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Multitudinous seas: representations of the ocean in early modern English drama

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**MULTITUDINOUS SEAS:
REPRESENTATIONS OF THE OCEAN IN
EARLY MODERN ENGLISH DRAMA**

by

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B.A., Barnard College, Columbia University, 2012
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On land, the tuggings of the moons can somewhat safely be ignored by men, and left to the more pliant senses of women and seeds and an occasional warlock. But at sea even males are victims of the rise and fall, the twice-daily surge of the waters they float on, and willy-nilly the planetary rhythm stirs them and all the other voyagers.

M.F.K. Fisher, *The Gastronomical Me* (New York: North Point Press, 1943), 40.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation argues that early modern English writers represent the sea and tides as offering multiple, often contradictory spaces of risk and possibility. On page and stage, the ocean appears threatening and protective, liberating and confining, barren and fecund. Merchant vessels set sail to return with precious cargo, or to sink; royal children cast adrift either perish, or return unlooked-for; pirate crews elect a captain who may lead them to freedom, or to the gibbet; sea-storms divide families for the rest of their lives, or until a miraculous reunion; coastlines fortify island nations, or leave them vulnerable to attacking fleets. The sea furnishes an objective correlative for tempestuous grief, bottomless love, utter confusion, and myriad other states. As plot element and metaphorical vehicle, the literary sea opens multiple possibilities.

The first chapter argues that in history plays by Shakespeare, Fletcher, and Greene, the trope of England as an island fortified by the sea emphasizes not threatened British insularity, but rather hospitality, fortunate invasions, and continuity between Britain's tidal rivers and its surrounding seas. The second chapter traces the security and vulnerability of maritime travelers from classical and medieval texts by Ovid, Virgil,

Petrarch, Gower, and Chaucer to early modern romances by Greene, Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Sidney through three key images: the storm-tossed ship, the rudderless boat, and the symmetrical shipwreck. The third chapter considers pirates in plays by Heywood and Rowley, Dekker, Daborne, and Shakespeare as representations of oceanic risk and contradiction. The fourth chapter analyzes gendered depictions of mythical sea creatures and deities in works by Shakespeare, Spenser, Dekker, Marlowe, and Lyly, arguing that while these authors use sea imagery to complicate traditional representations of gender, when they ascribe gendered qualities to the embodied sea, it is within the bounds of traditional gender roles. The final chapter discusses riches from the sea in texts by Marlowe, Shakespeare, Munday, and Spenser, demonstrating that before maritime wealth can be circulated economically or socially, it must undergo a land-change—a process of re-integration that frequently demands reversing the effects of sea-change.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation argues that early modern English writers represent the sea and tides as offering multiple, often contradictory spaces of risk and possibility. Like their forerunners, early modern English authors made abundant use of the ocean, from staging storms at sea to using oceanic metaphors to convey the currents and depths of human experience. Merchant vessels set sail to return with precious cargo, or to sink; royal children cast adrift either perish, or return unlooked-for; pirate crews elect a captain who may lead them to freedom, or to the gibbet; sea-storms divide families for the rest of their lives, or until a miraculous reunion; coastlines fortify island nations, or leave them vulnerable to attacking fleets. The sea furnishes an objective correlative for tempestuous grief, bottomless love, utter confusion, and myriad other states. As plot element and metaphorical vehicle, the literary sea opens multiple possibilities. As one might expect, these representations of the sea are numerous, inconsistent, and conflicting across the range of years and genres; however, they are often contradictory within one author's writings, or even within one work. Almost the only thing that representations of the sea in early modern literature have in common is that the sea is usually described as vast and wet—it can often seem that beyond that, no other qualities are consistent.

Rather than attempting to explain away these contradictions, this dissertation locates in them the most essential quality of the sea in early modern English literature: its multiplicity. At a moment when England was beginning to increase drastically its number of military and merchant ships—a process culminating in the maritime mastery of the British Empire in the nineteenth century—and developing a new national relationship to

the global ocean, English writers found in the sea a potent and adaptable, and contradictory and polysemous, source of images.

Earlier investigations of oceanic language and themes in the works of Shakespeare and his contemporaries often downplay the contradictions and multiplicity in representations of the ocean in their quest for a thesis that reinforces one element as dominant. In contrast, this dissertation takes a more deconstructionist approach. Organized around five key binary oppositions—both individual and national security and vulnerability, legality and illegality, masculinity and femininity, and reward and ruin—this project does not merely attempt to explain how one term of each binary overwhelms and governs its partner. Rather, the project argues that the ocean is always both: both safe and dangerous, both free and constrained, both masculine and feminine, both rich and barren. Representations of the ocean in early modern English literature are meaningful not despite but because of their essential mutuality, combination, and contradiction.

In the chapters that follow, the sea emerges as a space of risk and self-determination. Because of the fundamental risk entailed in leaving shore and taking to the sea, individual choice and its limits come to the foreground, and the sea offers myriad metaphors for inner experience. Often, the literary sea serves as a figure for an interior self, and when early modern English writers evoke risk, self-determination, and even freedom in maritime images and language, they are marking those concepts as elemental: inherent and foundational to the physical world, the individual, and humanity. In many ways, this project identifies an early modern precursor to the process that Margaret

Cohen calls “The Sublimation of the Sea.”¹ Cohen finds sublimation occurring in eighteenth-century painting, literature, and aesthetic theory, when “ships and sailors were progressively erased from imaginative depictions of the sea,” a process culminating in “the empty seas of the Romantic sublime. Cleared of historical mariners, the sea was then open to imaginative repopulation by poets, novelists, and artists” (11). Cohen suggests that the early modern ocean was too busy—too cluttered—to be a powerful metaphor for the interior self. However, this project’s close attention to early modern representations of the ocean demonstrates that the sea need not be empty to be sublime. Indeed, a large part of the expressive power of earlier maritime representations arises from a clutter of contradictory descriptions.

Consider the first storm in *Pericles*. Like many scholars, Gwilym Jones identifies the first storm as the work of George Wilkins, Shakespeare’s collaborator, and the second storm as the work of Shakespeare himself.² Jones finds Wilkins’s storm emphasizing “heavenly judgment” while Shakespeare’s is “weighted towards human experience,” with “the prince, the seamen and the audience experience[ing] the storm together” (109). This difference arises predominantly from the way the two storms are presented to the audience, which learns about the first storm only through Gower’s narration:

[Pericles] doing so put forth to seas,
Where when men been there’s seldom ease.
For now the wind begins to blow;
Thunder above and deeps below
Makes such unquiet that the ship
Should house him safe is wracked and split,
And he, good prince, having all lost,

¹ Margaret Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 11.

² Gwilym Jones, *Shakespeare’s Storms* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015).

By waves from coast to coast is tossed.
 All perishen of men, of pelf,
 Ne aught escapend but himself;
 Till Fortune, tired with doing bad,
 Threw him ashore to give him glad.³ (2.0.27-38)

Gower mediates the audience's experience of the storm, offering contradicting expectations for the security and vulnerability involved in a voyage. Gower initially emphasizes vulnerability, framing the storm with a warning that when "men put forth to seas," they usually suffer—or, as he puts it, "there's seldom ease." He primes listeners to expect a reversal of fortune and to interpret that reversal as potentially providential. This upending of Pericles' fortunes is more profound because of what has come before: the journey from Tarsus is the fourth Pericles has made by this point in the play, and the first that is not smooth sailing. In describing the wreck, Gower points out that Pericles is in unusual danger: "the ship / *should house him safe* is wracked and split" (emphasis added). Here, Gower describes the ship as ordinarily secure and its destruction in this case as a failure that will somehow nevertheless "give him glad." Is the shipwreck disastrous, or providential?

Over the course of the scene, it becomes clear that the answer is a contradictory *both*. After the wreck, Pericles enters "wet" and bemoans his ruin:

Yet cease your ire, you angry stars of heaven!
 Wind, rain and thunder, remember earthly man
 Is but a substance that must yield to you,
 And I, as fits my nature, do obey you.
 Alas, the seas hath cast me on the rocks,
 Washed me from shore to shore, and left me breath

³ All citations to William Shakespeare, *Pericles*, ed. Suzanne Gossett (London: Bloomsbury, 2004). Henceforth *Per*.

Nothing to think on but ensuing death.
 Let it suffice the greatness of your powers
 To have bereft a prince of all his fortunes,
 And, having thrown him from your watery grave,
 Here to have death in peace is all he'll crave. (2.1.1-11)

Since his ship is destroyed, his men are drowned, and his self is underwater, Pericles assumes that the situation is a total loss. Out loud, he reminds the “stars of heaven,” the “wind,” and the “rain and thunder” that they are the ones in control of “earthly man”; in the face of these forces, Pericles describes himself as utterly passive, a “substance” that “the seas” may act on rather than a voyager who goes where he will. While Pericles is a “good prince” who has acted rightly, his speech indicates that he believes he has overstepped in an essential way by taking to a ship. He is grateful only to be out of the water, and, like Gonzalo in *The Tempest*, craves a dry death. At this point, Pericles—and metonymically, man—is done with the hostile, foreign element of the sea.

Yet the next entrance brings on three men who make their living, such as it is, from the sea. Moreover, the three fishermen can pull not only fish but also philosophy from the waters: the first fisherman theorizes that fish in the sea correspond to types of humanity, and in both cases “the great ones eat up the little ones” (28-29).⁴ Pericles recognizes their musings as social commentary:

How from the finny subject of the sea
 These fishers tell the infirmities of men
 And from their watery empire recollect
 All that men may approve or men detect. (47-51)

⁴ Gossett notes that “this proverbial statement... appears with slight variations in the Hand D (Shakespeare?) section of *Sir Thomas More*, ‘men lyke rauenous fishes / Woold feed on on another’” (2.1.28-29n). The observation sums up More’s plea for empathy towards an influx of refugees.

The fishermen's fluency with the sea and its finny subject contrasts markedly with Pericles's experience as a shipwrecked voyager. Pericles concludes that man is alone and at the mercy of forces he cannot metaphorize. His speech fixates on natural phenomena and features: "wind, rain and thunder," "the seas," "the rocks," the "shore." Apart from ascribing anger to the stars of heaven, Pericles the castaway refrains almost entirely from figurative language; at that moment, it is as if the wreck has stripped him not only of worldly ornament but also of the ornaments of words. He refuses to interpret the ocean. In contrast, the fishermen, whose livelihood is pulling things out of and tossing things—bait, entrails, small fry—back into the water, interpret radically.

These contradictory modes of representing the ocean coexist. Pericles's fortunes are literally salvaged when the fishermen pull his armor up in their nets, but it does not erase his loss. As he tells his rescuers before the providential discovery, "What I have been I have forgot to know; / But what I am want teaches me to think on" (69-70). Reduced to a shivering body, he describes himself as a man without a past; however, it is only by memory of all he has lost that he can conceive of himself as unknown and wanting. Even when his armor is restored, it is so rusted that it carries no symbolic power beyond provoking mockery in the other contestants; after its sea-change, the armor is purely a protective covering for Pericles—and it turns out that he can very well win the tournament and Thaisa with rusty but functional armor. Even stripped of all his fortunes, Pericles is still a king, a hero, the title character.

The contradictions in Gower's description of the first storm, and between Pericles's and the fishermen's descriptions of the ocean, provide powerful examples of

the semiotic multiplicity available in representing the sea. No one interpretation, no one way of viewing the waters, takes precedence. Instead, each character's experience and role in the play—Gower's to narrate and provide archaic flavor, Pericles's to undergo the episodic challenges of the Romance hero, the fishermen's to philosophize while salvaging the hero's health and armor and then to send him on his way—determines how they describe the sea. At the same time, each character's representation of the sea illuminates their role.

Prevailing Currents: Critical Context

What does it mean to “suffer a sea change,” as Alonso's drowned body is said to have done in Ariel's song from *The Tempest*? Peter Hulme points out that the phrase is doubled, encompassing “the literal transformations brought about by salt water,” but also “the transformations experienced by those who cross the sea.”⁵ *Crossing the sea*, however, is a teleological and somewhat limiting concept: the phrase simplifies an ocean-going craft's often indirect and interrupted progress, constructing a simple line from point A to point B, potentially erasing the sea and the time spent in crossing. Hulme is not alone in this usage: only recently have a significant number of literary scholars attempted to focus on the sea itself rather than the ships sailing on it or the cities at its edges.

In the past few decades, this “oceanic turn” (including “Blue Studies” and the “New Thalassology”) has directed attention to a rather large, and surprising, lacuna in the

⁵ Peter Hulme, “Cast Away: The Uttermost Parts of the Earth,” in *Sea Changes: Historicizing the Ocean*, ed. Bernhard Klein and Gesa Mackenthun (New York: Routledge, 2004), 187-201, 187.

Humanities. In the words of Kären Wigen, “no longer outside time, the sea is being given a history, even as the history of the world is being retold from the perspective of the sea.”⁶ These ocean-centric histories build upon Fernand Braudel’s mammoth study *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, which posited the idea of oceans not as empty space but as maritime regions encompassing many nations and societies, worthy foci of historical study in their own right.⁷ After Braudel’s work on the Mediterranean, midcentury American historians like Carlton Hayes and Frederick Tolles posited a comparable—but much more vast—“Atlantic Community” or “Atlantic System.”⁸ Bernard Bailyn notes, however, that this nascent Atlantic History was not merely an imitation of Braudel’s “disaggregative” method; to Bailyn, Braudel’s work was “taking apart in three dimensions of time, not putting together, the elements of a world,” “conceptually meta-historical not historical,” and “based on a formulation essentially epistemological not historical” (4-5). In contrast, twentieth-century Atlantic historians viewed their oceanic subject from a position steeped in military strategy—derived from World Wars One and Two—that positioned the Atlantic System first against the Axis and then against Communism. Later works like Paul Gilroy’s *The Black Atlantic*, examining “the stereophonic, bilingual, or bifocal cultural forms originated by, but no longer the exclusive property of, blacks dispersed within the structures of feeling, producing,

⁶ Kären Wigen, “Introduction: Oceans of History” in *American Historical Review* 111:3 (2006), 717-780, 717.

⁷ Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, trans. Siân Reynolds (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 2 vols.

⁸ For a thorough study of the development of Atlantic History as a discipline, see Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005).

communicating, and remembering” what Gilroy terms “the black Atlantic world,” demonstrated that histories of the Atlantic World need not merely replicate ideological systems.⁹

Like the ocean itself, the oceanic histories of the past three decades are polysemous and multivalent. Alain Corbin, Philip Steinberg, Barry Cunliffe, John Gillis, and Kenneth White explore the social and conceptual construction of the sea and the seaside; Marcus Rediker, David Harris Sacks, David Cordingly, and Mark Kurlansky study the lives of sailors, pirates, and other maritime laborers as well as the economic and political systems in which they participated; Elizabeth Mancke, Carole Shammas, and Sugata Bose track the maritime element in the rise of nations and empires.¹⁰ This work not only reframes existing historical narratives but also introduces new primary material related to maritime life, which can in turn enrich literary studies of the sea across

⁹ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (New York: Verso, 1993), 3.

¹⁰ Alain Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea: The Discovery of the Seaside in the Western World, 1750-1840* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1994); Philip Steinberg, *The Social Construction of the Ocean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Barry Cunliffe, *Facing the Ocean: The Atlantic and Its Peoples, 8000 BC-AD 1500* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); John Gillis, *Islands of the Mind: How the Human Imagination Created the Atlantic World* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), and *The Human Shore: Seacoasts in History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Kenneth White, *On the Atlantic Edge* (Dingwall: Sandstone, 2006); Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); David Harris Sacks. *The Widening Gate: Bristol and the Atlantic Economy, 1450-1700* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991); David Cordingly, *Seafaring Women: Adventures of Pirate Queens, Female Stowaways, and Sailors' Wives* (New York: Random House, 2001); Mark Kurlansky, *Cod: A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World* (New York, Random House, 1997); Elizabeth Mancke and Carole Shammas eds. *The Creation of the British Atlantic World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005); Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

historical periods.

In this multiplicity of focus and method, however, Wigen identifies several conceptual commonalities. First, work in Blue Studies distinguishes concepts like the Atlantic World or the Mediterranean region from the oceans that give them their name; ancient cultures recognized *Mare Nostrum* as a single body of water, but the region of focus did not emerge until the twentieth century. Second, historians of the sea accept that the sea is rarely or never singular, and multiple perspectives exist among cultures but also within them. Building off this essential multiplicity, “*maritime regions everywhere are understood to be fractured, fragmented worlds*, unified more by contact among contrasting places than by any purported similarity across their shores” (720). Wigen’s emphasis on fracture and fragment might seem to imply an original and somehow unbroken region or system, but Blue Studies as a whole does not propose such a concept; rather, connections and contact constitute a maritime region far more than territorial or topographical geography. These points of contact, however, are never fixed. Wigen writes that “in practice, the skeins of maritime connection—whether in the realm of idioms and ideas, diasporic dispersals, imperial projections, scientific linkages, or strategies of resistance—quickly transcend the confines of a single ocean.”¹¹ In giving the sea a history, Blue Studies emphasizes the multiplicity, contradiction, overlap, and flux inherent in any discussion of the moving waters round earth’s human shores.

In tandem with this growing attention to the history of the ocean, literary criticism

¹¹ Kären Wigen, “Introduction” in Jerry H. Bentley, Renate Bridenthal, and Kären Wigen, eds, *Seascapes: Maritime Histories, Littoral Cultures, and Transoceanic Exchanges* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2016), 2.

has generated its own form of Blue Studies.¹² Before the 1980s, work on the literary sea, for example Robert Ralston Cawley's *The Voyagers and Elizabethan Drama* or Alexander Frederick Falconer's *Shakespeare and the Sea*—separated by more than two decades—appeared rarely and sporadically.¹³ Like many pioneering works, Cawley's and Falconer's primarily identify and catalogue, directing a reader's attention to key ocean-related moments in early modern drama rather than providing extensive analysis of those moments. Because of this relative lack of argumentative scholarship on the literary sea, current scholars often emphasize that their work attempts a double intervention: not only do they seek to introduce sea-related topics to the study of their own period, but also, they work to reorient the attention of ecocriticism from the land to the seas.¹⁴ The most prominent recent examples of the “New Thalassology” in early modern literary criticism, Steve Mentz's *At The Bottom of Shakespeare's Ocean* (2009) and Dan Brayton's

¹² In addition to the studies cited above, see, for example, Sebastian Sobceki, *The Sea and Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008); Laura Brown, “Oceans and Floods: Fables of Global Perspective,” in *The Global Eighteenth Century*, ed. Felicity Nussbaum (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003) 107-120; Adriana Craciun, “The Frozen Ocean” in *PMLA* 125:3 (2010), 693-702; Bernhard Klein, ed., *Fictions of the Sea: Critical Perspectives on the Ocean in British Literature and Culture* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2002); Steve Mentz, *Shipwreck Modernity: Ecologies of Globalization 1550-1719* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

¹³ Robert Ralston Cawley, *The Voyagers and Elizabethan Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938); Alexander Frederick Falconer, *Shakespeare and the Sea* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1964).

¹⁴ Until recently the terrestrial bias of ecocriticism was visible even in its definition: in her introduction to *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, Cheryll Glotfelty declares that “ecocriticism takes as its subject the interconnections between nature and culture, specifically the cultural artifacts of language and literature. As a critical stance, it has one foot in literature and the other on land” (xix). Glotfelty focuses exclusively on landscape as opposed to seascape, and the essays in the collection do not include the ocean in their study of Nature. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, eds., *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996).

Shakespeare's Ocean: An Ecocritical Exploration (2012), both pursue these twin goals. Mentz articulates explicitly presentist stakes: “we need Shakespeare’s ocean now, because late-twentieth-century culture has frayed our connections to the sea” (ix). The book’s stated goal is to repair those connections, a task for which readings of Shakespeare are a means to an end.

Mentz opens his readings with Ariel’s “Full Fathom Five,” purportedly to return the particularities of the sea to critical discussion of the song. Musing that “too often, when the song is read (or heard), the reference to the sea quickly becomes a metaphor for the artistic process or theatrical magic or mutability itself,” Mentz worries that “the real taste of ocean gets lost in the flux. It shouldn’t. It’s there” (1). This is a pertinent and necessary intervention into the critical conversation about literature in general and early modern literature in particular. The Elizabethan and Jacobean eras saw a sea-change in England’s, and English people’s, relationship to the sea around them—they built more ships, sailed further, and began to conceptualize a “British Empire.”¹⁵ Unfortunately, Mentz follows up this observation about a need to attend particularly to the physical, literal sea with a return to extended metaphor:

poetry that contains the sea leaves a taste in the mouth, a sharp tang of nonhuman immensity. When we taste salt, we recognize instantly that this water isn’t good to drink, but we also know that its bitterness flavors our world. The taste turns up in odd corners of Shakespeare’s plays. Bringing

¹⁵ As Bruce Ward Henry, David Armitage, Glyn Parry, and many others have noted, one of the first writers—if not the first—to use the phrase “British Empire” was Elizabeth I’s occult advisor John Dee, in the 1580s. For more on Dee’s role in developing the concept, see Bruce Ward Henry, “John Dee, Humphrey Llwyd, and the Name ‘British Empire,’” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 35:2 (1979), 189-190; David Armitage, “The Elizabethan Idea of Empire,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 14 (2004), 269-277; Glyn Parry, “John Dee and the Elizabethan British Empire in Its European Context,” *The Historical Journal* 49:3 (2006), 643-675.

these waters together enables the plays to shed light on our literature's pervasive ocean-dreams. (1-2)

With the goal of using a general familiarity with Shakespeare to awaken twenty-first century readers to impending ecological disaster, Mentz relies on such metaphors throughout the slim volume. Prose-poem interludes like “What the Pirates Said to Hamlet” veer further away from text-based analysis: “when you come back,” the interlude begins, “set yourself down naked. Show your body, dripping wet. Let everyone see. That way you can keep your secrets” (63). Never mind that Hamlet's account of the pirates contains no mention of the prince touching the ocean at all. Mentz's self-indulgent foray leaves ample room for scholarly work on Shakespeare and the sea.

Dan Brayton's “ecocritical exploration” attempts to “foreground the maritime dimension of the early modern imaginary and symbolic relationship to the biophysical environment” (1). Like Mentz, Brayton asserts that the current ecocritical conversation “needs a conceptual adjustment that acknowledges the existence of the global ocean” (22). Brayton's book answers that need, attending to historical, ecological, and Shakespearean discourse on crabs, herrings, pilchards, maps, whales, and other material realities of the early modern sea. Brayton's materialism supplies intriguing contextual information (verging at times toward trivia, as when a reference to Hamlet's psyche produces the observation “often whales respond to the presence of humans and ships by diving”) for reading Shakespeare's ocean, but like *At The Bottom of Shakespeare's Ocean*, the book offers a narrow, even limited, perspective (79). While both works provide readings of Shakespeare's plays, they are also deeply invested in the trends, neologisms, and impressionistic flourishes that characterize much work in the ecocritical

mode. This dissertation revisits many of the same texts, moments, and metaphors to which Mentz and Brayton have directed scholarly attention, but it incorporates the insights to be gained from historicist approaches to early modern English literature.

Despite the prominence of Mentz and Brayton, ecocriticism is not the only critical school to direct attention towards the sea or voyaging in early modern literature and culture: discussions of geography, cartography, colonialism, travel narrative, and piracy all attend to the ocean as a (sometimes literally) marginal element. John Gillies's *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* traces the figures of the voyager and the other, mapping the plays onto various center-and-periphery schemata; Gillies describes the sea in *Antony and Cleopatra* as “chimeric, formless, endless, uncertain, phantasmal.”¹⁶ His study of Shakespeare's geographic imagination for the most part represents the ocean as an unknowable, symbolic space to be crossed rather than a worthy focus for sustained attention in itself. Work on early modern cartography, like that of David Buisseret, Peter Barber, Bernhard Klein, D.K. Smith, Julie Sanders, and others also tends to overlook the ocean in favor of the land that can be more intricately mapped.¹⁷ Many scholars name the Mediterranean as their focus—see, for examples, the

¹⁶ John Gillies, *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 117.

¹⁷ Peter Barber, “England I: Pageantry, Defense, and Government: Maps at Court to 1550” and “England II: Monarchs, Ministers, and Maps, 1550-1625” in *Monarchs, Ministers, and Maps: The Emergence of Cartography as a Tool of Government in Early Modern Europe*, ed. David Buisseret (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 26-56; 57-98; Bernhard Klein, *Maps and the Writing of Space in Early Modern England and Ireland* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001); D.K. Smith, *The Cartographic Imagination in Early Modern England: Re-writing the World in Marlowe, Spenser, Raleigh, and Marvell* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2008); Julie Sanders, *The Cultural Geography of Early Modern Drama, 1620-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

essays in the edited volume *Remapping the Mediterranean World in Early Modern English Writing*—but rarely if ever comment on the *Mediterranean Sea*, instead giving their attention to the lands surrounding it.¹⁸ Even geographically-oriented literary criticism focusing on the coastline or the island, like that of Elizabeth Bellamy or Lynn Staley, does not investigate the topic of the sea.¹⁹

However, geographic or cartographic work provides a fruitful alternative model to ecocriticism for attending to how physical place and lived conditions affect and are affected by literary texts. Buisseret and Barber stress that maps are documents of power, and that the stakes of describing land are the wealth, security, religious allegiance, past, and future of monarchs and their subordinates. While less mappable, control of the sea is about controlling many of the same elements. Spatially-oriented pairings like center and periphery or voyager and other can apply equally usefully to oceanic spaces—or they can be deconstructed from an oceanic perspective with new and productive results; this project makes use of both approaches to reorient discussions of the early modern literary sea.

The study of early modern travel narratives and the processes and products of colonial expansion both adapt some of the methodology of studying geography and cartography, but they also replicate these disciplines' focus on the land over the sea. This

¹⁸ Goran V. Stanivukovic, ed., *Remapping the Mediterranean World in Early Modern English Writing* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

¹⁹ Elizabeth Jane Bellamy, *Dire Straits: The Perils of Writing the Early Modern English Coastline from Leland to Milton* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013); Lynn Staley, *The Island Garden: England's Language of Nation from Gildas to Marvell* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012).

“terrestrial bias”—to use the words of Dan Brayton—has existed for decades. Surprisingly, from Stephen Greenblatt’s study of Spanish domination of the Americas, to David Cressy’s accounts of early English colonists’ communication between the metropole and the colonies, to Andrew Hadfield’s work anthologizing and analyzing travel narratives, to Mary Baine Campbell’s focus on the response of European travelers to exotic environments, the ocean appears only tangentially no matter how many leagues of water the travelers may cross.²⁰ With some notable exceptions, like William Strachey, early modern travel writers tend to represent sea voyaging as a sort of monotonous interlude punctuated only by storms or battles.²¹ The ratio of sea to land source material partially explains contemporary critics’ lack of focus on the sea; however, they also neglect the oceanic material that is available to them.

In postcolonial criticism, with its focus on encounter between peoples and cultures, omitting the ocean is more understandable. Critics like Peter Hulme, Kim F.

²⁰ Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvellous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); see also Stephen Greenblatt, ed., *New World Encounters* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); David Cressy, *Coming Over: Migration and Communication between England and New England in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Andrew Hadfield, *Literature, Travel, and Colonial Writing in the English Renaissance, 1545-1625* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); Andrew Hadfield, ed., *Amazons, Savages, and Machiavels: Travel and Colonial Writing in English, 1550-1630: An Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Mary Baine Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400-1600* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988).

²¹ See, for example, John Smith’s “True Travels” in *Captain John Smith: Writings with Other Narratives of Roanoke, Jamestown, and the First English Settlement of America*, ed. James Horn (Washington: Library of America, 2007); Kenelm Digby, *Journal of a Voyage into the Mediterranean*, ed. John Bruce (London: 1868); Richard Hawkins, *The Observations of Sir Richard Hawkins, Knight, in His Voyage into the South Sea in the Year 1593*, ed. C. R. Drinkwater Bethune (London: 1847); Robert Leng, *Sir Francis Drake’s Memorable Service Done Against the Spaniards in 1587*, ed. Clarence Hopper (London: 1863).

Hall, Daniel Vitkus, Nabil Matar, Jonathan Goldberg, and Shankar Raman have articulated the boundaries, commonalities, and power dynamics between Europe and the Americas, Christendom and the Islamic world, colonizer and colonized.²² The leagues of water between many of these cultural poles receive less attention, but the methods underpinning postcolonial criticism can inform a discussion of how early modern writers represent those oceans. For example, the dynamics of colonialism inform early modern discussions of the rocky geography of England's coast, of the exotic rewards of maritime trade, and of the many ways an oceangoing vessel can be a nation unto itself.

While studies of early modern geography, cartography, travel writing, and colonialism may not engage directly with the particulars of the ocean, the growing body of work on early modern pirates, merchant sailors, and maritime economies does. Cheryl Fury, Patricia Fumerton, and Richard Blakemore have illuminated the living conditions of early modern sailors, emphasizing the precarity of their lives and the permeable barrier between legal and illegal maritime labor.²³ Lois Potter, Claire Jowitt, and Laurie

²² Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (London: Routledge, Kegan & Paul, 1986); Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Jonathan Goldberg, *Tempest in the Caribbean* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); Shankar Raman, *Renaissance Literature and Postcolonial Studies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011).

²³ Cheryl Fury, *Tides in the Affairs of Men: A Social History of Elizabethan Seamen, 1580-1603* (London: Greenwood Press, 2002); Patricia Fumerton, *Unsettled: The Culture of Mobility and the Working Poor in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Richard Blakemore, "The Ship, the River and the Ocean Sea: Concepts of Space in the Seventeenth-Century London Maritime Community," *Maritime History and Identity*, ed. Duncan Redford (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 98–119; Richard

Ellinghausen have examined historical and fictional representations of early modern pirates, suggesting that the state's attitude toward piracy affects and is affected by the way pirates are recorded and invented in broadsides, ballads, and plays.²⁴ This research is a rare example of critical conversation about how humans interact with the sea and how being “of the sea,” in Ellinghausen’s words, affects allegiances, morality, and identity in fiction and reality. Discussions of merchant venturing and maritime economy, such as those by James D. Tracy, Walter Cohen, Ceri Sullivan, Antonis Balasopoulos, and Valerie Forman, outline how the metaphors governing trade by sea—metaphors of Fortune, Providence, and the riches they might bestow on a venturer—functioned in early modern Europe; understanding representations of maritime venturing is a vital part of understanding how the sea embodies risk, reward, and ruin simultaneously in early modern texts.²⁵

Blakemore, “Pieces of Eight, Pieces of Eight: Seamen’s Earnings and the Venture Economy of Early Modern Seafaring,” *The Economic History Review* 70:4 (2017), 1153-1184.

²⁴ Lois Potter, “Pirates and ‘Turning Turk’ in Renaissance Drama” in *Travel and Drama in Shakespeare’s Time*, ed. Jean-Pierre Maquerlot and Michèle Willems (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Claire Jowitt, *The Culture of Piracy, 1580-1630: English Literature and Seaborne Crime* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2010); Claire Jowitt, ed., *Pirates?: The Politics of Plunder 1550-1650* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Laurie Ellinghausen, “‘We are of the Sea!’: Masterless Identity and Transnational Context in Daborne’s *A Christian Turn’d Turk*,” *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 41.2 (2015), 178-201; Laurie Ellinghausen, *Pirates, Traitors, and Apostates: Renegade Identities in Early Modern English Writing* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018).

²⁵ James D. Tracy, ed., *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long-Distance Trade in the Early Modern World, 1350-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Walter Cohen, “The Undiscovered Country: Shakespeare and Mercantile Geography,” in *Marxist Shakespeares*, ed. Jean E. Howard and Scott Cutler Shershow (New York: Routledge, 2001), 128-158; Ceri Sullivan, *The Rhetoric of Credit: Merchants in Early Modern Writing* (Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2002); Antonis Balasopoulos, “‘Suffer A Sea Change’: Spatial Crisis, Maritime Modernity, and the Politics of Utopia,” *Cultural Critique* 63 (2006), 123–156; Valerie Forman, *Tragicomic Redemptions: Global Economics and the Early Modern English Stage* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2008).

Current scholarship lacks an examination of the early modern literary ocean that is inclusively focused, firmly grounded in textual analysis and historicist praxis, and free of the distracting rhetorical flourishes of ecocriticism. That said, this dissertation takes a great deal from existing studies: a spatial understanding of the oceans; historical context for the interactions of sailors, pirates, fishermen, merchants, and island dwellers with the seas; a focus on the power hierarchies at play in journeys of exploration, domination, and exploitation both political and economic; and useful readings of the many oceanic texts and moments in the literature. At the same time, however, this dissertation gives sustained attention to different types of representations of the ocean rather than of the many types of characters who interact with it.

All the Quarters in the Shipman's Card: Chapter Summary

The following five chapters investigate early modern representations of the ocean across a number of topics. Each chapter is organized around a binary opposition, engaging a different thread of current critical conversations—for example, studies of piracy, gender, or nation-building—and connecting those conversations through a focus on the sea. Each chapter, then, both adds oceanic material to a critical discussion of mostly non-oceanic texts and themes and argues for the value of attending to representations of the ocean across critical and literary genres.

Chapter One investigates the security and vulnerability of the nation, using the early modern trope of England as a fortified island as a test case. I argue that despite repeated references to England as naturally fortified by sea and shore, early modern

English authors do not ultimately assert that the island nation is in fact sealed off by the ocean from the “envy of less happier lands.” Speeches about the fortified island in *Richard II*, *Cymbeline*, and John Fletcher’s *Bonduca* subvert and undermine the trope, often putting xenophobic rhetoric into the mouths of morally dubious characters like Cymbeline’s queen. Robert Greene’s *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* treats the idea of surrounding England with a magical wall of brass as a central problem: such a wall would isolate the nation from welcome as well as unwelcome foreigners, keeping out not only the German potentates who seek to defeat England’s best scholar but also Eleanor of Castile, whose marriage to the future Edward I ties up the entire play. The tidal imagery of *King John* provides another paradigm for the relationship between island nation and surrounding ocean: that of a peaceful and beneficial ocean of royal power opposing the damaging flood tides of baronial insurrection. Instead of being naturally fortified by its seas and shores, the island nation is treated as permeable. To describe the early modern examples of this oceanic permeability, I employ the concept of *fortunate invasion*. The second half of the chapter examines the borders of the English ocean as they appear in the many early modern works that treat the nation as suffused by rivers which are in practice and in concept indistinguishable from the sea. The anonymous *Arden of Faversham* and Heywood and Rowley’s *Fortune By Land And Sea* dramatize trade and travel involving this river network, a tidal resource permitting characters to reach the ocean and eventually prosper. Nondramatic texts like Spenser’s “Colin Clouts Come Home Againe” and *The Faerie Queene* also emphasize the commonality, contact, and overlap between England’s rivers and the ocean, fresh water and salt.

Chapter Two moves outward from the island nation and its permeable boundaries to examine classical, medieval, and early modern texts depicting travel over the sea. In this chapter, I argue that sea travelers—at least those deemed to be virtuous—are safest when they seem most vulnerable. The chapter is organized around three tropes: the storm-tossed ship, the rudderless boat, and the intentional shipwreck. I first trace the storm-tossed ship from Ovid’s *Tristia* through Petrarch’s “Rima 189” and three early modern English adaptations: Wyatt’s “My Galley Charged,” Britomart’s complaint in Book Three of *The Faerie Queene*, and Sonnet 34 of Spenser’s *Amoretti*. The image of a vessel out of control and buffeted by a storm provides the poets with a figure for the individual willingly submitting to greater forces: whether the Divine Augustus, the Christian God, or the Beloved. The chapter then considers instances of the rudderless boat: the voyages of Custance in Chaucer’s *Man of Law’s Tale*, the hero’s flight from England in *King Horn*, the casting away of Greene’s Fawnia or Shakespeare’s Perdita, the journey of Prospero and Miranda to their island in the “rotten carcass of a butt,” and the survivors of shipwreck in Erasmus’s colloquy *The Naufragium*. While these castaways seem to be extremely vulnerable, they typically survive and, eventually, return to safety and good fortune. Whether such deliverance comes at the hand of God or from the plot demands of Romance, the trope of the rudderless boat illustrates that critical generalizations typifying the sea as hostile and threatening do not always hold true. The third part of the chapter discusses a related trope—the fortunate shipwreck—from Virgil through Shakespeare. The wreck of the Trojans in Carthage sets up a central plot in both the *Aeneid* and Marlowe’s *Dido Queen of Carthage*; shipwrecks mark the narrative

sections of Gower's *Apollonius of Tyre* and Shakespeare's adaptation of it in *Pericles*. *The Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night*, and *The Tempest* all also open with a wreck—or, in the case of the *Tempest*, with two. Philip Sidney's *New Arcadia* has a similar origin point: the burnt hulk of the ship that once carried Musidorus and Pyrocles. Despite appearances, however, in none of these cases does maritime disaster actually prove disastrous. Sea travel may be predicated on risk, but representations of that travel often foreground happy—or at least just—endings.

Chapter Three concentrates on another peril of sea travel: pirates. I argue that onstage, pirates exist as visible representations of the sea's risk and possibility, and that their ships function as spaces where the usual laws—social, dramatic, generic—do not apply. Stage pirates' contradictory, chaotic behavior is often linked with their reputation as self-interested and self-determined agents who prioritize personal decision-making over political allegiances or established moral principles. Heywood and Rowley's *Fortune By Land And Sea* presents a contrast between the unredeemable career pirates Purser and Clinton and the part-time pirate hero, Forrest; Forrest operates somewhat like a merchant venture or colonist, capturing a valuable maritime resource—wanted pirates—and selling it in exchange for the titular fortune by sea. The definition of piracy in the play is fungible depending on the role each character already plays, and as a protagonist, Forrest is not bound by the same rules as Purser and Clinton. The episode in *Henry IV Part Two* in which Suffolk is executed by sailors also illustrates the point that different laws apply aboard a ship: the signs of earthly power that Suffolk expects to save him in fact ensure his demise because the sailors he antagonizes have, as sailors, the

ability to decide his fate based on their own preferences. Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turn'd Turk* also dramatizes pirates as able to make their own choices, whether converting to Islam or transforming into a pirate-hunter. The play suggests that piracy has its uses when employed by the state, just as it threatens the state when it goes without regulation. The broadside ballad "Sir Andrew Barton," which recounts a sea-fight between a Scottish pirate and an English noble, emphasizes a pirate's personal choice while downplaying international laws: because of Sir Andrew Barton's reputation as a pirate, what is effectively an international conflict between England and Scotland can be dismissed as a personal dispute. Finally, the chapter turns to the stage pirates who function as narrative devices rather than main or supporting characters. In *Hamlet*, these pirates never appear onstage at all; we have only Hamlet's word for how he gets on their ship and why they return him to Elsinore. In *Pericles*, pirates save Marina from being murdered on the orders of her jealous foster-mother. In both cases, the pirates are motivated primarily by desire for economic gain, but their choices have positive side-effects for Hamlet and Marina. The two characters take advantage of the opportunity provided by their time at sea: to negotiate for themselves, to act decisively. Stage pirates embody self-determination, and repeatedly display a capacity to swoop in from offstage, reorganize things, and make an equally sudden exit.

From pirates, who famously claim a maritime identity with the slogan "we are of the sea," the fourth chapter turns to other marine creatures—gods, mermaids, monsters—and investigates the gendering of oceanic imagery on the page and stage. In this chapter, I argue that despite the association of early modern water imagery with gender fluidity, sea

deities and creatures are themselves generally ascribed an essentialized gender. Female mermaids seduce; male sea gods and sea monsters are sexually aggressive and rapacious. The chapter first considers moments of gender fluidity accompanied by oceanic imagery: Britomart's complaint in *The Faerie Queene*, Jessica's pageboy disguise in *The Merchant of Venice*, Viola's alter-identity as Cesario in *Twelfth Night*, Cleopatra's erotic roleplaying and stage managing in *Antony and Cleopatra*, and Moll Cutpurse's threatening drag persona in Middleton and Dekker's *The Roaring Girl*. These moments are pervaded by a period-specific discourse of sea-monstrosity that can be exemplified by Ambroise Paré's *On Monsters and Marvels*, with its emphasis on hybridity and category-crossing as particular to marine creatures. After establishing connections between sea imagery and gender-fluid performances, the chapter then turns to notable instances of gendered sea gods and creatures. The episode of Neptune forcefully and amorously detaining Leander in Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* illustrates rapacious sexuality; Proteus's aggressive pursuit and imprisonment of Florimell in *The Faerie Queene* compares the sea god's tactics to the repetitive attack of ocean waves against a rocky shore. John Lyly's *Galatea* associates the oceanic hunger of the devouring monster Agar with male sexual appetite; the myth of Scylla in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and its early modern inheritors illustrates that when the sea monster is female, appetite may remain but is divorced from sexual appetite. Attending to representations of sea creatures adds complexity to discussions of early modern conceptions of gender.

The fifth and final chapter considers ruin and reward, discussing the potential for enormous loss or immense gains often associated with the sea in early modern English

literature. Noting that sea wealth can take many forms, from sunken treasure to the profits of merchant ventures to women's bodies recovered from the waves, I argue that before any form of maritime wealth can be circulated economically or socially, it must undergo a land-change—a process of re-integration that frequently demands reversing the effects of sea-change. The chapter begins by considering moral discussions of sunken treasure in classical, biblical, and early Christian sources, in particular the story of Crates—a wealthy man who, on the advice of the cynic philosopher Diogenes, found peace by throwing his gold into the sea—and the abundant fortunes of the pious maritime tribe of Zebulon in the book of Genesis. Many descriptions of maritime riches, like the heaps of coin in the warehouses of Barabas in *The Jew of Malta* or the uncanny gemstones winking from the sea floor in Clarence's dream in *Richard III*, suggest that the sea renders wealth inert. The aesthetic transformation of Alonso's bones in Ariel's "Full Fathom Five" song in *The Tempest* suggests that even something "rich and strange" from the sea cannot move freely on land without reintegration. Whether the treasures are precious objects or women's bodies makes little difference. Discussions of Desdemona in *Othello*, Thaisa in *Pericles*, and a Sea-Woman from Anthony Munday's *A Briefe Chronicle of the Successes of Times* exemplify the treatment of women as a form of riches from the sea. The recovery of Thaisa and of the Sea-Woman both demand significant terrestrial processing—Thaisa in Cerimon's magic workshop and the temple of Diana, and the Sea-Woman in the bathtubs and at the spinning wheels of her adoptive townspeople. Finally, the episode of Amidas and Bracidas in *The Faerie Queene* contains several overlapping forms of sea-borne riches, including land eroded and deposited by

the waves, a chest of gold, and maidens. The judicial labor of Artegall effectively undoes the sea-change that all three types of wealth have undergone before the episode begins. In early modern English literature, sea-change effectively removes material wealth and precious human bodies from social and economic networks; without processes of rehabilitation, the riches of the sea cannot join or re-join the human world.

CHAPTER ONE: Brass Wall and Silver Sea: Security and Vulnerability of the Nation

This chapter investigates the trope of England as a fortified island, widespread in early modern English literature, and argues that early modern texts treat the idea with skepticism: works like Shakespeare's *Richard II*, *King John*, and *Cymbeline* in particular, along with Fletcher's *Bonduca* and Greene's comedy *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, represent not British isolation and threatened insularity, but rather hospitality and fortunate invasions. The chapter then explores the network of tidal rivers depicted in the anonymous *Arden of Faversham*, Heywood and Rowley's *Fortune By Land And Sea*, Spenser's "Colin Clouts Come Home Againe," and *The Faerie Queene*, suggesting that the primary role of these rivers in early modern English literature runs contrary to the idea of a sealed, sea-ringed island.

A Fortress Built by Nature?

Many recent studies take it for granted that Shakespeare's England was obsessed with the threat of foreign invasion.²⁶ Such accounts posit that frequent invocations of England's natural fortifications in early modern literature, particularly Shakespeare's

²⁶ See James Shapiro, "Revisiting 'Tamburlaine': 'Henry V' as Shakespeare's Belated Armada Play," *Criticism* 31.4 (1989), 351-366; Richard Wilson, "A Sea of Troubles: The Thought of the Outside in Shakespeare's Histories," *Shakespeare's Histories and Counter-Histories*, ed. Dermot Cavanagh, Stuart Hampton-Reeves, and Stephen Longstaffe (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 101-134; and Lynn Staley, *The Island Garden: England's Language of Nation from Gildas to Marvell* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2012). Most recently, Adam McKeown has argued that in the age of Henry VIII, English authors used fortified island rhetoric to unify England during a time of growing regionalism: see McKeown, "Walled Borders and the Geography of Power in Henrician Prose," *English Literary Renaissance* 48:2 (Spring 2018), 121-135.

English histories, express invasion anxiety. And indeed, two monologues—the famous “sceptered isle” of *Richard II* and the speech on “the natural bravery of your isle” in *Cymbeline*—do seem to emphasize England’s inherent geographical ability to repel all invaders.²⁷ Both Gaunt and Cymbeline’s Queen praise the “rocky shore” and the surrounding sea as natural defenses against hostile forces; in addition, the wreck of the Dauphin’s ships on Goodwin Sands at the end of *King John*, an event suggesting the destruction of the Armada, provides a prime example of England’s geographical security²⁸. Taken together, these three moments might indeed suggest that England is “a fortress built by Nature for herself / Against infection” by foreign powers (*R2* 2.1.43-44). According to this claim about invasion anxiety, the more early modern authors insist on England’s natural fortifications, the more they reveal their lack of confidence in the fortified island’s ability to remain unconquered.

However, early modern English historiographers and Shakespeare’s English

²⁷ All citations from *King Richard II*, ed. Charles R. Forker (London: Bloomsbury, 2002), and *Cymbeline*, ed. Valerie Wayne (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), henceforth *R2* and *Cym*.

²⁸ In his Arden Second Edition of *Richard II* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), Peter Ure provides a catalogue of examples of England as a fortified island from Shakespeare (*3H6, Jn.*), Daniel (*Delia*, sonnet XLIV, *The Civile Ware*), Greene (*Spanish Masquerado*), and *The Libelle of English Polycye* (52n). Ure points out that each passage identifies a contradiction in the relationship between England and “the sea which both guards it and cuts it off from the rest of the world”; in Daniel’s case, that sea is explicitly figured as jealous. Daniel’s usage in *Delia* XLIV particular, which describes “fair *Albion*, glory of the North, / *Neptune*’s darling helde between his armes: / Diuided from the world as better worth, / Kept for himselfe, defended from all harmes,” casts England as a female lover to jealous Neptune, resonating with Gaunt’s description of “the envy of less happier lands.” About Daniel’s second use of this figure, in *The Civile Wares*, Ure clarifies that “the phrase is part of a complaint against being cut off by the waves from escape and so made an easy prey to tyranny,” another thread Gaunt takes up explicitly in the “scept’red isle” speech. Both Daniel and Shakespeare acknowledge that England’s insularity contributes both to its safety and its vulnerability at once.

histories complicate this claim of Britain's maritime invulnerability. *Richard II* and *Cymbeline*, like *Richard III*, end with tentative peace established as a result of invasions: Bolingbroke lands from France to become Henry IV, while *Cymbeline* ends with the order that "A Roman and a British ensign wave / Friendly together" (5.5.478-79). Furthermore, Shakespeare's histories represent multiple invasions of England by forces both foreign and domestic.²⁹ Such dramatizations of successful invasions not only register specific historical events, but are also in accord with the stress in contemporary chronicles on early Britain's vulnerability to waves of invasion.³⁰ What, then, are we to make of Gaunt and the Queen's emphatic praises of the natural fortifications protecting Albion? In this section, I argue that *Richard II*, *King John*, and *Cymbeline* present an ambivalent view of the contributions of the sea to national security: in these plays, the sea

²⁹ Richmond's landing from France at Milford Haven in *Richard III* is the most obvious example, but other invasions are York's, returning from Ireland, in *2 Henry VI* and Warwick's, with French troops, in *3 Henry VI*. Cordelia's landing with the French army is another notable moment. For the purposes of this chapter, I use "England" to refer to the tetralogies and *King John* and "Britain" to refer to *King Lear* and *Cymbeline*. For the more complicated naming of the British archipelago, see Joan Fitzpatrick, "Marrying Waterways: Politicizing and Gendering the Landscape in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* River-Marriage Canto," *Archipelagic Identities: Literature and Identity in the Atlantic Archipelago, 1550-1800*, eds. Philip Schwyzer and Simon Meador (Burlington: Ashgate, 2004), 81-91; Willy Maley, "Postcolonial Shakespeare: British Identity Formation and *Cymbeline*," in *Shakespeare's Late Plays: New Readings*, eds. Jennifer Richards and James Knowles (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 145-157; Andrew Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser's Irish Experience: Wilde Fruit and Salvage Soyl* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

³⁰ Staley distinguishes between two historiographic traditions: that of Gildas and his inheritors, who portray the island as isolated, fallen, and violated; and that of Bede and his followers William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon, and William of Newburgh, who are more positively inclined towards invading forces (*The Island Garden*, 16). According to Staley, Bede characterizes England as "permeable (not necessarily vulnerable) and inherently hospitable; as colonized (rather than victimized), thus as enriched by those who transgress its boundaries; as attached to (rather than detached from) the rest of the world" (2).

is not only praised as protective, but also decried as threatening, and, very often, shown to be ineffective at keeping out invaders. The “sceptred isle” speech is not the paean to a protective ocean it is sometimes taken to be, and in *King John*, instead of natural fortifications repelling or admitting invaders based on their worthiness, royal and baronial will, described in the language of tides and currents, truly determine England’s fate. Furthermore, *Cymbeline* represents the radical patriotism and isolationism of the British Queen as regressive and futile. Thus, in many ways, the treatment of the fortified island theme in Shakespeare’s English histories reveals more than a simple response to invasion anxiety.

Although the two insular speeches of Gaunt and Cymbeline’s Queen emphasize the protection afforded by coastal waters, Gaunt’s sea is also threatening. While England’s “fortress built by Nature,” is served by the sea “in the office of a wall / Or as a moat,” providing protection from “the envy of less happier lands,” Gaunt also evokes a threat that comes from the sea itself. The shores of England are imagined to “beat back” the “envious siege of wat’ry Neptune” (2.1.47-49, 62-63). While the sea can, Gaunt claims, rebuff foreign envy, the “envious siege” of the sea itself must also be repulsed.

Kathryn Montgomery Harris has argued that the sea variously protects or troubles England depending on whether the nation’s leaders are behaving prudently or ignobly.³¹ At the moment of Gaunt’s speech, the nation is “leased out,” under the management of

³¹ “When England is ‘this other Eden,’ the sea protects; when [England is] leased out by Richard ‘like to a tenement or pelting farm,’ the sea is a threatening, envious bond.” Kathryn Montgomery Harris, “Sun and Water Imagery in *Richard II*: Its Dramatic Function,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 21:2 (Spring 1970), 158. Montgomery Harris presumably means “bond” in the sense of boundary or limit.

multiple masters like a paltry farm (2.1.59). In this context, Gaunt reframes the sea as another threat: as Harris points out, once England's king is its landlord, it is "bound in by the triumphant sea, / Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege / Of watery Neptune" (61-63). While England is always subject to envy, when the kingdom is royally mismanaged, its sea is no longer a protective moat, but a confining "bound" and, paradoxically, also a besieging invader. At this point, instead of the sea serving as "wall" or "moat defensive," the "rocky shore" takes over the functions of a wall to shield the nation from the "envious" and "triumphant" sea. Thus, Gaunt's invocation of naturally-fortified England exhibits ambivalence about the beneficent, otherwise-defensive capabilities of its surrounding seas.

Cymbeline's Queen expresses nothing resembling Gaunt's ambivalence about geographical fortifications. To the Queen, Neptune is not a threat to Britain, but its rightful lord. She praises "The natural bravery of your [Cymbeline's] isle, which stands / As Neptune's park, ribbed and paled in / With oaks unscalable and roaring waters" (*Cym.* 3.1.18-20). The Queen expresses no sense of internal corruption, so Neptune's role is that of a careful land-holder who has imparked Britain from among the waters to keep it safe and separate. The seas the Queen describes are hazardous, but only to non-Britons: as she says, the "sands" offshore "will not bear your enemies' boats / But suck them up to th'topmast" (21-22). The Queen describes a British coast ringed with treacherous shoals, to which she ascribes the power to identify and destroy Britain's "enemies." When recounting Caesar's double failure to invade England, the Queen gives all the credit to these sands, as well as to "our terrible seas," which "carried" the would-be conqueror

“from off our coast,” and to “our rocks” which “cracked” the Roman supply ships “like eggshells” (25-29). According to her, Caesar was defeated by Britain more than by the Britons.³²

The Queen asserts that a coastline is almost all the defense Britain needs; to its natural fortifications, Cymbeline need only add the inspiring memory of “the Kings” his “ancestors” (3.1.17-18). Jodi Mikalachki has argued that the king and the play ultimately come to reject the Queen’s patriotism because it disrupts “the masculine network of kinship, promises, and honor that binds Cymbeline to Rome”; to extend that line of thinking, the Queen’s praise of Britain as its own defender also relegates the military prowess of male Britons past and present to mere afterthought.³³ Even the British hero Cassibelan appears in the Queen’s estimation more celebrant of the island’s victory than participant in it: she claims that following the wreck of Caesar’s shipping, “for joy... / The famed Cassibelan, who was once at point— / O giglot Fortune!—to master Caesar’s sword, / Made Lud’s town with rejoicing fires bright” (*Cym.* 3.1.29-32). Prevented by giglot Fortune from actually mastering Caesar, Cassibelan merely rejoices that the Roman ships have sunk.

Cymbeline is not the only person who undermines the Queen’s rabid patriotism:

³² Elizabeth J. Bellamy notes that the Queen follows Camden’s *Britannia* in emphasizing “the extent to which Caesar was impeded less by the island’s Briton indigenes than by its coastlines” in *Dire Straits: The Perils of Writing the Early Modern English Coastline from Leland to Milton* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 103. Valerie Wayne notes that the Queen’s account follows British historiographical tradition, while Lucius’s contrasting one follows the Roman history (*Cym.* 3.1, 26n). Setting these two historiographical traditions at odds points out that the fortunate and fortified island is sometimes less fact and more interpretation.

³³ Mikalachki, *The Legacy of Boadicea: Gender and the Nation in Early Modern England* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 98.

Innogen also questions the concept of an isolated, exceptional Britain. Confronting her exile from her father's court and, consequently, all of Britain, Innogen remarks on the nation's singularity: "I'th' world's volume / Our Britain seems as of it but not in't, / In a great pool a swan's nest" (3.4.137-139). Echoing Bolingbroke's and Mowbray's laments after Richard exiles them, Innogen's comparison seems to set a spotlight over Britain as a special, and perhaps vulnerable, place—isolated, apart, "of" the world, "but not in't." Set apart from its context, the comparison of Britain to a swan's nest suggests patriotic myopia. Willy Maley suggests that "Britain seems of the world but not in it precisely because it is an invention," a product of the "Stuart Myth" representing "British identity...as a return to an original wholeness, to unity and integrity, to a pre-existent identity that was dormant during centuries of foreign tyranny, Roman and Norman (French)" (149-150). Maley takes into account the poetic tradition attached to the Britain-as-swans nest comparison. For example, there is the resemblance between the simile and Giles Fletcher's image in *Christ's Victory and Triumphs*, where Fletcher writes, "Our Britain Island, like the weedie nest / Of a true Halcyone, on the waves doth ride, / And softly sayling, skornes the waters pride" (Maley 150; *Cym.* 3.4 139n.). Fletcher alludes to the myth of Alcyone and Ceyx, in which a grieving widow is transformed into a bird that, during a few halcyon days of calm, nests directly on the sea; comparing Britain to this impossible-seeming floating nest casts the nation as mythical, rare, and privileged—a patriotic claim.³⁴ In contrast, Innogen places the Britain-as-nest image in a context that

³⁴ Fletcher's image of the aloof, natural, yet remarkable nest—an explicitly defensive construction for raising cygnets—contrasts markedly with Gaunt's assertion that England breeds a race of crusading warriors who are particularly suited to invade other lands.

undermines British exceptionalism by removing Fletcher's mythic trappings.

Despite Maley's claim that "*Cymbeline* seems obsessed with the very idea of Britain, its intangibility," Innogen's swan's nest is less mythical and more permanent than Fletcher's (Maley 150). Protected and aloof, the nest of a swan seems to be a tiny fortified island of its own—indeed, in the natural world, swans nest in the center of "a great pool" in order to foil predators. However, the rest of Innogen's speech to Pisanio casts a skeptical shadow over the idea of Britain-as-swan's-nest. Innogen begins by asking her companion, "Hath Britain all the sun that shines? Day, night / Are they not but in Britain?" (136-137). The answer is, implicitly, of course not. These introductory questions indicate that Innogen's simile underscores the difference between appearances and reality: "I'th' world's volume / Our Britain *seems* as of it but not in't." She concludes, "Prithee, think / There's livers out of Britain," puncturing the isolationist, exceptionalist image that others, like Fletcher and Innogen's own stepmother, produce without irony.

In contrast to the Queen's inviolable Britain, John Fletcher's *Bonduca* portrays British resistance to Rome as flawed and ultimately unable to withstand Roman invasion. Drawing on contemporary politics, Claire Jowitt interprets Fletcher's invading Romans as representative of British efforts to conquer and colonize Virginia in the early seventeenth century.³⁵ According to Jowitt, Fletcher's play refuses to accord either

³⁵ See Jowitt, "Gender and Colonialism in John Fletcher's *Bonduca* and *The Island Princess*," in *Voyage, Drama, and Gender Politics 1589-1642: Real and Imagined Worlds* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 104-139. Jowitt's analysis of Fletcher within a colonial context follows in the wake of other political readings of the Beaumont and Fletcher canon. See Shankar Raman, "Imaginary Islands: Staging the East" in *Renaissance Drama* 26 (1995)

Romans or Britons a monopoly on virtue and honor, and Jowitt suggests that this ambiguity results in the play's layered identifications of invaders and defenders with Rome, Britain, England, and America: "as the ancient Britons represent native Americans in the play, the audience is invited to support their subjugation; as they represent 'British' independence, their defeat is, of course, a mournful affair" (106).³⁶ Jowitt suggests that with these contradictory inclinations, Fletcher seeks to "question the merits of contemporary colonial policies," but she does not explore how such questioning extends back into English history, particularly complicating patriotic received wisdom about a fortified island nation (106). In particular, the Romans' complaints about the British land and seas fighting against them take on a correspondingly ambivalent cast.

Initially, the island does a good job of foiling the Romans' plans: Petillius complains that the Roman supplies are stalled offshore by contrary winds and that consequently the soldiers' hunger

131-161; Gordon McMullan, *The Politics of Unease in The Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994); Andrew Hadfield, *Literature, Travel, and Colonial Writing in the English Renaissance 1545-1625* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 254-264.

³⁶ Jowitt notes that "until recently most commentators argued that in the military conflict between the ancient Britons and Romans, Fletcher consistently revealed the Romans to be more honourable, masculine and virtuous" (106). See Paul D. Green, "Theme and Structure in Fletcher's *Bonduca*," *Studies in English* 22:2 (1982), 305-316; Sandra Clark, *The Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher: Sexual Themes and Dramatic Representation* (New York and London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994); Mikalachki, *The Legacy of Boadicea*. Whether the average early modern audience member would notice the Romans' superiority and infer the allusion to American colonization that Jowitt has identified, let alone whether he or she would support the defeat of a famous British queen on the strength of it, is a question that must necessarily go unanswered.

gave Bonduca
 (With shame we must record it) time and strength
 To look into our Fortunes; great discretion
 To follow offered Victory; and at last, full pride
 To brave us to our teeth. (1.2.221-225)³⁷

In addition to the winds' interference, the land rises against Rome as well: Petillius complains that the British resist in such numbers that "one would swear" that the "Hills are wooded with [Bonduca's] partizans" (1.2.239). Jowitt's point about multiple allegiances colors the island's fortifications: by repelling Romans who are also, symbolically, British, the geographical defenses are both protecting British interests and defying them.

However, *Bonduca* places responsibility for the eventual success of the Roman invasion less on ineffective natural defenses than on human attackers and defenders. In reaction to the delay of the Roman provisions, Swetonius declares:

as a pine
 Rent from Oeta by a sweeping tempest,
 Joynted again, and made a Mast, defies
 Those angry windes that split him: so will I,
 Piec'd to my never-failing strength and fortune,
 Steer thorow these swelling dangers, plow their prides up,
 And bear like thunder through their loudest tempests.
 (1.2.229-235)

Swetonius transforms the island's rough seas and inhospitable coasts from an insurmountable barrier to a human challenge by likening himself to a part of the natural landscape—a pine tree on Mount Oeta—that through human-like effort defies the

³⁷ All citations are from Fletcher, *Bonduca*, ed. Cyrus Hoy, in *The Dramatic Works of the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon Volume IV*, ed. Fredson Bowers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 149-259.

elements that had initially bested it.³⁸ This extended simile foreshadows the failure of the fortified island to hold off Rome, as well as the superior military tactics of the Roman army against the British guerilla force. Initially confounded, Swetonius and the other Romans eventually master the challenging countryside and defeat the defenders who attempt to use it against them. Ultimately, it is the human cost of resistance, represented by the death of Hengo, that defeats the British; in the end, the friendly landscape does not afford much of an advantage.

By contrast, the Queen of *Cymbeline* ascribes Britain's victory primarily to the island's natural bravery. By emphasizing landscape and seascape over human valor, the Queen cancels much of what historians like Bede, William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon, and William of Newburgh claim to be worth appreciating and protecting in the island nation. A naturally-fortified Britain is not enough to keep the nation safe, because ancient and recent history repeatedly demonstrates Britain's vulnerability to invasion. However, as those historians note, each of its invaders contributes something to the greatness of the sceptered isle. A protectively isolated ancient Britain like the one the Queen describes is essentially different from the Romano-Anglo-Norman nation inhabited by Shakespeare's audience.

The Queen's speech largely ignores Romans as well as Britons. Not only does she reduce British resistance to an afterthought, but she also refuses to acknowledge the fact of Roman presence in Britain.³⁹ She denies, in other words, what the play's audience

³⁸ Mount Oeta is most famous for being the site of the death and apotheosis of Hercules, so the death and re-birth of the pine tree takes on an especially heroic cast.

³⁹ Even as she invokes Neptune, the Roman sea-god, another sign that her rhetoric is

already knows: Rome had invaded and occupied Britain, and as Cymbeline himself admits, “Did put the yoke upon’s”;⁴⁰ and, at least according to Bede and his inheritors, Britain was better off for it (3.1.52).⁴⁰ Even within *Cymbeline*, the British coastline does not ultimately repel the Roman army: Roman forces land at Milford Haven and engage the British troops. Similarly, in *Richard II*, the coastline does nothing to prevent Bolingbroke’s conquest, and the land does not heed Richard’s own orders to “Feed not thy sovereign’s foe” or to hinder the invaders with “spiders,” “heavy-gaited toads,” and “stinging nettles,” (3.2.12-18). Indeed, of Shakespeare’s twelve plays set in English or British history, invading armies land on English soil in seven.⁴¹ These invasions do not all prove disastrous for the nation. Some, such as Henry Richmond’s, are portrayed as acts of God, fortunate indeed.

Greene’s *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* takes a similarly sanguine view of foreign invaders.⁴² Likely written in 1589, *Friar Bacon* contains a central character who desires to protect England from an invading force like the Armada.⁴³ Yet, as Anthony

inherently unstable.

⁴⁰ Drayton summarizes these waves of invasion in *Poly-Olbion*, Song II, 157-160. Gordon McMullan points out how the title pages to the *Poly-Olbion* and Speed’s 1611 *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain* both depict the various races of invaders who intermingled to form Britain (McMullan, “The Colonisation of Early Britain on the Jacobean Stage,” in *Reading the Medieval in Early Modern England*, eds. Gordon McMullan and David Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 122.)

⁴¹ *King Lear* (French and British), *Cymbeline* (Roman), *King John* (French), *Richard II* (English), *2 Henry VI* (English), *3 Henry VI* (French and English), *Richard III* (English).

⁴² Robert Greene, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, ed. J. A. Levin (London: Ernest Benn Ltd, 1969).

⁴³ In his introduction to the New Mermaids edition (London: Benn, 1969), J. A. Lavin points out that “although the patriotic flavour of *Friar Bacon* suggests that it was written some time after the defeat of the Armada in July 1588, it is hardly conclusive evidence, particularly since there is no specific allusion to the Armada in the play” (xii).

Esler claims, at the time, “the victory over the Spanish Armada” was “a generally accepted guarantee of and symbol for God’s continuing support in the Spanish War.”⁴⁴ England required no wall to accomplish what the Protestant Wind and God’s favor had already done. However, in the play, one of Friar Bacon’s chief pet projects is to “circle England round with brass,” creating by means of his magic a brazen wall that will ring “the English strond / From Dover to the market place of Rye” (2.170, 64-65). Mark Dahlquist argues that Bacon’s description of the wall-to-be signals “impious hubris”: Bacon compares his wall to “the construction of the walls of Babylon by Ninus and Semiramis...an ambitious building project that in its polemical associations evokes the Church of Rome, the Whore of Babylon, and the overreaching ambition of a city that had thought to build ‘a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven.’”⁴⁵ Bacon presumes that England needs such a wall for its protection: that its natural and human defenses are not enough and that it is his responsibility to remedy the problem—hubris indeed.

As a whole, the play rejects Bacon’s presumptuous desire to seal off England.

Brian Walsh writes,

in terms of international conflict, the play emphasizes friendship, concord, and openness. As many critics have pointed out, it is ultimately appropriate that the brass wall Bacon hopes to see built around England never materializes, for the nation cannot so thoroughly enclose itself and hope to survive in an increasingly interdependent world where opportunities for stabilizing alliances and economic expansion beyond Europe were mushrooming.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Anthony Esler, “Robert Greene and The Spanish Armada,” *ELH* 32.3 (1965), 326.

⁴⁵ Mark Dahlquist, “Love and Technical Iconoclasm in Robert Greene’s *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*,” *ELH* 78.1 (2011), 51-77; 55.

⁴⁶ Brian Walsh, “‘Deep Prescience’: Succession and the Politics of Prophecy in ‘Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay,’” *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 23 (2010), 63-85; 78.

Walsh describes medieval and, metonymically, early modern England—networks of trade and international alliances were becoming ever more essential to national security. However, historians like Bede, Henry of Huntingdon, and William of Malmesbury and Newburgh emphasize that England had not been enclosed from foreign invasion for hundreds of years. Walsh notes that Friar Bacon declares that his wall “will prevent even ‘ten Caesars’ with ‘all the legions of Europe’ from touching ‘a grass of English ground,’ calling attention to the Roman conquest of Britain as a precedent for successful invasion that makes the magical defense system necessary” (65). Unlike the Queen, Bacon at least acknowledges Rome’s ancient victory, but like her, he admits no positive consequences of it. Instead of acknowledging what the Romans brought to England, Bacon names them only as invaders. This willful blindness is only one indication that his brazen wall will not help national security. Furthermore, as Deanne Williams argues, “Friar Bacon’s reference to Rome reminds us that it is impossible to reverse the effects of a Roman invasion of Britain that has already taken place in history,” and history, as noted above, is largely supportive of the Roman victory, characterizing Britain as the natural inheritor of Roman valor and virtue.⁴⁷

Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay ends with the play’s erstwhile predator Prince Edward marrying Eleanor of Castile, a match that will, as Bacon prophesies, enrich English royalty for generations to come. Bacon speaks elliptically, promising

That here where Brute did build his Troynovant,
From forth the royal garden of a king,

⁴⁷ Deanne Williams, “Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay and the Rhetoric of Temporality” in *Reading the Medieval in Early Modern England*, eds. Gordon McMullan and David Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 31-48; 43.

Shall flourish out so rich and fair a bud
Whose brightness shall deface proud Phoebus' flower,
And over-shadow Albion with her leaves. (16.44-48).

Bacon's prophecy opens with an allusion to a mythically fortunate invasion of England. It appears that now that he claims to be "Repentant for the follies of my youth," Bacon can acknowledge England's historico-mythical origins as a Trojan colony (16.36). Seen in retrospect, not all invasions warrant a wall of brass.

Edward's bride, Eleanor of Castile, is one such fortunate foreign invader: King Henry of England calls her "the lovely Eleanor, / Who dared for Edward's sake cut through the seas, / And venture as Agenor's damsel through the deep" (iv.9-11). In his words, Spanish Eleanor becomes the ship she travelled in, a ship that, in its origin and destination, implies those of the Armada. But the England of *Friar Bacon* is not on the defensive: Walsh notes that "*Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* was performed at a moment when war with Spain was a constant threat, and yet Eleanor of Castile and her father are portrayed in a wholly sympathetic light" (78). King Henry compares Eleanor to Europa herself, indicating that her bridal voyage is important not just for England, but for the entire continent.⁴⁸ In Barbara Traister's words, "England's glory can best be served not be shutting her off from the rest of the world with Bacon's wall but rather by allowing her communication and interchange with other countries."⁴⁹ International relations offer,

⁴⁸ Europa was traditionally beguiled, kidnapped, and raped by Zeus in the form of a white bull, but in comparing her to Eleanor of Castile, Henry III makes Europa an active venturer across the waves. This unusual metaphor suggests that Eleanor may not be wholly willing to travel to England to marry Edward, despite what her parents and representatives may claim.

⁴⁹ Barbara Traister, *Heavenly Necromancers: The Magician in English Renaissance Drama* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1984), 74.

the play suggests, a more farsighted means to national security than a defensive, insular stance.

Although his marriage to Eleanor is the satisfying conclusion of the play, for much of *Friar Bacon*, Prince Edward pursues an inappropriate relationship with the English beauty Margaret of Fressingfield. Wooing her, Edward employs a nautical image that echoes his father's:

Edward or none shall conquer Margaret.
 In frigates bottomed with rich Sethin planks,
 Topped with the lofty firs of Lebanon,
 Stemmed and incased with burnished ivory,
 And overlaid with planks of Persian wealth,
 Like Thetis shalt thou wanton on the waves,
 And draw the dolphins to thy lovely eyes
 To dance lavoltas in the purple streams. (viii. 52-59)

Margaret will be not Europa, carried over the waves, but Thetis, their sea-goddess embodiment. Yet Edward miscalculates with this attempt at domestic seduction: offering Margaret of Fressingfield, the play's embodiment of English virtue and even England itself, a romantic cruise across the purple streams is bound to fail. The village life Margaret and Fressingfield represent is solid, stable, and stationary. It is Eleanor, not Margaret, who is the voyager cutting the waves. Edward's international fantasy combining the world's treasures and world travel is far more suitable to a Spanish princess than an English country girl, suggesting how radically the prince is misapplying his energies in pursuing Margaret. His productive, international marriage to Eleanor represents the proper stage for such a pageant.

Overall, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* portrays Bacon's plan to enclose England in a wall of brass as hubristic and harmful to national security, offering instead

international alliances as a far more productive way to ensure that England remains safe and powerful. Bacon's wall is an overreaction to invasion anxiety. The ambitious friar misunderstands England's vulnerability in three ways: first, the invasions he cites, Trojan and Roman, are foundational moments of British identity. Second, God's attention ensures that truly hostile invasions like the Armada will never make it to English shores. And third, contemporary welcome invaders like Eleanor of Castile could likely not be stopped by such a wall: Castile tells Henry III that "The Pyren Mounts swelling above the clouds, / That ward the wealthy Castile in with walls, / Could not detain the beauteous Eleanor" (iv.14-16). If the Pyrenees, "Neptunus' haughty pride," and "the brunt of froward Æolus" cannot prevent Eleanor from getting to England, how could even a magical wall do so (18-19)? The wall of brass is at best redundant and at worst, stifling. *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* both invokes and repudiates the idea of a fortified island, suggesting that fortunate invasion is an essential part of Britain's history.

England's coastal geography does protect it from some unfortunate invasions, however—notably, from the Dauphin's ships in *King John*.⁵⁰ The sands do not prevent French forces, aided by rebellious English barons, from reaching and fighting in England, but as that fight progresses, a messenger reports that "the great supply / That was expected by the Dauphin here / Are wrecked three nights ago on Goodwin Sands" (5.3.9-11). Recalling the fortuitous storm that scattered the Armada, the wrecks ostensibly provide an example of the naturally fortified island doing its job.⁵¹

⁵⁰ All citations from Shakespeare, *King John*, ed. E. A. J. Honigmann (New York: Routledge, 1967), henceforth *KJ*.

⁵¹ In 3.3.1-3, King Philip of France compares his loss at Angiers to the wreck of an "armado,"

However, as a whole, *King John* presents a more complicated picture of seas and shores. Following the account of the French wrecks, the play next stages the defection of the dying French Count Melun to the English side. Melun's shift spurs the rebellious Salisbury to end the barons' uprising. Salisbury's metaphor is tidal:

We will untread the steps of damnèd flight,
And like a bated and retirèd flood,
Leaving our rankness and irregular course,
Stoop low within those bounds we have o'erlooked,
And calmly run on in obedience
Even to our ocean, to our great King John. (5.4.52-57)

Salisbury uses the familiar language of the fortified island to emphasize the human power of England's king and barons to determine whether the nation is secure. King John is the ocean that surrounds the island, and the barons are a flood-tide that has broken away from that ocean and overrun the land. While Gaunt suggests that when the land is troubled, the sea engages in an envious siege of England's shores, Salisbury's image is slightly different. For him, the ocean has "bounds" and does not threaten the island. Only the disobedient tides attack the land, while the obedient ones leave it unscathed. The metaphorical ocean Salisbury describes provides a provocative contrast to the protective-aggressive seas of the fortified island speeches. Here, the sea is regal, resolute, and aloof; the rebellious English barons are responsible for the nation's woes.

another connection to the Spanish Armada of 1588: "So, by a roaring tempest on the flood, / A whole armado of convicted sail / Is scatter'd and disjoin'd from fellowship." E. A. J. Honigmann places this allusion in context of the many parallels between the story of *King John* and the situation of Elizabeth in the "Armada Period," concluding that the resemblance results not from coincidence but rather from "selection of incidents relevant to a particular purpose" (xxvi-xxix). Honigmann aside, the allusion has received surprisingly little recent scholarly attention.

One early modern explanation for the existence of Goodwin Sands is a sort of literal version of Salisbury's metaphor. In his *Apologcall Epistle* to Elizabeth's Privy Counsell, Roman Catholic priest Richard Broughton ties Goodwin Sands to civil war and noble rebellion.⁵² Broughton places the origins of Goodwin Sands in the context of a terrestrial and political rebellion against the anti-church behavior of William Rufus, third son of William the Conqueror:

William called Rufus, afflicted the Churches and Monasteries of England with grieuous oppression, maketh a decree against some iurisdiction of Pope Vrbane in England, and exiled Saint Anselme Archbishop of Canterbury, for his defence thereof, but hee was not left vnpunished; his naturall brother Robert duke of Normandy, and others his neerest kinsmen and Nobility, raised and maintained wars against him, the Welchmen inuaded and spoiled Glocester, Shrewsbury, and other parts of England, and tooke the Ile of Anglesey, and the very insensible creatures rebelled against him, and called for vengeance, the earth at Fynchamsteed in Barkshire flowed forth with blood: the winde in one tempest ouerthrewe sixe hundred and sixe houses in his chiefe City of London, the sea surroundedand ouerwhelmed al the lands that belonged to his friend, the earle of Goodwine, and is called Goodwine sands to this day. (73-74)

Catholic propaganda aside, it is worth noting that according to Broughton, Goodwin Sands allegedly took on its current ship-threatening form in sympathizing with a rebellion by Robert, Duke of Normandy, and other nobles against William Rufus. Seconding this political rebellion, all nature joins against the king: "the very insensible creatures" rebel and call for "vengeance," the "earth" flows "forth with blood," and the "winde in one tempest" flattens over six hundred houses in London. Broughton casts these disasters as proof of England itself rejecting William Rufus's offenses against the Church: the

⁵² Richard Broughton, *Apologcall epistle directed to the right honorable lords, and others of her Maiesties priuie counsell* (Antwerp, 1601), STC 3893, 73-74.

rebellious seas swamp, and claim, part of the nation while taking part in a general rebellion of nobles and nature against the King's blasphemous policies.⁵³

Rebellious nobles are not the only forces linked to the sea in Shakespeare's play. Salisbury's words pick up on a thread of imagery running through *King John*, which compares royal power to oceans and currents. King John himself threatens to flood Angiers, asking the French king,

Say, shall the current of our right roam on?
Whose passage, vex'd with thy impediment,
Shall leave his native channel and o'erswell,
With course disturb'd, even thy confining shores,
Unless thou let his silver water keep
A peaceful progress to the ocean. (2.1.335-340)

Both Salisbury and King John maintain that the royal ocean is normally peaceful; however, John threatens that that ocean might overrun the land if its natural course is not restored. The inexorable current of royal right and will is, in John's fashioning, essential to England's safety and future. Furthermore, disturbing the accustomed course of that current may have dire consequences: by defying the king, Angiers risks causing John's

⁵³ In his 1576 *Perambulation of Kent*, jurist William Lambarde disputes the legend that the sinking of Godwin Sands was judgment against William Rufus's oppression of the church. Instead, Lambard describes the formation of Godwin Sands as a natural, if remarkable, event: "about the end of the reigne of king William Rufus, (or the beginning of Henrie the first) there was a sodaine and mightie inundation of the Sea, by the which a great part of Flaunders, and of the lowe countries thereabout, was drenched, and lost," causing large numbers of cloth workers from the continent to immigrate to England (88). Lambarde continues: "at the same tyme that this happened in Flaunders, the like harme was done in sundry places, bothe of England, and Scotland ... this place, being sometyme of the possessions of the Earle Godwine, was then first violently overwhelmed with a light sande, wherewith it, not onely remayneth covered ever since, but is become withal (*Navium gurges, & vorago*), a most dreadfull gulfe, and shippe swalower" (86). In this account, Godwin Sands is a physical reminder of the natural and economic connections between England and the continent. William Lambarde, *A perambulation of Kent* (London, 1576), STC 2008:09, pages 84-86.

will to “o’erswell” the “confining shores” that his enemies are attempting to impose.

Thwarted, King John indicates he might resort to unchivalrous violence similar to that with which Henry V threatens Harfleur.

Attempting to reconcile the two monarchs by suggesting the marriage of Blanche to the Dauphin, Hubert again compares royal power to flowing water: Blanche and the Dauphin are “two such silver currents” and “when they join,” they will “glorify the banks that bound them in” (2.1.441-442). As royals who do not yet rule, the two are mere silver currents flowing between banks, not entire oceans who can threaten to call up flood-tides if they are displeased.⁵⁴ Indeed, Hubert says explicitly that Kings John and Philip will be in command of the wedded couple’s power: “Two such controlling bounds shall you be, kings, / To these two princes, if you marry them” (444-445). As controlled currents, Blanche and the Dauphin will resemble the ideal vassals, obediently adding volume and power to the ocean in the way the rebellious, tidal barons should—but do not. Hubert suggests that the wedded tributaries of Blanche and the Dauphin will permit the currents of both kings’ right to flow unimpeded. It is worth pointing out that this wedding is multinational: Blanche is “a daughter...of Spain” who is “near to England,” engaged to a French prince who is also her cousin. The all-important, and braided, silver currents of power are not purely English, French, or Spanish (423). The most prominent seas of *King John* are not those that wreck the Dauphin’s invading fleet, but rather the

⁵⁴ Though a mere current, the Dauphin is also, metaphorically, a native of the sea: Dan Brayton lays out the Dauphin-dolphin connection that also appears in several characters’ speeches in *King John* in *Shakespeare’s Ocean: An Ecocritical Exploration* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012), 112.

metaphorical ones used to illustrate human will and power for the kings, princes, and barons of England and France.

Furthermore, the actual sea of *King John* takes from both sides: it wrecks the Dauphin's ships, but John's forces suffer as well. The Bastard Falconbridge, John's nephew and champion, relates his dangerous seaside encounter near the end of the play: "half my power this night, / Passing these flats, are taken by the tide. / These Lincoln Washes have devourèd them" (5.6.39-42). Falconbridge's losses echo Salisbury's tidal metaphor: even after the disobedient barons have promised to stop their flight, the actual tides of England still devour the King's troops. It is not so easy to untread the steps of rebellion as Salisbury would make it seem. Falconbridge's prophetic final words, "This England never did, nor never shall, / Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror, / But when it first did help to wound itself," suggest that the wound of civil war is of far more concern than the threat of foreign invasion (5.7.112-114). England's leaders are a diverse group, descended from multiple waves of invaders; though they are often in conflict, when they work together, they have the ultimate power over national security. Shakespeare's English history plays suggest that national security lies less in the geography of England, which may repel foreign invaders, than in the people of England, united, who will either defeat such invasions or, as Bede suggested, incorporate them.

Each of these plays approaches the idea of the fortified island ambivalently. *Richard II* and *King John* emphasize that proper authority and obedient nobles are the true protections of the nation, while *Cymbeline* puts an extreme, xenophobic version of fortified island rhetoric into the mouth of a wicked queen. The twin banners, Roman and

British, waving at that play's end remind the audience that at least in the ancient past, foreign invasions could have positive results. Furthermore, Shakespeare's stirring contribution to *Sir Thomas More* extends empathy and compassion to European immigrants.⁵⁵ More asks those who would seal England to foreigners to "Imagine that you see the wretched strangers, / Their babies at their backs, with their poor luggage / Plodding to th' ports and coasts for transportation" (6.85-87). It is "mountainish inhumanity" to fortify England against such vulnerable invaders (6.156). Reading More's speeches in the context of skeptical portrayals of the fortified island in *Richard II*, *King John*, and *Cymbeline* provides a powerful model for rejecting the rhetoric of insularity and isolationism.

Silver Currents: England's Network of Rivers

Early modern descriptions of England as a naturally fortified island often highlight not the nation's inviolability, but rather its fortunate vulnerability to invading forces both foreign and domestic. This concluding section argues that in addition to undermining the fortified island's military effectiveness, early modern writing about England's network of rivers dissolves physical boundaries between island and sea.

Maggie Kilgour writes that water

played a complex role in defining Britain as a nation separate from Europe, an independent whole that yet within itself was able to contain diversity. Drawing upon Christian and neoplatonic depictions of the many flowing into a single source, the image of the rivers of Britain surrounded by a sea

⁵⁵ All citations from Shakespeare, et al., *The Book of Sir Thomas More*, ed. John Jowett (London: Bloomsbury, 2011).

suggested a national independence and wholeness which was achieved through the harmonious reconciliation of internal differences.⁵⁶

Kilgour correctly identifies the national importance of the English river networks, but she overstates the ability to distinguish between rivers and sea. River travel, tidal patterns, and the allegorical family relations of rivers and ocean in early modern plays and poems indicate that in many ways, the sea extended far into England.

If *King John* characterizes royal will and authority as an ocean, it is worth investigating how that ocean's power can possibly affect the land it surrounds. On the one hand, the rebellious tides of the barons attempt to usurp the sea's power and attack the land; on the other hand, the silver currents of lesser, but legitimate, authority run from the land and enrich the sea. In both cases, however, the land is permeable and the water moves unencumbered.

In contrast to this one-way flow, Andrew McRae quotes another early modern way of imagining the nation's waterways from a 1665 speech to the House of Commons: "this Island is incomparably furnished with pleasant Rivers, like Veins in the Natural Body, which conveys the Blood into all the Parts, whereby the whole is nourished."⁵⁷ The

⁵⁶ Kilgour, "Writing on Water," *English Literary Renaissance* 29.2 (1999): 285.

⁵⁷ Andrew McRae, *Literature and Domestic Travel in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 21. For more on the role of rivers in early modern English life, see Bruce Smith on the watery keynote sounds of London in *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 57; for an analysis of later plays, see Julie Sanders, *The Cultural Geography of Early Modern Drama, 1620-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 18-64; Mark S. R. Jenner articulates the customs and politics of access to London's water sources like the Thames, conduits, wells, and canals ("From Conduit Community to Commercial Network? Water in London, 1500-1725" in *Londinopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of*

speaker, Sir Edward Turner, imagines England's rivers as part of a circulatory system by which nourishment moves throughout the country; the purpose of Turner's speech was, McRae notes, to "promote the navigation of inland waterways and the circulation of goods and people" (21). These inland waterways were, according to McRae, hindered by natural and constructed barriers like shallow sections, falls, weirs, dams, and locks, and so the system did not function as people like Turner would have liked. Outside of cities, "river travel was uncommon throughout the early modern period" (21).

However, despite the real-life hindrances to river travel, plays like *Arden of Faversham* and *Fortune by Land And Sea* portray the ability of England's rivers to transport people easily from place to place and scene to scene. As Tom Lockwood notes, "Faversham was, through the sixteenth century, an important coasting port for trade goods conveyed from the South-East to London. This knowledge times and pressures the play's days."⁵⁸ Thus, Alice tells Mosby that "'Tis now high water," and Arden is, therefore, "at the quay"; later, in London, Arden sends Michael to "learn what time the tide will serve our turn" and subsequently invites Franklin to "draw to the quay / And with the tide go down to Faversham" (I.183, VI.1-2, 43-44). Arden's business interests mean that like trade goods, he and his associates frequently travel by river to the capital and back. Arden's river travel places him within a larger network radiating from St. Paul's churchyard across the Southeast or even the entire country; at the same time, it

Early Modern London, eds Paul Griffiths and Mark S. R. Jenner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 250-272).

⁵⁸ Tom Lockwood, "Introduction" in *Arden of Faversham* ed. Martin White (London: Methuen Drama, 2007), vii-xviii.

removes him, undercutting his authority where it is needed most—his own home and lands. It is these “daily tidal rhythms of the coasting trade” that take Arden from Alice often enough for her to conduct first an affair, and then plot a murder, with Mosby (Longwood xviii). While highlighting the practice of English landowners and businessmen who traveled along the rivers to conduct their affairs, *Arden* suggests that at the same time, this movement made possible by this system of waterways erodes those landowners’ control over their home estates.

Heywood and Rowley’s *Fortune By Land And Sea* connects river trade and travel to another major system of exchange and communication: the network of kinship. In the play, kinship connections and routine river shipping combine to facilitate the escape of one of the protagonists, Young Forrest, from a miscarriage of justice. Fleeing the authorities after killing his brother’s murderer in a duel, Young Forrest escapes by hiding in “an empty trunk . . . which should be sent by water to Gravesend” to the merchant, a relative of Young Forrest’s sister’s in-laws.⁵⁹ This merchant generously tells Young Forrest, “my house to entertain you, my purse to furnish you in any course, my Ship if you’l to Sea, is at your service,” and Forrest chooses to ship out; subsequently he becomes the ship’s captain by election, defeats the notorious pirates Purser and Clinton, gaining his fortune by sea, and eventually returns to enrich his home country with his new wealth (3.3.3-4). Without the network of kinship, Forrest’s sister’s stepmother-in-law would not be able to provide a connection to the merchant who enables him; without

⁵⁹ Thomas Heywood and William Rowley, *A Critical Edition of Fortune By Land And Sea*, ed. Herman Doh (New York: Garland, 1980), 3.1.72.

an established system of river trade by which a trunk can be sent by water to Gravesend as a matter of course, Young Forrest would be trapped in his hometown. Once at sea, Young Forrest plugs himself easily into another, more dubious network of pirates and privateers, which I take up in more detail in Chapter Three.

In both *Arden* and *Fortune*, goods and people can move unhindered from place to place by means of England's rivers, though the plays do not reach a consensus on whether this movement is positive or negative. However, such consensus ultimately matters less than the fact that the two plays depict what was evidently a blocked and contingent system as easy and free. Similarly, the chorographic river poems of Harrison, Camden, Leland, and Drayton describe imaginary river journeys that would in reality be at best, challenging, and at worst, impossible (McRae 24-25). These texts evoking England's rivers elide the obstacles faced by river travelers in order to unify the nation into the image of a body with a healthy balance and flow of humors.

McRae's study of early modern river travel can illuminate the royalty-as-ocean imagery of *King John*. McRae writes that English property law distinguished between navigable and un-navigable rivers: "navigable rivers were recognized as public highways, open to transportation in the same way as the open roads. Their beds were owned by the Crown, and while their banks were often acknowledged to lie in private hands, boatmen were nonetheless ceded rights to stop and to unload goods" (26). Constructed obstacles like weirs and locks were not permitted on such rivers, and across England, "the perception of such obstacles as unjust restrictions on the rights of the commons was encoded in British law by the Magna Carta" (26). Like the common lands whose

enclosure spurred so much upheaval, navigable rivers belong in some way to the people, even as they are officially possessions of the Crown. “Non-navigable rivers, by comparison, were recognized as private property, giving the owner of one or both banks control over the bed, banks, and rights of access. The owner of such a river could therefore erect weirs or locks, and prevent boats from mooring on his or her land” (26-27). These non-navigable rivers were an asset for landowners in terms of the freshwater fish they could provide for consumption and sale as well as for running mill-wheels, watering livestock, and facilitating local travel and trade—often for a price in each case. Despite what plays and poems might suggest, it was often local landowners, and not the crown, who controlled the vital circulatory systems of the inland rivers.

The legal distinction between private and Crown-owned rivers is a crucial one, “determined by the extent of tidal flow upstream” (27). Indeed, “in the eyes of the law, a tidal river was assumed to be navigable, while a non-tidal river was assumed to be non-navigable” (27). This legal definition meshes intriguingly with the idea of a royal ocean. Legally, tides had a role in determining the bounds of royal authority over watery England; in *King John*, the “silver currents” of royal right are also, presumably, tidal. Could it be the cyclical, predictable influx of royal ocean water that silvers these currents within the play?

The ebb and flow of the tides into England’s rivers periodically extend the sea’s boundaries, dissolving the distinction between sea and land. In combination with the network of navigable and non-navigable rivers crisscrossing the nation, rivers which poets and playwrights exaggerate into seamless means of communication and travel,

these tides call further into question a physical divide between sceptred isle and silver sea.

Like the physical realities of travel and tides, Spenser's imaginary rivers suggest that Britain and Ireland are suffused with water, not separate from it. Both the courtship of Bregog and Mulla in "Colin Clouts Come Home Againe" and the Thames-Medway wedding in Book IV of the *Faerie Queene* place English and Irish rivers in the context of a larger water-world.⁶⁰ Colin's tale of the sly union of Bregog and Mulla indicates that the land of Ireland is perforated by channels and streams:

First into many parts his streame he shared,
That whilst the one was watched, the other might
Passe unespide to meet her by the way;
And then besides, those little streames so broken
He under ground so closely did convay,
That of their passage doth appeare no token,
Till they into the Mullaes water slide. (138-144)⁶¹

According to Colin, the rivers of Ireland are, or at one time were, engaged in devious movements underneath the surface of the landscape, bent on their own plots and plans. He emphasizes that these maneuvers are "unespide" and that "no token" of them appears to any but the most careful observer. It is "a shepherdes boy" who eventually notices Bregog's sly behavior and alerts Mulla's father, the river Mole; Colin gives credit to those of his own profession who, living on the land, are particularly suited to parsing the

⁶⁰ For Spenser's Irish concerns in the Thames-Medway wedding, see Fitzpatrick, "Marrying Waterways"; Andrew Hadfield, "Spenser, Drayton, and the Question of Britain," *The Review of English Studies* 51.204 (2000), 582-589; Bart van Es, "'The Streame and Currant of Time': Land, Myth, and History in the Works of Spenser," *Spenser Studies* 18 (2003): 209-219.

⁶¹ Edmund Spenser, "Colin Clouts Come Home Againe," *Edmund Spenser's Poetry* eds. Hugh MacLean and Anne Lake Prescott (New York: W. W. Norton, 1993), 560-582.

signs and clues of nature (147). To any but a shepherd, the rivers' affair would go unnoticed. The consequences of the discovery are that, in Kreg Segall's words, "seeking to evade Mulla's father by scattering himself, Bregog is scattered utterly."⁶² Blocked up with "Huge mightie stones" by the Mole, Bregog ceases to be a river at all; his channels are dispersed underground, and he is fragmented (150).⁶³

After retelling the story of Mulla and Bregog, Colin describes his journey to see "Cynthia, the Ladie of the sea" (166). Bart Van Es points out that the poem is particularly concerned with the "point of contact between a river and a monarch described as ruler of the sea" (218). As the poem traces this contact, the barriers between river, dry land, and ocean become uncertain. Colin compares the sea to what he knows—a landscape:

So to the sea we came: the sea? That is
A world of waters heapéd up on hie
Rolling like mountains in wide wilderness,
Horrible, hideous, roaring with hoarse crie. (196-199)

After indicating that, at least poetically, water may secretly flow under solid land, Colin compares the "world of waters" to un-solid mountains that roll and cry like a "Thousand wyld beasts with deep mouthes gaping direfull" (202). Colin's experience of the sea has shaken his points of reference to the core: water, land, and animal are jumbled together

⁶² Kreg Segall, "The Precarious Poet in Colin Clouts Come Home Againe," *Studies in English Literature* 53.1 (2013): 32. Segall connects Bregog's secret journey to Mulla's bed with the dangerous secret speech of a poet, particularly a love poet, concluding that Bregog represents one extreme (and Stesichorus another) that Colin must learn to avoid.

⁶³ For a summary of ancient and early modern debates around the circulation of water within the earth, see Nathanael Carpenter, *Geographie Delineated Forth in Two Bookes* (Oxford, 1635), STC 4677, Book II, 142-155. The authorities Carpenter cites do not reach a consensus on whether the water of rivers like the Mole and the Bregog originated from rainwater, great stores of water in subterranean cisterns, or an underground channel from the sea.

into a terrifying, chaotic mess. The inhabitants of the ocean are similarly hybrid: Colin's companion, the "shepherd of the Ocean," is both like the land shepherds—he is as "skilfull" at playing a shepherd's pipe "as any"—and, coming from "the main-sea deepe," utterly strange (66-67, 75). The ocean is a parallel, but different, world from the land. Its creatures as well as its shepherds are disconcerting: Colin describes the ship on which he and the shepherd of the Ocean sail to Cynthia's court as a confusing "monster":

Behold an huge great vessell to us came,
 Dauncing upon the waters back to lond,
 As if it scornd the daunger of the same;
 Yet it was but a wooden frame and fraile,
 Glewéd together with some subtile matter,
 Yet it had armes and wings, and head and taile,
 And life to move it selfe upon the water.
 (213-220).

The ship is at once a fragile "wooden frame" held together with subtle glue, and a living creature, armed and winged. This monster does not threaten Colin or the other passengers; its riskiness comes instead from how "bold" it is and how carelessly it scorns the sea's dangers despite its own vulnerability (220). The seascape Colin sees from this monster's back is an inversion of his own home range, with flocks of fish and sea nymph shepherdesses; the ship is simultaneously a part of that magical kingdom and something foreign, made of the wood of landlocked trees, and not at home there. Spenser's pastoral ocean simultaneously draws and blurs a line between land and sea.

The wedding of the Thames and Medway similarly unites the sea and the world's rivers into an intermingled family. Fitzpatrick highlights Spenser's descriptions of the Medway in *The Shepherd's Calendar* as "salt" and "brackish" as well as "meynt," or mingled, with those of the Thames; she connects this mingling to "Spenser's

preoccupation in his river poetry with the sexual act and its consequences,” a reading that also takes up Mulla and Bregog’s secret, and disastrous, affair (83). Fitzpatrick treats the “brackish waues” of the Medway as relating primarily to the river’s junction with the Thames, but Spenser indicates that “The salt Medway” is half-fresh, half-salt even before it joins the other river. The Medway is, in this early description, a mixture of river and sea; the Thames, also, is famously tidal. The two streams whose wedding draws together the “Sea-gods” and “the famous rivers” are, in their salinity, related to both branches of the family.⁶⁴ The *Faerie Queene* does not mention explicitly the tidal natures of the Thames or Medway, but it does describe the bride as followed by fifty nereids, who “haue the sea in charge to them assinde, / To rule his tides, and surges to vprere” (4.11.52). As the procession of water-deities flows past the reader, both “the louely Bridegroom” and the bride are situated between representations of the sea, and following the Medway’s wake are the many mistresses of the tides (stanza 24). Even as Spenser names each distinct river, stream, god, goddess, and nymph, the larger effect of the catalogue is to blur them all together into the category of *water*. If all these personifications were to gather together, their streams and currents would, of course, be as indistinguishable from each other as Adriana’s drop of water from the breaking gulf.

Examining depictions of seas and rivers in these texts reveals that England appears in its literature as suffused with, not sealed by, water. This potential vulnerability is not a liability, but rather an asset: Shakespeare, Fletcher, Greene,

⁶⁴ Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton, Hiroshi Yamashita, Toshiyuki Suzuki, and Shohachi Fukuda (New York: Routledge, 2001), 4.11.12, 20.

Drayton, and Spenser take pains to describe a nation that cannot remove itself from a larger world. England is no swan's nest, no fortified island. Instead, waves of invasion and the British rivers, each with its own name and character, contribute to the glory of England. Rather than being unique because aloof, England is special as welcoming to both travelers from abroad and to waters themselves. Both the fortified island and the network of rivers provide early modern English authors with contradictory models of England's relationship with its geographic neighbors in the British Isles and across the Channel. The silver seas around England, which extend inland by means of those rivers, are simultaneously hospitable and selective, vulnerable and secure.

CHAPTER TWO: “My Feeble Bark”: Security and Vulnerability of the Individual Traveler

Sea voyages were necessary to connect an island nation to the rest of the world. In order to trade in European or global networks, English people had to cross the ocean, or at the very least, the Channel. Sea travelers, whether passengers or sailors, risked their lives by venturing beyond the shore. They could be becalmed and suffer thirst and starvation; they could founder in a storm or run aground and be wrecked; they could be attacked by pirates, privateers, or other hostile vessels, or suffer any number of misfortunes. In both fictional and non-fictional texts, there is always danger on the early modern sea, and texts about sea travelers frequently highlight vulnerability. However, at the same time, the sea may also be constructed as the polar opposite: provided a character is virtuous, the sea may become, paradoxically, a location of security where inner qualities like birthright, innocence, or piety control the waves. This chapter traces the security and vulnerability of maritime travelers from selected classical and medieval texts to early modern romances through three key images: the storm-tossed ship, the rudderless boat, and the symmetrical shipwreck.⁶⁵ In the earlier texts, some nonhuman power, such as the gods, God, or Fortune, may keep a vulnerable traveler secure, while in the early modern texts considered in this chapter it may be the writers themselves, for example

⁶⁵ This rudderless boat is distinguished from David Quint’s description of the “barca aventurosa,” an “enchanted boat” that “travels without human guidance carrying the hero from episode to episode” and “is a common topos of chivalric romance,” in *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 248-249. The unsteerable boat of the following chapter is also a romance fixture, but unlike Quint’s boat, it is a vehicle not for masculine heroes but for feminine (or feminized) victims and, as Helen Cooper points out, it is never willingly boarded.

Spenser, Sidney and Shakespeare, who take on an analogous protective power.

Antecedents: The Storm-Tossed Ship and the Rudderless Boat

Classical and medieval poems and romances emphasize the idea of the sea as a powerful, dangerous force, always waiting to swallow up individuals. However, although texts such as Ovid's influential second poem of the *Tristia* and Chaucer's "Man of Law's Tale" highlight the threatening potential of the seas, the result of their maritime encounters is often unexpected survival. Ovid and Chaucer's seas threaten, but the writers rarely allow the waves free rein to destroy. Instead, like other classical and medieval authors, they frequently employ the ostensibly uncontrollable force of the waves to maintain order and fulfill the designs of plot.

Ovid's poems of exile, the *Tristia*, open with a description of vulnerable sea travel that later writers such as Petrarch, Chaucer, Erasmus, Wyatt, Spenser, and Shakespeare found deeply influential. In particular, the later writers respond to Ovid's description of the vessel that is out of control, piloted by someone incompetent or by nobody at all, as a potent metaphor for various troubled human states. Not literally rudderless, but unpiloted, Ovid's ship is at the mercy of natural and, he asserts, divine forces; Ovid emphasizes that it is one of these divine forces, Augustus Caesar, who carefully guides the vulnerable ship.

During Ovid's poetic account of his own sea journey, historically precipitated by Augustus Caesar's order exiling him to Pontus, the speaker's ship becomes unsteerable in a storm: "Our Pilat knew not whether he should steare, / Art failes him, lost in his amazed

feare.”⁶⁶ While Ovid does not mention the physical breakdown of the ship, the pilot’s incapacity removes human agency from the equation as much as if the mast, rudder, or sails had broken away. In this vulnerable state, the weather and waves become visible symbols of Ovid’s turbulent emotions:

Nothing but ayre and water can I see,
 And both of them doe seeme to threaten me.
 Whiles divers winds their forces doe display,
 The sea is doubtfull which he should obey.
 (B3v)

Like the sea, Ovid is buffeted in contrary directions as he journeys towards exile: not only is the ship bobbing unguided through the huge waves, but also he grieves deeply the loss of Rome, while casting himself as wholly obedient to Caesar’s will. Indeed, for Ovid, Caesar’s will fulfills a similar role to that of the Christian God in the “Man of Law’s Tale.” Caesar’s order of exile overrides the gods of the sea. Ovid pleads with “yee greene gods who doe the sea command” to “take off from us your heavy threatning hand. / And let me beare this wretched life of mine, / Unto that place which *Caesar* did assign” (B4r). While he obeys Caesar’s command to go to Pontus, Ovid has what Gonzalo accuses the Boatswain in *The Tempest* of having: “no drowning mark upon him.”⁶⁷ Ovid tells the sea gods that “my fault was judg’d not worthy death to be: / Had *Caesar* meant

⁶⁶ Ovidius Naso, *Tristia*, trans. Wye Saltonstall (London, 1633), STC 18979, 1.2, page B3v. Underlining the thematic connection between Ovid’s journey and early modern seafaring, this edition contains an epistle dedicatory to Sir Kenelm Digby in which Saltonstall addresses Digby as “one who is my brother in misfortune, who is *exul in patria*, being enforced to let that skill and experience which he hath gotten abroad in marine affaires, and which hath beene approved of both by the English and Dutch nations in severall long voyages, lye dead in him for want of imployment” (A3v-A2r).

⁶⁷All citations from William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* ed. Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan (London: Bloomsbury, 2011), 1.1.28. Henceforth *Tmp*.

to take my life away, / He neede not use your helpe who all doth sway,” and later asks them, “Why stay you me who am by Casesar sent?” (B4r-v). The storm that opens the *Tristia* becomes a figure for the struggle between various authority figures for control over Ovid’s fate; while the gods contend and the pilot is frozen, the poet is subject only to higher powers. And, while he seems to be in dire straits, the force of Caesar’s order renders him, paradoxically, secure in his suffering. Like Chaucer’s Custance, whose passive years in the open boat are both transitional and central to her narrative, Ovid experiences the storm both as a terrifying powerlessness before natural and political power, and a hindrance on the way to beginning his real exile.

Ovid’s image of the out-of-control and storm-buffed ship has a long afterlife in medieval and early modern Italian and English poetry; Petrarch’s influential “Rima 189” picks up the imagery of the *Tristia*’s second elegy, reinforcing the metaphorical ties between the ship and the individual soul seeking love and grace.⁶⁸ Petrarch transforms

⁶⁸ The Italian text is as follows:

Passa la nave mia colma d'oblio
per aspro mare, a mezza notte il verno,
enfra Scilla et Caribdi; et al governo
siede 'l signore, anzi 'l nimico mio.

A ciascun remo un penser pronto et rio
che la tempesta e 'l fin par ch'abbi a scherno;
la vela rompe un vento humido eterno
di sospir', di speranze, et di desio.

Pioggia di lagrimar, nebbia di sdegni
bagna et rallenta le già stanche sarte,
che son d'error con ignorantia attorto.

Celansi i duo mei dolci usati segni;
morta fra l'onde è la ragion et l'arte,
tal ch'incomincio a desperar del porto.

the storm-tossed ship into a psychological conceit with “a quick and insane thought” manning “each oar”; it is both a vessel in which the poet rides out the storm and a personification of the speaker’s self (5). Unlike Ovid’s poem, where faith in Caesar’s order provides some manner of cold comfort in a grim situation, “Rima 189” names the things that could comfort the speaker only to deny them. Reason and skill are both dead, and the “two trusty signs,” Laura’s eyes, are invisible; his ship of self is wholly at the mercy of the emotional storm, and the poet losing hope (12). When both the threatening weather and the foundering vessel signify the poet himself, there is little hope to be gained from external forces. A metaphorical ship in a metaphorical storm is, it seems, wholly vulnerable.

However, despite the poetic claim to be an out-of-control ship, Petrarch’s control over the poetic form remains secure. The sonnet structure and rhyme scheme, the wave-like trochaic tetrameter, and the tight economy of images all impose order on an evocation of disorder. Even as the speaker complains that “reason” and “skill” have deserted him, the texture of the poem calls that assertion into question (13). Because of all the poetic techniques Petrarch employs, the end of each line is, for the reader, a sort of port—a point of repose and recognition in a chaotic situation. The speaker cannot control his troubled emotions, but the poet can, via a sustained metaphor and the sonnet form, convey them clearly and powerfully. The contrast between the out-of-control, storm-tossed ship and the tightly constructed sonnet makes the poet’s power particularly clear.

Subsequent English citations from Francesco Petrarch, *Canzoniere*, trans. and ed. Mark Musa (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 280.

Despite their different uses of “Rima 189,” Petrarch’s English adapters employ the techniques of their verse tradition to create the same contradiction between vulnerability and security. In the poetry of Petrarch, Chaucer, Wyatt, and Spenser, a storm-tossed ship becomes not only an image of powerlessness, but also, paradoxically, of poetic control. This tradition informs the storm-tossed ships of Shakespeare’s plays, where dire, seemingly-chaotic voyages more often begin or reorient the plot than result in total devastation.

Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde* puts a rough translation of Petrarch’s sonnet into the mouth of the lovelorn Troilus, who compares himself to a ship lost in deep darkness, with no star to guide him.⁶⁹ As with Petrarch’s original sonnet, the tight rhyme scheme of Troilus’ song imposes some order on the uncertain situation; however, in the context of the inexorable back-wind and oppressive darkness, Chaucer’s rhymes also suggest Troilus’s own sense of constraint. Sir Thomas Wyatt’s “My Galley Charged,” a close translation of Petrarch’s “Rima 189,” maintains the same sense of powerlessness and threat while amplifying the speaker’s despair. Wyatt transforms Petrarch’s somewhat-daunted final line “And I despair of ever reaching port” into “And I remain despering of the port.”⁷⁰ While Petrarch’s speaker only begins to despair at the end of the sonnet, despair is a constant of Wyatt’s speaker’s journey in the ship of self. Even more than in “Rima 189,” the speaker systematically denies that any higher power, divine or

⁶⁹ Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), Book 5, lines 638-44.

⁷⁰ Sir Thomas Wyatt, “My Galy Charged” in *Collected Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt* ed. Kenneth Muir and Patricia Thomson (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1969), 21-22.

otherwise, protects the speaker. At the same time, like Petrarch, Wyatt sketches out this grim situation in a carefully-structured sonnet.

Both of Edmund Spenser's poetic treatments of "Rima 189"—Britomart's complaint in *The Faerie Queene* and "Sonnet 34" of the *Amoretti* are similarly disciplined.

In the first, Britomart's complaint to her "huge sea of sorrow" in Book Three, Canto Four, the lady knight describes herself as the passenger on a "feeble vessel crazd, and crackt" which is steered by the "lewd Pilott" Love and managed by "Fortune" as its boatswain.⁷¹ Both these sailors, Britomart sighs, "saile withouten stares, gainst tyde and winde; / How can they other doe, sith both are bold and blinde?" (*FQ* 3.4.9). The ship is in grave danger, "tossed" in a storm of "tempestuous grief": "cruell billowes beat" upon it, and "moyst mountains each on others throng, / Threatning to swallow vp" the vessel and Britomart (*FQ* 3.4.8). And, while the storm is acute and extreme, Britomart, like the speakers in poems by Petrarch, Chaucer, and Wyatt, explains that she has been at its mercy for a long time: "my feeble bark is tossed long," she says, and all she longs for is "reliefe" (*FQ* 3.4.8). Though feeble, the vessel has endured a painfully protracted storm; it is stronger than it initially appears.

In this torment, Spenser sets Britomart up as an heir to Petrarch's speaker. Susanne Wofford notes that "Britomart's restlessness and her turn inward" at the beginning of the canto "must be understood...as indicating that she is taking up the

⁷¹ All citations from Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton, Hiroshi Yamashita, and Toshiyuki Suzuki (New York: Routledge, 2007), 323. Henceforth *FQ*.

position of a Petrarchan lover, with all the dangers for her quest and her poem which that stance entails” (33-4). Wofford goes on to argue that by placing Britomart in a Petrarchan context, Spenser

here implies three things: an inner restlessness resulting from the absence of the object of desire and from the discovery that the pictures feigned by fancy are insubstantial; a turning inwards to resolve this restlessness; and a resulting confusion about whether the action described represents an internal or an external event. (34)

Thus, as in Petrarch’s sonnet, Britomart’s “feeble vessel” represents her, but the winds and waves that buffet that self, as well as the “bold and blind” crew, are also aspects of her interior life. Jerome Dees suggests that this proliferation causes tension within the poem: “the conflict mirrored in the short lyric is between the seemingly uncontrollable flux of subjective emotions...and the apparent inadequacy of any other objective natural phenomena to enable [Britomart] to understand and thus control those emotions.”⁷² To Dees, Britomart’s complaint is a failure of metaphor: he lists some of the inconsistencies in Britomart’s complaint and concludes that the crashing waves of the sea cannot accurately describe Britomart’s emotions. However, like Petrarch’s and Wyatt’s poetic lovers before her, Britomart is not comparing herself only to the sea, the waves, the winds, the mist and rain, but also to the ship, its sailors, its ropes. Britomart, and Britomart’s emotions, make up the entire fabric of the metaphor, not merely the natural phenomena. In its multiplicity of signifiers, the image of the ship that is out of control in

⁷² Jerome S. Dees, “The Ship Conceit in ‘The Faerie Queene’: ‘Conspicuous Allusion’ and Poetic Structure,” *Studies in Philology* 72.2 (1975), 208-225, 219. For more on the specifically erotic, Ovidian language of Britomart’s complaint, see M. L. Stapleton, “‘Loue my lewd Pilot’: The Ars Amatoria in the *Faerie Queene*,” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 40.3 (1998), 328-346.

a storm perfectly accommodates and articulates the confusion Wofford describes between the internal and external source of Britomart's emotional turbulence, as well as that turbulence itself. Although the content is chaotic, the form—both metaphoric and poetic—is perfectly chosen.

Petrarch, Wyatt, and Spenser each transform Ovid's unpiloted but divinely-guided ship into a more complicated image: these poets speak not only for passengers on the ship but also the ship itself, and each of the elements of the buffeting storm represents a facet of the speaker's emotional state. The speakers assert that they are completely vulnerable to the sea, the storm, Love, Fortune, and other external forces, but those forces, it turns out, originate in themselves. This is a powerful, if not pleasant, situation. Even at the most vulnerable, the speaker is still, paradoxically, in control of the rhyme, meter, and metaphor out of which he or she constructs that vulnerability.

Eschewing this bitter control allows Spenser to introduce hope into his second adaptation of the Rima, "Sonnet 34" of the *Amoretti*. Unlike earlier treatments, "Sonnet 34" emphasizes the comparative frame: the speaker is "Lyke as a ship that through the Ocean wyde, / By conduct of some star doth make her way," but he does not claim to actually be that ship.⁷³ "So I," he continues, "doe wander now in darknesse and dismay" (5, 7). The speaker does not connect himself to the force of the "storme" that "hath dimd" the "star" that is the "trusty guyde" of the ship; no winds, waves, mists, or rains appear. Instead, the speaker acknowledges that he is lost, "careful comfortlese, / In secret sorow

⁷³ Edmund Spenser, "Sonnet 34," *Edmund Spenser's Poetry*, ed. Hugh MacLean and Anne Lake Prescott (New York: W. W. Norton, 1993), 600-601, lines 1-2.

and sad pensiveness,” but takes a more hopeful tone than earlier writers, or even than the speaker in Britomart’s complaint (13-4). Because the cause of his secret sorrow is external, he may hope that circumstances will change:

Yet hope I well, that when this storm is past
 My Helice the lodestar of my life
 Will shine again, and looke on me at last,
 With lovely light to cleare my cloudy grief.
 Till then I wander carefull comfortlesse,
 In secret sorow and sad pensiveness. (9-14)

Spenser’s “Sonnet 34” returns to Ovid’s faith in a higher power: in this case, it is the beloved rather than Caesar or a god who can allay the speaker’s suffering. That suffering is more external in cause, and in some ways more straightforward than the self-torment of the other poems; the image of the storm-tossed ship in “Sonnet 34” is therefore simpler than that of Britomart’s complaint. The speaker of the sonnet expects a way out of his emotional storm because the storm clouds may eventually subside.

Whether the gale that threatens the storm-tossed ship is linked to internal or external forces, the image of the ship itself is a productive one in this vein of classical, medieval, and early modern literature. The particular iteration of the storm-tossed, un-piloted ship originating in Ovid’s *Tristia* suggests simultaneous vulnerability and security in that work and the works that adapt it. Ovid finds cold comfort in Caesar’s binding order of exile, which transcends the natural forces that challenge him, but at least it is a certainty. Taking up Ovid’s imagery, Petrarch’s “Rima 189” eschews such a higher order and conflates ship, storm, and crew into warring elements of the speaker’s own chaotic emotional state. At the same time, Petrarch and his inheritors Chaucer, Wyatt, and Spenser lay out the turbulent storm in carefully rhymed and metered poetry, indicating

that while the speaker is foundering, the poet retains formal control. Finally, in his more optimistic “Sonnet 34,” Spenser returns to Ovid’s position as vulnerable to a higher power—in this case, the beloved rather than Caesar—but faithful that that power will outlast any distress imaged by the natural phenomena the speaker may endure. In each case, the poet retains some type of control over the storm-tossed ship, either by contrasting storm and poetic form or by emphasizing obedience to a greater authority who will eventually calm the waves. There is more to the image of the storm-tossed ship than mere vulnerability; it contains a fundamental, intentional contradiction between form and content and draws particular attention to the writer’s skill and power.

The Vulnerable Traveler in the Rudderless Boat

In addition to the storm-tossed ship, with its origins in Ovid, later medieval sources provide another particularly influential image of the vulnerable sea traveler: the person cast away in a rudderless boat, or, in the words of Peter Hulme, “a *navis unus pellius*, a ship of one skin, as it was traditionally called.”⁷⁴ Historically an Irish coracle formed from a single cowhide, this vessel is tiny and unseaworthy. While texts like the *Tristia* convey that even the largest and most well-appointed ship can bob like a cork in the face of a storm at sea, stories about rudderless boats remove even the dubious assurance of a fully-outfitted ship and mariners to sail it. At the same time, unlike the chest in which Danae and Perseus were cast adrift in Greek myth, the vessels of the

⁷⁴ Peter Hulme, “Cast Away: The Uttermost Parts of the Earth,” in *Sea Changes: Historicizing the Ocean*, ed. Bernhard Klein and Gesa Mackenthun (New York: Routledge, 2004), 189.

medieval works are definitely boats, albeit not safe ones.⁷⁵ Sending someone out onto the Mediterranean or North Sea in a small, rudderless craft constitutes a deferred death sentence, “an attempt to leave the authorities’ consciences clean: the sea—or at least God through his instrument the sea—would protect the innocent and condemn the guilty” (Hulme 189). The rudderless boat convention builds on the medieval view of the sea as a hostile, alien wasteland: for a solo traveler in such an inhospitable element, survival seems all but impossible. However, when medieval writers like Chaucer cast a protagonist adrift on that hostile element, they frequently use the reader’s expectation about the dangers of the sea strategically.

Medieval romance in particular makes use of the rudderless boat trope to generate suspense. Sebastian Sobecki points out that being set adrift in such a boat “is a romance, and, more importantly, an Insular commonplace.”⁷⁶ For example, in an attempt to eliminate his bastard son Mordred, the King Arthur of medieval romance casts a large group of children away in such a boat. In *King Horn* an emir of a group of invading Saracens orders young Horn of England and his child companions into a “schupe” so that the “se...schal adrenche” them.⁷⁷ In popular legend, saints like Mary Magdalen,

⁷⁵ The basket in which the infant Moses floats down the Nile, and even the whale’s belly in which Jonah spends three days and three nights are notable non-boat Biblical antecedents. Like the rudderless boat, Moses’s basket and the whale’s belly are unexpected vessels of relative safety for the hunted Hebrew baby and the afflicted sailor. Further discussion of this trope appears in Chapter Five of this dissertation on pages 223-230.

⁷⁶ Sebastian I. Sobecki, *The Sea and Medieval Literature* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008), 101.

⁷⁷ Ronald B. Herzman, Graham Drake, and Eve Salisbury, eds., “King Horn,” in *Four Romances of England: King Horn, Havelok the Dane, Bevis of Hampton, Athelston* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997), lines 107-109.

Kentigern, and Gregory are all abandoned in rudderless boats with the intent that they will disappear under the waves.⁷⁸ Christian holy men like Saint Brendan and his fellows periodically and intentionally abandon their oars and rudders while at sea on a pilgrimage in order to allow God to guide them.⁷⁹ Each of these heroes or heroines survives the voyage so that his or her story may continue and the miracle be remarked upon. Adapting these stories, early modern authors like Shakespeare also take into account their audiences' expectations about the vulnerability of the passengers of a rudderless boat: many early modern readers and viewers came to text and theater familiar with these romances and saints' lives and how such plots usually resolve.

These boats expose their passengers to the most extreme conditions of seafaring: weather, waves, isolation, and terror. If such a thing happened in real life, the passengers could not reasonably be expected to survive. Yet, as with unwanted babies exposed to the elements in classical myth, romance heroes and heroines reliably endure and return to the very society that cast them away. The returned hero or heroine dominates the medieval romance convention of the sea as a hostile, dangerous space, turning this most vulnerable mode of sea travel into an unexpectedly secure situation. Indeed, the rudderless boat is so consistently secure that later authors like Greene and Shakespeare even begin to play with the convention.

⁷⁸ Helen Cooper, *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 120-122.

⁷⁹ For a survey of medieval accounts of the life of Saint Brendan, see W.R.J. Barron and Glyn S. Burgess, eds. *The Voyage of Saint Brendan: Representative Versions of the Legend in English Translation* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002). Helen Cooper lists multiple further examples of the *navis unus pelliis* in her chapter "Providence and the Sea: 'No Tackle, Sail, Nor Mast'" in *The English Romance in Time*.

In the medieval stories, the passengers of such vessels survive by dint of their birth, faith, innocence, or some combination of all three. V. A. Kolve points out that historically, the ancient Greeks “thought the sea an arbiter of sin and innocence,” and that medieval Europe may have inherited the custom of setting adrift from them.⁸⁰ Like trial by combat or the ducking of a witch, being set adrift outsourced judgment and punishment in one moment. Kolve also emphasizes that the custom of setting adrift contains chance, risk, and possibility at its foundation: exposing someone in an open boat happens “when guilt” cannot be “conclusively determined by human investigation,” “when men” seek to “combine severity with some possibility of mercy,” or “when, as in the case of Custance, society” wishes “to expel an unwanted person from its midst” (326). By putting such people out to sea with varying supplies and resources, authorities could affect the probability of death. Though Prospero and Miranda are confined to “a rotten carcass of a butt,” they have food, water, and books to sustain them; Horn has no supplies, but he is granted something with which he can “rowe” (*Tmp.* 1.2.146; Herzman et al, “King Horn,” line 122). The children that King Arthur exposes have not even that small aid. However, regardless of the amount of gear the exposed character has, the people casting him or her adrift do not expect his or her survival or return.

Like Horn, children cast away are often political threats to new rulers. Helen Cooper argues that the *navis unus pellius* draws together themes of “pollution, guilt, and the fate of nations” because of the “threat inhering in procreation in patrilinear societies,”

⁸⁰ V. A. Kolve, *Chaucer and the Imagery of Narrative: The First Five Canterbury Tales* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984), 325.

where “blood relationship, small babies, or pregnant women” can all present dangerous political problems (113). Those cast away may be products of extramarital sex, like Perseus, of incest, like St. Gregory, or of both, like Arthur’s bastard son/nephew Mordred (114, 121-2). In these cases, the rudderless boat is a way to solve the question of inherited pollution: setting such an infant adrift is, in Cooper’s words, “an especially attractive option if the victim were someone such as a close relative or a baby, whose assassination would transgress stronger taboos than would the killing of a stranger” because this form of deferred execution displaces the agency onto the sea (114). Yet in each of these cases, the sea does not perform its expected function of cleansing and eliminating political or social threats. Instead, Perseus, St. Gregory, and Mordred return, establishing a precedent that Shakespeare and other, later writers work with and against.

In other works, the person or people cast adrift are not illegitimate or polluted, but rather righteous. After invasion (*King Horn*), usurpation (*The Tempest*), or monarchial rashness (Greene’s *Pandosto*), legitimate heirs can find themselves afloat in an unriggered, steerless vessel. Though they are of course not expected to survive, such trials by water end up securing the voyagers’ claims to the throne once, according to the standards of romance, they inevitably return: Cooper writes that “the return of the victims in these stories amounts to a guarantee that the true line of descent does indeed run through the children” (117). To Cooper, “their recovery is a mark that the succession is ensured by God himself”; only divine intervention could keep someone alive in an open, steerless boat on the ocean (117).

These medieval stories reappear as plot elements in early modern drama. For

example, Prospero and the infant Miranda in their rotten, unrigged craft strongly recall the legend of Custance, a Roman princess who spends years in a rudderless boat, alone or with her infant son, floating from Syria to Northumbria to Rome.⁸¹ This medieval antecedent makes obvious the paradox inherent in the rudderless boat, a paradox that Shakespeare develops when describing the island of *The Tempest*. When Custance is on land, in society, she is most vulnerable: despite her pleas, her father, the Roman emperor, sends her to Syria to marry the Sultan; at the wedding feast, the Sultan's mother orders the entire Roman party slaughtered with the exception of Custance, whom she casts away in an empty rowboat. Custance floats on the ocean for years. Once she fetches up in England and is taken in by a friendly couple, one of the couple is murdered, and, in a miscarriage of justice, Custance is tried for the offence. After divine intervention proves she is innocent, Custance marries the King of Northumbria, but her trials are not over—the king's mother turns the king against her and she is cast away once again, this time with her newborn child. Again, she floats for years, and comes ashore back in Rome, where she is recognized and welcomed by her father and, briefly, reunited with her husband.

Despite what a reader might expect, Custance's trials on land are far more harrowing than the years she spends adrift on the sea. At each landing point, people with power mistreat Custance because of her passive, womanly virtues—in Syria, her

⁸¹ For Chaucer's debt to the tale of Constance in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, Book II, see Peter Nicholson, "The 'Man of Law's Tale': What Chaucer Really Owed to Gower," *The Chaucer Review*, 26.2 (1991), 153-174; Elizabeth Allen, "Chaucer Answers Gower: Constance and the Trouble With Reading," *ELH* 64.3 (1997), 627-655; Malte Urban, *Fragments: Past and Present in Chaucer and Gower* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009).

Christian faith, beauty, and chastity, then her status as good queen, wife, and mother in Northumbria. However, on the sea, the only entity with power over Custance is God, and, by extension, the Virgin Mary. Because of the same virtues that cause trouble on land, divine authority maintains Custance at sea. Paradoxically, her vulnerable position in the rudderless boat is actually when she is safest. Similarly, Prospero and Miranda are safer in the “rotten carcass of a butt” than they are in Milan with Antonio in power, and the only threat on the deserted island comes from another person (or quasi-person): Caliban. Prospero plots and schemes for a decade to ensure his return to society, but the Custance legend suggests that in returning, he is reintroducing danger into his life and the life of his daughter.

Robert Greene’s prose romance *Pandosto: The Triumph of Time*, Shakespeare’s source for *The Winter’s Tale*, also features a baby in a rudderless boat. As in the Custance legend, the sea is not wholly chaotic or wholly threatening. Greene specifies that personified Fortune is directly responsible for bringing Pandosto and Bellaria’s daughter to safety after her father casts her out; Pandosto decrees that the newborn be cast away in a rudderless boat because he is aware of the merciful connotations of such a fate:

seeing his noblemen were importunate upon him, he was content to spare the child’s life, and yet to put it to a worsen death. For he found out this device: that seeing (as he thought) it came by fortune, so he would commit it to the charge of fortune, and therefore he caused a little cock-boat to be provided, wherein he meant to put the babe and then send it to the mercy of the seas and the destinies.⁸²

⁸² Robert Greene, “Pandosto: The Triumph of Time,” in *An Anthology of Elizabethan Prose Fiction* ed. Paul Salzman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 166. Another prose romance in this collection, Nashe’s *The Unfortunate Traveller*, deals briefly with the image of the cast-away babe as one of the emblems of the long parade of fantastically-armored tournament knights: “the infant knight, who on his armor had enameled a poor young infant

Pandosto intends to be cruel and seem kind. In the full swell of his tyranny, he feels no pity for the child he believes to be the product of adultery, and trusting such an (allegedly) illegitimate baby to fortune is, in his mind, to ensure that it is killed by exposure. Once deposited “into the main sea,” the baby encounters a “mighty tempest which tossed the little boat so vehemently in the waves that the shipmen thought it could not continue long without sinking” (167). However, she does not sink: instead, the narrator relates how the baby, “being tossed with wind and wave, floated two whole days without succor, ready at every puff to be drowned in the sea” (173). The baby is the most vulnerable of travelers, unable to walk, swim, thermoregulate, or call on any divine aid.

However, at this moment, a higher power of sorts intervenes: “Fortune, minding to be wanton, willing to show that as she hath wrinkles on her brows so she hath dimples in her cheeks, thought after so many sour looks to lend a feigned smile” (173). Out of a contrary inclination, Fortune brings the baby ashore to be plucked up by a shepherd, named Fawnia, and eventually reunited with her royal relations as a romance reader would expect. Greene’s use of the steerless boat in a romance setting creates irony: the reader strongly suspects that the baby must survive even as all signs ostensibly suggest that it will not. The vulnerable baby is, in fact, perfectly safe.

put into a ship without tackling, masts, furniture, or anything. This weather-beaten and ill-apparelled ship was shadowed on his bases, and the slender compass of his body set forth the right picture of an infant. The waves wherein the ship was tossed were fretted on his steed’s trappings so movingly that ever as he offered to bound or stir they seemed to bounce and toss and sparkle brine out of their hoary silver billows. Their mot *Inopem me copia fecit*, as much to say as the rich prey makes the thief” (266). Perhaps the infant knight suggests with his armor that he is, like a cast-away heir, intrinsically deserving of glory and status.

In adapting Greene, Shakespeare removes the baby from the rudderless boat and places her in the hands of the unfortunate courtier Antigonus; obscuring Perdita's origins, Shakespeare sends Antigonus off "pursued by a bear" and wrecks the ship that brought the Sicilians to Bohemia's seacoast. Philip Edwards notes, "It is surprising how often these sea disasters" such as the one that transports Perdita to Bohemia in *The Winter's Tale* "are insertions in or alterations of the source-material Shakespeare was using," but does not go further into the effects of removing the rudderless boat (129). While Greene highlights the role of capricious but ultimately friendly Fortune in preserving Fawnia, he is less charitable to the Bohemians that find her. Fawnia is discovered by "a poor mercenary shepherd" who is motivated to foster her only by "covetousness of the coin" that he finds in the baby's wrappings (Greene 174). The Shepherd's wife initially threatens the baby with a cudgel, "thinking it was some bastard," and is only mollified by the sight of the "rich purse full of gold" (175). Fawnia's situation once she alights on land is far from secure: economic and social pressures threaten her, and gold is the only thing that ensures her relative safety. Like Custance, Prospero, and Miranda, she is safest when she seems most vulnerable—bobbing across the open sea in her open boat. Already abandoned by her father to nature's fury, she is free from further human threats until she lands.

Without an unsteerable vessel, and with an added shipwreck and bear attack, *The Winter's Tale* ends Act Three with a sense that nature is dangerous, chaotic, and ultimately unfair.⁸³ While Antigonus and the sailors have contributed to Perdita's

⁸³ All citations to William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, ed. John Pitcher (London:

exposure, they are not ultimately responsible; however, they are punished and Leontes is not. In contrast to the furious violence of nature, the “good deeds” of the kindly Shepherd, that stock character of Romance, preserve baby Perdita to grow to adulthood (*WT* 3.3.135). Similarly, though Antonio expects Prospero and Miranda to perish of thirst and exposure before they can reach land, it is the actions of Gonzalo in providing “some food” and “some fresh water”—and of Miranda herself, whose smiles inspire in her father “an undergoing stomach to bear up / Against what should ensue”—that allow them to reach the island, and safety (*Tmp.* 1.2.160, 157-8). While the earlier texts emphasize passive floating, Shakespeare incorporates an emphasis on individual action, a theme that arises often in the writings of the most famous Renaissance humanist, Desiderus Erasmus.

In contrast to the passive, but ultimately safe, floating of *Pandosto*, the Custance story, and the *Tristia*, Erasmus’s colloquy “*Naufragium*” describes what is very close to the worst-case scenario of a sea voyage: shipwreck. The interlocutor Adolphus has experienced what merely threatens Ovid and Custance; his ship does not survive a storm, all are drenched in the sea, and not everyone lives. Like *The Winter’s Tale* and *The Tempest*, the colloquy demonstrates a humanist conviction in the power of individual action rather than Providence or Fortune.

Like Ovid, Erasmus describes the passengers of Adolphus’s ship as powerless and attempting to put themselves into the hands of the divine; however, in Erasmus’s version, there is a right way and a wrong way to do so. Both ships are threatened by a storm at

Methuen Drama, 2010). Henceforth *WT*.

sea, and like Ovid's pilot, the ship's master in Erasmus's colloquy gives up command in the face of the adverse weather, saying "I'm no longer master of my ship; the winds have won. The only thing left to do is put our hope in God and each one prepare himself for the end."⁸⁴ The master explicitly cedes control over the vessel and the fate of its passengers to a higher power, in this case, the Christian God; however, he is not the only person on the ship to determine who lives and dies. Erasmus argues that in how he or she behaves and directs his or her prayers, each passenger has some measure of control.

After the passengers have cast away all their lading, the next step, as the ship still founders, is for "all the shrouds to be slashed and the mast sawn off down to its socket and thrown into the sea, together with the spars" (355). The mariners systematically remove the ship's means of steering: the only thing left to maneuver with is the "tiller," and the sailors focus on beseeching heaven rather than on using it (355).

Erasmus's dialogue explicitly challenges the idea that vulnerable travelers on the sea can rely on petty ritual and the intercession of saints to save their bodies. The sailors and passengers who pray to Mary, the sea, or various saints instead of "straight to the Father himself" are foolish and, presumably, do not survive: Erasmus's interlocutor Adolphus lists all the various names for the Virgin that the sailors recount: they invoke her as "Star of the Sea, the Queen of Heaven, Mistress of the world, Port of Salvation," and "many other titles which the Sacred Scriptures nowhere assign to her" rather than praying directly to God or trying to save the ship, which they believe is doomed (356,

⁸⁴ Desiderus Erasmus, "The Shipwreck," in *The Collected Works of Erasmus: Colloquies*, vol. 39, trans. Craig R. Thompson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 351-367.

355). Others aboard bargain with various saints for safe passage, which Adolphus sums up as, “I’ll give a taper if I can swim to safety” (356). But most of those who are praying take no other action to save themselves.

Among these foolish travelers, Adolphus highlights two of the passengers who combine unadulterated piety and practicality: “a certain woman who was suckling a baby,” and “an old priest, a man of sixty named Adam” (356, 357). The woman is remarkable for her unostentatious piety: “she was the only one who didn’t scream, weep, or make promises; she simply prayed in silence, clasping her little boy” (357). The passengers work together to make sure the quiet woman and her baby survive the wreck: they set her up “on a warped plank” and tie her “in such a way that she [cannot] easily fall off,” finally putting “a small board to use as a paddle” (358). The woman is “the first of all of them to reach shore” because, as Adolphus reports, “holding her baby with her left hand, she paddled with the right” (358). By modeling correct behavior to her fellow travelers, this new mother influences those travelers to help her. The woman’s piety and the fact that she is tied to a table by others for her dangerous journey recall Custance’s patient suffering; the mothers of both stories, floating on the sea with their infants, resemble certain versions of the Mary legend, such as the *Stella Maris*. The episode of the quiet woman’s rescue suggests that the only intercessors necessary for the pious, who have a direct connection to God through prayer, are their fellow humans; no saints are necessary. The passengers who tie the woman to the table also provide her with the little board as a means to steer herself. By paddling with her free hand, the young mother uses her own physical strength in combination with her piety—as Custance does when she

struggles against the rapacious steward—to preserve herself. The woman makes it safely to shore because of a combination of faith and human effort: the effort both of others and of herself.

Though he does not get the help of others on the boat, the old priest survives because he knows how to manage his own body in the sea. While most of the others are weeping and praying, the old priest strips “to his underclothes” and with “his shoes and leggings removed,” he urges “all to prepare likewise for swimming” (357). After the ship breaks apart and Adolphus and another man are clinging to the “stump of the mast,” the old priest joins them; the two laymen are dismayed, and cry, “who’s the third?...He’ll be the death of us all” (358). The old priest, however, “calmly” tells them, “cheer up, there’s plenty of room. God will help us” (358). While others, including a Dominican Friar who had entreated “all the saints,” in particular Dominic, Thomas, Vincent, Peter, and Katherine of Siena, instead of Christ, are drowning, the priest urges Adolphus and his fellow to “keep hold” of the mast “with confidence” and kick their feet “vigorously” (359). As with the young mother, her table, and her small board, the priest and Adolphus strive to save themselves while hoping for divine favor.

The old priest is an expert in the water. He tells Adolphus “a remedy” against swallowing salt water (“every time a wave came rushing upon us, he turned the back of his head to it and kept his mouth closed”), and he is calm and confident as they head toward shore:

When we’d made some progress after swimming a while, the priest, who was very tall, said, “Cheer up, I’m touching bottom.” I didn’t dare hope for such great luck. “We’re too far from shore to hope for bottom.” “Oh no,” he replied, “I feel land with my feet.” “Maybe it’s something from the chests

that the sea has rolled this way.” “No,” he said, “I feel land plainly by the scraping of my toes.” After we had swum a while longer in this direction he again touched bottom, “Do what you think best,” he said, “I’m giving up the whole mast to you and trusting myself to the bottom,” and thereupon, after waiting for the waves to subside, he went on foot as fast as he could. When the waves overtook him again, he resisted by clasping his knees with his hands and putting his head under water, as divers and ducks do; when the waves receded, up he popped and moved on. When I saw he was successful at this, I imitated him. Standing on the coast were men—hardy fellows and used to the water—who by means of long poles, held out from one to the other, braced themselves against the force of the waves, so that the one farthest out held his pole to the swimmer. When this was grasped, all heaved towards shore and the swimmer was hauled safely to dry land. A number were rescued by this device. (359-60)

While Adolphus allows his anxiety to dominate him, the old priest trusts in his senses—his feet and hands tell him that he is within his depth—and his body’s ability to move through the water to safety. He is strong, but he is also skilled, diving under the oncoming waves “as divers and ducks do” rather than facing them head on. The priest knows when to fight and when to duck, and by this intentional application of strength, he perseveres. Similarly, the rescuers on shore have devised a practical system to protect themselves from the waves’ force while they do their merciful work; through their device of the long poles, seven people are hauled in, although Adolphus reports that “two of these died of exhaustion when brought to a fire” (360). This final detail indicates that even the best practical measures cannot save everyone; God may still take survivors even after they have reached shore.

Yet from the dialogue it is clear that appropriate prayers to God are not alone enough to save one from shipwreck. The priest’s combined use of strength and skill to swim to shore resembles his practical approach to salvation: not only prayer directed straight to the Father, but also effort. This is a different sort of faith altogether than the

desperate, superstitious wailing of the other passengers to saints; it is much more in line with the quiet woman who trusts to God, her fellows, and her right hand to keep her and her child from drowning. The dialogue-within-a-dialogue between the priest and Adolphus pits two points of view against each other: Adolphus is fearful and without hope, and he cannot hear or does not heed the old priest's reports until he sees for himself that the priest has made it safely to shore. Then, with the priest's example in mind, he is able to follow and make his own way to safety. Adolphus's faith is correct, but he needs a model to demonstrate how to move through the physical reality of the wreck.

The survivors of Erasmus's "Naufragium" have in common a balance of appropriate, modest piety and skillful, practical action. While travelers like Custance and Ovid for the most part passively endure the buffeting of the sea and eventually fetch up safely on shore, these survivors are more active. A quiet prayer and a little board to use as an oar, Erasmus suggests, will get you much farther than bargaining with a saint or singing to the *Stella Maris*. While Erasmus's primary goal is to cut out foolish rituals and saintly intercessors, urging Christians to pray directly to God himself, a secondary effect is to expose the role of human effort that remains when these superstitions pass. In the dialogue, human agency, in the form of the correct form of piety and the sense to swim or paddle for yourself as others have done, plays a part in determining one's security at sea, even in one of the most obviously vulnerable situations of all. This humanist outlook is not confined to learned colloquies. In revising the rudderless boat of medieval exempla and romance, Shakespeare stresses the power of the active individual in determining security and vulnerability. The sea remains a testing space, but the quality being tested is

no longer God's love or Fortune's caprice.

Symmetrical Shipwrecks and the Chaotic Sea

The classical and medieval sources of early modern drama abound with shipwrecks, but most are not completely tragic. The wreck of Aeneas's fleet opens the *Aeneid* (and sets the stage for Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage*): the seas rage, and the poet tells us that "The Southwind caught three ships and whirled them down / On reeds, hidden midsea," while "The Eastwind drove three others from deep water / Into great shoals and banks, embedding them / And ringing them with sand."⁸⁵ However, after this description of the storm and the wrecks, Neptune calms the seas. The Trojans are not utterly destroyed. Aeneas retains seven ships and a reduced, but still significant, number of followers, and these survivors arrive safely in Libya. Numerous further trials await them, and this storm is only one episode of many.

The narrated opening storm of the *Aeneid* is suspenseful; though readers know Aeneas will survive and found Rome, the storm itself appears to be a serious threat. In his *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, however, Marlowe eliminates this suspense at the outset, reducing the harrowing storm to an introductory setpiece that requires far fewer stage properties than would staging a tempest. While Shakespeare's *Tempest* produces the sounds, sights, and emotions of a storm-tossed ship, Marlowe gives Venus lines that deliberately minimize the storm's fury. Venus describes the storm to Jupiter, aligning the forces of the storm with the Greeks who besieged Troy:

⁸⁵ Virgil, *Aeneid* trans. Robert Fitzgerald (New York: Random House, 1983), 1.152-157.

Poore Troy must now be sackt upon the Sea,
 And Neptunes waves be envious men of warre,
 Epeus horse to Aetnas hill transformed,
 Prepared stands to wracke their wooden walles,
 And Aeolus like Agamemnon sounds
 The surges, his fierce souldiers to the spoyle:
 See how the night Ulysses-like comes forth,
 And intercepts the day as Dolon erst.⁸⁶

Pairing the forces of the sea and the elements with the victorious Greeks paints a grim picture indeed. However, Venus's rhetorical strategy of comparing the sea to the Greeks puts the emphasis on the Greeks' ferocity, rather than that of the waves. Aeneas's group has previously escaped these Greeks, who, though certainly threatening, are less powerful than the forces of nature. In Venus's description, the storm becomes more of the same trouble the Trojans have already endured rather than a new and bigger problem than they have ever before faced.

In diminishing the dramatic force of the storm, Marlowe follows Virgil's example. In the lines following Venus's description of the wild waves, Jupiter reveals to Venus and the audience that the storm will not prove fatal. In a direct translation of Virgil's phrases, Jupiter tells Venus that "Aeneas wandering fate is firme": like Ovid under Caesar's edict of exile, Aeneas has more powerful orders to obey than those of Juno, Aeolus, or the howling storm (1.1.83). No matter what he suffers in this episode, fate decrees that he will eventually found Rome.

The emotional consequences of the storm for Aeneas and the Trojans fade quickly: initially discouraged by the "many dangers" that have befallen them, the Trojans

⁸⁶ Christopher Marlowe, *Dido Queen of Carthage*, in *The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe*, Volume I, ed. Roma Gill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 1.1.64-71.

respond heartily to Aeneas's request to "Pluck up your hearts" (1.1.145, 149). Achates replies, "Brave Prince of Troy, thou onely art our God / ...Doe thou but smile, and cloudie heaven will cleare, / Whose night and Day descendeth from thy browes" (152-56). Aeneas takes the place of Neptune, Aeolus, and Jupiter in Achates's formulation. Achates also ascribes to the Trojan prince a transformative power of speech: the storm was terrible and the survivors landed in what Achates describes as "extreame miserie," but at Aeneas's words, the survivors are easily cheered (1.1.157). Through Aeneas's three lines of comfort, all is smoothed over because the plot requires that Aeneas and the Trojans land in Libya, cheer up, meet Dido, and eventually leave her to found Rome. Furthermore, the comical opening scene of *Dido*, in which Jupiter dallies with a petulant Ganymede, frames the entire treatment of the *Aeneid* as irreverent and designed to entertain. Under such demands, this famous classical shipwreck can have only a reduced impact on its survivors or its audience.

Unlike Shakespeare in *The Tempest*, Marlowe's goal is not a realistic dramatic representation of a shipwreck, because *Dido, Queen of Carthage* does not rely on plot or suspense to succeed onstage. Rather, Marlowe is more concerned with the erotic and comic possibilities of staging a well-known tale with a troupe of boy actors. The appeal lies less in finding out what happens than in watching how Marlowe treats a story that a large percentage of the audience would likely know. In contrast, the story of *The Tempest* is original, and however likely it is to turn out happily, it is still neither guaranteed nor wholly familiar. Suspense is a possibility and an asset for *The Tempest* in a way it cannot be for *Dido*.

The *Aeneid*, and Marlowe's treatment of it, is far from the only non-disastrous, or even fortunate, shipwreck relevant to early modern drama; Gower's tale of Apollonius of Tyre, in Book Eight of the *Confessio Amantis*, provides another example, one that Shakespeare adapts in *Pericles*. In accordance with his theme of the reversals of Fortune, Gower emphasizes Fortune's inconsistencies right before describing the storm that wrecks Apollonius off the coast of Pentopolis: "Fortune hath evere be muable [mutable] / And mai no while stond stable."⁸⁷ Gower's Fortune here is a slave to its own nature—Gower describes Fortune as, for the most part, an "it" that "mai" never be at rest, but must always be shifting itself and, consequentially, others from high to low (line 587). Gower sets up Apollonius' tumble from the heights of power and happiness, but the storm and shipwreck are more complicated than they first appear. Apollonius starts out with power—specifically his kingdom, Tyre, and the ability to relieve the famine in Tarsus—but he is also on the run from the malice of Antiochus, a voluntary exile from his own city. The storm Gower describes is frightening in the usual way ("The wynd aros, the weder derketh, / It blew and made such tempeste, / Non ancher mai the schip areste"), and the ship breaks up "upon a roche, And al goth down into the depe" (604-606; 626-627). Gower specifically mentions that Neptune "wolde not acorde" with saving the ship, although he could have (623). All seems lost.

However, this shipwreck happens at the beginning of Apollonius's adventures, and many reversals of fortune still await him. The shipwreck off Pentopolis is not the

⁸⁷ John Gower, *Confessio Amantis* ed. Russell A. Peck (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), Book 8, lines 585-6. Henceforth *CA*.

moment of ruin that it initially appears to be. Gower writes that Fortune “was to this lord diverse,” mixing pain and gain (602). Like the *Aeneid* and *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, the *Confessio* sets up shipwreck as a moment of rupture but not ruin. From the chaos of storm and the destruction of sailing vessels comes an opportunity to redirect or reorganize characters and plotlines into a new order.

Virgil and Gower provide a model for the use of the shipwreck in later works, one that writers like Marlowe, Sidney, and Shakespeare use and develop. In *Pericles*, Shakespeare preserves the optimism of *Apollonius*, having his character Gower reassure the audience that although “the ship / Should house him safe is wracked and split, / And he, good prince, having all lost, / By waves from coast to coast is tossed,” Pericles is not doomed.⁸⁸ “Fortune,” Gower continues, becomes “tired with doing bad” and throws the prince “ashore to give him glad” (37-38). Shortly after Pericles crawls ashore, the fishermen dredge up his lost armor; wearing it, he wins the tournament and Thaisa’s hand. The first storm and shipwreck of *Pericles* aligns with its source material, going even further than Gower’s poem in emphasizing that the shipwreck is ultimately a fortunate event.

Virgil, Marlowe, and Gower describe chaotic and frightening shipwrecks that somehow end (relatively) happily, a trend that also appears in other major early modern dramatic and literary works, most notably in Sidney’s *New Arcadia* and, besides *Pericles*, in Shakespeare’s *The Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night*, and *The Tempest*. However, in

⁸⁸ All citations from William Shakespeare, *Pericles* ed. Suzanne Gossett (London: Bloomsbury, 2004), 2.0.31-34. Henceforth *Per*.

most of these cases, Sidney and Shakespeare increase the artificiality of the shipwreck trope: in each of these works, out of the overwhelming chaos of a shipwreck emerge organized pairs of survivors—families neatly parceled into halves or groups by the requirements of plot and genre. Like the passengers of rudderless boats, these shipwreck survivors are isolated and vulnerable to the dangers of the sea. In both cases, characters' inability to control and determine their own fate during the shipwreck appears dramatically emphasized. Yet after the wreck, these characters, like Custance, reliably survive, go on to have multiple adventures, and are reunited with the family from whom they seemed irrevocably sundered.

Sidney's *New Arcadia* opens with a shipwreck that separates the two heroes, cousins Musidorus and Pyrocles; in the aftermath of the wreck, each young man believes the other dead. Interesting in its own right, Sidney's treatment of the shipwreck and the two divided heroes also resembles Shakespeare's notable shipwrecks in *The Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night*, and *The Tempest*. Because of the length and intricacy of the plot Sidney devises, the opening wreck is particularly productive as a starting point. The shipwreck is a powerful way to open a play, but it has a different effect when it is launching an extended prose romance.

It is fitting that Sidney's complicated plot begins at sea—a polysemous space that is first and foremost decidedly separate from land. Scholars of the *New Arcadia* have elaborated on the work's prose style, symmetry, fixed character types, and Romance-specific generic conventions, but few besides Nandini Das attend in particular to the

politics of space.⁸⁹ According to Das, the plotting of the *New Arcadia* is spatial as well as temporal: placing the work “against the backdrop of the growing interest in the mapping of space, narratives, and knowledge in the late sixteenth century” reveals that Sidney’s intricate narrative conforms not only to Romance conventions but to cartographic impulses as well.⁹⁰ This comparison “makes it possible to trace some of the recurrent connections that Sidney made between spatial and narrative ‘plots’ in his writing” (Das 52). Sidney himself argued that the poet’s task “is to give the abstract a perceivable shape, a ‘sweet [...] prospect into the way’, whose approachability will facilitate his reader’s willing ‘journey’ to virtue” (Das 57). Das suggests that the *New Arcadia* accomplishes this task by blending “a heightened sense of space” with “the motifs and techniques of romance” while building a concrete, geographical framework that supports and organizes the seemingly-chaotic profusion of plots and characters (57).

The *New Arcadia*’s famous opening juxtaposes chaos and symmetry, space and character, the danger of the ocean and the relative security of the shore. The work introduces its two heroes, Musidorus and Pyrocles, as survivors of a shipwreck which leaves “a ship, or rather the carcass of the ship, or rather some few bones of the carcass” floating offshore, “part broken, part burned, part drowned.”⁹¹ In this description, the cousins’ ship disintegrates before the reader’s eye. The combination of types of

⁸⁹ See Arthur Amos, *Time, Space, and Value: The Narrative Structure of the New Arcadia* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1977); Nancy Lindheim, *The Structures of Sidney’s Arcadia* (Buffalo: University of Buffalo Press, 1982); Ann Dobyns, “Style and Character in the ‘New Arcadia,’” *Style* 20.1 (1986): 90-102.

⁹⁰ Nandini Das, “Romance Re-Charted: The ‘Ground-Plots’ of Sidney’s *Arcadia*,” *The Yearbook of English Studies* 41.1 (2011): 51-67.

⁹¹ Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia*, ed. Victor Skretkovicz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 7.

destruction—broken, burned, and drowned—highlights the extreme vulnerability of the ship’s passengers, particularly the two heroes. Yet consciously or unconsciously, both employ Erasmus’s strategy of taking action to preserve themselves.

Musidorus’s body saves him where his mind cannot. The narrator points out that Musidorus’s hands are “constanter friends to his life than his memory” because they have clasped instinctively onto a piece of wreckage: shepherds find the unconscious prince “fast griping upon an edge of a square small coffer which lay all under his breast,” but he is left far closer to death than to life (5-6). Musidorus did not intentionally save himself, nor does he seem to want to have been saved once he is awake. His mental response to vulnerability is to shut down, but his body refuses to let him drown. Thus, when the shepherds who recover him employ various lifesaving techniques (“lifting his feet above his head, making a great deal of salt water to come out of his mouth” is the first tactic), Musidorus comes to (6). However, his will is still divided from his body. Immediately, he calls out for his other half: “‘What,’ said he, ‘and shall Musidorus live after Pyrocles?’” (6). Assuming that his cousin is dead, Musidorus attempts to throw himself back into the sea from which he has just been rescued. His attempt indicates that he prefers death over a life without his other half, Pyrocles; if he had his way, the shipwreck would be the end of his story. However, the automatic self-preservation of his hands and the practical lifesaving techniques of the shepherds ensure that Musidorus survives, and he has little choice but to accept that his plot is only beginning.

The survival of Pyrocles is no less ambivalent than that of Musidorus, and the text again confirms and controverts expectations for a survivor’s fate and behavior. An active

survivor, he is discovered sitting on the wrecked ship's mast "as on horseback, having nothing upon him but his shirt which, being wrought with blue silk and gold, had a kind of resemblance to the sea on which the sun then near his western home did shoot some of his beams" (7-8). Pyrocles has suffered a different sort of sea change than his cousin has, for while Musidorus swallowed the sea and nearly died, Pyrocles has in some way become the sea, and remains unscathed. Like Arion on his dolphin, Pyrocles is safe on his mast—for a time. Unfortunately, Musidorus and the mariners whose help he enlists cannot reach Pyrocles, and he is taken up by "a well-known pirate" instead (8). If shipwrecks are, as Northrop Frye observes, "the normal means of transportation" in Romance, pirates must be only slightly less common; both types of maritime crisis render romance heroes and heroines supremely vulnerable to external forces.⁹² This is certainly true for Sidney's two young heroes: the shipwreck-pirate combination sets the two on separate but parallel journeys across the Near East until they reunite, disguised, at the court of Basilius in Arcadia. Returning several times to the shipwreck through various characters' descriptions, Sidney nevertheless refuses to narrate the event himself or to confirm any one telling over another. The shipwreck is a foundational enigma, necessary to set Musidorus and Pyrocles on their respective paths.

The two heroes of the *New Arcadia* ensure a symmetrical narrative structure. Helen Cooper points out that the two heroes necessitate "two heroines" to match them, and whose "attributes complement each other" as their "adventures interlock" (62).

⁹² Northrop Frye, *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 4.

Cooper writes that “such symmetrical structuring, and mirror symmetry in particular, imposes a discipline on many romance authors that the linear quest alone does not, and gives both unity and depth to their texts” (59). Like the spatial awareness Das traces, this symmetry clarifies the abstract concepts and chaotic details of the *New Arcadia* into organized patterns.

Interestingly, Sidney chose to locate the origin of this symmetrical, secure structure in a shipwreck—a moment which we have already seen is one of acute vulnerability. The shipwreck in the *New Arcadia* fits with the pattern Philip Edwards identifies in Shakespeare’s romances where shipwreck is “a major structural device,” used “either to set the action of a play going or to create a redirection in the action.”⁹³ As in Shakespeare’s plays, in the *New Arcadia*, all the plot unspools from the moment of shipwreck. Furthermore, like that of Ovid, Chaucer, Erasmus and, we will see, Shakespeare, Sidney’s treatment of sea-peril is foundationally ambiguous. The two young men suffer physically and emotionally after the shipwreck, especially because just at the moment that Pyrocles seems safe, he is taken up by the pirates for an uncertain fate. The horror of the shipwreck and its aftermath emphasizes the deep emotional cost of sundering kinship and friendship bonds, even if the rupture contributes to the symmetrical organization of the plot as a whole. The shipwreck in this case severs a connection that the two heroes cherish but do not, it turns out, actually need—each is capable of solo adventures, and because they are separated, each young man is free to

⁹³ Philip Edwards, *Sea-Mark: The Metaphorical Voyage, Spenser to Milton* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1997), 129.

form an exogamous heterosexual attachment.

The fictional shipwreck, then, may be a moment of second birth: the frightening, threatening ocean resembles Julia Kristeva's characterization of the womb, which generates life but also threatens to swallow whole families and disgorge individuals.⁹⁴ *Pericles* makes the shipwreck-childbirth connection particularly explicit. Midway through the play, a sea-storm threatens to wreck the ship carrying Pericles and his pregnant wife Thaisa; the moment is different from the other sea-storms of Shakespeare, for no shipwreck occurs—Pericles avoids the ship's destruction by throwing Thaisa's body overboard. The second storm of *Pericles* combines the conventions of storm-tossed ship and rudderless boat, but adds a human cost. Although the ship survives, Pericles's family is wrecked: he loses his wife, his daughter, and his own personality for fourteen years. This abortive shipwreck is nonetheless a structural element that splits the family deliberately so they can eventually be reunited. At the same time, by reinterpreting the storm at sea and the castaway in the rudderless boat, *Pericles* doubles down on the vulnerability of maritime travel.

In his introduction to the scene, Gower tells the audience that the violence of the storm brings on Thaisa's early labor: "up and down the poor ship drives. / The lady shrieks and, well-a-near, / Does fall in travail with her fear" (*Per.* 3.0.50-52). The storm

⁹⁴ See Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982). Kristeva writes, "the abject confronts us, on the other hand, and this time within our personal archaeology, with our earliest attempts to release the hold of *maternal* entity even before existing outside of her, thanks to the autonomy of language. It is a violent, clumsy breaking away, with the constant risk of falling back under the sway of a power as securing as it is stifling" (13).

at sea resembles the storm of childbirth: Pericles prays to “the god of this great vast” to “rebuke these surges” and to “thou that hast / Upon the winds command” to “bind them in brass” (3.1.1-3). The howling wind and groaning ship stand in for the sounds and efforts of Thaisa’s labor, and both female entities—queen and ship—end up bringing forth a daughter of sorts. First, Thaisa gives birth to a “fresh new seafarer,” Marina, but seems herself to die in the attempt: the nurse Lychorida tells Pericles, “Take in your arms this piece of your dead queen” (41, 17-18). Suparna Roychaudhury concludes that “from the name of Pericles’s daughter, we must conclude that she embodies something essential about the sea,” pointing out that the story of the “blustering birth” is re-told three times in subsequent acts, each time with a different cast (28).⁹⁵ In focusing on the birth of Marina, however, Roychaudhury does not mention the (second) birth of Thaisa, a birth that begins aboard the storm-tossed ship, continues in Cerimon’s magical workroom, and concludes once she is reunited with her husband and daughter over a decade later.

Once Thaisa is (to all appearances) dead, the sailors intervene, declaring that her body cannot stay on board the ship: “Sir,” says the Master to the king, “your queen must overboard. The sea works high, the wind is loud and will not lie till the ship be cleared of the dead” (47-49). When Pericles scoffs, “That’s your superstition,” the Master stays firm and insists, “Pardon us, sir; with us at sea it hath been still observed, and we are strong in custom. Therefore briefly yield ’er, for she must overboard straight” (51-53). Although Thaisa’s labor has ceased, the ship labors still, and the sailors believe that it will only end

⁹⁵ Suparna Roychaudhury, “Mental Tempests, Seas of Trouble: The Perturbations of Shakespeare’s *Pericles*,” *ELH* 82.4 (2015), 1013-1039. The discussion of retelling Marina’s birth appears on pages 1031-1034.

once the ship is “cleared” of the body it is trying to deliver. This second birth is, ostensibly, a miscarriage, and the threat to the ship is similar to the threat to Thaisa—that the mother will die alongside or instead of her baby, in this case, taking Pericles, Marina, Lychorida, and all the sailors with her to the bottom of the sea.

Although Pericles fears that by casting her overboard, he is dooming his wife to a burial “in the ooze” with only “simple shells” for a “monument,” she does not sink (60-64). Instead, she becomes a type of castaway, and the “satin coffer” in which she lies, a type of rudderless boat (3.1.67).⁹⁶ Although she seems to be dead, Thaisa is in fact only unconscious and, like other passengers of rudderless boats, she is not in danger. Her body, “shrouded in cloth of state, / Balmed and entreaured with full bags of spices” and accompanied by a letter from Pericles entreating whoever finds it to “give her burying,” floats to Ephesus, where she is revived by the magician Cerimon (3.2.63-64, 71). Although freed from the womb-tomb of the floating coffer, Thaisa subsequently becomes a votaress of Diana for fourteen years, returning to a pre-sexual, yet decidedly feminine, state that also resembles a sort of womb. This abortive shipwreck moves Thaisa backward in her life course and causes Pericles to entomb himself in the grieving stasis from which Marina revives him in Act Five. The abortive wreck is the lynchpin of the play, and like the wreck of the ship that brings Perdita to Bohemia, it heralds a new

⁹⁶ Thaisa joins a notable group of castaways. Like Danaë, Thaisa is a new mother who makes a long sea journey in a box; she also resembles Custance in her little boat. In Suzanne Gossett’s opinion, Thaisa recalls Jonah in the whale’s belly (63n). Furthermore, the episode reworks the miraculous story of the Queen of Marseille in the Digby play “Mary Magdalene” (see David Bevington, ed., *Medieval Drama* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2012), 687-753. The Queen’s death and casting away occurs during lines 1746-1797; she and her child are recovered during lines 1880-1915). For further discussion of Thaisa’s fate, see Chapter Five of this dissertation, pages 227-232.

direction for the plot.

The almost-wreck of Pericles is a structural element that allows Shakespeare to pivot from the first half of the story to the second; however, most of the actual shipwrecks in his plays happen first thing, like the wreck that begins the *New Arcadia*. One of the clearest, and earliest, examples of such an ostentatiously artificial opening shipwreck is in *The Comedy of Errors*. Not only does Shakespeare insert the shipwreck into his sources, but he also increases the number of people who are saved: in the sources, it is the twins' father rather than a shipwreck who divides them by taking one along on a business trip to Tarentum and leaving the other twin at home in Syracuse; furthermore, there is only one set of twins rather than two.⁹⁷ The shipwreck that Egeon recounts at the beginning of *The Comedy of Errors* is, like that of the *New Arcadia*, the root of all the subsequent errors. Although the shipwreck splits Egeon's family into two almost-identical halves, the break is not neat: multiple sets of twins cause only confusion and misrecognition for the majority of the play. Following a critical consensus, Laurie Maguire points out that by doubling "the number of twins," Shakespeare exponentially increases the number of errors and the amount of chaos in the play.⁹⁸ In the estimate of Robert S. Miola, creating the twin Dromios increases "the incidents of error in the play from seventeen [in Plautus] to fifty."⁹⁹ Behind this chaos, however, lies a carefully-orchestrated shipwreck backstory that plants the seeds for an ending with three times as

⁹⁷ T. Maccius Plautus, *Menaechmi*, trans. Henry Thomas Reily (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1912), Perseus Digital Library, "Prologue."

⁹⁸ Laurie Maguire, "The Girls from Ephesus," in *The Comedy of Errors: Critical Essays*, ed. Robert S. Miola (New York: Garland, 1997), 354.

⁹⁹ Robert S. Miola, *Shakespeare and Classical Comedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 22.

many recognitions as in a work with only one broken pair.

Some critics see the initial shipwreck as falling in line with the compounded errors of the play proper. Steve Mentz writes that “the spar rescue reduces social bonds to minimal, fragmentary structure. Two sets of three people – a parent, a child, and an orphan – sit ‘at either end of the mast’ (1.1.85), abandoned to fate, ‘obedient to the stream’ (1.1.86)” (40).¹⁰⁰ To Mentz, “this symmetrical family – whose mirror-structures generate the ‘errors’ of the play’s middle acts – shows human bodies and communities at the mercy of the sea” (40). Rather than an ordered, organized plot set-up, Mentz sees a depiction of maritime chaos from which the repeated misrecognitions naturally flow.

However, before the family is even split, echoes of the rudderless boat alert readers and viewers to the guiding hand of providence or fortune: “the sailors sought for safety by our boat,” Egeon recalls, “and left the ship, then sinking-ripe, to us.”¹⁰¹ The connection of the failing ship to a fruit ripening for sinking connects it to the similarly ill-omened “rotten carcass of a butt” in which Prospero and Miranda make their escape. Like that dubious vessel, and like Custance’s little boat, Egeon and Emilia’s ship is “obedient to the stream”; the two parents, lashed to their respective sides of the mast with their respective babies, are also obedient. By dipping into the deep image—even cliché—of the rudderless boat here, in the moment of rupture, Shakespeare all but promises that all will, eventually, be well. The two parents have symmetrically arranged themselves,

¹⁰⁰ Mentz’s “orphan” is presumably each Dromio, although Egeon’s narrative mentions only that the Dromios’ parents were “exceeding poor,” not dead. Egeon explains how he bought the Dromios from their living parents in 1.1.54-55.

¹⁰¹ All citations from William Shakespeare, *The Comedy of Errors* ed. Kent Cartwright (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), 1.1.76-77. Henceforth *Err*.

their sons, and their servants into two groups, and though the intervention of the “mighty rock” which splits their now “helpful ship” “in the midst” breaks up the family, even Egeon can recognize the essential balance of the situation: “in this unjust divorce of us, / Fortune had left to both of us alike / What to delight in, what to sorrow for” (1.1.101-6). Egeon can rejoice at having his life and one son while he mourns his wife and his other child. The situation is too neat, and too poignant, to be random.

The Duke, hearing Egeon’s story, agrees, suggesting that “the fates have mark’d” Egeon “to bear the extremity of dire mishap” (1.1.140-1). Even within the play, characters cannot accept the shipwreck as wholly a “mishap.” Not only does the Duke emphasize the incredible quality and quantity of Egeon’s bad luck, but also, even in the first scene, the play flirts with the idea that this “mishap” may eventually make Egeon happy: Cartwright points out that in Egeon’s story,

a certain syllable, *hap*, is repeated: in ‘happy’ (37, 138), ‘hap’ (38, 113), ‘mishap[s]’ (120, 141), ‘Hapless’ (140). Those *hap*- words introduce repetition-with-variation as they register the twists of narrative, and they add an echoing power to their near cousins in Egeon’s closing lines, when his haplessness has left him ‘Hopeless and helpless’ (157). The floating phoneme *hap* may even hint at a possible alternative, happier narrative. (*CE*, “Introduction,” 70)

On top of foreshadowing an eventual joyful reunion, this repetition-with-variation creates a pattern that highlights the author’s design and skill, boldly calling attention to what otherwise might be so incredible as to interfere with the audience’s enjoyment of the play. Egeon’s pattern of imagery also points out an underlying plan. Miola notes that “Dimly...Egeon senses a mysterious order beneath the apparent chaos” of the shipwreck:

He coins an unusual epithet, ‘the always-wind-obeying deep’ (63), for the sea which ruins him and he recalls the phrase several lines later, describing

the survivors of the storm as ‘floating straight, obedient to the stream’ (86). The hints of some unfathomable chain of command and obedience, of some providential order, continue in other cosmological references. ‘The heavens did grant’ (66) obscured light, he says, a warning of impending doom. Later, they are more merciful: ‘the sun gazing upon the earth, / Dispers'd those vapors that offended us, / And by the benefit of his wished light / The seas wax'd calm’ (88–91). The focus on the beneficent power of the sun and the religious tone here suggest the place of the powerless, uncomprehending mortal in a strange but ordered world and prepare obliquely for the resolution by the Abbess. (25)

Miola posits that the underlying order to the shipwreck is a religious one, and the Pauline connotations of Ephesus, the presence of the Abbess in place of the city’s pagan patroness, Diana, and other aspects of the play back up his assertion. However, the author of the shipwreck narrative is, in the most literal sense, the anonymous playwright—or playwrights—who mined classical and medieval sources to put together a brazenly artificial opening to this unity-following, misrecognition-magnifying adaptation of Plautus. The symmetrical shipwreck in *The Comedy of Errors* draws attention first and foremost to the skills of the adapter. Yet Mentz minimizes the play’s constructed state, deemphasizes the symmetry of the event, and its romance resonances, in order to make an argument about the real-world, “incomprehensible” sea and the need for “patience and deep fatalism” to endure it (40). Despite Mentz’s claim, the sea of *Errors* is not incomprehensible, nor is it imbued with the transformative, frightening, magical qualities of Gloucester’s dream or Ariel’s song; the audience needs to be patient only for two hours of entertainment. Mentz describes the play in deep and elemental terms, connecting it to the ecologically-threatened ocean of today, but doing so requires ignoring the literary context of the structural shipwreck in medieval romance and classical comedy. These symmetrical shipwrecks do complicate plots temporarily, but ultimately, they promise a

mathematical resolution.

Edwards points out that Shakespeare's shipwrecks are especially unrealistic: "shipwrecks in fiction have little to do with probability; they were standard examples of the unforeseen accident, of the unexpected intervention of fate or fortune or supernatural power in human designs, but even so Shakespeare seems sometimes almost to advertise his shipwrecks as authorial devices" (130). The perfect deployment of a divided couple and two divided sets of twins in the *Comedy of Errors* is an ostentatiously plotted event, even more so than Sidney's similar device in the *New Arcadia* or the later split of Viola and Sebastian.

What the shipwreck has divided must eventually be restored. Once recognized by her husband, Emilia picks up Egeon's opening narrative at exactly the point he left off: she tells the assembled company that after the rock split the ship, "By men of Epidamnum, he [Antipholus of Ephesus] and I / And the twin Dromio, all were taken up" (5.1.355-6). However, while Emilia can provide some of the missing story, she does not have the final end. She reveals that Antipholus and Dromio were taken from her by "rude fishermen of Corinth," and she finishes, "What then became of them, I cannot tell" (5.1.357-60). This second split, of mother from children, has little effect on the plot, however. The audience meets Emilia thirty-three years afterwards, when she is settled as an abbess. Unlike Egeon, who remained in touch with his son and Dromio, she does not search for her lost family. Fortunately, because of both the requirements of genre and the aftershocks of the original shipwreck, her family finds her. The play's ending heals and reinforces the broken relationships. Matching Antipholus of Syracuse to Luciana, his

twin's wife's sister, seals the two brothers not only together, but also into a closed square of marriage, while the Dromios exit "hand in hand, not one before another" (5.1.426).

The organized, artificial structure of the play's opening returns at its close with the sight of three happy heterosexual couples and the two Dromios, united at last, each pair a visible sign of the play's underlying symmetry.

Like the *New Arcadia*, and *The Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night* opens with a shipwreck that equally divides a family; however, the opening shipwreck is less obviously artificial as the family divided consists of only one set of twins, rather than a family of six. Viola and Sebastian, fatherless and (presumably) motherless, are all the family that each other have. Yet in contrast to the horror emblemized by Sidney's broken, burned, and drowned hulk floating off the coast of Laconia, the fresh sorrow with which Egeon recounts the breakup of his family, or the loud and chaotic opening scene of the *Tempest*, the shipwreck in *Twelfth Night* is over before the story begins, leaving no trace but the few survivors. Camille Wells Slight's suggests that in the play, "nature's harshness is not emphasized"; instead, it is "filtered through human hope...Viola has been saved from drowning only by chance, but she spends little time contemplating her narrow escape."¹⁰² Instead, like Musidorus, Viola initially concentrates on her lost relative, demanding "And what should I do in Illyria? / My Brother he is in Elysium."¹⁰³ For both protagonists, a major negative impact of the shipwreck is how it severs them from someone who had, up until that point, been a constant companion.

¹⁰² Camille Wells Slight's, *Shakespeare's Comic Commonwealths* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 216-7.

¹⁰³ William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night* ed. Keir Elam (London: Bloomsbury, 2008), 1.2.2-3.

For Viola, “human hope” soon overwhelms grief: her next line, “Perchance he is not drowned” transforms grim certainty into uncertain optimism (1.2.4). In response to the Captain’s attempts to reframe that possibility as pessimism, “It is perchance that you yourself were saved,” Viola initially returns to her grief and despair: “O my poor brother!” (1.2.5-6). However, the second half of the line recommits to continuing her broken conversation: “And so perchance may he be” (1.2.6). By doubling down on her optimism that the shipwreck represents not an end but a beginning, Viola coaxes from the skeptical Captain his eyewitness account of Sebastian’s escape from the wreck, a description that in several points resembles Sidney’s of Pyrocles:

After our ship did split,
 When you and those poor number saved with you
 Hung on our driving boat, I saw your brother,
 Most provident in peril, bind himself—
 Courage and hope both teaching him the practice—
 To a strong mast that lived upon the sea,
 Where, like Arion on the dolphin’s back,
 I saw him hold acquaintance with the waves
 So long as I could see. (1.2.8-16)

Like Pyrocles, and Erasmus’s old priest, Sebastian acts quickly and boldly to preserve himself. In contrast to the lifeboat, which is “driving” before the wind, unsteered, on his mast, Sebastian moves intentionally with the waves with “courage and hope.” The mast to which he binds himself is “strong,” but Sebastian is also, metonymically, strong at this moment: he straddles the mast in a clearly masculine position and holds “acquaintance with the waves” as though they were suitors to his lordly position. Like Arion’s dolphin, Sebastian’s mast is described as a living thing, though without the ability of the dolphin to intentionally transport him to safety. In Arion’s case, the rescued musician is passive

and the dolphin does the work—locating him, swimming up under him, and carrying him on its back to the shore. Sebastian must do that work for himself. Viola and the Captain resemble passengers in a *navis unus pellius* insofar as chance, rather than Providence, Fortune, or Neptune, saves them; Steve Mentz asserts that “Viola’s liminal, sea-borne self depends, fundamentally, on chance.”¹⁰⁴ Sebastian, in contrast, seems well on his way to saving himself.

In both the *New Arcadia* and *Twelfth Night*, the romantic prospect of the reunion of shipwrecked twins all but ensures both halves’ survival; the active position that the Captain ascribes to Sebastian makes it even less likely to an audience member that he would succumb to the waves. Viola takes heart, rewarding the Captain for sharing this hopeful image: completing the meter of his line, she replies, bluntly, “For saying so, there’s gold,” an early indication that the shipwreck that threatens death and ruin will turn out to produce hope, love, and prosperity (1.2.16). Five acts later, Orsino’s description of the topsy-turvy dramatic situation as “this most happy wreck” invokes the plot-generating reversal of the shipwreck while denying feelings of destruction, loss, or grief; although Malvolio has stormed off vowing revenge and Antonio remains in custody, Orsino is determined to cast things positively.

To Edwards, the opening wreck means that “the play erupts into disruption: the

¹⁰⁴ Steve Mentz, *At the Bottom of Shakespeare’s Ocean* (New York: Continuum, 2009), 61. For more on chance as a symbolic feature of the sea, see Ulrich Kinzel, “Orientation as a Paradigm in Maritime Modernity,” in *Fictions of the Sea: Critical Perspectives on the Ocean in British Literature and Culture* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2002), 28-48. Kinzel points out a sixteenth-century change in depictions of fortune from the medieval *rota fortunae* to a woman holding a sail, suggesting from this graphic shift that fortune is no longer conceived as methodically turning but rather as a resource that the prudent could harness for their own gain.

past is effaced, the slate is cleansed” (141). What needed cleansing? Perhaps, as with Musidorus and Pyrocles, the shipwreck liberates the twins from their introverted bond and sets them up for two exogamous marriages. But as Suzanne Penuel has shown, dead fathers—both the twins’ and Olivia’s—haunt the play’s multiple instances of doubling: the shipwreck cannot efface Viola and Sebastian’s memories of a father who “had a mole upon his brow . . . and died that day when Viola from her birth had numbered thirteen years” (5.1.238-40).¹⁰⁵ The twins have held onto the figure of their dead father for years, let alone through one wreck.

Viola herself makes the connection between shipwreck and birth: after hearing about Olivia’s double mourning for her father and brother, Viola cries, “O that I served that lady, / And might not be delivered unto the world— / Till I had made mine own occasion mellow— / What my estate is” (1.2.38-41). Without her brother, Viola feels harsh, raw, and unformed—not yet mellowed—and imagines Olivia’s house as a sort of second womb which would deliver her only when she feels ready. The shipwreck has transformed her from a complete, twinned adult into a lone infant—a new, unwanted start as an individual. As a reaction to her metaphorical rebirth, Viola shields her vulnerable new self with a disguise that makes her a mirror image of her lost brother. Without the shipwreck’s temporary separation of the two, *Twelfth Night*, like the *New Arcadia*, would have no opportunity to move forward. And, following earlier romance tropes, the sundered twins’ symmetrical plots provide a pattern that organizes “what you will” into a

¹⁰⁵ Suzanne Penuel, “Missing Fathers: *Twelfth Night* and the Reformation of Mourning,” *Studies in Philology* 107.1 (2010), 74-96.

neatly tied-up comedy that ends with a family reunion, two marriages, and a betrothal.¹⁰⁶ *Twelfth Night* revisits the structure of *The Comedy of Errors*, but its “happy wrack” lacks the ostentatious symmetry of the earlier play. The play still employs shipwreck as a major plot device that gets the Romance plot moving, but it is perhaps less interested in foregrounding the event as an authorial decision. Yet as before, the initial symmetry of the shipwreck device reemerges with the sight of the two couples hand in hand at the end of the play.

Perhaps the most discussed shipwreck in Shakespeare is the one that opens *The Tempest*.¹⁰⁷ In this last solo play, Shakespeare actually stages a shipwreck; unlike those

¹⁰⁶ For the “equivocal” ending of *Twelfth Night*, in which neither the audience nor Orsino gets to see Viola in her women’s weeds, see Phyllis Rackin, “Androgyny, Mimesis, and the Marriage of the Boy Heroine on the English Renaissance Stage,” *PMLA* 102 (1987), 29-41; and Keir Elam’s introduction to the Arden Third Series *Twelfth Night*, 49-50.

¹⁰⁷ Scholars have investigated the opening storm scene for its colonial or hierarchical implications as well as its relationship with William Strachey’s historical shipwreck narrative *The True Reportory of the Wracke and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gale* (1610), ed. Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), Volume 8, 275-94. For the relationship between this text, European colonialism, and *The Tempest*, see Alden T. Vaughan, “Shakespeare’s Indian: The Americanization of Caliban,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39 (1988), 137-53; Meredith Skura, “Discourse and the Individual: The Case of Colonialism in ‘The Tempest,’” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40:1 (1989), 42-69; Leo Salinger, “The New World in ‘The Tempest,’” in *Travel and Drama in Shakespeare’s Time*, ed. Jean-Pierre Maquerlot and Michèle Willems (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 209-222; Peter Hulme, “Stormy Weather: Misreading the Postcolonial *Tempest*,” *Early Modern Culture* 3 (2003), np; Kristen Sandrock, “Medieval vs. Early Modern: Travel Narratives and Other Genres in *The Tempest*,” *Shakespeare Seminar* 9 (2011), 15-26. For a discussion of the collapse of social hierarchy during the storm, see Annabel Patterson, *Shakespeare and the Popular Voice* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 154; David Norbrook, “What Cares These Roarers for the Name of King?: Language and Utopia in *The Tempest*” in *The Politics of Tragicomedy: Shakespeare and After*, ed. Gordon McMullan and Jonathan Hope (New York: Routledge, 1992), 21-54; Julia Major, “Silence! Trouble Us Not: Travail and Translated Identity in *The Tempest*” in *Shakespeare and the Translation of Identity in Early Modern England* ed. Liz Oakley-Brown (New York: Continuum, 2011), 74-102; Jeffrey S. Doty, “Experiences of Authority in *The Tempest*” in *Shakespeare and the Politics of Commoners* ed. Chris Fitter

mentioned in *Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Pericles*, the storm and wreck of the *Tempest* is vividly and chaotically staged, a spectacular opening. The play also calls attention to the artificiality of the shipwreck conceit by immediately explaining that the wreck was entirely managed by Prospero's magic and that neither the ship nor its passengers have suffered any harm. The survivors of the tempest are not split up into symmetrical groups, but they are divided deliberately, according to Prospero's intentions. Throughout the play, they are vulnerable to his will and whims, but not to the sea's fury.

The play opens *in medias res* with the chaotic sounds of both the storm and the sailors who are trying to survive it, and everything indicates that the situation is truly dire. The Folio stage direction calls for "a tempestuous noise of thunder and lightning heard," which immediately places the audience in the storm along with the ship. The precise nautical terms invoked in the opening dialogue further situate viewers aboard a realistic and storm-tossed ship.¹⁰⁸ The play gives no hints that the storm's threat is empty.¹⁰⁹ This opening scene appears to stage a dreadful contest between the powerful sea and a group of highly vulnerable travelers. Kristen Sandrock argues that "it is

(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 236-251. For the religious resonances of the storm scene see Lynn Forest-Hill, "'This Insubstantial Pageant Faded': The Drama of Semiotic Anxiety in *The Tempest*" in *Shakespeare Survey* 68 (2015), 353-67.

¹⁰⁸ Alexander F. Falconer found the nautical terminology so convincing that in *Shakespeare and the Sea* (London: Constable, 1964), he suggests that Shakespeare may have spent time as a sailor himself. This hypothesis has generally been dismissed, but Dan Brayton reiterates the accuracy of Shakespeare's sailing terms on pages 195-7 of "Sounding the Deep: *Shakespeare and the Sea* Revisited," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 46.2 (2010), 189-206.

¹⁰⁹ Leo Salinger writes that "the shipwreck scene that opens *The Tempest* seems to the audience convincingly natural until they learn that real magic has produced it... The audience are not purely and simply detached spectators, but are drawn into the experience of the characters" ("The New World in *The Tempest*," 213-4).

significant that the shipwreck in *The Tempest* occurs before Prospero and his supernatural powers are conveyed to the audience” because without that knowledge, the scene appears to “probe...the power of agency vis-à-vis the forces of nature” (20). At least in this initial scene, neither human agency nor human authority seem to have very much power at all.¹¹⁰

The scene’s disruption of social hierarchy, in which the Boatswain chastises the King of Naples and his courtiers, appears to further demonstrate the impotence of human attempts at order in the face of nature. The Boatswain’s words explicitly dismiss the importance of rank on the struggling ship: “You mar our labour. Keep your cabins! You do assist the storm,” he shouts in response to Alonso and Antonio’s questions, then asks, “What cares these roarers for the name of king? To cabin! Silence! Trouble us not” (*Tmp.* 1.1.13-4, 16-8). David Norbrook terms this “a remarkably defiant gesture,” and the Boatswain and the play pit “the boundless voice of the elements and of social transgression,” embodied in the “roarers,” “against the name of king, the arbitrary language of power” (21). This defiance is possible because the situation is—or appears—so serious: with the ship in a dangerous storm, the king and courtiers’ lives depend upon the Boatswain’s and the other sailors’ work. The Boatswain’s “challenge to hierarchical authority,” as Julia Major puts it, conveys to the audience not only that rank means nothing when confronted with the forces of nature, but also that the forces of nature in this case are extremely threatening (77). Indeed, as the scene ends, “a confused noise

¹¹⁰ Although Prospero is not mentioned in the text, some directors choose to stage the opening tempest with the magician overlooking the struggling ship, which adds a human element to the scene.

within” indicates that the ship appears to be lost: voices cry, “Mercy on us!—We split, we split!—Farewell my wife and children!—Farewell brother!—We split, we split, we split!” (*Tmp.* 1.1.60 *s.d.*, 60-2). At this point, the audience may well believe that these vulnerable travelers have perished at sea.

However, Prospero’s conversation with Miranda in the following scene immediately assures viewers that all are safe and that even the storm itself was a result not of nature’s uncontrollable force, but rather of one man’s magical skill. Miranda describes “a brave vessel...dashed all to pieces” and the “poor souls” on it who “perished,” but Prospero comforts her, “Tell your piteous heart / There’s no harm done” (1.2.6-9, 14-15). He explains to his distressed daughter:

The direful spectacle of the wreck which touched
The very virtue of compassion in thee,
I have with such provision in mine art
So safely ordered, that there is no soul—
No, not so much perdition as an hair,
Betid to any creature in the vessel
Which thou heard’st cry, which thou sawst sink.
(1.2.26-32)

Scholars have in many ways moved beyond the Shakespeare-Prospero identification, but it is nonetheless tempting to read Prospero’s description of the “spectacle” “safely ordered” by his “art” as resonant with a writer’s use of a shipwreck to begin a plot.¹¹¹ Even setting aside the writerly connotations of Prospero’s words, the terrifying shipwreck of the first scene dissolves remarkably quickly into a carefully managed illusion. There

¹¹¹ For an overview on the Shakespeare-Prospero connection, see Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan’s introduction to the Arden Third Series *Tempest* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011), 98-99.

was never, we learn with Miranda, any danger at all.

As in *The Comedy of Errors* and *Twelfth Night*, the shipwreck is a structural element that makes the rest of the play possible. Contrasting with the realism of the opening scene, Prospero's speech to Miranda highlights the shipwreck's organized and performative nature. However, his words do not erase the excitement and suspense of the earlier scene, nor are the castaways, we soon learn, completely out of danger. Prospero has plans of his own for them—vengeful plans. Alonso, Sebastian, and Antonio were in some ways safer aboard the storm-tossed ship, when Prospero intended to bring them safely to shore, than they are once they reach the island and are at his mercy, and at the mercy of each other's ambitious plots.

With the notable exception of the clowns Stephano and Trinculo, Prospero arranges his castaways across the island in handpicked groups. While these groups are not symmetrical as are character sets in the *New Arcadia* or Shakespeare's earlier plays, they do serve distinct purposes. Prospero deposits Ferdinand alone, convincing him with Ariel's "Full Fathom Five" song that his father has perished, and ensures that Miranda encounters the prince and falls in love with him (1.2.390-420). He keeps the other Italian nobles and courtiers together, intervening to prevent Sebastian and Antonio from murdering Alonso so that later all of them can be accused and persecuted by the spirits in the shape of harpies (2.1.199-309). In both cases, the castaways think they have been preserved by chance or providence, and do not learn Prospero's role in their adventures until the end.

The aristocrats are not the only Italians who wash ashore, however. Stephano and

Trinculo also make it to the island while the other servants and sailors remain asleep under hatches in the enchanted ship. It is unclear whether Prospero is initially aware of these two, though Ariel later informs him that they have met up with Caliban and that the three “varlets” are planning to murder Prospero and rule the island themselves (4.1.139-42, 170). Prospero claims that he has “forgot that foul conspiracy” until midway through the masque, but he manages to thwart it nonetheless; although Prospero may not have intended Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban to team up, their plot is nonetheless resolved to Prospero’s satisfaction. His control over the shipwreck, the castaways, and their eventual fates wavers only slightly throughout the play. Even as Prospero’s ultimate goal shifts from revenge to reconciliation and rehabilitation, he is the one who decides what happens to each of the visitors to the island.

Each of these three works opens with a seemingly catastrophic maritime accident; however, the works eventually reveal that these incidents are not disastrous but rather unrealistically merciful. Sidney’s and Shakespeare’s symmetrical shipwrecks adapt classical generic conventions to render what would have been in fact a highly vulnerable, chaotic moment for actual sea travelers as the seed of an organized plot of adventure and reunion.

Early modern literature participates in a rich tradition of vulnerable seafarers, building on medieval and classical writers’ envisioning of a larger order behind the seemingly chaotic forces threatening voyagers. While earlier texts tend to attribute the survival of a vulnerable traveler to divine authority, later writers like Erasmus complicate this idea of the passive, righteous passenger of the rudderless boat. Erasmus constructs

the ocean and the sinking ship as a litmus test for correct Christian piety, which to him is a combination of faith and practical skill. In contrast, writers like Sidney and Shakespeare use shipwrecks primarily as structural elements to bisect families so that their respective stories may begin. Although romance protagonists survive their encounters with the waves, romances are written nonetheless against a backdrop of anxieties about a deadly, unpredictable sea, which often carries with it inherited elements from the long-standing topos of the sea of Fortune. Such stories are suspenseful because of the real sea's rages even while, at the same time, the romance genre prompts expectations that the hero or heroine will come through.

While religious tales, romance, voyage narratives, prose fiction, and drama each contribute to the conversation in different ways, this multivalent topic shares common traits: the sea, and the places one visits after crossing it, are often spaces where the traveler cedes control over his or her fate to a higher power. Writers take the inherent risk of sea travel as an opportunity to consider how human agency and luck or destiny may collide. Overwhelmingly, they write about a sea where the most threatening situations turn out, thank goodness, to be part of a larger plan. At the same time, though, they do not otherwise challenge the sea's reputation as chaotic and deadly.

CHAPTER THREE: Rogue Waves: Piracy and Self-Determination on the English Stage

In the past decade, scholarship on early modern pirates has expanded dramatically.¹¹² While this critical conversation acknowledges, or even underscores, the contradictory understandings of pirates in the period, no one has placed these conflicting portrayals of pirates within the context of the contradictory early modern sea. As a space of risk and possibility, the ocean of early modern culture often simultaneously embodies both extremes of binary oppositions between safety and vulnerability, risk and reward, failure and success. As the sea's inhabitants, pirates are similarly contradictory. They are continually crossing and re-crossing the line between legal actor and outlaw. In particular, early modern pirates exist onstage as visible representations of the ocean's risk, possibility, and contradiction. This chapter examines stage pirates' relationship to a

¹¹² Recently, Patricia Fumerton and Cheryl Fury have contextualized early modern piracy within a broader conversation about the social and economic pressures on England's itinerant, and sometimes criminal, underclasses as well as on its merchant sailors. Lois Potter, Claire Jowitt, Mark Hutchings, and Laurie Ellinghausen have articulated the multivalent uses to which early modern dramatists put pirates in their plays. At the same time, Nabil Matar, Daniel Vitkus, Barbara Fuchs, and Goran V. Stanivukovic have drawn critical attention to the effects of the religious and economic conditions of the early modern Mediterranean on piratical endeavors. See Fumerton, *Unsettled: The Culture of Mobility and the Working Poor in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Fury, *Tides In The Affairs of Men: The Social History of Elizabethan Seamen, 1580-1603* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002); Potter, "Pirates and 'Turning Turk' in Renaissance Drama" in *Travel and Drama in Shakespeare's Time*, ed. Jean-Pierre Macquerlot and Michèle Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 124-140; Jowitt, *The Culture of Piracy, 1580-1630*, (Farnham: Routledge, 2010); Mark Hutchings, "Acting Pirates: Converting *A Christian Turned Turk*," in *Pirates?: The Politics of Plunder 1550-1650*, ed. Claire Jowitt (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007): 90-104; Ellinghausen, "'We Are Of The Sea!': Masterless Identity and Transnational Context in Daborne's *A Christian Turn'd Turk*," *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 41.2 (2015), 178-201; and Ellinghausen, *Pirates, Traitors, and Apostates: Renegade Identities in Early Modern English Writing* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018).

spectrum of legal and illegal activities including executing prisoners, attacking foreign ships, and kidnapping, in order to argue that both the pirate ship and the sea function dramatically as spaces where the usual laws do not apply. Dramatic pirates' ambiguous legal status is associated with their reputation as self-interested and self-determined agents motivated more by personal will than by national allegiance or traditional morality.

Temporary and Career Pirates

By the turn of the 17th century, English pirates were well known as being particularly fierce.¹¹³ From the 1570s onward, Elizabeth I had awarded certain nobles, including Sir Francis Drake, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir John Hawkins, and Sir Martin Frobisher, letters of marque licensing them to disrupt Spanish shipping and seize goods bound to and from the Spanish-American colonies as well as merchant cargoes on vessels in the Mediterranean. In between preying on the Spanish, however, Elizabeth's "sea dogs" often ignored their official instructions and attacked ships bearing flags of other nations. Concurrent with the mandated or semi-mandated privateering, other English vessels performed more straightforward piracy, swooping down on the merchant ships of the Atlantic and Mediterranean and seizing cargoes to divide in shares among the common sailors.

In this fairly crowded field, several English pirates found particular notoriety: Thomas Walton and Clinton Atkinson (alias Purser and Clinton) were hanged at Wapping alongside seven other pirates in 1583, and had their (alleged) speeches on the gallows

¹¹³ Potter, "Turning Turk" 125-126.

published in a pamphlet; John Ward hunted along the Barbary Coast in the early 17th century, and was the subject of several heavily fictionalized ballads and pamphlets.¹¹⁴

They were not alone in inspiring verses: Jacques Lezra points out that such titles as “The fatal farewell of Captain Gilbert Horseley,” “A passport for pirates wherein they may mark and shun their abuse by the death of Tom Clarke,” and “Clinton’s lamentation” all appear in the *Stationer’s Registers* between the years 1579 and 1583.¹¹⁵

In addition to these printed materials, Purser, Clinton, and Ward featured prominently onstage. Robert Daborne’s 1612 play *A Christian Turn’d Turk* depicts the life and death of John Ward despite the fact that the real Ward had not died at all, but was rather married and living in a “faire Palace, beautified with rich Marble and Alabaster stones” in Tunis.¹¹⁶ Heywood’s *Fortune By Land and Sea*, written between 1607 and 1609, dramatizes the capture and execution of Purser and Clinton and makes their downfall the source of the young hero’s titular fortune by sea. In song and onstage, the pirates are antiheroes, proud and subversive. C. M. Senior quotes the ballad of John Ward, where the pirate proclaims that even if James I “reign king of all the land, I will reign king at sea.”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Ransome, David R. “Ward, John [called Issouf Reis, Captain Wardiyya] (c. 1553–1623?), pirate.” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. For an extended discussion of the executions of Purser and Clinton, see Jowitt, “Scaffold Performances: The Politics of Pirate Execution” in *Pirates? The Politics of Plunder*.

¹¹⁵ Jacques Lezra, “Pirating Reading: The Appearance of History in *Measure for Measure*,” *ELH* 56 (1989), 255-292, 24n.

¹¹⁶ Ward’s decorating choices are included in the report of Scottish traveler William Lithgow, who dined with Ward in his Tunisian palace circa 1615. William Lithgow, “The Total Discourse, of the rare Adventures, and painful Peregrinations of long nineteen years Travails...,” (London, 1640), STC 15714, page 358.

¹¹⁷ Senior, C. M., *A Nation of Pirates: English Piracy in its Heyday* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1976), 36.

Ward is not alone in claiming the entire sea as his domain; literary scholars have made much of the piratical refrain, “we are of the sea,” suggesting that it arises from pirates’ status as master-less men or as creators of a political sphere outside the nation.¹¹⁸ And indeed, unlike merchant, passenger, fishing, or military vessels, which embark with specific destinations in mind and cross the sea to reach them, pirate ships occupy oceanic space in a different way. The sea is a pirate’s workplace, as it is for a military or merchant sailor or a fisherman, but for a pirate, returning to land without facing punishment requires strategy and care. This oft-quoted phrase is descriptive indeed.

Many scholars have investigated the political implications of pirates’ ties to the sea. Writing about the late seventeenth century, Christopher Hill traces the radical Cromwellian roots of early Caribbean settlement, tying some pirates’ extra-legal activities on those waters to attempts to escape Restoration England.¹¹⁹ Hill argues that to these pirates the global ocean, and the Caribbean Sea in particular, presents an alternative to a politically unfriendly homeland. Hill notes that aboard, some pirates practiced democratic (or semi-democratic) elections and divided their spoils non-hierarchically; on land, they formed utopian communities like the short-lived (and possibly fictional) settlement of Libertalia, on Madagascar, mentioned in Defoe’s *A General History of the Pyrates*. Hill ties the desires for social and economic reform attributed to pirates to their illegal activities at sea. Indeed, Kevin P. McDonald argues that although Libertalia was

¹¹⁸ See Jowitt, “Subversive Pirates?: Representations of Purser and Clinton, 1583-1639” in *The Culture of Piracy*, 17-45; Ellinghausen, ““We Are Of The Sea!””

¹¹⁹ Hill, “Radical Pirates?” in *The Collected Essays of Christopher Hill, Volume Three: People and Ideas in 17th Century England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986), 161-187.

Defoe's invention, the real-life pirate settlers of Madagascar "were important cross-cultural brokers," and that their communities played a key role in drawing the island into the network of European slavery and colonization.¹²⁰ As Hill and McDonald have it, pirate settlements provide an on-shore version of the romanticized, utopian conditions of pirate ships found in plays like *Fortune By Land And Sea*.

Other scholars have also claimed that pirates attempted to free themselves from social hierarchy altogether. Marcus Rediker argues that eighteenth-century maritime spaces served as breeding grounds for radical political thought: separating themselves not only from nations but also from the oppressive conditions of merchant and naval vessels, pirates intentionally created an extra-legal free space.¹²¹ However, early modern piracy was not as harshly defined or punished as it would later become, and it remained therefore a fluid and usually temporary profession. Cheryl Fury writes that

With the exception of the more "notorious pirates" like Captains Stephen Haines, Clinton Atkinson, William Vaughan, William Arnewood alias Arnold, or Thomas Watson [sic] alias Purser, the evidence suggests that most of their crews did not live permanently outside the law or form a separate criminal caste. The seamen's depositions indicate that most participated in the legitimate or legal maritime community in addition to their sojourns into illegal activities. Motives were varied for seeking such employment, but it appears to have been transitory work. In many cases, pirates were privateers in error or seamen in search of work. Most "pirates" were a part of the larger maritime community and accepted as such. It is likely that the transitory nature of this sort of employment precluded the development of a separate subculture.¹²²

¹²⁰ McDonald, "The Dream of Madagascar?: English Disasters and Pirate Utopias of the Early Modern Indo-Atlantic World" in *New Worlds Reflected: Travel and Utopia in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Chloë Houston (Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), 95-114.

¹²¹ See Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

¹²² Fury, *Tides In The Affairs of Men*, 26. Fury records Purser's birth name as "Thomas Watson," while I follow Jowitt and the pamphlet she quotes in using "Walton."

Fury's analysis largely belies early modern theatrical representations of pirates as a different type of humanity and the adoption of a pirate lifestyle as comparable to turning Turk. At the same time, dramatic depictions of short, fortune-making careers such as that of Young Forrest in Heywood and Rowley's *Fortune By Land And Sea* or even of Valentine in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* align with Fury's more ad-hoc account of piracy. In addition, Elizabeth's attitude toward pirates was far more lenient than that of James I. As Claire Jowett claims, "during Elizabeth's reign, the strategic value of piracy was recognized," with the Queen authorizing "expeditions that ostensibly were to develop and expand trade routes, but in reality were aimed at attacking foreign—especially Spanish—shipping" (35-36). In contrast, "the Jacobean state sought to create an Empire through trade and peace with European rivals," and consequently, "during the first decades of the seventeenth century the state's attitude to piracy hardened considerably"; laws were tightened, enforcement increased, and many pirates were hanged in mass executions (36). James transformed an ad-hoc moneymaking endeavor into a forbidden practice, drawing a line in the sand, as it were, between legal and illegal maritime work.

Despite these changing historical conditions, however, plays like *Fortune By Land And Sea* and Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turn'd Turk* depict famous, career pirates for whom a return to honest sailing is all but impossible. Captured by the pirates Purser and Clinton, Rowley and Heywood's Merchant describes piracy as a sea change: "Clinton I know thee, and have us'd thy skil, / Ere now in a good vessel of my own, / Before thou tookest this desperate course of life."¹²³ Although the Merchant goes on to

¹²³ Thomas Heywood and William Rowley, *A Critical Edition of Fortune By Land And Sea*,

suggest that “Perhaps if now thou do’st me a good office, / Time may enable me to quit thy love,” he does not specify what form this aid might take. (1624-1625). In response, the pirate Clinton vows to “neglect no opportunity,” but the opportunity to which he is referring is to “stufte the vast hold of our empty ship with such rich wares as this our prize affords” (1633-1634). He has no intention of taking up the Merchant’s conditional offer, whatever it may entail. Even at the height of his power, the Merchant cannot commute a sentence; when Forrest, outlawed, flees to him, the best help the Merchant can offer—albeit at considerable risk to himself—is “a safe waftage / Over to France, to Flanders, or to Spain / Or any forraign coast” (3.3.1333-1335). The Merchant can help Forrest escape English justice, but he cannot make the young man safe in England. Likewise, he may be able to offer Purser and Clinton money or information, but it is unlikely that he could put in a word good enough to erase their records as pirates.

The Merchant’s offer is especially unbelievable because the audience knows that the Queen’s justice is particularly focused on those two pirates. The Queen’s proclamation names Purser and Clinton as “two famous Rovers on the Sea...Long since proclaimed Pirates” and offers immense rewards “to him or them...That can bring in these Pirates Ships or Heads” (3.4.1542-1560). The person who captures the pirates will gain “A thousand pound sterling” and, “If a banisht man his country...If a condemned man his liberty...Besides her Majesties especial favour” (1562-1568). These two are far beyond rehabilitation. In fact, so eager is the law to get its hands on them that it offers clemency to other criminals—like Forrest—in exchange for Purser and Clinton. The

ed. Herman Doh (New York: Garland, 1980), 4.1.1621-1623.

proclamation and their own resolution that “since our country have proclaim’d us pyrats,
/ And cut us off from any claim in England, / We’l be no longer now call’d English men”
ensure that they will be pirates until the end of their days (4.1.1618-1620). For these
characters, the divide between legal and illegal is sharply, and permanently, defined.

For Forrest, however, it is not. The force of Purser and Clinton’s crime can
counterbalance any other person’s, a detail Forrest knows well. After the mariners name
Forrest their captain by virtue of his “valour” and the extraordinary good fortune he has
brought them, Forrest turns his sights from the Spanish prizes they have so far captured
and toward “the valiant Pirats / That are so much renowned upon the sea” (4.2.1693-
1694). Forrest tells the mariners that attacking Purser and Clinton is “a conquest worth
the hazarding” because

Besides a thousand pounds reward proposed
To that adventurer that can bring them in,
My peace and pardon though a man condemned,
Is by the proclamation ratified. (1695-1699)

Forrest describes attempting to capture the pirates in the same language the Merchant
uses to describe his economic endeavors: (ad)venture. When captured, the Merchant
confesses that “that which most afflicts my sorrowful soul, / Is that my friends have
ventured largely with me” (1652-1653). Like the Merchant, Forrest hazards his life and
that of his men in the hope that he will obtain a valuable commodity—the heads or ships
of Purser and Clinton—to trade for something he wants. Once he has defeated them, he
continues to use economic language, offering “thankes to heaven for this great victory /
Bought with fearful hazard of our lives / and larg expence of blood on either part”
(4.5.1842-1844). Forrest compares fighting and capturing ships to the legal activity of

merchant adventuring, suggesting that for him, the line between legal and illegal at sea is not distinct, but rather shifting and permeable. Further, to a pirate-hunting pirate, Purser and Clinton are comparable to the “best merchandise” that the Merchant complains that they have “seised” from “every corner my surprised bark”; the notorious and therefore valuable pirates resemble natural resources like gold, silver, furs, or lumber, that the canny adventurer can extract and sell (4.1.1598-1600). Not only are pirates “of the sea” in a national sense, but they are also, in a way, a potential part of its riches.

Forrest’s ability to obtain and sell Purser and Clinton for a pardon, a thousand pounds, and a knighthood demonstrates that for him, piracy is not a permanent condition. However, as Jowitt notes, he is all but indistinguishable from those he hunts: “Young Forrest represents himself as though he were in possession of letters of marque allowing him to make attacks on other shipping. Yet though he persistently attempts to articulate a difference between his exploits and those of Purser and Clinton, in the action that follows there appears to be little to choose between them” (31). Forrest maintains that because he confines his piracy to “any thing that stands with justice, / Our countries honour, and the reputation / Of our own names,” attacking only “foes” and succouring “distrest” “friends & countrymen...with the best supply we have / Of victuals or munition,” he gains only “lawful spoyl” (4.2.1690-1692; 1715-1719). Yet both he and Purser and Clinton fly “the Cross of England and St. George,” and both ships divide their wealth democratically rather than hierarchically (1758). Purser’s opening lines outline the pirates’ avowed commitment to fairness:

The spoyl of this rich ship we will divide
 In equal shares, and not the meanest of any,
 But by the custom of the sea may challenge
 According to his place, rights in the spoyl:
 Though Out-laws, we keep laws amongst ourselves,
 Else we could have no certain government. (4.1.1581-1586)

Unlike the law of the land, the custom of the sea ensures that each crew member has a right of appeal; the flexibility and equality of the pirates' self-determined code contrasts favorably with the "gripping power" of the legal code that condemns Forrest for defending himself against his brother's murderer (2.3.917).

Once the mariners make Forrest their captain, Forrest appears to adopt the custom of the sea, and its rhetoric. After his victory, he announces to his sailors and Purser and Clinton's freed prisoners, "the riches of [the pirates'] ship /We 'mongst you will divide in equal shares, / To every man's desert, estate, and place" (4.5.1850-1852). Jowitt points out that "this distribution runs counter to the official Elizabethan policy" for privateers of "the prize being divided only on return to England, thus ensuring that the crown was awarded a percentage of the total spoils" (32). Victorious aboard his ship, Forrest becomes, like the pirates, a law unto himself; however, he is less radical than they. Eschewing the absolute equality of shares on Purser and Clinton's ship, where "not the meanest of any, but by the custom of the sea may challenge according to his place, rights in the spoyl," Forrest promises instead shares that are "equal" "to every man's desert, estate, and place" (4.1.1582-1584). While the pirates recognize but reject social distinctions between the best and the "meanest," Forrest reinforces them. Jowitt is correct that he acts like a pirate in attacking ships, taking their cargo, and dividing the spoils on board, but she minimizes the conservatism evident in Forrest's brand of piracy. Virtue,

valor, and fortune get Forrest out to sea and in charge of a ship, and it is these qualities that are eventually rewarded at the play's end.

As a protagonist, Forrest can perform piratical feats but then reintegrate himself into land-based society. He is not "of the sea" the way that Purser and Clinton are; rather, his actions resemble those of privateers like Drake or Raleigh, or the Elizabethan seamen that Fury describes. In the same play, however, Purser and Clinton operate under another definition of piracy, one that is a permanent life state that ends one way or another in a violent death. As in history, in *Fortune By Land And Sea*, piracy is simultaneously legal and illegal, depending on who you are.

Another dramatic example of the shifting allegiances of early modern sailors occurs in the death of Suffolk in *Henry VI Part Two*, where a former servant of Suffolk's, now risen to Lieutenant of a pinnace and called "captain" by his fellow mariners, oversees the beheading of his old master.¹²⁴ As the scene opens, Suffolk is disguised and the Lieutenant is disposed to take a ransom payment in exchange for sparing his life. When hotheaded sailor Walter Whitmore, having lost an eye "in laying the prize aboard," demands that "to revenge it," Suffolk "shalt die," the Lieutenant advises him, "Be not so rash; take ransom, let him live" (4.1.25-28). Initially, Whitmore excepted, the sailors are primarily interested in the money they can extract from the gentlemen's families, not in more violence. The provenance and political affiliations of the seamen are unclear; profit is their motive.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ All citations are from *King Henry VI, Part Two*, ed. Ronald Knowles (London: Methuen, 1999), henceforth parenthetically cited *2H6*.

¹²⁵ Ronald Knowles states that "modern scholars have not been able to ascertain precisely the

Although the situation seems to be heading toward Suffolk's ransom, it takes a grim turn. Suffolk offers the furious Whitmore two pieces of information that he assumes will overawe all the commoners and preserve his life: he reveals his St. George medal, a signifier of his membership in the Order of the Garter, and, several lines later, tells Whitmore, "thy prisoner is a prince, / The Duke of Suffolk, William de la Pole" (44-5). Whether or not Suffolk conceives of these moves as risky, both gambles fail. To his order, "Look on my George; I am a gentleman," Whitmore replies, "And so am I; my name is Walter Whitmore," prompting Suffolk to remember, "a cunning man did calculate my birth / And told me that by water I should die" (29-31; 34-35). Suffolk's alarm arises from the fact that Whitmore, like another famous seagoing Walter, Sir Walter Raleigh, pronounces his name so it sounds like "water."¹²⁶ On the water, "Water" Whitmore is immune to the semiotic power of the George medal and can proclaim himself equal to any gentleman; Suffolk is in his power, and the power of the Lieutenant. In attempting to save himself by removing his disguise, Suffolk unintentionally activates the animosity of that Lieutenant who, to Suffolk's arrogant question, "Jove sometimes went disguised, and why not I?" replies, "But Jove was never slain as thou shalt be" (48-49). While the following lines give an indication of why the Lieutenant so hates and resents Suffolk, initially the Lieutenant's change of heart suggests that it is perhaps

ownership of the vessel in 1450"; even more unclear is whether Shakespeare intends the reunion of master and servant to be random or somehow pre-arranged (2*H6* 4.1.n).

¹²⁶ In his introduction to the *Discovery of Guiana*, Benjamin Schmidt notes that "Raleigh was always Elizabeth's 'Water'—such was her pet name—a play on his broad Devonshire accent" (2). *The Discovery of Guiana by Sir Walter Raleigh, With Related Documents*, ed. Benjamin Schmidt (Boston: Bedford St. Martin's, 2008).

merely Suffolk's nobility and attitude that have condemned him. Both the George and Suffolk's name would have had a predictable effect on land: doffed caps, deep bows, and other indications of respect. On this ship, however, these signs do not communicate as Suffolk expects.¹²⁷

The play gives Suffolk and the Lieutenant a backstory to explain the latter's behavior, but backstory or no, the ship still appears as an unusual space where a former servant can execute his master with impunity. Suffolk taunts the Lieutenant, calling him an "obscure and lousy swain" and reminding him,

Hast thou not kissed thy hand and held my stirrup?
And bare-headed plodded by my foot-cloth mule,
And thought thee happy when I shook my head?
How often has thou waited at my cup,
Fed from my trencher, kneeled down at the board
When I have feasted with Queen Margaret?
Remember it, and let it make thee crestfallen,
Ay, and allay this thy abortive pride. (50; 53-60)

Suffolk's tale mixes signs of intimacy with performances of hierarchy. The two men may have eaten from the same plate (albeit sequentially), but the Lieutenant has also walked, hatless, by the mule "used to carry the conspicuously sumptuous covering" for Suffolk's

¹²⁷ Following Suffolk's own insistence that he "dies by pirates," scholars often identify the pinnace as a pirate vessel and suggest their insubordinate behavior to Suffolk is a result of their outlaw status; however, only Suffolk names them pirates, and it is also possible that wartime conditions combined with the alternate hierarchies of seafaring (as in the famous opening storm scene of *The Tempest*) are reason enough. See Karl P. Wentersdorf, "Hamlet's Encounter with the Pirates," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 34.1 (1983), 434-440; Thomas Cartelli, "Suffolk and the Pirates: Disordered Relations in Shakespeare's *2 Henry VI*," in Jean E. Howard and Richard Dutton, eds., *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works, Volume 2: The Histories*, (Malden: Blackwell, 2003), 325-343; Chris Fitter, "Emergent Shakespeares and the Politics of Protest: *2 Henry VI* in Historical Contexts," *ELH* 72.1 (2005), 129-158; Claire Jowitt, "Pirates and Politics: Drama of the 'Long 1590s'," in *The Culture of Piracy, 1580-1630*.

horse (54n). About this passage, Knowles admits, “I can find no explanation for the apparent recognition of a former household servant here...Perhaps what is more important is the dramatic function in the pathos of recollected greatness?” (53-64n.). Some may find pathos in Suffolk’s “recollected greatness,” but this recollection is at the expense of the Lieutenant, who now, in a reversal of roles, holds Suffolk’s life in his hands. The maritime setting of this reversal can help to illuminate an otherwise confusing reunion.

This brief episode presents the unstable and contingent allegiances of seamen in several ways. First, signals of authority such as Suffolk’s George and his noble title are rejected at sea in a way that would be all but impossible on land. Second, the history between the Duke and the Lieutenant shows that going to sea may offer a man of low status power that would be unavailable to him on land. Third, the Lieutenant’s change of plan suggests that aboard, the officer may have the authority and autonomy to make critical decisions himself, based on his own reasoning and even emotions. Whether these mariners are indeed pirates or merely engaging in piratical behavior, their pinnace is not only a space of social reversal and personal decision-making, but also a space where the line between legal and illegal is particularly permeable and unclear. Both in reality and onstage, the sea represents a space ruled as much by opportunity as by established authorities.¹²⁸

¹²⁸ For a succinct summary of early modern English positions on sovereignty and the sea, see Bradin Cormack, *A Power to Do Justice: Jurisdiction, English Literature, and the Rise of the Common Law* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 256-261.

Patriots and Infidels

For both early modern dramatists and the critics who study their work, piracy often appears inextricable from “turning Turk”— i.e., converting to Islam.¹²⁹ However, relations between Europe and the Islamic World are not the only geopolitical struggle affecting pirate characters in early modern performance. The ballad “Sir Andrew Barton” embodies Scottish-English hostility through the defeat of the pirate Andrew Barton. Economic tensions between English and Scottish shipping and maritime interests are for the most part masked in official international discourse, but realized in extra-legal violence and performed on the stage; because of their self-determination, their fluctuating and contradictory legal status, and their oceanic workplace, pirate figures are often found participating in unofficial but nationally-tinged battles. Pirates can be interpreted multiple ways by multiple viewers inside and outside of a text, and this flexibility is essential.

Criticism of Daborne’s *A Christian Turn’d Turk* has described the play’s ambivalent attitude towards piracy and conversion. According to Daniel Vitkus, the play sets up “a distinction between legitimate and illegitimate maritime aggression, only to

¹²⁹ See Potter, “Pirates and ‘Turning Turk’ in Renaissance Drama”; Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Barbara Fuchs, *Mimesis and Empire: The New World, Islam, and European Identities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Jonathan Burton, “English Anxiety and the Muslim Power of Conversion: Five Perspectives on ‘Turning Turk’ in Early Modern Texts,” *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 2 (2002), 35-67; Claire Jowitt, *Voyage, Drama, and Gender Politics 1589-1642: Real and Imagined Worlds* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003); Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Gerald MacLean, “On Turning Turk, or Trying To: National Identity in Daborne’s *A Christian Turn’d Turk*,” *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 29.2 (2003), 225-252; Hutchings, “Acting Pirates”; *Remapping the Mediterranean World in Early Modern English Writings*, ed. Goran V. Stanivukovic (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Jowitt, *The Culture of Piracy* (2010); and Ellinghausen, *Pirates, Traitors, and Apostates* (2018).

collapse and destabilize that distinction. Those who betray and ‘turn’ are, in the end, hard to differentiate from those who present themselves as the representatives of an admirable and heroic masculinity” (*Turning Turk* 143). John Ward, the titular figure, who dies an apostate, and Simon Dansiker, another pirate who repents, gains a pardon, and becomes a pirate-hunter, are, as Vitkus points out, extremely similar in their behavior and speech. Ultimately, the chief distinction between them is the direction—to or from Christianity—that they finally turn. Building on Vitkus’s claim, Gerald MacLean suggests that ambiguity arises because despite his best efforts, Ward cannot truly turn Turk: “in Daborne’s moral-nationalist scheme, Ward dies recognizing that, in death, he will be judged as a Protestant Englishman, the very national identity he has been attempting to disown” (226). Englishness is impossible to smother; even after his conversion and circumcision, Ward cannot negate the moral standards of his home country. Piratical deeds, and even apostasy, do not ultimately change a person’s national identity.

While MacLean’s reading seems compelling, it directs attention away from the evidence that pirates like Ward can for a time possess a large degree of self-determination. Ellinghausen focuses not on Ward’s death, but on his life, noting that “Ward and other pirates” who gain name-recognition and have plays and ballads composed about them comprise “a class of otherwise worthy and talented men who put their abilities to their own uses, rather than to those of the monarch or the state” (“We Are Of The Sea” 190). For both ambitious renegadoes, as well as those who have no other option, the sea, as “a place in which traditional modes of authority meet the alterity of the sea, with its promise of physical and psychic mobility” provides a particular haven

(190).¹³⁰ It is the sea of fiction as much as or more than the real sea that promises these freedoms, and Ellinghausen's description of the sea's "promise of physical and psychic mobility" recalls the environment of the playhouse. In contrast to the sea, the playhouse's physical boundaries, rather than its limitlessness, make it a space of freedom, but as Jowitt and Mark Hutchings have shown, sumptuous costume was an outward sign of "psychic mobility" for both pirates and actors.¹³¹ Acting within the environments provided by ship and playhouse, the dramatic pirate is a particularly strong figure of self-determination, risk, and possibility.

Daborne's play juxtaposes the conflict between Christianity and Islam with that between law and career piracy, emphasizing that pirates have starring roles to play on both sides of cultural and legal divides. *A Christian Turn'd Turk* shows that piracy is not inherently threatening to the state or to regular people; when deployed by agents of the state, it can, paradoxically, be a force for order, and even the most dangerous pirates can be worthy opponents. These noble pirates sail not only the Mediterranean, but the North Atlantic as well: the broadside ballad "Sir Andrew Barton," printed in 1630, ties pirates and privateers to the cultural fissures within the British Isles themselves while indicating the mutual respect between seafarers both legal and illegal.

The ballad's eponymous Scottish pirate combines fierceness, nobility, and nationalism, and consequently is both reviled and admired by the Englishmen who

¹³⁰ Ellinghausen indicates that unlike the ambitious Ward, most pirates had other, more practical or even desperate reasons for going to sea—"domestic poverty and subsequent criminal behavior" (191).

¹³¹ See Jowitt, *The Culture of Piracy*, 22; Hutchings, "Acting Pirates," 90.

oppose him. Initially named a “Traitor” by King Henry VIII for preying on English ships (although Scotland is, at this point, its own country), Sir Andrew Barton proves his valor in the sea-fight and in his dying words to his men:

Fight on, fight on my merry men all,
 a little I am hurt yet not slaine,
 Ile but lie downe and bleed a while,
 and come and fight with you againe.

And do not, saith he, feare English Rogues
 and of your foes stand in no awe,
 But stand fast by S. Andrewes crosse,
 vntil you hear my whistle blow.¹³²

Sir Andrew follows martial convention in bravely denying his wounds, and he casts his fight as a national one. He bids his men “feare no English Rogues” and “stand fast by S. Andrewes crosse,” the symbol of Scotland. In the illustration at the beginning of the 1630 broadside, Sir Andrew, handsomely dressed, stands with a thistle growing by his right foot, another detail that emphasizes his Scottishness.

Both sides’ leaders make the national flavor of the conflict clear. Lord Charles Howard, who leads the English troops, sets up his side of the fight as both a personal quest and a mission for the good of England: to the king’s question, “Have I nere a Lord in all my Realme, / dare fetch that Traitor unto me,” Lord Howard replies,

I hope to proove in valour strong:
 The Scottish knight I vow to seeke,
 in place wheresoever that he be,
 And bring on shore with all his might,

¹³² Anonymous, “A true Relation of the Life and Death of Sir *Andrew Barton*, a Pirate and Rover on the Seas, To the tune of *Come follow me Love, etc.*” (London, 1630), STC 1539.5, lines 20, 197-204. NB: the original broadside contains no line numbers but I include them here based on my own count. For an overview of the life of the real Sir Andrew Barton, see Claire Jowitt’s introduction to *Pirates?: The Politics of Plunder*, 4-8.

or into Scot and [sic] he shall carry me.
(19; 28-32)

Lord Howard's promise to capture Sir Andrew imagines the contest as a sort of tug-of-war—either he will drag Sir Andrew to the King's court in London, or Sir Andrew will drag him into Scotland. Either way, Lord Howard foresees the fight ending not on the sea, but onshore.

The English crew manning Lord Howard's ship is a highly skilled team drawn from multiple northern counties: the ballad mentions particularly that William Horsly, the bowman "whose actiue hands had gained fame" and is knighted for shooting and killing Sir Andrew, was a "Gentleman borne in Yorkeshire," and that Henry Hunt, who aids in the defeat of the Scottish, is a "Merchant of New-castle" (46-47; 64). The ballad is clear that the fight is between Scots and Englishmen, but even though Sir Andrew is a "Scottish knight," he is characterized as a pirate rather than a Scottish privateer. In doling out pensions and favors after Sir Andrew is defeated, King Henry promises "Seven shillings to our English men, / who to this fight did stoutly stand," and then, in the ballad's final two lines, "12 pence a day to the Scots, till they come to my brother King his Land" (245-248). Both Sir Andrew and Lord Howard pit England and Scotland symbolically against each other, but Henry admits no hostility between himself and his "brother King," the King of Scotland.

Following the defeat and killing of the historical Sir Andrew by English forces in 1511, King James requested restitution from King Henry for the death of a Scottish noble; Henry refused, as, in the words of English chronicler Edward Hall, "it became not one Prince to laie a breache of a league [an international treaty] to another Prince in

doynge Justice upon a pirate or thiefe.”¹³³ Henry’s argument is that the right of any state government to punish pirates and thieves is universal whether the criminals be foreign nationals or not. By calling Barton a pirate, Henry minimizes the fact that his brother King’s noble has died upon his orders, seemingly deescalating international tension. However, by ignoring James’ claim to restitution, Henry actually adds stress to the relationship. Indeed, as Jowitt points out, “Barton’s death, and Henry VIII’s failure to provide ‘restitution, accordyng to the league,’ contributed to the increasing Anglo-Scots tension at the time – which ultimately led to the battle of Flodden Field on 9 September 1513 and James IV’s own death” (*Pirates?* 9). As a noble and a pirate, Sir Andrew Barton stands for Scotland as a larger idea, and his attack on English shipping reveals and exacerbates an underlying animosity between his nation and England. At the same time, because of the self-determination associated with career pirates, he can be viewed as a rogue agent who can be attacked and even killed without disturbing international treaties. A true pirate, Barton bears multiple, contradictory symbolic meanings at once.

In an Anglo-Scottish relationship that included ongoing border raiding and intermittent land-based warfare, the sea-fight recounted in the ballad is an opportunity for the two countries’ soldiers and sailors to meet in battle unofficially. Capturing a Scottish pirate provides Henry an opportunity to flex his naval muscles and to score a memorable victory over a longtime rival, all while maintaining the appearance of friendly peace between himself and his “brother.” He may even reward Sir Andrew’s men with twelve

¹³³ Edward Hall, *Henry VIII*, ed. Charles Whibley, 2 vols (London: T.C. & E.C. Jack, 1904), I, 39. Quoted in Jowitt’s introduction to *Pirates?* on page 8.

pence a day for their bravery in fighting against his own troops; the gift emphasizes Henry's princely magnanimity. As he dispenses generous pensions to the English heroes and a small travel stipend to the Scottish pirates, Henry's royal power is on full display.

While Sir Andrew's piracy is an excuse for an Anglo-Scottish dust-up, the sea provides a safe third space for the conflict to come to a head. On the open sea, no physical territory can be gained or lost, and the fighting is not inscribed on a plot of land in memory the way it is at Bosworth or Flodden Fields. Instead, the characters of the story get full attention: the nationalist rogue Sir Andrew, the brave commander Lord Howard, the generous and competent merchant Henry Hunt, and the skilled soldiers and sailors of both ships. While clearly English in its sympathies, the ballad extends respect and even admiration to its antihero, the pirate knight. Like Ward, Purser, Clinton, and other famous pirates, Sir Andrew Barton supports polysemous interpretations. In particular, such pirates provide opportunities for early modern works to depict multiple sides of several contemporary geopolitical positions without causing problems with censors or other authorities.

Thieves of Mercy

In addition to the famous pirates on whose exploits plays and ballads focus centrally, another type of dramatic pirate also stalks the stage. Minor or offstage helpers-along in *Hamlet* and *Pericles*, these "purely narrative pirates," as Jowitt calls them, seem to function only to drive plot (*The Culture of Piracy* 130). Scholars have long debated whether there is more to these incidental episodes of piracy than meets the eye,

particularly in the case of *Hamlet*, and some have argued that despite their deceptively small roles, the pirates are significant.¹³⁴ In the context of a larger trend of contradictory or opposing representations of the ocean, however, that significance takes on a new cast: pirates resemble other oceanic manifestations of force like storms and wrecks. In the case of people captured from the seaside, pirates are an invasion of oceanic unpredictability onto land. When they strike other ships at sea, pirates make manifest the risk of venturing away from shore. In both cases, “purely narrative pirates” provide extreme examples of the sea’s inescapable effects. Indeed, Shylock categorizes them among other impersonal risk factors: “there be land rats, and water rats, and water thieves—I mean pirates—and then there is peril of waters, winds and rocks.”¹³⁵ At the same time, however, the pirate episodes affect both Hamlet and Marina in different ways, suggesting that narrative pirates may be more than mere plot device.

Both Hamlet and Marina are saved from death by the sudden intervention of pirates: Hamlet, when the ship in which he travels to England to be executed is attacked, and Marina, when she is plucked from the beach where her foster-mother’s servant has just revealed that he has orders to murder her. While the pirates’ intervention into *Pericles* appears to be an unplanned act of Providence, the question of what, if any, role Hamlet may have had in his own capture has long been a topic of debate.¹³⁶ As Karl

¹³⁴ See, for example, Lezra, “Pirating Reading.”

¹³⁵ Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. John Drakakis (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), 1.3. 21-23.

¹³⁶ The suggestion that Hamlet had colluded with the pirates who capture him was first made by George Miles in 1870; in this century, Martin Stevens, Karl Wentersdorf, David Farley-Hills, and Bernice Kliman have all weighed in. See Stevens, “Hamlet and the Pirates: A Critical Reconsideration,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 26 (1975), 276-284; Wentersdorf,

Wentersdorf puts it, with the pirate episode, “it is sometimes argued, Shakespeare allows a fortuitous happening, and allegedly a very unlikely one at that, to determine the course of events at a crucial point preceding the catastrophe” (435). In this interpretation, the pirates act like any other random or providential event at sea; a storm, wreck, sea monster, or other shipboard misadventure could also precipitate Hamlet’s return. The pirates qua pirates are not especially important; rather, the emphasis is on the risk of sea travel. Indeed, Hamlet has already provided for his eventual return to Elsinore by opening and modifying Claudius’s execution order. Wentersdorf writes that “if the Prince had not been left on the pirate ship when the temporarily grappled vessels separated, he would have continued on his way to England; and after the supposed orders of Claudius had been carried out there, Hamlet would have returned to Elsinore” (435). If we take this reading to be true, then the pirates merely hasten a sequence of events that Hamlet has himself put into action.

However, unlike other types of maritime peril such as tempests, sea monsters, ship-wrecks, Neptune, etc., pirates are human agents—ones particularly associated with pursuing their own self-interest. Hamlet’s self-determination in the pirate episode is strikingly in contrast to his often-beleaguered state in the previous acts of the play, and the pirates’ own exercise of agency is also a prominent factor in this scene. Hamlet can negotiate an exchange with them, and they are active participants in the resulting bargain: as he writes to Horatio, “they have dealt with me like thieves of mercy, but they knew

“Hamlet’s Encounter with the Pirates,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 34.4 (1983), 434-440; Farley-Hills, “Hamlet’s Account of the Pirates,” *The Review of English Studies* 50.199 (1999), 320-331; “At Sea about Hamlet at Sea: A Detective Story,” *SQ* 62 (2011), 180-204.

what they did: I am to do a turn for them.”¹³⁷ Hamlet’s statement implicitly recognizes their options: the pirates could kill the prince, they could show simple mercy, they could demand ransom for him, or they could strike a deal with him—which they choose to do. In the context of other pirate plays, it is not surprising that the pirates of *Hamlet* choose to make a deal. Although Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor confess that “it is not clear quite what Hamlet has agreed to do for the pirates in return for his freedom,” adding, “perhaps he is supposed to be negotiating a ransom or an amnesty of some kind for them,” the specific terms of the arrangement matter less than the fact that an arrangement is made at all (4.6.21n.). Like other dramatic pirates, the offstage pirates of *Hamlet* have the power to make their own decisions based on cost-benefit analysis.

At sea, Hamlet behaves differently than he does in Elsinore.¹³⁸ During the voyage to England—before he ever sets foot on the pirate ship—he takes decisive action to move events forward: he first acts on a hunch and violates the royal seal; then he forges Rosencrantz and Guildenstern’s death warrant. He is already acting more like a pirate than a prince. This piratical behavior culminates when he subsequently “boards” a pirate ship while they are grappled and makes his deal with the actual pirates (4.6.18). Even Hamlet’s narrative identifies him with the actions of thieves and pirates, from violation of

¹³⁷ Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor (London: Thomson Learning, 2006), 4.6.19-21.

¹³⁸ Jowitt claims that “the previously hesitant and indecisive Prince is either transformed by his experiences on the pirate ship or, if it is a pre-arranged meeting and the pirate ship is a projection of Hamlet’s own stratagem (his ‘craft’), then it can be seen as the physical manifestation and release of his pent-up potential for epic action” (*The Culture of Piracy*, 132). However, the Hamlet who returns to Denmark exhibits the same indecisive, erratic behavior as the Hamlet who was exiled; only aboard the two ships does he demonstrate the potential for concerted action that Jowitt identifies.

diplomatic privilege, to forgery, participating in a sea fight, to ruthlessly sending erstwhile friends to their deaths. The way he represents the fight at sea actively connects him to the pirates, who board their quarry, see how best they can make a profit off the encounter, and steal or deal for what they want. Describing his journey, Hamlet emphasizes the self-interested—if not ruthlessly selfish—deliberate choices he makes to return home. The seafaring episode constitutes a sort of moral holiday for Hamlet, but some of his decisiveness follows him back to Elsinore: once home, his behavior—from leaping into Ophelia's grave to accepting Laertes' challenge to his forceful dispatching of Claudius—brings about the end of the play with relative swiftness. However, the exact degree to which Hamlet changes after or even because of his moral holiday matters far less for this investigation than does the seafaring nature of that experience.

It is essential that Hamlet's first moments as a decisive actor happens at sea, outside the confines of the court and in a setting with alternate hierarchies of skill.¹³⁹ In multiple ways, the rules of Elsinore do not apply; rashness is rewarded. Hamlet is on the ocean when he takes the risk of opening Claudius's letter and responding mercilessly to what he reads inside; once he is on the pirate ship, still at sea, he makes a deal with the pirates that apparently suits their interests and his. It is also apt that negotiating with pirates returns Hamlet for the last act of his revenge, because pirates put themselves and their goals before nation, monarch, or law. The maritime conditions of Hamlet's trip—the risk of the ocean and the example provided by self-determining pirates—provide an enriching thematic context for understanding an otherwise somewhat puzzling episode.

¹³⁹ These alternate hierarchies are demonstrated most clearly in 1.1 of *The Tempest*.

As in the providential view of Hamlet's pirate encounter, some scholars have described the pirates of *Pericles* as mere authorial conveniences.¹⁴⁰ To this point of view, Marina's kidnapping appears to be an expedient way to get the princess from her unsafe home in Cleon and Dionyza's court to the brothel in Mytilene where she can, eventually, be reunited with her father and provided with a suitable husband. Suzanne Gossett points out that "the pirates derive formally from New Comedy," a genre in which, as Robert S. Miola writes, "the sea is the setting for various journeys, for personal and professional disasters, for storms and shipwrecks, for *praedones* and *piscatores* ('pirates' and 'fishermen')," all of which appear in Shakespeare's play (*Per.* 4.1.87.1n).¹⁴¹ Certainly, the pirates perform an important narrative function in rescuing, transporting, and selling Marina. However, unlike a storm or shipwreck, pirate kidnappers make deliberate choices, and attending to their self-determination in relation to Marina can illuminate not only their role in *Pericles*, but also the parts they play in other early modern plays.

The pirates who kidnap Marina do so onstage, and the scene is clearly intended to suggest that they do so with rape in mind. At the very point that Leonine is about to murder the young woman, the pirates enter, one crying "Hold, villain!" (4.1.87). Initially, it might appear that the pirates intend to rescue Marina: they have spotted a "villain" and want to stop him from performing a bad deed. However, their desire to save Marina is

¹⁴⁰ Shakespeare, *Pericles*, ed. Suzanne Gossett (London: Bloomsbury, 2004), henceforth parenthetically cited *Per.*

¹⁴¹ Robert S. Miola, *Shakespeare and Classical Comedy: The Influence of Plautus and Terence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 145-146. Other classical forerunners include the unfortunate pirates of the *Seventh Homeric Hymn to Dionysus* and the kidnappers of ancient Greek novels such as Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe* and Xenophon of Ephesus' *Ephesian Tale*.

not disinterested: the second pirate proclaims Marina, “a prize, a prize!”; the third pirate claims “half part” and urges his “mates,” “let’s have her aboard suddenly” (89-91). They hustle Marina offstage. Leonine remains to parse what he has just witnessed and inform the audience, “These roguing thieves serve the great pirate Valdes, / And they have seized Marina” (92-93).¹⁴² At this point, the pirates’ personal desire to have sexual control over Marina seems to be their chief motivation.

However, in the next scene, it becomes clear that the pirates have not personal but commercial goals in mind. When they reappear to sell Marina, they affirm to Bolt, Bawd and Pander that that she remains a virgin (4.2.39). These two sequences dramatically demonstrate the pirates’ practices and their motives: they leave the sea and come ashore to kidnap, but they do so primarily for financial gain rather than to swell their own ranks or merely to satisfy an urge to rape, pillage, or steal. They work together on land to obtain prizes, but they take those prizes to sea in order to maximize the profits. Their interests are primarily economic rather than sexual. Like the pirates of *Hamlet*, the pirates who kidnap Marina are always up for a deal.¹⁴³ Because of Marina’s gender, however, the pirates view her as a commodity to exchange rather than a potential business partner.

However, as Suparna Roychaudhury has argued, Marina’s rhetorical skill is tied

¹⁴² As Gossett and earlier editors note, this “great pirate” shares a name with Don Pedro de Valdes, one of the admirals of the Spanish Armada, a detail which makes the moment curiously anachronistic as well as narratively expedient (*Per.* 4.1.92n).

¹⁴³ Jowitt suggests that in their eagerness to sell, rather than rape, Marina, they are figures of “over-determined mercantilism,” which “seeks to buy and sell excessively, commodifying and making available to the highest bidder something meant to be enshrined and sacred, a Princess’s virginity” (*The Culture of Piracy* 133).

to her history with the sea.¹⁴⁴ Like her father, Marina is one “whom both the waters and the wind” (as well as more human forces) “In that vast tennis-court hath made the ball / For them to play upon” (2.1.58-60); more than Pericles, however, Marina successfully conveys her identity through her eloquence that “even redeems others” as well.¹⁴⁵ Her language before and after her encounter with the pirates demonstrates Marina’s self-possession and powers of self-determination even when she seems most passive and vulnerable. Roychaudhury writes that “Marina renders the tempest that heralded her life into the basis of an identity”; she transforms a vulnerable moment at sea into a personal creation myth (1034). In rendering her mental anguish rhetorically as sea-storm and wave-tossed ship, Marina participates in the widespread early modern literary tradition of the mental tempest: “Marina invents...a visceral yet ultimately comforting image of her turbulent birth, a scenario in which she envisages a ‘ceaseless storm’ withstood, even overcome” (1034). Marina’s powerful self-narration both before and after her kidnapping is intrinsically linked to the emotional experience of being at sea.¹⁴⁶ After the

¹⁴⁴ Suparna Roychaudhury, “Mental Tempests, Seas of Trouble: The Perturbations of Shakespeare’s *Pericles*,” *ELH* 82.4 (2015), 1013-1039; Travis Curtright, “‘Falseness cannot come from thee’: Marina as Character and Orator in Shakespeare’s *Pericles*,” *Literary Imagination* 11.1 (2008), 99-110.

¹⁴⁵ Jeanie Grant Moore, “Riddled Romance: Kingship and Kinship in *Pericles*,” *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature* 57.1 (2003), 33-48; 41.

¹⁴⁶ Curtright also highlights Marina’s command of her emotional experience, but he focuses on how she communicates it to Leonine and to Pericles using classical rhetorical forms. Curtright argues that “Marina’s self-presentation does not simply show the design of romantic narrative,” but also systematically produces ethos in both her listeners and the audience (108). However, Curtright’s convincing rhetorical analysis of Marina’s speeches to Leonine is dampened somewhat by the fact that she does not, in the end, convince the servant not to murder her: his final line before the pirates interrupt is “I am sworn / And will dispatch” (4.1. 86-7). Marina’s conversation with Pericles in the hold of the ship is genuinely successful, perhaps because they meet on more neutral ground both physically and rhetorically.

pirates kidnap her, when she is in Mytilene, her powers of speech are at their fullest; she is able to dissuade would-be clients from sexually pursuing her, thereby remaining virginal, as she chooses to be. After her kidnapping, Marina becomes a successful negotiator: in addition to convincing the brothel-goers of Mytilene to reform, she persuades Bolt that he will make more money hiring her out to teach people to “sing, weave, sew and dance” than by prostituting her (*Per.* 4.5.186). Having been commodified by the pirates, Marina argues that her genteel talents also constitute a commodity, and one far more profitable than her (unwilling) sexuality.

Neither Marina nor the pirates who capture and sell her are merely characterless devices demanded by the romance structure of the play. Marina’s kidnapping by pirates removes her from the home of her envious foster parents and forces her to employ eloquence to transform herself and her interlocutors. In both Marina’s and Hamlet’s cases, experiences at sea provide an opportunity to become decisive, savvy actors, strategists, and negotiators—if only for a short while. The pirate ship is a space where political, social, and rhetorical rules operate differently than on land. Furthermore, alternate, piratical values sometimes bleed out from the ship itself and into the plays at large. Though their part is small, the pirates’ will has a large impact on the plot of the play; more than mere romantic convention, they are thinking agents who make determined choices and negotiate to their best advantages. Though they live on the sea and are thematically connected to its risk and possibility, “purely narrative pirates” are more than just oceanic spillover. They fit the contradictory, aggressive, unmanageable qualities of the sea while at the same time managing that sea to serve their own (and the

dramatist's) purposes. As in the ironic safety of the rudderless boat, the convention of rescue by pirates encompasses multiple, ironic, and contradictory roles of the sea as it appears in early modern literature.

CHAPTER FOUR: Watery Roles: Gendered Bodies in and Around the Sea

Scholars of early modern literature have observed that imagery of the sea often accompanies a fluid representation of gender.¹⁴⁷ Sea-soaked plays like *Twelfth Night* and *Antony and Cleopatra* contain cross-dressing and gender play, while hybrid figures like the mermaid provide a way for the ocean's fluidity to come ashore. However, when early modern authors describe the sea as embodied, those bodies, whether of mermaids, sea-monsters, or Neptune himself, are firmly and essentially gendered. When the sea is productive, fecund, and tempting, its body is feminine; when the sea is rapacious, invasive, and aggressive, its body is male. Spenser, Shakespeare, Marlowe and others

¹⁴⁷ For example, Stephen Orgel connects Viola's decision to present herself as a eunuch—implying “sexual alternatives and equivalents, of either-and-both”—to the shipwreck she has survived and her belief that Sebastian has drowned. See “Call Me Ganymede,” in *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 53-82, 56. Janet Adelman remarks on the feminine aspects of Antony's liquid character, writing that “like the Nile,” Antony “overflows the measure,” feeling “himself becoming ‘indistinct / As water is in water (4.14.10-11)’” (126-127). Adelman notes that the play connects “Antony's overflowing” in particular “with the fecundity of the overflowing Nile” (127-128). See Janet Adelman, *The Common Liar: An Essay on Antony and Cleopatra* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973). Echoing Adelman, Laura Levine also connects Antony's dissolving masculine self to the image of “water in water,” arguing that the image “suggests the inability of Antony's body to hold a fixed shape” and noting that “a moment later Antony makes explicit the emasculation this process implies.” See Laura Levine, *Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-Theatricality and Effeminization 1579-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 55. More recently, Sarah Carter notes prominent water imagery in the Ovidian myth of Hermaphroditus and the personified spring Salmacis both in the original and in early modern translations. See Sarah Carter, *Ovidian Myth and Sexual Deviance* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 120-129. Keverne Smith tracks the “water-drops” of tears in Shakespeare's plays, noting the complicated and contradictory, and often boundary-crossing, gendered connotations of crying. See Keverne Smith, *Shakespeare and Son: A Journey in Writing and Grieving* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2011), 3-5. Valerie Billing notes how Malvolio describes Viola's state “somewhere between youth and adult, man and woman” as being “in standing water” (448). See Valerie Billing, “Sexuality and Queerness on the Early Modern Stage,” *A New Companion to Renaissance Drama* ed. Arthur F. Kinney and Thomas Warren Hopper (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2017), 443-455.

use the imagery of the sea to complicate conventional representations of gender, but when they ascribe masculine or feminine qualities to the embodied sea, they do so within the bounds of traditional gender roles. Routinely asserting the essentialized gender of mermaids, sea-monsters, et cetera, allows early modern authors to describe performative gender in oceanic language while maintaining that some things—natural elements, like the sea—remain fixed, stable, and organized under a traditional gender binary.

In many cases the sea imagery of early modern literature accompanies or highlights moments that emphasize the performative nature of gender. Britomart's complaint juxtaposes the hard exterior of the lady knight's armor to a tempestuous emotional setting. Viola emerges from the opening shipwreck intent on cross-dressing in Illyria. Cleopatra, aligned like the rest of Egypt with water and intuition, brags about playing dress-up as her Roman lover, girding her loins with his famous sword Philippan.¹⁴⁸ Even the usually hyper-masculine Richard of Gloucester vows to “drown more sailors than the mermaid shall,” connecting his seductive powers of rhetoric to the temptress of the sea.¹⁴⁹ However, such fluid language is not the only way that imagery of the sea intersects with gendered descriptions.

¹⁴⁸ Mary Crane observes that “The Roman world is an orderly, impermeable, man-made “arch.” The Egyptian “earth” is “dunghy” “clay”—elemental, life-giving, and allied with another element, water” (5). For more on the differences and slippage between Roman and Egyptian world-views, see Mary Thomas Crane, “Roman World, Egyptian Earth: Cognitive Difference and Empire in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*,” *Comparative Drama* 43.1 (2009), 1-17. In his introduction to the Arden Third Series edition of the play, John Wilders remarks that the Nile “reflects something of [Cleopatra's] paradoxical nature, both life-enhancing and fatally poisonous” (54). William Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra* ed. John Wilders (London: Bloomsbury, 1995). All quotations from this edition.

¹⁴⁹ William Shakespeare, *King Henry VI, Part Three*, ed. Eric Rasmussen and John D. Cox (London: Methuen, 2001), 3.2.186. Before making his claim about drowning more sailors than the mermaid, Richard muses that he is “like one that stands upon a promontory / And

This chapter brings together critical conversations about gender and the sea in order to argue that the sea provides a productive discursive space for early modern writers to explore the construction of gender on the page and stage. The second half of the chapter identifies a contradiction between how the language of the sea evokes gender fluidity while the sea itself is persistently coded in traditional, masculine/feminine, active/passive binaries. In the writings of Spenser, Shakespeare, Marlowe, Middleton, and Dekker, the performative qualities of gender apply to human characters, but far less to their imaginative descriptions of the natural world. Attending to this essentialist representation of the sea's masculinity and femininity enriches and complicates the critical conversation about how early modern people conceived of gender both on and off stage by identifying the embodied sea as as-yet-unacknowledged source of traditional, essentialist discourse.

The Ebb and Flow of Gender

Spenser's lady knight provides an excellent example of gender fluidity. The setup to Britomart's Petrarchan complaint, an *ubi sunt* catalogue of classical women warriors,

spies a far-off shore where he would tread" who "chides the sea that sunders him from thence, / Saying he'll lade it dry to have his way" (135-139). The sea here represents an unsurmountable obstacle, but once Richard resolves to pursue the crown by deceit and dissembling, he vows not to dry up the sea, but to surpass a sea-monster in monstrosity. The mermaid's hybrid body resembles Richard's deformed one, and her seductive voice provides a model for Richard's, but he vows to outdo her in the same way he will "slay more gazers than the basilisk" (187). Richard compares himself to a dangerous female temptress only to claim that his capacity for temptation far exceeds any mermaid's. The mermaid's tempting femininity is paradigmatic, and Richard invokes it to mark his own masculine temptation as all the more horrifying in comparison.

places Britomart in a larger context; however, at the same time, the narrator sets her apart:

these [warrior women], and all that els had puissance,
 Cannot with noble *Britomart* compare,
 Aswell for glorie of great valiaunce,
 As for pure chastitie and vertue rare.¹⁵⁰

Although Britomart comes after famous women like Penthesilea and Camilla, the poem maintains that she exceeds them in both martial prowess and moral purity—although she dresses and fights like a man, Britomart is in no way an immodest woman. Furthermore, unlike earlier women warriors, whose female bodies were on display even as they fought, Britomart’s armor notably disguises her face and figure. Her gender is sometimes hard for other characters to parse correctly; she performs masculine deeds in a masculine costume, and as a result many take her to be male.¹⁵¹ Beneath her armor, however, she maintains a feminine appearance, and her main quest arises out of heterosexual love for Arthegall, whom she is destined to marry. Despite her deeds and her armor, Britomart is not attempting to live as a man; rather, she is somewhat of a hybrid.

The masculine and feminine elements of her personality clash in the complaint and combat on the “rich strond” where she overcomes Marinell; Spenser uses the language of the seashore, and the sea itself, to describe Britomart’s interior and exterior

¹⁵⁰ All citations to Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton, Hiroshi Yamashita, and Toshiyuki Suzuki (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2007), 3.4.3. Henceforth *FQ*.

¹⁵¹ For example, earlier in Book Three, Malecasta mistakes Britomart for a male knight and is smitten; it is unclear whether Malecasta perceives her error before “sudein feare and ghastly drerihedd” send her into a swoon. Only when Malecasta’s entourage enters and encounters Britomart in her smock, “with locks vnbownd,” is the confusion about her gender somewhat dispelled (3.1.47-64).

conflicts (*FQ* 3.4.20).¹⁵² Before her complaint, Britomart sits “vpon the rocky shore” and has her squire “vnlace her lofty crest,” stripping herself of her knightly accoutrements before engaging in pathetic fallacy (7). Facing the water, Britomart watches the “surges hore, / That gainst the craggy cliffs [do] loudly rore”; the rough waves inspire the “huge sea of sorrow, and tempestuous grieffe” that she describes as her emotional state (7, 8). In relating the seaside scene to her passionate emotions she joins another tradition besides that of the woman warrior: as Suzanne Wofford points out, Britomart’s complaint puts her in the rhetorical position of a typical Petrarchan speaker, usually a man describing a female beloved.¹⁵³ In Britomart’s case, however, the roles are reversed, as she uses traditionally masculine love rhetoric.¹⁵⁴

Unlike the other speakers of versions of Petrarch’s “Rima 189,” who describe a tempestuous mental state but not a physical tempest, Britomart is represented as actually gazing on the stormy ocean while she makes her comparison. Britomart is not only describing the sea; she is also surrounded by the narrator’s descriptions of the sea—the cold waves and the cliffs that beat back their unending assault. Not only does Britomart compare her turbulent emotional state to the sea, but she also makes the complaint from the “rich strond,” a valuable but liminal space that the poem uses to represent aspects of

¹⁵² Although the site of Britomart’s complaint is initially identified only as “the seacoast,” we learn later in Canto Four that she is attacked by Marinell because she is in his territory: “never man he [Marinell] suffred by that same / Rich strond to trauell, whereas he did wonne, / But that he must do battail with the Sea-nymphes sonne” (3.4.6, 3.4.20).

¹⁵³ See Susanne Lindgren Wofford, “Britomart’s Petrarchan Lament: Allegory and Narrative in the *Faerie Queene* III, iv,” *Comparative Literature* 39.1 (1987), 28-57. For more discussion of Britomart’s complaint, see Chapter Two of this dissertation, pages 76-79.

¹⁵⁴ Later poets like Mary Wroth further explored the implications of a female speaker and a male beloved for the Petrarchan tradition. For more, see Mary Wroth, *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth* ed. Josephine Roberts (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992).

Britomart as both a warrior and as a lover. Even after she has “shut vp all her plaint in priuy griefe,” put her helmet back on, been mistaken for a man by Marinell, and defeated him, Britomart has not vanquished her emotional tempest; rather, she rides on along the shore and continues seeking her beloved. The complaint and combat demonstrate Britomart’s fluid gender performance: in both cases, Britomart performs a masculine role—Petrarchan lover, conquering knight—as a female performer. The shifting, violent sea and its threshold provide the background and the foreground of the lady knight’s gender-fluid experience. Spenser expands Petrarch’s conceit in “Rima 189” by placing Britomart literally on the seashore, describing the physical waves that she views in addition to her emotional seascape, and introducing “the Sea-Nymphes sonne” Marinell who guards the “rich strond” (3.4.20).¹⁵⁵ Oceanic imagery pervades this episode.

Britomart exists in a literary tradition of cross-dressing female protagonists alongside Shakespearean heroines like Viola, Rosalind, Jessica, Portia, and others. It is important to remember, however, that all of Shakespeare’s female characters are in some sense cross-dressing because the parts were written for male actors. This recurrent palimpsest of sexed bodies and gendered garments and attributes—some affected, some suppressed—has drawn the attention of scholars who consider the complicated and contradictory meanings of stage transvestitism.¹⁵⁶ In addition to multiple, overlapping

¹⁵⁵ Bradley notes that Marinell’s name “links the sea...and the land, as does his Rich strond, which, as tideland, is both sea and land” (3.4.20 n).

¹⁵⁶ An ongoing scholarly conversation has attempted to peel back the layers of desire embodied in a boy actor playing a female heroine dressed as a youth or eunuch or page, often with a particular focus on *Twelfth Night*. See, for example, Phyllis Rackin, “Androgyny, Mimesis, and the Marriage of the Boy Heroine on the English Renaissance Stage,” *PMLA* 102:1 (1987), 29-41; Dymphna Callaghan, ““And all is semblative of a women’s part’: body

types of desire, the presence of boy actors in women's roles—especially when those women are themselves disguised as men or boys—means that to some extent, the performative nature of gender is always on display. Such underlying performance conditions have at times encouraged critics to posit an early modern English view of gender that resembles contemporary assumptions. It is certainly true that cross-dressing and gender-bending are common in early modern literature, and that gender in the early modern period is more complicated than it appeared to Victorian and early twentieth-century readers. One such complication is registered in the seeming contradictions that arise as sea imagery both highlights and rejects performative notions of gender. Closer

politics and *Twelfth Night*,” *Textual Practice* 7.3 (1993), 49-73; Tracey Sedinger, “‘If sight and shape be true’: The Epistemology of Crossdressing on the London Stage,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48.1 (1997), 63-79; Casey Charles, “Gender Trouble in ‘Twelfth Night,’” *Theatre Journal* 49.2 (1997), 121-141; Denise A. Whalen, *Constructions of Female Homoeroticism in Early Modern Drama* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); David Orvis, “Cross-Dressing, Queerness, and the Early Modern Stage,” *Cambridge History of Gay and Lesbian Literature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 197-217. This work, especially the most recent writing, emerges from and overlaps with larger discussions of queerness and gender in the early modern period. For more on queer studies and Shakespeare, see Bruce R. Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England: A Cultural Poetics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Valerie Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002); *Queer Renaissance Historiography: Backward Gaze*, ed. Vin Nardizzi, Stephen Guy-Bray, and Will Stockton (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009); *Shakespeareer: A Queer Companion to the Complete Works of Shakespeare* ed. Madhavi Menon (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011); Simone Chess, *Male-to-Female Crossdressing in Early Modern English Literature: Gender, Performance, and Queer Relations* (New York: Routledge, 2016); *Queer Shakespeare: Desire & Sexuality*, ed. Goran V. Stanivukovic (London: Bloomsbury, 2017). For more on Shakespeare, women, and gender, see, for example, Lorraine Helms, “Playing the Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism and Shakespearean Performance,” *Theatre Journal* 41:2 (1989), 190-200; Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays from Hamlet to The Tempest* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Bruce R. Smith, *Shakespeare and Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Phyllis Rackin, *Shakespeare and Women* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); *A Feminist Companion to Shakespeare* ed. Dymphna Callaghan (Malden: John Wiley & Sons, 2016).

attention to the ways in which watery language and allusions to the sea coincide with gender-bending or gender essentialism, particularly onstage, can better articulate the distinction between early modern and contemporary constructions of gender. Shakespeare provides an especially productive set of examples with his many cross-dressing heroines, and recurrent use of gendered oceanic metaphors.

Many moments of cross-dressing by Shakespeare's heroines coincide with language connecting gender fluidity to water or the sea. In *Merchant of Venice*, anticipating Jessica's appearance in a pageboy's outfit in order to escape Shylock's house, Gratiano frames the flurry of action with an extended metaphor:

The scarfed bark puts from her native bay,
Hugged and embraced by the strumpet wind!
How like the prodigal doth she return,
With overweathered ribs and ragged sails,
Lean, rent and beggared by the strumpet wind!¹⁵⁷

In this image, the tardy bridegroom Lorenzo is imagined as a “scarfed bark” who is embarking to be “hugged and embraced” by Jessica; Gratiano also suggests that Jessica may resemble the “strumpet wind” which threatens to ruin both herself and Lorenzo with this match—despite the tidy fortune in Shylock's jewels she carries away with her. As an economic venture, eloping with the moneylender's daughter is an easy gain. At the same time, the passage also layers gendered language in provocative ways: it evokes a female strumpet wind interacting sexually with a female scarfed bark, which stands for a male lover—Lorenzo. The metaphor of the ship and the wind confuses traditional gender roles,

¹⁵⁷ William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* ed. John Drakakis (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), 2.6.16-20. All quotations from this edition.

attributing dangerous agency and active sexuality to Jessica, the supposed target of Lorenzo's seduction. Lorenzo, the seducer, risks—at least in Gratiano's eyes—being seduced and ruined. Later in the scene, Lorenzo describes Jessica's disguise as the “lovely garnish of a boy,” suggesting the sight of her cross-dressed provokes an erotic, and homoerotic, frisson (46). The episode layers risk, reward, gender, sexuality, and the nautical; all combine under the heading of fortune-hunting. In a play where trading ships bear the burden of the plot, this nautical imagery links Jessica's cross-dressing episode to the rewards and the risks of maritime trade. As with merchant ventures, the risks of cross-dressing in this play are great—life-and-death, even—but the rewards are even greater.

The play's other cross-dressing heroine, Portia, figures maritime risk as distinctly different for men and women. Waiting for Bassanio to make his choice of caskets, she compares her position as an unwilling participant in the casket game to “the virgin tribute paid by howling Troy / To the sea-monster. I stand for sacrifice” (3.2.56-57), Portia's metaphor strips the casket test of its alleged morality—according to her late father, the winner is meant to be the least avaricious, arrogant, and deluded, and therefore worthiest, of the suitors. The image of Hesione chained to a rock as a repayment to Neptune for her father's crime embodies the supremely vulnerable position of women, who “stand for sacrifice” either literally, as in Hesione's case, or figuratively, on the marriage market. Portia alludes not to voyagers, venturers, or ships, but rather to a scared maiden and a nonhuman, and voracious, avatar of the ocean: all risk, and no reward. John Drakakis notes that in the Ovidian source of this image, Hesione's would-be rescuer Hercules “undertook this task, not for the love of Hesione, but for her father's horses,” which he

had stolen from Neptune (55-57n). The allusion then “reflects ironically on Bassanio’s motives, since Portia is attractive in large part because of her inherited wealth” (55-57n). At this point in the play, Portia has not yet proven herself with her triumphant cross-dressing performance as the legal scholar Balthasar; she is primarily the “lady richly left” that Bassanio marks out in the opening scene (1.1.161). When Bassanio initially describes her, Portia is the sought-after reward of a successful venture; he likens her to the Golden Fleece and his quest to Jason’s. Jason’s example, however, is fraught, since the woman he brought home with the fleece was the vengeful witch Medea. While it is fitting that Bassanio compares Portia to the inanimate golden prize, not the troublesome female one, Portia does not prove to be a passive reward. By means of her cross-dressing, she transforms herself from a Golden Fleece or a sacrificial maiden at the mercy of a sea monster to a sort of venturer herself—and a supremely successful one.

Once she has successfully cross-dressed her way into the courtroom with Nerissa playing her boy clerk, saved Antonio’s life, forced her idea of justice onto Shylock, and tricked her husband with the ring plot, Portia’s last masterful act returns to the theme of maritime risk. She tells Antonio,

You shall find three of your argosies
 Are richly come to harbour suddenly.
 You shall not know by what strange accident
 I chanced on this letter. (5.1.276-279)

Coming on the heels of her other successes, Portia’s delivery of the three argosies “richly come to harbour” further underscores her unusual powers of control and connects her to the danger and profit of making a living off the sea. She reveals neither how the ships came to harbor safely after reports to the contrary nor, more interestingly, what secret

information networks she makes use of to find out that they have. No longer the passive victim of supernatural risk, she now—through means unknown—plucks Antonio from his financial ruin (and these argosies' sailors from death by water). As deliverer of the seemingly doomed, Portia somewhat prefigures Prospero, creator and manager of a powerful tempest; in some ways, she also resembles Fortune herself, especially as portrayed in the image of Fortune holding a sail.¹⁵⁸ According to Ulrich Kinzel, the sixteenth-century rise of imagery of Fortune with a sail rather than a wheel underlines a change in how Fortune was imagined: not as an unpredictable process bringing people glory and ruin by turns, but rather as a potential resource, like the wind, which the prudent could harness. Portia's prudent manipulation of the play's crises suggests that she is particularly attuned to the potential for success where others see only failure. She is a canny venturer, and profits greatly by the risks she takes. The pervasive maritime imagery of *The Merchant of Venice* intersects with the moments of transvestitism by all three of the play's female characters, and cross-dressing comes to stand in for a type of venture: a high-risk journey into an alien element (masculinity) in search of good fortune—freedom, justice, vengeance, wealth, and love.

Jessica, Portia, and Nerissa are not, however, the Shakespearean cross-dressing heroines most connected to sea imagery: in the cases of Viola and Cleopatra, the prominence of such language alongside onstage cross-dressing elicits attention and explanation. For both heroines, the language of the sea provides a way to maintain a

¹⁵⁸ Ulrich Kinzel, "Orientation as a Paradigm in Maritime Modernity," in *Fictions of the Sea: Critical Perspectives on the Ocean in British Literature and Culture* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2002), 28-48.

middle space within a gender binary. Of particular interest is the connection between oceanic imagery and sea monstrosity: Viola calls herself a “poor monster,” and Cleopatra’s barge is crewed by women dressed as sea nymphs and mermaids.¹⁵⁹ Early modern representations of sea monsters provide a productive context: sea monsters frequently cross and complicate established boundaries, including those between sea and land.

Monstrosity and Gender Essentialism

Early modern monsters, particularly sea-monsters, are frequently chimeras—hybrid blends of other creatures—making them a potent symbol for gender fluidity. While land monsters can also be chimerical in the early modern imagination, the sea is the particular



Figure 1.1

home of strange hybrid creatures: as Wes Williams notes, “early modern natural historians and storytellers found their monsters in all four elements, but the element of choice remained the sea.”¹⁶⁰ Indeed, sixteenth-century texts like Ambroise Paré’s *Works* and *On Monsters and Marvels* present a truly copious selection of “marine monsters”

¹⁵⁹ All citations from William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night* ed. Keir Elam (London: Bloomsbury, 2008), 2.3.34. Henceforth *TN*.

¹⁶⁰ Wes Williams, *Monsters and their Meanings in Early Modern Culture: Mighty Magic*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 51.

ranging from what is most likely a sea lion to a “fish in the habite or shape of a Bishop,” which looks like nothing so much as the Creature from the Black Lagoon.¹⁶¹ To Paré, the most remarkable sea-monsters are hybrids and chimeras; the sea is a real-life repository for things that cross categories or blend multiple legible sets of attributes. Paré customarily names and describes these monsters as a sea-version of one or more land animals: “a Lion-like scaily Sea-monster,” “a sea-monster with a mans face,” “a monstrous Sea-calfe,” and “a monstrous Sea-swine” (1003-1005). These creatures are usually said to have the top half of a recognizable land creature combined with a fish tail, scales, or perhaps flippers. Of the “Lion-like scaily Sea-monster,” Paré writes, “it was in



¹⁶¹ **Figure 1.2**

Ambroise Paré, *The workes of that famous chirurgion Ambrose Pary*, trans. Thomas Johnson (London: 1634), STC 19189, page 1002. See also Ambroise Paré, *On Monsters and Marvels*, trans. Janis L. Pallister (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 107-136.

shape and bignesse like to a Lion, but all scaily, and the voice was like a mans voice” (1003). He

describes the man-faced monster as being “of the bignesse of a child of five

yeeres old, like to a man

even to the navell, except

the eares; in other parts it resembled a fish” (1003).

The sea-calf, he specifies, has “the head and shape of a Calfe” but is “much

different from the common

Sea-calfe or Seale” (1004). The known creatures of land and sea serve as points of reference and points of contrast for the monstrosities of the ocean.

Discussing a pair of humanoid sea monsters allegedly seen in the Nile, Paré reads them according to their gendered attributes. Because sea-monsters as a category defy boundaries and categories, one might expect that their gendered traits would be similarly hybrid or fluid—however, it is not so. The male sea monster receives more specific attention: “his shape was just like a man even to the middle, with a countenance



Figure 1.3

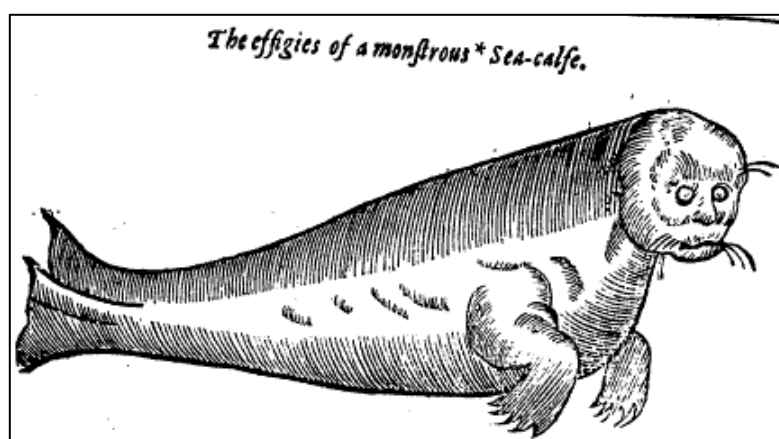


Figure 1.4

composed to gravity, his
 haire yellow, yet
 intermixed with some gray,
 his stomack bony, his armes
 orderly made and jointed,
 his other parts ended in a
 fish” (1001). Of the female



Figure 1.5

sea-monster, Paré writes merely that she had “the shape or countenance of a woman, as appeared by her face, her long haire, and swollen breasts” (1001). Paré presents the male sea monster as somewhat individualized, but the female monster is simply a type. In both the description and the accompanying image, Paré’s text emphasizes the maleness of the male sea-monster and the femaleness of the female. Describing hybrid monsters with human torsos, fish tails, and extra limbs, Paré nevertheless doubles down on gender essentialism.

What unites Paré’s descriptions of all the sea-monsters is their simultaneous familiarity and strangeness—they resemble land creatures, even humans, closely enough to recognize corresponding characteristics, but fins, scales, and other marine features distort those characteristics, making them monstrous. As these hybrid monsters bob up and down in the waves, some may seem human: the water is often said to conceal their fishy lower bodies. Sea-monstrosity may be hybrid, but it also follows patterns familiar in non-aquatic creatures. Thus, bodies that come from the sea may be deceptive and difficult to read—except in their relationship to traditional gender binaries.

After emerging from the waves, Viola does not initially identify herself as a monster, instead focusing on the correspondence, or lack thereof, between exterior shows and interior self. However, Paré's work suggests that the correspondence between the inside and the outside of a body, or the top and bottom half of a body, is a central concern of discourses of monstrosity. At the moment that Viola decides to cross-dress, she declares her skepticism about the relationship between appearance and truth. Even as she asks the captain to "present" her "as a eunuch," she avows that "nature with a beauteous wall / Doth oft close in pollution" (1.2.53, 45-6). In portraying herself as a eunuch, Viola chooses to appear as androgynous rather than attempting to pass as male—even her disguise sidesteps the gender binary. Viola asserts that a pleasing exterior frequently conceals its opposite; in a disguise, her exterior and interior will certainly not match.¹⁶²

However, she also brushes aside this caveat, in the case of the Captain: she tells him, "of thee, / I will believe thou hast a mind that suits / With this thy fair and outward character" (1.2.46-48). Because he seems kind and trustworthy, and she is in dire straits, she makes a conscious choice to trust him. Viola's affirmation of her will to believe

¹⁶² This observation resembles the one that leads Bassanio to choose the leaden casket in 3.2 of *Merchant of Venice*:

Thus ornament is but the guiled shore
 To a most dangerous sea; the beauteous scarf
 Veiling an Indian beauty; in a word,
 The seeming truth which cunning times put on
 To entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,
 Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee;
 Nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge
 'Tween man and man: but thou, thou meagre lead,
 Which rather threatenest than dost promise aught,
 Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence;
 And here choose I; joy be the consequence! (97-107)

provides an antidote to the cynical voice of experience she rehearses initially. For the relationship between his appearance and his self, Viola uses the word “suits,” which not only suggests “accords,” but also, as becomes clear in the final scene, the very garments that she proposes to put on (cf. 5.1.230). Even as she posits a true connection in this case between exterior and interior, seeming and being, clothes and the man, Viola recalls her disguise. Later Viola exclaims that “Disguise, I see thou art a wickedness,” but immediately goes on to articulate a more complicated, chimerical idea of self.

Some readings of the play, however, take Viola at her initial word. Steve Mentz claims that Viola remains neatly split between male and female, active and passive, writing that “Viola understands herself as trapped in passivity, ‘like Patience on a monument’ (2.4.111), imprisoned within her page-boy disguise...Unlike the cross-dressed connivers Portia and Rosalind, Viola does little to advance her cause; she simply hopes ‘tempests are kind, and salt waves fresh in love’ (3.4.324).”¹⁶³ Mentz relates this inward-outward divide to how, “unlike Sebastian-as-Arion,” who actively “struggles in the surf,” passive “Viola does not commune with her oceanic world” (55). He continues by claiming that by “hanging on to ‘our driving boat,’” Viola “holds herself apart” from the ocean and, metonymically, the world of Illyria (55). To Mentz, “the privileged cultural location for the separation and liminality that Viola represents is the place she begins the play, the beach” (55). He reads Viola as essentially passive and static, feminine in a masculine coat, and unchanging from the moment that she washes ashore.

However, Viola’s relationship to her performed gender is more complicated than

¹⁶³ Steve Mentz, *At the Bottom of Shakespeare’s Ocean* (New York: Continuum, 2009), 54.

Mentz allows. Despite her reservations about her role as wooer, Viola speaks passionately, if conditionally, about her feelings to Olivia: “If I did love you in my master’s flame,” she says, “in your denial I would find no sense, / I would not understand it” (1.5.256, 258-259). She is not passively wearing the coat of Cesario, but actively imagining what a man might feel and say in Cesario’s situation. Viola continues by describing the “willow cabin” she would make at Olivia’s gate, the “loyal cantons of contemned love” that she would sing “loud even in the dead of night,” and how she would “make the babbling gossip of the air / Cry out ‘Olivia!’” if she were the one who were in love with the countess (1.5.260, 262-263, 265-266). Viola’s performance in this moment has a powerful effect on Olivia, piquing Olivia’s interest far more than any of Orsino’s previous messages, or messengers, have done. It is Viola’s ability to inhabit the role of a lovelorn youth—drawing, perhaps, on her own feelings for Orsino and the freedom a young man’s clothes have given her—that captivates Olivia. Viola is not merely wearing a costume; she is acting.

With acting comes a destabilizing of who Viola thinks she is. Directly after accusing disguise of being a wickedness, Viola reveals that her problem is more complicated than mere deceit. Instead, she lays out the problem of her male disguise as one of multiple, coexisting selves, combined like the disparate parts of one of Paré’s monsters: “As I am man, / My state is desperate for my master’s love; / As I am woman, now alas the day, / What thriftless sighs shall poor Olivia breathe?” (2.3.36-39). At this moment, there is no clear distinction between Viola’s female self and male disguise: she is both man and woman, and she loves Orsino and pities Olivia with all the facets of her

hybrid self. She is a “poor monster”—defying categories, chimerical, unnatural (34). At this moment and in the rest of her amorous pursuits, Viola is a blended and multivalent person by virtue of her dress, behavior, and how others perceive her. As Casey Charles argues, Viola “upsets essentialist constructs of gender hierarchy by successfully performing the part of man as a woman,” and “collapses the polarities upon which heterosexuality is based by becoming an object of desire whose ambiguity renders the distinction between homo- and hetero-erotic attraction difficult to decipher” (128). Far from being a woman inside a male shell, Viola complicates both femininity and masculinity, existing somewhere between and beyond this binary. Like the messy situation, she herself is a “knot” beyond her own capacity to explain (41).

Ultimately, Viola confesses her love for Orsino even as she confirms and denies her maleness: she tells Olivia that she will go with “him I love, / More than I love these eyes, more than my life, / More by all mores than e’er I shall love wife” (5.1.130-132). Viola’s outburst suggests queerness on multiple levels, implying at one moment a boy’s love for his master, a man’s love for his wife, a maid’s love for a lady, a heroine’s love for a hero, and a boy actor’s body underneath all of it. When Viola finally reveals herself, she puts a great deal of weight on her external appearance: she will not accept her place as Sebastian’s sister, Olivia’s sister-in-law, or Orsino’s wife because of her “masculine usurped attire” (247). “Do not embrace me,” she tells her twin, until she can confirm who she is by showing the assembly her “maiden weeds” (246, 251). Her body is not enough; she needs the clothes as well. No one requires this confirmation of her—Sebastian, Olivia, and Orsino all greet her as Viola—but for Viola, her performance

cannot end until her disguise does.

At this moment, the sea swirls back into the play. Viola calls attention to her costume, her resemblance to her twin, and their shipwreck all at once, noting that “Sebastian was my brother too; / So went he suited to his watery tomb” (5.1. 229-230). She emphasizes that Sebastian was dressed identically to her—“so” was he “suited”—when he was initially submerged in the ocean; dressing like him is a way of bringing him back to life. Sebastian, too, views Viola as essentially changed: he calls her “drowned Viola” as though she had indeed perished in the shipwreck (237). Orsino picks up the thread of imagery, summing up the entire situation as “this happy wrack” (262). The opening wreck, when both twins were drenched if not drowned, prompts Viola’s cross-dressing, and a happier wreck brings that cross-dressing to an end.

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, water imagery surrounds gendered performance even when the heroine does not fully cross-dress: Cleopatra uses imagery of fishing and mermaids to accompany instances of gender-bending play. Tara Pedersen claims Cleopatra to be a mermaid-like figure whose body and self-presentation are difficult to pin down.¹⁶⁴ In particular, Cleopatra’s relationship with Antony involves blurring of bodies, traditional gender roles and even identities: “those who observe Antony and Cleopatra repeatedly have trouble identifying and distinguishing one body’s shape and actions from another’s,” Pedersen writes (112). For example, Enobarbus mistakes Cleopatra for Antony as the Egyptian queen enters in the play’s second scene, and Caesar

¹⁶⁴ Tara Pedersen, *Mermaids and the Production of Knowledge in Early Modern England* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2015), 121.

later says of Antony, “he is not more manlike / Than Cleopatra, nor the queen of Ptolemy / More womanly than he” (1.4.5-7). Furthermore, Cleopatra contributes to the sense of transformative play both with her sexuality and with how she reports on it after the fact:

I laughed him out of patience, and that night,
I laughed him into patience, and next morn,
Ere the ninth hour, I drunk him to his bed,
Then put my tires and mantles on him, whilst
I wore his sword Philippan. (2.5.19-23)

Jonathan Gil Harris suggests that the sexual frisson of this moment comes because Antony recognizes himself in Cleopatra when she is girded with the Philippan sword and, narcissistically, desires her all the more for that.¹⁶⁵ However, Harris fails to take into account that Cleopatra dresses Antony up in her own “tires and mantles.” Not only has Cleopatra dressed Antony in her clothes, but she also claims to have out-drunk him before doing so—a boast perhaps more expected from a soldier in a tavern than from a queen. It is thus from an effeminized point of view that Antony watches Cleopatra wearing the sword, and vice versa. The lovers exchange traditionally masculine and feminine roles simultaneously, contributing to the indistinguishable quality of the two.

This moment of gender play is surrounded by watery imagery.¹⁶⁶ Cleopatra describes her cross-dressing episode amid discussion of pleasure fishing, which begins with the demand, “Give me mine angle; we’ll to th’ river” (10). Imagining “music

¹⁶⁵ Jonathan Gil Harris, “‘Narcissus in thy face’: Roman Desire and the Difference it Fakes in *Antony and Cleopatra*,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 45.4 (1994), 408-425.

¹⁶⁶ According to Sophie Chiari, Cleopatra “is a creature born out of the river’s mud and slime who eventually collapses all differences between such binaries as wetness and dryness, male and female, or life and death.” Sophie Chiari, “Clime and Slime in *Anthony* [sic] and *Cleopatra*,” *Shakespeare’s Representation of Weather, Climate, and Environment: The Early Modern ‘Fated Sky,’* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), 176-216, 187.

playing far off” and the “tawny-finned fishes” she will catch, Cleopatra continues,

My bended hook shall pierce
Their slimy jaws, and, as I draw them up
I'll think them every one an Antony
And say, “Ah, ha! You're caught!” (2.5.12-15)

In fishing as in the bedroom, Cleopatra wields the phallic “bended hook,” with Antony in cold water or women’s clothing. According to Cleopatra, she is the master of the river and the fishes, while Antony, supposedly of that element, is mere prey.¹⁶⁷ Cleopatra names herself the aggressive predator.

In his description of Cleopatra’s barge at Cydnus, Enobarbus also evokes her slippery, watery sexuality. Like the imagined fishing expedition, the barge’s trip is accompanied by music—the “tune of flutes” which keep time for the oars (2.2.205). Cleopatra stage-manages the air by means of music, and, on her “perfumed” barge, with scent (203). According to Enobarbus, Cleopatra entraps the elements: her perfumed sails make the “winds...love-sick,” and the rhythm of her oars causes “The water which they beat to follow faster / As amorous of their strokes” (204-207). Enobarbus’s description of the smitten waves evokes the slavish devotion of a masochistic lover; here, though, unlike in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, where Helena tells Demetrius, “the more you beat me I will fawn on you,” the woman holds the power.¹⁶⁸ Cleopatra’s control over the barge, her servants, and her audience is impeccable. In particular,

¹⁶⁷ Of course, both Antony and Cleopatra suffer naval defeat. Pompey’s claim, “the sea is mine,” is correct; rivers may hasten to do Cleopatra’s will, but at sea, she is far from masterful (2.1.11; 2.2.233-234).

¹⁶⁸ William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, ed. Sukanta Chaudhuri (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 2.1.205.

Her gentlewomen, like the Nereides,
 So many mermaids, tended her i' th' eyes,
 And made their bends adornings. At the helm
 A seeming mermaid steers. The silken tackle
 Swell with the touches of those flower-soft hands
 That yarely frame the office. (216-221)

The costumed women, particularly she who steers the barge, serve but also represent Cleopatra. Their “flower-soft hands” competently manipulating the barge’s “tackle” carry clear sexual overtones, but also prefigure Cleopatra as fisherwoman; the labor of sailing, like the labor of ruling, is suffused with sensuous detail, seductively encouraging the audience to imagine Cleopatra’s sexual practices first and foremost.

To Pedersen, the mermaid is an essentially contradictory and slippery figure: “the mermaid fails to conform to one easily understood and interpreted role...she simultaneously embodies contradictory positions” and “gains her identity through a deep incoherence” (13-14). By surrounding herself with mermaid figures, Cleopatra evokes sensuality and danger, attraction and repulsion, action and passivity, and her potent, alluring body. The same contradictions occur in the image of her fishing for a school of Antonies, and of her cross-dressing sexual adventure. As with Viola, imagery of hybrid, chimerical sea-monstrosity surrounds Cleopatra, marking her fluid performance of gender.

Shakespeare is not the only dramatist to connect mermaids and fishing to gender-nonconformity. Middleton and Dekker’s *The Roaring Girl*, compares the titular heroine to a mermaid and a fish. When the protagonist of the marriage plot, Sebastian, pretends to his father, Sir Alexander, that he plans to marry Moll Cutpurse (hoping that this horrifying prospect will soften his father towards his actual choice, the virtuous Mary),

Sir Alexander complains that Moll is “a mermaid / that has tolled my son to shipwreck”¹⁶⁹ (1.2.211-218). Sir Alexander’s metaphor reacts to Moll’s dangerous hybridity. In choosing an image of seductive and threatening femininity, he opts not for a figure like Eve, Venus, Circe, or Spenser’s Acrasia, all of whom have a beautiful human form from head to toe. Rather, Sir Alexander compares cross-dressing Moll to a half-woman, half-fish. The mermaid is a tempting female like a human seductress; however, she promises sexuality with her voice and upper half, and delivers ruin not by way of moral lapse or sexual thrall but by shipwreck and literal death. Similarly, Moll’s tempting features are more than her woman’s body: Moll’s infamous swaggering, cross-dressed persona threatens by dressing and using that body in a socially unacceptable way.

The “shipwreck” Sir Alexander fears is about more than his son’s misdirected sexuality, however; he fears for his economic and social position as well. Pedersen reads the line as a possible illustration of “a father’s anxiety regarding the continued ability of his son’s, and ultimately his own, goods to circulate. Sir Alex looks at Moll and sees a mermaid because she challenges the perpetuation of his line and goods according to socially acceptable practices” (43). The mermaid in Pedersen’s formulation is a threatening figure who aims not only at men’s lives, but also their ships, and, by extension the commodities those ships carry. Subsequently, Sir Alexander further demonstrates that he thinks of Moll as an economic problem when he exhorts his lackey Trapdoor to “hunt her forth, / Cast out a line hung full of silver hooks,” hoping to bait

¹⁶⁹ Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker, *The Roaring Girl*, ed. Jennifer Panek (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011).

Moll with money (211). While mermaids are usually the tempters, Sir Alexander suggests that Moll may herself be vulnerable to appropriate temptation.

Sir Alexander is not the only one to conceive of women as fish and men as fishers. Moll herself rages:

I defy all men, their worst hates
 And their best flatteries, all their golden witchcrafts
 With which they entangle the poor spirits of fools,
 Distressed needlewomen, and trade-fall'n wives.
 Fish that must needs bite or themselves be bitten,
 Such hungry things as these may soon be took
 With a worm fast'ned on a golden hook:
 Those are the lecher's food, his prey; he watches
 For quarrelling wedlocks, and poor shifting sisters:
 'Tis the best fish he takes. But why, good fisherman,
 Am I thought meat for you, that never yet
 Had angling rod cast towards me? (3.1.93-100)

In this fishing game, Moll identifies a mixed bait: “a golden hook,” but also “best flatteries.” Poor women require not just money but also male attention (consider Marlowe’s Hero caught fast by “Cupid’s golden hook” as a prime example). Despising such attention, Moll proclaims herself invulnerable; she boasts that she “never yet / Had angling rod cast towards” her. Moll suggests that her cross-dressed persona protects her from being as obviously vulnerable to male flattery as a distressed needlewoman or a trade-fallen wife might be. She is, indeed, no ordinary fish, but a monstrous one, more suited to catching than to being caught. Like the mermaid, Moll occupies contradictory positions in the love-fishing economy. As a woman, she is a fish (or a mermaid), but wearing men’s clothes, swaggering, smoking, and all her other scandalous habits allow her to act as a fisher who preys on other fishers. In this ecosystem, Moll is the top predator, the big fish. The language of fishing and mermaids articulates her outsider

gender position as woman emulating, and even hunting, men.

In many cases, gender fluidity and sea language appear together, and attending to this conjunction can help to advance a critical understanding of gender in early modern England as potentially complicated, flexible, and performative. However, while metaphors of the sea can, for early modern writers, help collapse the traditional male-female binary, there is another strain of sea language that has the opposite effect. Personifications or inhabitants of the sea, including mermaids, sea nymphs, and sea gods like Neptune and Proteus, do not display the gender flexibility that one might expect. Spenser and Marlowe invoke mermaids and nymphs to associate the sea with passivity, temptation, or nurturing, but their classical male sea gods embody an active, aggressive, rapacious ocean. While sea metaphors are gender-flexible, the vehicle sustaining those metaphors is often not: there are limits to early modern writers' understanding of representations of gender flexibility. In particular, non-dramatic texts like *The Faerie Queene* and *Hero and Leander* contain prominent essentialist personifications of the sea's gender, suggesting that the material conditions of early modern performance may have had an effect on the way writers deployed the language of the sea. It is possible that these conditions led dramatists and poets to conceive of gender more and less essentially according to genre. Tracing the gendered qualities of the personified sea can help identify larger patterns inherent in the ways masculinity and femininity were performed and poetically evoked in the period.

Although Pedersen argues that the mermaid is a contradictory, indeterminate figure, one thing that is never indeterminate is the mermaid's female body. She is, at the

core, “a hybrid creature that combines a female head (and frequently torso) with the lower extremities of an animal—most commonly a single- or double-tailed fish” (Pedersen 10).¹⁷⁰ However, mermaids were also virtually interchangeable with sirens: “the characteristic sweet but dangerous voice of the sirens encountered by Ulysses also becomes a frequent feature of the mermaid lore of the British Isles as fishermen faced the dangers of fish-women hybrids described in tales about the sea” (12). The early modern mermaid is a doubly tempting figure: her comely upper body combines with her seductive voice to ensnare unwary men. Indeed, even the mermaid’s traditional accoutrements, the comb and the mirror, stand for “narcissistic vanity, deceptive self-presentation, and dangerous female sexuality” (13). Marion Gibson and Jo Ann Esra emphasize that “Shakespeare’s usage of the imagery of mermaids highlights their confusing nature: they can be classed as demonic or nature spirits, classical monsters or natural creatures.”¹⁷¹ However, whether they are evil or neutral, the mermaids remain

¹⁷⁰ Pedersen does not take up the parallel figure of the merman, perhaps because they are much less prevalent than mermaids. A rare example of a merman appears in Thomas Nelson’s 1590 *Pageant for the Fishmongers*, announcing that he has “before a manlike shape, behind a fishes fell” before decrying the fish-eating habits of the nation (A1). Anne Lancashire notes that the merman was one of the figures supporting the arms of the Fishmongers’ Company (9). She points out that the speech of the merman in the pageant is in fourteeners, “a by now old-fashioned verse form in the popular theatre,” which suits his complaint about “religious dietary customs (fish days and flesh days) no longer observed by the nation, to the detriment of both the people at large and the fishmongers” (16). In addition to nostalgia, Lancashire notes that in the pageant the merman is a symbol of “monstrosity” (8). The merman himself describes his “forme” as “monstrous, strange and rare.” See Thomas Nelson, *The Device of the Pageant: Set Forth for the Worshipful Companie Fishmongers* (London, 1590), STC 18423; Anne Lancashire, “The Comedy of Love and the London Lord Mayor’s Show,” in *Shakespeare’s Comedies of Love* ed. Karen Bamford and Ric Knowles (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 3-29.

¹⁷¹ Marion Gibson and Jo Ann Esra, *Shakespeare’s Demonology: A Dictionary* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 140.

seductive, beautiful, and legibly female.

Male gods and monsters of the sea are similarly traditional. In *Hero and Leander*, Marlowe's Neptune arguably embodies the masculine hunger of the sea, and his embrace of Leander eventually exposes the youth to aggressive male sexuality. From the moment Leander leaps into the Hellespont, Neptune, mistaking the young man for Ganymede, desires him. The sea god immediately acts to possess his love-object, commanding the sea itself to bring the boy to him:

Leander strived; the waves about him wound
And pulled him to the bottom, where the ground
Was strewd with pearl, and in low coral groves,
Sweet singing mermaids sported with their loves
On heaps of heavy gold. (643-647)¹⁷²

While mermaids and sirens generally sport with “their loves” below the waves, Neptune employs the waves to pull Leander to the sea floor against his will. He does not tempt, as a siren does, but rather takes without asking. Once the youth is at the bottom of the sea, Neptune continues aggressively wooing him: “the lusty god embraced him, called him love, / And swore he never should return to Jove” (651-652). “Lusty” Neptune ignores Leander's wishes and actively defies his own brother by stealing his supposed-cupbearer and plaything; he is shamelessly rapacious. Under water Leander—holding his breath—is silent, passive, and vulnerable.

Even when he realizes that Leander is a mortal and that “under water he was almost dead,” Neptune modifies his method, but not his goal. The sea god “heave[s]”

¹⁷² Christopher Marlowe, “Hero and Leander,” in *The Collected Poems of Christopher Marlowe* ed. Patrick Cheney and Brian J. Striar (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 193-220.

Leander back to the surface, but does not stop his amorous advances: putting “Helle’s bracelet on” Leander’s “arm,”

He clapped his plump cheeks, with his tresses played,
And, smiling wantonly, his love bewrayed.
He watched his arms, and as they opened wide,
At every stroke betwixt them he would slide
And steal a kiss, and then run out and dance
And, as he turned, cast many a lustful glance
And throw him gaudy toys to please his eye,
And dive into the water and there pry
Upon his breast, his thighs, and every limb,
And up again and close beside him swim,
And talk of love. (654-655; 663; 665-675)

Neptune’s attentions reduce Leander, in Petrarchan fashion, to a collection of body parts. Unlike a Petrarchan lover, however, Neptune attains physical intimacy, sliding into Leander’s arms, stealing kisses, and prying upon his beloved’s body. These caresses are even, in a way, reciprocated, for as Leander swims, he is constantly moving against the waves, and the passage contains slippage between the ocean’s waves and Neptune’s physical body. Marlowe personifies those waves themselves as actively desiring—they have “mounted up, intending to have kissed” Leander (657). The waves are both part of and under the control of Neptune’s body, and they participate in his aggressive sexuality.¹⁷³ The embodied ocean is both body and ocean at the same moment, and both body and ocean are hotly pursuing Leander. As in *Antony and Cleopatra*, the resistance

¹⁷³ Donna Haraway’s question in *The Cyborg Manifesto* applies here: “why should our bodies end at the skin, or include at best other beings encapsulated by skin?” (61). Especially in the case of a sea god, it is not unreasonable that the boundaries of Neptune’s physical body would be fluid and would include the sea he governs and represents. Donna Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century,” *Manifestly Haraway* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 5-90.

only further inflames the waves’—and, metonymically, the god’s—ardor.

This active desire dismays and confuses Leander, who objects, “You are deceived; I am no woman, I” (676). To Leander, the only kind of body that would sustain such touching is a female body; as Rebecca Yearling puts it, “Leander is a heterosexual who apparently cannot conceive of male-male sexual relationships,” and “although Marlowe acknowledges the existence of homoerotic desire, he insists that it will not be actualized within the poem.”¹⁷⁴ It is true that Neptune is unable to penetrate Leander, but as James M. Bromley points out, “Marlowe’s poem undoes the equation of narrative and sexual consummation; here, penetration neither signifies the *sine qua non* of sexual activity nor does it carry the privilege that ‘consummation’ would potentially confer upon it.”¹⁷⁵ Neptune enjoys the contact he forces on Leander, and his homoerotic desire is the subject of more than fifty lines of the poem—it is, in fact, “actualized” by Marlowe’s extended description.

Neptune’s forceful pursuit of Leander ends when Leander reaches Hero’s island; because of the poem’s abrupt morning-after ending, the reader never witnesses Neptune’s revenge on his would-be lover. Neptune’s desire, however, has seemed to some to provide a model for Leander’s sexual interaction with Hero. John Leonard suggests that Leander emulates Neptune fully by forcing himself on Hero without her consent; Leonard points out that Hero is “affrighted,” and “overcome with shame and sallow fear,” while

¹⁷⁴ Rebecca Yearling, “Homoerotic Desire and Renaissance Lyric Verse,” *Studies in English Literature*, 53.1 (2013): 53-71.

¹⁷⁵ James M. Bromley, “‘Let it Suffise’: Sexual Acts and Narrative Structure in *Hero and Leander*,” in *Queer Renaissance Historiography: Backward Gaze*, ed. Vin Nardizzi, Stephen Guy-Bray, and Will Stockton (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 67-84. 72.

Leander's hands are "cast upon her like a snare" (737, 743-744).¹⁷⁶ To Leonard, Hero is as trapped and vulnerable as Leander was to Neptune during his swim.

However, Leonard does not acknowledge Hero's conflicted feelings during both of her physical encounters with Leander. In the scene in the temple, the narrator specifies that although Hero fears Leander will knock her down to "the rushes" on the floor, she struggles against him "with a kind of granting," participating in an extended amorous dalliance that is no less exciting for the fact that it does not end in penetration (550, 557). In her tower, Hero is similarly of two minds regarding Leander: even as her "every limb" moves to "defend the fort and keep the foeman out," her desire for Leander remains (755-756). Eventually, the narrator reveals that "treason was in her thought, / And cunningly to yield herself she sought" (777-778). Hero's initial physical resistance to Leander is both sincere and feigned; once Leander succeeds in embracing and kissing Hero, the narrator informs us that "every kiss to her was as a charm," and she "at his mercy was" (767, 770). In both romantic encounters, Hero reciprocates Leander's desire in a way Leander never does with Neptune.

Although Hero is not the entirely unwilling object that Leander is with Neptune, Leander's behavior does parallel the sea god's: after his swim and Neptune's caresses, Leander pursues Hero more actively and more insistently. In the first encounter, Leander is "rude in love and raw," ignorant of the mechanics of heterosexual intercourse, though he does suspect that "some amorous rites or other" are "neglected" (545, 547-548).

¹⁷⁶ John Leonard, "Marlowe's Doric Music: Lust and Aggression in 'Hero and Leander,'" *English Literary Renaissance* 30.1 (2000), 55-76.

Before the swim, the narrator describes Leander's captivating effect on Hero with a fishing metaphor: "having swallowed Cupid's golden hook, / The more she strived, the deeper was she strook" (333-334). However, even if he is able to hook Hero, at that point in the narrative, Leander cannot net her; as a fisherman, he is limited. After Neptune's embrace, however, Leander knows exactly what he wants from Hero: first he "greedily" tries to touch Hero's "dainties," then he "enclose[s] her in his arms and kisse[s] her," and finally he succeeds breaking "the truce" between them and consummating his passion (753-754, 766, 769). It is only after his swim with Neptune that he can realize his desire for Hero. In many ways, the inexorable and hungry sea—decisively embracing, seizing, and caressing the human body—serves as a model for male desire in the poem, displacing other, less successful ways of interacting with the ocean's prizes.

Unlike Neptune, Spenser's Proteus, the sexually aggressive sea god of book three of *The Faerie Queene*, succeeds in capturing his love-object; despite this power, however, he cannot win her affection. Proteus initially woos Florimell with subtle temptations, but eventually grows more forceful. When he first appears, Proteus stands in sharp contrast to the "old leachour," the fisher, who manhandles Florimell when she takes refuge in his boat (*FQ* 3.8.36). Proteus makes "speaches milde," working to "recomfort" the distraught Florimell and "bidding her feare no more her foeman vilde, / Nor doubt himselfe" (34). However, he then physically removes Florimell from the fisher's boat with "rugged hands" and kisses her with "froy lips...Whiles the cold ysickles from his rough beard, / Dropped adowne upon her yvory brest" (35). From this beginning, it is clear that Proteus is not a true savior, but rather another in a long line of

men and male creatures who desire, hound, and assault Florimell.

However, he is, at least initially, more gentle and sly than her other pursuers. The narrator relates how “with flattering words he sweetly wooed her,” and “dayly he tempted her with this or that, / And never suffered her to be at rest” (38-39). These temptations include shapeshifting into “a mortall wight,” “a Faerie knight,” and “a king”; eventually, when Florimell still resists, Proteus switches to “dreadfull shapes” (39-41). He threatens her as “a Gyaunt,” “a feend,” and a “Centaure” before transforming into “a storme, / Raging within the waves” (41). It is this final shape, the sea-storm, that best embodies Proteus’s masculine desire; storm-like, he batters Florimell’s defenses, attempting to erode them until she consents. Florimell has encountered many male characters—and even monsters—who have attacked her, but Proteus is by far her most powerful suitor. As a sea-god, his will is elemental.

Proteus makes his home in a grotto carved by just such a storm:

His bowre is in the bottom of the maine,
Vnder a mightie rocke, gainst which doe raue
The roaring billowes in their proud disdaine,
That with the angry working of the waue,
Therein is eaten out a hollow caue. (37)

Proteus’s bower embodies the power of the ocean to grind away anything in its way; Spenser’s use of “raue,” “roaring,” “proud disdaine” and “angry working” does not convey sexual desire, but it does accord with Proteus’s intense frustration at Florimell’s constant refusal. Proteus’s cave, formed by the aggressive beating of the waves on the rock, links his own forceful wooing to the sea’s action. It is true that Proteus can be seductive and flattering like a siren, but only for a time. Once flouted, he resorts to

violent force to exert his will over the woman who refuses him.

Lyly's *Galatea* provides a final example connecting the ocean to masculine sexual appetite. The plot of the play revolves around propitiating the anger and hunger of Neptune, who in the past has caused catastrophic floods because invading Danes destroyed his "stately temple of white marble" on the shores of the Humber.¹⁷⁷ During these floods, Tityrus tells his daughter Galatea in the opening moments, "ships sail[ed] where sheep fed," and "monstrous mermaids" replaced the "passing fair maids" who had formerly inhabited the land (33, 39). Once the waters receded, in order to avoid further floods, the community had to agree that "at every five years' day, the fairest and chastest virgin in all the country should be brought unto this tree, and here being bound...is left for a peace-offering unto Neptune" (47-51). This sacrifice is carried away by "a monster called the Agar, against whose coming the waters roar, the fowls fly away, and the cattle in the field for terror shun the banks" (53-56). Editors of Lyly's play, including R. Warwick Bond and George K. Hunter, identify the Agar as a monstrous personification of an actual phenomenon, "an allegory of the tidal wave or *éagor* on the Humber estuary" (54 n.). Lyly's Agar blends classical tradition—such as the sea-monster that attempts to devour Andromeda before Perseus saves her—with English geography, registering observable, unexplained, threatening behavior by the seas and tidal rivers of Lincolnshire and Yorkshire.

This sea-monster is a representative of Neptune, who takes the virgins for an

¹⁷⁷ John Lyly, *Galatea*, ed. George K. Hunter (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 1.1.16.

unknown, but unpleasant, fate. Tityrus confesses that “whether she [the virgin sacrifice] be devoured” by Agar, “or conveyed to Neptune, or drowned between both, it is not permitted to know” (60-62). Neptune’s hunger blends with the monster’s, and it is unclear whether their appetites are physical, sexual, or both. Michael Pincombe concludes that “allusions in *Galatea* make it fairly plain that” the sacrificed women “will be subjected to a sexual assault,” noting that both Neptune and Agar “are eager to spill and perhaps drink ‘Maydens blood.’”¹⁷⁸ In Lyly’s play, the obliterating hunger of the ocean is figured as a desire to rape and dominate virgin prey; it is this threat that motivates the title character to dress as a boy in order to avoid being sacrificed. While unlike Marlowe’s Neptune, Lyly’s Agar is fiercely heterosexual, the sexual aggression is consistent.¹⁷⁹

The classical figure Scylla—usually but not always paired with her whirlpool partner, Charybdis—is a notable exception to the tradition of rapacious male sea-monsters. Unlike Neptune, the monster that Perseus kills, or the threatening Agar—and unlike the seductive mermaid—Scylla is hungry, but neither sexually aggressive nor alluring. However, her gendered qualities nevertheless conform to stereotypes about self-absorbed, vengeful, monstrous women. Indeed, in the *Metamorphoses*, her resistance to her many suitors, in particular to the merman Glaucus, results in her transformation into a

¹⁷⁸ Michael Pincombe, *The Plays of John Lyly: Eros and Eliza* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 132.

¹⁷⁹ Curiously, in all three cases, the sea-god does not succeed in ultimately possessing his love-object: Leander swims away from Neptune, Florimell never relents and is eventually rescued by Marinell, and in *Galatea*, nobody ends up being carried away by the Agar into Neptune’s clutches.

monster. Ovid describes her as “a sweet girl once,” but one who “repulsed” all her suitors and “went to the sea-nymphs” to tell them “how she’d eluded all the young men’s love.”¹⁸⁰ One of those suitors, Glaucus, frustrated by Scylla’s refusal, asks Circe for help; envious, Circe curses Scylla by enchanting Scylla’s favorite swimming place:

Scylla came,
 And waded in waist-deep, when round her loins
 She saw foul monstrous barking beasts. At first,
 Not dreaming they were part of her, she fled
 And thrust in fear the bullying brutes away.
 But what she feared and fled, she fetched along,
 And looking for her thighs, her legs, her feet,
 Found gaping jaws instead like Hell’s vile hound.
 Poised on a pack of beasts! No legs! Below
 Her midriff dogs, ringed in a raging row!
 (14.57-67)

Scylla becomes a chimerical monster and a personification of monstrous femininity. The barking, baying dogs guarding her midriff replace the legs she used to run from Glaucus and preclude the possibility of her ever accepting a suitor. From a woman who repulsed men, she becomes a loud, chaotic, hungry, vengeful monster whose hideous body repels them. Ovid is particular about why Scylla attacks Ulysses’s men: “when the first chance came / To vent her rage and hate on Circe,” Scylla takes it by robbing “Ulysses of his comrades” (71-73). She preys on the sailors to get back at her female tormenter, not because of any inherent desire—sexual or alimentary—for the men themselves. Scylla is a devouring sea-monster, but she is not a figure of sexual aggression; rather, she is a monstrous version of particularly female sins—frigidity and a refusal of

¹⁸⁰ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. A. D. Melville (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 13, lines 732-736.

heterosexuality.¹⁸¹

In early modern texts like Laurence Andrew's *The Noble Lyfe and Natures of Man of Bestes, Serpentys, Fowles, and Fishes*, Scylla retains the devouring, but not the ring of yelping hounds. Below an image of a modestly-dressed woman wearing a hood,

but with a dolphin's tail, Andrew writes that

“Scilla is a monster in the see between Italye & Sicill” and “a great enemye vnto” man.¹⁸²

According to Andrew, “it”—unlike his other monsters, Andrew refers to Scylla with this ungendered pronoun—“is faced & handed lyke a gentywoman but it hath a wyde mouthe & ferfull tethe & it is belied like a beste & tayed lyke a dolphin” (Cap. lxxij). Curiously, Andrew's Scylla



Figure 1.6

is a sort of anti-mermaid, not a singer but a willing

audience: he notes that “it hereth gladly singinge” (Cap. Lxxij). As in Ovid's version,

though a wide-mouthed devourer, Scylla is not associated with voracious female

sexuality: she is faced and handed not like a seductive, naked maiden, but like a

respectable gentlewoman.

¹⁸¹ In adapting Scylla into his figure of Sin, guardian of the gates of Hell, Milton adds other tropes of the monstrous feminine: the alluring daughter and the incestuous, devouring mother. See Book Two of *Paradise Lost*, lines 650-661 and 727-802. John Milton, “Paradise Lost” in *John Milton: The Major Works* ed. Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

¹⁸² Laurence Andrew, *The Noble Lyfe and Natures of Man of Bestes, Serpentys, Fowles and Fishes* (London: 1527), STC 13837.5, np. Andrew's book is organized under headings; the entry on Scylla is heading 72 (“Cap. lxxij”).

In contrast, Andrew's description of the "Syrene, the mermayde" which follows directly, makes particular mention of the siren, or mermaid's, sensuous menace. Andrew focuses on the mermaid's body to a greater extent than he does on Scylla's: he mentions her "nauyll" and her "papis [breasts] whiche be very grete," indicating that, as is traditional, her whole torso is unclothed (Cap. lxxxiiij).

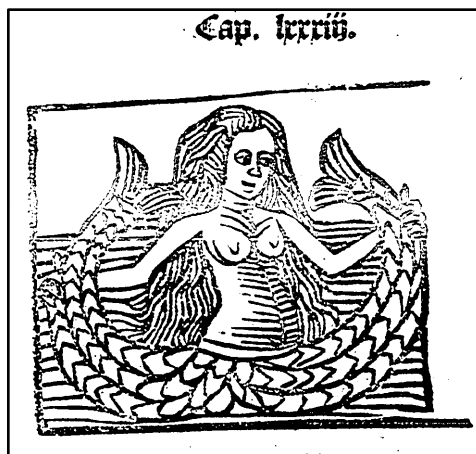


Figure 1.7

Indeed, the image of the mermaid accompanying the text depicts the typical bare-breasted, long-haired fish-woman; Andrew's emphasis is on not only the female body, but particularly the parts of it that good women—gentlewomen—do not customarily expose.¹⁸³ He also ascribes a malicious agency to the mermaid, writing that she "bringeth a man *gladly* to dethe," (Cap. lxxxiiij, emphasis added). After she "deceyueth" sailors with her "swete song," the mermaid "cometh and draweth them out of the shippe and tereth them asunder" (Cap. Lxxxiiij). Unlike his description of Scylla, Andrew does not mention the mermaid's teeth; it is unclear what the mermaid might do after tearing her victims asunder. In Andrew's text, Scylla remains a rare devouring female sea monster of note, an eater of men, but not a seducer of them.

Attending to gendered personifications of the sea deepens the conversation about

¹⁸³ A notable exception is Queen Elizabeth herself: diary entries from French ambassador André Hurault, Sieur de Maisse, describe how the queen "kept the front of her dress open" so that "one could see all her belly, and even to her navel" (12-13). For more on Elizabeth's open-fronted dresses, see Christopher Martin, "The Breast and Belly of a Queen: Elizabeth After Tilbury," *Early Modern Women 2* (2007), 5-28.

early modern gender constitution and performance with its focus on theatrical practices and the semiotics of cross-dressing. While early modern writers do not ascribe only one gender to the sea itself, they generally do commit to either masculine or feminine qualities and features for its embodied inhabitants. In fictional sea divinities and creatures, the blending of gendered traits that we might expect to encounter—both because of the classical and early modern discourses locating hybridity and zoological boundary-crossing in the ocean, and because of the connection between gender fluidity and oceanic imagery in human characters—occurs rarely, if at all. By reproducing a classical, essentialist binary of aggressive sea gods or seductive sea nymphs, texts like *Hero and Leander* and *The Faerie Queene* indicate that however flexible gender might be for human performers, allegorical or mythical figures were more fixed. However much literary and dramatic figures might combine gendered traits, those traits themselves do not usually co-exist; performativity has limits, and the polysemous ocean has rules. Essentialized representations of the embodied ocean make it possible for the ocean to be attached to gender fluidity in human terms; where gender is concerned, actors may perform, but nature obeys the gender binary. The fact that those rules ultimately apply to sexuality—aggression and seduction—as well as gender suggests that these are cultural preoccupations with very high stakes.

CHAPTER FIVE: The Takeaway: Venture, Salvage, and the Riches of the Sea

What of the economic gain from fictional merchant ventures, the stories about chests of treasure washed ashore after a wreck, the images of coins and gems and golden trinkets buried in ooze at the bottom of the sea? In early modern literature as—to a lesser extent—in reality, the great risks of voyaging are mitigated by the enormous, dazzling potential rewards. In literature, winning the wealth of the sea requires canny calculation, heroic daring-do, a spotless conscience, extreme good fortune, or a combination of some or all of the above. Furthermore, before such wealth can be circulated economically or socially, it must undergo some form of land-change—a process that integrates wealth that originates from the sea or reverses the sea-change suffered by sunken treasure beneath the waves.

The Abundance of the Sea

Often the inherited discourse of sunken treasure is morally weighted. Early modern authors cited Crates of Thebes—a wealthy man who, on the advice of the cynic philosopher Diogenes, found peace by throwing his gold into the sea—was a standard image of the rewards of rejecting material wealth. Although Crates appears prominently in classical texts such as Diogenes Laërtius's *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, these sources describe him redistributing his wealth to the people of Thebes rather than throwing it into the sea.¹⁸⁴ Later, Early Christian writers like St. Gregory Nazianzen and St. Jerome add the oceanic element. Gregory writes in his Forty-Third Oration that Crates,

¹⁸⁴ See Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, trans. Robert Drew Hicks (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925), Book 6.85-93.

“taking cheerfully the casting overboard of all that he ever had, sailed lightly across the sea of life.”¹⁸⁵ St. Jerome also expands upon the metaphor of drowning personal property, writing, “hence it was that Crates the famous Theban, after throwing into the sea a considerable weight of gold, exclaimed, ‘Go to the bottom, you evil lusts: I will drown you that you may not drown me.’”¹⁸⁶ Both writers contrast the sinking gold with the floating Crates: as the material things drown in the sea, the soul is unburdened and can travel easily across the waves. The sea is dangerous to enter and dangerous to cross unless one is morally pure.

Early modern writers also made use of the image of Crates throwing his gold into the sea: one such is Wilhelm Zepper, who writes in 1599 that Crates “cast his goods into the sea, because he supposed that by them he should be pulled back from the studie of philosophye, saying: I had rather lose them, than that they should destroy me, or cast me away.”¹⁸⁷ Again, the treasure represents a perilous (but seductive) burden that must be jettisoned if the individual is to avoid drowning himself. Perhaps it is because of morally-charged Biblical allusions to riches at the bottom of the sea that these Christian writers so often connect Crates’ wealth and sunken treasure.

For example, in Deuteronomy, Moses declares that the tribe of Zebulun “shall

¹⁸⁵Gregory Nazianzen, “Oration 43” in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Volume VII: S. Cyril of Jerusalem, S. Gregory Nazianzen*, trans. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (New York, 1894), 415.

¹⁸⁶St. Jerome, “Against Jovinianus,” in *Jerome: The Principle Works of St. Jerome* trans. Philip Schaff and M. A. Freemantle (New York, 1893; s.l.: Aeterna, 2016), 80-81. Citations refer to the Aeterna edition.

¹⁸⁷Wilhelm Zepper *The Art or Skil, Well and Fruitfullie to Heare the Holy Sermons of the Church* (London, 1599), STC 26124.5, 13.

offer the sacrifices of ryghteousnes: for they shal sucke of the abundance of the sea and of the treasures hid in the sand.”¹⁸⁸ The tribe of Zebulon have this privilege because of their “going out,” which the Geneva Bible glosses as their “prosperous viages upon the sea” (Deuteronomy 33:18, 18n). The verses link the tribe of Zebulon’s prosperous voyages and ability to suck of the abundance of the sea to their “ryghteousnes” in offering “sacrifices”; they can reap the sea’s rewards because they will in turn sacrifice some part of those rewards to God. The verse’s distinction between “the abundance of the sea” and “the treasures hid in the sand” suggests that the righteous tribe of Zebulon profits both from trade—prosperous voyages—and from salvaging sunken treasure. In this formation, accessing wealth from the sea marks this tribe as upright people.

Early modern writers take up the theme of the morality of sunken treasure in various ways. In his *Monument of Matrones*, Thomas Bentley quotes the tribe of Zebulon verse of Deuteronomy explicitly, praying that Elizabeth I and England “offer...together the offerings of righteousnesse” so that they “may sucke of the abundance of the sea, and of the treasures hid in the earth.”¹⁸⁹ Bentley is not alone in connecting sunken treasure to moral worth. As one example, Robert Wilson suggests in *The Pedlers Prophecie* that “for pride, couetousnesse, and excesse,” merchants will be punished by having their riches taken by the sea: “the hart of the sea shall eate vp your treasure, / The huge waues shall all ships ouerthrow: / They shall be drowned and all their pleasures.”¹⁹⁰ In contrast,

¹⁸⁸ *The Bible and Holy Scriptures Conteyned in the Olde and Newe Testament* (Geneva, 1562), STC 2095, Deuteronomy 33:19.

¹⁸⁹ Thomas Bentley, *The Monument of Matrones Conteyning Seuen Seuerall Lamps of Virginitie* (London, 1582), STC 1892, 726.

¹⁹⁰ Robert Wilson, *The Pedlers Prophecie* (London, 1595), STC 25782, C4v.

Edward Topsell deliberately separates the idea of finding or losing treasure from human morality, writing in *The Revvard of Religion* that God “is not delighted in worldly brauery, but hath buried great treasure in the sea which shall neuer be found, to keepe mankind from the end of his purpose: for this is their honour they get nothing but with much trauaile, and in one houre, loose labour, life and wealth.”¹⁹¹ Topsell offers sunken treasure as an image of the seemingly arbitrary, unknowable, and unfair allocation of sorrow and joy. While it would be reductive to assign sunken treasure one fixed significance across the period, it is fair to say that many early modern works present the sea as a source of limitless wealth but also a place of extreme trial.

However, this wealth is often represented as sterile or stagnating, cold and useless despite its great value—consider Barabas’s non-circulating “infinite riches” or the useless “wedges of gold” Clarence dreams he sees on the sea-floor.¹⁹² Before it can truly enter, or re-enter, a land-based economic system, wealth literally or figuratively pulled from the sea—the rewards of venture and salvage—must be assimilated. A comparable process of assimilation is necessary when the wealth of the sea is not lucre but female bodies: a weed-covered woman caught in a fishing-net, a long-lost wife recovered from a supposed watery grave, or a bride plucked from the waves along with a treasure chest must each be educated, judged, or must spend years in a temple before she can join society or return to marriage. Philip Edwards remarks upon the connection between lost treasure and lost

¹⁹¹Edward Topsell, *The Revvard of Religion* (London, 1596), STC 24127, 34-35.

¹⁹²All citations from Christopher Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta*, ed. James R. Siemon (London: Methuen Drama, 2009), 1.1.37; all citations from William Shakespeare, *King Richard III*, ed. James R. Siemon (London: Bloomsbury, 2009) 1.4.26. Henceforth *R3*.

people, noting that the sunken treasure of early modern literature, “the thing of great beauty and value which the sea has snatched, and keeps for itself, and which must be won back and restored, is essentially a person.”¹⁹³ The way that women are removed from the sea and subsequently integrated or reintegrated into human and economic relationships offers insights into why salvaged material treasure often proves difficult to circulate.

For example, the wealth—derived from trade on the Mediterranean and subsequently stockpiled—of Barabas, the Jew of Malta is not always easy to spend. Thinking of it, Barabas complains, “what a trouble ‘tis to count this trash” (7). The goods and coin he receives require labor to value and count, space to store, time and effort to sell and spend. To Barabas, it is work, and it is exhausting: his “steel-barred coffers are crammed full, / And all his lifetime hath been tired, / Wearying his fingers’ ends with telling” the coin that stuffs them (14-16). The picture Barabas paints is almost monastic—the isolated, weary merchant tells his coffers like a monk tells his beads, alone in his cell. David H. Thurn deemphasizes Barabas’s labor, calling him “an opulent overlord amidst stupefyingly concentrated wealth...but still capable of the niggling irritation of a businessman who must count his petty cash.”¹⁹⁴ Barabas is indeed incredibly wealthy, but his vehement, if privileged, complaints suggest more than mere “niggling irritation.” Concentrating and condensing wealth is part of his work. Therefore, instead of fatiguing heaps of coin, the merchant longs to be paid in more convenient gold

¹⁹³ Philip Edwards, “The Rapture of the Sea,” in *Shakespearean Continuities: Essays in Honor of E. A. G. Honigmann*, ed. John Batchelor, Tom Cain, and Claire Lamont (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997), 175-192, 176.

¹⁹⁴ David H. Thurn, “Economic and Ideological Exchange in Marlowe’s ‘Jew of Malta,’” *Theatre Journal* 46:2 (1994), 157-170; 161-162.

and jewels—items with more condensed value than the “paltry silverlings” to which he is accustomed (6). Stephen Greenblatt points out that Barabas’s “pursuit of wealth does not mark him out but rather establishes him...in the midst of all the other factors in the play,” from “the Turks exacting tribute from the Christians” to “the Christians expropriating money from the Jews,” from “the convent profiting from these expropriations,” to the “prostitute” and “blackmailer” plying their trades.¹⁹⁵ Everyone is out to profit, and riches circulate in Malta after they have flowed in via merchants’ venturing.¹⁹⁶

The entire island relies on easy-to-exchange—or easy-to-store—wealth. Thus Barabas dreams of “a wedge of gold, / Whereof a man may easily in a day / Tell that which may maintain him all his life” (9-11). He imagines a house heaped not with small change but with gems he could “receive...free, and sell...by the weight” (24). He lists them off: “pearl like pebble-stones,”

bags of fiery opals, sapphires, amethysts,
 Jacinths, hard topaz, grass-green emeralds.
 Beauteous rubies, sparkling diamonds,
 And seld-seen costly stones of so great price. (23, 25-28)

¹⁹⁵ Stephen Greenblatt, “Marlowe, Marx, and Anti-Semitism,” in *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 52-76; 58.

¹⁹⁶ Daniel Vitkus points out the parallel between Barabas’s opening monologue and that spoken by the Jewish merchant Jonathas in the *Croxton Play of the Sacrament* (c 1461-1500): “Both Jonathas and Barabas are identified with an international trade in luxury goods that flowed through the Mediterranean” (166). However, Vitkus does not emphasize the gap between the wealth Barabas says he has—“silverlings”—and the wealth he wants: gold and gems. In the Croxton play, Jonathas has “infinite riches in a little room,” while Barabas dreams of such. Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). For more on the economic labor of the other Mediterranean Jew of early modern drama, Shylock, see Ian MacInnes, “‘Ill Luck, Ill Luck?’: Risk and Hazard in *The Merchant of Venice*,” in *Global Traffic: Discourses and Practices of Trade in English Literature and Culture from 1550-1700* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 39-56; Bradley D. Ryner, “The Cosmopolitical Economies of *The Merchant of Venice* and *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*,” *Renaissance Drama* 42:2 (2014), 141-167.

Barabas's heady daydream of "infinite riches in a little room" contrasts with the actual rewards of his merchant venturing or, as he terms it, "vulgar trade" (37, 35). Barabas dreams of one type of riches while minimizing—yet still bragging about—the type of riches he does possess. Stephen Deng identifies "the social hierarchy implicit in the use of gold versus silver coins" as the primary distinction between forms of wealth, connecting it to the empty golden and silver caskets in Portia's house in Belmont.¹⁹⁷ However, social significance is only part of what makes the gems and precious metals appealing. In addition to their immediately obvious value, gold and gems also obviate the need for interpretive, enumerative labor demanded by heaps of coins. This seems backwards—one major function of coinage is to simplify economic transactions—but it points to the global reach of Barabas's maritime ventures.¹⁹⁸ With merchant vessels bringing cargo from all over the known world, Barabas receives one type of coin from "the Persian ships," another from the "Samnites," and a third from the "men of Uz" (2, 4). It is part of his job to figure out how much the coins are worth in Malta—to tally, convert, and exchange them. Similarly, as Richard Wilson points out, "Jewish traders formed the key commercial network" of the "first age of globalization because they had representatives everywhere."¹⁹⁹ The labor of the Jewish merchant—or usurer—is not

¹⁹⁷ Stephen Deng, *Coinage and State Formation in Early Modern English Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 172.

¹⁹⁸ Lea Knudsen Allen argues that the exotic origins of Barabas's goods and coin contributes significantly to their value to him, other characters, and early modern English audiences. "'Not Every Man Has the Luck to Go to Corinth': Accruing Exotic Capital in *The Jew of Malta* and *Volpone*," in *Global Traffic: Discourses and Practices of Trade in English Literature and Culture from 1550-1700*, ed. Barbara Sebek and Stephen Deng (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2008), 95-114.

¹⁹⁹ Richard Wilson, "Another Country: Marlowe and the Go-Between," in *Remapping the*

only in amassing, interpreting, and (ideally) condensing and dispersing coin, but also in amassing, interpreting, and condensing and dispersing information. Neither Barabas's coin nor his precious information are literally pulled from the sea, but, like the wealth of the tribe of Zebulun, both come from sea trade. Before he can spend even his paltry silverlings on his various schemes, Barabas must assimilate his riches.

The sea-floor is one source of wedges of gold and heaps of gems, but as they appear in early modern literature, those riches require as much as or more labor of assimilation than Barabas's coins. Shakespeare describes the bottom of the ocean as a deeply unsettling scene.²⁰⁰ Clarence's nightmare of drowning mentions seeing

a thousand fearful wracks,
A thousand men that fishes gnawed upon,
Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,
Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,
All scattered in the bottom of the sea.
Some lay in dead men's skulls, and in the holes
Where eyes did once inhabit, there were crept—
As 'twere in scorn of eyes—reflecting gems,
That wooed the slimy bottom of the deep
And mocked the dead bones that lay scattered by. (24-33)

Besides prefiguring Clarence's own death by drowning, the scene incorporates glittering

Mediterranean World in Early Modern English Writings, ed. Goran V. Stanivukovic (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 131-156; 133. For a reading of *marranos* (Spanish Jews who claimed to have converted to Christianity), Jewishness, global trade, and the figure of Barabas, see Peter Berek, "The Jew as Renaissance Man," *Renaissance Quarterly* 51:1 (1998), 128-162.

²⁰⁰ Steve Mentz glosses Clarence's dream as "the impossible fantasy of knowing the unknowable, reaching the bottom of a bottomless place" (xiii). However, some of the power of Clarence's dream lies in what readers and viewers know to be on the sea floor: wrecks, bones, treasure. Steve Mentz, *At the Bottom of Shakespeare's Ocean* (New York: Continuum, 2009).

riches that taunt mortal viewers with their focus on earthly wealth.²⁰¹ Death and decay surround them, from the drowned men gnawed by fishes to the leering skulls whose eye-sockets house the winking jewels. Under the water, the gems have an uncanny agency: they lie, they creep, they woo, they mock. The gold and gems are unsalvageable except in a nightmare; they are economically useless, and therefore sinister. As Stephen Marche puts it, “the bottom of the sea, where the dead are, is not a place of hidden beauty; it is the repository where what is good and beautiful is obscured from the light of day. That obscurity is not waiting to be uncovered as in *The Tempest*. The lost are unimaginably removed there.”²⁰² This treasure has suffered a sea-change from easily exchangeable universal currency to a sort of human body, both *memento mori* and moral warning.²⁰³ The gems and gold are too busy reanimating sunken skulls to be economically circulated again.²⁰⁴ This uncanny behavior does not diminish the gems’ immense value—a lot of the horror lies in directly comparing that value to the value of sight, or life itself—but it also suggests that in being lost and submerged, this treasure undergoes an essential transformation.

²⁰¹ Brian Carroll points out that Clarence’s prophetic dream, like the other dreams of *Richard III*, is “truer than the observed or objective actions on the stage, than the objective ‘truth’ of the play” when so much of Richard’s power comes from lying and performing (37). Brian Carroll, “Richard as Waking Nightmare: Barthesian Dream, Myth, and Memory in Shakespeare’s *Richard III*,” *Visual Communication Quarterly* 20 (2013), 28-45.

²⁰² Stephen Marche, “Mocking Dead Bones: Historical Memory and the Theater of the Dead in ‘Richard III,’” *Comparative Drama* 37:1 (2003), 37-57, 39.

²⁰³ Marjorie Garber writes that “the conjunction of the skull and the jewel, the time bound and the timeless, was apparently a familiar figure of *vanitas*” and, considering Clarence’s dream, concludes that “death is clearly the victor here” (10). Marjorie Garber, “‘Remember Me’: *Memento Mori* Figures in Shakespeare’s Plays,” *Renaissance Drama* 12 (1981), 3-25.

²⁰⁴ In his edition, Siemon notes that Richard of Gloucester also lies, creeps, woos, and mocks, suggesting that the stones are not merely macabre but, like Richard, actively malicious (30-33n).

In imagination, the sea can change treasure into grotesque bodies, but it can also change bodies into treasure. Ariel's song describes this transformation:

Full fathom five thy father lies,
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes,
Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.²⁰⁵

While the king is in reality undrowned, Ariel's song tells Ferdinand that his body is at the bottom of the ocean.²⁰⁶ In addition to the song's playful formal structure, which Marjorie Garber notes features "patterns of chiasmus, or crossing," and "beautifully mirrors the pattern of metamorphosis," the verses also play with time and the processes of decomposition, fast-forwarding past the gnawing fishes of Clarence's dream.²⁰⁷ According to Ariel, Alonso's body has already become pearl and coral, though the supposed shipwreck has just happened. The imaginary sea-change is quick, painless, and complete: "nothing" of Alonso's body "doth fade"—nothing is lost to hungry fish, scouring currents, or decay.²⁰⁸ As a father, though, he is (it seems) completely lost to Ferdinand, who concludes "myself am Naples, / Who, with mine eyes, never since at ebb,

²⁰⁵ All citations from William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan (London: Bloomsbury, 1999), 1.2.397-403.

²⁰⁶ Mentz focuses on the falseness of the song to reemphasize his point about the unknowable: "there is something terrifying about Ariel's description of radical physical metamorphosis, and its insistence on a glittering but false vision of submerged treasure. Taking the measure of these waters is nearly impossible and also irresistible" (8).

²⁰⁷ Marjorie Garber, *Shakespeare After All* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), 860.

²⁰⁸ Dan Brayton explains that the grammar of the song itself enhances the theme of mutability: "'Nothing of him that doth fade' provides no clear referent, while the following two lines... resist clarity by pivoting between an invented nominalization, 'sea-change,' and an equally vague noun phrase, 'something rich and strange' (53). Dan Brayton, *Shakespeare's Ocean: An Ecocritical Exploration* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012).

beheld / The King my father wrecked” (1.2.435-437). After witnessing the shipwreck and hearing the song, Ferdinand has also undergone a sea change: he is now (he believes) the king, and he figures this change metonymically, accepting the traditional re-designation that he is also Naples itself.

In the logic of the song, Alonso’s body, politically precious in life because of his kingship, becomes economically precious in death. If removed from the ocean, the pearl and coral would fetch a high price, just as Caliban, if he could be transported to England, would be a wonder worth paying to see (2.2.27-31). The distance from the bottom of the sea and the distance across the sea are comparable where riches are concerned. Pearl and coral have no value before they are taken out of the sea, and Caliban has no monetary value on the island, though his value in labor is considerable. In both Ariel’s and Trinculo’s flights of fancy, riches are only riches when brought to the right market. As it is, the isolated island exists outside of established systems of commodification, although each wave of newcomers keeps a weather eye open for potential commodities to pack up and carry away. An important part of the work of exporting such commodities—be they pearls and coral or a “dead Indian”—is knowing where they will fetch the highest price (2.2.32).

Salvaging Sea-Women

The sea might change Alonso’s and Caliban’s bodies into treasure; women’s bodies are treasure already. On top of the Petrarchan conventions mocked by Shakespeare in “Sonnet 130”—the beloved’s “coral” lips and the golden “wires” of her

hair—Shakespearean characters frequently connect female beauty with the precious cargo of sea vessels.²⁰⁹ For example, watching her disembark at Cyprus, Cassio calls Desdemona “the riches of the ship.”²¹⁰ Furthermore, he suggests that her precious beauty has calmed “tempest themselves, high seas, and howling winds” and smoothed “the guttered rocks and congregated sands” that otherwise would have tried to “clog the guiltless keel” of the ship (69-70). Cassio at once evokes and dismisses the perils of maritime voyaging—the difficulty of getting “the riches of a ship” to the desired port—and attributes a magical power to Desdemona’s beauty. Similarly, Bassanio discusses Portia’s beauty in terms of a valuable object and magical—or mythological—wonder when he remarks that Portia’s “sunny locks / Hang on her temples like a golden fleece, / Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchis’ strand.”²¹¹ As a stand-in for the Golden Fleece, Portia is a treasure inextricably bound up with the heroic overseas quest required to win her. This pattern of discourse raises questions about the value of both women and of other treasure—does a journey across the sea, or out of the sea, add to the worth of such commodities?

An anecdote from Anthony Munday’s chronicle history of the Netherlands provides an intriguing lens for interpreting how value is assigned to women and to other riches from the sea, as well as contextualizing the literary trope of women who wash

²⁰⁹ William Shakespeare, *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), 2, 4.

²¹⁰ All citations from William Shakespeare, *Othello* ed. E. A. J. Honigmann (London: Bloomsbury, 1997), 2.1.83.

²¹¹ All citations from William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. John Drakakis (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), 1.1.169-171. For further discussion of Portia as the Golden Fleece, please see Chapter Four of this dissertation, pages 175-176.

ashore in or alongside treasure chests. For example, in Greek myth, both Danae, the mother of Perseus, and Semele, the mother of Dionysus, are allegedly thrown into large boxes with their illegitimate newborn sons, and the boxes are thrown into the sea where, after floating for a time, they fetch up on other shores.²¹² Thaisa from *Pericles* and Spenser's Lucy—both discussed below—are two early modern examples. Of course, it is not exclusively women who are closed up in boxes or chests and sent out on the waves—consider the baby Moses in his basket or even Noah and his animals in the Ark. Indeed, the boundaries distinguishing castaways like those discussed in Chapter 2 from women like Lucy or Thaisa are extremely indistinct. What unites the women discussed below is the ways they are described as potentially valuable in economic, rather than virtuous, terms.

The woman mentioned in Munday's chronicle comes from the sea and ends up becoming a valuable community member. Munday describes how in the time of Albert of Bavaria (the latter half of the fourteenth century), "a Sea-Woman (by reason of great Tempestes at Sea, and extraordinarie high tides) was seene swimming in the Zuyderzee, between the Townes of Campden and Edam" in the Netherlands.²¹³ The Sea-Woman was caught, "brought to Edam, and cleansed from the Sea-Mosse grown about her, by her long abiding there" (405). The Sea-Woman was not a mermaid, but a humanoid woman: Munday relays that "she was like to another woman," and "endured to be appareled" in a

²¹²For more on the trope in Greek myth, see N. M. Holley, "The Floating Chest," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 69 (1949), 39-47. For a further discussion of the floating chest versus the rudderless boat, please see Chapter Two of this dissertation, page 110.

²¹³ Anthony Munday, *A Briefe Chronicle, of the Successe of Times, from the Creation of the World, to this Instant* (London, 1611), STC 18263, 405.

landswoman's clothes (405-406). The unexpected thing about the Sea-Woman, then, is not that she has scales or fins, but rather that she does not.

Despite cleaning up well, the Sea-Woman is not immediately happy on land. Although she “would fede on meates as others did, yet sought shee all meanes to escape, and get into the water againe, had shee not very carefully bin tended” (406). In time, however, “she did learne to spin, and exercise other womanly qualities” (406). After avowing that she was “daily seene of infinite persons, who have made perfect testimonial of this rare accident, and signified to it for an undoubted truth,” Munday reveals that the Sea-Woman “lived fifteene years, and lyeth there buried in the Church-yard,” having presumably converted to Christianity sometime during her residence in the town (406). Plucked from the ocean and cleaned of her coating of moss and seaweed, the Sea-Woman eventually, through careful watching and tutelage, learns to spin and behave like a normal woman. After assimilating, she is a member of the community until her death and beyond: buried in the churchyard, the Sea-Woman waits for the day of judgment alongside all the other Christians of Edam.

This anecdote introduces an unusual and fascinating example of wealth pulled from the sea. It must be said that the wealth—the Sea-Woman—looks almost nothing like Munday's readers would expect. However, reading the Sea-Woman as comparable to other riches harvested from venturing over or beneath the waves opens productive opportunities to interpret a fascinating trope: the woman who is lost overboard, presumed dead, and then miraculously recovered. Like the other valuables discussed in this chapter, the Sea-Woman needs time and work in order to join the economy. She has the potential

to work, but when she is fresh from the ocean, that potential is not obvious: she requires cleaning, dressing, supervision, care, and training before she is valuable as anything beyond a marvel. Indeed, it is curious that the villagers undertake this work to turn her into a normal woman rather than deciding to put her on display. Presumably her value as a marvel would be much higher than her value as a spinster; however, all that Munday records is that the villagers choose to give her a bath and incorporate her into their community. Perhaps once scrubbed, she no longer looks different enough—no scales, no fins—to attest to her marvelous origins. At any rate, because the woman is treated as a community member rather than a sideshow commodity, Munday’s account suggests that even marvels must spin for their supper sooner or later. The story of the Sea-Woman of Edam indicates that time can be an important element in realizing the ultimate potential value of the sea’s providings.

Time is not the only factor, however, and failure to process the riches of the sea can void even the most enormous potential. Even precious spices and Aztec gold needed to be packed, shipped, inventoried, unloaded, and brought to market, and that process often proves complicated or even confounding. Consider the *Madre de Deus*, an enormous Portuguese carrack captured by the English in 1592: Hakluyt writes that the *Madre de Deus* was “one of the greatest receipt belonging to the crowne of Portugall.”²¹⁴ The ship’s East Asian cargo dazzled the English: Hakluyt comments, “here, I cannot but

²¹⁴Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* (London, 1600), STC 12626a, 197. For more on the *Madre de Deus* and her cargo, see Elsje van Kessel, “The Inventories of the *Madre de Deus*: Tracing Asian Material Culture in Early Modern England,” *Journal of the History of Collections* (2019), 17 p.

enter into the consideration and acknowledgement of Gods great fauor towards our nation, who by putting this purchase into our hands hath manifestly discovered those secret trades & Indian riches, which hitherto lay strangely hidden, and cunningly concealed from vs” (198). Hakluyt provides a tantalizing list of the “iewels,” “spices, drugges, silks, calicos, quilts, carpets and colors, &c” on the *Madre de Deus* and notes that the cargo was judged to be worth 150,000 pounds sterling (198). However, the ship’s treasures inspired looting and embezzlement from the moment of capture, and during the time the *Madre de Deus* spent in Dartmouth Harbor, unscrupulous characters buzzed around her, helping themselves to hundreds or thousands of pounds worth of precious stones and exotic luxury goods. Despite the best efforts of the crown, the majority of the embezzled loot was never recovered. The plundering of the *Madre de Deus* demonstrates the risks of mismanaging the introduction of the sea’s riches into the land economy. Until it is processed, valued, and spent, treasure is only an idea.

Like material treasure, women who are pulled from the sea in literature require integration—or re-integration. Take Thaisa, for example: after she appears to die while giving birth to Marina in the middle of a storm at sea, Pericles’s queen is packed into a box and tossed overboard into the wild waves. Peter Womack, Suzanne Gossett, Barbara Mowat, Joanne M. Rochester, and others have traced the resemblances between *Pericles* and the Digby manuscript play *Mary Magdalen*, in which the king of Marseille leaves the body of his queen—dead in childbirth—on a rock in the ocean with her newborn baby and finds both of them miraculously restored to life and health when he sails by on his

return voyage.²¹⁵ Forced by the captain of his ship to jettison Thaisa, Pericles imagines his wife lying at the bottom of the sea. “Straight [I] must cast thee,” he tells the body,

scarcely confined, in the ooze,
Where, for a monument upon thy bones
And aye-remaining lamps, the belching whale
And humming water must o’erwhelm thy corpse,
Lying with simple shells.²¹⁶

He commits Thaisa’s body to the waves in a “satin coffer” with “spices,” “jewels,” and a note giving her name and provenance (3.1.65-67). The sea floor Pericles imagines contains no treasure other than his wife’s bones, and those bones are not subject to a physical sea-change into any other element—precious or otherwise. Instead of undergoing a physical transformation into a coral monument, Thaisa’s bones merely lie with “simple shells,” slowly dissolving. Pericles imagines that physically she will cease to be: between the “belching whale” and the “humming water” the sea will “o’erwhelm” her, erasing everything queenly, lovable, human, and individual about Thaisa.²¹⁷

However, Thaisa is not dead, and in the very next scene, the magician Cerimon revives her.²¹⁸ Before he sees the woman in the chest, however, Cerimon expects that it

²¹⁵See Peter Womack, “Shakespeare and the Sea of Stories,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 29 (1999), 169-187; Barbara Mowat, “‘What’s in a Name?’: Tragicomedy, Romance or Late Comedy,” *A Companion to Shakespeare’s Works* ed. Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), vol. 4, 129-149; Joanne M. Rochester, “Space and Staging in the Digby ‘Mary Magdalen’ and ‘Pericles, Prince of Tyre,’” *Early Theatre* 13.2 (2010), 43-62.

²¹⁶ All citations from William Shakespeare, *Pericles*, ed. Suzanne Gossett (London: Bloomsbury, 2004), 3.1.59-64. Henceforth *Per*.

²¹⁷ Gwylim Jones summarizes the resonances of the Jonah legend with Thaisa’s fate in “Pericles: Storm and Scripture,” *Shakespeare’s Storms* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 108-124; 119-122.

²¹⁸ Garber points out that this episode shares more with the “Full Fathom Five” song than merely imagining the sea floor: “in both *Pericles* and *The Tempest* the mourned and beloved person beneath the waves is, in fact, not dead” (*Shakespeare After All*, 768).

will—naturally—be full of treasure: “If the sea’s stomach be o’ercharged with gold,” he tells his companions, “‘Tis a good constraint of fortune / It belches upon us” (3.2.56-58).²¹⁹ Thaisa is belched up not by the whale Pericles feared, but by the sea. Instead of the gold he expects, Cerimon finds the body “Shrouded in a cloth of state, / Balmed and entreaured with full bags of spices!” (63-64).²²⁰ With his magic, the wizard wakes Thaisa from her swoon. He observes that “her eyelids, cases to those heavenly jewels / Which Pericles hath lost, begin to part / Their fringes of bright gold” (97-99). Thaisa herself is the treasure pulled from the sea.²²¹ Thaisa-as-treasure shares some key qualities with material treasure. Although Cerimon restores her to life, Thaisa is not immediately able to return to society; instead, she becomes a priestess of Diana until her daughter and husband come to collect her at the end of the play.

In a similar plotline, the long-lost wife and mother Emilia in *The Comedy of Errors* spends the time following her shipwreck as an Abbess, secluded from the world until her sons and husband find her as part of the climax of the play. The return of the lost loved one is a commonplace in Romance, and it does not always involve the sea

²¹⁹ This moment recalls Ariel’s speech as Harpy in Act 3 Scene 3 of *The Tempest*, when he tells Alonso, Sebastian, and Antonio, “you are three men of sin, whom destiny, / That hath to instrument this lower world, / And what is in it, the never-surfeited sea / Hath caused to belch up you” (53-56). Cerimon’s sea is “o’ercharged with gold,” but Ariel’s can never be filled up. In both cases, however, the sea takes on a whale-like agency: whereas Jonah’s whale obeys God’s commands, here in Ariel’s formula the sea gobbles, preserves, and disgorges objects and people according to the mandate of destiny, a more targeted force than mere “fortune”, but one whose moral arc is similarly unclear.

²²⁰ Gossett notes the global, mercantile origins of these precious spices in her edition. 3.2.64n.

²²¹ Reflecting on this moment, Lyndy Abraham muses “is it a coffin or a treasure chest?” “Weddings, Funerals, and Incest: Alchemical Emblems and Shakespeare’s *Pericles*,” *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 98.4 (1999), 523-549, 539.

(consider for example, Hermione in *The Winter's Tale* or the two princes in *Cymbeline*). Thinking of women like Thaisa or Emilia as salvaged treasure, however, helps illuminate the process of commodification involved not only in her case, but also in those of other lost-then-found Romance characters.

While it may seem that Thaisa is merely biding her time until other characters are ready to meet her again, she interacts with the world differently after her recovery on account of her vulnerability as woman-as-treasure. Because of Pericles's transformative grief and the years that separate both him and Marina from the loss of Thaisa, at the time of the reunion, the conditions of Thaisa's value have fundamentally changed. Before the final reunion in Diana's temple, it is already clear from Pericles' meeting with Marina that Thaisa's place in her family will be different. With the "queen's square brows, / Her stature to an inch, as wand-like straight, / as silver-voiced, her eyes as jewel-like," Marina now occupies the position of fair young woman—and embodied treasure—that was originally Thaisa's (5.1.99-101). Both Pericles and Marina have suffered myriad trials and griefs, and they are both older and, temperamentally, very different than they were at the moment of Marina's birth and Thaisa's seeming death fifteen years earlier.

In those years, Pericles and Marina have both suffered a sea change. Pericles has withdrawn into his grief, and Marina has grown into eloquent womanhood. Pericles avows that the griefs he and his daughter have suffered are essentially transformative: "tell thy story," he urges Marina (125). "If thine [griefs] considered prove the thousand part / Of my endurance, thou art a man, and I / Have suffered like a girl" (126-128). In this metaphor, Marina suffers with the manly fortitude her father should display; they are

both blended and inverted by their respective sorrows. The experience of restoration is also transformative: it is a “great sea of joys” that turns Pericles back into a father, Marina into a princess and a bride, and, consequently, changes Thaisa from a nun into a mother and queen (182).

The transformed Pericles and Marina require a different Thaisa—a matron and a queen. Marina kneels to Thaisa and longs to be clasped to her “mother’s bosom” (5.3.45). Once he recognizes his wife, Pericles declares that he and she will rule again—but not in Tyre. Leaving his youthful kingdom to Marina and Lysimachus, Pericles tells Thaisa, “we’ll celebrate their nuptuals” and then “spend our following days” in Pentapolis (81-83). Pericles seeks retirement, and he wants to take Thaisa with him. Her supposed death at sea and her years in Diana’s temple transform Thaisa’s family, and consequently they also change her. The Thaisa of Act Three is gone; the wife and mother who returns is not exactly the same person who was tossed overboard. However, the sea change extends not just to the woman-as-treasure, but to the husband and the daughter who value her.

Like the dramatic and chronicle historical moments discussed above, the tale of Amidas and Bracidas in Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* illustrates the transformative power of the sea over the riches it conceals and then reveals. This section of the poem equates maidens and their dowries—in this case a treasure chest that has washed up on the shore—and compares both types of salvaged treasure to another type of wealth: land.²²²

²²² For an extended examination of the form and context of this episode, see Laura Lehuanani Yim, “Standing in the Sea: Allegory, Multiple Jurisdictions, and the Fluid Foundations of Law and Poetry in *The Faerie Queene’s* Book of Justice,” in *A Poetics of Fluidity in Spenser, Bacon, and Herbert, 1580-1630*, PhD Diss., Brandeis University, 2005. ProQuest, UMI 3166245, 21-63.

The episode illustrates Justice, personified by Artegall, at work. The case involves carefully balanced and parallel sets of possessions: two brothers, who own two different islands and who love two different women. The one chest of treasure, along with the erosion of one brother's island to the benefit of the other, present a problem of allocation. What is the just solution when Fortune—in this case, in the form of the sea—gives and takes away from both brothers? The two brothers cannot come to a decision or enjoy the various forms of wealth they have salvaged until a judiciary process confirms which woman, island, or treasure chest belongs to whom.

A summary of the brothers' dispute over the land, the women, and the treasure chest makes it clear how women, land, and treasure are all comparable forms of wealth to be awarded by either Fortune or Justice. Each brother has inherited an island from their father, each island originally "as great and wide" as the other.²²³ However, according to Bracidas,

tract of time, that all things doth decay,
And this deuouring Sea, that naught doth spare,
The most part of my land hath washt away,
And thrown it vp vnto my brothers share:
So his encreased, but mine did empaire. (5.8)

Bracidas's island has shrunk, and the current has deposited Bracidas's lost land onto Amidas's island, turning an equal inheritance into an unequal one. Although the movement of the land resulted from a natural process, the erosion leaves Bracidas feeling like his brother has stolen from him.²²⁴

²²³ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton, Hiroshi Yamashita, Toshiyuki Suzuki, and Shohachi Fukuda (New York: Routledge, 2001), 5.4.7.

²²⁴ The question of land ownership and erosion resembles debates about the property rights

Erosion patterns are not the only way the sea interferes in the brothers' fortunes: indirectly, it also reallocates the brothers' love-interests and a substantial amount of treasure. The dispute arises from the brothers' almost, but not quite, parallel situations. The plot details are convoluted, but the essence is that one brother has a larger island, his brother's ex-sweetheart Philtera, and no treasure chest, while the other has a smaller island, his brother's ex-sweetheart Lucy, and the chest of gold she found floating on the waves.²²⁵ This chest of gold pulled from the sea is at the center of the disagreement. Once Bracidas wins Lucy and the treasure, Philtera makes a (presumably intentionally false) counterclaim, saying that the chest was hers to begin with, that it was in the sea because she lost it in a shipwreck, and that by rights, it belongs to her and to her betrothed Amidas.²²⁶

Philtera's claim equates the treasure chest with the two women in complicated

over the "bed, banks and water" of English rivers; for an overview, see Andrew McRae, *Literature and Domestic Travel in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 26.

²²⁵ Since Bracidas's lands have shrunken and Amidas's have grown, Bracidas's sweetheart, Philtera, transfers her allegiance to the more land-rich brother, who, "taking her," leaves "his owne loue," Lucy, "astray" (9). Heartbroken, Lucy throws herself into the sea. However, she does not drown, but instead discovers the contentious treasure: while Lucy floats "among the billowes beating of her / Twixt life and death, long to and fro," she chances "vnawares to light vpon" a "coffer" also floating in the waves (10). Lucy clings to the coffer and eventually a ship rescues her; it turns out that the coffer is full of gold.

²²⁶ Philtera alleges
 that to her selfe that threasure appertained;
 And that she did transport the same by sea,
 To bring it to her husband new ordained,
 But suffred cruell shipwracke by the way. (13)

In recounting the set-up to the two claims, Bracidas suggests that Philtera is making hers up but ultimately concludes "whether it be so or no, I can not say" (13). The narrator does not confirm or deny Philtera's story, but overall it appears that Philtera—who has already transferred her affections from one brother to another on the basis of wealth—is lying.

ways. First, despite the faithful behavior of Lucy and the faithless behavior of Philtera, the narrator does not distinguish between the value of the two women: the treasure chest is the primary reward, and a woman comes with it either way. Second, the women want the treasure only as a dowry, not to spend for themselves: Philtera wants the chest so she can bestow it on Amidas, and Lucy wants it so that she can bestow it on Bracidas. The treasure is an extension of the women, and the women are, inversely, also an extension of the treasure.

This is the situation that the two brothers set before Artegall: Artegall must decide which woman's claim on the chest is true—and therefore which brother gets the treasure. Artegall has an opportunity to correct the seeming injustices done to Bracidas by Philtera (who jilted him for his brother and then made a false claim on the gold) and by the ocean (which took his land and gave it to his brother). While Lucy is honest and Philtera is not, the characters of the women and whom they marry are ancillary to the main question of material gain. In comparison to the wealth in land or the wealth in treasure, the woman is merely a bonus, or consolation, prize. Artegall's decision follows the Elizabethan law of alluvion: essentially, finders, keepers.²²⁷ Artegall tells both Bracidas and Amidas that “what the sea vnto you sent, your own should seeme” (17, 18). He elaborates:

what the mighty Sea hath once possest,
And plucked quite from all possessors hand,
Whether by rage of waues, that neuer rest.

²²⁷ With some exceptions (like that all the whales who are beached on English shores belong to the Crown), the law of alluvion distributes washed-up goods to the person who salvages them. For more on the historical origins of the justice Artegall applies here, see Joel Altman, “Justice and Equity,” *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 413-415, 414; Andrew Zurcher, *Spenser's Legal Language: Law and Poetry in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007), 143-145.

Or else by wracke, that wretches hath distrest,
 He may dispose by his imperiall might,
 As thing at random left, to whom he list. (19)

Unlike in *Pericles*, where the sea cannot dissolve family relationships or ownership—consider Pericles’ armor—to Artegall (and to the law), the sea washes away all previous rights of ownership, making the chest the property of the finder—Lucy. She gives it, and herself, to Bracidas, and Amidas has to be content with Philtera and his bigger island.

Is this a just solution? Philip Edwards reads this episode as indicative that “the sea gives, and the sea takes away,” calling the process “haphazard” and “unpredictable.”²²⁸ This unpredictability, Edwards suggests, interrupts the orderly cosmos and the well-ordered poetic epic; however, the sea’s reallocation of resources in the case of the brothers is hardly disorderly. Artegall essentially upholds the sea’s decisions, because the sea has recompensed each brother: the land moves to the island where the sea sent it, the chest of treasure belongs to her who happened upon it.

Orderly as they may be, however, the sea’s decisions divide the brothers and bring them to a paralyzing quarrel. While ownership of the chest is under dispute, neither couple can be married, nor can the brothers interact with each other peacefully. The treasure, and therefore the characters’ relationships and social development into married people, is stuck until Artegall sorts treasure and relationships out. After the sea has stripped a given property of its history, then, there must be a judicial process before it can be correctly reincorporated into someone’s possession. Until that happens, the treasure

²²⁸ Philip Edwards, *Sea-Mark: The Metaphorical Voyage, Spenser to Milton* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1997), 41.

remains in the chest, the brothers, irreconcilable, and the women, unmarried.

This episode makes two key points: first, wealth from the sea can be contentious because it is seemingly free for the taking. Where property rights are concerned, the sea washes away the human record, and without that record, problems arise. Thus the second takeaway: the need to record or rerecord human ownership and value on the riches of the sea before they can circulate socially—via marriage—or economically. A judicial process is only one form of the necessary land-change that the riches of the sea must undergo—we have seen that obtaining and spending (as it were) such wealth can require canny venturing, mercantile activity, cleaning off moss, job training, and remaining in a temple or shrine until the right moment.

Whether performed by an avatar of justice or the townsfolk of Edam, these land-changes are essentially social in nature—they attach value and ownership to things that are rare, miraculous, or novel so that those things can circulate in human company. The literary pattern of land-changes humanizing sea-riches suggests that as England began to plant colonies and started on the long journey toward maritime dominance, its poets, dramatists, preachers, translators, and chroniclers were negotiating how to think about a growing influx of foreign goods and foreign people. While some were content to confine exotic goods to the insides of *Wunderkammern*, or to keep exotic peoples in sideshow tents, others might wonder what sort of processing—social or economic—the products of colonial expansion require.²²⁹ Might they even have the potential to enact change on the

²²⁹ For an overview of *Wunderkammern*, or cabinets of curiosity, see Adriana Turpin, “The New World Collections of Duke Cosimo I de’Medici and their role in the creation of a *Kunst- und Wunderkammer* in the Palazzo Vecchio,” in *Curiosity and Wonder from the Renaissance*

colonizers?

Across these moments in early modern literature, the rewards of risking the sea have elements in common. Such riches must be recognized, either by the morally worthy finder of a washed-up coffer or by a canny venturer who knows what the market wants, where on earth to seek those valuable commodities, and how to transform them into something that is valuable on a human scale—be it a woman who can spin or cash that can be spent. Even that cash must be turned by the merchant's labor into spendable wealth. Similarly, the finder of a chest of gold, or of a woman, must expend time, care, and perhaps even magic to get that treasure to the point where it can be introduced into the economy. Underneath the waves, the sea works transformation on the treasure that falls into it so that without such rehabilitation, the treasure is utterly inhuman—a pearl-strewn coral reef that was once the body of a king, or a jewel winking from the empty eye socket of a grinning skull.

to the Enlightenment, ed. R.J.W. Evans and Alexander Marr (Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), 63-86.

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