, p.42.

²³⁰ Letter dated 20 April 1583, written by Nicholas Faunt (Secretary to Sir Francis Walsingham) to Anthony Bacon (Lord Burghley's nephew), quoted in Edward Nares, *Memoirs of the life and administration of the Right Honourable William Cecil, Lord Burghley [...]* (London: Colburn and Bentley, 1831), Vol. 3, p.216.

²³¹ John Dee, *A true & faithful relation of what passed for many yeeres between Dr. John Dee... and some spirits* (London: D. Maxwell for T. Garthwait, 1659), p.23.

²³² For more on the Anjou match see Blair Worden, *The Sound of Virtue: Philip Sidney's Arcadia and Elizabethan Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), pp.89-114.

²³³ Deanne Williams, 'Dido, Queen of England', *ELH*, 73.1, (Spring, 2006) pp.31-59 (pp.42-43).

with their humanist educations, would also have understood the significance of Dido's story in regard to Elizabeth's marital status. Although Elizabeth was not present at the performance, she is bound to have heard reports from those who were. Speaking of Elizabeth's 1566 visit to Oxford, Kewes argues that while "principally aimed at the Queen, the various scholarly exercises likewise angled for the attention of those around her – counsel to councillors, as it were. The marriage issue no less than the calls for further reform played to diplomats and courtiers as well as to Elizabeth. Thus her absence on certain occasions hardly meant that a performance failed" (Kewes, 'Plesures', p.374). Following this argument, Elizabeth's absence during Gager's *Dido* did not deprive it of its political relevance to the courtiers in the audience, along with any students who had aspirations to positions in Elizabeth's court. Furthermore, Kewes attests to the fact that "Elizabethan drama was at once the most powerful and the most public form of counsel" (Kewes, 'Jerusalem', p.171). Thus, Gager's academic play about Dido being presented at what was essentially the equivalent of a royal progress, was imbued with political significance and the elite and learned spectators would have recognized this.

Gager's sources were books I and IV of Virgil's *Aeneid* and book VII of Ovid's *Heroides*. Ovid was a stalwart of humanist curricula and was included on 'Wolsey's Statutes for Ipswich (1523)'.²³⁴ Ruth Lunney attests that Virgil's poem likewise "was an important text in sixteenth-century humanist education, with older grammar school boys engaged in grammar and translation exercises and undergraduates in studies of rhetoric."²³⁵ This classical education ensured that, as Jensen states, "Roman ideals and civic virtues entered the minds of boys very early in their educational careers."²³⁶ Additionally, Kewes states that Virgil's works "no less than those of classical historians influenced contemporary thinking about monarchy, government, and citizenship."²³⁷ Thus, Gager's audience would have been acutely aware of the didactic value of Aeneas and Dido's story. A binary is perceived between Virgil's positive representation of *pious* Aeneas, who is focused on reverence for gods and country, and Ovid's negative portrayal of a weak and vacillating deserter. However, this ignores the ambiguities inherent in Virgil's version. The *Aeneid* is open to multiple readings despite, as Craig Kallendorf explains, the "school-based belief that Virgil's hero was a flawless example of virtue."²³⁸ For instance, the fall of Troy is not a shining moment for Aeneas, who fails to act

²³⁴ Peter Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric: Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.13.

²³⁵ Ruth Lunney, 'Dido, Queen of Carthage' in *Christopher Marlowe at 450*, ed. by Sara Munson Deats and Robert A. Logan (London: Routledge, 2015), pp.13-50 (p.19).

²³⁶ Jensen, *Reading the Roman Republic* (2012), p.27.

²³⁷ Kewes, 'Henry Savile's Tacitus' (2011), p.522.

²³⁸ Craig Kallendorf, *The Other Virgil: 'Pessimistic' Readings of the Aeneid in Early Modern Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.49. See also Richard F. Thomas, *Virgil and the Augustan Reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Colin Burrow, 'Virgil in English

when King Priam is murdered: “Then first wild horror on my spirit fell / and dazed me utterly.”²³⁹ Ovid takes this crack in Aeneas’s pious armour and expands his passivity. His Dido accuses Aeneas of deserting his father and wife:

But neyther thou thy Syre
ne priuate Gods didst beare
Vpon thy back: thy vaunting crakes
these to Elisa were,
Thou lyste at euerie worde,
not now thy tongue doth ginne
To gloze, ne I the first in trappe²⁴⁰

Paul White believes that Ovid’s art is that “the reader can never separate the work’s utility from the pleasure it brings. The honeyed strains of the poetry are so skilfully intermingled with the ‘serious’ intent of the poet that no critic could suggest the work’s ‘superficiality’ detracts from its educative impact.”²⁴¹ Gager attempts to adopt this method, mixing his Virgilian and Ovidian sources with staged spectacle. The majority of Gager’s elite and academic audience would have been able to identify which sources he was using and to what purpose, as well as recognize moments of artistic licence where he departed from those sources. Kewes argues that in bringing ancient rulers to life on stage the playwrights were “relying on the audience’s knowledge of their exemplary status as good or bad princes” (Kewes, ‘Jerusalem’, p.181). Kewes continues by explaining that playwrights highlighting their classical authorities meant that “they announced a commitment to providing a practical application of humanist learning and literature of counsel” (Ibid, p.181). The audience of *Dido* would thus be expecting the play to be employable as instruction. In one sense, this instruction is simple, that personal feelings must not interfere with political duty, but this simplicity is complicated by Gager’s demonstration of the difficulties of upholding this ideal.

Parts of *Dido* are written as though Elizabeth were in attendance, perhaps because of the likelihood that she would hear about it through Leicester. For instance, the play parallels Dido’s welcoming of Aeneas and Elizabeth’s welcoming of Łaski. Both visitors arrived unexpectedly but are treated generously by their respective queens. After an elaborate banquet Dido’s

Translation’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, ed. by Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.21-37.

²³⁹ Virgil, *Aeneid*, trans. by John Dryden (The Floating Press, 2009; 1697), Book 2, ll.559-60. “At me tum primum saevus circumstetit horror / Obstipui; subiit cari genitoris imago”.

²⁴⁰ Ovid, *The Heroycall Epistles of the Learned Poet Publius Ouidius Naso*, trans. by George Tuberville (London: Henry Denham, 1567), fol.43^r.

²⁴¹ Paul White, *Renaissance Postscripts: Responding to Ovid’s Heroides in Sixteenth-Century France* (Columbus: Ohio State University, 2009), p.20.

kindness is highlighted by Aeneas: “Who can describe the words of this kindly queen, her placid countenance, the faith and help she gives us wretched people in our misfortune?”²⁴² This flattery of Dido can be transferred onto Elizabeth and the hospitality she extended to Łaski. To aid this comparison, Gager uses Dido’s alternative name ‘Elisa’ 19 times throughout the play, compared to ‘Dido’ 44 times. The shorthand ‘Eliza’ was frequently used to identify Elizabeth and this usage thus strengthens the parallel between the two. One of the most notable parallels in the play is Iopas’s song at the banquet which Gager turns into praise for the queen:

The world sees nothing like or equal to our Elisa [...]
 Let decorated garlands encircle the cups, let Bacchus be placed in the
 noble gold, let great shouts ring through the hall. Thus orders Elisa.
 We salute you as a noble guest. Now it is pleasing to redouble our lengthy
 praises, now our happy voices ring through this great hall. (*Dido*, 2.1.344-60)²⁴³

These final lines essentially break the fourth wall, calling attention to Elizabeth’s request that Oxford entertain Łaski and encouraging the audience to toast him. Along with the music, Raphael Holinshed’s account of the performance attests to the impressive stage effects: “wherein the quéesnes banket (with Eneas narration of the destruction of Troie) was liuelie described in a marchpaine patterne, there was also a goodlie sight of hunters with full crie of a kennell of hounds, Mercurie and Iris descending and ascending from and to an high place.”²⁴⁴ This account, describing the marchpane banquet and map, the use of dogs for a hunting scene, and machinery for gods ascending and descending, signifies the pageant-like quality of *Dido*. The banquet and map being made entirely of marchpane, the early modern forerunner of marzipan, indicates the extraordinary lengths Gager went to in attempting to dazzle the audience. Sara Mueller clarifies that banquets were not just conceived of “as sustenance, as an occasion for community gathering, or even as an opportunity for the upwardly mobile to display expensive and rare goods to their guests, but as theatre.”²⁴⁵ Gager took this already theatrical medium and put it centre stage in an explicitly theatrical context. Banquets were about ostentatious display and cooks could be incredibly creative with the food, sometimes tricking

²⁴² Sutton’s edition is based on two manuscripts: (i) **A**. British Library Add. MS. 22583, fols. 34^v-44^r, Gager’s autograph MS. containing the Prologue, Argument, Act II, Act III, and the Epilogue; and (ii) **B**. Christ Church MS. 486, which preserves the entire play but is not in Gager’s hand and the date and reason for production are unknown. Sutton relies on **A** when it is available and **B** when it is not. “Quis tam benignae verba reginae satis / Vultusque placidos referat, et miseris fidem / Opemque nostris rebus extremis datam?” (2.1.281-3).

²⁴³ “Nil videt nostrae simile aut secundum / Orbis Elisae. [...] Vinciant pictae cyathos coronae, / Nobili Bacchus statuatur auro, / Maximi fiant strepitus per aulam, / Iussit Elisa. / Hospes illustris tibi gratulamur, / Iam iuvat longos geminare plausus, / En tibi laetae volitant per ampla / Atria voces.”

²⁴⁴ Raphael Holinshed, *Holinshed’s Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* (Aldersgate: Henry Denham, 1587), Vol. 6, p.1355.

²⁴⁵ Sara Mueller, ‘Early Modern Banquet Receipts and Women’s Theatre’, *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England*, 24 (2011), pp.106-130 (p.106).

“guests into thinking a dish is something that it is not” (Mueller, p.108). Whoever created the banquet for *Dido* was partaking in this tradition, moulding an entire banquet and detailed map out of marchpane. Sandis explains that “Gager turned his re-enactment of the Trojan narrative into a visual spectacle for his audience, in a way that Virgil could not” (Sandis, p.374). The banquet would have been particularly impressive, and Gager’s turning of a literary narrative into a visual spectacle can be applied to the entire play. *Dido* rises to the level of courtly entertainment at various points through the use of dumb shows and masques, the details of which are now unfortunately lost. For instance, at the end of Act 2, Scene 2 the stage directions call for the entrance of “a procession of masquers.”²⁴⁶ This type of stage direction recurs throughout the text, indicating the masque-like quality which was present throughout the performance.

The other major moment which is written as if Elizabeth were present is the Epilogue, which provides a direct warning to her to resist foreign love and prioritize the commonwealth. This brings the play back to the importance and difficulties of duty, in this case royal duty. Gager again makes a comparison between the two queens: “Dido, one woman surpasses you by far: our pious virgin queen” (*Dido*, Epilogue.1241-2).²⁴⁷ He employs Virgil’s epithet for Aeneas, “pious”, as praise for Elizabeth here and, as will be shown later, Aeneas can also be connected to Elizabeth throughout the play. As well as forging a connection between the queens though, Gager importantly points out the difference between them: “But she has not condescended to marry any Sychaeus, and may no Aeneas sway her affections!” (*Dido*, Epilogue.1244-5).²⁴⁸ Aeneas is used here to encompass any of Elizabeth’s foreign matches, including King Eric IV of Sweden and the French Duke of Anjou. In addition to these explicit instances, there are other places where Gager appears to be offering counsel to his queen, as well as to her courtiers and prospective counsellors. He creates Dido’s counsellor Hanno to demonstrate explicitly not only the danger of foreign princes but also the importance of counsel. Hanno urges his queen to display piety: “A kingdom is maintained by the same arts that gained it. Just show that piety that has made the gods favour you. Because you displayed it, you render us secure. However, a present evil has made us fearful” (*Dido*, 1.2.124-127).²⁴⁹ Virgil’s epithet for Aeneas is again transferred to Dido and thence to Elizabeth. Hanno credits her piety for her success in turning an escape from her native kingdom into the establishment of Carthage. However, Hanno also underscores that her piety is about to be challenged by an “evil”, that evil being Aeneas.

²⁴⁶ “*Pompa larvalis.*”

²⁴⁷ “Sed una longa, Elisa, te superat tamen. / Regina virgo quot tulit casus pia!”

²⁴⁸ “Dignata nullo coniuge Sichaeo tamen, / Animumque nullus flectat Aeneas suum.”

²⁴⁹ “Quibus obtinetur artibus regnum potens / Iis tenetur. Prima quae fecit deos / Pietas faventes servat, id praesta modo. / Quod praestitisti, nosque securos facis. / Quanquam timere fecerit praesens malum.”

Having bookended the play with flattery for Dido, and thus Elizabeth, Gager in Act 3 elucidates the clash between Dido's duty to her country and her love for a foreign man. He creates the ghost of Dido's husband, Sychaeus, to comment explicitly on why Aeneas is a problem:

Dido, if now Sychaeus has completely left your mind, if now you
are undertaking a second marriage, has Libya produced no princes
whom you might love? Will you, a fortunate woman, marry this
wretch, a pious woman marry a traitor? A queen marry a fugitive?
A Tyrian woman marry a Trojan?" (*Dido*, 3.1.562-6)²⁵⁰

Aeneas is held up as an example to be avoided in regard to Elizabeth's previous potential foreign matches. Immediately following this a storm is staged, to which Gager adds wailing nymphs: "alas for the evil marriage" (*Dido*, 3.2.584).²⁵¹ This lament was inspired by Ovid's Dido, who retrospectively adds: "I heard a voyce, I thought / the nymphes had howled for joy: / But they were Furies forespake / of this my fell annoy" (*Heroides*, fol.43^v).²⁵² Gager enlarges this allusion, giving the nymphs a physical representation on stage to visually and vocally signal the danger of the union. Holinshed recounts how impressive the staged storm was: "the tempest wherein it hailed small confects, rained rosewater, and sned an artificiall kind of sned, all strange, marvellous, & abundant" (Holinshed, p.1355). Another culinary-inspired prop is mentioned here, the use of "confects" as hailstones. *Dido* was not the only play to use this technique, although it was rare which adds to the spectacular effect. In 1573 the anonymously written *Masque of Janus*, which was performed at Hampton Court, featured comfit "hayle stones."²⁵³ Comfits or confects were small, white, spherical sweets which were made by coating a seed or nut in boiled sugar. Anouska Lester comments that, like the Italian sweets thrown as 'confetti' during celebrations, the sweets were not merely to be witnessed as they fell: "audiences are encouraged to also touch, taste, and smell them. They are multi-sensory objects. The comfits would feel like hail when caught by or landing on audience members, as well as sounding like hail as they hit hard surfaces."²⁵⁴ This interactive element is intended to draw the audience further into the performance. The act of throwing the sweets "may have rendered them inedible", as not every spectator will have wanted to eat the sweets dropped on the floor, meaning that "the spectacle and excess associated with both sugar and masques are intensified"

²⁵⁰ "Si iam Sychaeus excidit penitus tibi, / Si iam secundos expetis, Dido, thoros, / Nulloque Libya, quos ames, gignit duces? / Misero beata, perfido nubes pia? / Regina profugae? Troico Tyria viro?"

²⁵¹ "Heu hymenaeos, heu male iunctos"

²⁵² "audieram vocem; nymphas ululasse putavi: / Eumenides fatis signa dedere meis."

²⁵³ Albert Feuillerat (ed.), *Documents Relating to the Office of the Revels in the Time of Queen Elizabeth* (Louvain: A. Uystpruyst, 1908), p.175.

²⁵⁴ Anouska Lester, 'Lost properties and where to find them: comfit hailstones', *Before Shakespeare* (posted 2021). <<https://beforeshakespeare.com/2021/01/25/lost-properties-and-where-to-find-them-comfit-hailstones/>> [accessed 26/01/21].

(Ibid). Holinshed also mentions the artificial snow that fell and while he gives no hint of what it was made of, given the previous use of food within the performance, it is possible that the snow was created by dusting sugar or flour over the stage. Whatever its composition, the tempest was impressive enough for Holinshed to call it “maruellous”. Not only was sweets-as-snow a rarity in dramatic performance, but during the early modern period sugar was used to denote wealth and power because it was imported and thus expensive.²⁵⁵ The sugared hailstones and the marzipan extravaganza indicate the expense to which Oxford was willing to go to impress Łaski. For at least a few people, Gager’s stagecraft inspired delight, but his stagecraft also adds to the feeling of dread surrounding the marriage. The tempest is at once visually impressive and didactically focused, with the pathetic fallacy emphasizing the tragedy of Dido and Aeneas’s marriage.

Entertaining dramaturgy was familiar to Gager, as in the preface of *Ulysses Redux* (1592), he states that he produced the play “not according to the exacting standards of the *Art of Poetry* employed as some sort of goldsmith’s balance, but rather measured according to the exacting standards of popular taste.”²⁵⁶ *Dido* too sought to appeal to the “standards of popular taste” and even exceeded what was seen on the popular stage, being at times more reminiscent of courtly entertainments with their lavish effects. It appears that Gager succeeded in pleasing, at the very least, Holinshed, Leicester, and Łaski. Leicester sent a letter to the university expressing thanks from both himself and the Queen because “y^e Prince Laskey [...] made such report here of y^e great entertainment you gaue him.”²⁵⁷ Linda Shenk argues that when Leicester indicates Elizabeth’s thanks “he implies that the university entertained on the crown’s behalf, thus making this entertainment an extension of the court’s hospitality. In effect, the crown was treating the university as a royal ancillary.”²⁵⁸ Gager’s play, therefore, served a variety of purposes, providing popular entertainment and politically relevant content for the elite and scholarly audience, as well as aiding Oxford’s position as an important part of England.

Gager twists the *Aeneid*’s portrayal of Aeneas to suit his own dramatic and scholarly purposes. This occurs when Mercury appears to reassert Aeneas’s destiny: “You are building walls for

²⁵⁵ For more on the status of sugar in the early modern period see Kim F. Hall, ‘Sugar, Gender, and the Circum-Atlantic Performance of Class’ in *Feminisms and Early Modern Texts: Essays for Phyllis Rackin*, ed. by Rebecca Ann Bach and Gwynne Kennedy (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2010), pp.63–80.

²⁵⁶ William Gager, *Ulysses Redux* (1592), ed. and trans. by Dana F. Sutton (University of Birmingham: The Philological Museum, posted 2005, revised 2019). <<http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/gager/plays/ulysses/>> [accessed 11/12/20]. Preface: “Equidem ego hanc sive tragaediam, sive fabulam, sive narrationem historicam, sive quicquid eam dici ius fasque est, non ad exquisitam Artis Poeticae tanquam aurificis stateram, sed ad popularis iudicii trutinam exigendam proposui, et effudi potius quam scripsi.”

²⁵⁷ Quoted in Boas, *University Drama*, p.191, from Bodleian, MS Twyne 17, fols.172-3.

²⁵⁸ Shenk, ‘Gown Before Crown’ (2008), p.28.

lofty Carthage and constructing a fine city in devotion to your wife, forgetful of your own affairs, unmindful of your kingdom” (*Dido*, 3.5.637-9).²⁵⁹ While being visually impressive, this *deus ex machina* also reinforces the sentiment that duty to the gods must be obeyed. In Senecan stichomythic fashion, Aeneas discusses his dilemma between love and duty with his advisor, Achates:

ACH. But the gods are to be feared more.

AEN. But Dido is dear to me.

ACH. Think of Ascanius.

AEN. I am also thinking of great Carthage.

ACH. Is the land of Italy, owed you by the Fates, any the lesser?

AEN. The voyage is long.

ACH. Jupiter shows the way.

AEN. But Juno is savage.

ACH. This is matter to build your reputation.

AEN. But I am indebted to Elisa for everything (*Dido*, 3.6.689-92)²⁶⁰

The central conflict of the play is here given direct expression in dialogue which dichotomises love against duty. Achates, a model counsellor, represents the voice of reason in favour of religious duty, while Aeneas emotionally expresses the demands of love. Aeneas’s debating is added by Gager, as Virgil’s version reads: “The pious prince was seiz’d with sudden fear; / Mute was his tongue, and upright stood his hair. / Revolving in his mind the stern command, / He longs to fly, and loathes the charming land” (*Aeneid*, 4.279-282).²⁶¹ Virgil’s Aeneas is initially shocked but thereafter resolutely accepts his duty. Gager’s indecisive Aeneas is less cold and thus more sympathetic. This change also allows for a more thorough exploration of the conflict between political duty and personal love. This exploration is fitting for the audience, as explained by Buckley: “Gager is able to submit Aeneas’ decision to leave Carthage to the kind of reasoning inculcated by a university liberal arts training, a training which made the art of discourse the foundation for all learning.”²⁶² Gager’s expansion of this scene can be seen as a humanistic interrogation in the vein of a university disputation. Aeneas’s wavering causes

²⁵⁹ “Carthaginis tu moenia excelsae locas / Urbemque nunc uxorius pulchram exstruis / Rerum tuarum oblite, regnique immemor.”

²⁶⁰ “AEN. At chara Dido est. ACH. Veniat in mentem tibi Ascanius. / AEN. Etiam magna Carthago venit. / ACH. Num terra fati debita Italia est minor? / AEN. Via longa pelago. ACH. Iupiter monstrat viam. / AEN. At saeva Iuno. ACH. Materia laudis tuae. / AEN. At cuncta Elisae debeo”

²⁶¹ “At vero Aeneas aspectu obmutuit amens, / arrectaeque horrore comae, et vox faucibus haesit. / Ardet abire fuga dulcisque relinquere terras, / attonitus tanto monitu imperioque deorum.”

²⁶² Emma Buckley, ‘Medieval and Early Modern: Classical Authorities in William Gager’s (1583) “Dido”’ in Elisabeth Dutton and Martin Rohde (eds.), *Medieval Theories of the Creative Act/Theorien des kreativen Akts im Mittelalter/Théories médiévales de l’acte creative*, Vol. 38 (Reichert Verlag Wiesbaden: Universitätsverlag Freiburg, 2017), pp.189-207 (p.202). I am very grateful to Emma Buckley for sharing with me her, at the time, unpublished chapter.

Norland to describe him as “not a symbol of strength but an image of weakness” (Norland, p.176). However, the difference between Virgil and Gager’s representations of Aeneas lies not in strength against weakness but in their ease, or lack thereof, of accepting duty. Virgil’s prince of Troy effortlessly prioritizes the gods over Dido, while Gager’s prince is truly torn between them. After considering his position, Aeneas mournfully concludes that he must respect the gods: “I call men and the gods, also holy Faith, to witness that, Dido, I leave your land against my will” (*Dido*, 3.6.724-5).²⁶³ Through the model of the Trojan hero, the play exemplifies to Elizabeth that personal sacrifices must be made for the good of her people. Indeed, Elizabeth can more productively be compared to Aeneas, rather than Dido, because he is the leader who actively chooses to focus on their public responsibilities. Far from being weak, Gager’s Aeneas is a dutiful ruler who considerately, rather than blindly, sacrifices love for the benefit of his people. This has the dual effect of making Aeneas a more compassionate character while also affording Gager a vehicle through which to examine the merits of competing duties, thereby signalling to Elizabeth that public duty to God and country must be prioritized over private love.

Throughout the play Gager continues to shape his Aeneas differently to Virgil’s version, allowing for a fuller exposition of the difficulties that a ruler faces in dedicating themselves to their people. This in turn makes Aeneas a more considerate character than in Virgil’s version, where Aeneas is obedient to the gods but unnecessarily cruel to Dido. In the *Aeneid*, after Aeneas’s destiny has been reasserted and he has reacted with little emotion, he makes immediate plans to leave:

Three chiefs he calls, commands them to repair
The fleet, and ship their men with silent care;
Some plausible pretence he bids them find,
To colour what in secret he design’d.
Himself, meantime, the softest hours would choose,
Before the love-sick lady heard the news (*Aeneid*, 4.290-5)²⁶⁴

Aeneas plans to ready his ships and people in secret to escape Carthage without confronting Dido. This cowardly and deceitful behaviour hardly aligns with his noble and pious image. While he is taking such action in service of his duty to the gods and his people, there is no need for him to abandon Dido without explanation. In contrast to Virgil, Gager’s Aeneas goes to

²⁶³ “Homines deosque testor, et sanctam fidem, / Me, Elisa, terris cedere invitum tuis.”

²⁶⁴ “Mnesthea Sergestumque vocat fortemque Serestum, / classem aptent taciti sociosque ad litora cogant, / arma parent, et quae rebus sit causa novandis / dissimulent; sese interea, quando optuma Dido / nesciat et tantos rumpi non speret amores”

Dido immediately to explain: “Queen, I have not hoped to conceal my departure” (*Dido*, 4.2.812).²⁶⁵ He justifies his decision to her:

The very messenger of the gods, the herald sent to earth by Jupiter on high (I swear this by both our heads), delivered this command. I saw this god in broad daylight as he was contemplating these walls, I heard his pleasant discourse with these ears, the orders of Jupiter almighty. Cease your lamentations, let there be a limit to reproaches. I do not seek Italy of my own will, I am not unbidden. (*Dido*, 4.2.832-9)²⁶⁶

That he does not try to sneak away and instead explains himself is not only far more honourable but also allows the statesmen and students in the audience to understand exactly why he has favoured his public duty. He clarifies that his intent is not malevolent: “Wanting makes the crime. He is called guilty who does wrong of his own will” (*Dido*, 4.3.911-12).²⁶⁷ Gager borrows this line from Seneca’s *Hercules Oetaeus*: “He does no sin who sins without intent.”²⁶⁸ Buckley argues that Gager’s interpretation of Aeneas “engages with concepts of criminal liability and moral blameworthiness, guilt and culpability” (Buckley, ‘Dido’, p.206). Establishing criminal intent (*mens rea*) was stressed in legal texts, particularly in Henry de Bracton’s influential *De Legibus*, originally written in 1235, but re-published in 1569: “[W]e must consider with what mind (*animo*) or with what intent (*voluntate*) a thing is done, in fact or in judgment, in order that it may be determined accordingly what action should follow and what punishment. For take away the will and every act will be indifferent, because your state of mind gives meaning to your act.”²⁶⁹ As one of the most expensive and longest law books on the market, *De Legibus* was primarily read within legal circles, although there is some evidence of a smaller religious and antiquarian readership.²⁷⁰ Gager had a Doctorate of Civil Law and while Bracton’s text is concerned with common, rather than civil, law, Gager’s interest in law indicates that he may well have read it. Although Aeneas chooses duty to the gods and his people with a guilt free conscience, he still struggles with the strain it places on his personal life. He declares: “Elisa, I should gladly abandon my comrades, myself, Ascanius, everything, if

²⁶⁵ “Regina, non hanc tegere fugam”

²⁶⁶ “Frustratur, ipse caelitem interpres, Iove / Nuncius ab alto missus in terras (caput / Utrumque testor) per leves auras tulit / Mandata. Vidi lumine in aperto deum / Haec intuentem moenia, atque hausi auribus / Dulcem loquelam, iussa supremi Iovis. / Remitte planctus, sit querelarum modus. / Non sponte, non iniussus Italiam sequor.”

²⁶⁷ “Non animus idem est. velle concludit scelus, / Nocens vocatur sponte quicumque est nocens.”

²⁶⁸ Seneca, *Hercules Oetaeus*, trans. by Miller, *Seneca’s Tragedies*, Vol. 2 (1917), p.257. “Haud est nocens quicumque non sponte est nocens”, 1.886.

²⁶⁹ Henry de Bracton, *On the Laws and Customs of England*, trans. and ed. by George E. Woodbine, George E. and Samuel E. Thorne (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968), 101b.

²⁷⁰ Ian Williams, ‘A Medieval Book and Early-Modern Law: Bracton’s Authority and Application in the Common Law c.1550-1640’, *Tijdschrift voor Rechtsgeschiedenis*, 79 (2011), pp.47-80 (pp.8-10).

this would satisfy Jupiter and my destiny. This departure is not my fault” (*Dido*, 4.3.880-3).²⁷¹ Aeneas’s decision is framed in terms of what he must do, in spite of what he wishes to do.

Gager altering the character of Aeneas which he found in his sources and making him dutiful but also sympathetic exists in tandem with Dido’s extreme grief. Her damaged emotional state is still emphasised: “No peace remains for her, no hope of peace, neither by day nor by night does she find repose. Pacing about, out of her mind, she groans, hisses, rages, has no time for anything but complaints” (*Dido*, 5.1.987-9).²⁷² Gager takes this emotional distress from Ovid: “with Sulphure toucht I burne / Both day and night to Didos thought / Aeneas makes returne” (*Heroides*, sig.41^r).²⁷³ Gager portrays a wronged Dido *and* a regretful but dutiful Aeneas. Dido feels so distraught that she commits suicide: “now a roaring strikes my ears, stupor seizes my mind. Chill dread grips my breast, I tremble with horror” (*Dido*, 5.2.1047-50).²⁷⁴ This heightened emotional state echoes Ovid: “Downe by my chéeke the teares / vpon the weapon fall: / Which now in steade of brine with bloud” (*Heroides*, fol.47^r).²⁷⁵ By depicting her suicide onstage *Dido* partakes in the popular entertainment standards of the time, where staged death was expected. In Gager’s play, Dido’s death is not primarily intended to satisfy a bloodthirsty audience, although it does achieve that as a consequence and her sister’s subsequent suicide certainly fits that purpose too. Rather, her suicide allows the audience more fully to experience the extent of her suffering. Her distressed emotional state allows Gager to highlight the tragedy of her entanglement with a foreign beau. This leads into the Epilogue where Gager instructs his audience to ruminate on the play: “Now let each spectator reckon up what good is to be derived from this play” (*Dido*, Epilogue.1217).²⁷⁶ Audience members are instructed to use their own moral judgement in working out the meaning of the play. Gager expected his erudite audience to engage with the performance of his classical play in this active way. His audience were not to be passive, but were to actively engage in the debates about duty taking place onstage. Specifically, his reshaping of Aeneas from insensitive to distressed prompts the audience to compare this Aeneas to his representations in Virgil and Ovid. Aeneas’s discussion with Achates and his justification to Dido about the importance of his duty allows Gager to investigate more fully the necessity, but also the strain, of upholding this dutiful ideal. This co-

²⁷¹ “Elisa, comites, memet, Ascanium, omnia / Laetus relinquam, si Iovi fiat satis / Fatoque. Non est culpa discessus mea.”

²⁷² “Nulla nec restat quies / Nec spes quietis, luce nec tenebris silet, / Quin errat amens, ingemit, stridet, furit.”

²⁷³ “Uror ut inducto ceratae sulphure taedae, / ut pia fumosis addita tura rogis. / Aeneas oculis vigilantis semper inhaeret; / Aenean animo noxque diesque refert.”

²⁷⁴ “En clamor meas / Percellit aures, et ferit mentem stupor. / Tremisco. Gelidum concipit pectus metum, / Horrore quator.”

²⁷⁵ “scribimus, et gremio Troicus ensis adest; / perque genas lacrimae strictum labuntur in ensem, / qui iam pro lacrimis sanguine tinctus erit.”

²⁷⁶ “Nunc quisque reputet quid sibi hinc referat boni.”

exists with Gager's intensification of Dido's heartache, which serves to strengthen both the educational message of the play and the entertainment value. Gager's heroes serve his pedagogical purpose, as the audience more fully understand, and sympathise with, the difficulty of trying to reconcile personal feelings with political duty.

Although the audience are asked to work out the lessons being taught, the messages that Gager is sending are clear: liaisons with foreign princes are condemned and duty to country must be prioritized above anything else. The play argues that Elizabeth is fit to govern as long as she does not lose herself to a foreign man. While the play compares her to Dido in the Epilogue, it is Aeneas who is a more exemplary figure for Elizabeth. It is Aeneas who makes the difficult, but necessary, decision to obey the god's commands and prioritize the needs of his people. Gager's message is remarkably similar to Christopher Marlowe's later *Dido, Queen of Carthage* (1594) which, in Williams's words, "transforms Virgil's apologia for masculine prerogative into praise for a queen who, by avoiding marriage, preserved the liberty and prosperity of her people" (Williams, p.43). However, while Gager's play certainly addresses itself to Elizabeth, primarily in the banquet scene and the Epilogue, it is not exclusively aimed at her.

Dido presents the audience, comprised of statesmen and students, with a challenging political situation to consider, particularly through the portrayal of Aeneas. Gager presents Aeneas as a dedicated leader who struggles to reconcile his public duties with his private feelings. He employed his play as a pedagogical tool to teach not only students (many of whom were prospective courtiers), as Legge does, but also courtiers themselves. It is with the help of his counsellor that Aeneas comes to the decision that he must prioritize his political duty. Both Hanno and Achates serve as an endorsement of the positive influence of counsellors, thus encouraging present and future counsellors in the audience to do their duty. Gager understood the value of entertainment to enhance didacticism and so included vivid deaths and lavish effects. Some of *Dido*'s stage effects exceeded those seen in the London theatres, with the marchpane and blizzard of sweets in particular emulating the extravagance of court entertainment. Of course, this is fitting given the courtly and elite audience of the play, an audience who were not only treated to such a display but were also expected to engage actively with the ethical issues concerning duty which were presented. Buckley explains that *Dido* is "not simply the inculcation of virtue by studying exemplary models of heroic behaviour, but rather a more challenging and complex exploration of virtue, articulated within and through the apparatus of an elite, sophisticated and up-to-date liberal education" (Buckley, 'Dido', p.207). Gager bookends his play with the message that duty to country must be prioritized over personal love but in the middle he also engages with the complexity, and difficulty, of

upholding this virtuous ideal. Nor was Gager alone in exploring these issues of duty through drama and encouraging his audience to engage with the teaching. His fellow Oxford playwright, Matthew Gwinne, also deals with the complexity of upholding classical duties in *Nero*, to which this chapter now turns.

NERO: THE INTERROGATION OF DUTIFUL IDEALS

Matthew Gwinne entered the University of Oxford in 1574 and during his more than 30 years there he established himself as one of the institution's literary luminaries. He produced an edition of *The Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia* (1590) with Fulke Greville and composed dedicatory verses for the work of his colleagues, notably for Gager's *Ulysses Redux* and *Meleager*.²⁷⁷ He was also involved in the academic disputations for Łaski's visit in 1583 and James VI and I's in 1605. For James's visit he also wrote the comedy *Vertumnus, sive, Annus recurrens* and the pageant *Tres sibyllae*. His largest theatrical endeavour was the 5,000-line history play *Nero*, which was published in 1603, and reprinted in 1637 and 1639, but never performed. Gwinne is candid about the possible reasons for its lack of performance in the introductory dedication: "one must consider the multitude of roles, the unequal length of the Acts, and the implausibility of producing such an intractable piece."²⁷⁸ Despite this, he desired that it be performed: "For even if the writing is quite vigorous, enunciation, facial expression, bearing and gesture cause it to make a deeper impression on the mind" (*Nero*, Preface). Gwinne wanted his play to make an "impression on the mind" and thought performance was the most successful means to that end. Even so, Gwinne believed that literary narratives in general could be turned to pedagogy. Speaking in his capacity as a physician, he declares that: "If there is a benefit from my work when I ply my practice, I hope there is also a profit in literary works when I read them" (*Nero*, Preface). The profit of *Nero* lies in its exploration of the complexities and difficulties of a counsellor's duty. Gwinne dedicated the play to Sir Thomas Egerton, Lord Keeper and Lord Chancellor, his son John Egerton, Baron and MP for Callington and later Shropshire, and his son-in-law Francis Leigh, MP for Oxford and a gentleman of the privy chamber to James.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁷ Iain Wright, 'Gwinne, Matthew (1558–1627), physician and playwright', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, posted 03/01/08.

<<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-11813>> [accessed 20/07/18].

²⁷⁸ Matthew Gwinne, *Nero* (1603), ed. and trans. by Dana F. Sutton (University of Birmingham: The Philological Museum, posted 1997, revised 2017). <<http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/Nero/>> [accessed 15/10/20]. This is based on the original 1603 edition.

²⁷⁹ J. H. Baker, 'Egerton, Thomas, first Viscount Brackley (1540–1617), lord chancellor', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, posted 23/09/04.

<<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-8594>> [accessed 16/04/21]; Louis A. Knafla, 'Egerton, John, first earl of Bridgewater (1579–1649), politician and lawyer', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, posted 23/09/04. <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e->

Certainly, the political issues explored in *Nero* were relevant to these men, but they were also relevant to the wider academic community at Oxford. The discussions about duty in *Nero* were applicable to both current and future courtiers.

One benefit of the printed version of the play is that it allows Gwinne to identify his sources explicitly. He is forthcoming about his reliance on historical and literary texts: “Let Tacitus, Suetonius, Dio and Seneca do the speaking for me” (*Nero*, Preface). He largely relies on Tacitus’s *Annals*, but the last acts were composed with the aid of Suetonius’s *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars* and Dio Cassius’s *Roman History*. Gwinne almost certainly used the original Latin version of the *Annals* because of his education and its widespread availability. Gwinne points to his sources in the margins, as Jonson famously does in *Sejanus* (1603), but to a different purpose. Jonson relies on Tacitus to defend *Sejanus* from controversy. As Evelyn Tribble has argued, Jonson’s “keys in the text continually draw attention away from the text toward the margins. This strategy ensures that the reader’s frame of reference (almost literally) will be classical rather than contemporary.”²⁸⁰ He frames *Sejanus* simply as a scholarly exercise in literary archaeology, but it held the potential to be read subversively in reference to contemporary politics. Gwinne’s marginalia similarly substantiate his account but their primary purpose was not scholarly defence. Rather, Gwinne was inviting his reader to investigate his historical, literary, and political sources in order to deepen their understanding of the conceptions of duty that the play explores. Where Gager encourages his audience to engage actively with *Dido* in the epilogue, Gwinne encourages his reader to engage actively throughout the whole play.

John English, an Oxford scholar and St John’s College Dean of Law from 1611, had a copy of Gwinne’s *Nero* in his collection alongside works by Seneca and Tacitus.²⁸¹ While there is no definite evidence that English read his *Nero* alongside his Tacitus, the possibility certainly existed. More substantial evidence of *Nero* being read as Gwinne intended comes from a marked up copy of the play now held at the British Library (shelf-mark C.186.b.23). A few names are written in different hands in the back of this copy, with the two identifiable names being “Richardus Amherst” and “Dudley Diggs”. Richard Amherst attended St John’s College, Oxford, from 1582 and after graduating became a lawyer and MP for Lewes from 1614 to

[8587](#)> [accessed 16/04/21]; Thomas Seccombe revised by Sean Kelsey, ‘Leigh, Francis, first earl of Chichester (d. 1653), politician and courtier’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, posted 23/09/04. <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-16382>> [accessed 16/04/21].

²⁸⁰ Evelyn B. Tribble, *Margins and Marginality: The Printed Page in Early Modern England* (Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 1993), p.152.

²⁸¹ For more on English’s literary collection see W. C. Costin, “The Inventory of John English, B.C.L., Fellow of St. John’s College,” *Oxoniensia XI-XII* (1946-1947), pp.106-116.

1622.²⁸² “Dudley Diggs” could be a reference to Sir Dudley Digges, the English diplomat and politician who sat in the House of Commons between 1610 and 1629, representing Tewkesbury. Digges attended Oxford in the early 1600s, was afterwards intimately involved with James’s government, and also published several political works, including *The Worthiness of Warre and Warriors* (1604) and *Rights and Privileges of the Subject* (1642).²⁸³ Another possibility is that the play was annotated by Digges’s third son, also called Dudley, who likewise attended Oxford and went on to achieve some distinction as a royalist pamphleteer, notably publishing *The Unlawfulness of Subjects Taking up Armes against their Sovereigne in what Case soever* (1643).²⁸⁴ Both father and son were involved in politics, as was Amherst, which suggests that the copy of *Nero* circulated in a small circle of politically motivated men in London. The annotator clearly read the play in the ‘active’ way that Gwinne desired and so it had relevance for them. For instance, they underlined:

Caeso tyranno gratior nulla hostia:
Sanguine tyranni suavior nullus liquor

Nero has one neck, a number of men have numerous hands.
 No sacrificial offering is more welcome than a slain tyrant,
 no liquor sweeter than tyrant’s blood (*Nero*, 5.1.5.3541-2).

Next to this, they note that it comes from “Seneca in Her: Fur:”, meaning that they are drawing on their own knowledge of classical literature while reading the play.²⁸⁵ While Gwinne himself does not acknowledge Seneca’s influence here, the reader correctly identifies that it is drawn from *Hercules Furens*: “Vitam cruore capitis invisi deis libare possem; gratior nullus liqueo tinxisset aras” (“Would that I could pour out to the gods the blood of the man I hate; no more pleasing stream had strained the altars”).²⁸⁶ The reader not only draws upon their own humanist education in identifying sources, but they also write short notes throughout the play. For instance, they have underlined “Custodiendam das ovem pastor lupo, / Imo laniandam!” (“You

²⁸² ‘Amherst, Richard’, *History of Parliament*. <<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/member/amherst-richard-1565-1632>> [accessed 12/02/2021]

²⁸³ Sean Kelsey, ‘Digges, Sir Dudley (1582/3–1639), politician and diplomat’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, posted 23/09/04. <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-7635>> [accessed 18/01/21]; ‘Digges, Dudley’, *History of Parliament*. <<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/member/digges-sir-dudley-1583-1639>> [accessed 12/02/2021]

²⁸⁴ David Stoker, ‘Digges, Dudley (1613–1643), royalist political writer’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, posted 23/09/04. <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-7636>> [accessed 18/01/21].

²⁸⁵ BL, shelf-mark C.186.b.23, sig.O2^v. The political importance of this copy of *Nero* has been previously unrecognized.

²⁸⁶ Seneca, *Hercules Furens*, trans. by Miller in *Seneca’s Tragedies*, Vol. 1 (1917), p.81, ll.920-2.

are a shepherd who entrusts his lamb to the wolf for the guarding — rather for the rending!), and have written “stultitiae exempla” (“example of folly”) next to it (*Nero*, 1.3.431-2, sig.C2^r). The annotations of this reader signify that they were reading the play, at least partly, in order to extract political wisdom from it.

The academic pedigree of *Nero* is unquestionable, but this does not mean that it was a didactically dry academic exercise. In line with both the popular and Senecan tradition, *Nero* promises the audience: “Murder, revenge, weeping, slaughter, evil.” (*Nero*, Prologue.3).²⁸⁷ Early modern plays were replete with bloody spectacle, commonly taking the violence in Senecan tragedies to new extremes. Gwinne employs similar techniques to heighten the theatricality and spectacle of his play, featuring torture scenes, elaborate murders, and prolonged suicides. For instance, a woman kills herself with her own bodice (*fascia*): “*She fastens her breast-band in a sort of a noose to the canopy of the chair, inserts her neck, throws her weight on it, and strangles herself*” (*Nero*, 5.2.2.3.3815) and Nero stamps on a severed head: “Let Plautus and anybody else who wants to snatch away my laurels thus make his exit. (*He tramples on the head*)” (*Nero*, 4.5.2792-3).²⁸⁸ Along with this hyperbolic violence, Gwinne also expands upon the supernatural elements found in Seneca, filling his play with a troop of vengeful spirits who return to comment upon the story. Much like *Dido*, this blend between the scholarly and the popular allows *Nero* to convey more effectively its political instruction.

Nero's instruction centres on the duty of counsellors living under tyrannical rule. By bringing to life Nero and his advisors, Seneca, Burrhus, and Poppaea, Gwinne is able to take abstract ideals and apply them to real world situations. Kent Cartwright asserts that “[d]rama tests the scripted and the felt, the conceived and the experienced, against each other.”²⁸⁹ Drama offers examples of experiences in a way that moral textual guides do not and Gwinne uses this to his full advantage. Thus, dramaturgy and theatricality work in aid of Gwinne's pedagogy. The use of historical examples was a common pedagogical technique in the early modern period. Henry Savile in *The Ende of Nero and Beginning of Galba* (1591) explains that: “since we are easier taught by example then by precept, what studie can profit us so much, as that which gives us patternes either to follow or to flye, of the best and worst men of all estates, cuntries, and times that ever were?”²⁹⁰ However, Gwinne's depiction of Nero's reign complicates the simple exemplary model. While he uses examples rather than precept, he also highlights the intertextuality of his work which leads to a multitude of interpretations. Rather than instructing

²⁸⁷ “Caedem, ultionem, lachrymas, cladem, nefas.”

²⁸⁸ “*Vinclo fascia in modum laquei ad arcum sellae restricto, indit cervicem, et corporis robore connisa, spiritum exprimit.*”; “Plautus, et quisquis mihi / Praeripere cupiat lauream, sic, sic eat. *Caput proculcat.*”

²⁸⁹ Cartwright, *Theatre and Humanism*, p.17.

²⁹⁰ Savile, *The Ende of Nero* (1591), sig.¶3^r.

his readers in precisely how to deal with a tyrant, he presents a variety of examples without giving a definitive answer as to which is ‘right’. Gwinne’s provision of examples within the context of the play itself, along with contextual material in the margins, encourages his audience to interrogate and extrapolate what they think the correct action would be.

Gwinne uses the tyrannous reign of Nero to exemplify the difficulty of survival at court. Nero’s corruption begins when he seeks advice for dealing with Agrippina’s plot against him. Burrhus, the prefect of the Praetorian Guard, and Seneca, his private tutor, offer sage advice in dealing with his mother’s overreaching:

NERO. Am I always to be a boy, subject to my mother’s law?

Ruler of everything, must I obey my mother?

BUR. Fear your arrogant mother’s schemes, Caesar. She was always cruel, now she is deceitfully weaving plots.

SEN. Her ostentation is to be cut short, her arrogance diminished.

Strike at her ministers, if you abstain from harming your mother.

It is permissible to do against them whatever is impermissible to do to a parent. (*Nero*, 2.5.909-15)²⁹¹

Seneca suggests removing Agrippina’s guards to curb her power because harming a parent is morally “impermissible”. After gods and country, duty to parents is the most important classical ideal to uphold, so Seneca provides a method of diminishing Agrippina’s power without breaking this fundamental duty. Nero acts on his advisors’ counsel, but Poppaea then malevolently influences him to murder his mother: “Does she mount towards authority by murder? Her son’s too? Why be terrified, my Nero? Dispose of a mother who is trying to dispose of her son” (*Nero*, 3.3.1509-11).²⁹² This causes Nero to waver between his duties to his familial and political roles: “Uncertain, I am caught between being Caesar and being a son. My angry mind is Caesar’s, my pious mind a son’s. Revenge is welcome to Caesar, her safety is welcome to her son” (*Nero*, 3.3.1566-8).²⁹³ Burrhus, supporting Seneca’s measured advice, attempts to halt Poppaea’s murderous plan: “But every person must be given an opportunity for

²⁹¹ “NERO. Ergone semper matris arbitrio puer / Subiiciar? Orbis arbiter, matrem audiam? / BUR. Matris superbae, Caesar, insidias cave. / Quae semper atrox, nunc struit fallax dolos. / SEN. Est amputanda pompa, minuendus tumor. / Matris ministros plecte, si matre abstines. / Fas est in illos, quicquid in matrem est nefas.”

²⁹² “Ad regna scandit per necem? Nati quoque? / Quid expavescis, mi Nero? Natum exue / Matrem exuenti: Caesarem infensum sciat”.

²⁹³ “Incertus inter Caesarum et natum haero. / Irata mens est Cesari, nato pia. / Vindicta grata est Cesari, nato salus.”

defending himself, even more so for a mother” (*Nero*, 3.3.1542-4).²⁹⁴ However, Poppaea’s manipulative rhetoric pushes Nero over the edge:

POP. Why are you hesitating, Caesar? Are you pious towards your impious mother? Piety is a private matter, anger suits a ruler. Revenge upon her is your safety, her safety your penalty. Piety is worse than anger, revenge better than safety. Rule, Caesar, as is reasonable.

NERO. But she is my -

POP. Rather, her own.

NERO. – mother.

POP. But a wicked mother.

NERO. It is a dire sin to harm even an evil mother.

POP. It will be right to do to her what she prepared against her son.

NERO. Let her be -

POP. Rather, let her not be.

NERO. – guilty. (*Nero*, 3.3.1571-8)²⁹⁵

This Senecan stichomythic dialogue demonstrates the power of a crafty rhetorician. Poppaea sets out her argument as if it is a battle between pragmatic action and unrealistic ideals. She frames the murder of Agrippina as a necessary pre-emptive measure, employing the rhetorical device of paradiastole to reframe vice as virtue. Additionally, she appeals to both Nero’s emotions and his reason. She inspires him to fury because “anger suits a ruler”, but also recommends that he “Rule, Caesar, as is reasonable”. She therefore convinces him in both mind and heart of the rightfulness of her murderous designs. Poppaea is superficially persuasive but there is a logical inconsistency in her argument. The paradox at the centre of her counsel, which her use of paradiastole feeds into, runs counter to Senecan moral philosophy. Her wicked counsel is a lesson for monarchs and courtiers alike, specifically about the need to watch out for seemingly persuasive arguments which are, in reality, glib and morally suspect. A monarch must be wary of this type of counsel, and a counsellor should never offer such counsel. Nero is taken in by Poppaea’s unethical counsel though and goes through with killing his mother. Having established the virtue of Seneca and Burrhus and the villainy of Nero and Poppaea, Gwinne builds upon this to probe at the core issue of his play: a counsellor’s duty in regard to a tyrant.

²⁹⁴ “sed est / Defensionis cuique tribuendus locus, / Matri magis”.

²⁹⁵ “POP. Quid, Caesar, haeres? impiae matri pius? / Privata pietas: ira regnantem decet. / Vindicta in illam tibi salus: illi salus / Tibi poena: pietas peior est ira; ultio / Salute potior: Caesar, ut par est, rege. / NERO Mea est — / POP. Sua imo. / NERO mater. / POP. At mater mala. / NERO Nocere matri vel malae dirum nefas. / POP. Fas erit in illam, quae nefas nato struit. / NERO Sit — / POP. Immo ne sit. / NERO Sit rea.”

Poppaea recognizes that, as his counsellors, Burrhus and Seneca hold the power to temper Nero's evil. She therefore persuades him to dispose of them and his wife, Octavia: "Your tutors, this one and that, forbid your being a man. Your Juno refuses to let you be a Jupiter. If you are a man, why is your marriage to me being delayed?" (*Nero*, 4.3.2477-9).²⁹⁶ Nero asks for Burrhus's opinion on his exile of Octavia:

BUR. Does it please you to drive her away in her innocence, with these things unproved?

NERO. It pleases me.

BUR. And so give her back her dowry, which consists of your empire.

NERO. What are you saying?

BUR. Do not ask me to repeat myself, Nero. It suffices to have said it once. (*Nero*, 4.3.2505-8)²⁹⁷

Gwinne takes Burrhus's bold attempt at restraining Nero from Dio's *Roman History*:

Indeed, frankness of speech was characteristic of Burrus and he employed it with such boldness that once, for example, when he was asked by the emperor a second time for his opinion on matters regarding which he had already declared himself, he answered bluntly: "When I have once spoken about anything, don't ask me again."²⁹⁸

Gwinne's marginal note to "*Dio*" makes this parallel clear and emphasizes that his Burrhus is similarly audacious in offering genuine counsel. Kewes argues that the purpose of the counsellor figure in early modern drama is "to underscore the moral duty of those in power to take frank counsel and of subjects or subordinates to provide it irrespective of the personal risk involved" (Kewes, 'Jerusalem', p.175). Burrhus certainly offers counsel irrespective of personal risk, placing his duty to Rome above the value of his own life. Indeed, Burrhus is stripped of his power and presumably murdered, prompting Seneca to note that: "*Wicked* Nero turns to *wicked* advisors" (*Nero*, 4.5.2737).²⁹⁹ Buckley comments that the play is "not only a test of classical learning for actors and audience, but also a challenge to this educated elite to consider

²⁹⁶ "ne vir utique, magistri negant / Hic, ille: ne sis Iupiter, Iuno negat. / Cur differuntur, si vir es, thalami mei?"

²⁹⁷ "BUR. His non probatis pellere insontem placet? / NERO Placet. / BUR. Ergo dotem redde in imperio sitam. NERO Quid ais? / BUR. Quid aiam, me, Nero, ne bis roges. / Sat est semel dixisse."

²⁹⁸ Dio, *Roman History*, Book 61.13.

²⁹⁹ "Ad nequiores nequior vergit Nero." Italics my translation.

for themselves the complex balancing act of court life.”³⁰⁰ Gwinne uses Burrhus as an example to elucidate the difficulty of navigating the dynamic between pleasing the monarch and offering frank counsel, a dynamic which is exacerbated when the monarch is tyrannical. At Poppaea’s insistence, Nero replaces Burrhus with two commanders: “Thus you can rely on one, if the other becomes a source of fear. Power divided is weakened” (*Nero*, 4.3.2527-8).³⁰¹ Later in the play, when Flavius declares “There is not much loyalty in so many men” (*Nero*, 5.1.5.3531) when amassing his rebellion, Gwinne provides a marginal note to Machiavelli’s *Discourses on Livy* (1531): “*Macch. in Liv. 3.6.*”³⁰² Here, Machiavelli comments on dividing power, recommending a prince “fear those for whom he has done too many favours.”³⁰³ This is relevant to Flavius’s concern about the conspiracy growing too large but also to Poppaea’s insistence on Nero not giving one individual too much power. Their similar arguments are grounded in early modern political theory. At least one reader took heed of this, underlining “Non multa tam multis fides” and writing next to it and underneath the reference to Machiavelli “Non adhibe multos”, which translates to “Do not use many men” (BL, C.186.b.23, sig.O2^f). While essentially just a repetition of the advice, writing this in the margin serves to highlight its significance and turns it into a pithy and memorable maxim.

Burrhus exemplifies the dangers of giving honest advice to a tyrant, while Seneca is a demonstration of passivity and complicity. In a scene that has no precedent in the historical sources, Octavia harshly blames Seneca for allowing Nero’s villainy:

But is this what the philosophers preach regarding wives, to banish the modest, and to keep your whores at home? Is this what you preached? Is this what Nero learned? The both of you are evil, let the both of you pay the penalty for your evil. A philosophical courtier is a monstrosity. I believe that one can be neither, when he strives to be both, for the two things do not harmonize. (*Nero*, 4.5.2715-20)³⁰⁴

Gwinne provides a note to John of Salisbury’s *Policraticus* (1159) here, a book of political theory situated in the mirrors for princes genre. Reprinted in Paris in 1513, this book had an erudite readership due to its dense political material. Octavia borrows directly from John’s

³⁰⁰ Emma Buckley, ‘Drama in the margins – academic text and political context in Matthew Gwinne’s *Nero: Nova Tragædia* (1603) and Ben Jonson’s *Sejanus* (1603/5)’, *Renaissance Studies*, 30.4 (2016), pp.602-622 (p.612).

³⁰¹ “Sit spes ab uno, ab altero si fit metus. / Divisa vis, infirma”.

³⁰² “Non multa tam multis fides”.

³⁰³ Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy* (1531), p.260.

³⁰⁴ “Sed num philosophi sic in uxores docent, / Pellere pudicas, capere meretrices domo? / Itane docebas? Itane discebat Nero? / Nequiter uterque; uterque nequitiam luat. / Monstrum est philosophicus aulicus: neutrum puto, / Uterque qui vult esse: conveniunt male.”

description of a philosopher at court: “the philosopher-courtier is a monstrous thing; and, while he affects to be both, he is neither one because the court excludes philosophy and the philosopher at no time engages in the trifles of the courtier.”³⁰⁵ Gwinne is pointing his learned readers to further reading, encouraging them to seek out political theory to further contextualize the play. Octavia’s condemnation of Seneca’s collusion with Nero finds no rebuff because he realizes that he has failed in his duty as a teacher, that his passivity has allowed Nero to become a tyrant. Even worse though, on occasion Seneca aided Nero’s villainous machinations. Again in a scene without precedent in the ancient sources, Seneca admits the immorality of concealing Agrippina’s murder: “Matricide is easy to commit, hard to defend. Nevertheless I obey Nero” (*Nero*, 4.3.2456-7).³⁰⁶ This aligns with ‘An Homilie against disobedience and wylfull rebellion’ (1571), which taught that a subject’s duty is to tolerate an evil ruler: “for subjects to deserve through their sins to have an evil Prince, and then to rebel against him, were double and treble evil, by provoking God more to plague them. Nay let us either deserve to have a good Prince, or let us patiently suffer and obey such as we deserve.”³⁰⁷ While obedience to the monarch was the expected ideal during the early modern period, Buckley comments that this scene “makes absolute obedience look much less attractive” and “starts to look in fact like active participation in tyranny” (Buckley, ‘Seneca’, p.28). While in a theoretical sense obedience to the monarch is necessary, Gwinne shows that in reality it can lead to the enabling of evil. Gwinne’s creation of these new scenes to highlight Seneca’s culpability underscores the complicated nature of adhering to political duty. *Nero* deconstructs the concept of ‘political duty’ by questioning whether this duty is owed to monarch or country.

Gwinne builds upon Octavia’s rebuke of Seneca by further manipulating his source material in regard to Thrasea Paetus, who in Tacitus’s *Annals* is a morally upstanding exemplum by being one of the few senators to stand up to Nero. Thrasea further implicates Seneca in Nero’s crimes: “Nor do I blame Nero, but rather Seneca” (*Nero*, 4.4.2667).³⁰⁸ Gwinne pulls this from Tacitus: “So now it was not Nero, whose brutality was far beyond any remonstrance, but Seneca who was in ill repute, for having written a confession in such a style” (*Annals*, 14.11).³⁰⁹ While this line is taken almost directly from Tacitus, it is given to Thrasea, who is silent in Tacitus’s narrative at this point, in order to blame Seneca more directly. Thrasea’s exemplary behaviour in regard to restraining Nero gives Gwinne’s words for him here further ballast and authority. Thrasea and Octavia not only highlight the extreme importance of advisors in shaping a

³⁰⁵ John of Salisbury, *Policraticus* (1159), ed. and trans. by Cary J. Nederman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), book 5, p.91.

³⁰⁶ “Facile patari, haud facile purgari potest, / Materna caedes: pareo Neroni tamen.”

³⁰⁷ Anonymous, *An Homilie* (1571), sig.Biii^r.

³⁰⁸ “Nec ego Neronem culpo, sed Senecam magis”

³⁰⁹ “ergo non iam Nero, cuius immanitas omnium questus antibat, sed Seneca adverso rumore erat quod oratione tali confessionem scripsisset.”

monarch's behaviour, but they also interrogate Seneca's dutiful ideals of obedience. This becomes even clearer when Gwinne's Seneca is compared with the Seneca of the pseudo-Senecan *Octavia*, which at the time was believed to have been written by Seneca himself. Gwinne explicitly points to *Octavia* in the margins twice: first, when Poppaea and Nero interpret their nightmares (*Nero* 4.2.2298 and 2337 with *Octavia* ll.721-37 and ll.740-55); and second, when Poppaea describes the rioting in Rome (*Nero* 4.7.3014 with *Octavia* ll.792-803). However, the influence of *Octavia* is not limited to these moments of imitation, and any reader would reasonably be expected to notice the significance of Gwinne's twisting of Seneca's character. In the classical play, Seneca goes to Nero after his denouncement of Octavia and strongly attempts to restrain his tyranny by evoking classical ideals. When Nero declares that to "destroy foes is a leader's greatest virtue", Seneca replies "For the father of his country to save citizens, is greater still."³¹⁰ The Seneca of *Octavia* actively offers counsel in an attempt to restrain Nero, while the Seneca of *Nero* enables and aids the tyrant. Rather than offering Seneca as an example for his readers to model themselves on, Gwinne invites them to examine his actions against other examples.

Octavia's bitter reproach forces Seneca to reflect on his choices in government. This leads to him realizing that he is ethically compromised and thus to denouncing court life:

The Court is a game, it cheats and cozens. See it. The Court is a siren: it sings, it sings incantations. Fear it. The Court is a cavern: it shuts and locks you within. Guard against it. The court is a hyena: it captures and kills you. Flee it. Either the Court is nothing, or it is crime, deception, and treachery. It makes few glad, many sad, but it destroys those whom it gladdens. Retire from Court. (*Nero*, 4.5.2756-62)³¹¹

Seneca has gone from unquestioning, and therefore dangerous, obedience to a spokesman for the subversive message that royal courts are inherently unethical. Seneca's speech is not necessarily encouraging the courtier readers to "Retire from Court", but it is encouraging them to examine the realistic ethical ramifications of court life. While not speaking specifically about *Nero*, Cartwright outlines why Seneca's speech on the treachery of court is so effective: "For humanist reformers, drama promised to encourage the spectators' emotional embrace of the transformative vision of education through their engagement with the protagonist's self-discovery" (Cartwright, p.49). By allowing the audience to experience Seneca's journey to

³¹⁰ Seneca, *Octavia*, trans. by Miller in *Seneca's Tragedies*, Vol. 2 (1917), p.443. "Nero. Extinguere hostem maxima est virtus ducis. Seneca. Servare cives maior est patriae patri" (ll.443-4).

³¹¹ "Est aula ludus; ludit, illudit: vide. / Est aula Siren; cantat, incantat: time. / Est aula cavea; claudit, includit: cave. / Est aula hyaena; comprimit, perimit: fuge. / Aut aula nihil est, aut scelus, fucus, dolus. / Paucos beavit, perdidit plures: sed et / Hos quos beavit perdidit: ab aula redi."

knowledge, they become emotionally involved and therefore more receptive to his final declamations. Seneca's realisation that his ideals and teachings are incompatible with the realities of the political world leads to him committing suicide with his wife. They do this by slitting their wrists and then ingesting poison, which Gwinne wanted to represent visually on stage. While Gwinne's play encourages the reader to search the *Annals*, *Policraticus*, and *Octavia*, amongst many other texts, to augment their perspective of a counsellor's duty, he also furnishes his play with bloodshed, mixing spectacle into didacticism.

The ghost of Octavia begins Act 5 by describing the nightmare that has consumed Rome: "Nero does not spare his citizens, nor his city, as he destroys his subjects and their homes with fires and ruinations in a general massacre" (*Nero*, 5.1.1.3169-71).³¹² This follows the trend of the person murdered in the previous Act introducing the upcoming Act. Gwinne's play features a graveyard's worth of ghosts, a common stage presence during the early modern period. The ghosts in *Nero* are reminiscent of Revenge and the ghost of Andrea in Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* and Fury and the ghost of Tantalus in Seneca's *Thyestes*. In all three of these plays, the ghosts act as a Chorus rather than being actively involved in the plot. With Octavia's ghost having established the extremity of Nero's tyranny, the focus then moves to a conspiracy against Nero. Flavius attempts to convince Seneca to join them before he commits suicide:

(*Flavius draws his sword.*)

SEN. What hope have you?

FLAV. My hope resides in this.

SEN. Against our prince?

FLAV. A monstrous evil.

SEN. Evil, but to be tolerated.

FLAV. If he would tolerate other good men.

SEN. Can you, one single tribune, achieve this? (*Nero*, 5.1.4.3498-3502)³¹³

This discussion is representative of the on-going debate during the early modern period regarding resistance theory.³¹⁴ Seneca continues to vocalize his support for tolerance of an evil ruler. This argument is also present earlier in *Nero*, when the Chorus at the end of Act 2 declares: "A ruler, whether good or bad, is sent us by Jove. The bad is sent for chastisement, the good as a reward" (*Nero*, 2.Chorus.1241-2). That the Chorus mirrors Seneca's argument gives

³¹² "O monstra; nec adhuc civibus parcit Nero, / Nec civitati, caedibus cives, domos / Flammis, ruinis, destruens, strage omnia."

³¹³ "SEN. Quae spes? / FLAV. In isto. SEN. In principem? / FLAV. Egregie malum. SEN. Malus, at ferendus. / FLAV. Si bonos alios ferat. / SEN. Poteris tribunus unus?"

³¹⁴ For more on this see J.H. Burns with the assistance of Mark Goldie (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp.159-253.

his viewpoint more weight. However, Flavius is not acting alone, but has amassed a number of highly ranked men to join his cause. That these men have a duty to protect Rome, rather than being powerless citizens in the vein of Jack Cade, gives their rebellion ideological weight. However, Seneca is unable to commit regicide, even against a depraved ruler, because of his commitment to theoretical ideals. Buckley comments that *Nero* “at least obliquely invites its audience to wander imaginatively further down the path to resistance” and thus concludes that it “deserves billing as a sophisticated, and even ‘explorative’, negotiation of the complexities of monarchical rule” (Buckley, ‘Seneca’, pp.29-30). The play is certainly explorative, and here specifically, Gwinne stages an unsolved debate, with the politicians justifying their plot by pragmatically separating duty to country and duty to Nero and Seneca maintaining his philosophical ideals. Gwinne does not provide his audience with direct examples to follow. Rather, he encourages his readers to interrogate the examples set by Burrhus, Seneca, and the conspiracy against each other and against the marginalia.

Gwinne ends his play with a direct moralizing comparison between Nero’s Rome and Elizabeth’s England: “Her reputation, deeds, and destiny are so disparate that nothing can be more different as our English goddess from Nero, these times from those, our highest goods from his evils” (*Nero*, Epilogue.5007-9).³¹⁵ He also comments that it is hard to tell “whether she favours upright and loyal courtiers, or whether she creates them thus” (*Nero*, Epilogue.5003-5).³¹⁶ Either way, the point is clear that virtuous courtiers are essential to virtuous rule. Although written with Elizabeth’s government in mind, one copy of the play in the British Library (shelf-mark 636 d.4) has a dedication to the new King James I. New leadership prompted public anxiety and James’s reputation and public support for the divine right of kings may have exacerbated that anxiety, potentially leading Gwinne to reframe his play in an attempt to counsel the new monarch. In this context the play can be seen as a double-edged sword: at once providing a warning to James against self-serving behaviour, and bidding him to cooperate with members of parliaments, while also prompting the politicians of England to do their duty in guiding the new king. Gwinne’s preface to James is packed with wisdom plucked from classical minds. Of course, the margins are full of references and in this case they more closely resemble those of Jonson’s *Sejanus* in providing a scholarly defence. One example comes from Pliny the Younger’s *Panegyricus*: “Vita Principis censura est, eaque perpetua: ad hanc dirigimur, ad hanc conueritmur: nec tam imperio est nobis, quam exemplo.”³¹⁷ This translates to “An emperor’s life is censorship, and a true perpetual one; this is what guides and directs us,

³¹⁵ “Tam fama, facta, fata dispara, ut magis / Nihil esse possit, quam Anglica Neroni dea, / Temporibus illis ista, bona summe malis.”

³¹⁶ “faciat, an foveat magis / Probos, fideles aulicos: patres suos / Magis an sequatur: an praeceat;”

³¹⁷ BL, MS. 636 d.4, sig.A3^v.

for *exemplum* is what we need more than *imperium*.”³¹⁸ The importance of example is paramount not only to James’s kingship, Gwinne argues through Pliny, but also to how his play functions as political counsel. Gwinne presents the reader with examples but they are not examples to be plainly imitated. Rather they are to be interrogated, and not only within the context of the play itself, but also against the wider historical, literary, and political sources which the play draws upon and points to. As in Gager’s *Dido*, readers are expected to weigh up the moral and political implications of the examples set by the characters within the play. *Nero* is not an instructional how-to guide for courtiers; rather, it promotes the critical interrogation of ideals of duty clashing with the dismaying political reality.

Both *Dido* and *Nero* are specifically tailored to their erudite audiences, but they also both feature dramaturgical elements commonly associated with the popular stage. In the case of *Dido*, there was also a connection with courtly entertainments and pageants. Gager’s play presents advice for statesmen, specifically Łaski and Leicester, and students, but it also provides sweets aplenty and a visually impressive banquet and storm. Both Dido and Aeneas were rulers whose public responsibilities came into direct conflict with their romantic lives. Dido can be seen fairly simply as a warning for Elizabeth, encouraging her to put political duty before personal desire, in particular in regard to foreign marriage. Aeneas presents the audience with a more complex critical examination of duty, but he ultimately comes to the conclusion that his duty to country is of the highest importance and so he functions as a dutiful model for Elizabeth. While the instruction which Gager presents is clear, he also shows the difficulty of upholding duty. Furthermore, Gager reasonably expected his scholarly audience to understand the significance of his changes to Aeneas’s character in order to enhance their perspective on the ethical and political implications of his choices.

Gwinne embarks on a similar project but is even more explicit, through his marginalia, about his desire for the audience to compare his version to the sources. *Nero* is also filled with entertaining elements, such as ghosts, gory violence, and inventive deaths. However, Gwinne combines this spectacle with, in the published version of the play, extensive marginalia which encourage the reader to compare *Nero* with its historical, literary, and political sources. This intertextuality is offered in combination with a variety of examples within the play itself, none of which is promoted as the correct one. Burrhus commits to his duty of offering frank counsel but is murdered for it. Seneca, while trying to follow theoretical ideals, shows up the complicity which can occur when obeying a tyrant. Both men prompt a discussion over the clash of ideals and reality in terms of political duty. This clash is also evident when the nobility form a

³¹⁸ Pliny the Younger, *Letters, Volume II: Books 8-10. Panegyricus*, trans. by Betty Radice (Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 45.6.

rebellion against Nero, provoking a discussion over the legality and morality of removing a monarch. This prompts the audience to ruminate on how they would react to a tyrannical leader, while offering no easy path to follow. Both *Dido* and *Nero* offer clear surface level messages, on the importance of rulers and counsellors committing to political duty, but they both also demonstrate the difficulty of prioritizing this ideal. *Nero* in particular evades being an instructional how-to manual, instead choosing to delve into the ethical complexities of upholding idealistic duty within the real world of politics. This dynamic of offering political lessons but also highlighting the difficulties of maintaining duty without providing solutions can also be seen in the history plays written at the Inns of Court. While Inns plays often featured the dumb shows usually associated with court masques, they were far less creative with staging techniques than Oxford plays and thus maintained a more serious tone. The focus of drama from the Inns of Court was directed towards instructional advice, specifically concerning the duty of counsel, rather than providing an entertaining spectacle, as will be seen in the next chapter.

4. THE DUTY OF COUNSEL IN INNS OF COURT DRAMA

This chapter will turn to drama produced at the Inns of Court with an examination of *Gorboduc* (1561) by Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville and *The Misfortunes of Arthur* (1587) by Thomas Hughes and other Inns men. Like the universities, the Inns were pedagogical institutions but the drama that they produced was distinctly different. While university dramas mixed entertainment into instruction, the Inns focused more heavily on instruction alone. *Gorboduc* was a precursor to the plays of the commercial theatre and drew its inspiration from Senecan tragedy and the law school environment. It is credited by A. Wigfall Green as “the first English tragedy, the first play in which blank verse was used, and the first play to employ native legendary material.”³¹⁹ Much like *Dido*, *Gorboduc* straddles the line between tragedy and history. Thomas Preston’s *Cambises* (1561), shown at court almost a year before *Gorboduc*, also represents a link in the transition from morality play to history play. Though written and performed almost thirty years later, *The Misfortunes of Arthur* also claims a few firsts: the first to dramatize Arthurian legend; the first to utilize the Senecan ghost; and, according to Green, it “is more directly the precursor of the Elizabethan history play than is *Gorboduc*” (Ibid, p.151). Both plays are about the unnatural breaking of royal family bonds and how this impacts the nation. Moreover, not only are family bonds what cause the primary political strife, but the solution to resolving this strife is the political advisors, who are free from domestic ties and are able to prioritize fully their political duty. *Gorboduc* and *Misfortunes* sought to counsel Elizabeth I and her counsellors about the duty of counsel itself. Both insist on the importance of the monarch and their counsellor’s adhering to their respective duties to ensure political stability.

Both plays employ what we would now describe as legendary rather than historical material but conceptions of history were less strictly defined during the early modern period. *Gorboduc* and *Misfortunes* were taken from, as Boas explains, “the annals of Britain which was not as completely legendary in their eyes as in ours.”³²⁰ What impacts *Gorboduc*’s status as history for Boas is “the subordination of the dramatic action to the enforcement of a political moral”, which gives “the piece a didactic rather than an historical character” (Boas, p.112). While the didacticism does take precedence over history, one does not negate the other. The nature and status of history in the early modern world was entwined with notions of didacticism. *Gorboduc* and *Misfortunes* use mythology to the same purpose as many subsequent history plays: they utilize historical and literary sources to a pedagogical purpose. John E. Curran Jr. confirms that

³¹⁹ A. Wigfall Green, *The Inns of Court and Early English Drama* (York: Benjamin Blom, 1965), p.17.

³²⁰ Boas, *University Drama in the Tudor Age* (1914), p.112.

early modern people “had every reason to feel that the Galfridian legends were important enough to treat as history. Not only had the legends become a conspicuous part of the Tudor myth, but they also carried substantial weight regarding Britain’s own ancient past.”³²¹ While elite circles were aware that legends lacked authenticity, they still maintained a presence in popular culture. The playwrights of the Inns may have been aware that the myths of Gorboduc and Arthur were not necessarily ‘true’, but they understood their important cultural status. In particular, they understood the ease with which these stories could be utilized for teaching their fellow Inns men, along with courtiers and Elizabeth I, about the duties expected at court, particularly concerning counsel. *Gorboduc* and *Misfortunes* function as both mirrors for princes and mirrors for magistrates. Both plays deal with a tumultuous Britain, dramatizing kings torn between their personal and public duties, and they put an emphasis on the importance of counsellors to political harmony and responsible stewardship. This chapter will demonstrate that Inns drama was used as a tool to provide counsel about the duty of counsel itself.

INNS OF COURT CULTURE

Before analysing the plays it is important to understand the culture of the Inns of Court, now widely thought of as the third university in early modern England. The Inns certainly shared some similarities with the universities: they had halls for communal meals; chapels for worship; and residential accommodation. However, the Inns were not merely a law-centred replication of the universities. Two of the major differences lay in educational composition and geographical location. The structure of education which students received differed massively from the universities, as there was no formal curriculum. Students were required to set their own course of reading and observe the courts in action themselves. Formal examination took the form of moots which were judged by the benchers, senior lawyers who acted as the governing authority for the Inns. Moots were similar to university disputations, with participants arguing over a set problem, in this case always legal in nature.³²² A disputation was won by evoking philosophical and theological authorities; a moot was won by evoking legal maxims and principles. Like disputations, moots were watched by other students, turning them into public performances. Karen J. Cunningham identifies that “moots are unstable verbal and performance environments that provide an important model for analysing the volatile discursive relations among the

³²¹ John E. Curran, Jr., ‘Geoffrey of Monmouth in Renaissance Drama: Imagining Non-History’, *Modern Philology*, 97.1 (Aug., 1999), pp.1-20 (p.3).

³²² For more on moots see Samuel Edmund Thorne and John Hamilton Baker (eds.), *Readings and Moots at the Inns of Court in the Fifteenth Century* (London: Selden Society, 1990).

Crown, English subjects, and those who wrote for the theater in early modern England.”³²³ Inns men were used to viewing and assessing formal arguments, and as they took place in the same halls which served as the dining hall and the site for the Christmas Revels, the social and pedagogical functions were intertwined. This mixing was advanced by the physical location of the Inns. Situated on the west side of London, the Inns were within easy access of the entertainments of metropolitan life, while also being close to the royal court. Studying at an Inn meant access to the kingdom’s centre of cultural, legal, and political life. As Astington points out, the Inns lay “between the twin poles of fashion and power, the city of London and the district of Westminster, where the old medieval royal palace housed the principal law courts and the Parliament, and the newer palace of Whitehall the monarch and her or his central administrative body, the Privy Council.”³²⁴ While university students were largely limited to the towns of Oxford and Cambridge, Inns students had the freedom to explore London. This central location and lack of educational structure led to many men joining the Inns with no intention of becoming lawyers, instead seeking a gentlemanly reputation and/or connections to further their political careers.

A third difference between the universities and the Inns lay in the student population. Lawrence Stone estimates “that about 50% of Inns of Court entrants had previously attended a University.”³²⁵ University was thought to offer a broader classical education, while the Inns were more specifically about legal and political learning. The vogue for humanist education meant that the nobility sent their sons to university to pick up, as Stone explains, the “classically-orientated training which they had come to believe that every gentleman ought to have, whether to serve his Prince, to hold his audiences in the House of Commons or Lords, or to converse agreeably with men of his own standing” (Stone, p.70). Jessica Winston asserts that the Inns specifically served as “finishing schools, where ambitious men came to gain useful legal training while acquiring a cosmopolitan sophistication that would allow them to function at court and in other exclusive social circles.”³²⁶ The exclusive social aspect of the Inns was essential for their reputation. In theory the Inns were open to anyone who could afford the admissions fees (the minimum cost being estimated at £40 or £50 per year), but in reality this produced a highly elite student body. Wilfrid R. Prest describes that “no scholarships were offered to needy students and no formal opportunities existed for poor men’s sons to pay their

³²³ Karen J. Cunningham, “‘So Many Books, So Many Rolls of Ancient Time’: The Inns of Court and Gorboduc’ in *Solon and Thespis: Law and Theatre in the English Renaissance*, ed. by Denis Kezar (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), pp.197–217 (p.198).

³²⁴ Astington, *Actors and Acting in Shakespeare's Time* (2010), p.70.

³²⁵ Lawrence Stone, ‘The Educational Revolution in England, 1560-1640’, *Past & Present*, 28 (Jul., 1964), pp.41-80 (p.55).

³²⁶ Jessica Winston, ‘Seneca in Early Elizabethan England’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 59.1 (Spring, 2006), pp.29-59 (p.33).

way by working as menial servants.”³²⁷ Less than half of the students at Oxford and Cambridge were of gentle birth, while at the Inns four fifths of the students came from the landed classes.³²⁸ This elite social composition allowed the Inns to maintain an aristocratic reputation. This reputation meant that some attended the Inns with no intention of studying law, leading to a mixed cohort of students. There were those who sought to be called to the bar, those with aspirations to serve the royal court, and then the gentry who intended to pick up just enough legal expertise to get by in their aristocratic world. For all of them the experience, skills, and social connections forged inside and outside of the institutions’ walls were invaluable.

In addition to the legal and political aspects of the Inns lay another influence: literary culture. The importance of literature at the Inns is illustrated by Jasper Heywood in his translation of Seneca’s *Thyestes* (1560). Heywood depicts a dream in which Seneca asks him to translate the tragedy but he feels himself inferior to the students of the Inns. Heywood recommends Seneca visit “Minerva’s men” where the “finest wits do swarm” at the Inns:

Thou shalt them find whose painful pen thy verse shall flourish so,
That Melpomen thou wouldst well ween had taught them for to write,
And all their works with stately style and goodly grace t’indite.
There shalt thou see the selfsame North, whose work his wit displays,
And Dial doth of Princes paint, and preach abroad his praise.
There Sackville’s sonnets sweetly sauced and featly finèd be;
There Norton’s ditties do delight, [...]
There hear thou shalt a great report of Baldwin’s worthy name,
Whose Mirror doth of magistrates proclaim eternal fame.³²⁹

These lines imbue the Inns men with literary genius, describing them as “Minerva’s men”, the disciples of the Roman goddess of wisdom and sponsor of the arts. They are also associated with Melpomene, the Greek Muse of Tragedy, which further bolsters their ability to transmit Senecan tragedy to an early modern audience. Heywood cites examples of this genius, including Thomas North, translator of Antonio de Guevara’s *Dial of Princes* (1557), and later the highly influential translator of Plutarch’s *Lives* (1579), Sackville and Norton, the authors of *Gorboduc*, and William Baldwin, the compiler of the *Mirror for Magistrates* (1559), which he proclaims has “eternal fame”. Heywood wrote this while he was a fellow of All Souls College,

³²⁷ Wilfrid R. Prest, *The Inns of Court under Elizabeth I and the Early Stuarts: 1590-1640* (London: Longman, 1972), p.27.

³²⁸ See Stone, *Educational Revolution* (1964), pp.57-68.

³²⁹ Seneca, *Thyestes*, trans. Jasper Heywood (1560) in *Elizabethan Seneca: Three Tragedies*, ed. by James Ker and Jessica Winston, *MHRA Tudor and Stuart Translation Series*, Vol. 8 (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2012), ll.86-96.

Oxford, but he briefly joined Gray's Inn around this time and was a respected translator himself, having previously translated Seneca's *Troas* (1559).³³⁰ Winston argues that "his preface does not so much paint him as an outsider to the ranks of 'Minerva's men' as it endows him with special authority."³³¹ He claims for himself the literary reputation which pervaded the Inns. Many of the works he lists belong to the *speculum principis* genre, works intended to shape the behaviour of rulers and magistrates by providing examples to follow or avoid. *Dial of Princes*, *Mirror for Magistrates*, and *Gorboduc* all fall into this category. Therefore, his preface indicates that the literary culture of the Inns is blended with an interest in political life. Winston affirms that "this literature imagines legal professionals as a special group within the commonwealth, one that plays a crucial role in securing the peace and counselling monarchs and other nobles" (Winston, *Lawyers*, p.51). The texts reflect an image of these men having the position and knowledge to counsel political leaders. Literary composition was a way to demonstrate their ability to offer counsel, to put their classical educations to work in service of the commonwealth.

Heywood's choice of drama to translate is itself illustrative of the connections between literary and political culture. Seneca himself was an author and politician and so his plays could be read with reference to the nature of governance. Winston claims that "[m]any of the translators saw Senecan tragedy as a classical version of advice-to-princes poetry" (Winston, 'Seneca', p.41). Therefore, the translations were political as well as literary. Heywood was not the only translator of Seneca; Alexander Neville followed with his translation of *Oedipus* (1563), and John Studley rendered *Agamemnon*, *Medea*, *Hercules Oetaeus* (all 1566), and *Hippolytus* (1567). These translations occurred at the Inns and universities and so were aligned with the scholarly mirrors for princes texts mentioned in Heywood's preface. This was a politically engaged group of men and they purposefully shaped their translations of Seneca in the image of the *Mirror*. Heywood created new lines for the chorus to speak in *Troas*, declaring Hecuba "of high estate a queene / A Mirrour is, to teache you what you are."³³² Neville in his *Oedipus* added a chorus which asked readers to "Let Oedipus Example be of this vnto you all, / A Mirrour meete. A Patern playne, / of Princes carefull thrall."³³³ Seneca's tragedies lent themselves to use as political mirrors, while Seneca himself, being both a politician and playwright, provided a model against which Inns men could define themselves as politically

³³⁰ Dennis Flynn, 'Heywood, Jasper (1535–1598), poet and Jesuit', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, posted 23/09/04. <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-13182>> [accessed 18/07/19].

³³¹ Winston, *Lawyers at Play* (2016), p.47.

³³² Seneca, *The Sixt Tragedie of the Most Graue and Prudent Author Lucius, Anneus, Seneca, Entituled Troas*, trans. by Jasper Heywood (London: Richard Tottyll, 1559), sig.Biii^v.

³³³ Neville, *Oedipvs* (1563), sig.Dii^v.

literate members of the nation. Senecan tragedy provided the authors of *Gorboduc* and *Misfortunes* with a model of tragedy as a mirror to princes, which informed the style and political function of their plays. The educated audiences of these plays will have been aware of this dynamic, and will have known that the plays could be mined for lessons, especially lessons pertaining to the ideal, but rarely achieved, symbiotic duty between monarch and counsellor.

GORBODUC: THE DUTIES OF KING AND COUNSELLOR

Gorboduc was first performed at the Inner Temple in December 1561 for the Christmas Revels and was performed again before Elizabeth and her courtiers at Whitehall in January. The play thus had a dual audience, initially being viewed by Inns students before gaining a more elite audience. In 1559 Elizabeth had issued a proclamation limiting plays on “matters of religion or of the governance of the estate of the commonweal”, because these topics were “no meet matters to be written or treated upon but by men of authority, learning, and wisdom”, nor were they “to be handled before any audience but of grave and discreet persons.”³³⁴ *Gorboduc* being performed indicates that Elizabeth thought the playwrights were “men of authority, learning, and wisdom” and both audiences were “of grave and discreet persons”. The playwrights utilized their legendary play about Gorboduc splitting his kingdom between his sons and the resulting civil war to a didactic purpose, applicable to both Inns men and Elizabeth’s court. The established dynamic of drama-as-counsel, along with the subject matter, the place of staging, and the pedigree of the dramatists means that by the time Elizabeth and her courtiers saw *Gorboduc* its function as counsel would have been self-evident. Winston argues that the play’s initial performance at the Inner Temple meant that it “shifted the debate away from the core of the polity” and by expanding this dialogue beyond the central government it was “implicitly making a claim that members of the Inn were part of the political nation too, that they too could legitimately contribute to discussions of matters of state.”³³⁵ Doyeeta Majumder builds upon this, declaring that “*Gorboduc* opens up the English stage to the discussion and representation of political issues that were hitherto excluded from the world of the theatre.”³³⁶ Certainly, the discussion of political issues is traceable through the history plays of all sites of production, meaning that these dialogues about the dynamics of power were opened up to broader audiences, and *Gorboduc* was an important step in that direction.

³³⁴ Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, 3 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), III, pp.115–16.

³³⁵ Jessica Winston, ‘Expanding the Political Nation: *Gorboduc* at the Inns of Court and Succession Revisited’, *Early Theatre*, 8.1 (2005), pp.11-34 (p.21).

³³⁶ Doyeeta Majumder, ‘Absolutism without Tyranny in *Gorboduc*: The Changing Poetics of Tudor Political Drama’, *Renaissance Studies*, 32.2 (April 2018), pp.201-18 (p.217).

Beyond its two performances, *Gorboduc*'s print history (1565, 1570, and 1590) indicates its broader appeal. In 1570 it was also published at the end of a collection of Norton's tracts. Philip Sidney in his *Defense of Posey* (1595) highlights *Gorboduc* as an example of drama which aligns with his belief that education and delight should be combined in poetry. He states that it is "full of stately speeches, and wel sounding phrases, clyming to the height of Seneca in his style, and as full of notable morallitie, which it dooth most delightfully teach."³³⁷ Conversely, modern critics, such as Green, have noted that it is "not especially ductile, and [...] the uniform cadence eventually becomes monotonous" (Green, pp.143-4). Norland blames this on the authors' backgrounds: "their political advice is developed in a series of disputations that are more appropriate to a law court or parliamentary debate than to the theater."³³⁸ The two audiences, also trained in law and/or politics, would have picked up on the moot-like style of the play and would have been attuned to the political instruction on offer, regardless of whether or not they were bored by the performance.

Both Norton and Sackville were intimately involved with the government throughout their lives, with Sackville in particular becoming one of Elizabeth's closest advisors. The son of the privy councillor Richard Sackville, Sackville joined the Inner Temple in 1554. He entered the House of Commons in 1558 and was re-elected to Elizabeth's first parliament in 1559 before moving into her inner circle.³³⁹ George Abbot cited Elizabeth's description of Sackville as "a scholar, and a traveller and a Courtier of speciall estimation" whose discourse was "judicious but yet wittie and delightfull."³⁴⁰ Norton served as a secretary to Edward Seymour, 1st Duke of Somerset, before joining the Inner Temple in 1555.³⁴¹ Norton likewise sat in parliament from 1558 and in 1571 was appointed the first Remembrancer for London. As well as being actively involved in politics, both Norton and Sackville had literary interests which often reflect their political interests. Sackville contributed to the *Mirror for Magistrates* in 1563, writing the Introduction and Tragedy of Henry, Duke of Buckingham, which signals his interest in political

³³⁷ Feuillerat (ed.), *The Complete Works of Philip Sidney* (1923), p.38.

³³⁸ Norland, *Neoclassical Tragedy* (2009), p.74.

³³⁹ Rivkah Zim, 'Sackville, Thomas, first Baron Buckhurst and first earl of Dorset (c. 1536–1608), poet and administrator', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, posted 28/05/15. <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-244505>> [accessed 19/07/19]; 'Sackville, Thomas', *History of Parliament*. <<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/sackville-thomas-15356-1608>> [accessed 09/02/21].

³⁴⁰ George Abbot, *A sermon preached at Westminster, May 26, 1608, at the funerall solemnities of the right honorable Thomas, earle of Dorset* (London: Melchisedech Bradwood for William Aspley, 1608), sig.C2^v.

³⁴¹ Marie Axton, 'Norton, Thomas (1530x32–1584), lawyer and writer', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, posted 03/01/08. <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-20359>> [accessed 19/07/19]; 'Norton, Thomas', *History of Parliament*. <<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/norton-thomas-1532-84>> [accessed 09/02/21].

lessons being drawn from history. Norton contributed to *Songes and Sonettes* (1557), usually called *Tottel's Miscellany*, and produced anti-Catholic pamphlets on topics such as the marital politics of Mary, Queen of Scots. Most notably, their political and literary interests were united in *Gorboduc*, written after they had both sat for Elizabeth's parliament, and thus occupied positions of political authority.

The political relevance of the play to Elizabeth, her courtiers, and the Inns students is evident from the lengthy counsel scene, which departed from the sources, at the start of the play. In Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, Gorboduc is still alive at the outbreak of civil war but has no direct involvement: "When their father had become senile, a quarrel arose between these two as to which should succeed the old man on the throne."³⁴² Robert Fabyan's *Chronicle* (1533) ascribes even less action to Gorboduc, for he dies before his sons battle: "he dyed and lyeth buried at new Troy or London" and then "Ferrex wyth Porrex hys brother, sonnes of Gorbodug: were ioyntly made gouvernours and dukes of Britayne."³⁴³ The playwrights, however, make Gorboduc the instigator of division and thus instill the play with greater political meaning, specifically faulting the monarch for creating instability. Another alteration to the traditional chronicle accounts is the creation of several counsellors who facilitate the rhetorical debate and enable the playwrights to highlight the importance of adhering to duties of counsel. The plays' two audiences were populated with people who were either involved in the giving and receiving of counsel or aspired to be involved. The first counsellor, Arostus, agrees with the king's plan to divide the kingdom: "They two, yet young, shall bear the parted reign / With greater ease than one."³⁴⁴ Next, Philander agrees but urges delay until Gorboduc's death: "When fathers cease to know that they should rule, / The children cease to know they should obey" (*Gor*, 1.2.207-208). Finally, Eubulus, whose name means 'wise counsellor', opposes the plan because it will be "worst of all for this our native land. / Within one land one single rule is best: / Divided reigns do make divided hearts" (*Gor*, 1.2.158-260). Pithy and aphoristic in nature, this line could easily be extracted for use in a commonplace book. If Eubulus's name is not enough to convince the audience of the legitimacy of his advice, it is further proven within the remainder of the play. However, Gorboduc sides with Arostus's viewpoint, which while not ill intended, results in disaster. Dermot Cavanagh contends that "[a]lthough we may 'know' from the play's official mouthpieces (the Dumb Shows and the chorus) that both these views are misguided, they are also genuinely persuasive. The audience is

³⁴² Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, trans. by Lewis Thorpe (London: Penguin, 1966), p.88.

³⁴³ Robert Fabyan, *Fabyans cronycle* (London: William Rastell, 1533), sig.biii^v-biiii^r.

³⁴⁴ Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton, *Gorboduc, or Ferrex and Porrex*, ed. by Irby B. Cauthen Jr. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970), 1.2.106-107.

being asked to adjudicate a deliberative process.”³⁴⁵ This is Cavanagh’s only mention of the dumb shows and chorus and by casting them aside he misunderstands not only the point of the counsel scene, but the point of the play itself. It is not asking the Inns men, magistrates, and Elizabeth, all of whom were well trained in rhetoric and were aware of the ability of rhetoric to make poor arguments persuasive, to settle these conflicting viewpoints. The very purpose of the dumb shows and chorus is to clarify the instruction in the play and the chorus does indeed explain that the point of this scene is *not* about distinguishing between virtuous and villainous counsel (as they do in Act 2 when Ferrex and Porrex are led astray), but about “erring parents in their children’s love” (*Gorboduc*, 1.Chorus.383). Gorboduc casts aside Eubulus’s clearly wise advice and makes his decision based on his private love for his sons, rather than on his public duties as king. Gorboduc is presented to Elizabeth as a negative exemplum, while Eubulus is an endorsement of the counsellor figure, encouraging Elizabeth to heed wise advice and encouraging courtiers and students to replicate his exemplary dutiful model.

Curran argues that the authors’ alteration of the source material “to yield these political examples indicates that they were trying to conceive of their own drama as a history play, an illumination of truth with fiction” (Curran, p.12). Eubulus himself makes this connection between history and political examples clear. He cites an example from Britain’s mythical past to support his argument:

The mighty Brute, first prince of all this land,
Possessed the same and ruled it well in one;
He, thinking that the compass did suffice
For his three sons three kingdoms eke to make,
Cut it in three, as you would now in twain.
But how much British blood hath since been spilt (*Gor*, 1.2.270-275)

He uses a historic example as a warning, citing Brutus’s disastrous dividing the kingdom between his three sons. Brutus’s story serves as a mirror for princes, just as the Chorus serves Gorboduc’s story: “A mirror shall become to princes all / To learn to shun the cause of such a fall” (*Gor*, 1.Chorus.392-393). The authors are explicitly pointing to the mirrors for princes genre as their model, which facilitates their own presentation of Gorboduc as a negative exemplum from which to learn. Eubulus is confident in his advice because “Your wonted true regard of faithful hearts / Makes me, O king, the bolder to presume / To speak what I conceive within my breast,” (*Gor*, 1.2.247-249). This is referential to the authors’ own presentation of *Gorboduc* as counsel, as their “faithful hearts” are presenting what they “conceive” within their

³⁴⁵ Cavanagh, *Language and Politics* (2003), p.41.

breasts. Eubulus keeps the “native land” at the forefront of his mind, as his duty dictates, whereas Gorboduc is clouded by his paternal love: “But sith I see no cause to draw my mind / To fear the nature of my loving sons” (*Gor*, 1.2.338-389). Eubulus being the ‘wise counsellor’, and his counsel being shown as correct by the end of the play, signals to the courtiers and students with political aspirations that he is the dutiful model they should follow. Astington comments on the lengthy and legalised style of this scene, noting that “the end of the act, and ‘the music of cornets’ which plays during the ensuing dumb show, were probably greeted with some relief by audience and actors alike” (Astington, p.72). Samuel A. Small further comments on the lack of entertainment: “neither blood-shed nor deaths occur on the stage in *Gorboduc*. These things delighted the English audiences of the sixteenth century; yet Sackville and Norton strictly held to the classical rule of not allowing blood-shed violence on the stage.”³⁴⁶ Joel B. Altman believes that the playwrights’ desire to explore the problem in the style of a legal battle was “a desire undoubtedly shared by their Inner Temple audience, who must have heard the scene with the same enjoyment they experienced at a declamation of a mootings.”³⁴⁷ Whether or not either of the audiences enjoyed the play, it was certainly replete with teaching about the duty of counsel and would have been instantly recognizable because of the Senecan style and lengthy counsel scene at the outset.

The only advice Gorboduc accepts is Eubulus’s warning about the vulnerability of youth to flattery: “flattery then, which fails not to assail / The tender minds of yet unskilful youth” (*Gor*, 1.2.291-292). He supplies his sons with counsellors but fails to realize that navigating counsel from advisors is a skill they do not possess. The Chorus sets out a warning:

When youth, not bridled with a guiding stay,
Is left to random of their own delight,
And wields whole realms by force of sovereign sway,
Great is the danger of unmaster’d might (*Gor*, 2.Chorus.83-86)

Both sons stand as examples of youthful monarchs inexperienced in the ways of counsel, unaware that not every counsellor is dutiful and ethical. Norland believes that this message was “designed for Elizabeth’s ear”, as she too attained power during youth (Norland, p.76). It is Ferrex’s mother, Videna, who raises his suspicions about his brother. She tells him of Gorboduc’s plan to give half of the kingdom to Porrex, whom she suspects “being rais’d to equal rule with thee, / Methinks I see his envious heart to swell, / Fill’d with disdain and with

³⁴⁶ Samuel A. Small, ‘The Influence of Seneca’, *The Shakespeare Association Bulletin*, 10.3 (July, 1935), pp.137-150 (pp.149-50).

³⁴⁷ Joel B. Altman, *The Tudor Play of Mind: Rhetorical Inquiry and the Development of Elizabethan Drama* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), p.255.

ambitious hope” (*Gor*, 1.1.33-35). This causes Ferrex to doubt Porrex’s loyalty and thus prepare for a worst case scenario. Porrex sees his caution as a direct threat: “doth he so prepare / Against his brother as his mortal foe?” (*Gor*, 2.2.1-2). A parasite of Porrex’s heightens this fear with fictions from Ferrex’s court, which is “filled with monstrous tales of you and yours” (*Gor*, 2.2.24).³⁴⁸ Philander, whose name means ‘the friend of man’, astutely incites Porrex to seek clarity: “Send to your brother, to demand the cause. / Perhaps some traitorous tales have filled his ears / With false reports against your noble grace” (*Gor*, 2.2.30-32). However, Porrex accepts counsel from the wrong person and commits fratricide which leads Videna to commit filicide, thus beginning a popular revolt, an invasion from Scotland, and an on-going civil war. All of this murder takes place off stage, which adheres to the play’s Senecan model and restrains the spectacle.

The dumb show of Act 2 clarifies the mistake made by the princes in their failure to distinguish between virtuous and wicked counsel. A prince is given a clear glass filled with wine and a covered golden cup filled with poison, the former he chooses to break and the latter to drink. The printed version of the play clarifies the meaning:

a faithful counsellor holdeth no treason, but is plain and open,
ne yieldeth any indiscrete affection, but giveth wholesome counsel,
which the ill advised Prince refuseth. The delightful gold filled with
poison betokeneth flattery, which under fair seeming of pleasant
words beareth deadly poison, which destroyed the Prince that
recieveth it. (*Gor*, 2.Dumb-Show.10-14)

The Chorus interprets this for the audience:

Woe to the prince, that pliant ear inclines,
And yields his mind to poisonous tale, that floweth
From flattering mouth! And woe to wretched land,
That wastes itself with civil sword in hand! (*Gor*, 2.Chorus.21-24)

This highlights the importance of the monarch distinguishing between true and false counsel. This dumb show can clearly be read as a comment on the monarch-counsellor relationship and their symbiotic duties, but it has also been read as commentary on Elizabeth’s marriage politics. An anonymous courtier who recorded his impressions shortly after it was performed believed this dumb show was referring to Robert Dudley and the King Eric XIV of Sweden serving as Elizabeth’s suitors. The courtier reports that “[m]any things were handled of mariage, and that

³⁴⁸ For more on misinterpretation in the play see Peter C. Herman, “‘He said What?!?’: Misdemeaning Gorboduc, or Problematizing Form, Service and Certainty”, *Exemplaria*, 13.1 (2001), pp.285-381.

the matter was to be debated in parliament”, and more specifically, that the second dumb show “ment that yt was better for the Quene to marye with L. R. knowen than wth the K. of Sweden.”³⁴⁹ The courtier chose to focus his attention on the dumb shows, likely because, as Norman Jones and Paul Whitefield White point out, “in a play full of static action and long sententious speeches, these sequences of elaborate visual spectacle and movement were the most engaging and therefore memorable parts of the play” (Jones and White, p.5). The imagery of these shows would have provided the audience with a small amount of visual spectacle and variety in comparison to the monotonous blank verse speeches of the acts. These dumb shows, effective in arousing interest, may have been all the more memorable because *Gorboduc* is the first known English play to use them.³⁵⁰

Despite the second dumb show being about the dangers of rejecting wise counsel and accepting flattery, the anonymous courtier chose to read it as a comment on certainty against uncertainty, and more specifically, the certain Englishman Robert Dudley against the uncertain foreign King of Sweden. This courtier interprets, whether rightly or wrongly, the play as a comment on Elizabeth needing to heed her Parliament on their recommendations of her marriage to “L. R.”, Lord Robert, rather than “K. of Sweden”, King Eric of Sweden. The authors, being members of Elizabeth’s Parliament, were certainly interested in the Queen’s marital choices, but the play features nothing explicitly about marriage. Regardless of the Act 2 dumb show being about the monarch navigating counsel, this courtier chose to read the play with an eye to Elizabeth’s marriage choices. The explicit advice about counsel was thus fed into a more implicit argument. Peter Wentworth in his *Pithie Exhortation to her Maiestie for establishing her Successor to the Crowne* (1580s, printed 1598) cites *Gorboduc*’s tale as a warning for settling the succession, although whether or not Wentworth had knowledge of Norton and Sackville’s play is unknown.³⁵¹ Similarly, Winston argues that the play is speaking about Elizabeth’s unsettled succession, which “must be decided through conversation and consultation among the three main institutions of the political nation, monarch, council, and Parliament” (Winston, *Lawyers*, p.181). In this way, the primary argument of the play, that counsel is essential to kingship, can be used to enhance more implicit and topical arguments. This is even more of a possibility when Norton and Sackville’s political lives are considered. From the beginning of her reign the

³⁴⁹ BL, MS Add 40823, fol.359^v. Norman Jones and Paul Whitefield White, ‘Gorboduc and Royal Marriage Politics: An Elizabethan Playgoer’s Report of the Premiere Performance’, *English Literary Renaissance*, 26.1, Culture, Documents, and the Drama (Winter, 1996), pp.3-16. Jones and White accompany their transcription with a reproduction of the original manuscript, p.16. I quote from their version.

³⁵⁰ “dumb show”, n., 1. OED Online, July 2019. Oxford University Press.
<<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/58396>> [accessed 23/07/2019]

³⁵¹ Peter Wentworth, *Pithie Exhortation to her Maiestie for establishing her Successor to the Crowne* (Edinburgh: Robert Waldegrave, 1598), p.30.

childless Elizabeth was urged to marry, and later, to choose a successor. As Norton and Sackville were part of Elizabeth's first government, they will have been involved in these discussions. Even more telling, in 1563 Norton was involved in drafting a Commons' petition urging Elizabeth to marry and settle the line of succession.³⁵² That these men were actively involved in this issue suggests that Elizabeth could hardly fail to notice the politically relevant potential of their drama.

Robert Dudley had a direct connection to the play, as he was elected Prince for the Revels as thanks for his support of the Inner Temple in absorbing a smaller Inn and he was also the sponsor of both performances of *Gorboduc*. This, along with the eyewitness account, has led Henry James and Greg Walker to conclude that Dudley was involved in the creation of the play and that the dumb show "seems to have been a clear allegorical statement of the desirability of Robert, Lord Dudley as a royal consort."³⁵³ Despite one person reading the play for topical commentary, describing it as a "clear" allegory is an overstatement. Dudley's direct influence on the play must have been limited to non-existent. Mike Pincombe explains that he "must surely have come late to the production of the original script. He was made Lord Governor of the revels only three or four weeks before *Gorboduc* was performed in the Inner Temple."³⁵⁴ This did not necessarily prevent audience members from reading the play as if he had direct involvement, but the reality of his involvement is dubious.

Although Dudley is unlikely to have influenced the message of the play, and certainly the text itself bears no witness to his interference, his interaction with the Inner Temple was significant. Winston claims that Dudley being part of their Revels opened up an opportunity "to turn the imitative revels court into a mirror for the real court and shape historical fiction to comment on the realities of the political world" (Winston, 'Expanding the Political Nation', p.16). The Revels granted members an opportunity for self-fashioning and this meant that the festivities were used for the training of future statesmen. According to one observer, attendants at the Revels were to be the same as those "in the King's Highness house, and other Noble men, and this is done onely to the intent, that they should in time come to know how to use themselves."³⁵⁵ Both the Revels and drama allowed Inns men to develop the skills necessary for

³⁵² M. A. R. Graves, *Thomas Norton: The Parliament Man* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.103.

³⁵³ Henry James and Greg Walker, 'The Politics of *Gorboduc*', *The English Historical Review*, 110.435 (Feb., 1995), pp.109-121 (p.109).

³⁵⁴ Mike Pincombe has argued against this in 'Robert Dudley, *Gorboduc*, and 'The masque of Beauty and Desire': A Reconsideration of the Evidence for Political Intervention', *Parergon*, 20.1 (January 2003), pp.19-44 (p.39).

³⁵⁵ From a report to Henry VIII on the Inns of Court, printed in Edward Waterhouse, *Fortescutus Illustratus, Or a Commentary on that Nervous Treatise De Laudibus Legum Angliae* (London: Tho. Roycroft for Thomas Dicus, 1663), p.546.

state service. Dudley's involvement in the Revels and *Gorboduc* added a level of authority which would have aided the participants in their attempts to style themselves as dutiful political servants. This fashioning is further confirmed by Gerard Legh's *Accedens of Armory* (1568), which reports that the Inner Temple is "priuileged by the moste excellent princes, the high gouernour of the whole Iland, wherein are the store of Gentilmen of the while Realme, that repaire thither to learne to rule, and obeye by lawe, to yelde their fleece to their prince and common weale."³⁵⁶ Moreover, that the 1561 Revels were not merely playful is attested to by the fact that Richard Onslow, Dudley's 'Lord Chancellor', was Speaker of the House within two years and Christopher Hatton, his 'Master of the Game', soon rose to become the actual Lord Chancellor. Dudley was not the only influential figure connected to *Gorboduc* though and the multifaceted nature of the play is indicated by Pincombe who claims that the second dumb show was actually about William Cecil, who became Norton's patron shortly after the play's performance. Cecil was the Queen's advisor and Privy Council's most prominent member and so the dumb show about the virtues of the "faithful counsellor" could apply to him. Pincombe cites further evidence of this connection being that "Eubulus is described in the dramatis personae as 'Secretarie to the king', whereas Arostus, Dordan, and Philander are merely counsellors; and who but 'Mr Secretary Cecil' would be suggested by that title?" (Pincombe, p.40). That the play could be read with regard to the leading statesmen of the early 1560s, whether that was the intention or not, indicates that it could speak to a variety of political situations which concern the duties of a counsellor.

Not all spectators and readers will have mined *Gorboduc* for commentary on the political situation at the time of its performance. A notable example of a reader instead seeking to extract universal instruction on the duties of a counsellor is identified by Laura Estill: William Briton in his commonplace book (BL, Add MS 61822).³⁵⁷ Briton read the play in the early 1590s and extracted three pages worth of lines for his section 'Pithie sentences and wise sayinges'. Briton extracts general advice and places it alongside Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*, extracts from William Baldwin's *Treatise of Moral Philosophy*, Thomas Blenerhasset's *The Seconde Part of the Mirrour for Magistrates*, and Thomas Elyot's *The Boke Named Governour*, indicating his interest in politics, literature, and morality. From Baldwin he copied a quotation from Periander, one of the Seven Sages of Greece, about duty: "performe what-soeuer thou promysest, or not promyse" (fol.83^v). Briton adding "or not promyse" demonstrates his desire to adapt his chosen quotations to his own uses, in this case he expands the quotation to encompass not only what one must do for duty, but what one must not do too. Estill notes that

³⁵⁶ Gerard Legh, *Accedens of Armory* (London: Richard Tottel, 1568), fol.119^v.

³⁵⁷ Laura Estill, 'New Contexts for Early Tudor Plays: William Briton, an Early Reader of "Gorboduc"', *Early Theatre*, 16.2 (2013), pp.197-210. I quote from her transcription.

by “decontextualizing parts of *Gorboduc*, Briton highlighted both their potential timelessness and their ability to be recontextualized” (Estill, p.201). From *Gorboduc* he copied down Ferrex’s “a cawsles wronge & so vniust dispight / maie haue redresse or at the least revenge” (fol.89^v; 1.1.12-13). Briton changes Ferrex’s “such causeless wrong” to “a causeless wrong”, rendering the line more widely applicable and thus creating a commonplace. This indicates his desire to extract the political and moral value from the play, particularly the moral recompense which occurs as a result of a lack of adherence to duty. He notes down many politically relevant quotations:

when growing pryde dothe fill the swelling brest
& greedie lust doth rayse the chymminge mynde
oh hardlie may the perrill be repress
ne feare of angry goods ne lawes kind
ne country care cann fiery harte restraine
when force hath armed envie & disdaine (fol.90^r, 2.2.89-94)

Within the play these lines are about Ferrex and Porrex’s unguided rule leading to “growing pride” and “greedy lust”; within Briton’s commonplace book they are the pride and lust that always comes with power. Briton seems interested in the difficulties of duty in a real world context, specifically concerning courtiers disdaining their duties to God, law, and country. These lines also seem applicable to those vying for power in Elizabeth’s final years. Estill comments that “[i]t is difficult to imagine Briton copying these extracts without thinking of Raleigh, Essex, Cecil, or even the recently-deceased Dudley” (Estill, p.203). Harriet Archer argues that the “composition and publication of the text coincided with a series of critical moments in Elizabeth I’s reign, from crisis points in her relationship with Northern nobility and court faction to peaks of tension in public and conciliar discourse with respect to her marriage and provision, or at least nomination, of an heir.”³⁵⁸ Regardless of whether Briton saw his choice of quotations as commentary on the politics of his time or whether they were more generally intended, the specific purpose which Norton and Sackville intended for the initial performances was necessarily altered in the printed versions. Their portrayal of the difficulties of a counsellor’s duties interacting with the monarch’s duties carried resonance beyond their original intention and was applicable to other, later, political situations as well as to a wider, and less elite, readership. Briton seemed especially interested in the duty of advisors and he copied the play’s caution to “be plain without all wrie respect / or poysonous craft to speake in pleasing wyse” (fol.89^v, 1.2.29-30) as well as the Chorus’s interpretation of the second dumb

³⁵⁸ Harriet Archer, “The Earth... Shall Eat Us All’: Exemplary History, Post-Humanism, and the Legend of King Ferrex in Elizabethan Poetry and Drama’, *English: The Journal of the English Association*, 68.261 (July 2019), pp.162-183 (p.166).

show already quoted above: “wo to the prynce that plyant eare enclynes / & yelds his mynde to poysonous tlae that floweth / from flattering mouth” (fol.90^f, 2.Chorus.103-5). Briton’s commonplace book demonstrates that *Gorboduc* could be mined for aphorisms relating generally to power and duty and shows that the play was valued as political and moral counsel long after its initial performances.

The printed versions of the text encouraged the continued utilization of *Gorboduc* for lessons in political duty. In 1590 Edward Allde printed the play alongside Lydgate’s politically moralizing historical narrative of Julius Caesar, *The Serpent of Division*. David Norbrook aligns this printing with “a propaganda campaign to have James VI recognised as Elizabeth’s heir.”³⁵⁹ Whether this was the intention or not, this edition provides further support for viewing *Gorboduc* as history. The text was marketed as valuable because of how it connected Rome’s fall and Britain’s civil war to modern times, with the title page declaring “*England take heede*” and then the famously proverbial Latin tag “*felix quem faciunt aliena periculum cautam*”, which translates to “Lucky is he whom the dangers experienced by others make careful.”³⁶⁰ Along this vein of the play being politically utilized, Day’s 1570 edition of *Gorboduc* was the first known play to include commonplace markers, punctuation called diples (that look like quotation marks) to indicate lines which are worthy of being noted down. One instance of diples being used is when Philander ruminates on his political duty and the difficulties of offering advice: “O most unhappy state of Counsellors / That light on so unhappy Lords and times / That neither can their good advice be heard, / Yet must they bear the blames of ill success” (*Gor*, 2.2.69-72). While the title page reminds the reader of the play’s royal audience, the inclusion of commonplace makers suggests that it can be read both within that context *and* for timeless maxims relating to the “unhappy state of Counsellors” because of their advice to monarchs going unheeded. Even if a counsellor abides by their duty to offer wise advice, it is useless if a monarch does not abide by their duty to listen to this advice.

Act 5 ends with Eubulus ruminating on the tragic results of monarchs not heeding sage advice. He laments that “though so many books, so many rolls / Of ancient time, record what grievous plagues” (*Gor*, 5.2.3-4) rebellion causes, people nevertheless forget the lessons of history. *Gorboduc* seeks to remind its audience of historical lessons, promoting the following of astute counsel in order to avoid national disaster. The political import of *Gorboduc*, a play written on a political topic by statesmen, could hardly have been missed. It is deeply bound up with the

³⁵⁹ David Norbrook, ‘Macbeth and the Politics of Historiography’ in *Politics of Discourse: The Literature and History of Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. by Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Wicker (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp.78-116 (p.84).

³⁶⁰ John Lydgate, Thomas Sackville, Thomas Norton, *The serpent of deuision [...] Whereunto is annexed the tragedye of Gorboduc* (London: Edward Allde, 1590), title page.

literary and political culture in which it was produced but its counsel was also applicable more widely. Norton and Sackville were ambitious political actors and the first audience was composed of men who were similarly politically inclined, while the second audience comprised of the Queen and men already in political positions. These politically aware groups were surely attuned to *Gorboduc*'s advice about how vital the dynamic between the duties of a monarch and the duties of their counsellors are to the welfare of the nation. The eyewitness account and Briton's commonplace book demonstrate that the play was thought of in both politically specific and general terms. Kevin Dunn argues that "*Gorboduc* is part of a longer discussion than may be discerned by reading it as merely a response to the new Queen's unmarried state; this discussion centres on the presentation of the conciliar class to itself."³⁶¹ Specifically, Dunn believes that the play "shows the conciliar class instantiating itself as the representative of the state, the entity that persists through changes of monarch and government" (Ibid, p.304). The central conflict of the play results from the king being clouded by his paternal love, whereas the counsellors are without privatizing familial ties. Eubulus presents an exemplary model to be followed by prospective and current courtiers but he is also a message to Elizabeth that wise counsel should be heeded. The play shows what happens "when kings will not consent / To grave advice, but follow wilful will" (*Gor*, 5.2.396-7). *Gorboduc* was not the only play which claimed the authority to counsel elite audiences about counsel itself. *The Misfortunes of Arthur* is similarly presented as counsel to both counsellors and monarchs and coming from the same legal background as *Gorboduc*, was similarly imbued with the intellectual authority of the Inns.

THE MISFORTUNES OF ARTHUR: THE CLASH OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE DUTY

The Misfortunes of Arthur was put on by Gray's Inn and performed before Queen Elizabeth in the February of 1587. While Hughes is usually referred to as the author, it was the collaborative effort of eight men. Hughes wrote the bulk of the action but Nicholas Trotte wrote the prologue; William Fulbecke wrote the speeches which open and conclude the play; Francis Flower wrote the choruses for the first two acts; Flower, Christopher Yelverton, Francis Bacon, John Lancaster, "and others" devised the dumb shows; and Lancaster and John Penruddocke "directed these proceedings at Court."³⁶² Robert Robinson then published the play within a month of the performance, with Fulbecke's performed speeches being relegated to an appendix and replaced by versions written by Hughes. Where relevant the differences between performance and print will be identified. Half of the authors served as members of Parliament at

³⁶¹ Kevin Dunn, 'Representing Counsel: "Gorboduc" and the Elizabethan Privy Council', *English Literary Renaissance*, 33.3 (Autumn, 2003), pp.279-308 (p.304).

³⁶² Thomas Hughes, et al., *Certaine deuises and shewes presented to her Maiestie [...]* (London: Robert Robinson, 1587), sig.G2^r.

some stage in their lives. Yelverton served in multiple Parliaments before contributing to the play and went on to be elected as Speaker of the House of Commons.³⁶³ Bacon also sat in Parliament before contributing and went on to have a distinguished, if controversial, political career which saw him serve as Attorney General and Lord Chancellor.³⁶⁴ The governmental backgrounds of these men served to imbue their play with political authority. The authors saw themselves as occupying a position of intellectual privilege from which they could counsel the Queen, her courtiers, and also their fellow Inns men. This counsel was focused on monarchical duties and their conflict with familial duties, as well as on the duties of counsel itself. The clashing of duties, the play suggests, is inevitable for a leader but it shows that these clashes are best tackled with the aid of advisors. After the performance of *Misfortunes* there was a flurry of plays on similar themes in the commercial theatres. Lucy Munro attests to the fact that “most prominent playing companies of this period all had plays featuring Anglo-Saxon settings or characters; the fact that the majority are now lost has perhaps blinded scholars to their commercial importance at this time.”³⁶⁵ Furthermore, three Anglo-Saxon plays were performed at the Jesuit College at Douai: William Drury’s *Aluredus, sive Alfredus* (1619), Thomas Carleton’s *Fatum Vortigerni* (1619), and the lost *Emma Angliae Regina* (1620). While this does not necessarily establish a cause and effect relationship between *Misfortunes* and the later plays, *Misfortunes* was certainly a forerunner of Anglo-Saxon subject matter.

That *Misfortunes* functions as political counsel for Elizabeth and her courtiers is evident from the offset, with Nicholas Trotte’s prologue serving as an endorsement of the advice that the Inns of Court men are presenting. Little is known of Trotte, but he had a connection to Francis Bacon’s family.³⁶⁶ In the prologue he claims that,

Our industrie maintaineth unimpeacht:
Prerogative of Prince, respect to Peeres,
The Commons libertie and each mans right;

³⁶³ David Ibbetson, ‘Yelverton, Sir Christopher (1536/7–1612), judge and speaker of the House of Commons’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, posted 03/01/08. <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-30213>> [accessed 19/01/21]; ‘Yelverton, Christopher’, *History of Parliament*. <<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/yelverton-christopher-1537-1612>> [accessed 09/02/21].

³⁶⁴ Markku Peltonen, ‘Bacon, Francis, Viscount St Alban (1561–1626), lord chancellor, politician, and philosopher’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, posted 04/10/07. <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-990>> [accessed 09/02/21]; ‘Bacon, Sir Francis’, *History of Parliament*. <<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/member/bacon-sir-francis-1561-1626>> [accessed 09/02/21].

³⁶⁵ Lucy Munro, “‘Nemp your sexes!’: Anachronistic Aesthetics in Hengist, King of Kent and the Jacobean “Anglo-Saxon” Play’, *Modern Philology*, 111.4 (May 2014), pp.734-761 (p.739-40).

³⁶⁶ Evangelia H. Waller, ‘A Possible Interpretation of “The Misfortunes of Arthur”’, *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 24.2 (April, 1925), pp.219-245 (p.222).

Suppresseth mutin force, and practicke fraude,
Things that for worth our studious care deserve³⁶⁷

It is argued that the lawyers ensure the royal prerogative is adhered to and thus that the welfare of the commonwealth is protected. Trotte's comment covers the whole social hierarchy from top to bottom, starting with the prince and descending to peers, commons, and ordinary men. The Inns men are figured as essential cogs in this machine and are fashioned as legitimate political advisors. They are not submissive subjects but active political participants and their legal "industrie" grants them the authority to advise the Queen on matters of state. Winston rightly argues that the authors as "legal performers do not simply advise the queen but also fashion themselves as a legitimate, distinctive, and essential group within the early modern commonwealth" (Winston, *Lawyers*, p.4). As in *Gorboduc*, the figure of the counsellor is emphasized and this can be seen as bolstering the importance of the counsel offered by the Inns men. The play, therefore, stands as self-referential testimony to the argument foregrounded in its own prologue, showing that cooperation between a ruler and their counsellors is essential to the stability of the nation. Both *Gorboduc* and *Misfortunes* drew their counsellor figures from the advisors of Seneca's tragedies. Curtis Perry claims that "the failure of counsel to avert catastrophe within the play is juxtaposed with Trotte's introduction, which offers up a model of political reciprocity that the queen is tacitly enjoined to live up to."³⁶⁸ Similarly, Altman concludes that "the tragic outcome is attributed largely to the ineffectiveness of counsel" (Altman, p.266). However, it is not the failure of counsel itself, but rather the failure of leaders to heed this counsel that leads to catastrophe. The drama is therefore not juxtaposed with Trotte's introduction, but works seamlessly with it. The lawyers use drama as a platform from which to demonstrate their legal and political expertise. This method of using drama to facilitate political counsel had already been established at the Inns with *Gorboduc*. Moreover, like its predecessor, *Misfortunes* focuses more on teaching than entertainment. For instance, Christopher J. Crosbie comments on *Misfortunes*' "shortcomings as a theatrical endeavour."³⁶⁹ Both plays are written in blank verse and the repetitiveness of the speech patterns results in monotony. This coupled with the lack of visual spectacle, apart from the dumb shows, results in a play which is clearly intended for political instruction, specifically concerning duty.

Despite the precedent set by *Gorboduc* of drama-as-counsel and Trotte's proclamation of their

³⁶⁷ Thomas Hughes, et al., *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, ed. by J. Payne Collier (London: Septimus Prowett, 1828), Introduction, 87-91. Line numbers are my own as they are absent from this edition. Collier reproduces the original printed version of the play which prioritizes Hughes's version of speeches in 1.1 and 5.2. Flower's Chorus speeches for the first and second acts are not printed.

³⁶⁸ Curtis Perry, 'British Empire on the Eve of the Armada: Revisiting *The Misfortunes of Arthur*', *Studies in Philology*, 108.4 (Fall 2011), pp. 508-537, (p.536).

³⁶⁹ Christopher J. Crosbie, 'Sexuality, Corruption, and the Body Politic: The Paradoxical Tribute of The *Misfortunes of Arthur* to Elizabeth I', *Arthuriana*, 9.3 (Fall, 1999), pp.68-80 (p.68).

suitability, offering counsel to a ruler had to be navigated carefully. Trotte rejected any contemporary relevance of the play and at the same time flattered Elizabeth:

The matter which we purpose to present,
Since streights of time our liberty controwles,
In tragike notes the plagues of vice recounts.
How sutes a tragedie for such a time?
Thus – for that since your sacred Majestie
In gracious hands the regall sceptre held,
All tragedies are fled from State to stadge. (*MoA*, Intro.127-133)

He argues that Elizabeth's statecraft means that tragedies now only occur on the dramatic stage, rather than the political stage. This flattery calls attention to her "sacred" and "gracious" status, as well as her ability as a ruler to maintain a stable and healthy commonweal. Nonetheless, the actual relevance of the play to the issues of Elizabeth's reign would have been clear. Written a year after the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, and months before the attack of the Spanish Armada, the play has been read as commentary on both situations. Norland claims that "the continuing Spanish threat that was associated with the Babington plot discovered in 1586, together with the other Catholic plots associated with Mary Stuart's claim to the throne, led these youthful members of the intelligentsia to represent as a warning to Elizabeth and her counsellors the tragic end of Britain's most famous hero" (Norland, p.96). Gertrude Reese reads Arthur as a representation of Elizabeth and Mordred as Mary. She suggests that the "insistence of parliament upon action against Mary, and Elizabeth's reluctance to accede to public demand, are reflected in the play."³⁷⁰ Giles Gamble believes that "[a]s the lawyers reworked the Arthuriana, they created a past which fits their case. They set forth the "history" of the old Arthur in a way that emphasized their current anxieties regarding Elizabeth's lack of an heir and the constant threats of usurpation, civil war, and foreign invasion."³⁷¹ Despite Trotte's refutation in the introduction, the play could be seen to pertain to the political uncertainty in England, in particular with regard to the question of succession and the threat from enemies both within and outwith the country. The cipher-like quality of *Misfortunes* aligns with Annabel Patterson's methodology for reading early modern texts in a politically active way. She argues that writers and holders of power both understood the conventions of encoding political commentary in drama, "conventions as to how far a writer could go in explicit address to the contentious issues of his day, and how, if he did not choose the confrontational approach, he could encode his

³⁷⁰ Gertrude Reese, 'Political Import of *The Misfortunes of Arthur*', *The Review of English Studies*, 21.82 (Apr., 1945), pp.81-91 (p.86).

³⁷¹ Giles Y. Gamble, 'Power Play: Elizabeth I and 'The Misfortunes of Arthur'', *Quondam et Futurus*, 1.2 (Summer, 1991), pp.59-69 (p.59).

opinions so that nobody would be *required* to make an example of him.”³⁷² Thus, audiences were primed to decode the contemporary relevance of plays, regardless of assurances from playwrights that there was none. *Misfortunes* and *Gorboduc* fall into this model identified by Patterson in the plays of Massinger, Marston, Rowley, and Middleton, which indirectly discuss the controversy over Prince Charles’s Spanish match in the 1620s.³⁷³

Trotte’s denial of relevance is not only transparent but is also explicitly rejected within the play itself. Gorlois sets out the action at the start, recalling Tantalus from Seneca’s *Thyestes*, and he reappears at the end to deliver a panegyric prophecy which brings the cursed cycle of vengeance of Arthur’s bloodline to an end. Fulbecke’s original version of this speech ends in praise for Elizabeth:

Vaunt Brytaine vaunt, of her renowned raigne,
Whose face deterres the haggies of hell from thee:
Whose vertues holde the plagues of heauen from thee,
Whose presence makes the earth fruitfull to thee:
And with foresight of her thrice happie daies,
Brytaine I leaue thee to an endlesse praise. (*MoA*, 5.2.26-31)

Fulbecke focuses heavily on the current prosperity of Britain because of the Queen who “deterres the haggies of hell”. Hughes reworks this but retains the same basic meaning:

That virtuous Virgo, borne for Brytaines blisse;
That peerlesse braunch of Brute; that sweete remaine
Of Priam’s state; that hope of springing Troy,
Which, time to come and many ages hence,
Shall of all warres compound eternall peace.
Let her reduce the golden age againe,
Religion, ease, and wealth of former world. (*MoA*, 5.2.18-24)

That both Elizabeth and Arthur were thought to be descendants of the Trojan Brutus was one of the cornerstones of the Tudor myth. This is further developed by declaring that Elizabeth will return England to “the golden age” that is associated with the classical era and is evoked in Tudor propaganda.³⁷⁴ This final statement is not inspired by Senecan tragedy and instead evokes a sense of Christian closure. This departure from the model is employed in order to set

³⁷² Annabel Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England, With a New Introduction* (Wisconsin: Wisconsin University Press, 1984), p.12.

³⁷³ Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation* (1984), p.81-99.

³⁷⁴ For more on this prayer’s use of the Golden Age see Luke B. T. Houghton, ‘Astraea Revisited: The Virgilian Golden Ages of Tudor England’, *Neulateinisches Jahrbuch*, 21, (2019), pp.135-168 (pp.141-2).

Elizabeth apart from Arthur. Their shared genealogy is called upon but they are differentiated because of Elizabeth's virginity in contrast to Arthur's incest. Crosbie argues that the play's representation of sexual perversion is a homage to the virginal Queen, that by "[p]ortraying a Britain plagued with moral weakness and judged by divine retribution, Hughes creates a foil to Queen Elizabeth's nation, a foil that the audience would certainly recognize" (Crosbie, p.78). Similarly, despite the play's proclamation that Elizabeth is *not* the same as Arthur, Perry contends that it "would have been expected to encode advice on political matters, and the well-known genealogical link between Arthur and the Tudors ensures that the play would have been understood to have contemporary relevance" (Perry, p.511). Perry goes on to point out that because the initial speech written by Trollope sets the play up as a continuation of Arthur's heroic reputation, spectators would anticipate the play to feature "a chivalric Arthur, a heroic, conquering Britain, and a narrative in which conquest is glorious and civilizing" (Perry, p.532). However, Arthur's incest with his twin sister, Anne, means that he is tainted before he even appears on stage and so the expected moral binary of chivalric Arthur against villainous Mordred is complicated. Families haunted by the crimes of their ancestors were a feature of many Senecan plays, notably *Thyestes* and *Agamemnon*, and in *Misfortunes* this has similarly grim consequences. The Chorus moralizes that: "In Brytain warres and discord will not stent: / Till Uther's line and offspring quite be spent" (*MoA*, 1.4.23-24).

The complication of Arthur's character allows Hughes to intensify the need for counsel within the play. His primary source was Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* and in this account there is no incestuous plotline; instead, Mordred is merely Arthur's nephew. While distancing Arthur from Elizabeth, this alteration also makes Arthur's position more difficult, and a greater breach of duty, as killing a son is harder than killing a nephew. This creates a greater dilemma for Arthur and thus a greater need for counsel. However, Arthur does not appear onstage until the third act and so the play is framed by his absence. His foreign wars have the unintended consequence of allowing his son the opportunity to cause domestic chaos. Despite this emphasis on Arthur's culpability, he is still indisputably the hero of the play. The majority of characters describe him as a paragon of princely virtue. Gawin, the King of Albany and Arthur's nephew, asks Mordred to yield and describes Arthur in glowing terms: "For Arthur's fame and vallure's such, as you / Should rather imitate, or at the least / Envie" (*MoA*, 2.3.26-28). This request for Mordred to step down is framed against his father's fame and valour. Gawin emphasizes these qualities:

Remember Arthurs strength, his conquests late,
 His fierie minde, his high aspiring heart.
 Marke then the oddes: he expert, you untried;

He ripe, you greene. Yeelde you whiles yet you may;
He will not yeelde: he winnes his peace with warres. (*MoA*, 2.3.48-52)

Here Arthur is imagined in all of his glory in comparison to Mordred's lack of experience. Gawin starts with a tricolon, "his conquests late, his fierie mind, his high aspiring heart", to emphasize Arthur's heroic qualities. To draw out the comparison between the two, Gawin utilizes double antitheses: "he expert, you untried"; "he ripe, you greene". Arthur's strength is also described in architectural imagery, he is "the realmes defence" (*MoA*, 4.3.37) and the "piller of our state" (*MoA*, 5.1.16). This praise for Arthur signals to the audience that he is a strong king, but even he is faced with a crisis about upholding ideals of duty.

The major divergence between the historical source and the play is in Arthur's vacillation. In Geoffrey's version, Arthur grants Mordred no mercy and instead self-assuredly seeks vengeance: "As soon as the bad news of this flagrant crime had reached his ears, Arthur immediately cancelled the attack which he had planned to make on Leo, the Emperor of the Romans [...] then without more ado he himself set off for Britain" (Book XI, Ch. I, p.258). The Arthur of *Misfortunes*, by contrast, wavers between his paternal feelings and his responsibility to protect England. It is Arthur's reluctance to act that enables the enlargement of the role of the counsellors, making them central to the narrative and subsequently to the political advice offered in the play. Cador is essential in encouraging Arthur to prioritise his political duty:

Since Arthur thus hath ransackt all abroad,
What mervaile ist if Mordred rave at home?
When farre and near your warres had worne the world,
What warres were left for him but civill warres?
All which requires revenge with sword and fire
And to pursue your foes with present force. (*MoA*, 3.1.26-31)

These lines are taken from Lucan's *Pharsalia*, which the playwrights borrowed from as heavily as they borrowed from Seneca.³⁷⁵ *Misfortunes* relies on Lucan linguistically (330 lines are taken from Lucan, and 300 from Seneca) but relies on Seneca both linguistically and stylistically. These lines are expanded from: "What conquests now remain, / What wars not civil can my kinsman wage?"³⁷⁶ These words are put into Cador's mouth which simultaneously lays some of the blame at Arthur's feet, for his warmongering ways leaving the country open to attack, while also demanding that he win his kingdom back by using force. Arthur is a legendary figure, one

³⁷⁵ George M. Logan, 'Hughes's Use of Lucan in *The Misfortunes of Arthur*', *The Review of English Studies*, 20.77 (Feb., 1969), pp.22-32.

³⁷⁶ Lucan, *The Civil War (Pharsalia)*, trans. by J. D. Duff (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015). "Quod socero bellum, praeter civile, reliqui?" (ii, l.595).

of the Nine Worthies, who stands as an example of heroism and chivalry but here his militarism creates national instability. This is brought up again later when Arthur says “Rome puffes us up, and makes us too, too fierce” (*MoA*, 3.1.201), which is adapted from Agamemnon in Seneca’s *Troades*, who declares: “Does Troy make us too arrogant and bold?”³⁷⁷ This line fits into the play’s critique of militarism and serves as a realisation to Arthur that his emulation of classical values has made him, and his son, overly ambitious. This meaning is strengthened by changing Seneca’s reference from Troy, known for falling, to Rome, known for longevity. The change also reflects the cultural significance of Rome to early modern England, but, as is done with the Arthuriana, the image of glory is complicated.

Despite Cador’s reprimand and his own acknowledgment of fault, Arthur finds himself unable to avenge these wrongs and perform his duties as king because of his paternal love for Mordred:

But as for warres, insooth, my flesh abhorres
 To bid the battayle to my proper bloud.
 Great is the love which nature doth inforce
 From kin to kin, but most from sire to sonne. (*MoA*, 3.1.39-42)

Arthur believes that the strongest familial bond is the one between father and son and it is this depth of emotion which causes his struggle. Felicity Brown points out that *Misfortunes* is the first depiction of Arthur where he feels love for Mordred; all other versions depict only hatred.³⁷⁸ Arthur’s love for his son is integral to his dilemma and thus to the depiction of the necessity of advisors. By having Arthur waver between his commitment to his paternal role and political role, Hughes is able to elucidate the utility and value of political advisors. It also presents Arthur as a compassionate character who, as Altman states, “comes closer to being a complex character than any other figure in these Inns of Court plays, simply by virtue of Hughes’s obsessive rehearsal of all possible proofs for his case” (Altman, p.266). While this rehearsal is repetitive and potentially dull for the audience, it feeds directly into the edifying drive of the play in that it allows the counsellors to demonstrate their importance. Kingship is never free from issues and *Misfortunes* represents that reality, but it also presents the solution to resolving difficulties: aid from counsellors. Howell, Arthur’s other counsellor, is also essential in reminding the king that his duty to country must come before the bonds of family:

³⁷⁷ Seneca, *Troades*, trans. by Miller in *Seneca’s Tragedies*, Vol. 1 (1917), p.143. “Troia nos tumidos facit / nimium ac feroces?” (264-5).

³⁷⁸ Felicity Brown, ““With giddy steps runs on a headlong race”: the reinvention of the king in *The Misfortunes of Arthur*”, *Early Modern Inns of Court and the Circulation of Text* (King’s College London, 14th-15th July 2019).

A king ought alwaies to preferre his realme
Before the love he beares to kin or sonne.
Your realm destroid is neere restord againe,
But time may send you kine and sonnes inough. (*MoA*, 3.1.45-48)

Howell's argument that Arthur can produce more sons but that his kingdom is irreplaceable seems heartless but it is politically necessary. The necessity of placing country before family is founded in Cicero's *De Officiis*: "our first duty is to the immortal gods; our second, to country; our third, to parents [...]."³⁷⁹ Parents can be extended to include all family in this situation. Despite this ideal hierarchy of duties, Arthur's concerns are twofold: first, there is his personal ethical concern: "Whereof who knowes which were the greater guilt, / The sire to slaie the sonne, or sonne the sire?" (*MoA*, 3.1.66-67); second, is his reluctance to wage war against his own kingdom: "Be witnesse, heavens, how farre 'tis from my minde / Therewith to spoile or sacke my native soile" (*MoA*, 3.1.231-32). Arthur's counsellors are crucial in reframing his arguments, bidding him to accept the personal cost and reminding him that war is necessary. While this specific situation was not a contemporary issue, the play can be seen as a message to Elizabeth and her counsellors about political difficulties, regarding the succession or Spain or any other issue, needing be resolved with the aid of advisors. Cador and Howell are shown to be trusted political authorities who are essential to ensuring the welfare of the country, which translates into imbuing the playwrights, who were acting as counsellors and in some cases *were* counsellors, with this same authority. Like *Gorboduc*, the playwrights use *Misfortunes* as a platform from which to validate their political expertise. The play stresses collaboration between monarch and counsellor as the way to settle political strife and Arthur, along with Mordred, not participating fully in this collaboration is what leads to the tragic ending.

Mordred's advisor, Conan, is in some ways an even more exemplary model to the counsellors in the audience than Arthur's advisors. In being tasked with counselling a villain, Conan demonstrates the importance of providing honest and bold advice, even when the situation is dangerous. He is reminiscent of the counsellor-to-a-tyrant figure from Seneca's *Thyestes* and the pseudo-Senecan *Octavia*. (In *Thyestes*, a guard unsuccessfully attempts to dissuade Atreus's impious vengeance against his brother. In *Octavia*, Seneca unsuccessfully attempts to restrain Nero's evil.) In this vein Conan continually challenges Mordred:

MORDRED. Ech crowne is made of that attractive mould,
That of it selfe it drawes a full defence.
CONAN. That is a just and no usurped crowne;

³⁷⁹ Cicero, *De Officiis* (1913), I: 160.

And better were an exiles life, than thus
Disloyally to wronge your sire and liege.
Thinke not that impious crimes can prosper long:
A time they scape, in time they be repaide. (*MoA*, 2.2.89-95)

Conan reframes Mordred's argument that once a crown is attained it cannot be challenged, by maintaining that a crown obtained by anything other than lawful succession is usurpation, a crime which will most certainly be punished. Conan also attempts to convince Mordred of his wrongs on a personal level, framing Arthur not only as his "liege" but also his "sire", thus emphasizing that Mordred is committing two wrongs; one against his political duty to his king and another against his filial duty to his father. Furthermore, Conan's final two lines are just the kind of pithy axiomatic advice that early modern readers would have copied into their commonplace books. Conan's lines throughout the play are easily mined for commonplaces because of the Senecan stichomythic quality of his exchanges with Mordred. Arthur's counsellors lines can also be mined with an eye to commonplacing. Thus, the instruction of the play works on two levels: on one level Conan, Cador, and Howell, are exemplary counsellors within the context of the play; on the other, their pithy statements can be divorced from their original context and applied more widely. No counsellor wanted to fall foul of the monarch but their duty bids them to give honest advice regardless of the impact on their own political standing or even on their life. Conan understands this and continually offers Mordred wisdom despite its aggravating effect:

CONAN. If powre be joyned with right, men must obey.
MORDRED. My will must go for right.
CONAN. If they assent.
MORDRED. My sword shall force assent.
CONAN. No – gods forbid! (*MoA*, 2.2.36-40)

Conan speaks to Mordred incredibly directly but he ultimately fails because of the usurper prince's unwillingness to accept counsel. Speaking to a tyrant so frankly often ends in murder, as endless historical examples show, so Conan's commitment to his duty as a counsellor is admirable. Conan's first line here is succinct and again easily extracted from its context for use in other politically relevant situations. While Conan and Mordred's conversations are stichomythic, which leads Gamble to describe them as "[a] trifle sententious" (Gamble, p.63), that is entirely the point. The lines are overtly moralizing about the restrictions of monarchs within the laws of government and religion. Furthermore, Conan's speech patterns being so closely linked to Senecan tragedy would encourage the classically trained audience to mine these scenes, and the play in general, for exemplary wisdom in the same way they would mine

Seneca's plays. As Freyja Cox Jensen observes, "[s]tudents used Seneca's moral and philosophical essays to gather perspectives on characters and events."³⁸⁰ Seneca's plays, which were familiar to Inns students, could also be used toward this purpose. Conan's emulation of Seneca thus adds a didactic layer which would be easily understood by the elite audience who had humanist educations.

Speaking of all three counsellors, Perry argues that the "play's interest in these wise counselor figures has everything to do with the self-presentation of the gentlemen of Gray's Inn as politically sophisticated citizen-subjects offering service and admonitory advice to the queen" (Perry, pp.535-6). The play stands as self-referential testimony to the argument foregrounded in its own prologue, that the Inns men are reliable political authorities. The counsellor figures in the play serve a dual purpose though, as they are also the channel through which the main instruction is presented. In performance they demonstrate to Elizabeth the necessity of accepting counsel and they offer an exemplary model to Elizabeth's courtiers, urging them to offer advice as audaciously and selflessly as Cador, Howell, and Conan do. In print the counsellors could be used by students to supplement their educations regarding the use of rhetoric and the duties of courtiers. Spectators and readers could also decode the contemporary relevance of the play, mine speeches for aphorisms, and use it to more broadly facilitate conversations about the dynamics of government. Thus, the advice in the play, that cooperation between a ruler and their counsellors is paramount to the stability of the nation, could be multifaceted in its application.

Conan's efforts to restrain Mordred are ultimately fruitless because of Mordred's refusal to accept counsel, and it is this refusal which leads to civil war and the father and son inflicting fatal wounds on each other. Geoffrey does not report Arthur and Mordred killing each other directly: "the accursed traitor was killed and many thousands of his men with him" and after further fighting "Arthur himself, our renowned King, was mortally wounded" (Book XI, Ch. II, p.261). The playwrights alter their deaths, forcing father to kill son and son to kill father. It is also reported that this instance of familial violence is not isolated: "[t]he brethren broach their bloud; the sire the sonne's / The sonne againe would prove by too much wrath, / That he, whom thus he slew, was not his sire. / No blood nor kinne can swage their irefull moodes" (*MoA*, 4.2.170-3). This is taken from *Pharsalia*: "[o]ne his brother slew, nor dared to spoil the corse, till severed from the neck he flung the head afar. Another dashed full in his father's teeth the fatal sword" (vii, 1.626-30).³⁸¹ The dramatists alter their historical source to more strongly

³⁸⁰ Jensen, *Reading the Roman Republic* (2012), p.84.

³⁸¹ "quis pectora fratris / Caedat, et, ut notum possit spoliare cadaver, / Abscisum longe mittat caput: ora parentis / Quis laceret, nimiaque probet spectantibus ira, / Quem iugulat, non esse patrem."

reflect contemporary fears of civil war. Before Arthur dies he calls attention to the cautionary example his story provides:

the wofull fathers hart,
That sawe himselfe thus made a sonnelesse sire!
Well, since both heavens and hell conspir'd in one
To make our endes a mirror to the worlde,
Both of incestious life and wicked birth,
Would gods, the fates, that linckt our faultes alike,
Had also fram'de our minds of friendlier mouldes! (*MoA*, 5.1.117-123)

The tragedy is put into a larger context here, conjuring up fate and doomed ancestry, but the personal responsibility that Arthur and Mordred share cannot be ignored. There is a sense in the play that their fates could have been changed had Arthur acted faster on his advisors' recommendations and had Mordred accepted advice at all. Arthur frames his tale as a "mirror to the worlde", and so, like *Gorboduc*, aligns himself and his story with the mirrors for princes genre. Also like *Gorboduc*, Arthur presents his misfortunes as a lesson and this cannot have escaped the notice of Elizabeth and her courtiers, who were familiar with humanist pedagogy. The civil war that takes place in *Misfortunes* can be vaguely mapped onto the various anxieties gripping England in the 1580s, in particular in regard to the question of succession and the threat from both internal and external enemies. Civil war represents the worst end point of turmoil and uncertainty within a country and so it stands as a stark warning to resolve these issues. While Arthur's inability to act is an example *not* to follow, the counsellors represent examples *to* follow. The tragedy is not the fault of ineffective counsel, but of the prince and king repeatedly ignoring that counsel. Conan expresses this towards the end of the play: "men in greatest countenance with their king / Can worke by fit perswasion sometimes much; / But sometimes lesse, and sometimes nought at all" (*MoA*, 4.1.31-33). Counsel is effective as long as monarchs actually act upon that counsel. The play thus serves as an endorsement of counsellors and emphasizes that their duty is necessary for the safety and welfare of subjects.

To conclude, *Misfortunes* and *Gorboduc* proclaim that the adherence of both monarchs and counsellors to their duties is vital to political stability. Both sets of playwrights combined drama and legendary history to convey political lessons to audiences which included Elizabeth as well as current and future courtiers. The core lesson about the significance of counsel could be read to different ends; one eyewitness saw *Gorboduc* as a comment on contemporary politics, while a reader later mined the text for political commonplaces. While there is no surviving evidence of this kind of engagement with *Misfortunes*, the opportunities to do so certainly exist. Both plays could be employed to comment obliquely on the topical issues of Elizabeth's reign, specifically

the succession, foreign politics, and internal strife, which if mishandled could result in a disastrous civil war. The solution to avoiding tragedy is explicit within the play: monarchs must work with their advisors. Winston states that although “literature and drama were recreational activities, these forms of play facilitated the serious legal and political ambitions of individual writers, and the consolidation of the Inns as a significant and autonomous social, legal, political, and professional domain” (Winston, *Lawyers*, p.8). The subject matter, style, pedigree of playwrights, and location of production of *Gorboduc* and *Misfortunes* indicates that they were attempting to provide authoritative political advice. Eubulus, Cador, Howell, and Conan are presented as exemplary advisors, whose didactic impact is tripartite: they are employable by courtiers and students as positive examples; they demonstrate to Elizabeth that advisors are essential to England’s stability; and they bolster the image of Inns men as counsellors. The Ciceronian ideal of people adhering to their respective political duties is endorsed in Inns drama, but the difficulties are also demonstrated. Monarchs allow their personal lives to interfere with their public duties, while counsellors have only limited power. This idealisation of duty mixed with an acknowledgement of the realities of public life is also present in the drama of the English Jesuit colleges of the continent. However, Jesuit plays have a distinctly religious conception of duty, are aimed at a broader audience than those of the Inns plays, and employ spectacular stagecraft to enhance the reception of their lessons about duty, as will be seen in the next chapter.

5. MORALITY THROUGH SPECTACLE: THE JESUITS AND THE HISTORY PLAY

This chapter will demonstrate how Jesuit college drama dealt with notions of duty through analysis of Thomas Compton Carleton's *Fatum Vortigerni* (1619) and Joseph Simons's *Theoctistus, sive constans in aula virtus* (1624). While drama written by Inns of Court men was preoccupied with the duty of counsellors at court, drama at English Catholic Colleges was concerned with the duty of a Christian subject. The plays of the Inns focused more on pedagogy than dramatic spectacle but Jesuit drama sought to combine its didacticism with theatrical effects, much like the University of Oxford's *Dido* and *Nero*. Speaking of Jesuit drama specifically, Ribner claims that "[t]hese academic exercises lie apart from the mainstream of English drama and cannot be said to have had any influence upon it."³⁸² While it may well be true that Jesuit plays had little influence upon the development of history plays in England, they certainly do not lie apart from the mainstream. The plays from the English Colleges on the continent were often written by Englishmen and were watched by an audience, and performed by a cast, which included English boys. Therefore, to understand the full scope of the history play during the early modern period, the plays from the English Jesuit Colleges must be included. While Jesuit histories are the most like academic exercises of all of the educational institutions, in that they were academically prescribed, they are also deeply theatrically motivated and so are strikingly similar to the plays of the London playhouses. Jesuit drama was imbued with a high level of theatricality because not only did it encourage the students to be attentive to the moral content, but it could also capture the interest of non-academic audience members and potentially teach them religious virtue too. Therefore, Jesuit plays operated on two levels, inculcating not just Jesuit school room instruction but also broader lessons about Christian duty. The students could learn about the religious and political challenges of their futures in the priesthood, while audience members external to the college could receive more general wisdom about how familial and political duty should be subservient to religious duty, akin to the ideals prescribed by both the Bible and *De Officiis*.

In this context, religious duty can be broadly defined as centring God and religious doctrine within one's life, with religious faith being integral to all other duties. More specifically, for the Jesuits this entails following the edicts of the pope, rather than a monarch. The history plays of the Inns and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge provided guidance on the duties of political life and the Jesuit Colleges followed this trend, but they added a distinct Catholic emphasis to this guidance. Jesuit drama was not trying to create model courtiers and gentry; it

³⁸² Ribner, *The English History Play* (1965), p.228.

was trying to create model Jesuits and Catholics. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit Order, describes his vision in the ‘Formula of the Institute of the Society of Jesus’, which was signed by Pope Paul III in 1540 and Pope Julius III in 1550. Ignatius opens by declaring that “[w]hoever desires to serve as a soldier of God” must “strive especially for the defence and propagation of the faith and for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine, by means of public preaching, lectures and any other ministration whatsoever of the Word of God.”³⁸³ Ignatius’s followers were encouraged to spread the message of God in everything they did and this included the drama they produced. Carleton’s *Fatum Vortigerni* and Simons’s *Theoctistus* both focus on historical royal courts and it is through these political settings that the plays promote religious morality as being integral to political duty. Carleton’s play is an example of an early Jesuit play, in that it is strictly educationally directed and lacks dramatic flair, while Simons’s play is an early, and under-researched, example of what Jesuit drama developed into, namely spectacle plays. The main difference between the two is in how they convey their lessons, with *Fatum Vortigerni* featuring minimal props and staging and *Theoctistus* employing spectacular stage effects. Drama was part of the Jesuit educational curriculum and so the highly didactic, but not very dramatic, style of plays at the outset of their mission was fit for purpose. As the seventeenth century progressed Jesuit theatre developed a more elaborate style to teach a more diverse audience about the necessity of religious morality as a prerequisite for political duty. Jesuit drama confronted the inevitable clash between religion and politics, an issue which would be relevant in the futures of many Jesuit students, and advised that religious virtue must inform political behaviour, an issue highly relevant to any politically-engaged audience member.

THE VALUES OF THE JESUIT ORDER

The first Jesuit teaching College was opened in 1546 in Gandía at the request of Duke Francisco Borja, who insisted that Ignatius accept students who had no intention of joining the Jesuit Order. Ignatius’s interest in pedagogy stemmed from his desire for his recruits to have educations but, as Harro Höpfl explains, “in response to demands made on [the Society] by rulers, municipalities, and bishops, it was natural to combine teaching ‘externs’ (pupils and students not intended for the Society) with training its ‘scholastics’ (novices).”³⁸⁴ The number of Jesuit colleges rapidly increased, with approximately 300 colleges operating in 1600 and 500 by 1650. These figures, estimated by William H. McCabe, meant that “by the middle of the

³⁸³ Ignatius of Loyola, ‘Formula of the Institute of the Society of Jesus’, *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, 33.1 (January 2001), p.1.

³⁸⁴ Harro Höpfl, *Jesuit Political Thought: The Society of Jesus and the State, c. 1540-1630* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.10.

seventeenth century nearly all of Europe's capitals and major towns, as well as hundreds of more obscure centers of population, had Jesuit colleges."³⁸⁵ Ignatius prioritised the humanist study of ancient languages and rhetoric but to this he added an emphasis on Christian morality. He wrote the *Spiritual Exercises* (1548) to aid people in discovering God's will and they were a central component of Jesuit training which were usually taken during the first year of the novitiate and again after ordination to the priesthood. Akin to humanists, Jesuits understood the educative value of drama and so colleges routinely performed plays, as stipulated in the official outline for Jesuit education, the *Ratio Studiorum* (1599): "Tragedies and comedies, which are to be produced only rarely and in Latin, must have a spiritual and edifying theme. Whatever is introduced as an interlude must be in Latin and observe propriety."³⁸⁶ Written by teachers and acted by students, plays were to be educationally and spiritually enriching. Drama was also employed in the classroom: "the teacher can assign the writing of some short dramatic episode instead of the usual topic, for example, an eclogue, a scene, or a dialogue, so that the best may afterwards be performed in class, with the roles portioned out to different pupils" (*Ratio Studiorum*, p.79). These non-staged exercises further confirm the perceived didactic value of drama. This value can also be seen in the *Spiritual Exercises*, where readers are told to imagine themselves in hell, to "see in imagination the great fires, and the souls enveloped, as it were, in bodies of fire. [...] To hear the wailing, the screaming, cries, and blasphemies against Christ our Lord [...] To smell the smoke, the brimstone, the corruption, and rottenness."³⁸⁷ It was hoped that readers using their senses to imagine themselves in hell were able to experience it more fully, thus leading to a deeper spiritual understanding. Plays echo this because, as Jonathan Levy and Floraine Kay argue, the "Order believed that student actors were particularly moved and instructed by performing because they used their senses to imagine themselves inside another person and situation."³⁸⁸ Plays also benefited the audience, because while the *Spiritual Exercises* took place solely in the mind of the individual, plays provided the audience with visual and oratorical aides to instruction.

The main function of plays was to propagate the faith and they achieved this firstly by providing models for Jesuit students to follow, and secondly by presenting Catholic ideals to both students and external audience members. Alison Shell argues that Jesuit drama provided "exemplary types that its actors and youthful audience would find it easy to identify with, thus

³⁸⁵ McCabe, SJ, *An Introduction to Jesuit Theater* (1983), p.6.

³⁸⁶ *Ratio atque Institutio Studiorum Societatis Jesu*, ed. and trans. by Allan P. Farrell (Washington: Conference of Major Superiors of Jesuits, 1970), p.17.

³⁸⁷ Ignatius of Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*, ed. by Anthony Mottola (New York: Image, 1964), p.59.

³⁸⁸ Jonathan Levy and Floraine Kay 'The Use of Drama in Jesuit Schools, 1551–1773', *Youth Theatre Journal*, 10.1 (1996), pp.56–66 (p.64).

ideally inculcating in them the ability to behave well in certain types of future situation.”³⁸⁹ The educational benefits of dramatic performance were explicitly prescribed by the German Jesuit Jacobus Pontanus: “(1) The clever acting of poor students on the stage often moves the wealthy to help them; (2) the plays bring renown to the teachers and to the school; (3) they can be excellent means for exercising the memory; (4) they are a great help to students in mastering Latin; (5) they inculcate lessons of virtue.”³⁹⁰ These are a myriad of benefits but the importance of the inculcation of virtue is continually reiterated. The Portuguese dramatist Luís da Cruz in his *Tragicæ comicaeque actiones* (1605) asks why the Society expends time and money on plays and answers: “There is but one purpose we have at heart and will always have, namely, to be of service to the state by instilling virtue.”³⁹¹ The French Jesuit René Rapin also argues for the didactic importance of drama and poetry: “While it is true that poetry aims to delight, still this is not its principal purpose [...] Poetry, being an art, must be useful, both of its very nature and its virtue of the essential subordination of every art to polity, the general end of which is the good of the people.”³⁹² Both da Cruz and Rapin emphasize plays being useful for the promotion of virtue and this virtue being essential for public welfare. Jesuit drama teaching religious morality extended beyond the students as other regular attendees included relations of actors, benefactors and patrons of the colleges, ecclesiastics, townspeople, statesmen, nobility, and royalty. Cardinal Mazarin, Cardinal Richelieu, Louis XIII, and Louis XIV were supporters of Jesuit drama in France. Philip II of Spain saw a Jesuit play in Seville in 1570 and Princess Isabella, sovereign of Belgium, was entertained at St Omer in 1625. To clarify the religious intent, and for the aid of audience members unfamiliar with Latin, pamphlets were distributed which contained a plot synopsis in both Latin and the national language. There are many similarities between English university drama and Jesuit college drama but one of the biggest differences is intellectual exclusivity. While university theatre was tailored to an academic and

³⁸⁹ Alison Shell, ‘Autodidacticism in English Jesuit Drama: The Writings and Career of Joseph Simons’, *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England*, 13 (2001), pp.34-56 (p.34).

³⁹⁰ Jacobus Pontanus, *Progymnasinatum latinitatis, sive dialogorum*, Libri VI, Liber I, Progymnasma centesimum: “Actio Scenica” (Padua, 1641), p.441. Trans. by Allan P. Farrell, *Ratio atque Institutio Studiorum Societatis Jesu*, (Washington: Conference of Major Superiors of Jesuits, 1970), p.122. “putant, credo, etiam ad suam ipsorum gloriam pertinere, si siliii placuerint. H. Et ad gymnasii quoque decus atque gloriam vehementer scito interesse: laudatur anim locus & magister, ubi & a quo tam praeclara indole, tam apti ad res pulcherrimas adolescents instiuantur. Quin nosmet ipsos, codiscipulos, populum, magistratus, totas civitates liberaliflima & honestiflima voluptate cumulamur, si nos ex poetae sentential gerimus.”

³⁹¹ Luís da Cruz, *Tragicæ comicaeque actiones* (Lyons: s.n., 1605), ‘Preface and Foreword to the Printer’. Cited in Allan P. Farrell, *The Jesuit Code of Liberal Education: Development and Scope of the Ratio Studiorum* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1938), p.123.

³⁹² René Rapin, *Refleçons sur la Poétique d’Aristote, et sur les ouvrages des poètes anciens et modernes* (Paris: François Muguet, 1674), VII. Trans. by McCabe, SJ, *An Introduction to Jesuit Theater* (1983), p.24. “Il est vray, que c’est le but que se propose la Poësie, que de plaire; mais ce n’est pasle prinipcal: comme pretendent les autres. En esset, la Poësie estant un Art, doit ester utile par la qualite de sa nature, & par la subordination essencielle, que tout Art doit avoir à la Politique, dont la sin générale est le bein public.”

sometimes royal audience, Jesuit dramas sought to appeal to a wider variety of people beyond only students.

Spectacle became integral to Jesuit theatre and was intended to make audiences more receptive to Catholic piety. Shell states that Jesuit theatre “aimed to win over the less-educated members of the audience by an *argumentum*, a vernacular plot-synopsis distributed to the audience, and by a high concentration of such crowd-pleasing devices” (Shell, pp.36-7). Spiritual ends were reached through sensory means including music, ballet, extravagant costumes and scenery, large processions, storm machines, ghostly apparitions, and flying machines. René Fülöp-Miller confirms that spectacle was employed “to entice [the public] from the wandering troupes of actors and the Protestant school theatres, whose only means of attraction were the spoken word and the subjects of their pieces.”³⁹³ Joseph Simons’s *Zeno* (1631) features many of the hallmarks of Jesuit theatre, with the chariot of Mars entering “drawn by four tigers” and angels flying onstage: “On either side of the altar, two angels appear on cranes, as if hovering in mid-air.”³⁹⁴ Vincenzo Guinigi’s *Ignatius in Monte Serrato, arma mutans* (1622) also features lavish effects, with a storm and centaurs appearing: “Here a cloud appears, and from the cloud thunder and lightning [...] While Ignatius prays, a Chorus of Centaurs comes on and tries by its dancing to disturb the Saint in ecstasy [...] At the name JESUS, the Centaurs disappear.”³⁹⁵ In *Elias Propheta* (1640) staged at Graz, a character plunged to his death from a window which was, as McCabe reports, “done by a “dummy” stuffed with meat, blood, and bones, which the dogs in the street attacked with unfeigned realism” (McCabe, p.62). Fülöp-Miller explains that “[a]ctual bushes were often used for scenery; for the furnishing of interiors, they sought, as far as possible, to procure genuine pieces of splendid furniture, and, when a scene included a banquet, the fathers borrowed the table-ware from the court” (Fülöp-Miller, p.417).

Pageantry meant that the instruction of plays was made less obtrusive, and hopefully, rendered more appealing and inspiring. The actors of *Acolastus* (1556), performed in Lisbon, “so moved their audience that many, even the most prominent, shed tears in abundance. You would scarcely believe how acceptable the performance was to all the people, and how much they wanted this sort of play to be staged frequently. This is especially true of the students, who are particularly delighted and inspired by the drama.”³⁹⁶ The editor of Jakob Bidermann’s *Ludi*

³⁹³ René Fülöp-Miller, *The Power and the Secret of the Jesuits* (London: Peter Owen, 1957), p.417.

³⁹⁴ Joseph Simons, *Zeno* (1631), ed. and trans. by Dana F. Sutton (University of Birmingham: The Philological Museum, posted 2014). <<http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/zeno/>> [accessed 04/06/20], 3.2 and 4.4.

³⁹⁵ Vincenzo Guinigi, *Poesis heroica, elegiacam kyrica, epigrammatica, aucta et recensita: Item Dramatica, nunc primum in lucem edita* (Antwerp: Ex officina Plantiniana Balthazaris Moreti, 1637), 4.6.

³⁹⁶ Marianus Lecina (ed.), *Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu, Litterae quadrimestres: 1556*, Vol. IV (Madrid: S. Bernardi, 1897), pp.456-7. Trans. by William H. McCabe, *An Introduction to Jesuit Theater*

Theatrales Sacri reports that the performance of *Cenodoxus* in Munich in 1609 caused fourteen members of the Bavarian court to perform the *Spiritual Exercises* and inspired the student who played the title role to join the Order.³⁹⁷ The plays of Nicolaus Avancini proved very popular in Vienna, and his elaborate *Pietas Victrix* (1659) was first performed for the coronation of the Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I. Despite the success of Jesuit theatre across Europe, very few plays were published because Jesuits saw the main value of theatre in the experience of performance. In the introduction to his volume of plays, Avancini declares that theatre employs “scenic apparatus, the delights of ear and eye, the intelligence and skill of the actors” and so “the stage lives and breathes; the written is fleshless bones.”³⁹⁸ Da Cruz comments that although his plays “had their meed of praise when they won the applause of large crowds of educators and students, nobles and the people; [...] Well I knew that what had delighted the eyes of spectators might not meet with the same kind of reception when read” (Da Cruz, preface). Jesuits saw staging as integral to the pedagogy and entertainment of their plays. Eugene J. Devlin confirms that while these plays were “crowd pleasers, which they certainly were, the Jesuit *ludi* were primarily intended to promote reflection and ultimately personal conversion.”³⁹⁹ Jesuits viewed pageantry as a tool for religious inculcation and conversion.

Plays were often based on historical governments because the intersection between church and court was a major aspect of Jesuit life. Shell confirms that “[h]istorical tragedy was in itself a conscious attempt to make plays relevant to the performers, since [...] the selected narratives tend to be those which invite parallels with contemporary religious events.”⁴⁰⁰ The parallels to be drawn were relevant not only to performers, but also to audience members who planned to join the Order. Jolanta Rzegocka explains that “since the founding of the Society in 1540, the Jesuits have been active preachers, distinguished theologians and disputants, and have served as confessors and tutors to sovereigns and members of royal families across Christendom.”⁴⁰¹ Drama could convey the correct dynamic between God and society to this range of spectators, with each of them taking what they needed from the plays’ teaching. For the counsellors,

(St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1983). “Incredibile quidem est quantopere uniuerso populo placuerit, quantumque omnes cuperent ut hujusmodi comoediae frequenter agerentur, maxime scholastici, qui hac re mirifice delectantur ac excitantur; quod spero fore.”

³⁹⁷ Jakob Bidermann, *Ludi Theatrales Sacri* (Munich: Joannis Wagneri, 1666), ‘Praemonitio ad lectorem’.

³⁹⁸ Nicolaus Avancini, *Poesis dramatica* (Cologne: Joannem Wilhelmum Friessem juniorem, 1675), I, ‘Ad lectorem.’

³⁹⁹ Eugene J. Devlin, ‘The Imperial Play as Final Chapter in the Jesuit Theater in Austria’, *Comparative Drama*, 23.2 (Summer, 1989), pp.141-155 (p.142).

⁴⁰⁰ Alison Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy and the English Literary Imagination, 1558-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.187.

⁴⁰¹ Jolanta Rzegocka, ‘Civic Education on Stage: Civic Values and Virtues in the Jesuit Schools of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth’ in *Exploring Jesuit Distinctiveness: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Ways of Proceeding within the Society of Jesus*, ed. by Robert Aleksander Maryks (Boston: Brill, 2016), pp.41-61 (p.41).

confessors, and tutors to royalty the problems between politics and religion were particularly relevant. In 1602 Claudio Acquaviva, the Superior General from 1581 to 1615, discussed how Jesuit royal confessors should handle political issues:

Since a confessor will inevitably meet with the prince, a public person, when dealing with a particular matter, the Father is allowed to put forward with religious liberty, the course of action he judges in the Lord to be for the greater service of God and of the prince himself.⁴⁰²

Confessors and counsellors were integral at royal courts because they had, as Thomas M. McCoog states, “an important role in the formation of the ideal Counter-Reformation Christian prince, a prince whose actions are guided by Christian principles and not Machiavellian amorality.”⁴⁰³ Ignatius recommended in a letter to Jean Pelletier that he “try to preserve and increase the goodwill of the Prince, and try to please him whenever it is possible to do so in accordance with the will of God.”⁴⁰⁴ Adam Contzen, confessor to Maximilian of Bavaria, in his *Ten Books on Politics* (1621) defended religious men advising political men: “It is not foreign to our Society to deal with the mutual duties between Kings or Princes and their subjects, their obligations and the government of the whole commonwealth. [...] The purview and end of my teaching is to show how all human matters both private and public are to be directed towards the highest good and the ultimate object.”⁴⁰⁵ The highest good was the preservation of the commonwealth through reverence to God and obedience to the pope.

Despite Jesuits professing that they would interfere in politics only as far as religion necessitated, their roles as confessors to kings on the continent fed into their reputation in England for devious manipulation. It was not only Protestants who were prejudiced against Jesuits, as the Catholic priest Christopher Bagshaw demonstrated when he insisted that they acted,

as if religion were nothing else but a meere politicall deuse [...] they were the men that by Machiuels rules are rayseed vpto mayntayne it by equiuocations, detractions, dissimulation, ambition, contention

⁴⁰² John Patrick Donnelly, SJ (ed.), *Jesuit Writings of the Early Modern Period 1540 – 1640* (Hackett: Indianapolis, 2006), pp.219-220.

⁴⁰³ Thomas M. McCoog, SJ, “*And Touching Our Society*”: *Fashioning Jesuit Identity in Elizabethan England* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2013), p.367.

⁴⁰⁴ William J. Young (ed.), *Letters of St Ignatius of Loyola* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1959), p.248.

⁴⁰⁵ Adam Contzen, *Politicorum libri decem* (Mainz: s.n., 1621), i.1.1–4. Cited in Höpfl, *Jesuit Political Thought* (2004), p.63.

for superioritie, stirring vp strife, setting kingdomes against
kingdomes, raising of rebellions, murthring of Princes ⁴⁰⁶

The priest Thomas Bell recanted his Catholicism and published anti-Jesuit texts which added to the expanding myth of the devious Jesuit. He declared that “Matters of state, titles of princes, genealogies of kinges, right of succession, disposing of sceptres, and such affaires are their chief studies.”⁴⁰⁷ Jesuits were undeniably involved in secular matters when at court but “matters of state” were certainly not their “chief studies”. Their reputation is neatly summed up in Nicholas Breton’s *Englands Selected Characters* (1643). A Jesuit, he claims, “being borne for the service of the Divell, cares not what villany he does in the world; [...] his breath is the fume of blasphemy, and his tongue the firebrand of hell; his desires are the destruction of the vertuous.”⁴⁰⁸ This hyperbolic description gives expression to the prevailing diabolic Jesuit stereotype in England. Alexandra Walsham reports that this was elaborated in a vast number of sermons, tracts and pamphlets which depicted the Jesuit as “a crafty dissembler constantly dreaming up treasonous schemes to subvert states and assassinate divinely anointed princes and monarchs.”⁴⁰⁹ Despite the many anti-Jesuit tracts which claim otherwise, crafty dissembling was never taught in Jesuit classrooms or drama. While many plays focused on political topics, they taught that religious virtue was essential to statecraft. Both Carleton’s *Fatum Vortigerni* and Simons’s *Theoctistus* elucidate that Jesuits saw religious duty, the fostering of personal virtue through a relationship with God while obeying and applying the edicts of the Pope, as essential to fulfilling political duty. *Fatum Vortigerni* and *Theoctistus* exemplify the appealing method that Jesuits used to propagate their ideals. Rather than strictly adhering to a Jesuit-specific version of Christianity, the plays promote general Catholic values and emphasize the necessity of adherence to God for the preservation of the country.

FATUM VORTIGERNI: A TYRANNICAL EXEMPLUM

Thomas Compton Carleton was sent to the continent when he was fourteen and attended the English College at St Omer from 1606 until 1611 before moving to colleges in Madrid, Valladolid, and St Alban. He taught at Liège from 1617, at Douai from 1619, and St Omer from 1622, before completing his training in 1628 at Liège, where he became professor of philosophy

⁴⁰⁶ Christopher Bagshaw, *A sparing discoverie of our English Iesuits, and of Fa. Parsons proceedings vnder pretence of promoting the Catholike faith in England* (London: Felix Kingston, 1601), p.6.

⁴⁰⁷ Thomas Bell, *The Anatomie of Popish Tyrannie* (London: John Harison for Richard Bankworth, 1603), sig.C1^v.

⁴⁰⁸ Nicholas Breton, *Englands Selected Characters, describing the good and bad worthies of this age* (London: Thomas Slater, 1643), p.12.

⁴⁰⁹ Alexandra Walsham, ‘‘This Newe Army of Satan’’: The Jesuit Mission and the Formation of Public Opinion in Elizabethan England’ in *Moral Panics: The Media and the Law in Early Modern England*, ed. by David Lemmings and Claire Walker (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp.41-62 (pp.41-2).

and theology and prefect of studies.⁴¹⁰ *Fatum Vortigerni* was performed at Douai in 1619 and was followed by two now lost history plays, *Emma Angliae Regina ac Mater Hardicanuti Regis* (1620) and *Henricus Octavus* (1623). *Fatum Vortigerni* is representative of Jesuit drama but it is not as heavily weighed down with ideological explicitness as some of its counterparts, such as the anonymous *Thomas Cantuariensis* (1613). Telling the story of Thomas of Canterbury returning to England from his Roman exile and his subsequent clash with King Henry II, the play exemplifies the career of a martyr to encourage the Jesuit audience to be willing to similarly sacrifice their lives for the church. The clash between Thomas's religious ideals and Henry's royal supremacy was an easy one to draw parallels with, especially in the years of harsh anti-Catholicism which followed the discovery of the Catholic-led Gunpowder Plot against James VI and I in 1605. *Thomas Cantuariensis* presents a straightforward narrative, while *Fatum Vortigerni* introduces conflict between the duties to king, family, and God. Where Thomas of Canterbury is an example to be followed, Vortigern provides an example *not* to be followed. By focusing on a tyrannical king rather than a martyr, Carleton's play presents a more complex exploration of the reconciliation between political and religious duty. Like the authors of *Gorboduc* and *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, Carleton used Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* as his source. While he largely followed this legendary account, his minor changes serve to make the story more intriguing and thus the message that Christian ideals are necessary to statecraft more engaging. Vortigern begins the play as a typical early modern stage villain, with a plot to use the insurgent Picts to murder the current King Constans and rule Britain himself. He then turns on the Picts and uses Hengist and Horsa, of Anglo-Saxon legend, to protect his newfound kingdom. These events lead Vortigern's unnamed wife, his son Vortumer, and Bishop Wodinus to confront his breaking of his duties as husband, father, king, and Christian subject.

Vortigern is first confronted with the consequences of breaking his duty when his nameless wife discovers that he is planning to divorce her and marry Hengist's daughter, Ronixa. The inclusion of female characters was unusual as it went against the prescriptions for Jesuit drama: "No female makeup or costume is to be permitted" (*Ratio Studiorum*, p.17). However, women play an important role in *Fatum Vortigerni* as Vortigern's divorce from his wife serves as the first conflict which snowballs into greater conflict. Initially she threatens him with the wrath of God: "Vortigern, God will not let your guilt go long unpunished, and will angrily hurl his fires

⁴¹⁰ J. Blom and F. Blom, 'Compton [Compton Carleton], Thomas (1592–1666), Jesuit', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, posted 23/09/04. <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-6038> [accessed 26/11/19].

from heaven. [...] I shall go to church and innocently pour forth prayers for the guilty man.”⁴¹¹
However, her devout solution quickly changes:

But what if he proves to be a guilty Jason, captivated by the woman’s wiles?
Let him be a Jason. Being a woman, I’ll devise a crime worthy of his wife. If
there is some foul deed still uninvented and unfamiliar, horrible impious, by
my doing I’ll ensure that it is performed. [...] as a woman I’ll ready my avenging
hand and confront crime with equal crime. (*Vort*, 2.8.835-9, 843-4)⁴¹²

His wife evokes the story from Greek mythology of Jason betraying Medea. By equating Vortigern with Jason, she equates herself with the scorned Medea, who murdered her children to spite her ex-lover. Vortigern’s wife uses this famous instance of a revenging woman to justify her own desire to lash out in anger. While there are no verbal echoes of Seneca’s *Medea*, she adopts a line from *Thyestes*: “who punishes crime with crime?”⁴¹³ Later in the play, Carleton’s only other female character, Ronixa, lashes out in an analogous way. She similarly evokes Medea to inspire her criminal behaviour, “Medea is enough” (*Vort*, 3.15.1550), as well as citing other examples:

For what is a woman born, if not to wreak havoc? In every age and every
place we have been a criminal sex, full of evils. Our firstborn, Eve, has
instructed every woman in her wiles. [...] I do not have far to look in able
to find examples of impious crime. What about Vortigern’s wife? She
showed me the way. (*Vort*, 3.15.1545-6, 1552-4)⁴¹⁴

Ronixa argues that women are predisposed to criminality by using the classical example of Medea, the biblical example of Eve, and the contemporary example of Vortigern’s wife. The justification for both women rests on the supposed inherent immorality of their sex. Ronixa decides to poison her husband’s son and the wife decides to kill herself, which while being a Christian sin lacks the dramatic flair and outward destruction of Medea and Ronixa’s crimes. The nameless wife is a creation of Carleton’s as in his source, *Historia Regum Britanniae*, there

⁴¹¹ Thomas Compton Carleton, *Fatum Vortigerni*, ed. and trans. by Dana F. Sutton (University of Birmingham: The Philological Museum, posted 2007, revised 2007), <<http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/vort/>> [accessed 24/11/19]. “In te, Vortiger, hoc numen scelus / Diu haud inultum sinet, at iratus polo / Vibrabit ignes. [...] / Ego templum petam, / Et pro nocenti vota transfundam innocens.” (2.3.687-9, 694-5).

⁴¹² “Prodeat Iason foeminae captus dolis? / Iason esto. Faemina inveniam scelus / Muliere dignum. Si quod ignotum est adhuc / Et inusitatum facinus, horrible, impium, / Auctore me, me conscia effectum dabo. / [...] foemina ultricem manum / Aptabo, scelere parque miscebo scelus.”

⁴¹³ Seneca, *Thyestes*, trans. by Miller in *Seneca’s Tragedies*, Vol. 2 (1917), p.181. “Scelere quis pensat scelus?” l.1103.

⁴¹⁴ “Nisi perdat, ad quid mulier? Omni aevo et loco / Genus scelestum fuimus, et plenum malis. / [...] Medea satis est [...] / Nec longa quaeram sceleris exempla impii. / Quid Vortigerni sponsa? Patefecit viam. / Audere nostrum est, faeminam scelus decet.”

is no mention of Vortigern having a wife before taking Hengist's daughter as his bride. Geoffrey of Monmouth reports that: "Satan entered his heart, so that he fell in love with Renwein and asked her father to give her to him. I say that Satan entered his heart because, despite the fact that he was a Christian, he was determined to make love with this pagan woman."⁴¹⁵ Carleton further complicates this clash between Christianity and paganism by giving Vortigern a wife, which serves to intensify his breach of duty as he is violating the sanctity of marriage, and thus his duty to God, both through his union with a heathen and through unlawful divorce. Furthermore, this addition to the play means that, as Dana F. Sutton comments, "it is very tempting to think that Carleton has deliberately devised a situation which replicates that of the Henrican divorce."⁴¹⁶ While Vortigern and his nameless wife are not straightforward representations of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, the similarity in the dissolution of their marriage does suggest the sinfulness of the action. In both situations divorce signals a larger theological issue; for Henry VIII his new marriage causes his break with Roman Catholicism and for Vortigern his marriage to a pagan demonstrates his disregard for the Christian God. Rather than presenting a straightforward analogy to England's breach from Rome, the similarity prompts a more nuanced discussion about the wrongfulness of this kind of rupture between church and state.

In creating a wife for Vortigern, Carleton also seized the opportunity to create a bishop to fight for the wife's marital bonds. There is a hint of religious interference in Geoffrey of Monmouth's version: "It was at this time that St Germanus, the Bishop of Auxerre, came and Lupus, Bishop of Troyes, with him, to preach the word of God to Britons" (Geoffrey, p.160). However, Carleton greatly expands this by having Bishop Wodinus interact directly with Vortigern, leading to a debate about the relationship between church and monarchy. Wodinus emphasizes that Vortigern's new marriage breaches Christian faith: "You have married a pagan, here I take a firm stand. By what faith, pray, is it permissible to insist on this?" Vortigern tyrannically replies: "By the faith of kings, whom nothing prevents from doing as they please" (*Vort*, 2.14.1019-21).⁴¹⁷ While the Bishop declares that God's law supersedes a king's law, Vortigern believes his royal position is beyond the reproach of divinity. He declares:

VORT. Kings should obey their own laws.

WOD. Rather a Christian ought to obey Christ.

⁴¹⁵ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain* (1966), p.160.

⁴¹⁶ Sutton, 'Introduction' to *Fatum Vortigerni* <<http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/vort/intro.html>> [accessed 02/07/20].

⁴¹⁷ "WOD. Duxti paganum, hic sisto. Qua fide id, precor, / Expostulare liceat? / VORT. Id regum fide, / Quibus licere quidlibet nihil vetat."

VORT. The people's law frequently forbids obedience to Christ.

WOD. The wise man is accustomed to comply with both laws. (*Vort*, 2.14.1045-8)⁴¹⁸

Wodinus asserts that Christian duty is integral to kingship, but Vortigern refuses to recognise his duty as a Christian subject. Their conversation serves as a microcosm of the types of conversations that were taking place in the early modern period about the relationship between religion and kingship. For instance, James VI begins his *Basilikon Doron* (1599) with the statement to his son that “ye shall know all the things necessarie for the discharge of your duetie, both as a Christian, and as a King; seeing in him, as in a mirrour, the course of all earthly things, whereof hee is the spring and onely moouer.”⁴¹⁹ Despite endorsing the kind of leadership that is preached by Wodinus, the Protestant James was no model for the Jesuits. They hoped for greater religious toleration after 1603 when James took the English throne, but they were to be disappointed as anti-Catholic sentiment increased during his reign. Robert Miola outlines that the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot in 1605 led to harsher measures: “An Act for Better Repressing of Popish Recusants (1606) mandated communion, empowered the government to seize two-thirds of the property of recusants instead of the former monthly fine of twenty pounds, and required all office holders to swear a new Oath of Allegiance.”⁴²⁰ The Oath required the subject to acknowledge “that the Pope neither of himself, nor by any authorities of the Church or See of Rome, or by any means with any other hath any power or authority to depose the King.”⁴²¹ This Act made it treason to obey the authority of Rome over the king, making England such an inhospitable environment for English Jesuits that they largely remained in their refuges on the continent. Wodinus serves as a shining example for Jesuit students to follow in this regard because he refuses to place political expediency over his religious duty. The Bishop fails to restrain the king and is forced to excommunicate him: “deeming you wholly unworthy of the name of a Christian, on behalf of our supreme God and also the apostolic power conferred on me, I excommunicate you” (*Vort*, 2.19.1168-72).⁴²² Vortigern has Hengist kill Wodinus, cementing his belief that he is above religion with the murder of a church official.

Vortigern's disregard of the duties of marriage and religion and his association with Hengist causes the nobility to approach his son, Vortumer, about launching a rebellion. Vortumer is

⁴¹⁸ “VORT. Servare proprias principem leges decet. / WOD. At Christianum plus decet Christum sequi. / VORT. Christum sequi plerumque lex populi negat. / WOD. Studere utrique qui sapit legi solet.”

⁴¹⁹ James VI and I, *Basilikon Doron* (1918), p.12.

⁴²⁰ Robert S. Miola, *Early Modern Catholicism: An Anthology of Primary Sources* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp.18-9.

⁴²¹ George Walter Prothero, *Select Statutes and Other Constitutional Documents Illustrative of the Reigns of Elizabeth and James I* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), p.259.

⁴²² “Hinc prorsus igitur / Te Christiani nominis indignum arbitrans / Ex parte summi numinis et sacro quoque / Apostolorum iure translato mihi / Te Christiani iuris indico.”

hesitant because a son should be dutiful to his father: “even though my father is responsible for this crime, my piety nevertheless forbids me, confronting a son with his father” (*Vort*, 3.6.1295-6).⁴²³ However, Lord Canutus convinces him of the necessity of action:

CAN. Since your father disdains Christian laws, a son may piously subdue his father. However you may regard your father, these laws will tell you what a pious subject can do against a tyrant. [...]

VORTUM. I am convinced. And indeed as a son I shall exact punishment from my father, wreaking vengeance on him for my mother. My nation is far dearer to me than my father, my loyalty is dearer than my friendships. Though it may be a hard thing to destroy a father, and hard to destroy the sovereign of one's nation, yet it would be harder to permit crime for kings. (*Vort*, 3.1.1297-1300, 1306-12)⁴²⁴

Canutus convinces him that his filial duty is rendered invalid if the parent is impious. By disregarding his duty to his father and rebelling against him he is upholding his duty to his kingdom, his mother, and God. The prevailing attitude in England was that rebellion was immoral because all monarchs were God's chosen servants. This is expressed in Matthew Gwinne's *Nero*: “A ruler, whether good or bad, is sent us by Jove. The bad is sent for chastisement, the good as a reward” (*Nero*, 2.Chorus.1241-2).⁴²⁵ However, there was also the line of argument which suggested that rebellion served divine power. This is exemplified in Jack Cade's story in the *Mirror for Magistrates* (1559): “Although the deuill raise them, yet God alwayes vseth them to his glory, as a part of his Justice.”⁴²⁶ In this way, Vortumer's unwilling but pious rebellion against his father could be figured as a part of God's justice against Vortigern's tyranny. Furthermore, Vortumer's argument that while killing a king would be hard “it would be harder to permit crime for kings” illustrates the political stance of George Buchanan, Scottish humanist and tutor of James VI and I. In his *De Jure Regni apud Scotos* (1579) he makes the argument that it is lawful to resist tyrants because they are enemies of the state: “BUCH. What war is that which is carried on with him who is the enemy of all mankind, that is, a tyrant? / MAIT. A most just war.”⁴²⁷ Vortumer's rebellion is therefore representative of the argument in favour of the lawfulness of rebellion against a tyrant.

⁴²³ “Paterque sceleris author, at pietas tamen / Cohibet, suoque suggerit nato patrem.”

⁴²⁴ “CAN. Cum Christiana iura contemnit parens, / Natus parentem premere vel pie potest. / Utcumque patrem perspicias, haec dicent tibi / Quid in tyrannum subditus pius queat. [...] / VORTUM. Vincor. Et natus quidem / Poenam a parente poscam, ut ulciscar meam / De patre matrem. Charior longe est mihi / Parente patria, charior amicis fides. / Durum tamen perdere parentem siet, / Durumque patriae principem, reges tamen / Permittere scelus durius.”

⁴²⁵ “Princeps, seu bonus est, seu malus, a Iove: / In paenam malus est, in pretium bonus.”

⁴²⁶ Baldwin, *Mirror* (1559), fol.xlviii^r.

⁴²⁷ George Buchanan, *De Jure Regni Apud Scotos Dialogus* (1579), ed. by Dana F. Sutton (University of Birmingham: The Philological Museum, posted 2001, revised 2009), <<http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/scotconst>>, [accessed 17/11/20]. “BUCH. Quid in quo, quod cum hotius humani generis hoste, hoc est tyranno geritur? / MAET. Iustissimum.”

The clash between the impious father Vortigern and the dutiful son Vortumer is the reverse of the clash in *The Misfortunes of Arthur* between the dutiful father Arthur and the impious son Mordred. Other than the reversal of roles, a key difference between these clashing sons and fathers is their emotional reactions. Arthur spends the play in turmoil over having to battle his own blood and Vortumer likewise has to be persuaded to prioritise his duty to country. However, where Mordred is uncaring, Vortigern is deeply distressed. He wails:

Oh my son! Oh my boy! Vortumer, the grief and sorrow of your father! Is my firstborn son my enemy? Am I, his father, an enemy to him? [...] Depart, piety, let it perish here. He is no son of mine who thus strikes his father with his treacherous hand. Why delay my arms? Animated by new fires, I shall meet this criminal man with an avenging blow. (*Vort*, 3.6.1356-9, 1381-4)⁴²⁸

Vortigern manages to convince himself to take up arms against his son but his distraught reaction humanizes him. Sutton argues that “this way of thinking is thoroughly out of place in a morality play — with Death ever present to help the audience learn the proper lessons — about an evil man suffering a richly-deserved damnation” (Sutton, ‘Introduction’). Carleton softening the tyrant does render him less effective as a straightforward example of villainy. However, it adds dramatic interest which in turn contributes to the overall didactic purpose of the play, in that an interested audience is more likely to pick up on the instruction. While Vortigern is a ruthless murderer, he genuinely loves his son which creates greater conflict and makes reconciliation between the pair possible. During the battle Hengist flees and this causes a change of heart in Vortigern. His son immediately ceases his antagonism:

Albeit I seemed hostile to my father, it was neither anger nor rage, nor hope of honor, nor the fickle favor of the people, but rather an indomitable love of my nation and your station that armed these son’s hands against their father. Thus you live, and with your victorious steel you have put to rout the German exile. (*Vort*, 3.14.1520-5)⁴²⁹

It remains unclear if Vortigern’s rehabilitation is genuine or a strategic act. The play does not represent Vortigern using his “victorious steel” to exile Hengist; rather he flees of his own accord. However, the audience is given no insight into Vortigern’s state of mind at this point

⁴²⁸ “O nate! O puer! / Vortumere, patris maeror et luctus tui! / Primusne patris scepra violabis? Patri / Primusne natus hostis, et nato parens? [...] / Excede, pietas, pereat hic. Non est meus, / Qui sic parentem perfida impellit manu. / Quid arma tardo? Facibus animatus novis / Ego hunc scelestum vindice excipiam plaga.”

⁴²⁹ “Verum nec ira, nec repercussus furor, / Nec spes honoris, nec levis populi favor, / Sed patriae amor invictus, et tui status / Has in parentem prolis armarunt manus. / Sic vivis, et victrice Teutonicum exulem / Ferro fugasti.”

and so it remains obscure as to whether his faith in God has been restored or whether he expediently decides to act piously because his martial strength has deserted. What is clear is that Ronixa's poisoning of Vortumer later in the play serves to set his mind on revenge: "What savage beast committed this crime? At least tell me, son, so that I might avenge your death and blood" (*Vort*, 3.17.1595-7).⁴³⁰ However, Ronixa kills herself after being confronted by Vortumer's ghost and so he is denied direct vengeance.

Vortigern takes his anger and turns it on Hengist which vilifies him further rather than serving as redemption. Instead of giving Vortigern the personal vendetta of a father avenging his son's murder, like Hieronimo in *The Spanish Tragedy*, he loses all familial motivation and instead challenges Hengist over his previous acts of service:

VORT. I do remember him, he has been untrustworthy again and again.

CHERD. If he ever has been, it was for your benefit. For thus your crimes are most excellently ascribed to your guilty captain. (*Vort*, 4.4.1664-7)⁴³¹

Vortigern is no longer focused on his son's death, and instead blames his ex-ally for being untrustworthy, despite these untrustworthy actions demonstrating Hengist's loyalty to Vortigern. This prevents Vortigern from becoming a wronged avenger with whom the audience can sympathise. By turning on his ally he once again becomes the stage villain who will do anything to maintain power. Towards the end of the play Pluto, the mythical ruler of the underworld, appears onstage and announces that Vortigern will be handed to him "for punishment as a treacherous, savage, and impious enemy. So this is the fatal course of his final doom: he is marked down for a dire payment and grave brand of infamy, so our Vortigern might stand as an example" (*Vort*, 5.7.1996-2000).⁴³² Vortigern being a Hieronimo would have barred him from becoming an example of treacherous impiety. Despite his previous turn from evil prompted by his son, Carleton removes his sympathetic motivations, which ultimately presents him as a warning to the audience against wicked behaviour and the breaking of duty to God.

Vortigern's death is set up to further present him as an example of villainy being deservedly punished and thus as a warning against similar behaviour. Death, who acts as the Chorus throughout the play, brings forth the ghosts of Vortigern's victims to torment him:

⁴³⁰ "Quaenam haec feralis bellua patravit scelus? / Alloquere saltem, nate, ut ulciscar tuam / Necem et cruorem."

⁴³¹ "VORT. Memini, et infidi semel / Iterumque et ultra. / CHERD. Nempe tum pro te fuit / Si unquam. Nocenti scelera sic ergo optime / Duci imputentur."

⁴³² "Ut perduellem perfidum, ferum, impium / Mihi meo addixere multandum foro. / Fatalis hic en sortis extremae tenor, / Diro exaratus stipite, et gravi nota, / Cum Vortigernus noster exemplo foret"

WOD. While as a priest I was condemning your unclean marriage, I fell
by a pagan's wound, when in your cunning you hired that guest. I warned
you then with a word of salvation. [...]

WIFE. You polluted our marriage-bed by bringing in a foreign whore,
and you armed my hands for suicide with an avenging knife. [...]

VORTUM. While as a loyal son I condemned my father's crimes, I perished
by my step-mother's crime. Your sins brought your son to that point. I, a
guiltless son, atoned for my guilty father. (*Vort*, 5.18.2330-3, 2336-8, 2342-5)⁴³³

The ghosts lay the guilt of their deaths at Vortigern's feet and then on Death's command they drag him to hell. This differs greatly from Geoffrey of Monmouth's account, where Hengist's army burn Vortigern to death: "When everything else had failed, they tried fire; and this, once it took hold, went on blazing until it burned up the tower and Vortigern with it" (Geoffrey, p.188). Carleton's adaptation of the death scene allows him to clarify the moral message. Being killed by his victims affords them the chance to blame him explicitly and Hengist killing Vortigern would have prevented this. Furthermore, the inclusion of tormenting supernatural elements is reminiscent of the professional stage in London. Shakespeare's *Richard III* (1593) features a scene in which the titular tyrant is tormented by the spirits of his victims and Carleton's play follows this closely, with his ghosts mimicking those in *Richard III* by declaring "Despair and die" at the end of their accusations. That Vortumer blames his father rather than his actual murderer, Ronixa, suggests that the audience is supposed to view Vortigern as the genesis of all evil within the play. He exhibits the chaos which is wrought when the king, the most politically important person, fails to uphold religious duty.

Fatum Vortigerni is representative of early Jesuit drama, with its focus on instruction rather than dramatic spectacle. Vortigern, despite having moments of dramatic interest which complicate the message, ultimately stands as an example of tyranny which is to be abhorred by the audience. He is a negative *exemplum* because he lacks Christian ethics, evident through his egomaniacal desire for power and his unlawful divorce of his wife in order to marry a pagan. Bishop Wodinus and Vortumer, who are willing to sacrifice their lives to uphold their duties to God and country, present the audience with moral examples to be followed. Carleton was not alone in his choice of subject for *Fatum Vortigerni*, as two other plays written around this time focused on the dynamic between Vortigern and Hengist's Saxon forces. The first was Thomas

⁴³³ "WOD. Dum incestuosum mista damnavi thorum, / Cecidi pagani vulnere. Ast illuc tuus / Conduxit astus hospitem. Admonui prius / Verbo salutis [...] / UXOR. Thorum iugalem pellice inducta extera / Infide polluistis et armasti meas / Ultrice ferro propriam in necem manus. [...] / VOTRUM. Dum fida proles scelera damnavi patris, / Scelere novercae perii. Eo noxae tuae / Duxere natum. Pro patre nocente innocens / Natus lui."

Middleton's *Hengist, King of Kent, or The Mayor of Quinborough* (1619-20) and the second was William Rowley's *The Birth of Merlin, or, The Child Hath Found his Father* (1622). Both plays were written in English for the commercial stage in London and so they are markedly different to Carleton's Latin college play. While Carleton's play is focused on Vortigern's monarchical problems, Middleton's play contains a comic subplot concerning Simon, the eponymous Mayor of Quinborough, and Rowley's contains a comic depiction of a woman giving birth to the fully grown wizard Merlin. Vortigern occupies a small role in both plays, particularly in *The Birth of Merlin*, where he features only briefly at the end before being burned in his tower. That these plays were produced for commercial gain for broad London audiences rather than educative instruction for Jesuit students does not mean that they lack educational value however. Both plays are preoccupied with exploring the complex nature of English national identity. While Hengist is both an invading force and a founder of the English nation, Middleton's play seeks to distance the Saxons. For instance, Hengist uses an Old English phrase to instruct his army to draw their weapons: "Nemp your sexes! [*The Saxons draw their swords on the British Lords*]." ⁴³⁴ The audience would understand the meaning of this phrase, which is a version of 'take your daggers', through the visual gloss but the sense of alterity is extant. Lucy Munro declares that the language in the play is used to other the invading Saxon force and thus "Protestant England is being distanced from its pagan forbears, who are associated instead with the Roman Catholic church." ⁴³⁵ Munro expands this argument to include *The Birth of Merlin*, which also constructs national identity through language. Within the play it is feared that the British association with Brutus, "old Brute and Brittain", will be linguistically replaced and destroyed by "Hingest-men, and Hingest-land." ⁴³⁶ National identity lies at the hearts of both plays, although it is not focused on throughout. For Carleton's play, on the other hand, it is personal identity which is integral, specifically the necessity of personal Catholic faith for public political action, and that is the focus of the play. The importance of integrating personal ethics into political action is also seen in Joseph Simons's *Theoctistus*, to which this chapter now turns.

THEOCTISTUS: THE SPECTACLE OF EVIL

While the moral focus of Jesuit theatre remained unchanged it developed from its modest dramatic beginnings into grandiose productions which captured the attention of people all over Europe. Parsimonious stage settings were replaced by elaborate theatrics, leading to far more

⁴³⁴ Thomas Middleton, *Hengist, King of Kent* in David J. Lake (ed.), *The Canon of Thomas Middleton's Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 4.3.22.

⁴³⁵ Munro, "Nemp your sexes!", (2014), p.748.

⁴³⁶ William Rowley, *The birth of Merlin, or, the Childe hath found his father* (London: Tho. Johnson for Francis Kirkman and Henry Marsh, 1662), 4.3.15–18.

spectacular plays. Devlin claims that “*Pietas Victrix* of Nicolas Avancini is generally considered to be the prototype of an emerging dramatic genre, the “spectacle play” (*ludus caesareus*)” (Devlin, p.142). Presented before Emperor Leopold in February 1659, *Pietas Victrix* features a journey into the underworld, earthquakes, and a battle in the air between an Austrian eagle and the dragon of *Impietas*. While it is undeniably elaborate, describing this play as a prototype serves to overlook Joseph Simons’s *Theoctistus*, which was performed in 1624, and is also situated in the ‘spectacle play’ genre. *Theoctistus* is an early representation of the Jesuit spectacle play, as it features a vast array of crowd-pleasing elements to sweeten its instruction concerning the nature of personal religious duty at a morally corrupt royal court.

Born Emmanuel Lobb, Joseph Simons was sent to Portugal at the age of eleven to become a merchant but was converted to Catholicism and sent to St Omer College. He entered the English College at Rome in 1616 before joining the Jesuit novitiate in 1619. He then taught at St Omer from 1623, where his tragedies were written and performed, and at Rome from 1647, where *Zeno* and *Mercia* were first printed in 1648. *Theoctistus* was printed at Liège in 1653, while his collected plays were published as *Tragoediae quinque* at Liège in 1656 and reprinted in 1657, 1680, and 1697.⁴³⁷ As Jesuit plays were rarely published, this print history suggests the popularity of Simons’s work. As well as being held in high regard as a playwright, he became the English provincial in 1667 and was consulted by the Duke of York, later King James II, about the Catholic faith, to which he shortly thereafter converted. Simons therefore had an impact on both the style of Jesuit drama on the continent and on the English political world. This dual interest is reflected in his plays, which are concerned with both religious duty and court intrigue. Even in *Mercia* and *Vitus*, which deal with Christianity’s clash with paganism, the plots are concerned with a political power struggle. Simons’s plays represent a shift away from martyr tragedies and towards a more popular form as they are reminiscent of the revenge tragedies and history plays performed on the London professional stage in earlier decades. Much like the histories written by Gager and Gwinne at Oxford, the lines between professional theatre and Jesuit theatre are ambiguous. While intended for different audiences, the methods employed by playwrights were not dissimilar. James A. Parente Jr. explains that Simons’s plays “exemplified the transformation of religious theater into political drama. The popular tyrants and martyrs of the preceding decades were no longer regarded exclusively as exempla of moral or immoral behaviour but as the tragic victims of courtly intrigues.”⁴³⁸ However, viewing the

⁴³⁷ Thompson Cooper revised by Alison Shell, ‘Lobb, Emmanuel [*alias* Joseph Simons] (1594–1671), Jesuit and playwright’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, posted 23/09/04. <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-25561>> [accessed 03/12/19].

⁴³⁸ James A. Parente, Jr., ‘Tyranny and Revolution on the Baroque Stage: The Dramas of Joseph Simons’, *Humanistica Lovaniensia*, 32 (1983), pp.309-324 (p.310).

characters as tragic victims could still aid the pedagogic aims of the plays. Character, along with elements such as ghosts and flying gods presented the audience with an enjoyable experience which enriched the potentially dull didacticism. *Theoctistus* exemplifies Simons's style of combining dramatic spectacle with religious instruction and this method proved highly popular with audiences. Along with its original performance in 1624, it was expanded and performed at the English College in Rome while Simons was rector between 1647 and 1650 and then, as Sutton explains, after it "had appeared in print, it was acted at Rome by students of the Seminarium Romanum, (the central seminary for the training of Jesuit priests, founded by Pius IV)."⁴³⁹ *Theoctistus* details the political struggle that took place over the underage Byzantine Emperor Michael III, taken from Caesar Baronius's Catholic history *Annales Ecclesiastici* (1588-1607). *Theoctistus*'s entanglement in court intrigue allows him to exemplify the virtues of personal religious duty in a public role.

The first act establishes the various courtiers who seek the downfall of the virtuous logothete. The first sign of trouble for *Theoctistus* occurs when Michael is sacrilegious in his grief over a dead friend and he chastises him: "Be sane, Caesar, and stifle these unworthy complaints. Rage hurled against heaven has a way of falling back down on the man who hurls it" (*Theo*, 1.6.525-7).⁴⁴⁰ This causes Michael to rage against *Theoctistus*: "you set a limit on my passionate grief? (*He erupts furiously.*) May heaven's forked fire, its evil stench, its fiery maelstrom laden with sulphurous flame, envelop you" (*Theo*, 1.6.528-31).⁴⁴¹ Bardas, Michael's uncle, seizes upon this spark of discord and advises Stilbo, his tutor, to take advantage of the situation:

Caesar himself is heated by the impulsiveness of youth and craves to wield the scepter by himself, his mother cast aside. Give him a push in the direction where he is leaning. Make him feel ashamed to be a man under the thumb of his helpless mother. Tell him that the government is being seized by *Theoctistus*' guile. If he wants to rule by himself, this man must be brought down wholly. (*Theo*, 1.8.649-54)⁴⁴²

Along with Jannes and his brother, Arsaverus, they target not only *Theoctistus*, but also Michael's mother who does not appear onstage and is given a voice by *Theoctistus*. Knowing

⁴³⁹ Joseph Simons, *Theoctistus* (1656), ed. and trans. by Dana F. Sutton (University of Birmingham: The Philological Museum, posted 2013) <<http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/theo/>> [accessed 04/06/20], 'Introduction'.

⁴⁴⁰ "Caesar, indignas preme / Sanus querelas. Iactus in coelum furor / Repetit furentem."

⁴⁴¹ "Tamen dolori ponis ardenti modum? / Erumpit furibundus. / Te fax trisulca, te malus coeli vapor, / Te turbo flammeus igne sulphureo gravis / Involvat, urat, foedet, incendat, necet."

⁴⁴² "Aetatis ipse Caesar impulsu calet, / Sceptrumque solus, matre deiecta, vovet. / Qua vergit urge. Pudeat imbelli virum / Subesse matri. Dic *Theoctisti* dolo / Regnum occupari. Sceptra si solus probet, / Hunc prouendum penitus."

that Michael is inexperienced in statecraft, they plan to manipulate his desire to escape custodianship. Sutton suggests that Simons dramatized Theoctistus's story because he saw its resemblance to the life of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, who served "as regent of England during the minority of Henry VI, who was brought down by a court combination led by Henry Cardinal Beaufort, arrested on a trumped-up charge of treason and, at least in the popular mind, was murdered at Beaufort's instigation" (Sutton, 'Introduction'). There are certainly parallels between the downfalls of Theoctistus and Gloucester and any audience member with an interest in English history may have identified this. Gloucester and his wife Eleanor were stock figures in Tudor and Stuart history writing, appearing as characters in the *Mirror for Magistrates*, Eleanor for witchcraft and Gloucester for treason, and as conspirers and necromancers in Shakespeare's *2 Henry VI* (1591).⁴⁴³

While there are no direct parallels between Simons's play and Shakespeare's, St Omer may have possessed a copy of Shakespeare's First Folio (Saint-Omer, BASO, inv. 2227) during Simons's residency. An ownership inscription indicates that it was either the property of Edmund Neville, who taught during the 1630s, or Edward Neville, who taught between 1664 and 1670. Simons's teaching stint at St Omer overlaps with Edmund Neville's and so he may have had access to the text but there is not enough information to determine ownership. The most heavily annotated plays, done in a hand from the second half of the seventeenth-century or the beginning of the eighteenth-century, are *1 Henry IV* and *Henry V* and they bear inscriptions which delete passages or clarify movement on stage. Jean-Christophe Mayer explains that "these features are characteristic of texts prepared for stage productions. Thus, there is good reason to believe that the Saint-Omer First Folio was used, notably for two of its plays, to stage Shakespeare."⁴⁴⁴ While this is not proof of Simons's direct engagement with Shakespeare, it does demonstrate that educators at St Omer were interested in commercial drama. Furthermore, despite Jesuit drama offering overt teaching, Shell notes that the "reception of these messages would have differed pronouncedly from person to person, depending on the degree to which the respondent was implicated with the Jesuit educative process" (Shell, 'Autodidacticism', p.38). That Jesuit plays offered instruction would not have been lost on external audience members but they were not viewing plays as a part of a scholastic curriculum and so may have seen the plays purely as entertainment. The student actors and audience members would have been more attuned to the educative lessons about duty. The actors who practised their lines repeatedly

⁴⁴³ See Cathy Shrank, "'Hoysted high vpon the rolling wheele": Elinor Cobham's Lament', in *A Mirror for Magistrates in Context*, ed. by Harriet Archer and Andrew Hadfield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Nina Levine, 'Authorizing History in *2 Henry VI*: The Case of Elinor Cobham', *Shakespeare Survey*, 22 (1994), pp.104-21.

⁴⁴⁴ Jean-Christophe Mayer, 'The Saint-Omer First Folio: Perspectives on a New Shakespearean Discovery', *Cahiers Élisabéthains*, 87 (Spring, 2015), pp.7-20 (p.11).

likely fully absorbed the message of the play, while the student spectators, although not as familiar with the lines, were trained to mine drama for instruction.

Theoctistus occupies a relatively minor role in the play but when he does appear he is strictly moralistic. For instance, when he catches a group of boys from the Emperor's retinue reading the fictitious *The Art of Conjuring Imps from the Realm of Dis* he moralizes to the audience about the vice of court:

This is a sample of the royal court. Unbridled youth whiles away the day. Wantonness, dice, wine, and Venus are the ABC's of their manners. When the first strength of their young years has been squandered by these forbidden arts, they attain to honors. Gaining a share in privileges, they preside over the forum and the battlefield, bereft of any illumination by facts. (*Theo*, 2.4.1040-45)⁴⁴⁵

This scene is given added didactic purpose because of the educative context of the drama, and so Theoctistus is lecturing both the boys in the play and the boys in the audience. While they are reading in jest, their attempt to conjure a demon is far from a joke within the world of the play because the supernatural realm is proven to exist. His tirade links court life with the immorality of "forbidden arts" and this connection between courtiers and evil is presented as very real through the machinations of those who seek Theoctistus's demise. While Theoctistus is admonitory, he does not push his religious beliefs as the solution. This method of dealing with political life in a moral, but not overtly Catholic, manner is less jarring than Bishop Wodinus's upright but stilted manner in *Fatum Vortigerni*. His religious orthodoxy is also softened because he holds no sacerdotal office and so his exemplary role is that of a courtier who maintains religious integrity in the face of political pressure. In this way the play functioned for both students who, as Shell argues, "would assent to the models on offer, actively internalizing them in readiness for occasions when real-life exemplary behaviour was needed" (Shell, 'Autodidacticism', p.35), and for audience members external to the college who could admire Theoctistus's general religious virtue rather than being repelled by an aggressive doctrine. *Theoctistus* allows for this broad appeal because it preaches individual religious duty rather than the systemic implementation of one religion.

Simons wraps this message about religious duty within spectacular theatrical effects. While the wizard Merlin is cut from the plot of *Fatum Vortigerni*, *Theoctistus* leans into magical elements

⁴⁴⁵ "Hoc specimen aulae. Ludit effraenis diem / Iuventa. Luxus, tesserae, merum, Venus, / Elementa morum. Cumque per vetitas semel / Diffluxit artes primus annorum vigor, / Prensant honores. Iura partiti, forum / Martemque, rerum luce viduati, regunt."

to captivate the audience. Jannes leads Stilbo to a dark magic shrine and after discussing their hatred of Theoctistus, the setting changes at Jannes's command:

(He stamps the ground with his foot. The scene suddenly changes into a hideous grove, where can be seen the mouth of a dark cavern, looking as if it were an entrance to the Underworld.) Behold the gate of Dis, the threshold of his underworldly home. There the dark lake of the shades has its outlet, this is a highway for its ghosts. The vast maw of this immense cave gapes open, leading to the lowest basement of Tartarus. (Theo, 2.1.759-621)⁴⁴⁶

In Greek mythology Tartarus was a dungeon which imprisoned those dangerous to the gods, most notably the Titans, but it later became a place for all sinners to face punishment. That Jannes can conjure this hell by the stamp of a foot turns him from a devious courtier into an evil conjurer. Stilbo agrees to pledge himself to Jannes and the scene again changes: “*(A rock opens, and a sort of chapel can be seen, with an altar bearing a goat. Around it are walls and an assortment of human body parts, hung up as if they were votive offerings.)*” (Theo, 2.1.785).⁴⁴⁷ These rapid changes were likely accomplished through painted cloth backdrops being drawn apart like curtains. Alternatively, although less likely, Fülöp-Miller explains that in some theatres “the wings were arranged in triangular revolving prisms, so that a treble change of scene could be effected by simply moving a lever” (Fülöp-Miller, p.418). The inclusion of the goat in the chapel is an explicit connection to sin and Satan, who was often represented as such or as having cloven hooves.⁴⁴⁸ In the Bible goats are used as symbols of sin: “And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on the left.”⁴⁴⁹ The left had wicked connotations, translating to *sinister* in Latin, and this choice is deliberate: “Then shall he say to them on the left hand, Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels.”⁴⁵⁰ The dark magic elements are then expanded upon with the creation of a wax figure of Theoctistus which is used as a kind of voodoo doll. Arsaverus commands: “Take this image of the unspeakable man. Whatever evil thing you do to this will be suffered by Theoctistus himself” (Theo, 2.2.904-6).⁴⁵¹ The scene then changes again:

⁴⁴⁶ “*Pede terram percutit. Scena repente mutatur in lucum horrendum, ubi apparet os nigrae cavernae velut ostium inferorum. / IAN. En porta Ditis, limen infernae domus. / Hic solvit ora furvus umbrarum lacus, / Hic manibus iter. Vastus immenso patet / Hiatus antro, Tartari ad fundum ultimum.*”

⁴⁴⁷ “*Rupe apertra visitur quasi sacellum cum ara hircum gestante, circa parietes, varia membra corporis humani tanquam anathemata.*”

⁴⁴⁸ See Malcolm Gaskill, *Witchcraft: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁴⁴⁹ St. Jerome, *Biblia Sacra Vulgatæ* (Rome: Typographus Vaticanus, 1592), Matthaicum 25:33. “et statuet oves quidem a dextris suis, haedos autem a sinistris.”

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid*, Matthaicum 25:41. “Tunc dicet et his qui a sinistris erunt: Discedite a me maledicti in ignem aeternum, qui paratus est diabolo, et angelis ejus.”

⁴⁵¹ “*Nefandi prende simulacrum viri. / Huic tu malorum quidquid appones, geret / Theoctistus ipse.*”

(*The chapel is transformed into an apothecary's shop.*)

ARS. The shop is open for business.

STIL. Display its deadly wares.

ARS. (*He shows him different poisons contained in various vials, with which an effigy is anointed.*) Here we have the Hydra's blood.

STIL. Let it pour its plague into his veins.

ARS. And the juice of Stygian hemlock.

STIL. Let it pass within his jaws and inflame his throat.

ARS. The foam of the three-headed hound.

STIL. Let it bury its rabies in his marrow. (*Theo*, 2.2.911-4)⁴⁵²

The pair smear the effigy of Theoctistus with a potion made from a variety of toxins from Greek mythology, including the blood of the Lernaean Hydra, a many-headed serpent monster that is killed by Hercules, poison extracted from the Styx, the river which separates Earth and the Underworld, and saliva from Cerberus, the three-headed dog of Hades. Natalie Armitage clarifies that the type of magic associated with “the ‘voodoo doll’ has its origins in the magical practice of Europe, not that of a colonial syncretic religion, like Vodou, or even the cultures of the West African people taken to the Americas during the colonial slave trade.”⁴⁵³ Armitage further elucidates that in early modern England image magic “was believed by many people, including monarchs and ecclesiastics, to be sufficiently powerful at this time to be a threat to any individual” (Armitage, p.89). Therefore, the inclusion of the voodoo doll in *Theoctistus* was not necessarily seen as purely fantastical.

An attempt upon Elizabeth I's life through witchcraft is documented in the Acts of the Privy Council, which details four women being arrested at Windsor in 1579 because “they have made away and brought to their deaths by certen pictures of waxe of certen persons” and that “there hath bene latelie discovered a practise of that device very likelie to be intended to the distruction of her Majesties person.”⁴⁵⁴ James VI and I also dealt with suspected attempts on his life and a notable instance was recorded in the pamphlet *Newes from Scotland* (1591) which details a group from North Berwick seeking his death through manipulation of the weather. James also published *Daemonologie* (1603), a dissertation on witchcraft, which mentions that

⁴⁵² “*Sacellum vertitur in officinam apothecarii. / ARS. Patet officina. / STIL. Prome funestas opes. / In variis ampullis exhibet diversa venena, quibus ungitur effigies. / ARS. En sanguis Hydrae. / STIL. Fundat in venas luem. / ARS. Stygiae cicutae succus. / STIL. In fauces eat, / Flammetque guttur. / ARS. Spuma tergimini canis. / STIL. Rabiem medullis condat.*”

⁴⁵³ Natalie Armitage, ‘European and African figural ritual magic: The beginnings of the voodoo doll myth’ in *The Materiality of Magic: An Artifactual Investigation into Ritual Practices and Popular Beliefs*, ed. by Ceri Houlbrook and Natalie Armitage (Pennsylvania: Oxbow Books, 2015), pp.85-101 (pp.85-6).

⁴⁵⁴ Acts of the Privy Council, New Series, XI, 22 (January 16, 1578-79).

people can “make Pictures of Waxe and Clay: That by the roasting thereof, the Persons that they beare the Name of, may be continually melted or dryed away by continuall sicknesse.”⁴⁵⁵ The Jesuit scholar Martín Antonio del Río’s three volumes of *Disquisitiones Magicae* (1599-1600) became the Catholic authority on witchcraft and describe that with the aid of evil spirits a witch can make an image of a person and “stick pins in them, or melt them in the fire, or break them in pieces, and this makes sure that those people represented by the images waste away or suffer some other kind of death.”⁴⁵⁶ This is the type of witchcraft which Eleanor Cobham was accused of using against Henry VI. The *Mirror for Magistrates* tells of “How she in waxe by counsel of the witch, / An Image made, crowned like a king, / [...] which dayly they did pytch / Against a fyre, that as the waxe did melt, / So should his lyfe consume away vnfelt.”⁴⁵⁷ Simons may well have been drawing on Eleanor’s notorious dabbling in witchcraft, which parallels the witchcraft in this scene. The goat on the altar, body parts as votive offerings, and the use of a voodoo doll heighten the spectacle of the play, while also transforming the courtiers from ruthless politicians into satanic magicians.

Despite the effort taken to represent the supernatural evil of the courtiers, they also employ more traditionally political, and effective, means of destroying their enemy. Basilius, another courtier bent on Theoctistus’s demise, convinces the Emperor to turn on him:

To you he relegates the empty name of ruler and a transitory brilliance, while appropriating for himself decrees, powers, and rights. Why do you languish so long on your throne, Caesar, held down by other men’s strength, will, and hand? [...] Show us proof of your proud character. (*Theo*, 2.7.1271-4, 1275)⁴⁵⁸

Basilius accuses his enemy of allowing Michael the title but hoarding the power for himself. He goads Michael into acting out against Theoctistus in order to demonstrate his strength of character. Michael’s method of dealing with issues of kingship is further developed by advice from Stilbo, who recommends to “[m]ake a show of worshiping God and the crew of saints. Religion, that delightful invention of the ancients, restrains peoples with its faith and its fear. [...] All that tribe of priests should steer clear of the court” (*Theo*, 3.1.1311-4, 1320-1).⁴⁵⁹ Stilbo’s advice to pretend to be religious while not actually being so aligns with Machiavelli’s

⁴⁵⁵ James VI and I, *Daemonologie, in forme of a dialogue* (London: William Cotton and William Aspley, 1603), p.44.

⁴⁵⁶ Martín Antonio del Río, *Investigations into Magic*, trans. by P. G. Maxwell-Stuart (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p.126.

⁴⁵⁷ William Baldwin, *The last part of the Mirour for magistrates* (London: Thomas Marsh, 1578), fol.45^r.

⁴⁵⁸ “Tibi vana regni nomina, caducum iubar, / Decreta, vires, iura, transcribit sibi. / Quid longum inertii, Caesar, in solio iaces, / Pressus alienis viribus, nutu, manu? / [...] Superbi specimen ingenii refer.”

⁴⁵⁹ “Deum / Superumque vulgus primus in specimen cole. / Religio, priscis dulce figmentum, fide / Metuque populos fraenat [...] / Omne mystarum genus / Absistat aula.”

guidance in *The Prince* (1532): “seeming to have [virtuous qualities] is useful; for instance, to seem merciful, trustworthy, humane, upright and devout.”⁴⁶⁰ This undermines Theoctistus’s genuinely religious position and Stilbo further discredits him by declaring that priests should not be at court. Stilbo also presents Michael with immoral methods of gaining wealth:

At one time, announce a war you never intend to wage. [...] Let anything in your realm, sacred or profane, be put up for sale: the honor of the purple toga, the fasces, the tiara, offices, the senate, and the courtroom with its laws, its bench, and ordinances. When nothing else remains, invent new grades of noble honors for men to purchase. (*Theo*, 3.1.1353-4, 1361-5)⁴⁶¹

Stilbo recommends taking advantage of common people and courtiers alike. Simons potentially took these strategies from the kings of his birth country. In 1496 the pretender Perkin Warbeck invaded England and Henry VII subsequently raised money to protect his throne from further attack from Scotland. However, a war with Scotland never materialised which allowed Henry to absorb the money into his own coffers. While Henry VII invented excuses for levies, many years later James VI and I created new noble positions for purchase. Glen Mynott explains that by “December 1604 James created 1,161 new knights, trebling the existing number in less than two years. Large-scale corruption seems to have been involved, with many undeserving cases having bought recommendation to the king.”⁴⁶² Although Simons does not include these events as direct criticism of either king, their underhand methods for gaining wealth are certainly examples for a virtuous person to avoid.

Despite continuous encouragement for Michael to remove Theoctistus, the young Emperor is hesitant to act against his guardian and mother. He claims that “[t]he laws of nature forbid a man to do violence to his mother” (*Theo*, 3.6.1795).⁴⁶³ Bardas, growing frustrated, argues,

BARD. Nature enjoins you to do whatever serves your advantage. If some recalcitrant parent resists this law, I trample on that parent. You are manufacturing delays, Caesar. You must finally make up your mind. Tell us, do you feel that Theoctistus’ death should be prepared?
EMP. I do.

⁴⁶⁰ Machiavelli, *The Prince* (1988), p.61.

⁴⁶¹ “Nunc bellum cane / Nunquam gerendum. [...] / Venale prostet quidquid in regno sacrum, / Quidquid prophanum est. Decora purpureae togae, / Fasces, tiarae, munia, senatus, forum, / Leges, tribunal, iura. Cum superat nihil / Novos honorum finge, quos emant, gradus.”

⁴⁶² Glen Mynott, “We must not be more true to kings / Than Kings are to their subjects’: France and the Politics of the Ancient Constitution in Chapman’s Byron Plays”, *Renaissance Studies*, 9 (1995), pp.477-93 (p.492).

⁴⁶³ “Vim ferre matri iura naturae vetant.”

BARD. And remove your mother far from the court?

EMP. I do.

BARD. You assume sole government of your realms.

EMP. I assume it, I embrace it, I want it. (*Theo*, 3.6.1798-1804)⁴⁶⁴

Bardas puts pressure on the young Emperor by scolding him like a child. It is not dark magic or subtle manipulation which convinces Michael; it is being continually harassed by a group of older courtiers. Once Theoctistus is murdered, the conspirators turn on each other, throwing the court into chaos. Jannes is then possessed and after attacking his brother, he lashes out at his tormentor: “You continue to threaten me, you hateful shade? Let my blows be redoubled. May your pain endure forever. (*Suddenly Jannes collapses, as though dead. Soon, after his brother has departed, he returns to himself and is snatched up by a flying chariot drawn by serpents or fire-breathing horses.*)” (*Theo*, 5.3.2642-3).⁴⁶⁵ A flying chariot being pulled by mythical creatures is another lavish set piece which would have required machinery and elaborate props. Either this was spectacular because of the ingenuity of the effects, or it was unintentionally comical because of the failure to adequately stage something so grand. Either way, Simons’s use of extravagant (or amusing) stage effects may have induced the audience to be more receptive to the play’s message that duty to God is imperative to fulfilling governmental duties. Many of these effects depict the supernatural and the final scene follows this by featuring Theoctistus’s ghost continually appearing and disappearing to torment Bardas, evocative of Banquo’s ghost in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* (1606). The spectre of Theoctistus is able to control Bardas’s motion: “Albeit unwillingly, I am being taken where the shade drives me. Is this the ending of my affairs? Is this the profit of my prideful attitude?” (*Theo*, 5.7.1866-7).⁴⁶⁶ This scene is presented as retribution being served by a divinely guided being. The majority of magic in the play has been black magic and this has been clearly telegraphed to the audience with props such as wax dolls, goats, and body parts, all of which were firmly associated with necromancy. Theoctistus appears without any symbols, and unlike the dark magic, actually has an effect. God is not present as a figure in the play but Theoctistus’s power after death suggests God’s existence and serves as validation of his maintenance of religious duty while at the royal court. While the evil courtiers succeed in murdering Theoctistus and ruling the court, their power quickly crumbles and so demonstrates the folly of their disregard for religion. Thus, the play prescribes personal virtue and adherence to God’s law as vital for the preservation of

⁴⁶⁴ “BARD. Natura quidvis, quo tibi prosis, iubet. / Quam si refigat pertinax legem parens, / Calco parentem. Caesar, innectis moras. / Decerne tandem. Dic, Theoctisto necem / Sentis parandam? / IMP. Sentio. / BARD. Matrem procul / Moves ab aula? / IMP. Moveo.”

⁴⁶⁵ “Etiam minaris, umbra detestabilis? / Geminentur ictus. Perstet aeternum dolor. / *Iannes repente cadit tanquam mortuus, mox fratre egresso redit ad se et curru aereo a serpentibus vel equis igneis tracto abripitur.*”

⁴⁶⁶ “Quo me lacessit umbra, vel nolens feror. / Haec meta rerum? Mentis hoc tumidae lucrum?”

harmony at the political court.

Both *Fatum Vortigerni* and *Theoctistus* present the lesson that duty to God is integral to familial and political duties, but they do so in different ways. *Fatum Vortigerni* is representative of early Jesuit drama in that there is no elaborate stage dressing to accompany the educative morals. *Theoctistus* by contrast, while still prompting religious duty, does so through the elaborate stage effects for which Jesuit drama came to be known. Jesuit plays becoming more lavish served to engage people external to the colleges, thus spreading to a wider audience the message of Christian virtue being essential to political duty. This was further aided by playwrights sometimes promoting general religious devotion, rather than explicitly polemical Catholic ideals. Therefore, audience members from outwith the college were more likely to absorb the message, while the Jesuit students could still extract the expected values to contribute towards their own learning. In both *Fatum Vortigerni* and *Theoctistus* this learning is about how Christian duty is essential for the fulfilment of political duty. While more students would be expected to become priests or confessors to kings, rather than political courtiers, these roles were not devoid of political significance. The absorption of lessons about morality and duty was enhanced by the inclusion of spectacular stage effects. An entertained audience was more likely to pay attention and thus more likely to engage with the instruction and then actively practice that instruction. This method of blurring education and entertainment together brought Jesuit drama closer in line with the style of drama on the professional stage in London. This is not to say that Jesuit theatres and London playhouses were producing analogous plays; indeed the professional stage was not prescriptive in its educational messages and the type of entertainment on offer differed, but to separate them fully creates a false dichotomy. While Jesuit and London playwrights had different aims in writing, the basic method of combining entertaining features, such as music, visual spectacle, and character development, with political instruction, whether unequivocal or ambiguous, was common to both. The next chapter turns to the ambiguous instruction from the professional London stage, using Shakespeare's *Henriad* to exemplify the ways in which popular drama combined theatricality and didacticism to explore the ideals and ethics of duty in a less straightforward way than Jesuit drama.

6. THE THEATRICALITY OF POLITICAL DUTY IN SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORIES

This chapter moves away from sites of educational development and towards plays written for the professional stage in the Liberties of London. The biggest difference between the drama of the academic and popular stages is not in the dynamic between education and entertainment, but in the clarity of their aims and messages. Both stages could be educational, but where the instruction in academic drama was usually straightforward, the popular stage tended towards more cryptic lessons. As Kathryn M. Moncrief and Kathryn R. McPherson state: "Education cannot be narrowly defined in this, or in any, era—it happened in schoolrooms to be sure, but also in dimly lit churches, paneled closets, crowded streets, and rowdy playhouses."⁴⁶⁷

Playhouses were a site for political thought and education but they tended towards ambiguity and so were much less didactically axiomatic than academic theatre. This ambiguity is further heightened because plays were not written with a specialised audience in mind, but appealed to a broader cross-section of early modern society. Despite this, history was understood to be educational during the early modern period and this carried through to history plays. While the few documented examples of theatre goes using history plays in the development of political ideas cannot be equated to the entire audience responding in this way, the ability to use plays in this way certainly existed.

Despite not having an overtly pedagogical purpose, the history plays of the popular stage were no less concerned with duty. To illustrate this, and recover the popular concern for duty, this chapter will focus on Shakespeare's *Henry V* (1599) but will also look to *Richard II* (1595), *1 Henry IV* (1597), and *2 Henry IV* (1598), as well as to the anonymous *Famous Victories of Henry V* (c. 1586-7) and Anthony Munday, Michael Drayton, Richard Hathwaye, and Robert Wilson's *Sir John Oldcastle* (1599). *Henry V* occupies an important position in the development of the history play. It stands at the peak of the genre's popularity; it caps Shakespeare's second tetralogy; it is in dialogue with the earlier *Famous Victories* and the later *Oldcastle*; and it was first performed on the brink of Queen Elizabeth's death which was an imminent concern because of her sustained refusal to name an heir. Staged at an important time for both the history of England and for the history play, *Henry V* is deeply aware of its position in this regard. However, rather than offering advice to Elizabeth and her advisors as the Inns of Court's *Misfortunes of Arthur* and Oxford's *Dido do*, *Henry V* takes a less direct approach.

⁴⁶⁷ Kathryn M. Moncrief and Kathryn R. McPherson, "'Shall I teach you to know?': Intersections of Pedagogy, Performance, and Gender' in *Performing Pedagogy in Early Modern England: Gender, Instruction, and Performance*, ed. by Kathryn M. Moncrief and Kathryn R. McPherson (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2011), pp.1-17 (p.17).

Shakespeare presents a philosophical questioning of duty and statesmanship instead of providing practical instruction about the duties of a statesman through the exemplum of Hal's journey to and through kingship. The Henriad takes part in a broader cultural conversation about public figures and their moral and political duties. Thus, Shakespeare's second tetralogy is concerned with what constitutes public duty in the same way as academic drama, but the plays are exploratory rather than explicitly educative. Of course, Shakespeare is not representative of the commercial stage as a whole though. *Famous Victories* and *Oldcastle* stand as points of contrast as they are more easily decipherable in terms of lessons which can be extracted, although *Famous Victories* edges towards ambiguity. Furthermore, they were still performed before non-specialized audiences and whether the educational value of them was received or not is unknown.

SETTING THE SCENE: THE LONDON STAGE

With the building of The Theatre in 1576 and its successors on the outskirts of London, commercial drama was in a more economically stable position than ever before. These purpose-built playhouses allowed for the development of professional actors and playwrights. Many of these playwrights had experience at Oxford, Cambridge, and/or the Inns of Court and so the didactic interests with which academic drama was imbued often carried over onto the popular stage. However, the plays attracted more diverse crowds, with less wealthy attendees paying the lowest price to stand in the yard, while more wealthy citizens could pay extra for seats in the roofed galleries. Michael Hattaway argues that the dominant group were students from the Inns: "the Bankside playhouses were almost opposite the Inns of Court where there were approximately 1,000 students in residence, drawn from the more moneyed groups in the land."⁴⁶⁸ Similarly, Ann Jennalie Cook concludes that "far from reflecting a cross-section of society, the spectators came chiefly from the upper levels of the social order."⁴⁶⁹ However, the privileged were more likely to leave behind signs of their presence, and so while the extant evidence points to their dominance, its fragmentary nature is not authoritative. Although audiences were heterogeneous to some degree, that the demographic makeup cannot be precisely ascertained fundamentally resists generalizations about reaction. Andrew Gurr comments that the audience is "the most inconstant, elusive, unfixed element of the Shakespearean performance text."⁴⁷⁰ Rebecca Yearling embraces elusiveness and the

⁴⁶⁸ Michael Hattaway, *Elizabethan Popular Theatre: Plays in Performance* (London: Routledge, 2005), p.50.

⁴⁶⁹ Ann Jennalie Cook, *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London, 1576-1642* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p.8.

⁴⁷⁰ Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987; 2004), p.5.

discrepancy of spectator emotions, thereby exploring “the ways in which early modern drama can be slippery, inviting complex, changing and even self-contradictory types of audience response.”⁴⁷¹ Jennifer Low and Nova Myhill differentiate between the collective audience towards whom the playwright directs the performance and the individual spectator. These two categories “represent fundamentally different understandings of what happens in the theater, with the former privileging the performative authority of the play and the latter the interpretive authority of the playgoer.”⁴⁷² While audience response can never be ascertained with certainty, these ways of figuring *possible* response allow for a degree of complexity not afforded by simply inferring response based on one factor.⁴⁷³

While the exact composition of audiences of professional drama cannot be established, they were certainly more varied than the audiences of Inns, Cambridge, and Oxford plays. These audiences largely comprised of students and courtiers, while professional theatre also attracted less educated and non-elite spectators. Gurr argues that these spectators formed an audience which was “an active participant in the collective experience of playgoing” (Gurr, p.53). Educational institutions prescribed this active participation, but audiences of the professional theatre were no less active. The performance of history plays meant that everybody could now engage with and in public discourses about politics, where previously this was restricted to environs such as the court and universities. Peter Lake explains that “putting history on stage enabled audiences to feel not only that they were watching history take place before their eyes, but also that they were being made privy to the way in which politics really worked.”⁴⁷⁴ Mass audiences could now see history plays, in Lake’s words, “strip away the carapace of pretended virtue from the official version of events and thus [...] reveal the realities of both ancient and contemporary politics” (Lake, p.37). While history plays being presented to such varied audiences meant that some knowledge of the workings of politics was moving beyond the court, they did not provide an open doorway through which to enter into governmental debates. Still, histories afforded people a small degree of political insight into the inner mechanisms of government and so theatres became sites of political thought where matters of statecraft were interrogated.

⁴⁷¹ Rebecca Yearling, ‘Emotion, Cognition and Spectator Response in the Plays of Shakespeare’, *Cultural History*, 7 (2018), pp.129-44 (p.133).

⁴⁷² Jennifer A. Low and Nova Myhill (eds.), *Imagining the Audience in Early Modern Drama, 1558-1642* (New York: 2011), p.2.

⁴⁷³ For further discussions of audience response see Jeremy Lopez, *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); and Bettina Boeckler, *Imagining Shakespeare’s Original Audience, 1660-2000* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

⁴⁷⁴ Lake, *How Shakespeare Put Politics on the Stage* (2016), p.2.

Thomas Heywood in his *An Apology for Actors* (1612) saw this political insight as fostering a respect for royal authority: “Playes are writ in this ayme, and carryed with this methode, to teach the subjects obedience to their King, to shew the people the untimely ends of such as have moved tumults, commotions, and insurrections.”⁴⁷⁵ Conversely, Stephen Gosson in his *Playes Confuted in Five Actions* (1582) believed that the theatre created a critical public: “Tailers, Tinkers, Cordwayners, Saylers, olde Men, yong Men, Women, Boyes, Girles, and such like, be the iudges of faultes there painted out, the rebuking of manners in that place, is neyther lawfull nor conuenient, but to be helde for a kinde of libelling, and defaming.”⁴⁷⁶ Despite differing in their assessments of the moral worth of plays, both authors believed they offered significant insight into the workings of royal power. However, theatre was neither intrinsically subversive nor affirming of authority. Jean E. Howard claims that public theatre was “a vehicle for ideological contestation and social change” and so “in this period theatrical power was real power.”⁴⁷⁷ History plays were inherently political, but not necessarily straightforwardly patriotic or dissident. David Scott Kastan argues that regardless of “their overt ideological content, history plays inevitably, if unconsciously, weakened the structure of authority: on stage the king became a subject – the subject of the author’s imaginings and the subject of the attention and judgment of an audience of subjects.”⁴⁷⁸ Previously monarchs were only seen in tightly controlled displays of royal authority but while their representation on stage opened them up to be publicly judged, this representation did not necessarily weaken their authority. Kastan further argues that the stage’s “counterfeit of royalty raises the possibility that royalty is a counterfeit” (Kastan, p.464). The revelation that royal power is founded partially upon theatricality does not necessarily mean that audiences began to view royalty as counterfeits though. Rather than stripping royalty of their divine authority, it allowed audiences to understand the necessity of theatricality to carrying out the public duties of leadership.

Queen Elizabeth used theatrical self-presentation to bolster her political effectiveness, with Urszula Kizelbach asserting that she “was extremely aware of the power of theatrical display, and she manipulated her public image and gender to pave the way for herself in the world of early modern politics.”⁴⁷⁹ Elizabeth acknowledged this connection between theatre and kingship in her speech to Parliament in 1586: “for we princes, I tell you, are set on stages in the sight and view of all the world duly observed. The eyes of many behold our actions, a spot is soon spied

⁴⁷⁵ Heywood, *An Apology for Actors* (1612), Book III, sig.F3^v.

⁴⁷⁶ Stephen Gosson, *Playes Confuted in Five Actions* (London: Thomas Gosson, 1582), sig.D1^r.

⁴⁷⁷ Jean E. Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1993), p.18.

⁴⁷⁸ David Scott Kastan, ‘Proud Majesty Made a Subject: Shakespeare and the Spectacle of Rule’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 37.4 (Winter, 1986), pp.459-475 (p.461).

⁴⁷⁹ Urszula Kizelbach, *The Pragmatics of Early Modern Politics: Power and Kingship in Shakespeare's History Plays* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2014), p.75.

in our garments, a blemish quickly noted in our doings.”⁴⁸⁰ The similarity of actors and royalty allows for an apt comparison but also draws attention to the fact that royalty *are* actors. Elizabeth had no qualms about drawing attention to this because the politicians she was addressing had the authority to be privy to the inner theatrical workings of power. However, history plays allowed the common spectator to be privy to this information too and so history plays were crucial to the theatre becoming a politically important medium.

History during the early modern period was intended to be actively used, as humanist training encouraged people to, in Lake’s words, “extract from various accounts of the past crucial insights and apothegms with which to engage with contemporary concerns and dilemmas” (Lake, p.34). History plays were presented to the audience with political and didactic potential, and the vast majority of them had a specific interest in notions of duty. For instance, Christopher Marlowe’s Elizabethan *Edward II* (1592) displays the conflict which occurs when King Edward prioritizes his personal relationship with Piers Gaveston over his royal duty. In the Jacobean period, Ben Jonson in his Roman history plays, *Sejanus His Fall* (1603) and *Catiline His Conspiracy* (1611), presents a world populated by manipulative political players which results in an unstable government devoid of dutiful ideals. Philip Massinger’s Caroline *The Roman Actor* (1626) demonstrates the chaos that occurs when Emperor Domitian chooses to serve his own selfish desires rather than the needs of the country. Shakespeare’s interest in history spanned his entire career, with his two English history tetralogies, *King John* (c. 1596) and *Henry VIII* (1613) outwith these collections, an assortment of Roman plays, and a few plays typically classed as tragedies but which depict history, such as *Macbeth* (1606). All of his histories present a public figure who is either not fit for the role or who experiences conflicting duties. Shakespeare’s second tetralogy is focused on the complicated nature of royal duty and the difficulty of trying to abide by it. *Richard II* presents a lawful king whose obsession with the theatrics of kingship obscures the necessary pragmatism of royal duty. The *Henry IV* plays depict a king who is well versed in statecraft but fails to unite this with the ceremony and iconography of kingship. *Henry V* stands at the pinnacle of these plays and features a king who combines the strengths of Richard II and Henry IV, but nonetheless questions public duty. Shakespeare’s *Henriad* is both politically engaged and metatheatrical, with *Henry V* in particular being conscious about the connection between history and drama, while also philosophically engaging with the burdens of kingship and duty.

THE THEATRICALITY OF PRINCE HAL

⁴⁸⁰ *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, ed. Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p.194.

A reasonable number of spectators would have seen *1* and *2 Henry IV* or at least have been aware of Henry's reputation and so they would have attended *Henry V* with some idea of what to expect. Henry's transformation from ruffian prince into hero king was etched onto the early modern collective conscience through the histories of Hall and Holinshed, the ballads which circulated in folk memory as a sung tradition, as well as through *The Famous Victories*, and so Shakespeare's changes to this account would have been evident.⁴⁸¹ *1 Henry IV* opens with the planning of a robbery, during which Hal intends to play a practical joke on Falstaff by disguising himself and robbing his friend so that he can mock him later when he lies about the turn of events. With the mischievous identity of the group established, Hal then reveals himself in a soliloquy:

I know you all, and will awhile uphold
The unyoked humor of your idleness.
Yet herein will I imitate the sun,
Who doth permit the base contagious clouds
To smother up his beauty from the world,
That, when he please again to be himself,
Being wanted, he may be more wondered at
By breaking through the foul and ugly mist
Of vapors that did seem to strangle him.⁴⁸²

Hal discloses that he is not evading his princely duties in favour of delinquency or fun; rather, he is tightly controlling the image he presents so that he can reveal his regal self at the most opportune moment. The purpose of doing this, he claims, is because "My reformation, glitt'ring o'er my fault, / Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes / Than that which hath no foil to set it off" (*IHIV*, 1.2.203-5). This soliloquy is delivered in the future tense, signifying Hal's acute attentiveness to his future role. He is deeply aware of the importance of image to kingship and believes he will look all the more virtuous for having had an immoral past. Hal's insight into the presentation of political duty and authority was copied out by a reader on a single quarto leaf, now preserved in a composite volume of historical papers, and is dated "April 14 / Anno / Domi 1620."⁴⁸³ This reader noting down Hal's soliloquy demonstrates at least one person being interested in the most politically astute part of the play. After his revealing speech to the audience, Hal publically proclaims that "when I am king of England, I shall command all

⁴⁸¹ For instance, see *A new Ballad, intituled, The Battell of Agen-Court, in France, betweene the Englishmen and the Frenchmen* (1615), Early English Broadside Ballad Archive (EEBA) ID: 20278. While not published until after the performance of *Henry V*, it likely circulated orally beforehand.

⁴⁸² William Shakespeare, *Henry IV: Part 1* (1597), ed. by David Scott Kastan (London: Bloomsbury, 2002), 1.2.185-193.

⁴⁸³ BL, MS Egerton 2446, fol.13^r.

the good lads of Eastcheap” (*IHIV*, 2.4.13-4) because “I can drink with any tinker in his own language during my life” (*IHIV*, 2.4.17-9). While his transformation is sometimes seen as occurring through his education in the tavern, on the battlefield, and at the court, Lake argues that the *Henry IV* plays present “not a sudden transformation, a Saul-on-the-road-to-Damascus conversion, but a long-planned, and entirely calculated, performance or facsimile of such a transformation” (Lake, p.349). Hal’s time spent in the Boar’s Head Inn is not about developing his princely education and understanding his duty to his people; he already understands that, as the soliloquy quoted above makes clear. Rather it is part of his performance to enhance his future regal façade. Thus, Hal’s transformation is symbolic and aligns with Machiavelli’s advice: “seeming to have [virtuous qualities] is useful; for instance, to seem merciful, trustworthy, humane, upright and devout.”⁴⁸⁴ Hal understands that ‘seeming’ is more important than ‘being’ and so he is projecting an image of being a prodigal prince in order to enhance his future virtue. However, Cicero believes that morality and politics are inextricably intertwined, and so seeming immoral is the same as being immoral: “For what difference does it make whether a man is actually transformed into a beast or whether, keeping the outward appearance of a man, he has the savage nature of a beast within?”⁴⁸⁵ While Hal’s conduct is in service of the country and may be politically effective, in Ciceronian terms, it is still morally corrupting. The complex nature of ‘seeming’ is also developed in Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure* (1604), where the strict steward Angelo seems to be a virtuous upholder of justice but his hypocrisy becomes apparent through his attempts to seduce Isabella. However, the play is not straightforwardly critical of ‘seeming’. Isabella arranges a bed trick to make it seem as though she sleeps with Angelo, while the Duke wears a disguise and seems to be friar. These moments are not depicted as morally compromising, indicating, as in *Henry V*, that ‘seeming’ rather than ‘being’ is not inherently negative.

Shakespeare’s Hal stands in direct contrast to the Hal from the anonymous *Famous Victories of Henry V*, one of Shakespeare’s dramatic sources. Both plays open with the highway robbery but while Shakespeare’s Hal abstains from the crime in order to mock Falstaff’s cowardice, the Prince Harry of *Famous Victories* takes delight in committing the crime: “A hundred pound! Now, bravely spoken, Jockey. But come, sirs, lay all your money before me.”⁴⁸⁶ Hal stands apart from his tavern friends and this distance is heightened when we learn that his behaviour is part of a greater plan, but Harry’s pleasure in villainy is not an act. This is reinforced when Harry genuinely wishes for the death of his father so that he can bring his friends to court with

⁴⁸⁴ Machiavelli, *The Prince* (1988), p.61.

⁴⁸⁵ Cicero, *De Officiis* (1913), III: 83.

⁴⁸⁶ Anonymous, *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth: Containing the Honourable Battell of Agincourt* (London: Thomas Creede, 1598), II.43-4.

him: “my lads, if the old king my father were dead, we would be all king.” (*FV*, 1.499-500) Furthermore, the audience is shown the prince punching the Lord Chief Justice: “*He giveth him a boxe on the ear*” (*FV*, SD.390). This follows the account given in Edward Hall’s *The Union*: “for the imprisonment of one of his wanton mates and vnthrifitie plaisaiers he [Henry] strake the chiefe Justice with his fiste on the face.”⁴⁸⁷ According to *Tarltons Jestes*, in *Famous Victories* this is played for comedic effect: “Tarlton himselfe (euer forward to please) tooke vpon him to play the same Iudge, besides his owne part of the Clowne: and Knel then playing Henry the fift, hit Tarlton a sound boxe indeed, which made the people laugh the more because it was he.”⁴⁸⁸ As well as being humorous, the prince hitting a court official amplifies his unruly reputation. Shakespeare does not stage this violence, instead opting to have Falstaff merely mention it: “For the boxe of the ear that the Prince gave you, he gave it like a rude prince, and you took it like a sensible lord.”⁴⁸⁹ Shakespeare’s omission of this moment on stage serves to soften the character of Hal, thus supporting his presentation as an actor rather than a true wastrel.

Hal’s acting ability is demonstrated during the scene with Falstaff in which they role play being king. The scene starts with Hal playing himself and Falstaff playing Henry IV, fitting given Falstaff’s role as a second father to Hal. Part way through they switch roles and Hal performs as the king: “Dost thou speak like a king? Do thou stand for me, and I’ll play my father” (*IHIV*, 2.4.421-2). On a didactic level this play-within-a-play allows the prince to test out the role of king, but on a philosophical level it also reveals the extent to which kingship is a theatrical role and the king himself an actor. Furthermore, that their playing is performed before the tavern goers heightens their performance as if it were on a theatrical stage. Colin Burrow comments that this metatheatrical scene “underlines the consistent tendency to interweave theatrical ability with political authority in the *Henry IV* plays.”⁴⁹⁰ Hal cultivates his acting skills precisely because of his future role as king, because political duties require acting.

Despite Hal’s thespian façade, there are two moments where he unexpectedly reveals himself to others in the play: the first is when he thinks Falstaff is dead; the second is when he thinks his father is dead. When Falstaff dishonourably pretends to be dead to avoid fighting the Scottish rebel Douglas, Hal finds his ‘body’ and mourns him: “I could have better spared a better man. / O, I should have a heavy miss of thee” (*IHIV*, 5.4.103-4). Falstaff sees a glimpse behind the actor’s mask here. This moment reveals to him that Hal has an interiority that he has been

⁴⁸⁷ Hall, *The Union* (1548), p.33.

⁴⁸⁸ *Tarltons Jestes* (London: John Haviland for Andrew Crook, 1638), sig.C2^v.

⁴⁸⁹ William Shakespeare, *Henry IV: Part 2* (1598), ed. by A. R. Humphreys (London: Methuen, 1981), 1.2.193-5.

⁴⁹⁰ Colin Burrow, ‘Shakespeare’s Authorities’ in *Shakespeare and Authority: Citations, Conceptions and Constructions*, ed. by Katie Halsey and Angus Vine (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp.31-53 (p.36).

concealing; something which the audience knows is for the sake of duty. To the audience it shows that Hal has not been heartlessly using Falstaff as a tool to his own ends and feels personal affection towards him. A greater moment of unintended revelation comes when Hal mistakenly thinks that his father is dead:

This sleep is sound indeed: this is a sleep
That from this golden rigol hath divorc'd
So many English kings. Thy due from me
Is tears and heavy sorrows of the blood,
Which nature, love, and filial tenderness
Shall, O dear father, pay thee plenteously.
My due from thee is this imperial crown,
Which, as immediate as thy place and blood,
Derives itself to me. (*2HIV*, 4.5.34-42)

While seeming to be genuinely upset at his father's passing, Hal is not so overcome by grief that he ignores his royal birth right and so he seizes the crown. Janette Dillon comments that Hal placing the crown upon his head is almost sacrilege: "The crown is a sacred object, identifying the peculiar status of a king or queen; and the moment when the crown passes from one monarch to the next is literally a consecrated one, embedded in the ceremony of vows and is anointed with holy oil before the crown is set upon his head."⁴⁹¹ Hal's inappropriate wearing of the crown thus perverts the sanctity of the most powerful icon of kingship. Soon after taking the crown and leaving, Henry wakes up and demands to know who has taken his crown. Matthew H. Wikander observes that "the play has coerced Hal into re-enacting his father's highly significant gesture in the abdication scene in *Richard II*."⁴⁹² Richard, forcing Bolingbroke to take the crown from him, rather than handing it over, amplifies the usurpation symbolically: "Here, cousin, seize the crown."⁴⁹³ This stands in parallel to Hal's premature seizing of the crown, forcing Henry IV to ask: "Is he so hasty that he doth suppose / My sleep my death?" (*2HIV*, 4.5.60-1). In both instances a physical crown is unlawfully seized, revealing acrimony in the transfer of power, although Hal's betrayal is subsequently forgiven.

Henry IV is acutely aware of the political upheaval which his usurpation caused and to ensure that his son experiences less discord he offers him advice. He begins by admitting his guilt over seizing the crown from Richard II: "God knows, my son, / By what by-paths and indirect

⁴⁹¹ Dillon, *Shakespeare and the Staging of English History* (2012), p.63.

⁴⁹² Matthew H. Wikander, 'The Protean Prince Hal', *Comparative Drama*, 26.4 (Winter, 1992-93), pp.295-311 (p.301).

⁴⁹³ Shakespeare, *Richard II* (2002), 4.1.181-82.

crook'd ways / I met this crown" (2HIV, 4.5.183-5). However, rather than suggesting an entirely religiously devout route, he ends with some rather more pragmatic advice: "Be it thy course to busy giddy minds / With foreign quarrels" (2HIV, 4.5.213-4). Machiavelli also encouraged war to consolidate power: "Nothing enables a ruler to gain more prestige than undertaking great campaigns" (*Prince*, p.74). Henry's speech is significantly expanded from the historical sources, with Raphael Holinshed's *The Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande* (1577) reporting: "well faire sonne sayde the King (with a greate sigh) what right I had to it, God knoweth."⁴⁹⁴ Vine identifies that Shakespeare augmented this with a passage from Samuel Daniel's *The Civile Wars* (1595):

(An action wherewithall my soule had ment
T'appease my God, and reconcile my land)
To thee is left to finish my intent,
Who to be safe must neuer idly stand;
But some great actions entertaine thou still
To hold their minds who else will practise ill.⁴⁹⁵

Here Henry links political authority with the fate of the soul but he also recommends a degree of expediency which is not extant in other sources. Vine argues that it is Daniel's account which provides Shakespeare with "the sense that Henry IV's penance and his need to appear spiritually accountable are also linked inextricably to his political legitimacy and (even more so) to his concern for his son's legitimacy and his son's authority."⁴⁹⁶ Shakespeare's Henry encourages his son to take heed of accountability to God *and* to pragmatically defend the kingdom. According to both Henrys, the duty of a king is bound up in presenting an honourable image through reverence to God, but he must also protect his political legitimacy through less honourable means, such as by invading France to instil patriotic feelings and distract from issues in England.

This scene between the father and son greatly diverges from *Famous Victories*. While Shakespeare's prince mistakenly takes the crown and is then counselled, the prince of *Famous Victories* plans to murder his father: "*The Prince [crosses the stage to Henry IV] with a dagger in his hand*" (FV, SD.599). He unexpectedly finds his father awake and undergoes a sudden

⁴⁹⁴ Raphael Holinshed, *The firste volume of the chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande* (London: J. Hunne, 1577), p.1162.

⁴⁹⁵ Samuel Daniel, *The first fowre bookes of the ciuile wars between the two houses of Lancaster and Yorke* (London: P. Short for S. Waterson, 1595), sig.S2^r.

⁴⁹⁶ Angus Vine, "'A Trim Reckoning': Accountability and Authority in *1 and 2 Henry IV*" in *Shakespeare and Authority: Citations, Conceptions and Constructions*, ed. by Katie Halsey and Angus Vine (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp.157-178 (p.169).

moral conversion: “[*Aside*] My conscience accuseth me” (*FV*, 1.614). He then renounces his villainy:

’Tis not the crown that I come for, sweet father, because I am unworthy,
and those vile and reprobate companions I abandon and utterly abolish
their company forever. [...] And this ruffianly cloak I here tear from my back
and sacrifice it to the devil, which is master of all mischief. (*FV*, 1.624-6, 629-30)

This conversion could be seen as a miraculous divine intervention to ensure the safety of England. The play was performed by the Queen’s Men, founded by Sir Francis Walsingham and Edmund Tilney, Master of the Revels, which indicates its connection to men who promoted English history within the Tudor agenda. However, history plays were rarely so simple. As Brain Walsh comments, the company’s “initial interest in history may have been driven by Ciceronian principles about the didactic powers of history”, but by “self-consciously *performing* history, the Queen’s Men open it up to a kind of philosophical and practical scrutiny that helps to promote a critical historical consciousness.”⁴⁹⁷ *Famous Victories* may have been intended as royalist propaganda, which would have been particularly relevant around the years of hostility with Spain, but it could be problematic in performance. *Famous Victories* can be seen as at once patriotic and potentially subversive. Henry’s speech before the Battle of Agincourt exalting the strengths of England against the vast numbers of France is clearly patriotic: “My lords and loving countrymen, though we be few and they many, fear not. Your quarrel is good, and God will defend you” (*FV*, 1.1265-70). Larry S. Champion argues for the subversive nature of the play though, declaring that Harry’s sudden conversion is an expedient action to save himself when he is surprised to find the king awake, which “not only covers his original scheme to take the king’s life; the resulting reconciliation with his father also solidifies his expectations for the crown.”⁴⁹⁸ Champion further explains that the play showing the inner workings of royal power serves as “a demystification of the royal house and an exposure of the corruption at its center” (Champion, p.18). This is not to say that every spectator scrutinized the motivations of the royals on stage, but the play is certainly open to this type of reading.

Shakespeare’s plays similarly open kingship up to the judgment of theatre audiences, and this judgement is occasionally recorded. Henry’s lecture in *1 Henry IV* is explicitly politically educational and so it is appropriate that part of this speech was copied down in a commonplace book composed around 1594-1603, written chiefly in Latin, and ascribed to Thomas Harriot, a mathematician and natural philosopher. These extracts were possibly derived from jottings in a

⁴⁹⁷ Walsh, *Shakespeare, The Queen’s Men* (2009), p.31.

⁴⁹⁸ Larry S. Champion, *The Noise of Threatening Drum: Dramatic Strategy and Political Ideology in Shakespeare and the English Chronicle Plays* (Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 1990), p.20.

pocket book made during a performance rather than from the edited 1598 quarto.⁴⁹⁹ Jeffrey S. Doty notes that the following passage, describing how Henry usurped power from Richard (*IHV*, 3.2.50-4), was written down and altered:

& then y^{ou} he must steale Curtsey
from Heavn, & dress hymself in
sutch humility, as he may pluck
allegiance from men harts euen in
the presence of y^e Queene w^{ch} els
opinion w^{ch} must & doth oft aid help
one to a Crown will still keepe
loyall to possession⁵⁰⁰

Henry explains the importance of gaining support from the people, revealing that royal power is provisional. These lines recommend pragmatically acting a role, “dress hymself in / sutch humility”, in order to gain and maintain power based on public support. These lines have been changed by the person copying them down. “King” is replaced by “Queene” and the note taker has added “w^{ch} els / opinion w^{ch} must & doth oft aid help / one to a Crown will still keepe / loyall to possession”, as well as changing the tense to third person. Doty therefore argues that Harriot saw the play as providing reflection on current matters of state, “mining [...] Shakespeare’s lines for insight into the workings of power,” and so Shakespeare turned “the theater into a space in which playgoers could practice thinking about how power works in the political domain” (Doty, p.185). While not all audience members will have mined plays in this way, the notebook is evidence that some spectators used drama as a tool for actively engaging with political thought. Similarly to Doty, Kirstin M. S Bezio argues that this thought was concerned with issues regarding the current political regime: “Audiences were not simply attending plays to seek entertainment for an afternoon, but to become both informed about and engaged with the socio-political events and issues of their day.”⁵⁰¹ The idea of gaining popularity amongst commoners was relevant to the factional court politics of the 1590s. Popularity was strongly associated with the Earl of Essex, who was a favourite of Elizabeth’s but who also deliberately appealed to the populace. Paul Hammer argues that “[i]n this public manoeuvring by Essex and his rivals, the whole of the queen’s regime was opened up to discussion and criticism by subjects in ways which even the best efforts of official censorship

⁴⁹⁹ For more on this see Hilton Kelliher, ‘Contemporary Manuscript Extracts from Shakespeare’s Henry IV, Part 1’, *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700, Volume 1*, ed. by Peter Beal and Jeremy Griffiths (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), pp.144-81.

⁵⁰⁰ BL, MS Add 64078, fols. 47^r-8^r; quoted in Jeffrey S. Doty, ‘Shakespeare’s *Richard II*, ‘Popularity,’ and the Early Modern Public Sphere’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 61.2 (2010), pp.183-205 (p.183).

⁵⁰¹ Kirstin M. S. Bezio, *Staging Power in Tudor and Stuart English History Plays: History, Political Thought, and the Redefinition of Sovereignty* (New York: Routledge, 2016), p.53.

could not control.”⁵⁰² Shakespeare’s history plays, while speaking to the topical dynamics of the Elizabethan government, also contributed to more general conversations about the state.

Shakespeare’s *Henriad* could also be used in a more philosophical manner to examine the concept of kingship and duty more broadly. For instance, the advice scene also serves the purpose of contrasting the methods employed by the king and prince to maintain power. Hal understands and embraces the dynamic between acting and kingship, while his father lacks the necessary performativity. Henry IV is a strategic and pragmatic thinker but he lacks the theatrical skill essential to kingship. He advises his son that once he is king he should stay out of the public eye:

My presence like a robe pontifical,
Ne’er seen but wondered at; and so my state,
Seldom but sumptuous, showed like a feast
And won by rareness such solemnity. (*IHIV*, 3.2.56-9)

However, his “rareness” also caused rebellion and so his model of kingship is not to be straightforwardly replicated. Henry V absorbs the pragmatic skills of his father but his royal self-presentation is markedly different. Henry IV says that “like a comet, I was wondered at” (*IHIV*, 3.2.47), but Henry V improves on his father’s brevity by presenting himself like a star to be constantly wondered at. Henry IV is not spared by Shakespeare when deconstructing the iconography of kingship. This is most evident at the Battle of Shrewsbury where Henry has knights dress in his clothing. After killing one of these knights, Douglas learns of the deception and vows to “kill all his coats. / I’ll murder all his wardrobe, piece by piece, / Until I meet the king” (*IHIV*, 5.3.26-8). When he finally meets Henry on the battlefield he doubts him: “I fear thou art another counterfeit” (*IHIV*, 5.4.34). Douglas cannot recognize the true king and so Henry is indistinguishable from those who portray him. While this is an effective trick in warfare, it has dangerous ramifications for the sanctity of kingship’s iconography. Kastan argues that this moment proves “that kingship itself is a disguise, a role, an action that a man might play.”⁵⁰³ Falstaff and Hal taking turns to play the king in a tavern is one thing, but an enemy being unable to distinguish the king on the battlefield signifies how easy it is to ‘play’ a king. While of course there is more to kingship than embodying the iconography, this scene highlights how easily the visual ceremony of kingship can be appropriated.

⁵⁰² Paul E. J. Hammer, “The Smiling Crocodile: The Earl of Essex and Late-Elizabethan ‘Popularity’” in *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*, ed. Peter Lake and Steven Pincus (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp.95-115 (p.95).

⁵⁰³ David Scott Kastan, “‘The King Hath Many Marching in His Coats,’ Or What Did You Do in the War Daddy?” in *Shakespeare Left and Right*, ed. by Ivo Kamps (New York: Routledge, 1991), p.253.

Hal playing the rogue is used as a foil to his future virtuous image as king, but he has another foil in the form of Falstaff, who represents comedy and vice. Ribner argues that Falstaff is “perhaps the greatest comic figure in the world’s literature, but also the device by which Shakespeare achieved the didactic ends of his history play.”⁵⁰⁴ Falstaff enables Hal to play his role, but he also serves to challenge him. Hal gears his entire life towards his political duty, while Falstaff offers arguments against dedicating one’s life towards ideals such as duty and honour:

Can honour set to a leg? No. Or an arm? No. Or take away the grief of a wound? No. Honour hath no skill in surgery, then? No. What is honour?
A word. What is in that word ‘honour’? What is that ‘honour’? Air. A trim reckoning. Who hath it? He that died o’ Wednesday. Doth he feel it?
No. Doth he hear it? No. ’Tis insensible, then? (*IHV*, 5.1.131-7)

Falstaff’s monologue figures honour as merely ‘a word’, an abstraction.⁵⁰⁵ He poses rhetorical questions which he immediately answers to highlight the absurdity of dying for something that is conceptual and offers no tangible value. Norman Rabkin states that this speech is “convincing enough almost to undo our respect for anyone who subordinates life to ideals.”⁵⁰⁶ It is tempting to agree with Falstaff but Shakespeare’s history plays take those abstract ideals and place them in real world situations, allowing the audience to understand why they are important. However, Hal’s conception of his political duty, that the welfare of the kingdom is paramount, is so ingrained in how he conceives of his role as king that it erodes his own personal morality. He is so indebted to upholding his own idealized conception of public duty that it negatively impacts his personal religious duty, and for Cicero and Christianity, religious duty is integral to fulfilling all other duties. Hal’s theatrical representation suggests he is guided by Ciceronian ethics and Christianity but in reality he is guided by Machiavellian ethics.

Shakespeare’s Falstaff stands in stark and deliberate contrast to Oldcastle in *Sir John Oldcastle*. The connection between Shakespeare’s Falstaff and the historical Lollard John Oldcastle is well established and was deemed so offensive to Oldcastle’s descendants that *2 Henry IV* ends by refuting the idea that Falstaff is a representation of Oldcastle: “Falstaff shall die of a sweat, unless already a be killed with your hard opinions; for Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is not

⁵⁰⁴ Ribner, *The English History Play* (1965), p.171.

⁵⁰⁵ For more on honour and English politics see Mervyn James, *Society, Politics and Culture: Studies in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

⁵⁰⁶ Norman Rabkin, ‘Rabbits, Ducks, and Henry V’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 28.3 (Summer, 1977), pp.279-296 (p.283).

the man” (*2HIV*, Epilogue.30-2).⁵⁰⁷ Munday, Drayton, Hathwaye, and Wilson wrote their version of the character in an attempt to revive the knight’s image. This is made clear in the prologue:

It is no pamper’d glutton we present,
Nor aged Counsellor to youthful sin,
But one, whose virtue shone above the rest,
A valiant Martyr and a virtuous peer;
In whose true faith and loyalty express’d
Unto his sovereign, and his country’s weal⁵⁰⁸

The references to a “pamper’d glutton” and “youthful sin” clearly recall Shakespeare’s Falstaff and Hal. To achieve the vindication of the titular hero against the defamation of Shakespeare, the quartet place Oldcastle in the vicinity of two rebellions against Henry V, but demonstrate his virtue and innocence. The play therefore comments on a monarch’s authority in relation to a subject’s religion. Mary Grace Muse Adkins argues that the playwrights gave Oldcastle “the political complexion demanded of loyal subjects of Elizabeth, and were interpreting his Lollard beliefs largely in terms of sixteenth-century Puritanism.”⁵⁰⁹ Puritans proclaimed that their private conscience had no interference with their loyalty and duty to the Queen and this dynamic is supported within the play. Oldcastle draws a distinction between heresy and treason when he denies that he is a traitor:

My gracious Lord, unto your Majesty,
Next unto my God, I owe my life;
And what is mine, either by nature’s gift,
Or fortune’s bounty, all is at your service.
But, for obedience to the Pope of Rome,
I owe him none, [...]
I do beseech your grace,
My conscience may not be encroach’d upon. (*JO*, 2.3.7-12, 17-18)

Oldcastle summarizes that his personal religion is not seditious and so he remains loyal to the king. This is the argument which many Catholic recusants were making during the early modern period. Like them, Oldcastle sees his duties to God and country as differentiated but

⁵⁰⁷ For an overview of the Oldcastle controversy see Gary Taylor, ‘The Fortunes of Oldcastle’, *Shakespeare Survey*, 38 (1985), pp.85–110; and David Scott Kastan, *Shakespeare after Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1999), pp.93–106.

⁵⁰⁸ Corbin and Sedge (eds.), *Sir John Oldcastle* (1991), Prologue.6-11.

⁵⁰⁹ Mary Grace Muse Adkins, ‘Sixteenth-Century Religious and Political Implications in Sir John Oldcastle’, *Studies in English*, 22 (1942), pp.86-104 (p.87).

non-conflicting. Henry assents to Oldcastle's justification of religious liberty: "We would be loath to press our subjects' bodies, / Much less their souls, the dear redeemed part / Of him that is the ruler of us all" (*JO*, 2.3.19-21), but with a caveat: "Do not presume to tempt them with ill words, / Nor suffer any meetings to be had / Within your house" (*JO*, 2.3.23-5). Henry accepts Oldcastle's private heretical beliefs, but fears these beliefs will spread and incite rebellion. Oldcastle actively works to stop rebellion when the Earl of Cambridge attempts to install him as his uprising's figurehead. He asks for their strategy to be written out and signed, so that he can present it as evidence against them: "This head shall not be burdened with such thoughts, / Nor in this heart will I conceal a deed / Of such impiety against my king" (*JO*, 3.1.199-201). While Oldcastle's enemies declare that he is "a dangerous schismatic, / Traitor to God, the King, and common wealth" (*JO*, 4.3.12-3), they are continually countered by Oldcastle's loyalty and the King's belief in him: "There had not lived a more true hearted subject" (*JO*, 4.2.65). The play proclaims that there is no clash between religion and duty to king. While holding Oldcastle up as a paragon, the amount of treachery in the play suggests a dark side to the regime. Champion points out that "a glance beyond the monarchophilia and patriotic glitter reveals a sordid world of political treachery, a society riddled with division and injustice, in which the less fortunate face poverty, manipulation, and exploitation."⁵¹⁰ Sir John, Parson of Wrotham, declares: "If ever wolf were clothed in sheep's coat, / Then I am he, – old huddle and twang, yfaith, / A priest in show, but in plain terms a thief" (*JO*, 1.2.155-7). The majority of courtiers and clergy are represented as dangerous to political authority, which while providing a foil for Oldcastle's religious piety and political loyalty, paints a disheartening picture of the government.

In *Sir John Oldcastle* the titular character is one of Henry V's only dutiful subjects, whereas in the *Henry IV* plays Falstaff represents everything which Hal must reject in order to assume the mantle of kingship. This is made explicitly clear at Hal's coronation where he publicly rejects Falstaff: "I know thee not, old man" (*2HIV*, 5.5.47). He then reprimands him:

Reply not to me with a fool-born jest.
Presume not that I am the thing I was,
For God doth know – so shall the world perceive –
That I have turned away my former self. (*2HIV*, 5.5.55-8)

This "former self" was of course always a façade but it is one Falstaff could not discern. As Kizelbach describes: "Hal's transformation from a prodigal son into a responsible king is a fake, since Hal was always himself, that is, the future king – even when carousing in the tavern

⁵¹⁰ Larry S. Champion, "'Havoc in the Commonwealth': Perspective, Political Ideology, and Dramatic Strategy in 'Sir John Oldcastle' and the English Chronicle Plays", *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England*, 5 (1991), pp.165-179 (p.169).

he remembered who he was and what his obligations towards his kingdom were” (Kizelbach, p.228). Hal always belonged to the world of the court and to begin his duty as king he must reject the carnivalesque world of Falstaff. It is this very moment of public rejection which signals to the coronation crowd, as well as the theatre’s audience, that Hal has fully thrown off his roguish disguise and has assumed his previously hidden dutiful disposition. This is not to say he has abandoned performance and dissimulation, as *Henry V* will show that these are the hallmarks of his political authority. Throughout the *Henry IV* plays Hal demonstrates that theatricality is essential to the duties of royalty. Henry V is Shakespeare’s most self-consciously performative king and he exhibits this important political quality from his first scene in *1 Henry IV* to his last in *Henry V*.

THE DUTIFUL DISSIMULATION OF KING HENRY V

The link between theatrical entertainment and political thought is most evident in *Henry V*. During the prologue the Chorus draws attention to the metatheatrical and political nature of the play. In an ideal world the play would have “A kingdom for a stage, princes to act, / And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!”⁵¹¹ Of course, if this were the case the play would no longer be a play but real life. The Chorus then draws attention to the shortcomings of theatrical representation and asks the audience to furnish the scenes with their imaginations:

Can this cockpit hold
The vasty fields of France? Or may we cram
Within this wooden O the very casques
That did afright the air at Agincourt?
[...]
Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts.
Into a thousand parts divide one man
And make imaginary puissance.
Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them
Printing their proud hoofs i’th’ receiving earth.
For ’tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings. (*HV*, Prologue.11-4, 23-8)

The participation of the audience’s imagination is framed as essential to the performance, in turn highlighting that this *is* a performance. The inclusion of the audience in decking the world

⁵¹¹ William Shakespeare, *Henry V* (1599), ed. by T. W. Craik (London: Methuen, 1995), Prologue.3-4. This edition is based on the First Folio (F1) due to that copy likely being based on Shakespeare’s manuscript, whereas the First Quarto (Q1) was probably memorially reconstructed from performance and as such features many errors and cuts. Discussion of the differences between F1 and Q1 will be noted where relevant.

of the play draws them further in and validates their position as judges of drama, and by extension as judges of kings. The Chorus is aware of the play's theatrical shortcomings *and* of its political interest, thus forging a connection between dramatic playing and matters of statecraft. Furthermore, Walsh explains that, "despite these effusive apologies for inadequacy, the play itself affirms the theater as a vehicle of historical transmission."⁵¹² The play depicts a world in which historical and political knowledge is largely only passed between the Church and the royal court to an audience made up of people beyond these two seats of power and thus transmits both historical and political thought to a broader group.

Henry V begins with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Ely plotting to distract the king from taking money and land away from the Church by encouraging him to invade France. After a lengthy explanation of Henry's right to the throne through the French Salic law, the King asks for a simple answer: "May I with right and conscience make this claim?" (*HV*, 1.2.96). Canterbury willingly accepts responsibility if Henry's claim is not valid: "The sin upon my head" (*HV*, 1.2.97). Regardless of whether or not Henry believes his claim to be legitimate, he uses it as religious legitimization for his war. He then calls the French ambassador in and after being mocked with the gift of tennis balls for his playful and rebellious past, he proclaims:

I will dazzle all the eyes of France,
Yea, strike the Dauphin blind to look on us.
And tell the pleasant prince this mock of his
Hath turned his balls to gun-stones, and his soul
Shall stand sore charged for the wasteful vengeance
That shall fly with them; for many a thousand widows
Shall this his mock mock out of their dear husbands,
Mock mothers from their sons, mock castles down (*HV*, 1.2.280-7)

Henry stating the he will "dazzle" France linguistically recalls his rhetoric in *I Henry IV*: "glitt'ring o'er my fault" (*IHIV*, 1.2.203). Having already privately decided to start a war, he employs dissimulation and acts as though it is the Dauphin's insult which drives his desire to conquer France. It is "his soul" that will suffer because Henry has God's support: "But this lies all within the will of God, / To whom I do appeal, and in whose name / Tell you the Dauphin I am coming on" (*HV*, 1.2.290-2). C. W. R. D. Moseley takes Henry at face value, believing that "the irresponsibility of the Dauphin, a more foolish Hotspur, must bear a good deal of the blame

⁵¹² Brian Walsh, 'Chantry, Chronicle, Cockpit Henry V and the Forms of History' in *Shakespeare and the Middle Ages*, ed. by Curtis Perry and John Watkins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp.151-171 (p.166).

for the decision to refuse Henry's demands, and thus for the war that will devastate France."⁵¹³ While the Dauphin's response is childish, it is certainly not deserving of an ethically unfounded foreign invasion. Henry places the blame for the destruction that will be wrought on the Dauphin for inciting him, just as if the legal justification for the war is wrong then the responsibility lies with Canterbury. In both instances he uses religion not as a repository of moral guidance, but as an ideological weapon. Henry's shifting of responsibility leaves him, on first glance, untarnished by fault. He is aware that maintaining power is not about being a legitimate ruler, but about appearing to be legitimate. Howard identifies that Henry is "constantly aware of and in command of the impression he is making and of how those who are audience to his performance are responding" (Howard, p.147). The justness of the action is not what is important; it is making the action *appear* just that is. Henry's embrace of the dynamic between acting and kingship is born out of his duty England. However, in adopting Machiavellian ethics, he breaks what to Cicero is the most important duty of all: duty to God. Henry's commitment to royal duty is pragmatically, rather than religiously, focused but he executes his version of duty expertly. His façade fools even those who are aware of the deviousness in politics. For instance, the play opens with Canterbury, proven to care more about his own wealth than his duty to God, recalling the events of *2 Henry IV*: "The breath no sooner left his father's body, / But that his wildness, mortified in him, / Seem'd to die too" (*HV*, 1.1.25-7). Canterbury believing that Hal's "wildness" died when Henry IV died demonstrates that his façade has been effective. Henry V understands the importance of theatricality in statecraft and he has the skill with which to implement it. He outwardly appears to be a model of Cicero's conception of duty, but in reality he is using Ciceronian duty as a theatrical tool for his Machiavellian conception of duty, which divorces religion from political responsibilities.

The necessity of Henry's acting ability to his political authority, and thus to his duty, is demonstrated throughout the play by an incongruence between his actions and the rhetoric used to describe him. The Chorus describes him as "the mirror of all Christian kings" (*HV*, 2.Chorus.6), Captain Gower describes him as "O, 'tis a gallant king!" (*HV*, 4.7.10), and Henry himself claims "We are no tyrant, but a Christian king" (*HV*, 1.2.242). However, his behaviour rarely lines up with these professions of his faith and honour. Gower's praise comes after he has described Henry's order to slaughter prisoners of war: "the king, most worthily, hath caused every soldier to cut his prisoner's throat" (*HV*, 4.7.9-10).⁵¹⁴ Henry's own declaration that he is a "Christian king" comes after he has decided to invade France to legitimize his rule and before

⁵¹³ C. W. R. D. Moseley, *Shakespeare's History Plays: Richard II to Henry V, the Making of a King* (London: Penguin, 1988).

⁵¹⁴ For a discussion of Henry's double order to kill the prisoners see Charles Edelman, "'Then Every Solider Kill His Prisoners': Shakespeare at the Battle of Agincourt", *Parergon*, 16.1, (1998), pp.31-45.

he blames the taunts of the French Dauphin for the invasion. In this way, Henry manipulates events and his own image in order to maintain his power. A prime example of his stage management of events occurs when he besieges the town of Harfleur. He tells the Governor that unless he yields “[t]he gates of mercy shall be all shut up” (*HV*, 3.3.10), and then graphically describes the carnage which will ensue:

The blind and bloody soldier with foul hand
Defile the locks of your shrill-shrieking daughters,
Your fathers taken by the silver beards,
And their most reverend heads dashed to the walls,
Your naked infants spitted upon spikes (*HV*, 3.3.34-38)

Henry finishes this speech with “Will you yield and this avoid?” (*HV*, 3.3.42), shifting the responsibility away from himself and onto the French Governor, who does yield. Henry’s rhetorical tactic here is an invention of Shakespeare’s, as Holinshed reports that: “dayly was the towne assalted: for the Duke of Gloucester, to whome the order of the siege was committed, made three mynes vnder the grounde, and approching to the walles with his engins and ordinance, wold not suffer them within to take any reste” (Holinshed, p.1175). In Shakespeare’s account the atrocities that are described never come to fruition and so Henry’s willingness to carry them out cannot be determined. On the one hand, this speech could be seen as an attempt to win the battle with verbal violence rather than physical brutality; on the other, he may be willing to slaughter innocents to gain victory. Bloody-thirsty or versed in psychological warfare, Henry resists definite interpretation here. Rabkin has convincingly argued that *Henry V*’s “ultimate power is precisely the fact that it points in two opposite directions, virtually daring us to choose one of the two opposed interpretations it requires of us” (Rabkin, p.279). The difficulty of reconciling Henry’s identity between the poles of virtuous hero or dissimulating villain partly exists because of his acting skill. He incongruently occupies both identities. Whether or not invading France can be viewed as contributing to his duty to country raises issues about Henry’s reasoning, and as a result his conception of duty is streaked with ambiguity.

The Henry of *Famous Victories* is by comparison uncomplicated, and the audience do not witness his methods in taking Harfleur. Instead the battle is won offstage and then Henry declares: “no doubt this good luck of winning this town is a sign of an honorable victory to come” (*FV*, 1.1.135-6). *Famous Victories* shies away from unflattering moments, but Shakespeare’s *Henry V* embraces these moments to explore the moral murkiness which can accompany political duty. Lake explains that “[w]hat we see in *Henry V*, therefore, is a series of perfectly modulated rhetorical performances, designed to extract the last iota of political

advantage from the situation at hand” (Lake, p.372). These performances show Henry employing the Machiavellian ethic of the means justifying the ends. He uses religion as a veneer and an ideological support for his agenda, in defiance of Cicero’s ethos that duty to religion and country are interlocking. Henry’s chameleon-like ability is tied to his sense of royal responsibility; his every move is calculated to enhance his political authority, and by extension the political standing of England, but this is at odds with Ciceronian and Christian principles.

Henry’s understanding of royal duty is particularly questioned when he dresses up as a common soldier to speak to his men. This scene is not present in Shakespeare’s sources, with Hall only reporting that the “Englishmen that night sounded their trompettes and diuerse instrumentes Musicall with greate mellody, and yet thei were bothe hungery, wery, sore traueiled and much vexed with colde diseases” (Hall, p.47). Shakespeare uses Henry’s disguised discussion with his soldiers to theorize about the duties of a king. Henry denies that there is an inherent difference between kings and subjects: “I think the King is but a man, as I am [...] / His ceremonies laid by, in his nakedness he appears but a man” (*HV*, 4.1.102, 105-6). This adds further credence to the other scenes throughout the *Henriad* which paint kingship as a role which is acted, while at the same time confirming to the soldiers that the king has a private conscience. However, Henry’s encouragement to the soldiers rings false: “I could not die anywhere so contented as in the king’s company, his cause being just and his quarrel honourable” (*HV*, 4.1.126-8). Williams retorts, “That’s more than we know” (*HV*, 4.1.129), before laying the blame for the morality of the war on Henry’s shoulders:

But if the cause be not good, the King himself hath a heavy reckoning to make, when all those legs and arms and heads chopped off in a battle shall join together at the latter day, and cry all, “We died at such a place” [...] Now, if these men do not die well, it will be a black matter for the King that led them to it—who to disobey were against all proportion of subjection. (*HV*, 4.1.134-8, 143-6)

Williams argues that duty forces the soldiers to fight for the king’s cause and so if they die it is his fault. This emphasis on conscience is in line with Henry IV’s assertion: “Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown” (*2HIV*, 3.1.31). Williams believes it should be uneasy because a soldier’s duty to his king means the moral burden ultimately lies with the king. Williams use of the word “reckoning”, as Vine explains, “conjoin[s] spiritual reckoning and political accountability, but also draw[s] on the word in its eschatological sense” (Vine, p.170). Soldiers have no choice but to follow their king to their deaths and so Williams forces Henry to consider the link between expectations of public duty and private morality. Henry is unable to admit the

moral opacity of his actions and resists this insistence on his responsibility for his soldier's souls:

if a servant, under his master's command transporting a sum of money,
be assailed by robbers, and die in many irreconciled iniquities, you may
call the business of the master the author of the servant's damnation.

But this is not so. The King is not bound to answer the particular endings
of his soldiers, the father of his son, nor the master of his servant, for they
purpose not their deaths when they propose their services. (*HV*, 4.1.150–158)

Henry concludes the discussion with the axiomatic “Every subject's duty is the King's, but every subject's soul is his own” (*HV*, 4.1.175–177). Williams concedes that “'Tis certain, every man that dies ill, the ill upon his own head. The King is not to answer it” (*HV*, 4.1.185–186). However, Henry's argument misses the original point, or rather purposefully ignores it. R. Scott Fraser describes his evasion as “a brilliant variation on Henry's strategy of allowing the clergy to take responsibility for the justness of the war, and making the citizens of Harfleur the potential cause for the rapaciousness of his army.”⁵¹⁵ Henry's argument stands *if* his war against France is fair: but if it is not, then Williams is right to blame Henry. Williams's argument links the collective duty of the soldiers and the individual duty of the king, as well as the private and public duties of each party. Henry leaves the collective duty of his army unacknowledged, and thus ignores his own public responsibility to that army. Instead, he refutes Williams's argument based on his lack of responsibility for the private duty of his men. But this is a manipulation of Williams's primary concern, which was that the king had led them into an unjust war, a point which Henry ignores. Rabkin confirms that Henry's answer evades “the suffering he is capable of inflicting” and “the necessity of being sure that the burden is imposed for a worthy cause” (Rabkin, p.289). Additionally, war necessitates death in a way that a servant transporting money does not. Although Williams concedes, he still distrusts monarchical power. When Henry claims that “I myself heard the King say he would not be ransom'd” (*HV*, 4.1.189-90), Williams replies: “Ay, he said so, to make us fight cheerfully; but when our throats are cut, he may be ransom'd, and we ne'er the wiser” (*HV*, 4.1.191-3). Williams is aware that the king will lie to his subjects in order to garner the desired response. Indeed, Henry in this moment is lying to Williams about who he is in an attempt to boost patriotic feeling. This invented conversation between the disguised Henry and the soldier Williams allows Shakespeare to explore the discord between public duty and private conscience, as well as the sometimes uneasy connection between public performance and private morality.

⁵¹⁵ R. Scott Fraser, ‘Henry V and the Performance of War’ in *Shakespeare and War*, ed. by Ros King and Peter Franssen (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp.71-83 (p.79).

Henry's conversation with Williams prompts him to ruminate further on his duty as king. In a rare soliloquy which has no precedent in Hall or Holinshed, Henry explains his thoughts on the burdens and duties of kingship:

Upon the King! 'Let us our lives, our souls, our debts,
our careful wives, our children, and our sins lay on the king!'
We must bear all. O hard condition,
Twin-born with greatness, subject to the breath
Of every fool, whose sense no more can feel
But his own wringing. What infinite heart's ease
Must kings neglect that private men enjoy!
And what have kings that privates have not too,
Save ceremony, save general ceremony?
And what art thou, thou idol ceremony? (*HV*, 4.1.227-36)

In this private speech, Henry reveals that he struggles to bear the burden, "our lives, our souls, our debts", which subjects place on their king. Thus far in the play, Henry has seemed confidently authoritative in his role but here the audience learn about the true nature of his feelings in relation to his kingship. Despite being an adept political actor, one who fully embraces the theatrical dimension of sovereignty, Henry struggles with being "subject to the breath / Of every fool". He understands the necessity of being on display but this display necessarily invites a level of judgement with which he is uncomfortable. He then reduces the ceremony and iconography of kingship, believing that it is all that separates him from his people. Although of course there is more to kingship than ceremony, Henry is expressing the internal struggles which plague his reign, namely his desire to be a private man and his awareness of what his claim is based upon. As John Drakakis argues, "[h]is anxiety derives from both the uncertainty of his claim and the doubt about the true veracity of the 'idoltrous' rituals upon which he is forced to rely."⁵¹⁶ Despite this internal struggle, it is Henry's outward embracing of the theatrical and ceremonious elements of kingship, in conjunction with his understanding of the practicalities of the political role, which enables him to embody the part of the king successfully and fulfil the duties of state. Henry's veneration of religious virtue is essential to his carrying out of the pragmatic Machiavellian sense of duty he has.

Henry's theatrical style of kingship stands in stark contrast to Shakespeare's other thespian king: Richard II. Like *Henry V*, *Richard II* is concerned with questions of kingship and Shakespeare explores these questions partly through comparisons between Richard II and

⁵¹⁶ John Drakakis, 'New Directions: Shakespeare's *Henry V* and Religion' in *King Henry V: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Line Cottagnies and Karen Britland (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), pp.126-155 (p.152).

Bolingbroke. Richard equates himself so fully with the guise of kingship that it leads to him confusing ceremony and reality: “Not all the water in the rough rude sea / Can wash the balm off from an anointed king” (*RII*, 3.2.54-55). The play proves this to be untrue though:

With mine own tears I wash away my balm,
With mine own hands I give away my crown,
With mine own tongue deny my sacred state,
With mine own breath release all duteous oaths:
All pomp and majesty I do forswear. (*RII*, 4.1.207-11)

Richard’s empty performance of kingship highlights the importance of combining ceremony with expediency. He may present himself as king, but he has forgotten that his duty to the state is of the utmost importance. Richard’s kingship identifies theatricality with hollowness while Henry V’s kingship identifies theatricality with duty. Richard notes the threat of Bolingbroke’s popularity, “As were our England in reversion his” (*RII*, 1.4.35), but believes his embodiment of the role should suffice to prompt loyalty from his subjects. Howard argues that Richard’s “gorgeous but ineffective rhetoric and his histrionic poses reveal the emptiness of legitimate titles severed from pragmatic skills necessary to invest them with meaning” (Howard, p.143). Richard’s theatricality is also a negative force during the deposition because he turns it into a self-driven performance, while Bolingbroke linguistically withdraws, unintentionally absolving himself from blame. Furthermore, the deposition was historically a private affair, with Holinshed reporting that “the Procurators aboue named, repayred to the Tower of London; and there signified to king Richarde of the admission of King Henrie” (Holinshed, p.1116). Shakespeare locates the scene in Westminster Hall, having Bolingbroke transform it into a public show: “Fetch hither Richard, that in common view / He may surrender; so we shall proceed / Without suspicion” (*RII*, 4.1.156-8). This further shields Bolingbroke from garnering a traitorous image, but it also turns the deposition into a public judgement. Doty claims that the play therefore “suggests that responding to and judging matters of state are fundamentally similar to responding and judging theater” (Doty, p.203). By placing political matters on the theatrical stage, the audience is invited to participate in political thought.

Henry V consciously invites this political thought, with Henry, unlike his predecessors, being deeply self-conscious about his royal duty and what it means. After philosophizing about duty with his soldiers and Williams’s questioning his motivations, Henry then questions himself in prayer. He acknowledges blame for both his and his father’s actions:

Not today, O Lord,
Oh, not today, think not upon the fault

My father made in compassing the crown.
I Richard's body have interrèd anew,
And on it have bestowed more contrite tears
Than from it issued forcèd drops of blood. (*HV*, 4.1.289-94)

Henry reveals personal remorse for a crime he did not commit and this show of reverence for God adds a heretofore missing moral element to his rule. Vine argues that in this prayer, “moral and political authority thus come together in a speech that seeks both contrition from the divine confessor [...] and approval from the audience, for whom the king's authority is reasserted after its questioning earlier in the scene” (Vine, p.172). While this prayer solidifies Henry's sense of public duty and private moral commitment to the crown, the prayer itself may be hollow. Vine points out that the Folio version of the play, in which the scene is one of private devotion, differs from the First Quarto, published in 1600, where he prays in the company of officers and attendants.⁵¹⁷ Vine asks whether “this is the prayer of a true penitent, or the prayer of a political performer who recognizes the value of this appearance of devotion on the eve of battle, or indeed (and perhaps most compellingly) whether it is a bit of both” (Vine, p.173). Both versions of the text emphasize the significance of morality to a king's duty, but whether Henry is truly concerned with religious accountability or not is ambiguous. Joseph Sterrett argues that prayer is fundamentally performative and, speaking of Claudius's prayer in *Hamlet* (1599-1602), argues that he is not truly alone in this scene because he is being observed by the audience: “Of course, *we* hear Claudius confess. Or do we, the audience, simply *overhear* his confession?”⁵¹⁸ The presence of the audience changing the dynamic of a ‘private’ prayer is even more evident in Henry's prayer because he has previously shown awareness of the audience through his soliloquies. His few revelations of interiority are always at least partly a performance because *we* witness them. Henry's soliloquy affirms that his life is lived in service to his country, “what watch the King keeps to maintain the peace” (*HV*, 4.1.280), but it may still be just a semblance of private morality. When the battle is won in England's favour, Henry proclaims: “And be it death proclaimed through our host / To boast of this or take that praise from God / Which is his only” (*HV*, 4.8.115-7). This may be genuine piety, but he may be appropriating the military victory as a religious victory to augment his own divine authority. *Henry V* allows the audience to question the relationship between statecraft and divinity and to interrogate the iconography and ideology of kingship in relation to royal duty and theatrical performance.

To conclude, Shakespeare's *Henriad* explores the connections between political duty,

⁵¹⁷ William Shakespeare, *The Cronicle History of Henry the fift* (London: Thomas Creede, for Tho. Millington and John Busby, 1600), sig.E1^r.

⁵¹⁸ Joseph Sterrett, *The Unheard Prayer: Religious Toleration in Shakespeare's Drama* (Boston: Brill, 2012), p.105.

theatricality, and private conscience and these connections are most explicitly realized in Hal's journey to and through kingship. Henry V succeeds where Richard II and Henry IV fail, mainly as a result of his ability to combine theatrical presentation with pragmatic action. Richard II understands the performative aspects of kingship but lacks political proficiency, whereas Henry IV applies expediency but is disinclined to act the part ceremoniously. Henry V understands that theatrical ability is necessary to his duties as king, namely to protect the welfare of the country, but he is also willing to partake in morally dubious behaviour to fulfil this duty. This behaviour is explicitly questioned by Williams and their debate about morality in relation to kingship and duty forces Henry to reflect on the difficulties of his responsibilities. The play never offers a concrete stance on whether Henry's immoral methods employed in the name of duty to country are justified or not; instead, the audience is left to ruminate on the connections between duty and morality. This is not to say that all commercial plays were ambiguous in terms of duty. The Oldcastle of *Sir John Oldcastle* is exemplary because of his ability to be dutiful to both his king and his religion, which are publically opposed but, according to the play, privately reconcilable. Less straightforwardly though, the Henry of *Famous Victories* can be read as either patriotic or subversive. Professional history plays sometimes offered straightforward messages but they were often open to ambiguous readings, like many of Shakespeare's histories. Rather than presenting Henry as an *exemplum* to follow for political success, Shakespeare uses him to question the duties of a king, but he is also used to present kingship as a role to be acted. *Henry V*, through its explicit intertwining of kings and actors, kingdoms and stage, encouraged the audience to critique political figures and their adherence to, or forsaking of, duty. In *Henry V* the uneasy dynamic between unrealistic Ciceronian principles of public service, Machiavellian political expediency, private conscience, and virtuous morality, all combine to form a complex representation of duty which defies simple commonplacing.

By presenting politics on the stage, Shakespeare, as well as other playwrights of histories, encouraged the theatrical audience to think about how statecraft functioned. Historical dramas on the popular stage presented a space in which everyone, rather than just courtiers and students, could engage in broader cultural conversations about how government worked and the duties of statesmen. In some cases this meant that informed spectators drew allegorical parallels between drama and the political issues of the day, but for others drama presented a more philosophical interrogation of kingship and duty. Professional theatre shared the same concerns with duty as academic theatre but it was frequently exploratory and ambiguous rather than explicitly educative. The history plays of the public theatre demonstrate the difficult interaction between political duty and private concerns but they often did not offer resolution, and therefore, often did not offer direct lessons in the vein of plays from Jesuit Colleges or the Inns

of Court. Shakespeare's historical characters rarely find resolution. Henry IV and Macbeth's consciences are beset with guilt, Brutus and Antony's personal relationships interfere with their public roles, leading to both private and political downfall. Similar concerns plague the characters of other playwrights; Marlowe's Edward II cannot reconcile his private life with his public life, while for Chapman's Bussy D'Ambois his sense of personal duty comes into fatal conflict with a corrupt government. All of these plays exemplify the struggle which occurs when personal moral values, or the lack thereof, meet the problems inherent in the political world and they do not offer instruction for resolving this struggle. The late Elizabethan and early Jacobean period saw the grim realities of life at the royal court come to the foreground and history plays speak to this reality. History plays on the public stage showcase the various problems that are associated with duty and while straightforward lessons can be extracted from some of these histories, many of them do not offer a clear instructional guide.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has argued that duty is not only integral to the early modern history play, but is also integral to early modern society, particularly in terms of political thought. Duty in the early modern period was an unfixed but pervasive concept and history plays contributed to the ongoing discussion about how citizens, particularly ones involved in the political sphere, could maintain philosophical ideals of duty within the often morally bankrupt world of politics. History plays were didactically charged but their teaching of duty often went beyond a simple endorsement of Christian and Ciceronian ideals as they were also in dialogue with other political thinkers, such as Tacitus and Machiavelli. Each site of dramatic production in this study was invested in illuminating the difficulties inherent in attempting to uphold ideals of duty in the real political world. Some of the history plays promote the maintenance of ideals but with an awareness of the personal burden, such as *Theoctistus* and *Misfortunes of Arthur*, while others wade into the ethical murkiness which comes with attempting to reconcile ideals and reality and provide no definitive solution, such as *Nero* and *Henry V*. Collectively, the plays produced at these sites of performance indicate that dutiful ideals were being constantly tested against reality and thus the ideal ethical framework was being challenged.

As argued in Chapter 1, the idealisation of duty was rooted in a mixture of Christian doctrine and Cicero's *De Officiis*, both of which prescribed duty being inextricably tied to morality. While this stance was not superseded, the less idealistic ideas of Tacitus and Machiavelli also gained traction throughout the early modern period. Malcolm Smuts argues that "we do not find a transition from one kind of humanism to another so much as an ongoing conversation, in which constitutionalist, ethical and reason of state arguments interact with each other."⁵¹⁹ Thus, Ciceronian ethical duty co-existed with Tacitean reason of state and Machiavellian pragmatism. Still, these ways of defining duty all feature the same end goal: that duty to country must be prioritized over other competing duties. Where they differ is in how to achieve this end goal, with Cicero centring religion and Machiavelli disregarding religion. It is this exploration of how best to uphold duty that was in constant flux throughout the early modern period. History plays exemplify this "ongoing conversation" between the different conceptions of duty. This thesis has demonstrated the dramatic preoccupation with conceptualizing duty, while also demonstrating how history plays achieved this exploration of the ideals and difficulties of duty, both pedagogically and theatrically.

⁵¹⁹ R. Malcolm Smuts, 'Varieties of Tacitism' in *Ancient Rome and Political Culture in Early Modern England*, ed. Paulina Kewes, special issue of the *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 83.3 (Autumn, 2020), pp.441-465 (p.441).

This study has necessarily looked beyond the dominant scholarly model for the history play: Shakespeare's English histories. Rackin argues that the "English history play was, in fact, a deeply ambivalent medium, the place where two discursive fields [history and theatre], each unsettled in itself, came together in a new hybrid genre, with no established tradition and no uncontested protocols to govern the complicated negotiations between its unstable components."⁵²⁰ This thesis has demonstrated that this elusiveness applies to *all* history plays, not just Shakespeare's English plays. History plays frequently blurred the boundaries between genres, between historiography and theatricality, and between entertainment and pedagogy. A third element can be added to the unstable mixture between history and theatre; that element being the equally unstable concept of duty. How history, theatre, and duty were conceived of, shaped, and utilized during the early modern period was under constant examination. This thesis has charted how different history plays examined ideals of duty. Each of these institutions and each of the playwrights within them were responding in their own particular ways to the changes in historiography, pedagogy, and stagecraft, and this was blended together to explore conceptions of political duty. These conceptions were also in dialogue with political thinkers and historians such as Cicero, Tacitus, and Machiavelli.

The major unifying element between the different stages covered in this thesis, at least when comparing their history plays, is the utility and pedagogy of the plays. That history plays from a variety of stages and from the 1560s through to the 1620s are united in their exploration of the complexities of upholding duty, in both a political and personal context, signifies not only a continued theatrical interest in duty, but a persistent wider cultural interest in duty. There is evidence, in the shape of individual readers' notes, that many of the plays in this thesis were used towards the specific development of political thought in regard to duty for use in a practical context. Of course, these few instances cannot be taken to represent how the entire audience reacted. The argument of this thesis is not that every spectator and reader extracted lessons about duty from history plays, merely that the opportunity to do so existed. For instance, *Richardus Tertius* presented its student audience with clear examples of undutiful courtiers who were to be shunned. These students may not have absorbed the play in this educational manner, but the possibility existed. This is also not to say that the lessons of plays were always straightforward. Chapter 6's focus on Shakespeare's *Henriad* demonstrates the more implicit style of teaching which could be present. Shakespeare was not seeking to teach a specific audience about their roles in society, as many academic playwrights were; rather, his plays offered an unresolved interrogation of duty and this prompted the audience to think through the issues of duty for themselves. In fact, some of the more didactically aimed plays

⁵²⁰ Rackin, *Stages of History* (1990), p.104.

can also be read in this way. Jesuit drama seeks to instil in students the moral values which are figured as essential for life at court, while also more generally commenting on the difficulty of reconciling religious duty and political duty, which is applicable to both student and non-student audience members alike. Even in plays which had a specific lesson for a particular audience, their subsequent print editions changed the ways in which they could potentially be received. *Misfortunes* began as a performance which spoke to Elizabeth and her counsellors about the necessity of royalty and statesmen adhering to political duty. However, it was also printed and thus reached a larger audience at a later date, one not necessarily reading the play with an eye to the contemporary counsel it was imparting. Gwinne purposefully reshaped his *Nero* in this vein. Originally written during Elizabeth's reign, with the epilogue specifically addressed to her, at the accession of James I Gwinne wrote a new preface to the play to direct it to his new monarch. Even so, these explicitly aimed prologues and epilogues are at odds with the pedagogy of the play itself, which offers no clear solution to the problems of trying to uphold ideals of duty. All of the plays in this thesis can be viewed and read in this multifaceted way. At their core though, they all explore the complexity and difficulty of upholding ideals of duty when faced with the harsh reality of politics.

The other major unifying strand between the sites of production examined in this thesis is their use of stagecraft to aid the instillation of their lessons about duty. Of course, this stagecraft has its own intrinsic value but it also helps to achieve didactic aims. The perception that there is a strict schism between the entertainment styles of academic drama and popular drama is false. Some academic plays, although not all, employed highly elaborate stage devices in order to entertain the audience, both for entertainment's sake and for the better inculcation of messages about duty. *Dido* reaches the heights of courtly masques by featuring banquets and storms made out of sweets and the delight inspired by this spectacle feeds into the pedagogy of the play, because an entertained audience is more likely to be attuned to the message about sacrificing personal desires for political duty. *Nero* more closely resembles the drama of the popular stage, featuring the ghosts, gory violence, and inventive deaths that were common in the plays of the London playhouses. Gwinne's play also resembles popular drama in its evasion of a clear lesson about duty; *Nero* mimics Shakespeare's histories by not offering any resolution about how to uphold idealistic duty within the real world of ruthless politics. *Theoctistus*, with its satanic rituals involving a goat and a flying chariot pulled by mythical beasts, demonstrates the Jesuit mission of including elaborate stage effects in an attempt to enhance the absorption of the lesson that duty to God and country must be adhered to, even if it results in death. On the other hand, the forerunners of the history play, *Richardus Tertius* and *Gorboduc*, were not particularly preoccupied with staging spectacle, although they did attempt to develop theatricality through their emulation of Senecan tragedy, and so they align far more with the

perception of what academic drama ‘should’ be (although rarely, it seems, was). *Fatum Vortigerni* and *Misfortunes of Arthur* also fall into this pattern of edging towards entertainment but concentrating far more on education. Still, both academic and popular plays combine entertainment and erudition in order to show up the difficulty of living by dutiful ideals in the real world; they just do so in different ways and measures.

Where the sites diverge most is in their accessibility and thus in their audience composition. The plays of Oxford, Cambridge, and the Inns were essentially closed to the general population. Inns plays were produced in English so would be understood by everyone, but they were closed performances, intended only for Inns men, royalty, and courtiers. The playwrights of *Gorboduc* and *Misfortunes* could be bold in counselling Elizabeth about what they conceived her duty to be because the audience was not made up of average citizens (who it was believed should not be privy to such political conversations). The history plays from Oxford and Cambridge were performed in Latin and thus were linguistically inaccessible to the majority of the population. University audiences were comprised of students, teachers, and distinguished, often political, guests, which meant that the lessons about duty were specifically tailored to them. The instruction about, and exploration of, the difficulties of duty in *Richardus Tertius*, *Dido*, and *Nero* is relevant to the lives of the courtiers and students who were watching and/or reading. While Jesuit plays were also performed in Latin (although, as the seventeenth century progressed, it became increasingly common for them to be performed in the vernacular too), they sought to appeal to the masses, hence the provision of a plot synopsis and ostentatious sets and effects. Jesuit plays were popular on the continent, drawing large crowds beyond merely the students of the colleges, which means they more closely align with popular drama than with academic drama, as the message about duty reached a far more diverse audience. The commercial theatres in London were open to anyone who was willing and able to pay the price of admission, and while no concrete evidence exists for exact audience composition (and indeed, it would vary per play), it was certainly more varied than at the Inns or universities. That the playhouse audience was unfixed meant that commercial playwrights were unable to write for a specific audience in the way that academic playwrights were. Shakespeare was not seeking to educate people about the burdens of their political duty in their current or future roles in government, but his plays still interrogated how ideals of duty functioned in real situations and they contributed to the broader conversation about the duties of statesmen and monarchs.

The printing of plays meant that a broader reading public could engage with the examination of concepts of duty after the initial performance. This often led to a different reading of the lessons about duty on offer. Printed plays, while lacking the visual spectacle of performance, were more easily used for commonplacing. The discussion of whether ideals of duty were incompatible

with the real world held timeless resonance but this was not the only way in which plays were utilized. Spectators in the original audience may have sought to connect the messages in the play to the contemporary political issues of their day, but later readers were no longer necessarily attuned to that historical context, and may have applied the play to the political situation of their own time. Across all of the sites of production, and whether printed or performed, that duty was a pervasive theme signals its pervasiveness across early modern society more generally. All of the plays dealt with the difficulty of implementing duty in one's life; some were just more specific than others about how to reconcile such ideals with the morally murky reality of politics.

While this study has covered a range of sites of production, time periods, and historical sub-genres, there are necessarily plays that have been excluded. This means that there is an opportunity to further assess and explore how duty is depicted in the history play. For instance, the closet dramas written by Mary Sidney, William Alexander, and Elizabeth Cary, amongst others, could benefit from being explored with attention to duty. Plays which took recent historical events as their subject have been excluded only because of lack of space and they could similarly gain from being examined with an eye to duty. The historical sub-genres themselves could be investigated in greater detail to identify if there are differences between, for instance, how Roman plays conceive of duty compared to English medieval plays. While this thesis has focused on histories, tragedies show their own particular proclivity towards questions of personal duty which could be explored. There is also scope for assessing duty outwith the bounds of drama. Chapter 1 is only a short summary of how duty was theorized and further studies could delve deeper into how classical and humanist thinkers, historians, and politicians figured duty and dealt with the ethical problems it raised. Another avenue would be to go beyond the chronological boundaries of this thesis, examining history plays performed post-1624 up until the closing of the theatres in 1642.

This study has inevitably not been exhaustive but by tracing duty through a selection of plays from the different sites of performance, it has shown that history plays were invested in exploring the difficulties of adhering to ideals of duty. Sometimes this took the form of instilling ideals of duty, such as in Inns of Court and Jesuit drama. The plays from these stages highlight the burdens of upholding duty to God and country but they also declare that it is necessary. The university drama of Oxford and Cambridge likewise presents Christian and classical teaching as essential to conduct in the political world, but there is a deeper awareness of how unrealistic this is when faced with the villainy present in politics and solutions to this problem are not always offered. This is then taken a step further in Shakespeare's *Henriad*, where lessons in upholding duty are not offered. Rather, the clash of ideals and reality is

presented as an unsolved problem which feeds into a more philosophical dissection of how duty is conceptualized. Where Jesuit drama champions the ideal, Shakespearean drama shows that living by a philosophical ideal is impossible. By looking at these sites of production in contrast to each other, this thesis has elucidated the pervasiveness of duty but also its unfixed nature. What it meant to be an ideal citizen, particularly in the political sphere, was being explored through these history plays, and while many of them sought to instil idealized values in audiences and readers, there was also an acknowledgment that implementing duty in one's life was not only difficult, but also sometimes impossible.

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