

PROPERTIES OF DESIRE:
PERFORMING WOMEN ON THE EARLY MODERN TRANSVESTITE STAGE

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores how stage properties contribute to the enterprise of depicting the desires of women on the early modern English public stage. It posits a trinity of female character, boy actor, and stage property in performance, the three unified by a shared occupation of subordinate places in the hierarchies that govern the home, the state, and the stage. It considers a Renaissance theatre informed by Pre-Reformation stages that employ religious and salvific objects and variably signifying geographical spaces. I argue that props can shift from *locus* mode to *platea* mode as actors do. Catching a spectator's attention *as* props, these objects can contradict their scripted functions in a way that amplifies the resistance of a play's daughter or wife to patriarchal authorities.

My project draws upon the work of Frances Teague and Andrew Sofer on early modern stage properties; and upon the work of Erika T. Lin, Richard Preiss, Robert Weimann, and Bert O. States on stage theatricality. Chapter 1 argues that the travels of a salvatory in the Digby *Mary Magdalene* construct the nature of the Magdalene's erotic desire as the basis of her spiritual authority. It compares this play to *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, where the journey of a lute foregrounds the damage done to women by male constructions of female erotic desire. Chapter 2 imagines a trial performance of *Arden of Feversham* in order to introduce a play whose title page condemns Alice for her crimes but whose props offer an affective experience to spectators that would prompt fellow-feeling for her. The final chapter takes up the props in *Pericles* that drive scenes where daughters resist the identities assigned to them by patriarchs. I argue that these props fail to do what they have been employed to do but potentially afford these daughters a way to negotiate with the powerful for a life in a home conducive to their desires. My coda considers the larger implications of props in the *platea* that destabilize hierarchies of authority on the stage, in the world, or in the cosmos.

DEDICATION

For my teachers and librarians who helped me stomach grade school.

~Especially Miss Connelly and Mr. Early.

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INTRODUCTION

Where Women and Boys Tread: Props Take Their Places on the Early Modern Page and Stage

Stage properties have a way of attracting attention in early modern drama that can undermine the authority of a play's most powerful characters. Props in Christopher Marlowe and Thomas Nashe's *The Tragedie of Dido, Queen of Carthage*, for instance, turn the strife between Queen Dido and the soldier she desires into the stuff of comedy, not tragedy. The play retells Vergil's account of the tragic consequences of Aeneas' sojourn in Carthage, but the play's props in performance contest the title's generic claim. *Dido* is a play lush with objects, especially love-tokens and gifts. A stage profligate with gems, feathers, fans, and sweetmeats is appropriate to a play whose central concern is the interference of erotic desire with the business of empire building. But the play's props not only embellish the scenes with opulent toys meant to incite desire in characters and spectators alike. They deflate the very passions they stoke.

A concealed object injures the mighty queen herself just before she meets the shipwrecked man she will fall in love with. Venus has sent her son Cupid armed with an arrow whose strike will make Dido "dote upon" Aeneas (2.1.327) rather than sport with him, as Jupiter wants to "play with" Ganymede (1.1.1). In 3.1, Dido demands that Aeneas "tell me, in sooth, / In what might Dido highly pleasure thee" (100-1).¹ Her request is his cue to step into the role of beloved by asking for beautiful things, the way Ganymede does when he demands a "fine brooch" and a "jewel for mine ear" from Jupiter (1.1.46-47). But all Aeneas can think to ask for are tools: "sails," "oars," "tackling," "stern," and "anchor" (3.1.105-9). Aeneas is thinking of

¹ Citations from *Dido, Queen of Carthage* are to the Revels Plays edition.

practical things whose functions will enable his departure from Carthage rather than ornamental things that will signify he welcomes the role he is offered as Dido's lover.

The queen, in her turn, translates the objects Aeneas has in mind into spectacular playthings that would bind him to her shores rather than enable him to leave them. Glittering anchors, linen sails, fragrant masts, and splashing oars (3.1.115-26) appeal to the senses more than they promise plain sailing. Her elaborate descriptions--"tackling made of rivell'd gold," masts carved from "the barks of odoriferous trees," and "[o]ars of massy ivory, full of holes" (115-18)--fashion extravagant objects in an auditor's imagination. They might even prompt her to anticipate how marvelous they would be to behold if they were to arrive onstage. Dido's descriptions of the gifts she devises for Aeneas also imply the dangers that might await the recipient of her attention. Aeneas' pilot, Achates, had best be on his guard: Holey oars and crystal anchors may look amazing, but they are entirely impractical, and "wanton mermaids" who have trinkets for sailors are nothing but trouble (129-30). Cupid's assault notwithstanding, this is Dido at play, Dido still in charge, a Jupiter to her Ganymede, mistress to her minion.

The verbal objects Dido embroiders into her verse, and which give her such power, do finally appear onstage as stage properties--and they turn on her. In 4.4, Dido orders her gifts back and contemplates sinking what remains of Aeneas' ships. While she agonizes beautifully over the consequent "frown" her beloved would "terrif[y]" her with (110, 115-16), a lord interrupts to announce the return of the shipping gear: "here's Aeneas' tackling, oars, and sails" (124-25). The signifying capacity of these props is manifold. They have emblematic potential, as Mary Smith shows: "Psychological tension is represented pictorially when Dido sits on stage surrounded by sails and tackling from Aeneas' ships. As she speaks in imagery which would bind Aeneas, she herself is bound physically and spiritually, caught among the tangle of ropes and cloth and

broken dreams" (Smith 188). Dido's lines also offer the possibility for those props to move in this scene, and those actions pose a problem. For one, an attendant is going to haul all of the ship's gear onstage. This procedure will surely be noisy and ungainly, colliding indecorously with the queen's glorious aria.

Furthermore, Dido addresses the props directly and, at the same time, her lines invite the boy actor to do more than sit in a kind of emblematic stasis. Certainly the text suggests that Dido responds to their arrival passively with self-directed pity--"poor Carthage Queen" (4.4.132)--given her grief for the loss of "Aeneas' love" (140). But subsequent lines allow an actor to mobilize fierce emotions in response to both man and thing that dare "offend the Carthage Queen" (158). Her speech to the gear in second person might suggest her effort to displace her rage from the person to the thing. The tree: "And yet I blame thee not, thou are but wood" (143); the tackling: "Was it not you that hoised up these sails? / Why burst you not, and they fell in the seas?" (153-54). She may grab, hoist up, even shake the oars and ropes she is so furious with, engaging them in battle, as her lines suggest she does: she will "break his oars"; she will "tie" the ropes "full of knots" out of revenge (149, 155).

In such a moment, the ropes and oars take on a certain liveliness in performance, a liveliness that may begin to make the props appear to battle back. Compared to the heft and coil of ship masts, anchor, and sailing rope, Dido's boy actor, even if in his late teens, is little in stature and force. The props in motion around a flailing figure could make an incongruous sight, and a lot of noise, which would blunt the impact of Dido's tragic lines. Moreover, any comic effects in this penultimate scene might be difficult to recuperate at the very end where, if Dido is to present a tragic character, she must draw pity from her spectators. By now the actions of props more readily detach spectators from engaging sympathetically with the queen. Once Dido throws

the "relics" (5.1.292) of false love that were her own gifts for "false Aeneas" (312) into the pyre, she leaps after them into the flames. Dido thus translates herself into one of her lover's "ticing relics" (5.277), a discarded love object, a stage prop. A particular production may achieve a tragic finale.² But the potential for props to subvert the play's tragic teleology is built right into the text. Any director, like the helmsman Achates, has to be wary of their compelling presence. In *Dido*, stage properties undermine the rhetoric of Dido's most powerful lines, the very lines that authored them and called them forth to the stage for the attention of the play's spectators.

This dissertation investigates how stage properties intervene in the problems and pleasures of depicting the desires of women on the early modern stage. To do so, it considers both the properties and the stage upon which props travel. It keeps in mind a transvestite stage where boys play the roles of girls and women. And it regards this stage as one whose craft emerges from pre-Reformation medieval stages. Such a stage features religious (efficacious and salvific) objects and variably signifying playing spaces. This dissertation supposes that cultural memories avail these theatrical elements for translation in later secular playhouses.³ It argues that a relationship unique to female characters and the objects they use charges stage properties with what may appear to a spectator to be agency, an agency that is potentially subversive. The final scenes of *Dido* instantiate the pivotal impact stage properties can have in the hands of a boy actor

² See Thomas, who describes such an ending in her review of the Globe Young Players' 2015 production of *Dido*. As she tells it,

"[Jasmine] Jones' Dido became poignantly and desperately hopeless. . . . The trapdoor under the stage became the funeral pyre. With orange light dancing on Dido's skin, the audience were left hanging on her bold resolve to die, and her leap into the fire elicited audible gasps" (532-33).

³ See, for instance, Cooper *Shakespeare*; and Schreyer.

playing a desiring female character.⁴ Props can support the emotions evoked by an actor's lines; they can contradict the content of those lines or deflate the emotions that passionate dialogue can produce. They may achieve a certain liveliness, which, in the case of *Dido*, assists the play in its parody of Vergil's serious themes by upstaging the play's protagonist, muting Dido's expression of her passion and undermining her capacity for tragic stature.⁵

My project focuses on female characters, whose primary obligation in early modern drama is to marry. These are middle class and aristocratic women who roam for a time in the liminal spaces between parental and marital homes. Here they pursue alternate desires, desires which put them at odds with the men who would direct, contain, use, judge, and/or discipline them. I take into account the roles of these female characters in relation to stage properties in the context of the status of early modern daughters and wives as property and property owners. The very genesis of the word "property" in theatre history is indeed germane to how early modern female characters both use and are figured by stage props.

Property's meaning as any (usually material) thing belonging to a person or a group of persons (*OED* n. 3b), and more particularly, its meaning as an appurtenance for a play (*MED* n.

⁴ Christopher Marlowe wrote *Dido* in collaboration with Thomas Nashe sometime in the 1580s. For discussions on the textual history, authorship, and dating of the play see Oliver xx-xxx and Wiggins.

⁵ The comic incidents that disrupt the play's serious proceedings have prompted considerable debate about the extent to which the play is a tragedy, as its title page asserts it is. Gibbons identifies the play's consistent focus on "extreme emotional states" (38) and finds Aeneas' excesses "deeply absurd, farcical" (40). But he insists nevertheless that "Dido attains a state of divine exaltation" (44) by the "power and depth of [her] emotion" (43) and the "erotic hyperbole" of her poetry (44). Rick Bowers, on the other hand, gleefully celebrates Marlowe's "wickedly theatrical little play" as it "foregrounds comedy, twists gender, and debunks heroism with a decidedly 'camp' sensibility" (96). Like Gibbons, Cope and Wood find that the farcical elements of the play neither diminish the tragedy of the play's end nor the dignity of its protagonist. Turner and Gill find that the problems assigning Dido an unambiguously heroic stature were problems that Marlowe created for himself and was unable to solve. Crowley finds the play's imitation of Vergil "a quasi-tragedy" if we understand that Marlowe's Dido is met by a "malleable, pseudo-Ovidian" Aeneas rather than the "epic, pseudo-Vergilian" Aeneas she wants (430).

3b), arrive into the English language at roughly the same time--late 1300s to early 1400s.⁶ The earliest reference to *property* as a theatrical object offered by the *OED* is a citation to *The Castle of Perseverance*, dated before 1450 (n. 5). In this play, one flag-bearer says to another, "Grace if God wil graunte us, of his mikyl myth, / These parcell[ys] in propyrtes we purpose us to playe. . ." (131-32). That is, the flag-bearers' troupe intends, God willing, to play their roles "in costume and with theatrical properties," as David Bevington translates the citation (n. 134).

The *MED* provides an earlier citation for *prō̃preṭē* (n. 3b), dated before 1425, from the *Northern Homily Cycle: Legendary*, part 1: "Hastili þant gert he dight A faire toure. . . . Also 3 it gert he mak þarin Propirtese by preue gyn, Ðat it was like untill a heuyn And rayn þarfro cumand ful euyn." *Property* here refers more to stage machinery than a stage prop. The narrative from which this reference derives involves a proud king who wants to be regarded as the greatest lord and god of all. To exalt himself, he creates a fair tower (plus a bejeweled throne for himself, next to which he will place the Holy Cross!) and uses a concealed device--"Propirtese by preue gyn"--to fashion rain in the heavens. Such theatricality is characteristically associated with wicked kings, particularly Herod, in medieval and early modern literature.⁷ Thus the earliest reference I have found to date to the devices we think of now as stage property is coloured by an idea of how such objects enable deceit and hypocrisy. I explore this idea especially in chapter 2 where I consider the plots and devices Alice Arden fashions in order to satisfy her desires.

⁶ See *prō̃preṭē* (n.) in the *Middle English Dictionary (MED)*; and see *property*, n. and *prop* n. in the *OED*. Rutter notes that the theatrical sense of the word *property* "was contemporary to Shakespeare's theatre" (*Enter* 5). She points to Philip Henslowe's entry in his *Diary* of "a payment to 'John thare the 23 of October 1602 to paye vnto the paynter of the properties for the playe of the iij brothers'; these may have included 'a tabell & a coffen' elsewhere itemized" (180 n. 11).

⁷ See Williams, *French Fetish*, especially 54 and 84-5.

The more general meaning of *property* as something that is owned and its more specific meaning as something that is a portable object used in a play have, considered in tandem, led scholars to speculate that the latter, theatrical, sense of the term originated because those objects were the personal or communal possession, the property, of an actor or a theatre company. Margaret Harris suggests, "[stage] properties are so called because they belong to whoever uses them on the stage. In fact, until comparatively recently, this was literally the case, as the actor supplied for himself such small things as he needed for his performance" (7). Eleanor Margolies asserts, "[b]eing derived from 'property', the word 'prop' originally referred to an object that belonged to a theatre company or the actor" (3). I cannot find evidence of such a derivation in a primary document, however. Nor is it certain if *prop* as the abbreviation of *stage property* entered the English language as early as did the word "property." The *OED*'s earliest recorded use is dated 1841: "There we subsisted by *spouting*, not Shakespeare, but our dresses and props" (n.^o 1a, emphasis in original). The only meanings provided by the *MED* for *prop* or *proppe* are a stopper for a bottle; and a support for a vine or other plant. It may appear, then, that *prop(pe)* is not used as an abbreviation for *stage property* in pre-modern English. However, I suggest that Shakespeare does use the word "prop" metatheatrically in *Richard III*, as I discuss in more detail in chapter 2.

Property's several meanings are more generally relevant to my focus on early modern female characters, because daughters and wives themselves were regarded as property while some could also own property, and both conditions were inextricably tied to their identity. In her discussion of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Margreta de Grazia demonstrates how "[s]ubjects and objects are so tightly bound in the play's economy" (24) that "what *one* is depends on what one

owns" (De Grazia 34, emphasis in original).⁸ Prescriptive literature and personal property laws restricted wives' personal property rights: "Wives could own--but usually only widows could bequeath--*real* property given to them in premarital agreements or wills. But . . . the husband still had major control over the disposition of that property" as he had over the disposition of her *personal* property, or moveable goods (Hull 32, emphasis in original). Linda Boose explains how a daughter is "a temporary sojourner within her family, destined to seek legitimation and name outside its boundaries." In the house of her father a daughter has no role "in extending its integrity into history. When her patronymic identity as daughter is exchanged for one that marks her as wife, she is still the alien until she has once again changed her sign to 'mother of new members of the lineage'" (21-22). Andrew Sofer, considering the meanings of *property* in the context of women and early modern drama, remarks how, "[w]omen become properties to be conveyed between parties, forcibly if necessary" (*Stage* 113).

I trace the perverse role stage properties have in enabling these female characters' resistance to patriarchal authorities and the identities they bestow upon them. Jean E. Howard does not argue with the truism that "the English Renaissance was no real Renaissance for women" ("Crossdressing" 427), but she reminds her readers

that early modern England was not only permeated by well-documented social mobility and unsettling economic change, but by considerable instability in the gender system as well. . . . [I]f the vast social changes of the period led to intensified pressures on women and a strengthening of patriarchal authority in the

⁸ De Grazia's emphasis draws attention to "a common Renaissance homonym lost to modern pronunciation" (34).

family and the state, these changes also produced sites of resistance and possibilities of new powers for women. (Howard, "Crossdressing" 425, 427)⁹

Importantly, Howard wonders about what attending plays in the public theatre did for women. At least, "to be at the theatre, especially without a male companion, was to transgress the physical and symbolic boundaries of the middle-class woman's domestic containment" ("Crossdressing" 440). And, as Phyllis Rackin says, "[b]ecause playing was a commercial enterprise, it was in the players' interests to please as many of the paying customers as they could, the women no less than the men. The female playgoers in Shakespeare's London brought their own perspectives to the action" ("Misogyny" 53). This dissertation keeps in mind what those perspectives might be as it traces how stage objects function in representations of women who are travelling between houses.

The following chapters offer close readings of four plays: the anonymous Digby *Mary Magdalene* and *Arden of Faversham*, Thomas Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, and William Shakespeare's *Pericles*. These plays dramatize four iconic female identities: virgin, wife, adulteress, and prostitute. They locate the daughters or wives variously at the crossroads between a family and a conjugal home, or on a road away from these homes. Two conflicts of desire typically confront these early modern female characters: they are thwarted in their pursuit of a man they desire and/or they are besieged themselves by appetitive men. Focusing on how playwrights, characters, and actors employ objects on their respective stages, I look at how property stagecraft implicates the ways desire complicates the lives of the protagonists on their journeys.

⁹ Joan Kelly first asked, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?"

This dissertation has two axes of inquiry: a theoretical one that explores how stage props signify, and an interpretive one that considers the impact of a prop's signification with respect to a character as embodied by a boy actor. I am interested in the objects that are depicted in a play's fiction, and I trace how these objects become stage properties and then signify in performance. The female protagonists who are most closely associated with those props in these four plays pursue their desires by improvising at a moment of conflict, metatheatrical actions that link their agency to their capacity to transcend the roles scripted for them. A key to their ability to solve their problems is how they handle objects that come their way. I argue that the agency a female character achieves--that is, her ability to satisfy her desires in the face of obstruction--is inextricably tied to the efficacy of the objects she handles.

Determining the potency of a particular object a female character handles on a sixteenth-century English stage depends on the signifying capacity of both prop and stage. Thus my project contributes to two areas of study in Renaissance drama by bridging one to the other: the function of stage properties in performance; and the Renaissance stages' theatricality, or how early modern spectators understood their stages to signify. On the one hand, scholars who address early modern stage props, including cultural materialists, theatre historians, and performance theorists, tend to think about the stage upon which props move as a uniform or unified stage. On the other hand, scholars who pay attention to the interplay of mimetic and presentational aspects of the early modern stage consider only the human figures upon such a stage. These latter scholars address the way different places on the stage allow characters and actors different means of drawing the attention of their spectators. My question is, does such a bifurcated stage apply as well to the way stage properties signify? And, if so, how?

Setting the stage for my answer, I employ methods of scholars in both areas of inquiry. Scholars who work on the materiality of the early modern stage inform my methodology for assessing a play's use of stage props. Frances Teague's *Shakespeare's Speaking Properties* laid the groundwork for most critical approaches to the function of stage properties in Shakespearean drama, to the many ways props may "speak." The foundation for her work lies in her appendices (157-97). There, she compiles property lists for each of Shakespeare's plays in the first, and divides these properties into categories, listing the frequencies with which the props occur for each play in the second. Teague demonstrates how, besides marking a play's time and setting, props may signify semiotically as symbols, emblems, metonymies, or synecdoches. For example, the object imagery and the material stage properties in *Dido* serve to construct setting and mood; they paint Olympus and Carthage alike as places of longing and beguilement. But the objects are also the primary means with which mortal and immortal lovers negotiate their desires; they are integral to the action of the play. The few props that appear onstage are potent synecdoches for a promised profusion of playthings coming from gods to their beloveds.¹⁰

Teague also shows how props may move in performance; that is, any prop is not necessarily a stable signifier but can alter in meaning. *Dido*, for example, coordinates the queen's assertion of power and subsequent diminishment in the clutch of desire in scenes of gift giving and requesting, featuring objects that shift in their potential for harm. In 1.1, Jupiter invites his page, "gentle Ganymede," to "Come . . . and play with me" (1) and makes promises of things to come that might woo his unyielding cupbearer: He will "pluck" the feathers from Juno's peacocks for fans to cool his minion's face. He will make the swans who serve Venus "shed" their "silver down" to "sweeten" his "slumbers" and tear the wings from Hermes, "[i]f that thy

¹⁰ Of course, productions may choose to materialize some or all of what is promised to come.

fancy in his feathers dwell" (1.1.34-39). The violence with which Jupiter threatens to purchase the delicate stuffs he conceives as love gifts charge the "linked gems" (42) he offers Ganymede with danger and desire, the one association inextricable from the other. Venus kidnaps the son of Aeneas, Ascanius, with similar tactics. Her gifts promise the child many pleasures at the same time that they signal the danger of her attention: "Milk-white doves" for sentinels (2.1.318-20) hardly seem an appropriate guard for a little boy subject to the "cry of beasts, the rattling of the winds" (2.1.336) and, much more dangerous, the malignant attention of Juno (3.2.1-20).

Dido's demand in act 3 that Aeneas ask of her what he desires aligns her with the gods, Jupiter and Venus, who grant gifts to others. The play's patterning thus posits Dido as the powerful, dangerous one who bestows things. It also aligns Aeneas with Ganymede and his own son, Ascanius, who are potentially in danger from the gods who woo them. But when a little boy clamours for Dido's attention and, once in her lap, demands "this fan" (3.1.32) from her, the play turns perverse. The danger of desire in this scene is materialized in the "golden arrow" (3) Cupid smuggles to prick and eventually doom his unwitting host. The play's objects turn from things that promise pleasure to things that produce anguish. Stage properties that once signified as ornaments given from gods to lesser gods or mortals--silver quivers and golden shafts--now signify as weaponry. Thus the mast, anchor, and rope have the potential to arrive on the scene in 4.4 already charged militarily, or militantly, as if arms from the man they were designed to seduce.

This dissertation traces props as they mutate like this, while it locates itself particularly in the scholarly attention to how stage properties may sometimes perform like stage actors. Teague, for instance, distinguishes between a prop that acts figuratively and one that may "stand in place of a performer, to become a surrogate actor" (30) or can "be regarded anthropomorphically as a

performer" (Teague 31).¹¹ She gives as an example Launce's appropriating "shoes, staff and hat as surrogates for his parents, sister, and Nan" (30) in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Launce picks up the shoe that is his mother as if to kiss it and identifies his mother's bad breath, employing "the old comic attitude that all shoes stink." As Teague explains, "the property must be recognized by the audience as both mother and as old shoe for this joke to work" (31). What is also important here for my purposes is how Teague argues that the capacity of a prop to signify depends in part on an audience's reception. In this case, spectators may transfer associations they have with objects from the real world to that which they recognize onstage.

Andrew Sofer also argues that props can transcend their role as sign (*Stage* 24). I employ Sofer's method for analyzing the journeys that stage properties track throughout any given performance. Sofer focuses on singular props in a series of plays from medieval to modern and shows how they function in ways that are less passive than the more conventional uses such properties might be employed to provide, such as metaphors for characterization, for example. He identifies and analyzes props that perform as more than just "visual shorthand" (20-22). Rather, they may achieve a kind of autonomy in a "mode of 'semiotic subjectivity,'" where they "transcend their customary roles as transparent scenic metonymies and expository signs" (24). Sofer argues that props may come to be fetishized onstage, explaining how they may suddenly acquire extra-ordinary signification and thereby have emotional consequences for their spectators: "A fetishized prop is one endowed by the actor, character, or playwright with a special power and/or significance that thereafter seems to emanate from the object itself. . . . By extension (contagion?), the object then serves the same function for the audience" (26).

¹¹ On stage props as performing objects, see also Rivère de Carles, esp. 64-67.

Teague and Sofer thus isolate and analyze the diverse ways specific props may make meaning in particular plays in performance. Douglas Bruster, on the other hand, canvasses the general ways props and their uses have developed over time (xvii). Bruster takes a quantitative approach to things and traces the kinds and the numbers of stage properties used in plays from genre to genre from Tudor to Stuart periods, as well as changes in the kinds of roles stage props played. He finds a progression between 1590 and 1620, for instance, "with props serving not only as floating signifiers between characters (signs, for example, of such things as marriage, chastity, and social position), but also as legitimate objects of interest in and of themselves" (117). That is, interest shifted in what stage properties might suggest about a character in whose possession the prop was to the "integrity" of the property itself--its own identity rather than a related character's (117).

Catherine Richardson looks at the material culture of the real world of contemporary England in order to consider how objects interact with language and action on Shakespeare's stage. She points to the valuable scholarship that considers how familiar audiences may be with the texts that appear onstage or are alluded to in plays--the Bible, Ovid, other plays, contemporary ballads, for instance. She argues we need to appreciate how objects, too, spoke to audiences. As she puts it, "We need to . . . enter that distinctive world of goods and appreciate the potential transgressions involved in eating food, furnishing homes and wearing clothes . . . if we are to understand the way Shakespeare's plays negotiated meaning between words and things" (*Shakespeare* 5).

Richardson's study of objects in both real and theatrical worlds participates in the object-centric and/or thing-centric scholarship that now flourishes. Marlis Schweitzer and Joanne Zerdy have assembled a collection of case studies called *Performing Objects and Theatrical Things*.

Their scope is vast. They consider theatre and performance over time from the thirteenth to the twenty-first centuries. The many and diverse kinds of objects and things the collection scrutinizes includes stage props, but also research, construction, and environmental materials, for instance--sketches, boats, film reels, winds, ruins, drums, lolly-pops--and much much more. Contributors to *Performing Objects* "move beyond conventional humanist methodologies and their privileging of the human subject in order to develop new ways of learning from, listening to, and collaborating with nonhuman entities" (Schweitzer and Zerdy 17).

Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda make a case for the stubborn materiality of props onstage that appear to resist their adoption as signs for something else: "Like Snout's crude 'rough-cast' wall in the play of *Pyramus and Thisbe*," they argue, "theatrical objects always potentially refuse to be subordinated to the *logos* of the play in which they appear." What they "make visible" instead, "by virtue of their conspicuous fabricatedness," are "alternate dramas of manufacture and the body" (11). Their book, *Staged Properties in Early Modern Drama*, gathers a collection of essays by scholars, who, like Richardson and Bruster, share a materialist approach to their topic. Their essays agree that, as Arjun Appadurai writes in *The Social Life of Things*, "[i]n order to read the meanings of any object . . . it becomes necessary to trace its 'cultural biography' as it 'moves through different hands, contexts, and uses'" (18).¹²

If materialist scholarship asserts the power of early modern stage properties to "puncture dramatic illusion by pointing to alternate social dramas of economic production, exchange, and ownership" (Harris and Korda 15), it does not say how those props do that, how they point outside of their playworld to the world inhabited by their spectators. I ask what prompts spectators to see props "puncture dramatic illusion." Though they do not say so expressly, all of

¹² See also Richardson and Hamling; and Richardson, "Shakespeare and Material Culture."

the scholars of early modern dramatic texts I discuss above appear to presume a uniform stage upon which stage props are put to use by authors who write them into their plays and actors who perform with them. But the structures that housed England's medieval drama produced stages that were not uniform.¹³ These non-uniformly signifying stages that contemporary scholars call "place-and-scaffold" established different modes of theatricality; that is, alternate conventions whereby spectators understood the action they were witnessing.

Place-and-scaffold staging was an outdoor, non-processional medieval technique of theatre wherein "the acting area consist[ed] of an open space (the *place*) surrounded by individual stages (the *scaffolds*), each localized as a structure (house, palace, temple, Hellmouth) or natural feature (a mountain)" (Twycross 56). In this theatrical system, there is literally no unified stage, but rather a cluster of localized and scaffolded stages dispersed in and around a place. Spectators understood the scaffold and place, and the characters within them, to relate to them in different ways. Characters in the place are seen to be subservient to those that speak from the scaffolds, who are at some remove from characters in the place. Where the audience members sat, stood, or roamed, however, is uncertain (58-60). This is a problem that informs how scholars theorize a mode of medieval theatricality that comes to be called *platea* and *locus*, and which some argue informs a newly Protestant England's secular Elizabethan stage.

Robert Weimann turns to the place-and-scaffold system to theorize the "authority" of theatrical spaces, by which he means to distinguish what particularly gives theatrical areas the power to draw the attention of and secure credibility from an audience. These "theatrical techniques," he argues, "continued to be meaningful and effective in Shakespeare's theater" (*Shakespeare* 77). Whereas the downstage *platea* facilitated contact between actor and audience,

¹³ See Chambers, *Elizabethan* 22; Nicoll 40, 41, 46; and Southern 231-36.

the symbolic function of upstage *loci* distanced the sets and the actors performing within them from the audience.¹⁴ Actors in these two different places claimed different relationships to their spectators, because, according to Weimann, "the Elizabethan platform stage . . . provided two different, although not rigidly opposed, modes of authorizing" the speech that issued from those places. The *locus* "tended to privilege the authority of what and who was *represented* in the dramatic world." On the other hand, "the *platea*, being associated instead with the actor and the neutral materiality of the platform stage, tended to privilege the authority of what and who was *representing* that world" (Weimann, "Bifold" 409, emphasis in original). What is key is that the locus-centered authority, whatever "great weight and meaning" an audience may have accepted that it commanded, could be "challenged," and that challenge tended to come from "whatever *platea*-dimension Shakespeare's stage tended to retain or, sometimes, revitalize" (410).

There has been a current upsurge in scholarly attention to the potential relevance of medieval *platea* and *locus* for Renaissance theatricality. Unlike Weimann, Richard Preiss does not take the authority of any part of the Elizabethan amphitheatre stage for granted. If Shakespeare's stage retains the *platea*, for Preiss it resides primarily with the spectators before the stage.¹⁵ He argues provocatively that even to speak of Shakespeare's theatre or any "authors' theatre" is to speak of an institution that grew within "the audience's theatre" first (186)--a loud, combative arena wherein the *playgoers* were engaged in a contest for authority with the players

¹⁴ Other scholars of the medieval stage refer to the plural of *locus* as *loca*: Bush notes that "I follow [Alan H.] Nelson who follows Chambers in using *locus* as the singular and *loca* as the plural" (139, fn. 1). Weimann uses both forms in *Shakespeare*, but adopts *loci* in a later work ("Bifold" 409). The variability must certainly relate to the Latin word's abnormal declension: the masculine, singular *locus* takes a double plural, *loci* and *loca*, which *Cassell's Dictionary* distinguishes by assigning *loci* to "single places" and *loca* to "places connected with one another, neighbourhood, region." Others distinguish between geographical and later metaphorical uses of the term related to passages in a book or the grounds of an argument. See Adams 438-39.

¹⁵ See also Aronson-Lehavi 19, 65.

themselves to speak (Preiss 64). If the *platea* existed at all as a place "subservient to the *locus*," Preiss argues, then that place existed only "[i]nside the fragile membrane of the play. . . ; beyond those borders, however, *platea* is all there was." Outside the drama proper, as far as the production and circulation of authority was concerned, the voice of an audience that took its own authority for granted had to be negotiated--the main responsibility of a playing company's clown (64). This dissertation keeps the "audience's theatre" with its willful spectators in mind as it makes its interpretive claims about the actions within a play's perimeters to foreground possibilities the theatrical mode of *platea* offers for resistance and subversion.

Erika T. Lin intervenes in the current understanding of *platea* and *locus* by relieving those places from requiring discrete physical boundaries at all.¹⁶ Lin shows how rather than literal movement from one part of a stage to another--from the downstage place associated with the *platea* and upstage places associated with the *locus*--it is the "dynamic interplay between theatre's representational strategies and presentational effects" (6) that affords characters degrees of authority. *Locus* and *platea* are more modes than geographies of theatricality. The key difference between the two modes is how what characters say and do in either mode is heard and seen by their auditors. What puts a character in and out of *locus* or *platea* mode is the intimacy an actor establishes with his spectators (30). Lin argues that a character who is conscious that he is the object of a spectator's attention is in the *platea* and achieves "theatrical privilege" (34) or authority in relation to one who is not. She explains that from the point of view of a character, "[m]erely being watched or heard does not situate one in the *locus*; rather, being watched or heard *unawares* does" (33; emphasis in original). For Lin, theatrical privilege means the advantage one character has over another in drawing the attention and approbation of playgoers.

¹⁶ See also Mooney.

Characters "who articulate the most awareness of this theatrical semiotics and who showcase their ability to manipulate such signifiers" acquire that advantage (Lin 37).

The scholars of the medieval and early modern stage theatricality from whose work I draw are concerned with relations among authors, players, clowns, characters, and spectators--all human or fictionally human agents. But none consider how non-human things might operate on a non-uniformly signifying early modern stage. I suggest that stage properties can also shift in and out of *platea* and *locus* modes as actors do. That is, stage objects, like characters, can point to their own theatrical semiotics in such a way that occasions their shift from representing what they have been scripted to represent, an object in *locus* mode, to presenting themselves as props, in the *platea*, from outside the stage's fiction to playgoers. A non-uniform stage enabled Elizabethan and Jacobean playgoers congregating in the theatres to recognize when props might leave behind or transcend their fictions, step outside the *locus*, so to speak, and "puncture dramatic illusion" (Harris and Korda 15) to address them directly as the things themselves.

The things that Dido, the metatheatrical author of the ship tackle, imagines for us are in *locus* mode. They serve their author, who devises their role to play in her scenario: the objects will bind Aeneas to her shores rather than enable him to leave her. She creates objects out of nothing with her words in a receptive auditor's imagination, just like a playwright can, and subsequently calls for the material things themselves to come onstage. But their eventual performance onstage exemplifies how stage props can be seen by spectators to stop signifying the way that they have been deployed to do by a character, or perhaps even their author. Rather than impede Aeneas, Dido's props impede only Dido. Their final performance is one in *platea* mode that speaks through their representation as Dido's fantastical gifts, because they command their spectators instead to experience their intrinsic properties: their clank, their weight, their

insistent materiality. If so, then the early modern period's view of objects on its stage is potentially a unique and democratizing view of the things in its world.

Stage properties can also engage their spectators in *platea* mode by prompting their memories of like objects in other playworlds or the real world. Marvin Carlson coined the term *ghosting* to describe a phenomenon that happens when audiences bring memories of "things"-- "not only the actors but all the accouterments of theatre"--from previous productions to new ones (Carlson 7-8). The effect of Alice Arden's use of a prayerbook can be overlaid or even undermined by a playgoer's memory of Richard III's use of a prayerbook. The more the prayerbook attracts attention to itself as a theatrical device, one that has appeared as such in another play, the more it enters into *platea* mode. Audiences may also bring memories of things from the real world to the play. In *Pericles*, for instance, a scripted object in *locus* mode represents a passport written by Pericles that identifies the body of his dead wife, Thaisa. That stage object can figuratively step out of the *locus* and stop speaking representationally. Instead, it can present itself as a stage property in *platea* mode, a stage letter with characters, and speak about itself. It can point to itself as a thing that shares a history, or histories, as cultural materialists locate, with other stage letters and whose theatrical ontology is informed by its kinship with letters in the real world.

However stage objects catch a spectator's attention, however they assert themselves metatheatrically as stage properties for the very reason that their fictional role has been dropped for the moment, they are in the *platea*. And properties in the *platea* can acquire a subjective authority in relation to something or someone else in the *locus*, because they participate in the dynamic interplay between presentational and representational modes in terms of their "actor"-audience relationship. I locate the agency that props appear to acquire not in some kind of

vitalism but in their particular stage and the particular way things there, human and non-human alike, are "uplifted to the view," as Bert O. States might say (35).¹⁷ Given the way objects and humans are framed on the early modern (bifurcated) stage; and depending upon how an actor might handle a particular stage property, subjectivity does not necessarily belong only to human beings upon that stage.

Susan Harlan and Kristen Poole have both analyzed how a singular stage prop might figure something more than its representational role. Harlan shows "how Shakespeare's plays position armour as an object upon which crucial relationships between textual and human bodies, between subjects and objects, and between historical pasts and contemporary moments are literally and figuratively inscribed" (Harlan 132). In *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Pericles*, "armour figures . . . both as a symbolic system and as a material object that is manipulated and worn by players" (132). She argues that both plays "suggest that the subject's [Antony's or Pericles'] military dress objectifies him, that he is transformed into steel by donning his armour. The stage prop, or object, thus threatens to displace the subject" (132-33). In Harlan's example, the prop achieves agency in its relation to characters, either Antony or Pericles, whereas Poole releases the stage prop from its representational relationship to character entirely. The prop speaks to a spectator about itself. Poole considers the demonic contract in *Doctor Faustus* and suggests that Faustus' scroll announces itself first as a material presence, inviting spectators to see its own ontology and relations: "Will it have the same appearance in hell? Where will it go once it gets there? Does Satan have a secretary?" (203).

¹⁷ The phrase originates with William Shakespeare's *Cleopatra*, who warns her maidservant Iras how they will be put upon a stage and paraded through Roman streets to advertise Caesar's triumph: "Mechanic slaves / With greasy aprons, rules, and hammers shall / Uplift us to the view" (5.2.210-12).

I build on the work of these two scholars in order to look at the effects of a series of stage properties that are unique to girl or women characters. In the plays I consider here, women use or are associated with props differently than men.¹⁸ For instance, *Dido's* Aeneas speaks to a stage prop too, when he wonders why the statue of Priam he sees does not weep like Niobe's but rather makes him weep instead. But unlike Dido, Aeneas is aware that he is speaking, unusually, to a thing, and that his mind plays tricks on him: "Achates, though mine eyes say this is stone, / Yet thinks my mind that this is Priamus" (2.1.24-25). Achates replies, "Thy mind, Aeneas, that would have it so / Deludes thy eyesight: Priamus is dead" (31-32). The potentially estranging effect of Aeneas' unconventional interaction with a stage prop is clarified for the play's auditors by his speech. His lines keep the prop in *locus* mode. Therefore, his address to a prop does not complicate the play's attitude toward him. Even so, Aeneas' account of a statue that makes him weep in *Dido* rehearses the affective potential of inanimate matter on the early modern stage.

Second, I show how the boy actor of the Renaissance transvestite stage helps register the resistance that a play's objects enable or foreground a female protagonist to achieve against authority.¹⁹ Kathryn Rebecca Van Winkle considers the lot of early modern England's boy actors, who are "in the relentlessly de-privileged position" suffered by the young in Elizabethan times. She argues that Marlowe provides the boys of *The Children of the Chapel Royal* "the

¹⁸ Pollard, on the other hand, identifies certain props as "female" props, which stand in for female characters that disappear from the stage. For Pollard, these props "often signify women's lack of individual voice, agency and body control" (122). See Hammons, who looks at differences between male- and female-authored Renaissance verse with respect to their central preoccupations with material objects from love tokens to real estate.

¹⁹ As current scholarship makes increasingly evident, girls and women were by no means absent from English stages. See Brown and Parolin; Callaghan; McManus; Tomlinson; Williams, *Shakespeare* and "Chastity"; and Wynne-Davies. On erotic desire and the performance of gender in early modern England and on its stages, see Bloom; Munro *Children*; Newman; Orgel *Impersonations*; Rackin, "Androgyny"; Shapiro; and Zimmerman. For a canvass of early modern and twentieth-century responses to the boy actor, see Barker.

opportunity to perform getting one over a 'master' figure" (Van Winkle 48). Jeanne McCarthy looks as well at the conditions for child actors and considers especially their education and the contemporary expectations of their performance. She argues that given the "practices and tensions developed within the institution of the school or choir, . . . the elite schoolboy tradition . . . provides a particularly early and flourishing habitation for the tensions between author, text, and disempowered player" (159). McCarthy shows how boy actors are, as they are for Van Winkle, at once at a disadvantage in terms of authority, but also in a position to resist their expected submission to a master/author and his texts, very like the female characters they portray I would add. Furthermore, as Jean E. Howard argues, a boy actor's materializations of fantasized femininity could be politically and socially dangerous:

Every time a boy actor drew on the culture's codes of femininity to create a stage "woman," that actor risked evoking the powerful associations encoded in those discourses and material objects. . . . The all-male stage excluded women performers and writers; it could not exclude the unpredictable performance of femininity, nor could it control the interpretation of those representations by cultural players of both sexes. (Howard, "Staging" 278-79)

I build on these arguments by suggesting that female characters, boy actors, and stage properties, by the very fact of the generally (but not universally) "de-privileged" places they occupy in the hierarchies of authority in the state and home and on the stage, make up a very powerful trinity in performance. I argue that this trinity is capable of producing potential, if ambiguous, sites of resistance and agency for their spectators. The arrivals, the departures, and the motions of female-directed stage properties in the hands of boy actors affect the way spectators might perceive a female character's agency.

My method of reading the plays is informed by a strategy that G. B. Shand calls "actorly reading." Approaching playscripts as "deeply unstable, contingent and open sites of producible optionality," such a strategy tries to read early in the process of theatrical performance: not from the vantage point of a theatre audience, but from the perspective of an imagined performer or an enabling director ("My Lives" par. 9). Actorly reading involves "'sitting inside' the character--a process of inhabiting, physically, emotionally, imaginatively, a subjectivity Other than one's own, a subjectivity which is understood to be essentially there for the experiencing" ("Gap" par. 12).²⁰ It depends on asking "what if" at points in a text where various options for performance are available, and asking what are the effects of one or another choice in performance. I conduct such an experiential engagement with my protagonists' scripts, imagining--which is to say staging visually in my mind's eye, blocking, and directing--a female character's interior and performative journeys.

I am committed to a style of reading that is necessarily speculative, because the texts I look at are "interrogative" texts, as both Catherine Belsey and Sarah Munson Deats point out. Belsey argues that in early modern texts "no single voice is privileged." Rather, these texts "enlis[t] the reader in contradiction" (*Critical* 89, 95). Deats looks at the way Marlowe's plays in effect argue both sides of a question. Spectators answer to one or the other side depending upon where their attentions lie or are drawn while reading or watching a play (199). The value of my imaginative reading is that it complements the works it addresses, because "it embraces provisionality rather than prescription in critical reading," as Shand puts it.²¹

Of course, my method of reading early modern playtexts is bracketed to my observance of current research on contemporary theatrical and performance conditions, especially John H.

²⁰ See also "Directing" and "Stagecraft."

²¹ Shand, E-mail.

Astington, David J. Kathman, Scott McMillin, and Evelyn Tribble on actors and acting; Tiffany Stern on rehearsal; Simon Palfrey and Stern on parts and cues; both Andrew Gurr and Sally-Beth Maclean on playing companies; Anthony Dawson and Paul Yachnin on theatre culture; and Paul Menzer on character acting; and recent work on character, especially the collection of essays edited by Yu Jin Ko and Michael W. Shurgot. Such a historically informed improvisational critical practice is appropriate for an inquiry into how the protagonists pursue their desires by performing and improvising. Their actions open up spaces where these women, and perhaps the women who watch them, may imagine agency. Their actions take them to places where they might desire imaginatively.

My first chapter puts the Digby *Mary Magdalene* (c. 1515-30), a medieval conversion romance, in conversation with an early modern domestic tragedy, Thomas Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1603). Both plays, set in the context of a Christian redemption discourse, concern themselves with female protagonists whose fall into sexual sin is followed by their acts of repentance. I adopt Teague's method of cataloguing all of the props that appear on both stages and provide an overview of their kinds and effects. These two plays pay less attention to how female characters might make unique or transgressive use of objects. Rather, the symbolic resonances and material and/or theatrical histories of the objects help constitute the apparently transgressive passions and motivations of the characters in whose hands they appear.

I focus in this chapter on key properties that stand in for the protagonist and/or aspects of their character. In the Digby *Mary Magdalene*, a container of ointment or salve, a salvatory, which is neither overtly mentioned in a stage direction nor in the dialogue, can nonetheless be textually located. When Mary enters Simon's house in search of Jesus, she must have a vessel

with her to house the "*precious ointment*" with which she means to anoint him (640 sd.).²² And she must have a vessel with her again when she approaches Jesus in the garden, wanting once more to anoint him "with this bamys sote" (1071). The salvatory accrues signification related to Mary's ardour that does not trade away earthly or profane desire for a pure spirituality, as scholars have argued. Rather, the play posits the force of Mary's desire as enabling her redemption. The movement of the prop and its emblematic iteration in the playtext suggest that her desire is the basis of her spiritual authority, an authority independent of clerical authority. Having made the relation between Mary's bliss, her spirituality, and her authority, the prop disappears, but the repetition of the word *bliss* keeps the idea the prop generated present for its playgoers or playreaders until the end, where they too are invited to participate in Mary's journey of desire. The play puts the prop in motion in the context of iterative text and imagery to characterize a woman whose desires contribute to her own and others' flourishing.

Whereas a jar of balm in *Mary Magdalene* narrates a benevolently assisted journey toward salvation through sexual desire, a lute, played and subsequently broken in an early modern play about a woman and her desire, *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, narrates the obstruction of such a journey. In this play, female desire is subject to scrutiny, peered at obliquely with a voyeuristic gaze. Scholar and musician Anne Acton is translated by marriage to Anne Frankford and transported to a conjugal household that endangers her. She is seduced into adultery by a houseguest, spied upon and reported by a household servant, and trapped by her husband and another guest into the public exposure of herself at night in the arms of her assailant. Unlike Mary, who ends the Digby play as a positive exemplar of spiritual authority, Anne's authority is undermined as early as her wedding day, until she is given to announce

²² Citations to the text of the Digby *Mary Magdalene* are to Bevington's edition of *Medieval Drama*.

herself to the women in her audience as a negative exemplar--"O women, women" (13.141)--an "instance" of one who "[trod] awry" (143).²³ Anne's lute, discovered "flung in a corner" (15.12), stands in for Anne violently handled and exiled. As the lute traverses various stages from play to play in performance, and from hand to hand on Heywood's stage, the instrument becomes an increasingly charged focal point for contemporary ideas about music, beauty, and women, and contradictions between experienced female desire and male constructions of female desire.

John Frankford's final action is to announce that he intends to devise a monument for Anne. Given the play begins with a male character identifying Anne as an ideal wife, a fitting end might have identified her in similarly idealized terms, even if as a model penitent. But the epitaph John imagines for her, carved sumptuously with "golden letters," reduce Anne to a pronoun, paying attention instead to the one who killed her and designed her a gilded monument: "'Here lies she whom her husband's kindness killed'" (17.140). The lute in action in a boy actor's hands in the penultimate scene elicits spectators' tears not for a woman killed with kindness, as the play's title and final words announce. The lute draws the *platea* away from Anne's assailant, and transfers the *platea*'s authority to Anne, instead. Consequently, spectators on- and offstage are prompted to weep for a skilled woman whose singing voice and lute play are silenced early on and finally heard too late. In the *platea*, the lute condemns instead the play's male characters for their responses to Anne in her distress: Wendoll's self pity, Sir Charles' condescension, Sir Francis' judgment, John's pompous forgiveness and cruel epitaph. The play answers Anne's diminishment as she starves her way to death in the final scene with a prop that, sent to its destruction, symbolizes Anne's destruction while it sounds, as it breaks, a protest at the genre and its poisonous roles for women.

²³ Citations to the text of *A Woman Killed with Kindness* are to the Revels edition.

My second chapter imagines a trial performance of *Arden of Faversham* (1591) and proposes that Pembroke's Men have a leading boy of unusual range who performs the role of Alice Arden. The play applauds the boy actor's potential agency in performing the part of one of the play's purported villains in a way that may nonetheless command a spectator's sympathy. Alice's perverse way with her prayerbook and her subversive reading of the evidence of her husband's corpse undermine the authority of the play's title page and privilege instead her words and her own interpretation of the part she performs. This chapter's focus is another domestic tragedy that judges, this time, a willfully adulterous wife, who declares a last-minute repentance for a yet more heinous crime, mariticide. Alice Arden commits several taboo acts, desecrating sacred objects and finally arranging the murder of her husband in the service of her desire to live with her lover.

I give an account of all of this play's props, but I look in detail at a prayerbook shorn of its leaves and a dead and bleeding body the play takes pains to identify with Christ after his crucifixion. I also consider the props that the play imagines for us but does not necessarily present onstage, including a poisoned crucifix and a painting that kills at a glance--spectacle that insistently points at and exploits anxieties that motivate the iconophobes and the iconoclasts. The responses of the play's characters to these alarming props pay little attention to or even contradict the props' conventional semiotic meaning and foreground instead a phenomenological attitude the play takes to the objects it presents, foregrounding its objects in *platea* mode. The decidedly un-domestic props in *Arden* contribute to the play's assertion of the power of objects, especially stage objects, to compel, from the point of view of post-Reformation iconoclasts and antitheatricalists, a dangerous pre-Reformation way of seeing from their beholders. The props

prompt characters, as stand-in spectators, not to think about the things they see, as a Protestant theatre would have it, but rather to register and feel their effects.

Alice in particular repeatedly makes transgressive use of the objects she takes into her hands, deliberately ignoring or blithely unaware of their conventional significations, in order to satisfy her desires. Horrified by her public reknown as a strumpet for her adultery, Alice declares herself an honest wife disastrously enchanted by a lover she insults as lowborn. Thrown into crisis as her lover, Mosby, turns away from her, she appears to be drawn as obliviously and fatefully to a prayerbook for its beautiful golden cover (rather than for its contents, which are meant to reprove and save her) as she is to the very man who means to kill her. Fetishizing the religious book she disfigures sacrilegiously, only to refigure it idolatrously, she rejects her husband and the God of the Bible to enact her commitment to Mosby. Fetishizing the beaten and bleeding corpse of her husband she murdered vengefully, she rejects her partners-in-crime to enact her recommitment to her husband and to God.

While Alice's sacrilegious acts appear to be contained and condemned with her death sentence, I argue that this play stages its own act of transgression by presenting the inanimate body of her husband as potentially salvific--the very means, in fact, by which Alice pursues her redemption successfully. The stage trick that lies in wait for a spectator can offer her an experience of reading semiotic signs that profess Alice judged, found guilty, and condemned. At the same time, the phenomenology of the stage provides an actor playing Alice a way (should he choose it) to disclose the bleeding corpse to a spectator affectively, offering her a medieval mode of experience in a contemporary drama of salvation. Thus a dead and bleeding body in *platea* mode offers a spectator an affective experience that would prompt her fellow-feeling for a murderer even as the same body in the *locus* shows a spectator the evidence of her homicide.

The boy actor's skillful handling of the props that represent the play's fearful objects helps persuade his spectators to feel for Alice in the moments of her alarming self-transformations, tempting spectators to exult with her even as her onstage jurors condemn her and the play's own subtitle pronounces her a "wanton wyfe" and "wicked woman." As *Arden* reinvents a theatrical affective mode from past stages for its own by means of its props, its metatheatrical play with the emerging conditions of its own craft and the training of its craftsmen initiates an inquiry into the ontology of objects. Alice's disfiguration of her prayerbook undermines the authority of Renaissance liturgical or devotional texts to moderate (especially female) behaviour. And the more the prayerbook speaks from the *platea* to its spectators, pointing to its relations with other books, the more it enables *Arden* to undermine the authority of any text, including the play's own playbook.

My third chapter returns to the genre of romance with a focus on *Pericles*, a play that features not one daughter, but three: Antiochus' daughter, Thaisa, and Marina. Each daughter is identified or instructed to identify herself in ways that inscribe her into patriarchy.²⁴ I look at four props inscribed with text and which must be read aloud in performance. The inscribed props purport to identify and describe each of the daughters, and in the case of one of them, her suitors. A riddle, a courtly device, a passport, and a monument all ask an onstage audience, "Who is here?" or "Who lies here?" The scenes of their reading dramatize a conflict over the claims the inscriptions make about the character whose identities they describe between the authors and the readers of the texts. When the props identify characters, they conform to their textual identity in *locus* mode and do what they have been scripted to do. Baring themselves as stage properties in the *platea*, however, the props point to their own ontologies in ways that enable or highlight a

²⁴ The play also refers to a fourth daughter, Philoten, daughter of Dionyza and Cleon, who is similarly identified.

daughter's resistance to her own inscription. Props in the *platea* do not necessarily do what they were scripted to do.

Antiochus's daughter, the object of her father's desire, is most violently her father's property. She does not break the bonds crafted by Antiochus in a riddle that ventriloquizes for her a treacherous identity with a will to incest and her own rape even as she expresses her desire for a suitor. The playwrights' use of a scroll to deliver the riddle from Antiochus to Pericles materializes the daughter's voice as a prop delivered from one patriarch to another. While the daughter fails to elude the fatal identity inscribed for her by her father's text--the riddle retains the daughter for the king's palace and bed--the prop fails to relieve Pericles of his head. *Imprese*, similarly, fail to procure from Thaisa the responses to their enigmas that they are designed to procure as a means of structuring her choice of suitor and to inscribe her as a court subject. She appears to ignore the emblematic meanings of the *imprese*, choosing instead to write her own text and to deliver her letter to her father. In *locus* mode, her letter does what she intended it to do: announce her choice of suitor and negotiate the terms of her royal subjectivity. She also thereby crafts a noble identity for the man she wants for her husband, but she is later left for dead by her husband because he misidentifies her. The passport Pericles writes for her misreads her as dead and fails to prompt Cerimon to bury her. Cerimon brings Thaisa back to consciousness instead, whereupon their dialogue about the characters of the letter rather than the semiotic content of the letter consolidates the play's thematic distinction between imposing and recognizing identity.

Marina's character, the play's final daughter, variously identified as "this piece" (3.1.17; 4.2.41, 133), "a young, foolish sapling" (4.2.82-83), "peevish baggage" (4.6.15-16), "a creature for sale" (72), and "my dish of chastity" (144), negotiates with her bawd for a creative life

independent of paternal and marital homes, even if she lives there only for a time. With her new home, a "leafy shelter" on the seashore (5.1.46-47), she achieves her desires: to be released from the brothel that imprisons her and to do no harm "to any living creature" (4.1.76).²⁵ Just as the flowers in Marina's hands do not signify the way Shakespeare's flowers in the hands of daughters conventionally signify, for the precise reason that they are not all identified specifically, Marina's actions in the play undermine the static identity inscribed upon a monument devised for her by her guardian, the identity of a Romance heroine too good to enable a real girl to flourish. Marina's anti-monumental performance brings to a gestalt the play's investigation of fathers who read daughters as properties. Marina interrupts Pericles' attempt to identify her and asserts her own self-originating and endlessly prolific identity, without a prop. Thus a play whose characters devise inscribed objects to solve their problems--whose objects in action may not do what they have been scripted to do--releases the prop from its job.

This dissertation addresses how stage properties signify on the early modern stage, yet it sets itself the task of keeping three balls in the air in each chapter: a trinity of prop, character, and actor. I attend to all three elements in each chapter, but I engage imaginatively with especially one element of the trinity in each of them. In the first, I imagine myself as inhabiting the textual roles of two female characters, Mary Magdalene and Anne Frankford, to investigate how stage props implicate these roles as exemplars of desiring women. In chapter 2, I imagine a few moments in the stage life of a boy actor. My fiction foregrounds the implications of such a challenging role as the scandalous Alice Arden, through whose hands travel most of the play's often very dangerous props. In chapters 1 and 2, my focus is on how props serve character and actor. In chapter 3, I look, as well, at the implications the playtext has for the props themselves. I

²⁵ All citations from Shakespeare's plays are to *The Complete Pelican Shakespeare*.

ask not only what the props in *Pericles* do to and for character and actor, but also what the play might do to and for the things that populate its fiction and its stage. This dissertation concludes with a coda that glances at John Milton's *Comus: A Maske at Ludlow Castle, 1634*, where a girl, not a boy, takes the stage before, finally, it listens for the voice of a prop.

CHAPTER ONE

Props in Motion: The Ontology of Desire in the Digby *Mary Magdalene* and
A Woman Killed with Kindness

This chapter tracks the stage lives of a salvatory in the anonymous Digby *Mary Magdalene* and a lute in Thomas Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*. These two props intervene in depictions of female sexuality: that of Mary Magdalene, the protagonist of a medieval religious conversion romance, and of Anne Frankford, the protagonist of an early modern domestic tragedy. Both plays are set in the context of a Christian redemption discourse: their protagonists fall into sin and subsequently commit themselves to acts of repentance that are deemed to be requisite for their salvation. I engage imaginatively with Mary's and Anne's textual roles as they depict a saint's progress and a wife's progress, respectively, in order to compare the portraits of desire shaped, first, by the salvatory and next, by the lute.

I investigate the ontology of feminine sexual desire in *Mary Magdalene* because, quite radically, the play represents Mary's desire directly and yet seeks neither to renounce nor to qualify it. While this dissertation's concern is with inclusive personal desire--"that feeling or emotion which is directed to the attainment or possession of some object from which pleasure or satisfaction is expected" (*OED* n. 1), this chapter attends to erotic desire, what Richard Rolle de Hampole in 1340 defines as "fleschely desyris" (n. 2). It argues that the medieval play proposes the availability of a redemption that does not reject feminine sexual desire. Profane desire is neither exorcized, reformed, transformed, transcended, sublimated, nor abandoned. The play demonstrates this by way of the travels of a salvatory and its balm. Mary and the good angel call for them to materialize in the very place of her fall, her bower. By so doing, the play in fact depicts sexual desire as helpful if not requisite in Mary's redemption. Thus the salvatory, its

contents, and its provenance are a nexus for a reconsideration of the ontology and function of desire in Mary Magdalene's journey from secular fall to spiritual healer, teacher, and mystic. Mary, by virtue of her "kendnesse" (1366), emits a simultaneously willful and passive, free-ranging and narcissistic desire--rather like a beacon--somehow moored toward blessedness. It is ineffable and inexplicable. Its effects are curative and salvific. The fact that Mary is not tempted further into apparent sexual sin perhaps implies that sexual desire divinely located, however that may be, cannot be tested, is inviolable.

Whereas the Digby play dramatizes a benevolently assisted journey toward grace through sexual desire, along with the intervention of a good angel and interactions with Jesus, *A Woman Killed* stages a woman's coercion into adultery. Compared to Mary's, Anne Frankford's sexual life is interfered with and her spiritual progress thwarted through her interactions not only with Wendoll, an early modern version of the Digby play's character Curiosity, but her Christian husband, whose job it is, as early modern society's injunctions dictate, to guide and protect her. Ending the play in exile from her marital home, Anne instructs her servant to break her lute upon a coach wheel, and thus she announces her "farewell / To all earth's joy" (16.72-73). Her command assumes that the salvation she desires depends upon her rejection of whatever playing a lute might mean for her. Just before she commands her servant, she addresses the lute directly in second person and makes an analogy between herself and her instrument: ". . . Oft have I sung to thee; / We both are out of tune, both out of time" (17-18). In this scene, the lute is figured both as affecting and reflecting Anne's inner condition. According to Anne, playing a lute, one of earth's pleasures, renders a body unfit for salvation. And at the same time, she recognizes the lute as a mirror of her self. Thus the lute is both an efficacious and a symbolic object from Anne's point of view. But the lute also has the potential to function similarly for her spectators. Its

physical fate mirrors the destruction of Anne herself at the end of the play, killed by "her husband's kindness" (17.140). And the lute in the hands of the boy actor who plays Anne enables her, finally, to express her desires: the lute is an efficacious prop.

Anne's many accomplishments, including her mastery of the lute, are subordinated on the stage to her capacity to inflame illicit desire. Her capacity is represented as dangerous for everyone, and the play's investigation of it is a prurient affair. Whatever desires Anne may have are mystified, and feminine sexual desire is subject to scrutiny, peered at obliquely with a voyeur's gaze. As the lute traverses early modern stages from play to play, and Heywood's stage from hand to hand, the instrument becomes an increasingly charged locus for contemporary ideas about music, beauty, and women; and contradictions between experienced female desire and male constructions of female desire. Paradoxically, as the character Anne loses her flesh and becomes physically more like the boy actor who plays her as she dies, her lute increasingly takes up a life and voice of its own. The play makes use of the lute to allegorize and to voice protest at Anne's destruction.

I. The Historical and Literary Mary Magdalene and the Digby *Mary Magdalene*

The problems of desire that confront so many early modern girls and women in the liminal spaces between paternal and marital homes relate, of course, to contemporary anxieties about female sexuality. The life of the historical Mary Magdalene figure has served many artists with a way to apply ideas about sinfulness and holiness to women and their sexuality, often by deploying a binary of female lust opposed to female piety, all through the body of one exemplar. I first want to provide some context for the Digby play's version of the figure and its use of her salvatory by glancing at her known history and at a few of her representations.

The literary tales and visual attributes of the Mary Magdalene figure invoke various and sometimes conflicting accounts of Mary's desire--its profanity, its holiness, its transition from one to the other state. The tales trace her occupations from sexual sinner to penitent to preacher and mystic. A general account of the Magdalene²⁶ figure is given by the *OED*, which identifies her as "a follower of Jesus to whom he appeared after his resurrection (John 20:1-18), in the Western Church frequently also identified with the unnamed sinner of Luke 7:37, and therefore represented in hagiology as a reformed prostitute elevated to sanctity by repentance and faith" (n.1a).²⁷ Pope Gregory I, in the fifth century, was the first to conflate the stories of several biblical women: the penitent prostitute who washed Jesus' feet with her tears, wiped them with her hair, and anointed them; Mary of Bethany, sister of Martha and Lazarus; and Mary, from whom Christ exorcized seven devils and who was present at his crucifixion and Resurrection and bidden to bear the news to his disciples (Slim 139). In the thirteenth century, Jacobus de Voragine tells the story of Saint Mary Magdalene, who journeys by ship to Provence and effects the conversion of the King and Queen of Marseilles.

Various interpretations of her name imply some contradiction with respect to her qualities and significations. For instance, De Voragine interprets the name "Mary" as *amarum mare*,

²⁶ *Magdalen* and *Magdalene* both refer to Mary of Magdala, a town on the Sea of Galilee. The pronunciation of the vernacular form of the word, *maudlin*, is still current for the names of Magdalen College, Oxford, and Magdalene College, Cambridge.

²⁷ The Magdalene figure's ongoing capacity to reflect and construct polarizing attitudes towards female sexuality in the context of religious and political ideology is evident even in the emendation of the *OED*'s description of the figure from its earlier print to the present online editions. The print *OED* includes a reference from Luke 8:2 to the devils voided from Mary's body that the later online does not. It omits the passages in John 20 about Mary's visit to the resurrected Christ, which the online includes. The online edition elides the print edition's reference to the Magdalene's loss of "purity." (The print *OED*'s entire definition reads: 1.a. *the Magdalen(e)*: the appellation of a disciple of Christ named Mary, 'out of whom sent seven devils' (Luke viii.2). She has commonly been supposed to be identical with the unnamed 'sinner' of Luke vii.37, and therefore appears in Western hagiology as a harlot restored to purity and elevated to sainthood by repentance and faith.)

which can mean "light-giver," or "enlightened," but also "bitter sea." For him, *Magdalene* can also mean "the same as *manens rea*, remaining in guilt," or it can mean "armed," or "unconquered," or "magnificent" (De Voragine 355). Theresa Coletti traces this multi-textual figure in the context of local East Anglian cultural performances and dramatic texts. "Conflating intimacy, contemplation, and evangelism," she explains, "late medieval versions of the *unica Magdalena* bring flesh and materiality to a religion of presence. . . . Mary Magdalene is an apt symbol for this religion of Word and flesh and . . . a rich vehicle for examining the vexed yet dynamic relationship between the two" (*Magdalene* 228).

The Magdalene's story and her symbolic valences are told as much by the objects associated with her as by her body.²⁸ Widely represented in visual art, the Magdalene's signal attribute is a vessel, but others include a book, a cross, a skull, and, particularly in the 16th century, a lute. The figure and the objects in the anonymous *Portrait of a Woman as Mary Magdalen* (Figure 1) work together to produce tension between the sacred and profane, between "Word and flesh," in large part because, like the character Anne Frankford, she appears to have rejected her lute. The Flemish painting is assigned to the South Netherlandish School, ca. 1530, and belongs to the collection of the Duke of Devonshire held at Chatsworth. Various artists are proposed, but any attribution is finally inconclusive.²⁹ This version of the Magdalene is seated at

²⁸ See Badir, who contextualizes her study of the many literary images of the Magdalene from 1550-1700 with a generous series of pictorial images that represent the Magdalene's figures and attributes.

²⁹ According to Slim, "attributions are to the Master of the Female Half-Lengths, to the Master of the Death of the Virgin (Joos van Cleve), to the Master of the Parrot, to Ambrosius Benson, and to Bernard van Orley" (145).



Figure 1. Portrait of a Woman as Mary Magdalen (oil on panel, 18-1/4" x 13-3/4"). Anonymous. Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth, Bakewell, Derbyshire. © Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth. Reproduced by permission of Chatsworth Settlement Trustees. [*Inscribed in upper left corner: LAVRA VESTALIS*]

study, richly clothed in wool and velvet, and adorned with precious metals and chiffon. Her downcast eyes gaze upon a missal bound in turquoise and protected with a bejeweled cover. Turned face down on a table before her lies a lute case, which partially obscures an open songbook. Over her shoulder upon a ledge or piece of furniture rests a large lidded salvatory.³⁰ Its metal ornately wrought into patterns of beaded ropes, intricate knots, and miniature faces, the vessel appears to stand sentinel at a doorway over which is inscribed: LAVRA VESTALIS.

H. Colin Slim identifies the musical score that lies beneath the Chatsworth Magdalen's lute case as lute tablature in French notation for the beginning of a popular Flemish love song, "O waerde mont" [O honor-deserving mouth] (147).³¹ The origins of the song in two manuscript partbooks testify to the song's association with dancing, for each partbook depicts miniatures of couples dancing along with its voice part. Slim reads the iconography of the painting: the woman is reading, not singing or playing; it is the lute's case that is depicted, not the instrument itself, "implying that she has put her instrument aside or returned it to its case"; the case itself conceals much of the love song (147).

Affixed to the back of the painting is a letter in an eighteenth-century Italian hand identifying the figure as Laura, Petrarch's beloved. Art historians have since dispensed with that attribution. Slim argues, furthermore, that "LAVRA" is not a descriptor for the painting's figure but a signpost for the painting's doorway. *LAVRA* is a Latin form of a Greek noun that translates as *laura*, "a loosely-knit community of cells or hermitages that housed contemplative ascetics in the deserts of the Middle East" (150-51). Likewise, "VESTALIS" does not apply to the Chatsworth Magdalen herself. The word's ancient Roman meaning is "a community of virginal

³⁰ Various depicted, the Magdalene's vessel is variously referred to as pyx or salvatory, or simply jar, box, or bottle. It is constructed out of materials such as precious metals, wood, or alabaster, and it contains, variously, oil, ointment, or balm. See Davidson, "Middle" 86.

³¹ Slim reprints the entire song in the original and in translation 147-48.

women secluded and living apart from daily life" (Slim 151). Slim suggests that "this woman . . . may represent a later stage in the Magdalen's career, that of the convert and the penitent." At least, he argues, "the Chatsworth Magdalen, so intent on her prayer book, was surely no longer interested in the frivolities of a basse dance. . . ." (147). This particular Magdalene appears to consider "earth's joys" (16.73) such as dancing, singing, and playing a lute inimical to whatever desires animate her life and direct her activities.

In Slim's reading, the material objects associated with the Chatsworth Magdalen make concrete abstract ideas of what is considered sacred and what profane as they relate to this Magdalene's supposedly linear, one-way transition from singer, player, and dancer to devotional reader, penitent, and contemplative. The prayerbook and the salvatory align symbolically together in opposition to the lute(case) and the songbook. By telling a story of transition from one activity to another, from singing to reading, the objects give evidence for something that cannot be seen, this Magdalene's inner condition. They suggest her disavowal of the pleasures of popular music as a fact and pre-condition of her faith and commitment to contemplation. Slim compares the women painted by the Master of the Female Half-Lengths to the Chatsworth Magdalen. (See Figure 2.)³²

No prayerbook or lute case in sight, the Magdalene is reading her music and playing her lute, the expression on her face as serene as that of the Chatsworth Magdalen. Although there is no signpost for a *laura* indicating her locale as part of a hermitage, a large salvatory, very similar in look to the one in the Chatsworth painting with its ornate metalwork, sits likewise upon a ledge or a sill just behind her. This painting of the Magdalene suggests there is something

³² Figure 2 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an illustration of the *Mary Magdalene Playing the Lute*, Master of the Female Half-Lengths. Active ca. 1530-1540. Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany.

congruent between the salvatory and the lute. Mary's actions--playing her lute--do not contradict her salvatory's conventional symbolic constitution of her sacredness. These two portraits complicate any certain distinctions between sacred and profane, between the flesh and the Word, as far as the semiotics of both Magdalenes' associated objects are concerned.

One could think of the key objects represented in the two paintings--the prayerbook, the songbooks, the lute and lute case, and the salvatories--as "speaking properties," Frances Teague's epithet for the objects that appear on Shakespeare's stages. For one, prop/objects, like the lute, have no fixed or essential meaning. And for another, they tell us something, even if contradictorily, about the characters who handle them or to whom they belong. In the Digby play, the prop I call a salvatory exists in two significant parts: a vessel and its contents, Mary's "precious bamys" (1018). Mention of a "salvatory" does not occur in the text of the Digby play at all, but its existence is implied by the actions called for in the lines early on in the play. As I shall show, some kind of container must travel with Mary in order to house her precious ointment, carried to Simon's house to anoint Jesus and to greet the resurrected Jesus at his vacant tomb. Once Mary leaves Christ's garden, there is no further call for Mary's balms, and thus, her vessel. What happens to the stage prop is left to a reader's imagination or for a production to determine. While *A Woman Killed* was certainly performed--first in Philip Henslowe's theatre, the Rose--no evidence has been found to indicate that the saint's play was ever performed. There are no performance notes accompanying the play, for instance, such as the stage plan that was appended to the manuscript for the morality play, *The Castle of Perseverance* (c. 1405-25).³³ Given the

³³ See Bevington, 796-97.

medieval text is a dramatic script, however, this chapter assumes it is constructed in principle as theatrical, even if it may be produced only in a reader's imagination.³⁴

Scholarship on the Digby play typically addresses in some way the role of the Magdalene's sexuality in her fall and her redemption. Theresa Coletti, however, counteracts a pervasive scholarly "impulse to privilege the saint's fallen, feminine sexuality, [which] has obscured other signs that the dramatist saw that attribute as but an aspect of a complex spiritual anthropology" (*Magdalene* 153).³⁵ She analyzes the Digby play in the contexts of East Anglian vernacular religious and social culture. She demonstrates how as a figure of "contemplative and visionary authority," the Digby Magdalene responds to "late medieval anxieties about feminine authority in mystical experience and the evangelical sphere" (102, 23). And indeed, as Coletti and others have pointed out, many iterations of the Magdalene's *vita* promote Mary's beauty and vanity as the cause of her pursuit of the world's pleasures and describe with some relish her sensual exploits. But the Digby *Magdalene* downplays Mary's sexual sinning. She is rendered vulnerable on account of her grief over her father's death at the same time as she is the direct target of Satan. The Digby Magdalene does not so much pursue sensual pleasure as she falls prey to Lechery, Satan's minion and Mary's first seducer, who takes her to the tavern, where she is in turn seduced once more by Curiosity.³⁶

³⁴ For an overview of the scholarship on the Digby *Mary Magdalene*, see Findon, *Hero* 22-26. On the play's theatricality, see Coletti, *Magdalene* 190-217; for the play's use of stage spaces, see Rochester; and Bush.

³⁵ See also Coletti, "Design" and "Sociology of Transgression"; Grantley; Davidson "Middle"; Brock; Findon "Mary" and "Napping"; Hearon; and Carter.

³⁶ Coletti shows how the play interrogates the discourses of aristocratic courtliness: "Curiosity's mimicry of . . . aristocratic expressions of masculine desire also establishes his kinship with the King of Marseilles' erotic excesses, which Mary Magdalene herself eventually disciplines and redirects" ("Sociology" 12); See also *Magdalene*, especially 154-63; Findon, *Hero*, 61-75; and Badir, 21-57. Badir looks at the Digby play, 31-32, in the context of her examination of "how

What is important for my purposes in Coletti's astute analysis of the play in its many historical contexts is how she elaborates the play's contribution to the late fifteenth-century English imaginary with respect to female religious authority. She argues, "Dramatic images of Mary Magdalene as contemplative and mystical lover of Christ valorize personal knowledge, interior will, and individual experience as elements of a religious sensibility in which the institutional church plays a diminished role" (*Magdalene* 23). The Digby Magdalene's potent exemplarity lies not with her transition from sinner to penitent but with her spiritual authority. As Coletti puts it, "Gender is an important aspect of the play's construction of a devotional ideal, I suggest, not because the drama seeks to model female behavior, but rather because the play associates femininity with a spiritual ideal that was broadly available in late medieval culture" (134).

The play's valorization of feminine spiritual authority, an authority "that emphasizes the independence of the religious subject from clerics but not from God" (134), is precisely why I want to reconsider the description, in the Digby saint play scholarship generally, of the Magdalene's sexuality as fallen and renounced in the first place. Unlike other scholars who understand the Digby Magdalene's profane desire as translated into something finer as part of her transition, as I show below, I argue that the Digby play fashions her profane sexuality as an inextricable part of her spiritual authority. Such authority, rooted in sexuality, is, after all, noted as well in other ancient Lives of holy harlots and prostitute saints of the desert, such as Syrian Mary, niece of Abraham; Pelagia of Antioch; and Mary of Egypt.³⁷

reformulations of Luke's sinner were used to conceptualize the difference between the Catholic past and the Protestant present" (26).

³⁷ See, especially, Burrus; Ward; and Karras.

II. The Good, the Bad, and the Prop: The Digby Saint Play's Theatricality

The Digby *Mary Magdalene*'s props generally help coordinate the play's many and far flung locations.³⁸ Indeed, one of the most noted features of the play's protagonist, daughter to Cyrus and sibling to Martha and Lazarus, is her wide-ranging mobility. Mary travels from her home castle in Bethany after her king and father dies to a tavern in Jerusalem, to a temple in Marseilles, to a rock in the middle of the sea, and finally to a hut in the desert. Satan's plot to damn her initiates her journey from her family's home to her own in a bower. There, awaiting her "valentines" (564) she will instead be met by the good angel, who chides her. She seeks Jesus and his forgiveness, and once achieved, she enters into his discipleship. As an apostle, she preaches and performs miracles. She converts the king and queen of Marseilles to Christianity, enables their conception of a child, and restores the queen and child to life. As a contemplative and visionary, she retreats to the wilderness and ascends with angels to Heaven and feeds on manna.

Her travels account in part for the play's extraordinary scene changes: I count fifty-five, which call for twenty-two different settings. While, again, there is no evidence of the play as ever having been performed, whatever limited evidence we have for medieval theatrical production suggests the play could have been produced in a number of different ways, playing even in a village square or a large hall. But the large number and the particular nature of the settings called for suggest the use of a place-and-scaffold stage space. Some scenes depend for their staging on the general, non-localized acting space that the *platea* offers. There, temporary

³⁸ Digby MS 133. The Oxford University's Bodleian Library preserves the sole copy of the Digby manuscript. It contains several texts, including the only two extant Middle English Saint plays, of which *Mary Magdalene* is one and *The Conversion of St. Paul* the other. The copy of the manuscript that is the *Mary Magdalene* play is dated to c. 1515-30. Coletti notes that the play's language assigns the copy to East Anglia (*Magdalene* 36).

scenic units like Mary's bower, the ship that takes Mary and the king and queen to and from Marseilles, the rock in the middle of the sea, or the hut in the wilderness may be brought upon the *platea* and later removed if necessary.

Other scenes depend on a simultaneous staging of several *loci* in fixed relation to each other from start to finish. These scenes include abstract locations like Heaven, Hell, and World, from which Jesus or Satan perform, and locations from which other personified abstractions perform such as Flesh, Gluttony, or Sloth. *Loci* also include temporal worldly locations--Simon's house, the tavern, the castles of the play's kings--and their worldly inhabitants.³⁹ Joanne Rochester shows how "[t]he spatial logic of the scaffolds helps to integrate the action of the play" and helps the spectators to "perceive parallels in actions that occur over time and in space" (46):

The play contains numerous . . . parallels and oppositions: the tavern in which Mary falls to her fleshly lover Curiosity, allowing her to be conquered by the Seven Deadly Sins, opposes the house of Simon, where she meets her spiritual lover Christ and is cleansed of seven devils. Physical, visible structures help link together the moral significance of the play's events; the audience knows what is likely to happen within each such structure. The scaffolds give physical form to the play's moral topography. (47)

Rochester does not address this play's props, but they are likewise integrated into the play's structural "parallels and oppositions" (47).

The play's main categories of stage properties--objects that the play's dialogue and stage directions call to be materialized in characters' hands or upon their persons--are money and

³⁹ Bevington provides a conjectural diagram for the play's possible stage design p. 688.

letters, clothing and treasures, and food and drink. Generally, the play's secular kings reward their messengers with gold for delivering letters; the secular characters boast of their rich clothing and possessions; and they provide feasts for their followers. The props function emblematically to point to a character's spiritual condition. They also function theatrically to punctuate how the play opposes the actions of its fallen characters with those of its redeemed, as follows.

First, here are the specific actions of the characters as they deliver letters, boast about or change their clothes, and offer or consume feasts. The emperor Tiberius wants to ensure that all peoples in his regions acknowledge his sovereignty and obey his commands. He gives his messenger gold to deliver a letter to Herod to make his intent known. He instructs Herod to root out any dissent (115-39 sd.). Herod has been told that there is a "child" whom the world "shold magnify" (173-74). He orders the messenger to send the letter on to Pilate (225-28). Pilate pays the messenger gold for his tidings and bids the messenger return to the Emperor, commending himself to his service (249-64 sd.). Pilate writes of Jesus' death and sends a messenger with these tidings to Herod and the Emperor (1249-80 sd.). Overjoyed at this news, Herod rewards the messenger and sends him on to the Emperor (1281-92 sd.). Upon receipt of that letter, Tiberius pays the messenger for his service and sends him away: "Hold this gold to thy wage, / Mery for to make" (1332-33). By the time the priest in the temple of Marseilles exhorts the king to make offering to "Senti Mahownde" (1205),⁴⁰ the "besawnt of gold, rich and rownd (1218)" the king sets down suggests, by the repetition of the act of giving gold coin, that his offering is more a payment to procure service and less a tithing demonstrating his own devout faith. His speech

⁴⁰ The *locus* inhabited by the King of Marseilles stands for the non-Christianized European world. As Scherb explains, however, "the dramatist establishes the religion practiced at Marseilles as not only pagan but inversely Christian," hence the priest's anachronistic reference to "Senti" (Saint) Mohammed. See especially 6-7.

confirms his intent: "I ofer itt for my lady and me, / That thou mayst be ovr counfortes in this stownd" (1219-1220). The play opposes these actions of payment for gain or service with the same king's later charity towards Mary, who lives in a log hut without sustenance. Marseilles offers her money, along with food and clothes, "with swich grace as God hathe me lentt" (1651-54).

Consider now the clothes of the play's characters: the gallant Curiosity, a "shert of reynnes with slevys peneawnt" (shirt of cloth from Raines with pennant sleeves) along with vest, doublet, hose, and silk lace (496-502); the King of Flesh, "florichyd in my flowers" (334); Pilate, who boasts of his "robys of rich[e]sse" (229); and Cyrus, who commands his followers to "[b]ehold my person, glistering in gold" (53). The ostentatious vestments of these characters are opposed to the plain garments worn by the three Marys (Magdalene, Jacobe, and Salome), who enter the *platea* after news of Jesus' crucifixion. The text describes their robes only in so far as they signify their spiritual condition and allegiance to Jesus: "*arayid as chast women, with signys of the Pass[i]on printyd upon ther brest*" (992 sd.); and later, the Magdalene, who appears to the King of Marseilles clad "[a]ll in white," her change of clothes provided her by an angel (1618 sd.-24). Worldly treasures--Herod's "riche rubyis" set all about with "the goodly grene perle" (153-54) and Marseille's "relikes brighth" (1232) and idols (1535-39)--are opposed to Mary's crown, given to her by Jesus in heaven to "have possession, / By ryth en[h]jiritawns" (2074-75).

Finally, and most notably, the play's many feasts. "Win[e] and spicys" are provided by Tiberius (46), Cyrus (112), and Marseilles (962) to their loyal followers. The king of Flesh feasts himself with a fragrant assortment of "deintyis delicious" (344), all "comfortativys to my comfortacion" (338). At the tavern, a wide selection of the best of red and white wine is on offer from many regions (470-80). There, in the company of Curiosity, Mary partakes of "[s]oppes in

wine" and a "lityl brede," before Curiosity escorts her to "another stede" (536, 541-42).⁴¹ The play answers worldly sustenance with the good angel's prayer for "gostely bred" (721), which is materialized near the end of the play. Mary is fed on earth by an angel, who "*bring[s] an oble* [mass wafer] while another brings Mary to "*receive . . . the bred*" (2019 sd.). And Jesus commands his angels to relieve Mary with "gostly fode" (2006), to raise her up into the clouds and "[t]her fede with manna to hir sistinouns" (2008; 2020-31 sd.).

Different actions with props of a similar category point to the difference between fallen and redeemed characters. The coin the king of Marseilles pays to his god signifies his fallen nature; the coin he offers in charity signifies his redemption.⁴² The bread Mary eats in Curiosity's arms signifies her fallen nature; the bread she eats in the angel's arms signifies her redemption. Fictionally, Marseilles' "besawnt of gold, rich and round" (1218) is not the same coin as the "mony" the king gives to Mary (1653). Neither, in the play's fiction, can the bread Mary eats in the tavern be the same as that which she eats in Heaven. However, a hypothetical production of the play might represent the money and the bread with noticeably the same prop in order to call the attention of its spectators to the very differences between the two earlier and later actions of those two characters. One prop for two different fictional objects puts two different actions together for comparison. In this way, one prop can point very neatly to the conversion of a character, here either the king or the Magdalene. After all, as Rochester shows, this is how the scaffolds may function: "the possible use of the same station for different actions stresses parallels between those actions" (Rochester 46). Such a prop, whether in the hands of an actor in

⁴¹ The Digby Magdalene is not really the "tavern fly" Bush makes her out to be (165).

⁴² He and the queen will receive instruction from Peter in the stations of the cross, and afterwards they will be baptized.

the place or not, is in *platea* mode, pointing at its own theatrical function to correlate actions of characters.

The play uses a similar symbolic and theatrical strategy with its various representations of the "*precious ointment*" (640 sd.) with which Mary anoints Jesus' feet in Simon's house. The balms and the ointment the play depicts are a critical component of the prop that I call Mary's salvatory. They are critical to the play's depiction of Mary's desire. Differences between the play's various iterations of the balms or ointment are linked with the Magdalene character in the context of her actions in roughly the first half of the play. These iterations are: "thes[e] bamys precious of prysse" (569) which surround Mary in her bower before she has met the good angel; the "swete bawmys" she determines that she will take with her as she seeks Jesus (613); the "*precious ointment*" (640 sd.) with which she ministers to Jesus' feet; the "precious bamys" (1018) with which the Magdalene exhorts her fellow Marys, Salome and Jacob, to anoint Jesus when they should arrive at the monument; and the "bamys sote" (1071) with which Mary offers to anoint the resurrected Jesus when she finally meets him. The repeated references to the balms trace Mary Magdalene's conversion to a follower of Christ.

III. Balms as Props: "Bamys Precius," "Precious Ointment," and Erotic Desire in the Digby Play Scholarship

Several scholars of the Digby play, whose work I address below, read repeated references to Mary's balms as more than a means for the play to point theatrically to Mary's conversion to a follower of Christ. They read a "real" or perhaps even magic change in the balms themselves as a symbolic signifier of an analogous transformation or reformation of Mary's sexuality. That is, they read a transformation somewhere along the way of the profane balms in Mary's bower into spiritual balms suitable for anointing Jesus as a signifier of her readiness for Christ's forgiveness.

Here are three scholars' arguments in more detail in advance of my alternate reading of the play's use of these balms. Coletti refers to the play's parallelisms, noting particularly the Magdalene's travel from her bower to Jesus in the garden, and makes an argument about how "the Digby saint play depicts the transmutation of physical desire to a spiritual plane":

The play signals the transmutation of Mary Magdalene's erotic desire by representing her tavern seduction and sinful attachment to lovers in the same language and imagery that it employs to figure her devotion to Jesus. Thus the "erbyre" or bower in which she awaits "valentyne" anticipates the "garden" that the resurrected Christ will make in her heart; the "bamyse precyus" that grow in that bower look forward to the "bamyse sote" with which she attempts to anoint the risen Jesus; the "halsing and kissing" she expects from carnal paramours become the kisses that Jesus rejects with his "Towche me natt, Mary"; and the "ardent lowe" of which Luxuria claims to be full is rejected in favour of the "ardent lowe" with which the eremitic saint prepares to meet her maker--and lover. (*Magdalene* 183)

Coletti does not base Mary Magdalene's "transmutation" upon a transmutation of Mary's balms. Rather, Mary's earlier use of them "anticipates" her (better) later use, although both uses of the balms are prohibitive. The "bamyse precyus" are associated with her "sinful attachment to lovers"; the "'bamyse sote' with which she attempts to anoint the risen Jesus" would then be likewise rejected when Jesus says, "Towche me natt, Mary." For Coletti, the transmutation of Mary's erotic desire is signified first by comparing Mary's early "sinful attachment" to "carnal paramours" to the "ardent lowe" for her "maker--and lover" that Mary expresses at the end of the play. Second, it is signified by Jesus' rejection of Mary's ointment and her kisses. However,

Coletti does not address the scene where Jesus speaks to Simon in praise of Mary while she anoints Jesus' feet with her "*precious ointment*" (640 sd.).

Holly Dugan investigates the politics of smell in late medieval and early modern England. She argues that the "medieval Catholic liturgy used perfumed incense as a tool of transformation, translating parishioner's prayers into a sweet substance that could transcend the earthly realm and rise up to God." She notes how "the exotic, profane, and holy all were invoked by scented incense and balm . . ." (234). Dugan positions the Magdalene "at the center of such transformations" and correlates her figure's "ability to represent the power of temptation as well as redemption" with the dual nature of her balms: "The ointment bottle containing scented oil or balm works as a hinge between these two aspects of her legend and thus is critical to understanding (and staging) both Mary Magdalene's descent into cupidity and her penitent submission at the feet of Christ" (235).⁴³ Dugan argues that the play dramatizes an "identity transformation" (240) on the part of the Magdalene during her travel from her harbour to Simon's house that is based on "[t]he play's overt taxonomy of scent" (239):

Despite the Magdalene's sexual contentment in the floral bower with the gallant Curiosity, the Ghost of Goodness quickly convinces her to search for a salve for her soul; under his counsel, the Magdalene pursues the Prophet, seeking to trade her erotic, sweet balms for "an oil of mercy." . . . Lest there be any doubt about the Magdalene's handling of Christ's body, the play emphasizes that once penitence is achieved the Magdalene must abandon her sweet balms for churchly incense. . . . (Dugan 238).

⁴³ Dugan's aim is to show how the play stages "proper and improper engagement with worldly goods," and she demonstrates very neatly how "the play's numerous meditations on the smell of spice ingredients educate its audience about navigating the pungent and sweet scents of the medieval church and market" (236).

Dugan posits an allegory between the "these bamys precius of prysse" (Digby 569) and Mary Magdalene's "sexual contentment" on the one hand, and the "oil of mercy" used to anoint the Prophet's feet and Mary's penitence on the other. The former, her sweet balms that signify her erotic or fleshly desire, must be "trade[d]" or "abandon[ed]" for the "oil of mercy" or "churchly incense." For Dugan, the transition from one material to another signifies the Magdalene's penitence and her salvation. But, for one, Mary is alone in her bower of bliss--at least Curiosity is not there with her in the scene that is dramatized--and she is by no means very "contented" about that. Furthermore, while the good angel may instruct her that "[s]alve for thy sowle must be sowth" (594), Mary is not advised, nor does she seek to "trade her erotic, sweet balms *for* 'an oil of mercy'" (Dugan 238, my emphasis) at that time. Mary, herself, determines, "I shal porsue the Prophett" and insists, "By the oile of mercy he shal me relyff. / *With swete bawmys* I wil sekyn him this syth" (610, 612-13, my emphasis).

Joanne Findon notes that the good angel's "'salve' recalls the 'bamys' of the arbour which Mary sees as an appropriate setting for encounters with her 'valentynys'; yet while these 'bamys' are intended for erotic attraction, the 'salve' is for healing her soul of lust and pride" (*Hero* 94). At the moment Mary determines to go with "swete bawmys" to seek Jesus, Findon argues that "[h]ere the 'sweet bawmys' have been redeemed and transformed into the perfumed ointment with which she will soon anoint the feet of Jesus" (94). Findon, likewise, argues for a transformation of Mary's erotic desire on the basis of the play's apparent transformation of a material object upon which the play does not insist.

**IV. Figuring Desire: From "Bamys Precius" in an Arbour to "Precius Ointtment"
in a Salvatory**

The nature of the Digby Magdalene's erotic desire is constructed first by Mary's account of herself and her balms in the arbour, before the necessity of a vessel or a salvatory becomes apparent. The actions of Mary in her bower with her balms, and her pursuit of Jesus along with them, suggest she redeems herself without forfeiting her profane desire for something more rarified. The play allows for the force and gravity of Mary's erotic desire to persist until the end of her last day on earth. After Mary has travelled to the Tavern with Lady Lechery and met Curiosity, as Satan has planned, Satan meets with Flesh at the stage of the World and sends a bad angel to Mary so that he may "ever be hur g[u]ide" (557). At this point, the action moves to the *platea*:

*Here shal Satan go hom to his stage, and Mary shal entyr into the place alone,
save the Bad Angyl Mary shal be in an erbyr, thus seying:*

MARY. A, God be with my valentines,

My bird sweting, my lovys so dere!

For they be bote for a blossom of blisse.

Me mervellit[h] sore they be nat here.

But I woll restyn in this erbyre

Amons thes[e] bamys precius of prysse,

Till som lover wol apere

That me is wont to halse and kisse.

Her[e] shal Mary lie down and slepe in the erbyre. (563 sd. - 571 sd.)

Erbyr's meanings resonate with both sacred and profane allusions or associations: with the Garden of Eden ["a garden of fruit-trees, an orchard" (*OED* n. 3)], and to a secular place of refuge ["a bower or shady retreat" (n. 5)].⁴⁴ Mary identifies herself as a "blossum of blisse," for whom her "[valentines] be bote"; that is, good or profitable to her (*MED* n. 1). Thus the "bamys precius of prysse" are part and parcel of her retreat for love and rest, her very bed for erotic play. Her first line consists of a prayer to God that is initiated by an interjection, "A" (or "ah!"). Such an interjection expresses emotion--surprise, admiration, pain, or grief, perhaps, as the *OED* suggests (int. 1). Or as Mary's diction above surely suggests it may express pleasure, or even sexual anticipation, desire that is the very breath of her prayer to God to protect her "lovys so dere!"

Valentine is a word frequently mentioned with reference to the choosing of sweethearts or the mating of birds (*OED* n. 1). Mary refers to "valentines" in the plural, as she does to "my lovys so dere!" "My bird sweting," however, is in the singular. Perhaps singular "bird" is a scribal error, and the nouns are meant to be consistently plural: *God be with my valentines, my sweet birds, my loves so dear!* The word *brid*, *briddas*, and *bird* in Old English referred to the young of a bird, which the *MED* suggests is probably akin to the Old English *byrd*, or birth, offspring, and this earlier meaning is current throughout the Middle English period (*brid* n.). And as well as the young of a bird or other animals, it could be used as a term for a maiden or a girl (*OED* n. 1d). What if Mary is referring to her own young and singular self, nestled snugly in her bower awaiting her lovers? If Mary is the bird here, then Mary is strongly self-dramatizing.

⁴⁴ Findon places the Digby's Mary Magdalene in the context of a long line of legendary sleepers in the liminal space of the garden and shows how the play draws on and manipulates traditions of romance for its concerns about female piety and desire. See "Napping"; "Mary"; and *Hero*.

Findon also considers how Mary identifies herself while she is in her bower, and she reads Mary's describing herself as a "blossum of blisse" in the context of courtly love discourse:

Normally, courtly love terms are applied to women by men whose gaze constructs them for the audience; rarely do women construct themselves as objects of beauty. . . . [A]fter some initial resistance she has apparently accepted the identity of the static, idealized lady on a pedestal that Curiosity has constructed for her through his clever rhetoric, and has internalized it. (*Hero* 79)

But given her possible use of the term "bird," she could as well be referring to herself in the sense of *blossom's* meaning as an early, developmental stage. For instance, in the *Weaver's Pageant*, Mary addresses her baby, Jesus, "Swetter than eyuer wasse blossom on brere!" (399). If the Digby Magdalene is representing herself as young, as a bird, a blossom, she is figuring the powerful woman she will become as *in potentia* here in the arbour. She is less in need of transformation as she is of nurturing and growth in order to manifest her potential.

Mary's youthful or adolescent ardour is suggested even two scenes earlier, where Mary promises Curiosity, the gallant to whom Lechery introduces her, "I wol never from yow wynd, / To die for your sake" (545-46). Her phrase, "to die for your sake," foreshadows her service to Jesus, who dies for humanity's sake. But her line may also capture the all-or-nothing quality, the hyperbole, of adolescent passion: *I will never leave you; I will die for you*. Given she enters the arbour alone, her promise to Curiosity did not amount to much, or Curiosity has gone back to the tavern in search of fresh virgins. If so, Mary is undaunted, and such adolescent fervor could inform her line, "Me mervellit[h] sore they be nat here" (567), with considerable umbrage, particularly if she waits expectantly for some time before uttering the line. The dramatic text

provides an opportunity for an actor to stage something of a tantrum, one that expresses confusion and upset that lovers are not where Mary wants them to be.

A scene staged in this manner makes available a comical protagonist for spectators to whom she may even appeal in the throes of her pique, one who asks for her spectators' sympathy early on for her young, if sinful, self. An ironic, if not subversive, effect of such sympathy, if an actor chooses or manages to elicit it, would be to make a later, penitent Mary, if she were portrayed as serenely and matter-of-factly all-business, less engaging, perhaps, to a spectator smitten with a fetching, funny, and willful teenager. Identifying with her in this way sets up for a spectator the possibility for complex and contradictory responses as she engages with the character on the *platea* and the desires she expresses.

Mary's response, finally, to her unwelcome solitude, is to take charge and take action, even if the action is to fall back down onto her bed and go to sleep: "But I woll restyn in this erbyre . . ." (568). Declaring "I woll" signals intention and agency. *But* is a coordinating conjunction that suggests a more aggressive or determined intention than another like *so*, for example. The role this text fashions for Mary Magdalene asks of its actor to express the sheer willfulness of her desire for her lovers, whoever they may be, and a breathtaking confidence that she can simply lie back and wait for them to come to her--someone that *she* wants to "halse and kisse." This Magdalene, passive, narcissistic, and confident, simultaneously active and other-oriented, can present an awesome portrait of an agential desire, a powerful and willful, if alarmingly free-ranging, passive, and narcissistic desire.

Mary's plan works. Her performative utterance is felicitous, for, ironically, someone does come, just not whom she expects. Her agent of divine intervention, the good angel, asks her why she is so unstable? He informs her she is brought into sin and sorrow and reminds her that

"[fl]eschly lust" is to her "full delectabyll" (593). He offers her the way out of sin: she must seek salve for her soul "[a]nd leve thy werkes vain and veriabyll" (594-95). But Mary's action upon waking does not immediately give evidence of her altered intention, even if she is, as her lines further on demonstrate, on the road to repentance. In fact, her action upon awaking demonstrates rhetorical similarities to her initial action in the bower, recapitulating her experience:

A, how the sperit of goodnesse hat[h] prom[p]tyt me this tide,
And tem[p]tyd me with tityll of trew perfythnesse! (602-3)

The action here could be staged to shimmer no less suggestively with sexual energy as the action at the beginning of the bower scene, particularly if Mary is "tem[p]tyd" by the "tityll" or whisper⁴⁵ of a good angel who looks like a late valentine finally arriving to love her, as she is waiting for. (The actor playing the good angel may find himself whispering in order not to wake up the bad angel!).

Mary wakes up and interjects, "A," just as she does line 564. Her repetition offers an opportunity for these two lines to be delivered with the same emotion as she offers her prayer to God to be with her valentines. Then, as before, she expresses her upset and confusion, but this time, in pain and fright over her recognition of her sinfulness, not in frustration over uncooperative lovers:

Alas, how betternesse in my hert doth abide!
I am wonddyd with werkes of gret distresse.
A, how pynsi[v]nesse potit[h] me to oppresse,
That I have sinnyd on every side!
O Lord, w[h]o shall put me from this peynfulnesse?

⁴⁵"tittle" (*OED* vb. 1): "to speak in a whisper or in a low voice, to whisper; especially to whisper in the ear of, to tell (a person) confidentially."

A, w[h]oo shal to mercy be my gostly g[u]ide? (604-9)

As before, she takes charge: "I shal porsue the Prophett, whereso he be" (610). She expresses confidence in the path she has chosen and that the man she pursues will do what she wants: "For he is the welle of perfith charité; / By the oile of mercy he shal me relyff" (611-12). Thus her confidence before she falls asleep that the lovers she wants will come to her constructs the very faith that mobilizes her to pursue her prophet.

When she enters Simon's house in search of him, she must have with her a vessel to house the "*precious ointment*" with which she means to "*anoint him*" (640 sd.). She may have received a salvatory from the good angel. But perhaps his line to her, "Salve for thy sowle must be sowth" (594) suggests he will leave the salve for her to find. Mary might then decide to start with what she already has in her arbour: "With swete bawmys I wil sekyn him this syth" (613). These "swete bawmys," emblematic of her "[f]leschly lust" (593), and potentially the very "bawmys" with which she was accustomed to tend to her lovers, go with her to Jesus, and are thus available to be used as the "*precious ointment*" with which she anoints his feet. Together, the prop and the gesture suggest that what is demanded of Mary is not a love for Jesus that is different from or no longer invigorated by erotic desire.

The resurrected Christ countermands Mary's hortative, "Lett me anoint yow with this bamys sote" and her declaration, "Butt now will I kesse thee, for my hartes bote" (1071-73). As Coletti, Dugan, and Findon point out, Mary is not to be handling Christ's body any further: "Towche me natt, Mary" (1074). And certainly, the good angel reprimands Mary, "Fleschly lust is to the[e] full delectabyll" (593). But when Mary confesses her sins to Jesus, she claims only "the sinne of pride," "wrath," and "envy" (682, 684), against which she "wol en-[h]abite me with humelité" and "wil deuide / Thes[e] fayer vertuys, paciens and charité" (682-85). She does not

mention lust or lechery, nor for that matter chastity or abstinence. Mary's account of her past sins and her faith in her ability to do what she wants--in this case to practice fair virtues in the future --is in accord with the play's overall strategy of opposing the fallen condition with the redeemed. And Christ validates Mary's own account of her past sins and the virtues she proposes to adopt and attributes her salvation to her faith: "Woman, in contriss[i]on thou art expert, / . . . / Thy feyth hath savit the[e] and made the[e] bryth" (686-90).

V. Absent/Present Salvatory: A Prop's Textual Iteration

If the play stages a transformation of the prop I identify as the salvatory and its balm, it occurs after Mary has found the resurrected Christ and her effort to anoint him is rebuffed; the play makes no call for procuring ointment, and thus the salvatory, again. Rather, the meaning and power of her desire is consolidated for spectators by the salvatory's reflection in the play's verbal imagery. The play introduces a series of terms for a sacred container, such as a precious pine [box], a palace, a tabernacle, and a vessel. It associates these terms first with the Virgin Mary and then addresses Mary Magdalene in language conventionally associated with the Virgin Mary. Thus the Magdalene's conventional attribution, her salvatory, which acquires in the Digby play a congruence with her faith and will as they are invigorated by sexual desire, is transfigured as a sacred vessel.

Sacred vessel imagery is introduced in the scene where Mary enters "*with hyr disipill*" (1335 sd.) and situates herself with all of her "brothyrn departyd asondyr" (1348), disciples who have already taken their passage to diverse countries to teach Christ's passion (1345-47). Mary is about to receive instructions from Jesus through the angel Raphael for her to go to Marseilles and convert the land's king and queen. That action is interrupted by what might first appear an

unrelated event. Stage directions read, "*Her[e] shall hevyn opyn and Jhesus shall shew [himself]*" (1348 sd.). In the scaffold that locates Heaven, Jesus appears and offers an apostrophe to his mother, Mary. The play's structuring of his laudation just before Mary receives her instructions, and the staging of Mary below on the *platea* and Jesus above, suggest for the spectators that the Virgin's qualities are held up as a model of "demure feminité" that the Magdalene must pattern herself after in order to effect "For mankind the feynddes defens" (1356, 1357). Jesus' lines offer a conceit of the Virgin Mary as a sacred box filled with precious scents--the "precious pin[e] full of ensens" (1360), which recall Mary's own salvatory filled with "*precious ointment*" (640 sd.):

She was my tapirnakill of grett nobillnesse,
 She was the paleys of Phebus brigthnesse,
 She was the vessel of puere clennesses
 Wher my Godhed gaff my manhod myth. (1352-55).

Jesus constructs his mother metaphorically while "[s]he was" alive as the perfect container for his own Godhead made mighty.

Mary Magdalene is directly linked with the Virgin Mary further on in the play. The Magdalene is the recipient of an apostrophe from the king of Marseilles that makes use of a similar metaphor as that which Jesus offers to the Virgin Mary. First the Magdalene accomplishes the task Jesus gives her--"she shall converte the lond of Marcyll" (1371). Then she resurrects the dead queen of Marseilles and restores the royal couple's fertility. And so the king hails the Magdalene in a manner that mirrors the rhetoric of appellation and adoration that is conventionally offered to the Virgin: "Heyll be thou, Mary! Owr Lord is with the[e] . . . / Heyll, tabirnakill of the blissyd Trenité!" (1940-42). The king's reference to the tabernacle of the blessed Trinity invokes the series of sacred vessels that Jesus attributed to the Virgin Mary, the

pine box, the tabernacle, the palace, the vessel, along with the salvatory of balm with which the Magdalene is already associated. It is as if her once present salvatory now attracts to her the verbal emblems that invest the Magdalene with potency. As the Virgin was Jesus' instrument, so becomes the Magdalene. Conceptually, Mary Magdalene magnifies the power of the Virgin, for she is imagined here to encompass the entire trinity. Her body is configured here *as* a sacred container.

Thus her depiction by one she has converted to Christianity as a holy vessel signifies not only the spiritual attainment she has achieved--she is a "holy apostyle" (1381). It also signifies the spiritual power that she wields--she effects miracles--and thus the authority she now commands. *Tabernacle* is a literary emblem, part of the Digby play's iterative pattern of vessel imagery that is realized physically in the play by the salvatory that Mary brings with her to anoint Jesus. And that absent present salvatory, like the absent present body of Christ himself, not only signifies--Mary's salvation and the hope of salvation for those amongst whom she journeys--but it operates efficaciously onstage. It invests Mary with might and gravitas, perhaps not unlike the way the newly discovered Higgs-Boson particle pulls in with its gravity surrounding objects, which it invests with mass before it disappears. Importantly, while Christ recognizes Mary's contrition and assigns her a mission, her authority is demonstrated to come from within: Mary's inner resources that cannot be seen but that can be signified by her salvatory and its contents. The play also takes pains to dramatize Jesus and Mary's relationship as an intimate one, based upon Mary's inner qualities.

Their relationship is brought up for attention while Mary stands with her disciple on the *platea* and Jesus is located up in Heaven's scaffold. Out of the blue Jesus offers an ode to his mother; the Magdalene is given no dialogue and remains silent throughout his lines. If the play's

simultaneous staging enables *platea* characters to react to *locus* characters, then Mary might overhear Jesus, and direct her response to her spectators, as *platea* characters are able to do. What if she has been hoping that Jesus will welcome her? After all, she is his newest recruit; she may be excited about entering the brotherhood and waiting for her own assignment to travel. Her first word as she enters the scene is an expression of intense emotion--"A!"--as she "now . . . remembyr[s] my Lord" (1336). A few lines later she repeats, "A! his grett kendnesse may natt fro my mencion" (1342).

But, while she is thinking about Jesus and his great kindness to her, Jesus comes out onto the scaffold and does not speak to or acknowledge her; rather, he praises his mother. An actor might express in some way that her expectations are a little dashed here. Such a gesture might then heighten the moment of Jesus' turn in attention from his mother to the Magdalene: "Butt now of my servantt I remembyr the kendnesse" (1366). Jesus' single line is provocative in its poignant suggestion of intimacy, given the context of his previous fourteen-line objectifying blazon of his mother. I think staging a scene that pays attention to Mary Magdalene in the context of Jesus' turn in attention from his mother to her interrogates the emotional nature of their connection. Why is it *this* particular quality of "kendnesse" that Mary remembers of Jesus and that Jesus remembers of her, even so long after his sojourn on earth is over?

One might look for a particular act committed by Mary that would prompt Jesus to attribute to her "the kendnesse." Mary's primary interaction with Jesus during his time as incorporate on earth occurs in Simon's house, where she ministers to his body with her hands, her tears, her hair, and her balms: *Her[e] shal Mary wasche the fett of the Prophet with the terres of hur [e]vis, whipping hem with hur herre, and than anoint him with a precius ointtment* (640.

sd.). Her actions assigned to her by these stage directions--washing, drying, and anointing Jesus' feet--are annotated by Jesus' instructions to Simon to look at her:

But, Simond, behold this woman in al wise,
 How she with teres of hir better weping
 She wassheth my fete and dothe me servise,
 And anoi[n]tit[h] hem with onimentes, lowly kneling,
 And with her her, fayer and brighth shynning,
 She wipeth hem again with good intent. (665-70)

Jesus teaches Simon his error in judgment by showing Simon Mary's kindness, as demonstrated by her actions--washing his feet; and how she is doing that--with "good intent." *Kindness* can mean a natural inclination, tendency, disposition, or aptitude (*OED* n. 3) or kind feeling; a feeling of tenderness or fondness; affection, love" (n. 5). Mary's natural inclination for expressing tenderness, fondness, affection, love, feelings that can arguably accompany her feeling of contrition as she washes Jesus' feet, appears to have moved Jesus enough to experience and express a remembrance of it. This play interrogates the hard and fast distinctions implied in the terms *eros*, sexual desire, as it informs feelings of tenderness, fondness, and affection, *philia*, and its apparently most spiritual manifestation, *agape*.

At the end of the play, Jesus refers once more to his "wel-belovyd frynd, withoutt variouns!" (2005). She is "*in erimo*" (1989 sd.), and an angel descends with "[g]ostly fode to reseive to thy sa[l]vacion" (2027), to whom Mary replies,

Fiat voluntuas tua in heven and erth!
 Now am I full of joye and blisse.
 Laud and preyse to that blissyd birth!

I am redy, as his blissyd will isse. (2028-31)

Her wordplay on "blisse" and "blissyd," or *blessed*, where her blissfulness is situated in the context of Jesus' blessedness, looks back to her youthful self-reference as "blossum of blisse" (566). There she waited for someone she desired "to halse and kisse" (571); "*Her[e] shall she be halsyd with angelles. . .*" (2031 sd.). How, then, is Mary different? If the "sweet bamys" from the bower are the very "*precius ointment*" she uses in Simon's house, then the property does not change its composition any more than the nature of Mary's desire changes. What is different is that in Simon's house, the precious ointment is put to "good intent" (670). As Mary herself says when she has grown to full bloom and delivers the "joyfull tiding" (1087) of Jesus' resurrection, "He . . . hath relevyed my woo, and moryd my blische" (1098-99). Jesus has anchored her bliss, the desire that she manifests in the play first in her arbour, to good intent.

Mary utters "A" from fall to ascension: "A, good Lord, I thank the[e] withowt veriawns!" (2098). With her final prayer, "Lord, of ardent love! . . ." (2110), she demands the gates of heaven open for her, repeating her earlier *bliss / blessed* wordplay, identifying her own bliss with the bliss of Jesus and the blessed gates of heaven: "I recummd my sowle onto thy blisse. / Lord, opyn thy blissyd gates!" (2113-14). As Mary dies, the angels who receive her soul announce her never-ending bliss in heaven (2122) and proceed to "sing a mery song" (2123). While they rejoice in heaven ("*Gaudent in caelis*"), the priest below on the *platea* reiterates that Mary is "In heven blisse with gle and game!" (2127). He announces he will bury the body properly and, finally, he turns to the audience with the hope that they too might be brought to God's "blisse so brygth" (2135, 2138). Here the audience is incorporated into the action of the play, invited to sing along with the angels and the "clerkys with voicys cler" (2139). They are

thus implicated in the play's overarching theme, that God's bliss is available to all; Mary, who pursued her prophet with her salvatory in hand, shows them the way.

She dies expressing her veneration, however, for the soil, for the world, that engendered her "bamys precious of prysse" (569): "This erth at this time ferven[t]ly I kisse" (2115). The intense ardor that *fervently* implies (*OED* adj. 1a) recalls and constitutes the same agential desire that threw her back to sleep "[a]mons thes[e] bamys precious of prysse, / Till som lover wol apere" (569-70) when she was younger and no less erotically charged. Thus the play's construction of Mary's salvatory and her balm suggests her willful and profane desire may be redirected to submit to and serve God's will, and thereby is blessed. The erotic desire the play attributes to Mary by means of its prop is not procreative; it is productive. It invigorates not only Mary's faith in God and Jesus, but her faith in herself and her capacity to achieve what she wants. The Digby play's Mary Magdalene is animated by an efficacious desire that contributes to her spiritual authority.

VI. Fatal Attractions: Wayward Desires in *A Woman Killed*

Like the Digby play, Thomas Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, written and launched in 1603 by the Worcester's Men at the Rose theatre, ends with its protagonist dying "*in her bed*" (17.38 sd.), embraced by her spouse, expressing her conviction that she is bound for heaven: "Pardoned on earth, soul, thou in heaven art free! / Once more thy wife dies, thus embracing thee" (121-22). But compared to Mary Magdalene, the lot of Heywood's female protagonist is severe: Anne Frankford is not allowed a redemption that prepares her to resume a full, albeit penitent, life on earth (Ornstein 139). Trouble for Anne arrives after her marriage to John Frankford when Wendoll enters the Frankford household. On account of the companionship he provides to Frankford, he is invited to stay and make use of Frankford's "table and [his] purse"

(4.63). Frankford goes so far as to instruct Anne to let Wendoll know that he must "keep his table, use his servants, / And be a present Frankford in his absence" (6.77-78). While Frankford desires Wendoll, Wendoll desires Anne. In her husband's absence, Wendoll intercepts Anne on her way back from bidding Frankford goodbye on his way to London on business. He seduces her into allowing his kisses. Frankford's servant, Nicholas, sees the event and later tells his master. Unbelieving, Frankford devises a plot to discover them in the act of adultery by faking another business trip but returning unawares at midnight. He barges into Anne's private chamber, finds the pair sleeping in each other's arms and, with some prodding from Nicholas, chases Wendoll out of the house. Anne is sent to live in a manor several miles away from her household. There, she determines to commit suicide by starvation in repentance.

The play's subplot concerns the house of Mountford and a brother's attempt to prostitute his sister. The subplot is nominally connected to the main plot through Anne's brother, Sir Francis Acton, who has a falling out with Sir Charles Mountford over the results of a hawking match. Sir Charles kills Sir Francis' falconer and huntsman, for which he is sent to jail. Nearly broke from having bought his way out of jail, Sir Charles accepts the loan of 300 pounds from Shafton, who, once it is spent, demands its repayment or the right to purchase Sir Charles' ancestral house and grounds from him. Meanwhile, Sir Francis means to humiliate Sir Charles further by propositioning his sister, Susan Mountford, who is also impoverished by Sir Charles' crime and punishment. But upon sight of Susan, Sir Francis falls in love with her and pays Sir Charles' debts. When Sir Charles discovers the identity of his benefactor, he attempts to relieve himself of this new burden by offering his sister's body to Sir Francis for his pleasure. Susan reluctantly agrees to the deal at the same time as she determines to kill herself before the affair is consummated. Sir Francis insists upon marrying, not prostituting, her. The two plots unify in the

play's final scene where these three are among the mourners at Anne's deathbed. John is brought back to Anne's side and grants her the forgiveness she demands from him before she dies. There he announces his design for Anne's monument. Her "funeral epitaph" will be engraved upon a marble tomb "[i]n golden letters" and read: "'Here lies she whom her husband's kindness killed'"(17.137-40).⁴⁶

Whether the play congratulates or condemns John Frankford for his ostensible "kindness" is a vexed question.⁴⁷ However one reads the play's ending, Anne Frankford's sexual congress with Wendoll haunts her deathbed, pardoned or not. Her reference to her dying "[o]nce more" implies her symbolic death when she was discovered in the act of adultery. As Reina Green suggests, in performance Anne's nightclothes in this scene are likely the same "*smock*,

⁴⁶ For a discussion of the sources for Heywood's playtitle see Orlin, *Private* 158-60; and Smout 179-80 for a discussion of the play's impact.

⁴⁷ Ure finds the theme of marriage dramatized in such a way that does not depart from "an accepted code" (197): "Heywood was not writing a problem play" (199). Henderson finds *A Woman Killed* an ideologically conservative play that does not challenge the values of its time but rather encourages spectators to perceive "Frankford's merciful judgment as properly analogous to God's" (282). Bromley defends Frankford against charges of hypocrisy and misogyny, pointing out that Frankford's response to Anne's adultery is patterned precisely upon instruction in current books on domestic comportment for gentlemen, aimed not at the nobility but the rising middle class. She argues, "Heywood is more concerned with the social consequences of crime than the moral consequences of sin, and Anne's crime . . . is most threatening to the established hierarchy" (271). Panek, however, argues that Frank's actions are in direct violation of the recommendations offered in contemporary marriage manuals, one of which Heywood wrote himself. For Panek, Frankford "fails to grasp the essential concept of the companionate marriage" (363-4). Christensen does not defend Frankford, but examines Heywood's response to an economy that was shifting from a manorial system to an emerging capitalism and the effects of that shift on household life. Frankford's professional obligations interfere with his household obligations: "Frankford's business means Wendoll's pleasure" (326-27). For Anne's part, Bromley argues that her "repentance is genuine" (273). But Green, as noted above, disagrees that the play stages a successful salvation. She suggests that while the play's other characters may perceive Anne's form of penance as "a sign of female virtue," her starvation "both covers and reveals her essential rebellion and insatiable desire" (69). Green argues that "Heywood does not simply dramatize conduct-book morality . . . but also explores the inherent contradictions of their tenets. He reveals . . . the web of complex and contradictory demands on female behavior" (70).

nightgown, and night attire" (13.77 sd.) she wears when she enters the scene after her husband discovers her in bed with Wendoll. Furthermore, given her repentance by way of starvation, "the flat-chested body of the boy actor" who plays her both realizes and points at the cause of her starvation: "Even as she is displayed as a repentant desexualized wife, the audience is reminded of Anne's adultery" (Green 68-69).⁴⁸ Staging her penance this way raises doubts about whether she will receive pardon "at that day / When the great Judge of Heaven in scarlet sits," whatever Frankford might "hope" (17.105-7). As Green advises, "Anne's self-imposed starvation results in her suicide and that, according to Christian theology, would lead to her eternal damnation. Death is not simply a side effect of Anne's penance but her goal" (65). Death is the final, but also the only overt and realized, object of Anne's desires that the play depicts.

VII. The Lute and Anne's Education

I have argued that the Digby play's theatricality positions the Magdalene's salvatory and contents as constitutive of Mary's sexuality. Unlike other iterations of the figure's *vita*, the Digby Magdalene's sexuality contributes to what Christ attributes to her as her great "kendnesse." The salvatory functions to shape the Magdalene's sexuality as an inextricable part of her spiritual authority, an authority that accrues to her over the course of the play. The lute in *A Woman Killed* highlights Anne's fatal inscription into the misogynist discourses of her time that undermine the very authority assigned to her at the start of the play. During the opening wedding celebrations, Sir Charles Mountford describes the qualities of the asset John Frankford has acquired by his marriage. Anne's authority is put in the context of the education she has received

⁴⁸ See also Frey and Lieblein, who argue that Anne's self-mutilation by way of self-starvation is another kind of Amazonian act, such as male infanticide and breast removal, which launches "a direct attack on patriarchal authority" (60).

before marriage, including music lessons. So the grounds for the lute's sudden appearance in the play, in scene 15, are laid here:

You are a happy man, sir; and much joy
 Succeed your marriage mirth, you have a wife
 So qualified and with such ornaments
 Both of the mind and body. First, her birth
 Is noble, and her education such
 As might become the daughter of a prince.
 Her own tongue speaks all tongues, and her own hand
 Can teach all strings to speak in their best grace
 From the shrill treble to the hoarsest bass.
 To end her many praises in one word,
 She's beauty and perfection's eldest daughter,
 Only found by yours, though many a heart hath sought her. (1.13-24)

Anne's princely education includes a musical one in stringed instruments. Deanne Williams points to the lute as "[t]he instrument of choice among well-brought-up girls in the Renaissance" (*Shakespeare* 73). Referring to the lute that Ophelia plays and sings to in the Q1 *Hamlet*, Williams shows how the instrument "evokes an entire history and identity: conjuring a girl just as educated, capable, accomplished, and self-sufficient as [Miss] Anne [Grene] or [Princess] Mary, or the 'princely' Marina that would later appear in Shakespeare's *Pericles*" (82).⁴⁹ Moreover, lute practice contributed to a girl's education in love, sex, and marriage:

⁴⁹ Miss Anne Grene, student of John Danyel, court musician; Princess Mary, daughter of Henry VII.

[T]he culture of lute instruction for early modern girls illustrates the extent to which sexuality, in its ideal expression as well as its violent or transgressive forms, occupied a place . . . among the things girls learned about in preparation for adulthood. As a girl, a student of the lute would encounter characters that would teach her a great deal about love: the jilted Ariadne, abandoned by Theseus, the coy Daphne, chased by lusty Apollo, and the cruel Chloris, nymph of the budding Spring. More than just plucking the strings, then, lute instruction constitutes a form of serious play: a girl's rehearsal or imaginative preparation for love and marriage. (Williams, *Shakespeare* 79)

Heywood's protagonist, however, is no Shakespearean heroine. Unlike the many girls in Shakespeare "who can take care of themselves, and defend their own interests" (76), Anne fails to flourish in spite of her potential. Dangers befall Anne within her marriage and her new household. The play's household props, a distinct group amongst more conventional kinds of props in the play, help establish the marital and household relations wherein Anne and even her lute are indeed "out of tune" (16.18). That is, the lute as a prop itself appears an outlier in the context of the rest of the play's props.

VIII. Props Domesticated: The Theatricality of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*

While the representative function of most of the props in the Digby play are overlaid by their emblematic or symbolic value in the service of the play's didactic aims, the props in Heywood's play serve primarily to represent the very thing and function of any object that appears in the playtext. John's watch, for instance, whose "hand points upon twelve" and his "dark-lantern" function unobtrusively and most conventionally, establishing the "dead midnight" at which time

John and Nicholas troop back to the household to surprise Wendoll and Anne in scene 13 (5-6, 20). The jets, jesses, bells, and terrets in scene 3 that harness the hawks belonging to Sir Charles and Sir Francis might ironically parallel Sir Charles' own fetters in scene 7 and 10 (3.9, 24; 7.70; 10.24), but primarily they function to support the play's representation of a sporting match between the two nobles at Chevy Chase (1.94) in scene 2.

The monies that appear onstage point to the play's economies in action: money purchases Sir Charles' first release from prison (5.10-12); a crown represents Nicholas' advance wages from John (8.27-30); a bag of gold is the stake with which Sir Francis means to "tempt" Susan (9.41-47). The play's weapons are used for fighting: Sir Charles and Sir Francis draw their swords when they duel after falling out at the match. Nicholas does speak to his own dagger after he catches sight of Wendoll kissing Anne, exclaiming, "What say'st thou, metal? / Does not the rascal Wendoll go on legs / that thou must cut off?" (6.170-72). But Nicholas' address to a prop is a bit of comic stage business that emphasizes his own liveliness rather than that of the prop in his hand. He is a choleric character, and also the play's clown. The weapon that calls the most attention to itself is Susan's knife. She brandishes it unexpectedly after finding herself "tricked . . . like a bride" in "this gay attire, these ornaments" (14.1-2), her costume designed by Sir Charles so that she might better attract Sir Francis. Susan's knife and her action with it ally her with the Roman Lucrece: "But here's a knife, / To save mine honour, shall slice out my life" (84-85).

But the props that point most conspicuously to their very functionality are the "*voider*," "*wooden knife*," "*salt and bread*," "*tablecloth and napkins*," "*carpet*," and "*two lights*," with which Spiggot, Nicholas, and a couple of other servingmen enter scene 8 (0 sd.). A similar parade occurs in scene 11, where Spiggot and Jenkin enter "*with a tablecloth, bread, trenchers*,

and salt" (22 sd.). This play's depiction of domestic objects in action contributes to its generic classification as a domestic play, in this case as domestic tragedy.⁵⁰ In scene 8, Jenkin is marshaling the servants to clean up after the family and their guest's supper in the parlour and to prepare "a spread for the servingmen in the hall" (2-3). With neither the parlour nor the hall depicted, spectators are given to understand what has just happened in the former and what is about to happen in the latter. Jenkin commands the servants, "So, march in order and retire in battle 'ray" (1). As Catherine Richardson puts it, "[i]n terms of its dramatic form, this is a pageant or procession, an organization of space and actors more usually associated with displays of military might, where the props carried are weapons and standards." Like crowns and insignia upon banners, the status and the respect royal emblems of power inspire instead "is suggested by the trappings of an emerging bourgeois culture" ("Properties" 135).

What Richardson demonstrates so neatly is how in this scene the objects and their locations establish characters' social relations. The domestic props that populate the play, especially, situate characters in the contexts of their houses and construct their social relations with those that live with and near them. As she explains, when John Frankford enters "*as it were brushing the crumbs from his clothes with a napkin, and newly risen from supper*" (8.21 sd.), he is entering from the parlour, where he and his guest, Master Cranwell, have been eating.

⁵⁰ For an overview of the origins, taxonomies, and medieval and Tudor contexts for a group of early modern plays J.P. Collier in 1831 first identified as domestic tragedy, see Comensoli, especially the introduction and chapter 1. She argues that a number of these texts resist the homiletic structures of the genre. The alienation the female protagonists experience is "grounded in the tension between personal desire . . . and social, discursive, and ideological claims" (25-26). However, for Comensoli, *A Woman Killed* is not an adequate example of a domestic play that resists the genre's didacticism. Anne can only muster "bewilderment" (89) when confronted by Wendoll, and she does not consciously choose to disrupt the integrity of the Frankford household. Rather, her transgression "is precipitated not only by vanity and lust but also by her corrupt feminine understanding" (80). Comensoli contrasts Anne's more passive fall into transgression to Alice Arden's "wilful encroachment upon the male prerogatives of desire and resoluteness" (89). See also Gutierrez; Bach; and Berek.

Nicholas, rather than going into the hall to eat as ordered by Jenkin, waits for his master so that he may tell him what he saw in private. They are standing somewhere between two places, neither parlour nor hall:

We see the house at this point from the underside, behind its scenes, from a place that is traversed rather than inhabited, much as the stage itself is, without the illusory permanence of the prop. The very absence of the properties, fresh in the mind from their recent exit, sharpens the audience's perception of the space as an unlocated one. (Richardson, "Properties" 136)

Richardson argues that "[i]mplicit in the positioning of Frankford in such a liminal space without property is the unsettling feeling that his social standing is compromised." Brushing the crumbs from his clothes--"[clothes] are the supremely self-defining exterior expression of a person in interaction with society"--implies "that we are seeing behind his mannered social identity to the man himself" (137). The stage business enables audience members to imagine a particularized social history of the Frankford family and their household; and the spectator can read the preceding events of the play into this domestic environment (with its associated rituals and ideologies of social and economic distinctions) and view subsequent events against this background (146-49).⁵¹

IX. Anne's Lute from Hand to Hand

No servant brings the lute onto the stage pageant-style in preparation, say, for a musical recital. Preparations for an evening's recreation are indeed staged: in the parlour in scene 8, a table, a carpet to cover it, candles and candlesticks, "*stools, and other necessaries*" are paraded in for an

⁵¹ On the household and companionate marriage in *A Woman Killed* see Orlin, *Private* 137-81; on the household and business in the play see Christensen.

evening's card games (113 sd.-119). Rather than being carried onto the stage by any character, the lute *is discovered* at once by John and his servant, Nicholas. Their responses to their discovery of a lute focuses a spectator's own sight upon that lute. Nicholas exclaims: "Sblood, master, here's her lute flung in a corner" (15.12). The text makes no indication which particular room in the Frankford household we are in.⁵² Rather, one finds a tour of the entire household has just occurred and an inventory of its objects scrutinized. Cranwell asks John, "Why do you search each room about your house, / Now that you have dispatched your wife away?" (1-2). He replies that when he thinks of Anne's "unkindness" his "thoughts are all in hell." To avoid such "torment," he "would not have a bodkin or a cuff, / A bracelet, necklace, or rebato wire, / Nor anything that ever was called hers" left behind by which he "might remember her" (5-10).⁵³ John's language evidences this play's sensitivity to how especially domestic objects evoke the presence of absent owners. His language also produces an auditory pageant of women's domestic wear--bodkin, cuff, bracelet, necklace, rebato wire--that is a correlative of visual pageants of kitchen and dining wares in scene 8 and 11. Frankford's construction puts the lute, as it is discovered, in the context of all the other household goods that have been variously paraded or itemized, only to highlight that the lute is solo and not a part of such a pageant.

Nicholas' exclamation, moreover, while expressing his righteous indignation--"Sblood"!--invokes a vision of the lute's violent flight to that solitude, "flung in a corner" and foregrounds the passion of the one that threw it there, though presently absent. But the scene as written does not give evidence for why Anne threw it away. Certainly, such a gesture anticipates the violent tortures Anne proposes for her own body in order to "redeem" her honour: "I would have this

⁵² Of course, a production may choose to determine one.

⁵³ A bodkin is a long pin or pin-shaped ornament used by women to fasten up the hair (*OED* n.3). A rebato wire supports the large fashionable collars or ruffs from the late 16th until the mid 17th centuries, which were also typically trimmed with lace (*OED* n.1).

hand cut off, these my breasts seared, / Be racked, strappadoed, put to any torment . . . " (13.134-36). Does she, like *Taming of the Shrew's* Bianca and Katharina, "reject the lute, considered a key prop of obedient girlhood"? Does she "reject the ideals of feminine behavior . . . implied by the lute"? (Williams, *Shakespeare* 76). Or, is her action a gesture of self-abasement at her recognition of her failure to manifest the ideals of feminine behaviour and obedience? The lute's condition and location suggest something of what must have been the violent emotion with which it was thrown. But perhaps that emotion--displaced as it is onto the object--is not necessarily directed entirely at herself in that moment. Perhaps it is directed at John Frankford.

Unlike Petruchio, who proposes and puts into play "a way to kill a wife with kindness" in order to bring Katherina to terms with her marriage (4.1.197), John is a reluctant bridegroom, in spite of Anne's extraordinary accomplishments, beauty, and meekness. When Sir Francis exclaims, "This marriage music hoists me from the ground," John retorts, "Ay, you may caper, you are light and free; / Marriage hath yoked my heels" (1.9-11). Sir Charles intervenes at this breach of wedding decorum by refiguring his initial encomium of the bride in order to instruct and inscribe John into his place within the institution of marriage and this particular union presently being celebrated:

You both adorn each other, and your hands
 Methinks are matches. There's equality
 In this fair combination; you are both scholars,
 Both young, both being descended nobly.
 There's music in this sympathy; it carries
 Consort and expectation of much joy, . . . (65-70)

John's inscription into marriage appears to imply, in Charles' lines, a containment of Anne's authority. Anne's princely education is iterated once more: she is a scholar, like John. Her matchless ability to play all stringed instruments is correlated now with one of the Renaissance's favourite allegories of music's and love's harmonies, here, the love implied in marriage.⁵⁴ Indeed, the music called for in the play's opening festivities is referred to by one of the celebrants directly as "marriage music" (1.9). At the same time, Sir Charles delimits the authority he granted to Anne earlier--scholarly, musical, and linguistic authority--to the realm of an ideally companionate marriage.

The play does not depict scenes of the Frankfords' marital and domestic life together, and how Anne, with her skills, may contribute to it, before the adultery occurs. Rather than the domestic life between Anne and her new husband, the play pays attention to the relationships between John, his companion, Wendoll, and Nicholas.⁵⁵ Nicholas distrusts Wendoll the moment he enters the house.⁵⁶ The only evidence, finally, for what Anne and John's marital relations might have been like comes from John's language the moment he discovers Anne's lute. While first looking for her stray belongings, he proclaims he "loved her dearly" (15.4). Upon sight of her lute, John exclaims:

Her lute! Oh, God, upon this instrument

Her fingers have run quick division,

⁵⁴ Shakespeare's Berowne, for example, in *Love's Labor's Lost*, declares "Love" as "sweet and musical / As bright Apollo's lute, strung with his hair," thus according love's speech the power to "[m]ake heaven drowsy with the harmony" (4.3.314, 316-19).

⁵⁵ See Bach, who argues persuasively how, given the play's depiction of male kinship, romantic heterosexual language exists in the context of the language of homosocial bonding, so much so that the early modern heterosexual couple literally does not exist in the way we understand it to today (515-16). See also Findlay 157-60.

⁵⁶ "I do not like this fellow by no means; / I never see him but my heart still earns. / Zounds! I could fight with him, yet know not why; / The devil and he are all one in my eye" (4.83-86).

Sweeter than that which now divides our hearts.
 These frets have made me pleasant, that have now
 Frets of my heartstrings made. Oh, Master Cranwell,
 Oft hath she made this melancholy wood,
 Now mute and dumb for her disastrous chance,
 Speak sweetly many a note, sound many a strain
 To her own ravishing voice, which being well strung,
 What pleasant, strange airs have they jointly sung!--
 Post with it after her.--Now nothing's left;
 Of her and hers I am at once bereft. (15.13-24)

If Nicholas' expression of his sight of the lute foregrounds its owner's present absence, John's response at the sight of it invokes Anne's absent presence, her fingers playing upon that lute in "quick division." For John, the "pleasant, strange airs" that "have made me pleasant" suggest that the lute, his gift to Anne (16.72), signifies his bond to her, his pleasant, companionate marriage, which Anne has nullified by her adultery: "Now nothing's left." But the prop transforms John's own body too, whose "frets" have made "[f]rets of my heartstrings now." Correspondingly, John's emotion--"Oh, Master Cranwell"--transforms the prop to "melancholy wood." Of course, John's transferred epithet refers to *his* melancholy as he fetishizes the instrument with his nostalgia for Anne's "ravishing voice," as "well strung" as her lute. Both Anne and her lute are objects "jointly" singing for John's pleasure, but by "ravishing" him, she weakens him: "I am . . . bereft."

John's language draws upon and foregrounds contemporary misogynist notions of the powers of music and the beautiful women who produce it. Linda Phyllis Austern addresses the

implications for female musicians and those who watched them perform in English Renaissance literature: "Women . . . were regarded as agents alternately of salvation and destruction even as music was perceived as an inspiration to both heavenly rapture and carnal lust." They might inspire "either pure spiritual ecstasy or destructive physical passion" (Austern, "Sing" 420). The women in Austern's survey who play music and sing are confronted with a double bind constructed for them by this language, because even if "[t]he most chaste female musicians in these works tend to express their innermost thoughts to lutes, viols, and virginals in privacy, . . . men may chance to listen and find their senses ravished." There are "two standard effects on the men who listen by chance or design: it either liberates the soul or ensnares both soul and body" (436). Austern concludes that "[i]t is clear that many well-to-do Englishwomen did learn musical skills, particularly stringed and keyboard instruments. And it is equally clear that the most proper normally kept these inflammatory skills to themselves lest they inadvertently excite masculine passion" (447).⁵⁷

There would appear to be no way out for a woman to act with agency within the strictures of this ideology except to submit to silence or to speak as a negative exemplar--as Anne does in direct address to the women of the audience:

O women, women, you that have yet kept
 Your holy matrimonial vow unstained,
 Make me your instance! When you tread awry,
 Your sins like mine will on your conscience lie. (13.141-44)

⁵⁷ See Austern, "Alluring"; Cary, who provides classical, medieval, and biblical connotations of the lute; Craig-McFeely, who argues that Anne's wrongdoing is displaced onto the lute 304-5; and Henze. See also Larson, who considers Milton's response to the voice and body of a singing female.

In *A Woman Killed*, the lute evokes this ideology for consideration when Frankford speaks in response to his sight of it and the memories the lute prompts. Anne's role enacts the consequences of the actions of a woman assigned an identity constructed by that ideology: she inflames masculine desire even while intent upon expressing her own passions. The double bind that traps such a woman is enacted in scenes 6 and 11: Anne's seduction by Wendoll stages her entrapment, and her experiences within her household afterwards stage her imprisonment. The experiences that confront Anne in scenes 6 and 11 produce the violent emotions with which Anne flings her lute away. Thus the lute in action lays bare the construction of a pernicious ideology at the same time as it demonstrates its deleterious effects: a violated and abandoned lute in scene 13 looks back at its violated and abandoned owner in scenes 6 and 11.

In scene 6, a trap is laid, and Anne falls into it: Wendoll struggles but fails to resist submitting to his desire to seduce Anne as he approaches her, and by line 106, he declares, "I love you." Anne declares her passion for her husband and resists his advance on the basis of her own wellbeing: "The love I bear my husband is as precious / As my soul's health" (140-41). Paula McQuade argues that Anne "accedes to Wendoll's request, not out of sexual desire, but because she is unsure what to do and unable to advance a compelling argument for preserving her chastity" (245).⁵⁸ But Anne has been introduced at the start of the play as a scholar. Certainly she demonstrates here her will to exercise moral deliberation in order to fend off Wendoll: she equates her love for (and obedience to) her husband with her own soul's health. Before Anne can think how to respond to the paradox, if not the speciousness, of Wendoll's reply, "I love your husband too" (6.141), he seduces her by talking her into imagining "[t]hat act of night" (149).

⁵⁸ See also Bowers; Cook; and Creaser.

It hardly requires John's subsequent imposition of humiliation and exile to bring Anne to despair. It is one thing to be raped; it is another to be seduced to submit to one's rape. Jane Miller asserts that "[s]eduction is necessarily quite different from rape," (2); that is, "[t]he language of seduction spells out the ambiguities within an apparently shared responsibility. The seducer tempts. The one who is seduced yields to temptation" (Miller 21).⁶⁰ But Miller qualifies her distinction between the two acts on the basis of whether or not consent is elicited and offered. Whether consent is solicited by Wendoll and offered by Anne in scene 6 is ambiguous. The play's text is slippery when it comes to whether Anne's "oh"s are sighs of desire in Wendoll's *fantasy*--Anne is entirely and only frightened and confused--or signs of Anne's sexual enchantment. But surely Wendoll's assertions of Anne's "divine perfections" (6.11), which leave him helpless in the face of his own desire, like "[s]ome fury [that] pricks" men "on" (6.99), participate in the same toxic stew of ideas about women and their sexuality as does John's lament at his own diminishment from Anne's "ravishing voice" as "well-strung" as her lute (15.21). Wendoll's rhetoric mystifies at the same time as it justifies the transfiguration of a rape into a seduction, a rape that furthermore implicates Anne into adultery.

In scene 11, Anne is trapped within a household that conspires to restage and publish her adultery. She is safe neither in private nor in public. John constructs his own discovery scene, one wherein Anne, once again, tries to do everything she can think of rather than submit to Wendoll. The Frankfords, Cranwell, and Wendoll are sitting to supper. Nicholas enters with a letter contrived by his master to take him away on business. Cranwell, Anne, and Wendoll are left alone, and Wendoll says to Anne, "My pleasure is / We will not sup abroad so publicly, / But in your private chamber, Mistress Frankford" (90-92). Anne may make a discovery of her own as

⁶⁰ Therefore, she continues, "if seduction is something other than a rape, it may also be thought of as a deflected or renamed rape, a rape annulled by an ambiguous assertion of conquest" (21)

she responds to Wendoll: "Oh, sir, you are too public in your love, /And Master Frankford's wife--" (93-94). Cranwell interjects and completes her line, asking if he might be shown to his own chamber (94-95), and Wendoll promptly obliges him, calling for light to show his way (97). Anne's objection can be spoken entirely to Wendoll: *Do not speak like this in front of Cranwell: publically, I am Frankford's wife*. Cranwell may take his cue from them both and take his leave discreetly. Alternatively, Anne could be alarmed over Wendoll's public announcement that he intends to sup privately with her. She turns to him in dismay and mortification--"Oh, sir, you are too public"--that is, *Cranwell is present*. With that thought, she turns to Cranwell and defines herself to him as Frankford's wife: "And Master Frankford's wife--" (11.94). We are left to fill in that gap, what she might have said or asked Cranwell. She could be turning to him here for support: *Master Frankford's wife asks you to stay with us--*for a way to get away from Wendoll. But Cranwell will not let her speak either. In fact, he leaves her.

What if Anne, here, suspects or realizes that Cranwell intended to go and leave her with Wendoll? And if so, might it not also dawn on her that her husband planned to leave her, and plans to catch her, as well? "How all conspire / To make our bosom sweet and full entire!" (100-1): Wendoll's words are then not just dramatically ironic but cruelly apt to her. It has just been demonstrated to Anne, once more, that there really is no way out of sin. If she had not acquired a thorough enough education in sex before marriage from her lute play, she has now indeed acquired experience with the effects of the language men use to manage women. Her discovery could inform her final lines with defeat and despair: ". . . Well, you plead custom; / That which for want of wit I granted erst / I now must yield through fear. Come, come, let's in" (111-13).

Despair at her entrapment and rage at the men who trapped her are the emotions that Anne's "lute flung in a corner" evoke with its first appearance onstage. It is "mute and dumb"

(15.19) as far as John is concerned and so prompts a strangely artificial lament from him for "[s]weeter" times (15.15). Sent via Nicholas to be returned to its owner, when the lute lands in Anne's arms, it plays a real lament: ". . . My lute shall groan; / It cannot weep, but shall lament my moan" (16.29-30). "My lute" takes the subject position here. As Anne personifies her lute and transfers her woe and her voice to the lute, an ostracized woman forges for herself an alternate household. She places herself in a kind of ghost chorus of the lute's female performers in stages, pages, and canvases past, with the daughters of princes who learn to play and play to learn from their sisters' erotic (mis)adventures.

Even when Wendoll enters the scene of her lute playing and speaks in direct address to the audience about his horror and his self pity (15.31-44); even when he catches sight of Anne and her servants and interrupts again--"O my sad fate! / Here, and so far from home, and thus attended!" (44-56), Anne and her lute command attention as long as she is still playing. By the mechanics of her stage's theatricality, Anne, who does not see Wendoll but who is seen by him, would be trapped in the *locus* in relation to Wendoll in the *platea*. But dramaturgically, music has the power to "compel attention" (372) and, as Simon Smith shows, can be "used to focus playgoers' scattered attention" (376).⁶¹ The lute steals the *platea* away from Wendoll for Anne and her boy actor. If we pay some attention to Wendoll, his lines only refer us back to the power of Anne and the power of her lute in performance:

So poets write that Orpheus made the trees
And stones to dance to his melodious harp,
Meaning the rustic and the barbarous hinds,
That had no understanding part in them;

⁶¹ See also Larson; and Henze on the transformative power of performed music.

So she from these rude carters tears extracts,
 Making their flinty hearts with grief to rise
 And draw down rivers from their rocky eyes. (16.50-56)

Aligning Anne with Orpheus, Wendoll interprets the stones Orpheus taught to dance with his lute as the servants that attend Anne, the "carters" that drive Anne's chariot. And indeed, Nicholas no sooner admits to Anne that she "made him sad" than he finds himself in tears and makes to leave, "or I shall straight turn baby too" (16.65-67).

But the effect of the lute in performance in the boy actor's hands, in tune with Anne's role and her chorus of sisters, is to attribute the epithet "rude carters" to her spectators both on- and offstage. In fact, the lute itself cannot help but foreground the play's metatheatricity: in this instance the prop has to be the real (and expensive) thing, because a fake lute could hardly produce the music necessary to move its auditors to tears.⁶² The groundlings standing in the yard of the amphitheatres are those whom the Venetian Antimo Galli would in 1613 refer to as "the gang of porters and carters."⁶³ Given the tears both on- and offstage, the performance of Anne/the boy must be efficacious, it must be moving. In fact, Hiroyuki Minamino reports, "It was the highest honor for the musician, particularly the instrumentalist, of the Renaissance to be equated with Orpheus; among those who won this praise were Pietrobono de Burzellis,

⁶² See Maitland on the problems of illusion that musical instruments as stage properties pose. Maitland notes that the lute, in particular, is unable to produce a tone that would "carry through a theatre of any size." More troublesome would be the potential disconnect in performance between the action of an actor playing a fake instrument onstage and a musician playing a real one offstage: "Not only musicians, but the most uncultivated of the audience will be inclined to laugh if they see an actor grab frantically at the strings of his property harp at a moment when no corresponding chord is being played in the orchestra. . . ." (270). Maitland's argument, however, is that "the execution of music in dumbshow is, as a rule, far better in plays than in operas, and the sooner operatic artists take a leaf out of the book of their colleagues the better for opera" (273).

⁶³ Galli was reporting how the Venetian ambassador insisted upon standing amongst them himself. As quoted in Keenan 135.

Francesco da Milano, and John Dowland" (275). Those who judge Anne, or are deaf to her groans, are the ones with "flinty hearts" (16.55).

Heywood's later play, *The Wise-woman of Hogsdon*⁶⁴ refers metatheatrically to the apparent spectator-response to *A Woman Killed*. In *Wise-woman* one character chides another for weeping: "Here's such wetting of Hand-kerchers, hee weeps to thinke of his Wife, shee weeps to see her Father cry! Peace foole, we shall else have thoe claime kindred of the Woman kill'd with kindnesse" (3.1.364-65). Surely, it is the penultimate scene 16 where Anne plays her lute and not the final one where she dies that prompts such a storm of emotion from its spectators.⁶⁵ At least, *Hogsdon's* lines emphasize how emphatically the lute in performance contradicts Anne's own scripted text. On- and offstage spectators' tears are evidence that the boy actor and the lute are *not* "out of tune." They are not "out of time," as the playtext dictates (16.18). In scene 16, in performance, Anne is not an exemplar to the women in the audience who may "tread awry" as she claims in scene 13 (141-44). Rather, she compels the women in her audience to commiserate and identify with her own and her sisters' passions--their sorrows and their desires. Anne and her lute in scene 16 undermine the pompous words of judgment offered by Sir Francis, and rebuff the condescending words of consolation offered by Sir Charles, in scene 17 (16-22; 109-111). In scene 16, Anne and her lute protest the relegation of a gifted boy actor to a pathetic spectacle in scene 17, there lying upon a bed delivering by rote only an obsessively abject request for pardon rather than playing a tragic swan song (17.81-92).

⁶⁴ First performed c. 1604 and published 1638.

⁶⁵ See Hobgood 97-127, who argues that Anne functions as a kind of "*pharmakon*, a paradoxical poison meant to treat emotional excess with emotional excess" (120). Hobgood suggests, however, that *A Woman Killed* in fact exploited "the very humoral intemperance it purported to cure." In this way, the theatre cultivated "a voracious appetite . . . for what it alone could provide" (126).

Of course, the lute also functions to make a spectacle out of Anne in scene 16, "a spectacle of female suffering" (Marsden 503), as the genre of she-tragedy promises. Jean I. Marsden writes about a dramatic form that depends on an aesthetics of passive suffering, "a dramatic tradition in which the female figures suffer not for their virtue but for their sins" (Marsden 502). Key to "she-tragedy," as Marsden defines the genre, is "its characteristically titillating spectacle of a fallen woman" (503). But Anne delivers a defiant gesture at the end to disown the fatal role scripted for her. She orders Nicholas, "Go break this lute upon my coach's wheel" (16.70).⁶⁶ Anne's gesture resists Wendoll's transference of responsibility for his crime to "[t]he swift Fates" that "drag me at their *chariot wheel* / And hurry me to mischief" (6.100-1, my emphasis). Her gesture is a protest at her inscription into the misogynist discourses the very playtext promotes. It is a rebuke of the genre that revels in the compromise of women for the thrill of the hunt and the final display of the trophy. In fact, Anne gives the lute to the man who betrayed her to her husband in particularly salacious language: ". . . I will tell you master, / That which will make your heart leap from your breast, / Your hair to startle from your head, your ears to tingle" (8.38-40). A heart leaping, hair standing on end, ears tingling: physical signs of the frisson that is the reward of relating and watching female sexual transgression--the very ground of the genre.

Travelling from stage to stage, and hand to hand in Heywood's play, the lute takes up a life of its own just as it is sent to its destruction. Anne's first command to her coachmen at the start of scene 16 to "[b]id my coach stay," allows her to humble herself as she walks the two miles further to the manor (1-6). But as editors will note, the gesture is in part a practical device

⁶⁶ See Mukherji, who makes a fascinating connection between Anne's instruction to Nicholas and "[b]eing 'broken' alive on the wheel . . . , a common penalty for offenders in the Italian tales of crime and punishment that lie behind so many Jacobean adultery plays" (87-88). See also Rowland's discussion of the lute in performance 123-37.

on the part of the company to forestall having to produce a full-sized chariot for the stage. Likewise, breaking a (real) lute onstage is too expensive an effect. Since the carriage is conveniently stopped offstage, the lute must also be sent somewhere offstage, blind to an audience, to be broken. Sound effects can produce the break. Anne's lute will live to see another day, another afternoon's performance. Marsden considers Nicholas Rowe's *The Tragedy of Lady Jane Grey*, 1715, as "one of the very last plays to use the she-tragedy paradigm," and the problems he encountered writing it "represented the death of a genre" (520). Perhaps Anne, her boy actor, and their lute in *A Woman Killed* stage the first blow.

X. Props in Motion: Figuring "Blossum[s] on Brere"

Both the Digby *Mary Magdalene* and *A Woman Killed* present its protagonists as young and full of promise, both a "blossum on brere" (*Weaver* 399). The salvatory and the lute are emblematic of their potential to flourish. Both props evoke contemporary associations spectators (or readers) may bring with them to the play, discourses about the power of female erotic desire and attendant anxieties about its effects. I have argued that the Digby play's salvatory and its balm participate in the play's theatrical design, whereby repeated uses of props point to related and significant actions on the part of its characters. The salvatory in motion from bower to house to garden gives evidence for what cannot be seen. It constitutes the nature of Mary's desire as erotic and generative of her faith and will. The emblematic iteration of the salvatory in the play's verse suggests that her desire is the basis of the spiritual authority she accrues throughout her travels and her works. Independent of clerical authority, her salvatory demonstrates that her authority comes from within.

The lute in Heywood's play likewise functions theatrically in accordance with the play's other props, which in this play locate characters within the marital and domestic relations of the Frankford household. But Anne's lute also supplies evidence of the unmarried Anne Acton's life, her growing up, her superlative education. The lute's unexpected and late appearance in the play raises questions about why her accomplishments are never depicted in performance in the Frankford household. The flight of Anne's lute into a corner highlights the irony of that absence. Anne's lute, finally playing in the hands of the company's boy actor, gives voice to a character whose desires are silenced before they are hardly expressed. As Anne plays, she repudiates the homiletic text instructing her women auditors what the author prescribes her to speak. If Heywood has written a play that upholds and teaches the conservative and misogynist sexual politics of his time, then one of his own props subverts his very thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

Stage Tricks: Handling Props in *Arden of Faversham***I. Now Playing at the Theatre**

We know very little for certain about the earliest performances of *Arden of Faversham*. But the trial performance might have happened something like this: It is 30 December 1592 at the Theatre in London, nearing four o'clock in the afternoon . . .

*Forgive me Arden, I repent me nowe,
And would my death save thine, thou shouldst not dye.*

Benjamin Jeffes speaks these lines in the last minutes of *The Lamentable and True Tragedie of M. Arden of Feversham in Kent* as part of his role, Mistress Alice Arden. Alice gazes in repentance at the bleeding body of her husband, Thomas Arden, whom she has murdered. Benjamin gazes in apprehension at the inert body of his master, Nathaniel Orton, whose service he is about to leave. Master Orton, who plays Thomas Arden, is translated to a bloody prop.

At thirteen years old Benjamin came to the attention of a livery-company man, M. Orton, free of the Drapers and actor and sharer in Pembroke's Men. Benjamin's father swore that no son of his would set foot in a playhouse. Minding the injunctions of his parish priest, Wetherly believed that plays were "consecrated to idolatrie." "They are not of God," he would pronounce. But £35 is a handsome sum. At fourteen, Benjamin wrote in the Draper company's annals: *I Benjamin Jeffes the sonne of Wetherly Jeffes have put myself prentise to Nathaniel Orton for the terme of eight yeares begininge at Cristmas in Anno 1585 By me Benjamin Jeffes.*

Apprentice riots and outbreaks of the plague have closed London's theatres for much of 1592, but now Pembroke's Men, last seen on tour in Leicester, have returned home to London. Today at the Theatre their new play, *Arden of Faversham*, is tried before the audience. James

Burbage, owner of the Theatre, is anxious; he will watch the action in the pit and the galleries to see whether the new play will pass the test of the stage. If Burbage has reason to be anxious, so does Benjamin. The play's trial is his only rehearsal. The two other roles he has been playing on tour, Margaret and Kate, have been cut down to half their original size while he studied to play Alice. Benjamin will command the stage alone in the face of a raucous crowd three times, expressing Alice's murderous and adulterous desires. He is about to graduate to adult status and play the roles of men if he passes *his* trial. What if he fails? When he is not standing or sitting at night studying, he is on his knees praying. "*Let me meditate upon my Sauivour Christ,*" Alice says, "*Whose bloode must saue me for the bloode I shed.*"

What about his spectators, what do they see? Down in the pit before the stage, Barnabe Beade jeers at Alice: "S'Blood! th'art hell-bound, foul strumpet!" Tearing the Book of our Lord to pieces . . . Tilney should ship that boy straight to prison. Beade peers suspiciously at his wife, who looks up rapturously at Alice. She goes to see Jeffes every time he has a new role. Up in the gallery sits young Lucy Swanston, soon to be married. One wonders what she thinks about Alice and her desires. What she may be thinking about women's agency. Maybe she thinks about having to marry at all. How about Agatha Barksted, married, widowed, and twice converted? She is old enough to have seen the Mysteries. She may be in store for a miracle.

If Benjamin graduates, he will join the Lord Strange's Men as an adult. But for now, the play over and the men dining at the Anchor, he must join the other boys for the night's chores. They have to scrub the stage floor clean of the evidence of Alice's crime. If Jeffes wants to avoid Orton's frown of displeasure when he comes home, he better have done a good job. He will find that pig's blood makes for a stubborn stain. It is the most recalcitrant of stage props.

We don't know if Benjamin Jeffes existed.⁶⁷ But my fictional account of *Arden's* trial performance is nevertheless based on evidence gathered by the scholarship on the history of the Pembroke's Men playing company. However, I offer an alternate reading of some of the evidence. Scott McMillin looks at the roles for boys, analyzing how the company might have cast Shakespeare's *Henry VI* plays and *The Taming of the Shrew*. Queen Margaret's roles in the Quarto editions are roughly half as long compared to the size of her roles in the Folio 2 and 3 *Henry VI*. McMillin conjectures that the reason Margaret's large roles were cut was because the particular boy actor meant to play them, or, perhaps, for whom the roles were written, was not available for Pembroke's Men:

[I]f Shakespeare wrote the parts as we have them in the early 1590s, he was pushing beyond the norm--perhaps because the company for whom he originally intended the play [Strange's Men, according to Knutson, "Marlowe" 42] included a leading boy of unusual range who was not available for the performances of Pembroke's Men and whose roles had to be reduced for another child actor. ("Casting" 152).

I conjecture, on the other hand, that Pembroke's Men *did* have the unusually talented leading boy, but the company assigned him the part of Alice in their new play, *Arden of Feversham*, as his graduation trial. Therefore, they shortened his other roles for the time being while he learned his new part.

⁶⁷ The boy actor's lines cited above are to a facsimile of the Malone copy of the text registered as *Arden of Feversham* by Edward White in 1592. Subsequent citations from the play are to the following edition unless otherwise noted: *The Tragedy of Master Arden of Feversham*, ed. M. L. Wine. I derived Jeffes' contract with the Draper company directly from Wooding's book on the Jacobean actor John Lowin (5).

I have imagined a few moments of stage life for that talented boy as Benjamin Jeffes because I derive my argument for the play's use of its props from what I discover is extraordinary about the role of Alice Arden, and therefore, extraordinary for the boy actor who plays her. First, her character is a notoriously scandalous one for a young person to play. *Arden's* published text takes pains to announce and condemn the insatiable desire of its main female character even before the first scene begins. The play's title page reads:

THE LAMENTA= / BLE AND TRVE TRA- / GEDIE OF M. AR- / DEN OF
FEVERSHAM / IN KENT. / *Who was most wickedlye murdered, by / the meanes*
of his disloyall and wanton / wyfe, who for the loue she bare to one / Mosbie,
hyred two desperat ruf- / fins Blackwill and Shakbag, / to kill him. / Wherin is
shewed the great mal- / lice and discimulation of a wicked wo- / man, the
vnsatiable desire of filthie lust / and the shamefull end of all / murderers. (2)

The character's notoriety is all the more given she is based upon a real woman. More compelling, her role has the most to do with the many objects that appear in *Arden*. I argue that the play is notably conscious of Alice Arden's role as a difficult one for its boy actor and, furthermore, that the role supports the actor by calling for repeated use of props.⁶⁸ The metatheatrical relation between the boy and his character, and between the boy and the props produces meaning. Thus I begin this chapter with a fiction that points to the boy beneath the role.

My fiction sets up this chapter's concern with the material conditions within which the boy actors, their companies, and their props perform. It sets up ideas I explore about presence and absence in theatrical performance and about theatre's blurring of reality and fiction. It sets up

⁶⁸ The role is especially difficult because of its many lines and because it depends on cues from so many different characters. I take up the demands of acting generally in the early modern playhouse and the particular challenges that face the boy who plays Alice Arden toward the end of this chapter.

my concern with how early modern plays invite their spectators to perceive the objects-- characters, actors, and props--upon its stages. And it points to the antitheatrical discourses the props invoke. This chapter gives an account of all of *Arden's* props in order to demonstrate the play's sensitivity to the signifying capacity of objects: both in the world and onstage. I look in detail at a prayerbook shorn of its leaves and a dead and bleeding body the play takes pains to identify with Jesus Christ on trial for blasphemy. I also consider the props that the play imagines for its spectators but does not necessarily materialize, including a poisoned crucifix and a painting that kills at a glance--spectacles that insistently exploit anxieties that motivate the iconophobes and the iconoclasts.

The play's key prop, a prayerbook, invokes its non-theatrical life upon the stage to significant effect. Prayerbooks have both "real" histories as objects in a non-theatrical world and contemporary stage histories as theatrical properties. But *Arden's* prayerbook is also unique in that it is absent, then present, from one edition of the playtext to another. Its appearance onstage is mandated by the text, but its entry onto that stage is not. Like the boy actor, the props in this play, too, may not be lost entirely to their representational roles in performance. They may engage in interplay between *locus* and *platea* modes. Thus my concern is with the ways spectators might perceive the actor who holds props that have a wide-ranging capacity for signification.

As Russell A. Fraser declares, "the rude handling of sacred totems is what [Tudor] drama is all about" (3). I look at the rude handling of sacred totems in *Arden* to consider the affective prompts that the play may thus have in store for a spectator. *Arden* produces what I call a Corpus Christi effect in order to play a trick on its startled spectators. The Corpus Christi effect is a new, post-Reformation resurrection of a theatrical mode from an outlawed medieval theatre. *Arden*

offers to its sixteenth-century spectators its own version of the salvific ocular experience that the medieval Corpus Christi plays offered to its Catholic spectators, should a contemporary actor choose to perform, and his spectator happen to perceive, in that mode. The stage trick relies on a body and blood on the stage floor rendered into props by the actors who handle them. The effect is subversive: while Alice's blasphemy, rebellion, and felony appear to be contained and condemned by her death sentence, the play asserts the corpse of her husband as potentially salvific by means of the Corpus Christi effect. The play's objects support Alice's preposterous claim of salvation through Christ's mercy, in spite of the lengths to which the play's text strives to judge and condemn her.

The effect of the play's trick extends beyond a historical mode of affective contagion between actor and spectator.⁶⁹ As Alice works with objects in her hands to command sympathy rather than censure from her offstage spectators, the play works metatheatrically with its props to support a boy actor's performance in a large part that takes cues from many characters. The props enable Alice's actor to manage his expression of her wayward desires while showing off the skills of his trade. They help his improvisation in performance so as to render present a woman who makes good on her licentious, felonious, and blasphemous desires. The play thus celebrates the leading boy even at the same time as it asserts that the dangers of the stage, as the antitheatricalists warn, are real.

II. *Arden of Faversham's* Stage Properties: Commanding Attention

The plot's basis in reality complicates how the props in *Arden* speak about fact and fiction, truth and lies, absence and presence. On 15 February 1551, a woman named Alyce Arden murdered

⁶⁹ See also Floyd-Wilson, *Occult*, who looks at how both *Arden* and *A Warning for Fair Women* employ the early modern idea of "sympathetic contagion" (47) especially 50-64.

her husband, Thomas Arden of Faversham, merchant and landlord, in their own parlour.⁷⁰

Mistress Arden drew some of Master Arden's own servants and business colleagues into her plot. The killers carried the corpse out into the meadows at the back of the Ardens' garden.

Alyce Arden was tried and convicted, sentenced to die, and burnt at the stake in Canterbury.

The most noted chronicler of the circumstances is Raphael Holinshed, who in the 1570s related the crimes, the sentences, and a most curious aftermath of the affair: a perfect imprint of the shape of Arden's body was left behind on the plot of ground in the meadows where the corpse had once lain hidden. The grass did not regrow for two years where the corpse had lain, marking its absent presence. Some twenty years later, one or more unknown playwrights dramatized the murder and some of the events reported or imagined afterwards in what is understood to be the first known British domestic tragedy, *The Tragedy of Arden of Faversham*.⁷¹ The plot is

⁷⁰ Thomas Arden came from a family in Wye and served Sir Edward North during the reign of King Henry VIII. He married Alice Mirfyn, the half-sister of Sir Thomas North, the translator of Plutarch (Wine xxxv, xxxvi, 1 fn.). The Wardmote Book of Faversham contains the official account of Thomas Arden's murder, which refers to Thomas Arden's wife as Alyce Arden. (See Wine, Appendix 3, 160-63).

⁷¹ Leggatt looks at how *Arden's* domestic concerns introduce the first strands of realism in Elizabethan drama, where, as he argues, heroic action is pitted against practical reality, bringing tragedy down to earth. Orlin argues that *Arden* invented the genre of domestic drama to satisfy contemporary "desires . . . to see through walls . . . to identify disorder and to imagine that in this way it is mastered" (*Private* 8); see especially 91-98. Belsey locates the importance of the real crime that is a source for *Arden* in the scandal of Alice's resistance to the institution of marriage ("Alice"). See also Dolan, who considers Alice's domestic rebellion in the context of England's representations of domestic crime from 1550 to 1700. Challenging the social order of its time, the play, as Dolan shows, "registers both the violence and the vitality of scheming subordinates in their attempts to seize the master's pivotal subject-position" (57); see in particular 52-58 and 70-88. Martin, on the other hand, considers Thomas Arden's response to the threat of his loss of patriarchal agency. Sullivan, likewise, considers Master Arden's role in his own murder--his "own failures as husband, landlord, and 'little king'" ("Arden" 80).

Schutzman looks at how the very policing of small-town and domestic social orders may actually enable the desires of a "freedom-seeking wife" (290). Neill looks especially at Alice's will to self-govern, and Laperle looks at how Alice's abilities as rhetorician and improviser produce a subversive subjectivity. See also Kerr, who looks at how scenes of detection in *Arden* contribute to the potential for idealistic closure in a play that represents very complex social

labyrinthine, and the cast of characters packed with tricksters. Willful, desiring, and devious heroine Alice (who seduces her double-dealing lover Mosby by repudiating her marriage oath) and two comically anarchic thieves (the suspiciously named Black Will and Shakebag) are thwarted repeatedly by the apparent (but eventually exhausted) good luck of Master Arden.

Characters in *Arden of Faversham* function as stand-ins for the play's spectators who are looking uncertainly at what antitheatricalists and iconoclasts will argue are dangerous objects. Characters repeatedly express concern not just with the effects of inanimate objects but also with their very efficacy. How do they work? Can one make a crucifix effectively poisonous so that it will murder the one who looks at it, for instance? And if so, how does one make such a thing without being poisoned? Will the scent of rhubarb help? (1.609-32). As can be expected in a play whose actions revolve around several attempted murders by several would-be assassins, these characters wonder about an object's ability to kill or incriminate. As characters investigate how objects in their environment work, and how well they work, the props call attention to themselves and enter into the *platea*. The play thereby makes a metatheatrical argument about the power of props and the objects they represent.

Of course, not all of *Arden's* thirty-nine props contribute in a pointed way to this pattern. Some function unobtrusively like the very thing they are scripted to represent. A page or leaves of paper are brought onstage to represent three documents, for instance: Arden's deeds to the land of the Abbey of Faversham; Alice's letter to Greene; Michael's letter to Susan. Money exchanges hands nine times without calling attention to the very coins or notes. There are eight instances

problems. Ousby and Dubrow, on the other hand, consider how the play's focus on the language of so many schemers demonstrates its playwright's distrust of art itself. Stephen also emphasizes the play's complex moral relativity, which he argues is the play's strategy to promote audience participation and critical judgement.

where weapons--swords, pistols, bills, and glaives--are drawn or enter the stage conventionally and, so, unobtrusively.

Then there are eight props that might command more attention from their spectators, because they are associated with one of the two main characters, Alice or Thomas Arden. These are in some ways tokens of identity, and they contribute to the characterization of the person to whom they are said to belong, as Anne's lute does in *A Woman Killed*. Alice's key to the household, for instance, signifies Alice's right to enter all the rooms in her domain. Other tokens of identity include Alice's silver dice and her prayerbook, Arden's purse and girdle, and his dead body, blood pouring from his wounds. These latter props call more attention to themselves because, first, blood and bleeding bodies are sensational objects that rivet attention. But they also begin to shift toward the *platea* because they are the direct focus of the play's action. More unconventional domestic props include poisonous objects and their antidotes: poisoned broth, mithridate, and a poisoned crucifix. These also include a domestic object used as a weapon: a hand towel. And there are domestic objects that are used in the play to conceal evidence of murder: a pail of water, rushes, and cups of wine.

Other objects that compel attention can only be heard by the play's audience. These are objects that are spoken about in the play's dialogue, but which do not necessarily become manifest in the play's action. I have drafted a property list for *Arden* (see appendix A), and I included a column for objects mentioned by a character, even though they are not (certainly or necessarily) materialized. The objects highlighted nonetheless have a "real" presence in the fictional world of the play as far as its characters are concerned: the blue satin doublet "all to-torn" and a livery cloak stripped of "all the lace" worn by a thief whom Bradshaw saw "of late"

and was describing to Will Shakebag afterwards (2.36-59).⁷² I consider the effects of hearing about these objects with respect to a playgoer's apprehension of the props that do arrive onstage.

Scholars are increasingly addressing the matter of the unseen in the theatre. Anthony Dawson considers the force of imaginary objects for theatre's spectators when he asks,

[I]f theatrical spectacle has semiotic force (i.e. the power it accrues by transforming material objects into representational signs), how much more force might belong to the spectacle that is thoroughly imaginary, i.e. nothing but representation, and thus drives the operation of theatrical illusion to the limit? Theatrically, Macbeth's imagined dagger is more powerful than a "real" one would be. (*Culture* 148)

Andrew Sofer makes a brilliant analogy of the theatre's invisible objects to the universe's "dark matter." As he explains, "In physics dark matter refers to nonluminous mass that cannot be directly detected by observation. . . . [B]ecause it does not emit light, x-rays, or any other radiation, dark matter can only be inferred by its gravitational effects on the motion of ordinary matter" (*Dark* 3).⁷³ In Sofer's analogy "real" dark matter's gravitational effect is like the force of offstage or invisible objects in the theatre:

Alongside material bodies and objects, then, invisible phenomena continually structure and focus an audience's theatrical experience. These daggers of the mind remain incorporeal yet are crucial to the performed event. . . . Materially elusive though phenomenologically inescapable, dark matter is the "not there" yet "not

⁷² Thus, I do not include objects that serve as the vehicle for metaphor: the "cloudy robe" that is Shakebag's metaphor for the "black night," which shields him as he waits for Arden to appear, for instance (5.1-3).

⁷³ That is, "We infer that dark matter exists because without its gravitational pull observable galaxies would fly apart" (3).

not there" of theater. . . . Exerting irresistible force over our imaginations in the playhouse, it pulls the visible elements of theatrical representation into a pattern. Dark matter comprises *whatever is materially unrepresented onstage but unignorable*. It is not a finger pointing at the moon but the tidal force of gravity that pulls at us unseen. (Sofer, *Dark 4*, emphasis in original)

Characters in *Arden* talk repeatedly to each other about the frightful objects they have seen in the past or are about to devise in the play's long first scene especially. The energy of this dark matter amplifies the mortal effects of the visible properties onstage. Franklin presents Arden, who is in a "melancholy mood" (1.8), with deeds to "[a]ll the lands of the Abbey of Faversham" (5) and urges him to "droop no more" (1). The deeds in Arden's hands do not "cheer [him] up" (1), because there are documents in his mind's eye that make him wish he were dead (14). These are the love letters Mosby and his wife exchanged, which Arden remembers as "those foul objects that offend mine eyes" (15, 12). Michael, Arden's servant, is also unlucky in love. He intends to send a "taunting letter" (158) to his beloved Susan, Alice's serving maid and Mosby's sister, because she has received a dagger-in-heart emblem and verses from a painter, Clarke, who is also in love with her (1.150-52). Clarke's gift appears to take flesh-and-blood form in Michael's imagination to enable his vengeance: "she shall eat the heart he sent with salt / And fling the dagger at the painter's head" (159-60).

Mosby and Alice consider making a poisonous portrait of Alice, the very sight of which would be mortal, in order to kill Arden, but they wonder what antidote might protect an unintended spectator of the portrait (227-41). Mosby, Alice, and Clarke discuss the efficacy of a poisoned crucifix and its apparent antidotes (604-32). The crucifix makes an appearance in scene 10, when Alice asks where it is and Clarke obliges her: "Ay, here it is; the very touch is death"

(10.79-80). But given its mortal touch, Clarke must present it covered--it is indeed dark matter. Once Alice and the rest exit the scene, the device is never mentioned again. Its absent presence is of a piece with the ghostly print of Arden's corpse that Franklin describes in the play's epilogue.

I call attention to these instances of the foul objects characters confront or imagine in order to consider a phenomenological attitude the play takes pains to foreground. M. L. Wine suggests that the playwright "convey[s] to his audience the feeling of the larger powers of destiny operating on the anarchic lives of ordinary men and women" (lxxix). He observes how the "ethical confusion . . . that finally doom[s] most of the characters . . . [is] reflected in how literally they use language without being aware of its 'poetic' overtones of a greater, more meaningful world of order" (lxxx). Wine offers as an example "Alice's comparison of Arden's arms around her to 'the snakes of black Tisiphone' (14.144)" and explains her metaphor as "an allusion to the avenger of crime against kin that ironically eludes the speaker completely" (lxxx). I argue that characters handle objects as obliviously to the "poetic overtones" or conventionally shared semiotic meanings of those objects. That is, there is an ironic gap between what the character and the playwright assert about a prop or, perhaps, even between what a character means and the prop performs.

Several of the plots Alice and Mosby devise to murder Arden in scene 1 concern the painter, who can "temper poison with his oil" so that whoever should look at his work will "[s]uck venom to his breast and slay himself" (229-32). When Mosby proposes that Clarke should fashion a poisonous "counterfeit" (233) of Alice's image, the text gives no evidence that Alice is aware of the perfidy of a gift that invites the adoration of its recipient as its very means of dispatch. Alice does not recognize pressing semiotic associations the object would bear: how it could implicate her, given it is made in her image. Her dialogue registers simply the toxicity of

the device, its phenomenological reality. Thus she identifies it as "dangerous" for the reason that "thou or I or any other else, / Coming into the chamber where it hangs, may die" (1.235-37). She and Mosby quarrel over whether covering it with a cloth would suffice as an antidote, or whether to hang it in Arden's own "study for himself" (239). As stand-in spectators, these characters are not thinking about what they see, but rather, registering the physical nature and effects of the objects in their view.

No characters consider while they devise the second plot--to feed poisoned broth to Arden--that murder by way of food would direct suspicion toward Alice, mistress of the household. Fortunately for Arden, the plot fails because Arden perceives the poison at first spoonful, and Franklin is fortuitously standing at hand with a box of mithridate to mitigate its toxic effects. Undeterred, Alice and Mosby turn once more to Clarke and commission from him a poisoned crucifix "[t]hat whoso look upon it should wax blind / And with the scent be stifled" (612-13). No character speaks to the blasphemy of fashioning such a thing. No character speaks to the perverse irony of a crucifix used as a murder weapon. The cross is conventionally recognized as a sacred representation of the son of the Christian God, a son himself put to death. A crucifix is both an emblem of God's promise to the devout of life after death, and an efficacious procurer of that promise: the very sight of Christ alone is salvific, not lethal--as many a contemporary spectator would have understood.

A spectator may register that dramatic irony while she watches Alice worry about how Clarke should make such a thing and not poison himself. "Well questioned, Alice" (625), Mosley adds, heightening the absurdity of the pseudo-scientific inquiry. Clarke's supposed antidotes for the crucifix's poison seem worrisomely insufficient:

I fasten on my spectacles so close

As nothing can any way offend my sight;
 Then, as I put a leaf within my nose,
 So put I rhubarb to avoid the smell,
 And softly as another work I paint. (1.627-32).

A company's resident clown would make good on the comedy the lines afford. His physical antics would call attention to the absent objects he imagines in his hands and about his body: what sort of leaf and how large a stalk of rhubarb might be maneuvered into Clarke's nose, and how would they stay there? The effect of hearing about these objects is less to signify the characters' motives and more to draw attention to the supposed efficacy or even nature of those objects: a pair of spectacles, a leaf, a piece of rhubarb, and a crucifix. The characters' disregard of the object's semiotic valences highlights the objects' own thing-ness for a spectator, as well as their affective, rather than semiotic, implications. That is, this play privileges a phenomenological attitude to the objects upon its stage by featuring characters who focus on their effects and how they feel them. Thus the play sets its foundation for its slippery stance toward contemporary iconoclasm and antitheatricity. As I will show, the play's attitude to objects makes a Protestant reformer's case for the danger of spectacle, at the same time as it enables a Catholic Corpus Christi effect that saves the play's worst blasphemer.

III. The Problems of Spectatorship: Iconoclasm, Antitheatre, and the Ontology of Props

One question the play thus asks is why *should* sacred totems be rudely handled? The *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* provides one answer with its definition of *iconoclasm*: "The odd pair of beliefs shared by enthusiasts including Cromwell and the Taliban, that while 'false idols' have no supernatural powers they are nevertheless so dangerous that they must be destroyed rather than

ignored" (*Oxford* 177). False idols simply cannot be left alone by their spectators, because they compel a subject's gaze. Such is the anxiety that *Arden of Faversham* exploits so masterfully: certain objects have a suspect power that will compel a spectator's mortal gaze. But what and how spectators see is another question. I turn to several scholars who think about the different ways spectators can see what plays in front of them.

Huston Diehl compares Protestant and Catholic ways of seeing by comparing the responses of spectators to a medieval painting of the Madonna, the *Schöne Maria* of Regensburg (ca. 1519-1521), and of parishioners in an illustration of a church being stripped of its images in John Foxe's 1570 edition of *Acts and Monuments*. Pilgrims respond to the painting of the Madonna with fervor: they raise arms in supplication, fall prostrate in a trance, or stagger in religious rapture (9). Diehl argues their responses are indicative of "a superstitious seeing close to magic, entailing a belief in the efficacy and power of the viewing itself" (*Staging* 11). Foxe's illustration, on the other hand, features an iconoclastic scene of sacred images burning in a bonfire while others "are being hauled out of a church and loaded onto a boat identified as 'the ship of the Romish Church'" (11). In the interior of the church, a preacher speaks to Protestant parishioners in a room that has been stripped of its altar, altarpiece, rood screens, and statues (11). As Diehl explains, the remaining font and communion table "remin[d] worshipers of spiritual rebirth and Christian redemption. . . . Its images elicit spiritual reflection by calling to mind what is absent, promised, or invisible and pointing to a world beyond the physical" (13). The objects in the Protestant sanctuary prompt its spectators to think ("calling to mind") rather than feel (awe).

Diehl compares these two ways of seeing in order to distinguish the new, Protestant theatre that contemporary playwrights helped fashion. She turns to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, who

"articulates the qualities of an ideal Protestant theater" (Diehl, *Staging* 83). Even while Hamlet mistrusts "the empty theatricality of the court and the Machiavellian role-playing of the courtiers, . . . he embraces the actors and devises his own drama, one he hopes will have the power to stir the conscience and move the soul." Hamlet "praises . . . actors who refrain from exploiting their creative powers, and audiences who distance themselves from spectacle and focus on the meaning of the play" (82-83). A Protestant theatre privileges spectators who think about what they watch and actors who enable that kind of spectatorship. Presumably, actors who "exploit[t] their creative powers" and transmit their passion to their spectators are dangerous.

By this account, then, *Arden* is a worthy candidate for a play that aspires to fulfill England's new desire for Protestant theatre. Its elaborate attention to the details of transforming a crucifix into a weapon not only points to the characters' insouciant treachery but also highlights for spectators their very (dangerous) ignorance of their blasphemy. For a reformist playwright, paintings that poison their adoring spectators and crucifixes that poison rather than save their beholders are apt metaphors for a reformist attitude toward Catholic imagery. Moreover, the play's emphasis on *the body that looks* at a painted image rather than the image itself as the real source of danger foregrounds both the significance and the danger of the act of perceiving, of "a superstitious seeing" (Diehl 11) or, idolatry. It is not so much the poison but the observer that becomes mortal by the very act of looking: he will then "[s]uck venom to his breast and slay himself" (*Arden* 1.232). The play puts the spectator, the body that looks, in its antitheatrical and iconoclastic sights. In this reading, *Arden* is itself a kind of mithridate, an antidote to Catholic imagery and its poisonous way of seeing divinity.

But whether spectators of Protestant theatre did distance themselves from spectacle as they ought to is another matter. Marguerite A. Tassi describes how "Elizabethans were as much

in love with images, as they were fearful of the dangerous powers attributed to them" (Tassi 29). In her chapter devoted to *Arden of Faversham*, Tassi argues that dramatists exploited iconoclastic phobias directed specifically toward portraiture and painters to thereby distinguish and so defend their own art against antitheatrical argument. Like Diehl, she locates the Elizabethan desiring gaze in the theatre in the context of medieval religious art, specifically drama. Tassi emphasizes, however, that spectacle was nonetheless the draw:

The newly built theaters featured excellent actors who fed people's eyes with fancies and spectacles. What was once, just a few decades earlier, a sacred theater that fostered a devotional (or idolatrous, according to the reformers) gaze in Christian worshippers had given way, by order of law, to a secular and commercial form of play that satisfied the curious, hungry gaze of "spectators" who gathered in a new kind of social arena. (35)

Anxiety over over rapturous seeing, over a hungry gaze, points at problems of desire in a newly reformed church and in the drama written for these newly built theatres. In the Catholic Digby *Mary Magdalene*, desire is not suspect but celebrated as an inextricable part of the Magdalene's spiritual authority. But in *A Women Killed with Kindness*, Anne inflames transgressive masculine desire even as her own passions are mystified and represented as dangerous for all. *Arden* exploits the Protestant demonizing of desire most explicitly, announcing upfront Alice's passions as "unsatiabie desire of filthie lust" (2) and coordinating illicit sexual desire with the desire for spectacle. Women *are* like objects in this regard: women, especially passionate women, like false idols, are accorded no spiritual power, but are deemed so dangerous that they must be destroyed rather than ignored.

Tassi picks up Michael O'Connell's thesis in *The Idolatrous Eye*, which investigates precisely the phenomenon that both iconoclasts and antitheatricalists fear a spectator's "idolatrous eye" will perceive: presence. As Tassi explains, "The opposition to theater, like the hostility to graven images, reflects fear and anxiety about a state of mind that grants *presence*, i.e., the presence of a god, or another essence not made by God, to an image." A player put himself in the sights of the iconoclasts and antitheatricalists because he was considered a "self-created image" (36, emphasis in original). The actor's body was essentially a lie because it pretended to be something it was not, and anyone who willfully impersonated another, or who watched another do so, was "engag[ing] in a dangerously sacrilegious business" (36).⁷⁴

Of course, anxiety about a state of mind that grants presence is inextricably implicated in doctrinal differences over the Eucharist, the crisis that gave rise to the great body of dramatic theatre called the Corpus Christi or Mystery plays. Theologians arguing over the Eucharist have concerns similar to those that iconoclasts and antitheatricalists do: what do congregants (spectators) see when they look at (and eat) the host (an art or stage object)? Catholic doctrine asserts that the consecrated host is the body of Christ, that the communion wine is the blood of Christ, and that Christ is present in both, as opposed to non-Catholic beliefs that Christ is variously represented by these objects. Sofer addresses the different ways spectators experience the reality of a play's stage properties by making an analogy of those potential experiences to the various doctrinal approaches to the Eucharist. I turn to Sofer's method of theorizing prop reception because it is a particularly useful lens with which to consider the stage props in *Arden*, a play that engages so provocatively in Protestant iconoclasm.

⁷⁴ See also Dawson *Culture*, pp. 131-60.

Sofer takes up the contested ontological status of the elevated host in Mass to define a set of polar and overlapping phenomenological and semiotic attitudes toward stage properties: Catholic, Lutheran, Zwinglian, and Anglican attitudes (*Stage* 51, 55). Sofer first stipulates, of course, that for an object on stage "to register *as* a 'prop,'" it "must be perceived by a spectator as a sign" (50). Sofer builds on Dawson's correlation between Anglican doctrine and the contract made between actor and spectator in performance⁷⁵ to theorize "the ambiguity of the object's reception" (50):

Like a character, a theatrical sign is not a semiotic given but a temporal contract between actors and audience, in which identity is superimposed on a material object. Such a contract is tenuously constituted in time and thus subject to moment-by-moment renegotiation for the duration of performance. (56-57)

Sofer adopts Peter Brook's notion of how "an 'empty object' can be remarkably effective onstage in the hands of a skilled actor" (52). Brook explains

that an actor possesses an extraordinary potential for creating a link between his own imagination and the imagination of the audience, with the result that a banal object can be transformed into a magical one. . . . This alchemy is possible if the object is so neutral and ordinary that it can reflect the image that the actor gives to it. It could be called an "empty object." (Brook 46)⁷⁶

⁷⁵ See Dawson, "Performance" esp. 38-41.

⁷⁶ Sofer cites a slightly differently section of Brook than I do here. I am not sure about Brook's caveat--that the object must be neutral, an "empty object," for the alchemy to occur. I am thinking, for instance, of the leather straps cast into the shape of a horse in *War Horse*. That construction is no neutral object. Nevertheless, as I watched two actors representing the horse by maneuvering the puppet and another actor responding to the apparatus and its actor-prompted motions as "horse," that leather apparatus was at once wondrously "real" and ingeniously artificial to me. During that performance, I perceived the horse as if a "Lutheran" spectator, which is also Brook's position, as Sofer points out in the excerpt I cite here.

Sofer posits Brook's water bottle as carried by an actor to represent a baby on a stage, and considers what a spectator's "religious" attitude might be to the water bottle:

[T]he "Catholic" position, which denies representation, is untenable with regard to stage properties. . . . [A] "Lutheran" spectator fuses semiotic and phenomenological perspectives and perceives both a bottle *and* a real baby (Brook's position); a "Zwinglian" spectator perceives a bottle that merely represents a baby, without getting swept up into the illusion; and an "Anglican" spectator accepts a virtual baby whose presence is (in Dawson's phrase) "unreal but also efficacious." (*Stage 57*)

Catholic and Zwinglian attitudes are at polar ends of ways that a spectator may perceive a prop's ontological status onstage. The Anglican attitude recognizes the materiality of the bread and the wine, but locates the occurrence of the sacrament, the efficacy of the bread and the wine, within the recipient: "Unlike for the Reformed Protestants . . . the sacrament is not simply representation. At the same time, 'presence' is no longer absolute and unquestioned, behind the appearances of bread and wine, but rather is itself troubled or mediated" (Dawson, cited in Sofer 56). The Lutheran attitude--consubstantiation rather than transubstantiation--translates in theatrical terms imaginatively along the lines of Bert O. State's phenomenological approach, as Sofer acknowledges, where the bottle "'discloses' the baby to the audience as a unique, affective *experience*" (53, emphasis in original). As Sofer points out, Brook does not "insist on literal consubstantiation, that the baby really coexists with the bottle at an ontological level. Even in Brook's alchemical theater, we are not participating in a Mass." The (theatrical) Lutheran attitude does not insist, like "[a] strictly Lutheran approach, . . . on the baby's real presence" (53). But the baby feels absolutely real, even though the water bottle does not disappear.

On the basis of these analogues between doctrinal and theatrical approaches to ontology, Sofer makes an analogy between the efficacy of props in the theatre and "what theologians term receptionism, 'the doctrine that the efficacy of the consecrated elements depends upon the spiritual state of the communicant' rather than upon the transformed material substance of the object" (*Stage* 58). That is, the spectator "determines what sort of imaginative contract is entered into" (57). Thus Sofer, too, privileges the re/perceiving end of the dynamic between a wafer and a congregant, between a prop and a spectator. Whether poisonous or sacramental, any material/spiritual transformation occurs at the site of the congregant/playgoer.

Nevertheless, the efficacy of the prop and the receptivity of the playgoer are also affected by what an actor (the priest, if we extend Sofer and Dawson's analogies) may do to endow the prop with meaning, or what Dawson calls "meaningfulness." Dawson offers the profound observation that theatrical objects (actors, characters, and props alike) do not necessarily "*have* meaning, but they are meaningful" in action ("Performance" 32, emphasis in original). In the next section, I ask what choices, given the obligations of the lines of his role, does the actor, as he performs Alice while she carries her prayerbook, have as he carries his "water bottle"? How might he make sense of lines--as he memorizes them, and as he discovers the whole of the play in performance--that oblige him to declare that Alice will burn the book one moment and tear out its leaves in the next? I do so in order to demonstrate how the playtext orchestrates a consubstantive experience for its spectators in this scene that sets the stage for a miracle at the play's end. Such an experience is precisely one that Protestant theatre eschews: "They say miracles are past, and we have our philosophical persons, to make modern and familiar, things supernatural and causeless," remarks Lafew to Bertram and Parolles upon news of the King's recovery in *All's Well That Ends Well* (2.3.1-3). As Claire McEachern notes, "Protestants

believed that miracles ceased with Christ's ascent into heaven; Roman Catholics believed modern miracles possible" (*All's Well* n. 2.3.1).

IV. The Signifying Capacity of Alice's Prayerbook

Of course a distinction between a baby and a water bottle is more apparent than is one between a prayerbook that is a prop and a prayerbook anywhere else. Neither is a prayerbook an "empty object" like a water bottle may be on- or offstage. Rather, it will invoke conditions of its use in the real world to the stage. To determine the signifying capacity of the prop that represents a prayerbook in scene 8, one thing that matters is what kind of prayerbook it is. It might be the Book of Common Prayer. From its first edition in March 1549 through to January 1645, when its use was decreed illegal, the Book of Common Prayer was the most authoritative of all England's devotional works. It defined for its users the new Church of England's church service, sacraments, and rites, and it established daily and yearly cycles for prayers and readings (Swift 30-31). Its origins lie in the "new service books and liturgies prepared for Henry VIII during the Reformation: a thicket of texts, overlapping and often contradictory" (33). Daniel Swift estimates the book "went through approximately 525 editions between 1549 and 1729 in English alone," and "it was revised and reissued in 1552, 1559, and 1604, in folio, quarto, octavo, and even smaller versions" (31). If Alice's prayerbook is the Book of Common Prayer, then its capacity to signify authority is undermined by the book's instability. What is designed to be a didactic text is ironically made vulnerable to seditious use by its historical contradictions.

Elizabeth Williamson allows that "the term 'prayer book' could . . . refer to the *Book of Common Prayer*," but she insists that "none of the surviving [early modern] play texts goes so far as to represent the Protestant liturgical manual on stage" (372 n. 3). Instead, Williamson

suggests that "[t]he prayer book properties that appeared in public plays could . . . be closely identified with private [prayer] manuals. . . . [T]hese types of books, many of which were written by women, were immensely popular and provided a convenient framework for daily devotion" (Williamson 373). Tara L. Lyons looks at other kinds of religious prescriptive literature that the prop could represent and points out the contradictions that undermine the works' exhortations to women, especially, to govern their desires. The Protestant *A Book of Christian Prayers*, for instance,⁷⁷ "provocatively mocks female chastity and jests at the erotic penetration of English women as their fleshly bodies face death" with its "border illustrations of the Dance of Death" (212). Whether the Book of Common Prayer or another kind of prescriptive book, the authority that the prop in Alice's hands is designed to represent appears susceptible to subversion.

We don't know what the companies of Pembroke's or Lord Strange's Men used to represent Alice's prayerbook. But I suggest that the very appearance of the book that does arrive onstage in scene 8 has the potential to affect its spectators before Alice so much as points it out for notice to Mosby. It could arouse shock or alarm if a spectator believes that it is, in fact, the Protestant liturgical manual. Or, if the book is noticeably costumed as a woman's devotional reader, then the prop could invoke personal domestic associations. It may prompt the memory of a book of a playgoer's own to which she has an emotional attachment, given her (devotional) experience with it.

The prayerbook as prop also has a theatrical history that may contribute to the ways Alice's book could signify. I turn for comparative purposes to two plays dated close to or at the same time as *Arden*: Shakespeare's *3 Henry VI* (1590) and *Richard III* (1591). Both plays feature a prayerbook as a prop. In the former play, a fugitive King Henry enters a thicket "*disguised*,

⁷⁷ Published from 1569 to 1608 by John and son Richard Day.

carrying a prayerbook" (3.1.12 sd.). No further mention is made of the object in the stage directions; no speech text refers to the book nor embeds any further gesture to be made with it. The first question the stage direction raises is whether the prayerbook is part of Henry's disguise? Then it would function, as Lena Cowen Orlin describes, to "substantiate deceit" ("Performance" 190). Randall Martin notes that Henry's prayerbook "suggests [his] anti-worldly reasoning and 'wise folly,' each of which the chronicles proffer as possible motives for his running away" (3.1.12 n.). In this case, Henry's prayerbook is not part of his disguise. Rather, here is an example of a prop that functions to externalize and give potential evidence for what is internal, therefore unseen and, in this case, apparently questionable--Henry's motive(s) for flight. Furthermore, the prop also distinguishes Henry from the two gamekeepers, who enter the start of the scene "*with crossbows in their hands*" (3.1.0 sd.). Props can thus also "fix identity" (Orlin 190), and the gamekeepers' crossbows identify the two men as game hunters.

Importantly, the gamekeepers themselves make a metaphoric connection between their own occupation and/or weapons and Henry as "game": "Ay, here's a deer whose skin's a keeper's fee: / This is the quondam King--let's seize upon him" (22-23). In fact, the second gamekeeper later refers to what he perceives as a missing prop that authenticates identity when he asks of Henry, "But if thou be a king, where is thy crown?" (61). Henry replies, "My crown is in my heart, not on my head" (62). These are characters that present an awareness of the semiotic significance of the objects they bear or attend to, and even of those objects that are absent or missing.

Characters in *Richard III* present a similar awareness in the notably metatheatrical scenes where Richard plots how he may stage-manage events so as to prompt a cowed citizen audience to support his claim to kingship. In 3.5, Richard directs Buckingham to bring the citizens to

Baynard's Castle, where he shall be "well accompanied / With reverend fathers and well-learnèd bishops" (3.5.99-100). In 3.7, with the Mayor standing by, Buckingham advises Richard, ". . . look you get a prayer book in your hand / And stand between two churchmen" (47-48). According to plan, when Richard enters "*aloft, between two Bishops*" (94 sd.), the Mayor notices what Buckingham and Richard intend: "See where his grace stands, 'tween two clergymen" (95), the observant Mayor remarks to Buckingham, who in turn instructs the Mayor how the stage blocking signifies: the clergymen relate to Richard as "[t]wo props of virtue for a Christian prince, / To stay him from the fall of vanity" (96-97).

Buckingham's audacious pun on *props* divides both onstage characters and *Richard III*'s spectators.⁷⁸ There are those onstage who (only) register Buckingham's intended meaning for the Mayor;⁷⁹ that is, that the clergymen function to prop or shore up a Christian in the face of temptation. And there are the other character-actors on the stage who are participating in the "Richard for King!" play. Playgoers, too, may or may not register that the clergymen "indeed are 'props' in this blatantly 'staged' scene" (39), as Michael Mooney notes.⁸⁰ The prayerbook and the two clergymen are literally "speaking props" that identify Richard as a Christian and signify his piety. Both the Mayor's and Buckingham's words, however, emphasize their sight of the props. "See where his grace stands," says the Mayor (3.7.95); "And see, a book of prayer in his hand," says Buckingham (98), highlighting the props as visual evidence of what can otherwise not be seen--Richard's internal condition. For my purposes, what is key in both plays is twofold. First, props function here as an external and readable (apparently credible) indication of a character's interior thinking or state: Henry's motive, Richard's piety. Second, characters are aware of, and

⁷⁸ See "Introduction," pp. 5-7, for a discussion on the etymology of *prop*.

⁷⁹ Even the actor playing the Mayor may choose to register the theatrical sense of the word.

⁸⁰ See also Williamson 382-86.

even use, the semiotic significance of objects strategically: the gamekeeper points out an absent crown to challenge Henry's claim to kingship; Richard holds and reads from a prayerbook to prompt the citizens' allegiance.

Whether Alice is making pre-meditated strategic use of her prayerbook, and if so for what purpose, is a more complicated affair than interpreting Henry's use of his prayerbook. For one, no character advises Alice to pick hers up in any scene previous to scene 8, nor does stage direction indicate how the book enters that scene. Part of the interpretive problem lies with the playtexts themselves. Stage direction in the quarto that appeared in the same year that the title of the play was entered in the Register of the Stationer's Company (1592) reads "Here enters A[l]es" (1310). The quarto does not indicate that Alice enters with a prayerbook. Karl Warnke and Ludwig Proescholdt's 1883 edition, reprinted in 1973, and C.F. Tucker Brooke's 1918 edition reproduce the 1592 quarto's "*Here enters Ales*" (3.5.43 sd., 3.5.43 sd.). However, editors of the 1973 Revels Plays edition (Wine), the 1982 New Mermaids edition (White), and the 1999 Revels Student Editions (McLuskie and Bevington) reproduce editor K. Sturgess' addition (1969): [*holding a prayerbook*]" (Wine, coll. 8.43 sd). After all, as McLuskie and Bevington point out, she "needs the prayer book for her vow in line 116" (8.43 n.), where she declares to Mosby that she will "burn this prayerbook." Entering a scene with a prayerbook, as with Henry's entrance, immediately suggests to her spectators, both on- and offstage, that Alice has been using the book for some reason prior to her entry.

Certainly Alice's actions in scene 1 give cause for a penitent turn. Even before she begins to plot Arden's murder with others, she fantasizes a kind of magical, mythic death for Arden: "O, that some airy spirit / Would in the shape and likeness of a horse / Gallop with Arden 'cross the ocean / And throw him from his back into the waves!" (94-97). Alice thus creates her own

mythology and, next, her own religion, wherein "Love is a god" (1.101). She devises the tenets from which she reasons that since "[s]weet Mosby is the man that hath my heart" (98), that "therefore Mosby's title is the best" (102). Her tenets include that "marriage is but words" (101), and, therefore, her husband, Arden, "usurps" her "heart" (99, 98). But by scene 8, Mosby is no longer a faithful congregant in Alice's church: "Disturbèd thoughts drives me from company" (1), Mosby declares, as he chides himself for being a man "[w]hose troubled mind is stuffed with discontent" (10). Vice-like, Mosby lusts to "sit in Arden's seat" (31) and determines that he will use and then dispose of his accomplices, including even "Mistress Arden": "And I will cleanly rid my hands of her" (37, 43). Like Richard III, Mosby delivers his intentions and motives in direct address. But Alice's intentions when she enters scene 8 are not made evident.

If she enters the scene holding a prayerbook, as the play's editors advise (8.43 sd.), a spectator is left to interpret Alice's intentions according to what she thinks Alice is doing with that prayerbook as she approaches and speaks with Mosby. Mosby's line indicates that she appears upset: "What, sad and passionate?" (45). Mosby encourages Alice to tell him her troubles by arguing, "Fire divided burns with lesser force" (47). Alice's first lines suggest she (ineffectually) struggles to end her affair with Mosby: "But I will dam that fire in my breast / Till by the force thereof my part consume. / [Sighing.] Ah, Mosby!" (48-50). Mosby reminds her that she has feigned distress before in order to get her way: "'tis thy policy / To forge distressful looks to wound a breast / Where lies a heart that dies when thou art sad. / It is not love that loves to anger love" (55-58). Alice's reply plays on the poetic and non-poetic use of the verb *murder*:

ALICE. It is not love that loves to murder love.

MOSBY. How mean you that?

ALICE. Thou knowest how dearly Arden lovèd me. (59-61)

Alice appears to be not only calling off their affair but also reminding Mosby that their plan to murder Arden must then also be abandoned:

I pray thee, Mosby, let our springtime wither:
 Our harvest else will yield but loathsome weeds.
 Forget, I pray thee, what hath passed betwixt us,
 For now I blush and tremble at the thoughts. (8.66-69)

Her urgent repetition of "I pray thee" and her blushing and trembling at "the thoughts" of what they have done may indicate that reading her prayerbook has prompted her to acknowledge her actions as shameful. Thus she feels remorse.

In this scenario, reading her prayerbook and rejecting Mosby are both penitential. Her use of the prayerbook is transparent, without subterfuge, and in accord with the purposes for which it was written. The actor handles the prop as an external sign that points to her inner state (contrition) and her motive (penance). Another reading finds her genuinely contrite, but yet deliberately manipulating the signifying quality of her prayerbook. Anticipating her lover's objections, she deliberately uses the book as a prop. She shows it as evidence of her change of mind--she will not kill Arden, she will honour her marital vows, she has undergone a religious conversion--as a means of persuading Mosby to abide by her change of plan. In this case the prayerbook still points to her contrition, but Alice also demonstrates, like Buckingham and Richard, that she is aware that the book has the ability to convey meaning that she can exploit.

Another possibility may be that Alice is entirely deceitful: she is not contrite at all and uses the book's capacity to demonstrate contrition on the part of its owner to trick her audience so that she may pursue some other (nefarious) desire. Both Williamson and Lyons read Alice's intents this latter way as part of their approach to how the prayerbook signifies in scene 8. Lyons

argues Alice uses her prayerbook to conduct a love test: "Alice pretends to end their affair. She claims to have repented her sinful lusts. . . . During her performance, Alice carries a prayer book to costume her role as the virtuous lady, and Mosby is clearly deceived" (224). Lyons' argument rests on an Alice that makes intentional use of a prayerbook's meaningfulness.

Williamson argues, likewise, that Alice deliberately exploits the prayerbook's ability to convey meaning to an audience. She notes how often Alice and Mosby quarrel and suggests that Alice "begs for [Mosby's] forgiveness using her prayer book as proof of what she is willing to do to regain his favor" (391). Alice "uses her prayer book to impress her lover with her lack of reverence for this emblem of domestic loyalty" (388).⁸¹ Williamson also addresses the problem that Alice's designs on her prayerbook are themselves contradictory. At line 116, she will burn it; in line 118, she will strip and replace its pages:

I will do penance for offending thee
 And burn this prayerbook, where I here use
 The holy word that had converted me.
 See, Mosby, I will tear away the leaves,
 And all the leaves, and in this golden cover
 Shall thy sweet phrases and thy letters dwell;
 And thereon will I chiefly meditate
 And hold no other sect but such devotion. (8.115-22)

⁸¹ See also Holbrook, who argues that the scene of Alice and her prayerbook "is an audacious reversal of the old idea of the corrupting effect of poetry (including, of course, theatre)" (135). Holbrook's point is that even if Mosby and Alice are shown to be repentant at the end of the play, *Arden* is nevertheless concerned with showing "the attempt of two people to live authentically outside social constraints" in a world "consumed by social rank" (134).

Alice veers in just two lines from intending to burn her book to refiguring it. Williamson interprets Alice's change of mind in the context of her ironical use of the word *penance* in line 115: Alice's acts "are closer to Protestant iconoclasm than they are to traditional gestures of repentance. . . . Like any good iconoclast, however, she knows that the defaced object is a more powerful reminder than the one that has been destroyed altogether. . . ." (391-92).

I do not cite Williamson and Lyons at such length to argue with their conclusions. The play's depiction of Alice's disfiguration of her prayerbook absolutely undermines the authority of the Renaissance liturgical or devotional text(s) to moderate (female) social behavior. Nor do I argue with their method, whereby they read a prop's performance onstage in the context of the represented object's real-world value and use. But I draw attention to their shared vision of an Alice who enters the scene, prayerbook in hand, with the intention of using the book strategically. Their arguments depend on an Alice who is aware of how her prayerbook can signify and therefore how she may manipulate her audience (Mosby) with it. It is no surprise that Alice might act deceitfully, as she does throughout the play, but neither scholar takes into account all the characters' typical responses to other props or to the play's invisible objects. I have argued that their responses privilege the objects' materiality and their potential for physical effects. Alice, especially, is noticeably oblivious or resistant to the theological or blasphemous implications of her actions with the painting and the crucifix.

Williamson's and Lyons' readings imply that Alice is incontrovertibly a damnable figure. On account of her premeditated deceit, she is readily condemned without qualification, a response that I do not think is as subtle as the play potentially makes available. Say that Alice is suddenly sensitive to her book's range of signification--that it is an "emblem of domestic loyalty" (Williamson 388), that its purposes are "to help her curb her fleshly appetite and live as a chaste

wife" (Lyons 224). Say she is aware of how her intent to disfigure the book will speak to her audience, and say, too, she makes deliberate use of that knowledge. Such an Alice is cool and calculating. Spectators would more likely condemn her, even as they may admire her brazen performance.

Prompting a spectator's emotional detachment and an unambiguous censure of her actions would certainly be in line with the domestic drama genre's didactic aims, "to identify disorder and to imagine that in this way it is mastered" (Orlin, *Private* 8). A spectator in this scenario is, in fact, Hamlet's ideal Protestant spectator, because one is not getting swept up in an actor's passions, but instead, focusing soberly on the meaning and implications of her actions: one identifies and denounces her deceit and her sacrilege. Once again, this play is like mithridate--a defense against Alice's poison. But I propose that in keeping with the attitude she expresses earlier in the play, Alice is as careless of the conventional semiotic significations of a prayerbook as she is of those of a crucifix and a poisonous portrait. Perversely, the text devoted to the prayerbook in motion provides an opportunity for spectators to feel with and for Alice.

Spectators know from Arden in scene 1 that "[l]ove letters passed 'twixt Mosby and my wife" (15). Alice promises Mosby that his "sweet phrases" and "letters" will "dwell" within "this golden cover" after she tears away the book's pages (8.118-20). Given she refers to and has plans for the letters in scene 8, perhaps the actor enters the scene carrying those very letters. (Or perhaps they are in his costume's pocket.⁸²) What if Alice means to burn the letters as she enters the scene? She may not even be carrying the prayerbook at this point but grabs it off a shelf in

⁸² The actor playing Alice may be directed to carry in these letters (and/or the prayerbook) by the "plat" or plot box hanging up in the tiring house, which not only lists entrances but "the props that are to be carried or worn by the person of the entering actor" (Stern, *Documents* 211). Stern notes that "not all entrances and certainly not all personals [props carried by actors] are determined in books," by which she means the playbooks held by the prompters, "perhaps because they will be sorted out on plots instead" (228).

the study wherein Mosby and Alice meant to hang the poisoned portrait (1.239).⁸³ In this scenario, it is not spiritual remorse that impels Alice to declare to Mosby that she "will dam that fire in my breast" (8.48), but rather her rage at Mosby on account of her public humiliation as adulteress. After all, she declares to Mosby that she has reverted "to my former happy life again, / From title of an odious strumpet's name / To honest Arden's wife, not Arden's honest wife" (71-73).⁸⁴ And she accuses Mosby of making her "sland'rous to all my kin" (75) so that "[e]ven in my forehead is thy name engraven." But then she taunts Mosby on account of that very name--"[a] mean artificer, that low-born name" (75-77). Her insults provoke Mosby to curse her (80) before he takes his leave, offended: "I am too good to be thy favourite" (105).

Now Alice is in crisis, and in moments of crisis, Alice typically turns to objects to help her get what she wants. The moment it occurs to her, "Mosby loves me not" (108), the thought striking her precisely as Mosby may literally be leaving the scene, Alice improvises: "I will do penance for offending thee" (115). She thinks here of his letters that she was about to burn and, mortified, thinks to perform penance for Mosby's sake, not God's, by burning her household prayerbook instead. Given now her conversion back to her own religion, wherein "Love is a god" (1.101), a more appropriate form of penance suddenly occurs to her. She will transfigure her prayerbook to grant the very letters she was about to burn a place of honour within it. She "will tear away the leaves, / And all the leaves, and in this golden cover / Shall thy sweet phrases and thy letters dwell" (118-20). Perhaps that golden cover is what drew her attention to the book in the first place. Such an Alice, attracted to a book for its gorgeous cover, is more in keeping with the attitude toward objects that Alice otherwise demonstrates in the play. (And, with Alice as a

⁸³ Mosby and Alice are clearly in or at least in front of the Arden household, because at the end of the scene (8.155-56) they invite Bradshaw in for a beer and supper.

⁸⁴ That is, she will be seen as honest Arden's wife, even if no longer Arden's honest wife. See Wine 8.73 n.

stand-in spectator, the play takes a sly shot at its own audience.) Then she turns to the pages of the book with an action that seems demanded by the playwright's embedded gesture, the repetition of "leaves," and the addition of "all the leaves," which directs a crescendo of emotion with which the actor handles the prop as he speaks his lines. Perhaps he actually tears pages out to insert Mosby's love letters in,⁸⁵ letters that translate a mutilated prayerbook into personalized prescriptive literature, Alice's own devotional love book.⁸⁶

An actor who uses the prop that way dramatizes the Elizabethan preoccupation with love as idolatry. But as significant for the spectator of this scenario, the prop has changed, even if the actor does not remove any pages.⁸⁷ Alice's mortification over her public opprobrium; yet her desire for Mosby; her fear that he will leave her, "Look on me, Mosby, or I'll kill myself" (8.112): these emotions fetishize her prayerbook and charge it with inordinate meaningfulness. A spectator may also apprehend with some anxiety the irony of knowing the man she tries but fails to leave intends to kill her. What of the boy actor's adrenalin-charged body as he performs an act of sacrilege, which his text demands he represent? A spectator's shock, or another's thrill, at the very sight of it? These emotions electrify that book as it undergoes its fearful transformation.

⁸⁵ The prop itself could be jiggled to include with the bound leaves a set of re-shreddable pages for repeated performance.

⁸⁶ Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, published a few years later than *Arden* in 1595, features a metaphor comparing a wife to a book cover. Lady Capulet instructs Juliet to "[r]ead o'er the volume of young Paris' face" in her effort to persuade Juliet to envision herself as wife to Paris (1.3.81): "This precious book of love, this unbound lover, / To beautify him only lacks a cover" (87-88). As Lady Capulet would have Juliet be Paris' "cover," so Alice would "beautify" Mosby, that "precious book of love," who would be "unbound" without herself as "golden cover" (*Arden* 8.119). If book covers and wives are indeed a contemporary association, I suspect Alice would nonetheless be as oblivious to it as she is to all the other associations objects might have. But spectators might recognize the connection. Williamson notes that "Elizabeth I had portraits of herself and the Duke [of Anjou] inserted into her prayer book," and that "[a] prayer book is referred to as the secret container for love letters in Shirley's *The Wedding*" (391 n. 39).

⁸⁷ Williamson argues that Alice does not actually tear out the pages of the prayerbook: "Because this type of play is ultimately concerned with social stability, the destruction of the prayer book is one crime it is not willing to stage" (393).

These are the emotions than can enable a (consubstantive) experience for a spectator. With Alice as our priest, we witness a thrillingly real iconoclastic experience meant to enable Alice's desires.

If one allows it, one can be swept up in that charged moment, in the invention of a new rite with its own new ceremonial token, Alice's lovebook. Alice's extraordinary actions cannot help but invite a spectator to detach herself in shock and judge Alice for her transgression at the same time the prop in her hands enables the same spectator to fear for her, sympathize with her, exult with her, as she re/disfigures her prayerbook in desperation. The prop in *platea* mode undermines the Protestant aesthetics the play is designed to exploit.

V. Blood in the *Locus* and the *Platea*

Alice performs unconventional rites of penance twice in *Arden*. The first time, she transfigures a sacred object into an idolatrous fetish to demonstrate her devotion to her mortal lover. The second time, she translates a profane object into a sacred totem to achieve God's spiritual salvation. I trace this play's second transformation (a kind of consubstantiation via the theatre's Corpus Christi effect), its implications for Alice, and its potential affective consequences for the spectator, by turning to Alice's husband, whose dead body provides the materials for what will become stage prop.⁸⁸

Arden opens with Thomas Arden expressing his melancholy. A spectator is prompted to sympathize with him for his grief over his wife's infidelity. The same spectator might later judge Arden for his ruthlessness. "For Christ's sake," Dick Reede pleads to Arden on behalf of his wife and children (13.17). He begs for the return of the lands that Arden was given "[b]y letters

⁸⁸ For an investigation of the circumstances under which a human body might become a theatrical prop see Sofer, "Take up the Bodies." See also Marchesi, who considers the effects of severed limbs as stage props.

patents from his majesty" (1.4). Arden condemns Reede for his "clamorous impeaching tongue" and threatens retribution if Reede continues to "rail": "I'll banish pity if thou use me thus" (13.22-27). Arden's is a noticeably un-Christian response to the needy and dispossessed, particularly since it is Arden's good fortune that dispossessed Reede of his. And good fortune appears to protect Arden over the course of the play, since he eludes his would-be murderers' hands until the evening of his last supper.

Witnesses describe Arden's escapes, of which he is blithely unaware, in terms of religious salvation. Shakebag and Black Will are about to attack Arden on the road when Lord Cheyne appears and interrupts their plans. "Arden, thou hast wondrous holy luck" (9.133), Will complains, and Greene attributes news of Arden's escape, yet again, to God's will: "The Lord of Heaven hath preservèd him" (142). Scene 14 opens with Will marvelling to "Sirrah Greene, when was I so long in killing a man?" (1), and he concludes, "doubtless, he is preserved by miracle" (28-29). Alexander Leggatt notes wryly, Fate [in Arden's tragedy] is not so much inexorable as perverse," remarking that "just as we ourselves have begun to wonder if Arden leads a charmed life, he is killed" (129). His death is similarly charmed, for the play transforms Arden's corpse into a stage prop that signifies something between the felt absence and the real presence of Christ's bloody body, at once an alarming and wondrous, idolatrous and salvific image.

The play conjures its stage trick by deploying both the visceral qualities of blood and its semiotic meanings. Lucy Munro explains that blood was thought to be represented on the early modern stage by "animal blood, vinegar, vermillion, ink, [or] paint." The difficulty of cleaning anything, including expensive costumes, stained with such materials is argued to have led professional theatre companies to "have seen a financial imperative in controlling the appearance

of blood on their stages" (Munro 80-81). Munro's survey of their use of blood and body parts demonstrates that it "is rarely realistic or naturalistic in any uncomplicated manner." Rather, "the symbolic potential of blood or limb is always to the fore, but . . . we are also simultaneously aware of its association with the raw physicality of the bleeding or damaged body" (93).⁸⁹ Thus blood on *Arden's* stage arrives primed both to enable semiotic interpretation, and to be apprehended in all its phenomenological bloodiness. The boundaries between the represented and the real, between *locus* and *platea*, begin to blur when it comes to blood on a Renaissance stage.

For reckoning the psychological impact of stage blood, the outlawed medieval Corpus Christi plays are important, for in the Passion plays, as Sofer points out, "Christ's body was covered . . . with blood,"⁹⁰ and his blood "is both curative and salvific" (*Stage* 70, 80). The *N Town Passion Play II*, for instance, depicts the circumstances of the extreme physical abuse whereby Jesus' body would be brought to such a condition: during his trial in Jerusalem, Jesus is both beaten about the head and whipped (160 sd., 440 sd.). The York play *Christ's Death and Burial* dramatizes evidence of the curative and salvific effects of Christ's blood. The moment the blind Longeus pierces Christ's side with his spear to make sure he is dead, the soldier regains his sight (291-99 sd.). Afterwards, Longeus affirms the power of the Lord's blood: "Full spitously spilte is and spente / Thy bloode, Lorde, to bringe us to blis / Ful free" (306-8). The Centurion, who was watching, declares the event a miracle and evidence of Jesus's mercy: "O wondirfull werkar, iwis, / . . . / Trewe token I trowe that it is / That mercy is mente unto man" (313-16). What the Centurion witnesses brings him to believe that Jesus is truly "Goddis sone" (322-23).

⁸⁹ See also Stevens on the practical and conceptual problems of producing blood, particularly painted blood, on the stage.

⁹⁰ And sweat, spittle, and mucus as well (*Stage* 70).

But blood on the mystery play stages, as O'Connell points out, was not just symbolic: "it was graphic, realistic blood, never, so far as can be determined, simply stylized" ("Blood" 182). He explains how the actor who played Christ on trial and in crucifixion "was encased in a close-fitting leather body suit, which would have been made to conceal packets of stage blood" (183).

More broadly, Corpus Christi plays also exploited the kind of mystic seeing that Diehl claims the *Schöne Maria* procured from its spectators. The passion plays and the painting exemplify what Peter Travis calls "ocular experience," which Travis describes a "psychological phenomenon, often known as 'affective piety.'" He explains that in such a state "medieval viewers were often convinced that before their devoted gaze sacred icons came alive to perform anew their wondrous deeds" (17).⁹¹ *Arden* in turn exploits that medieval mode of mystic vision to fashion anew a sacred icon from a dead body. It prepares its spectators to behold an icon by making unlikely connections between Arden and Jesus Christ especially in the last moments of both the character's and the saviour's lives.⁹²

That Arden is murdered while gambling over a game of dice, perhaps the very silver dice Alice tosses with Mosby "for kisses" (1.124), alludes to the figure of Judas, who, in Matthew (26.15), delivered Jesus to the chief priests with a kiss for 30 pieces of silver, and to the soldiers at the foot of Christ's cross gambling for his garments (Mark 15.24). That Arden is struck or stabbed by three assailants--Mosby, Shakebag, and Alice--echoes Christ's being denied three times by Peter (Matt. 26.33-35, 69-75). The dialogue of his assailants suggests Arden receives at least five blows, causing wounds that thus parallel the number Christ received on the cross from

⁹¹ See also Davidson "Sacred."

⁹² O'Connell argues that Shakespeare, in particular, demonstrates evidence of engaging with the outlawed mystery play tradition. The blood that is shed in *3 Henry VI*, *Julius Caesar*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Macbeth*, and *Lear*, he argues, "acquires a force that is analogous to what it had been in the cycle plays. . . . On Shakespeare's stage the specific occasion of the spectacular effusion of blood seems always connected with innocence" ("Blood" 189).

four nails and one spear.⁹³ Whether the instruments with which he is killed are swords, knives, or perhaps blunt instruments, the result is that his body is especially bloodied.

The blood that Arden sheds does not behave as blood normally would and resists the efforts of characters to control it. Alice orders Susan to "wash away this blood," but Susan cannot: "The blood cleaveth to the ground and will not out" (14.254-55). "But with my nails I'll scrape away the blood," Alice counters, but she finds, "The more I strive, the more the blood appears!"(256-57). (At the same time, her lines are also a metatheatrical wink at the chore of washing the ink or animal blood from a stage's floor!) Alice and Susan "*open the countinghouse door and look upon Arden*" (327 sd.). There Alice instructs Susan with her imperative, "See," to gaze upon the condition of Arden's body, a vision that recalls the beaten and scourged body of Christ on his way to crucifixion, an ocular experience that may trigger a state of affective piety in the way of stages past: "See, Susan, where thy quondam master lies, / Sweet Arden, smeared in blood and filthy gore" (328-29). Metatheatrically, Alice's command to Susan, stand-in for the play's spectators, prepares the ground for the Corpus Christi effect. When the Mayor enters the house, he says, "Look in the place where he was wont to sit. -- / See, see! His blood! It is too manifest" (400-1). Alice responds, "It is a cup of wine that Michael shed," and Franklin retorts, "It is his blood, which, strumpet, thou hast shed" (402, 404).

The play depicts a confrontation over the ontological status of the blood/wine on the stage floor and so conjures the forbidden Catholic sacrament of Communion, where sacramental

⁹³ That is, a nail in each hand, a nail in each foot, and a spear in his side. Editors isolate textual prompts that would account for three wounds inflicted upon Arden's body (Wine and White 14.235, 236, 238 and McLuskie and Bevington 232, 233, 235). But the text supports the infliction of five wounds: 1st--Mosby: "'Now I can take you'" (14.232); 2nd--Mosby: "There's for the pressing iron you told me of" (235); 3rd--Shakebag: "And there's for the ten pound in my sleeve" (236); 4th and 5th--Alice: "Take this for hind'ring Mosby's love (her first blow or stab) and mine (her final)" (238).

wine is perceived to be turned by miracle into the blood of Christ, shed for the salvation of mankind. In so doing, the play begins to overlay its representation of a historical murder mystery solved, its murderer condemned by the evidence--a dead body and blood on the floor--with the outlawed medieval drama created to affirm and celebrate that miraculous sacramental transformation.

The wondrous effect of that transformation becomes evident when the Mayor and his guard discover Arden's body, and Alice is put to trial, then and there, for murder. In scene 16, the Mayor admonishes Alice, "See, Mistress Arden, where your husband lies. / Confess this foul fault and be penitent" (1-2). Alice replies,

[*leaning over the body.*] Arden, sweet husband, what shall I say?

The more I sound his name, the more he bleeds.

This blood condemns me and in gushing forth

Speaks as it falls and asks me why I did it. (3-6)

Alice thus moderates her own trial by cruentation, a phenomenon whereby a murder victim's body bleeds freshly in the presence of its killer. Historically, it was used as a test for exposing a murderer, known also as the Ordeal of the Bier.⁹⁴ It is no surprise that a play so concerned with the efficacy of objects should feature such a phenomenon, the efficacy of which test was itself contested.⁹⁵ There were those, too, who offered "naturalist explanations for the phenomenon," as Mary Floyd-Wilson advises, in "cheap print publications" that theorize how "human passions can

⁹⁴ Brittain explains: "Of Germanic origin, dating from the period after the overthrow of the Roman Empire, [use of the Ordeal] continued until at least as late as the seventeenth century" (82).

⁹⁵ Brittain gives examples of cruentation used as conclusive evidence in 1608, by the Faculty of Law at Marburg, in Somerset in 1613, and in Mas d'Azil, France in 1639 (85-86). Physicians debated its efficacy: "Marcus Antonius Blancus in his *Tractatus de Indiciis Homicidii* (1547) raised some objections to it, but did not dare condemn it formally. Andreas Libavius, of Halle, discussed it and defended it in his book *De Cruentatione Cadaverum* (1594)" (Brittain 86).

heat the imagination to such a degree that 'spirits' (fine vapours that flow in the blood) emanate out of the body to stir up the corpse's blood" ("*Arden*" 190). The test would be conducted with the victim

laid naked on his back. [The suspect] approached the body, repeatedly calling on it by name, then walked around it two or three times. He next lightly stroked the wound with his hand. If during this time fresh bleeding occurred, or if the body moved, or if foam appeared at the mouth, the suspect was considered guilty of murder; if not, further evidence was sought. (Brittain 82)

By staging a cruentation scene, *Arden* aligns itself with a contemporary play that also stages a cruentation, *Richard III*. But the latter dramatizes a more conventional cruentation compared to *Arden*'s. In *Richard III*, Lady Anne serves as prosecutor and calls out the evidence to the scene's jury--her retinue: "O gentlemen, see, see! Dead Henry's wounds / Open their congealed mouths and bleed afresh." Thus the prosecutor distinguishes herself from the suspect, Richard, whose "presence," Anne charges him, "exhales this blood / From cold and empty veins" (1.2.55-59). In *Arden*, Alice takes her trial into her own hands. The Mayor, Mosby, Franklin, Michael, Susan, and the watch guards are on the scene and serve as jury. One might expect the mayor, her prosecutor, to announce the evidence that condemns her, as Anne in *Richard III* condemns Richard. But Alice directs herself, as suspect, both to witness and to pronounce the evidence: "This blood condemns me" (16.3-6).

Speaking his lines, the actor may well lean over and touch *Arden*'s wounds, as the suspect of a conventional cruentation must. But in *Arden*, a figure who touches the wounds of the corpse of a bleeding body that is aligned with a crucified Christ surely invokes the story of doubting

Thomas. John 20:24-29 tells a story about verifying a resurrected Christ's presence by touch.⁹⁶ Alice first asks the body a question, "What shall I say?" as if expecting an answer, and she receives one: "This blood . . . / Speaks as it falls" (16.3-6). As Alice sees and hears the blood condemn her, she asks for forgiveness, declares her repentance, and calls out in the imperative, as if she could command the very Christ-like resurrection of that body, a phenomenally live body of an actor, to "[r]ise up, sweet Arden, and enjoy thy love. . . ." (9).

Thus once again Alice invests an object with inordinate meaning, fetishizing the dead body with her contrition, her repentance, her desire for salvation, and her anxiety: ". . . frown not on me when we meet in heaven" (10). And the text validates her faith in her salvation: Bradshaw pronounces it in scene 18, "Mistress Arden, you are now going to God, / And I am by the law condemned to die" (18.2-3). She replies, "let me meditate upon my Saviour Christ, / Whose blood must save me for the blood I shed" (10-11). As she did with the prayerbook, Alice commandeers a signifying object perversely to get what she desires, and her verbal and gestural responses to the dead body on the floor begin to align with the play's affective presentation of that dead body.

The blood of Arden's corpse condemns Alice, as it does in a conventional cruentation. And like the blood of the living Christ in the Corpus Christi plays, Arden's blood appears to be salvific, and it appears to save Alice. Her words and the boy actor's potential gestures enable the Corpus Christi effect. Semiotically, the boy actor represents Alice Arden, an adulteress and murderer, and relates to the prone adult actor playing Thomas Arden as representing the corpse of Alice's murder victim. As Arden's body represents the victim of Alice's homicide, the corpse's blood is in *locus* mode. It is a naturalistic effect of Arden's bludgeoning and visible evidence of

⁹⁶ The same story is told in the N-Town plays in "Christ's Appearance to Cleophas, Luke, and Thomas."

Alice's crime. A spectator is here invited to judge and condemn Alice. With its Protestant aesthetics, the play stages precisely what the title page says the play offers: "Wherein is shewed the great mal- / lice and discimulation of a wicked wo- / man, the vnsatiabile desire of filthie lust / and the shamefull end of all / murderers" (2).

At the same time, the blood presents itself affectively in the *platea* as participating in a supernatural intervention into Alice's pursuit of redemption. The play thus offers a spectator another way to see/feel: with the boy actor as her surrogate devotional spectator, a spectator may partake of an affective experience of consubstantiation, should she accept it, to see Christ's bloodied body disclosed to her. As Alice looks upon a bleeding body and finds salvation, so may the play's spectator participate in a drama of salvation. If Elizabethan and Jacobean tragedy worked to demystify the efficacy of sacred and devotional images, as Diehl argues, and if "for Kyd it was necessary to travesty sacred objects in order to reclaim them for his sensational theatre," as Sofer argues (*Stage* 87), then *Arden's* author(s) restored to English spectators a prop with "devotional efficacy as salvific ocular experience" (72). *Arden* reclaims a magical, even miraculous, property for the blood that shed so plentifully on the early modern stage.

VI. The Character, the Actor, and the Prop in *Arden*

I have proposed by this chapter's fictional account of the stage life of Benjamin Jeffes, and this chapter's readings of the prayerbook and corpse scenes, how a boy actor's (hypothetical but personal) emotions and gestures may contribute to the agency of the desiring female character he plays. The play prompts character, actor, and spectator alike to fetishize its objects and so effects the salvation of a figure that, perversely, it characterizes as damned. I attend now to the flip side of those relations: how the role and the props serve the boy actor. Alice's role orchestrates its

character's perverse way with objects, an effect that contributes to the agency of a company's senior apprentice onstage. Alice's role and the objects associated with that role help a gifted boy actor to take *his* professional trial into his own hands.

First, what is most remarkable about *Arden* is that the props cluster around one character especially: Alice. And this is not insignificant. In comparison to Shakespeare's plays, for instance, *Arden* asks its producers to supply a lot of stage properties. According to Frances Teague, the number of props per Shakespearean play ranges as low as 15 and as high as 61.⁹⁷ *Arden* has 39. Alice is onstage only for 8 of the play's 19 scenes, but when she is there, 28 of the play's 39 props are brought into play. None of the play's characters are drawn to the objects in *Arden*'s playworld so consistently as Alice. Mosby and Michael share the stage with 18 props over the course of the play, Shakebag and Black Will with 13, and Arden and Susan with 11. What is more, if we consider which of the play's 18 characters are responsible for *bringing* the properties to the stage,⁹⁸ 11 characters other than Alice initiate the appearance and travels of 22 props altogether.⁹⁹ Alice alone brings 17 props into play. And Alice not only has an unmatched affinity for objects, she has a tricky way with them like no other, as I have already shown with her prayerbook and Arden's bleeding corpse.

Consider, for instance, the first prop that Alice brandishes in the play, a pair of silver dice, and how she accounts for the meaning of the dice in action. Alone on the stage after learning that Arden and Franklin are leaving for London before noon, she is met by Adam, an innkeeper, who informs her that Mosby is in town but refuses to see her. Outraged, she threatens him. However fortified his house may be, she warns, "[t]hese hands of mine should raze it to the

⁹⁷ In *As You Like It* and *Henry VIII* respectively (195-96).

⁹⁸ I do not include in my count Lord Cheyne's retinue or the men of the city's Watch.

⁹⁹ Franklin for 6, Mosby and Arden each for 3, Greene and Shakebag each for 2, and the Mayor, Cheyne, Black Will, Bradshaw, Clarke, and Adam for only 1 each.

ground / Unless that thou wouldst bring me to my love" (1.117-19). But when bullying Adam fails--he merely prepares to flee the scene--Alice turns to the dice it appears she has on hand and improvises another way to get what she wants:

Stay, Adam, stay; thou wert wont to be my friend.
 Ask Mosby how I have incurred his wrath;
 Bear him from me these pair of silver dice
 With which we played for kisses many a time,
 And when I lost I won, and so did he--
 Such winning and such losing Jove send me! (121-26)

The pair of silver dice sent by Alice through Adam to Mosby in *Arden* appears in Holinshed too, but her account of the games she has played with them does not. She does not transfigure the dice as she will later the prayerbook, but she demonstrates her readiness to translate the conventional meaning of an object in motion--here, how the roll of a dice signifies--for her own delight: "Such winning and such losing Jove send me!" Typically, dice in a game are the means by which to separate a winner from loser(s), and such games are played for stakes to which all players contribute and thus potentially lose.¹⁰⁰ But the game Alice invents with her dice award her the kisses that are the game's stakes whichever way they may roll: whether she wins or loses by the roll of her dice, she always gets a kiss from her lover. Her account of the games she plays with the dice to satisfy her desires anticipates her idolatrous handling of a prayerbook on her newly secular, post-Reformation stage.

¹⁰⁰ In fact, a dice game for such stakes is Arden's last activity before he is murdered: "Come, Master Mosby, what shall we play for?" he asks. "Three games for a French crown, sir," Mosby replies (14.223-24).

Second, the fact that Alice turns to objects in moments of desperation is related to her role, I argue, a role suitable for a boy actor's candidacy for adult player status. My fictional account of *Arden's* trial performance proposes that the "leading boy of unusual range"--the boy McMillin conjectures that Shakespeare had in mind as he wrote lengthy roles for Queen Margaret and Kate--is performing reduced versions of those roles, which McMillin discovers in the quarto edition, because he is preparing for his role as Alice. This, too, is conjecture. One problem is we do not know who wrote *Arden of Faversham*, nor do we know the circumstances of its composition. Jill Levenson notes the primary candidates are Thomas Kyd, Marlowe, and Shakespeare ("Arden" 241).¹⁰¹ Macdonald P. Jackson asserted in 2011 the probability that "Shakespeare had a substantial share in [its] composition" ("Gentle" 37). His latest published work on Shakespeare asserts an even higher probability that *Arden* is worthy of inclusion into the canon (*Determining* 84). The other problem is we know very little about the origins and circumstances of Pembroke's Men. Shakespeare is thought to have had some business with them. I offer below a brief overview of almost a century's scholarship based on limited historical evidence and creative conjecture of *Arden's* story and Shakespeare's relation to it. I do so because its gap-ridden history bears upon this chapter's argument about *Arden's* work with stage properties in the hands of a boy actor on the brink of graduation.¹⁰²

In 1972, McMillin recounted a hypothesis from the late 1920s

¹⁰¹ Kinney gives an account of other candidates: "George Peele, Robert Greene, Anthony Munday, Samuel Rowley, Robert Yarrington, Thomas Heywood, George Wilkins, and--perhaps to no surprise--the seventeenth Earl of Oxford. . . . There seem to be no bounds, in fact, to the urge to speculate," Kinney remarks, giving final short shrift to the "far-fetched . . . introduction (in 1633) of a person named Cloy who may never have existed" (83).

¹⁰² It is interesting that the play's concern with how physical objects are presented and read as evidence for what cannot be seen is reflected proleptically in its own reception as an object for study.

that Shakespeare found an early theatrical association with a company which in the 1590s passed briefly under the patronage of the second Earl of Pembroke. It is virtually certain the Pembroke's men performed the quarto versions of the history plays, *The First Part of the Contention Betwixt the . . . Houses of York and Lancaster* (hereafter *1 Contention*) and *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York* (hereafter *The True Tragedy*), along with a third play related to a longer Shakespearian text, *The Taming of A Shrew* (hereafter *A Shrew*). ("Casting" 141-42)

McMillin relates that Pembroke's Men arrived in the records with their appearance in Leicester in 1592 when severe plague outbreaks sent the acting companies on tour. They presented two plays at court during the Christmas season, 1592-3, after which, given continued outbreaks of the plague, they returned to the provinces. The "extant plays known to have belonged to the company . . . in addition to the three quartos mentioned earlier . . . include *Edward II* and *Titus Andronicus*" (142). McMillin notes that Alfred Hart would add *Arden of Faversham*, *Soliman and Perseda*, and *The Massacre at Paris*, and that later, A.S. Cairncross would include *1 Henry VI*, *Richard III*, *The Spanish Tragedy*, and *Romeo and Juliet* (142-43). McMillin deduces that the company "consisted of eleven principal adults, four boys, and approximately five supernumeraries" (153 "Casting").

Karl P. Wentersdorf added *Edward II* and *Titus* to the repertory of plays owned by Pembroke's Men and includes the possibility of *Doctor Faustus* as well ("Repertory" 85).¹⁰³

Twenty years later, in 1995, Andrew Gurr added to what is known that one of the two companies

¹⁰³ "Indeed," he writes further, "a first-class repertory of this kind is exactly what one would have expected Pembroke's Men to possess, in view of the fact that they were the players chosen to entertain Queen Elizabeth I and her court on the opening and closing days of the official Christmas festivities in 1592-93" ("Repertory" 85). See also Wentersdorf's "*Arden*."

asked to perform at Court at Christmas was "Strange's, based at the Rose. The other, Pembroke's, was most likely at the Theatre, and was very likely led by the son [Richard] of the Theatre's owner [James Burbage]" (*The Shakespearian* 269).¹⁰⁴ Gurr's conjecture: "It is most likely that Shakespeare performed with Pembroke's in mid-1592 in *3 Henry VI*" (271). In 1999, Rosalyn Knutson allowed, "*Edward II* and *Arden of Faversham* belonged to Pembroke's Men in 1593" ("Shakespeare's" 349) and cites Wentersdorf ("The Repertory").¹⁰⁵ But in 2001, Knutson wrote differently about Pembroke's Men and their repertory: "I have resisted conjectural repertorial lists such as that constructed by Karl P. Wentersdorf, which includes *Soliman and Perseda*, *Arden of Faversham*, *The Massacre of Paris*, *Richard III*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Doctor Faustus*, and *Romeo and Juliet*" (Knutson, "Issues" 135).¹⁰⁶ Katherine Duncan-Jones, also in 2001, allowed the possibility that Shakespeare was a sharer in Pembroke's Men (68). I give the last word here to Lois Potter, who, 2012, made note of Lord Strange's company: "In 1593 it played *Harry of Cornwall* in the west of England. Faversham was another stop on the touring circuit, and it is

¹⁰⁴ While we have from Henslowe's diaries evidence pertaining only to the Rose theatre (see Rutter, *Documents* 48-69), Chambers infers from an undated petition from the watermen of the Bankside to Lord Admiral Howard "that houses other than the Rose were open" (vol. 4, 311): ". . . It maye therefore please your good L. for godes sake and in the waye of charetie to respecte vs your poore water men, and to give leave vnto the said Phillipp Henslo to have playing in his saide howse duringe suche tyme *as others have*, according as it hathe byne accustomed" (my emphasis, 312).

¹⁰⁵ She further claims that *Arden* and *Edward II* may have moved in 1594 over to Chamberlain's Men, who also acquired some of Pembroke's players after the company fell apart and disappeared from notice (349). Pembroke's servants do appear, however, to have reassembled, entering into a contract to play for a year at the Swan up to February 1598; see Chambers, vol. 2, 128-31.

¹⁰⁶ See also Gurr, who in 2011 insists "*Arden's* author and company are unknown, and there is little to suggest that it had any link with the Chamberlain's Men, unless one tries to conflate the names of its villains Black Will and Shakebags" ("The Stage" 71).

likely that the anonymous *Arden of Faversham*, a play about the murder that was the town's best-known event, was written initially for performance there" (87).¹⁰⁷

We do not know for certain whether *Arden* belonged to Pembroke's company at the very time that the roles of Margaret in Shakespeare's history plays were cut. It matters little, too, whether or not Shakespeare had a hand in writing or acting in *Arden*. What is relevant in the play's constructed and as yet uncertain history to this chapter's concern with sacred totems is that several of the plays in the repertory with which *Arden* may be associated also feature a prayerbook. The possibility the play was composed while its company was on tour and rehearsed at a public theatre in London in advance of its court performance is also germane to what I have argued is a very metatheatrical play whose concerns include providing a vehicle for a gifted boy actor. The actor and the character may both be on trial by the play's end. If the objects in Alice's environment serve Alice in her pursuit of her desires, the stage props may likewise serve the boy actor in his desire to show off his skills at creating the illusion of a dramatic character's presence.

Stern argues persuasively that early modern actors did not have the time for collective rehearsals, such as those a contemporary actor expects. With daily performances of different plays during the Elizabethan public theatre season, actors may have had to keep current thirty to forty roles and learn a new one every two weeks. A first reading of a new play would be amongst the actor-sharers, and if it were deemed suitable, it would be read again for the full company. There might, but not necessarily, follow a read-through of the play by the actors themselves before the actors received their parts in order to memorize them in private. An actor's part (or

¹⁰⁷ Potter also notes that the *Henry VI* plays and *Taming's* Induction make repeated reference to names of places in the midlands, and on this evidence suggests that "[i]t seems almost certain that at some point [Shakespeare] was acting and writing for this company" (55). She conjectures further that he "may have progressed from a touring company (perhaps 1587 to 1589) to Strange's Men (1589-93) and then Pembroke's (1593-4)" (87).

parcel, scroll, or roll) contained only his role's lines and its cues: three or four words from the preceding speech of an unidentified character (Stern, *Rehearsal* 54-62).¹⁰⁸ The first days of a play's public performance, as Stern describes, "were separated from other days by the use of legal terminology: the play was 'tried' and the audience was the judge, 'trial' clearly being a trial of the play itself. . . . If successful, the play was deemed to have passed its trial--'these Playes haue had their triall alreadie, and stood out all Appeales'; 'it hath past the Test of the Stage'" (113).¹⁰⁹ Simon Palfrey and Stern deduce the consequences for performance of an actor's single parts-based preparation, where an actor cannot know from whom, or from where, his cues arrive until the play's trial:

To the actor initially learning from such a part-text, he cannot know whether he is addressed by one person or many, or across a short or a long period of time. . . . So this particular technology--not naming the cuer--ensures that the event of performance will retain its own urgent immediacy. The things that are happening are happening *now*, in the present; the actor has to stay on edge. . . . (93)

The role of Alice Arden is one of the largest ever written for a boy to play: 592 lines. With respect to rehearsals and boy actors, McMillin conjectures that there must have been some occurrence of at least partial pre-public "trial" rehearsals, particularly between lead boy actors and their master actors.¹¹⁰ Roles like *Othello's* Desdemona and Emilia, and *The Alchemist's* Dol and Dame Pliant are almost entirely rehearsable with two or three master adult actors, because virtually all of the roles' cues come from those two or three actors (or, in the case of Emilia, also from Desdemona). McMillin contrasts these roles, which he calls "restricted" roles, to "wide-

¹⁰⁸ See also Levenson, *Romeo and Juliet* 14-15.

¹⁰⁹ See Syme, who explores the limits of the early modern analogy between the theatres and the law courts (89-90).

¹¹⁰ See also Astington 142.

ranging" roles such as Rosalind and Portia, which have 721 and 578 lines respectively.¹¹¹

Seventeen of Portia's speeches run ten lines or more, fifteen of Rosalind's. The large number of different actors from whom the boy who plays Rosalind or Portia may receive his cue is what makes these roles especially challenging. Portia receives cues from fourteen other characters and Rosalind, thirteen ("Sharer" 240).

Arriving at the early modern English stage several years earlier than these plays of Shakespeare, *Arden* contains seventeen characters other than Alice. Alice receives cues from twelve of them, only two of which may be doubled by the same actor. Therefore, the boy actor receives his cues from at least eleven actors. Even private rehearsal with the men playing Mosby and Arden, the characters from whom Alice receives 46% of her cues, will not help the boy with the substantial cues, 54%, that he receives from nine other actors. Richard Madelaine suggests that "[s]ome major roles for boys may have served as, even been conceived of as, 'apprentice-pieces' for boys at the end of their apprenticeship and about to 'graduate'" (233). He also asserts, "Shakespeare's audiences must have shared, to some degree, the actors' awareness of the boys' apprenticeship in role playing" (234).

Arden's Alice is not a restricted role. It is an apprentice-piece for its boy actor.¹¹² In fact, the play takes pains to point metatheatrically to Alice's role as an apprentice-piece. Her role shares similarities with Richard III's as Vice figure: Alice is a fearless improviser in moments of

¹¹¹ See also Tribble, who subordinates restricted and wide-ranging roles under the broader term "scaffolded roles" to analyze the "material, linguistic, and /or environmental support" provided to novice actors "to aid them in practicing the appropriate skills" ("Marlowe's" 7).

¹¹² On the early modern apprenticeship system and for actors' biographies, see Kathman. On the training and accomplishments of the early modern boy actors see Astington, Bentley, Madelaine, McMillan, "Sharer," and especially Tribble on novice actors and what she refers to as "enskillment" (*Cognition* 115-50) and "Marlowe's." She reminds us that "'conning' a part and performing before an audience are two very different tasks, the one demanding a quick wit and a ready memory, the other demanding the 'situation awareness' that is gained only through experience" (*Cognition* 120). See also Menzer and Royce.

confrontation. In fact, her inversionary language as she hands over the dice to Adam--"when I lost I won" (1.124)--situates her in a line of trickster characters that Robert Weimann and Douglas Bruster locate in Shakespeare's plays (16). These include the witches in *Macbeth* ["Fair is foul, and foul is fair" (1.1.12)]; figures adapted from the Vice tradition such as Richard III and Iago; and clowns, such as Sly, Bottom, and Lear's fool (16-17). Unlike Richard, however, she does not present herself to the audience to engage and implicate her spectators in her schemes.¹¹³ Nevertheless, Alice takes great delight at pointing reflexively to her ability to perform the tricks she does, at the same time as her role restrains the expression of her delight to that which is given to another character, Mosby, rather than an unruly audience.

Thus, for example, when Arden tastes something "not wholesome" (1.365-66) in his broth and asks her if she made it, she has to improvise to reclaim her role as the "tormented" (389) wife of a mistrustful husband. Notably, at such a moment her instinct is to hone in on the object--in this case, throwing the bowl of broth down so it may no longer be inspected. "Give me a spoon," she demands in response to Arden's request for Franklin's mithridate, "I'll eat of it myself" (386). As far as the play is concerned, her actions with the bowl of broth and the spoon have solved the apparent crisis. Once Arden, Franklin, and Michael exit, she turns to Mosby to direct his attention to how well she brought the scene to a close: "I am glad he is gone; he was about to stay, / But did you mark me then how I brake off?" Mosby replies, "Ay, Alice, and it was cunningly performed" (1.417-19). Here, surely, is a metatheatrical nod to a boy actor asking

¹¹³ Richard does this when, for example, he successfully woos Anne at the very scene of the funeral possession for her dead husband, whom he has killed: "Was ever woman in this humor won?" (1.2.228), he asks of his audience.

and receiving praise from his tutor. We might even think of the characters Mosby and Alice as exemplary master- and apprentice-Vice roles.¹¹⁴

This scenario puts the diabolical yet perversely attention-compelling objects of the play to practical use. A portrait and a crucifix turned to poison weapons, and a prayerbook defaced in the service of carnal desire, defer blame from the youthful actor, not ready to bear the burden of performing a villain like Richard with his "inductions dangerous" (1.1.32), onto those objects. Pointing to the role as an apprentice-piece also presents the boy beneath the role. The effect in *Arden* is less to raise problems of gender that roles of disguised heroines do, for instance, and more to celebrate the boy actor in this particularly challenging part. At the same time, highlighting the doubleness of the apprentice's art, the boy beneath the character, may also highlight metatheatrically the prop beneath the represented prayerbook, given how closely this play ties its character, Alice, to the objects in her world.

The more the prayerbook speaks from the *platea* to its spectators, the more it enables *Arden* to stage an intervention into the authority of not only conduct books and prayerbooks, but all books, all texts, the Book and the Text itself. (This is so even if Alice is punished at the end of the play, meeting the very fate in *Canterbury* she initially proposes for her prayerbook.) Say that the hypotheses offered by McMillin, Hart, Cairncross, Wentersdorf, and Gurr are correct: the repertory of the Pembroke's Men in the early 1590s included *Doctor Faustus*, *3 Henry VI*, and *Richard III*, along with *Arden of Faversham*. Then *Arden's* use of a prayerbook is all the more pointed and notable. Spectators who watch *Arden* may variously have seen one or all of these

¹¹⁴ See 12.65-74 for another example, where Alice turns to Mosby for praise of her accomplishment: "First tell me how you like my new device." Alice describes to Mosby how they two will meet Arden arm-in-arm "[I]like loving friends" and provoke him to anger. In the fray, Alice would call in their accomplices to kill him. Mosby praises Alice: "Ah, fine device! Why, this deserves a kiss."

plays. Then *Arden's* prayerbook has the potential to evoke significant theatrical associations with the prayerbooks that signified so pointedly in *3 Henry VI* and *Richard III*, as well as the books that contribute to Faustus' damnation. This is especially so because it would be practical and financially prudent if the very same prop were used in all of the plays. (*Faustus*, of course, furnishes its stage with a study full of books.)

In his consideration of books as stage props, Dawson distinguishes between commonplace books that appear on Shakespeare's stages and "the Book," which "was of course something different--the very basis of the religion of Protestants, the source of revelation and controversy for the whole culture." Dawson considers the effect of a book which "is given special theatrical prominence, or when books take on the aura of power associated with 'the Word'" (*Culture* 143). He considers Faustus' idolatrous turn to his books and argues, "The play points to a central difficulty of Protestantism, which emphasized the individual's own interpretive relation to the Bible and at the same time had to find ways of policing interpretation" (146). Alice's own interpretation of the book in her hands, and the way Alice's role facilitates a boy actor's interpretations, makes *Arden* susceptible to upending the authorities it presents.

The play foregrounds its query into the authority of the Book and the Word with pervasive dialogue that features one character doubting or asserting the veracity of their own or another character's words, especially their sworn oaths. Altogether there are twenty-four instances where characters either refer to slander or rumour, take oaths or swear they will, or query the force of an oath. The most telling of these instances is Alice's response to Mosby's assertion that he has "sworn / Never hereafter to solicit thee" (1.429-30):

What? Shall an oath make thee forsake my love?

As if I have not sworn as much myself

And given my hand unto him in the church!
 Tush, Mosby! Oaths are words, and words is wind,
 And wind is mutable. Then, I conclude,
 'Tis childishness to stand upon an oath. (433-38)

While I do not claim that the play upholds Alice's conclusion, the chain of metaphors she links together to work her way toward it--words spoken on the breath as mutable as the wind, hardly a foundation for standing upon--is compelling. And her verbal trick here is realized physically onstage with the prayerbook she makes mutable.

The play may not realize the prayerbook's actual destruction. But even to imagine the transformation of a bound and sewn object like a book into something more fluid may yet have theatrical force. At least the event, or the claim to perform it, facilitates the play's inquiry into the ontology of objects. For if *Arden's* prayerbook has the potential to present in performance other prayerbook props from its related plays, then, metatheatrically, it may also stand in for another book in some ways very like Alice's patched up love book: the playbook, any playbook. Stern asks

to what extent actors were given an accurate version of their section of the 'book' [the playbook] anyway, whatever the 'book' was. . . . Here it should be borne in mind that the creation of parts, an act of massive textual proliferation in which every play was rendered into as many documents as there were characters, . . . had the potential to produce great textual difference even if the scripts were then learnt with minute accuracy. (Stern, *Documents* 238)

The playbook's ontology is in constant flux, and all the more so then are the performances it authors. Stern argues that "what an actor brought to rehearsal was not a part to

be worked on, but a completed performance often bolstered by outside authority." But she also argues that "they sometimes counteracted this by modifying their lines in performance, using extemporization and textual change as a means of asserting themselves in their parts against the restraints of enforced action" (*Rehearsal* 70). We may never discover how the original boy actor handled his stage props during *Arden's* trial and subsequent performances. But against its ostensible Protestant aesthetics, the play applauds the boy who exploits his creative powers onstage, *pace* Hamlet and his advice to his players. It thematizes the boy actor's potential agency in performance. Alice's transgressive way with her prayerbook and her subversive reading of the evidence of her husband's corpse undermine the authority of the Book, and undermine the authority of the playtext's title page. Her actions privilege her words and her own interpretation of the parts and roles she performs--a metatheatrical nod to the actor who performs her.

CHAPTER THREE

Props Written and Read: Daughters and Desire in *Pericles*

A "woman," it seems, must die in order to get a Life.
Virginia Burrus, *The Sex Lives of Saints* (12)

MARINA: Yet I was mortally brought forth, and am / No other than I appear.
William Shakespeare, *Pericles* (5.1.99-100)

I. Solving Problems: Inscribing Props and Identifying Daughters

Props in *Arden of Faversham* highlight dangerous ways of seeing. Props in Shakespeare's *Pericles* structure ways of reading and misreading. Some props, as commonplace as letters or as solitary as a monument, are inscribed and meant to deliver information or commands. Others with more elliptical text, such as a riddle or heraldic shields, are meant likewise to be read but also require sophisticated interpretative skills. Some props are not inscribed with text, but they are still pointedly read. Heads of decapitated suitors are meant by a king to signify warnings to other live suitors. And like the inscribed props, props without text can be misread as well as read: fishermen identify the object in their net as a fish when it is in fact a coat of armour.

This chapter looks at the props whose reading and misreading entail mortal consequences for daughters. As characters read and speak the words inscribed on a riddle, heraldic shields, a passport, and a monument, spectators on- and offstage are given to understand that the texts purport to describe and/or script the behaviour of these daughters. Thus props in action drive scenes that illustrate the girls' inscription into patriarchy, where they are identified in ways that inhibit their agency. To identify someone, as Linda Charnes says, "is to attempt to secure meaning, to erase multiplicity and eliminate indeterminacy--to 'fix' that person, so to speak" (8). Actions of reading these props enact a patriarchy's means of interpellating its subjects,

foregrounding the violence inflicted upon daughters who are identified first and foremost as the property of their fathers and kings.¹¹⁵

Most of the props in *Pericles* are brought onstage in association not with the titular hero but with the play's three royal daughters. The first daughter spectators see, notably not identified by name but assigned a speech prefix reading "DAUGHTER," is sought for marriage by Pericles, Prince of Tyre, but suborned to incest by her father, King Antiochus of Antioch. The decapitated heads of suitors, the riddle, and also poison, gold, and a pistol, relate to this daughter and to the subsequent events her marriage test inaugurates. Her death will later be reported by a character and confirmed in the epilogue. A second daughter, Thaisa, leaves the palace of her father, King Simonides of Pentapolis, to marry Pericles. She appears to die in labour aboard ship; her casket is thrown overboard, and it washes ashore in Ephesus. Most props in act 2 relate to the festivities that orchestrate Thaisa's betrothal--the shields brought in by the knights, and the food, drink, banquet table, chairs, and lights provided for the celebrants. Props in act 3 also relate to Thaisa, now a wife and mother: a pen, ink, and paper help Pericles write a passport to accompany Thaisa's apparent corpse, along with spices and a cloth of state. Boxes, napkins, fire, and a viol are called for by the mage, Cerimon, so that he may restore her to life.

A third daughter, Marina, born at sea to Thaisa and Pericles, is left with the king and queen of Tarsus, set on to be murdered by the queen, captured by pirates, and sold to a brothel in Mytilene. There, she talks her way out of the hands of men and into a home of women on the

¹¹⁵ Frederick Kiefer also observes that *Pericles* pays close attention to the appearance of the written word: "it takes a variety of forms, including a riddle, an impresa, a message in a coffin, an inscription on a tomb." For Kiefer, "[e]ach of these artful constructions describes or applies to one or another young woman who, by her appearance, evokes the personification of nature herself" (196). Kiefer argues that Shakespeare's synthesis of human and artifact "clarifies the subtle relationship between art and nature" (196). See Kiefer's appendices for useful overviews of "Elizabethan Literacy," "Written and Printed Words on the Stage," "The Pragmatic Value of Property Letters," and "Books and Written Materials as Symbols."

seashore, where she teaches her many arts. She is reunited with her parents, and her father betroths her to the governor of Mytilene. A monument commemorates her death for her father in Tarsus, and flowers and money flow in and out of her hands while she lives in Tarsus and Mytilene. Props related to Pericles and his travels are the exception to this pattern of props and daughters. One fisherman gives a gown to a soaked Pericles cast ashore at Pentapolis, and another catches his father's armour in a net. A pillow is brought for Pericles' head once he is reunited with Marina and overcome by joy in Mytilene. At the end of the play, in Ephesus, Thaisa recognizes the ring her father gave Pericles upon their departure from Pentapolis.

Pericles has drawn a wealth of scholarship on the family dynamics it dramatizes.¹¹⁶

Constance Jordan looks at how *Pericles* alludes to contemporary political and social conditions. She shows to what extent a political metaphor employed by James I that situates the monarch as father to his children (subjects) and husband to his wife (the commonwealth) translates children and wives into possessions or properties.¹¹⁷ The play is itself a family member in terms of genre, one of the four late Shakespearean plays, including *A Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*, and *The*

¹¹⁶ For overviews of the scholarship on *Pericles*, see Gossett, Introduction 106-61 and Skeeel.

¹¹⁷ See Williams, "Papa" and *Shakespeare* 102-8. Williams looks at daughterhood and fatherhood through Marina and Pericles in the context of the play's focus on incest and its use of the medieval figure John Gower as Chorus. On Gower and *Pericles*, see also Cooper "Worthy"; Driver; Hillman 106-23; Egan 86-91; and Jones. Gossett addresses the play's themes of ambivalent fatherhood and parental love developed by the relations within and interactions between two main families, including Cleon, Dionyza, and daughter, Philoten ("You"); Campana considers the implications of Marina as possibly "the most trafficked figure in Shakespeare's works" (50). The play's expression of contemporary anxieties over maternal sexualities and Oedipal desire are addressed in psychoanalytic studies by Adelman; Kahn; and Nevo, and in the context of Shakespeare's use of Diana of Ephesus by Bicks; and Hart. Dowd argues that the play exposes contemporary concerns with patrilineage and roaming heiresses, featuring four families without male issue. See also Novy, who considers the contemporary phenomenon of multiple parenting in a play that divides several parents and foster parents into the good and the evil. On the theology of *Pericles*, see Beckwith 85-103, Finkelstein, Kaytor, and Richmond.

Tempest, that were first defined as romances in the nineteenth century by Edward Dowden.¹¹⁸

The predominant romance motif of seafaring and shipwreck is the focus of much rich study: some scholars focus on the sea as emblem and metaphor,¹¹⁹ others on the materiality of the sea.¹²⁰ Likewise, scholars consider how props function in *Pericles* both as material and emblematic objects. Joanne Rochester, who addresses the play's resemblance to the Digby *Mary Magdalene*,¹²¹ shows how props help locate audiences from scene to scene in a play that puts "the audience, . . . like *Pericles*, at sea, always in danger of being lost in the tale" (50). Props such as the fishermen's nets locate the action at the seashore, for example. Julia Reinhard Lupton

¹¹⁸ For studies of the romance genre, see Parker, who focuses on the implications of romance's deferred endings and its intervals of wandering between quest and end; Beer, who gives an introduction to romance from medieval to post-Romantic literatures; and Fuchs, who explores romance as a mode. See also Werth for romance after the reformation. See Mentz, *Romance*, for Elizabethan romance prose fiction in the context of early modern print culture and book markets.

For overviews of the scholarship devoted to Shakespeare and romance, see Greenhalgh; Lamb and Wayne; and Thorne. For studies of Shakespeare and romance, see Mowat, *Dramaturgy*, who looks at how Shakespeare's romances shape a vision of life with an emphasis on the overthrow of illusions of human reason and control; McDonald, who explores the implications of Shakespeare's late style with its elliptical lines and gnomic plots; Lyne for Shakespeare's turn to skepticism; and Cutts, who took an early stand against conceptions of Shakespearean romance figures as innocents abroad on pastoral islands conducting the affairs of chivalric combat and romance. For Cutts, *Pericles* is "a figure of varying degrees of disorder and discord" (10).

¹¹⁹ See Roychoudhury, who looks at the "tempest-tossed self" in the context of the renaissance use of the marine tropes "*mare malorum* (sea of troubles) and *tempestas mentis* (tempest of the mind)" (1014-15). See also Peterson, who considers how the tempest functions as an emblem of adversity in *Pericles*; Dewar-Watson; and Hall, who both look at the sea as an instrument and metaphor of transformation; and Hopkins, who studies the play's correlation of sea borders and sea journeys with borders and journeys of the mind.

¹²⁰ Mulready shows how the early modern English used the resources offered by romance narratives to conceive of its seafaring--its commercial and imperial exploits. Mentz, on the other hand, looks to Shakespeare to help a postmodern world reconceive of its oceans and its exploitation of them, calling for a "blue cultural studies" (*At the Bottom* ix, xii). Mentz turns to *Pericles* to argue that the life Marina suffers can "demonstrate the power of coming to terms with the sea," even as "the usual supports of human culture" are of little help in "living in an oceanic world" (69). See also Mentz, *Shipwreck*; and Brayton, who looks at Shakespeare's depiction of the relationship between humanity and the ocean in the context of marine environmental history.

¹²¹ On the resemblance of the Digby play's episodes featuring the King and Queen of Marseilles to *Pericles*, see Mowat, "'What's'" and Womack.

thinks about the labour that produces "Pericles' rusty armor, withered branch, and fishnet stockings," suggesting that these "imperfect restitutions . . . can be bid to tell a story [about] human inventiveness" (Reinhard Lupton 78).

Props also contribute to the pointedly emblematic nature of the play, as Rochester argues, showing how "props emblematically mark locations," for instance: "The severed heads mark Antioch as a place of death and tyranny," and the knights' devices "associat[e] Pentapolis with chivalry and virtue" (53).¹²² Several scholars notice how the things in *Pericles* encourage emblematic readings of the whole play,¹²³ and how the play fashions spectators as readers too: "The audience witnesses a series of emblematic tableaux, is called upon to make sense of the wooing knights' 'devices' on their shields, and listens to riddles, mottoes and endless aphorisms, especially ones about the abusive operations of power and kingship" (Healy 58).¹²⁴

Further to reading the props emblematically, and as material objects of contemporary significance, I look at the effects of reading those props. I argue that scenes of characters reading inscribed props point metatheatrically to the stage action of mimetic theatre. The readers of props in *Pericles* speak lines written by other characters who have authored the props' inscriptions, just as actors speak lines written by a playwright. The lines written on the prop dramatize a conflict, between the authors and the readers of the texts, over the claims the inscriptions make about the

¹²² See also Dunbar, who identifies the heads of the dead suitors with the *memento mori* tradition and suggests that the unnamed daughter herself is described as an emblem: a "glorious casket stor'd with ill" (87).

¹²³ See Hanna, who considers the play's use of the emblem of Patience in the context of Christian iconography. Preston makes a case for the structure of the play itself as emblematic with its alternating verbal and visual accounts of the action; and Hunt argues that the play explores the emblematic imagination only to assert "the limits of an emblematic way of knowing" (16).

¹²⁴ See also Bergeron, who notices that many Shakespearean romance characters attempt to comprehend, if not master, the events that occur over which they have no control by writing. He argues that the romances, especially, "depend on the intrusion of 'bookish authority' for their resolution" (160).

characters whose identities they describe. Thus, the play's metatheatres throws into relief a contest for authority between a playtext (an author's lines) and the actors (readers) who perform its lines. As scenes of reading props play out, *Pericles* asserts the limits of authority that dramatic text exercises over the actors who incarnate textual characters, and over the stage properties written to drive those scenes.

To study the play's theatrical ontologies is to produce what I call non-anthropocentric readings of all the things on its stage: its characters and its objects, its actors and its properties. This depends on the early modern idea of a great chain of being, premised upon a divinely planned hierarchical order, which, I suggest, can correspond to the stage as a kind of microcosm. That is, a stage hierarchy privileges an author (the god who creates) over the actor/character (the human) over the stage property (the animal/plant/mineral/element). I argue that *Pericles* looks at the human and non-human things on its stage in ways that foreground only to undermine what one might call a typically anthropocentric view of theatrical practice. That is, as a play's characters create and/or use objects that come to hand as tools to solve their problems, so authors and actors create and/or use props as theatrical resources to make meaning. But in *Pericles* the play's props do not necessarily serve an author, a character, or an actor.

Ostensibly, characters in *Pericles* use the objects the props represent to solve their problems. King Antiochus' problem is the suitors who want to marry his daughter. The riddle he devises for them to read brings about their beheading. Simonides' problem is that Thaisa must marry. He invites knights to identify themselves to her by presenting her with their shields whereby she may choose a suitor. Pericles' problem is that his wife's apparent corpse must go overboard, and the passport he writes to accompany her body declares her dead and asks for her

proper burial. Dionyza's problem is she has no dead body to show to Pericles. The monument she creates for Marina declares her dead and dissembles the evidence she lacks.

When the props function for characters in these ways, they conform to their textual identity in *locus* mode and do what they have been scripted to do. In the *locus*, they speak about the conditions of female subjection the play represents, their texts illustrating the inscription of daughters into patriarchy. Baring themselves as stage properties in the *platea*, however, the objects do not always do what the characters who devised them intend them to do. Instead, they procure unconventional or resistant responses. These props enable such reading in *locus* and *platea* modes because the artifacts the props represent invite historically contemporary behaviours that can be recovered. The objects are therefore examples of what Robin Bernstein calls "scriptive things" (8), or "things that script a repertoire of behaviors" (19). This chapter looks not just at the text of the riddle, the form of the *imprese*, or letter-writing and monument-making conventions, but also the human behaviour or practices those things invite or discourage. As Bernstein says, "The goal is not to determine what any individual did with an artifact but rather to understand how a nonagential artifact, in its historical context, prompted or invited--scripted--actions of humans who were agential and not infrequently resistant" (8).

When props fail in various ways to do the jobs they were scripted to do, they foreground the extent to which the daughters are able to resist the identities given to them by patriarchs and claim for themselves alternate identities based upon their own desires. Antiochus' daughter does not escape the prop that binds her, and her desires remained unfulfilled. The props that confront Thaisa in 2.2 do not appear to signify for her the way they are designed to signify because the *imprese* do not procure from her the responses they are designed to produce. Instead, Thaisa claims a husband for herself despite the objects, and an identity for him with a device she writes

herself. The props in Marina's hands do not signify the way flowers in the hands of Shakespearean daughters do conventionally, for the precise reason that they are not all identified by the names humans have assigned them. As Marina's flowers elude identification, so Marina's actions do not reflect the description of the girl on her tombstone, and she resists her father's attempts to identify her. Marina's actions at the end of the play are governed by no text whatsoever. Not bound to an author's lines, a boy actor is free to improvise her into being.

As the play stages scene after scene whereby daughters resist their status as the property of their father and king, the play, as it were, releases the stage property from its job of inscribing daughters. The last scene features a lone prop that identifies a king, not a daughter. Props in action in *Pericles* question assumptions of human and divine authorship, exposing the mechanisms of inscription into the anthropocentric hierarchies upon which patriarchy depends. They interrogate the construction of hierarchies that subordinate the agency of one human to another and the agency of the non-human to the human or to the divine.

II. Constructing *Pericles*: Diffusing Authority with Plural Voices

In keeping with a play whose scenes foreground the texts of authors, only to limit the authority authors command when those texts are enacted in performance, the play's composition was a collaborative affair. The voices of many authors may be heard in *Pericles'* extant texts and sources, denying the authority of any one contributor to claim the play as his own. *Pericles'* primary source, *Confessio*, diffuses the authority of its own author, John Gower, by belatedly naming the author as one of the work's two competing narrators, Amans and Genius: Amans confesses to Venus late in book 8 that his name is John Gower (2320-22). Amans/Gower is a lover whose confession is the subject of *Confessio*, and he narrates the work's framing story. There, he receives spiritual guidance from Genius, who tells him a series of tales as exempla of

the seven deadly sins. "Apollonius of Tyre," from which *Pericles* derives, addresses the sin of lechery by focusing on incest. Maria Bullón-Fernández argues that if Genius, often seen as a mouthpiece for Gower himself, "tries to exert control over his stories," then the revelation that Amans' name is John Gower "allows Gower to reflect on Genius's authority" and question "ultimately his own authority and that of any author" (34-35).¹²⁵

Thus Shakespeare tests his own authorial agency by resurrecting the author of one of the stories he rewrote for his play, an author who tested his own authority while alive.¹²⁶ Brought into the ring with Shakespeare, so to speak, Gower as Chorus is an assertive presence. He interrupts the action of Shakespeare's play to tell his spectators what will happen before they see it. Moreover, Gower invokes the combative authorial voice of one of Shakespeare's contemporaries into the play too, as Deanne Williams points out: "Gower's self-professedly dull and prolix commentary . . . dramatizes (and satirizes) the position taken by Ben Jonson in an ongoing contemporary debate concerning the respective merits of the visual and verbal aspects of the dramatic experience" ("Papa" 599).¹²⁷

Matters concerning the printing of the play also undermine any idea of the primacy of an author. The text of the play's title page points to a tension between authors and actors, between

¹²⁵ See also Chaudhuri, who argues, "Recalled to the early modern theatre, the medieval poet enters into a kind of debate about authorship, a debate that is by no means resolved in favor of new kinds of authorial claim, but allows competing forms of authority to share the stage" (80).

¹²⁶ Shakespeare would know John Gower in body and mind: "The poet's effigy, his head resting on his three major works, was readily seen in St Saviour's, Southwark Cathedral, the parish that served those associated with the playhouses along with those employed in local brothels." Shakespeare could access *Confessio* in manuscript and in printed editions by William Caxton or Thomas Berthelette (Driver 317).

¹²⁷ See also 610-12. Jonson, of course, wrote the notorious critique of *Pericles* as "some mouldy tale" (21).

printed text and the play's performance. *Pericles* was first published in quarto in 1609,¹²⁸ its title page inscribed as follows:

THE LATE, / And much admired Play, / Called / Pericles, Prince / of Tyre. / With
 the true Relation of the whole Historie, / aduentures, and fortunes of the said
 Prince: / As also, / The no lesse strange, and worthy accidents, / in the Birth and
 Life, of his Daughter / *MARIANA* / As it hath been diuers and sundry times acted
 by / his Maiesties Seruants, at the Globe on / the Banck-side. / By William
 Shakespeare. / . . .¹²⁹

The performance of the play by the King's Men at the Globe receives top billing over the author of the play, William Shakespeare. While a title page typically refers to a play's theatrical performance, that reference is not necessarily privileged over the play's authorship graphically. For example, the title page for *Hamlet* Q1, 1603, announces the play's author in advance of the circumstances of its performance: "THE / Tragicall Historie of / HAMLET / *Prince of Denmarke* / By William Shake-speare. / As it hath beene diuerse times acted by his Highnesse ser- / uants in the Cittie of London . . . / and else-where / . . ." The title page for *King Lear* Q1, 1608, gives the author top billing even over the play's title: "M. William Shak-speare: / *HIS* / True Chronicle Historie of the life and / death of King LEAR and his three / Daughters. /

¹²⁸ The 1609 quarto was subsequently reprinted five times, the last time in 1635, all five of which derive with some changes from Q1, the play's sole surviving early text. The quarto's text was collected into a folio of works by William Shakespeare for the first time in the second issue of the Third Folio in 1664, joining its kindred six plays that were attributed to Shakespeare but excluded from the first edition of that collection, edited by John Heminge and Henry Condell. These plays are *The London Prodigal*, *The History of Thomas Lord Cromwell*, *Sir John Oldcastle*, *The Puritan*, *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, and *The Tragedy of Locrine*.

¹²⁹ All citations from unedited quarto editions of *Pericles* and its related texts are to the University of Victoria's *Internet Shakespeare Editions*.

. . . / *As it was played before the King's Maiestie at Whitehall. . . .*"¹³⁰

The print history of *Pericles* is also a story about two authors who may be competing or collaborating with each other. In 1605, even before the quarto was published, George Wilkins published a prose version, and thus pre-empted the publication of the play. Wilkins' book was entitled "THE / Painfull Aduentures / of *Pericles* Prince of / Tyre. / *Being* / The true History of the Play of *Pericles* as it was / lately presented by the worthy and an- / cient Poet *Iohn Gower*." Wilkins privileges the play's authorial character, "*Iohn Gower*," over the play's author William Shakespeare, who receives no mention. Rather, the name "GEORGE WILKINS" is signed as "Most desirous to be held / all yours" to "the Right Worshipfull and most worthy Gentleman Maister Henry Fermor. . . ." Nevertheless, the title page of Wilkins' text prioritizes from top to bottom the performance of the play--"as it was / lately presented." But, as it happens, Wilkins himself may also have written sections of the play.

We do not know for certain the facts of the relations among Wilkins, Shakespeare, the play's manuscript for performance, and the 1609 quarto of *Pericles*. Stephen Orgel hypothesizes that Wilkins wrote the first two acts, and Shakespeare, "liking the plot, . . . touched them up and finished the play" (Introduction 606). Wilkins himself may have borrowed the earlier work of another author, Laurence Twine, whose work was entered into the Stationers' Register in 1576, published c.1594 and republished in 1607: *The Pattern of Painful Adventures*. Twine's title page introduces, "the most excellent, pleasant and variable Historie of the strange accidents that befell unto Prince Apollonius, the Lady Lucina his wife, and Tharsia his daughter." Twine extracted the Apollonian tale from the Latin *Gesta Romanorum*, one of John Gower's sources for his "Apollonius of Tyre" too. François de Belleforest's *Histoires tragiques* (1559-1583), a multi-

¹³⁰ Title pages from *Hamlet* and *King Lear* are transcribed from *ISE*.

volume project, offers another version of the Apollonius story in volume 7. Twine's *Painful Adventures* also bears possible traces of Sir Philip Sidney's *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, printed in 1593. Editors agree that Sidney's hand contributes to the tournament scenes in act 2 and may have prompted Shakespeare to change the protagonist's name "Apollonius" to "Pericles," given Sidney's protagonist "Pyrocles." Plutarch's voice is heard as well, channeled by Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans* (1579), who relates the life and times of the great Athenian statesman, Pericles.

For traditional Shakespeare source studies, *Pericles* is a problem. As Lori Humphrey Newcomb remarks, "the textual and intertextual descent of *Pericles* attracts charges of illegitimacy, misbegetting, and even incest" (24). But importantly she argues that "[t]he set of Pericles tales did not ask early modern audiences to . . . isolate singular sources or master authors" (41). In fact, the play's creation produces the problems the play explores about assuming, assigning, and responding to authority, particularly textual authority.

III. Diffusing Authority: Voices of the Riddle in Antioch

The polyvocality and multihandedness of the play's authorship is reflected in the exaggerated theatrical polyphony of the first scene, where a riddle inscribed upon a scroll written by one character in the voice of another is read aloud by yet another. The riddle session sets a pattern for scenes of reading inscribed props, where reader/actors resist the texts they are given to perform. In 1.1, reader/actor Pericles eludes the limits of the riddle session that King Antiochus creates for him, but the king's daughter remains bound by the identity the riddle's text inscribes. The play's chorus, "Ancient Gower," explains why the king wants to set a trap for his daughter and her suitors in the first place: "Antiochus the Great" took a wife, who died and left him a daughter

"[s]o buxom, blithe, and full of face" that her "beauty . . . / Made many princes thither frame, / To seek her as a bedfellow" (1.Cho.17, 23, 31-33).¹³¹ But Antiochus has "provoke[d]" his child "to incest" (26), and his daughter's suitors initiate a crisis that befalls any father "bent on retaining, not exchanging, his daughter," as Linda E. Boose puts it (30).

Antiochus takes control of his crisis by crafting a riddle, because by convention that is what asking riddles, in formal riddle sessions, enables riddle-tellers to do (Abrahams 190-91).¹³² Riddle-tellers assert their power by asking their opponent to answer a question that is difficult or impossible to answer. As Abrahams and Dundes explain, the "image (or *Gestalt*) presented in the riddle-question is impaired and therefore, is, in most cases, undecipherable" (130-31). A riddle's image seems impaired because, content-wise, riddles often take shape in metaphor in order to sow confusion. Their answers clarify apparently obscure or puzzling relations between things. A descriptive riddle, the kind that Antiochus sets for the suitors, consists of a topic, the object "as it is allegedly described," and a "comment" or an "assertion about the topic" (Georges and Dundes

¹³¹ I follow the practice adopted by the Pelican edition, referring to this scene and others like it as "Cho." (for Chorus) and inserting act and line numbers before and after the abbreviation respectively. Gower means to tell spectators what will happen before it happens, so many of his appearances (and lines) appear in a scene external to and preceding the main action.

¹³² Shakespeare makes use of riddles and riddle sessions throughout his career. See Cook for her book-length study of riddles and enigmas in imaginative writing, including Shakespeare. Gorfain published a series of articles reflecting her sustained interest in and a structural approach to riddles in Shakespeare. They explore how Shakespeare adapts their structures and strategies, analyzing the effects of riddling in several plays. See Mullaney 116-34 for treasonous language through amphibology in Shakespeare, especially *Macbeth*. See also Defaye, who writes on enigma in *Pericles*, *Merchant*, and *All's Well That Ends Well*. For riddles in *Merchant of Venice*, see Belsey "Love"; Oz; and Horwich. In *Hamlet*, see Holdefer; In *Cymbeline*, see Wickham; in *Romeo and Juliet*, see Sohmer; in *Twelfth Night*, see Cox; Hassel; Hoffman-Walbeck; Pearson; Smith; and Lewis; in *Pericles*, see Egan 86-91; Goolden; Moore; Mullaney 135-51; Pitcher; and Rochester.

113).¹³³ The daughter of Antiochus is both the topic and narrator of his riddle,¹³⁴ and its answer is the narrator's incestuous relation to Antiochus:

"I am no viper, yet I feed
 On mother's flesh which did me breed.
 I sought a husband, in which labor
 I found that kindness in a father.
 He's father, son, and husband mild;
 I mother, wife, and yet his child.
 How they may be, and yet in two,
 As you will live, resolve it you."

(1.1.65-72)

The riddle takes no great labour to interpret after the first four lines, as scholars note: A daughter who finds a husband in her father thus feeds on her mother's flesh. The following two lines "can be clarified by understanding 'son' and 'mother' as 'son-in-law' and 'mother-in-law'" (Gossett, Introduction 134). Suitors who fail correctly to answer Antiochus lose their heads.

But Shakespeare modifies this scene as it occurs in Gower's book to complicate the power structures of riddle-telling, altering both the text and the delivery of the riddle. On the left below is Gower's riddle-text from book 8, "Apollonius of Tyre," to compare with Shakespeare's version, again, on the right. Both riddles are narratives, whose narrators are also each riddle's topic, taking the subject position "I":

¹³³ Other kinds of riddles, for instance, do not give enough information.

¹³⁴ Riddle topics, of course, are not necessarily human. An early very simple descriptive riddle reads: "Twenty-fo' horses set upon a bridge," and the answer is "teet' in yer gum" (Georges and Dundes 113).

"With felonie I am upbore,
 I ete and have it nought forbore
 Mi modres fleissh, whos housebonde
 Mi fader forto seche I fonde,
 Which is the Son ek of my wif.
 Hierof I am inquisitif;
 And who that can mi tale save,
 Al quyt he schal my doghter have;
 Of his ansuere and if he faile,
 He schal be ded withoute faile.
 Forthi my Sone," quod the king,
 "Be wel avised of this thing,
 Which hath thi lif in jeupartie." (405-17)

The Riddle.

"I am no viper, yet I feed
 On mother's flesh which did me breed.
 I sought a husband, in which labor
 I found that kindness in a father.
 He's father, son, and husband mild;
 I mother, wife, and yet his child.
 How they may be, and yet in two,
 As you will live, resolve it you."

(1.1.64 s.d.-72)

The descriptive elements look similar from one text to the other, although their rendition in *Confessio* is notoriously baffling. P. Goolden turns to an earlier Latin prose romance, *Apollonius of Tyre*, which survives in some hundred manuscripts, to offer a coherent translation: "I am carried along by crime, I feed on my mother's flesh, I seek my brother, my mother's husband, my wife's son and I do not find" (246). The significant difference is that all versions of the riddle earlier than and including Gower's agree in assigning the "I" of the riddle to Antiochus. He is the riddle's narrator. But Shakespeare assigns the "I" of the riddle to the daughter; she is the riddle's narrator, not Antiochus. Gower's king takes responsibility for the incest that occurs in the palace of Antioch: he claims the crime of feeding on a mother's flesh as his own. Shakespeare's king transfers the responsibility and desire for incest to his daughter by forging her subjectival voice--

the "I" in the riddle text, which he, not his daughter, writes (1.Cho.35-38). The text illustrates the inscription of its daughter, whose voice is usurped and counterfeited by her king and father.

The delivery of the riddle, however, enacts a diffusion of the king's authority in Shakespeare's play that does not occur in Gower's book. In *Confessio*, Antiochus is not only author and narrator of the riddle, but also the riddle-teller: Antiochus asks Apollonius the riddle question directly (8.402-5). In Shakespeare's version, Antiochus is author of the riddle; the daughter the narrator; but Pericles is the riddle-teller. The play text does not describe how Pericles receives the riddle; its arrival is not announced by a stage direction that instructs what it looks like or how it is brought to the stage. But in all of *Pericles'* variant quartos, the stage prop is made manifest by *mise en page* (Sig. A3v in Q1). See figures 3 through 6 for the lines devoted to the riddle in facsimiles of different editions of the play. One can compare the riddle lines in the quarto, the third and fourth folio editions, and the first collected plays edition in the eighteenth century by Nicholas Rowe. The words materializing a riddle-bearing prop on stage distinguish themselves from the words preceding and following them by appearing centre-page in italic characters.

In figures 3 through 6, words that look like a title, "The Riddle," precede a body of verse that composes the enigma, a series of rhyming tetrameter couplets.¹³⁵ A playreader might expect the words *The Riddle* be set apart typographically to distinguish them from the riddle text proper, the dialogue meant by the actor playing Pericles to read aloud as the "conclusion" that Antiochus demands he "expound": "I am no Viper, yet I feed . . ." (A3v). In fact, most contemporary editors emend the original text in such a manner. Either "The Riddle" is set in roman, and the lines of

¹³⁵ The 1609 (first and second), 1611, 1619, 1630 (fifth and fifth variant) and 1635 quartos are available to compare online at the British Library's *Treasures in Full: Shakespeare in Quarto* <<http://special-1.bl.uk/treasures/SiqDiscovery/ui/search.aspx>>.

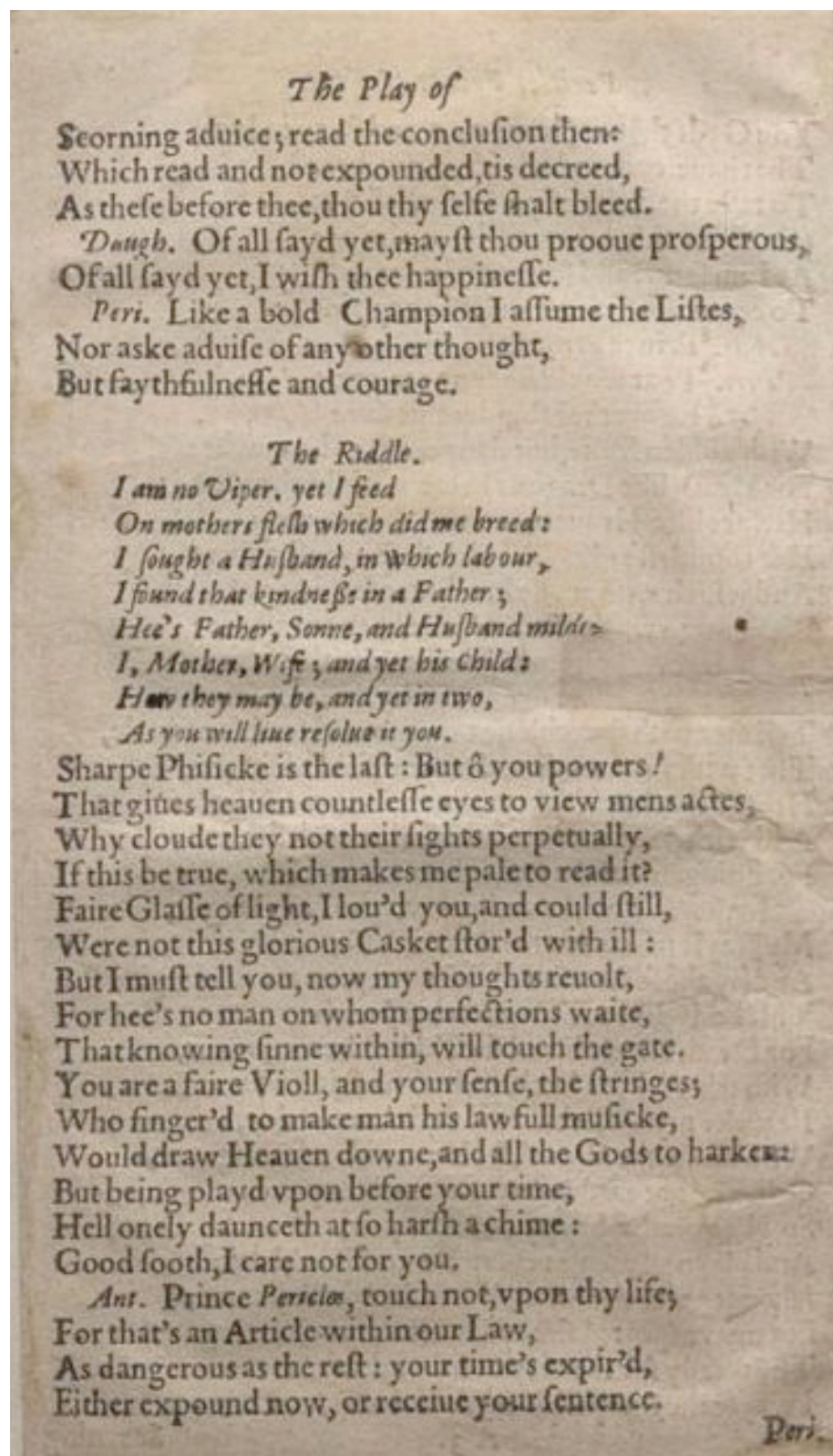


Figure 3. *Pericles*, Quarto 1 (1609) British Library, London. This facsimile and the following copies below are from *Internet Shakespeare Editions*. University of Victoria, 31 Mar. 2015. <internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Library/Texts/Per/>

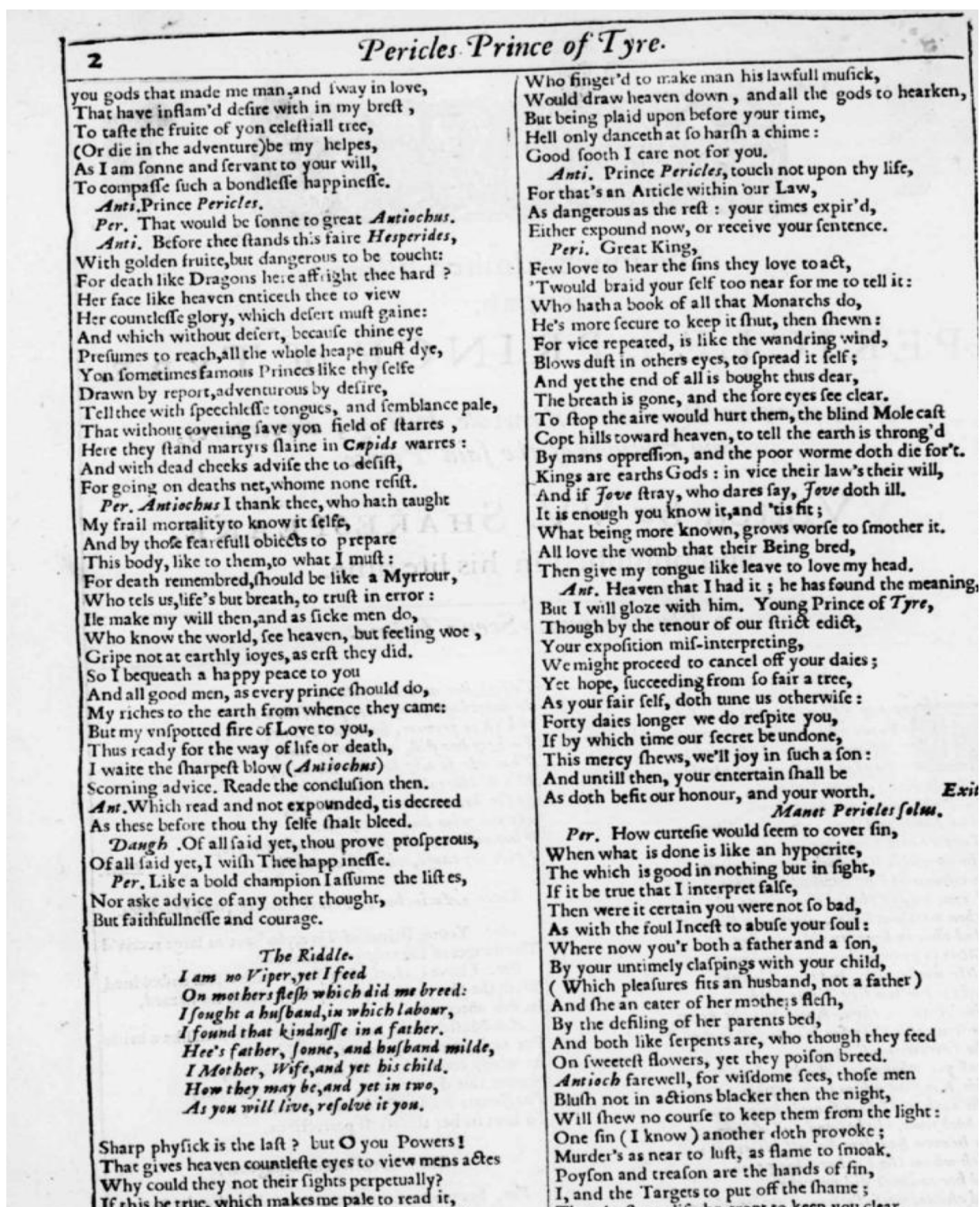


Figure 4. Third Folio (1664). State Library of New South Wales.

Actus Primus. Scena Prima.

Enter Gower.

TO sing a Song that old was sung,
From ashes ancient Gower is come,
Assuming mans infirmities,
To glad your Ear and please your Eyes;

It hath been sung at Festivals,
On Ember Eves, and Holy-Days,
And Lords and Ladies in their lives,
Have read it for restoratives.

The purchase is to make men glorious.
Et bonum quo Antiquius, eo melius.

If you, born in these latter times,
When Wits more ripe, accept my Rhimes;

And that to hear an old man sing,
May to your wishes pleasure bring:

I life would wish, and that I might
Waste it for you like Taper light.

This Antioch, then, Antiochus the great,
Built up this City for his chiefest seat;

The fairest in all Syria.

I tell you what mine Authors say:

This King unto him took a Peer,
Who died, and left a Female Heir,

So bucksome, blithe, and full of face,
As Heaven had lent her all his grace:

With whom the Father liking took,
And her to incest did provoke.

Bad Child, worse Father, to entice his own.

To evil should be done by none:

But custom, what they did begin,

Was with long use, counted no sin.

The beauty of this sinful Dame,

Made many Princes thither frame,

To seek her as a Bed fellow,

In marriage pleasures, Play fellow:

Which to prevent, he made a Law,

To keep her still, and men in awe,

That who so ask her for his Wife,

His Riddle sold not, lost his life:

So for her many a wight did die,

As you grim looks do testifie.

What ensues to the judgment of your Eye,

I give my cause, who best can testifie.

[Exit.

Enter Antiochus, Prince Pericles, and Followers.

Ant. Young Prince of Tyre, you have at large receiv'd
The danger of the task you undertake.

Per. I have (*Antiochus*) and with a Soul emboldned
With the glory of her praise, think death no hazard,
In this enterprize.

Ant. Musick bring in our Daughter, clothed like a Bride
For embracements, even of *Jove* himself;
At whose conception, till *Lucina* reign'd,
Nature this dowry gave, to glad her presence,
The Senate House of *Planets* all did fit,
To knit in her their best perfections.

Enter Antiochus Daughter.

Per. See where she comes, apparell'd like the Spring,
Graces her Subjects, and her thoughts the King,
Of every virtue gives renown to men:
Her Face the Book of praises, where is read.
Nothing but curious pleasures as from thence,
Sorrow were ever rackt, and testy wrath

Could never be her mild Companion.
You gods that made me man, and sway in love,
That have inflam'd desire within my Brest,
To taste the fruit of yon celestial Tree,
(Or die in the adventure) be my helps,
As I am Son and Servant to your will,
To compass such a boundless happiness.

Ant. Prince *Pericles*.*Per.* That would be Son to great *Antiochus*.

Ant. Before thee stands this fair *Hesperides*,
With golden fruit, but dangerous to be toucht:
For Death like Dragons here affright thee hard?

Her Face like Heaven enticeth thee to view
Her countless glory, which desert must gain:
And which without desert, because thine Eye
Presumes to reach, all the whole heap must die,

You sometimes famous Princes like thy self
Drawn by report, adventurous by desire,
Tell thee with speechless tongues, and semblance pale,
That without covering save yon field of Stars,

Here they stand Martyrs slain in *Cupid's* Wars:

And with dead Cheeks advise thee to desist,
For going on Deaths Net, whom none resist.

Per. *Antiochus* I thank thee, who hath taught
My frail mortality to know it self,

And by those fearful objects to prepare
This Body, like to them, to what I must:

For Death remembered, should be like a Mirroure,
Who tells us, life's but breath, to trust in error:

I'll make my will then, and as sick men do,
Who know the World, see Heaven, but feeling woe,

Gripe not at Earthly Joys, as erst they did.
So I bequeath a happy peace to you

And all good men, as every Prince should do,
My riches to the Earth from whence they came:

But my unspotted fire of Love to you,
Thus ready for the way of Life or Death,

I wait the sharpest blow (*Antiochus*)
Scorning advice. Read the conclusion then.

Ant. Which read and not expounded, 'tis decreed
As these before thou thy self shalt bleed.

Daugh. Of all said yet, thou prove prosperous,
Of all said yet, I wish Thee happiness.

Per. Like a bold Champion I assume the Lists,
Nor ask advice of any other thought,
But faithfulness and courage.

The Riddle.

I am no Viper, yet I feed
On Mothers flesh which did me breed:
I sought a Husband, in which labour,
I found that kindness in a Father.
He's Father, Son, and Husband mild,
I Mother, Wife, and yet his Child.
How they may be, and yet in two,
As you will live, resolve it you.

Sharp Physick is the last? but O you Powers!
That gives Heaven countless Eyes to view mens acts
Why could they not their lights perpetually?
If this be true, which makes me pale to read it,
Fair glass of light, I loved you, and could fill,
Were not this glorious Casket stor'd with ill:
But I must tell you, now my thoughts revolt,
For he's no man on whom perfections wait;
That knowing sin within, will touch the Gate:
You are a fair Viol, and your fence the strings,
Who finger'd to make man his lawful musick,

Would

Figure 5. Fourth Folio (1685). Slate Library of New South Wales.

2850 Pericles, Prince of Tyre.

Ant. Which read and not expounded, 'tis decreed
As these before so thou thy self shalt bleed.

Hesp. Of all said yet, may thou prove prosperous,
Of all said yet, I wish thee happiness. [Ex. Hesperides.]

Per. Like a bold Champion I assume the Lists,
Nor ask advice of any other thought,
But faithfulness, and courage.

The Riddle.

*I am no Viper, yet I feed
On Mother's flesh which did me breed:
I sought a Husband, in which labour,
I found that kindness in a Father.
He's Father, Son, and Husband mild,
I Mother, Wife, and yet his Child.
How they may be, and yet in two,
As you will live, resolve it you.*

Sharp Physick is the last? but O you Powers!
That gives Heav'n countless Eyes to view Mens acts,
Why could they not their sights perpetually?
If this be true, which makes me pale to read it,
Fair Glass of light, I lov'd you, and could still,
Were not this glorious Casket stor'd with ill:
But I must tell you, now my thoughts revolt;
For he's no Man on whom perfections wait,
That knowing Sin within, will touch the Gate:
You're a fair Viol, and your sense the strings,
Who finger'd to make Man his lawful Musick,
Wou'd draw Heav'n down, and all the gods to hearken,
But being plaid upon before your time,
Hell only danceth at so harsh a chime:
Good sooth I care not for you.

Ant. Prince Pericles, touch not upon thy Life,
For that's an Article within our Law,
As dangerous as the rest: Your time's expir'd,
Either expound now, or receive your Sentence.

Per. Great King,
Few love to hear the Sins they love to act,
'Twould braid your self too near for me to tell it;
Who hath a Book of all that Monarchs do,
He's more secure to keep it shut, than shewn:

For

Figure 6. *The Works of Mr. William Shakespeare*, edited by Nicholas Rowe, vol. 6 (1709). Boston Public Library.

verse in italics, as one can see in Rowe's edition. Or, as Stephen Orgel sets it for the Pelican edition, "The riddle" appears in italics and the riddle text in roman. But the centering of text and the undifferentiated typography of the riddle titles and texts in the quartos and folios suggest that one particular riddle--the one about Antiochus and his daughter--has for a title *A Riddle*.

Certainly, abbreviated folkloric devices such as proverbs, adages, and riddles, often collected in books as riddles are, might feature their generic names as titles: "An Adage," "A Proverb." But in *Pericles*, "The riddle" is embedded in text with theatrical codes of writing and reading. Thus the words fashioned as if they were the riddle's title would then appear to prompt, peculiarly, the actor playing Pericles to read aloud "The Riddle" before the rest of his lines that articulate Antiochus' riddle.

However, *The Riddle* is not dialogue and even not as much a stage direction as it is a "scribe-direction." Tiffany Stern explains that the italic lettering of generic headings like *the letter, a song, or epitaph*, indicate a scroll, not dialogue (*Documents* 181). Words like *The Riddle* "belong to a pre-performative moment when the play is yet to be divided into [actors'] parts and scrolls. They are forms of direction to the person who will write out the scroll in the first place: the scroll-scribe." Scrolls are extracted from the playbook and delivered to actors to be read onstage (Stern, *Documents* 182). Shakespeare takes advantage of his theatre's use of a scroll-scribe to highlight the distinction he makes between the riddle's author and the riddle's reader, transferring the riddle materially from author (typically the riddle teller) to the one who must answer the riddle (who in this play, also tells the riddle).

The effect of Shakespeare's revision of Gower's verbal riddle into a material riddle is to dilute the primacy of the Gowerian king's authorial "I," fortified as it is by all the riddle's antecedents. The travel of the scroll from a courtier's or the king's hand into the hand of Pericles

points at this scene's amplified theatrical ventriloquism, what Seth Lerer would call Shakespeare's "theatre of the letter." Addressing the scene in *Hamlet* where Polonius reads aloud (to Claudius and Gertrude) Hamlet's poem to Ophelia, Lerer argues that the scene "shows Hamlet as a writer," but audiences hear Hamlet "not in his own voice but ventriloquized through that of another. . . . It dramatizes exactly how drama is performed from script--not just from the memory of the actor, but from the hand of the character" (845, 844).¹³⁶ Pericles reads lines written by another, as Polonius does when he reads aloud Hamlet's poem. But furthermore, the lines Pericles reads aloud, which are written by another, express yet one more voice, the daughter's (even as it is forged). Whereas the riddle's content confounds the kinship relations between the characters of the play's fiction in the first scene, the materiality of the riddle as theatrical scroll confounds any direct relation between the "I"s and the voices of the scene's three main characters and their actors. The voice of the "I" that the actor who plays Pericles speaks is at once the actor's own voice as well as that of Pericles, the role the actor plays; the "I" also belongs to Antiochus, the character who wrote the riddle; and to the daughter, in whose voice the riddle was written. The authorial "I," and the power that attends it, is in this scene fragmented.

¹³⁶ See Goldberg, who theorizes the structures of a letter in terms of absence and presence. As Lerer explains in his article, "Hamlet's Poem to Ophelia and the Theater of the Letter," Stephen Orgel has asserted in response to materials in Goldberg's work that "Renaissance plays . . . seem compulsively to turn to scenes of writing, to letters and documents, to written discourse as the mode of action" (841; 858 n. 1). See Wall, who shows how scenes of writing in early modern literature draw upon metaphors that link writing and sexuality, especially feminine and fallen sexuality. She argues that some authors, like Shakespeare and Sidney, also expose and revise this trope. See also Sanders, who argues "that the inwardness revealed in reading or in writing is privileged over aspects of character revealed through dialogue" (56), even at the same time as "[t]he theatre exploited . . . anxieties about authenticity linked with books and scribal texts" (56). Stewart, on the other hand, addresses "the stuff of which [letters] are made [and] the form they take" (22). He looks at the phenomenology of letters in Shakespeare's plays, considering "letters as a theatre audience sees letters: not primarily as texts, but as material objects that move between individual characters." Stewart argues that "Shakespeare revels in contradicting the text of a letter with its physical journey" (23).

Thus, in *Pericles*, the effect of separating the riddle-text from the riddle-teller is to transfer the power that comes with being the one who asks the riddle to the one confronted by the riddle. When Pericles first greets the king and his daughter, before he reads the riddle, he is subservient. He acknowledges his place within cosmic and earthly hierarchies, vowing to the "gods that made me man, and sway in love" that "I am son and servant to your will" (1.1.20, 24). And to Antiochus, who addresses him "Prince Pericles," the prince adds: "That would be son to great Antiochus" (26-27). But when Pericles reads author Antiochus' script, rather than participate in accordance with the parameters set by the king--win the daughter or die--Pericles does neither. He goes offscript and refuses to verbalize the riddle's answer, precisely *because* he has solved it, finding an alternate answer in silence.¹³⁷ To put it another way, the riddle has not procured from Pericles the response it was supposed to. Rather than articulate the riddle's answer, Pericles critiques the conditions of the social hierarchy of which he is a part: "Kings are earth's gods," he acknowledges. But he also infers that their actions are not necessarily without vice. They are unimpeachable because they are subject to none on earth but themselves: "in vice their law's their will" (1.1.104). For Antiochus, the prop has failed to provide another head for the heap. But it does not fail to keep the daughter at home for the king.

Whereas the text of the riddle enacts this daughter's inscription, the materiality of the riddle as theatrical scroll foregrounds its consequences: she has no authoritative voice of her own with which to speak and resist her bondage. Certainly, the daughter is not entirely voiceless. She has two lines to speak, and with them, she expresses something of her desire: "Of all 'sayed yet," she says to Pericles, "mayst thou prove prosperous, / Of all 'sayed yet, I wish thee happiness"

¹³⁷ See Emig, who disagrees: ". . . if Antiochus is a bad riddler, Pericles is an incompetent reader" (147). Emig's larger point is that the three main characters, Pericles, Thaisa, and Marina all fail to establish coherent identities; with its "flat, underdeveloped characters," *Pericles* asserts "the failure of figuration proper" (151, 155).

(1.1.60-1). In fact, given Shakespeare's change to Gower's riddle-text, the boy actor who plays the daughter could simply have spoken the riddle himself as dialogue, thereby speaking as the daughter, "I am no viper . . .," directly to Pericles. But this play is pointedly aware that a daughter's speech does not mean that she has a voice. Shakespeare's use of a scroll to deliver the riddle from its author to its reader/actor materializes the daughter's voice *as* a prop delivered from one patriarch to another. This daughter is not given even a forged voice with which to speak. If she had, she would at least have been granted the attendant power of the riddle-teller. She is indeed "provoke[d]" (1.Cho.26): *pro-vocare* is not only to call forth or incite someone, but also to speak for or on behalf of someone. The riddle, as it is told about her, "fixes" her, as the act of identifying does (Charnes 8), into a kind of stasis within her parental home and bed by means of its descriptive elements, whose words articulate and perpetuate her bondage every time, ironically, a suitor reads aloud the riddle. Pericles, in turn, thus inevitably misreads her-- "this glorious casket stored with ill" (1.1.78)--and so further calcifies the grim identity crafted for her by her father, and it is fatal. The gods do not, finally, tolerate Antiochus' "heinous capital offense," as Helicanus calls it, and the daughter and king alike are subject to their vengeance, "shriveled up" by "a fire from heaven" (2.4.5-12).

IV. Negotiating Authority: The Strategies of the *Imprese* in Pentapolis

Heraldic shields, or *imprese*,¹³⁸ are brought to the stage to facilitate the marriage of the play's second daughter and inscribe her as a court subject. But Thaisa side-steps the mechanism of the shields and makes use of her own device, a letter, that asserts her desire for a suitor yet acknowledges her court subjectivity to her father. Simonides constructs a marriage test for his

¹³⁸ That is, "imprints," an Italian term given "to such 'ornamentation-books' as other people indicated by the word emblem" (Green xvii-xviii).

daughter by celebrating her birthday, whereby "princes and knights come from all parts of the world to joust and tourney for her love" (2.1.110-11). It is Thaisa's "honor . . . to entertain / The labor of each knight in his device" (2.2.14-15). The subject of the competition between suitors is not her identity, as in Antioch, but those of the knights. Therefore, just as the daughter of Antiochus is unnamed, identified instead by the riddle, stage directions identify Thaisa's suitors by number, not by name--"*First Knight*" and so forth--because they must present their identities to Thaisa in spectacular form by their shields.

Thus while *Pericles* may "look back to a medieval world in making [its] central characters questing heroes" (Warren, Introduction 20), the shields they bear do not call forth or reiterate ghost voices from their medieval past so much as they appeal to their own courtly and theatrical makers as a subject of great interest and delight. Neither John Gower nor his antecedent authors describe a parade of shields; Apollonius competes with other "yonge lusti men" whose players must be naked, as was custom for that game (8.673, 683-86). Twine's Apollonius brings himself to the king's attention by playing tennis. Shakespeare invented and embedded into his play a small-scale version of the great Accession day tilts--the rage in Queen Elizabeth's court. Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong theorize the poetics of spectacle that masques and masque-like performances in late Shakespearean drama present: "Allegory, symbol and myth are the substance of masques, . . . and meaning in this form is, in both the figurative and literal senses, dependent on how things *appear*. A viewer's understanding of the masque, moreover, depended on his ability to *read* what he saw" (11, emphasis in original).¹³⁹

¹³⁹ *Imprese* are a kind of royal plaything. According to Puttenham, the idea behind their creation is that "the courtly maker," who "was the principal artificer, having many high conceits and curious imaginations," has "leisure enough to attend his idle inventions" (190). Shakespeare's joke is that Pericles' trials at sea have *not* granted him the leisure or the means to make a spectacular show, and the other courtiers mock him for his "rusty outside" (2.2.50).

We can gather what Thaisa may see as she considers each *impresa*. Books of emblems and shield artifacts, or evidence of them, still exist.¹⁴⁰ For Thaisa to read something like these shields properly, she must understand how they are constructed. An *impresa* asserts its bearer's identity by putting in relation a figure and a motto for its spectator to interpret. An emblem, a related device, adds a final epigram that explains the relation. As Huston Diehl explains, "The motto and picture pose a riddle or enigma, which the epigram solves or explains" (*Index* 3). An *impresa*, however, having no final explanatory verse, leaves its enigmatic relationship between word and image to be resolved by its spectator.

Thaisa's performance as such a spectator, as reader/actor in this scene, might appear to a playgoer versed in poetical arts either uninformed or recalcitrant. She waits for her father to do the hard part of the reading: parsing the enigma of the motto's relation to the picture. Simonides must prompt her to begin engaging with the devices presented by five of the six knights: "Who is the first that doth prefer himself?"; "Who is the second that presents himself?"; "And what's the third? "; "What is the fourth?"; "And what's / The sixth and last. . . ?" (2.2.17, 23, 28, 31, 39-40). But Thaisa responds only to what is not enigmatic about the shields. She identifies each knight by the kingdom he serves: "A knight of Sparta," "A prince of Macedon," "The third of Antioch" (18, 24, 28). She describes the device's picture and reads aloud the motto. How the *impresa* signifies--the apt correspondence of the words to the image--is left for her father to interpret:

¹⁴⁰ Daly's survey of the emblem in early modern Europe counts "over 6,500 books of emblems and *impreses* published" (4), any one of which might contain "anywhere from a handful to over 800 printed emblems, dealing with every conceivable topic" (34). The pictures and mottos of the Fourth and Fifth knights' shields can be found in Geoffrey Whitney's 1586 *Choice of Emblems*, for instance (139a and 183a, respectively). Also, hundreds of *impresa* shields hung in the Shield Gallery at Whitehall. We know as well that Shakespeare and Richard Burbage composed and constructed the respective parts of an *impresa* for Francis Manners, the Earl of Rutland, for his entry into the Whitehall tiltyard (Young, "Note" 454). See also Young, *English Tournament and Tudor and Jacobean Tournaments*; Vanrigh; and Day.

KING. What is the fourth?

THAISA. A burning torch that's turned upside down;

The word, "Qui me alit, me extinguit."

KING. Which shows that beauty hath his power and will,

Which can as well inflame as it can kill. (2.2.31-35)

But Thaisa need not give anything like a correct answer to an *impresa* or a bearer of one, as Pericles does when he is confronted with a riddle. Rather, the devices are constructed to make an impression upon Thaisa. The props that structure the knights' tournament script a part for Thaisa whereby she may recognize herself at once as subject to king and father, and her father does warn her as much in the play: "I'll tame you; I'll bring you in subjection!" (2.5.75). The shields, like other portable epigrammatic devices, are meant, as George Puttenham theorizes, to instruct a beholder by entertaining her. That is, they are "to insinuate some secret, witty, moral, and brave purpose presented to the beholder, either to recreate his eye, or please his fantasy, or examine his judgment, or occupy his brain, or to manage his will, either by hope or by dread" (Puttenham 196). As Juliet Fleming elaborates, reading an *impresa* properly enables an *impresa* to function properly: It is an object whose "meaningful identity both causes and is produced retroactively by the 'hope and dread' within which the subjects of imperial power come to recognize themselves" (122). By reading courtly devices correctly, readers acknowledge and produce their courtly subjectivity. Presumably Simonides is "recreated," as Puttenham might observe, by the objects Thaisa is meant to "entertain" (2.2.14).

While Simonides may appear to be playing or governing Thaisa's part in reading the *impreses*, Thaisa's literal responses to their display may signal merely her indifference to their charms. The objects do not appear to signify for Thaisa; they appear to be silent for her (while, of

course, Thaisa's reactions to the *imprese* in performance are finally governed by her actor's gestures). The playtext gives no direct evidence for how a "withered branch" and a motto, "In hac spe vivo" (2.2.43-44), are interpreted as the *impresa* that merits Pericles his "wreath of victory" (2.3.10). Rather, the text indicates how Pericles impresses Thaisa by making her hungry: she finds herself "[w]ishing him my meat" (32). Thus, in this particular masque/tournament, *imprese* do not appear to be doing their job, and Thaisa, instead, plays an unexpected part. She asserts her desire and secures its object by writing her own device to her father, a letter.

If the play does not censure Thaisa for her assertion of desire and assumption of agency, some scholars do:

Romance convention decrees that [Pericles] wins the tournaments and Simondes' daughter's Thaisa's heart. Yet Thaisa, too, behaves in a dubious way. She tells her father in a letter that she will marry none but Pericles. . . . Renaissance women, particularly aristocratic ones, did not choose their own husbands, and they certainly did not blackmail their fathers, at least not in the idealized world of romances. Further noteworthy here is yet another form of indirect communication: after . . . the riddle of the opening of *Pericles*, we now have a letter, a rather impractical device for a daughter who sees her father every day.

(Emig 149)

I do not disagree with the claims Rainer Emig makes about Thaisa; Emig argues that characterization in *Pericles* as a whole fails deliberately (see n. 137). Nor do I dispute his assertion that contemporary aristocratic women did not choose their husbands. But the aristocratic writing hand is a disciplined hand, one that "pays homage to the king" (Goldberg 119), a hand that "works to maintain social difference but also to allow social mobility and the

lure of privilege to those who wield the pen" (Goldberg 134). A letter, then, is precisely the means with which Thaisa might negotiate her relations to her king and father, might acknowledge her subjectivity at the same time as she asserts her will. After all, Princess Elizabeth herself wrote such a letter to her father, King Henry VIII. In her letter, which accompanied her trilingual translation of Queen Katherine's *Prayers*, she acknowledges herself as her father's subject, "bound to your majesty." But she also asserts herself a subject like no other, because she is his daughter, reminding him that his virtues are also her own by inheritance: "May I, by this means, be indebted to you not as an imitator of your virtues but indeed as an inheritor of them" (*Elizabeth* 9-10).

The contents of Thaisa's letter are never read aloud for spectators. Rather, the play dramatizes the effects of the letter while it is read, a scene of misreading once more. Simonides gives the letter to Pericles, who misconstrues what he could have read as a love letter from Thaisa as a mortal threat, perceiving "the king's subtlety to have my life" (2.5.44). For a spectator, the letter may appear to be in *platea* mode with respect to Pericles, because its form and delivery recall the scroll that Pericles received from Antiochus, who makes no secret of the threat that comes with reading. Consequently, Pericles jeopardizes his own engagement by denying he ever "aimed so high to love your daughter" (47).

But the letter functions in *locus* mode as far as the characters Thaisa and her father are concerned because it does precisely what Thaisa meant the letter to do. She wields an inscribing pen herself and its ability to bestow identity on behalf of Pericles, at the same time as she acknowledges her subjection to Simonides. She acknowledges her father's concerns over her beloved's origins and forthwith "make[s] him noble" with her rhetoric: "Suppose his birth were base, when that his life / Shows that he is not so, yet he hath virtue, / The very ground of all

nobility, / Enough to make him noble" (Oxford ed. 9.77-80). In act 1, scenes of reading and misreading suggest a daughter's inscription into patriarchy is inevitably absolute and fatal. But act 2 offers scenes where the inscribed props ameliorate the vision of daughterhood act 1 presents. The scenes foreground a daughter's ability to negotiate her way into a kind of royal subjectivity that affords her agency. Unlike the inscribed props related to the daughter of Antiochus--and Marina, as I will show--the inscribed props in Thaisa's domain do not impose a (fixed and toxic) identity upon her. Rather, the shields and the letter prompt behavior that provides the initial grounds for the play's meditation on human identity.

V. Overturning Authorities: Identification by Passport in Ephesus

In two separate scenes in act 3, the passport prompts actions from Cerimon and Thaisa that facilitate the play's hypothesis about how humans construct identities for themselves and others. If the identity of Antiochus' daughter, as portrayed in the riddle, is entirely a construct of her father's making, both scenes in act 3 explore how an author's writing produces the author. In the first scene, reader/actor Cerimon ignores the instructions that author Pericles writes in the passport, because the passport speaks more truly about its author than its subject. In the second, Cerimon looks at the author's script, and his dialogue with Thaisa models an alternative to the formation of identity in act 1; in act 3, characters recognize rather than impose identity.

The difference between the passport and the scene of its reading in *Pericles* compared to the scene in *Confessio* highlights Shakespeare's pointed interest in the relation between writing and identity formation. In both versions, the wife of Pericles/Apollonius is thought to have died in labour while aboard a storm-tossed ship, and the shipmen insist on account of custom that the dead be thrown overboard so the storm may abate. And in both, Pericles/Apollonius puts treasure and a letter he writes to accompany the body in the casket; the casket washes ashore at Ephesus,

and Cerimon, a lord of Ephesus, discovers its contents and reads what, in *Pericles*, he calls a "passport." I compare the text of the script in the casket as it appears in *Pericles* (right) and *Confessio* (left) below. Shakespeare, unlike Gower, highlights the capacity of a letter to speak at one and the same time about both author and subject:

[*Confessio Amantis*]

"I, king of Tyr Appollinus,
 Do alle maner men to wite,
 That hierre and se this lettre write,
 That helpeles withoute red
 Hier lith a kings doghter ded:
 And who that happeth hir to finde
 For charite tak in his mynde,
 And do so that sche be begrave
 With this tresor, which he schal
 have."
 Thus whan the letter was full spoke,
 Thei haue anon the cofre stoke,
 . . .
 And thus in hope and good believe
 Of that the corps schal wel aryve,
 Thei caste it over bord als blyve.

(8.1121-1140)

[*Pericles*]

[*Reads.*]
 "Here I give to understand,
 If e'er this coffin drives aland,
 I, King Pericles, have lost
 This queen, worth all our mundane cost.
 Who finds her, give her burying;
 She was a daughter of a king.
 Besides this treasure for a fee,
 The gods requite his charity." (3.2.69-76)

King Apollonius identifies himself by name and title and as author of the text. The epitaph he writes identifies his wife's royal status by means of her paternity: "Hier lith a kings doghter ded" (1126), and he invokes her finder's charity. Notably, he does not make apparent his own bond to the body. A reader cannot garner much about Apollonius himself other than that he is the King of Tyre. The narrator reports his men are confident the corpse will arrive on land safely; he doubts only who should happen to find her, not whether she will be found.

The purpose of Pericles' letter, like that of Apollonius, is expressly to identify the subject of his letter, "This queen" (3.2.72), yet Pericles attends less to his queen than Apollonius does to his. The most direct reference to Thaisa in the passport--"She was the daughter of a king" (74)--parallels the epitaph Apollonius writes for his queen, but it is not an epitaph. The word "Here" (69) at the start of Pericles's letter, which might have begun an epitaph for Thaisa--Here lies a king's daughter--refers instead to his own letter.¹⁴¹ Pericles is as much the subject of the passport as Thaisa: the conditional "if" in its second line expresses Pericles' anxiety over whether the coffin *will* "driv[e] aland" (70), and he translates the fact of Thaisa's (apparent) death to the anguish of *his* having "lost" (71) her.

The passport does not prompt from its reader the action its author intends. By interpreting the text he reads, Cerimon receives a subjective impression and registers the grief of absent Pericles: "If thou livest, Pericles, thou hast a heart / That ever cracks for woe" (77-78). By interpreting the evidence of Thaisa's body, Cerimon recognizes that Thaisa is alive: "[L]ook how fresh she looks," he observes to the Second Gentleman, "They were too rough / That threw her in the sea" (80-81). Accustomed to "turning o'er authorities" (32), Cerimon dismisses the

¹⁴¹ As Newstok explains, "[t]he word 'here' serves as the common, even the *principal* declaration of an epitaph" (1).

instructions of the author to bury the body. By acting outside of his text, Cerimon restores Thaisa, whom the author declared dead, back to the stage.

Ironically, as Cerimon's second scene with Thaisa and her passport shows, the identification the passport facilitates correctly is the author's own. When Cerimon turns to the text once more to hand the passport to Thaisa as her property, his attention is not focused on the meaning the words construct. Rather, what arrests him is the form of the script:

CERIMON. Madam, this letter, and some certain jewels,

Lay with you in your coffer; which are

At your command. Know you the character?

THAISA. It is my lord's. (3.4.1-4)

The reading practice employed does not work to recognize words in sentences from handwritten signs, or characters, as before. At that time, when Cerimon first receives the passport from the coffin wherein Thaisa lies, he cries out: "Apollo, perfect me in the characters" (3.2.68). That is, Cerimon asks Apollo to teach him to translate the characters with which Pericles wrote the passport into words governed by syntax. But Cerimon's question--"Know you the character?"--draws on the human capacity to recognize identity from handwriting, a practice that presumes correspondent relations between a person's identity and their script.

The import of Cerimon and Thaisa's exchange seems evident: Cerimon asks Thaisa if she recognizes the script with which the letter is written, and Thaisa replies in the affirmative by identifying the handwriting as her husband's. But Cerimon's question is in some sense an odd thing to ask at all, because he has read the letter, and Pericles has identified himself there. If Cerimon is not sure Pericles wrote the letter, then he is asking Thaisa if, indeed, she recognizes the letter's characters as written by Pericles; for, if she is his wife, she would surely know his

writing hand. But Cerimon did not express doubts about whether the author was Pericles in 3.2. Suppose he is sure of the letter's author. Then he is asking Thaisa whether she knows who *she* is; for if she knows she is Thaisa, then she knows Pericles, and thus also his particular hand.

In fact, either way his question is significant because, theoretically, the writing hand of the Renaissance aristocracy was an artificial hand that conformed to copytext models, producing anonymity not particularity. As Goldberg shows, the job of Renaissance pedagogic practice was to enable the inscription of identity into hierarchical place. Goldberg locates the foundation of Elizabethan literacy in regimes under the dominion of "the kindly paternalistic figure of the pedagogue" (44), scholars such as Roger Ascham and Richard Mulcaster, who taught at grammar schools (or the schoolrooms of the royal and aristocratic children). As a teacher instructed a student in the arts of double-translation, "the pedagogic subject [was] shaped by exemplary texts" (49). Nobles learned their letters by copying from their betters, receiving an "education in inscription *as* inscription. . . . The disciplined hand conforms to its copytext models--and pays homage to the king" (118).

If a subject does not produce writing characteristic of his or her own subjectivity, but rather the Renaissance pedagogy of writing produces the noble subject, then herein lies a problem. If a recognizably noble hand must conform to the model hand, then it also becomes an anonymous hand beyond its ability to characterize nobility. Indeed, Shakespeare is already addressing the issue in *Twelfth Night*, where Maria boasts to Toby how well she can forge her mistress' hand: "I can write very like my lady your niece; on a forgotten matter we can hardly make distinction of our hands" (2.3.148-50). In this case, Maria knows and forges her mistress' hand, and Malvolio mistakes the one hand for the other. But *Pericles* acknowledges the recognition of different hands. The scene where Thaisa and Cerimon read the passport together

argues that individual identity can shine through universal models that might otherwise be used to impose identity. The scene also foregrounds a principle that may apply to theatrical practice: an actor's individuality may shine through a textual role. What is supposed theoretically here Shakespeare brings to bear dramatically in the following two acts, where the play's third daughter, Marina, is represented both by a funeral monument and a boy actor.

VI. Constructing Identity: Monumental and Anti-Monumental Marina in Tarsus and Mytilene

Marina enters the play with props: "*a basket of flowers*" (4.1.13 sd.). She calls attention to her flowers by describing them: "The yellows, blues, / The purple violets, and marigolds" (15-16). And Marina is herself symbolized as a flower in the text of her monument: "She was the chiefest flower: she was good" (Oxford ed., 18.37). Her flowers and her monument point to opposing aspects of Marina's characterization. Her monument signifies dead, textual Marina, an emblem of perfection, glorified in her absence and set on a pedestal. Marina's flowers point to live, performative Marina, a girl in action, born below deck and shipped underground. Gower teaches us how to read the monument, isolating Marina's polar identities, one as she is described and the other as she performs in the play--monumental and anti-monumental Marina.

Reader/actor Gower does not resist the text he reads as do Pericles (who does not answer the riddle), and Thaisa (who ignores a shield's enigma), and Cerimon (who disobeys the instructions in the passport). Gower does not exist as a character in the same way as Pericles, Thaisa, and Cerimon, but "stand[s] i' th' gaps to teach you, / The stages of our story" (4.4.8-9). He, like the spectators, knows the monument's text is a lie. Marina is not dead; she lives in Mytilene imprisoned in a brothel. Her monument calls attention to its lie all the more, because in

the Renaissance, epitaphs were read as transparently truthful (Newstok 145, 145 n.10), so that epitaphs onstage present themselves paradoxically as "the preeminently 'sincere' genre within the preeminently 'insincere' genre" (149).¹⁴² Epitaphs were also satirized, however, in epigrams such as "On Gullio," for instance.¹⁴³ Gower shows both how well the lie works and how, paradoxically, the monument is truthful.

Gower shows spectators the monument in *locus* mode, teaching them how its author, Dionyza, created the object to show Pericles that she and Cleon mourn their foster daughter. As Dionyza explains to Cleon: "[H]er epitaphs / In glittering golden characters express / A general praise to her, and care in us / At whose expense 'tis done" (4.3.43-46). Gower produces a dumb show that shows the prop in action: "*Cleon shows Pericles the tomb [of Marina], wherat Pericles makes lamentation, puts on sackcloth, and in a mighty passion departs*" (4.4.22 sd.). Pericles leaves Tarsus as Dionyza means him to, in the belief that she and Cleon "wept after her hearse, / And yet we mourn" (4.3.41-42). For Dionyza, the object accomplished what she meant it to do.

Gower points at the monument in *platea* mode by prioritizing the spectacle of the monument over its text. He points to it for spectators in dumb show first, noting the emotional effect it has on its onstage spectator, making even an antitheatrical point: "See how belief may suffer by foul show" (4.4.23). Only then does he read its glittering golden characters aloud. We do not know how Marina's monument was represented on stage. But I can imagine what a

¹⁴² Newstok notes that "Shakespeare's subversion of epitaphic sincerity is most pronounced in *Timon of Athens*" (164), which features contradictory reports of two epitaphs for Timon. See also Zurcher, who writes on "untimely monuments" in *The Winter's Tale* and *Pericles*; and Sherman for "countermonuments" in *The Winter's Tale* 65-88, as well as "skeptical epitaphs" in Donne and Shakespeare 153-90. For the history of inscription as a monumental art and a literary form, see Sparrow. On death and burial customs in medieval and early modern England, see Gittings; and Jupp and Gittings.

¹⁴³ See Weever, "In obitum sepulcrum Gullionis, epigram 21, second week.

spectator might see: a stone girl standing upon stone etched with golden characters that *glitter*, characters that sparkle, gleam, and shine with brilliant but broken, tremulous light, as the *OED* defines "Glittering" (v. 1a). The phenomenology of the monument undermines the semiotics of the text and belies the death of a dramatic character. The glittering script's affective force, animating the stone, refutes the death of the girl. Conjuring John Gower's literary monument to the stage, Shakespeare invents a brilliant conceit for the fourth act's juxtaposition of Marina's textual identity as an archetypal romance heroine (dead Marina) and her performative identity (live Marina).

In *locus* mode, the epitaphs assign Marina an identity built of superlatives that only an archetype can live up to. Consider the two extant versions of those epitaphs:

'The fairest, chastest, and most best lies here,
Who withered in her spring of year.
In nature's garden, though by growth a bud,
She was the chiefest flower: she was good.'
(Oxford ed., 18.34-37)

"The fairest, sweetest, and best lies here,
Who withered in her spring of year.
She was of Tyrus the king's daughter,
On whom foul death hath made this slaughter;
Marina was she called, and at her birth,
Thetis, being proud, swallowed some part o' th' earth.
Therefore the earth, fearing to be o'erflowed,
Hath Thetis' birth-child on the heavens bestowed;
Wherefore she does, and swears she'll never stint,
Make raging battery upon shores of flint."

(4.4.34-43)

On the left are those that appear in Wilkins' *Painfull Adventures*, the prose version of the story *Pericles* tells based on the play. On the right are the epitaphs as they are produced in the quarto. The epitaphs in Q1 may be over twice the length of their version in *Painfull Adventures*, but the

strategies at work in both are similar: one set glorify her, the other set mythologize her.¹⁴⁴

Textual, monumental Marina, "The fairest, sweetest, and best, . . . [w]ho withered in her spring of year" (4.4.34-35), is Gower's "absolute Marina" who "gets / All praises" (4.Cho.31-34). She is the conventional figure of romance literature: autonomous, not relative, as the *OED* defines "absolute" (adj. 1). This Marina is not relational: her actions, in the end, do not depend on the actions of others, for she is bound by her genre. No matter what the peril, a romance heroine's honour cannot be breached because her genre insists she marry according to her "innate royal identity," as Mario Digangi argues (191). Because this Marina is textual, because she belongs to Gower, she *is* "immortal" as Gower describes her (5.Cho.3), and so "[t]he fitter then the gods should have her," as Dionyza says (4.1.10).

Marina's monumental identity links her to Antiochus' daughter, who *was* taken by the gods. That daughter's "beauty," Gower reports, "[m]ade many princes thither frame, / To seek her as a bedfellow" (1.Cho.31-33); Marina's "beauty," Boulton reports, "stirs up the lewdly inclined" (4.2.137-38). Marina's peerless identity is as fatal as the other daughter's, and inscribed for her by no less a patriarch. Dionyza upholds hierarchies of beauty that function in the institutions that sustain patriarchy. These include the above-ground economy of marriage, where suitors like Pericles may seek "the purchase of a glorious beauty / From whence an issue I might propagate" (1.2.71-72); and the underground economy of the brothel, where Marina comes to understand that her beauty is the brothel's prized asset and laments, "That I am pretty" (4.2.65). Dionyza believes that Marina, beautiful and skillful, competes with her own daughter for suitors.

¹⁴⁴ The ambiguous pronoun in line 42 in Q1 ("she" in "Wherefore she does"), and the confusion of Thetis for Tethys in line 39, create a kind of familial confusion that parallels the effect of Antiochus' riddle. As Orgel explains, "Thetis was a sea nymph, the mother of Achilles, often confused, as here, with Tethys, the wife of Oceanus, god of the ocean" (n. 4.4.39). But the point is that Marina's birth is so momentous, it initiates a battle between the earth and the sea.

As Gower tells it, Dionyza and Cleon's daughter, Philoten, "[w]ould ever with Marina be," as they wove, sung, and wrote together: "This Philoten contends in skill / With absolute Marina" (4.Cho.20-31). *Contend* can mean to strive in rivalry with another (*OED* v. 4a), but it can also mean to strive earnestly; to make vigorous efforts (v. 1). Shakespeare's female friendships are typically close sisterhoods, a kind of temporary matriarchy, wherein each may work and play arm-in-arm with the other until marriage inscribes them back into patriarchy, or marriage-arranging puts them at odds. It is a patriarch that argues that Marina "did distain my child and stood between / [Philoten] and her fortunes" (4.3.31-32). And another that conjures Marina as the "dove of Paphos" but Philoten, "the crow" (4.Cho.32).

In fact, Marina's monumental, patriarchal identity is so compelling, it is the one most scholars write about. Digangi argues that "Marina's exceptional resistance to the Bawd's seduction can be attributed to her dramatic status as a virginal archetype, a fabulous romance princess" (191). Michèle Marrapodi considers Marina an exemplar of the "woman as wonder" or *donna mirabile* trope, whose origins he locates in *commedia grave* (182-83, 193-99). Theodora Jankowski attributes Marina's escape from death and her conversion of "Mitylene's gallants" to "[t]he quasi-magical power associated with virginity" (226).¹⁴⁵ As Suzanne Gossett reminds us, "[s]he is reunited with her parents and restored to noble status through accident, coincidence and the beneficence of Diana, whom she begs to 'aid my purpose'" (Introduction 107-8). Michael Baird Saenger reads *Pericles* as a burlesque of romance, absurdly distending the "romance topos of the power of a pure virgin," a girl who is so catalytic, all who enter the brothel turn around and abandon the house to "hear the vestals sing" (192). Simon Palfrey notes how her perfections sit uneasily with her actions: "She embodies a perfect virginal royalty, fulfils consummately the

¹⁴⁵ See also Helms; and Archibald.

archetypal brief, and yet is forced into accommodations which the symbolism would conventionally preclude" (Palfrey, *Late* 207-8).¹⁴⁶

In the *platea*, the monument's characters--their glitter, not their semiotics--correspond to the way Marina resists identities assigned to her by patriarchs in Tarsus, Mytilene, and finally, on the seashore, where she is confronted by the patriarch who authored her, her father. Anti-monumental Marina is contingent, negotiating, always improvising, and relational, her glittering light brilliant but tremulous. She enters the play in Tarsus, arguing and asserting an identity she makes up herself:

Enter Marina, with a basket of flowers.

MARINA. No, I will rob Tellus of her weed,

To strew thy green with flowers. The yellows, blues,

The purple violets, and marigolds,

Shall, as a carpet, hang upon thy grave

While summer days doth last. Ay me, poor maid. . . . (4.1.13 sd.-18)

Dionyza's following address to her is a kind of hailing that seeks to interpellate Marina as a member of a family other than the one she mourns. Rather than "poor maid," Dionyza would have her a nursling of herself and Philoten, a nursling sick by her own inclination and in need of a restorative:

How now, Marina? Why do you keep alone?

How chance my daughter is not with you?

Do not consume your blood with sorrowing.

Have you a nurse of me. Lord, how your favor's

¹⁴⁶ See also "The Rape."

Changed with this unprofitable woe. (4.1.22-26)

Dionyza interrupts Marina's solitary occupation by taking the flowers away from her--"Come give me your flowers"--and instructing her to "[w]alk with Leonine," where the "air is quick" and "sharpens the stomach" (27-29). But Marina's initial actions with those flowers reflect the resistance her language expresses. The syntax of Marina's response is nearly identical to her very first line, which begins with "No": "No, I pray you. I'll not bereave you of your servant" (31). By refusing to stop grieving and strewing flowers, she also refuses to identify herself as Dionyza insists. Asserting her will even as her desires are thwarted--the flowers she stole will not grace her nurse's grave--Marina from the start resists authorities when they seek to limit her agency. Here Dionyza's will prevails. By taking charge of Marina's flowers, Dionyza takes charge of Marina. Sending her on the road to her apparent death, the play's conflation of Marina's agency with Marina's flowers anticipates both her own reification by monument in 4.4 and the translation of her "real" flowers in 4.1 into a symbol inscribed upon that monument: Marina as "the chiefest flower" (*Oxford* 18.37).

The considerable stage business with Marina's flowers calls particular attention to them and their capacity to point in multiple ways to matters of identity. Her flowers can function symbolically as an analogue to the flowers other literary daughters gather, such as those Proserpine does before she was likewise abducted and pirated underground to Hades: "While in this garden Proserpine was taking hir pastime, / In gathering eyther Violets blew, or Lillies white as Lime. . ." (*Shakespeare's Ovid* 5.491-92). But Marina's account of her flowers resists, unconventionally, their symbolic attributes compared to the way two other Shakespearean daughters gather flowers and read them symbolically. Ophelia and Perdita very noticeably make correspondences between a particular species of flower (or plant) and a particular human quality.

Ophelia identifies "rosemary" with "remembrance" and "pansies" with "thoughts" (*Hamlet* 4.5.170-72). Perdita associates marigolds with "men of middle age," because they "are flowers / Of middle summer" (*Winter's* 4.4.105-8). Conversely, she assigns human attributes to violets in order to describe them, "dim / But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes / Or Cytherea's breath" (*Winter's* 120-22).¹⁴⁷

Marina's flowers do not disappear into representations of human qualities so readily, because her account of them is less species-specific: "The yellows, blues, / The purple violets, and marigolds. . . ." (4.1.15-16). Editors gloss the meaning of Marina's *violets* and *marigolds* by referring to lines in other plays where those particular flowers are cited. Roger Warren notes that violets and marigolds "[b]oth recur in Perdita's flower speeches," for instance (n. 15.67). Gossett glosses the symbolic meaning of violets and marigolds where she notes that these are "flowers associated by Shakespeare with death," citing the references to violets in *Hamlet* and to marigolds in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (Arden 3 ed., n. 4.1.14).

Such notes, and editors' understandable silence with respect to what those "yellows" and "blues" might signify, all the more highlight that "yellows" and "blues" refer to flowers only by their colour, and thwart any attempt to identify them by species to see whether or how they may signify in terms of symbolic meaning. In the *locus*, the flowers point beyond themselves to other daughters and to human characteristics or abstractions: rue, death, marital infidelity. In the

¹⁴⁷ Play editors may even attempt to fill in perceived gaps where the text does not indicate clearly which characters should be associated with which plant in *Hamlet*; that is, on account of the symbolic concordances between plant species and human attributes. Jones points out that "[t]here are no stage directions to indicate who should receive Ophelia's flowers." She provides an overview of the play's editors who gloss what is perceived to be that very problem, who hypothesize which character would have received which flower had Shakespeare thought to give direction: "Hibbard agrees with Jenkins that 'fennel' and 'columbines' signify marital infidelity and should go to the Queen while 'rue' (repentance) should go to Claudius who had tried in vain to repent" (114).

platea, the flowers do not speak about humans but about themselves. They call attention to themselves as representing live but non-human things, which may be plucked from the ground to serve the dead. They call attention to themselves as props, which, onstage, may either be real live flowers (but which, plucked, will then die, needing to be replaced the next performance) or mock ones (mimicking live ones). Marina's flowers for her nurse, their uncertain liveliness in performance, recall the living monument her father assigns to her mother before he casts her into the sea, "Where, for a monument upon thy bones / And aye-remaining lamps, the belching whale / And humming water must o'erwhelm thy corpse" (3.1.63-65). Her flowers' uncertain ontological status relates the props thematically to Marina's uncertain liveliness, her doubled identity in the play.

Anti-monumental Marina achieves a measure of freedom from the limits of the texts that author and script her, because when Marina speaks for herself, she repudiates the language of superlatives and absolutes inscribed for her on her monument. Marina in the brothel is performative Marina in action. She assaults Boult with caustic and earthy imagery, hardly the vocabulary belonging to a romance heroine: like a "damnèd doorkeeper to every / Coistrel that comes inquiring for his Tib," his "food is such / As hath been belched on by infected lungs" (4.6.158-62). Boult's response surprises. He neither boxes her (though an actor may choose to respond violently) nor quarrels with her, but defends his turn to his trade: "What would you have me do? go to the wars, would you? where a man may serve seven years for the loss of a leg, and have not money enough in the end to buy him a wooden one?" (163-66). Marina's first response is to insult Boult yet even more and then pray, for the third time, for supernatural intervention. Here, she appeals to her monumental identity as romance heroine: "That the gods / Would safely deliver me from this place! (172-73), crying out beyond her text to invoke, metadramatically, the

deus ex machina, the *coup de théâtre*, that typically brings to a happy end a romance heroine's travails.

But at this moment, when the gods fail, Marina changes tack and claims her performative identity. This identity is contingent and relational, constructed by interaction with another, in this case Boult, whom she suddenly recognizes as less an adversary than another economic actor like herself. The playtext affords the boy actor playing Marina space to demonstrate an improvisatory mind in action, one that responds in the moment to what she has just heard from Boult. Under the circumstances, the action that follows does not behoove a romance heroine: "Here, here's gold for thee," she says (4.6.174), as she hands over the money the governor of Mytilene gave her for "[speaking] so well" (97). With what Tiffany Jo Werth describes as "a most unsaintly gesture, [Marina] proposes to sing for her supper. . ." (91). Werth argues that here Shakespeare "adapt[s] the genre's most controversial figure--the romance heroine--by supplanting her reliance on the supernatural marvelous with a model of piety that rewarded steadfast faith and rhetorical performance" (92).¹⁴⁸

But Marina's steadfastness and rhetorical prowess are not the only attributes that get for her what she wants; rather, her understanding of herself as a contingent, relational being also and perhaps moreso enables her to resist the identity that Boult had earlier inscribed for her when he advertised her attractions in the marketplace as instructed by the bawd: "her hair, complexion, height, her age, with warrant of her virginity" (4.2.53-55). Here with Boult, Marina's speech demonstrates at this moment that she understands both her own *and* Boult's places in the underground economy. Instead of proselytizing or rebuking, as earlier, she ventures an alternate

¹⁴⁸ See also Bishop, who discusses how Marina as storyteller enables the "wondrous reparations" at the play's end, and who is thus "in part a figure for the power of Shakespearean narrative to manage and order potentially damaging impulses." (93).

business relationship *with* her keeper, bartering her gold to purchase a place in an "honest house" (5.Cho.2) "amongst honest women" (4.6.187), a dwelling where she can be "true to character," as the *OED* defines "honest," (adj. 3.c-e). Therefore, Marina proposes Boulton "[p]roclaim" (176) her services to the market not with adjectives, as before, but with verbs. The descriptors Marina devises for herself do not paint her image, as once Boulton's did, nor glorify her character, as Dionyza's epitaphs do; rather, they assert with verbs her performative identity: "I can sing, weave, sew, and dance, / . . . / And I will undertake all these to teach" (176-78). The coins that Marina receives from Lysimachus for her counsel and in turn transfers to Boulton to pay him materialize Marina's entry into a trade she creates for herself outside of both parental and marital homes.

VII. Claiming Identity: Singing Without Script on the Seashore

As the number of props onstage dwindles from four in 5.1 (a seat, fresh garments, and a pillow for Pericles, and Diana's silver bow) to one in 5.3, the play appears to free the daughter from the inscribing prop. Whereas inscribed props construct identity and engineer dramatic conflict in acts 1 through 4, no object negotiates the conflict between Marina and her father. At the start of 5.1, Marina, still dead to Pericles, lives "with her fellow maids . . . upon / The leafy shelter that abuts against / The island's side" (45-47). Pericles suffers his losses in silence until Lysimachus hears of his plight and is told by another Lord about Marina's healing arts (38-39). She is duly fetched to heal Pericles. Rather than having an identity inscribed for her, as she has had by Dionyza, Marina asserts her own identity to her father, one that is not static or fatal as the ones inscribed for daughters in earlier scenes.

Performative Marina initiates her father's healing, and the revelation, recognition, and restoration of identity that the romance genre demands, by singing a song for which Q1 provides

no text. Stage directions merely indicate "*The song*" (5.1.75 sd.), and the boy actor improvises Marina's song in performance. Once healed, Pericles wants more. Similar to other patriarchs in the play, he wants to identify Marina. With no prop to provide Pericles with the means of identifying the stranger before him, he struggles unaided with the epistemological problem of identity: how one can know or recognize identity. He searches for relation: "You are like something that--" (97). He tries to specify from what country she originates; he demands to know if Marina is "[h]ere of these shores" (98), another way to fix identity, or by means of nationality: "What countrywoman?" (97). Marina, like the inscribed props before her, gives her answer enigmatically. She resists Pericles' attempts to fix her identity--to know who she is. She replies with a riddle of her own devising and claims the authority of the riddle-teller: "No, nor of any shores. / Yet I was mortally brought forth, and am / No other than I appear" (98-100). When Marina tells her riddle, she unifies the fragmented authorial "I" of the first scene and recuperates its vision of a daughter's ventriloquized voice. Marina, like Gower's king, is author, narrator, and speaker of her riddle. She replaces the prop.

Her answer, of course, is her very name, Marina: she is not of the shores, because she is of the sea. As when she first enters the play, resistance grounds her language in negatives and *noes*. She does not say, "I am what I appear," which seems but is not the same as what she does say, "I . . . am no other than I appear." Marina brings herself to subjectivity by experiencing her identity as something phenomenologically apprehendable; that is, "I am no other than I appear at this moment before you." In the way she describes her flowers "yellows" and "blues" (4.1.15), Marina describes her identity as neither species-specific (she is: not one or the other) nor essentialist (no other than I appear). As she offers an account of her own ontology, *Pericles* celebrates the birth of a dramatic character. Marina is "mortally brought forth" by a boy

performing moment-by-moment onstage. If the actor who plays Marina in acts 4 and 5 also plays Antiochus' daughter in act 1, his body foregrounds the relation between the two daughters. His live body mitigates the fatal identity the riddle inscribes for the daughter and undermines Gower's closing lines that align "monstrous lust" with "Antiochus and his daughter" both (Epi. 1-2). Rather, the boy's doubled body suggests that it is not the so-called lust of one daughter versus the so-called purity of another that is at stake in the play, but the capacity of one or the other daughter to *speak* within the houses and markets constructed by patriarchy.

Pericles is himself attracted to Marina's monumental identity. Even as he asks her to account for herself her own way--"Tell thy story," he says (5.1.129)--he interrupts her before she can speak:

If thine, considered, prove the thousandth part
 Of my endurance, thou art a man, and I
 Have suffered like a girl. Yet thou dost look
 Like Patience gazing on kings' graves and smiling
 Extremity out of act. . . . (130-34).

His language recalls another Shakespearean daughter, Viola, who "sat like Patience on a monument, / Smiling at grief. . . ." (*TN*, 2.4.114-15). But his language also describes her by what she has done--she has suffered, and what's more, like a man, not "like a girl." Williams suggests that "this is for Pericles his ultimate success as a parent: he has brought his daughter up as a prince, allowing her to be the man, and to escape the suffering and victimhood, 'as a girl,' that he willingly takes on himself" (*Shakespeare* 108). The play's use of props suggests an associated transfer of "baggage" (4.6.15-16) or "burden" (5.3.47)--as Marina has been named--from daughter to Pericles.

In the final scene, a ring in Ephesus is the sole prop in play, a ring that clinches a moment of recognition. Rings in Shakespeare more typically belong to and identify daughters, such as those belonging to Imogen in *Cymbeline* and Portia and Nerissa in *The Merchant of Venice*.¹⁴⁹ But *Pericles*, a play focused intently upon the identities and inscription of daughters, puts a ring on the hand of a husband, a ring that will identify him to his wife, whose identity he appears to mistake in the final scene once more:

THAISA. . . . O my lord,
 Are you not Pericles? Like him you spake;
 Like him you are. Did you not name a tempest,
 A birth, and death?
 PERICLES. The voice of dead Thaisa!
 THAISA. That Thaisa am I, supposed dead
 And drowned.
 PERICLES. Immortal Dian!
 THAISA. Now I know you better.
 When we with tears parted Pentapolis,
 The king my father gave you such a ring. (5.3.31-39)

As in 5.1, coercive text no longer facilitates identification. And the prop in play no longer identifies a daughter but, instead, a father and husband to a daughter and wife. Like Thaisa and the passport, Thaisa and the ring facilitate a recognition, not an imposition, of identity.

¹⁴⁹ Helena, on the other hand, orchestrates an exchange of two rings that belong originally to men, the King of France and Bertram. See Peterson, "The Ring's," who looks at the ring plot in *All's Well That Ends Well* in the context of Elizabethan iconography. See Pollard, who focuses on how certain stage props like rings, necklaces, and handkerchiefs substitute as stand-ins for female characters, who repeatedly vanish from the early modern stage.

To put it another way, props are freed from the job they have been created to do, to illustrate the inscription of daughters into patriarchy. Shakespeare's fiction collapses the metatheatrical hierarchy structured by conflicts between authors and readers of inscribed props, a stage hierarchy that privileges authors over characters, actors, and props. In 5.1, Marina replaces the prop. At the end of 5.3, the boy actor governs the character, because Marina is silent at the end of the play. The text gives her no lines to speak. Her role's final words are those that initiate her reunion with Thaisa: "My heart / Leaps to be gone into my mother's bosom" (44-45). She is given no lines to indicate her involvement in or response to her betrothal to the governor of Mytilene--to a former patron of the brothel who attempted to purchase her, to one that gave her the money to purchase her freedom.¹⁵⁰ As Shakespeare frees her "yellows" and her "blues" from the identities humans attribute them, he frees the boy actor from text that would govern his actions as Marina responds to her betrothal and relates to her betrothed. The end of Marina's story is told in the moment in performance. And if Shakespeare imagines a creative life, if a brief one, free of a paternal or marital household for one of his daughters, he also allows the idea that objects might function free from the limits of their human inscription.

¹⁵⁰ In 5.1, Lysimachus tells Pericles, "I have another suit," and Pericles replies, "You shall prevail, / Were it to woo my daughter. . . ." (251-52). In 5.2, Gower reports that "fair Marina" is "promised" to Lysimachus (10-122). In 5.3, Pericles introduces him to Thaisa as "[t]his prince, the fair betrothèd of your daughter," who "[s]hall marry her at Pentapolis" (71).

CODA

Hearing Voices

This dissertation has explored the myriad ways stage props signified on the early modern stage. More specifically, it has focused on props that call attention to female characters as they claim an identity based upon their desires, and to the boy actors who played those girls and women. Props such as a vessel, a lute, a prayerbook, or a monument foreground the stakes in plays where daughters might speak with agency in a patriarchy. This dissertation has situated its work alongside scholars Frances Teague, who addresses the capacity for properties to "speak to audiences" (10), and Andrew Sofer, who focuses on "lively" props that transcend their unobtrusive representational functions (29). It argues uniquely that props may harness the authority of the *platea* to "speak," to become "lively," and to open possibilities for resistance to authority. Like actors and characters, props can point to their own theatrical semiotics in such a way that occasions their shift from representing what they have been scripted to represent, an object in *locus* mode, to presenting themselves as props, in the *platea*, from outside the stage's fiction to playgoers.

Moving in and out of *platea* mode, props contribute to the way a play makes meaning. Closer to the *locus* they may paint a pervasive setting and mood, as do the gifts in Christopher Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage*. Towards the *platea*, they may launch a setting to the foreground for notice, as do the parade of domestic objects in *Arden of Faversham*. They may point to their own theatrical function as props, as in the Digby *Mary Magdalene*, to correlate the actions of characters. Offstage things--Sofer's "dark matter"--may amplify the effects of the props onstage, pulling them into the *platea*. Objects that do things directly to characters can likewise affect the playgoers that gaze upon them, making them weep, pity, or exult--making

them feel when they ought, perhaps, to think. Props that command their audience to experience their intrinsic properties--metal that clanks, text that glitters--may consequently blunt their own representational function or diminish their own conventional significations. Props in the *platea*, finally, can undermine the authority of a play's most powerful characters: its kings, queens, landowners, judiciaries, priests, husbands, fathers, and seducers. Props that function this way destabilize hierarchies that assert who has authority, who finally speaks with authority, on the stage, in the world, or in the cosmos.

This dissertation has also attended to the role of the boy actor in relation to prop and character. An actor can do something for the prop; he can call it into the *platea*. A clown's antics with rhubarb and spectacles on or around his nose, or a boy's legerdemain with silver dice, foreground those objects in action. On the other hand, a prop can help the boy, as the diabolical props in *Arden* defer censure from a young actor playing a censurable role. Even a prop's absence and / or replacement *by* a character, as Marina replaces the prop that subordinates the daughter to a fixed identity in *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, may celebrate metatheatrically a boy actor's agency in performance. But mainly I have focused on how a boy actor and a prop might highlight or enable a character's agency: how his (hypothetical but personal) emotions or his artistic skill as he handles a prop can point to a character's authority and evoke sympathy for the character he embodies. To the extent that this dissertation has considered the boy actor with respect to the agency of a female character, it has been the youth of the boy, his status as apprentice, rather than his gender, that is the site of his subjection (in relation to adult actors) and agency (as a candidate for graduating roles).

The next question may be what are the implications when a girl actor rather than a boy actor plays the girl onstage? Such is the case, for instance, in *Comus: A Maske at Ludlow Castle*,

1634, wherein 15-year old Alice Egerton plays the protagonist, Lady. Do props in the case of a girl actor still assist a female protagonist to resist the characters that would subdue her? Does a real girl even need a prop to have a voice? Considering this one particular Caroline masque, the answer appears to be no. Indeed, props in this play--chiefly magic dust, a poisonous chair, Circe's rod and charming cup--are scripted to blinker, imprison, and lead Lady into temptation. The props do not appear to assist her, nor do they perform perversely, undermining authorities the text empowers. They perform what they are scripted to perform and do not appear to point beyond their representative functions as enchanted/enchanting objects.

Perhaps as far as Milton is concerned, props belong in *locus* mode. Or, perhaps as far as early modern props are concerned, whether a girl or a boy performs with them is less relevant. After all, the early modern period is a time where *girlhood* is a capacious term, as Deanne Williams has demonstrated, arguing that "identifications with and as girls are possible for men, boys, and women" (*Shakespeare* 14). That being speculated, a large question unanswered here is how, if at all, do the *platea* and *locus* function in masques? Certainly masquing stages, where aristocrats and professional actors perform together, signify differently than the medieval religious and Renaissance public stages this dissertation addresses. Stage props would surely have a different kind of life on such a stage.

This dissertation has suggested that the female character, boy actor, and stage prop, by the very fact of the generally de-privileged places they occupy in the hierarchies of authority in the early modern state, home, and theatre, make up a very powerful trinity in performance. It has argued that props in the *platea* may fortify the voice of a female character and the voice of a boy actor, and thereby produce potential sites of resistance and agency for their spectators. I want to end by thinking about props and their voices. I do not mean voice enabled by a supposed

vitalism, but voice as a metaphor for an agency beyond the prop's capacity to make meaning for humans in playhouses. A capacity for voice has a built-in metatheatricality especially in Renaissance drama: Actors are at the mercy of what Richard Preiss calls the audience's theatre, where playgoers themselves contest actors, boys and men alike, for the authority to speak and be heard in the playhouse. I have suggested that the hierarchies of the stage can be thought of as a kind of microcosm of a macrocosmic order: a stage hierarchy privileges an author (the god who creates) over the actor/character (the human) over the stage property (the animal/plant/mineral/element). Perhaps perceiving props moving in and out of the *platea* provides a provocative analogy for perceiving objects in the real world. In her *Vibrant Matter*, Jane Bennett thinks about how she perceives objects in the real world. She does not perceive matter as (naively) vital, or as passive or mechanistic. Rather, matter for Bennett is an assemblage of things capable of producing effects: "In this assemblage, *objects* appeared as *things*, that is, as vivid entities not entirely reducible to the contexts in which (human) subjects set them, never entirely exhausted by their semiotics" (5, emphasis in original).

To see objects in a way that is never entirely exhausted by their semiotics, namely *human* semiotics, is to describe the experience of perceiving stage props in *platea* mode. And plays that harness their stage's capacity for the *platea* suggest that stage illusion, the *locus* mode, provides an analogue for the human illusion whereby things-as-objects-of-human-perception (things for the spectator) become synonymous to the things themselves. That is, the *locus* mode is an analogue for the illusion that what I see when I see an object is the very sum of the thing itself. Plays that highlight their props at the very moment when they are in motion in ways that are not, or cannot be, scripted by an author--by a human--highlight a less anthropocentric way of looking at things. In those moments plays rethink the colonization of the object (the prop) by the subject

(the author, actor, character, and/or spectator); that is, the taking of the figure (the object of human perception) for the thing. It is one thing for a human to design, build, and play a lute to produce what may be to the human ear harmonious music. But something else happens when a lute breaks. The crack of wood and the snap of gut are the sounds that wood and gut in motion will make, that only wood and gut can make as they explode apart. I can attempt to represent their sounds with my words. But I cannot play the lute in order to make that sound; I cannot reproduce it. The sound of a lute breaking is the voice of the thing itself.

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APPENDIX

Notes:

1) Column A lists only the first appearance of a prop. I count the glaives and bills belonging to the mayor's watch as one single prop, but the swords or pistols belonging to the main characters separately. With respect to money, I count twenty angels, for instance, as one prop, but each appearance or transfer of angels, pounds, crowns, or gold separately. I count Arden's dead body, the blood spilled on the ground, and the blood flowing from his wounds in Alice's presence as three props: they are attended to differently and at different moments onstage.

2) Column B does not include objects that serve as a vehicle for metaphor; the objects listed here refer to something present in the fictional world the characters inhabit. So, a thief's livery cloak, as Bradshaw describes its appearance as part of his account of what he witnessed, is included (2.58), but Shakebag's referent, "cloudy robe," for his ode to "black night[']s ... sheeting darkness" is not (5.1-5). (Considering the objects of metaphor too would be fascinating, but that is beyond the scope of my chapter.)

3) Column B highlights my distinctions between **poisonous objects** and their **antidotes**, **weapons** or **harmful objects**, **blood or bloody objects** and **objects that reference Arden's avarice**.

A: Stage Properties	B: Objects referred to by characters
SCENE ONE (640 lines)	
6: Arden's deeds to the lands of the Abbey of Faversham	
	15: love letters exchanged between Mosby and Alice;

<p>[<i>Alice onstage</i>]</p>	<p>referred to as "foul objects that offend my eyes" by Arden (12); 17: Alice's wedding ring on Mosby's finger; 30: Mosby's silken gown; 40: bed; 43: (Mosby's) lustful blood;</p> <p>[<i>Alice onstage</i>]</p> <p>90: Arden's commercial goods</p>
<p>123: Alice's silver dice</p>	
<p>[<i>Alice exit</i>]</p>	<p>152: representation of a dagger sticking in a heart with verses from Clark to Susan; 158: Michael will send a "taunting letter / As she shall eat the heart he sent with salt / And fling the dagger at the painter's head" (158-60); 167: gallows; 220: bags of gold that Arden "hoards up"; 222: commercial goods; 229: poison tempered with oil (paint); 233: counterfeit of Alice; 238: cloth (cover); 278: (poisoned) picture; 279: poison; 280: broth; 283: dram of poison; 288: Susan's dowry;</p> <p>[<i>Alice exit</i>]</p> <p>301: letters patents</p>
<p>309 sd.: Mosby's sword, which Arden "<i>draws forth</i>"</p>	
<p>[<i>Alice onstage</i>]</p>	<p>312-13: Mosby's bodkin, Spanish needle, pressing iron</p> <p>[<i>Alice onstage</i>]</p> <p>360: Arden's breakfast</p>
<p>367 sd.: broth, which Alice "<i>throws down ... on the</i></p>	

<i>ground"</i>	
382: Franklin's box of mithridate	
	386: spoon ; 387: broth , "full of poison to the brim "; 421: not a goodly poison : "should have been some fine confection / That might have given the broth some dainty taste. / This powder was too gross and populous" (423-35) ; 445: gold ; 459: letters patents ; 477: pouch (into which Arden may, "greedy-gaping still for gain ... scrape and hoard up)
522: ten pounds for Greene from Alice	
	523: twenty (pounds) more; 611: crucifix impoisonèd ; 615: crucifix ; 627: impoisonèd drugs ; 628: spectacles ; 630: leaf ; 631: rhubarb
SCENE TWO (111 lines)	
	21: (gold) plate ; 23: half ox ; 31: crowns ; 36: plate ; 42: plate ; 54: watchet satin doublet "all to-torn"; 56: threadbare velvet hose , seam rent; 57: worsted stocking rent above the shoe; 58: livery cloak , missing "all the lace" (all of this describing the apparel of the thief who stole Lord Cheyne's plate and sold it to Bradshaw): (the suit) "'Twas bad, but yet it served to hide the plate " (59); 62: cudgel-stick ; 64: money, plate ; 66: plate ; 71: plate
75: letter (to be carried by Bradshaw from Greene to Alice)	
78: crown , for Black Will from Bradshaw	
	79: water ; 86: twenty angels ; 87: twenty angels

95: (twenty) angels , for Black Will from Greene	
	97: money
103: ten pound , for Shakebag from Greene	
	104: twenty (pound) more ; 110: gallon of sack

SCENE THREE (209 lines)

1: letter (to Susan, read aloud by Michael, taken away by Arden at 24)	
	48: forty angels ; 50: portable book stall ; 72: ten pound ; 73: Will asserts he values every drop of his blood at a French crown ; 73-74: ten pound ; 79: stall ; 80: shop window (breaks Will's head); 84: bloody brow ; 91: gold ; 94: lap of crowns ; 105: bloody stain ; 106: Arden's heart panting in Will's hand ; 118: Arden's blood ; 162: knife ; 199: weapon

SCENE FOUR (107 lines)

	74: daggers ; 77: ireful instruments
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SCENE FIVE (63 lines)

37 Shakebag's sword	
	46: sword

SCENE SIX (46 lines)

	3: bed ; 16: evil-sounding horn
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SCENE SEVEN (31 lines)

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	10-11: napkin (gold knit)
	12: bed
	14: keys
SCENE EIGHT (167 lines)	
<i>[Alice onstage]</i>	4: drink ; 11: gold ; 31: (Arden's) seat ; <i>[Alice onstage]</i> 89: dowry
116: Alice's prayerbook	
118: prayerbook's leaves	
119: prayerbook's golden cover	
	120: (Mosby's) letters
153: letter (delivered by Bradshaw from Greene to Alice)	
	155: cup of beer
SCENE NINE (153 lines)	
1: Black Will's tools (including pistol)	
2: Black Will's powder, flint	
	7: pistols ; 8: gunpowder ; 9: dag (pistol) ; 10: fire ; 12: purses ; 13: pistols ; 15: booties ; 17: money ; 20: muscado ; 21: hurting weapon ; 29: cannon-bullet ; 40: dagger ; 54: (horse)shoe; 76: glove ; 84: handkercher ; 117: purse
122: crown , for Black Will from one of Lord Cheyne's attendants	
	131: dag (pistol) ; 132: crown

135: Shakebag's pistol	
136: Shakebag's pistol's bullet	
	147: bullet

SCENE TEN (104 lines)

	37: purse and six-and-thirty shillings ; 40: purse ; 64: painting-table ; 67-68: lining of wenches' petticoats; 71: dagger made of a pencil
<i>[Alice onstage]</i>	
79: (poisoned crucifix): ALICE. Say, Clarke, hast thou done the thing thou promised? CLARKE. Ay, here it is ; the very touch is death.	

SCENE ELEVEN (34 lines)

	30: bramble-bush (threatened to be used as a hand weapon)
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SCENE TWELVE (74 lines)

<i>[Alice onstage]</i>	<i>[Alice onstage]</i>
	33: letters
58: money , for Black Will from Alice	

SCENE THIRTEEN (155 lines)

<i>[Alice onstage]</i>	
83 sd., Arden's sword ; Franklin's sword ; Mosby's sword	

SCENE FOURTEEN (412 lines)

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>[Alice onstage]</i></p>	<p>6-7: wooden legs; 9: blades, nuts; 14: barrel; 15: dagger; 16: beer, brewer's cart; 18: tallies; 21: coltstaff; 22: mace, sword; 23: buckler; 24: quart pot; 26: sign, lattice;</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>[Alice onstage]</i></p> <p>36: purse, money; 55: hilts; 59-60: sword-point; 63: buckler; 66: arming-sword; 71: every drop of [Arden's] detested blood; 72: angels 82: weapon; 99: [backgammon] tables; 107: key; 118: chair; 119: stool; 121: towel; 125: gold</p>
126: twenty pounds , for Black Will from Alice	
	127: forty more pounds ; 129: saddle
133: key , to the Arden household, which Black Will demands from Alice	
	157: tables
165: tables	
188: chair , in Arden's house, offered to Mosby by Alice	
199: cups of wine	
224: French crown , played for by Mosby and Arden at the tables	
237: (Alice's murder) weapon	235: pressing iron ; 236: ten pound ;
249: gold , for Will and Shakebag from Alice	
254: Arden's blood ; pail of water to wash it away	

263: rushes	
287: Arden's seat , given to Mosby by Alice; stools for the guests.	
	294: ratsbane
298: Mosby's cup of beer	
331: Arden's dead body , to be borne to the Counting house	
341: glaives, bills of the Mayor's watch	
	344: pile of wood
383: murderers' hand-towel and knife , discovered by Franklin	
388: pig's blood , apparently eaten for supper, according to Alice	
	397: [Arden's] guiltless blood ; 398: slipshoe, rushes
402: cup of wine , apparently shed by Michael, according to Alice	

SCENE FIFTEEN (12 lines)

11: Shakebag's gold	
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SCENE SIXTEEN (21 lines)

<i>[Alice onstage]</i>	<i>[Alice onstage]</i>
5: Arden's blood , "gushing forth" from his wounds	
14: Arden's purse and girdle , found at the head of Mosby's bed	
	21: [Council's] warrant

SCENE SEVENTEEN (14 lines)

	9: buckler ; 12: twenty warrants
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SCENE EIGHTEEN (39 lines)

<i>[Alice onstage]</i>	<i>[Alice onstage]</i>
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	4: letter [Bradshaw referring to the letter he brought to Alice from Greene]; 7: Alice agrees Bradshaw brought her such a letter ; 9: worldly things ; 11: blood ... blood ; 38: blood
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EPILOGUE (18 lines)

	12: Arden's body's print , found in the fields beyond the Arden household
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