

Spring 2006

Rumor, gender, and authority in English Renaissance drama

Keith M. Botelho

University of New Hampshire, Durham

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholars.unh.edu/dissertation>

Recommended Citation

Botelho, Keith M., "Rumor, gender, and authority in English Renaissance drama" (2006). *Doctoral Dissertations*. 313.
<https://scholars.unh.edu/dissertation/313>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Scholarship at University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctoral Dissertations by an authorized administrator of University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. For more information, please contact nicole.hentz@unh.edu.

RUMOR, GENDER, AND AUTHORITY IN
ENGLISH RENAISSANCE DRAMA

BY

KEITH M. BOTELHO
B.A. Saint Anselm College, 1996
M.A., University of New Hampshire, 2001

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
English Literature

May, 2006

UMI Number: 3217421

INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

UMI[®]

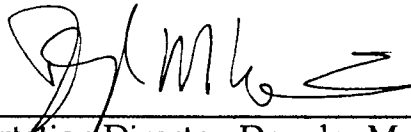
UMI Microform 3217421

Copyright 2006 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.

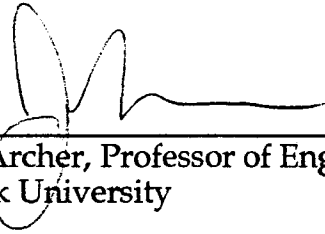
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

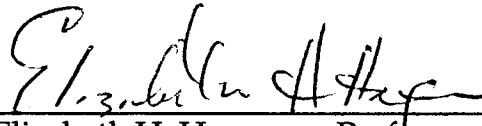
This dissertation has been examined and approved.



Dissertation Director, Douglas M. Lanier
Associate Professor of English



John M. Archer, Professor of English
New York University



Elizabeth H. Hageman, Professor of English



Elizabeth Jane Bellamy, Professor of English



Jan V. Golinski, Professor of History

4/29/06
Date

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the Graduate School at the University of New Hampshire, whose funding helped to support the research and writing of this dissertation. A Summer Teaching Assistant Fellowship in 2005 allowed me to travel to the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., to pursue necessary research for my final two chapters, while the 2005-2006 Graduate School Dissertation Fellowship gave me the opportunity to complete the dissertation.

My dissertation director, Doug Lanier, has been an incredible mentor and teacher. I have benefited from his good humor, his sound advice, and his rigorous questioning of my arguments and ideas. I thank him for his ongoing advocacy of me and my work—his example has shown me what it means to be a passionate teacher and committed scholar.

The roots of this dissertation began with a 2001 conversation with John Archer, and his direction helped me to frame the central questions of my emerging ideas. An independent study he directed gave me the opportunity to develop an earlier version of my Jonson chapter. I thank him for his willingness to remain on my committee after taking a position at New York University.

Betty Hageman's insistence on argumentative clarity is evident in each chapter of this dissertation. I thank her for sharing with me her encyclopedic knowledge of the Renaissance, as well as her continued encouragement of my research.

Jane Bellamy's support and her keen insights and questions early in the project were invaluable. I also thank her for the opportunity to work as her editorial assistant on her volume on Spenser and Milton, which taught me great lessons about the academic writing process.

Jan Golinski has been a wonderful asset to my committee, providing a historian's eye that helped me rethink some of my historical generalizations. I appreciate his encouragement of my work that grew out of our independent study on science and magic in the seventeenth century.

I thank Sue Schibanoff for coming on board with such exuberance for my dissertation defense. Her example as both scholar and academic professional has not only benefited me, but myriad doctoral students in the department.

Rachel Trubowitz has been a positive and encouraging voice throughout my doctoral program. And I want to thank Gary Bouchard at Saint Anselm College for his good advice and humor and for sparking my interest in the Renaissance as an undergraduate.

I have benefited from Drew Lopenzina's unfailing friendship and support. As we went through the doctoral program together, we challenged each other and pushed one another toward the finish line. Thanks as well to the members of the monthly dissertation workshops for their feedback on my work.

Thanks to the loving support of my family and friends. I appreciate everyone coming along for this ride as I pursued my doctoral degree.

Finally, I want to thank my wife Denise and my children, Ethan and Julia, whose love, patience, and laughter sustained me throughout. I dedicate this dissertation to you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	vii
CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION: BUZZ, BUZZ: A RENAISSANCE CULTURE OF RUMOR.....	1
A. Elizabeth I: Glorianna. Bess. Fama?.....	26
1. TABLE TALK: MARLOWE AND HIS MOUTHY MEN.....	55
A. Loose Scholarly Tongues and the Humanist Tradition.....	59
B. "For so the rumor runs": Marlowe's Men and the Truth.....	68
2. BRUTTS AND BRITONS: RUMOR, COUNSEL, AND THE EARLY MODERN PLAY OF HISTORY.....	104
A. Listening to Fearless Speech: Counsel and Rumor in <i>Gorboduc</i>	111
B. "Open your ears" to "The harsh and boist'rous tongue of war": Shakespeare's Second Tetralogy.....	118
3. AURAL INSURGENTS: SHAKESPEARE'S DISSIDENT WOMEN.....	160
A. "Full of tongues, of eyes and ears": <i>Titus Andronicus</i>	163
B. Saying and Hearing "Nothing": Refusals to Speak and Listen in <i>Lear</i> , <i>Shrew</i> , and <i>Measure</i>	171
C. "Is whispering nothing?": Inaccessible Female Spaces in <i>Othello</i> and <i>The Winter's Tale</i>	183
D. Female Discerning Listening, Male Transgressive Speech: The Case of <i>All's Well That End's Well</i>	191

4. "NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH": BEN JONSON'S COMEDY OF RUMORS.....	208
A. Charting Jonsonian Noise: <i>Epicoene</i> and <i>Bartholomew Fair</i>	215
B. Truth, Rumor, and the Breakdown of Gendered Spaces: <i>The Staple of News</i> , <i>The New Inn</i> , and <i>The Magnetic Lady</i>	228
EPILOGUE.....	267
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	273

ABSTRACT

RUMOR, GENDER, AND AUTHORITY
IN ENGLISH RENAISSANCE DRAMA

by

Keith M. Botelho

University of New Hampshire, May, 2006

The dramatic works of Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, and Ben Jonson register a certain type of male character who is capable of discerning listening, an action that becomes an agent of specific masculine authority and identity. However, rumor's inherent ambiguity and indeterminacy poses the greatest threat to discerning listening. The paradox that emerges is that while the drama posits men as superior authors of information, it is men—and not women—who are responsible for the circulation of unauthorized information and rumor on the stage. Early modern literary and cultural discourses repeatedly pointed to the dangers of loose tongues and transgressive speech, and such idle chatter was consistently gendered female. Male characters continually attempt to disown their own loose speech by placing women and their gossip as the true threat to informational authority. As early modern drama exposes transgressive male talk and a male anxiety of informational access, men must seek to maintain their informational authority from male unauthorized speech. This dissertation traces a shift in concerns about the female tongue to the male

tongue and how discerning listening became a necessary component in the establishment and maintenance of authorial identity on the early modern stage.

I claim that rumor is an omnipresent and diffuse cultural, social, political, and theatrical issue with extreme consequences for male sovereignty. As certainty and truth break down through the workings of rumor, so too do the received notions of masculine identity. Furthermore, female characters with their authorizing ears are often seen exercising agency on the early modern stage in what I call female aural environments, where careful listening, rather than excessive speech and gossip, becomes a vehicle for uncovering truth. I contend that the early modern theater is a theater of rumor and early modern drama exposes the cultural reality of male speech gone astray, making the case for the necessity of becoming a discerning earwitness amid the buzz of the realm.

INTRODUCTION

BUZZ, BUZZ:

A RENAISSANCE CULTURE OF RUMOR

“My intention was not to deal with the problem of truth, but with the problem of the truth-teller, or of truth telling as an activity: . . . who is able to tell the truth, about what, with what consequences, and with what relations to power . . . [W]ith the question of the importance of telling the truth, knowing who is able to tell the truth, and knowing why we should tell the truth, we have the roots of what we could call the ‘critical’ tradition in the West.” —Michel Foucault (1983)

“Knowledge and truth are never identical; there is no true knowledge and no known truth. Nevertheless, certain pieces of knowledge are indispensable for an account of the truth.”
—Walter Benjamin, from an unpublished fragment (1920-21)

“Among wise men, it is better for you to listen than to speak.”
—Juan Luis Vives, *Introduction to Wisdom* (1521)

The final essay of Francis Bacon’s 1625 edition of *The Essays or Counsels Civil and Moral, Newly Enlarged* is entitled “A Fragment of an Essay on Fame,” a fitting conclusion for a collection that began with the essay “Of Truth.” After recounting the traditional iconography that the “poets” (Ovid, Virgil, and perhaps even Chaucer) give to this “monster” Fame or Rumor—her body or clothing covered in eyes, tongues, and ears—Bacon claims that there is no topic less discussed than fame, but none so worthy of examination. Bacon continues to probe into the nature of rumor:

What are false fames; and what are true fames; and how they may be best discerned; how fames may be sown and raised; how they may be spread and multiplied; and how they may be checked and laid dead. And other

things concerning the nature of fame. Fame is of that force, as there is scarcely any great action wherein it hath not a great part.¹

I want to focus on Bacon's use of the word *discern* in the above passage. While Bacon sets up a binary of true and false rumors, it is important to note that the poets he mentions all recount that Rumor speaks *both fact and fiction, truth and falsehood*. Rumor, in fact, breaks down any simple binary by taking on ambiguous (and as we shall later see, androgynous) characteristics. Rumor is such a compelling and terrifying entity because it renders individuals unable to make these distinctions; it is incumbent upon the one receiving these rumors to distinguish, perceive, and extract the truth. The way to this sort of discernment that Bacon points to is through enhanced sensory activity, particularly by keeping one's ears open. For Bacon in the early decades of the seventeenth century, rumor—so diffuse, so threatening—was a pressing social and political concern, and he inveighs at the conclusion of the fragment, "Therefore let all wise governors have as great a watch and care over fames, as they have of the actions and designs themselves."²

Bacon's stress on the need to discern the truth content of rumors emphasizes the discriminating value of the senses, of being able to understand or detect the difference between truth and falsity. In fact, the words *discernment* and *discerning* date from the sixteenth and seventeenth century, respectively; as Bacon's essay suggests, there seems to be an early modern concern with the necessity of engaging in discriminating sensory activity, of being able to grasp what is obscure or ambiguous. Often, commentary about discernment appeared in religious, scientific, and philosophical discourse, emphasizing the necessity of the senses in arriving at eternal or absolute truth. In this dissertation, I argue

that discerning listening becomes a construct of masculinity on the early modern stage, and I examine how male characters, filled with anxieties about unauthorized information and rumor, must distinguish truth from untruth in order to preserve male authority. Discerning listening consists of opening one's ears to all sounds and voices, male and female, withholding speech in order to listen discriminatingly. The early modern theater—a place of listening itself—serves as the backdrop to examine the often gendered nature of discerning listening and to explore who possesses the capability to control rumor and unauthorized information. As I detail in my third chapter, Shakespeare presents an exception to this paradigm, as he examines the dissident powers of discerning listening among women. While there are moments of female discernment in Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Jonson, the three dramatists that are the focus of this dissertation, a certain type of male character (king, warrior, scholar) emerges as overwhelmingly in possession of discerning listening to unauthorized information in order to secure male authority and sovereignty. While these dramatists often present women engaged in gossip and loose talk, they also take pains to show men “raising rumors.” In fact, male characters on the early modern stage often emerge as the greater threat to male discerning listening, as women become scapegoats in the drama for male transgressive speech.

At the heart of my dissertation lies the question: what could the early modern man or woman know with authority? Sir John Davies, in *Nosce Teipsum* (London, 1599), comments precisely on this dilemma, one that extends throughout the seventeenth century: “What can we know? or what can we discern? / When Error chokes the windowes of the mind.”³ Davies highlights

our own modern concerns with the static that impedes communication in our daily lives. Such interference blocks or inhibits a person's ability to arrive at truth, and it is imperative for the individual to combat the tyranny of noise or else risk falling into confusion or disorder. Certainly, much was at stake for men who, in the numerous discourses of the early modern period, posited themselves as superior authors of information who possessed control over the ordering of information and knowledge.⁴ Increasingly in the early modern period, women's own authority began to emerge, and they established distinct domains for originating, dispersing, and authorizing information. Certainly we can witness this emerging female sovereignty in the multiple discourses of the period; further, the word *authoress*, meaning a female author, leader, or mother, dates from the fifteenth century (*OED* 1). At stake then were the grounds for who had the authority to control information, who was equipped to discern the truth.⁵ Absorbing this debate and the anxieties that stemmed from it, dramatists of the period contended that the path to truth and authority rested in careful listening with a discerning ear to all voices.⁶ And certain types of male characters emerge as those invested with the traits of discerning listening, discerning the truth from male and female talk by aurally detecting the veracity of the information and the credibility of the teller.

The purpose of my dissertation is twofold: to reassess the gendered binaries of orality and auality in Renaissance England and to examine how playwrights of the period engaged with and responded to these issues of rumor and gossip on the stage. In this dissertation, I claim that early modern dramatic productions are potent cultural sites that challenge received notions of the gendered authority of information and assert the necessary role of the discerning

ear as a way to not only authorize information amid the threatening buzz of the day, but also as a way of securing male or female sovereignty. Rumors and unauthorized information pose the greatest threat to discerning listening on the early modern stage. These anxieties about male control of information are located within a wider framework of nascent information systems in the early modern period. Dramatic productions cast doubt on received notions of gender identity in the culture as governed by the control of information. The social, political, and cultural issue that is rumor becomes a dramatic concern at the outset of the Renaissance commercial theater, and by recovering these neglected moments of male rumormongering, as well as other forms of their own transgressive speech, we can begin to reassess a critical commonplace that women were the only real threat to male authority of information. Men and their penchant for engaging in rumor and unauthorized information become a greater source of male anxiety than female gossip.

In fact, literary and cultural depictions of gossiping women seem to draw our attention away from the increased male anxieties about the authorization and control of information. Male identities, registered via their previous control over knowledge, become increasingly unstable as male rumor, and not female gossip, emerges as a greater cause for concern. What makes Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, and Ben Jonson's engagement with these issues unique is that they suggestively rethink social and gender stereotypes about the female tongue and women's unrestrained speech and present dramatic works where listening is central to the construction of an early modern identity. The chapters that follow argue that the discerning ear—listening to and for rumor and truth in both male and female talk—becomes a way to avoid becoming

feminized by female talk (Marlowe); becomes the key construct in growing into a successful king (Shakespeare); becomes a vehicle to assert female sovereignty, to pose resistance to male constrictions, and to draw attention to men's own noisy speech (Shakespeare); and becomes a way to be an auditor and earwitness in various London spaces over a consumer of the visual, a practice that draws one's attention away from truth (Jonson). It is precisely the ability to discern that Bacon propounds that emerges as a pressing theatrical issue in early modern drama, one that is central to an understanding of masculinity on the stage.

Complicating this issue is that the playhouse emerges as the early modern version of the classical and medieval conception of the House of Fame or Rumor. The masses would flock to the doors of both playhouse and the House of Rumor to see and be seen but, more importantly, to hear news and information. The early modern theater was a place of aural and oral, a theater inscribed by rumor that investigated the slipperiness of received information and the resulting consequences for male and female identities. Early modern theatrical practice enhanced the audiences' senses, particularly the auditory and visual, but what many plays in fact register is the fallibility of the senses in coming to authorized knowledge. Dramatic representations seem to be an apt vehicle for exploring these questions about the authority of information, for as Paul Yachnin claims, "the theatre itself was a center of the trade in news in early modern London."⁷ *To give audience* to something in the early modern period meant to give it one's ear, to listen (*OED* 1); furthermore, an *audience* was an assembly of listeners (and later readers of a book) (*OED* 1) who gathered in an *auditorium*, or place of hearing, to receive news (*OED* 1). The theater was a market for news from home and abroad, thereby establishing information as a commodity to pay

for, even before the rise of journalism in the seventeenth century. Thus, the early modern theater put on display the powers and failures of audition, and the stage, in representing these debates about rumor and authority, performs powerful cultural work by reworking and satirizing social concerns about the related issues of gender, information, and authority. Dramatic productions of the period take aim at the limits of listening in an increasingly noise-filled world, while also offering alternatives to both men and women in how to outwit rumor, gossip, and other forms of oral abuse through a certain training of the ear, that receptacle of logos.⁸ All the while dramatists were continually aware of their own reliance on the ambiguities of gender and truth. However, the theater does more than merely acknowledge these concerns, as it re-envisioned gender relations and informational authority and posits the necessity of discernment in the maintenance and continuation of male sovereignty, which was embattled by gendered noise that threatened to undo its power.

The unruly (male *and* female) tongue that spreads rumor and gossip on the early modern stage was often at odds with the discerning ear that could distinguish these abuses of the tongue to come to truth or assert one's authority. Yet one related concern particular to the Renaissance English stage was the fact that boys and men played the parts of women in the theater. While men would perform their female roles depicting the standard early modern type (gossip, scold, shrew), it was men playing male roles who brought to light how deeply invested they were in the control and legitimization of information. On the early modern stage, then, the anxieties regarding female talk are actually anxieties about male speech. As is often the case in Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Jonson, men emerge as the greater threats to information control and male authority by

way of their investment in rumor. While gendered talk is a component of these plays, it is gendered listening that often challenges notions of authority on the early modern stage.

I see discerning listening as the vehicle that dramatists use to rethink constructions of masculinity and to reassess notions of gendered authority concerning language and information. In recent decades, a number of studies have explored related concerns about the slipperiness of language.⁹ Howard Felperin has noted the precariousness of language or “linguistic indeterminacy” in Shakespeare, language that holds within it the possibilities of truth and untruth at the same time.¹⁰ Felperin’s assertion seems to point to the ambiguities inherent in rumor, where spoken or written news contains within it an indeterminate amount of both truth and untruth. His insight that “noise” is the product of the ambiguity of language also points to rumor’s social and political implications. Recent studies regarding rumor during the period usually revolve around Shakespeare and his plays *2 Henry IV* (where Rumour speaks the Induction to the play), *Hamlet*, and *Othello*. I found, however, a need to situate Shakespeare within a larger cultural debate as well as to examine the ways the theater interrogates these issues about the (de)stabilizing effects of rumor and unauthorized information on masculinity. Rumor for me is more than just an interesting diversion in one of Shakespeare’s plays—it is part of a larger early modern conversation regarding the authorization of information in the period, as well as the question of the gendering of information authorship and control. I claim that the indeterminate nature of rumor complicates the authority of information and often places it outside the boundaries of control. What is at

stake for male characters on the stage is the dominance of hearing, particularly discerning the rumors that manifested themselves in early modern theatrical productions. Male authority thus becomes invested in discerning listening.

Since 1999, three works have helped to reshape the field of aurality and the associated noises that infiltrated the early modern period. First, Bruce Smith, in *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor* (1999), performs an archaeological unearthing of the various sounds on the soundscape of early modern England. His approach differs from Felperin's as he examines sounds in the oral world that extend past spoken language. Smith's book often reads like a catalogue of sounds, from those of speech communities in England to those of physical objects like bells, and he draws his examples from a wealth of sources, thereby surrounding the reader within the "acoustic horizons" or properties of the period.¹¹ The O-factor, according to Smith, "centers the listening subject within the horizon of hearing," while it centers "speaking and listening subjects within horizons of place, time, and culture."¹² Early modern theaters, the wooden Os, were "instruments for the production and reception of sound."¹³ Smith devotes little space to rumor per se, briefly discussing it in relation to the rooms at court where it held sway.¹⁴ However, Smith does offer insight into listening as a communicative and political act, "with listening's capacity to catch a polyphony of sounds and voices, with listening's openness to the potentialities in silence."¹⁵ Listening is momentarily silencing one's tongue to catch this polyphony of sounds, and the grounds of communication rely on the success of this listening. Smith's richly-nuanced book gives modern readers a "sound-o-rama" of an aurally unrecoverable historical past.

Early modern England, Kenneth Gross observes, highlighted “the risks of speaking and hearing in the world, a world drawn together by fragile, often corrosive networks of murmuring, news, and tale-telling, full on interruption, derangement, nonsense, and static.”¹⁶ Gross’s socio-political approach in *Shakespeare’s Noise* (2001) examines plays from the middle of Shakespeare’s career and investigates the various noises that occupy his works, stemming from the tongue to violate the ear, including slander, curse, insult, defamation, and other disturbances of the ear, in which rumor and gossip “play a part as well.”¹⁷ For Gross, the power of Shakespeare’s theater rests in these abuses of language. *Noise* for Gross is an umbrella term that, while useful, does not provide for the nuances that mark rumor as what I am arguing is perhaps not only one of the most threatening issues/ noises in early modern England’s political and social life, but also the issue that dramatists *throughout* the period consistently examined. In his analysis of *Hamlet* and *Measure for Measure*, Gross points to the necessity of “probing” into scandalous rumors and how this act itself can become a poison.¹⁸ My emphasis on discerning listening addresses an issue that “probing” leaves undigested—its relation to gender concerns.¹⁹ In my conception of discerning listening as presented in a range of plays in the period (including but not exclusive of Shakespeare), only certain types of men harness this quality, and they do so in an attempt to maintain male authority.

In a related study, Wes Folkerth’s *The Sound of Shakespeare* (2002) provides a response to Bruce Smith’s call for a “cultural poetics of listening,” attempting to understand the role of sound in Shakespeare’s works. Folkerth’s phenomenological approach to listening, which Smith asserted is “an amalgam of biological constants and cultural variables,” sets out to listen with early

modern ears to garner information about how this culture would have understood Shakespeare's sounds in specific contexts.²⁰ He conceptualizes hearing through religious and philosophical discourses, noting the early modern anxieties about the vulnerability of the receptive ear, open to attack.²¹ My analysis offers a more fully-realized gendered scope than does Folkerth's book, as I perceive receptivity as a concept that Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Jonson see as open to both men and women. However, the discerning ear that can distinguish truth from untruth becomes a sign of power and authority with specific male valences.

As opposed to the approaches of Smith, Gross, and Folkerth, my approach has at its core an emphasis on active listening as an agent of specific gendered authority on the early modern stage. Further, I posit that it is a certain kind of listening by a certain type of individual that allows for a rethinking of power and authority. The wider range of plays I consider—roughly from the beginning of the commercial theater to the years prior to the closing of the theaters—reveals that discerning listening, rumor, and male authority are interwoven dramatic issues present not only in Shakespeare. The well-documented ambiguities about gender on the early modern stage serve as a backdrop to my discussion of these little-discussed ambiguities of rumor and unauthorized information that inhabit the plays of Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Jonson, all engaged in a sustained fashion with questions about authorizing information, the gendering of spaces of information, and the destructive *and* empowering potential of rumor. These dramatists respond to a culture where rumor ran rampant, and its effects infiltrated domains of knowledge and political, religious, and social institutions, as well as the institution of the theater, the focus of this study. While the effects

of rumor certainly do seem made for a theatrical experience, I argue that dramatists' engagement with rumor is more than just for theatrical effect. Early modern dramatists tap in to the social anxieties caused by unauthorized information and in their dramatic productions challenge received gender binaries as related to informational authority. Further, they satirize those who fail to listen, and posit ways for men *and* women to come to truth through discernment.

If the theater came to be understood as the House of Fame or Rumor, then, as I will later claim, Queen Elizabeth I was the embodiment of Fame or Rumor. Before returning to these claims, I want to demarcate the boundaries of the terms that will occupy the remainder of my dissertation: gossip and rumor. We can begin by looking to an ancient conception of gossip. In his *Works and Days*, Hesiod writes:

Act in this way and evade the malicious talk of us humans.
Gossip, moreover, is evil, so light it is easily lifted,
Yet it is terribly painful and awfully hard to get rid of.
Nobody's talk is dispersed altogether as long as a lot of
People repeat it, for Gossip herself is some kind of a goddess. (747-51)²²

Hesiod identifies gossip as "malicious talk" that has the quality of negative attachment, unable to be easily shaken off. It is hurtful because it is deliberately spoken, so easily repeatable on the tongues of many, poised to ruin reputations. Moreover, it is important to consider the alignment of both Gossip and Rumor/Fame with women. This gendering of malicious talk certainly had taken hold in the Renaissance, as loose tongues and uncontrolled and unauthorized talk becomes inextricably tied to the female sex. I contend, however, that these depictions are too easily repeatable and aid in setting up false binaries between

men and women in the Renaissance. Hesiod's early description of gossip goes a long way in getting to the heart of an early modern understanding about gossip and its distinguishing characteristics from rumor. While some tend to bleed these terms into one another, I side with social psychologists Ralph L. Rosnow and Gary Alan Fine, who argue that rumor and gossip are not interchangeable; in fact, the distinction between the two is often evident in the multiple discourses of the early modern period. According to Rosnow and Fine, gossip is small talk or trivial tattle about someone or someone's affairs, "a preoccupation with the 'nonessential'—and the news may or may not be factual."²³ Gossip, accordingly, focuses on an individual's moral reputation or fame. Gossip as chatter depends on the situation and on the intentions of the speakers, and it can be positive or negative, located in print or through oral transmission.²⁴ As the authors make clear, "gossip is not merely idle talk, but talk with a social purpose," usually to castigate, embarrass, or expose.²⁵ Gossip has a touch of the moment, timely news or information that compels repeating to another set of willing (and ungendered) ears. Sociologist Tamotsu Shibutani remarks that gossip is restricted to small local groups and concerns "the private and intimate details of the traits and conduct of specific individuals" that order interpersonal relations by placing individuals as objects of talk.²⁶ Finally, Deborah Jones takes a sociolinguistic approach to gossip, defining it as intimate talk, a language of female secrets, about the personal and domestic that brings women into a speech community that oftentimes is viewed by men as a threat.²⁷ As I will elaborate in my third chapter, while there is power in what Jones calls these speech communities, I find even more subversive potential in the auditory communities women engage in on the early modern stage.

Gossip derives from the roots *god+sib*, meaning a relation or godparent; one *OED* definition of gossip, dating from 1566, attacks the character of womanhood: “a person, mostly a woman, of light and trifling character, esp. one who delights in idle talk; a newsmonger, a tattler” [3].²⁸ During periods of “lying in” after the birth of a child, a woman’s gossips (friends, relations) shared her space both before and after the birth (*OED* 2b).²⁹ As Julie Sanders has recently remarked, “the space, constructed by patriarchy, was taken over by the very women whom patriarchy had marginalised.”³⁰ Sanders makes an important point regarding the gendered domains of knowledge and information in the Renaissance. Many of the anxieties about gender in the period could be witnessed in the crossover effect; that is, in the female spaces seeping over into male spaces, and vice versa. This is in part what sparked the antitheatrical prejudice against boy players acting as and dressing like women on the stage. Thus, the anxiety about women “taking over” male domains of knowledge and control, of infecting male spaces with gossip, would bolster the necessity of reinforcing gender binaries or at the very least male domains of information. Gossip networks certainly did arouse anxiety for men who saw them as a threat, out of the reach of the male authorizing ear.³¹ What was more often the case, however, was not that men were “taking over” female domains or engaging in the coded feminine behavior of gossip, but that they were struggling with a reality that their own talk of rumors and half-truths was more of a threat to male sovereignty than was women’s gossip.

According to Karen Newman, forms of oral chatter such as gossip and scolding were perceived as an undermining of authority and a threat to order and male sovereignty: “The extent of this perceived threat may be gauged by the

strict delegation of the talking woman to the carefully defined and delimited spheres of private and domestic life in which the husband was exhorted to rule."³² The perceived danger of women asserting their own informational authority increases as women's talk escapes to the public domains where men also ruled. This amplification of anxieties about women does crucial cultural work in constructing fixed gender binaries, but all too often these collapse upon one another; a certain deafness to the troublesome potential of male talk coexists with the array of public anxieties surrounding the threat of female talk. Nonetheless, the image of the woman with a gossiping or scolding tongue in the early modern period became a social construction that marked her as transgressive and could lead to potentially grievous actions against her. As Linda Boose remarks, narratives from the century posit the shrew as a "test obstacle essential for positing the culture's terms for male dominance."³³ When a woman disrupted the social order with her loose tongue, the law often worked to silence her. Numerous ballads and broadsides detail the gossip, shrew, or scold and the punishments for speaking boldly, which included the use of the cucking stool and the scold's bridle to tame the uncontrolled female tongue. As Keith Thomas notes, the cucking stool was used in Tudor times as public exhibition of the common village scold, who he notes was legally defined as "a troublesome and angry woman who, by her brawling and wrangling amongst her neighbours, doth break the public peace, and beget, cherish and increase public discord."³⁴

Loose tongues are coded as female in the early modern period, and as Pamela Allen Brown asserts, scolding was "a chronic, legally actionable offense" while connotations of shrew or gossip "varied from mild to damning."³⁵ Although such legal justifications for punishing 'male talk' in a public fashion do

not get mapped onto the culture in such overt ways, we must not mistake this as evidence that men were the absolute embodiment of the controlled tongue, leveled speech, and keen ability to discern truth from faulty information through listening.³⁶ As Rosnow and Fine have concluded, the transactional nature of gossip and rumor is at odds with the traditional associations of gossip and rumor as female pursuits.³⁷ Likewise, Patricia Meyer Spacks notes in her influential book *Gossip* that gossip is desired by both men and women even though men often deny they desire it.³⁸ In fact, male anxiety rests in the seeping of female into male or male into female, and this process of disowning male loose speech—by positioning this type of speech within the realm of the female—was central to the construction of the early modern masculine self. To bolster the appearance of having informational authority, men and male institutions often cast women as a threat that needed to be controlled, while in fact men were just as (or even more) complicit in spreading rumor and unauthorized information, often at the expense of male authority. Male characters on the early modern stage, mirroring cultural anxieties, perhaps mistakenly viewed gossip as a larger threat to male authority than it possibly was.

To begin to grasp the complexity of rumor's place in early modern England and on the English stage, we can usefully contrast it with gossip. Whereas gossip concerns itself with small groups or individuals, rumor is oriented to large groups or societies; whereas gossip is intimate chatter with a local purpose, rumor is unverified and ambiguous information with deliberate designs affecting a larger social group; whereas gossip is concerned with the moral reputation of those being talked about, rumor usually transcends the focus of individual reputation to posit an ambiguity about people or events. If gossip,

then, has local implications, rumor has larger-scale implications and should not be viewed as gossip on a larger scale.

True or not, rumor is deemed necessary to repeat; it contains within it threads of both truth and falsity.³⁹ Rumor is a shadow of truth, but it also shadows truth. It is a form of information transmission whose origins are indeterminate; it is always derivative, a simulacra, an entity that grows (more true, more false) with each retelling, threatening the authority of both speech and print. Sociologists note that rumors can tell us much about the culture in which they flourished, suggesting that rumors concern what society would view as important or pressing and not trivial.⁴⁰ Rumors are a life-line of sorts, as they allow us to better understand our world or moment—again, rumors contain in them a double method, both true and false with the ability to alarm and comfort, to exploit for gain or merely amuse for entertainment. Rumor has a greater urgency than gossip because the information that constitutes rumor has a shelf life, and it becomes more plausible when more people repeat it.⁴¹ When credibility of official sources and authority is questioned and doubt arises about supposedly authorized truth, rumors are ripe and truth becomes a point of contention.

One of the most influential early twentieth century books on rumor, Allport and Postman's *The Psychology of Rumor*, defines rumor as an unverified topical proposition for belief, a social phenomenon that has some importance to both the speaker and listener, and its truth content is shrouded in some type of ambiguity.⁴² Such ambiguity does not allow for verification, particularly as the information becomes more and more distorted through multiple retellings.⁴³ Rumor, what Rosnow and Fine call a form of social exchange, is information

neither substantiated nor refuted, fueled by a desire for meaning or closure, often dealing with issues of great magnitude to a larger social group.⁴⁴ And, in his influential book *Improvised News*, sociologist Tamotsu Shibutani has argued that rumor is a collective transaction whereby people attempt to make sense of their world; he writes, "Much of any crisis situation is already defined; a certain number of particulars are available, and these constitute the know [sic] facts of the event. Only the missing gap is supplied by rumor."⁴⁵ Rumor becomes a stand-in when truth is at a crossroads. Rumors, like any commodity, have value, and people are willing to engage in a "rumor market" when they have something to gain or something to lose. And the innate ambiguity of rumor that is one of its central functions becomes a potent metaphor for the breakdown of communication and authority on the early modern stage.⁴⁶

Classical writers like Virgil and Ovid wrote about rumor and influenced early modern writers who engaged in this tradition.⁴⁷ Virgil, in *The Aeneid*, writes that Rumor flies about swiftly, a diffuse and enormous monster with piercing eyes and millions of mouths, "And every mouth is furnished with a tongue, / And round with listening ears the flying plague is hung" (4.264-65).⁴⁸ She spreads "disastrous news" among crowds, delighting in the fear she causes as she infects the ear with ambiguity. Of central importance is that Rumor "mingles truth with lies" (4.271).⁴⁹ While she spares no man or woman of her evil ways, she also spreads not only lies and falsehoods. Rumor is contingent on presenting this truth/falsity ambiguity, disrupting at many levels a certainty and authority of what is delivered unto the ears of its listeners.⁵⁰

Ovid's depiction of The House of Rumor in *Metamorphoses* is closely aligned with Chaucer's own undertaking in *The House of Fame*. The three dramatists I examine in the dissertation all were drawn to Ovid, and they would have had the opportunity to read him in Arthur Golding's 1567 translation of *Metamorphoses*. In Ovid's rendition, the House is marked by an absence of silence, as there is a continual buzz that fills the dwelling and the ears of the crowds that occupy the space. In Golding's translation, which parallels Virgil's own description, "millions both of trothes and lyes ronne gadding every where" (12.58), and the original piece of information grows greater as people add various fictions. In the House of Rumor, truth becomes untraceable, and Ovid notes that "Bruit that loves to tell / Uncertayne newes uppon report, whereof he dooth not knowe / The author" (12.65-7). As Rumor sweeps the land, taking pleasure in spreading truth and falsity in equal measure, its information is further held in question by its lack of an author, an originary, authorizing source.

The Renaissance literary imagination inherited a noisy soundscape from the Middle Ages. As Jeffrey J. Cohen has recently outlined, the "raucous" Middle Ages had "less to do with the placid harmonies of Gregorian chant (the contemporary aural shorthand for giving media a medieval 'feel') than with the screams, shouts, burps, farts, sonic explosions, dissonance, and indecipherable linguistic babble that fills the world."⁵¹ As might be expected, it is Chaucer who most perceptively gives us aural access to these medieval noises and their relation to truth.⁵² Chaucer examines the nature of truth by writing about rumor. Chaucer's dream vision, the 2158 line *The House of Fame* (c. 1374), influenced by Ovid and Virgil, stands as medieval England's key text regarding the figure of Rumor.⁵³ In the second book, Jupiter has bid a talking eagle to bring the

dreamer, Geoffrey, to the House of Fame, where he will hear “Bothe soth-sawes and lesinges” (both true and false speech) (676). All speech and other sounds, we are told by the eagle, disturb the air, and all the noises soar upward: “That every word that spoken is / Comth into Fames Hous, y-wis” (881-82). The House of Fame maintains a measure of authority over orality, as all discourse enters clearly, without static. Once inside the Hall of Fame, the dreamer sees a huge “feminyne creature” (1365) on a throne, adorned with a multitude of eyes (1379) and “Had also fele up-standing eres / And tonges, as on bestes heres” (1389-90). Soon, as numerous supplicants arrive to pray to Fame, the dreamer sees her fickle nature as she often randomly doles out fame or infamy to the multitudes who come to her with the help of Eolus and his trumpets, Good Name and Slander (1572). When a Stranger enters amid this murmuring and asks the dreamer what he is seeking, the dreamer responds that he wants news to strike his ears, no matter what it is (1886-87). And it is at this moment that he is brought to the House of Rumor.

The House of Rumor is a building sixty miles in length located in a valley outside the House of Fame and is fashioned like a cage, made of weak timber.⁵⁴ Its doors are always open to accept news, and noises erupt from everywhere: “And, over all the houses angles, / Is ful of rouninges and of Jangles” (1959-60). After the eagle brings him inside the House, the dreamer is struck by how everyone, standing in close vicinity to one another, whispers in someone else’s ear some news that what he repeated was true, saying “‘Thus hath he seyde’—and ‘thus he dooth’— / ‘Thus shal hit be’—‘Thus herde I seye’— / ‘That shal be found’—‘That dar I leye’—” (2052-54). Each individual asserts his own authority in the retelling, although authority has in reality been sapped of its power. Most

astonishing to Geoffrey is what he observes next, as each individual present who hears news quickly tattles what he was told to another, stitching and adding to the story until it grows wildly (2060-67). These rumors exist solely in speech and they rely on the tongues of men to be spread into the ears of other men. And in terms that link rumor to related early modern concerns about fire, Chaucer writes,

Were the tyding sooth or fals,
 Yit wolde he tell hit nathelees,
 And evermo with more encrees
 That hit was erst. Thus north and southe
 Went every [word] fro mouth to mouthe,
 And that encreasing ever-mo
 As fyr is wont to quikke and go
 From a sparke spronge amis,
 Til al a citee brent up is. (2072-80)⁵⁵

Well into the seventeenth century, rumor and the spread of unauthorized information was often aligned with the plagues that spread throughout Europe and the great fires that tore through the city.⁵⁶ In fact, the effects of rumor have the potential to become a social and political catastrophe, certainly a cause for panic or hysteria. The ultimate danger is that the sources for this information are easily forgotten, and thus the truth of the original is potentially lost in the retelling. When these tales are fully developed and warped, they rise to depart from the House of Rumor, but the dreamer notes that sometimes a truthful story and a lie attempt to fly out the same window, impeding one another:

Thus saugh I fals and sooth compounded
 Togeder flee for oo tydinge
 Thus out at holes gonne wringe
 Every tyding streight to Fame. (2108-11)

Both true and false exit the House as one; likewise, both true and false will enter the ear in the form of a unified entity, rumor. Negotiating truth rests within this ear with its ability to discern.

A crisis of truth permeated the Renaissance, and rumor was at the forefront. This crisis, with the invention of new modes for circulating discourse and the resulting anxiety of authorizing this information as credible, becomes a pressing subject of myriad cultural productions, including those of the theater.⁵⁷ The anxiety from the Middle Ages, with its symbolic female figure of Fame, seems to shift to an anxiety concerning male information publics and their trafficking in unauthorized information. With the invention of moveable type and the flourishing of the printing press, information could be dispersed as never before, and news could quickly reach the masses. As Walter Ong has noted, early modern Europe still maintained a heavy oral residue even after the advent of the printing press; nonetheless, print had subtle yet significant influence on the human consciousness.⁵⁸ Speaking of the birth of printing in western Europe in the fifteenth century, Brian Richardson argues that “long-term factors, such as urbanization, the rise of the cost of labour, and the development of universities and hence of lay culture, came together to foster a demand for cheaper and more plentiful reading matter.”⁵⁹ Information was no longer in the domain of the wealthy, educated, or the elite, for the poor, uneducated commoner could just as readily hear the latest news from at home or afar.⁶⁰ Literacy rates in England were perhaps the highest in Europe, creating, as one recent study has claimed, an “age of nascent information media.”⁶¹ Yet, the questions for all who encountered information concerned authority and trust: how reliable is the source relaying

the information? and what authority does he or she have? Print was often viewed as a mark of authorized information, although it, too, was not exempt from rumor. The knowledge maintained by a society is largely based not on proof, but rather faith—rumors are readily believed if they correspond to someone's hopes or fears.⁶² Rumors, of course, begin with people, but their anonymous function disrupts notions of an originary moment/place of information.⁶³ Thus, aural discernment of the information that came pouring into early modern ears becomes a crucial means of securing truth.

In fact, an increased reliance on the ear and its ability to listen for the truth is evident in the period, as calls arise for individuals to become earwitnesses to truth. Ramie Targoff has shown that this truth was an eternal Truth of God; God's word was to inhabit the ear and make its way to the heart. She writes, "At the heart of the liturgical changes introduced during the Reformation was the shift of emphasis from a visual to an auditory register."⁶⁴ Underlying such admonitions was the injunction from the apostle Paul, who said to the Romans, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17).⁶⁵ John Donne makes a similar comment in an April 1627 sermon preached to King Charles at Whitehall, where he admonishes, "see that you doe heare God, else every rumor will scatter you; But take heed what you heare, else you may come to call conditionall things absolute."⁶⁶ Thus, the training of the ears to listen for the truth of God's Word became as such an outline for redemption. However, this ideal was certainly challenged with the onslaught of earthly auditory pleasures that could take an individual's ear away from hearing truth.

Bacon, for one, emphasized the need for first hand observation of the natural world, by which man could assert his power over it.⁶⁷ Yet the rise of this

new type of thinking brought about skepticism and erased objective certainty. Becoming an eyewitness, however, was often seen as a way to truth and certainty. For instance, writing in a letter about his first voyage, Christopher Columbus remarked, "For although there was much talk and writing of these lands, all was conjectural, without ocular evidence. In fact, those who accepted the stories judged rather by hearsay than on any tangible information."⁶⁸ Ocular proof, the same kind that Othello calls for, is given a place of prominence in determining truth in Columbus's narrative. Columbus places this information transmission about foreign lands within both oral and manuscript culture; yet, seeing with one's own eyes, Columbus asserts, bypasses the potential rumors that inhabit both oral and manuscript transmission. While eye-evidence became a necessary component in determining the credibility of information in the scientific domain, it also brought to light the actual limits of sight in verifying information for most of the world.

Stephen Greenblatt has claimed that early modern travel writers were liars.⁶⁹ Traveler's tales and reports from other lands certainly highlighted the concerns about the credibility of received information and the resulting doubts about truth.⁷⁰ One interesting seventeenth-century example is an epigram entitled "On Captaine Drake his Voyage":

Some think it true, whilst other some do doubt,
Whether Capt. Drake compast the world about.
Some say he did it in the Devils raine,
And none ere since could doe the like againe:
But these al deceived, why should they doubt it?
They know each yeere there's some that goe about it.⁷¹

According to the epigram, doubt is only founded if one does not have aural or visual access to others who supposedly attempt this feat. As Stanley Cavell has

perceptively remarked, "Doubt, like belief, is most fully, say originally, directed to claims of others, of speakers; an appropriate reaction to, for instance, rumor, Iago's medium."⁷² Of course, doubt arises when there is ambiguity, and rumor certainly fits this category; for belief to occur, one must be able to parse this ambiguity and discern truth. We might also consider the phrases usually attached to a piece of rumor or to reported accounts of events or places: "It is reported" or "I heard that." Even a brief glance at a chronicle history such as Holinshed's reveals that conflicting reports are often presented side by side, and much of what is related is without an author attached. The passive construction of the former takes away the originary source of the information, and thus subjectivity is erased. And, while the latter posits a subject (the "I"), this individual has been privy only to a retelling.⁷³ Repetition of already unauthorized information takes one even further away from the truth.

While there were in fact methods of authorizing documents in the period (royal seals, for instance), more often than not it was difficult to trace the origins of information or news, thus forging a certain crisis regarding truth and authority because rumor was always to be contended with. Communication in the early modern period is marked by its fragility and instability, and as certainty and truth break down through the workings of rumor, so too do the received notions of male authority, which posited males as superior authors of information. Rumor has the potential both to destabilize *and* to bolster an individual, a community, a nation, or a situation; it stands as a tool and enemy, a poison and remedy. Rumor enters in to a world of confusion, a land of babel where individuals are searching for truth. Unlike gossip, confined to a smaller community, rumor has a calculated effect that often has larger implications for

those hearing and speaking it. While the intentions of gossip may be to injure a person's reputation or fame, rumor's intentions often have larger-scale, more debilitating consequences for society. This drive to be "in the know" offers rumor a place in a culture where information, true or false, is prized and its credibility and authority is not always examined.⁷⁴ And as I examine in the following section, it is Elizabeth I who becomes the all-hearing authority of information in the sixteenth century and complicates notions of male informational authority in the early modern period.

Elizabeth I: Glorianna. Bess. Fama?

The historian Lacey Baldwin Smith, in his discussion of treason in Tudor England, comments upon the Tudor government's determination to "chase down every political rumour to what was always presumed to be its evil source"; he writes that the sixteenth century "inevitably assumed the worst: rumours emerged fully developed from someone's evil mind into which Satan had entered . . . Rumours by definition had sinister origins, were evil in their purpose, and constituted a threat to society."⁷⁵ The ambiguous nature of rumor that I have described, a constant that must be contended with in the political realm, led monarchs to repeatedly put in place ways to both combat the deleterious effects of rumor while at the same time capitalize upon the political potential of a well-timed rumor set in motion from the tongues of the court. Sharon L. Jansen tells us that after the new Treason Act of 1534 was passed during the reign of Henry VIII, "there was danger in all kinds of words, even the kind we might typically ignore as harmless gossip, wild rumors, or foolish

boasting."⁷⁶ These verbal assaults Jansen describes had the potential to inflict harm only if they were not countered with a discerning ear. Gayatri Spivak's definition of rumor points to the very real political threat that early modern monarchs encountered; rumor, she says, is "always in circulation with no assignable source. This illegitimacy makes [rumour] accessible to insurgency."⁷⁷ The noises of Tudor England could prove harmful to subjects as well as to kingdoms, thus the need for a way to combat rumor as a precautionary measure. Informers were a commonplace employed by the courts in sixteenth century England, with their tongues, eyes, and ears at the ready, able to spread or overhear information depending on the circumstance.⁷⁸ Thus, the need to monitor, contest, and listen for rumor was a necessity for England's monarchs in the sixteenth century, for as history (and literature) had proven, rumor was an oral (and now printed) force to take seriously.

Precedents for the control of the tongue, and in particular of rumor and gossip gone astray, can be found in the royal proclamations of the last fifty years of the Tudor monarchs. Of course, we should remember, it was under female monarchs that these proclamations were made: Mary I (1553-1558) and Elizabeth I (1558-1603). In both 1553 and 1558, Mary issued proclamations (Tudor Royal Proclamations [TRP] 389, 446) for the suppression of seditious rumors. In the first proclamation, Mary notes that sundry "seditious persons"

cease not to invent, spread, and publish many false, untrue, and vain rumors and bruits, rashly discoursing upon the great and most weighty affairs touching the Queen's highness' royal person and state of the realm, contrary to their bounden duties of allegiance and contrary to all good order.⁷⁹

The proclamation implores her subjects to report offenders "of such lewd liberty of speaking" so that they may be punished. Yet Mary goes further, not only

holding accountable the loose tongues—which, we should note, are *not* gendered female—but those ears that hear “such light, seditious, or naughty talk, spoken in his or their presence”: “the same person so hearing and not declaring the same, and being thereof justly convicted, shall be reputed and taken for the first author of the said rumors, and have such punishment for the same as the first author should.”⁸⁰ In the absence of the origin of the rumor, one is appointed. Here, listening is linked to national duty; as the Queen’s subject, an individual must put his or her ears to use, and the tongue must speak the truth for the good of the realm. The proclamation assumes that the individual’s ears can discern what is being spoken as a rumor. Perhaps this was a misguided assumption, for the training of the early modern ear to discern rumor was not a given, a fact that many a dramatist in the years to follow would capitalize upon in their own dramatic depictions of rumor and its effects on men and women.

Men were certainly talking and listening in the period, and they risked punishment if they repeated this “naughty talk” against the crown.⁸¹ Clearly, as the latter proclamation (1558) makes clear, there was a divide between the Queen’s obedient and faithful subjects and those who spread rumors to bring about “sudden terror and fear.”⁸² Mary’s anxiety is certainly real: her efforts to restore Catholicism to England were successful but met with widespread panic that would continue in various forms for much of the next century as England would become, under Elizabeth, a staunch defender of the Protestant faith.⁸³ She asks her subjects not to be alarmed by “any such most false, lewd, and seditious tales, rumors, and lies, or give any manner of faith or credit unto the same.”⁸⁴ *Credit* is a key term, signaling the instability of information, both spoken and written. How *was* a person to determine the credibility of news and report in a

culture of rumor? Mary asks her subjects to *discredit* such rumors, insisting that all such talk is false, but as I have outlined, rumors contain the seeds of both truth and falsity. With oftentimes conflicting news and reports traveling throughout the country and throughout Europe, the notion of crediting information as true or false would become a pressing issue in the century that followed.

The lessons Elizabeth learned as princess about the injurious potential of report in a society that had, in many ways, no alternative but to give it some amount of credit, gave her a wealth of perspective during her own reign. As Queen, Elizabeth, like her half-sister Mary, was attuned to the dangers as well as the possibilities inherent in receiving and producing rumor, gossip, and news. As Kenneth Gross aptly remarks, "it is useful to recall that Elizabeth herself was dogged throughout her reign by tales of sexual misbehavior, secret marriages, and illegitimate children, or rumors about her secret plots to murder her rivals."⁸⁵ Elizabeth is one of the most information-savvy individuals of the sixteenth century, and the spin she put on seizing rumors for political gain corresponded with the rise of a commercial theater that had at its beginnings an emerging concern with authorizing information and rumor. The princess Elizabeth, in a bold 16 March 1554 letter to Mary, urges her to verify information she had supposedly received about her having "practiced, counseled, [nor] consented to anything that might be prejudicial to [your] person any way or dangerous to the state by any mean."⁸⁶ This (dis)information led Mary's Council to command Elizabeth to the Tower of London. Elizabeth, deemed a threat to Mary's Catholic crown because she was a Protestant claimant to the throne, asks Mary not to trust her own councilors, stating, "I think and believe you shall

never by report know unless by yourself you hear." Here, Elizabeth puts stock in first hand audition as a means of knowing the truth. Later in the letter, Elizabeth points to the potential problem that lies with the hearers, those who "have heard false report and not hearken to the truth known."⁸⁷ As she would implore Mary not to trust secondhand over firsthand information (hearing with your own ears, seeing with your own eyes), so too would Elizabeth value information accurately and credibly retrieved, as evidenced by her network of state intelligencers.⁸⁸

The possibility of rumor being mobilized *for* the crown was just as real as the possibility of it being used *against* the crown; thus, rumor's ambiguity almost always called for action.⁸⁹ Elizabeth is certainly concerned with the control of news and information about her and her realm, as numerous extant speeches and letters attest, and she seeks to use her spy network as an extension of the "eyes and ears" of the royal court, providing her with secrets, news, and information that, in essence, will only ever come to her secondhand. The second version of the 24 November 1586 speech points to Elizabeth's keen understanding of the necessity of properly discerning information before making judgements. Regarding a monarch's necessity of being just and temperate, Elizabeth remarks that she never

bent my ears to credit a tale that first was told me; nor was so rash to corrupt my judgment with my censure before I heard the cause. I will not say but many reports might fortune be brought me by such as might hear the case whose partiality might mar sometime the matter, *for we princes may not hear all ourselves*. But this dare I boldly affirm: my verdict went ever with the truth of my knowledge.⁹⁰

The Queen acknowledges that as arbiter of justice in the realm, she must make allowances for the veracity and accuracy of the reports she receives. Further, the majority of the time she will be a secondhand auditor of information, and she

must rely on the ears she authorizes as extensions of her royal ear. Therefore, like any monarch, Elizabeth was always a consumer of rumor, yet she must not credit or authorize all reports equally. Elizabeth must thus listen carefully, practicing aural discernment in order to uncover truth.

A certain amount of dialogue concerning the veracity of news and report also occurs between monarchs—Elizabeth I and James VI of Scotland, the future James I of Britain—during the final two decades of the sixteenth century. Over a twenty-year period of letter exchange, each monarch voices a clear understanding that their respective realms are harvesters of rumor and questionable information that must not be taken at face value.⁹¹ One letter provides a telling example. In a 13 April 1594 letter, James's tone borders on indignant as he puzzles over how Elizabeth could allow the earl of Bothwell to come across the border from Scotland into England after his string of rebellious acts against his crown.⁹² Although James is at first astonished that "so wise and provident a prince" as Elizabeth could be contemned by her subjects, James nevertheless acknowledges, "it is hardly to be believed, if I knew it not to be a maxim in the state of princes that *we see and hear all with the eyes and ears of others*, and if these be deceivers we cannot shun deceit."⁹³ James privileges firsthand knowledge, but notes that a monarch is subject to his or her subjects regarding the receipt of news and information by others; however, he or she is *not* powerless to fend off the deliberate deceivers or rumormongers who pose a threat to the well-being of the kingdom, *if they employ discernment*. Furthermore, we should note that this threat is amplified beyond the scope of the scold, and male deceivers of the ear are actually realized as more of a threat to the kingdom than female gossips with their loose tongues. While the female

scold or gossip might pose a more localized threat, the male performing these verbal assaults might be considered a greater concern to the well-being of the state. Anxiety about the male and female tongue remained central to the social construction of gender in the period, and it was men who would distance themselves from the gossiping female while engaging in even more threatening verbal behavior.⁹⁴

Over the forty-five years of her reign, Elizabeth issued a broad array of royal proclamations that sought to penalize or contain the rumors that flew swiftly throughout the realm and to suppress unruly male tongues. As might be expected, many proclamations concern religion, all of which denounce the speech or writings that subvert and disrupt the public quiet.⁹⁵ Elizabeth, in a 6 July 1590 letter to James, comments about the people of both their realms who urge their subjects to doubt Protestantism: "I pray you stop the mouths or make shorter the tongues of such ministers as dare presume to make orison in their pulpits for the persecuted in England for the Gospel."⁹⁶ On 6 February 1587, Elizabeth issued a proclamation that would severely punish "seditious perturbors of the common quiet" who spread and carry abroad false suggestions and bruits.⁹⁷ The necessity to issue such proclamations has everything to do with men talking (and failing to listen so as to discern truth) and virtually nothing to do with women gossiping in localized communities throughout Great Britain. Such proclamations were often meant to quell potential rebellions and often would offer awards for information regarding libels against the Queen.⁹⁸ Libel and slander seem to be pressing issues at the close of the sixteenth century, as the following proclamation makes clear. Elizabeth defends the Lord Treasurer from libels and vigorously states, "her highness doth hereby expressly pronounce that

all those that shall presume to publish any such slanderous bruits by word or writing maliciously shall be held in case of persons that are authors of sedition, and so guilty of the heavy pains due for the same.”⁹⁹ Both the oral and the written or printed word are deemed slanderous; these “publishers” become the de facto authors of the rumors even though they may not have been the original authors. These and such attempts to curb the spread of rumors, of course, are measures that can never fully or effectively contain this unauthorized information. The anxiety to curb the spread of rumors was perhaps even more threatening than the rumor itself.¹⁰⁰

Elizabeth’s position on the throne as female authority over information and controller of rumors complicates the traditional association of women as sources of transgressive talk. In fact, Elizabeth’s presence on the throne often willed men to speak, filled with anxiety about succession and marriage questions concerning the Queen. In her role as monarch, Elizabeth becomes a discerning listener by design, hyper-aware of the way in which rumor needed to be used for advantage and thwarted when necessary. Elizabeth’s reign and her informational authority fueled a gradual shift from understanding loose talk primarily as a female act to a realization that the detrimental aspects of rumor and unauthorized information were firmly embedded in male communities. Elizabeth’s reign raised male anxiety about information control to the point where cultural discourses continued to attack female talk and to sponsor efforts to reassert male authority.

At this point, I want to return to Bacon’s analysis of fame that begins this Introduction, which points to the dual nature of fama in the early modern period—*fama* as rumor or reputation. Fame as reputation is, I would assert, a

reason that rumor and gossip become such potent issues in early modern England. With the rise of print culture and the multiple channels of communication, a person's fame could certainly travel with increased speed; fame, however, could also fall prey to rumor and gossip, which had the potential to alter fame in an unauthorized fashion. Elizabeth is a useful study into the nature of both meanings of fama, as her writings reveal that she posited a connection between the two. Throughout her reign, Elizabeth took steps to secure her reputation within the realm of England and abroad. She sought to establish an authorized visual image of herself at a historical moment when monarchs were concerned with how they were to appeal to the world.¹⁰¹ In addition to this visual reputation, Elizabeth also wanted her fame repeated into the ears of future generations. Her control of state rumors, I would assert, was one effort to secure her fame in the historical record. Elizabeth's pursuit of fame, of an authorized, repeatable truth, sheds light on why rumor was such a charged issue for her during her forty-five year reign.

Elizabeth as the early modern incarnation of Fama? Certainly, the Queen is in many ways akin to this authorizing and ambiguous figure of Fame.¹⁰² Elizabeth, so concerned about her fame throughout her forty-five year reign, was equally concerned about fama, that destructive noise that always had the potential to wreak havoc upon her reputation. At once asserting her masculine and feminine traits as a monarch, Elizabeth offered an often-ambiguous presence to her subjects and to the world. As her speeches, letters, and proclamations show, her information savvy, her understanding that a discerning ear is absolutely essential in being able to perform effectively as a monarch, allowed her both to combat rumor and to use it as a political weapon. As a monarch who

could at once possess both truth and falsity to suit her design, Elizabeth embraced the characteristics of Rumor and Fama, becoming *the* authorizing ear of the sixteenth century.

I have attempted in this Introduction to trace some of the classical, medieval, and early Renaissance conceptions of rumor while laying out the general assumptions about informational authority and its relation to gender in the period. The chapters that follow begin to unpack and complicate the assumptions and assertions that I have made in the previous pages. As I worked through these chapters, I began to see that the dramatists satirize and valorize a type of listening and a type of listener. While the conclusions that these dramatists come to regarding these issues are not always compatible with one another, they do present a theatrical arc—spanning the rise and close of the commercial theater—of one of the most loaded issues of both the age and the stage.

In Chapter 1, “Table Talk: Marlowe and his Mouthy Men,” I argue that an anxiety about uncontrolled male speech permeates Marlowe’s plays—particularly *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, *The Massacre at Paris*, and *Edward II*—and in showcasing the dual fears of the effeminization of the male ear and the hazards of unauthorized information, Marlowe argues that the uncontrolled social conversation of men threatens masculine sovereignty. My concluding discussion in this chapter of *Edward II* perhaps best exemplifies Marlowe’s engagement with unauthorized information, for as I argue, it is Gaveston’s position at Edward II’s ear, and his refusal to listen to his barons, that causes auricular anxiety in the realm. The noise caused by Edward’s misrule is

ultimately quieted by the future king Edward III, who displays a keen understanding of listening to counsel and not accepting rumor at face value.

In the Tudor history plays, it is the auditor who takes center stage. In Chapter 2, "Bruits and Britons: Rumor, Counsel, and the Early Modern Play of History," I examine the auditory world of Shakespeare's second tetralogy. Using the paradigm of the Greek concept of "fearless speech," theorized by Michel Foucault, I argue that the *Henriad* makes a case for the necessity of the king or heir to the throne to be an acousmatic, to hear all counsel by giving license to both formal and informal, male and female, counsel to speak, even if they speak rumors. I argue that it is the ear and the ability of the male hearer to discern rumor and authorize report that is privileged in Shakespeare's history plays. The chapter traces Prince Harry's gradual privileging of the ear as a means of discerning truth, as well as how exactly the new King authorizes the reports he hears from men and women in his realm.

Drawing in part upon the insights gained from sociologist James C. Scott's examination of the subversive potential found in resistance theory, I argue in my third chapter, "Aural Insurgents: Shakespeare's Dissident Women," that Shakespeare's women often comprise dissident auditory communities that are imbued with a potential to discern rumors and male lies and undermine the male authority of information. I examine female dissidence by way of self-imposed silence, hushed speech or whispering, and refusals to speak and listen to men in *The Taming of the Shrew*, *King Lear*, *Measure for Measure*, *Titus Andronicus*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Othello*, and *The Winter's Tale*. I seek to show first how these female aural environments are in stark contrast to the conception of women as merely shrews, scolds, and gossips, and claim that Shakespeare challenges these

stereotypes by instilling a sense of auditory power in many of his female characters.

In my final chapter, “‘Nothing but the truth’: Ben Jonson’s Comedy of Rumors,” I argue that the emerging fixation on listening in Jonson’s plays is part of his larger concern with masculinity and the authorization of information and rumor. What I coin as Jonson’s comedy of rumors plays expose the aural failures and successes of his characters who occupy the spaces of the home, fair, inn, and staple. Yet Jonson asserts his own authority as dramatist to control the news and the printing of his plays, and he envisions a public of discerning readers who will “understand” his authorized words.

Comprising the early modern auditory were men and women who came to see and hear a play. I want to claim that as a dramatic issue, discerning listening (or its failure) and the workings of rumor make for compelling drama. The rumors, lies, and half-truths that I examine in the following pages test the ability of the discerning ear to come to truth, often resulting in entertaining theater. Horace’s dictum that the aim of the poet was to “inform or delight” is a useful angle to consider to what end Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Jonson engaged with the powerful issues of rumor, listening, and authority. Shakespeare and Marlowe often present the potentially grave dangers rumor and failures to listen can have for masculinity, but Shakespeare most fully realizes the pleasure of having female characters subvert male rumors and lies through their own powers of discernment. Yet Jonson comes to see discerning listening as a moral and ethical issue, and the self-taught classicist seeks to teach his audience and readers the necessity of becoming earwitnesses to the truth. The early modern

theater of rumor becomes the vehicle for Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Jonson to teach and delight, to showcase their own claim as dramatists to authorize and control rumor.

Notes

¹ Bacon, *The Essays or Counsels Civil and Moral, Newly Enlarged*, 455.

² *Ibid.*, 456.

³ Davies, *Nosce Teipsum* (London, 1599), B2r.

⁴ The history of the word *author* reveals the charged nature of the word for the early modern period. *Author*, from the Latin *auctor*, meaning originator or promoter, is derived from *auctus*, the past participle of which is *augere*, meaning to increase. By definition, then, an author is one who originates or gives existence, or an individual who increases the amount of information in circulation.

⁵ For an interesting article on the ways the Elizabethan state used torture as a way to truth, see Hanson, "Torture and Truth in Renaissance England." Today, it is the lie detector machine that has emerged as the (foolproof?) vehicle to come to truth. For more on lie detection in modern day America, see Alder, "A Social History of Untruth."

⁶ In Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, Innogen, responding to Giacomo's report, shows her powers of discernment and her auditory abilities:

If this be true—

As I have such a heart that both mine ears

Must not in haste abuse—if it be true,

How should I be revenged? (1.6.130-33)

Not accepting any report or news too readily, Innogen knows in this play's world of report that slander (that "canker's vice," as Sonnet 70 tells us) and mishearing are the grave possibilities. As Aemilia Lanyer would write in *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (1611), "Deceitfull tongues are but false Slanders wings" (112). See also the anonymous *Arden of Feversham* (1592). In Scene 7, Michael has just related to his companions how their plan to kill Arden had gone awry. Greene asks Michael if what he has just related is indeed true, and Michael replies, "As true as I report it to be true" (23).

⁷ Yachnin, "The House of Fame," 183. As Yachnin later writes, "the press helped to create a national public over the long term by making information about domestic and foreign affairs available to ordinary people throughout England; in a different way, the theatre contributed to the formation of a national identity by retailing elements of elite culture, including the news, in the London

entertainment marketplace and thereby helping to level the English system of rank," 197.

⁸ See Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (1613), where Sir Walter remarks, "'Tis good to play with rumor at all weapons" (2.2.40), or, it is a good idea to withstand rumor by whatever way possible.

⁹ I here offer a representative sample—see Kaplan, *The Culture of Slander in Early Modern England*; Cavell, *Disowning Knowledge*; Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*; Burke, *A Social History of Knowledge*; Bellamy, "Slanderous Troys"; Habermann, *Staging Slander and Gender in Early Modern England*; and Elsky *Authorizing Words*.

¹⁰ See Felperin, "'Tongue-tied our queen?': The Deconstruction of Presence in *The Winter's Tale*."

¹¹ Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England*, 9. For an intriguing analysis of the world of sound in Victorian England, see Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes*.

¹² *Ibid.*, 130.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 207.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 89-92.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁶ Gross, *Shakespeare's Noise*, 2.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁹ Furthermore, my dissertation extends Gross's call to map out "the post-Shakespearean history of 'noise' and 'news' in literary texts," 213 n. 15.

²⁰ Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England*, 8; Folkerth, *The Sound of Shakespeare*, 9.

²¹ Folkerth, *The Sound of Shakespeare*, 73. Folkerth examines three sermons—Robert Wilkinson's *A Jewell for the Eare* (1593), William Harrison's *The Difference of Hearers* (1614), and Stephen Egerton's *The Boring of the Eare* (1623)—that collectively align hearing with notions of obedience and receptivity, figured as feminine in the early modern period (44-51). Folkerth shows how sound is intimately tied to interiority and communal experience, and throughout his book he draws on early modern listening practices and how Shakespeare's plays engage with notions of hearing and listening that dominated everything from early modern religious practices to politics. In addition to the receptive ear in *Coriolanus*, his study also examines the public ear in *Antony and Cleopatra*, a reasonable good ear in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the greedy ear in *Othello*, and the willing ear in *Measure for Measure*.

²² Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 49. I thank Drew Lopenzina for drawing my attention to this reference.

²³ Rosnow and Fine, *Rumor and Gossip*, 84. As Karen Newman details, women have continually been associated with the trivial, the incidental, the domestic, "in short, with femininity—they represent the antithesis of the news," "Engendering the News," 66.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 87.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 91.

²⁶ Shibutani, *Improvised News*, 41-2.

²⁷ Jones, "Gossip," 243-45.

²⁸ For a fascinating fictional examination of a land of Gossips, see Joseph Hall's *A Discovery of a New World* (London, 1609). The narrator describes, in the second book of the work, his travels to Shee-landt, or Womandecoia, where the principal city is Gossipingoa. The narrator is taken to this place as a prisoner and made to observe a number of conditions that assert female independence and sovereignty, 96-122. Also see Samuel Rowlands' pamphlet *Tis Merrie When Gossips Meet* (1602) and the anonymous 1620 *A Gossips Greeting*.

²⁹ See Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (1613), where the Puritan women are gossips who attend to lying in.

³⁰ Sanders, "Midwifery and the New Science in the Seventeenth Century," 76.

³¹ For more on these gossip networks and the ways men exaggerated the threat women posed, see Bernard Capp's excellent examination in his recent book *When Gossips Meet*.

³² Newman, "City Talk," 184.

³³ Boose, "Scolding Brides," 214. See also the 1,100 line ballad printed in London circa 1550, "A Merry Jest of a Shrewd and Curst Wife Lapped in Morel's Skin, for Her Good Behavior."

³⁴ Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 528. David Underdown, in his article "The Taming of the Scold," further comments on the cucking stool:

By the sixteenth century ducking was regarded as a punishment only for women, but in medieval times this had not been the case. It was used for a variety of offences against the common weal: inappropriate dress on a feast day, for example, but particularly for violations of the laws of weights and measures. Such violations were, to be sure, often committed by women because of their prominence in the brewing and baking trades. (123)

See also Garthine Walker, in *Crime, Gender, and Social Order in Early Modern England*, for more on scolding and branks, 100-111. For more on the prosecution of scolding, see Dolan, Jardine, Boose, and Ingram.

³⁵ Brown, *Better A Shrew Than a Sheep*, 61. The female neighborhood gossip did in fact, as Brown argues, play a role in the much-needed circulation of information in the neighborhood and could give these women a thread of social standing, 60-67. As Jean Howard writes in *The Stage and Social Struggle*, "Women who gadded about outside the home or who talked too much (by male standards) were suspected of being whores—the open door and the open mouth signifying sexual incontinence," 100-101.

³⁶ See Constantia Munda's "The Worming of a Mad Dog" (1617), who, responding to Joseph Swetnam's attack on women as "beastly scolds" turns the table on his assertion and writes, "Joseph Swetnam is accounted a scold" (E2r). Also see Rachel Speght's defense against the slander of Swetnam, highlighting his "railing Tongue." As a lover of truth (she signs her name Philalethes in the

opening letters, which translates as such), she undertakes to rebuke Swetnam's loose tongue. In doing so, she aligns Swetnam not with other gossips or scolds deemed female, but rather to a construction of male unrestrained speech.

³⁷ Rosnow and Fine, *Rumor and Gossip*, 131.

³⁸ Spacks, *Gossip*, 38.

³⁹ A passage from Shakespeare's *King John* helps us to understand the ambiguities inherent in rumor. After his second coronation, King John is approached by a Messenger, who reports that he heard Lady Constance died in a frenzy three days before: "but this from rumour's tongue / I idly heard; if true or false I know not" (4.2.123-24).

⁴⁰ For an example of this assertion, see Rosnow and Fine, who cite the widespread rumor about Paul McCartney's death that gripped youth culture at end of the 1960s, *Gossip and Rumor*, 17. James C. Scott argues that "as a rumor travels it is altered in a fashion that brings it more closely into line with the hopes, fears, and worldview of those who hear it and retell it," *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 145.

⁴¹ See Hoffer, *Sensory Worlds in Early America*, who notes that rumor adds to gossip a narrative structure as well as motives and causal themes, 108. And James C. Scott comments upon the way rumor acts with the "mathematical logic of the chain letter phenomenon. If each hearer of a rumor repeats it twice, then a series of ten tellings will produce more than a thousand bearers of the tale," *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 144.

⁴² Allport and Postman, *The Psychology of Rumor*, ix, 33. The book was originally published in the wake of World War II, when the U.S. government took pains to warn against war rumors. See also their excellent brief summary of rumors in history and society and the rumor publics that emerge, 159-99.

⁴³ Gary Fine and Patricia Turner's description of rumor illuminates my point as they define rumor as "a truth claim with variable amounts of credibility," *Whispers on the Color Line*, 223.

⁴⁴ Rosnow and Fine, *Rumor and Gossip*, 4, 11.

⁴⁵ Shibutani, *Improvised News*, 77. He later defines rumor as a collective transaction that develops “as men caught together in an ambiguous situation attempt to construct a meaningful interpretation of it by pooling their intellectual resources,” 164. As Jean-Noël Kapferer writes, “Whenever the public endeavors to understand but receives no official answers, rumors arise. They constitute an informational black market,” *Rumors*, 9. He argues that rumor, an unofficial and alternative source of information, is “the emergence and circulation in society of information that is either not yet publicly confirmed by official sources or denied by them,” 263, 13-14.

⁴⁶ I find a compelling line of argumentation in Ton Hoenselaars alignment of the New Historicist anecdote with rumor. He writes, “Greenblatt’s use of the anecdote—the often anonymous verbal message or tale that, like rumour, hovers between fact and fiction, between literature and news, or between literature and history,” “Rumour, News and Commerce in Ben Jonson’s *The Staple of News*,” 145. What kind of literary or historical truth can be arrived at when the anecdotes used to make larger historical generalizations are viewed as nothing more than rumor?

⁴⁷ See also the Homer’s *The Odyssey*. Pallas Athena implores Telemachus to sail in search of news of his father: “Someone may tell you something, or you may hear / A rumor from Zeus, which is how news travels best” (1:300-301). In this instance, rumor is awaiting to be received, and Zeus can set in motion a rumor at his will. Rumor also does specific work as a vehicle for the spreading of news; while we are unsure of the validity of this news, we are told that rumor is a main source of men getting news.

⁴⁸ Virgil, *Vergil’s Aeneid*, 93. The idea that rumor flies about swiftly emphasizes its speed in spreading throughout the world. In *Macbeth*, Ross remarks, “there ran a rumour” (4.3.183), noting that rumor is often the first to reach the ears of those who listen.

⁴⁹ See also two other translations that nicely articulate this sentiment:

By day she squats on a house roof like a watchman
High in his tower, scaring eminent townsmen,
Telling some truth but clinging to lies and distortion.
Now she filled people with various gossip,

Gladly singing both her fact and fiction. (Book IV, 186-90)
Virgil, *The Aeneid*. Trans. Edward McCrorie, 83-84. Also see C. Day Lewis’s translation, *The Eclogues, Georgics and Aeneid of Virgil*, 224-25. Lines 189-90 read, “so she terrorizes whole cities, / Loud-speaker of truth, hoarder of mischievous falsehood, equally.”

⁵⁰ Virgil's depiction of Rumour is certainly the precursor to Spenser's Blatant Beast in Book VI of *The Faerie Queene*. Kenneth Gross has called the Blatant Beast "the multitongued monster of calumny," *Shakespeare's Noise*, 12. For his central article of the Blatant Beast, see Gross, "Reflections on the Blatant Beast." Ben Jonson, in his *Conversations with Drummond*, says that the blatant beast is the Puritans, 467.

⁵¹ Cohen, "Kyte oute yugilment," 7.

⁵² In Chaucer's ballad of good counsel, usually entitled "Truth" (c. 1383), he draws on the Gospel of John, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (8:32). He begins with an address to flee from the crowd and dwell in truthfulness, and the refrain repeats three times, "And, never fear, the truth shall make you free." Truth is often complicated in Chaucer and other medieval texts with the appearance of loose-tongued women. Chaucer's Wife of Bath is a good example of an uncontrollable loose-tongued woman who surrounds herself with like women. The Wife of Bath, in the Prologue to her tale, relates of her "gossib" Alisoun, "She knew myn herte and eek my privetee / Bet than our parissch preest, as mote I thee. / To hire biwrayed I my conseil al" (537-39). The Wife undermines the supposed authority of information, as she chooses to disclose her secrets to her gossip instead of the male figure invested with the authorizing ear of the church. Furthermore, in the Chester mystery play, *Noah's Flood*, Noah's Wife refuses to listen to or obey Noah to board the ark. Her "froward" nature (194) is realized when she tells her husband that she will not board, demanding "But I have my gossips every one, / One foot further I will not gone" (201-202); after being dragged aboard, she slaps Noah. Both of these medieval literary embodiments of the "dangerous" woman with the uncontrolled tongue highlight a larger concern about women's unrestrained speech that has potentially damaging effects to male sovereignty.

⁵³ See Ben Jonson's *The Masque of Queens* (1609):
 Help, help all tongues to celebrate this wonder:
 The voice of Fame should be a should as thunder.
 Her house is all of echo made
 Where never dies the sound. (481-84)

⁵⁴ Mary Flowers Braswell has argued that visual and verbal evidence indicates that "the source for Chaucer's description of the House of Rumor is not a house at all, but in fact, a birdcage," fashionable in thirteenth-century Europe, "Architectural Portraiture in Chaucer's *House of Fame*," 111. Braswell also makes an interesting case for the realistic architectural detail Chaucer includes in his descriptions of the Temple of Venus and the House of Fame.

⁵⁵ In Thomas Middleton's *Women Beware Women* (1620), the Lord Cardinal admonishes his brother the Duke of Florence for his sin in loving Bianca:

Ev'ry sin thou commit'st shows like a flame
 Upon a mountain. 'Tis seen far about,
 And with a big wind made of popular breath
 The sparkles fly through cities; here one takes
 Another catches there, and in short time
 Waste all to cinders. (4.1.208-13)

Middleton imagines how the popular breath—gossip or rumor—particularly in the city, has the potential to burn/raze reputations by spreading like a fire. Behind this anxiety, the Cardinal understands how the physical makeup of the city—its close living quarters, its conglomeration of peoples within a particular space—is a breeding ground for the spread of such potentially damaging talk.

⁵⁶ These tales existing in the world of orality/aurality (not print or manuscript) creep, pass, spread, and grow. We can also see a close parallel in the rhetoric used to describe rumor and the plague, another anxiety that spread uncontrollably throughout the Renaissance. As Jacques Attali has noted, noise disrupts order, and in all cultures, he asserts, it is "associated with the idea of the weapon, blasphemy, plague," *Noise*, 27.

⁵⁷ In Dekker and Middleton's *The Roaring Girl* (1610), Mrs. Gallipot perceptively remarks "rumor lies" (3.2.130); to believe otherwise is to risk losing informational authority. Furthermore, we should consider, a woman makes this statement, thereby asserting her own authority to discern rumor. As Montaigne writes in his essay "Of Lyers," "But the opposite of truth hath many-many shapes, and an indefinite field," 44. And in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Satan remarks that "There went a fame in Heav'n" that God would create a new generation that would be equal to the Sons of Heaven (1:651). Notably, Satan acts on this rumor, resolving to engage in war with this new generation. Satan, the father of lies, does not discern truth from falsity, and later in the epic, he can also be seen partaking in the ambiguity of rumor to reach his goals. See also Shakespeare's Sonnet 138, where doubt and distrust inhabit the speaker as he remarks, "When my love swears that she is made of truth / I do believe her, though I know she lies" (1-2).

⁵⁸ Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 115-21.

⁵⁹ Richardson, *Printing, Writers, and Readers in Renaissance Italy*, 6. I would add that the rise of Humanism and its reliance on print culture resulted in an increased demand for information as had never been witnessed before.

⁶⁰ For more on the achievement of the printing press, see Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*; McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*; Dooley, ed., *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe*; and Johns, *The Nature of the Book*. And for more on the interplay between script and print in the early modern period, see Alexandra Walsham and Julia Crick's Introduction to their edited volume, *The Uses of Script and Print*.

⁶¹ Dooley, *Introduction, The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe*, 1, 11.

⁶² I here expand on Kapferer's ideas in his Conclusion, *Rumors*, 264.

⁶³ Scott remarks, "Before the development of modern news media and wherever, today, the media are disbelieved, rumor might be virtually the only source of news about the extralocal world. The oral transmission of rumor allows for a process of elaboration, distortion, and exaggeration that is so diffuse and collective it has no discernible author," *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 144.

⁶⁴ Targoff, *Common Prayer*, 22. Targoff writes, "the English liturgy was designed to connect the faculty of hearing to its cognitive and spiritual counterparts," 23. See Targoff for more on the collective listening of worshippers and Richard Hooker's insistence that individuals be made earwitnesses, 47-56.

⁶⁵ See, for instance, the fifteenth-century iconography depicting Annunciation of the Virgin Mary, where Mary receives the light of God in her ear. See Filippo Lippi (c. 1450), Jan van Eyck (c. 1435), and Masolino da Panicale (c. 1440), whose renderings of *The Annunciation* can be found at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

⁶⁶ Donne, Sermon, www.lib.byu.edu/donne, 22. Donne's injunction echoes Isaiah 37:6-8, where Isaiah says, "Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land." See also Richard Brathwait who claims at the beginning of his essay "Of Hearing": "Hearing is the organ of understanding . . . As our eare can best judge of sounds, so hath it a distinct power to sound into the centre of the heart," *Essaies Upon the Five Senses* (1620), 6. Brathwait constructs a paradigm of the good Christian ear—judicious, impartial, discreet, and resolved—that is tied to the heart. He concludes the essay, "my eare must be tuned to another note, that my edifying Sense may discharge her peculiar office, not to affect novelties, or chuse varieties,

but to dedicate her inward operation to the mindes comfort (to wit) the Melodie of heaven," 26-27.

⁶⁷ See Fudge, "Calling Creatures by their True Names."

⁶⁸ Columbus, *The Four Voyages*, 122.

⁶⁹ Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, 7. And in another context, Greenblatt recounts a disturbing passage about the torture of a Chinese goldsmith from Edmund Scott's 1606 treatise and asks to what extent this testimony can be corroborated with certainty. Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse*, 14. For an examination of the types of credible testimony and proof in the medieval world, see Rosenthal, *Telling Tales*. Constance C. Relihan has recently remarked, "As early modern travelers, explorers, and merchants brought back observation-based reports that could amplify and qualify earlier accounts, fiction writers found new uses for their texts," *Cosmographical Glasses*, xii. In Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1729), Gulliver, at the completion of his travels, assures the reader that he has strictly adhered to the truth in his storytelling. This narrative intrusion to reassert that his recounting of his voyage is in fact true points to a concern that doubt lies heavily in the ears of others when hearing of fantastic events and places not seen. Gulliver writes, "I could heartily wish a law were enacted, that every traveler, before he were permitted to publish his voyages, should be obliged to make oath before the Lord High Chancellor that all he intended to print was absolutely true to the best of his knowledge; for then the world would no longer be deceived as it usually is, while some writers, to make their works pass the better upon the public, impose the grossest falsities on the unwary reader. I have perused several books of travels with great delight in my younger days; but, having since gone over most parts of the globe, and been able to contradict many fabulous accounts from my own observation, it hath given me a great disgust against this part of my reading, and some indignation to see the credulity of mankind so impudently abused," 275-76.

⁷⁰ See Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, where Sebastian tells Antonio, "Travellers ne'er did lie" (3.3.27), which proverbially meant that a traveler may lie with authority. The German Fugger newsletters of the sixteenth century are a famous collection of Count Philip Eduard Fugger's news reports from around the globe gathered by his agents and brought back to Augsburg. As the editor of the collection notes, "For the most part they are not even the reports of eye-witnesses of great events, but rather the reports of those who have heard the echo of events as they reverberated through the markets of the world," *News and Rumor in Renaissance Europe: The Fugger Newsletters*, 19-20. Of course, these echoes are filled with rumor, and what finally reaches back to Fugger is a wealth of unauthorized information where truth reverberates with half-truth. His news is always at least

secondhand. Also see Patricia A. Turner's discussion of early modern Englishmen and the rumors they brought back regarding African cannibals in *I Heard it Through the Grapevine*, esp. 9-13.

⁷¹ H[eath], *The House of Correction*, B4v.

⁷² Cavell, *Disowning Knowledge*, 7.

⁷³ One further example from the sixteenth century highlights this case. John Bale, in his first examination of the supposed heretic Anne Askew, recounts his unnamed sources and continually asserts that "Credyblye am I infourmed," *The Examinations of Anne Askew*, 154. The notion of credibility rests on both Bale as the "speaker" of the news and the authority of the original newsbearer, who may or may not have been a firsthand observer or auditor. In this sense, we can begin to see that most of the information he received by the eyes and ears was already twice removed from its origin. For more on how these notions of credibility permeated the Royal Society in the later seventeenth century, see Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*.

⁷⁴ The early modern publics, particularly the streets, offered a way for individuals to hear the latest news and encounter gossip and rumor, and Shakespeare often brings this to light. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, the Second Soldier asks the First Soldier if he has heard anything strange in the streets before concluding, "Belike 'tis but a rumour" (4.3.5). And in *King John*, Hubert notes that old men and beldams in the streets speak openly about young Arthur's death: "And when they talk of him, they shake their heads / And whisper one another in the ear" (4.2.186-90).

⁷⁵ Smith, *Treason in Tudor England*, 135.

⁷⁶ Jansen, *Dangerous Talk and Strange Behavior*, 77.

⁷⁷ Quoted in Hoenselaars, "Rumour, News and Commerce in Ben Jonson's *The Staple of News*" 154, originally in Spivack, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (1988), 213.

⁷⁸ The editors of the edition of Hugh Alley's Caveat remark, "The absence of a professional police force left the Tudors dependent upon private enterprise for the enforcement of much of their legislation," *Hugh Alley's Caveat*, 18. Alley was

an informer against offenses in the marketplace of early modern England, bringing his information before the courts to pursue charges.

⁷⁹ *Tudor Royal Proclamations* (afterward referred to as TRP), 4.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 4.

⁸¹ See TRP 400, where Mary declares the treason of Henry, Duke of Suffolk, and Thomas Wyatt for the “sowing of false and seditious rumors” which led to rebellion against the Queen in Kent. This proclamation was sent widely across the country to quell the rebels’ aims at disruption.

⁸² TRP, 93.

⁸³ Protestantism and Catholicism in the sixteenth century were becoming ‘religions of the book’ with the advent of printing, yet still relied heavily on orality/preaching. See Patrick Collinson, “English Reformations.”

⁸⁴ TRP, 94.

⁸⁵ Gross, *Shakespeare’s Noise*, 28. See also Shephard, “Sexual Rumours in English Politics,” for more on the rumors spread about the real or imagined sexual activities of Elizabeth I and James I. See also the diary of Baron Waldstein, a traveler to England who, on July 9, 1600, met Queen Elizabeth. He writes, “And when, among other things, I said that in reality she far surpassed the reports about her, then she interrupted me, putting the wrong meaning on my words, and said: ‘This shall be your lordship’s punishment—you have perhaps heard more than you are going to see: pay somewhat less attention to rumour,’” 75.

⁸⁶ *Elizabeth I*, 41.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 42. In a 24 November 1584 letter to Monsieur d’Alencon, Elizabeth, in fact, writes, “You will pardon me if I do not easily give credit to too good news, for fear that deception will redouble my anxiety,” *Elizabeth I*, 255.

⁸⁸ Elizabeth faced threats of conspiracies against her life, no better exemplified by the threat of Mary, Queen of Scots, in the 1560s and 1570s. In a 20 February 1570

letter to her, Elizabeth laments about the misconceptions concerning her good will toward Mary, received by “bruits and [by] untrue suggestions” *Elizabeth I*, 120. Elizabeth continues to assert her good will, hoping to induce Mary to “believe and trust rather to me in all your difficulties than lightly to credit either bruits of the brainless vulgar or the viperous backbiters of the sowers of discord,” 122. Elizabeth continues to make her case about the effects of faulty information: “And now, madame, if these my actions were at any time laid before your eyes or in your ears when malicious persons incense you with mistrust of me, I know you would reject their whispering tales or false writings and messages and deal plainly with me,” 123. These rumors that Elizabeth comments upon have reached Mary via oral and written channels—her demand is that Mary become both an eye- and ear-witness. During the threat of Mary Queen of Scots, Elizabeth writes to James VI of Scotland—Mary’s son and future James I of Britain—in the summer of 1585, assuring him of her ability to gather intelligence: “And if you suppose that princes’ causes be veiled so covertly that no intelligence may bewray them, deceive not yourself: we old foxes can find shifts to save ourselves by others’ malice, and come by knowledge of greatest secret, specially if it touch our freehold,” 262. Elizabeth’s eyes and ears are everywhere.

⁸⁹ In a second reply to the Parliament on 24 November 1586 regarding Mary’s execution, Elizabeth notes how “fellows abroad” “spare not to publish pamphlets, libels, and books against me with detestation of me and my government.” She continues, “Such rebels there are beyond the seas; I hope there are no such within the realm. I pray God there be not, but I will not swear it,” *Elizabeth I*, 197.

⁹⁰ *Elizabeth I*, 204, emphasis mine.

⁹¹ In a postscript to a letter to Elizabeth circa 31 July 1585, James writes, “I doubt not, madame, but ye have kept one ear for me, notwithstanding of many malicious tongues that now do boldly speak,” *Elizabeth I*, 263. Three years later in a September 1588 postscript to another letter, which points to the recent threat of the Spanish Armada, James assures Elizabeth, “I thought good in case of sinister reports, madame, hereby to assure you that the Spanish fleet never entered within any road or haven within my dominion,” 359.

⁹² The previous year, in a March 1593 letter to James, Elizabeth asserts her controlled tongue: “I have never yet dishonored my tongue with a leasing (ie. falsehood)—not to a meaner person than a king, and would be ashamed to deserve so foul an infamy,” *Elizabeth I*, 369.

⁹³ *Elizabeth I*, 376, emphasis mine.

⁹⁴ Elizabeth's letters to James, if fact, point to the wagging tongues of men in the kingdom who looked to take advantage of any ear that would listen. Elizabeth urges James to avoid the persuasions of "sinister whisperers," and in a January 1593 letter she warns James to take definitive action against current conspiracies in his realm "with heedy regard and not in sort as public rumor may precede present action," *Elizabeth I*, 295, 367. Responding to the Bothwell affair, Elizabeth remarks to James, "my rule of trust shall never fail me when it is grounded not on the sands of every man's humor, but on the steady rock of approved fact," 378. And, in a circa July 1594 letter to James, in which Elizabeth thanks him for their bond of constant amity, Elizabeth writes, "It gladdeth me much that you now have falsified such bruits as forepast deeds have bred you, for tongues of men are never bridled by kings' greatness, but by their goodness," 383.

⁹⁵ See, for instance, TRP 451 prohibiting unlicensed preaching, 27 December 1558; TRP 561, prohibiting seditious books regarding religion that are "commonly in secret sort here dispersed" and contain "sundry matters repugnant to truth," 1 March 1569; TRP 577, ordering the arrest for circulating seditious books and bulls "with untruths and falsehoods, yea, with divers monstrous absurdities to the slander of the nobility and council of the realm" in order to engender "in the heads of the simple ignorant multitude a misliking or murmuring against the quiet government of the realm," 1 July 1570; TRP 580, ordering the discovery of persons bringing in seditious books, writings, and "false reports" into the realm and who move "good subjects to be disobedient to the laws and scattering false rumors and news both by speech and by books and writings," 14 November 1570; TRP 598, ordering the destruction of seditious books and libels that "subvert the universal quietness and peace" and "pull from her majesty her faithful and trusty councilors by false calumnies, or with feigned and surmised tales," all of which make her reputation and nobility "taxed by the said manifest slanders and untruths," 28 September 1573; TRP 672, ordering suppression of books defacing true religion, slandering the administration of justice and endangering the Queen's title—this proclamation also points to the anxiety of England being a nation with porous borders, as the proclamation implores that "all merchants, masters of ships, officers of ports, or any other that shall be bringer into this realm of any the said seditious books or libels or a disperser of the same" shall be punished, 12 October 1584.

⁹⁶ *Elizabeth I*, 365. Other proclamations concern rumors about currency, exporting arms to Russia, grain supplies, and invasion. For instance, see TRP 475, 488, 492 for rumors concerning currency and coinage devaluation. The language of TRP 475 notes that slanderous tales about currency instill fear in the people, and such "as soon as any such lewd tale is uttered that the reporters thereof may be either punished with speed, or else produce the authors." Proclamation 492 notes that

those convicted of spreading seditious rumors “be set openly upon the pillory.” See TRP 481 for the prohibition of exportation of arms to Russia, where the Queen issues a proclamation to counter a report made in foreign parts that armor and provisions of war were to be transported into the countries of Russia: “considering that although this rumor be known to be false, vain, and malicious, yet if it should be permitted without contradiction to be carried from place to place, hurt and offense might come to her majesty’s name and credit amongst Christian princes.” See also TRP 541, where Elizabeth notes that certain ill-disposed persons who look to move “common” people “have of late secretly spread abroad in markets and other places” that the grain prices rise; the proclamation is again used to counter malicious rumors. The proclamation continues, “Nevertheless, considering it appeareth that a number of covetous men, having engrossed into their hands in sundry countries of the realm, and specially near to the seacoasts . . . through spreading of false rumors, threatened a dearth.” This proximity to water is significant, as these European ports become the place for information and news to be passed along. Of note as well is that this spreading rumor to enact panic or create confusion is noted specifically as a male action. Finally, see TRP 650 for the suppression of invasion rumors, which highlights the practices of traitors and rebels living in foreign lands who intend “to move the people of the realm to some murmuring.” The proclamation concludes, “And furthermore she exhorteth all sorts of her people that, whatsoever rumors by speeches or writings they shall hear of, as maliciously dispersed by traitors abroad or by their secret complices and favorers murmured at home; that they be not moved therewith to alter their duties and courage . . . but that all such murmurers and spreaders of like rumors may be apprehended and speedily brought to the justices and public officers by them to be chastised according to their demerits as sowers of sedition.” The proclamation concludes linking these rumors to the plague, hoping that these sowers of sedition be not boldened, “as by impunity to infect her good people with their traitorous contagions.”

⁹⁷ TRP 688.

⁹⁸ See also TRP 612 (1576) and TRP 810 (1601). Also see Kaplan, *The Culture of Slander*, on the paradox of libel.

⁹⁹ TRP 803 (1600). The conclusion of this proclamation touches upon the untrue reports and slanderous speeches that have been “bruided abroad of new licenses for transportation of leather out of the realm, which lewd reports, notoriously known to be false, are likewise given out by seditious and troublesome spirits to move her subjects to disquiet and discontentment.” The proclamation calls for the punishment of the authors and maintainers of “this slanderous speech and rumor concerning the transportation of leather.”

¹⁰⁰ Typifying the threats to the crown in the final years of Elizabeth's reign was the short-lived Essex Rebellion of 1601. Elizabeth's 9 February 1601 proclamation announcing the arrest of Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex, for his failed attempt at unsettling the crown posits Essex and two other men in particular—The Earls of Rutland and Southampton (Roger Manners and Henry Wriothoesley, respectively)—as being rumormongers. What is so unsettling, according to the proclamation, is that "this open act was so sudden as it cannot yet be thoroughly looked into how far it stretched and how many hearts it hath corrupted." Yet this proclamation, and others like it, are swift yet ineffective measures against the spread of rumor after it had embedded itself in the ears of the subjects. The proclamation asserts that government officials shall do well (and so we charge them) to give diligent heed in all places to the conversation of the person not well known for their good behavior, and to the speeches of any that shall give out slanderous and undutiful words or rumors against us and our government; and they that be in authority to lay hold on such spreaders of rumors . . . both the drift and purpose of evil-minded persons may be discovered, their designs prevented, and our people conserved in such peace and tranquility as heretofore, by God's favor, we have maintained and do hope still to continue amongst them. Essex, once favorite to the Queen, is then tried and executed in London for his rebellion, which would continue to cause such alarm (despite its lack of success) because rumors had infiltrated the public ear—rebellious action takes on another life on the tongues of others.

¹⁰¹ Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown*, 275.

¹⁰² For a historical review of the iconography of Fame, see Roberts, ed. *Encyclopedia of Comparative Iconography*.

CHAPTER 1

TABLE TALK: MARLOWE AND HIS MOUTHY MEN

At table let your talke be powdred with the salt of
heavenly wisdom, as your meat is seasoned with
material and earthly salt.

Above all abhorre all oathes, cursing and blasphemy,
for God will not hold him guiltlesse which taketh his
name in vaine.

—from the broadside *Certaine wholesome Observations
and Rules for Inne-keepers, and also for their Guests, meet
to be fixed upon the wall of every Chamber in the house*
(London, c. 1615)

In 1599, Lord Keeper Thomas Egerton lamented about his countrymen who, at “comon tables,” spoke freely of affairs of the state and the court.¹ Egerton’s anxiety rests in the public nature of such spoken discourse; as once private (authorized) information gets spoken in public (unauthorized) spaces, it becomes subject to the vagaries of retelling and has the potential to become rumor. And as affairs of the state or court themselves become *common*, as more and more domains of information exchange arise, informational authority begins to unravel.² Thus, by overreaching, by speaking about subjects beyond one’s firsthand knowledge or outside one’s authority, an individual potentially put himself and his country in harm’s way. Such was the case of Christopher Marlowe.

It was Marlowe’s loose-tongue that supposedly led to his murder on 30 May 1593. In his second note to Sir John Puckering in June of the same year,

Thomas Kyd, who had formerly shared working quarters with Marlowe, continued to build a case against “Marlowes monstrous opinions”:

First it was his custom when I knew him first & as I heare saye he contynewd it in *table talk* or otherwise to jest at the devine scriptures gybe at praiers, & stryve in argument to frustrate & confute what hath byn spoke or wrytt by prophets & such holie men.³

According to Kyd’s testimony, based in part on information and news that he has heard secondhand, Marlowe engaged in a form of active conversation (he jests, gibes, argues, frustrates, and confutes) that challenges both the oral and written word.⁴ The strands of his Humanist education are also apparent, as he engages his skills of rhetoric in arguing and confuting propositions that reveal a stark skepticism regarding religion.⁵ What is revealing is that Marlowe is reported to engage in “table talk,” which Kyd implies is a transgressive act that undermines the authority of religion and could prove, as Egerton would attest, to be a threat against the court and the well-being of the country. Kyd’s assertion of Marlowe engaging in table talk foregrounds an anxiety about male speech gone astray, an anxiety that I claim is at the center of Marlowe’s canon. The image of the chattering and gossiping woman was a staple in numerous early modern discourses, and it was the man and his controlled tongue who often served to counter this transgressive woman. Part of the reason why this is so, I would assert, lies in the ways in which gender binaries were aggressively coded and maintained by men during the period. A discursive deployment of iconographic and literary representations of women talking freely in early modern England, however, seems to point less to an anxiety about female talk and more to a male anxiety about their own loose tongues. Keeping gender lines intact and securing and promoting fixed gender behavior was crucial for men—men slipping into

loose talk could prove detrimental not only to the state, but also to masculine sovereignty.

The accounts of Marlowe's death (conjecture abounds, despite available testimony of the events) further reveal the dangers of table talk that Kyd had remarked upon. The coroner's inquest on Marlowe's death (1 June 1593), derived from the oaths of sixteen men, tells the story that on 30 May, Marlowe was invited to a feast in Deptford at the widow Eleanor Bull's home by Ingram Frizer; also present were Nicholas Skeres and Robert Poley, each of whom were either messengers in some capacity for the crown or were employed by one of the intelligence networks in the country. The men dined and took a walk on the property, yet after dinner Marlowe and Frizer "were in speech and publicly exchanged divers malicious words because they could not concur nor agree on the payment of the sum of pence."⁶ The inquest uses the verb *publicaverant*, meaning "to loudly exchange," suggesting, following Kuriyama, that Marlowe and Frizer quarreled loudly enough to be heard in other parts of the house where they had dined. This historical trace at the fringes of a rumored life points to the fact that these men did engage in table talk that devolved into an exchange of unruly tongues, recalling the type of transgressive woman against which men defined themselves. *Table-talk* in a general sense includes ordinary conversation or gossip at the dinner table, but it has come to be applied to the social conversation of men.⁷ Drawing these men together were their ties to the court—they would certainly have had much in common to talk about, although there was always danger in the spoken word in early modern England. Despite the pains men engaged in to keep gender roles and characteristics separate, women were certainly not the only ones talking during the early modern period.

In Marlowe's case, this male table talk about unauthorized topics interestingly gets spoken in a domain governed by a woman, and the multiple testimonies ultimately fell upon the royal ear of the realm, Queen Elizabeth, who would soon acquit Frizer of any wrongdoing. Marlowe's continued table talk and his own transgressive tongue ultimately cost him his life.⁸

Christopher Marlowe's life was dominated by rumor, a life of lies that is only understood on the basis of contemporary slippery evidence, false claims, questionable news, uncertainty, speculation, discrepancy, and rumored statements from questionable male "authorities" on everything from boys and tobacco to God. Rather, however, than think that this rumored life takes us away from the "true" story of Marlowe's career, we need to reconsider this point to argue that rumor and news, uncertainty and skepticism *is* the story. Marlowe's double lives as informer and playwright are in fact intimately tied, both bound by a continual negotiation of truth and untruth, fact and fiction—Marlowe's life and livelihood depended upon his partaking in both simultaneously. Like rumor, Marlowe remains an ambiguous presence; as a possible informer for (or against) the crown, he grasped the slippery nature of operating within truth and untruth; as a playwright, he tapped into the powers of ambiguity in spoken and written language, finding in rumor a dramatic path that he had tread throughout his adult life. If we can not accurately or definitively reconstruct a life of Marlowe, we can nevertheless uncover the traces of his own concern about ambiguous information, loose talk, and gender concerns that were central to his dramatic performances. In *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, *The Massacre at Paris*, and *Edward II*, Marlowe stages the unreliability of news and examines how his male characters struggle to control rumors found in the written and spoken word. In

this chapter, I argue that Marlowe showcases the dual fears of the feminization of the male ear and the hazards of men engaging in unauthorized information, and this uncontrolled social conversation of men threatens masculine authority in these plays. And, as Marlowe insists, the only way to recoup male sovereignty is through careful listening, not only to other men, but also to women.

Loose Scholarly Tongues and the Humanist Tradition

In the universities of sixteenth century England, particularly Oxford and Cambridge, doubt, incredulity, and skepticism were particularly strong forces that led many male scholars to question received information. The university campus in the sixteenth century was a male preserve of information retrieval and examination that would come to question the contemplative nature of learning and embrace learning for its practical and utilitarian aspects. Inherent in this drive for useful information was, Lesley Cormack notes, a search for order as students participated in the collection of facts.⁹ As a student at Cambridge for the majority of the 1580s, Marlowe would have followed a vigorous six-day-a-week curriculum developed by master of Corpus Christi College, Robert Norgate. As Richard Hardin remarks, “Norgate’s students were to learn the managing of knowledge—hence the study of languages, the controversies over Ramist logic and rhetoric, the cultivation of ‘method.’”¹⁰ This type of university education was oriented to the liberal arts, humanistic at its core, with oral exercises, logic, and rhetoric central to its curriculum and resembling the trivium of the medieval university that, according to Mark Curtis, “still tended to be primarily moral, literary, speculative, and authoritative rather than historical, scientific, and empirical.”¹¹ As Daryl Palmer remarks, “the traditional view of

'the Renaissance' is absolutely defined by the humanist impulse to recover, translate, and share knowledge."¹² And of course, the printing press aided in this impulse; yet as print failed to fix truth to the page, universities continued to stress a program rich in the oral tradition, as oral disputation was elevated to a formal way for a scholar to come to truth.

First-year Oxford and Cambridge students were required to attend disputations and to demonstrate their abilities to dispute during their tenure. Marlowe, the "poor scholar" who attended Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, in the 1580s, would have had to have mastered this art of rhetoric and argumentation, so much a part of the dominant Humanist education, before he graduated. One of the most important Renaissance attitudes toward rhetoric, Marion Trousdale tells us, is the commitment to arguing opposing points of view: "It is a highly skilled and highly trained technique of argument in which skill, which means effectiveness in use, is not dependent upon the truth of the argument being made."¹³ Mastering this art, a man could have potential powers in the wider world of politics and society. While this type of argumentation stresses the oral nature of the exchange, we should also regard the ability of the listener in hearing both sides in determining truth. We might conclude that Humanist education developed the rhetor as well as the auditor. Further, a Humanist education had the potential for opening up doubt about language; if, as Trousdale remarks, all verbal structures were "polysemous by nature and multi-faceted" as well as strategic, it was even more pressing for a listener to be attuned to hearing truth from falsity.¹⁴ Throughout his artistic career, Marlowe continually draws upon his days at Cambridge for material. Doctor Faustus, for one, although he continually participates in disputation even after he repudiates

his scholarly studies, questions the ends of disputation in the opening scene of the play before finally embracing the “concealed arts.” And in *Hero and Leander*, Leander showcases his powers of rhetoric in claiming that he speaks “naked truth” to Hero (208), yet he speaks to her “like to a bold sharp sophister” (197), which the Revels editor glosses as ‘a specious reasoner’ but also, he notes, was “the Cambridge name for a second- or third-year undergraduate in Marlowe’s time.”¹⁵ Marlowe perhaps conceives this exchange as a disputation from his undergraduate days, but he laces Leander’s language with untruth, despite his assertion to the contrary. Interestingly, it is a woman, Hero, who discerns Leander’s disingenuous rhetoric: “Who taught thee rhetoric to deceive a maid? / Aye me, such words as these should I abhor, / And yet I like them for the orator” (338-40). This distrust in Humanist rhetoric that often surfaces in Marlowe’s work is linked to the powers of the ambiguity of language; as Marlowe had done in his own life, in his poetic and dramatic works he used the inherent ambiguities of language to assert his characters’ power in the world.

The sixteenth century English university curriculum retained the imprints of influential Humanist educational theorists, including two I discuss at length below, Juan Luis Vives and Roger Ascham. In these men’s works, there is a separation between the “proper” education for a woman as opposed to that of a man, and male anxieties about female learning play out in the pages of these texts in surprising ways. The Spanish philosopher Juan Luis Vives (1492-1540), once the tutor to Princess Mary in England, objected to the ultimate authority of Aristotle and, anticipating Francis Bacon, vigorously applied induction to philosophical inquiry.¹⁶ Skepticism about man’s capacity to reason, particularly among those university men who, according to Marian Tobriner, were “always

so ready to defend their unfounded absolutes," marked much of the early modern period.¹⁷ Marlowe's *Faustus* certainly falls into this categorization. Watson comments that Vives himself said, "it is very seldom that we can affirm anything as absolutely true."¹⁸ Vives, in his widely popular *Introduction to Wisdom* (1521), details a way of affirming truth while warning men to show restraint in their speech.¹⁹ Vives writes repeatedly about the necessity to be instructed by hearing: "Do not listen to frivolous, trifling, or ridiculing matters, but rather to those things which are earnest, wise, and weighty."²⁰ Further, he implores his reader to "not only forbid your mouth any defilement of speech, but also your ears which are, as a man should say, windows of the soul."²¹ It is of necessity, he remarks, to "not admit to the honor of your table such as are scoffers, parasites, evil blabbers . . . and other such types, ready either by their words or deeds to arouse lewd laughter."²² Vives's pointed remarks about the benefits of discerning listening and the dangers inherent in table talk became a foundation for Humanist education in England in the years that followed.

And it is Vives who writes a manual on female education, *The Education of a Christian Woman* (1524), a text that consistently addresses supposed female shortcomings and male anxieties about talkative women. Vives remarks, "The custom to give praise to a woman for her ability to converse wittily and eloquently with men for hours on end is something that is welcomed and prescribed by ordinances of hell, in my opinion."²³ Vives' prescription is on behalf not of women, but rather of other men, for he sees that men listening to women's idle chatter will take men away from *their* education.²⁴ As women make public knowledge of other people's private affairs, they are, according to Vives, inclined to lie when they don't know the truth.²⁵ As will numerous

social critics that will follow in the next century, Vives recommends the bridling of the female tongue and asserts the virtue of a woman who can control her tongue. At stake in Vives' text is the drive to fix gender boundaries, to pit women's loquacity against the controlled tongue of man. Yet in arguably the most revealing moment in his text, Vives makes the following declaration:

I am a man, but since I have taken it upon myself to educate you through paternal affection, I will not hide or dissimulate anything that pertains to your education. I will even reveal our secrets, although I do not know if men will appreciate my doing so. So I want you to know that you are laughed at and deluded by us with that empty appearance of honor, and the more desirous you are of honors, the more you are an object of derision and slanderous talk.²⁶

Vives certainly would provoke the censure of his fellow men as he identifies men slandering women, this "secret" not to be repeated. In attempting to educate the Christian woman, Vives also forcefully, if unintentionally, yokes male speech with female speech. While these men idly talk about women, they ironically are deaf to the transgressive nature of their own speech.

Similar anxieties also rest in Roger Ascham's *The Schoolmaster* (1570).²⁷ Fifteen years before publishing *The Schoolmaster*, Ascham, Princess Elizabeth's tutor, incorporated his educational aims and methods in his instruction of the future queen.²⁸ In referring to the Princess, Ascham even rebukes Englishmen for being outlearned by a woman: "It is your shame (I speak to you all, you young gentlemen of England) that one maid should go beyond you all in excellency of learning and knowledge of divers tongues."²⁹ Like other Humanist proponents before him, Ascham sought to prepare English youth with a practical education that would be for the benefit of society. In his Preface to the Reader, Ascham outlines how he came to write the work. In 1563, he dined in Master

Secretary William Cecil's chamber with ten men, where the conversation turned to the bringing up of children. The book Ascham writes out of encouragement from this table talk begins with a chapter on the raising of youth, where he comments on the young male scholar: "I wish to have them speak so as it may well appear that the brain doth govern the tongue and that reason leadeth forth the talk."³⁰ Over the next few pages, Ascham urges men to show restraint in speech, to be "not rash in uttering" and "not quick in speaking," qualities that he believes will serve youth well in the world and will set them in stark opposition to the gadding women of the day.³¹ Yet, as Ascham further makes the distinction regarding the ideal of the tongue, he seems to push for a more manly tongue, one that does talk boldly about affairs of the world; he remarks that a man should have "a tongue not stammering or overhardly drawing forth words, but plain and ready to deliver the meaning of the mind; a voice not soft, weak, piping, womanish, but audible, strong, and manlike."³² While a man should be careful not to engage in loose talk like that of women, he should nonetheless, according to Ascham, be heard, audible "like a man." If having both qualities is debilitating for male sovereignty, according to Ascham, having both the ability to speak like a woman and a man was ultimately an empowering gesture for Queen Elizabeth.

Ascham's book, both a training manual and a warning to English men, insists that men question information and not accept "facts" at face value, a sort of skepticism that took hold in English social, political, and university life throughout the sixteenth century. As Humanist educators would argue, disputation was the effective manner of coming to truth, a formal mechanism that engaged men in orderly talk and argumentation. Later in his work, Ascham

makes a startling admission: men are responsible for loose talk. Ascham recounts a firsthand experience when he was in a gentleman's house where a young child spoke "ugly oaths" in front of the others, and then Ascham relates from where this child learned this talk:

This child, using much the company of servingmen and giving good ear to their talk, did easily learn which he shall hardly forget all days of his life hereafter. So likewise in the court, if a young gentleman will venture himself into the company of ruffians, it is overgreat a jeopardy lest their fashions, manners, thoughts, talk, and deeds will very soon be ever like. The confounding of companies breedeth confusion of good manners both in the court and everywhere else.³³

Here, Ascham's anxiety regarding the "confounding of companies" is one of transgressive male talk negatively influencing young men. Women, and the gossip that was traditionally associated with them, are not the detrimental influence to these young gentleman-scholars. Clearly, Ascham is making gender as well as class distinctions, but he muddies his earlier coding of the loose tongue solely with women by continually asserting the slippery nature of male talk.

Such Humanist texts as these profoundly affected the curriculum at the English university, and this changing educational landscape shaped university statutes concerning the education of young men.³⁴ In a letter to Edmund Spenser recounting the changes occurring at their alma mater, Cambridge, Gabriel Harvey writes, "much verbal and sophistical jangling: little subtle and effectual disputing."³⁵ This jangling, or idle talking, is reminiscent of the table talk I have examined. Harvey's remarks reveal that formal disputation, a staple in the Humanist program, is being threatened to be replaced with omnipresent and potentially transgressive table talk. Thus, like many of the institutions of the early modern period, the university also took precautionary measures concerning the protection of knowledge. Cambridge University Statutes dating

from the early sixteenth century attest to the fact, as they claim punishment for revealing the secrets of the university:

We likewise enact, that no secret of the said University (the revealing of which to any person not connected with it may probably grow into some remarkable or grievous harm or damage to the said University, or to one of the masters of the same,) be revealed to any person not a member of a college. . . . And if any one . . . shall have been probably suspected of such revealing, by the major and more discreet part of the university of regents, if he shall deny the charge, the proof of his innocence shall be established amongst a number of masters.³⁶

The university officials recognize that secrets, once spoken to other ears, have the potential to grow, to cause harm; making the private public, allowing rumors to develop, can destroy the fame of the university or one associated with the university. The consequence if convicted of this offense would be suspension and exclusion from the master's degree, as well as the honors, favors, and benefits that went along with it. The language of an earlier statute explains the notion of being "probably suspected": the chancellor was said to secretly make inquiry to regent masters if "any one be accounted to be with probability suspected of revealing the secrets,—meaning by 'suspected with probability,' being known or believed to be suspected by two or more persons."³⁷ As Barbara Shapiro explains, England, unlike Continental and ecclesiastical courts, was not bound by the two-witness rule, although this rule, nevertheless invoked in cases of perjury or treason, did often increase the probability of reaching a definitive ruling.³⁸ The same impulse that directed courts also permeated the university; underlying both is a need to expose lies through a careful mobilization of witnesses, of seeking to come to the truth. In the case of the university, to keep secrets confined to the university in order to prevent harm to people or places depended on the eyes and particularly the ears of others.

In fact, secrets and doubt were a part of Christopher Marlowe's tenure at Cambridge, and testimony proved to be a defining factor in Marlowe's life and afterlife. In 1587, it was rumored that Marlowe was planning on attending an English seminary at Rheims and accordingly the granting of his M.A. degree was in jeopardy. Critics and historians point to the intervention of the Privy Council on Marlowe's behalf as evidence of Marlowe's secretive service to Queen Elizabeth as a spy, although Kuriyama rightly, I think, insists that Marlowe, due to his youth and inexperience, was not a professional spy, but rather a messenger, letter carrier, or some other low-level newsgatherer.³⁹ The existing document produced by the Council, although at times vague, seeks to quell rumors in what seems to be a measure protecting not Marlowe, but rather the crown. The document is transcribed in full below:

Whereas it was *reported* that Christopher Morley was determined to have gone beyond the seas to Reames and there to remaine their Lordships thought good to certefie that he had no such intent, but that in all his actions he had behaved him selfe orderlie and discretelie wherebie he had done her Majestie good service, and deserved to be rewarded for his faithfull delinge: Their Lordships request was that the *rumor* thereof should be allaiied by all possible meanes, and that he should be furthered in the degree he was to take this next commencement: Because it was not her Majesties pleasure that anie one employed as he had been in matters touching the benefitt of his countrie should be *defamed* by those that are ignorant in th'affaires he went about.⁴⁰

This document seems to be yet another instance of protecting the said institution against the whisperings, rumors, gossip, and table talk of men. Like the country at large, the university was a place of men talking, here to a degree that the Privy Council deemed it crucial to step in. While the Queen supposedly does not want Marlowe to be defamed because of the rumor, the document has a utilitarian purpose: to protect the fame of the country and the Queen. The rumor's origins are anonymous ("it was reported"), virtually eliminating the probability of

locating a source to punish. Further, the document looks to quiet the rumor circulating within an oral community at the university and afar. Here we can witness the anxiety that this rumor stirs, for it places Marlowe as an ambiguous figure—an alleged Catholic, a young man in the employ of the court, a poor scholar, a budding playwright. The rumors about Marlowe's exploits position him as one containing the seeds of truth and untruth, just as ambiguous (and perhaps as threatening) as the rumor that needed to be stopped.

The statutes, documents, and treatises all seem to point to the perception that it was in the realm of men, not women, where the most disturbing anxieties about information authority and transgressive speech rested, while at the same time the discursive terrain of the period continued to mark women as the ones with the dangerous loose tongue. Marlowe, a budding dramatist and scholar, would have drawn from his Humanist education at Corpus Christi, with its focus on argumentation and its emphasis on questioning received matters of fact, in writing his plays. Further, Marlowe would have learned much from the oral and written transmission of news and reports employed in his capacity as a youthful messenger. As we will see in the plays I will discuss at length in this chapter—*Dido, Queen of Carthage*, *The Massacre at Paris*, and *Edward II*—it is the uncontrolled speech of men and the lack of a discerning ear that threatens to undermine and destroy male sovereignty.

“For so the rumor runs:” Marlowe's Men and the Truth

In *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, Dido's seductive tongue becomes a greater threat than the “ticing tongue” of Sinon, effectively becoming a scapegoat for the Trojans' own anxieties about uncontrolled speech. At stake for Aeneas is his

fame, and he is forced to realize by his own men that rumors of his feminization in Carthage could destabilize his status as warrior. It is through his own false oath and his ultimate refusal to speak to Dido and to listen to female speech that Aeneas appeases his men and ensures his fame will not be sullied by rumor. Critics agree that *Dido, Queen of Carthage* is Marlowe's earliest dramatic effort, perhaps written in part while he was a student at Cambridge. Played by the Children of Her Majesties Chapel and intended for staging in the private indoor theaters, the play closely follows the early books of Virgil's *Aeneid*, books that were well known to Elizabethans because they were studied in grammar schools and at university.⁴¹ Of note, as I've indicated in the Introduction, is that Book 4 of the *Aeneid* introduces the character of Fama, or Rumor, and Marlowe, while not having a character by that name (unlike Shakespeare's *2 Henry IV*, as we will see in the next chapter), makes report, received news, and rumor central to his drama. Marlowe's dramatization, in fact, is as much about Aeneas as it is about Dido. Leo Braudy points to a significant fact: the word *dido* in Latin means "I broadcast" or "I spread around," and he notes that "in one of the few uses of the Latin rumor in the *Aeneid*, Virgil says that the rumor went around (*diditur rumor*) the camp of Aeneas that they were about to found the city of Rome."⁴²

Marlowe's presentation depicts the characters as linguistically opposed. At the beginning of the play, Dido is relatively silent while Aeneas is the one whose tongue tells his tale; by the end of the play, the roles have been reversed—Aeneas is silent as he sails away while Dido's tongue "broadcasts" her misery. Certainly, Marlowe's play examines the effects of rumor and news on both men and women, but it is Aeneas who will ultimately struggle against hearing and

succumbing to female speech that he and his men come to see as threatening to his status as warrior.

Dido is intent on hearing the truth about the Trojans and Aeneas, for she remarks that there is conflicting report in Carthage. Disdaining the rumors swirling around her city, Dido goes to the source, Aeneas:

May I entreat thee to discourse at large,
 And truly too, how Troy was overcome?
 For many tales go of that city's fall,
 And scarcely do agree upon one point.
 Some say Antenor did betray the town;
 Others report 'twas Sinon's perjury;
 But all in this, that Troy is overcome,
 And Priam dead; yet how, we hear no news. (2.1.106-13)⁴³

These many tales that fall onto the ears of those in the city are characterized by a conflict of ambiguous reports—rumor has outpaced the truth of the situation and inhabits Carthage. Dido implores Aeneas to speak “at large” so she will be able to garner the true story, and when he is finished, we should note she accepts his tale at face value, blinded by love and not questioning the veracity of the events he has just related. As Aeneas begins to tell his tale, he remarks, “Then speak, Aeneas, with Achilles' tongue; / And, Dido, and you Carthaginian peers, / Hear me” (2.1.121-23). Aeneas begins his tale describing how Ulysses “Assay'd with honey words” to turn the Trojans back before calling on false Sinon, “Whose ticing tongue was made of Hermes' pipe, / To force an hundred watchful eyes to sleep” (2.1.145-46). Of note here is that the male tongue is hard at work enticing and enchanting men's ears; furthermore, variants of the word *honey* are used later in the play but by and about women (Anna and Dido), while *ticing*, meaning seductive or enticing, is later used to negatively describe Dido (4.3.31). Marlowe is here gesturing to his translation of Ovid's *Elegies*, which Marlowe

translated during his Cambridge years: "Let thy tongue flatter, while thy minde harme-workes: / Under sweet hony deadly poison lurkes" (1.8.104-105).⁴⁴

Aeneas relates how he lost his wife Creusa, but notes, "And, had not we / Fought manfully, I had not told this tale" (2.1.270-71). For Aeneas, this male ability to speak, to spread report and fama, is reliant on masculine aggression and warfare.

Once lovestruck, Dido's own speech becomes uneven, as Aeneas himself announces his concern about her "doubtful speech" where she contradicts herself by saying such things as "And yet I'll speak,—and yet I'll hold my peace" (3.4.31, 27).⁴⁵ When Dido and Aeneas finally do talk alone as she has requested, Dido realizes, "I follow one that loveth fame 'fore me" (3.4.27). As Braudy notes, for Virgil fame is the place where personal desire confronts historic destiny; true Roman fame for Virgil is essentially masculine.⁴⁶ Marlowe certainly takes the same route, depicting an Aeneas who is ultimately more concerned with fame and duty to the gods than with loving Dido. Aeneas notes that Jove wills it that he must depart from Carthage; if not, recalling Chaucer, he "Cannot ascend to fame's immortal house" (4.3.9). Aeneas assumes that Dido will try to convince him to stay, and he imagines he will hear Dido cry for him to come back and say, "And let me link my body to thy lips, / That, tied together by the striving tongues, / We may, as one, sail into Italy" (28-30). It is this possibility of female tongue tied with male tongue that provokes a harsh reaction from the fellow Trojan Achates, who implores Aeneas,

Banish that ticing dame from forth your mouth,
And follow your fore-seeing stars in all:
This is no life for men-at-arms to live,
Where dalliance doth consume a soldier's strength,

And wanton motions of alluring eyes
Effeminate our minds, inur'd to war. (4.3.31-36)

Whereas the term *ticing* was used to describe Sinon in 2.1, here Marlowe recuperates the term to apply to Dido. Carthage has become a place of feminization where warriors are emasculated, and Dido's words and speech are linked to this process. Achates's anxiety rests in the fact that Dido could destroy Aeneas's fame. When Aeneas enters and hears Dido grant him the power to command as king of Libya, he states, "A sword, and not a sceptre, fits Aeneas" (4.4.43). Dido pleads with Aeneas not to sail off to Italy, ignoring the duty he feels otherwise: "Heaven, envious of our joys, is waxen pale; / And when we whisper, then the stars fall down, / To be partakers of our honey talk" (4.4.52-54).⁴⁷ Aeneas wants to remove himself from this "honey talk" he had engaged in earlier in the cave with Dido, but he lies to her that he will stay in Carthage. Dido suspects he will depart, and she is struck that Aeneas has forsaken their love for his masculine duty and pursuit of fame: "Speaks not Aeneas like a conqueror?" she remarks (4.4.93). Aeneas's dismissal of coded "female speech" for "conqueror talk" completes the fourth act and prepares for the fifth act, which posits a reversal from the play's opening scenes, as Aeneas's more controlled speech and actual silence is viewed in stark contrast to Dido's raving that leads to her suicide. Marlowe retreats to these gendered binaries in order to restore masculine sovereignty.

The final act begins with Hermes, described as "Jove's herald" and "Jove's winged messenger," coming to Aeneas to tell him not to forget Italy and to leave Carthage: "The king of gods sent me from highest heaven, / To sound this angry message in thine ears" (5.1.32-33). Ultimately, it is only with the actual help from

the gods that Aeneas restores his ability to discern what the Trojans view as debilitating female speech. Aeneas will listen and plans to depart, showing restraint in his speech, but it is Dido whose speeches resemble those of Aeneas in the second act. Dido laments Aeneas's false oath that he would stay with her in Carthage and pleads with him one last time. In his final words of the play, Aeneas tells Dido, "In vain, my love, thou spend'st thy fainting breath: If words might move me, I were overcome" to which Dido quickly responds, "And wilt thou not be mov'd with Dido's words?" (5.1.153-55). When Aeneas leaves some thirty lines later without another word, Dido begins, according to her sister, to rave (5.1.193). She again appoints her sister Anna as a messenger to Aeneas to request his return.⁴⁸ When Anna reenters, she reports that Aeneas saw her and apparently heard her cry out to stay; she then began to implore him to "stay a while to hear what I could say; / But he, clapp'd under hatches, sail'd away" (5.1.239-40).⁴⁹ Preparing to commit suicide, Dido proclaims in front of the fire, "Now, Dido, with these relics burn thyself, / And make Aeneas famous through the world, / For perjury and slaughter of a queen" (5.1.292-94). Yet in this fire she will burn written records of Aeneas's pledge of love: "These letters, lines, and perjurd papers, all / Shall burn to cinders in this precious flame" (300-301). Dido sees Aeneas's actions against her as being viewed as *infamous*, yet any fame that will spread after she is dead will result from word of mouth, for the written record of Aeneas's vows is destroyed. Thus, by the end of the play Marlowe has placed Dido back in the familiar mold of the woman who attempts to destroy a man's fame with her loose tongue, while Aeneas emerges as reinstating his sovereignty in choosing to escape the feminizing speech of Dido. The ear of the warrior hero, Marlowe asserts, must be protected from the seductive words of a

woman. And it is another man, Achates, who ultimately saves Aeneas from infamy by discerning the deleterious potential in Dido's honey words.

Yet in *The Massacre at Paris* (c. 1592), it is men whose words and speech pose the greatest threat to other men. Male liars dominate the play, and Guise, who one critic has called "a pathological killing machine," silences Protestant tongues that blaspheme Catholic ears, yet falls prey to the Cardinal of Lorraine's own loose tongue.⁵⁰ Marlowe showcases how rumors and state secrets, set in motion by men, destroy Catholic aspirations in France. In this dramatic bloodbath, Marlowe presents a rendering of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in Paris on 23-24 August 1572, where scores of Protestants were brutally killed by Catholic mobs. Queen Elizabeth comments on this dark event in a December 1572 letter to Francis Walsingham, her ambassador resident in France, stating, "We are sorry to hear, first, the great slaughter made in France of noblemen and gentlemen, unconvicted and untried, so suddenly."⁵¹ As the shortest of Marlowe's plays at approximately 1,250 lines, this topical play is a memorially reported text that has been subject to various corruptions; as one critic has recently noted, in Marlowe's canon the play has been denied fame and awarded infamy.⁵²

The Massacre at Paris represents one of Marlowe's final engagements with the ways in which masculine sovereignty is tested by report and the workings of rumor and loose talk. Standing amid the bevy of men in this play is Catherine, the Catholic Queen Mother of France. She is underhanded and controlling, and, in the fourth scene, she asserts herself in council with the men of the realm. Yet unlike the men of the play, her ambition is not linked with the spread of news or report. However, the one woman who *is* linked with report is the figure of

Queen Elizabeth, who appears in name only three times during the play. After the offstage death of the Duke of Joyeux, Navarre asserts the need to put down the Catholics who work against “the perfect truth,” or, the Protestant cause: “And with the Queen of England join my force / To beat the papal monarch from our lands” (18.15-16).⁵³ Henry III, after the Machiavellian Duke of Guise is slain, remarks that Guise caused the Spanish to threaten England, perpetrated “foreign wars and civil broils,” and drew “a sort of English priests / From Douai to the seminary at Rheims, / To hatch forth treason ‘gainst their natural queen” (21.109-11).⁵⁴ And in the final scene of the play, Henry, dying after receiving a fatal knife wound from the Friar, tells the men that surround him, “I’ll send my sister England news of this, / And give her warning of her treacherous foes” (24.51-52). Immediately, Henry addresses an English Agent who has entered: “Agent for England, send thy mistress word / What this detested Jacobin hath done” (24.56-57). Marlowe’s final play ends with this injunction to spread news, invoking an English messenger to bring news by word of mouth to a Queen who historically was attuned to the threat of the Catholic menace to England and Protestantism. The Agent, an authorized figure of news retrieval, is the extension of the Queen’s own eyes and ears. Marlowe’s depiction of the Queen is through language, marking her as an enemy to the Catholic cause who is bolstered by her auditory awareness of actions outside her realm by way of her agents. We can perhaps read Marlowe’s own elevation of this Messenger, a role he might have known well in his employ with Elizabeth’s court, as the harvester of news, a necessary agent to the realm to bring truth and not rumor to the Queen.⁵⁵

Before coming to support the Protestant cause after the threat of Guise, Henry was known as the Duke of Anjou. As the massacre of Protestants is in full

force, the Protestant Navarre enters having heard news: "My lord, they say / That all the Protestants are massacred," and then he addresses Anjou directly, saying, " But yet, my lord, the report doth run, / That you were one that made this massacre" (9.71-72, 75-76). Anjou denies this charge, lying with his words, "Who I? You are deceiv'd; I rose but now" (9.77). Anjou is certainly a dissembler and is responsible for the murder of Protestant schoolmasters and, in one of the play's most famous scenes, for himself murdering Peter Ramus (1515-1572). Ramus was a French intellectual whose writings on logic and rhetoric critiqued Aristotle and attempted to systemize knowledge by way of an impulse to classify, usually through binary oppositions. Walter Ong has remarked that Ramism specialized in dichotomies and was based on simple spatial models and diagrammatic concepts apprehended by sight.⁵⁶ Such systems and methods reflected, according to Neal Ward Gilbert, a "Humanist dissatisfaction with aimless and disorderly presentations of subject matter."⁵⁷ Hugh Kearney gives a particularly clear view of the Ramist challenge in the English universities beginning in the 1570s. Ramist method, he remarks, "brought clarity to complex problems by its ruthless simplification," often by presenting an author's thinking through visual means, such as tables or family trees.⁵⁸ Kearney also points to the revolutionary implications inherent in Ramist thought, which attacked Cicero and Aristotle and posited a new way of approaching knowledge and information, bringing order to supposed disorderly logic.⁵⁹

Perhaps Ramus's own debunking of authority appealed to the young Marlowe, who would have encountered the tenets of Ramist thought during his tenure at Corpus Christi.⁶⁰ That Marlowe has chosen to stage the murder of Ramus is significant, and we might read this vivid scene as Marlowe's own fears

as a scholar who, through table talk, questioned authority.⁶¹ Ramus, facing a bleak situation, asks Guise why his scholarship is so offensive, and Guise answers:

Marry, sir, in having a smack in all
 And yet didst never sound anything to the depth.
 Was it not thou that scoff' st the Organon,
 And said it was a heap of vanities?
 He that will be a flat dichotomist,
 And seen in nothing but epitomes,
 Is in your judgment thought a learned man;
 And he, forsooth, must go and preach in Germany,
 Excepting against doctors' axioms,
 And *ipse dixi* with this quiddity,
Argumentum testimonii est inartificiale.
 To contradict which, I say, Ramus shall die. (9.25-36)⁶²

Hoping to purge himself, he answers, "I knew the Organon to be confused, / And I reduc'd it into better form" (9.46-47), but Guise rages, "Why suffer you that peasant to declaim? / Stab him, I say, and send him to his friends in hell" (9.54-55). Anjou intends to silence any further declamation, a staple in the Cambridge Humanist education, but he is also silencing Ramus's scholastic method of argumentation and its uncovering and ordering of truth. As Katharine Eisaman Maus has argued, Guise's dagger "provides a 'refutation' which is at once a black parody of logical disputation and its most effective implementation. By slaying his opponent, he makes his argument literally unanswerable."⁶³ Perhaps the killing of Ramus is a measure to silence the method as well as the man; Marlowe's staging of the event gives voice to the scholar, showing him to be a Protestant martyr caught up in the brutality of a Catholic massacre.⁶⁴

After Henry's change of heart against Guise, who, Henry has been told, gathers men for an uprising, the Duke Epernoun testifies to Henry what appears

to be his firsthand account of the events in Paris, where the citizens pledged their allegiance to Guise: "Nay, they fear'd not to speak in the streets, / That the Guise durst stand in arms against the king, / For not effecting of his holiness' will" (19.72-4). Such talk becomes, of course, fodder for table talk that could lead to open revolt. The boldness of these "commoners" in the city, speaking freely and brazenly in the streets against the King, is a threat that must be met with equal force—hence, Henry's assertion that he will "proclaim" Guise a traitor (19.60). The word, he seems to assert, can be just as powerful as the sword. The necessity for news of Guise's uprising to travel quickly to King Henry is underscored by Guise's own listening and manipulation of the news and report as he aspires to the crown. In his first soliloquy, Guise asks for "An ear to hear what my detractors say" to help him gain "a royal seat, a sceptre, and a crown" (2.103-104). Yet later during the massacre, he turns a deaf ear to a pleading Protestant, who implores Guise to hear him speak. Guise responds, "No, villain; that tongue of thine, / That hath blasphem'd the holy Church of Rome, / Shall drive no pliants into the Guise's ears" (12.2-5). Guise sees the massacre as silencing Protestant tongues that offend Catholic ears; Protestant speech thus poses a threat to Guise's aspirations. Yet it is Guise's brother, the Cardinal of Lorraine, who in a conversation with the Queen Mother Catherine, exemplifies that even secrets are subject to being repeated in the realm: "Madam, as in secrecy I was told, / My brother Guise hath gather'd a power of men, / Which are, he saith, to kill the Puritans" (14.34-36). Perhaps because of his brother's loose tongue, Guise's secret becomes public, news of which travels to Navarre and to King Henry. The loose tongue of a man, then, aids in impeding and ultimately destroying further Catholic aspirations in France.

Three murderers, appointed by Henry, ready themselves to kill Guise. Guise enters Henry's chambers and remarks that he has heard Henry was displeased with his great following of men, yet, Henry dissembles:

They were to blame that said I was displeas'd;
 And you, good cousin, to imagine it.
 'Twere hard with me, if I should doubt my kin,
 Or be suspicious of my dearest friends.
 Cousin, I assure you I am resolute,
 Whatsoever any whisper in mine ears,
 Not to suspect disloyalty in thee. (21.41-47)

Henry assures Guise that what he heard was wrong, asserting his own keen hearing through the whispers that circulate about. "They" had it incorrect, Henry asserts, placing the blame on ambiguous information and taking away the authority from those who reported the information. This information is a rumor that Henry planted so that it would get back to Guise. Here, of course, Henry is using the instability of truth and report to lull Guise into a false sense of security that ultimately sets up Guise's death. The lack of a discerning ear in this case traps Guise. Henry, who after orchestrating the death of Guise through his manipulation of report, can now confidently state, "I ne'er was king of France until this hour" (21.106). Henry's keen manipulation of report, of setting forth a rumor, silences the Catholic massacre and positions him as a monarch who, like his ally Queen Elizabeth, is in control of information.

Edward II, however, is no King Henry. In Marlowe's lone history play, Edward refuses to listen to the counsel of his barons, and, as I argue, it is Gaveston's position at Edward's ear that is the true cause for male anxiety. Similar to how the Trojans fear Aeneas is enticed by Dido's honey words, the barons in *Edward II* fear that Gaveston's words not only feminize their King but strip him of his authority and his ability to discern truth.⁶⁵ The play begins and

ends with a letter, and much of the play contends with an anxiety of documentation and deliberates about the authority of information received and the credibility of both the spoken and written word. Report and news, and the rumor that inevitably follows this information, arguably flies faster in *Edward II* (1592) than in any of Marlowe's other plays due in large part to the numerous messengers (who bring information orally) and letters (that bring information in manuscript form). While Edward's emptying of the treasury is a central cause of his as well as Gaveston's murder, his failure to listen to the council of his nobles and to distinguish between truth and lies detracts from his effectiveness as sovereign. In its engagement with the benefits and limits of oral and written forms of communication, the play establishes how kings, barons, protectors, upstarts, and royal favorites are undermined by the buzz of the realm, while the future king Edward III, by contrast, displays a keen understanding of the necessity of proof with his reliance on listening and its capacity to discern rumor.⁶⁶

The play begins with the favorite Gaveston reveling in Edward II's "amorous lines" in a letter he has sent to him, recalling him from the banishment imposed by the late Edward's father (1.1.6).⁶⁷ His sense of entitlement follows, and soon Gaveston is viewed as a threat not because of any homosocial relationship that may exist between him and the king, but because of his position at the king's ear. It is Queen Isabella who first makes note of this in 1.2., lamenting to the barons how her husband dotes upon Gaveston and "whispers in his ears" (52). The potential threat of whispering state secrets over table talk to this base upstart magnifies the potential of Gaveston—and not the nobles—giving voice and counsel to Edward.⁶⁸ Interestingly, Gaveston engages,

Othello-like, in eavesdropping on the conversation between Edward and the nobles (1.1.72).⁶⁹ The barons, most notably Mortimer Junior, can not hold their tongues in speaking out against Gaveston, a breach that Edward's brother Kent claims deserves punishment of death for a "trespass of the tongues" (1.1.117). This auricular anxiety of having Gaveston at the King's ear has willed men to speak.

In 1.4., Lancaster presents the Archbishop of Canterbury with a document that will be brought to the King regarding the nobles' wish for Gaveston to return to exile. Reluctantly, the King, whose anger stops his speech (43), signs the document, and Lancaster, taking the document, declares, "I'll have it published in the streets" (89), while Pembroke remarks, "This will be good news to the common sort" (92). The written document becomes fodder for verbal publication, serving to become a form of political rumor distributed among the masses. This quickly moving piece of news retains its element of truth, as Gaveston soon enters and tells Edward, "My lord, I hear it whispered everywhere / That I am banished and must fly the land" (106-7). The verbal publishing of the document is an attempt to right the social imbalance caused by Edward elevating the base Gaveston. As the two men lament the situation, Edward tells Gaveston it is better to remain mute instead of engaging in "mutual talk" which makes their grief greater (133-34). Edward insists that the Queen speak with the barons to ensure that Gaveston's exile will be repealed, and she seeks Mortimer Junior to be her advocate to the peers (212). The Queen has Mortimer's ear, sitting alone and talking with him out of the audience's and the nobles' reach, and she will ultimately convince him with her own enticing words. While they talk, the nobles watch their exchange, and Pembroke voices his

disbelief and underlying anxiety that the Queen's words can alter Mortimer. Lancaster stands dumbfounded when Mortimer returns from his conversation with the Queen and pleads for Gaveston's repeal after he has already been banished, saying, "In no respect can contraries be true" (249). Yet when the Queen pleads with the nobles to hear what Mortimer can pledge concerning the matter, Warwick remarks, "All that he speaks is nothing" (251). Warwick may here be voicing his concern that Mortimer, having been influenced by the female tongue, now will speak, if we take the pun on *nothing* to mean vagina, as a woman. The barons realize a very real fear in Mortimer, whose ear and tongue have become feminized by yielding to a woman's ticing tongue and her "honey words." Marlowe depicts how the male ear can become easily influenced with enticing words, male or female, and uses this binary to explore the conflicted anxieties of the barons.

Mortimer, however, *does* convince the nobles of the Queen's plans for Gaveston, and the Queen, eager to have her husband dote upon her instead of his minion, enthusiastically says, "This news will glad him much" (300). Mortimer has reported to the nobles the Queen's plan, which includes hiring a murderer to kill Gaveston in England.⁷⁰ The plan being set, the Queen goes to the despairing Edward and delivers the news he wants to hear, and the King exclaims, "Repealed! The news is too sweet to be true" (322). Edward displays a certain hesitation about this news but, because of its positive consequences for himself, he gladly accepts it without pondering the dangerous implications it might have. Edward has declared that Gaveston marry his niece, a plan that will keep Gaveston close to him in England. At the beginning of the second act, Baldock, the former tutor to this niece, and Spencer Junior speak about the way

to advance at court, which they deem is to follow the King's favorite, Gaveston. As they discuss their plans, Spencer Junior remarks that he has been told in secrecy that Gaveston's exile has been repealed (2.1.17-22). For Spencer Junior, secrets can be repeated, a dangerous if necessary necessity for one looking to rise. The fate of these men, and particularly the tutor Baldock, will turn out like the nameless schoolmasters who were murdered in *The Massacre of Paris*. Baldock's hopes that he will be preferred at court because he tutored the King's niece since her childhood are met with Spencer Junior claiming he should "cast the scholar off" (31). The ensuing conversation disparages "these common pedants, / That cannot speak without 'propterea quod'" (52-53) and those who have "a special gift to form a verb" (55). It seems that quite consistently throughout his plays, Marlowe highlights the dangers of a certain type of scholarship and academic method that takes one away from the pursuit of truth. And in this play, the spoken word, the staple of the academic exercises at the university, seems to be trumped by the omnipresent written document.⁷¹

Angered that Mortimer Junior and Lancaster engage in what he deems "private libeling" against Gaveston and Kent, the King then grows furious when the lords sarcastically greet Gaveston upon his arrival (2.2.34). The verbal quarrel between men leads to Mortimer wounding Gaveston with his sword and the King declaring war to "abate these barons' pride" (99). Yet Mortimer insists on relaying news to the King, first gleaned from a letter, that Mortimer Senior has been taken prisoner by the Scots. Edward, however, refuses to ransom Mortimer's uncle, and Mortimer, threatening now to speak his mind, tells the King that the "murmuring commons" could prove rebellious because of the extravagances the King has granted to Gaveston (159). Mortimer informs

Edward that the social imbalance he has created at court has mobilized both the printed and spoken word against him: "Libels are cast again thee in the street; / Ballads and rhymes made of thy overthrow" (176-77). Lancaster continues, noting that the northern borderers are "Cursing the name of thee and Gaveston" and that the Scots have made a disparaging jig about the King (180, 188). The noise caused by Edward's misrule has led to his defamation. As his ear is more attuned to Gaveston than to the reality of the situation in his realm, Edward's failure to listen to his counselors brings rebellion.

As the barons revolt and the battle of Tynemouth rages in 2.4, Gaveston escapes and the Queen informs Mortimer Junior of Gaveston's whereabouts (37-39). She refuses Mortimer's request that she sail with them to catch Gaveston, relating her anxiety that "if he hear I have but talked with you, / Mine honor will be called in question" (54-55). For Edward, Mortimer is the transgressive figure whose talk corrupts, debases, and undermines his love and authority. Yet for Warwick and the other barons, it is Gaveston's talk and his place at the King's ear, ever ready to listen and act at his request, that is the true threat to the realm. After the capture of Gaveston in 2.5., the Earl of Arundel announces that Edward wishes to speak with Gaveston, but Warwick and the barons are wary, seeing the danger in the potential of Gaveston again having the ear of Edward. Gaveston, "robber of kings' renown!" (69), sullies the fame of Edward by partaking in such moments of secret whisperings between them that lead to louder noise throughout the realm.⁷²

Yet another letter serves as the central point of news at the beginning of the third act. The act begins with Edward longing to hear an answer from the barons concerning Gaveston (3.1.1), and Spencer Junior speaks to counsel the

King not to suffer the defiance of the barons (10-23). The play ultimately is concerned with who has access to the King's ear and points to the dangers involved when the King fails to listen to his barons, who have a degree of authorized power, and instead allows men like Gaveston and Spencer Junior to speak freely. The Queen enters holding a letter and is accompanied by her son Prince Edward and the Frenchman Levune. Quickly asking the Queen "what news?" in hopes she brings word of Gaveston, Edward listens to her speak of more pressing political news:

News of dishonor, lord, and discontent.
 Our friend Levune, faithful and full of trust,
 Informeth us, by letters and by words,
 That Lord Valois, our brother, King of France,
 Because Your Highness hath been slack in homage,
 Hath seized Normandy into his hands.
 These be the letters, this the messenger. (3.1.59-65)

The Queen shows the letter to Edward, who quickly dismisses the urgency of this threat and returns to his concern with Gaveston (66-68). Edward again dismisses domestic and international problems because of his concern with Gaveston, but then chooses, in a halfhearted gesture, to send his son and the Queen with Levune to France to try to make peace. When Spencer relates to Edward that the barons have sent a messenger to speak with the King, the King agrees to give ear to the Herald, who advises the King to take leave of "smooth dissembling flatterers" like Spencer Junior at court and to cherish his "old servitors" for advice (169, 168).⁷³ The barons want to ensure the tempering of tongues that they see as dissembling at the King's ear. Their counsel is an authorized form of table talk, and the barons want exclusive privileges at Edward's ear. As they have already been the cause of the silencing of Gaveston's tongue, they also want to silence any other tongues that may entice Edward's

ear. Yet defiantly Edward refuses to hear their pleas, unable and unwilling to hear truth coming to him from the tongue of counsel.

Rice ap Howell comes to the Queen and Mortimer Junior in 4.6. with Spencer Senior as his prisoner and announces news to the pair: "Spencer the son, created Earl of Gloucester, / Is with that smooth-tongued scholar Baldock gone / And shipped but late for Ireland with the King," information which is only partially true (56-58). When Spencer Senior begins to voice a valid argument against Mortimer, Mortimer quickly tells guards to take him away because "He prates," linking this sort of railing with that of Gaveston. Spencer and Baldock are in fact with the King in hiding at an abbey in southern Wales, where Edward laments his situation and pines for a contemplative life:

Come, Spencer, come, Baldock, come sit down by me;
 Make trial now of that philosophy
 That in our famous nurseries of arts
 Thou sucked'st from Plato and from Aristotle.
 Father, this life contemplative is heaven.
 Oh, that I might this life in quiet lead! (4.7.16-21)

The silence and protection of the abbey is soon shattered, however, as the soldiers and Leicester enter and take all three men prisoner. This longing for the pastoral university landscape (the nurseries of arts) and a contemplative scholarly life (what Spencer insisted Baldock cast off in order to advance) seems the better alternative to the death they are about to endure.

Edward, captured and imprisoned at Killingworth Castle, is forced to give up his crown. Mortimer, acting on news that Edmund has hatched a plot to free his brother, resolves a plan to remove the King with the help of Matrevis and Gurney, to whom he speaks out of the Queen's hearing:

Matrevis, write a letter presently
 Unto the Lord of Berkeley from ourself

That he resign the King to thee and Gurney,
And when 'tis done we will subscribe our name. (5.2.47-50)

Mortimer Junior, scheming out of earshot of the Queen, mobilizes the letter as a means to become Protector of the crown. While Mortimer occupies himself with scheming with the written and spoken word, the King's brother enters, speaking with the young Prince Edward and causing heightened anxiety in Mortimer. The Queen notes, "Something he whispers in his childish ears," and Mortimer responds, "If he have such access unto the Prince, / Our plots and stratagems will soon be dashed" (76-78). Mortimer emerges as a man who is continually attempting to control the word, particularly conscious of what gets spoken into the ears of the King and future king. It is this aural access that certain men have in the ears of kings that stands as the pressing anxiety in the play.

Mortimer continues his scheming in 5.4., a scene that begins with Mortimer alone on stage with a letter. Because Mortimer has heard the commoners begin to pity Edward, he resolves that the King must die. Mortimer asserts he will do it cunningly:

This letter, written by a friend of ours,
Contains his death, yet bids them save his life.
"Edwardum occidere nolite timere, bonum est,"
"Fear not to kill the king, 'tis good he die."
But read it thus, and that's another sense:
"Edwardum occidere nolite, timere bonum est,"
"Kill not the king, 'tis good to fear the worst."
Unpointed as it is, thus shall it go,
That, being dead, if it chance to be found,
Matrevis and the rest may bear the blame
And we be quit that caused it to be done. (6-16)

Mortimer sees in this letter, unpunctuated and thus ambiguous, a way to protect his name from infamy. He fittingly intends on sending this letter with Lightborn, whose name, as many critics have noted, is the Anglicized version of Lucifer, the

father of all lies. Mortimer calls on the murderer Lightborn to be his messenger (17), who relates how he has murdered people via the mouth and the ear (34-36). Mortimer insists that the King's murder be secret and not be spied by anyone (28, 40), and then gives the letter to Lightborn to deliver to Gurney and Matrevis. Mortimer tells Lightborn that "Unless thou bring me news of Edward's death," he should never see him again; of course, it is Mortimer who lies, as he has already determined that Lightborn will be killed after he murders Edward. As Mortimer revels in his position—"The Prince I rule, the Queen I do command"—he recounts how at the "council table" he dissembled his way to his position as Protector (48, 58-71).⁷⁴ Yet it is Mortimer's continued refusal to listen to the new young King Edward III that will lead to his eventual death.

"What else? A table and a featherbed" (5.5.32). Lightborn enters Berkeley Castle and gives Gurney and Matrevis the ambiguous letter. As Lightborn enters the King's dungeon, he lies and tells the king he comes to comfort him and bring him "joyful news," a lie that Edward can clearly read (42). Edward lies down on the bed and dozes, but he awakens, exclaiming, "Something still buzzeth in mine ears / And tells me if I sleep I never wake" (102-103). No longer do Gaveston and Spencer buzz at Edward's ear, telling lies—this buzz, however, proves powerfully true. Lightborn finally speaks the truth, telling Edward he has come "To rid thee of thy life" (106) and demanding that Matrevis and Gurney get the table he had requested for use at this moment. Lightborn directs Matrevis and Gurney, who bring in the table and a red-hot spit, to "lay the table down, and stamp on it, / But not too hard, lest that you bruise his body" (111-12). Edward is subject to anal penetration by the red-hot spit, a crime that remains secret as promised by Lightborn. In his *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1587),

Holinshed similarly describes the scene: "His cry did move many within the castle and town of Berkeley to compassion, plainly hearing him utter a wailful noise, as the tormentors were about to murder him, so that divers being awakened therewith . . . prayed heartily to God to receive his soul, when they understood by his cry what the matter meant."⁷⁵ Marlowe has Matrevis succinctly note the anxiety this scream causes: "I fear me that this cry will raise the town" (113). Edward, pinned down under the table, still makes noise, and the crime, if not seen, is nevertheless heard.⁷⁶

And perhaps this is how word first reaches the young King Edward III. In the final scene of the play, the Queen tells Mortimer, "Ah, Mortimer, the King, my son, hath news / His father's dead, and we have murdered him" (5.6.15-16). It is the Queen who notes that her son the King vows to be revenged on them both and reports, "Into the council chamber he is gone / To crave the aid and succor of his peers" (19-20). Unlike his father before him, Edward III actively seeks out council and listens to his advisors. When Edward returns from council, he boldly tells Mortimer, "Think not that I am frightened with thy words" (27), enervating the power that once was harbored in Mortimer's tongue. The unpointed letter's failure to protect Mortimer places power in the spoken word, particularly in the ambiguity of rumor.⁷⁷ According to John Michael Archer, "popular voice, consensus, and sovereign hegemony outstrip mere writing and through his son's decision produce the truth of Edward II's murder."⁷⁸ Edward III even claims to give voice to his father, telling Mortimer, "Traitor, in me my loving father speaks, / And plainly saith 'twas thou that murd'red'st him" (41-42). When Mortimer asks, "But hath Your Grace no other proof than this?" Edward reveals the letter in Mortimer's hand, exposing his lies and treachery

and ordering Mortimer's head to be brought back to him (43-44). The proof, it turns out, rests in the same letter Mortimer hoped would keep his fame unblemished. And when the Queen entreats the young King for Mortimer's life, Edward III claims that she, too, was complicit in his father's murder: "Ay, madam, you, for so the rumor runs" (73). Dissembling once again, the Queen retorts, "That rumor is untrue; for loving thee / Is this report raised on poor Isabel" (74-75). When Edward momentarily relents, finding his mother not "so unnatural," a lord, one of his council, intervenes, stating, "My lord, I fear me it will prove too true" (76-77). Whereas Edward has the letter to implicate Mortimer, he must base his mother's judgment on rumor he and the council have received. Edward commits his mother to the Tower "Till further trial may be made thereof" (80). Edward III insists that his rule will rely on evidence and proofs, and all rumors, however damning they might be, will still be subject to a legal trial that will ultimately reveal the truth. The new king lends his discerning ear not only to counsel, but also to the rumors that come to him.

In the plays I have examined in this chapter, Marlowe often reinforces the gender stereotypes of the woman who wreaked havoc with her loose tongue, as we saw with Dido, Queen Catherine, and Queen Isabella. Certainly, these women were not prototypes of Queen Elizabeth I. But the example of Elizabeth as receiver of news—as depicted in *The Massacre at Paris*—casts her as one whose ears can discern rumor and lies, a dramatic gesture one can believe was influenced by Marlowe's own service as agent to the Queen. And it is the role of the male messenger to serve as extensions of the royal ear. However, many of Marlowe's men do not stand as the epitome of controlled tongues and discerning

ears, and he depicts Edward II, Mortimer, Aeneas, and Guise as lacking the ability to hear the potential threat of the lies and rumors in their surroundings. For Aeneas and King Henry III in particular, their authority and ability to hear clearly has been reestablished with the aid of other men. Yet we are left with a young king, Edward III, who, unlike his father, is eager to hear counsel and discern truth amid the ambiguities that fall upon his ears. Such a lesson about rumor control that Marlowe posits in his history play becomes a focal point in his successor's own history plays later in the decade.

Notes

¹ Quoted in Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture*, 340. Also see the c. 1615 broadside *Table-observations*, which sets forth twelve commands for men to obey while at table for meal or discussion, including, "Picke no Quarrels," "Maintaine no Opinions," "Report no Sad newes," "Repeat no Greivances," "Reveale no Secrets," and "Touch no State-matters." Such table talk had the potential to bring opprobrium to all who repeated or revealed unauthorized information. A printed social sanction, this broadside is a reminder of the potential consequences of speaking loosely in early modern England, for its subtext certainly makes it clear that many ears are listening. See also Robert Underwood, who wittily remarks in his *The New Anatomie* (London, 1612):

Much company for to frequent,
 And in his table talke,
 To argue there of many thinges,
 To make his clapper walke.
 Hee often times with Learned men
 Will offer to dispute,
 And if that they his arguments
 At any time confute,
 Then will he wrangle mightely,
 And then a man shall heare
 Both quips and taunts, yea rayling words
 Hee scarcely can forbear. (C4r)

See also Jeanneret, *A Feast of Words*, for more on the Renaissance views surrounding table talk.

² The *OED* defines common as "matters of public talk or knowledge, generally known" [7]. As Adam Fox outlines, throughout the early modern period, governmental and religious leaders warned "'the vulgar' against busying their heads with talk of politics, for such things were above them and none of their concern. By the end of the seventeenth century such warnings were being drowned out by a chorus of people reading aloud, asking for news, and expressing opinion," *Oral and Literate Culture in England*, 405.

³ Quoted in Kuriyama, *Christopher Marlowe: A Renaissance Life*, 231, emphasis mine.

⁴ Kyd, the Elizabethan playwright best known for his *The Spanish Tragedy* (1592), shared a patron (Lord Strange), a workroom, and possibly even a bed with Marlowe in 1591. This is a significant moment in their professional relationship that will allow Kyd to make such damning remarks about his fellow playwright. In his first letter to Puckering in June 1593, Kyd, pleading his innocence against charges of atheism, writes, "When I was first suspected for that Libell that concern'd the state, amongst those wast and idle papers (which I carde not for) &

which unaskt I did deliver up, were founde some fragmentes of a disputation toching that opinion, affirmed by Marlowe to be his, and shuffled with some of myne (unknown to me) by some occasion of our wryting in one chamber twoe yeares synce," quoted in Kuriyama, 229. Kyd, aware of Marlowe's death when writing these letters, shrewdly diverts attention from himself by defaming Marlowe's name and mobilizing the power of gossip and rumor to protect his own name and life. For a fascinating discussion on the "shuffling" of these papers, see Jeffrey Masten, "Playwrighting: Authorship and Collaboration," 360-66.

⁵ For more on the rising tide of disbelief, doubt, and uncertainty in the 1580s and 1590s as a possible source of atheism, see Davidson, "Christopher Marlowe and Atheism."

⁶ Quoted in Kuriyama, 225. Because the men were arguing over a bill, we might assume that the Widow Bull was operating a public tavern or gathering place. Records do not point to a definitive answer.

⁷ OED, 1a.

⁸ We might conclude that Marlowe's death fulfilled Richard Baines's demand. In his note (usually called the "Baines Note") circa 26 May 1593, submitted to the Privy Council just days before Marlowe's death, Baines writes, "I think all men in Christianity ought to indevor that the mouth of so dangerous a member may be stopped," quoted in Kuriyama, 222.

⁹ Cormack, *Charting an Empire*, 168.

¹⁰ Hardin, "Marlowe and the Fruits of Scholarism," 387, 394.

¹¹ Quoted in Hardin, 389.

¹² Palmer, *Writing Russia in the Age of Shakespeare*, 188.

¹³ Trousdale, "Rhetoric," 624-25.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 624.

¹⁵ Marlowe, "Hero and Leander," 15.

¹⁶ Brock, *A Ben Jonson Companion*, 289-90.

¹⁷ Tobriner, ed., *Introduction to Wisdom*, 50-51.

¹⁸ Watson, *Vives: On Education*, 9.

¹⁹ Here I offer a selection of Vives's pithy remarks in this work, which point to this early concern on the continent with the necessity of men listening and speaking properly: "God gave man a tongue to be an instrument of communication in society, in which Nature binds man to man"; "This tongue is the cause of great benefits and mischiefs, depending on its use. Therefore, James, the Apostle, compares it properly to the rudder of a ship. Roping must be thrown on it and drawn tight, so that it neither hurts others, nor itself"; "Sin is wrought by no instrument so easily, nor so often, as by the tongue" (140); "Do not be hasty when you speak, nor let your tongue precede your thought"; "This saying, 'Tell me everything which comes to your lips'—a thing which Cicero asked only of Atticus—ought seldom to be applied"; "So evil and so damaging, O Tongue, whither do you go?" (142); "Guard against being too busy in talking, or too full of words"; "Among wise men, it is better for you to listen than to speak"; "Do not be contentious or obstinate in argument. When you hear the truth, reverence it immediately with silence, rising as though to a godly thing" (143); "Truth may well suffer, but it will never be overcome"; "Despise lying as common rottenness. There is no more abject condition in man than lying, in which way we separate ourselves from God and become like the devil, and become his bondsman"; "Once you are known to be a liar, no man will believe you, even though you affirm the most truthful things"; "Truth always coincides with truth; falsehood, neither with truth nor with other falsehood" (145); "If you wish your opinions to be accepted as true, accept nothing lightly but what is assuredly known or else has a great likelihood for verisimilitude" (145-46).

²⁰ Vives, *Introduction to Wisdom*, 105.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 105. In a 1566 letter from Ireland, Sir Henry Sidney writes pieces of wisdom (that echo Vives) to his son Philip about how to become a gentleman-scholar: "Be you rather a hearer and bearer away of other men's talk than a beginner and procurer of speech; otherwise you shall be accounted to delight to hear yourself speak," *Renaissance Letters*, ed. Clements and Levant, 38.

²² *Ibid.*, 105.

²³ Vives, *The Education of a Christian Woman*, 130. In a later chapter on the maternal care of children, Vives continues to assert the necessity of training a child's ears: "Plato forbids nurses from telling idle old wives' tales to their charges. The same should be prescribed for mothers, for it is from this source some children from this early upbringing still retain childish and capricious minds in later years and cannot bear to hear serious and sensible discourse, preferring books of foolish tales that do not contain a particle of truth or anything that resembles it," 271.

²⁴ Vives, who encourages that women exchange as few words as possible with men, points to the example of Mary in scripture: "At the cross she was entirely speechless; she asked nothing of her son—to whom he would leave her, or what his dying wishes were—because she had learned not to speak in public. Imitate her, virgins and all women, imitate this woman of few words, but of remarkable wisdom," *The Education of a Christian Woman*, 133. Thomas Becon's 1564 *Catechism*, a text that was a central part of a theological education, relates the necessity of a maid's silence in similar terms: "And this noble virtue may the virgins learn of that most holy, pure, and glorious virgin Mary, which when she either heard or saw any worthy or notable thing, blabbed it not our straightways to her gossips, as the manner of women is at this present day, but being silent she kept all those sayings secret and pondered them in her heart." Quoted in Aughterson, *Renaissance Woman*, 28.

²⁵ Vives, *The Education of a Christian Woman*, 135-36.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 251. Vives, seemingly contradicting his earlier statements, later chastises men "of lowly spirit" who "engage in idle and dangerous talk and are offended if they are not privy to every secret," 256.

²⁷ See also Thomas Elyot's *The Book Named the Governor* (1531). Elyot's educational tract is aimed at the children of the English elite, and the young James I is said to have studied Elyot. Elyot, an acquaintance of the two preeminent Humanist scholars of the age—Thomas More and Desiderius Erasmus—expounded the benefits of fashioning a scholar who would be useful in society. Elyot, in a move to protect the young child he deems is prone to vice, advises that a seven year old should "be taken from the company of women" and assigned an "ancient and worshipful man" instead, 19. He then begins to outline the causes of what he views is the decay of learning among gentlemen, stating, "There be many nowadays in famous schools and universities which be so much given to the study of tongues only, that when they write epistles, they seem to the reader that, like to a trumpet, they make a sound without any purpose, whereunto men do hearken more for the noise than for any delectation that thereby is moved," 45. Elyot addresses a significant assessment about men

enjoying noise for its own sake, a fact that Ben Jonson will again contend with in his drama in the next century.

²⁸ Ryan, *Introduction, The Schoolmaster*, xvi.

²⁹ Ascham, *The Schoolmaster*, 56.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 24.

³² *Ibid.*, 28.

³³ *Ibid.*, 46. See Shakespeare's *Richard III*, where Queen Elizabeth, speaking of the young Duke of York, remarks, "Pitchers have ears," a proverb from the period ("Little pitchers have big ears") addressed to children who overhear adult remarks.

³⁴ The anxieties about such scholars talking about issues outside of their authority can be found in earlier Cambridge University statutes. One calls for scholars to dine together and that "the bible or some other authentic writing . . . shall be read at the scholars' table, and that the scholars, while dining together, shall bound to listen to what is read and observe silence," *Early Cambridge University and College Statutes*, 27. Punishment followed for those who broke the silence. Furthermore, one of the Peterhouse Statutes from Cambridge University (c. 1550) implores scholars "if any female of their relations or any other honest female should desire to hold counsel, conversation, or discourse with them, for any honorable and lawful reasons, the interview shall take place in the hall or some other respectable place," *Early Cambridge University and College Statutes*, 32-33. The conversation should be carried on discreetly so that the male scholar's "good fame" not be sullied. The statute continues by asserting that if the scholars need to have their heads washed or beards shaved, a male porter or servant should perform the act, not a female: "It is better certainly that all these matters be performed by males, than that by the coming in of women (as has been seen) any thing should by any means happen to the *scandal* of the whole house," 33, emphasis mine). Not only does the woman pose a threat to this male domain in her sexuality, but we can also read a threat of engaging in idle conversation with her over a shave or wash. The word employed to describe this is *scandal*, which is etymologically identical to the word *slander* (from the Old French *escandre* or *esclandre*, and also related to the German *skandal*, meaning "uproar"). The OED gives us many relevant definitions of *scandal* that align with the threat this statute

claims women pose in terms of speech: (2a) damage to reputation; rumour or general comment injurious to reputation; (2b) slander; (5) defamatory talk; malicious gossip; (6a) any injurious report published concerning another which may be the foundation for legal action. In any case, all the repeated attention to the potential hazards a woman and her tongue could cause provided a screen, intentional or not, for a seeming failure to pointedly address the more serious potential threat that existed among men talking.

³⁵ Harvey, Letter to Spenser, in *Renaissance Letters*, 40.

³⁶ *Early Cambridge University and College Statutes*, 99.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

³⁸ Shapiro, *A Culture of Fact*, 18. See Kuriyama's discussion of Marlowe being one of four witnesses who signed the will of fellow classmate John Benchkin's mother in 1585, 59-64. See also the 1552 English Statute under Edward VI, which reads, "no person or persons, after the first day of June next coming, shall be indicted, arraigned, condemned, convicted or attained for any of the treasons or offences aforesaid, or for any other treasons that now be, or hereafter shall be, which shall hereafter be perpetrated, committed or done, unless the same offender or offenders be thereof accused by two lawful accusers," *A Collection of Important English Statutes*, 65-66.

³⁹ Kuriyama, *Christopher Marlowe: A Renaissance Life*, 70-71. Adam Fox, in *Oral and Literate Culture*, remarks, "Professional carriers, chapmen, and travelling tradespeople were often discovered to be the factors and brokers of news, circulating information and spinning webs of communication in ways which few other sources could provide," 343. See also Simon Shepherd's discussion of messengers in *Marlowe and the Politics of Elizabethan Theatre*, 110-22.

⁴⁰ Quoted from Kuriyama, 202-203, emphasis mine. See also Charles Norman, in his biography on Marlowe, *The Muse's Darling*, who imagines this scene of the playwright awaiting to see if he'd been awarded the M.A.: "In a whirl of images he saw it all—the gowned students whispering together; rumor, like a watchman, making its rounds," 39.

⁴¹ Oliver, Introduction, xxx-xxxiv.

⁴² Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown*, 124-25, n. 8.

⁴³ All citations come from J.B. Steane, ed. *Christopher Marlowe: The Complete Plays*.

⁴⁴ The word *honey* and its variants are used only in Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, *Ovid's Elegies*, and *Hero and Leander*, and this textual point may help in dating *Dido* to his Cambridge years when he was being influenced by translating Ovid.

⁴⁵ Dido points Aeneas and the Trojans to former unsuccessful suitors whose pictures hang on a wall, recalling, "This was an orator, and thought by words / To compass me, but yet he was deceiv'd" (3.1.155-56). In fact, it is Aeneas's own oration that strikes Dido in such a way that she dwells on her new love, captivated enough by his words to offer her kingdom to him. The Trojan Cloanthus, looking upon these pictures, recognizes one suitor he knew in Athens as having "disputed once" (147). Oliver notes that this disputation links to the type of formal academic dispute that was a common part of the education of gentlemen at Cambridge in the sixteenth century, 43 n. 146.

⁴⁶ Braudy, 123, 125 n. 9. In his *Introduction to Wisdom*, Juan Luis Vives remarks, "Once dead, what more profit shall you have of your fame than the famous picture of Apelles, or the victorious horse on Olympia? Fame little profits any man in his lifetime if he does not know about it; and if he knows it, what profit does it bring? A wise man will despise it, and a fool becomes more foolish because of it," 154.

⁴⁷ For a close Shakespearean reference to "honey talk," see *Love's Labours Lost* (1595), where Boyet is described as "honey-tongued." Also see Sir Walter Raleigh's poem "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd" (1600), written in response to Marlowe's "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love." Raleigh writes, "A honey tongue, a heart of gall, / Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall" (11-12).

⁴⁸ A few lines later, a Nurse who had been watching Aeneas's son Ascanius, Dido's trump card to keep Aeneas in Carthage, reports to Dido that he has been stolen from her care. Enraged, Dido screams, "O cursed hag and false dissembling wretch, / That slay'st me with thy harsh and hellish tale!" (216-17). Because of the news the Nurse brings to Dido's ears, Dido tells her attendants to take the Nurse to prison. Defending her truth telling, the Nurse says, "I know not what you mean by treason, I; / I am as true as any one of yours," yet Dido responds, "Away with her! Suffer her not to speak" (222-24). Dido, who sought out the truth of the events of the war from Aeneas, now engages in silencing the truth because it offends her ears.

⁴⁹ This is the third time in the play when a woman has been silenced or not listened to by a man, for earlier in 4.2, Iarbas, who Anna doted upon, refuses her love. Anna says, "Iarbas, stay! Loving Iarbas, stay! / For I have honey to present thee with. / Hard-hearted, wilt not deign to hear me speak?" (53-55). Iarbas is intent on having Dido, yet in the play's final scene after Aeneas has departed, Dido silences him: "Iarbas, talk not of Aeneas" (5.1.283). Iarbas throughout the play has wanted either to be told news (1.2) or is thought perhaps to be eavesdropping on Aeneas and Dido's discourse in the cave (4.2.35).

⁵⁰ Riggs, *The World of Christopher Marlowe*, 311.

⁵¹ Quoted in Marcus, Mueller, and Rose, eds. *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, 215. Elizabeth continues, "But when more was added unto it—that women, children, maids, young infants, and sucking babes were at the same time murdered and cast into the river, and that liberty of execution was given to the vilest and basest sort of the popular, without punishment or revenge of such cruelties done afterwards by law upon those cruel murderers of such innocents—this increased our grief and sorrow in our good brother's [Monsieur de Mauvissiere, French ambassador] behalf, that he should suffer himself to be led by such inhumane counselors," 215-16.

⁵² Harraway, *Re-citing Marlowe*, 146.

⁵³ All citations come from Oliver, ed. *Dido Queen of Carthage and The Massacre at Paris*, 91-163.

⁵⁴ Oliver notes Elizabeth's fear of Rheims as a source of conspiracy against her and English Protestantism, 152 n. 102. Kuriyama tells us that Marlowe was reportedly planning to attend the English seminary at Rheims in and around 1587, 202.

⁵⁵ For more on this point, see Archer, *Sovereignty and Intelligence*, 90-93. Archer argues that the Agent is a figure for "the playwright-spy who must warn Elizabeth and her subjects of regicidal Catholic plotters, making public what he claims covertly to have witnessed" (92). As an informant/intelligencer himself, Marlowe would also have tapped into the powers of overhearing to garner information. In the play, the Messenger must first carry the news in his ear before relating it via authorized speech to Elizabeth. See Henderson, "Marlowe as a Messenger." See also Hopkins, who remarks that Marlowe's background of "pretence and disguise, of lying and danger, and of ambiguous and perhaps split loyalties provides a suggestive counterpoint to the world of his plays, and it may well be no accident that both his writing and his spying careers seem to have

their origins at the same time and in the same place," *Christopher Marlowe: A Literary Life*, 41.

⁵⁶ Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue*, 8-9.

⁵⁷ Gilbert, *Renaissance Concepts of Method*, 112.

⁵⁸ Kearney, *Scholars and Gentlemen*, 48. Timothy J. Reiss, in *Knowledge, Discovery and Imagination in Early Modern Europe*, seeks to adjust a dominant view of the Ramists, beginning with the work of Ong, that Ramism marked the change from the verbal to the visual, from an oral culture to visual culture. See particularly his discussion, 105-108. More recently, Reiss has written that while Ramus used the spatial method as a key teaching tool, critics have made a leap—one Ramus never made, he asserts—in claiming that this marked a new way of ordering reality. See "From Trivium to Quadrivium: Ramus, Method, and Mathematical Technology," 45-58.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 46-70.

⁶⁰ See U.M. Ellis-Fermor, who remarks that Ramus's "rebellion against the authority of Aristotle must have wakened an answer in Marlowe's mind," *Christopher Marlowe*, 108. See also Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition*, who notes the popularity of Ramist ideas at both Cambridge and Oxford. He quotes J.B. Mullinger, who summarized the reception of Ramist thought at the universities: "'to be well up in Ramus was regarded . . . as equivalent to being a good logician,'" 253.

⁶¹ The space Ramus occupies in his chamber is what James Knowles, in his article "Infinite Riches in a Little Room," has marked as one of Marlowe's signature elements, the presentation of gendered inner (hidden) spaces. He writes that that these are "sites of potential security for their inhabitants, are invaded by violence, the invasive gaze of the audience and by royal surveillance," 7. Knowles is suggestive in his assertions that these "closets" generated anxiety because of their "ambivalent status and the uncertainty which shrouds its relations and transactions," 10. The "hidden" nature of Ramus and his work is exposed, just as is Faustus in his study.

⁶² See *Doctor Faustus*, where Faustus claims he will "canvass every quiddity" of the necromantic books (1.164). Clare Harraway quotes Hilary Gattii, who claimed in *The Renaissance Drama of Knowledge* that the phrase Faustus cites in

Latin is not found in Aristotle but rather in the opening sentence of Ramus's *First Book of Dialectic*, quoted in Harraway, *Re-citing Marlowe*, 32.

⁶³ Maus, *Inwardness and Theater*, 72.

⁶⁴ For an alternate view, see Shepard, *Marlowe's Soldiers*, who writes that "Ramus represented in sixteenth-century Paris the voice of the one speaking up against the orthodoxies of the many, to his peril. When the state imposes martial law to regulate such voices, there is no security for the reasoning individual or for the state itself," 170. Speech and disputation ultimately fail in the play.

⁶⁵ As Sara Munson Deats has argued, Edward is an androgynous character, a "predominantly 'feminine' nature burdened with male responsibilities." "*Edward II: A Study in Androgyny*," 36. See also Doris Feldman, "The Constructions and Deconstructions of Gendered Bodies," where she argues Marlowe's plays "dismantle the seemingly stable, uniform and extralinguistic notion of masculinity and femininity as represented by male and female bodies, in order to expose these conceptions as ideological and semiotic constructs, as bodily fictions," 24.

⁶⁶ In *Doctor Faustus*, the Emperor has heard reports of Faustus's magic, and he demands, "let me some proof of thy skill, that mine eyes may be witnesses to confirm what mine ears have heard reported" (9.5-7). Unlike, as I later detail, Edward III, the Emperor needs the visual as confirmation to assure the truth of the rumors he has heard.

⁶⁷ All citations come from Bevington et al., *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*, 351-420.

⁶⁸ Mortimer Senior makes a further comment about the power of Gaveston's words on Edward, asking the Queen, "Is it not strange that he is thus bewitched?" (55). Mortimer here feminizes both Edward and Gaveston, relating Gaveston's tongue to the scold and Edward's ears to the gossip who believes all at face value.

⁶⁹ Gaveston in 1.4. gossips about the "ungentle Queen" having a relationship with Mortimer Junior—it is unlikely that he has witnessed anything firsthand, but rather he repeats a juicy bit of gossip at the right moment, further provoking his love Edward to dismiss his wife.

⁷⁰ Mortimer remarks, “praise him for that brave attempt, / And in the chronicle enroll his name / For purging of the realm of such a plague” (268-70). Fame, a concept Edward will harp upon later in the play, can be displayed through oral channels (spoken stories) or by written documents like the chronicles Mortimer discusses.

⁷¹ As Baldock and Spencer Junior end their jesting, the niece enters reading the letter from her Gaveston before she reads aloud from another letter from her uncle the King calling her back to the court. She tells Spencer of “joyful news” (75) that Gaveston will soon be at court, thereby confirming the secret information that Spencer had heard from a friend. The buzz of news is a main focus of the play so far, yet the information is interestingly factual, documented, and ultimately true.

⁷² Lancaster, later captured by the King’s men, remarks that he would rather die “than live in infamy under such a king” (3.3.24). Yet Edward, ever conscious of his own fame, does not flee the barons in 4.4 and determines to “die with fame” (7), and later, after being captured, laments to Leicester that Mortimer “spots my nuptial bed with infamy” (5.1.31).

⁷³ An attendant had come to Spencer Junior and whispered news to him at line 147; Spencer seems to be a news shield or filter for Edward.

⁷⁴ Mortimer also recounts, “I seal, I cancel, I do what I will” (5.4.51). Mortimer ability to “seal,” or authorize official documents, essentially gives him control over information in the realm.

⁷⁵ Quoted in Wiggins and Lindsey, xxxi-xxxii.

⁷⁶ In Thomas Deloney’s *Strange Histories, or, Songs and Sonnets, of Kings* (1612), we get a vivid poetic rendering of Edward’s final moments:

Loathing his life, at last his Keepers came,
 into his Chamber in the dead of night,
 And without noyse, they entred soone the same,
 with weapons drawne, & torches burning bright,
 Where the poore prisoner fast asleepe in bed,
 lay on his belly, nothing under’s head.

The which advantage, when the murderers saw,
 a heavie Table on him they did throw,
 Wherewith awakt his breath he scant could drawe
 with waight thereof they kept him under so,

And turning up the cloathes above his hips,
to hold his legges a couple quickly skips.

Then came the Murtherers one a horne had got,
which far into his fundament downe he thrust,
An other with a Spit all burning hot,
the same quite through the horne he strongly pusht
Among his intrailles in most cruell wise,
forcing heereby most lamentable cryes.

And while within his body they did keepe,
the burning spit still rowling up and downe,
Most mournfull the murthered man did weepe,
whose wailefull noise wakt many in the towne,
Who gessing by his cries, his death drew neere,
tooke great compassion on the noble peere.

And at which bitter screeke which did make,
they praid to God for to receive his soule:
His ghastly grones inforst their hearts to ake,
Yet none durst goe cause the Bell to towle,
Ha mee poore man, alacke, alacke he cryed,
And long it was before the time he dyed. (F2r-F3v)

The murderers enter "without noyse," but the scene soon erupts with the "wailefull noise" of "lamentable cryes," a "bitter screeke," and "ghastly grones."

⁷⁷ We might take the opposite to be true in *Doctor Faustus*, where Lucifer craves the security of a blood contract. For Faustus, the contract is unambiguous and seals his fate; for Mortimer the ambiguous letter ultimately fails to protect him.

⁷⁸ Archer, *Sovereignty and Intelligence*, 86.

CHAPTER 2

BRUTS AND BRITONS:

RUMOR, COUNSEL, AND THE EARLY MODERN PLAY OF HISTORY

“And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet.” Mark 13:7

“What impyete in tale herers, what impunity in tale tellers, what mallice in the one to seeke them, what flattery in the other to bringe them.”
Barnabe Rich, *A Path-Way to Military Practise* (1587)

“Histories will shewe us.” Leonard Digges,
Stratiticos (1579)

Sir John Smythe, in his 1590 treatise *Certain Discourses Military*, asserts that no man can achieve military discipline and excellence without abiding by three principal means: “by seeing actions of arms and of war performed, by conference with others to understand the reasons of things in action or already done, and by the discourses of men of experience and histories of things in times past performed and done.”¹ Smythe’s trivium of military excellence—being a firsthand eyewitness, hearing counsel, and listening to the example of history—represents the core concerns in this chapter, for the interplay of counsel, rumor, and history occupies a prominent place in Shakespeare’s second tetralogy, the *Henriad*. Moreover, these plays examine how kings and future kings authorize the information they receive from various oral and written

sources as well as from a diverse and socially dynamic group of reporters and advisors who make up their various informal and formal English counsels. In this chapter, I argue that in the *Henriad*, it is auditor who takes center stage. For Shakespeare's kings and princes, listening with open ears and allowing the many tongues of counsel to speak freely and fearlessly ultimately aids in securing Britain's fame in the historical record. Furthermore, these plays dramatize how the kings or future kings engage in discerning listening not only to counsel but also to the omnipresent rumors that surround them. Discerning listening, it is important to note, differs from the kind of obedient listening that subjects (of God and of the King) were to perform. Discerning listening entails action, a choice between diverse or ambiguous voices as a way to truth. In particular, I claim that Shakespeare emphasizes the training of Hal's ears as central to the success of his monarchy, as the young prince comes to hear the potentialities of mobilizing rumor as well as its dangerous ramifications. And the challenge to the successful authorization of report stands at the direct center of the tetralogy: the figure of Rumour, who enters at the beginning of *2 Henry IV* in a robe painted full of tongues and ears and proceeds to speak the Induction. To hear non-gendered counsel, to discern rumors, to listen to the example of history—such are the facets of a successful monarch that Shakespeare envisions.

In fact, bruits and Britons are closely allied etymologically both in history and in the history play. According to the *OED*, the word *bruit*, derived from the Latin *rugitus*, meaning roaring, and the French *brut*, meaning noise, dates to the mid-fifteenth century, and can mean "noise, din, clamour, sound" (1) or "report noised abroad, rumor" (2); the verb form can mean "to noise, report, rumour" (1) or "to speak of, make famous" (2). Britons, who Smythe called "the ancientest

inhabitants of [this] realm" (9), are, strictly speaking, natives of Britain. This British identity is usually traced back to the legendary Trojan Brutus, or Brute, the first king of Britain and founder of London (Troynovant). According to Phyllis Rackin, "Standard practice among earlier Tudor historians, the inclusion of the legendary account of Britain's founding by the Trojan Brut, had been exploited by Henry VII to justify his claim to the throne (since he claimed descent from Brut) and by Henry VIII to justify his break with Rome (since with Brut as its founder England would be an *imperium* as ancient as Rome)."² Irving Ribner asks the question of just how much the story of King Brute, now considered myth, was considered "actual history" by Elizabethans. He notes that the legend of the Trojan Brute, descendant of Aeneas, was the first of a long line of British kings and was "deliberately cultivated by the Tudors, who, perhaps because of their own uncertain title, claimed direct descent from King Arthur himself, the most illustrious of the line of Brute."³ The authority of British history is often clouded by this story, as it mixes legendary with actual history.⁴ And the history of Britain and of Britons is that bruits infiltrate Britain without remorse, particularly and most aggressively during wartime.

The historical record, of course, is laced with rumors. Rackin has shown that Tudor historians, who often looked to the past to understand the present, would come to realize that "historical fact was now open to question, and historical truth was now debatable. Records were subject to loss or distortion, witnesses could be biased, and all things were vulnerable to the ravages of time."⁵ Furthermore, as Rackin explains, the credibility and authority of historiographical writing was held in question as opposed interpretations and alternative accounts of events were printed; the authority of the historical author

began to diminish in the sixteenth century.⁶ Patrick Collinson reminds us of Sidney's declaration against historians in *Apology for Poetry* (1580), who calls the historian "loaden with old mouse-eaten records, authorising himself (for the most part) upon other histories, whose greatest authorities are built upon the notable foundation of hearsay."⁷ Yet *histories* remained potent *stories* (words with interchangeable meanings during the period) for the English nation in the sixteenth century as a means of fulfilling a certain nostalgia for the past, as well as reaffirming a discourse of nationhood. History plays provided, primarily over the course of a few decades at the end of the sixteenth century, yet another account of history, garnered from the chronicles and other sources that acted as written counsel for the playwright.⁸ As Martin Wiggins has written, history plays staged what the chronicles could only report.⁹ Shakespeare's history plays, of course, draw from various sources, including Raphael Holinshed's 1587 *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, Edward Hall's *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of Lancaster and York* (1548, 2nd ed.), and *A Mirror for Magistrates* (1559). History engrafts itself on paper to be retold again and again, and Shakespeare uses these works as the raw materials for *his* writing of history for the stage. I claim that this pastiche of voices—a historical and theatrical babel—becomes a more accurate representation of the truth than any one account.¹⁰

History seems to become predictable, a series of stories that will be repeated and used—by authors and generals alike—from one generation to the next.¹¹ What might be less predictable, but nonetheless one of the most effective wartime strategies, are the inherent ambiguities of rumor.¹² Paul Voss notes that Elizabethan war pamphlets detail "an ongoing and intense discussion over fact

and conjecture, truth and falsehood, reliability and rumor.”¹³ In the Elizabethan military tracts and treatises, we can see the deep roots of rumor, as both a trap to avoid (listening to and authorizing the varied reports that infiltrate the ear) and as a strategy to use (spreading forth via the tongue). Part of the success of this wartime strategy is the understanding that men easily fall prey to rumors, often failing or refusing to extend their powers of discernment over the ambiguities that reach their ears. If the rumor contains something that is beneficial to those who hear it, then it is more likely that the hearer will accept this information at face value. After Sir Walter Raleigh outlines the necessity of a Council of War in *The Cabinet-Council*, he asserts, “it behooveth a Captain to be constant, and not apt to believe the *vain rumors and reports of men*.”¹⁴ Deliberation of received information is essential for captains during wartime, Raleigh asserts; the significance of the news that comes to captains’ ears must be determined in relation to the truth content of the information as well as a consideration of the credibility of the teller.¹⁵ According to Thomas Procter, the captain, under the direction of counsel, must attempt to “*discerne the substance from the shadow, to shunne hys trappe, not to bee abused by anie paynted or coloured crafte*.”¹⁶ Furthermore, Procter asserts, “It is not commendable in a souldiour to be full of tongue, or a busie bodie, but he should be secrete and sober.”¹⁷ Here, Procter elevates discerning listening over foolish prattle, with its apparent links to university disputation, as a way to uncover the substance of truth from the shadows of ambiguity. Likewise, in *A Path-Way to Military Practise*, Barnabe Rich tells his readers that it is necessary for the soldier to be continually on sense alert, despite the current quiet and peace, because enemies abroad and the papists at home are always looking for opportunities to disturb the government. While

Rich's scare tactics are embedded in an anti-Catholic diatribe, he makes a succinct case for the need for soldiers to combat a tyranny of tongues in England. He assures the reader that there are "speciall markes" to identify the enemy: "You shall have them inquiring of newes, spreading of rumours, lying, forging, counterfeiting and dissembling."¹⁸ The threat of these "mischeevous" Catholics is that "they straine no curtesie to forge lyes" or "practise treasons."¹⁹ Rich asserts that a careful sense of listening becomes a way to identify the enemy and to protect the realm.

Yet as much as rumor was to be guarded against, both inside and outside one's own army, it could also prove an essential wartime stratagem.²⁰ Looking to the example of history, writers outlined how to navigate the linguistically treacherous paths of information exchange in sixteenth century wartime England—use rumor before it uses you.²¹ For instance, in the second book of his work, Procter asserts a "great policie" of warfare to "cast abrode, *imagined rumours* of mischiefes towardes, to appall and dismaye the enemie."²² The effectiveness of this policy rests in the rumor falling upon ears that fail to distinguish truth from falsity. War, it turns out, was as much fought out on the battlefield as it was in the terrain of the senses, particularly the ears and tongue.²³ Leonard Digges writes in his 1579 treatise, "A General may sometimes invent and sprede Rumors of ayde and assistaunce from Forraine Princes, or such like, to Annimate his own people, and terrify his adversarie."²⁴ Similarly, Sutcliffe writes, "Rumours of succours coming encourage our souldiers, discourage the enemy;" while remarking that "False sounds also & signes doe often abuse those that are credulous."²⁵ Finally, Barnabe Rich examines the stratagems of generals in history, remarking that "The spreading of rumours (duringe the fight)

affirming the Captaine of the enemies to have beene slaine" has benefited the army who initiated the rumor.²⁶ No matter if the rumor is invented or imagined, containing some truth or none at all, the purpose is, as Procter, Digges, Sutcliffe, and Rich attest, to terrify, dismay, and debilitate the credulous ears of the enemy while animating and bolstering the camp from where the rumor originated.

How, then, to discern truth from falsity?²⁷ Matthew Sutcliffe comments on those who fail to use the powers of discernment when receiving information: "Some there are that in counsel resolve upon every light rumour, and report, which causeth them oft times ridiculously to revoke their decrees, and determinations." Sutcliffe reiterates his position derived from the annals of history: "And in deede it is an odious sort of men, that doeth forge false rumours, and take upon them to prescribe the Generals what to doe."²⁸ If all men are to be heard, all reports must be weighed carefully. Again, there is an anxiety in authorizing information from any source from which it comes. The crucial characteristic of a general is to be able to distinguish truth from divergent reports, trusting not too quickly, relying upon the senses, particularly the ear. His ability to engage in discerning listening establishes his authority in a world of unauthorized information. These treatises, I have argued, reveal that the most potent weapons of Elizabethan warfare could be the tongue on the offensive, spreading rumors, and the ear on the defensive, discerning rumors to secure the truth. The wartime policy of spreading rumors and the wartime strategy of being able to discern truth from falsity, both firmly embedded in the historical record, naturally finds its way on to the stage in the second half of the sixteenth century. In the remainder of this chapter, I examine what I claim is the first dramatic pairing of the issues of war, counsel, and rumor in *Gorboduc* (1562) before

examining these issues in Shakespeare's second tetralogy, where, as I earlier mentioned, the figure of Rumour makes its first appearance on the Renaissance stage.

Listening to Fearless Speech:
Counsel and Rumor in *Gorboduc*

Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton's *Gorboduc, or, Ferrex and Porrex* (1562) emerges as the forefather of the history play tradition that would find a home on the English stage in the following decades.²⁹ The play catalogues a number of issues dealing with rumor and counsel, and it is noteworthy because of its attention to the gendering of authority, an issue that repeatedly surfaces in Shakespeare's *Henriad*. The play, moreover, chronicles the exploits of men who deal in unauthorized information and explores how failing to hear counsel undermines masculine sovereignty. I argue that *Gorboduc* not only details the failure of a king to listen to wise counsel but also shows how a king's failure to discern lies and dissimulation results in civil war.³⁰

Early modern counsel was often conducted at formal or informal council meetings and tables that brought men together to plan, talk, and listen.³¹ By definition, a council was a "body of men chosen or designated as permanent advisers on matters of state to advise and assist a sovereign or ruler in the administration of the government."³² Counselors become ambassadors to the royal ear, but the advice that could emerge from their tongues often fell in the category of flattery, thereby marking truth as a construct, spoken in fear or awe of the monarch. Not only would a monarch be inclined to listen for rumor, but he also would have to distinguish honest counsel from flattery—it was thus necessary for a monarch to be advised by only those who could speak without

fear and present news or advice honestly.³³ Ultimately, the monarch had to let his counselors speak; this modern notion of free speech dates to the early seventeenth century (free voice, free counsel) and is characterized by a certain liberty of expression.³⁴ As Sir Walter Raleigh relates in his *The Cabinet-Council*, “so liberty of speech and magnanimus uttering of what is good and fit, is necessary in Counsellors,” while Gyles Clayton, in *The Approved Order of Martiall Discipline* (1591), states that military captains and leaders should “give eare” to the wise counsel of older soldiers, who speak with the authority of experience.³⁵ Thus, if free speech was a necessity in counselors, then discerning listening (for truth, for rumor, for flattery) was a necessity for those who would hear counsel, including monarchs.

The early modern idea of free speech corresponds closely to the Greek notion of *parrhesia*, translated as “free or fearless speech,” a concept Michel Foucault examined in a series of six lectures delivered in the Fall of 1983 at the University of California at Berkeley. Foucault undertakes an examination of *parrhesia* and the one who uses it, the *parrhesiastes*, or the teller of truth, outlining the qualifications that determine *parrhesia*: frankness, truth, danger, criticism, and duty.³⁶ As the *parrhesiastes* says everything on his mind, he says something that is dangerous to himself which in turn involves a risk (although it is not always a risk of life or death); thus, the courage involved stems from the *parrhesiastes* saying something different from what the majority believes.³⁷ The speaker, out of duty to speak and not be silent, thus believes what he says is in fact true in a social situation where he is subject to one (the interlocutor) who exercises power over him; thus, *parrhesia* comes from below and is addressed to one above.³⁸ The speaker chooses truth instead of falsehood or silence. The early modern

monarch or military officer does not have the luxury of guaranteed truth-tellers—*parrhesia* is a changed concept in the early modern period, as deliberate falsehood becomes so common.³⁹ Thus, the credibility of the teller becomes increasingly paramount in the determination of truth.

Foucault also discusses what he calls “monarchic *parrhesia*” where “an advisor gives the sovereign honest and helpful advice,” which seems in line with the type of counsel we see in the history plays.⁴⁰ What the kings or would-be kings in the history plays allow is a certain license to speak fearlessly in counsel. While this sort of rhetorical exclamation is the central component in the Greek literature Foucault examines, in the Tudor history plays it is the *auditor* who emerges as the most significant character on the stage. This auditor grants license to his audience to speak fearlessly and openly to give counsel that is not always heeded. What Foucault does not discuss that is central to my discussion of the Tudor history play is the one who is willing to hear in Greek literature, the *ακουσματικι*, or what we now would call an *acousmatic*, a professed hearer.⁴¹ Thus, it is an auditory world that is the focus of the history play, one of hearing the fearless speech for what it is worth and determining its credibility, whether that might be the authority of the tale teller or the authority of the news itself. As the hearer relies upon the speaker of counsel for news (highlighting their interdependence), he must adjudicate the credibility and truth of the information. Certainly, as Shakespeare’s second tetralogy reveals, it is the necessity of the *acousmatic*, the king or king-in-training, to hear all counsel by giving license to everyone to speak, even if they speak outright lies, falsehoods, or rumors. The focus in the history plays I examine, then, centers on the one willing to hear rather than on the fearless speaker. Although the relationship is

essential in eventually determining truth, it is the ear and the ability of the hearer to discern rumor from the multitude of counsel he receives that is privileged in the Renaissance play of history.

History plays of the sixteenth century are indebted to the military treatises and manuals as well as the chronicle histories that detailed Britain's past. Underlying these plays was an engagement with rumor's own history, both literary and non-literary, as well as an exploration of the pitfalls of not hearing counsel. As I have outlined in the Introduction, despite all the counsel given to Queen Elizabeth regarding the ruling of her kingdom, it was she who clearly understood that the most potent force in politics was the word. By representing the failures of council, *Gorboduc* counsels Elizabeth I.⁴² Sackville and Norton can be read as fearless speakers, or *parrhesiastes*, perhaps initiating a convergence of playwright with royal counselor—and the stage as a council room—that would stretch from Shakespeare to Jonson until the closing of the theaters.⁴³ Elizabeth was not present at the first performance of *Gorboduc*, but after hearing about the play, she commanded a royal performance at Whitehall two weeks later, which after she had seen it performed reportedly exclaimed, "This is all against me."⁴⁴ *Gorboduc* is about heeding advice and the (in)ability to listen, stressing the need to distinguish good counsel from bad.⁴⁵ The play is doubly didactic, emphasizing on one hand the necessity of securing a stable line of succession, while on the other the aftereffects of the failure to listen to counsel and authorize information.

While Norton and Sackville's play heightens the listening powers of the audience, it also foregrounds an anxiety of auditory assurance for the characters onstage. What makes *Gorboduc* different from Shakespeare is its placement of the

powers of discerning listening outside the royal family in the wise counselors of the King, a man who in fact fails terribly at discerning the potential noises of civil war that threaten to unseat royal sovereignty in his kingdom. The irony of the play is that good counsel goes unheeded while bad counsel, often in the form of flattery, influences the King and his sons. As the Chorus at the end of the second act comments, "Woe to the prince that pliant ear inclines / And yields his mind to poisonous tale that floweth / From flattering mouth!" (2.2.103-105). To thwart the "flattering tongues" that the wise counselor Eubulus correctly believes will corrupt the royal sons, Gorboduc assigns one of his counselors to each of his two sons so that they may provide wise counsel to them. But, like father like sons, sound advice falls upon deaf ears. As the dumb show before the second act announces: "Ferrex and Porrex, who refusing the wholesome advice of grave counselors, credited these young parasites and brought to themselves death and destruction thereby" (21-23). These young parasites, in fact, infect the ears of Ferrex and Porrex. For instance, news arrives at the ear of Porrex that his brother prepares for war against him, and his parasite Tyndar comments that "Rumors are spread of your preparing here. / The rascal number of unskilful sort / Are filled with monstrous tales of you and yours" (2.2.22-24). The wise counselor Philander, of course, can see that "traitorous tales have filled his [Ferrex] ears / With false reports," but Porrex is unwilling to search further, taking the news from the ears of others without further discernment (2.2.31-32). Rumors are responsible for initiating a cycle of death and civil war in the play, yet if the prince had followed wise counsel, had actually listened to and considered the rumors that were coming to his ears, these outcomes could have been avoided.

But the play also details another function of rumor—its use by the enemy. The dukes Clotyn, Mandud, and Arostus meet Eubulus, and soon Nuntius brings news that Fergus, Duke of Albany, has raised arms with twenty thousand men (5.2.76-78). Fergus, who earlier announced his plan of secrecy in raising an army, now reportedly takes another position:

Daily he gathereth strength and spreads abroad
 That to this realm no certain heir remains,
 That Britain land is left without a guide,
 That he the scepter seeks for nothing else
 But to preserve the people and the land,
 Which now remain as ship without a stern. (80-85)

The rumor Fergus spreads around certainly has elements of powerful truth, but his use of broadcasting a mere truth is viewed as an abuse by the other dukes. Spreading news forth among the people is a clever play on the subjects' fears; the dukes may view this as an abuse against them, but Fergus has used the communication available to him to rally his supporters, a superbly tactical political move. What links the two examples of rumor is that they are "spread" on the tongues of the subjects of the realm, flying from one ear to the next without authorization. Rumors that spread so diffusely through the realm constitute a life-force for a public, emboldening them to take action. In both of these cases, Norton and Sackville detail not only a king and his princes failing to discern, but also the subjects who comprise the realm. In fact, Eubulus's wise counsel at the end of the play laments about the failure of the peoples' ears to listen to history:

That though so many books, so many rolls
 Of ancient time, record what grievous plagues
 Light on these rebels, aye, and though so oft
 Their ears have heard their aged fathers tell
 What just reward these traitors still receive,
 Yea, though themselves have seen deep death and blood,

By strangling cord and slaughter of the sword
 To such assigned, yet can they not beware,
 Yet cannot stay their lewd rebellious hands. (5.2.3-11)

Their ears hear, but they do not discern. And because these subjects “reject all truth” (14), they rise up against the crown. Here subjects (not monarchs) fail to listen to the truth of history, leading to mutiny, a vicious circle and an inevitable end that can only be changed by kings listening to wise counsel.

One of the play’s most intriguing scenes, however, concerns the gendering of received information and the resulting male anxieties about female authority. When a female reporter brings news, her authority is questioned and must be verified by men. Marcella, Queen Videna’s serving woman, enters and bewails unmerciful mothers, and Gorboduc asks her “what means your woeful tale?” (4.2.177). Marcella relates her firsthand account: “But out, alas, these eyes beheld the same; / They saw the dreary sight and are become / Most ruthless records of the bloody fact” (184-86). Marcella holds visual records of an event she has firsthand knowledge of (the audience must rely on her for this information), and she relates these facts orally. As Gorboduc laments, his counselor Eubulus claims that Porrex may, in fact, still be alive. While this may be a tactic to appease a king and grieving (yet still incredulous) father, it also perhaps signals the distrust of female eyewitnesses and their reports, as opposed to the blind trust and authority granted to male report depicted throughout the play. Gorboduc actually listens to his counselor but only when it concerns female report, for Marcella’s oral report is placed within the realm of gossip, thus gendering her words with an implied denial of credibility. Gorboduc decides under counsel to visit the place to “see if Porrex live or thus be slain” (198). Marcella, now left alone with the counselor Arostus, reasserts what her eyes have

seen, and implores Arostus to hear Porrex's "ruthful end" (203). As with all eyewitness accounts recounted to others, the individual serves as the eyes and ears for those not present at the original event. The audience is not brought on fact-checking missions after reports are delivered by male messengers, but Gorboduc embarks on one with his counselor, although this scene is not performed on stage. Marcella plays the role of the *parrhesiastes*, but the King refuses to listen.⁴⁶ The play itself offers no alternative, and Gorboduc's departure at this moment—to authorize information brought to his ear by a woman claiming to be a firsthand eyewitness—is the final time we see this King on stage before (as is reported in the following scene) he is murdered by rebels.⁴⁷ The deliberate distrust of female news reveals the male anxiety about garnering information from women before men act on behalf of the realm. The King asserts through his actions that reports are not credible if they first come from a woman and that they are not true unless authorized by the monarch himself. By gendering information in this way, Norton and Sackville depict male characters who deny female report but give ear to flattering male tongues and bad counsel. Whereas the wise counselors in *Gorboduc*, and not the King and Princes, play the role of the fearless speakers and the discerning listeners, in Shakespeare's *Henriad* it is the King and his son whose powers of discernment are the focal point of the plays.

"Open your ears" to "The harsh and boist'rous tongue of war":
Shakespeare's Second Tetralogy

In his second tetralogy, Shakespeare returned to and modified the issues that *Gorboduc* had raised, shifting the concern to a King and a king-in-training.

The four plays are an extended exploration of how a monarch *does* listen, distinguish, and discern truth from rumor, good counselors from bad. Shakespeare does not merely set out to depict a wise king in opposition to Gorboduc. Rather, I argue that he showcases an auditory training ground where kings, constantly bombarded with informational ambiguity, must exercise a discerning ear to be able to come to truth and rule successfully both on the battlefield and in council. While Richard II closely parallels Gorboduc in their mutual failure to listen to wise counsel, King Henry and Prince Hal become earwitnesses of the realm, hearing all counsel, male and female, and thereby securing England's fame by avoiding civil war.

Matthew Sutcliffe, in his 1593 *The Practice, Proceedings, and Lawes of Armes* remarks, "It had beene good if Richard the 2 would have folowed the advise of his uncle."⁴⁸ Kevin Dunn remarks that in the early fifteenth century, in the wake of Richard II's fall, "the problem of counsel had been much discussed, mostly in the personal and moral terms of the bad counselor corrupting a weak king."⁴⁹ The insistence on a king following advice or counsel, explored so fully in *Gorboduc*, is well and alive in *Richard II* (1595), but Shakespeare's play extends the discussion by examining the language of treason and slander.⁵⁰ I want to reexamine, however, these linguistic problems in the play by viewing them in terms of what Richard allows: "free speech and fearless" (1.1.123). In *Richard II*, "free speech" is contingent upon having the ear of a king or would-be king, but such speech in the play is racked with lies.⁵¹ Richard chooses to listen to his flatterers over the wise counsel of his uncle Gaunt. Richard, deaf to counsel, is displaced by Bolingbroke, who begins a new day in the realm, allowing informal counsel (in this case, the Duchess of York) to pierce his ear. Shakespeare thus

catalogues three issues in *Richard II*: Richard's refusal to listen to counsel and his willingness to be led by flattery, his own feminization, in terms that recall Aeneas's plight in Marlowe's play, by choosing words over warfare, and the divergent roles of the Queen and the Duchess relating to speech and listening.

Richard fails to listen to counsel because he falls prey to flattering tongues. As the dying John of Gaunt speaks with the Duke of York, he laments, "Though Richard my life's counsel would not hear, / My death's sad tale may yet undeaf his ear" (2.1.15-16).⁵² York, who believes "all in vain comes counsel to his ear" (4), responds by stating that Richard's ear is filled with "flattering sounds" and "Lascivious metres to whose venom sound / The open ear of youth doth always listen" (17, 19-20). According to Mario DiGangi, who reads Richard's parasitic male relations as fostering sexual disorder in the realm, York "had focused on Richard's abused ear as a synecdoche for his dangerously open body."⁵³ According to York, vanity is "buzzed into his ears," and "Then all too late comes counsel, to be heard / Where will doth mutiny with wit's regard" (26-28). Abused by flattery, Richard misses the opportunity to listen to counsel. Gaunt's unauthorized free speech against Richard's actions angers the King, who remarks, "This tongue that runs so roundly in thy head / Should run thy head from thy unreverent shoulders" (123-24). Yet as Gaunt's death is reported, his tongue "now a stringless instrument" (150), can no longer give sound counsel to the King. Yet York continues to speak freely, rebukes Richard, and warns him of the dangers his actions pose to the realm, but Richard refuses to take his counsel and reaffirms his will to seize Gaunt's money and lands to fund his Irish wars. Northumberland further reiterates the anxiety that the King is "basely led / By flatterers" (242-43) who threaten the well-being of the realm. Richard's flattered

ear displaces any sense of discernment, and he will not achieve clarity until he is deposed of his crown and is removed from those base tongues who counsel him.

The play actually begins with Richard calling forth Bolingbroke and Mowbray to “hear / The accuser and the accused freely speak” (1.1.16-17), and he later tells each man, “Free speech and fearless I to thee allow” (123). But the standoff is complicated by competing claims and accusations, as well as ambiguity about the truth each man speaks.⁵⁴ Mowbray claims, “’Tis not the trial of a woman’s war, / The bitter clamour of two eager tongues, / Can arbitrate this cause betwixt us twain” (1.1.48-50). Mowbray acknowledges that he and Bolingbroke engage in a war of words, an act that he naturally genders female and sees as ineffective in settling matters concerning men. He voices an anxiety about feminization, of men engaging in a female verbal act. Yet, as Bolingbroke and Mowbray ready themselves for combat, King Richard repudiates swords for more words; instead of a trial via combat, Richard resolves to throw his warder down and hold council with his nobles. Richard’s decision to engage in talk over combat effeminizes him as monarch, although Richard actually reveals a fleeting sense of his willingness to listen to counsel.⁵⁵ Aumerle and the Bishop of Carlisle try unsuccessfully to rally the king and empower him with advice to take arms, but Richard dismisses counsel: “Let no man speak again / To alter this, *for counsel is but vain*” (2.4.209-10, emphasis mine).⁵⁶ This represents a key moment in Richard’s reign, as he understands that his flatterers and their bad counsel have led him to this “day of doom” (185). Aumerle counsels the king one last time: “Let’s fight with gentle words / Till time lend friends, and friends their helpful swords.” Richard responds, “O God, O God, that e’er this tongue of mine, / That laid the sentence of dread banishment / On yon proud man, should

take it off again / With words of sooth" (130-35). Richard gives up both words and swords, a second time in the play where he has decided not to use the sword to settle conflict. Richard has fulfilled the words of Mowbray, and in not hearing counsel and not taking arms, he weakens royal sovereignty.

The garden scene in *Richard II* (3.4), which mirrors Marcella's news broadcast in *Gorboduc*, presents another moment of the gendering of news and authority. The garden is a prototype of the military encampment and on a larger scale, England—enclosed yet porous spaces (some gendered, others not) where information could be spread. In this scene, the First Man comments that they are "in the compass of a pale" (41), a fenced or walled enclosure. Bruce McLeod tells us that the Tudor English garden was designed as a fortified space with links to military fortifications.⁵⁷ The Queen, in the garden with two waiting women, sees a gardener and two men approach and hides in the shadows of two trees to listen: "They will talk of state, for everyone doth so / Against a change. Woe is forerun with woe" (28-29). The gardener uses gardening metaphors as a way of speaking about the present state of politics in England; in fact, he asserts that Richard didn't cultivate his land as the gardener himself does York's garden (56-8). The Gardener seems to be privy to information about the happenings of the realm, asserting that he has overheard information: "Letters came last night / To a dear friend of the good Duke of York's / That tell black tidings" (70-2). The Queen, unable to keep silent any longer, reveals herself and speaks with the gardener, rebuking him, "How dares thy harsh rude tongue sound this unpleasing news?" (75). The Queen is outside this network of news, and she must practice overhearing in order to garner information. The Gardener defends his knowledge, telling the Queen, "Little joy have I / To breathe this news, yet

what I say is true," while he later asserts "I speak no more than everyone doth know" (82-83, 92). As James Siemon remarks, "The queen appears almost comically ignorant, vituperative, and condescending, while the gardener displays a complex, accurate sense of social forces and political strategies. He knows the news."⁵⁸ Certainly, there is truth to what the gardener repeats, rumor though it is to his ears, yet the Queen, reminiscent of Gorboduc's disbelief of a woman's report, remains incredulous. The Queen, unwilling to listen to the counsel harbored in the free speech of the gardener, thus represents a female version of her husband.

When it is discovered that the Duke and Duchess of York's son Aumerle is part of a conspiracy of twelve, who have all set down their names in writing to kill the King at Oxford (5.2.96-99), all three look to gain the ear of the new King Henry, who ultimately will authorize all three to speak. The Duchess, whom York had called an unruly woman because of her free speech (5.2.110), tells Henry, "An if I were thy nurse, thy tongue to teach, / 'Pardon' should be the first word of thy speech. / I never longed to hear a word till now" (5.3.111-13). The Duchess continues, "Thine eye begins to speak; set thy tongue there; / Or in thy piteous heart plant thou thin ear, / That hearing how our plaints and prayers do pierce" (5.3.123-25). As Howard and Rackin note, the Duchess is the only woman in the play who manages to influence the action as this domestic quarrel spills over into the public.⁵⁹ Instead of viewing a woman within the construct of the gossip or scold, King Henry listens to both man and woman in this case and sides with a woman, granting her speech a certain maternal power. The newly crowned King has begun a new era in the realm, listening to all the counsel that

comes to his ear, exercising his powers of discernment in the best interest of the realm.

The final three plays of the Henriad detail how King Henry IV and Prince Harry give ear to a heterogeneous group of advisors; to establish his authority as leader, each man must be able to control information through both oral and aural channels and ultimately discern the truth from a multitude of voices and reports.⁶⁰ At times, particularly for Henry V, counsel is mere formality; while Henry V exercises a keen sensibility of coming to truth on his own, he nonetheless recognizes the necessity of listening to counsel. In *1 Henry IV*, Shakespeare displays a keen awareness that it is careful listening—determining what to hear and what not to hear from the multitudes around you—that is *the* education of a future king. Shakespeare's play is a study in oral and aural culture and kingship. Prince Harry's so-called reckless youth is a time spent listening to many voices and practicing his powers of discernment by speaking with and listening to his future subjects. Eastcheap is a place of auditory and linguistic grooming, and his Eastcheap companions are his sounding board. I argue that Prince Harry represents fearless listening, and he becomes *the* discerning earwitness of the realm, granting fearless speech to those around him. It becomes Henry's task to authorize the information that comes to his ear, and his auditory training with his companions in Eastcheap sharpens his powers of discernment. In my discussion of *1 Henry IV*, I examine the auditory oppositions to King Henry and Prince Hal: the rebel Hotspur and his failure to listen to counsel, and Falstaff, Prince Harry's chief counselor in London, whose babbling tongue counsels Hal how to discern.

Throughout the play, King Henry listens to his counselors, even assembling, as the Archbishop reports, a “council of war” to defeat the rebels: “the King hath drawn / The special head of all the land together” (4.4.26-27). For instance, in the first scene, after deciding upon hearing counsel to put on hold his plan for a crusade to the Holy Land, the King meets in Council to discuss domestic matters in light of unwelcome and “heavy news” from Wales (1.1.37).⁶¹ Yet while the King listens to counsel, he is met with the resistance of the proud Hotspur’s reckless tongue, which Shakespeare continually places in opposition to Prince Harry’s “princely tongue” (5.2.56).⁶² After Hotspur rebukes the King, Henry silences Hotspur and his further counsel—“Let me not hear you speak of Mortimer”—and warns him to send him his prisoners (117). Hotspur suffers from an inability to listen because of his fiery passions. A frustrated Worcester claims that Hotspur will “lend no ear” to his purposes, and his father Northumberland even states, “Why, what a wasp-stung and impatient fool / Art thou to break into this woman’s mood, / Tying thine ear to no tongue but thine own!” (1.3.216, 234-36). Hotspur, likened to a railing female scold or gossip, spends too much time talking and not enough listening, aligning his speech to that of Falstaff. Northumberland’s comment displaces male anxiety about loose tongues onto women while alerting his son to the possibility of his potential feminization.⁶³

Hotspur breaks down counsel. This impossibility of communication, in fact, dampens any hope of the rebels’ success.⁶⁴ Hotspur continually fails to heed sound counsel that predicts his plot will fail (2.4.9-12), and his smug assuredness and failure to listen above his own railing secures his eventual downfall. In 3.1., Mortimer and Worcester rebuke Hotspur for his stubborn nature and

unwillingness to listen to Glyndwr. Hotspur's babbling tongue and closed ears prohibit Glyndwr from speaking freely, and Hotspur admits he grows angry at Glyndwr's pronouncements of his prophecies, and asserts he "marked him not a word" and claims that he is as tedious as a "railing wife" (155-56). Hotspur's feminization of Glyndwr's speech once again shows a male displacement of anxieties onto women, for all wise counsel that falls on Hotspur's ears either gets dismissed as lies or as female talk.

Even when news is delivered by Sir Richard Vernon regarding the great numbers of troops marching under Westmorland and Prince John, as well as the fact that Glyndwr cannot draw up sufficient numbers of men, Hotspur remains reckless and unwilling to listen to counsel. While both Douglas and Worcester hear the enormity of this news—"That's the worst tidings that I hear of yet," Douglas says, while Worcester remarks, "Ay, by my faith, that bears a frosty sound"—Hotspur turns a deaf ear to this foreboding news (4.1.128-29). He continues this path of refusal to take counsel in 4.3. and is bolstered by the equally reckless Douglas. After both Worcester and Vernon implore Hotspur "be advised. Stir not tonight" (5), Douglas retorts, "You do not counsel well. You speak it out of fear and cold heart" (6-7). In truth, the eyes and ears of Douglas and Hotspur fail to see or hear counsel and the truth of the situation. Hotspur even refuses to read the letters sent to him by the Archbishop of York that warn him of the King's powerful army, stating, "I cannot read them now" (5.2.80).⁶⁵ Hotspur's disregard for both verbal and written counsel, coupled with his elevation of talking over listening, leads him to the brink of war. While Hotspur fails in his ability to discern true from false, Prince Harry must put to

good use his powers of discernment in reckoning with a counselor who in many ways resembles Hotspur himself.

Prince Harry gives Falstaff the ability to exercise fearless speech in his presence. Falstaff is orality gone unchecked, a “creature of bombast” (2.5.300), a “chewet” (5.1.29) with “no room for faith, truth, nor honesty” (3.3.142) in his bosom, and his babbling and garrulous nature aligns with that unrestrained speech of the female scold or gossip that, as I have earlier outlined, is often deemed transgressive by men in early modern England.⁶⁶ Furthermore, Joseph A. Porter raises the possibility that Falstaff is the embodiment of Rumour, who, I argue, is the central figure in the tetralogy.⁶⁷ Foucault traces the notion in Greek literature of being ἀτηροστομία, or an *athursotomia* (translated as one who has a mouth without a door), one who is “an endless babbler, who cannot keep quiet, and is prone to say whatever comes to mind.”⁶⁸ Crucial to Prince Harry’s eventual rise to the throne is his ability to be a scrutinizing listener to counsel. Despite Falstaff’s assertion that Hal speaks “quips” and “quiddities,” Harry’s wordplay is in effect the basis for keeping Falstaff talking, to give him more access not only to the speech from all corners of the realm, but also to give him ample opportunity to partake in discerning truth from what Poins calls Falstaff’s “incomprehensible lies” (1.2.165). Hal has been partaking in this supposed dissolute “lifestyle” for a considerable amount of time; in this play, he seems to already have mastered the process of discerning truth from others’ speech, and the play displays his acuity of hearing through falsity. As Greenblatt states in *Shakespearean Negotiations*, “To learn another language is to acknowledge the existence of another people and to acquire the ability to function, however crudely, in another social world.”⁶⁹ I would add that the Prince is also learning to

listen to another language, one that at its core is racked with lies and half truths. In counsel with Falstaff in 1.2., it is Falstaff who relates his run in with the King's council: "An old lord of the Council rated me the other day in the street about you, sir, but I marked him not; and yet he talked very wisely, but I regarded him not; and yet he talked wisely, and in the street too" (1.2.74-7).⁷⁰ Not only does Falstaff's tongue pose a threat, but he also refuses to hear one of the King's counselors, a fact Harry discerns all too well. Harry wryly responds, "Thou didst well, for wisdom cries out in the streets, and no man regards it" (78-9). Harry here seems to comprehend the fact that the common man does not grasp the wisdom or counsel that comes to his ears, a realization that he can and will parlay into a weapon as king.

Falstaff proves to be Harry's central source of counsel, mainly by negation, as the young prince learns to discern truth through careful listening amid Falstaff's enormous lies.⁷¹ In effect, Falstaff is a figure of anti-council whose lack of truth-telling actually counsels Hal in the necessity of listening closely to the spoken word. The Prince, not having been privy to how Falstaff's sword became hacked, inquires of Peto the truth, which he relates to the prince freely (2.5.280-84). Harry showcases his ability to seek out truth when it escapes him, listening to others for authorization and verification of what he already knows. In this scene, Harry, more than just having a good laugh, practices argumentative logic to expose the truth amid the lies. Of course, this is an easy task having been a firsthand observer, but here Harry proves his own best counsel. Falstaff claims, "Hal, if I tell thee a lie, spit in my face" (177). Later, when Prince Harry calls Falstaff on his lies, Falstaff responds, "Is not the truth the truth?" (212-13).⁷² Certainly not, as Prince Harry implies, for truth, he

understands, is not a constant but often rather depends on the credibility of the teller.⁷³

The King employs the military strategy of dissimulation on the battlefield of Shrewsbury in 5.3., looking back to Fergus's own dispersal of rumors in *Gorboduc* and ahead to *2 Henry IV* and its depiction of Rumor. Hotspur remarks upon the King's dissimulation: "The king hath many marching in his coats" (5.3.25). The omnipresence of these "coats" scattered on the battlefield at Shrewsbury looks ahead to the diffuse nature of Rumor in her robe full of tongues and ears. The key to the success of this tactic is visibility, for others to see the king everywhere, thereby confusing the enemy. And this is a similar tactic Falstaff uses in 5.4., when he "counterfeits" his death and wonders about the possibility of Hotspur practicing counterfeit dying as well: "Therefore I'll make him / sure; yea, and I'll swear I killed him. Why may not he rise as / well as I? Nothing confutes me but eyes, and nobody sees me" (121-23). Falstaff's dissimulation, unlike the King's, depends not upon visibility, but upon invisibility. If no eyewitnesses are present to refute Falstaff's lie, then he believes he can, in essence, make a truth. When Harry and John of Lancaster reenter from the battlefield, astonished that Falstaff is alive, Hal asks, "is it a fantasy that plays upon our eyesight? / I prithee speak; *we will not trust our eyes / Without our ears*" (131-33, emphasis mine). Prince Harry's employment of the ear to confirm what his eye has seen marks him as one who is a discerning witness of evidence and truth while marking the ear as the ultimate discerning member of the body. Yet, when Harry asserts that it was he who killed Percy, Falstaff retorts, "Lord, Lord, how this world is given to lying!" and lies about how he fought with Hotspur after he rose, making an oath that he gave Hotspur the wound in the thigh.⁷⁴

However, Harry seems to allow Falstaff's white lies, telling him, "For my part, if a lie may do thee grace, / I'll gild it with the happiest terms I have" (150-51). Although this may seem like a princely contradiction, Harry affords a certain leniency for Falstaff's harmless lies; after all, they have been the source of his youthful counsel into the nature of truth.⁷⁵ Falstaff, full of ambiguity, becomes a figure of rumor to be contended with, and Harry sharpens his discerning ear as he keeps this man of rumor in check.

In the world of noise that is staged in *2 Henry IV*, from the tavern to the battlefield, the potential for the breakdown of counsel and the corruption of the ear certainly exists, yet I argue that Prince Harry continually and carefully listens to the rampant lies and rumors, responding with authority to the figure Rumour's own appeal, "Open your ears." Gracing the exact central position of Shakespeare's second tetralogy is the figure of Rumor, who makes a striking appearance in the Induction of *2 Henry IV*, announcing her influence both of what has come before and what will come after.⁷⁶ Rumour enters the stage in a robe painted full of tongues and speaks the forty lines of the Induction.⁷⁷ Clearly, Shakespeare is drawing on the contemporary military treatises that propounded the same course of action during warfare that Rumour articulates. Such a stratagem, of course, is dependent upon the oral component of language. Henry IV is responsible for putting these bruits in motion throughout Britain; the messengers dispersed throughout the realm infect the rural towns with the intensity of the plague.⁷⁸ As Frederick Kiefer has stated, "Mere repetition can lead to the acceptance of rumor as fact; one report may constitute a rumor while many may be taken for corroboration."⁷⁹ The rumors *become* the news and

develop a truth probability in their retelling, for as the information is bruited about it gets repeated as truth. Standing as the Messenger outside Northumberland's castle, Rumor claims in the opening lines of the Induction that people are drawn to, even crave rumor; these people, it is important to remember, are men and women, subjects and kings, and instead of turning a deaf ear to it, people willingly feast upon the tongue's offerings of slanders, truths, half-truths, and untruths.⁸⁰ While truth is present on Rumor's tongues, it will take a discerning ear to distinguish truth from falsity. Further, Rumour seems to showcase a certain familiarity with the theater audience ("My well-known body"), implicating this multitude of feasting ears who come to the theater for news.⁸¹ Rumour's purpose is to "noise abroad" that Harry and the King have fallen—falsehood travels faster than truth—to reach Northumberland's ear.⁸² Central to the play, however, are the ways that a person must discern truth from conflicting reports and rumors as well as the way rumor can be used as a battlefield strategy, a necessary component of wartime dissimulation. The play concludes showcasing Harry's ability at demystifying rumor and his embracing of hearing counsel, facets that define Prince Harry's rise to kingship.

The play begins with an attempt to discern truth and certainty from conflicting reports. The opening scene can be read as a scene of counsel about how to arrive at truth when ambiguous news reaches the ear. As de Somigyi rightly notes, after Rumour's prologue, "the air is thick with the blended truths and lies of a whole sequence of posts, letters, messages, and messengers."⁸³ "The rumors that ensue," Jonathan Hart claims, "make it particularly difficult to recreate the truth of the times and reflect the fallenness, the deafness, of the

characters and the audience.”⁸⁴ Yet this deafness that Hart points to, this “disease of not listening,” is not applicable to the young prince. The infiltration of Rumour plays out in the opening scene as Lord Bardolph tells the ailing Northumberland that he brings “certain news from Shrewsbury” of the rebels’ success (1.1.12). Northumberland’s immediate question is directed at authorizing this information, asking, “How is this derived? / Saw you the field? Came you from Shrewsbury?” (23-24). Bardolph’s reply highlights his concern with the authority and credibility of the teller: “I spake with one, my lord, that came from thence, / A gentleman well bred and of good name, / That freely rendered me these news for true” (25-27). When Travers enters, he relates news gathered from another gentleman, and this information is everything *opposite* from what Bardolph had just reported. Bardolph then engages in an open denial of the news Travers brings, relating that Travers is “furnished with no certainties” (1.1.31), a tactic meant to discredit Travers and his witness. Ultimately, there is little certainty in Bardolph’s certainties. Northumberland must rely on the credibility of these secondhand reporters in determining truth, an anxiety that plagued the early modern period.

The din of conflicting report is exacerbated with Morton’s arrival with yet “more news” (59), and Northumberland claims he can tell the tragic nature of his news by reading Morton’s face. Morton tells Northumberland that he ran from Shrewsbury—the first person at Northumberland’s ear to claim he was a firsthand witness—and speaks freely about the fall of the rebellion and Hotspur (65-67). Northumberland craves that Morton fill his “greedy ear” (78) with glorious deeds of his son and family, but he knows the news will confirm death.⁸⁵ He implores Morton to speak the truth, not to coat his words with falsity or

flattery, saying, "If he be slain, say so. / The tongue offends not that reports his death" (96-97), and continues, "Yet the first bringer of unwelcome news / Hath but a losing office, and his tongue / Sounds ever after as a sullen bell" (100-102).⁸⁶ Bardolph, in his rush to bring any news, reports a rumor that raises up Northumberland before he learns by authority—the repetition of the same story by Travers and Morton—the crushing truth. Yet Morton asserts his authority as an eyewitness and reports how Percy's death, "Being bruited once, took fire and heat away / From the best-tempered courage in his troops" (114-15). Bruits have a debilitating effect on the spirit of the rebel soldiers, emptying them of resolve. Morton claims, "I hear for certain, and dare speak the truth / The gentle Archbishop of York is up / With well-appointed powers" (187-89), and because of Morton's bold free speech, he is the only one of the three reporters to speak for the remainder of the scene. Northumberland states, "Go in with me, and counsel every man / The aptest way for safety and revenge" (211-12). Yet interestingly, Northumberland is counseled by Lady Percy, his daughter-in-law, to not go to these wars, for she asserts that the rebels have enough men already (2.3.9, 41). Northumberland's ear is subject to this female tongue, and he allows himself to be counseled out of war. Northumberland, who showed his ability to listen to the conflicting reports of men to discern truth, ultimately allows his ear to be feminized through female counsel.

Prince John, acting on behalf of the King, uses rumor as a stratagem of war, reasserting royal sovereignty in playing upon the rebels' lack of discerning listening. Prince John's tactic, in fact, recalls his father's own battlefield dissimulation in *1 Henry IV*. In a scene recalling the parley in *Richard II*, Westmorland comes to the rebels' camp, offering the ear of the King (through his

representative in the field, Prince John) to hear their grievances. Westmorland tells the Archbishop that he is astonished that he has transformed “Out of the speech of peace that bears such grace / Into the harsh and boist’rous tongue of war” (4.1.48-9). In terms that recall Rumour’s tongues from the Induction, Westmorland remarks that the Archbishop’s once “tongue divine” has been changed “To a loud trumpet and a point of war” (51-2). The Archbishop gives Westmorland a schedule (166)—a written document that outlines the rebels’ general grievances and conditions. Prince John later remarks, “My father’s purposes have been mistook, / And some about him have too lavishly / Wrested his meaning and authority” (282-84), and the Prince thereby tells the rebels that their griefs will be redressed. The Archbishop takes the Prince’s word at face value, not thinking that he could be dissimulating, and Hastings orders Coleville to deliver “news of peace” to their armies (296). Rumor will fly and infect the rebel army, debilitating them through Prince John’s false word. The rebel yell of war becomes a pacified army of shouts of peace (313). But as Westmorland reports, the leaders of their army will not be discharged by the report Westmorland himself brings to them, as he tells Prince John that they “Will not go off until they hear you speak” (326). While the rebel army freely accepts Coleville’s news of peace and disperse upon his word, not needing further authorization from the Archbishop, the King’s army requires the oral authority from their leader the Prince. The deliberate planting of a rumor scatters the rebels and allows for the arrests of the Archbishop, Mowbray, and Hastings.⁸⁷

Yet before Prince Harry can assume the throne, he must quell the rumors of his former life and show his ability to listen to counsel. Upon hearing reports that Prince Harry dines with his companions at London, the dying King,

misreading his son, laments that “rage and hot blood are his counsellors” (64), a description that sounds more in line with Hotspur than with the Prince. In fact, Prince Harry’s counselors have been his London companions, and he has been counseled in listening for the truth amid the realm’s rampant lies. Warwick notes that the Prince studies his companions like “a strange tongue” in order to gain their language, only later to dismiss these same companions. Since the Prince can never dispel rumor completely, he must adapt to a world filled with buzz and become a discerning earwitness for the benefit of his future kingdom as well as for the securing of royal sovereignty. Aware of history, the King foresees that after his death all of the Prince’s “sage counsellors,” presumably his London crew, will occupy his son’s ear at court (248), a fact that the Prince flatly disputes. The King tells Harry to sit by his bed “And hear, I think, the very latest counsel / That ever I shall breathe” (310-11), counsel that rests on busying the subjects of the realm with foreign quarrels to “waste the memory of the former days” (342-43). Upon becoming King, Harry does give ear to the Lord Chief Justice and assures him, “My voice shall sound as you do prompt mine ear, / And I will stoop and humble my intents / To your well-practised wise directions” (5.1.118-20). Having been counseled by Falstaff and his London companions and finally by his father at his deathbed, the Prince is ready to give ear to a council of state:

Now call we our high court of Parliament,
 And let us choose such limbs of noble counsel
 That the great body of our state may go
 In equal rank with the best-governed nation;
 That war, or peace, or both at once, may be
 As things acquainted and familiar to us. (5.1.133-38)

The play concludes with King Henry V calling his Parliament (5.5.97), as he is ready to participate in a counsel of war to look upon France. As Joseph Porter

suggests, Hal, listening in a world of deafness and establishing a reign of new conceptions and uses of language, “has learned, not forgotten, how to speak.”⁸⁸ More importantly, he has learned how to listen to both formal and informal counsels in his realm.

The “open haunts” (1.1.60), his rooms of council, that Prince Harry inhabited in his youth have granted him an auditory awareness of the slipperiness of language that he uses to his benefit as King. As Dermot Cavanagh notes, Henry V concentrates on the silencing of delinquent speech and turbulent language; he argues, “What matters as much as Agincourt is the outcome of its lengthy sequence of orations, disputes, diplomatic exchanges, petitionings, acts of translation, judgements and negotiations.”⁸⁹ The Bishop of Canterbury, in the opening scene of *Henry V*, acknowledges how the King’s verbal abilities strike the ears of his people. He debates affairs of the commonwealth with aplomb and presents discourses of war and policy with a confident tongue; further, the Bishop notes that when the King speaks, “The air, a chartered libertine, is still, / And the mute wonder lurketh in men’s ears / To steal his sweet and honeyed sentences” (1.1.49-51). The King is here represented as a smooth and eloquent speaker, a result of years of council learning to listen. The Bishop then remarks that the King will give the French ambassador “hearing” in his court; the King, of course, knows the necessity of listening to messages, and he will discern the truth and the authority of the teller. King Harry seems to have already made up his mind about war with France, but he nonetheless understands the principles of hearing counsel.⁹⁰ King Henry V redefines the notion of counsel, for as he comes to see formal counsel as a

necessary formality, he continues to look outside the council room to hear counsel from all subjects in his realm. The King, aware of his fame that will be repeated in history, is fully resolved after this council of war to go to France to make his claim to the throne.⁹¹

King Harry showcases his full control of both the spoken and written word in the exposure scene (2.2), trapping the “band of traitors” by giving them his ear to hear their traitorous counsel. Gloucester tells how the King by “interception” has gathered information of their conspiracy; it would seem the King’s intelligence has been successful. As the King gives each man his commission, the men quickly realize they have been duped and beg for mercy, to which Henry replies, “The mercy that was quick in us but late / By your own counsel is suppressed and killed” (76-77). The King seems to reserve the harshest words for Scrope, however, as he “didst bear the key of all my counsels” (93). In privileging the capacities of the ear, that instrument of discernment and intelligence, to inform him of rumors, deceptions, slanders, and lies in his realm, the King also prepares himself to embrace “the blast of war [that] blows in our ears” (3.1.5).

On the eve of the battle at Agincourt, the Chorus reports that “creeping murmur” fills the universe (4.0.2):

From camp to camp through the foul womb of night
 The hum of either army stilly sounds,
 That the fixed sentinels almost receive
 The secret whispers of each other’s watch. (4-7)

Hums, murmurs, and whispers pierce “the night’s dull ear” (11) and give “dreadful note of preparation” (14). King Harry, the Chorus reports, walks among his “ruined band,” encouraging their ears with his words and his

presence before the eyes of his army. In 4.1., after he puts on Sir Thomas Erpingham's cloak—which, I suggest, parallels the robe, full of ears, of Rumour from 2 *Henry IV*—King Harry states, “I and my bosom must debate awhile” (32).⁹² His disguise will also lend him an ear, as it will allow him to become privy to information he could not have gathered in any other way. I disagree with Nina Taunton's assertion that Henry's insecurity as England's monarch compels him “to bypass conventional channels of information and go direct to his subjects for confirmation of his wisdom and valour.”⁹³ Rather, I view Henry's actions as an extension of his long obsession with discerning truth, choosing to glean counsel and possibly hear rumor from *all* his subjects, not just his formal counselors. And the only way that Harry *as King* can give men who are not his counselors fearless speech is by donning disguise. King Harry knows what can be garnered from these men, as his previous time in London has taught him. He is not merely toying with them, but engaging in listening to his soldiers to assess their courage while also giving them leave to speak freely, hearing counsel from below and not having to hear “poisoned flattery” (233) that reveals no truth. By engaging in the responsibilities of the king and his subjects with these men, King Harry practices a form of reverse counsel, a project he deems utterly necessary to induce his troops to fight valiantly. And with his Crispian's Day speech (4.3.19-67), King Harry gives a rousing proclamation that centers on fame, claiming that their actions on the battlefield will make their names “Familiar in his mouth as household words” (52). King Harry tells Montjoy, the French Herald who has again come to the English camp giving them an opportunity to surrender, that his soldiers have told him of their resolve to fight the French (117-20). Fully aware of the detrimental effects of rumor to those who hear it, Henry uses it as a

weapon that precedes combat on the battlefield. The King's dissimulation is a clever war stratagem intended to rally his troops and to strike fear in the French ear that will hear this message.

Rumor and valiant fighting lead the English to victory. Yet the King chooses not to attend the council of peace with France in order to attempt a parley with "our capital demand," the French Princess Catherine.⁹⁴ Of note is that the French Queen Isabel chooses to go with the council, noting, "Haply a woman's voice may do some good / When articles too nicely urged be stood on" (93-94). The female voice is thus given the authority to speak in this "council of peace." France, as Burgundy claims, is the "best garden of the world" (5.2.36), thus linking the final scene of the *Henriad* with the first play of the tetralogy, where the Queen is enclosed in York's garden, reliant on the tongues of others. As Barbara Hodgdon argues, Henry transforms Burgundy's vision through the site of Catherine's body, and she claims, "By husbanding Katherine, Henry possesses the unhusbanded garden of France."⁹⁵ If France becomes a Paradise-like garden to be invaded, Henry and his English army become Satanic in their endeavors. As Lisa Jardine remarks, Catherine becomes an "article" in an inventory of goods exchanged, seemingly denied any authority over her self.⁹⁶ Unlike the two other scenes that deal humorously with the failures of translation (3.4. and 4.4.), this wooing scene, in which Joseph Porter convincingly argues that the Babel theme of language difference is emphatically present, proves to show language as a precedent for nation building.⁹⁷ Catherine, uneasy with her English, remarks that the tongues of men are full of deceits (115-18), a statement the King seems to agree with in stating that "A speaker is but a prater" (153).⁹⁸ Declaring his love, the King tells Catherine that he can only assure her with

oaths, “which I never use till urged, nor never break for urging” (142-43). Pistol’s earlier sentiments come to mind at this moment, when, upon leaving for the war in France, he tells Hostess Quickly, “Trust none, for oaths are straws, faiths are wafer-cakes, / . . . / Therefore, *caveto* be thy counsellor” (2.3.42-44). Indeed, Catherine should be cautious, but she is left alone with only the counsel of her maid Alice as the King implores her to listen to his word (201-202). But King Harry is so entranced with Catherine that he exclaims after giving her a kiss, “There is more eloquence in a sugar touch of them than in the tongues of the French Council, and they should sooner persuade Harry of England than a general petition of monarchs” (256-59). Recalling Marlowe’s depiction of Dido and Aeneas, Catherine’s tongue has so enraptured the King that he momentarily places it above the decisions of council. The potential, of course, is that the King will value Catherine’s counsel over his own council’s advice, leading to the potential for the feminizing of male sovereignty. As Sinfield and Dollimore note, “Despite the bullying of Henry and the other men . . . the state cannot be secured against female influence.”⁹⁹ Thus, the war in France has given license to women—Queen Isabel and Catherine—to gain the ear of men in council with their tongues. King Henry V’s redefinition of counsel, his commitment to hear *all* voices speak freely, establishes a new day in the realm, as the King must put to use his powers of discernment to maintain male sovereignty.

In this chapter I have examined Shakespeare’s listening monarch and argued that the quality of discerning listening to counsel and for rumor is paramount in the successful rule of a realm and for the maintenance of royal fame and sovereignty. Unlike in Marlowe’s plays, where men counsel other men

about the effeminating potential of women's words, Shakespeare showcases in his male monarchs in the second tetralogy a willingness to listen to all talk and counsel, male and female. King Henry IV and Henry V allow fearless speech to come first, granting all their subjects the ability to counsel, even if they speak untruths. What distinguishes these Kings is that they understand the subversive potential of rumor and ensure that through discerning listening they do not become victim to its traps. Although the figure of Rumor leaves the Shakespearean stage after the Induction to *2 Henry IV*, its effects never do. Furthermore, characters like Falstaff come to embody Rumor. The young Prince, then, learns from Falstaff/Rumor in his youth only to dismiss them both when he becomes King. Nonetheless, Falstaff/Rumor emerges as Henry V's wisest counselor.

Notes

¹ Smythe, *Certain Discourses Military*, 116-17.

² Rackin, *Stages of History*, 21. See also the early thirteenth-century work by Lawman known as *Brut*, which contained the story of Great Britain from its founding under Brutus.

³ Ribner, *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare*, 13, 48.

⁴ Ribner later quotes A.P. Rossiter who, in his *English Drama from Early Times to the Elizabethans*, claims that the Elizabethans took for fact this mythical history of Brutus, calling it "the preposterous patriotic myth of the line of Brute," 224.

⁵ Rackin, *Stages of History*, 11-12.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 13-14. Perhaps we can take the historian or chronicler as a *bruite*, one who spreads a report or rumor. To a certain extent, the playwright also functions in a similar manner, particularly when staging history.

⁷ Collinson, "History," 58.

⁸ See, for instance, Ribner, *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare*; Howard and Rackin, *Engendering a Nation*, esp. 11-19; Snyder, "The Genres of Shakespeare's Plays," esp. 90-93; Kastan, "Shakespeare and English History"; Hadfield, "National and International Knowledge: The Limits of the Histories of Nations"; Goy-Blanquet, "Elizabethan Historiography and Shakespeare's Sources"; Kamps, *Historiography and Ideology and Stuart Drama*, esp. 26-66; Cavanagh, *Language and Politics in the Sixteenth-Century History Play*, esp. 1-15; and Danson, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Genres*, esp. 86-112.

⁹ Wiggins, *Shakespeare and the Drama of His Time*, 24.

¹⁰ John Ford, in his 1634 history play, *Perkin Warbeck*, based his play on others' accounts, particularly Gainsford's 1618 *True and Wonderfull History of Perkin Warbeck* and Bacon's *History of the Reign of King Henry VII* (1622). His play represents yet another retelling of the story of Warbeck; the audience of this history play (and every other that preceded it) watches a play created out of second hand accounts, rumor, and news that has been passed through many

hands. As the title page of the quarto suggests, this history or dramatic retelling of the story of Warbeck is "A Strange Truth." The word *strange* here aligns with the notion of unfamiliarity—the play presents a retelling of history that is new and never before heard or seen. For more on Ford's play, see Kamps, *Historiography and Ideology in Stuart Drama*, 168-95.

¹¹ Thomas Procter, in his *Of the Knowledge and Conducte of Warres* (1578), remarks, "Hystories are full of examples" (D2r) and suggests that generals "reade with judgement in hystories, of the dealinges and stratagemes of great princes & captaines in like affaires, for surelie, the greatest captaines that ever were, & almost all those chiefetaines & conquerours of antiquitie were wel lerned" (E2v). Furthermore, Procter makes such a case for throwing light on history, asserting that the knowledge of war "is for the more parte to be obtayned by collection & judgement of the reportes, historyes, & Chronicles written of warres" (iv). In *An Arithmeticall Militare Treatise, named Stratioticos: Compendiously teaching the Science of Numbers* (1579), Leonard Digges writes that a General should be "learned in Histories" (S2v), suggesting that through the act of reading a man may "knowe more sundry sortes of Embattayling, Encamping, and Fortifying, more Strategemes and Pollicies by famous Generals put in execution" (S3v). Digges makes note that "Antiquitie [portrayed] the Statues of their Emperoures with a Booke in one hand, and a Sword in the other" (S3r). The word and the sword are thus requisites for any military man, but particularly a leader of the battle. Such information is of importance in the larger spectrum of seeing and hearing during wartime, for, as Digges asserts, a general versed in history "shall the more readily conceive any information that shall be brought him by espiall" (T3r). These writers assert that knowing your history of war enables you to put into practice the successful strategies of the past and to be aware of the various forms of dissimulation in which the enemy engages.

¹² Nick de Somogyi, in his excellent chapter "Rumours of War" in *Shakespeare's Theatre of War*, claims, "War threatened more to Elizabethan playgoers than it ever delivered. It is equally true that invasion-scares, forced musters, printed news-reports and word-of-mouth rumours ensured that such anxieties were never allowed to be forgotten," 132. My ensuing discussion of rumor, while certainly benefiting from de Somogyi's astute analysis, draws primarily on texts and plays that he does not discuss in his chapter. For instance I have not replicated the examples he uses in his discussion of *Henry V*, which only focuses on Pistol as braggart and as one who "pronounces his lies and truth in every language," 176. de Somogyi's illustration depicts how rumor aligns with the braggart soldier, while I focus on the way that, in Shakespeare's *Henriad*, rumor becomes a linguistic weapon for kings in wartime.

¹³ Voss, *Elizabethan News Pamphlets*, 4.

¹⁴ Raleigh, *The Cabinet-Council*, F4r, emphasis mine.

¹⁵ Sutcliffe, in detailing the devices the Spanish have lately used, makes a clear case for the ways in which bruits, if not given over to discernment, can be detrimental to Britain:

When they entend any dangerous enterprise, then it is bruted, that either the king of Spaine or their chiefe Leader is dead, or sicke. Under pretence of warres against the Turke, An. 1588, he gathered great forces against us, and now I understand that newes is come of great preparatives in Spaine against the Turke: that our eyes may be bleared, and not see his preparation against France, or us. (Ee1r)

¹⁶ Procter, *Of the Knowledge and Conducte of Warres*, C2r, emphasis mine.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, E4v. Procter relates how Licurgus expelled all idleness and wantonness from his soldiers "that they should not sit longe at their meate, but be soon gone to the publiue exercyses, and profitable studyes appointed for them" (E4v). The anxiety of table talk could prove debilitating to the soldier, "roulinge towardes ruyne" (E4r). See also Smythe, 28-29.

¹⁸ Rich, *A Path-Way to Military Practise*, C4v.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, C4v.

²⁰ See Nina Taunton's excellent investigation on stratagems of war in 1590s *Drama and Militarism*. Taunton writes, "At the core of foreign-based actions in the 1590s lay stratagems of duplicity and secrecy," 97.

²¹ See arguably one of the final history plays before the closing of the theaters, John Ford's *Perkin Warbeck* (1634), a play concerning the authorization of the sovereign. The play details how rumor and intelligence assist Henry VII in his defeat of the Cornish and ultimately of Warbeck himself. Daubeney provides Henry a second-hand report of the Cornish fall, who were "Misled by rumour, that the day of battle / Should fall on Monday" (3.1.55-56). See also Procter, who gives a historical basis for his assertion of casting abroad rumors: "Titus Didius, beinge weaker then his enemie which was removinge to encounter a legion, comminge into his ayde, to stayer that purpose, hee publyshed thoroughe out all his armie that he entended the next daye to fighte the field, and suffered certaine prysoners colourable to escape, which freshlie toulde forth those newes when they retourned into their campe, where by the enemie stayed, and

the other saufflie received the succour sent unto him" (H2v). See also Digges, who writes in his 1579 treatise *Stratioticos*, "Some in the time of Battell by corrupted espies or otherwise have caused rumour to be spread in the Enimies Battell, that their Generall was slayne, or some part of them defeated, or flying away, and thereby so amazed them in the middest of the fighte, that they have swayed and broken. But thys muste be done on the contrarye parte of the Battayle, where the Generall is not to bee seene" (U4v). But this practice, as much as it is to be esteemed, is also a potential threat if used against the English. War, then, was as much a game of discerning truth as it was battle. To observe or hear deception was critical.

²² Procter, *Of the Knowledge and Conducte of Warres*, H2v, emphasis mine.

²³ See Taunton's discussion of military encampments and how the "enclosed nature of the camp permits a vital one-way flow of information about the enemy from outside to in," *1590s Drama and Militarism*, 171.

²⁴ Digges, *An Arithmeticall Militare Treatise, named Stratioticos*, Y1r.

²⁵ Sutcliffe, *The Parctice, Proceedings, and Lawes of Armes*, Ee2v.

²⁶ Rich, *A Path-Way to Military Practise*, H4v. Rich also points to the necessity of stopping the spreading of news: "When a barbarous alien (in battaile) had brought worde to Q Sextorious, that Herculeius was slaine, he slewe him straght with his dagger, least he should have borne those newes any further to have discouraged the armie" (H4v). Rich tells of Hannibal, who being informed that some of his men were fled and knowing the enemy to have spies in the camp, "pronounced openly that those runnagats were gon by his assignement to harken and spy what his enemies entended, the Roman spyes returned these newes to theyr companies, whereupon these fugitives were taken, theyr handes cut of and thus sente backe again to Hannibal" (J2r). Hannibal's example, which Rich holds up to be modeled, is to spread rumors in order ultimately to protect Britain from deserters.

²⁷ Ben Jonson probes this question in the next century in his *Discoveries*: "And how can he [a prince] be counccilled that cannot see to read the best counccillors (which are books) for they neither flatter us, nor hide from us? He may hear, you will say. But how shall he always be sure to hear truth, or be counccilled the best things, not the sweetest?" (1529-35).

²⁸ Sutcliffe, *The Practice, Proceedings, and Lawes of Armes*, R1r.

²⁹ In Canto X of Book II of *The Faerie Queene*, Edmund Spenser chronicles Briton's kings. He states,

And Gorbodug, till farre in yeares he grew:
Then his ambitious sonnes unto them twaine
Arraught the rule, and from their father drew,
Stout Ferrex and sterne Porrex him in prison threw.

But O, the greedy thirst of royall crowne,
That knowes no kinred, nor regards no right,
Stird Porrex up to put his brother downe;
Who unto him assembling forreine might,
Made warre on him, and fell him selfe in fight;
Whose death t'auenge, his mother mercilesse,
Most merciless of women, Wyden hight,
Her other sonne fast sleeping did oppresse,
And with most cruell hand him murdred pittillesse. (34:6-9, 35: 1-9)

³⁰ Sir Walter Raleigh makes a similar point in *The Cabinet-Council*, where he writes that "without Counsel, no Kingdom, no State, no private house can stand, for, experience hath proved that Commonweals have prospered so long as good counsell did governe, but when favor, fear, or voluptuosness entred, those nations became disordered; and in the end subject to slavery," D1r.

³¹ In Francis Bacon's 1625 essay "Of Counsel," he writes, "A long table and a square table, or seats about the walls, seem things of form, but are things of substance; for at a long table a few at the upper end, in effect, sway all the business; but in the other form there is more use of the counsellors' opinions that sit lower. A king, when he presides in council, let him beware how he opens his own inclination too much in that which he propoundeth; for else counsellors will but take the wind of him, and instead of giving free counsel, sing him a song of *placebo*" (382). Bacon here gives warning to how flattery can abuse counsel, a pressing concern in the history plays I examine in this chapter. See also the broadside *Greate Brittaines Noble and worthy Councell of Warr* (1624). The council of war (dating from 1612) was "an assembly of officers (military or naval) called to consult with the general or commanding officer, usually in a special emergency" (OED 14). Below is transcribed the poem that appears at the bottom of the broadside:

The God of Warre lookes downe, and from his eies
Shoots smiles of joy to see what Policies
Are read (here) in this Schoole: This Councell-Boord,
(Upheld by tenne brave Souldiers) does afford.

Matter (by Armes) to heighten Englands State,
 These being more great then Romes Decomuirate
 Happiest of Kings is ours: who in his Throne
 Sits, Kising Peace, enjoying her alone:

More then all Christian Kings doe yet when Drums
 Beate at his Neighbours Court gates, forthwith comes
 This heape of Worthies; an by them tis knowne,
 How to guard Strangers, how to guide our owne.

Th' Soldier fights abroad, but these at home
 Teach him to fight well: From these ten Heads come
 These streames of Councell, by which War does stand
 As Just, as in the Ocean does this Land.

At the table where the council of war meets, the oral, aural, and written all collide. The men could be arguing about information (the document on the far side of the table contains something of interest) or about plans to proceed in war. Yet what has brought these men to the table is what brings all early modern listeners—male and female—to both public and private places of exchange: information. Ten men sit around a table, listening and talking. A book (of strategy? of history?) lays open at the middle of the table. Ink and writing utensils adorn this cloth-covered table, awaiting use. The men gesticulate when they speak. They write, they listen, they talk. We should note that this is not one concurrent conversation, one unified discussion, but rather four conversations. Three worthies are engaged in a conversation at the left side of the table, one obviously speaking to the man facing the viewer, the other (notably the only man whose face is obscured in the entire picture) seems to write something down, perhaps recording this conversation. On the far side of the table in the middle, the two men with their hats removed speak, one writing something on paper, the other pushing a document toward the other for his perusal. At the right side of the table, three men are again engaged in conversation—the man at the head of the table speaks while the other two listen, perhaps waiting to respond, while the man at the far side of the table seems to record something from this ensuing conversation or proclamation. Finally, the two men who have their backs to the viewer are seemingly engaged in a heated debate or exchange, if we are thus inclined to interpret the placement of their hands. What we have is at least four men talking at this table at once, possibly about one topic, possibly not. We should wonder how much overhearing of other conversations was taking place at this table—the conversations are openly exchanged, and the only furtive actions seem to come from the two men at the far side of the table in the middle. Such war councils were, as the broadside details, places of fearless speaking, and the counselors were authorized by the monarch to discern the best war strategies for the good of the realm.

³² *OED*, def.(6). In Shakespeare's history play, *Richard III* (1597), Richard Gloucester's follower Buckingham announces the plan that will ultimately place Richard on the throne: "we tomorrow hold divided counsels" (3.1.176). These two council meetings, one public, one private, have, of course, different agendas. According to the *OED*, a *council* was also a deliberative assembly for consultation or advice, having its roots in the assemblies under Anglo Saxon and Norman kings known as the Great Council (4b). This council in medieval times (*concilium*) was "mainly appropriated to the assemblies convoked to settle points of doctrine and discipline in the Church." In choosing a council, Sutcliffe asserts of the General that "regarde is to be had of the choyse of a sufficient counsell of men of knowledge, experience, secrecy, loyaltie and other good partes fit for that place" (R2v). In his *Certain Discourses Military*, John Smythe, looking to the example of history, remarks, "in all ages and times, all emperors, kings, and formed commonwealths that have employed their generals with armies either in wars offensive or defensive have established a council of men of great sufficiency both in war and peace to assist their generals" (16). Later, he asserts how a king or lieutenant general should command an army: "consult with his council" and "know how of himself, after the opinions of his council heard, with valor and resolve and perform" (35). For Smythe and others, a lack of counsel in wartime signals that these men of war are "void of all reason and order military," 17.

³³ Christine de Pizan, in *The Book of the Body Politic*, writes of a prince's counselors, "He should not believe lightly in a thing that appears good before proving its truth, examining and inquiring. At first glance a thing may appear to be what it is not," 36. Perhaps the King could at times be his own best counsel.

³⁴ *OED*, 25. The *OED* dates "free voice" to Cyril Tourneur's *The Atheist's Tragedy* (1611) and "Free Counsell" to Bacon's essay "Of Counsel" (1625).

³⁵ Raleigh, *The Cabinet-Council*, D2v; Clayton, *The Approved Order of Martiall Discipline*, F1v, emphasis mine.

³⁶ Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 11-20.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 12-15. In the Greek conception of *parrhesia*, the coincidence between belief and truth, Foucault notes, occurs in a verbal activity, unlike in the Cartesian conception of evidence that takes place in a mental, evidential experience, 14.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 18.

³⁹ Foucault writes, "In the Greek conception of *parrhesia*, however, there does not seem to be a problem about the acquisition of the truth since such truth-having is guaranteed by the possession of certain moral qualities: when someone has certain moral qualities, then that is the proof that he has access to truth—and vice versa," 15.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 19. Foucault goes on to say that it is "the advisor's duty to use *parrhesia* to help the king with his decisions, and to prevent him from abusing his power. *Parrhesia* is necessary and useful both for the king and for the people under his rule," 22. The implied contract between the advisor and the king insists upon free speech. Yet if the playwright is to be considered a subject-counselor to the monarch, his free speech is severely held in check, particularly as the Office of the Revels exercised more control in striking potential harmful passages from plays.

⁴¹ Originally, the *OED* (1) tells us, *acousmatics* were a class of scholars under Pythagoras who listened to his teaching without inquiring into its inner truths or bases.

⁴² Elizabeth herself pointed to the effects of rumors and bruits as detrimental to the state, particularly the ramblings of the House of Commons regarding her succession. As Eric Sterling remarks (citing David Bevington's *Tudor Drama and Politics*), "The actors playing the parts of Parliamentary counselors who attempt to advise the monarch regarding the issue of succession are actually Parliamentary counselors attempting to convince the queen to choose a successor," 161. Similarly, Greg Walker comments that "Gorboduc provided its royal audience at Whitehall with a spur to action in the vision of a realm thrown into chaos by an unresolved succession," *The Politics of Performance in Early Renaissance Drama*, 202-203. However, Kevin Dunn sees critics as exaggerating *Gorboduc's* significance as counsel to Elizabeth, and he too points to Bevington, who he feels "got it right" by seeing "the larger issue of Royal will versus the authority of English chief counselors," 296. See also Dermot Cavanagh, in his chapter "The Language of Counsel in *Gorboduc*," where he remarks, "*Gorboduc* is not a dramatized parliamentary petition, but a many-sided and self-qualifying work and the rhetorical conflicts it presents demand to be adjudicated carefully," 45.

⁴³ Shakespeare certainly learned much from Norton and Sackville's treatment of these wartime issues of counsel and rumor, in effect learning from the counsel of his dramatic predecessors. The "new" in Shakespeare is his concern with discerning listening as a pathway to successful sovereignty.

⁴⁴ Cauthen, ed., *Gorboduc*, xii-xiii.

⁴⁵ Cavanagh explores what he calls “evil counsel” and other abuses of language in the play through transgressive speech, deficient counsel, and dispassionate advice, *Language and Politics in the Sixteenth-Century History Play*, 37-38. Speaking of the problem of counsel in the play, he notes, “The credibility of each voice we hear, including the monarch’s, is qualified by fast-changing historical circumstances. This makes it difficult to determine constructive speech from hasty, obtuse or malicious words,” 38. See also Ribner, 44.

⁴⁶ Foucault notes that the oppressed role of women in Greek society generally deprived them of the use of *parrhesia*. However, in this case and, as we shall see in *Richard II* and *Henry V*, women can be given the license to speak freely. See also Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure*, where Angelo’s own rhetoric fails to persuade Isabella to forsake her virginity for her brother’s life. At this point, Isabella proclaims that she will denounce Angelo for his advances, and “with an outstretched throat I’ll tell the world aloud / What man thou art” (2.4.153-54). The force of her threat lies in orality, in spoken language, and she again realizes the power of report to fly to the multitude. Boldly, Angelo remarks, “Say what you can, my false o’erweighs your true” (170). In other words, whatever lie Angelo puts into circulation, as he sees it, will hold more power over Isabella’s word, even if hers is true. Here report is tied with gender concerns—Angelo’s statement points to a certain privileging of male speech, or perhaps suggests the ways that men are able to manipulate the word for their benefit better than women could.

⁴⁷ The fifth act begins with four dukes—Clotyn, Mandud, Gwenard, and Fergus—who report the news of the offstage regicide of Gorboduc and his wife Videna. Also present is Eubulus, who counsels the dukes (30-122) on how to proceed, suggesting to suppress the rebels’ power and their “rebellious roars” by battle (83). Lies are the cornerstone of his plan, as he advises to persuade the rebels with “gentle speech” with the gift of pardon; of course, this is meant to distract the leaders and allow them to be overpowered, thus quelling further rebellion.

⁴⁸ Sutcliffe, *The Practice, Proceedings, and Lawes of Armes*, R1v.

⁴⁹ Dunn, “Representing Counsel,” 283.

⁵⁰ See Cavanagh on treason in *Richard II*, and Kaplan for a cultural examination of slander in early modern England. See also Robyn Bolan, “*Richard II*: Shakespeare

and the Languages of the Stage" who argues that *Richard II* is a play about the power and weaknesses of language.

⁵¹ For a superb extended discussion of the Bakhtinian concept of utterance and *Richard II*, see James Siemon, *Word Against Word*.

⁵² The pain John of Gaunt feels for his banished son Bolingbroke troubles Richard, who tells the old man, "Thy son is banished upon good advice, / Whereto thy tongue a party verdict gave" (1.3.226-27). Gaunt argues that in council, he was urged to judge the case not like a father but like a judge, and complains to the King that he "gave leave to my unwilling tongue / Against my will to do myself this wrong" (234-35). Richard "enjailed the tongue" of Mowbray and takes advantage of the "unwilling tongue" of Gaunt, silencing one and enforcing another to speak as an impartial judge against a son.

⁵³ DiGangi, *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama*, 117.

⁵⁴ Bolingbroke, upon returning to England, aligns himself with Richard when he tells Bagot to "freely speak thy mind" regarding Gloucester's death (4.1.1). Verbal accusations fly based upon what these men have heard, which amounts to hearsay at best. Bagot claims twice that he heard Aumerle say treasonous statements against Bolingbroke (10, 14), yet Aumerle rebukes Bagot's "slandorous lips" and maintains that what Bagot says is false (23). Fitzwalter also accuses Aumerle, stating that he heard him say he was the cause of Gloucester's death (35-36), but Surrey intervenes, saying, "My lord Fitzwalter, I do remember well / The very time Aumerle and you did talk" and accuses him of being false (51-52). Fitzwalter responds, "I say he lies, / And lies, and lies" (66-67).

⁵⁵ To ensure that the "quiet confines" of the realm remain quiet, Richard, by decision in council, banishes Bolingbroke from his territories for ten years upon pain of death (128-30). Mowbray reads his fate, banishment from the realm forever, in terms of language: "What is thy sentence then but speechless death, / Which robs my tongue from breathing native breath?" (1.3.166-67). In these moments Richard possesses a degree of foresight, perhaps through the advice of his council, that both banished men swear an oath to "never write, regret, nor reconcile" or "by advised purpose meet / To plot, contrive, or complot any ill / 'Gainst us, our state, our subjects, or our land" (180, 182-84).

⁵⁶ In 2.4.—a scene that looks ahead to the opening of 2 *Henry IV*— the Welsh Captain hints that he believes the rumor that Richard is dead, and in 3.2.

Salisbury brings discouraging news to the newly landed King: "Discomfort guides my tongue, / And bids me speak of nothing but despair" (61-62). He relates that all the Welshmen "hearing thou wert dead, / Are gone to Bolingbroke, dispersed, and fled" (69-70). The political effects are evident in the Welsh believing the buzz.

⁵⁷ McLeod, *The Geography of Empire in English Literature*, 222-23. Roy Strong, in his *The Renaissance Garden in England* (1979), notes that Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, illustrated with numerous garden pictures, was published in an English translation by Robert Dallington in 1592, 16. Over thirty years later, Francis Bacon would write in his essay "Of Gardens" in his 1625 *The Essays or Counsels Civil and Moral*, "The garden is best to be square, encompassed on all the four sides with a stately arched hedge" [enclosure], 432. For more on this scene as representative as a second Eden, see Jonathan Hart, *Theater and World: The Problematics of Shakespeare's History*, 36-38.

⁵⁸ Siemon, *Word Against Word*, 237.

⁵⁹ Howard and Rackin, *Engendering a Nation*, 141.

⁶⁰ In Matthew Sutcliffe's *Epistle Dedicatorie* in his 1593 work, he remarks that every one that speaketh reason is to be heard, citing the example of Xenophon, who he claims "refused not to heare the counsel of any private souldier" (R1v). Of the virtues of the Captain, Procter writes, is "the allocyatinge unto his weighty and secrete counsailes and practices, men of judgement wise, of invention politike, and trust approved" (C1v). See also Matthew Sutcliffe (1593), who, in relating the exploits of history to his reader, asserts, "say not this can not be so, for I never saw it. The authority is drawn from those which have seene more than thy selfe" (D1v). In his prefatory address to the Earl of Essex, Sutcliffe boldly states, "The beginning of all good successe, is good counsell and direction: the accomplishment is expedition. In counsell nothing awayleth more, then to followe good examples of expert and wise men" (A2r). Digges asserts that "it shall be requisite for him (the General) to use the Counsell and advise of certayne choyse men, with whome he may conferre of al circumstances concerning the Service" (S3r).

⁶¹ According to Westmorland, the council debated vigorously about the possibility and viability of such a crusade, but this "heavy news" reported Mortimer and his men were taken, and many men were butchered by the Welsh under the order of the "Wild Glyndwr" (37). Westmorland reports the rumor of the "misuse" of the soldiers' corpses done by Welshwomen, but such a thing, he asserts, is a shameful thing to be retold or spoken of (43-6). As Howard and

Rackin note, such moments, reported and not performed on stage, are erased from the scene of English history, 137. Howard and Rackin also note that Holinshed anxiously reports this incident: "The shamefull villanie used by the Welshwomen towards the dead carcasses, was such, as *honest eares* would be ashamed to heare, and *continent toongs* to speake thereof," 169, emphasis mine. Also recall in *Richard II* (3.3.114) when Scrope reports to King Richard of rebellion, where even "distaff-women manage rusty bills / Against thy seat." The second tetralogy does posit a place for women in warfare, although it is always in terms of ultimately "castrating" masculinity.

⁶² Hotspur himself claims, "Better consider what you have to do / Than I, that have not well the gift of tongue, / Can lift your blood up with persuasion" (5.2.76-78). Hotspur further acknowledges his lack of facility with speech: "I profess not talking" (91).

⁶³ This point is further emphasized as Hotspur ironically distrusts his wife's potential for free speech: "But yet a woman; and for secrecy / No lady closer, for I well believe / Thou wilt not utter what thou dost not know" (100-102).

⁶⁴ Mortimer, who himself laments the erasure of communication with his Welsh wife, remarks, "My wife can speak no English, I no Welsh" (3.1.189); he can understand only a more universal signification of her tears and kisses (196-206). The anxiety of drawing the borders on the map in this scene highlights the lack of a unification of identity and language among the rebels. For more on the division and the map, see Gillies. Digges continually asserts the need for Generals to have command of maps and models of other countries, asserting the necessity of a geographical and cartographic understanding (see for instance S4r and T3v).

⁶⁵ Although unlikely, given his refusal to heed counsel or learn from history, Hotspur could disregard these letters because of their potential for being filled with lies. The war treatises touch upon the dangers of letters. In a section entitled "Advertysementes how the armye that is weaker then the enemyes, may growe stronger, or save it selfe," Procter, looking back on history, notes, "Some have used to the same ende, to make manye private conferences, with the Generall of the enemyes, sending sundry letters secretelye, & sometime presentes, working also that some suspicious letter, of an imagined conference or practice betwene them, may come to the Princes handes, under whom such Generall is deputed. (Iiv)" Procter, in describing how "This Realme of Britayne" has in the past been hurt by hired soldiers, proposes to test for their trustworthiness by using letters: "The like prooffe is made by delyvering to the leader of them, letters sealed, pretending

great wayght, and purportinge litle, to bee sent foorth to sum friende, to see whether the same should be opened or not saufelye conveyed in tyme" (Iiv r). In his 1579 *Stratiotics*, Digges further outlines the strategies a General could partake in during war:

Some have written Letters to some of the principall Counsellors of their Adversaries, as it were touching some practice of Treason between them, and by corrupted espiall sounde the means that those Letters have bene interrepted, and brought to the General on the other side, who for Jealousie theron conceyved, at not only rejected, but also murdered those his most assured, Wise, and faithful Counsellours. (Yi v-r)

Matthew Sutcliffe, in his 1593 *The Practise, Proceedings, and Lawes of Armes* claims that "Suborned messengers are dangerous, if credit be given unto them," and cites the story of Annibal, who "causing them of Metapontus to write letters to Fabius, as if they were purposed to deliver up their citie into his hands, had almost drawne him into an ambush, where with his army he lay ready to welcome him to the towne" (Ee2r).

⁶⁶ Robert Miola, in *Shakespeare's Reading*, likens Falstaff to the Medieval Vice figure, a master of lies, pointing to the morality plays as yet another source for Shakespeare, 68. Leonard Tennenhouse views Falstaff as a figure of carnival and inversion in his *Power on Display*, 82-85. Falstaff is certainly aligned with what Justice Shallow, in *2 Henry IV*, calls the arrant knaves who "backbite" or slander (5.1.28).

⁶⁷ Porter, *The Drama of Speech Acts*, 100.

⁶⁸ Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 63-4. According to Raleigh in *The Cabinet Council*, "The Modesty of a Soldier is perceived by his Words, Apparel, and Actions: For to be a vaunter, or vain-glorious boaster, is far unfit in him that professeth Honor or Arms, seeing true Vertue is silent" (F2v, 66, emphasis mine). See also Barnabe Rich's *A Path-Way to Military Practice* (1587), which borrows the traditional rhetoric applied to women in describing the virtues of a soldier: "a souldiour must be adorned with these speciall vertues, which are silence, obedience and truth" (G4r).

⁶⁹ Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*, 49.

⁷⁰ The *OED* tells us that the word *rated*, dating from the 14th century, means "to rebuke angrily," but it also has connotations of scolding (1). See also *2 Henry IV*, where Mistress Quickly is said to be Falstaff's "counsel-keeper" (2.4.240), a link that feminizes Falstaff's ear. See also Sir John Smythe's *Certain Discourses Military* (1590) where he makes his case that the British nation has forgotten the ancient

orders and exercises military. He points to middle aged men, who “when they fall into argument of some such matters . . . instead of alleging reasons and examples, according to the use of other nations, with quietness and courteous phrase of speech, they argue for life and death, with hasty and furious words, as though there were no more in the experience of men of greater years but that which they say! Which, in the opinions of all men of any judgment that are of wise and brave nations, is thought more meet for the common sort of such as are *chiding women* than for men that do profess any knowledge in arts and sciences, and chiefly military” 5, emphasis mine.

⁷¹ The inn or tavern at Eastcheap where Hal and Falstaff playact and where Hal catches Falstaff’s lies is often identified as Boar’s Head. The boar, in fact, was traditionally referred to as having a keen sense of hearing. As Louise Vinge illustrates in *The Five Senses*, Medieval allegorical representations of the five senses depict the boar as having an acute sense of hearing, and thus it was often identified with the sense “auditus” (54-7). In Shakespeare, I argue, The Boar’s Head is an auditory, a place of hearing where the Prince can exercise his powers of discerning listening.

⁷² Procter gives recommendations regarding the proper conduct of soldiers, remarking, “And it is seldome or never seene the dissolute person to proove a profitable souldier, as if he be an idle, unrulie, blasphemous, or licentious manne of lyving, a ryotous dyceplayer or jangler, such bee more meete for an Alehouse then an army” (E3v). See also Martyn Cognet, *Politique Discourses Upon Trueth and Lying* (1586), for a contemporary definition of lying, its effects, and the types of persons who engage in lying, I2r-I6v. In his essay “Of Liars” (1572-74), Montaigne states, “Now liars either invent everything out of whole cloth, or else disguise and alter something fundamentally true. When they disguise and change a story, if you put them back onto it often enough they find it hard not to get tangled up,” 23.

⁷³ When Falstaff returns bearing “villanous news abroad” from the messenger Sir John Bracy, who was sent from the King, Falstaff seeks to engage Hal in a bit of playacting so he may “practise an answer” before he goes to court in the morning (305, 341). Falstaff, of course, can’t even act the truth, and misjudges what the young prince might actually say to his father. Here once again, the issue of flattery arises, another impediment in Hal’s uncovering of the truth.

⁷⁴ Howard and Rackin comment that wounding Hotspur’s thigh reenacts the castrating threat of the Welsh women from the first scene of the play, *Engendering the Nation*, 166-67.

⁷⁵ Falstaff is a major presence in *2 Henry IV*, but I will only offer a brief sketch of his role in the play. Falstaff tells the Lord Chief Justice that he is troubled with “the disease of not listening” (1.2.111), perhaps because, as he claims later in the play, he has a belly full of tongues (4.2.16). Joseph Porter calls Falstaff’s deafness his “modus operandi” in *2 Henry IV* (88). He assures the Chief Justice that he did not answer his call to meet with him regarding the Gad’s Hill robbery because “As I was then advised by my learned counsel in the / laws of this land-service, I did not come” (123-24). The Lord Chief Justice is well aware of Falstaff’s manner of “wrenching the true cause the false way” (2.1.101). Yet Falstaff himself seems to be able to discern lies from truth, being so adept as he is at fabricating stories. After his encounter in 3.2. with Justice Shallow, Falstaff rails that Shallow’s every third word was a lie and laments, “how subject we old men are to this vice of lying!” (276-77). Perhaps Falstaff sees himself in Shallow, although he does not have the capacity to rebuke himself. The much discussed scene of Falstaff’s dismissal presents a delusional Falstaff, who refuses to *hear* King Henry V’s words (5.5). In King Henry’s reign, he must dismiss those with the disease of not listening. Although King Harry can banish Falstaff, he can not, as Richard Abrams claims, rout rumor, “Rumour’s Reign in *2 Henry IV*,” 493.

⁷⁶ Nicholas Grene has recently argued in *Shakespeare’s Serial History Plays*, “Rumour is a theatrically inventive device to recapitulate, to remind the audience of where they are in the story,” 28. I disagree with Grene’s dismissive assertion about Rumour, for the figure functions as more than just a Chorus providing summary to an audience. For more on the figure of Rumour and *2 Henry 4*, see Kiefer, “Rumor, Fame, and Slander in *2 Henry IV*,” 1-35, revised in *Shakespeare’s Visual Theatre*, 62-100; Berger, “Sneak’s Noise, or, Rumor and Detextualization in *2 Henry IV*,” 126-47; Abrams, “Rumor’s Reign in *2 Henry IV*: The Scope of a Personification,” 467-95; and Knowles, “Unquiet and the Double Plot of *2 Henry IV*,” 133-40. See also A.R. Humphreys, editor of the Arden edition of *2 Henry IV*, esp. 4-6.

⁷⁷ A few years later, in the anonymous 1599 play *Clyomon and Clamydes*, the figure of Rumour enters the stage, running, and speaks:

Ye rowling Clowdes give *Rumor* roome, both ayre and earth below,
By sea and land, that every eare may understand and know,
What wofull hap is chanced now within the ile of late,
Which of strange Marshes beareth name, unto the noblest state

For either part, lo this to tell, I *Rumor* have in charge,
And through all lands I do pretend, to publish it at large. (1197-1200, 1209-10)

⁷⁸ In 3.6., Montjoy, the French Herald sent from the King, delivers King Charles's defiant message. He wears a tabard, or herald's coat, to signal his office as Herald, most likely emblazoned with the King's coat of arms (and perhaps with associations to Rumour's robe) (104). Throughout the second tetralogy, messengers and heralds are continually given leave to vocalize "fearless speech," knowing that they are indeed exempt from punishment. All these men, we should note, actually speak the truth—in the person of the Herald stood the grounds for authorization of the message. For a probing discussion of messengers and messages as speech acts, see Porter, 125-35. Also see Anderson, "A Losing Office': Shakespeare's Use of Messengers," 5-22, and Young, "Honorable Heralds and Manipulative Messengers in Shakespeare's Second Tetralogy," 14-19. Finally, see Sutcliffe, in *The Practice, Proceedings, and Lawes of Armes* (1593), who writes, "Ambassadors and messengers betwixt Princes, and States, are priviledged by the lawes of all nations" (Rr4r).

⁷⁹ Kiefer, "Rumor, Fame, and Slander in 2 Henry IV," 7.

⁸⁰ In "Of Liars," Montaigne points to the many faces of falsehood: "If falsehood, like truth, had only one face, we would be in better shape. For we would take as certain the opposite of what the liar said. But the reverse of truth has a hundred thousand shapes and a limitless field," 24.

⁸¹ Knowles claims that "many Elizabethans would have taken Rumor as representing all of the unquiet caused by rebellion and war in Henry IV's realm," 133. While Rumor may call to mind a historical viewpoint for the Elizabethan audience, it was perhaps also meant to call to mind the war and invasion rumors that plagued England in the 1590s.

⁸² See also Shakespeare's *Richard III*, where Richard tells Catesby to "Rumour it abroad" that his wife Anne is sick and that she in all likelihood will die (4.2.52). Richard's use of rumor here is a political device similar to the ones put into circulation in the second tetralogy.

⁸³ de Somogyi, *Shakespeare's Theatre of War*, 176.

⁸⁴ Hart, *Theater and World*, 105. See also Joseph Porter's discussion of the play and the Babel theme, esp. 89-115.

⁸⁵ See also *Othello*, where Othello relates how Desdemona would "with a greedy ear / Devour up my discourse" (1.3.145-46).

⁸⁶ In *Coriolanus*, Brutus, not believing the prisoner's report that the Volsces have entered Roman territory, tells the aedile to "see this rumourer whipped. It cannot be" (4.6.48). Menenius, a bit more cautious about received information, implores, "Before you punish him, where he heard this, / Lest you shall chance to whip your information / And beat the messenger who bids beware" (54-6). Free speech must be listened to and not automatically dismissed because of the nature of the teller.

⁸⁷ See also 3.1., where King Henry, citing intelligence, states, "They say the Bishop and Northumberland / Are fifty thousand strong," but Warwick rebuts this piece of news: "It cannot be, my lord. / Rumour doth double, like the voice and echo, / The numbers of the feared" (3.1.90-93). Warwick here asserts (correctly) that his information is more believable than the King's, throwing into question the credibility of the King's own intelligencers, but also highlighting the necessity of a counselor like Warwick to give the King accurate news. Warwick claims he has received a "certain instance" of Glyndwr's death (another truth), and then proceeds to advise the King to go to bed, to which the King replies, "I will take your counsel" (98, 101). The King later counsels his son Thomas, Duke of Clarence, to work to maintain the union of the brothers despite "venom of suggestion— / As force perforce the age will pour it in" (4.3.45-6). This "venom," what can be taken as rumor or lies, certainly aligns with the falsehoods that Iago pours into Othello's ears.

⁸⁸ Porter, *The Drama of Speech Acts*, 115.

⁸⁹ Cavanagh, 127-28, 136. See also Robert Miola, who has argued that Henry V performs his kingship in language, *Shakespeare's Reading*, 56.

⁹⁰ In *The Cabinet-Council*, Raleigh claims, "And in every just War these three things are to be looked into (*viz*) that the Author be of Authority, that the cause be good, and the end just," 57. As author of this proposed war, King Harry displays his authority not merely by ancient claim, but by a politic tongue. See also the title page of Matthew Sutcliffe's 1593 *The Practice, Proceedings, and Lawes of Armes* includes this quotation (from Luke 14:31?): "What king going to make warre with a forreine prince, sitteth not downe first, and taketh counsell, whether he be able with ten thousand, to meete him that commeth against him with twentie thousand?"

⁹¹ Discussing *Henry V*, Alan Sinfield in *Faultlines* notes that Elizabeth's Privy Council favored foreign war for "in some cases because it would strengthen their faction (puritans continually urged military support for continental protestants), in other cases because it would enhance their personal, military, and hence

political, power," 117. Canterbury, in fact, presents a long history about the King's claim to France (1.2.33-95), and the King, for almost one hundred lines, listens to the speech he has granted and to the history that is recounted. King Harry's concern is the treacherous neighbor the Scot, who he knows from history has attacked England while their forces were in France. His concern also seems to lie with the noise or rumors inherent in such an invasion: "England, being empty of defence, / Hath shook and trembled at the bruit thereof" (153-54). The noise, particularly the rumors of such an invasion, are the King's concern for future actions taken in France, as the realm might fear that history could repeat itself.

⁹² For more on the links between deceit and disguise in *Henry V* and its foreshadowing of similar events in *Measure for Measure*, see Hart, 175-76.

⁹³ Taunton, *1590s Drama and Militarism*, 176.

⁹⁴ Monarchs often consulted with counselors but did not attend council meetings. Kevin Dunn, in "Representing Counsel: *Gorboduc* and the Elizabethan Privy Council," remarks that political power was concentrated as never before in Elizabeth's Privy Council, but notes that Elizabeth rarely attended council meetings, 286-87. In the case of Henry V, he grants his English council "free power to ratify" (86). King Henry literally delegates his authority to his council, who become his eyes and ears *in absentia*. As Smythe claims in *Certain Discourses Military*, the lords of England are "the very eyes, ears, and voice of the king," 33. The King's council are entrusted as representatives of his body physical and body political.

⁹⁵ Hodgdon, *The End Crowns All*, 202-3.

⁹⁶ Jardine, *Reading Shakespeare Historically*, 9.

⁹⁷ Porter, 149. See also Howard and Rackin's suggestive discussion in *Engendering the Nation*, esp. 210-15.

⁹⁸ For an intriguing discussion of Catherine and the possibility of her linguistic subversion, see Newman, *Fashioning Femininity*, esp. 100-108.

⁹⁹ Sinfield (with Dollimore), *Faultlines*, 139.

CHAPTER 3

AURAL INSURGENTS: SHAKESPEARE'S DISSIDENT WOMEN

"Everyday forms of resistance make no headlines"
—James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*

"Where there is power, there is resistance."
—Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality I*

"Heare much; but little speake; and flee from that is naught:
Which lessons, by these formes in briefe, to every one are taught."
—Geffrey Whitney, *A Choice of Emblemes*, 1586

In the previous chapter, I examined how Falstaff was said to be affected with the "disease of not listening," an inability to discern truth from falsity. I want to begin this chapter by asking how women on the Shakespearean stage could use similar tactics of the ear as a form of resistance, or, more precisely, as a remedy against male oppression. I argue that Shakespeare's women engage in discerning listening often through an absence of the tongue—self-imposed silence, hushed speech or whispering, refusals to speak and listen to men—thereby emphasizing not only their enhanced sense of hearing but also men's own transgressive speech. Shakespeare often unsettles the gender stereotypes cultural commentators sought to enforce, as the silence of female discerning listening stands in opposition to the silent obedient listening called for by men. I seek to rethink the period's cultural prejudices of the "ideal" silent woman and the scolding shrew or gossip, prejudices that are imprinted on the

stage, and instead examine how Shakespeare refashions the cultural debate by presenting women who adopt the kind of listening—and consequently a lack of excess public talk—that Henry V used so effectively in the history plays. Many of Shakespeare's women who are discerning listeners are able to distinguish the truth in rumors and lies that come to their ears, asserting their own informational authority in the process. Shakespeare's aural insurgents, then, use listening as a powerful weapon that imbues them with a power that undermines male authority.

Disruptive potential comes, I argue, from the ear—in hearing or listening to women but not men—and the silent tongue—refusing to speak or respond to men or in fact engaging in hushed talk. Such female insurgent energies in Shakespeare are an underexamined power present in his plays, and Shakespeare refigures these energies as weapons against male domination. This chapter's focus on moments where women in Shakespeare were not necessarily garrulous or disruptive in speech serves to uproot discerning listening from the male domain, illustrating how Shakespeare's female characters did not necessarily have to engage in fearless or transgressive speech in order to establish their authority or garner some degree of agency.¹ My contention is that Shakespeare complicates such male cultural prescriptions, staging the dissident potential of female listening and *not* speaking, traits that had themselves been silenced by cultural observers who focused so much attention on the blabbing female tongue. While many of Shakespeare's women may very well be willed to silence by men who imposed social sanctions that mirrored those in Renaissance England—striving to keep women in line with masculine authority—the female characters I examine in this chapter appropriated the notion of silence and used

it as a mark of disobedience rather than obedience. Furthermore, many of Shakespeare's male characters are consequently "willed to speak;" in light of female dissidence, their anxieties are voiced and heightened as their words or commands fall on deaf ears, emphasizing that male authority was a contested site. As I will show in my discussion of seven of Shakespeare's plays, women on Shakespeare's stage often provoke anxiety in men by subverting male authority of the word through an absence of the type of railing tongue that was a cultural commonplace in the society and on the stage.

Male anxieties about information control and unauthorized talk were generally displaced upon women, those "leaky vessels" whose bodies, with what Gail Kern Paster has called their "liquid expressiveness," were linked to "excessive verbal fluency."² Male informational authority becomes an unstable concept in this age, an instability that Shakespeare's plays register for effect. Shakespeare presents a female network of discerning listeners, both to other women and to men's own transgressive speech. Silence and refusals to hear and speak to men become ways out of the confining space of the male worlds in the plays and definitively mark Shakespeare's women as unruly. The space that this resistance opens up is one where listening is emphasized, taught, and revered. I believe Jeanne Addison Roberts's claim that Shakespeare's women are unruly only within well-defined limits is itself a limiting appraisal that only sees resistance in public transgressive acts and not in the often subtle and silent forms that often fail to register. While she sees some resistance, in particular in Shakespeare's female rulers, she concludes that it is mostly contained by patriarchy and that the plays ultimately control non-conforming women.³ Shakespeare asserts that his female characters can perform more than public

shows of disobedience to undermine male authority. The rubric I use for examining female aural insurgents presents a model to challenge Roberts and other New Historicist conclusions that resistance and insubordination is sponsored and controlled by a powerful male elite in order to secure their power. This chapter thus seeks to restore the agency of female insurgency that, while often silent or muted, still powerfully challenges the male authority of information.

“Full of tongues, of eyes and ears”:
Titus Andronicus

Shakespeare’s early revenge tragedy, *Titus Andronicus* (1592), initiates a set of issues about the female tongue and ear that surface in various forms for the remainder of his dramatic career. Discursive debates about the gendering of tongues and ears in the period emphasize the cultural battlegrounds about these issues, one site of which was the early modern stage. By first examining these battlegrounds, I will place Shakespeare’s engagement with silence, speech, and gender within a larger historical frame from which he redefined the debate on the stage, spinning the concepts he explores in *Titus* as ways to envision further opportunities for female insurgence.

The admonition to be “chaste, silent, and obedient” appears in various forms throughout the early modern period, usually located in religious tracts and in various conduct books, as well as being ubiquitous in contemporary scholarly discourse.⁴ Speaking of the virtues of a maid’s silence, Thomas Becon writes, “And this noble virtue may the virgins learn of that most holy, pure, and glorious virgin Mary, which when she either heard or saw any worthy or notable

thing, blabbed it not out straightways to her gossips, as the manner of women is at this present day, but being silent she kept all those sayings secret and pondered them in her heart."⁵ Becon's anxiety rests in women blabbing information that comes to their ear to other women, potentially opening up the possibility of the spread of unauthorized information. The ideal is for women to listen and remain silent, thereby keeping male informational authority intact. In the next century, Richard Brathwait remarks in *The English Gentlewoman* (1631), "More shall we see fall into sinne by speech than silence."⁶ Furthermore, Brathwaite writes, "what is spoken of Maids, may be properly applied by an useful consequence to all women: *They should be seene, and not heard.*"⁷ Brathwaite views female speech as a sin and female silence as a virtue; by rhetorically calling for women to silence their tongues, Brathwaite makes a larger claim to preserve male informational authority. Men sought to control what came out of women's mouths, as evidenced in the myriad admonitions against gossip and the railing tongue coming from the household, the pulpit, and the page. Brathwaite wants women to hear but not to be heard; yet this type of hearing he envisions is obedient listening, something that would not, of course, register as subversive.

Such injunctions for women to remain silent and obedient are directly related to what was deemed *the* transgressive female bodily member, the tongue.⁸ As Carla Mazzio has shown, the female tongue was often considered the "unruly member" in early modern discourse; furthermore, as Ina Habermann suggests, "The tongue as an unruly body member is seen to be responsible for transgressive speech, and due to the culturally ingrained connection between embodiment and femininity, transgressive speech is feminized."⁹ As both critics show, the supposed loose female tongue—a sign of unchastity, disobedience,

noise—gets put in opposition to the controlled male tongue, and male writers often sought to defame these women in writing and in speech as a way to reassert their control.¹⁰ For instance, in Thomas Adams's sermon *The Taming of the Tongue* (1616), he writes, "Woman, for the most part, hath the glibbest tongue . . . She calls her tongue, her Defensive weapon; she meanes offensive: a fire brand in a franticke hand doth lesse mischiefe."¹¹ Adams continues, " When all the other members are dull with age, the tongue alone is quicke and nimble. It is an unruly evill to our selves, to our neighbors, to the whole world."¹² Adams's association of woman with tongue was itself a commonplace in the seventeenth century, and his anxiety concerning the unruliness of the female tongue and its potential for disobedience marks his understanding of the tongue as a weapon against patriarchy.¹³

In turn, a host of injunctions and public disgraces were directly aimed at women whose tongues were uncontrolled, and they were variously labeled as shrews, scolds, and gossips.¹⁴ These "crimes against silence," as Theodora Jankowski has usefully labeled such oral defiance, aroused deep-seated anxieties in men, who sought additional ways beyond print and pulpit to control female tongues.¹⁵ According to Bernard Capp, men grossly exaggerated the reality of these threats, even if their fears were rooted in social reality.¹⁶ As Constance Jordan has argued, such need for enforcement against women's oral defiance was a sign of the fragility of patriarchy.¹⁷ This fragility is rooted in an uneasiness about authority, and these "crimes" highlighted the slippages of male domains of authorization. Such "women of the tongue" disrupted and violated the patriarchal order in both the private realm of the household as well as by disturbing the public quiet of the city or town with their noisome speech.¹⁸

David E. Underdown reveals that court records between 1560 and 1640 “disclose an intense preoccupation with women who are a visible threat to the patriarchal system.”¹⁹ I pause over Underdown’s phrasing that the subsequent punishing of these women was due to the fact that they were a “visible threat.” Of course, they were an “audible threat” as well. Yet it is important to consider the acts of defiance and the undermining of the social order, in both public and private, that were *not* audible, that may have in fact escaped punishment because these actions were hushed, muted, and silenced, imposed not by any patriarchal authority but by women themselves as a form of resistance.

Patriarchy was seemingly silent about female aural defiance, an energy that Shakespeare taps into in his plays as an alternative form of dissidence to female verbal battery. Early modern commentators thus seem to overlook the ear and hearing as a site of transgression. The correlation between the tongue and the ear takes on increasingly gendered valences in the early modern period, with medical, moral, religious, and social commentators all contributing to the period’s understanding of these two bodily members. According to Penelope Gouk, “hearing was actually an important concern of the seventeenth-century English intellectual tradition, but its significance has been obscured because it was not treated as a unified subject, nor was any book ever devoted to it.”²⁰ Perhaps the undivided attention to the tongue cast a shadow on the powers of the ear, and its failure to make a footprint in the discourses of the period reveals just how invested male commentators were in controlling the tongue. The classical commonplaces reminding an individual that nature gave him two ears and one tongue—hear more, speak less—and that nature enclosed the tongue in

the mouth to limit an individual's speech inhabited many of these discourses.²¹

In these works, the ear becomes the vehicle to curb unruly speech.

A related influence on what would become the Renaissance English fascination with individual body parts was the anatomical blason tradition of the sixteenth century. The blason fragments the female body into parts and joins the image of the part with a poetic representation of that part. Often the body part became a synecdoche, as for instance the tongue coming to represent the woman. Both Petrarch and Shakespeare tapped into this tradition in their sonnets, and this push to fragment the female body leaked into other writings as well. Jonathan Sawday, for one, has linked medical and poetic strategies of "dissecting" the body: "the blazon formed a significant part of the culture of dissection which produced the partitioned body. But the importance of the blazon lay in its partitioning not of any indiscriminate body, but of a specifically female corpse."²² Sawday further remarks, "Female bodies were not just cut up within anatomy theatres. Within the court, they were cut up in literary texts in order to be circulated as a specifically male knowledge of women."²³ Through the literary dissection and fragmentation of the female body, male writers could thus define the terms of the woman's place in early modern society, depicting women as a set of objects/parts that could be, even needed to be, controlled by men.

Arguably the most well-known of these collections of blasons in sixteenth-century Europe was Clement Marot's *Blasons anatomiques du corps féminin* (France, 1536), a collection of woodcuts and poems on individual parts of the female body composed by approximately twenty different poets. As Nancy Vickers has remarked, the purpose of the blason was to "dwell upon the image,

calling upon the higher senses and capacities of the reader (sight, hearing, and understanding) and imposing a new and different perception through their radical fragmentation."²⁴ In fact, one blason in the work points to the powers of the ear and aurality: the "Blason De L'Oreille" (Blason of the Ear), an 82 line poem by Albert le Grand. According to le Grand, the female ear is highly prized, as it is the body part that is the door of the heart and understanding, the true judge of good and bad reports, and arbiter of all sound (lines 61-82). The female ear, as le Grand emphasizes, is imbued with the power of discerning listening, the ability to distinguish truth.²⁵ By disembodiment of the ear, le Grand is able to assert its power not only as vehicle for coming to truth, but also as a body part with the capacity to grant women informational authority.

Early modern revenge tragedies, in fact, often granted the individual body part a certain fetishized space that aligns with the blason tradition that preceded them. In *Staging Anatomies*, Hillary M. Nunn argues that "playgoers were familiar with the dynamics of performance that governed the anatomical theatre, for commercial playhouses nurtured in their crowds' strikingly similar habits of viewing."²⁶ This type of gazing upon bodies that Nunn identifies emphasized visual spectacle, and often an individual body part would pay the price for its real or perceived transgression. On the early modern stage, various body parts are the focus of revenge tragedies, from eyes to hands, hearts to genitals, and eyes to tongues.²⁷ One striking omission in revenge tragedies, however, is the ear, another testament to the lack of attention that is usually afforded this potentially transgressive body part. The tongue, of course, has received arguably the most attention in recent critical discussion of *Titus Andronicus*. This "lingual dismemberment," according to Carla Mazzio, has been the focus of feminist

theory in recent decades, and this severing of the tongue can be read as “indicative of larger strategies of patriarchal self-inscription in early modern Europe.”²⁸ But if tongues were silenced or in fact dismembered by patriarchy, women would have to rely on other body parts if they were to assert female sovereignty. And in Shakespeare, his women find ways to inscribe themselves within a domain of masculine authority without their tongues. Shakespeare reenvisioned the lack of tongue, real or metaphorical, as a weapon while granting the sense of hearing with the potential to thwart male authority. In *Titus*, I assert, “lingual dismemberment” leads to “patriarchal dismemberment.”

Lavinia, having her tongue cut out by Tamora’s evil sons Demetrius and Chiron, is left dumb, unable to speak.²⁹ Orality may be gone, but the potential for communication and resistance has not been erased. Lavinia’s example reveals that even without a tongue she can nevertheless prove transgressive and subvert male authority. Although Lavinia’s tongue has been severed, her ears remain and their ability to hear is dramatically enhanced in the process. What goes in the ear and the eye, Tamora’s sons figure, would certainly come out of a female mouth, so they cut out that potentially unruly member. In this case, male anxiety is perhaps woefully misplaced on the female tongue, for although a means of subversion, the ear can reinscribe through writing, a form of silent speech. In 4.1., Lavinia, that “Speechless complainer,” is able to communicate by way of her “dumb action” (3.2.39-40). Without tongue she cannot speak, but with discerning ears she can hear her father, uncle, and nephew, whose own speech serves as prompts to her ears. Tamora’s sons, particularly in their post-rape discussion of Lavinia’s situation, do not foresee Lavinia’s tongue being able to speak or her stumps being able to “play the scribe” (4.2.1-10). Titus states,

“Heaven guide thy pen to print thy sorrows plain, / That we may know the traitors and the truth” (4.1.74-75). Ultimately, they have failed to stop Lavinia’s “speechless dialect,” for she is still able to write the truth in the sand with the staff in her mouth and be heard. Lavinia becomes the translator of the crime, as her silent speech authorizes the truth of her predicament. The staff, in fact, becomes a prosthetic tongue, allowing Lavinia to “speak” through writing. Lavinia has been silenced by men via dismemberment, yet she remains transgressive by relating the truth and implicating male authority without her supposed unruly member, implicating these men by way of her tongueless mouth.

The world of *Titus* anticipates that of *Othello* and *Measure for Measure*—a world of whispers and buzzing, a world where information is never safe from the hungry ears and tongues that search out news. Aaron the Moor is certainly aware of this buzz, as he tells Tamora’s sons to ravish Lavinia in the woods instead of the court, for, as he states, “The Emperor’s court is like the house of Fame, / The palace full of tongues, of eyes and ears” (2.1.127-28). By invoking both Ovid and Chaucer’s renderings of the House of Fame, Aaron posits an understanding of the all-seeing / -speaking / -hearing body of rumor that could disrupt and undermine this planned attack on Lavinia. It is interesting that despite Aaron’s conception of the power of tongues, eyes, and ears, only Lavinia’s tongue is dismembered, certainly an oversight but consistent with male prejudices that signified the female tongue as *the* bodily member to fear. Aaron later curbs the potential disruptive force of female speech and gossip by killing the Nurse and midwife, the only eye- and earwitnesses to Tamora giving birth to Aaron’s child. He remarks, “The Empress, the midwife, and yourself. / Two

may keep counsel when the third's away" (4.2.142-43). After he has killed the Nurse, Aaron explains why he committed this act: "Shall she live to betray this guilt of ours— / A long-tongued, babbling gossip? No, lords, no" (4.2.148-49). As Chiron observes, Aaron "will not trust the air / With secrets" (4.2.168-69), and the actions he originates in both cases—dismemberment and murder—show his sole attention to the female tongue as holding unparalleled subversive power. Ultimately, however, Aaron, Chiron, and Demetrius are silenced as a result of Lavinia's tongueless actions and powers of discernment that have identified those responsible for her dismemberment.³⁰

Titus Andronicus sets forth a paradigm that Shakespeare would return to and recast throughout his dramatic career. As I have examined, the play places the female tongue at the center of male anxieties about transgressive speech, and its dismemberment is thought to ultimately silence a woman's potential for undermining male authority. Shakespeare, however, is able to imbue a speechless woman with the power to curb the speech of other men. *Titus* seems to unlock for Shakespeare an understanding of the dissident potential of silence, and he will continue to explore how women can be insurgent without being "full of tongue." As men fail to grasp silence as disobedience, Shakespeare imagines a social order plagued by ambiguities inherent in abstaining from utterance.

Saying and Hearing "Nothing":
Refusals to Speak and Listen in *Lear*, *Shrew*, and *Measure*

Silence, which the *OED* defines as "the condition resulting from abstaining from utterance" [1a], is an ambiguous condition, one that can be forced upon another or self-imposed, often implying resistance.³¹ In her study of gender and silence in early modern England, Christina Luckyj remarks that

silence was a contested and unstable site in early modern England, “an antirhetorical space of resistance, inscrutable, unreadable and potentially unruly and chaotic.”³² She later elaborates, noting that “powerfully silent women can exceed their dramatic functions to become emblems of unruly chaos.”³³ What my argument offers beyond Luckyj’s often astute analysis is a consideration of how these self-imposed refusals to speak and listen, at odds with notions of obedience, are intimately tied to notions of discernment. Silence was not just a part of a trivium representing submission to male authority—its ambiguous nature, with its ability to signal obedience and disobedience, becomes a way for Shakespeare to showcase the potentialities inscribed in female silence, in particular that of not listening (deaf ears) and not responding (mute tongues) to men. While many of Shakespeare’s women are silenced by the restraints of men (marks of obedience), many others abstain from utterance and audition at moments that signal their insurgent nature. Cordelia, Isabella, and the two wives in *Shrew* speak “nothing,” refusing to hear male speech that seeks to deny them power or autonomy. Such refusals to speak, answer, or hear threaten masculine authority, as women’s answers, responses, and information are concealed from the world of orality supposedly authorized by men.

The Taming of the Shrew

Scholars have investigated early modern drama for female resistance to male domination, and often many feminist critics see women gaining ground with their tongues. Lisa Jardine, for instance, notes that the tongue is a female weapon; she spends the better part of a chapter detailing how scolding gave women power, their only resort in the patriarchal household.³⁴ While it is true

that the changing notions of the family imbued women with more power in the home, still culturally, politically, and socially, they remained subordinated in a male-hierarchized world. How might we rethink Jardine's analysis in terms of how the self-imposed silencing of the tongue becomes a female weapon? Women who do not listen or respond to men in Shakespeare authorize silence for their own sake, resisting the patriarchal system that sought to silence them as part of a template of obedience. Silence and willed refusals to listen to or answer men provoke male anxiety because these women harbor information that is concealed from male authority.

The Taming of the Shrew (1592) portrays a site of gender struggle played out, as numerous critics have observed, through the tongues of the men and women of the play.³⁵ Shakespeare's comedy is certainly one about control, and one of the key struggles lies in the authority of language, of speaking and not speaking. The play begins by setting up a duality: Kate and her "loud alarums" and Bianca, in whose "wonderful silence" Lucentio sees "Maid's mild behaviour and sobriety" (1.1.125, 70-71). Kate's scolding is countered by Petruchio's rhetoric, which ultimately contradicts her words and is used for the purposes of domination in marriage. We can read Petruchio's language as a means of breaking down female verbal resistance, using Kate's own methods as a way of taming an unruly woman. Petruchio counters Kate not only with his tongue, but he also refuses to have his ear abused by her own railing, stating, "Think you a little din can daunt mine ears? / Have I not in my time heard lions roar?" (1.2.194-95). During his lively exchange with Kate in 2.1., Petruchio emphasizes his own power in hearing the truth about Kate:

'Twas told me you were rough, and coy, and sullen,
 And now I find report a very liar,
 For thou art pleasant, gamesome, passing courteous
 But slow in speech, yet sweet as springtime flowers. . . .
 Why does the world report that Kate doth limp?
 O sland'rous world! (236-46)

Here, Petruchio asserts his insistence that what he has heard secondhand is false; he privileges his first-hand auricular encounter with Kate, where he can deny the gossip and hear with his own ears. Of course, he hears what he wants to hear, and Kate's loose tongue only serves to heighten his desire for her. Report has proven correct, yet fighting fire with fire, so to speak, is not enough. In order to avoid being "Kated" (3.3.116)—that is, afflicted with bearing Kate's scolding tongue—Petruchio retreats with his new wife to his country house. He embarks on "taming" Kate, but his method is not merely lashing out at her as he does his servants. Rather, he engages in listening to Kate's own words and assertions only to contradict and undermine them.³⁶ Kate, however, ultimately undermines Petruchio through her own use of listening, or, rather, seeming to listen. Late in 4.1, a servant reports that Petruchio is in Kate's chamber "Making a sermon of continency to her, / And rails, and swears, and scolds, that she, poor soul, / Knows not which way to stand, to look, to speak" (4.1.164-66). Petruchio has adopted the female railing attribute while Kate, seemingly "obeying" and obedient, sits and listens to him, not speaking. Perhaps it is useful to think of Kate as a trickster figure at this moment, a woman "playing" subservient in the face of power, a useful rubric to apply for understanding the final scene of Kate's supposed bending to her husband's will.

The final scene of the play rests on the wager between Lucentio, Hortensio, and Petruchio to see whose wife is most obedient. This is a game of

commands, some that fail (“*bid* your mistress come to me” and “*entreat* my wife to come to me”) and one, Petruchio’s, that succeeds (“Say I *command* her to come to me”). Kate answers Petruchio’s command while Bianca and Hortensio’s wife “sit conferring by the parlour fire” (5.3.106).³⁷ The play’s close returns to the image of women engaged in unauthorized speech, an action the play asserts needs to be tamed. The women confer—that is, take counsel and converse—from one another in a site closed off to men. Yet the transgressive and disruptive behavior at the end of the play is that these women do not *listen* to their husbands’ commands and rather choose to *speak* freely with one another and listen to each other’s counsel. It is this private (not staged) counsel among women and discerning listening to women, for women’s ears only, that affords a space of resistance. Perhaps the three men engage in this wager *because* Kate is with the other women, beyond the ear of power, and the men feel it necessary to call these women into the face of authority. Kate’s famous final speech seems to reveal that she has been a student at Petruchio’s “taming-school” (4.2.56), as she implores these women “serve, love, and obey” (5.3.168), a reworking of the commonplace to be silent, chaste, and obedient. No matter how Kate says these words—head down, subservient, or with a wink—she has already spread the word about disobedience to the other women with whom she has conferred. Even before the speech, Petruchio tells Kate to relate to these “headstrong women” (5.2.134) what duty they owe their husbands. The Widow curtly responds, “We will have no telling” (136); the Widow and Bianca, it seems, have been instructed by Kate not to listen to her public pronouncement, as it is a speech designed by a man and for men’s ears only, to placate men’s deepest anxieties, something that offers men “good hearing” (186).

I believe critics pay primary attention to the offensive nature of Kate's demeaning speech, what Pamela Allen Brown calls Kate's "Griselda gospel."³⁸ This speech is not meant for the ears of the Widow or Bianca, however, but rather to placate the men present. In the face of authority, Kate, who according to Coppelia Kahn is "outwardly compliant but inwardly independent," seemingly gives in.³⁹ Kate does not, however, as Brown asserts, abuse the ears of the Widow and Bianca, for they are complicit with Kate in conspiring to perform submission in this public scene. The two women have already proved defiant in not listening and responding to their husbands, a tactic promoted in their parlor conference. Their silence after Kate's words is not a result of Kate's public speech, but rather a result of Kate's prior private conference with them. These women have been affected by words that have fallen upon their attentive female ears in female counsel. Undermining men comes from not hearing or listening or responding to their commands. The "quiet life" (112) Petruchio imagines, his control of Kate's unruly member, actually brings forth staged public obedience. Bianca and the Widow only listen to Kate in a private setting of female counsel, out of the earshot of men's authorizing control. Thus, while Kate speaks obedience, the two women only hear disobedience.

Measure for Measure

Measure for Measure (1604) raises the issue of aural access (an issue that will again arise in *Othello*) and explores the strategies for discerning lies and truth. I argue that Isabella ultimately refuses the Duke's proposals because she has engaged in discerning listening to the nature of his words, willing herself to silence in order to assert her own authority. The play reveals a seeming

transformation of the loose tongue staged in *The Taming of the Shrew*. In this play, Claudio's sister Isabella, a novice to a sisterhood of nuns, is well-known for her rhetorical prowess. Claudio tells Lucio that Isabella possesses "a prone and speechless dialect / Such as move men" (1.2.160-61). Female powers of persuasion are revered, viewed as necessary to secure the safety of Claudio himself. A decade after Shakespeare has Petruchio lock up Kate in his country house in order to tame her tongue, Shakespeare seems to offer yet another male fantasy, a place (the holy cloister) where women take a vow of silence. The tongues of nuns are bridled, but Isabella's tongue has not yet been, enabling her to speak with Lucio, who brings news of her brother's predicament. Isabella, however, is attuned to the possibilities of rumor to which Claudio has fallen prey. Claudio becomes subject to the intelligence of state, and the only possibility of his redemption is through the eloquence of Isabella. Even hard-hearted Angelo, who tells her that she wastes her words (74), becomes enamored with her and wants "to hear her speak again" (182). Angelo has effectively been tamed, as he says, "this virtuous maid / Subdues me quite" (189-90). Isabella's tongue entices men and destabilizes Angelo's authority in the process.

At this point, it might be helpful to briefly pause over the other male manipulator of language in the play, Duke Vincentio, who has gone into hiding in a Friar's cell, hiding behind silence of the cloister, the supposed vow of silence, and the confessional. He tells the Friar that Angelo, whom he has left in charge, "supposes me travelled to Poland— / For so I have strewed it in the common ear, / And so it is received" (1.3.14-16). The Duke circulates rumor as a strategy of dissimulation so he can return to oversee and overhear the events in Vienna. In 3.1., the Duke tells the Provost, "Bring me to hear them speak where I may be

concealed" (51). The Duke conducts the affairs of state through a clever manipulation of language, circulating rumors and overhearing his subjects, effectively becoming the Tongue and Ear of Vienna. Interestingly, he is disguised as a Friar, and his overhearing of Claudio and Isabella's conversation mirrors Roman Catholic confession. In disguise, he is able to convince Isabella to listen to his plan—"fasten your ear on my advisings" (196). However, the Duke's disguise, which he believed would give him aural access, also causes him anguish, as he overhears slanders directed at his own person.⁴⁰ The Duke returns as himself in the final act, full of knowledge gleaned from overhearing. The aural access to slanders, those once hidden truths about his person, at once look back to the aural access of King Henry V on the battlefield as well as ahead to Adam Overdo's overhearing in Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*. All three men (Henry V, Duke Vincentio, Adam Overdo) glean information through disguise; aural access fails to come to them in their positions of authority.

The play concludes with the Duke offering two marriage proposals to Isabella. First, he tells her, "If he be like your brother, for his sake / Is he pardoned; and for your lovely sake / Give me your hand, and say you will be mine" (5.1.484-86). After sentencing Lucio to his humiliation for slander, the Duke seemingly softens his possessive rhetoric with a more conditional proposal to Isabella: "I have a motion much imports your good, / Where to, if you'll a willing ear incline, / What's mine is yours, and what is yours is mine" (529-30). In the Duke's first proposal, he wants Isabella to "say" she will be his, that is, to acknowledge publicly (like Kate in *Shrew*) his sovereignty and possession over her. Of course, Isabella does not say anything, a "nothing" that Philip C. McGuire has aptly termed an "open silence," which he defines as "one whose

precise meanings and effects, because they cannot be determined by analysis of the words of the playtext, must be established by nonverbal, extratextual features of the play that emerge only in performance."⁴¹ As Jerald W. Spotswood has claimed, "Becoming aware of the limits of language for women within Vienna, Isabella will slowly come to realize the value of withholding her voice to disrupt the norms of patriarchal discourse."⁴² Ultimately the decision rests on Isabella's ear—will she grant the Duke "a willing ear"? While this may be in effect an indeterminacy that directors can unfold in performance, as McGuire suggests, it is the text that provides the play's final stance on female speech and female hearing.⁴³ The Duke, who has partaken in tuning his authorizing ear to the sounds of Vienna throughout the play, offers two very different proposals to Isabella's ear. His first grants Isabella a chance to bypass the silence of the nunnery to speak freely, yet by doing so she becomes a seeming possession of the Duke. Isabella, it is important to note, practices discerning listening to his proposals, hearing the potential to become subject to a man and thus denying his demand with a deaf ear and silent tongue. Wisely, Isabella remains mute, not using her tongue, remaining silent like the nuns of the convent from where she came. The Duke, unable to will her to speak, instead, in an attempt to save his lost authority at this moment, attempts to get her to give his proposal a "willing ear." The conditional "if" announces that this motion will only have a chance if Isabella *listens*.⁴⁴ This change in the Duke's proposals—from the tongue to the ear—showcases his own continued talking in these final moments, spurred on not by an act of defiance of Isabella's tongue, but rather by her unreadable, defiant, and ultimately powerful ear that may just refuse to listen.

King Lear

In *King Lear* (1608), the eyes of Gloucester have certainly been a critical and performative crux, but this tragedy begins with a female refusal to speak, representing a lack of tongue and a resistance at the ear. The will to speak is expressed by Goneril and Regan, yet Cordelia exercises her will to silence, her refusal to answer. When her father demands her to speak her love for him, Cordelia curtly states, "Nothing, my lord" (1.1.85). His desire *to hear* is denied because Cordelia fails to authorize speech in this moment.⁴⁵ The thrust of her resistance lies in her refusal to speak when summoned. By refusing to speak, Cordelia, in what Luckyj calls her "silent, subversive energies," refuses to obey a fatherly command, and by saying nothing, she undermines patriarchal authority and sparks Lear's descent into madness.⁴⁶ I concur with Kenneth Gross, who asserts that Cordelia's silence silences, turning Lear's world upside down.⁴⁷ Cordelia actually practices discerning listening to her sisters' hollow words addressed to their father, and she realizes that to speak as they do would fail to signify the depths of her love. Of course, no one "forces" silence upon Cordelia—only obedient speech is forced upon Lear's daughters, and this is precisely what Cordelia refuses.⁴⁸ Cordelia takes pride in not having the "large speech" of her sisters, telling her father, "such a tongue / As I am glad I have not, though not to have it / Hath lost me in your liking" (1.1.232-34). This reticence, Cordelia understands, runs the risk of dividing her familial and paternal bonds; her refusal to speak is the more appropriate option and highlights her discerning ear, while Goneril and Regan represent consenting to rigid patriarchal authority.⁴⁹

Lear wants his daughters *to speak* of their love of him, not for them *to be silent*, which might represent the truth of their feelings. Lear, then, understands the potential of silence at that moment to undermine his fatherly authority, and in willing his daughters to speak he succumbs to flattery, not truth. In this case, silence proves to be an act of filial disobedience rather than blind obedience, yet this refusal to speak actually signifies love while Goneril and Regan's speech does not. Ironically, Goneril's response to her father—"A love that makes breath [language] poor, and speech unable" (1.1.58) is in reality only truly evidenced by Cordelia. Cordelia answers her own question of what she should speak by answering in aside, "Love, and be silent" and later remarking that "my love's / More ponderous than my tongue" (1.1.60, 76-77). But in its original incarnation, Cordelia's "nothing"—her lack of tongue, her mouth without a tongue, her refusal to speak when asked—transfers the authority of the word to a woman, and induces her father to partake in a litany of curses and endless ranting. Her initial refusal to speak as her father wishes has brought about the effect of making him speak uncontrollably.

From Edgar's words that he is "light of ear," or rumor hungry (3.4.86), to the news abroad of the "ear-bussing arguments" regarding the division between Albany and Cornwall (2.1.7), to the "high noises" or rumors Edgar hears (3.6.104), *King Lear* is ripe with curses and other various noises that affect the ears of the play's listeners. Lear's pleas that occur after the opening scene also fall on the deaf ears of his eldest daughters, here signifying disobedience. Because of the indignities of her father against her gentleman, Goneril initially refuses to speak with the same father she had publicly declared her love for (1.3.8). Fearing her father's transformation, she rebukes him for keeping a hundred gluttonous

knights and squires at the palace, whereby Lear curses her. Lear further rails that Regan has struck him with a tongue “Most serpent-like” (2.4.154), but it is also his daughters’ ears that have proven to undermine his authority—despite Lear’s curses, they refuse to hear his verbal pleas.⁵⁰ In the final scene, kneeling with the deceased body of Cordelia in his arms, Lear laments, “Her voice was ever soft, / Gentle, and low, an excellent thing in woman” (5.3.271-72).

Cordelia’s silence that pervaded the opening scene returns in another form at the end of the play—death brings about an eternal silence, as Hamlet notes. But what we should note is that Lear voices the prominent view of a woman during the time of the play’s performance—soft of voice. Lear certainly has failed to grasp the fact that Cordelia’s willed silence, her refusal to speak, has led to an even more subversive silence in death, one that, inevitably, will cause Lear to die as well.

In *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Measure for Measure*, and *King Lear*, Shakespeare expands upon what he learned from *Titus Andronicus* to explore the dissident potential in refusing to respond to men and hear their commands. While Kate speaks public obedience, the Widow, Bianca, Isabella, and Cordelia refuse to succumb to what they view as the suppression of female sovereignty. But what happens to patriarchy in light of this silent insurgency? Petruchio and the husbands have perhaps been duped by a conspiracy of conferring women, who assert that they only listen to and obey other women. Duke Vincentio, while given access to male slander, is left at the end of the play without having been able to authorize his marriage proposal. And Lear, seeking obedient words to fall on his ears, is met with a refusal to speak what is expected by his youngest daughter, a “nothing” that reverberates loudly and plunges Lear into madness.

As Shakespeare shows, the moments of insurgency with the lack of tongue and the unwilling ear have dire repercussions for male sovereignty.

“Is whispering nothing?”:
Inaccessible Female Spaces in *Othello* and *The Winter’s Tale*

As I have shown in my discussion in the previous section, the potential for subversive talk among women that occupies a space outside of the earshot of men heightens male anxiety. But Shakespeare again spins the issue in *Othello* and *The Winter’s Tale*, highlighting an anxiety about a lack of *access* to the female ear. Shakespeare envisions spaces for female listeners, engaged in talking but intently listening to one another speak about their oppression in both public and private spaces. What is spoken between women in private or in the ear of another conceals information and news from the ears of men. Whispering and speaking in the ears of others outside the earshot of domination is, I am arguing, a dissident social practice that threatens male authority. Women on Shakespeare’s stage carved out spaces of resistance in places where men could not hear.⁵¹

Often, mothers, wives, daughters, and sisters on Shakespeare’s stage comprise a resistant public with a nonviolent sensibility, a sensory community with a unique and powerful aural environment.⁵² Women not only sought spaces outside of the earshot of men, but they also used whispering as a way to separate what information would fall into men’s ears. By figuring the safety of the female ear, engaged in discerning listening, women on the early modern stage could make the authority of information their own, denying men the ear to hear and thus authorizing the information for their own sake. And in doing so,

women created a profound anxiety that revealed itself in male talkativeness concerning their inability to control the word. In the face of power, female characters on the early modern stage often sought out a private site to voice their unhappiness, concerns, or various marital or social plights. These places out of the earshot of men were places of truth, places where a woman's innermost longings, wishes, and desires could be voiced among others, particularly among other women. I have earlier examined the anxiety men had for gatherings of gossips, of uncontrolled talking that was outside of their authorization, and men often sought for women to remain in the home, thereby denying them prolonged contact with other women that would, many believed, certainly lead to gossip that could prove detrimental to male authority. In this section, I will argue that some of Shakespeare's women sought sanctuary from male domination at the ears of other women, inaccessible spaces that undermined male authority.

Here I want to turn to the anthropologist James C. Scott, author of *Domination and the Art of Resistance*, who examines the offstage dissent of subordinate groups and provides an alternative way of understanding resistance to domination. Scott's analysis is useful in considering the literary phenomenon of insurgent women on Shakespeare's stage, where the private transcript embodied in whispering and hushed talk becomes a form of resistance. Scott argues that "every subordinate group creates, out of its ordeal, a 'hidden transcript' that represents a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant."⁵³ He makes a distinction between the public and the hidden transcript of power relations of the powerful and the powerless. The public transcript, he tells us, is "the open interaction (what is said) between subordinates and those who dominate—it is unlikely to tell the whole truth

about power relations."⁵⁴ The hidden transcript consists of "those offstage speeches, gestures, and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript" and can be thought of the "acrimonious dialogue that domination has driven off the immediate stage."⁵⁵ The hidden transcript is in effect the "privileged site for nonhegemonic, contrapuntal, dissident, subversive discourse."⁵⁶ Yet this resistance does not often make public expression, for the "fugitive political conduct" of subordinate groups resides beyond the ears of authority.⁵⁷ Scott claims,

the hidden transcript will be least inhibited when two conditions are fulfilled; first, when it is voiced in a sequestered social site where the control, surveillance, and repression of the dominant are least able to reach, and second, when this sequestered social milieu is composed entirely of close confidants who share similar experiences of domination. The initial condition is what allows subordinates to talk freely at all, while the second ensures that they have, in their common subordination, something to talk about.⁵⁸

The hidden transcript, Scott claims, is a weapon of the weak, a practice that undermines authority and grants the subordinates who speak a measure of authority in this sequestered site. The ears that hear this free speech out of the earshot of power, in effect, harbor information—what goes in does not always immediately come out through the mouth. This potential to harbor information raises further male fears that women could repeat and authorize this news outside men's own controlled social space, anxieties that come forth in *The Winter's Tale* and *Othello* in forms of hushed talk that belie a male ability to have informational access.

There is a toxic potential in words spoken into ears in Shakespeare's plays, for as they are whispered into the ear they become fodder for the tongue. We know from *Hamlet* that the ear is subject to poisoning, yet this poison is

refashioned as spoken words in *Othello* and *The Winter's Tale*.⁵⁹ Iago claims he will infect Othello's ear with slanders and rumor—"I'll pour this pestilence into his ear" (2.3.330). Similarly, we see a striking similarity about the male anxiety regarding whispering in Shakespeare's late romance *The Winter's Tale* (1611). The Iago-figure in *The Winter's Tale* is transformed, as Leontes becomes his own worst enemy, his own "putter-on" (2.1.143), slandering Hermione and believing the buzz he has himself created through circumstantial evidence. His jealousy stems from a fantasy of the powers of female audition. He fears people are gossiping about his situation of supposedly being cuckolded—"They're here with me already, whisp'ring, rounding, / 'Sicilia is a so-forth'. 'Tis far gone / When I shall gust it last" (1.2.217-19). Leontes asks Camillo if he has "heard— / For, to a vision so apparent rumour / Cannot be mute" that Hermione is "slippery" (1.2.272-75). While rumor cannot be mute, its distillation and distribution can be muted, particularly in the hidden transcript or through whispering. As Camillo denies that Hermione is a whore, Leontes flatly asks him, "Is whispering nothing?" (1.2.286). Whispering in public becomes for Leontes "proof" of his wife's adultery; furthermore, it brings about deep anxiety in Leontes because what is being spoken is outside of his direct authorization. We should remember that Leontes gives Hermione leave to speak earlier in the scene after she has held her peace in the public transcript (27). Later, however, Leontes grows not just jealous but unnerved because Hermione harbors the word in her ear, away from Leontes' own greedy ear. Furthermore, he becomes excessively talkative, railing uncontrollably, only to be made silent by female silence at the end of the play, as he stands in wonder at the silent statue of Hermione.⁶⁰

More, of course, gets poured into Hermione's ear, again out of the earshot of Leontes. He enters in 2.1. after Mamillius tells his mother he will relate a winter's tale: "I will tell it softly, / Yon crickets shall not hear it." Hermione replies, "Come on then, and give't me in mine ear" (2.1.32-34). At this moment, Leontes and his men enter discussing Camillo's desertion with Polixenes. His anger grows perhaps by seeing Mamillius whisper in Hermione's ear, a reminder to him of Hermione's supposed loose body, of opening her ear first to Polixenes. Leontes reads her open ear as a sign of her sexual promiscuity, yet there is also a sense that he is equally disturbed by his own ear's inability to hear. These "crickets" as Mamillius calls them, are Hermione's waiting women, who Hermione demands accompany her to prison (118-26). Seemingly, Hermione will still be able to engage in the hidden transcript with these women in the enclosed space of prison, a prison that, in turn, becomes a birthing room, as we are made aware in 2.3. The birthing room was where the lying in period after birth occurred, a place for the mother and her "gossips" only. Paulina brings "ocular proof," the newborn, to Leontes in 2.3., and responds to his query of the commotion she makes by stating, "No noise, my lord, but needful conference / About some gossips for your highness" (40-1). Leontes, however, sees Paulina as a "callat [scold] / Of boundless tongue" (91-2), a gossip in need of bridling. He seeks to control what he believes is Hermione's inclination for gossip, as he denies her the proper "childbed privilege" (3.2.101), traditionally awash with talkative women. Leontes seeks to undo concealed spaces—that is, spaces that lie outside his earshot, and in doing so he ceases the exchange of the hidden transcript. His temporary breakdown stems from an inability to authorize and control the word that finds its way into his wife's ear.

Othello marks another such instance in Shakespeare where the hidden transcript, again in the form of hushed talk and whispering, occurs between women beyond the earshot of male hearing. The key scene of this female exchange is the willow scene (4.3), but preceding it is a scene that displays a public exchange of information. Iago is adept at misconstruing evidence, and he has begun his work at abusing Othello's ears with rumors (1.3.377), insinuating that he heard Michael Cassio "blab" that he slept with Desdemona (4.1.24-29). As Carol Rutter argues, one of the play's perversions is that gossip isn't what women do; "It's men's talk."⁶¹ However, I would classify the type of talk Iago engages in as rumor because of its larger-scale repercussions in Venice and Cyprus. Othello demands Iago give him "ocular proof" (3.3.365), and his exchange at the beginning of 4.2. points to his obsession with the visual:

Othello: You have *seen* nothing then?
 Emilia: Nor ever *heard*, nor ever did suspect.
 Othello: Yes, you have *seen* Cassio and she together.
 Emilia: But then I *saw* no harm, and then I *heard*
 Each syllable that breath made up between 'em.
 Othello: *What, did they never whisper?*
 Emilia: Never, my lord. (4.2.1-7, italics mine)

Othello, still searching for verification of ocular proof, seems to take Cassio and Desdemona's being together as all the proof he needs. Emilia repeats "heard" twice, noting that any conversation between them took place within earshot. Like Leontes in *The Winter's Tale*, Othello here shows his anxiety about inaccessible whispering and information passing out of his reach and authorization. For him, whispering poses a threat to marital sovereignty—potentially making him a cuckold—and would serve as unheard "aural proof" that might trump anything that might be seen. However, Othello sees Emilia as a "closet lock and key of villainous secrets" (23), a woman who harbors information that has passed in her

ear and who does not give men access to this news. Othello will later attempt to sever any female to female talk in Desdemona's chamber, hoping to deny Emilia the possibility to infect Desdemona's ear. The private female space is one where their "close dilations" or private reports are exchanged, reports that gesture toward Iago's continual aims of uncovering the hidden through language.⁶² Yet as Patricia Parker notes, the play increasingly references the stopping of women's mouths, as we see with Cassio who fears Bianca will "rail in the streets" (4.1.156) and Iago who demands that his wife Emilia "Speak within door" (4.2.148).⁶³ These fears arise in the world "outside," and in seeking to curb female speech—particularly by moving it or its potential indoors—men erroneously think they curb the exchange of the hidden transcript.

The willow scene begins with Othello demanding that Desdemona go to bed and to dismiss Emilia from her chamber. Yet Emilia, the subversive force who rivals Iago in cleverness, makes what should have been an immediate dismissal into a prolonged conversation in private. Standing behind Desdemona, unpinning her, we can imagine Emilia actually at Desdemona's ear speaking these words, engaging in light gossip about itchy eyes ("I have heard it said so") before the conversation turns to husbands. Their ensuing hushed conversation in this private space certainly has a confessional quality to it, what Roland Barthes would call an "auricular confession, from mouth to ear, in the secrecy of the confessional."⁶⁴ This confessional space emphasizes listening over talking, as the comic conferring in *Shrew* becomes transformed in *Othello* as a tragic space of exchange of the private transcript. What Othello feared escapes from Emilia's mouth into Desdemona's ear in this private space, as Emilia states, "But I do think it is their husbands' faults / If wives do fall" (84-85).

Furthermore, Emilia voices women's right to revenge against men for their treatment of them, for "their ills instruct us so" (101). Emilia's transgressive words, freely spoken in this private space, fall into the ears of a Desdemona who refuses to subvert the authority of her husband.

Yet for all her supposed dissidence with her tongue, Emilia emerges as the one to speak not rumor or gossip but the truth in the final scene, as she has become both an eyewitness and earwitness to Desdemona's death. Further, Emilia exposes the limits of the male authority of language. When she finds Desdemona dead on her bed, Emilia tells Othello, "I must needs report the truth" (5.2.137). When Iago enters and tells Emilia to "charm [silence] your tongue," Emilia, refusing to be bridled, defiantly states, "I will not charm my tongue. I am bound to speak" (190-91). Emilia asserts her own informational authority after she has had aural access to the wrongs committed against Desdemona. As Emilia uncovers her husband's lies, slanders, and rumors, she defies the power balance in the public transcript and is willed to speak. She exclaims, "Good gentlemen, let me have leave to speak. / 'Tis proper I obey him, but not now" (202-203). Emilia stands to expose Iago's authority of the word and claims she will "speak as liberal as the north" in order to restore the truth amid the rumors that encircle them (226). The consequence for speaking the truth in the public transcript is death at the hands of her husband, whose authority of information she has subverted.

Scott's analysis of the hidden transcript opens up a way to understand Shakespeare's sensory communities with an aural component, inaccessible to men, that enable women to occupy a space to confront the truth of their plights. The defiance Shakespeare depicts in *The Winter's Tale* and *Othello* rests on women

exercising their need for talk in spaces inaccessible to men. Hermione's ear, like Emilia's, harbors information that is secured against male control. Men in both plays, fearful of what they can't recover or have access to, of what remains hidden from their ears, seek to deny women a space at one another's ears so as to curb the exchange of the hidden transcript. The plays reveal the powers of the muted private tongue, at odds with the garrulous public tongue, yet equally subversive.

Female Discerning Listening, Male Transgressive Speech:
The Case of *All's Well That Ends Well*

I conclude this chapter with a discussion of the murmuring of a man in Shakespeare's comedy *All's Well That Ends Well* (1604), a man who speaks with an unrestrained tongue and undermines the male authority of language. It is not uncommon in Shakespeare to witness a man engaging in what Biron in *Love's Labour's Lost* calls "mumble-news" [gossip] (5.2.464) or what Feste in *Twelfth Night* calls "bibble babble" (4.2.89).⁶⁵ As many of Shakespeare's romantic comedies reveal, the world can be turned upside down when men engage in talk that had traditionally been accorded to women. But, as I argue, in *All's Well*, Parolles' babbling tongue undermines men in the play. Shakespeare reenvisioned the associations of loose tongue with woman by presenting a man who uses his tongue as an exporter of dangerous talk, talk that threatens male sovereignty.⁶⁶ And such male loose talk is opposed to a community of female listeners, who are able to discern the lies of Bertram through careful listening.

In the world of *All's Well That Ends Well*, it is Bertram's companion, Parolles, who possesses the uncontrolled tongue. Significantly, *All's Well* is a

comedy about (male) language gone astray, a play where the main character responsible for such loose speech is named after the French word for *word—parole*.⁶⁷ Like Falstaff, Parolles is a figure of unchecked orality. Shakespeare seems to blason Parolles's tongue, fragmenting and displaying it to emphasize his unruliness and threat to male systems of authority. Parolles, who comically announces, "I love not many words" (3.6.75), is called an "infinite and endless liar" (3.6.10-11), a "manifold linguist" (4.3.224), a "humblebee" (4.5.6), a "carp" (5.2.79), and, according to Lafeu, "He's a good drum, my lord, but a naughty orator" (5.3.253-54). Parolles is not a man of war, but a man of speech, a fop who in his inability to keep male secrets becomes a potential rumormonger and thus a potential threat to male authority. In fact, male anxieties about his tongue occupy the subplot of the play, anxieties that threaten to spill over into the main plot and overtake the comedy.⁶⁸

The fourth act is central to our understanding of Parolles. In this scene, Parolles exposes men for their rampant lies and broken oaths. Before being ambushed in 4.1., Parolles laments his situation and declares, "I find my tongue is too foolhardy" (26), a statement the Second Lord Dumaine declares is "the first truth that e'er thine own tongue was guilty of" (4.1.29-30). Parolles remarks, "Tongue, I must put you into a butter-woman's mouth, and buy myself another of Bajazet's mute, if you prattle me into these perils" (36-38). Parolles, in moments of clarity, knows his tongue has put him in a precarious situation, and threatens to put his own garrulous tongue into one deemed a proverbial scold and figuratively take his tongue from a Turkish servant, mute because he lacks a tongue. Parolles wants discretion, but he can only talk his way out of a situation. The Second Lord Dumaine prepares his men to ambush Parolles, blindfold him,

and speak to him in “choughs’ language” (18), a device meant to establish and reveal Parolle’s lies. Indeed, left without eyes to see and only ears to hear and a tongue to defend himself, Parolles, as predicted by the Second Lord Dumaine, cries out that he will reveal all the secrets of their camp if they let him live (78-81). Parolles has given his confession *without* discretion, and he is willed to speak the truth, a truth that spoken (and spoken back as his confession is read aloud) undermines male authority. Parolles’s parole, his “pestiferous reports of men” (4.3.284), has thrown male authorization askew. As we have seen in the history plays, it is the male, not female, tongue that Shakespeare continually asserts is the more pressing danger to male sovereignty and male control and authorization of information.

Yet for all the men full of tongue in the play, there is also a community of discerning female listeners. For instance, Helena refuses to credit the King’s physicians in their dire diagnosis of him in 2.1; refuses to say the Countess is a mother to her in 1.3.; and, finally refuses to listen to her husband’s demands and his letter in 3.2. She resolves after refusing to hear Bertram’s demands, “I will be gone, / That pitiful rumour may report my flight / To console thine ear” (3.2.126-28).⁶⁹ At the beginning of 4.3., the Lords Dumaine gossip and repeat false information about the death of Helena, news that was in fact “planted” by Helena and has reached the ear of Bertram. Helena uses rumor as an act of dissimulation similar to that used by King Henry in the second tetralogy. The Second Lord Dumaine, inquiring about the verification of this news, is told by First Lord Dumaine that the rector of Saint Jaques le Grand faithfully confirmed the news. Bertram, too, has this news “point from point, to the full arming of the verity” (47-60). Helena, in letting her plan become rumor, has, through no

tongue of her own, duped numerous men in order to gain a sense of power in her relations with Bertram. She has set in motion a rumor that is repeated on the tongues of other men, ultimately undermining male sovereignty. Helena seems to discern the ambiguous power inherent in rumor, using it to her advantage at the end of her play to assert her own authority.

The play depicts scenes in Florence that place a group of women together, what Julie Crawford calls a “homosocial coterie of women,” talking about news they have heard about the war.⁷⁰ Such scenes of female conference parallel those I have already examined in *Shrew* and *Othello*, but here Helena takes on a more pointed role in teaching other women about the necessity of discerning listening to men’s talk. Helena, now in Florence, disguises herself as a pilgrim and infiltrates the private space of the Widow, Diana, and Mariana, giving her access to the Widow in order to announce her plot against Bertram. Helena states, “what to your sworn counsel I have spoken / Is so from word to word” (3.7.9-10). Unlike Bertram and Parolles, Helena speaks truth. The young Diana is schooled by these “gossips” to be wary of men’s oaths (3.5.15-25), as Diana herself soon witnesses firsthand in her dialogue with Bertram (4.2.70-72). One of the effects of these women gathering and talking privately is to educate other women about male manipulation of language—in effect, this is a form of female counsel that is similar to the male counsel I examined in the previous chapter. As the play details, all men are Parolles figures—full of tongue—and must be countered by women with discerning listening in order to identify male linguistic dissimulation. By training the female ear, women like Diana can maintain their virginity and not be duped by male lies that fall upon their willing ears. The preservation of the female chaste body, then, relies on the discerning

ear, yet this chastity is self-imposed, not sanctioned by men. As Alison Findlay has remarked, "the play shows that collaboratively, women can subvert the male-dominated world they are forced to inhabit."⁷¹ Furthermore, by discerning the parole of men, women can together defy alignment of scolds/shrews with sexual looseness. The play ultimately posits how male, not female, loose tongues upset social and gender distinctions in France.

In this chapter I have argued that female characters in a range of Shakespeare's plays are indeed insurgent in their refashioning of forms of obedient silence and listening. Rather, through muted talk (not gossip) and discerning listening (both to the talk of men and to the counsel of other women) Shakespeare's women put into practice insurgent energies that often defy male authority. In staging these alternative renderings of the cultural prescriptions that sought female obedience, Shakespeare offers spaces of female insurgency that not only make compelling drama but offer a rethinking of gender stereotypes that were commonplace on the early modern stage.

Notes

¹ One such woman whose listening is attuned to the world of rumor around her is Portia in *Julius Caesar*, whose ears are alert to the bustling noise of the streets. She tells the boy Lucius, "I heard a bustling rumour, like a fray, / And the wind brings it from the Capitol" (2.4.19-20).

² Paster, *The Body Embarrassed*, 25. As John Kerrigan has recently remarked, "The blabber was a verbal incontinent, whose itch to gabble whatever was in his mind would lead (as Plutarch warned) to rash disclosure," *On Shakespeare and Early Modern Literature* 97. Drink, of course, most often preceded these open mouths relating table-talk, as we saw in the first chapter. The condition of leaky mouths, if you will, was not only afflicting women.

³ Roberts, "Are Shakespeare's Women Unruly?" 106.

⁴ Margaret P. Hannay concludes her examination of the records and writings that aristocratic Englishwomen have left behind by stating, "Most of these women were chaste, some were obedient, but none was silent," "O Daughter Heare," 58. While Hannay here asserts that the pen stands in for voice, thereby undermining patriarchy, she does not consider the potential subversiveness that silence can have. Of course, such unscripted silences seldom register in the historical record. The ideal of the silent woman may best be visualized in a work by the German painter and woodcut artist Anton Woensam, whose woodcut "Allegory of a Wise Woman" (c. 1525) presents a striking and popular continental image of female stereotypes. As Christa Grossinger remarks, the woman has "a key in her ear, referring to her willingness to listen to the word of God; a lock in her mouth, preventing her from using bad language and gossiping," *Humor and Folly*, 107. Wisdom comes from listening to God (and supposedly to other men) and in keeping silent, both as a way to fend off gossiping and scolding but also as a way to bridle their potential disruption of the patriarchal order. What this woodcut, and numerous iconographic images and writing alike, reveals is an interesting blindness to the potentiality of silence as a weapon.

⁵ Becon, *Catechism*, 28.

⁶ Brathwait, *The English Gentlewoman*, G1r. Brathwait even tells women to "avert your Eare when you heare" evil words coming from immodest tongues, tongues he does not gender, G1r. Modesty in dress and speech is necessary, claims Brathwait, and he especially cautions about keeping company with other women who are "blabbes": "Beware therefore with whom you consort, as you tender your repute: for report will brute what you are, by the Company which you beare," G1r. Women become the subjects and sources of rumor, for report (or,

more pointedly, men) will spread rumors about women in order to maintain gender binaries.

⁷ *Ibid.*, G1r, italics in original. As Margaret P. Hannay notes, "Teaching women to read the words of men without teaching them to write their own was one effective means of silencing them," "Introduction," 8.

⁸ Jonathan Hope, responding to the view that in the Renaissance the English language was considered in terms of oral rather than written language, remarks, "This speech-based conception is partly due, no doubt, to the strength of the rhetorical tradition, predicated on spoken performance even if often applied to writing, but it is also a consequence of the generally dominant status of speech in the period," "Shakespeare and Language: An Introduction," 3.

⁹ Mazziio, "Sins of the Tongue," 54-55; Habermann, *Staging Slander and Gender*, 99. Yet Joy Wiltenburg argues that the female tongue, "like the weapons against husbands, acquires strong phallic associations" that in turn reflect male views about women. She writes, "Women's bodies were seen as both disorderly and disordered: not only were they apt to stray from their proper functions; they were flawed from the start, lacking a key prerequisite for authority," *Disorderly Women and Female Power*, 155.

¹⁰ See Geoffrey Whitney's *A Choice of Emblemes* (1586), where he presents a woodcut of a woman with her finger in her mouth, preventing speech: "This representes the vertues of a wife, / Her finger, staies her tonge to runne at large" (M3r). In Whitney's version, the stopped tongue is a virtue, and silence is a trait becoming of a woman and wife—anything less would move the woman into the realm of the transgressive.

¹¹ Adams, *The Taming of the Tongue*, E4v.

¹² *Ibid.*, F1r.

¹³ In J. H[earth]'s *The House of Correction, or certaine satyricall epigrams* (1619), we read of "Peter's trouble:

Peter is troubled with a froward Wife,
Whose curtnesse makes him wearie of his life:
The simple fellow, (with her rayling crost)
Hath often wish't that she her tongue had lost.

Alas (poore Peter) sure thy case is ill,
When shee'le nor lose her tongue, nor keepe it still.

And in *The Gossips Greeting or, A new Discovery of such Females meeting* (1620) by W.P., the author writes regarding female gossips: "Their tongues are smoothly oyl'd, sweet are their words, / And yet they cut worse then two edged swords" B1r.

¹⁴ The way to silence such women was through two devices meant to curb speech—the scold's bridle and the cucking stool. See Lynda Boose's central article on this subject, "Scolding Brides and Bridling Scolds." As Natalie Zemon Davis argues, the image of the disorderly woman did not always function to keep women in their place, "Women on Top," 162.

¹⁵ Jankowski, *Women in Power*, 38.

¹⁶ Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, 25.

¹⁷ Jordan, *Renaissance Feminism*, 249.

¹⁸ See also Thomas Cogan, *The Haven of Health* (London, 1589), where he relates in a chapter on the tongue, "the tongue can no man tame. It is an unruly evil ful of deadly poyson. But of mans tongue I have not to speake, but with all men to use that Phsicke which the wise man Cato prescribeth: It is a speciall vertue to charme the tonge. Yet it is very harde for women to observe it, as hee knoweth best that is troubled with a shrewe," Q3r.

¹⁹ Underdown, "The Taming of the Scold," 119. We should recall that such scolding tongues are also a factor in the representation of witches in early modern England. For an excellent discussion of these issues, see Jonathan Gil Harris's final chapter in *Foreign Bodies and the Body Politic*, 107-40.

²⁰ Gouk, "Some English Theories of Hearing," 95. As Gouk contends, most of the macroscopic parts of the ear had been identified by the early seventeenth century, 100.

²¹ I here offer several examples on this observation. In *The Dumbe Divine Speaker* (1605), Giacomo Affinati remarks, "Nature hath given him one tongue onelye, and two eares, therefore hee shoulde speake little, but heare muche," C2r. Furthermore, in *A Treatise of Modesty and Silence* (1632), Reverend Father F. Alfonso Rodriguez, S.J., discusses how nature situates the tongue and the ear:

And nature it selfe doth sufficiently insinuate, with how great circumstance and warines we ought to speake, by having inclosed the tongue under so sure a ward and custody, imploying unto that end two barres or gates, the one of the teeth, the other of the lippes, ordayning a wall and afterwarde another counterscarpe for custody of the tongue; whereas it hath plac't no guard, nor any let or barre to hinder accesse unto the eares, and that to give us thereby to understand, both the difficulty which there is, and caution necessary to be had in speaking, and also with what facility and promptitude we are to heare. (58).

Also, in a letter from Ireland, Sir Henry Sidney writes to his son Philip, "Think upon every word that you will speak before you utter it, and remember how nature hath ramparted up, as it were, the tongue with teeth, lips—yea, and hair without the lips, and all betokening reins and bridles for the loose use of that member," in *Renaissance Letters*, 39. Adams, in *The Taming of the Tongue* (1616) remarks, "A double fence hath the Creator given to confine it, the lips and the teeth; that through those mownds it might not breake," E1v. And John Taylor, author of the well-known *A Jupiter Lecture* (1639), writes in a broadside entitled "Christian Admonitions, against the Two Fearfull Sinnes of Cursing and Swearing" (c. 1630), "God hath naturally placed and inclosed the tongue of man within the stone walls of his teeth, and without those walls there are also two earthen Bulwarkes or Rampieres of his lippes: he hath apointed Reason to be the tongues guide and guardian."

²² Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned*, 191.

²³ *Ibid.*, 212. As Devon L. Hodges remarks, the purpose of the Renaissance anatomy text was "to strip away false appearances and expose the truth. With violent determination, writers of anatomies used their pens as scalpels to cut through appearances and reveal the mute truth of objects," *Renaissance Fictions of Anatomy*, 2. See also the volume *The Body in Parts* for an in-depth view of bodily fragmentation in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The editors write in their *Introduction*: "the individual part, though singled out in a range of textual and iconographic spaces, always suggests a series of relations—to a normative, pathological, or utterly elusive whole, or to other (dominant or submissive, cooperative or uncooperative) parts, and to the range of symbolic structures that are based on those relations," xv. It is worth noting that the volume does not contain any articles on the body part the ear, but does cover everything from the heart, the breast, the brow, the tongue, the anus, and the clitoris.

²⁴ Vickers, "Preface to the *Blasons Anatomiques*," 170. The drama of the seventeenth century continues to draw from this rich tradition. In Middleton's *Women Beware Women* (c. 1622), Sordido tells the Ward what the ideal woman/wife should be and "what faults that will not make her pass," speaking in terms that look back to the blason tradition:

The wife your guardianer ought to tender
 Should be pretty, straight and slender;
 Her hair not short, her foot not long,
 Her hand not huge, nor too too loud her tongue. (2.2.102-105)
 Of note is that his litany of female body parts (which continues for another
 thirteen lines) makes no mention of the ear.

²⁵ Oreille a qui tout se rapporte,
 Oreille la fenestre et porte
 Du coeur et de' l'entendement.
 Oreille qui fais jugement
 Des bons ou des mauvais rapportz,
 Des doux ou des rudes accordz,
 De tous accens, et de tous sons,
 Que sans toy nous ne congnoissons;
 Brief tu as de chascun ce tiltre,
 Que tu es vray juge et arbitre
 De ce qui est bien, ou mal dict.
 Oreille tu as le credit
 De tout ouyr, de tout scavoir,
 Sans qu'on s'en puisse appercevoir:
 Oreille tu as la puissance
 De donner quelque congnoissance
 Au demandeur, s'il parviendra
 A la fin ou il pretendra.
 Oreille donc qui tout entend,
 Pour me rendre bien fort content
 Escoute moy quand je voudray,
 Et croy tout ce que te diray. (61-82)

Les Blasons Du Corps Feminin, Editions Andre Balland (Paris, 1967), unnumbered pages.

²⁶ Nunn, *Staging Anatomies*, 204.

²⁷ For instance, a male anxiety about the male tongue is present in Thomas Middleton's *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1607), where Vindice and his brother Hippolito poison the Duke by having him kiss a poisoned skull. As the Duke dies, he rails against them, and Vindice replies, "What? Is not thy tongue eaten out yet? / Then we'll invent a silence" (3.5.195-96). Vindice continues, "Nay, faith, we'll have you hushed. / Now with thy dagger / Nail down his tongue" (3.5.197-99). For more on the tongue in Middleton's play, see Simmons, "The Tongue and Its Office in *The Revenger's Tragedy*."

²⁸ Mazzio, "Sins of the Tongue," 62.

²⁹ Tamora denies Lavinia's protest, "open thy deaf ears" (2.3.160). Tamora's refusal to hear Lavinia's pleas before she is raped and mutilated is different than a woman turning her deaf ears to men that I examine later in this chapter. See Affinati (1605), who gives an example of the cutting out of the tongue that is an inversion of the Lavinia/Philomel story:

This Philosopher was such an especial lover of silence, that his countrey being usurped by a mightie Tyrante, and hee much labouring for the libertie thereof, was by the Tyrant committed to prison: where, beeing put to greivous tortures, and insupportable tormentes, onely for discoverie of the private conjuration, hee (to free the rest from beeing revealed) with his owne teeth bit foorth his tongue, and spat it afterwarde in the bloudie Tyrants face, as contented rather to endure eternall silence, then (by his tongue) to injurie his countryes lovers, and copartners. (11)

Also see Henry Peacham's emblem "Silentum dignitas" in his *Minerva Britannia* (1612):

Loe Solon here th' Athenian sage doth stand,
The glorie of all GRECIA to this day,
With courage bold who taketh knife in hand,
And with the same, doth cut his tongue away:
But being ask'd of some, the reason why,
By writing thus he answer'd by and by.

Oft have I heard, that many have sustained,
Much losse by talke, and lavishnes of tongue,
Of silence never any yet complained,
Or could say justly, it had done him wrong:
Who knowed to speake, and when to hold his peace,
Findes fewest dangers, and lives best at ease. (156)

³⁰ Before dragging Lavinia away to rape her, Chiron silences her: "I'll stop your mouth" (2.3.184). All three men responsible for Lavinia losing her tongue and her innocence have their mouths stopped or effectively bridled as well. Lucius, speaking of Aaron, commands the Goths, "Sirs, stop his mouth, and let him speak no more" (5.1.150-51). And in the following scene, Titus orders his men to act against Chiron and Demetrius: "Stop close their mouths. Let them not speak a word" (5.2.163). At the conclusion of the play, Aaron is ungagged, and the first question he asks before he continues his assorted curses is, "Ah, why should wrath be mute and fury dumb?" (5.3.183).

³¹ See Gene Sharp's groundbreaking study, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, 170-71, where he examines 198 methods of nonviolent action, one of which is "silence." For an intriguing account of the issue of silence and speech in the Quakers during the Renaissance, see Bauman, *Let Your Words Be Few*.

³² Luckyj, 'A Moving Rhetoricke', 39.

³³ *Ibid.*, 91.

³⁴ Jardine, *Still Harping on Daughters*, 121.

³⁵ The play seems to echo Henry Smith's *A Preparative to Marriage*, published a year before Shakespeare's play (1591): "Husbands must hold their hands and wives their tongues." Quoted in *Half Humankind*, 53.

³⁶ Such taming techniques in the play, Margaret Downs-Gamble argues, parallel the educational programs advocated by Renaissance humanists, "The Taming-School," 65.

³⁷ Bianca sends word that she is busy (86) while the Widow hears in her husband's entreaty a jest and bids *him* to come to her (95-6). These responses underline the insurgency that is under way, one that has been initiated in the conference with Kate.

³⁸ Brown, "'Fie, what a foolish duty call you this?'" 301.

³⁹ Kahn, *Man's Estate*, 117. Kahn notes, "Though she pretends to speak earnestly on behalf of her own inferiority, she actually treats us to a pompous, wordy, holier-than-thou sermon that delicately mocks the sermons her husband has delivered to her and about her. It is significant that Kate's speech is both her longest utterance and the longest in the play," 115.

⁴⁰ Lucio, thinking the Duke is really a Friar, slanders the Duke. After he leaves, the Duke states, "back-wounding calumny / The whitest virtue strikes. What king so strong / Can tie the gall up in the slanderous tongue?" (417-19). The Duke gets to hear the effects of the word unfettered. A few lines later, when Escalus enters and asks the Duke "What news abroad i' th' world?" he answers, "There is scarce truth enough alive to make societies secure . . . This news is old enough, yet it is every day's news" (451-55). And in 4.1., he remarks how "volumes of report / Run with their false and most contrarious quest" (57-8). News, rumor, slander—the Duke laments how interwoven into the life of the world of Vienna these things are.

⁴¹ McGuire, *Speechless Dialect*, xv. Kenneth Gross suggests that these open silences can become in performance a vehicle for resistance, *Shakespeare's Noise*, 98. For a different view, see Michael Friedman, who claims that "the first four acts of the

play code Isabella's silence as obedience and submission while her formidable resistance is always embodied by speech," "Wishing a More Strict Restraint" 3.

⁴² Spotswood, "Isabella's 'Speechless Dialect'", 114.

⁴³ For more on this point, see Folkerth, *The Sound of Shakespeare*, 112-17.

⁴⁴ Wes Folkerth notes that this moment can be read as "as acoustemological disposition linked to assent, specifically to the role of assent in the practice of judging or 'hearing' others", *The Sound of Shakespeare*, 115.

⁴⁵ Lear, initially questioning Cordelia's response, responds, "Nothing will come of nothing, speak again" (1.1.89). Later in 1.4., the Fool sets out to teach Lear a speech:

Have more than thou showest,
 Speak less than thou knowest,
 Lend less than thou owest,
 Ride more than thou goest,
 Learn [hear] more than thou trowest [believe]. (1.4.101-104)

The wisdom of the Fool corresponds to Cordelia's refusals to speak in 1.1., and his advice to hear more than he believes points to another male failure to listen through the words of others. Kent dismisses the Fool's speech as, notably, "nothing," and when the Fool asks Lear if he can make no use of nothing, Lear again replies, "nothing can be made out of nothing" (1.4.111-14). The Fool then remarks, "now thou art an O without a figure. I am better than thou art now; I am a fool, thou art nothing" (1.4.168-69).

⁴⁶ Luckyj, 'A Moving Rhetoricke,' 78.

⁴⁷ Gross, *Shakespeare's Noise*, 179-80. As Gross observes, "What Lear wants both to drive from his ear and to find in his own voice is the strength of Cordelia's 'nothing,' a gesture of negation more unshakable than any of Lear's curses (if not a curse itself). That 'nothing' is the founding Word that turns Lear's world upside down", 179. Gross continues, stating that Cordelia's silence "exposes Lear himself to an answer that he cannot bear to hear", 180. Gross writes, "Lear can never quite say 'nothing' as Cordelia says it, yet neither can he drive the word from his ear. For her delicate word has already imprinted itself on the desolate noises of the wasteland", 181.

⁴⁸ For more on Cordelia's decision to be silent, see Rovine, *Silence in Shakespeare*, 41-2.

⁴⁹ Speaking to Lear, the Fool, in words that oddly resemble the plight of Cordelia, comments about Goneril and Regan: "They'll have me whipped for speaking true, thou'lt have me whipped for lying; and sometimes I am whipped for holding my peace" (1.4.159-61).

⁵⁰ Regan refuses to hear Lear's pleas asking her to provide clothing, food, and a bed for him (2.4.150). Both sisters focus in on Lear's own hearing, telling him to "give ear" and to hear their denials of shelter (2.4.228, 255). Regan, after refusing her father shelter from the storm, asserts that Lear is apt "To have his ear abused" (2.4.302).

⁵¹ For another dramatic presentation of this issue, see the enormously popular sequel to Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, John Fletcher's *The Woman's Prize, or The Tamer Tamed* (1611). Interestingly, Fletcher's play also has close ties to a play I will discuss in some detail in the following chapter, Ben Jonson's *Epicoene, or, The Silent Woman* (1609-10). Fletcher's play dramatizes an inversionary world of woman on top, where Maria, Petruchio's second wife, thought to be mild of demeanor, decides not to be "gentle, tame Maria" but instead a railing woman in control of her husband (1.2.170). As the Prologue remarks, the play presents "our female war" (10), with female warriors of the tongue and ear, with "Colonel Bianca" commanding the defenses, barricaded behind doors to confer with the other women (1.3.69). Fletcher makes the notion of war feminized as well, with female tongues as weapons and female ears fortifications against male commands. The three women—Bianca, Livia, and Maria—conspire in their "brave cause" (1.2.124) to deprive men of sexual fulfillment, a plan that Maria sees as taming Petruchio and making him "know and fear a wife" (1.3.276). Livia's pronouncement, "let's all wear breeches" (1.2.145), highlights the gender inversion that these women strive to accomplish. When Petruchio's servant Jaques enters telling Maria that Petruchio is waiting for her to go lie with him, Maria does not listen to this command to the consternation of Jaques. His anxiety lies in the "shuffling of these women": "I have observed 'em all this day—their whispers / One in another's ear, their signs and pinches / And breaking often into violent laughters" (1.2.216-20). This uncontrolled, concealed space of female talk and listening becomes a place of resistance. Fletcher depicts a sisterhood of non-listening women in the play, and their power in numbers threatens male sovereignty. While early modern commentators posited the male fantasy of "silent, chaste, and obedient," Fletcher, fully realizing female resistance through various forms of silence and an impenetrable private space of women, presents an inversionary nightmare that ultimately undermines male authority of the word.

⁵² I borrow the term "sensory community" from Peter Charles Hoffer, *Sensory Worlds in Early America*, 145. Hoffer outlines the offstage interior spaces of slave gatherings in early America that made up their sensory communities.

⁵³ Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, xii. Scott's term for these low-profile forms of resistance "that dare not speak in their own name" is the "infrapolitics" of subordinate groups, 20.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 4-5, 111.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁵⁹ See also *Cymbeline*, where Pisano remarks, "Leonatus, O master, what a strange infection / Is fall'n into thy ear! What false Italian, / As poisonous tongued as handed, hath prevailed / On thy too ready hearing?" (3.2.2-6). For more on hearing in this play, see Simonds, "No More . . . Offend Our Hearing".

⁶⁰ This silence is, however, different from Iago's own self-imposed (resistant) silence in the final scene of *Othello*. In *The Winter's Tale*, Paulina remarks, "I like your silence" (5.3.21). I would suggest that Paulina is not a scold as Leontes remarks, but rather one who, like Emilia in *Othello*, speaks fearlessly in the face of power in the public transcript.

⁶¹ Rutter, *Enter the Body*, 147.

⁶² Parker, "Othello and Hamlet," 61.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁶⁴ Barthes, *The Responsibility of Forms*, 251.

⁶⁵ See also *Much Ado About Nothing* (1599), where we hear the Prince, Don Pedro, remark that Benedick's "tongue is the clapper, for what his heart thinks his tongue speaks" (3.2.10-11). Benedick's love for Beatrice has made him "not as [I]

have been," a feminizing inversion in which the bachelor Benedick wags his tongue after falling in love. See also the final scene of *The Comedy of Errors*, where the Duke tells the Abbess, "With all my heart I'll gossip at this feast" (5.1.409). Furthermore, in Middleton and Rowley's *The Changeling* (1622) Beatrice accuses DeFlores of "unnecessary blabbing" (1.1.98). See Geoffrey Whitney's collection *A Choice of Emblemes* (1586), where one emblem is entitled "Silentium," 60-61. The 42-line poem that accompanies the emblem of a scholar silently studying a book, finger to his mouth, extols the necessity of man in guarding his tongue from excessive speech and babbling. Whitney draws his moral from the teaching of Pythagoras, Zeno, Cato, and Saint Paul, who "this faulte doth sharplie tutche, / And oftentimes, condemneeth bablinge mutche," 17-18. The thrust of Whitney's seemingly non-gendered discussion centers, actually, on taming the unruly *male* tongue. For an excellent study of emblems and the notion of silence, see Pinkus, *Picturing Silence*.

⁶⁶ Discussing female resistance to reforms enacted by Henry VIII, Sharon L. Jansen writes

I assumed that the kind of dangerous talk and strange behavior that women engaged in would be peculiarly female—that it would somehow be gendered activity. . . . But these assumptions were also challenged by the stories of the women I found. Just as often as women—even more often, as it turned out—men were accused of and investigated for gossip, for having engaged in scurrilous talk, idle tale telling, and spreading rumors. (*Dangerous Talk and Strange Behavior*, 144)

Even well into the seventeenth century, male religious writers like William Gearing, in *A bridle for the tongue* (London, 1663), expressed their anxieties about men's loose tongues and murmuring that took them away from listening to God's word: "But alas! if ever mens tongues were set on fire with hell, it is in this age: and if prophaness, slanders, revilings, lying, blasphemies, scoffings, oaths and execrations, were taken out of mens words, how few would remain!" A5v. Gearing also remarks, "Man hath many importers, his ears, his eyes, and all his senses in their several employments, but only one exporter, ie., the Tongue, and that finds work enough to utter all their reports," A5v. See also Henry Peacham, who, in his emblem collection of 1612, remarks,

So many men are in their Nature prone,
To make the worst of matters vaine and light,
And for a straw will take occasion,
In choller moov'd to quarrell and to fight.
Then meddle thou the least for feare of wrong,
But most of all beware a lavish tongue. (Bb3r)

⁶⁷ Bruce Smith points to the useful distinction between *la parole*, the immediate spoken word, and *le recit*, the word mediated by writing, and linguists such as Ferdinand de Saussure have detailed that *parole* refers to an individual's actual speech utterances, "Parolles's Recitations," 76.

⁶⁸ Along with Falstaff, Parolles also conjures up images of Coriolanus, who laments, "My throat of war be turned / . . . into a pipe / Small as an eunuch or the virgin voice" (5.6.112-14). Like Coriolanus, Parolles represents the often unspoken anxiety about men becoming like women through language and the excesses of the tongue. See also Johnson, "Silence and Speech in *Coriolanus*."

⁶⁹ Interestingly, *All's Well* is Shakespeare's only comedy to use the word *rumor*. There are 12 instances in all of Shakespeare where the word *rumour* is used, the majority of these coming from the history plays (*King John*, *Richard III*, and 2 *Henry IV*[2]) and the tragedies (*Macbeth* [2], *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Julius Caesar*, *Coriolanus*, and *Timon of Athens*). The romance *The Winter's Tale* is the remaining play to use the word. *All's Well That Ends Well*, in fact, begins with injunctions to Bertram about language. His mother the Countess tells him, "Be checked for silence / But never taxed for speech" (1.1.60-61), an interesting statement coming from a woman who is seen to control language throughout the play. The Countess relates that her son should in fact be criticized for silence (a standard feminine virtue) while being rebuked for idle chatter (again, a female stereotype). According to this configuration, Bertram should vie for moderation in speech. Further, in the following scene the King of France tells Bertram that his father's "tongue obeyed his hand" and that "his plausible words / He scattered not in ears, but grafted them / To grow there and to bear" (1.2.41, 53-55). Bertram's father used language not superfluously, but in moderation.

⁷⁰ Crawford, "The Homoerotics of Shakespeare's Elizabethan Comedies," 153.

⁷¹ Findlay, *A Feminist Perspective on Renaissance Drama*, 98.

CHAPTER 4

“NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH”:

BEN JONSON’S COMEDY OF RUMORS

“Let the greatest part of the news thou hearest be the least part of what thou believest, lest the greater part of what thou believest be the least part of what is true.”

Francis Quarles, *Enchyridion* (1641)

“They are an odious, and vile kind of creatures, that fly about the house all day; and picking up the filth of the house, like pies or swallows, carry it to their nest (the lord’s ears) and oftentimes report the lies they have feigned, for what they have seen and heard.”

Ben Jonson, *Discoveries* (lines 1998-2004)

I begin this chapter on the gendered spaces of rumor and the fantasy of a listening audience in the dramatic works of Ben Jonson with a consideration of two conflicting accounts of the responsible parties of London’s noise in the seventeenth century. At the bottom of the broadside *Tittle-Tattle; OR, the Several Branches of Gossiping* (1600/1603) appears a 36-line poem:

At Child-bed when the Gossips meet,
Fine Stories we are told;
And if they get a Cup too much,
Their Tongues they cannot hold.

At Market when good Housewives meet,
Their Market being done,
Together they will crack a Pot,
Before they can get Home.

The Bake-house is a Place you know,
Where Maides a Story hold,
And if their Mistresses will prate,
They must not be control’d.

At Alehouse you see how jovial they be,
 With every one her Noggin;
 For till the Skull and Belly be full,
 None of them will be jogging.

To Church fine Ladies do resort,
 New Fashions for to spy,
 And others go to Church sometimes
 To show their Bravery.

[The Hot]-house makes a rough Skin smooth,
 And doth it beautify,
 Fine Gossips use it every Week,
 Their Skins to purify.

At the Conduit striving for their Turn,
 The Quarrel it grows great,
 That up in Arms they are at last,
 And one another beat.

Washing at the River's Side
 Good Housewives take Delight;
 But scolding Sluts care not to work,
 Like wrangling Queens they fight.

Then Gossips all a Warning take,
 Pray cease your Tongue to rattle;
 Go knit, and Sew, and Brew, and Bake,
 And leave off TITTLE-TATTLE.¹

As part of a larger discourse that, as I have earlier shown, sought to give directives to women on how to conduct their lives, *Tittle-Tattle* serves to heighten male awareness of what could only be construed as a city problem—the loose-tongued (often implying a sexually loose) woman.² The poem reveals just how many spaces women occupy, creating for the broadside's author a din that spills over into male domains of business and exchange. The broadside implores such gossiping women to continue their work, for the good of the private household and of the city, but urges them to not speak when they are in these public places.³ Certainly, the clamor of the Renaissance marketplace was a babel of ungendered voices. According to Gail Kern Paster, literary texts responded to an urban

complexity initiated by the new and the commercial with a “negative emphasis on crowds, dirt, change, and noise.”⁴ As *Tittle-Tattle* reveals, these female gathering places threatened to spill into the male domains of authorized truth. Moving outside the realm of the domestic, women occupy civic space, and thereby constitute a visual and aural problem for men engaged in business. Women were a vibrant sector of London’s sights and sounds, yet the anxiety is that tittle-tattle draws women away from the necessary work that makes them a central component of London’s community. The broadside’s announcement of the disruptive potential of the female tongue works to erase any doubts that women needed to be controlled.⁵ The spaces mentioned in the poem are, with the exception of the alehouse and the church, places defined as within the realm of the woman in early modern England. The traditional zones where one could collect authorized information—the church and the courts of law, for example—have been overrun by new sites of unauthorized information exchange; furthermore, this supposed unrestrained talk is out of the earshot of men and cannot be authorized. *Tittle-Tattle* shows just as many women talking as women listening, and as I outlined in the previous chapter, female aural networks could prove insurgent. Yet by exposing the female loose tongue as *the* essence of these London places, the broadside author marks them as unofficial spaces of information exchange that threaten to override official male sites of authorized truth. The “Warning” amounts to yet another early modern commonplace, similar to imploring women to be silent, chaste, and obedient, in the male-dominated public marketplace of goods, ideas, and information.

Over two decades later, John Earle, in his *Micro-cosmographie* (1628), meditates upon the sounds and sights of Paul's Walk, which, because of its various noises, he aptly calls "the eares Brothell."⁶ Earle writes,

It is a heape of stones and men, with a vast confusion of Languages, and were the Steeple not sanctified nothing liker Babel. The noyse in it is like that of Bees, a strange humming or buzze, mixt of walking, tongues, and feet: It is a kind of still roare or loud whisper. It is the great Exchange of all discourse It is the generall Mint of all famous lies It is the other expence of the day, after Playes, Taverne, and a Baudy-House, and men have still some Oathes left to sweare here *The Visitants are all men without exceptions*, but the principall Inhabitants and possessors, are stale Knights, and Captaines out of Service, men of long Rapiers, and Breeches, which after all turne Merchants here, and trafficke for Newes. Some make it a Preface to their Dinner, and Travell for a Stomacke: but thriftier men make it their Ordinarie.⁷

Unlike *Tittle-Tattle*, *Micro-cosmographie* suggests that men—in particular, men who are not conventionally masculine—are very real threats to official or licensed male spaces of information exchange. Earle's description of the buzz of lies and news that circulates among men at Paul's Walk does not conclude with prescriptive measures for curbing this speech as did *Tittle-Tattle*. However, what these two texts hold in common is that they point to the corruption of information spaces in the city. Earle shows the limits of *Tittle-Tattle's* attack, revealing that it displaced onto women what is in part a male problem of engaging in unauthorized information. Yet Earle, as keen an observer of London as William Harrison and John Stowe were in the century before, bears out a key anxiety of the seventeenth century—the talk of *men* is also the noise of the city, and in such a place, an early modern Babel, there is little hope for discerning listening to occur. Earle's "outing" of London's noisemakers, however, failed to allay the brunt of anxious masculinity discursively placed upon women.⁸

The informal spaces of information exchange and the rift in the notion of informational authority that these two works detail raise many of the issues Ben Jonson would struggle with throughout his dramatic career. Jonson, reconciling both *Tittle-Tattle* and *Micro-cosmographie* in what I am calling his comedy of rumors plays, reveals that both men *and* women are responsible for the excess noise in and around London, and this din, a symptom of the growth of the city over the thirty years Jonson was writing, had detracted from the kind of discerning listening he would come to wish for from his audiences. The problem for Jonson was that London had become a city where the sounds, so intense and numbing, had become a buzz, white noise that became as much a fixture on the soundscape of early modern London as were the various sights that lined the streets.⁹ Jonson would see that this buzz kept people from becoming auditors in the original sense of the word, keen listeners who could discern truth amid lies, gossip, and rumors. In this view, Jonson was at arms as much with the auditory as with the much critically-discussed visual excesses of the day. Early modern Englishmen devoured with their eyes—they were spectators first, auditors second. And this is what Ben Jonson, with his authority as poet and playwright, sought to correct.

What drew Jonson and his contemporaries to write for the city and about the city can be understood in examining the impact of the crowds and the verbal and bodily excess they bring along, which was fodder for satirists like Jonson. Walter Benjamin has written of the ways that the anonymous crowd in the nineteenth-century industrial city engenders paranoia and panic; however writers like Jonson might be responding to an earlier manifestation of the city where there was not a fear of the crowd but rather a fear of information let loose

and of women in this public space as authors of information and news.¹⁰ This difficulty in authorizing information in the early modern city, often characterized as female, could be seen as producing not paranoia but rather hysteria (*hyster* meaning “womb”) among men who feared the loss of information authority to women.¹¹ This fear was displaced upon women when in fact men were the purveyors of rumor and oftentimes dangerously incapable of discerning them as well. Only noise remains in the early modern landscape, creating a sense of disquiet. Ben Jonson responds to this verbal excess in his comedy of rumors, where I argue he interrogates the failures of listening in distinct spaces and exposes the aural deficiencies of his characters who occupy these places.¹²

The second strain of my argument in this chapter lies in Jonson’s moral and ethical concerns with listening and authority. For Jonson, the influx of news aligns uncomfortably with the ephemeral and stands in the way of reaching unambiguous truth and understanding.¹³ Jonson’s growing displeasure with the stage links with his distrust of ephemeral networks of information exchange, as the playhouse becomes another node of commercial exchange for feasting eyes and untrained ears. The Jonsonian fantasy is to have auditors rather than spectators apprehend his works, as he believed in the powers of audition over vision in coming to truth. Jonson, perhaps realizing the daunting and outright impossible task of making auditors of spectators in the early modern theater, sought out another information space, the printed page authorized by Jonson himself, as the surest way to present nothing but the truth.¹⁴ In turn, Jonson envisions a public of discerning readers who, removed from the aural and visual excesses of the stage, will “understand” his authorized words under his tutelage. As Jonson would write in his first poem in *Epigrams*, “To the Reader,” “Pray thee,

take care, that tak'st my book in hand, / To read it well: that is, to understand."¹⁵ Understanding is for Jonson intimately linked to listening, and only those who possess discerning listening can partake in discerning reading. Calling upon Plautus in *Discoveries*, Jonson relates that a fool is characterized by his tongue and that silence leads to clearer hearing (483-85). Silence for Jonson is idealized in the reader, who is able to listen attentively to the words on the page and hear the truth presented to him by the author.¹⁶

Over the course of thirteen years at the end of his dramatic career (1609-16, 1626-32), Jonson examined the spaces of the house (*Epicoene*, *The Magnetic Lady*), the fair (*Bartholomew Fair*), the staple (*The Staple of News*), and the inn (*The New Inn*) as places of information exchange and spaces where male *and* female information networks contended with the workings of rumor.¹⁷ The two homes that serve as the bookends to this chapter are opposed, as one belongs to a man (Morose in *Epicoene*) while the other belongs to a woman (Lady Loadstone in *The Magnetic Lady*). Further, the inn and the staple are governed by men and the fair is watched over by a man. However, the attraction to all of these places is news, as these spaces become not only sites of information exchange but also sites where the fundamental notions of truth and authority are thrown into disarray amid the noise of lies and rumors that inhabit them. These plays, at once addressing topical cultural and social concerns about truth and unauthorized information, also argue that no political or social censor could effectively control the spread of rumor or idle intelligence, no matter how scathing the word might be. At stake for Jonson in the writing of these plays was his own fame and authority. He asserts his authority as dramatist to "control" the news (performing the role of the Master of Revels himself), and, in presenting the

spaces of rumor in these plays, he idealizes a sort of space—the printed page—that could be effectively monitored by Jonson alone.¹⁸ What makes the space of the printed page an informational space par excellence is that actors are not present to mediate Jonson’s work—rather, the authorized page bears Jonson’s intentions as author. Furthermore, Jonson was concerned with how news and information exchange infected spaces and moved between people in various places, giving rise to questions of the authority of those giving and receiving this information. And with lying being the “diet of the times” (*Discoveries* 352), Jonson sought to give his audiences a view of authorized truth. Jonson’s comedy of rumors argues for the necessity of the early modern individual to become a discerning earwitness in the unstable aural environment that was early modern England.

Charting Jonsonian Noise: *Epicoene* and *Bartholomew Fair*

Although *Epicoene* (1609) falls within the timeframe of what is usually called citizen or city comedy (roughly 1595-1616), I would suggest that in this play, Jonson’s energies are directed at an early form of what I am calling his *comedy of rumors*, perhaps an originary moment in his conception of the related issues of truth and rumor. In fact, Clerimont’s statement about the plan to vex Morose points to a different kind of comedy Jonson was exploring: “For God’s sake, let’s effect it; it will be an excellent *comedy of affliction*, so many several noises” (2.6.35-6, emphasis mine). Such a comedy rests upon the noises of rumor, gossip, and lies, of an exploration of the question of truth in a world of disguise and discord. As Peggy Knapp has argued, Jonson castigates the “publicke riot” of the new noise of capitalist growth in London by way of the

noisy London stage.¹⁹ The stage becomes his sounding board, but the printed page ultimately marks his authority over this buzz. Although the play is set in London and is chock full of references to London locales, the play is actually one of indoor spaces, where rumors circulate and truth is debated feverishly.²⁰ In fact, of the 28 scenes in the play, only one short scene (2.6) is located outside on a London street, while the remainder of the play is split between the homes of the male characters Clerimont, Daw, Otter, and Morose. In this respect, *Epicoene* is a play of male spaces that has rarely acknowledged close ties to Jonson's Caroline plays. Despite Morose's attempts to soundproof his home and to filter out the noises that surround him—from the calls of fishwives to the sounds of trumpets—he can never escape the noise, even with the nest of nightcaps over his ears and double walls in his home.²¹ Morose's ear is poisoned by the aural pollution that is early modern London. Jonson, I think, would sympathize with Morose's supposed "disease" of not being able to endure noise given his own increasing distrust with those who didn't listen but rather embraced speaking and seeing. The ear provided for Jonson a gateway to discernment, just as print, he imagined, gave his ephemeral performances authority. While certainly satirizing the extremes to which Morose goes to secure his aural fixation on silence—asking his servants to communicate with him as if in a dumb show—Jonson certainly hears the necessity and urgency of being able to hear clearly in a place (London) where the excess of noise assaulted the ears at every turn. As Laura Levine has perceptively argued, Morose's desire to communicate by signs (by way of legs and hands, not mouths) is an attempt "to create a world of absolute certainty"; however, this attempt fails as he is unable to detect uncertainty and lies.²² Morose cannot return to a primal state of silence, for the

world has turned into a noisy landscape of lies and rumors, a place where truth is at a crossroads. Moreover, Morose cannot have silence because of his own garrulous nature. As one critic has observed, Morose repeatedly violates the code of silence by talking more than anyone else in the play except Truewit.²³ Morose's actions showcase the futility that comes from trying to escape those outside sounds, as they inevitably enter even the most private of spaces, the home.

Morose has lost his battle against noise from the start, as he ironically enlists the aid of the barber Cutbeard to help him find a "dumb woman" who is "thrifty of her speech" for a wife (1.2.24, 29). As Truewit exclaims, "A woman and a barber, and love no noise!" (34-35). In the seventeenth century, barbers' shops "acted as centres of news and gossip and as places where newsletters and pamphlets might be seen."²⁴ Cutbeard, an accessory in Dauphine's plan to outwit his uncle, can be seen as the information nexus in the play, as well as one of the many men whose loose tongue undermines other men. When Morose asks Truewit how he found out about his marriage to Epicoene, Truewit replies, "Why, did you ever hope, sir, committing the secrecy of it to a barber, that less than the whole town should know it? You might as well ha' told it the conduit or the bakehouse or the infantry that follow the court, and with more security" (3.5.21-25). The conduit and the bakehouse, both sites for gossip and rumor dissemination, as related in the broadside *Tittle-Tattle*, are fitting spaces of this sort of unauthorized information exchange.²⁵ In fact, it is the loose-tongued barber, not an acid-tongued woman, who undermines Morose. Similarly, as Morose speaks of the places he would do penance if he was able to rid himself of his wife, he relates in almost map-like fashion places of noise, including

Billingsgate “when the noises are at their height and loudest” and at a play “that were nothing but fights at sea, drum, trumpet, and target” (4.4.11-17).²⁶ Yet the exchanges of information in the play and the omnipresent noises do not occur at these London hotspots for rumor and gossip, but rather within the confines of the various homes that are the center of the play.

Since Morose will not venture out into the city, the city must come to him. When Dauphine comes to his uncle to ask him if he has secured a lawyer to go ahead with divorce proceedings against Epicoene, Morose remarks,

Oh no! There is such a noise i' the court that they have frightened me home with more violence than I went! Such speaking and counter-speaking, with their several voices of citations, appellations, allegations, certificates, attachments, intergatories, references, convictions, and afflictions indeed among the doctors and proctors, that the noise here is silence to't! A kind of calm midnight! (4.7.12-18).

As I will later elaborate, the court and court proceedings (whether in mock-parliaments or domestic judgements) take precedence in Jonson's Caroline plays as a means for locating and securing truth. The court, a place of hearing (with the legal connotations of the word in play) and listening to the facts, is for Jonson an official space where truth can potentially be heard through lies and rumors. Yet the court must come to Morose in his house; he recounts that because of his father's example he will “come not to your public pleadings or your places of noise” for “the mere avoiding of clamors and impertinencies of orators that know not how to be silent” (5.3.52-3, 54-6). Morose challenges the claim of the court as a site of authorized truth, ultimately to his own detriment. It is difficult to ascertain whether Morose is more sensitive to the railings of men or women in the play, as his ears are equally assaulted by both. Truewit has Cutbeard don disguise and perform as a canon lawyer; Morose, subject to Cutbeard's loose

tongue earlier in the play, is now again subject to his ruling that will further ridicule him.²⁷ With the noise that increases to a roar in the final scenes of the play, Morose exclaims, "My very house turns round with the tumult" (5.3.58-9). His house, in fact, with the many walks of life performing, lying, and engaging in rumor, has become a microcosm of London, a seat of noise to fear.

Jonson lets no one off his satirical hook, exposing with equal scrutiny the effects of unrestrained speech of both men and women, of wagging tongues adding to the overall buzz of an already noisy city. Yet Dauphine is one of the only men in the play who is attuned to careful, discerning listening, as Clerimont tells Truewit that he is "hovering about the house to hear what news" (2.4.140-41). Dauphine is able to do this because he has been silent about his secret (Epicoene is a boy) for the entire play, and he shows improvisational skills of listening to everyone speak (especially Truewit) and maneuvering within the other designs that are swirling.²⁸ As Douglas Lanier has perceptively argued, Dauphine's strength, even his manliness, lies in not saying as much as his compatriots.²⁹ Dauphine, the Silent Man, outwits men and women because he listens more than he speaks. The play's title, of course, points to the supposed silent woman who turns out to be anything but. One may be led to believe that Jonson is engaging in a by now common ridiculing and chastising of the loose-tongued woman, but he looks beyond these types and also exposes a group of men whose loose tongues are more of a threat to men than those of the women in the play. Cutbeard the barber is the obvious example, but Jonson spends a good deal of time exposing the empty chatter of the knights Jack Daw and Sir Amorous La Foole, the type of men who, as Earle suggested, frequent unofficial information spaces.³⁰ Truewit calls Jack Daw "the only talking sir in town"

(1.2.46) and a “talking mole” (2.4.137), a chatterbox, while Clerimont calls La Foole a “wind-fucker” (1.4.72), a windbag who never shuts up.³¹ Both men, unlike Dauphine, are incapable of hearing through the lies and rumors swirling inside these houses, and they are wholly incapable of telling the truth, as both later announce that they have had sexual relations with Epicoene.

As is the case in many of Jonson’s Caroline comedies, *Epicoene* ends with a “hearing,” where certain discoveries are unveiled and the truth, hidden in this case by the plotting of Dauphine, is finally revealed. Yet the “trial” is populated by men such as Daw and La Foole, whose Haughty remarks are “not good witnesses in law” (5.4.115).³² After Cutbeard pronounces his sentence, Morose asks his nephew to let him die in silence, and it is here that Dauphine takes full control of this mock court proceeding, which ironically transfers the authorized space of the court to the informal space of the home. Promising to restore his uncle, Dauphine maneuvers to get Morose to agree to sign a contract assuring that Dauphine will be his heir. In words that look forward to the case surrounding the warrant in *Bartholomew Fair*, Morose says, “I will seal to it, that, or to a blank, and write thine own conditions” (5.4.169-70). After the unmasking of Epicoene, Otter, and Cutbeard, Truewit has the play’s final speech, and he turns to rebuking Daw and La Foole for slandering Epicoene with their lies. However, Truewit, a true judge of these slanderous men, gives his final sentencing to them: “you deserve to live in an air as corrupted as that wherewith you feed rumor” (5.4.220-21).

Truewit, in opposition to the relative silence of Dauphine, acts as the commander of noise in the play, governing the ruse, and his part in bringing the noise to Morose reveals an undermining of male sovereignty in the home.³³ In

fact, it is Truewit, acting as a post from the court, who first enters Morose's home, disrupting his desired silence. He tells Clerimont, "The spitting, the coughing, the laughter, the neezing, the farting, dancing, noise of the music, and her masculine and loud commanding, and urging the whole family, makes him think he has married a fury" (4.1.7-10). Of course, Epicoene is actually a boy, another male who contributes to the infiltration of noise into Morose's home. Truewit's anxiety about female noise turns out to be an anxiety about male noise. Furthermore, Truewit in particular disparages female talkativeness, relating to Morose how in marriage he will be exposed to hearing long-winded verbal exercises and be committed to a woman who would "be a stateswoman, know all the news: what was done at Salisbury, what at the Bath, what at court, what in progress" (2.2.108-10).³⁴ Here he asserts that women desire not just gossip but information from authorized spaces, certainly a threat to male authority. Morose is of course overjoyed that Epicoene initially is not taking pleasure in her tongue, which, he says, is "a woman's chiefest pleasure" (2.5.40). As the Collegiate ladies enter his home, Morose laments, "I shall be o'erwhelmed with noise" (3.6.3). However, he has already been bombarded with the noise of men, and the women merely exacerbate his disease and are not the cause of it.³⁵ The Ladies, prone to engaging in gossip, nevertheless remain outdone by the bombastic men who populate the houses in the play. The Collegiates, Epicoene, as well as the oftentimes railing Mrs. Otter, do engage in needless prattle in the play, yet their function seems at times to be to throw light upon the continuous chatter of their male counterparts. While satirizing both men and women, Jonson nonetheless has his male characters speak of the unruliness of female speech as a shield for their own disruptive tongues.³⁶ But it is ultimately Dauphine's discerning

listening and silence that allows him to bring forth the truth in the space of the home, and it is in these qualities that Jonson marks Dauphine as an ideal auditor, as well as a model for the male ideal reader who would understand the truth of his work.

Bartholomew Fair (1614)

The year 1614 marked not only the performance and publication of Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, but also the publication of his eighteen-line poem that accompanied Sir Walter Raleigh's *The History of the World*. The poem was originally printed facing the title page, which contained an engraved frontispiece that was a visual interpretation of Cicero's definition of history in *De Oratore*.³⁷ Jonson's verse serves to explain Cicero's dictum and the frontispiece itself, which depicts, in the upper part of the design, History supporting the earth, which is flanked by two representations of Fame—good and bad.³⁸ Jonson, no stranger to the citing of Cicero himself, composed this poem amid his own growing concern with "Evill fame" (3). The classical figure of Fame, from the Latin *fama* (rumor or noise), is shown on the frontispiece in her usual depiction, covered with ears and blowing a horn to disperse information across the world. Jonson, it seems, remains fixated upon the ambiguous implications of rumor while acknowledging the necessity of Fame to authorize one's work for posterity. And it is in this same year, in his play *Bartholomew Fair*, that Jonson continues his examination of truth, noise, and rumor that he explored so feverishly five years earlier in *Epicœne*.

Jonson uses the space of the fair, another unofficial space of the exchange of information, to articulate his anxieties about information control and

authorization, concerns that would be in full force upon his return to the stage in 1626. The fair, according to Adam Fox, was a melting pot of rumor and gossip “to which farmers and manufacturers, merchants and pedlars came from far and wide to listen for news and pass on reports as they did their business.”³⁹ The characters who inhabit the booths selling their wares and the visitors who visit the fair all engage, in varying degrees, not only in the circulation of economic exchange and consumption of goods, but also in the swapping of stories and news. Adam Overdo’s paradoxical authority can be understood by his own placement at Bartholomew Fair, which surrounds him with the “material circulation of warrants, licenses, and patents, demonstrating again and again that when governmental authority is alienated it is vulnerable to a variety of abuses.”⁴⁰ The fair itself, as an unofficial information space, stands as a space of dangerous license for Jonson, where the attempts to impose order on a disorderly public space—filled with aural interference—prove fruitless because the many warrants that circulate freely authorize behavior and actions that they were not intended to authorize.⁴¹

The public space of the fair signals not only how written authority goes awry, but also how the authority of the spoken word is fundamentally tested. Jonson investigates how those inhabiting the space of the fair become authors of news. Authority, invested in Adam Overdo, breaks in to this space of exchange, yet it fails to contain the circulation of unauthorized information. Yet before Jonson even takes his audience to the fair, he frames his concerns within the Prologue to the King’s Majesty and in the Induction on the Stage. The Prologue calls attention to the “zealous noise” of the Puritans who were continually objecting to holidays and the performance of plays (3). While Jonson asks King

James essentially not to listen to these Puritan complaints, he actually calls attention to the noise that undoubtedly will follow in the drama. Jonson has effectively censored Puritan “noise” outside the theater while clearing a space for the King to listen with discerning ears to the noise within the theater.⁴² The Induction that follows presents a mock contract, read by a Scrivener, with “certain articles drawn out in haste” between Jonson and the audience members (60). Within this often-ironic contract, Jonson outlines his concern with the primacy of hearing, and through a subtle shift in syntax, he cleverly posits the necessity of *listening* over watching a play as a means of uncovering truth. The contract, the Scrivener asserts, is an agreement between “the spectators or hearers” (65), and a few lines later he reasserts this agreement, now between the said “spectators and hearers” (74). The first instance would perhaps claim that being a spectator and hearer of the play are different pursuits, but in the next instance, with the shift from *or* to *and*, spectators and hearers are merged in a similar enterprise. Yet in the final use of this phrase, Jonson shifts the parties of the agreement, now “hearers and spectators” (134). Jonson has subtly allowed the hearer to become privileged in the terms of the contract. Jonson was furious throughout his career that his audiences paid more attention to spectacle than words, as his contentious battles with stage designer Inigo Jones make clear.⁴³ His contractual shift that posits “hearers” first can be read within the framework of his lifelong struggle to make listeners out of his audience. Yet the play that is to follow breaks down the authority of this authorized contract.

The characters who arrive at the fair come as spectators; in fact, as Frances Teague notes, the fairground characters also act as spectators, for “they want to make money unobtrusively; publicity would destroy them, so they watch their

customers more closely than they themselves are watched.”⁴⁴ Similarly, Justice Adam Overdo seeks to maintain authority at the fair through supervision so as to learn “the truth” about Bartholomew Fair. The problem with the space of the fair is that everyone is a spectator and *not* a discerning listener, and this is even more problematic when the figure of justice and authority, Overdo, places himself as a spectator first. Even when he does engage in disguised overhearing, he notably fails to listen closely on several crucial occasions, and the play satirizes the failed powers of discernment in an authority figure.

Overdo enters the fair disguised as a fool with a black book, presumably to keep notes on his observations, and he asserts that authority rests in doing this sort of observation himself and not trusting it to others. What follows, I would suggest, marks the central passage of Jonson’s concerns about information flow, truth, and listening up until this point in his dramatic career. Overdo soliloquizes,

For, alas, as we are public persons, what do we know? Nay, what can we know? We hear with other men's ears; we see with other men's eyes. A foolish constable or a sleepy watchman is all our information; he slanders a gentleman, by virtue of his place, as he calls it, and we, by the vice of ours, must believe him—as, a while ago, they made me, yea, me, to mistake an honest zealous pursuivant for a seminary and a proper young Bachelor of Music for a bawd. This we are subject to that live in high place. All our intelligence is idle and most of our intelligencers knaves; and, by your leave, ourselves though little better, if not arrant fools, for believing 'em. I, Adam Overdo, am resolved therefore to spare spy-money hereafter and make mine own discoveries. Many are the yearly enormities of this fair, in whose Courts of Piepowders I have had the honor during the three days sometimes to sit as judge. But this is the special day for detection of those foresaid enormities. Here is my black book for the purpose, this the cloud that hides me. Under this covert I shall see and not be seen. (2.1.27-46)⁴⁵

Overdo’s account deftly summarizes a key early modern concern: what *does* an authority figure know? With information circulating as it never had before in the seventeenth century through oral, manuscript, and print channels of

communication, Overdo's statement echoes precisely one of the fundamental anxieties of the early modern Englishman: all the information surrounding him is ultimately unreliable, lacking any foundation. In fact, Overdo depends upon rumor and idle intelligence, which serve to make the truth of the fair indiscernible. What can a person really know when all one's information is always already from another, and the reliability of that person or persons is questionable? And what does that say about the person who readily accepts these second or third-hand accounts without questioning their authority? Overdo here seems to privilege first-hand information, choosing not to rely on spies for his desired knowledge but rather to make his own discoveries.⁴⁶ By hearing with other men's ears and seeing with other men's eyes, subjectivity gets displaced, and one must thus be subjected to reports (or even worse, lies) filtered through another's senses. In disguise, Overdo makes a claim that maintaining authority extends from seeing and not being seen, and he thus becomes a spectator who fails to assert his role as listener.⁴⁷ When he does overhear in the play, however, he more often than not fails to discern the truth of what he has heard. His black book, in effect, records failures of vision and hearing, thereby implicating the written in the production of untruths. While he may hear, he ultimately fails to listen. For Jonson, listening is intimately tied to his concern of "understanding."

Overdo repeatedly engages in observation within the space of the fair, filling his little black book with the enormities he encounters. He fails to understand that to uncover truth he has to do more than be just a spectator—as an authority figure looking to make "discoveries," he must be first and foremost an auditor.⁴⁸ For instance, in 2.4. Overdo accepts second-hand information from

Mooncalf, and he fails to hear the conversation between Edgeworth, Ursula, and Nightingale on actual enormities (cutting purses and prostitution) because he is so taken in *looking* upon the figure of Edgeworth. Overdo, that “roaring rascal” (2.6.96), is so caught up in his own windy speech that he fails to observe Cokes’s purse being picked by Edgeworth, and Wasp, suspecting Overdo’s hand in the event, beats him.⁴⁹ Here we can see that by Overdo’s loose tongue, he undermines his position’s authority. His earlier desire to see and not be seen in disguise fails to keep him concealed, and his arrest is directly connected to his desire to be a spectator rather than a listener.

But, in 5.2., hoping to assist Troubleall for going “out of his wits” for his sake, Overdo again trusts appearances and the visual, as he is misled by revealing himself to Quarlous, disguised as a madman who Overdo takes to be Troubleall. He gives Quarlous a signed but blank warrant to be filled in later, which effectively gives Quarlous the authority to partake in Grace Wellborn’s fortune. In the final scene, Quarlous reveals privately to Overdo all that the Justice missed by not listening at the fair, beginning, “Hark you, sir, i’ your ear” (81-2). Overdo learns the “truth” of the fair in terms that resemble a discovery (hearing) at court, but not by first-hand observation or hearing, but rather second-hand through the mouth of Quarlous. Quarlous makes sure Overdo hears, and we appropriately conclude this play about the effects of failing to listen within the figure of authority’s own indiscriminate ear.

While expressly concerned with heterogeneous makers of noise in the unofficial information spaces of the home and fair, *Epicoene* and *Bartholomew Fair* derive much of their power from Jonson’s satiric examination of male listening or failures to listen. Official information spaces or authority figures come to these

informal spaces of the exchange of unauthorized information. Jonson foregrounds these spaces in these early comedy of rumors plays, as the various households and the fair emerge as informal spaces of information that give rise to questions of authority and truth, as well as what is at stake in coming to the truth in these spaces. Overdo's failures of discerning listening undermine his authority as Justice at the fair, while Morose, who takes pains to avoid hearing any noise, cannot discern truth in silence because the noise of male talk (including his own) infiltrates his home. However, Dauphine's silence and his discerning listening to those around him imbue him with informational authority, as he makes sure to withhold the secret so that it does not become rumor that will circulate within the household. The spaces Jonson crafts that are the focal point for the comedy of rumors plays reveal the slippery notion of truth that can only be grasped through careful discernment, by a certain type of man. And while Jonson would have a man in *Epicoene* serve as an example of a discerning listener, he satirizes a male authority figure whose indiscriminate listening and reliance on the visual take him far away from the truth he is supposed to authorize.

Truth, Rumor, and the Breakdown of Gendered Spaces:
The Staple of News, The New Inn, and The Magnetic Lady

Although Jonson ceased writing plays from 1616-1626, he still found voice for his growing concern with news. His masque, *News from the New World Discovered in the Moon*, presented at court before King James in 1620, builds upon the anxieties he voiced about the authorization of information and the space of rumor in both *Epicoene* and *Bartholomew Fair*.⁵⁰ The 1620s were, in fact, the years

when the English-language corantos (foreign news periodicals) first appeared, a commodity for an increasingly news-hungry public that Jonson contested in his late works. These beginnings of what would become a fully-functioning and profitable news industry, with their ephemeral forms, posed a commercial challenge to the equally ephemeral stage performances at the same time, for plays as representations of current events and news were in contest with the cheap news sheets that began to appear within England's borders.⁵¹ Jonson's masque is concerned with the state of news and serves as a precursor to Jonson's first dramatic effort upon returning to the stage, *The Staple of News*. The two Heralds pass on second-hand information about a new world in the orb of the moon, supposedly gathered through first-hand observation. This new world, which the 2nd Herald describes as a "Variety of nations, polities, laws!" (121), looks forward to Bacon's *New Atlantis*, published the year before *The Staple of News* was performed.⁵² The Heralds relate their information to a Printer, a Chronicler, and a Factor, or newspaper columnist. The Printer asserts that his is a business of commodity, freely accepting any news at any price (8). The 1st Herald scoffs at the Printer's statement, remarking, "What price but the price o' your ears," asserting that the only cost is the risk of freely accepting "any news" (9). The Printer, Chronicler, and Factor hear, for well over two-hundred lines, about the ways of this new world, yet sensing that they have not been truly listening, the 1st Herald remarks, "'tis time to exercise their eyes; for their ears begin to be weary" (263-64). By capitulating to these newsmongers, Jonson highlights how the desire for spectacle outweighs the ability to engage in a more refined sense of listening.⁵³

Jonson further satirizes these men of news who do not listen to information that comes to them in order to determine its truth. The Printer remarks, "I'll give anything for a good copy now, be't true or false, so't be news" (16-17). Likewise, the Chronicler is interested only in filling his swollen tomes with trivial and probably untrue information, although the Chronicler asserts that he loves to set forth for posterity the truth of things.⁵⁴ The Factor separates himself from both the Printer and Chronicler, asserting that he has gathered news to appeal to his various audiences, including Puritans, Protestants, and Catholics (36-9), and announces his hope to erect a staple for news, asserting, "I would have no news printed; for when they are printed they leave to be news. While they are written, though they be false, they remain news still" (53-6). The Printer, of course, disagrees, believing that it is printing that makes information news "to a great many, who will indeed believe nothing but what's in print" (57-8). His customers, he acknowledges, are forgetful, and he prints his collected relations "over again with a new date" (61-2). Print, it seems, gives "news" (unauthorized information) a mark of authority. Jonson's masque examines which words bear repeating, how they are repeated, and to what extent we can trust the "news" that is filtered down to us from any source. The truth content that information holds after it has been passed through many hands, issues Jonson began to unlock in his earlier comedy of rumors plays, would again emerge in Jonson's Caroline plays.

In thinking of Jonson's Caroline plays (1626–1633) as more mature manifestations of his comedy of rumors, we can attempt to dispel two notions. First, Jonson's late plays have traditionally suffered a blow to their own fame because of John Dryden's labeling them as "dotages."⁵⁵ Viewed in the context of

what I am calling the comedy of rumors, we can recast these works from artistic failures to plays that develop a full-fledged exploration of truth and rumor that he began to breach in his earlier plays.⁵⁶ As D.F. McKenzie relates in his central article on *The Staple of News* and the Caroline plays, "They are a final attempt to come to terms with the problem of audience implication and to insist on the primacy of his judgment over theirs."⁵⁷ I would add to McKenzie's assessment that these highly metatheatrical plays do more than just one-up Jonson's audience, but rather they extend the notion of discerning listening to include a fantasy of a discerning readership of his works. The second notion that we can begin to dispel through an examination of Jonson's late plays is that Caroline drama was unoriginal, a time of empty moralizing drama that lacked the freshness and intensity of Elizabethan and early Stuart drama.⁵⁸ Jonson's comedy of rumors plays, in fact, collectively explore what I assert is one of the most pressing social and political concerns of the early seventeenth century. Jonson's Caroline plays were not as different than his earlier plays after all, and they recoup their damaged reputation when examined in light of the comedy of rumors.

In the Prologue to *The Staple of News*, Jonson makes a distinction between spectators and auditors, as he did in the Induction to *Bartholomew Fair*. The Prologue begins, "For your own sakes, not his, he bade me say, / Would you were come to *hear, not see, a play*"; furthermore, Jonson would "have you wise / Much rather by your ears than by your eyes" (1-2, 5-6, emphasis mine).⁵⁹ Jonson asserts his role as poet as holding the key to bringing the people to truth, *if they listen to his words*: "He must be one that can instruct your youth / And keep your acme in the state of truth" (24-25). The state of truth gets tested in this play,

and Jonson seeks to problematize truth with the continual appearance of the four Gossips—Mirth, Tattle, Expectation, and Censure—in the Induction and the following four Intermeans, female characters who occupy the space of male spectators on the stage.⁶⁰ Jonson's Caroline plays, Julie Sanders has noted, examine the social and political potential of these intimate female spaces of talk and reflection.⁶¹ Yet as Jonson seems to interrogate the ways in which female gossip that spreads outside the realm of the private female space and into the public spaces of the world destabilizes "the state of truth," he simultaneously exposes the way the men of the staple undermine truth as well.

Jonson ridicules these gossips in his presentation on the stage, but he makes an even more pointed attack on the men of the staple in print. Directly before the third act, Jonson addresses his reading audience in his 20-line statement "To The Readers," a response to the ways in which Act Three had been perceived (incorrectly, in his view). For Jonson, the creation of a discerning network of readers of his work was of utmost importance, for as much as he had tried, he could not make discerning auditors out of his spectators. Stuart Sherman's comments align with my own argument, for he remarks that this "pure print intervention in the midst of a theatrical script" is directed at a reading public, for "only in the further detachment of the printed page can Jonson hope to 'mend' the interpretation that went awry at the playhouse."⁶²

Jonson rails against

this ridiculous Office of the Staple, wherein the age may see her own folly or hunger and thirst after publish'd pamphlets of news, set out every Saturday but made all at home, and no syllable of truth in them, than which there cannot be a greater disease in nature, or a fouler scorn put upon the times. (10-15)

The “disease” is again a disease of not listening or discerning truth from falsity, of being struck with the “new” of the news over its truth content. The Staple takes part in “coz’ning the people,” and Jonson tells the reader, “If you have the truth, rest quiet, and consider that” (18-19). This authorial print intrusion signals Jonson’s own attempt to redefine “the state of truth” in a culture that seeks the latest news in, as Clifford Leech has remarked, an “age mercifully dependent of rumour, not newspapers.”⁶³ Sherman convincingly argues that this note implies “a kind of faculty exchange, in which the eye, fixed upon the page, may accomplish that which Jonson wishes the ear to do in the theatre, but which it cannot because it is there overwhelmed by sight and talk The eye now functions not merely instead of the ear, but *as* the ear.”⁶⁴ For Jonson, the news business uncomfortably aligns with rumors and lies, but the printing of his works, more lasting than news, becomes a stabilizing force to correct what spectators did not hear correctly (or hear at all) the first time. News accounts present for Jonson a certain instability while his authorized printed works become in theory a stable medium to fix truth. Jonson wants to retrain his reader to read the third act correctly, not as it had been understood previously, “as if the souls of most of the spectators had liv’d in the eyes and ears of these ridiculous gossips that tattle between Acts” (5-6). His printed works provide an alternative space of reception where discerning readers can finally hear authorized truth. If, Jonson seems to assert, the reader considers truth through the eyes and the ears of the poet, he will be able to distinguish the truth amid the noise pollution.

Register remarks that the Staple is the house of fame where all people meet “To taste the *cornu copiae* of her rumors, / Which she, the mother of sport, pleaseth to scatter / Among the vulgar” (3.2.119-21). The Staple retains the

gendered associations of the House of Fame as female while bringing to mind the classical figure of Fama, Ovid's House of Rumor, and Chaucer's *House of Fame*. For Jonson, the threat is clear, for if rumor is allowed to be distributed as fact, and individuals did not and could not discern truth from fiction by way of careful listening, the potential for the breakdown of communication became a threat to men and women alike. Gossip Tattle's commentary in the Third Intermean highlights this instability of unauthorized information. Speaking of the news she receives, she states, "But whether it were true or no, we gossips are bound to believe it an't be once out and afoot. How should we entertain the time else, or find ourselves in fashionable discourse for all companies if we do not credit all and make more of it in the reporting?" (37-41). Jonson here calls attention to a dangerous paradigm of information retrieval and distribution that builds its foundation on lies. Listening is effectively denied a place in this paradigm, for these gossips believe the news whether it is true or not, as this news will ultimately fall on indiscriminate ears that will hear only what they want to hear.

In *The Staple of News*, Jonson voices his skepticism about journalism and his frustration with the burgeoning news business—with its parallels to rumor—as he satirizes its unwieldy birth in the place of the Staple.⁶⁵ As Jonson remarks in *Discoveries*, "What a deal of cold business doth a man misspend the better part of life in! In the scattering of compliments, tendering visits, gathering and venting news, following feasts and plays" (68-73). The news office had become a particularly central institution in those years Jonson had ceased writing plays (1616-1626).⁶⁶ As F.J. Levy notes, the "commodification of news, without royal authorization, so much deplored by Jonson, became the order of the day."⁶⁷

Jonson attacks those who pay for their news, filled with half-truths, gathered by “emissaries” whose credibility in ascertaining news is in question because they are part of a business that is, by its very nature, a commercial enterprise. Social psychologists Ralph Rosnow and Gary Fine argue that unauthorized information’s multiple functions and distribution patterns closely parallel the characteristics and rules of economic exchange and the conspicuous consumption of goods and services.⁶⁸ News had become a commodity in Jonson’s England, and the demand for news—true, untrue, or half-true—drove its production and the development of places like the Staple. In fact, Fashioner aligns the Staple in just this way, stating, “A place / Of huge commerce it will be!” (1.2.27-8).⁶⁹ The Staple—what Ton Hoenselaars has argued is “an institutionalized form of language abuse”—and its news are a vibrant part of the realm of marketplace exchange.⁷⁰ Barber tells Pennyboy Junior of news about the Staple “Where all the news of all sorts shall be brought, / And there be examin’d, and then register’d, / And so be issu’d under the seal of the Office, / As Staple News, no other news be current” (1.2.33-36). Brought, examined, registered, issued—the news brought to the Staple raises questions first about the credibility of the person delivering the information, but the extent to which the news is examined for veracity is certainly questionable, particularly when acknowledging that the news was a commodity to be sold. The Staple makes a claim to be an official site of authorized truth by using a seal to “certify” its news, but the reality as Jonson presents it is that the seal fails to authorize because commercial interests are concerned

The emissaries, including the Dutchman Hans Buz, are sent out to places like Paul’s Exchange and Westminster Hall, centers of gossip, rumor, and

newsmongering where the latest news was ready to fly into the public's ear.⁷¹ Sanders observes that the emissaries of the Staple are noticeably male, and that the only female assistance sought in the production of news is financial.⁷² This information space, while presided over by men, attracts both genders to its doors for their fill of news, and it is closely aligned with those spaces I detailed at the beginning of this chapter. In 1.4., Register and Nathaniel reveal that before news reaches the masses, it goes from emissary to clerk to register.⁷³ Thus, the news that finally reaches the paying public is many times removed, subject to error and revision. The woman who enters in this scene asking for a "groatsworth of any news," not questioning its veracity, exemplifies a public that does not question the credibility or authority of the news they freely buy and take as truth. And there is news of all kinds to choose from: barbers' news, tailors' news, porters' and watermen's news, as well as everything from Term news to Pontifical news and news beside the coranti and gazetti (1.5.7-15). In their desire to "hear" any news—news that has been catered to fit specialized interests—the public who come to the Staple fails to practice discerning listening for the truth of this information that is sold to them.⁷⁴

Three customers enter the Staple in 3.2., and unlike the woman in 1.4., here the first customer asks for specific news: "Ha' you in your profane shop any news / O' the saints at Amsterdam?" (123-24). How much news the customer receives actually depends on how much money he will exchange for it, in this case "Six penny worth" (125). In return, however, the customer does not receive news on a newssheet, something he or she can take with him. Rather, Register orders Barber to read the requested news aloud, placing the Staple's "news" in the realm of oral culture, which ironically demands an acute sense of hearing.

When the customer asks for more news, Register asserts that it will cost him more money, and the customer quickly obliges. Jonson's own anxieties about the news business rested on his inability not only to tame the flood of information circulating in England, but also his inability to control this early modern thirst for information. Perhaps Pennyboy Canter sums up Jonson's own view when he laments the "guilty race of men that dare to stand / No breath of truth" (5.6.3-4).

Fitton, an emissary whose name means "lie," praises the ability of the Staple to "dish out news, / Wer't true or false" (1.5.30-31). The act of "dishing out news" is associated with breaking bread at the dining table, at home or in taverns. The table was a space within an information space where gossip and rumor exchange not only occurred, but was expected. In fact, Jonson, in his poem "Inviting a Friend to Supper" (1616), assures the friend that he will "tell you of more, and lie, so you will come" (17). And in his 1624 masque *Neptune's Triumph for the Return of Albion*, the Cook tells the Poet that he is preparing meats for people who "relish nothing but *di stato*" [relish the gossip about the state], and that "They are our quest of enquiry after news" (176, 186). Jonson extends this association in *The Staple of News* with the character Lickfinger, the master cook, who enters the Staple in 3.2. with a sense of urgency, saying, "News, news my boys! / I am to furnish a great feast today. / And I would have what news the Office affords" (160-62). He asks in particular for news of the stage, for he asserts "They'll ask me about new plays at dinner time, / And I should be as dumb as a fish" (198-200). As the theater itself becomes talked about freely outside of its own space, the potential for mishearing or misunderstanding what actually occurred *inside* the theater is bound to occur. When Lickfinger has his own fill—Pennyboy Junior tells him he "hast news enough"—he leaves to prepare the

feast so that others may partake in a feast of food *and* rumor. Jonson recognizes the dangers in relating news during table talk, as the space of the table is marked as a site within a site of unauthorized information. The metaphor of devouring information at the table points to the fact that people did not “savor” the information they heard, instead engaging in indiscriminate listening that could potentially undermine male authority.

The final act attempts to resolve many of the anxieties about fame, although it is unsuccessful in doing so completely. Picklock twists information that Pennyboy Canter gives him for his own benefit, and when Pennyboy Junior enters the scene, a confrontation about truth ensues:

Pennyboy Junior: I'll stop your mouth

Picklock: With what?

Pennyboy Junior: With truth.

Picklock: With noise. I must have witness.

Where is your witness? You can produce witness? (55-7)

Picklock, like Othello, demands ocular proof again, ranting, “I must have witness, and of your producing, / Ere this can come to hearing, and it must / Be heard on oath and witness” (65-7). Pennyboy Junior implores Barber to “Speak what thou heard'st, the truth, and the whole truth, / And nothing but the truth” (68-9).⁷⁵ The irony, of course, is that Pennyboy Junior has asked a man known as a teller of tales and rumors to speak nothing but the truth. In his depiction of Pennyboy Junior, Jonson showcases his lack of discernment and his error in seeking truth from an already failed earwitness; as such, speaking the truth becomes as elusive as hearing the truth in the space of the Staple.

In *The Staple of News*, Jonson makes an explicit link between the space of the Staple and the House of Fame. At the heart of these spaces exists unauthorized information, and as such, both pose a threat to those official sites of

authorized truth. The Staple, gendered female yet governed by men, draws both men and women to it in search of news, and it represents a dangerous space that exceeds such places as Paul's Walk because here, information is exchanged as a commodity. Jonson's authorial intrusion after the third act showcases his belief in the corrective potential print had on such ephemeral forms as performance while giving him a final say to print the truth of his intentions.

The New Inn (1629)

The epigraph to the 1631 octavo of Jonson's commercial flop *The New Inn, or, The Light Heart*, performed only once in 1629, is adapted from Horace's epistles and reads, "I prefer to entrust myself to a reader rather than to bear the disdain of a scornful spectator." This after a whirlwind of attacks on the play from its "malicious spectators" ("Ode to Himself"), a group that would continually draw the ire of Jonson after his fallout with Inigo Jones.⁷⁶ Once again, Jonson sees the fixity of print—and the process he could control and authorize—as a way of rectifying the original response to those who had misunderstood because they had merely "seen" the play. As Jonas A. Barish comments, Jonson came to think of the printed version of his play as a reading experience rather than a theatrical experience, remarking that for Jonson, "the actor's voice—not to speak of the public's ear—constituted an unpredictable and untrustworthy element over which he had too little control; print offered an escape into a stabler medium."⁷⁷ The stability of print for Ben Jonson brought out discriminating readers who exceeded those listeners he fantasized about in the theater. In his "Dedication to the Reader" in the 1631 edition, Jonson further separates his readers from those "hundred fastidious impertinents" who

attended the performance of his play "To see, and to be seen. To make a general muster of themselves in their clothes of credit, and possess the stage against the play. To dislike all, but mark nothing. And by their confidence of rising between the acts, in oblique lines, make affidavit to the whole house of their not understanding one scene" (5, 9-15). Such audience members, already satirized in *The Staple of News*, will again be satirized in Jonson's next play, *The Magnetic Lady*, as I later detail. Yet in this dedication, Jonson is irate at the nature of his play's spectators who see but don't listen discriminatingly. Seeing is clouded by the enormities of stage design and the need for being noticed by others, perhaps a byproduct of the Caroline indoor theaters. Furthermore, spectators' hearing is clouded by the loud roars and auditory excess and sensationalism of the indoor Caroline theater that distracts one from the type of listening Jonson seeks from his ideal audience. Perhaps Jonson voices a certain nostalgia for the Elizabethan public theater at these moments, which may have offered more potential for the kind of listening Jonson longed for in his audience. Spectators, according to Jonson, do not like what they see because they fail to *mark* (to give attention to, reflect, to distinguish, to consider) or *understand*, both of which, for him, are linked directly to proper listening. In fact, in the Prologue to *The New Inn*, Jonson again summons his audience to be understanding hearers: "Hear for your health, then; but at any hand, / Before you judge, vouchsafe to understand" (21-22).⁷⁸ His final command of the dedication, "Read," seeks to enlist his true auditory, his listeners as readers, to hear how the truth of his play is realized through a text with his stamp of authority.

A proper audience for Jonson, I argue, consisted not of mere spectators, but rather auditors, careful listeners to the playwright's words. However, this

ultimately was a Jonsonian fantasy. What Jonson could make a reality, however, was printing his works, which would presumably ensure a network of discerning readers. Jonson further makes his case in his Epilogue to *The New Inn*, which begins, "Plays in themselves have neither hopes nor fears, / Their fate is only in their hearers' ears" (1-2). In another Epilogue Jonson wrote in defense of his play's original production, he states that his play was to give the King and Queen and court delight: "But then we mean the court above the stairs, / And past the guard; men that have more of ears / Than eyes to judge us" (5-7). Jonson is here admonishing those "below the stairs," best exemplified by the noisy patrons of *The Light Heart*, also perhaps the clientele who would frequent and disparage his plays. Those above the stairs, particularly the monarch, or at least those men with some sort of literacy or capacity for "understanding," are people, according to Jonson, with the capacity to possess a more refined sense of hearing, who listen to a play rather than judging with the eyes only. These "upstairs" individuals are certainly Jonson's intended readers.

The *New Inn* is, in fact, split into two levels, and the action of the play moves between these two spaces within the inn.⁷⁹ The inn is a place of reckoning and discernment. Downstairs, it is a gathering spot for the noise of the crowds engaged in hearing the rumors and gossip of the events inside and outside the inn—a place of news that reminds us of the *Staple*. Upstairs, the characters, who are often calling upon the noise below to be silenced, seek to mark or understand the nature of love and valor in a mock court presided over by the chambermaid Pru, who has been granted "authority absolute" in these proceedings (4.4.291).⁸⁰ According to Jonas Barish, Jonson "seems to have thought of the good audience as a kind of jury, assembled to render a verdict on a work of art. He asked of it

the impartiality appropriate to a court of law rather than the quick emotionality of fellow sharers in a human experience."⁸¹ Perhaps this is why in each of his four Caroline plays, Jonson repeats the legal pronouncement, "The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." As I have detailed, Jonson privileges the auditor or hearer over spectators, and the discerning reader over both. As Andrew Gurr reminds us, 'audience' (from the Latin *audire*, to listen) "hears back to its judicial sense of giving a case a hearing."⁸² I assert that Jonson sees in the term "audience" a group of listeners or readers who can derive the truth from the spoken or printed word, a *male* public who could potentially discern the noise of rumors, gossip, and lies to mark the truth. This audience aligns with the idea of a jury, a group of men who would discern truth amid lies and rumors.⁸³ The paradox for Jonson is to train the spectators, who had judged *The New Inn* as a failure, to be auditors.⁸⁴ The court (or the mock court in the space of the home or inn) provides for Jonson an informational space for truth to be heard, and Pru, who possesses temporary authority in disguise at this court (linking her to Adam Overdo), is granted the license to become *the* discerning auditor of the proceedings.

The Host Goodstock rejoices in the heterogeneous environment of the inn, where he can take in "the variety and throng of humours / And dispositions, that come jostling in / And out still" (1.3.134-36). As the Host discloses, The Light Heart is "the seat of noise / and mirth" (1.3.143-44), a sordid place according to Lovel, echoing the common reputation of inns in the period. Furthermore, Jonson again aligns another space of unauthorized information with the House of Fame. As Adam Fox writes, inns and alehouses were "revolving doors of news, rumour, and gossip, drawing in stories before

radiating them out again via the many people who passed through."⁸⁵ These below-stairs characters are characterized by those upstairs as "these half-beasts below" and "brute guests" (4.2.101, 109). The tapster at The Light Heart is Jack Jug, "a thoroughfare of news" (105) who swallows the news that comes in to the downstairs of the inn, repeats it to others, thus adding to the continual noise of the inn.⁸⁶ The noise never stops at the inn; in fact, it becomes the vehicle to rid Lovel of his melancholy. The play uses the upstairs/ downstairs spaces instead of the inside/ outside duality, and we can see how *The New Inn* is from the outset different than the primarily outside space that governs *Bartholomew Fair*. The downstairs crowd is populated by a noisy bunch that includes Colonel Tiptoe, whose unruly tongue gets him banished from the court proceedings above to the downstairs, where he will hold court among noisemakers and where his talk will be more suited. This "noise and tumult" (4.4.19) continually attempts to interrupt the upstairs court proceedings that have set out to authorize truth.

Lovel's pronouncements about the patient and listening individual hearing through rumor (4.4.135) lead to the discovery scenes that end the play, where the truth emerges for all to see and hear.⁸⁷ The unmaskings of Laetitia, Lady Frampul, and Lord Frampul in the final discovery scene look back to the unmasking of Epicoene. All is discovered downstairs in the inn, and cast out are the noisemakers who have paraded throughout the play. The only people left are those that have descended from the upstairs court and who become eye and ear witnesses to the truth of these revelations. In his Epilogue to the play, Jonson remarks that he could have "haled in / The drunkards and the noises of the inn / In his last act," but he as poet chose to do otherwise. By casting out these

potential rumormongers, Jonson opens up a space for the truth to be the only noise of the inn.

Although Jonson satirizes the downstairs crowds and their thirst for news, he still subtly disparages many of these upstairs characters, perhaps mocking as well those more “refined” spectators who sat on the stage.⁸⁸ The young lord Beaufort responds to his guardian Lovel, “I relish not these philosophical feasts. / Give me a banquet o’sense, like that of Ovid: / A form, to take the eye; a voice, mine ear” (3.2.126-28). Beaufort represents the intrusion of a “downstairs” mentality in the more refined “upstairs” space where reason and clear listening are supposed to govern. Lovel then proceeds, for the next 24 lines, to lambast “the earthly, lower form of lovers” who are only taken with what strikes their senses. Lovel expands his diatribe against this type of sensual love by relating it, interestingly, to a house. The senses get the best of us, according to Lovel, and he uses the metaphor of the frontispiece of a house to show that being enamored with just the visual (“Doors, windows, architraves, the frieze and Coronice” [148]) detracts from true love. Further, Lovel is set against the blazon tradition and the conventions of Petrarchan poetry, which idealizes and fetishizes a body part(s) rather than taking the time to mark what is “within,” as he remarks, “My end is lost in loving of a face, / An eye, lip, nose, hand, foot, or other part, / Whose all is but a statue” (149-52). Such talk rings with Jonson’s own distrust and disgust of stage illusion and spectacle, for he saw the spectators of his plays as being too overcome with stage effects to mark what was within, which for Jonson could only be gathered by a committed, listening auditory or, in its absence, a discerning reading public.

The inn, like the household, the fair, and the staple, are spaces where unauthorized information reigns. The space of the inn itself poses a problem to authorized truth—it is a revolving door of tale telling where rumors and gossip flow as freely as the ale. Jonson taps into the energies of an inn in this play, further anatomizing it into two distinct sections or spaces. In *The Light Heart*, two courts prevail and deliver the truth—first the upstairs ‘court of love’ and second the downstairs ‘court of discovery.’ Yet Jonson’s prefatory material, like his address to his readers in *The Staple of News*, posits another duality—performance and print. Jonson is able to make his fantasy of a listening jury a fictional reality. But only in print he can have his true audience, a discerning reader of the poet’s authorized words.

The Magnetic Lady (1632)

Jonson returns to the household in *The Magnetic Lady*, that quintessential private space he examined in *Epicoene*. Jonson’s spaces—inns, homes, staples, fairs—are what bring his characters together in a pursuit for the latest news, but not always in pursuit of the truth. *The Magnetic Lady* has traditionally been viewed as an unsuccessful comedy of *humors* revolving around the magnetism of Lady Loadstone.⁸⁹ By recasting this play instead as a comedy of *rumors*, I offer a fuller account of the play’s devices, which I argue center upon not Lady Loadstone per se, but rather upon her home. The audience never enters Lady Loadstone’s home, nor are we privy to what becomes the central space of that home, the birthing bed where Placentia gives birth. Such spaces (whether off stage, above, or below) are ripe with significance for Jonson, as they are invested in the ways in which truth is intimately tied with spaces where rumor and news

lurk.⁹⁰ Jonson asserts that discerning listening, within and without the immediate space of the home, is the way to truth. News and reports filter outward from within this domestic space, and thus, I would attest, the true “Magnetic Lady” of the play is the home—yet another Jonsonian House of Rumor—whose rumors attract the play’s characters to one another and to this space to engage in the social exchange of unauthorized information. Central to the construction and distribution of news in the play is the character Gossip, Dame Polish, whose uncontrollable tongue is the source for much of the play’s comedy. Yet, twice in the play, 1.5 and 5.5, Lady Loadstone defends Polish’s right to speak freely, despite her gossiping ways. Parson Palate notes Polish’s capacity within the Loadstone household as the Lady’s “shee-Parasite, Her talking, soothing, sometime governing Gossip” (40-2). The Lady, who could control Polish’s tongue, chooses to grant her free speech, and even allows herself to be counseled by this idle chatterer in similar ways to how Prince Hal allowed Falstaff to counsel him (2.3.66-67). Polish herself asserts her right to speak, “And speake, and speake again” (1.4.25), and her discussion on her rearing of Placentia—“I moulded her, / And fashion’d her, and form’d her”—suggests the Gossip’s central role in raising a child from birth, which Polish had in fact attended. The space inhabited by gossips at the birthing bed was a central place of gathering, talking, and *listening* for women in the early modern period, and Jonson, short of disparaging such spaces, finds a place for them inside the home, which happens to be the nexus of information and news in the play.

Polish contemplates whether Doctor Rut is to be believed, stating, “I warrant ‘hem he sayes true” (2.2.40). Rut, in fact, can’t deduce from the evidence that Placentia is pregnant (2.3.10-22), and he seeks to stop the idle chatter of

Polish: “peace, Gossip Tittle-Tattle” (27). Captain Ironside, however, hears other chatter coming from the house, stating, “yet, i’ the house, I heare it buzz’d there are a brace of Doctors” (2.6.117). Rumors, it turns out, are also pregnant within the house. In this scene, Ironside talks of “Pragmatic Flies, Fooles, Publicanes, and Moathes,” parasites, like Mosca in *Volpone*, who are busy in other people’s affairs (144). Rut speaks of Polish in just these terms in 5.7, stating, “’Tis such a Fly, this Gossip, with her buz, / She blowes on every thing, in every place” (1-2). Gossip Polish is joined by Midwife Chaire in 4.1. as Placentia readies to deliver her child, information that will soon be let out through the winds of rumor.⁹¹ Female gossips, midwives, and nurses dominated the period of lying in, David Cressy reminds us, and post-natal gossiping “transformed a biological event into a communal affair.”⁹² Furthermore, this community of gossips who will inhabit the closed spaces of Placentia’s birthing bed—Polish, Chaire, Keepe, gossip, midwife, and nurse respectively—bring to mind the female gossips who inhabit *The Staple of News*. Yet there is friction between Polish and Keepe because Keepe “Gossips out” about how Polish switched Placentia and Pleasance at birth (4.4.5). Polish tells Keepe to keep her voice down, so that the house doesn’t hear the news and ruin their fame. Lady Loadstone’s house, too, seems modeled after the House of Fame, a place like the Staple full of eyes, ears, rumor, and unverified information. Keepe, however, is defiant, and states, “I will be louder; And cry it through the house, through every room, and every office of the laundry-maids; Till it be burne hot to my Ladies ears” (32-5). It would seem that Polish’s child swap had avoided becoming part of the winds of rumor, yet it is in the immediate space of an immanent birth that the secret begins to fly.

Yet the women of the play are not the only ones who deal in information. Tim Item enters in 3.1., stating, "I Doe bring him [Dr. Rut] newes, from all points o' the Compasse. (That's all the parts of the Sublunary Globe) of times, and double times." Excited by this news, Needle replies, "In, in . . . and furnish forth the Table with your newes: Deserve your dinner. . . The Guests will heare it" (7-13). As Bruce Smith notes, "the offer of exclusive news might be enough to secure would-be-gentlemen a free dinner."⁹³ However, like so many other scenes of gossip and rumor exchange inside the house, the audience is not given aural access to these exchanges. In fact, Compass has overheard the entire conversation between Polish and Keepe about the baby switch, and he uses this new intelligence to enact a scheme that will undermine Sir Moth Interest, the money bawd. In the following scene, he tells Pleasance, Lady Loadstone's true daughter, "I have a news for you, I think will please you" (4.6.9). Once the gossips have let out the secret, it does not take long for the information to begin to circulate, particularly among the men.

Sir Interest, due to benefit from the money left in his care by Placentia's father, receives faulty information about who is the father of Placentia's child: "Mr. Compasse, / He is the man, they say, fame gives it out" (4.8.10-11). Lady Loadstone speaks of "all the infamy I heare," and Interest too is in disbelief, calling for proof about the situation (79-80). The final discovery scenes of the play present yet another informal trial, reminiscent of those in the earlier comedies of rumor, that seeks to sort out what everyone heard and saw and bring them to the truth. Silkworm says he saw the contract and can witness it (5.10.26) and Pleasance notes that she saw the child (5.10.71). After Interest's arrest, he implores Lady Loadstone, "Heare you this, sister? / And hath your house the

ears to heare it too?" (5.10.35-6). As a house of rumor, it certainly does. Compass implores Keepe, in terms that repeat those first presented in *The Staple of News*, to confess the truth to Lady Loadstone, "The truth, the whole truth, nothing but the truth" (5.10.83). Truth, as Ironside tells Interest, breaks out on every side of him, and Lady Loadstone is pleased that they "are all now reconcil'd to truth" (126).

Yet while truth is a point of contention in the space of the house, Jonson also draws his audience's attention to the nature of the theater by way of his metatheatrical framing device, where men inhabit the stage and debate the play and the necessity of discerning listening. These male figures—particularly the loose tongued Damplay and Probee—are just as, if not more, guilty of a failure to listen to the play than are the four Gossips of *The Staple of News*. The satirical rendering of these figures functions, I argue, to train the audience how to listen. In the Act I Induction or Chorus, the Boy, who is the mouthpiece for Jonson, meets Damplay and Probee on the stage and inquires, in terms that mimic the commercial sounds of Bartholomew Fair, "What doe you lack, Gentlemen?" (1). The playhouse and its plays seem to function in similar ways to economic commercial activity, calling forth the people to pay to enter to hear "news." Jonson returns to his insistence on judicious hearing over seeing when the Boy responds, "they shall know a good Play when they *heare* it" (57, emphasis mine). The Boy's final words of the Induction leading to the first Act are meant to remind the audience to keep their ears open: "I have heard the Poet affirme, that to be the most unlucky Scene in a Play, which needs an Interpreter; especially, when the Auditory are awake; and such are you, he presumes" (152-55). Those of the Auditory (or auditorium, the theater itself) are accused of needing a

mediator to explain the play to them because they are not utilizing their auricular capabilities.

Damplay proves to be a fickle observer, wanting conclusions to the action early on in the play. Of course, Jonson is ridiculing mere observers like Damplay (who mirrors Inigo Jones) who put more stock in spectacle than in listening to the verbal exchanges inherent in the comedy. In the Chorus that concludes the first Act, the Boy rebukes Damplay's railing by stating he "will damne our Play, unheard, or unexamined" (45-6). The Act II Chorus continues this debate, as the Boy warns that Damplay's censuring of the play could constitute libel. Probee seems to agree, telling Damplay, "It is an unjust way of hearing, and beholding Playes, this, and most unbecoming a Gentleman to appear malignantly witty in another's Worke" (48-51). All this chatter between acts makes a mockery out of actually hearing the play. But the Boy's continued disagreement with Damplay in the Act III Chorus reveals that Damplay has been mishearing all along, for he believes that the Poet tricked the audience in the third act "to make his prime woman with child, and fall in labour, just to compose a quarrell" (2-3). The Boy retorts, "With whose *borrowed eares*, have you heard, Sir, all this while, that you can mistake the current of our Scene so?" (4-6, emphasis mine). The Boy's training in the art of listening seems to have brought around Probee, who tells Damplay in the final Chorus at the end of the fourth Act, "our parts that are the Spectators, or should heare a Comedy, are to await the process, and events of things, as the Poet presents them, not as wee would corruptly fashion them" (10-14). Jonson asserts that the talkative spectator draws one away from actually listening for how the play will unfold. The Boy, modeled after Jonson, emerges

as the one with the powers of discernment, as the one equipped to lead men to truth.

In his comedy of rumors, Jonson consistently makes reference to the information spaces of these plays—home, fair, staple, inn—as the House of Fame. As I have argued, Jonson seeks out another space in the printed page, which he marks as a more stable space to authorize the truth of his intentions. All of these spaces, of course, underscore another early modern space of information exchange—the theater. Jonson, by satirizing the spaces of unauthorized information, also points to the way in which the playhouse must contend with such information as well. Jonson, I would assert, gradually retreats from the stage because he comes to increasingly see it as an incarnation of the House of Rumor which threatens his own authority as poet and dramatist. His inability to make listeners out of his spectators in the theater brought him outside the theater to the potential authorizing power invested in print. For Ben Jonson, unlike Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare, the staging of the related concerns of rumor, gender, and authority had moral and ethical implications. Jonson asserts that his works are spaces of truth, not just spaces of entertainment. And in typical Jonson fashion, he asserts himself as truth's authority to any ear that will listen.

Notes

¹ *Tittle-Tattle; OR, the Several Branches of Gossipping*, 1.

² In Shakespeare's late romance *The Winter's Tale* (1611), Clown, the Old Shepherd's son, voices his concern with the shepherdesses Mopsa and Dorcas discussing the slipperiness of men in public. Clown remarks,

Is there no manners left among maids? Will they wear
their plackets where they should bear their faces? Is there not
milking-time, when you are going to bed, or kiln-hole, to whis-
tle of these secrets, but you must be *tittle-tattling* before all our
guests? 'Tis well they are whispering. Clammer your tongues,
and not a word more. (4.4.235-40, emphasis mine)

The Clown, here in this rustic setting of Bohemia, would rather these women gossip in private (as do Desdemona and Emilia in *Othello*), to whisper their thoughts instead of talking uncontrollably in public. Here, there seems to be a sanctioning of the whisper, for it is assumedly less of a threat to male sovereignty than is public disclosure of such harmful (or harmless) tittle-tattle.

³ For perhaps the most illuminating recent extended consideration of the gossips' place in early modern England, as well as their threat to patriarchy, see Capp, *When Gossips Meet*.

⁴ Paster, *The Idea of the City in the Age of Shakespeare*, 4. As Michel Serres has written, "We are this tatter of languages, fringed with murmuring," *Genesis*, 124.

⁵ In a later manifestation of the anxieties of gossips that appears during Jonson's hiatus from the stage, see *The Gossips Greeting: or, A new Discovery of such Females meeting*. One of the anxieties rested in gossips gaining verbal control over men. One Gossip relates to the others:

And as I at the Bakehouse said before,
I was compel'd to scould, and ne're give o're:
Sometimes to cry, and fight and keepe a coi'le,
Gossips god-wot, I have past many a broyle,
E're I could make him subject to my will,
Use you your husbands so thei'le soone be still. (C3r)

⁶ According to Adam Fox, Paul's walk was "no less the locus of information swapped, tales told, and rumour gestated," *Oral and Literate Culture*, 346. And Bruce Smith comments that in an age without newspapers, such places like Paul's and the Exchange were "centers of hearing the latest—and spreading it by voicing it," *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England*, 60. According to the German traveler Thomas Platter (1599), the Exchange is a place where throngs of

merchants gather "buying, selling, bearing news," *The Journals of Two Travellers*, 157. And in Englishman Fynes Moryson's *Itinerary* (1617) he remarks that "the people flocke in great numbers, being naturally moer newefangled then the Athenians to heare newes and gaze upon every toye." Quoted in Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage*, 9. Moryson points to the dual concerns Jonson takes up in his plays, where excess of the visual and auditory lead to a public that fails to understand the truth.

⁷ Earle, *Micro-cosmographie*, J5r-K1r, italics mine.

⁸ For an extended study of anxious masculinity in early modern England, see Breitenberg.

⁹ The noises of public gathering places, as Bruce Smith has shown, were one part of the dynamic soundscape of early modern London, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England*, 56. For an earlier view of London's soundscape before 1600 and under the Stuarts, one that at times contradicts Smith's conclusions, see Burke, *The Streets of London Through the Centuries*, 1-40.

¹⁰ See Gilloch, *Myth and Metropolis*, 140.

¹¹ Laura Gowing argues that the early modern city was "consistently imagined through gendered personifications, which had their own impact on gendered spatial practices," "'The freedom of the streets,'" 131.

¹² Furthermore, Jonson's comedies are also intimately bound up with the comedy of humours, which Jonson acknowledges in the Prologue to *The Alchemist* (1610) that humours now "feed the stage" (9). While city comedies and humours' characters were in vogue at the beginning of Jonson's career, they were in decline and out of fashion when he left the stage in 1616. Even before he embarked on a ten-year hiatus, Jonson was experimenting with a new type of comedy in *Epicoene* and *Bartholomew Fair*, early manifestations of his comedy of rumors which occupy a prominent place after his return to the stage in 1626.

¹³ For a similar point, see Jonson's *Discoveries*: "Truth is man's proper good; and the only immortal thing, was given to our mortality to use" (659-61). Furthermore, Jonson writes, "nothing is lasting that is feigned," (671).

¹⁴ For a different view, see Adrian Johns, who in *The Nature of the Book* has argued that “far from fixing certainty and truth, print dissolved them,” 172.

¹⁵ For more on aurality and Jonson’s notion of understanding, see Wollman, “‘Speak that I may see thee’”. Wollman makes an intriguing argument that Jonson “bases his poetry in values cultivated by manuscript culture: the predication that hearing rather than seeing is the model for understanding and that the integrity of the poet is confirmed by the sound of the voice. Avoiding visual imagery and relying on oral/aural features, Jonson establishes meaning through sound and voice to undercut the silent work of the eye in his printed text . . . Despite his engagement with print, Jonson chose to retain the illusion of the speaking voice in a culture making a transition” 22. Wollman later concludes that “the poet’s expression of successful communication between those who understand is always linked to sound, hearing, and harmony, rather than to the visual apprehension of abstractions offered to the sight, which tend to turn ideas and poems themselves into objects,” 31.

¹⁶ See Geoffrey Whitney’s emblem “Silentium” in *A Choice of Emblemes* (Leyden, 1586). In this emblem, a male scholar reads at a table, his finger pressed to his lips; Whitney praises in a series of verses the benefits of silence and the evils of the tongue, which “althowghe it bee a member small, / Of man it is the best, and worste of all,” 61. In *Discoveries*, Jonson remarks, “How much better is it, to be silent; or at least, to speak sparingly!” (1982-83). Ideal silence for Jonson is realized in reading his authorized works, where the reader may partake in truth.

¹⁷ Gail Kern Paster has remarked about the “magnetic attraction” of city dwellers to places like Bartholomew Fair and Morose’s house, *The Idea of the City in the Age of Shakespeare*, 160. I would extend her argument to include the inn at Barnet, the staple, and Lady Loadstone’s house. Yet John Earle, in his *Micro-cosmographie*, writes that it is a handsome Hostess who is “the fairer commendation of an Inne, above the faire Signe or faire Lodgings. She is the Loadstone that attracts men of Iron, Gallants and Roarers,” G2r. As I will later argue in my discussion of *The Magnetic Lady*, it is the house as a place of information exchange, not Lady Loadstone, that is the play’s magnetic attraction.

¹⁸ For more on Jonson, the multiple discourses of censorship in the seventeenth century, and Jonson’s relationship with the Masters of Revels Office, see Burt, *Licensed by Authority*, especially 1-25 and 115-49. See also Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation*.

¹⁹ Knapp, “Ben Jonson and the Publicke Riot,” 167, 170-73.

²⁰ For an interesting discussion of Jonson's dramatic engagement with confined spaces, see the title chapter in Donaldson, *Jonson's Magic Houses*, 66-88.

²¹ Pamela Allen Brown has written that in Jonson's *Epicoene*, Morose's treaties with the fishwives are "a prefiguration of the 'articles' propounded between audience and author in the Induction to *Bartholomew Fair*, with the implication that the marketwomen 'out there' *must be dealt with*—in both cases through constructing the exchange of silence for money in a market of noise," "Jonson Among the Fishwives," 96, emphasis in original. Furthermore, as William W.E. Slights remarks, "Jonson seems to take a fierce delight in invading every private space in London and loosing every silenced tongue to give the city, along with Morose, just what it deserves," *Ben Jonson and the Art of Secrecy*, 95.

²² Levine, *Men in Women's Clothing*, 80, 83.

²³ Hallahan, "Silence, Eloquence, and Chatter in Jonson's *Epicoene*," 120-21.

²⁴ Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England*, 39. Here we should also look ahead to *The Staple of News*, where Pennyboy Junior doesn't want to hear a tailor relate news, asking Thomas Barber to tell him instead. Barber later becomes a part of the commercial network of the Staple, raising his own gossip and news to the level of a commodity.

²⁵ In fact, it is appropriate to think of the news flowing as water did at the conduit, the public water main where a household could get its "fill." Later in the play, Morose speaks of *Epicoene*, "She is like a conduit pipe that will gush out with more force when she opens again" (4.4.70-71).

²⁶ Billingsgate, according to the *OED*, was a fish market near the gate itself "noted for vituperative language" (1). After hearing Morose speak and rant, *Epicoene* mocks, "how idly he talks" (4.4.49), another gesture from Jonson that signals his understanding that women were not the only ones with unrestrained speech in early modern England.

²⁷ As Rocco Coronato has recently argued, "Morose is an eccentric whose persecution is carnivalised, rather than an eccentric who can be redeemed by festive lampooning," *Jonson Versus Bakhtin*, 103.

²⁸ I am in agreement with Hallahan's conclusion that "Clearly it is by adhering to silence that Dauphine achieves the final victory," "Silence, Eloquence, and Chatter in Jonson's *Epicoene*," 126. In turn Jonson is able to achieve a victory over his audience by keeping a secret (the truth) as well.

²⁹ Lanier, "Masculine Silence," 13.

³⁰ Jonson continually announces the presence of other male noises in the play that threaten to break in, including the "noise of fiddlers" (3.3.78) and a "variety of noises" (3.7.2) that grate Morose's ears. Clerimont makes an interesting statement on trumpeters, highlighting the nexus of information exchange within and without London by members of the non-elite classes: "they have intelligence of all feasts. There's good correspondence betwixt them and the London cooks" (3.3.81-2). Finally, the henpecked captain Tom Otter is associated with the loud sounds of the bearbaiting rings where he is a bearward and also with making noise behind his wife's back, although he is emasculated when he deals with her face to face.

³¹ Speaking about Daw and La Foole, Dauphine relates that they "have nothing, not the use of their senses, but by tradition [what they are told]" (3.3.90-1). Clearly, these two men fail to practice careful listening to others and especially to each other. According to Janette Dillon, "La Foole, with his narcissistic rambling, is a mere abuse of breath; and his endless talking, as the duel plot confirms, represents a metaphorical, if not actual, impotence," *Theatre, Court and City*, 134.

³² For more on the credibility and competence of witnesses in the courts in the early modern period, see Shapiro, *A Culture of Fact*.

³³ Slights recalls Ian Donaldson's contribution to *Epicoene* in *The World Upside-Down*: "He pointed out that when Truewit summons everyone in Morose's neighbourhood to the matrimonial feast, he is reproducing the social ritual called 'charivari'", *Ben Jonson and the Art of Secrecy*, 91. Slights provides a 1611 definition of *charivari* from Randall Cotgrave's *Dictionarie*, which reads in part "a foule noise made, a black Santus rung, to the Shame, and disgrace of another," 91, emphasis mine. Truewit, in this sense, brings the noise to enact a shaming ritual upon the one who cannot bear the noise, Morose.

³⁴ Ironically, Jack Daw, in his verses to *Epicoene*, writes, "Silence in woman is like speech in man," and "Nor is't a tale / That female vice should be a virtue male / . . . / I know to speak and she to hold her peace" (2.3.109, 112-13, 117). In 4.1., Truewit's remarks about women who go to public shows and plays "to see and

to be seen" are part of Jonson's own larger attack on early modern spectators, both male and female, who feast with the eyes and not with the ears. This concern will again be raised in *The Staple of News*. In fact, in the Second Prologue to *Epicoene*, Jonson notes that his play is "the object of your ear and sight" (6), giving authority to the ear above the visual. However, it is interesting to note that at the end of the play, Truewit comes forward to speak to the crowd who he addresses as "Spectators" (5.4.229). I do not think this is an oversight on Jonson's part; rather, he is frank in his assessment of those who have come to his play, an issue that I will later discuss in my examination of *The New Inn*.

³⁵ I here will only briefly give an overview of the women in the play whom Jonson undoubtedly is satirizing with their overwhelming claim to authority over males. As Karen Newman remarks, talk in women is dangerous "because it is perceived as a usurpation of multiple forms of authority"; however, I do not agree with Newman's assertion that woman "becomes the overdetermined locus of noise" in the play, "City Talk," 184, 186. Of course, the women of the play are anything but the cultural norm of "silent, chaste, and obedient." In fact, as Laura Levine argues, initially the women in the play are associated with dismemberment (yielding impotency), for they reduce Dauphine to a series of members or body parts, *Men in Women's Clothing*, 76. In fact, both Mrs. Otter (4.2) and Dauphine (4.6) are "dismembered" by words. As Janette Dillon notices, Otter's "anatomisation" of his wife is one of many such scenes in a play "obsessed with replacing real body parts with bought artificial substitutes," *Theatre, Court and City*, 133-34. Mrs. Otter overhears her husband railing against her, and she calls him "a slandering knave" (4.2.87). The Collegiates encourage Epicoene to go with them to Bedlam, the Exchange, and the china houses, places to see and be seen as well as places to hear and be heard (4.3.23-25). As Truewit remarks, the Ladies "know not why they do anything, but as they are informed" (4.6.57-8). Jonson depicts these women as controlling and curbing men's free speech and unruly tongues, for we learn from Daw that Mrs. Otter "corrects her husband so he dares not speak but under correction" (4.3.9-10). Furthermore, Haughty comments that Centaur has immortalized herself with "taming of her wild male" (4.3.25-6). Certainly, women of the play exert a kind of masculine authority that threatens not only Morose, but all the men in the play. Jonson presents these inversionary moments, I think, to highlight the problematics of unrestrained *male* speech and the failures of men engaging in careful listening.

³⁶ In *Discoveries*, Jonson writes, "A wise tongue should not be licentious, and wandering; but moved, and (as it were) governed with certain reins from the heart, and bottom of the breast: and it was excellently said of that philosopher; that there was a wall, or parapet of teeth set in our mouth, to restrain the petulancy of our words: that the rashness of talking should not only be retarded by the guard, and watch of our heart; but be fenced in, and defended by certain strengths, placed in the mouth itself, and within the lips. But you shall see some, so abound with words without any seasoning or taste of matter, in so profound a

security, as while they are speaking, for the most part, they confess to speak they know not what" (406-21).

³⁷ Patrides, *Introduction*, xv.

³⁸ According to C.A. Patrides, this conflict is resolved by "the omniscient eye of Providence which gazes downwardly into the composition and outwardly into the historical process," *Ibid.*, xv.

³⁹ Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England*, 351.

⁴⁰ Perry, *The Making of Jacobean Culture*, 222. Richard Dutton draws a parallel between Overdo and Ursula the pig woman: "She thus stands alongside Overdo—Eve with her Adam, the primal mother and the self-appointed guardian of the Fair-as-world," *Ben Jonson: To the First Folio*, 165.

⁴¹ *Bartholomew Fair* has been read through the radical backgrounds of popular festivity that Bakhtin studies in *Rabelais and His World*. See Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*. See also Bristol's *Carnival and Theater*, which elaborates on Bakhtin's thesis.

⁴² The Epilogue, in fact, begins, "Your majesty hath seen the play, and you / Can best allow it from your ear and view" (1-2). Jonson asserts that King James has been a spectator (interestingly he does not make the distinction he made about hearers and spectators with the King that he did with his audience), but it is first his ear and his proper listening to the play that will ultimately approve Jonson's dramatic effort.

⁴³ See for instance, Jonson's conversations with William Drummond, where Drummond recounts Jonson saying that "when he wanted words to express the greatest villain in the world, he would call him an Inigo" (479-81).

⁴⁴ Teague, *The Curious History of Bartholomew Fair*, 34.

⁴⁵ For a similar use of Overdo's phrase "We hear with other men's ears; we see with other men's eyes," see John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613). Antonio, speaking about Ferdinand, remarks, "He speaks with others' tongues, and hears men's suits / with others' ears;" furthermore, he "Dooms men to death by

information, / Rewards by hearsay" (1.1.173-77). For a later related example, see John Ford's *The Broken Heart* (1633), where Orgilus, who is in disguise, states in terms that recall Adam Overdo, "Mine eyes and ears are open" (1.3.50).

⁴⁶ For more on espionage and surveillance in Jonson's plays, particularly his Roman plays, see Archer, *Sovereignty and Intelligence*, 95-120.

⁴⁷ Overdo also asserts using his sense of smell (colloquially) in gathering information. In 2.2., he states, "Well, I will fall in with her, and with her Mooncalf, and wind out [smell out, as in hunting] wonders of enormity" (119-20). See also Richard Brome's *The Antipodes* (1636), where Joyless remarks in soliloquy that he has been a "nose-witness" (5.1.14).

⁴⁸ In his encounter with Knockem in 2.3, he remarks, "A cutpurse of the sword, the boot, and the feather! Those are his marks" (11-12). Yet Overdo is mistaken, believing to have heard Ursula call Knockem a cutpurse. Overdo thought his first-hand observation was supported by Ursula's words, but his inability to listen to the conversation leads him astray.

⁴⁹ The team of Nightingale and Edgeworth again work Cokes by appealing to his desire for ballads. Interestingly, the ear is doubly responsible for his purse being picked a second time. First, of course, Cokes is drawn in to hearing Nightingale's ballad about cutpurses, and while Nightingale sings, the stage directions read that "Edgeworth gets up to Cokes and tickles him in the ear with a straw twice to draw his hand out of his pocket." Quarlous and Winwife, we should note, confront Edgeworth and tell him that they saw him cut Cokes's purse; their failure to act, however, is driven by their desire for the black box Wasp carries, which they think Edgeworth can lift for their own purposes.

⁵⁰ See also Jonson's 1623 masque *Time Vindicated to Himself and to His Honors*, which begins with Fame exclaiming to the Curious, Ears, Eyes, and Nose, "Give ear, the worthy, hear what Fame proclaims!" (1). Fame announces that she has come from Time to gather the worthy people to a magnificent spectacle that Time planned to present that night. Nose, Eyes, and Ears rejoice because they anticipate an evening of Saturnalia, a day of inversion (what Nose later calls "the giddy world turned the heels upward" [183] and a "Babel of wild humors" [193]) where, like Bartholomew Fair, various forms of license were permitted. As the Curious grow impatient to see new sports and devices, Fame rejects their hope. They had hoped they would have talked of the king or state or censured the council, for Ears asserts, "We do it in Paul's" while Nose responds, "Yes, and in all the taverns!" (176). Ears is the last of the Curious to speak, stating, "We only hunt for novelty, not truth" (214), a comment that certainly aligns with what had

been Jonson's growing frustration with his audiences inability to hear the truth amid the noises of his day. As the second antimasque drives the Curious away, Fame, remarks, "Why, now they are kindly used, like such *spectators* / That know not what they would have" (218-19, emphasis mine). Fame echoes Jonson's own disgust with those who place spectacle above all else.

⁵¹ For excellent accounts of the news business in early modern Europe, see Muggli, "Ben Jonson and the Business of News"; Stephens, *A History of News*; Frank, *The Beginnings of the English Newspaper*; Newman, "Engendering the News,"; Shaaber, "The History of the First English Newspaper,"; Levy, "How Information Spread Among the Gentry"; Cust, "News and Politics in Early Seventeenth-Century England"; and Sanders, *Ben Jonson's Theatrical Republics*, esp. 123-43.

⁵² In Bacon's work, one of the Fathers of Salomon's House tells the traveler that the end of their foundation is the "Enlarging of the bounds of Humane Empire," 36. Here, the Father aligns the seeking out of knowledge with the imperial exploits that had permeated the English imagination over the previous fifty years, myriad voyages that were collected in Purchas and Hakluyt. Salomon's House seems to function with an imperial epistemology as its guiding principle, conquering new worlds of knowledge for the benefit of Bensalem. Such gathering of knowledge, central to Salomon's House, also plays out in the spaces of Jonson's comedy of rumors plays.

⁵³ For an earlier examination of the merits and use of the eyes and ears, see Underwood, *The Little World* (London, 1612). Speaking of the uses of the eyes and ears as necessary components of the head, the narrator writes,

It hath Intelligencers, which
seeke out to see and heare
What newes abroad, both good and bad,
and then the same they beare
Unto the owner of the House,
and him there of doth warne,
That he the bearer may prevent
the things that might him harme. (F4r)

⁵⁴ Levy, "Staging the News," 253.

⁵⁵ Larry Champion's study of Jonson's "dotages" proposes that the term 'dotage' needs qualification, for he reads a certain "care and precision" in the construction of these late plays, *Ben Jonson's 'Dotages'*, 8.

⁵⁶ See Butler's article "Late Jonson," which takes into account how these late plays have been viewed recently by various literary critics. His own account places these plays within the growing political tumult of the 1630s: "The plays educate as well as legitimate: they promote images of how responsible authority should act and of what the good society should be," 185. Overall, I agree with Butler's assertion, "Whatever they were, they certainly were not 'dotages'" 166.

⁵⁷ McKenzie, "The Staple of News and the Late Plays," 86.

⁵⁸ Richard Burt details the revisionist critics of the past twenty years (Anne Barton, Leah Marcus, and Martin Butler among them) who attempt to recuperate Jonson's and Caroline drama's fame, *Licensed by Authority*, 117-18.

⁵⁹ For more on listening as related to the Jeerers, see Cave, *Ben Jonson*, 150-52.

⁶⁰ For a succinct discussion of the place of the audience on the stage in the Renaissance theater, see Haynes, *The Social Relations of Jonson's Theater*, 68-76.

⁶¹ Sanders, *Ben Jonson's Theatrical Republics*, 64.

⁶² Sherman, "Eyes and Ears, News and Plays", 35.

⁶³ Leech, "The Incredibility of Jonsonian Comedy," 15.

⁶⁴ Sherman, "Eyes and Ears, News and Plays," 36, emphasis in original.

⁶⁵ As Edward Partridge notes, the Staple becomes another Jonsonian business that feeds on the lowest desires of men: money and news, *The Broken Compass*, 187. For more on the news and current events, as well as the problems of being unable to distinguish rumor from reality, see Woolf, "News, History and the Construction of the Present in Early Modern England." Another play that satirizes the new journalism was performed in 1626 as well, Fletcher's *Fair Maid of the Inn*. Knoll also points out that Jonson had precedents in the domestic drama for linking satire of news and economic theory in Robert Wilson's two plays, *The Three Ladies of London* (1584) and *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London* (1590). He assumes Jonson must have known both plays, *Ben Jonson's Plays*, 178.

⁶⁶ I disagree with D.F. McKenzie's conclusion that Jonson's play "marks the end of theatre as the only secular mass medium, the end of the playhouse as the principal forum of public debate, the end of the actors' popular function as the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time. The dramatic poet, as rhetor in the truest sense, had lost his vocation to a journalist," "*The Staple of News and the Late Plays*," 126. It seems to me that these two venues for the news were mutually enabling, just as the dramatist and journalist could seemingly coexist at the same time while one aids the other's enterprise. Earlier in his article, McKenzie states, "In the range of its fictive characters and reported events, even in its further perspectives of outer and inner rooms, the Staple is a competing image of the theatre," 97. Jonson seeks to readdress a balance in his printed versions of his works, for he may realize the unsavory parallel between theater and news that are both a part of the same commercial enterprise that relied on rumor.

⁶⁷ Levy, "How Information Spread Among the Gentry," 273.

⁶⁸ Rosnow and Fine, *Rumor and Gossip*, 131.

⁶⁹ The Staple is also a place of credit. The noun *credit*, in fact, is closely associated with economics and rumor and reporting. See the *OED* definitions, 3, 5, and 9. For a related use of this word in Shakespeare, see *Twelfth Night*, 4.3.6.

⁷⁰ Hoenselaars, "Rumour, News and Commerce in Ben Jonson's *The Staple of News*," 149.

⁷¹ "Buzz" is a response to stale news. For one of the phrase's most famous uses, see *Hamlet* 2.2.376. People flocked to London's ports, where they could be privy to information fresh from overseas journeys. Perhaps the capacity for English news, examined closely or not, to travel across the ocean underscores the anxiety about information (particularly news of political significance) freely flying about.

⁷² Sanders, *Ben Jonson's Theatrical Republics*, 65.

⁷³ The *emissary* is a person sent out to retrieve information. As the *OED* reveals, the word also implies "something odious and underhanded."

⁷⁴ See Dekker and Middleon's play *The Roaring Girl* (1610), where the fifth act is dominated by news and reports and brings up many of the issues Jonson would

later engage with in *The Staple of News*. In 5.2., Greenwit remarks, "One brings us water news; then comes another / With a full-charged mouth, like a culverin's voice, / And he reports the Tower. Whose sounds are truest?" (47-49). Sir Guy, however, replies, "Both news are false, / Of Tower or water" (53). The noises of the city's places are filled with false news, and Dekker and Middleton highlight the corrupted notion of truth in the city.

⁷⁵ Interestingly, each of Jonson's final plays repeats the dictum, "The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth"—*The Staple of News* (5.1.68-9); *The New Inn* (4.4.34-5); *The Magnetic Lady* (5.10.83); *A Tale of a Tub* (2.6.31-2).

⁷⁶ For more on Jonson's stormy relations with his audience, see Barish, "Jonson and the Loathed Stage."

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 33, 34-35.

⁷⁸ In her article "Jonson Among the Fishwives," Pamela Allen Brown writes, "Jonson grouses that his 'matter' should be understood rather than seen, digested rather than bolted. He praises the ears of learned judgment and abhors the greedy eyes and noisy mouths of the ignorant," 90.

⁷⁹ The Light heart is located in Barnet, a market town outside of London. Its placement in relation to the thriving metropolis that is London aligns itself with Bartholomew Fair in Smithfield. Both places are destinations that are populated by London characters—rumors and unauthorized information fly easily beyond the city to infect these spaces outside the bounds of London. For an excellent discussion of the "alternative societies" of the inn and the setting of the play outside London, see Sanders, *Ben Jonson's Theatrical Republics*, especially 144-63.

⁸⁰ This upstairs world seems to present an inversionary fantasy (Pru the chambermaid as Queen, Trundle as Crier, Ferret as Clerk), where a day of sport inside (like the outside space of Bartholomew Fair) grants license for these reversals. It is certainly noteworthy, and deserving of further inspection, the authority (and prudent sharp listening) Jonson gives to women in this play. For a revealing article related to this subject, see Ostovich, "Mistress and Maid: Women's Friendship in *The New Inn*."

⁸¹ Barish, "Jonson and the Loathed Stage," 29.

⁸² Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 102. Later, Gurr writes, "While 'audience' tended to hold the judicial connotation of a hearing, in the king's court and in the lesser lawcourts, 'auditor' meant simply a listener," 108. Jonson's case seems to provide a paradox: while he privileged an auditor and craves a listening audience, 'audience', as Gurr comments, implies a crowd while 'spectator' implies an individual. But spectators for Jonson were simply flawed playgoers who were captivated by the visual and not with the spoken word. When Jonson's works come to print under his authorization, he seems to appeal to the individual and his discerning ears. Perhaps he has in mind a "reading public," a crowd of eyes and ears attuned to his authorized words.

⁸³ According to Barbara Shapiro, in the early modern period, juries were composed entirely of men; furthermore, women's testimony seems to have been marked with lesser value than men's testimony, *A Culture of Fact*, 23-24, 16.

⁸⁴ Gabriel Egan, after an extensive search of the online database *LION*, concludes that "plays were much more commonly thought of as visual rather than aural experiences in the literary and dramatic writing of the period," citing that the "preponderance of visual over aural phrasing is more than twelve to one," "Hearing or Seeing a Play?" 332. We can understand from this quantitative analysis Jonson's reasons for his continual outbursts about spectators throughout his career.

⁸⁵ Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England*, 353. And, according to James C. Scott, "In European culture at any rate, the alehouse, the pub, the tavern, the inn, the cabaret, the beer cellar, the gin mill were seen by secular authorities and by the church as places of subversion. Here subordinate classes met offstage and off-duty in an atmosphere of freedom encouraged by alcohol," *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 121.

⁸⁶ Jug, like Tiptoe and Fly, is present at the beginning of the first court proceeding upstairs, yet the Host sends Jug downstairs in 3.2., most likely to keep the news upstairs out of the ears of those downstairs. Tiptoe remarks, "Come away. Buzz in their faces: give 'em all the buzz, Dor in their ears and eyes, hum, dor, and buzz. . . We'll find The thoroughfare below, and quaere him; Leave these relicts, Buzz; they shall see that I, Spite of their jeers, dare drink, and with a fly" (2.6.85-92).

⁸⁷ The *OED* dates the first usage of *discovery* as a term relating to the law (disclosure by a party to an action of facts or documents) from 1715, but other usages were in use during Jonson's time. For Jonson, this *discovery*, "the action of

disclosing or divulging anything secret or unknown" (2a, c. 1586) just happens to occur in the auspices of a mock court trial.

⁸⁸ The melancholy Lovel (a character deriving from Jonson's earlier humours characters) makes his case for true love, noting, "True love hath no unworthy thought, no light, / Loose, unbecoming appetite or strain, / But fixèd, constant, pure, immutable" (3.2.123-25). Lovel here seems to be speaking for Jonson's own distrust of that which is changeable, particularly performance; Barish, in fact, has argued that Jonson belonged to a Christian-Platonic-Stoic tradition that "finds value embodied in what is immutable and unchanging, and tends to dismiss as unreal whatever is past and passing and to come," "Jonson and the Loathed Stage," 38. Jonson hopes that print will ensure that the authorized version of his work will allow it to remain virtually unchanged.

⁸⁹ *The Magnetic Lady* has received its fair share of criticism, and one example will characterize its reception by twentieth-century critics. Joe Lee Davis remarks that the play, "by reason of its over-involved metaphor of moth, magnet, loadstone, needle, compass, and treasure in a well, turns into an extended comic 'metaphysical' conceit that fails to come off" *The Sons of Ben*, 86. Such "failures" are easy explanations for critics who view Jonson's late plays as uneven in terms of his earlier comedies. For instance, for an interesting discussion of the close parallels between *The Magnetic Lady* and Jonson's early humours play *Every Man Out of His Humour*, see Dutton, *Ben Jonson, Dramatist*, 290-99. Jonson, while certainly engaging with this central metaphor in the play, is also continuing his exploration of the slipperiness of information and the effects of rumor and gossip upon a particular place.

⁹⁰ For more on the "feminocentric environment" of Lady Loadstone's house and in *The New Inn*, see Sanders, "The New Inn and *The Magnetic Lady*."

⁹¹ See also John Ford's *The Broken Heart* (1633), where Phulas, having just received news, remarks "But this is but she-news / I had it from a midwife" (2.1.59-60).

⁹² Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death*, 84. Such a community, I have been arguing, should not be implicated as the sole space where news could be spread without authorization. I here turn to *Alternative Shakespeares vol. 2*, where, in Margreta de Grazia's article "Imprints: Shakespeare, Gutenberg and Descartes," she includes two figures that interestingly show the two spaces that posed a threat to male sovereignty. J. van der Straet's *Nova reperta* (1600) presents ten men and boys engaged in the business of setting type and printing news. We see an open door at the far end of the space, where once completed, news will be distributed outside the bounds of the printing house. The typesetters, for instance, could

complicate truth if they misplace letters or deliberately leave out or include material. We should also note that these men are dealing in printed news, which did increase the pace of information. In the figure below this, we see L. Dolce's *Transformationi d'Ovido* (1555), which presents seven women attending the birth of a child. Two women are removed from the actual process and are engaged in talk. For all the continual associations of gossips and birthing places as places of transgression, we might reconsider the actual threat to male information networks and to their authority of news and information that these female spaces actually presented. A *gossip*, a word derived from godparent (*god-sib*), was usually a female neighbor called in to assist at childbirth during the "lying in" period and was often called to act as midwife. See also Brome's *The Antipodes* (1638), where Blaze's wife Barbara reports to Joyless of his son Peregrine, and states, "Pray, Doctor Hughball, / Play the man-midwife and deliver him / Of his huge timpany of news" (1.3.5-7).

⁹³ Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England*, 61. In Jonson's poem "To Captain Hungry," he writes, "Do what you come for, captain, with your news; / That's, sit, and eat: do not my ears abuse. / I oft look on false coin, and know it from true" (1-3). See also *Shakespeare's All's Well That Ends Well*, where Lafeu remarks,

A good traveller is something at
the latter end of a dinner,
But one that lies three-thirds and uses a
known truth to pass a thousand nothings with,
should be once heard and thrice beaten. (2.5.26-9)

EPILOGUE

"It becomes problematic whether one can trust one's eyes and ears, and of course one's surrogate eyes and ears—the mass media."

—Rosnow and Fine, *Rumor and Gossip*

Rumour's injunction at the start of Shakespeare's *2 Henry IV*—"Open your ears"—emerges as the defining principle in the plays of Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Jonson. Opening one's ears is the precursor to engaging in discerning listening, yet these dramatists do not provide a unified prescriptive measure about how to extract truth from what one hears. Rather, the plays describe that to be a discerning listener, one must ultimately make a choice amid ambiguous information. This active component of discerning listening sets it apart from the passive notion of obedient listening to God or to the monarch. Furthermore, discerning listening has a distinct gender component, for to distinguish the truth within rumors, early modern dramatists assert that men need to engage in this type of listening to and for rumors in order to maintain informational authority.

In this dissertation, I have argued that early modern drama registers a certain type of male character (king/soldier/scholar/gentleman) who is capable of discerning listening, an action that becomes an agent of specific masculine authority and identity. However, rumor's inherent ambiguity and indeterminacy poses the greatest threat to discerning listening. The paradox that emerges is that while the drama posits men as the authors of information, it is

men—and not women—who are responsible for the circulation of unauthorized information and rumor on the stage. Male characters continually attempt to disown their own loose speech by placing women and their gossip as the true threat to informational authority. As early modern drama exposes transgressive male talk, men must seek to maintain their informational authority from male unauthorized speech. Thus, in this dissertation, I have traced a shift in concerns about the female tongue to the male tongue and how discerning listening became a necessary component in the establishment and maintenance of authorial identity on the early modern stage.

Furthermore, the issue of aural access surfaces throughout the preceding chapters. In my discussion of Marlowe's plays, a certain anxiety arises over who has access to a monarch's or warrior's ear. For instance, in *Edward II*, this anxiety is most fully realized in Mortimer, who distrusts *men* at the ears of kings—Gaveston at Edward II's ear and Kent at young Edward III's ear. Marlowe, however, reverts back to an anxiety about the feminization of male ears in *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, as Aeneas's men seek to deny Dido further access to their warrior-hero in fear that her talk will feminize him and make him neglect his duty. Shakespeare's second tetralogy, on the other hand, details the necessity of the King or would-be King to give all men and women in the realm access to his ear, as they form the crucial voice of formal and informal counsel. And, as king, Henry V seeks to gain access via disguise to the counsel of his soldiers, where he hopes to hear unfettered speech that will give him access to the truth. Male anxieties again arise in other Shakespeare plays—*Othello*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Taming of the Shrew*—where men are not given access to women's speech or to the words that are spoken into their ears. And in Jonson's comedy of rumors,

having aural access to male and female speech is the crucial precursor to coming to the truth.

Rumor, gender, authority, and discerning listening emerge as interrelated and pressing issues on the early modern stage at a historical moment that was experiencing a crisis of authorization. With the emergence of print culture, coupled with a still active oral and manuscript culture, the early modern period was finding its way amid a changing mediascape. With more information in circulation than ever before, with easier distribution and access to news and information from inside and outside England, the issue of the authorization of information became a pressing concern. During the 1640s, for instance, England saw an emergence of what we might now call a news service, as information of events home and abroad concerning the war littered the country. With titles such as *The true Informer*, *London's Intelligencer or, Truth impartially related*, and *The Kingdomes Weekly Intelligencer: Sent Abroad To prevent mis-information*, we can witness how these news reports took pains to establish and assert the credibility and truth of their news. And, with the increased possibility of ambiguous and unauthorized information to contend with, numerous cultural, political, and literary discourses attempted to make sense of the changing face of communication as well as the destructive and productive potential inherent in rumor.

In *A Social History of Truth*, Steven Shapin claims, "Premodern society looked truth in the face."¹ However, for the most part, the twenty-first century does not. Yet in many ways, the early modern period and our own present moment are remarkably similar. Rumor continues to infiltrate both old and new media, and repeatedly the media must contend with the fallout of reporting

unauthorized information to the masses. One such instance is the January 2006 West Virginia mine accident, where rumors spread that the majority of the miners had survived. Yet this news that spread among the families was unauthorized information that was dispersed after people overheard cell phone calls that reportedly told family members about survivors. These reports were also initially repeated to the press by others, including the governor of West Virginia. After hours of celebrating this good news, however, family members were told the truth, and mining officials called these initial reports an unfortunate miscommunication. Not only does this tragic event highlight the speed with which rumor travels (as well as emphasize rumor's inherent difference from gossip), it also reveals how the media is susceptible to reporting and printing unauthorized information. The following day, newspapers across the country, from *USA Today* to the *Los Angeles Times* to *The Washington Post*, printed headlines based on rumor. Similarly, cable news networks and internet sources all initially reported these rumors as fact. All of these media outlets soon issued retractions and apologies, but ultimately these events reveal how unauthorized information can under certain circumstances be portrayed as truth in a headline society. Even though these media outlets' credibility is momentarily sullied, the public nevertheless returns to these same sources for the truth.

On all levels—from media source to the reader or listener—there has to be a concerted effort to discern. In our information-saturated age, it is even more pressing that consumers of information carefully tread the rumor market that is our modern world. Discernment, both in the early modern world and in our own, lies at the heart of coming to truth. As the printing press revolutionized the

early modern world and its own access to information, so too have the technological advances of the twentieth century changed not only how we communicate, but also how we think about the power of information. From blogs to text messaging, from cell phones to the internet, the face of how we engage in information is constantly changing.² As a society, we thrive on access, but like the early modern period, increased access also brings along an anxiety concerning authorization. While communication may be faster today and while we have more venues for communicating, rumor has not been eliminated. Nor can it be. To come to the truth, a discerning public must open its ears.

Notes

¹ Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*, 410.

² In February 2006, Western Union ceased delivering telegrams, a revolutionary technology in the 1850s when it emerged.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abrams, Richard. "Rumor's Reign in 2 *Henry IV*: The Scope of a Personification." *English Literary Renaissance* 16:3 (1986): 467-95.
- Adams, Thomas. *The Taming of the Tongue* (London, 1616).
- Affinati, Giacomo. *The Dumb Divine Speaker* (London, 1605).
- Alder, Ken. "A Social History of Untruth: Lie Detection and Trust in Twentieth-Century America." *Representations* 80 (Fall 2002): 1-33.
- Alley, Hugh. *Hugh Alley's Caveat: The Markets of London in 1598*. Eds. Ian Archer, Caroline Barron, Vanessa Harding (London Topographical Society Publication No. 137, 1988).
- Allport, Gordon W. and Leo Postman. *The Psychology of Rumor* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1965).
- Anderson, Linda. "'A Losing Office': Shakespeare's Use of Messengers." *The Upstart Crow* 17 (1997): 5-22.
- Anon. *Arden of Faversham* (1592). *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*. Ed. David Bevington et al. (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002): 421-82.
- Anon. *Clyomon and Clamydes* (London: Oxford University Press, 1913).
- Archer, John Michael. *Sovereignty and Intelligence: Spying and Court Culture in the English Renaissance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993).
- Ascham, Roger. *The Schoolmaster*. Ed. Lawrence V. Ryan (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967).
- Askew, Anne. *The Examinations of Anne Askew*. Ed. Elaine V. Beilin (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).
- Attali, Jacques. *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*. Trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1985).

- Bacon, Francis. *The New Atlantis. Francis Bacon: The Major Works*. Ed. Brian Vickers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002): 457-90.
- . *The Essays or Counsels Civil and Moral, Newly Enlarged (1625). Francis Bacon: The Major Works*. Ed. Brian Vickers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002): 341-456.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. Trans. Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1968).
- Barish, Jonas A. "Jonson and the Loathed Stage." *A Celebration of Ben Jonson*. Eds. William Blissett, Julian Patrick, and R.W. Van Fossen (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973): 27-53.
- Barthes, Roland. *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*. Trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1985).
- Bauman, Richard. *Let Your Words Be Few: Symbolism of Speaking and Silence among Seventeenth-Century Quakers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
- Becon, Thomas. *Catechism*. In *Renaissance Woman: A Sourcebook: Constructions of Femininity in England*. Ed. Kate Aughterson (London and New York: Routledge, 1995): 26-9.
- Bellamy, Elizabeth Jane. "Slanderous Troys: Between Fame and Rumor." *Fantasies of Troy: Classical Tales and the Social Imaginary in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. Eds. Alan Shepard and Stephen D. Powell (Toronto, ON: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2004): 215-35.
- Berger, Harry. "Sneak's Noise, or, Rumor and Detextualization in 2 Henry IV." *Making Trifles of Terrors: Redistributing Complicities in Shakespeare* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997): 126-47.
- Bolan, Robyn. "Richard II: Shakespeare and the Languages of the Stage." *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean History Plays*. Ed. Michael Hattaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 141-57.
- Boose, Lynda. "Scolding Brides and Bridling Scolds: Taming the Woman's Unruly Member." *Materialist Shakespeare: A History*. Ed. Ivo Kamps (London and New York: Verso, 1995): 239-79.

- Braswell, Mary Flowers. "Architectural Portraiture in Chaucer's *House of Fame*." *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 11 (1981): 101-112.
- Brathwait, Richard. *The English Gentlewoman* (Amsterdam and New York: Da Capo Press, 1970).
———. *Essaies Upon the Five Senses* (London, 1620).
- Breitenberg, Mark. *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
- Braudy, Leo. *The Frenzy of Renown: Fame & Its History* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).
- Bristol, Michael D. *Carnival and Theater: Plebeian Culture and the Structure of Authority in Renaissance England* (London: Methuen, 1985).
- Brock, D. Heyward. *A Ben Jonson Companion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983).
- Brome, Richard. *The Antipodes*. Ed. Ann Haaker (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966).
- Brown, Pamela Allen. "Jonson Among the Fishwives." *Ben Jonson Journal* 6 (1999): 89-107.
———. "'Fie, what a foolish duty call you this?' *The Taming of the Shrew*, Women's Jest, and the Divided Audience." *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works, Volume III: The Comedies*. Eds. Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003): 289-306.
———. *Better A Shrew Than a Sheep: Women, Drama, and the Culture of Jest in Early Modern England* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003).
- Burke, Peter. *A Social History of Knowledge: From Gutenberg to Diderot* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000).
- Burke, Thomas. *The Streets of London Through the Centuries* (London: B.T. Batsford, Ltd, 1940).
- Burt, Richard. *Licensed by Authority: Ben Jonson and the Discourses of Censorship* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

- Butler, Martin. "Late Jonson." *The Politics of Tragicomedy: Shakespeare and After*. Eds. Gordon McMullan and Jonathan Hope (London: Routledge, 1992): 166-188.
- Capp, Bernard. *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
- Cauthen, Jr., Irby B, ed. *Introduction. Gorboduc, or Ferrex and Porrex*. By Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970): xi-xxx.
- Cavanagh, Dermot. *Language and Politics in the Sixteenth-Century History Play* (London: Palgrave, 2003).
- Cave, Richard Allen. *Ben Jonson* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991).
- Cavell, Stanley. *Disowning Knowledge in Six Plays of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
- Champion, Larry S. *Ben Jonson's 'Dotages': A Reconsideration of the Late Plays* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1967).
- Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The House of Fame. The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*. Volume 3. Ed. Rev. Walter W. Skeat (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926): 1-64.
- Clayton, Gyles. *The Approved Order of Martiall Discipline* (London, 1591).
- Clements, Robert J., and Lorna Levant. *Renaissance Letters: Revelations of a World Reborn* (New York: New York University Press, 1976).
- Cogan, Thomas. *The Haven of Health* (London, 1589).
- Cognet, Martyn. *Politique Discourses Upon Trueth and Lying. An Instruction to Princes to Keepe Their Faith and Promise* (London, 1586).

- Cohen, Jeffrey J. "Kytte oute yugilment: An Introduction to Medieval Noise." *Exemplaria* 16:2 (Autumn 2004): 1-8.
- A Collection of Important English Statutes, Showing the Principal Changes in the Law of Property; Together With Some Other Enactments of Common Reference* (Cambridge, MA: Waterman and Amee, 1888).
- Collinson, Patrick. "English Reformations." *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*. Ed. Michael Hattaway (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000): 27-43.
- Columbus, Christopher. *The Four Voyages*. Ed. J.M. Cohen (New York: Penguin, 1969).
- Cormack, Lesley B. *Charting an Empire: Geography at the English Universities, 1580-1620* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).
- Coronato, Rocco. *Jonson Versus Bakhtin: Carnival and the Grotesque* (Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi, 2003).
- Crawford, Julie. "The Homoerotics of Shakespeare's Elizabethan Comedies." *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works: The Comedies*. Eds. Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003): 137-58.
- Cressy, David. *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).
- Curtis, Mark H. *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition, 1558-1642* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959).
- Cust, Richard. "News and Politics in Early Seventeenth-Century England." *Past and Present* 112 (August 1986): 60-90.
- Danson, Lawrence. *Shakespeare's Dramatic Genres* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

- Davidson, Nicholas. "Christopher Marlowe and Atheism." *Christopher Marlowe and English Renaissance Culture*. Eds. Darryll Grantley and Peter Roberts (Aldersot: Ashgate, 1999): 129-47.
- Davies, Sir John. *Nosce Teipsum* (London, 1599).
- Davis, Joe Lee. *The Sons of Ben: Jonsonian Comedy in Caroline England* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967).
- Davis, Natalie Zemon. "Women On Top." *Feminism and Renaissance Studies*. Ed. Lorna Hutson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999): 156-85.
- de Grazia, Margreta. "Imprints: Shakespeare, Gutenberg and Descartes." *Alternative Shakespeares 2*. Ed. Terence Hawkes (London and New York: Routledge, 1996): 63-94.
- de Somogyi, Nick. *Shakespeare's Theatre of War* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).
- Deats, Sara Munson. "Edward II: A Study in Androgyny." *Ball State University Forum* 22:1 (1981): 30-41.
- Dekker, Thomas, and Thomas Middleton. *The Roaring Girl. English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*. Ed. David Bevington et al. (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002): 1371-1452.
- Deloney, Thomas. *Strange Histories Or, Songs and Sonnets, of Kinges Princes, Dukes, Lords, Ladyes, Knights, and Gentlemen, And of certaine Ladyes that were Shepherds on Salisburie plaine. Very pleasant either to be read or songe, and a most excellent Warning for all estates* (London, 1612).
- DiGangi, Mario. *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
- Digges, Leonard. *Stratitoticos* (Amsterdam and New York: Da Capo Press, Theatrum Orbis Terrarum Ltd., 1968).
- Dillon, Janette. *Theatre, Court and City, 1595-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

- Documents Relating to the Universities and Colleges of Cambridge*. Volume II (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1852).
- Dolan, Frances E. *Dangerous Familiars: Representations of Domestic Crime in England, 1550-1700* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).
- Donaldson, Ian. "Jonson's Magic Houses." *Jonson's Magic Houses: Essays in Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997): 66-88.
- Donne, John. Sermon, April 1627. www.lib.byu.edu/donne, 22.
- Dooley, Brendan. Introduction. *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe*. Eds. Brendan Dooley and Sabrina A. Baron (London and New York: Routledge, 2001): 1-21.
- Downs-Gamble, Margaret. "The Taming-School: *The Taming of the Shrew* as Lesson in Renaissance Humanism." *Privileging Gender in Early Modern England*. Ed. Jean R. Brink (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1993): 65-78.
- Dunn, Kevin. "Representing Counsel: *Gorboduc* and the Elizabethan Privy Council." *English Literary Renaissance* 33:3 (2003): 279-308.
- Dutton, Richard. *Ben Jonson: To the First Folio* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
———. *Ben Jonson, Dramatist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).
- Earle, John. *Micro-cosmographie, or, a Piece of the World Discovered* (London, 1628).
- Early Cambridge University and College Statutes in the English Language*. Ed. James Heywood (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1855).
- Egan, Gabriel. "Hearing or Seeing a Play? Evidence of Early Modern Theatrical Terminology." *Ben Jonson Journal* 8 (2001): 327-47.
- Eisenstein, Elizabeth. *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

- Elizabeth I. *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*. Eds. Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000).
- Ellis-Fermor, U.M. *Christopher Marlowe* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1967).
- Elsky, Martin. *Authorizing Words: Speech, Writing, and Print in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989).
- Elyot, Sir Thomas. *The Book Named the Governor*. Ed. John M. Major (New York: Teachers College Press, 1969).
- Feldman, Doris. "The Constructions and Deconstructions of Gendered Bodies in Selected Plays of Christopher Marlowe." *The Body in Late Medieval and Early Modern Culture*. Eds. Darryll Grantley and Nina Taunton (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000): 23-31.
- Felperin, Howard. "'Tongue-tied our queen?': The Deconstruction of Presence in *The Winter's Tale*." *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*. Eds. Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (New York and London: Routledge, 1990): 3-18.
- Findlay, Alison. *A Feminist Perspective on Renaissance Drama* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999).
- Fine, Gary, and Patricia Turner. *Whispers on the Color Line: Rumor and Race in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
- Fletcher, John. *The Woman's Prize, or The Tamer Tamed. English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*. Ed. David Bevington et al. (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002): 1215-96.
- Folkerth, Wes. *The Sound of Shakespeare* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).
- Ford, John. *The Broken Heart*. Ed. Donald K. Anderson, Jr. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1968).
- . *Perkin Warbeck*. Ed. Donald K. Anderson, Jr. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965).

- Foucault, Michel. *Fearless Speech*. Ed. Joseph Pearson (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001).
- Fox, Adam. *Oral and Literate Culture in England 1500-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- Frank, Joseph. *The Beginnings of the English Newspaper* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961).
- Friedman, Michael. "'Wishing a More Strict Restraint': Feminist Performance and the Silence of Isabella." *Selected Papers from the West Virginia Shakespeare and Renaissance Association* 19 (1996): 1-11.
- Fudge, Erica. "Calling Creatures by their True Names." *At the Borders of the Human: Beasts, Bodies, and Natural Philosophy in the Early Modern Period*. Eds. Erica Fudge, Ruth Gilbert, and Susan Wiseman (London and New York: Palgrave, 1999): 91-109.
- Gearing, William. *A bridle for the tongue* (London, 1663).
- Gilbert, Neal Ward. *Renaissance Concepts of Method* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960).
- Gillies, John. *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
- Gilloch, Graeme. *Myth and Metropolis: Walter Benjamin and the City* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1996).
- Gouk, Penelope. "Some English Theories of Hearing in the Seventeenth Century: Before and After Descartes." *The Second Sense: Studies in Hearing and Musical Judgment from Antiquity to the Seventeenth Century*. Eds. Charles Burnett, Michael Fend, and Penelope Gouk (London: Warburg Institute, 1991): 95-113.
- Gowing, Laura. "'The freedom of the streets': Women and Social Space, 1560-1640." *Londinopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London*. Eds. Paul Griffiths and Mark S.R. Jenner (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000): 130-51.

Goy-Blanquet, Dominique. "Elizabethan Historiography and Shakespeare's Sources." *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's History Plays*. Ed. Michael Hattaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 57-70.

Grete Brittaines Noble and worthy Councell of Warr (London, 1624).

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992).

———. *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

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

Greene, Nicholas. *Shakespeare's Serial History Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Gross, Kenneth. *Shakespeare's Noise*. (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001).

———. "Reflections on the Blatant Beast." *Spenser Studies* 13 (1999): 101-23.

Grossinger, Christa. *Humor and Folly in Secular and Profane Prints of Northern Europe, 1430-1540* (London/Turnhout: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2002).

Gurr, Andrew. *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642*, Third Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

———. *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, Third Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

Habermann, Ina. *Staging Slander and Gender in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).

Hadfield, Andrew. "National and International Knowledge: The Limits of the Histories of Nations." *The Renaissance Computer: Knowledge Technology in the First Age of Print*. Eds. Jonathan Sawday and Neil Rhodes (London: Routledge, 2000): 106-19.

Hall, Joseph. *A Discovery of a New World* (London, 1609).

- Hallahan, Huston D. "Silence, Eloquence, and Chatter in Jonson's *Epicoene*." *Huntington Library Quarterly* 40 (1977): 117-27.
- Hannay, Margaret P. "'O Daughter Heare': Reconstructing the Lives of Aristocratic Englishwomen." *Attending to Women in Early Modern England*. Eds. Betty S. Travitsky and Adele F. Seeff (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994): 35-63.
- . "Introduction." *Silent But for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Words*. Ed. Margaret Patterson Hannay (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1985): 1-15.
- Hanson, Elizabeth. "Torture and Truth in Renaissance England." *Representations* 34 (Spring 1991): 53-84.
- Hardin, Richard F. "Marlowe and the Fruits of Scholarism." *Philological Quarterly* 63 (1984): 387-400.
- Harraway, Clare. *Re-citing Marlowe: Approaches to the Drama* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).
- Harris, Jonathan Gil. *Foreign Bodies and the Body Politic: Discourses of Social Pathology in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
- Hart, Jonathan. *Theater and World: The Problematics of Shakespeare's History* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992).
- Harvey, Gabriel. "Letter to Edmund Spenser." *Renaissance Letters: Revelations of a World Reborn*. Eds. Robert J. Clements and Lorna Levant (New York: New York University Press, 1976): 40-2.
- Haynes, Jonathan. *The Social Relations of Jonson's Theater* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
- H[eath], J., gent. *The House of Correction, or certaine satyricall epigrams* (London, 1619).

- Henderson, Katherine Usher, and Barbara F. McManus, eds. *Half Humankind: Contexts & Texts of the Controversy about Women in England 1540-1640*, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985).
- Henderson, Philip. "Marlowe as a Messenger." *TLS* (June 12, 1953): 381.
- Hesiod. *Works and Days. Works of Hesiod and the Homeric Hymns*. Trans. By Daryl Hine (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005).
- Hillman, David and Carla Mazzio. "Introduction: Individual Parts." *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*. Eds. David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York and London: Routledge, 1997): x-xxix.
- Hodgdon, Barbara. *The End Crowns All: Closure and Contradictions in Shakespeare's History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).
- Hodges, Devon L. *Renaissance Fictions of Anatomy* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1985).
- Hoenselaars, Ton. "Rumour, News and Commerce in Ben Jonson's *The Staple of News*." *Rumeurs et Nouvelles au Temps de la Renaissance*. Ed. M.T. Jones-Davies (Paris: Editions Klincksieck [Universit e de Paris-Sorbonne, Societ e Internationale de Recherches Interdisciplinaires sur la Renaissance], 1997): 143-65.
- Hoffer, Peter Charles. *Sensory Worlds in Early America* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).
- Homer. *The Odyssey*. Trans. Stanley Lombardo (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Co. Inc, 2000).
- Hope, Jonathan. "Shakespeare and Language: An Introduction." *Shakespeare and Language*. Ed. Catherine M.S. Alexander (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 1-17.
- Hopkins, Lisa. *Christopher Marlowe: A Literary Life* (London: Palgrave, 2000).

- Howard, Jean. *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994).
- Howard, Jean E. and Phyllis Rackin. *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997).
- Humphreys, A.R., ed. *Introduction. 2 Henry IV* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966): 3-29.
- Ingram, Martin. "'Scolding Women Cucked or Washed': A Crisis in Gender Relations in Early Modern England?" *Women, Crime, and the Courts in Early Modern England*. Eds. Jenny Kermode and Garthine Walker (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994): 48-80.
- Jankowski, Theodora. *Women in Power in the Early Modern Drama* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992).
- Jansen, Sharon. *Dangerous Talk and Strange Behavior: Women and Popular Resistance to the Reforms of Henry VIII* (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1996).
- Jardine, Lisa. *Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* (Sussex, England: The Harvester Press, 1983).
———. *Reading Shakespeare Historically* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996).
- Jeanneret, Michel. *A Feast of Words: Banquets and Table Talk in the Renaissance*. Trans. Jeremy Whiteley and Emma Hughes (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).
- Johns, Adrian. *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
- Johnson, Robert C. "Silence and Speech in *Coriolanus*." *The Aligarh Journal of English Studies* 5 (1980): 190-210.
- Jones, Deborah. "Gossip: Notes on Women's Oral Culture." *The Feminist Critique of Language: A Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990): 242-50.

- Jonson, Ben. *A New World Discovered in the Moon*. *The Complete Masques*. Ed. Stephen Orgel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969): 292-305.
- . *Conversations with Drummond*. *Ben Jonson: The Complete Poems*. Ed. George Parfitt (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982): 461-80.
- . *The Masque of Queens*. *The Complete Masques*. Ed. Stephen Orgel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969): 122-41.
- . *Discoveries*. *Ben Jonson: The Complete Poems*. Ed. George Parfitt (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982): 375-458.
- . *Epicoene, or The Silent Woman*. Ed. L.A. Beaurline (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966).
- . *Bartholomew Fair*. *The Complete Plays of Ben Jonson*. Volume IV. Ed. G.A. Wilkes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982): 1-122.
- . *The Staple of News*. Ed. Devra Rowland Kifer (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975).
- . *The New Inn*. *The Complete Plays of Ben Jonson*. Volume IV. Ed. G.A. Wilkes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982): 363-474.
- . *The Magnetic Lady*. *The Complete Plays of Ben Jonson*. Volume IV. Ed. G.A. Wilkes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982): 475-576.
- . *Time Vindicated to Himself and to His Honors*. *The Complete Masques*. Ed. Stephen Orgel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969): 390-408.
- Jordan, Constance. *Renaissance Feminism: Literary Texts and Political Models* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).
- Kahn, Coppelia. *Man's Estate: Masculine Identity in Shakespeare* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981).
- Kamps, Ivo. *Historiography and Ideology in Stuart Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
- Kapferer, Jean-Noël. *Rumors: Uses, Interpretations, and Images* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1990).
- Kaplan, M. Lindsay. *The Culture of Slander in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
- Kastan, David Scott. "Shakespeare and English History." *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*. Eds. Margreta de Grazia and Stanley Wells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 167-82.

- Kearney, Hugh. *Scholars and Gentlemen: Universities and Society in Pre-Industrial Britain 1500-1700* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970).
- Kerrigan, John. *On Shakespeare and Early Modern Literature: Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
- Kiefer, Frederick. "Rumor, Fame, and Slander in 2 *Henry IV*." *Allegorica* 20 (1999): 1-35; rpt. in *Shakespeare's Visual Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003): 62-100.
- Knapp, Peggy. "Ben Jonson and the Publicke Riot: Ben Jonson's Comedies." *Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama*. Eds. David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass (New York and London: Routledge, 1991): 164-80.
- Knoll, Robert E. *Ben Jonson's Plays: An Introduction* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964).
- Knowles, James. "'Infinite Riches in a Little Room': Marlowe and the Aesthetics of the Closet." *Renaissance Configurations: Voices/Bodies/Spaces, 1580-1690*. Ed. Gordon McMullan (Great Britain and New York: MacMillan, St. Martin's, 1998): 3-29.
- Knowles, Richard. "Unquiet and the Double Plot of 2 *Henry IV*." *Shakespeare Studies* 2 (1966): 133-40.
- Kuriyama, Constance Brown. *Christopher Marlowe: A Renaissance Life* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002).
- Lanier, Douglas. "Masculine Silence: *Epicoene* and Jonsonian Stylistics." *College Literature* 21:2 (June 1994): 1-18.
- Lanyer, Aemilia. *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer: Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*. Ed. Susanne Woods (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).
- Lawman. *Brut*. Trans. and Ed. Rosamund Allen (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992).

- Leech, Clifford. "The Incredibility of Jonsonian Comedy." *A Celebration of Ben Jonson*. Eds. William Blissett, Julian Patrick, and R.W. Van Fossen (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973): 3-26.
- Les Blasons Du Corps Feminin* (Paris: Editions Andre Balland, 1967).
- Levine, Laura. *Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-theatricality and Effeminization 1579-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
- Levy, F.J. "How Information Spread Among the Gentry, 1550-1640." *The Journal of British Studies* 21:2 (Spring 1982): 11-34.
- . "Staging the News." *Print, Manuscript, Performance: The Changing Relations of the Media in Early Modern England*. Eds. Arthur F. Marotti and Michael D. Bristol (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2000): 252-78.
- Luckyj, Christina. *'A Moving Rhetoricke': Gender and Silence in Early Modern England* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002).
- Marlowe, Christopher. *Dido, Queen of Carthage and The Massacre at Paris*. Ed. H.J. Oliver (London: Methuen & Co Ltd., 1968).
- . *Dido, Queen of Carthage. Christopher Marlowe: The Complete Plays*. Ed. J.B. Steane (New York: Penguin Books, 1986).
- . *Doctor Faustus. English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*. Ed. David Bevington et al. (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002): 245-86.
- . "Hero and Leander." *The Poems: Christopher Marlowe*. Ed. Millar Maclure (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1968): 3-103.
- . "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love." *The Poems: Christopher Marlowe*. Ed. Millar Maclure (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1968): 257-58.
- . *Edward the Second*. Eds. Martin Wiggins and Robert Lindsey (London: A&C Black and New York: W.W. Norton, 1999).
- Masten, Jeffrey. "Playwrighting: Authorship and Collaboration." *A New History of Early English Drama*. Eds. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997): 357-82.
- Matthews, George T. *News and Rumor in Renaissance Europe: The Fugger Newsletters* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1959).

- Maus, Katharine Eisaman. *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995).
- Mazzio, Carla. "Sins of the Tongue." *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*. Eds. David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York and London: Routledge, 1997): 52-79.
- McGuire, Philip. *Speechless Dialect: Shakespeare's Open Silences* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985).
- McKenzie, D.F. "The Staple of News and the Late Plays." *A Celebration of Ben Jonson*. Eds. William Blissett, Julian Patrick, and R.W. Van Fossen (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973): 83-128.
- McLeod, Bruce. *The Geography of Empire in English Literature, 1580-1745* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- McLuhan, Marshall. *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962).
- A Merry Jest of a Shrewd and Curst Wife Lapped in Morel's Skin, for Her Good Behavior* (London, c. 1550).
- Middleton, Thomas. *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*. *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*. Ed. David Bevington et al. (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002): 1453-1514.
- . *The Revenger's Tragedy*: 1297-1370.
- . *Women Beware Women*: 1515-1592.
- Middleton, Thomas, and William Rowley. *The Changeling*. *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*. Ed. David Bevington et al. (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002): 1593-1658.
- Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. *The Riverside Milton*. Ed. Roy Flannagan (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998): 296-710.
- Miola, Robert S. *Shakespeare's Reading* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

- Montaigne, Michel de. "Of Liars." *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*. Trans. Donald M. Frame (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968): 21-25.
- Muggli, Mark Z. "Ben Jonson and the Business of News." *Studies in English Literature* 32:2 (1992): 323-40.
- Munda, Constantia. *The Worming of a Mad Dog* (London, 1617).
- Newman, Karen. "City Talk: Women and Commodification: *Epicoene*." *Staging the Renaissance*. Eds. David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass (New York and London: Routledge, 1991): 181-95.
- . "Engendering the News." *The Elizabethan Theatre XIV*. Eds. A.L. Magnusson and C.E. McGee (Toronto: P.D. Meany, 1996): 49-69.
- . *Fashioning Femininity and English Renaissance Drama* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991).
- Norman, Charles. *The Muse's Darling: The Life of Christopher Marlowe* (New York: Rinehart, 1946).
- Nunn, Hillary M. *Staging Anatomies: Dissection and Spectacle in Early Stuart Tragedy* (Aldershot: Ashgate: 2005).
- Oliver, H.J., ed. *Introduction. Dido, Queen of Carthage and The Massacre at Paris*. By Christopher Marlowe (London: Methuen & Co Ltd., 1968): ix-lxxvi.
- Ong, Walter J. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).
- . *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958).
- Ostovich, Helen. "Mistress and Maid: Women's Friendship in *The New Inn*." *Ben Jonson Journal* 4 (1997): 1-26.
- Palmer, Daryl. *Writing Russia in the Age of Shakespeare* (London: Ashgate, 2004).
- Parker, Patricia. "Othello and Hamlet: Dilation, Spying, and the 'Secret Place' of Woman." *Representations* 44 (Fall 1993): 60-95.

- Partridge, Edward B. *The Broken Compass: A Study of the Major Comedies of Ben Jonson* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958).
- Paster, Gail Kern. *The Idea of the City in the Age of Shakespeare* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1985).
 ———. *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).
- Patrides, C.A., ed. *Introduction. The History of the World*. By Sir Walter Raleigh (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1971).
- Patterson, Annabel. *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1984).
- Peacham, Henry. *Minerva Britannia*. Ed. John Horden (Yorkshire: Scolar Press, 1969).
- Perry, Curtis. *The Making of Jacobean Culture: James I and the Renegotiation of Elizabethan Literary Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
- Picker, John M. *Victorian Soundscapes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
- Pinkus, Karen. *Picturing Silence: Emblem, Language, Counter-Reformation Materiality* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996).
- Pizan, Christine de. *The Book of the Body Politic*. Trans. and Ed. Kate Langdon Forhan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
- Platter, Thomas. *Journal. The Journals of Two Travellers in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England: Thomas Platter and Horatio Busino* (London: Caliban Books, 1995).
- Porter, Joseph A. *The Drama of Speech Acts: Shakespeare's Lancastrian Tetralogy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

- Procter, Thomas. *Of the Knowledge and Conducte of Warres* (Amsterdam and New York: Da Capo Press, Theatrum Orbis Terrarum Ltd., 1970).
- Rackin, Phyllis. *Stages of History: Shakespeare's English Chronicles* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).
- Raleigh, Walter. *The Cabinet-Council* (London, c. 1600, pub. 1658).
- Reiss, Timothy J.. "From Trivium to Quadrivium: Ramus, Method, and Mathematical Technology." *The Renaissance Computer: Knowledge Technology in the First Age of Print* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000): 45-58.
- . *Knowledge, Discovery and Imagination in Early Modern Europe: The Rise of Aesthetic Rationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
- Relihan, Constance C. *Cosmographical Glasses: Geographic Discourse, Gender, and Elizabethan Fiction* (Kent and London: The Kent State University Press, 2004).
- Ribner, Irving. *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).
- Rich, Barnabe. *A Path-Way to Military Practise* (Amsterdam and New York: Da Capo Press, Theatrum Orbis Terrarum Ltd., 1969).
- Richardson, Brian. *Printing, Writers, and Readers in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- Riggs, David. *The World of Christopher Marlowe* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2004).
- Roberts, Helene E., ed. *Encyclopedia of Comparative Iconography: Themes Depicted in Works of Art. Volume I* (Chicago and London: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1998).
- Roberts, Jeanne Addison. "Are Shakespeare's Women Unruly?" *Shakespeare's Unruly Women*. Ed. Georgianna Ziegler with Frances E. Dolan and Jeanne Addison Roberts (Washington, D.C.: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1997): 103-11.

- Rodriguez, S.J., Reverend Father F. Alfonso. *A Treatise of Modesty and Silence* (London, 1632).
- Rosenthal, Joel T. *Telling Tales: Sources and Narration in Late Medieval England* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003).
- Rosnow, Ralph L. and Gary Alan Fine. *Rumor and Gossip: The Social Psychology of Hearsay* (New York: Elsevier, 1976).
- Rovine, Harvey. *Silence in Shakespeare: Drama, Power, and Gender* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1987).
- Rowlands, Samuel. *Tis Merrie When Gossips Meet* (London, 1602).
- Rutter, Carol. *Enter the Body: Women and Representation on Shakespeare's Stage* (London: Routledge, 2001).
- Ryan, Lawrence V. *Introduction. The Schoolmaster*. By Roger Ascham (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967): xi-xlii.
- Sackville, Thomas, and Thomas Norton. *Gorboduc, or Ferrex and Porrex*. Ed. Irby B. Cauthen, Jr. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970).
- Sanders, Julie. *Ben Jonson's Theatrical Republics* (London and New York: MacMillan Press and St. Martin's Press, 1998).
- . "Midwifery and the New Science in the Seventeenth Century." *At the Borders of the Human: Beasts, Bodies, and Natural Philosophy in the Early Modern Period*. Eds. Erica Fudge, Ruth Gilbert, and Susan Wiseman (London and New York: Palgrave, 1999): 74-90.
- . "The New Inn and The Magnetic Lady: Jonson's Dramaturgy in the Caroline Context." *Jonsonians: Living Traditions*. Ed. Brian Wooland (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003): 51-66.
- Sawday, Jonathan. *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995).

- Scott, James C. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985).
- . *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990).
- Serres, Michel. *Genesis*. Trans. Geneviève James and James Nielson (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1995).
- Shaaber, Mathias A. "The History of the First English Newspaper." *Studies in Philology* 29 (1932): 551-87.
- Shakespeare, William. *The Norton Shakespeare*. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997).
- Shapin, Steven. *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994).
- Shapiro, Barbara J. *A Culture of Fact: England, 1550-1720* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000).
- Sharp, Gene. *The Politics of Nonviolent Action, Part Two: The Methods of Nonviolent Action* (Boston, MA: Porter Sargent Publishers, 1973).
- Shepard, Alan. *Marlowe's Soldiers: Rhetorics of Masculinity in the Age of the Armada* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).
- Shephard, Robert. "Sexual Rumours in English Politics: The Cases of Elizabeth I and James I." *Desire and Discipline: Sex and Sexuality in the Premodern West*. Eds. Jacqueline Murray and Konrad Eisenbichler (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996): 101-22.
- Shepherd, Simon. *Marlowe and the Politics of Elizabethan Theatre* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986).
- Sherman, Stuart. "Eyes and Ears, News and Plays: The Argument of Ben Jonson's *Staple*." *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe*. Eds. Brendan Dooley and Sabrina A. Baron (London and New York: Routledge, 2001): 23-40.

- Shibutani, Tamotsu. *Improvised News: A Sociological Study of Rumor* (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1966).
- Sidney, Sir Henry. "Letter to Philip, from Ireland." *Renaissance Letters: Revelations of a World Reborn*. Eds. Robert J. Clements and Lorna Levant (New York: New York University Press, 1976): 37-9.
- Siemon, James. *Word Against Word: Shakespearean Utterance* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002).
- Simmons, J.L. "The Tongue and Its Office in *The Revenger's Tragedy*." *PMLA* 92 (1977): 56-68.
- Simonds, Peggy Munoz. "'No More . . . Offend Our Hearing': Aural Imagery in *Cymbeline*." *Texas Studies in Literature & Language* 24:2 (Summer 1982): 137-54.
- Sinfield, Alan. *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).
- Slights, William W.E. *Ben Jonson and the Art of Secrecy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994).
- Smith, Bruce. *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999).
———. "Parolles's Recitations: Oral and Literate Structures in Shakespeare's Plays." *Renaissance Papers* (1989): 75-88.
- Smith, Lacey Baldwin. *Treason in Tudor England: Politics and Paranoia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).
- Smythe, Sir John. *Certain Discourses Military*. Ed. J.R. Hale (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1964).
- Snyder, Susan. "The Genres of Shakespeare's Plays." *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*. Eds. Margreta de Grazia and Stanley Wells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 83-97.

- Spacks, Patricia Meyer. *Gossip* (New York: Knopf, 1985).
- Speght, Rachel. *The Polemics and Poems of Rachel Speght*. Ed. Barbara Kiefer Lewalski (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).
- Spotswood, Jerald W. "Isabella's 'Speechless Dialect': Subversive Silence in *Measure for Measure*." *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 20 (1994): 107-25.
- Stephens, Mitchell. *A History of News: From the Drum to the Satellite* (New York: Viking, 1988).
- Sterling, Eric. *The Movement Towards Subversion: The English History Play from Skelton to Shakespeare* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1996).
- Strong, Roy. *The Renaissance Garden in England* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1979).
- Sutcliffe, Matthew. *The Practice, Proceedings, and Lawes of Armes* (London, 1593).
- Swift, Jonathan. *Gulliver's Travels. Gulliver's Travels and Other Writings*. Ed. Clement Hawes (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004).
- Table-observations* (London, c. 1615).
- Targoff, Ramie. *Common Prayer: The Language of Public Devotion in Early Modern England* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001).
- Taunton, Nina. *1590s Drama and Militarism: Portrayals of War in Marlowe, Chapman, and Shakespeare's Henry V* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001).
- Taylor, John. *Christian Admonitions, against the Two Fearfull Sinnes of Cursing and Swearing* (London, c. 1630).
- Teague, Frances. *The Curious History of Bartholomew Fair* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1985).

Tennenhouse, Leonard. *Power on Display: The Politics of Shakespeare's Genres* (New York and London: Methuen, 1986).

Thomas, Keith. *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Scribner's, 1971).

Tittle-Tattle; OR, the Several Branches of Gossipping (London, c. 1600).

Tobriner, Marian Leona, ed. *Introduction to Wisdom: A Renaissance Textbook*.
By Juan Luis Vives (New York: Teachers College Press, c. 1968).

Trousdale, Marion. "Rhetoric." *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*. Ed. Michael Hattaway (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000): 623-33.

Tudor Royal Proclamations. 3 volumes. Eds. Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964-69).

Turner, Patricia A. *I Heard it Through the Grapevine: Rumor in African-American Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

Underdown, David E. "The Taming of the Scold: the Enforcement of Patriarchal Authority in Early Modern England." *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*. Eds. Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985): 116-36.

Underwood, Robert. *The Little World. Or, A Lively Description of all the partes and properties of Man* (London, 1612).
———. *The New Anatomie* (London, 1612).

Vickers, Nancy. "Preface to the *Blasons Anatomiques: The Poetic and Philosophical Contexts of Descriptions of the Female Body in the Renaissance*." Unpublished Dissertation, Yale University, 1976.

Vinge, Louise. *The Five Senses: Studies in a Literary Tradition* (Lund, Sweden: Publications of the Royal Society of Letters at Lund, 1975).

- Virgil. *The Aeneid. Vergil's Aeneid and Fourth ("Messianic") Eclogue in the Dryden Translation*. Ed. Howard Clarke (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989).
- . *The Aeneid*. Trans. Edward McCrorie (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1995).
- . *The Eclogues, Georgics and Aeneid of Virgil*. Trans. C. Day Lewis (London, 1960).
- Vives, Juan Luis. *The Education of a Christian Woman: A Sixteenth-Century Manual*. Ed. Charles Fantazzi (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000).
- Voss, Paul J. *Elizabethan News Pamphlets: Shakespeare, Spenser, Marlowe & the Birth of Journalism* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2001).
- W.P. *The Gossips Greeting or, A new Discovery of such Females meeting* (London, 1620).
- Waldstein, Baron. *The Diary of Baron Waldstein: A Traveller in Elizabethan England*. Trans. G.W. Groos (London: Thames and Hudson, 1981).
- Walker, Greg. *The Politics of Performance in Early Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
- Walsham, Alexandra, and Julia Crick's, eds. *Introduction. The Uses of Script and Print, 1300-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 1-28.
- Watson, Foster, ed. *Vives: On Education* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1971).
- Webster, John. *The Duchess of Malfi. English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*. Ed. David Bevington et al. (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002): 1749-1832.
- Whitney, Geoffrey. *A Choice of Emblemes and other Devises for the moste parte gathered out of sundrie writers, Englished and Moralized* (Amsterdam and New York: Da Capo Press, Theatrum Orbis Terrarum Ltd., 1969).

- Wiggins, Martin. *Shakespeare and the Drama of His Time* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- Wiltenburg, Joy. *Disorderly Women and Female Power in the Street Literature of Early Modern England and Germany* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1992).
- Wollman, Richard. "'Speak that I may see thee': Aurality in Ben Jonson's Print Poetry." *Ben Jonson Journal* 3 (1996): 21-37.
- Woolf, Daniel. "News, History and the Construction of the Present in Early Modern England." *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe*. Eds. Brendan Dooley and Sabrina A. Baron (London and New York: Routledge, 2001): 80-118.
- Yachnin, Paul. "The House of Fame." *The Culture of Playgoing in Shakespeare's England: A Collaborative Debate*. Paul Yachnin and Anthony Dawson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 182-207.
- Young, Daniel. "Honorable Heralds and Manipulative Messengers in Shakespeare's Second Tetralogy." *Proceedings of the Conference of College Teachers of English of Texas* 47 (September 1982): 14-19.