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**AFFECTING MANHOOD: MASCULINITY, EFFEMINACY, AND THE
FOP FIGURE IN EARLY MODERN ENGLISH DRAMA**

A Dissertation Presented

by

JESSICA LANDIS

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

September 2015

Department of English

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DEDICATION

To Phil, Jean, and Angie Landis

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ABSTRACT
AFFECTING MANHOOD: MASCULINITY, EFFEMINACY, AND THE FOP
FIGURE IN EARLY MODERN ENGLISH DRAMA
SEPTEMBER 2015
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This project identifies and analyzes the fop figure in early modern English drama and treats the figure as a vehicle that reveals the instability of conceptions of masculinity in the period. This project establishes a theatrical history of the character type. Although the fop did not emerge on the English stage as a stock character until late in the seventeenth century, antecedents and proto-fops appear across dramatic genres beginning in the late 1580s. Identifying these characters and deciphering their functions in plot and character development reveals, in part, how cultural anxieties about masculine codes of conduct were manifested. The project examines the spaces foppish characters occupied on stage between 1587 and 1615, specifically, the court, the battlefield, the academy, and the city. It argues that a man risks becoming a fop if he fails to adhere to codes that governed masculine conduct in these spaces. *Affecting Manhood* argues that foppishness was quite prevalent on the early modern English stage, showing up in the works of Shakespeare, Marlowe, Jonson, Middleton, Chapman, Marston, Peele, and Fletcher among others. Chapter One traces courtier fops in that appear in staged court spaces as figures that reveal cracks in the social and political facade of the court as an institution. Chapter Two focuses on soldier fops and posits that

excessiveness, an intrinsic characteristic of early modern fops, is also a major tenet of martial forms of masculinity, and so blurs the line between successful soldier and an effeminate fop. Chapter Three looks at the tradition of scholar fops within staged academies of learning to show the link between homosociality, homoeroticism, and effeminacy. Chapter Four turns to urban young men and the fops among them, claiming that foppishness and its accompanying effeminacies are constructed via the excessive use of particularly urban materials, such as clothing and young boys. Taken together, these specific fop figures become a critical lens for examining the shifting ideas about power and gender in early modern England.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The fop, a theatrical figure most often associated with late seventeenth-century comedies of manners, appeared on the early modern English stage as a character type. His familiarity increased over the period as he showed up in many different types of plays and occupied many different theatrical roles. Early modern stage fops are not as fully realized as the Restoration iterations of the stock character, but they have identifiable characteristics and dramatic functions that are certainly recognizable in their successors. Fops emerge as a character type in early modern drama via repeated patterns of behavior they display on stage that make them recognizable. In the following study, I describe several kinds of early modern fops that appeared on the early modern English stage and the traits that made the fop identifiable as a character type. Early modern fop figures misread their situations, overact social expectations, and generally behave excessively. One such trait that emerges from these patterns is unapologetic social ambition often marked by a pathetic desire to be liked. In the play *Summer's Last Will and Testament* (1600), Thomas Nashe employs the term fop to satirize playwrights' desire to have their plays be well-liked, claiming, "He, like a Fop & an Ass must be making himself a public laughing-stock."¹ The fop on stage shares with his creator a desire to get ahead by garnering praise. While the playwright at times invites laughter with his words, he also runs the risk of being ridiculed for his work by the public. Similarly, the stage fop is

¹ *A Pleasant Comedie, Called Summer's Last Will and Testament* (1600), B; STC: 387:03.

unknowingly the butt of jokes because his social ambitions are beyond the scope of his social savviness.

To study the character type of the early modern fop, it is necessary to establish an understanding of the meaning and connotation of the term “fop” in the early modern period. In Shakespeare’s *King Lear* (c. 1603-1606), the term appears three times in some form: twice in the bastard Edmund’s embittered speeches and once in one of the Fool’s songs. Edmund employs the term in the play’s second scene to label legitimate children and their parents fools, a “tribe of fops” (I.ii.14) who produce heirs in the base acts of sexual lust.² Everyone but Edmund, it seems, leads a life of little substance because they are conceived through an act that is given little thought. Later in the same scene, Edmund uses the term “foppery” during a prose speech about how foolish it is to blame natural phenomenon like the cosmos for disasters on earth when he believes men’s corruption causes the problems (118). In both of these uses, Edmund clearly wants to convey the court’s intense foolishness that he believes has bred an unstable crown and kingdom. Over the course of the speech, he decides to use this “foolishness” to his advantage and gain power by using his “wit” and his ability to “fashion fit” (181-2). Edmund’s idea of a “fop” is someone who can easily be manipulated, a person easily impressed by wit and fashion just as he is easily moved by the stars. Edmund can do as he pleases with Lear’s daughters and followers because they are driven by faddish concerns, or “fashion,” rather than authentic or autonomous senses of themselves.

² Ed. R.A. Foakes (Walton-on-Thames: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1997).

The use of the term later in the play—this time in its adjectival form—speaks to similar concerns about the authenticity of those who infiltrate the King’s world. In the scene, Lear has already cast off responsibility for his kingdom and is keeping late hours with his raucous knights as company. He enjoys his Fool, bantering, laughing at his songs. The Fool points out that he cannot have “all the fool” to himself because ladies, lords, and great men take up too much of it themselves (I.iv.152-155). He goes on to tease Lear for giving up his crown before launching onto the following song:

Fools had ne're less grace in a year,
For wise men are grown foppish,
And know not how their wits to wear,
Their manners are so apish. (I.iv.166-169)

Here, the Fool separates the terms “Fools” and “foppish,” associating the first with a lack of grace and the second with an undesired fate of “wise men.” Fools have never had “less grace,” which could refer to court fools’ unwillingness to please, or an inability to be charming or bestow favor, but certainly implicates that “wise men,” presumably Lear and his court, currently lack the same kind of grace. This first line, however, disallows a conflation of these courtiers and their fools. The courtiers lack grace *and* authenticity. The placement of the song directly after the Fool’s assessment of the *foolishness* of the court logically makes its message applicable to them. He associates foppishness with the shallow and affected nature of courtly customs: men “wear” their “wits” and “ape” their “manners” rather than embody them.

Lear does not contain a fop figure. Nor does the play deploy the terms “fop” and “foppery” in an innovative, or even very interesting, way. I begin with

the play because the Fool connects *foolish* foppishness and *affected* foppishness. A great number of plays of the period deal with similar issues, so *Lear* is no anomaly in that regard. I call on *Lear*, this tragedy of the domestic and public lives of an ancient King, as an example of the unexpected early modern places fops are to be found. Anxiety created by family dynamics, political decisions, and even war occur alongside the anxiety about class status and masculine identity that comes with being labeled a “fop.”

This project concerns the intersection of early modern ideas about masculinity and the history of the fop figure on the early modern stage. At its center lies the notion that while the term “fop” as it was used to describe a kind of affected, effeminate man in the eighteenth century was not necessarily in usage in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries, the *ideas* conveyed by the term were very much at work and can be discovered in plays of all different genres and topics. For modern readers, the term “foppish” suggests a particular type of affected man. We might reference, for example, a male pop star who wears feminine make-up, dresses flamboyantly, and gestures, speaks, or behaves effeminately. Those cognizant of the Western theatrical tradition likely think of the doltish but fashionable effete male characters who appeared in overly-done costumes on the Restoration stage.³ A “fop” in the early-seventeenth century, however, was often simply a fool. So how and why did the term transform and take on its gendered and classed overtones? This is the question I seek to answer in this dissertation.

³ Mark Dawson does extensive work on defining the eighteenth century fop in *Gentility and the Comic Theatre of Late Stuart London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). See especially Chapter Seven, “The Fop as Social Upstart?”, 145-163.

The term “fop” was bandied about in countless plays in countless contexts during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but the definition has long been understood the word to have broadly meant “fool” during the period. According to the *OED*, the word maintained this generic sense until late in the seventeenth century.⁴ Shakespeare certainly uses the word this way in various forms in several plays in addition to *Lear*, including: *Othello* (IV.ii.196), *The Merchant of Venice* (II.v.35), *Measure for Measure* (I.ii.224), and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (V.v.124).⁵ The term, however, is much more useful if we consider its later resonance as an identity category for affected and ridiculous men. Beginning in the late seventeenth century, fops were “foolishly attentive to and vain of [their] appearance[s]” and who were “pretender[s] to wit.” These definitions describe the familiar stock character from Restoration comedy, but such men certainly also appeared on the early modern English stage, as courtiers, students, soldiers, urbanites, and other characters. The etymological evolution of the word “fop” reflects a revolution in early modern culture. The term’s metamorphosis suggests that a figure of inauthentic gentility mirrors English society’s shift and resultant anxiety toward more mobile identities through a more mobile economy.

Taken with the political and social undercurrents of the plays in which he appears, the fluidity of the Renaissance fop as a character expresses the

⁴ The *Oxford English Dictionary* suggests that “fop” merely meant “foolish person” through the early eighteenth century and cites Robert Greene’s 1590 *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. The other senses of the word important to this paper — “One who is foolishly attentive to and vain of his appearance, dress, or manners; a dandy, an exquisite” and “A conceited person, a pretender to wit, wisdom, or accomplishments; a coxcomb, ‘prig’”—do not appear, according to the *OED*, until the 1670s.

⁵ All references to Shakespeare’s plays are taken from their respective, most contemporary Arden editions (London: Arden Publishers).

ambiguousness of gender and class identities in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Even when considering the later resonances of the term, the early modern “fop” remains somewhat difficult to categorize and define because the characteristics that define him are not exclusive to a single archetype.

Historically, this ambiguity is congruent with changing class structures, which meant changing and less-defined markers of identity. Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes, for example, assert, “Flexible definitions of gentility were a necessary feature of the rather mobile society of early modern England.”⁶ In contrast, the eighteenth century saw a solidification of the dialectical models that would define “male” and “female” and even “rich” and “poor” through a vigorous instillation of inflexible boundaries that contained identity categories.⁷ This project posits that studying the fop figure as he manifested in early modern England allows us to trace the transition from looser, more forgiving categories of identity to stricter classifications of gender, class, and sexuality that eventually forced distinctions between people, a process that has been critically and historically represented by the “creation” of homosexuality.⁸

⁶ *The Gentry in England and Wales, 1500-1700*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 9. Feal and Holmes show that the number of families claiming gentry status increased in the sixteenth century at a higher rate than the general population numbers increased. However, “The broadening of the social group occurred within a relatively fixed hierarchical structure of power and wealth” (15). Feal and Holmes acknowledge that defining a group in comparison to others provides “weak arguments for... homogeneity” (17).

⁷ In *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Volume 1* (New York: Vintage, 1978) Foucault claims that a shift modern binary system of gender differentiation occurred in the eighteenth century. Thomas Laqueur concurs, claiming the Renaissance functioned under a “one sex model” (*Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1990). For a more recent and looser interpretation of Foucault’s historical ideas of gender difference, particularly as they can be applied to the study of masculinity, see Alexandra Shepard’s “From Anxious Patriarchs to Refined Gentlemen? Manhood in Britain, 1500-1700,” *Journal of British Studies* 44 (2005), 281-295.

⁸ There exists a large body of literature on homoeroticism and the “birth” of the homosexual in the early modern period that has heavily influenced the ways I think about these issues. Many of

In its methodology, this project bears resemblance to Mario DiGangi's *Sexual Types* in that it seeks to identify a character type that appeared regularly on the early modern stage and inquire into its origins and cultural resonances. DiGangi sets out to show that "sexual types can... function to expose and critique the ideologies that make them intelligible."⁹ The project takes theatrical "type" figures akin to the early modern fop "not as [...] bearer[s] of sexual identity or subjectivity, but as [...] familiar cultural figure[s] that render sexual agency intelligible as *a symptom* of the transgression of gender, social, economic, or political order... the sexual type becomes an easily recognized figure for vilified forms of embodiment and agency."¹⁰ Though some behaviors typical of the early modern fop figure suggest that the character engages in transgressive sexual acts, this project does not seek to show him as a representative of a predecessor to the modern homosexual. Like DiGangi, I emphasize that character types, including the fop, do not necessarily take on specific identities. Instead their behaviors, sexual and non-sexual, work as *readable signs and recognizable transgression*.

these studies have been influential in shaping the critical discussion about gender as well as sexual identity. These include, though are certainly not limited to, the following: Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982); Laurence Senelick, "Mollies or Men of Mode? Sodomy and the Eighteenth Century London Stage," *Journal of History of Sexuality*, 1(1990): 33-67; Bruce R. Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England: A Cultural Poetics*. (University of Chicago Press, 1991); Gregory Bredbeck, *Sodomy and Interpretation from Marlowe to Milton* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); Jonathan Goldberg *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992); Mark Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Mario DiGangi, *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Randolph Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution: Heterosexuality and the Third Gender in Enlightenment London* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998); and Thomas King, *The Gendering of Men, 1600-1750, vol. 2: Queer Articulations* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008).

⁹ *Sexual Types: Embodiment, Agency, and Dramatic Character from Shakespeare to Shirley*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 4.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 6, emphasis added. George Haggerty, though discussing the emergence of one of the fop's descendants, the beau, similarly points out that effeminate men were read as, "contaminat[ing] masculinity" when they appropriate women's materials and behaviors (46).

The history of the fop figure is the history of a character who, by the late-seventeenth century, incorporates various signs of social and gender transgression into one type that he becomes a mainstay of dramatic comedy.

Before the fop becomes a recognizable Restoration gentleman in a giant wig and elaborate waistcoat, he first appears as several kinds of Renaissance men who are recognizable through a shared set of signifiers. “[Fops] represented a particular kind of social *typing* which derived its primary impetus from the theatre.”¹¹ The “typing,” however regulated and repeated on the stage, was not strict. The chapter divisions in this project reflect some of this diversity and identify the figure by the roles defined by their staged environments that call on specific codes of proper masculine behavior. I examine examples of foppish courtiers, students, soldiers, and urbanites. The unifying characteristics between fop figures, these sometimes seemingly disparate representations of affectation and self-presentation, include excessive tendencies, affected manners, and irrepressible ambition. Fops ape the behaviors of their social superiors in attempts to better their positions among courtiers, gentlemen, soldiers, gallants, and arguably other types of successful men. In their mimicry, however, they get distracted by frivolous aspects of masculine cultural identities.

George Haggerty, who examines the eighteenth century fop and other transgressive masculine identities, describes the fop’s situation, “Transformed to monkeys, these men perform their class and gender as the culture demands. If the women like toys and monkeys, then men who mimic them are likely to be more

¹¹ Mark Dawson, *Gentility and the Comic Theatre of Late Stuart London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 149.

successful in gaining their favors. But this success must always elude the fop.”¹² On stage, failure to perform the identity he strives to affect is an essential quality of a fop. This failure can take several shapes: social failure, sexual failure, economic failure. In the drama, fop characters are often effeminized for their behaviors because they are unruly in giving free reign to their desires, which often reads as dangerous to cultural or even national identities in early modern drama. As the evolving definition of the word suggests, fops take their desires and indulgences too far, which leads to their social collapse. Though they fail to integrate themselves into the social systems at work, systems that define and propagate concepts of masculinity, their attempts reveal the cultural processes of gender and class signification. Showing these revelations within the context of the English Renaissance rather than the English Restoration is one of the main aims of this project.

On the stage, this shift was partly played out through the changing fool character who at the beginning of the period primarily performed pratt falls and puns, but in the form of the fop, came to represent clueless but dangerous interlopers in genteel society. In some ways, the Renaissance fop is an intermediary between the classic fool and the Restoration fop and therefore incorporates elements of both traditions. He is the step between two phases of the comedic character on the English stage. Robert Armin, the clown actor who replaced Will Kemp after his departure from the Lord Chamberlain’s Men in 1599, laid out the stage fool’s various functions in his 1608 *Nest for Ninnies*, a

¹² *Men in Love: Masculinity and Sexuality in Eighteenth Century English Drama* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 47.

publication that contained rather intellectual musings on the theater and literature. He identifies three functions of the fool: “the fool as sinner, the fool as privileged critic of society, and the fool as merryman.”¹³ He played Shakespeare’s more intellectual fools like Lear’s Fool, the fools that prefer punning to pratt falls. Armin’s brand of fool is the first step toward the fop, whose role emphasizes social critique. Earlier fools such as Lavatch or Feste tell the audience what they should think about what they see (think about, for example, Feste’s suggestive song at the uncomfortable, gender-bending ending of *Twelfth Night*). The fop figure is less didactic and demands more of an audience; he requires the audience to judge for themselves, to recognize the foolery that he himself may not. He therefore *implicates* the audience. The plot lines that followed these characters acted as both forms of social control by exposing and humiliating such figures and forms of social critique by revealing and scrutinizing the cracks in the tightly structured power hierarchies of class and gender.¹⁴ There is danger in the latter: in criticizing the fop’s affectation, especially if he is a landed gentleman, the debate about “naturalness” opens up to include the superior classes. It leaves critics of foppish behavior in precisely the same place and those they criticize: open to accusations of foppery.¹⁵

¹³ Qtd. in Robert H. Bell, *Shakespeare’s Great Stage of Fools* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), 21.

¹⁴ Mario DiGangi’s ideas about the policing role played by certain characters from early modern drama who embody “sexual types” have been influential in the way I conceive of the fop’s role in exposing the performative nature of masculinity, civility, and power. See *Sexual Types*, 4-7.

¹⁵ In *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), Anna Bryson makes a similar argument about the eighteenth century Libertine: “Libertine conduct was ‘over-determined’ in the sense of being based both on the development of civility and on the reaction to it. In so far as it was based on the conditions of ‘civil society’ and depended on the transgression of civil forms for its effect, its development underlined and did not undermine those conditions and form” (275).

In “Some Fops and Some Versions of Foppery,” an important article that called attention to elements of foppishness present in early modern drama, Robert B. Heilman argues that the Renaissance stage fool and madman are important precedents for the Restoration fop. He says:

The spread of the new narrowed meaning of *fop* in the 1670s does not mean, of course, the sudden birth of a new concept. Euphuists, pedants, précieux, various ‘humors,’ pretentious worldlings of early vintage were forerunners if not actual contributors to the idea of the Restoration fop.¹⁶

Similarly, Susan Staves’s article “Some Kind Words for the Fop” acknowledges that foppish characters have their roots in Falstaffian characters, though it places the fop tradition squarely in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹⁷ This study pushes the fop’s connections with early modern drama further by appropriating the term “fop” and its more later definition to explore the complexities of self-presentation, especially as it relates to masculine identity, in the Renaissance.

Making a claim that necessarily must span literary time periods like the one I am making about the fop’s historical moment of appearance, of course, is not without problems. There is a wide critical divide that separates the study of Renaissance and Restoration literature to consider, and of course, it has been convincingly theorized that the ideologies of gender identity itself were vastly different in the periods in question. However, I do not subscribe to the idea that the systems of gender identification could have been so sharply different in concept. Jonathan Goldberg makes a similar argument against separating notions about sexual identity between the periods so distinctly. He claims that historical

¹⁶ “Some Fops and Some Versions of Foppery.” *ELH* 49 (1982), 365.

¹⁷ “Some Kind Words for the Fop.” *SEL*. 22:3 (1982), 419.

continuity can be established by thinking about early modern erotic relations as, “provid[ing] the sites upon which later sexual orders and later sexual identities could batten.”¹⁸ The character of the Renaissance stage fop can offer examples that highlight a more progressive notion of gender at work in the early modern period.

The study of the fop figure has been overwhelmingly relegated to studies in the long eighteenth century.¹⁹ This project advocates for a progressive history of a character type by showing he has roots in several character types. In other words, I would like to show that the Renaissance fop existed, but that it took several different versions of him to add up to the stereotypical Restoration fop. My line of inquiry is similar to Mark Dawson’s account of the emergence of the fop in the last quarter of the seventeenth century in *Gentility and the Comic Theatre of Late Stuart London*. I, too, seek to define the fop character, though I am focused on an earlier version. Dawson contends that the “advent” of the fop was a “re-christening for an earlier parody of the well-dressed gentleman: the gallant,” and a “hold-over from the days of the courtly libertine.”²⁰ I take on the subject of the gallant directly in Chapter Four on the city-dwelling fop, but it is important to delineate how the versions of the fop I deal with here are related to

¹⁸ Goldberg, *Sodometries*, 22. Qtd. in DiGangi, *Homoerotics*, 3.

¹⁹ In addition to the seminal articles cited below, the following studies include discussion of the eighteenth century fop: Andrew Williams, *The Restoration Fop. Gender Boundaries and Comic Characterization in Later Seventeenth Century Drama* (Salzburg: Salzburg University Studies, 1995); Philip Carter, “Men about Town: Representations of Foppery and Masculinity in Early Eighteenth-Century Urban Society,” *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations, and Responsibilities*. Eds. H. Baker and E. Chalus (New York: Longman, 1997), 31-57; M.E Casey, “The Fop—’Apes and Echoes of Men’: Gentlemanly Ideas and the Restoration,” *Fools and Jesters in Literature, Art, and History. A Bio-bibliographical Source*. Ed. V.K. Janick (Westport CT: Greenwood, 1998), 207-214.

²⁰ Dawson, 146, 165. Dawson associates the fop with the libertine via his sexual practices as the dominant partner in male-male sexual encounters, a position he claims can be inferred in the libertine characters’ sexually suggestive innuendos found in various plays of the period.

the gallant. Dawson sees the fop as not a direct descendent of the gallant figure, but as a copy of him, who has “links with questions of elite social structuration were growing consistently tighter across our period of interest.”²¹ My project supposes that the fop’s ancestry is more complicated, and that the figure brings together several different character types from theater history.

Most theater historians claim that the fop as a familiar stage character reached his pinnacle in the late-Restoration period, specifically the 1690s.²² Collie Cibber, sometime actor, sometime playwright, and sometime theatre manager, was and remains largely regarded as the man who perfected the fop on the stage. In 1696, he introduced Sir Novelty Fashion, a part he wrote for himself, in *Love’s Last Shift*. Cibber would reprise the role later in the year to great success at Drury Lane in John Vanbrugh’s *The Relapse*, the sequel to Cibber’s original. Having bought his barony, Sir Novelty becomes Lord Foppington and, along with George Etherege’s earlier (1676) Sir Fopling Flutter, establishes himself—and Cibber who portrayed him—as the quintessential fop figure. One might even claim Lord Foppington to be the ultimate fop, since he was created at the point of demise of the comedy of manners, the genre that created him, as it made way for the sentimental comedies that would be its successor in the eighteenth century. In Lord Foppington, we see the coagulation

²¹ Ibid., 146.

²² Several scholars have traced the history of the character and asserted that he thrived from the 1670s-the 1690s. See: Robert B. Heilman, “Some Fops and Some Versions of Foppery” (*ELH* 49 (1982). 363-395); Susan Staves, “Some Kind Words for the Fop”(*SEL* 22:3 (1982). 413-432); Susan Shapiro, “Yon Plumed Dandebreat’: Male ‘Effeminacy’ in English Satire and Criticism” (*Review of English Studies*. 39.155(1988). 400-412); Randolph Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution: Heterosexuality and the Third Gender in Enlightenment London* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998); Thomas King, “The Fop, the Canting Queen and the Deferral of Gender.” *Presenting Gender: Changing Sex in Early Modern England* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2001) 94-135.

of so many of the foppish characteristics and behaviors this project attributes to the Renaissance fop. The character's over-the-top sense of fashion, a sense shared by many of the earlier fop figures included in this study, has come to signify foppishness itself.

In his first appearance in *The Relapse*, Lord Foppington calls for his French man-servant so he can be dressed, and the young lad proceeds to usher in, “de shoemaker, de tailor, de hosier, de seamstress, de barber” to complete the task (I.iii.17-18).²³ After fussing over his breeches, his neckcloth, his shoes, and his hosiery, Foppington turns his attention to his periwig, which Pope's *Dunciad* claimed was carried in on a sedan chair, being so large.²⁴ According to the wigmaker, the piece is, “crammed [with] twenty ounces of hair” (I.iii.124-125), is “so long and so full of hair, it will serve you for hat and cloak in all weathers” (107-108), and reduces “[his] honor's side face to the tip of his nose” (129). Despite its enormity, Foppington complains that it is not big enough, for, “A periwig to a man should be like a mask to woman, nothing should be seen but his eyes” (136-138). This sartorial excess made the play and Cibber's performance popular and iconic: the play remained in repertory at Drury Lane with Cibber in the Foppington role into the 1730s, and though it was subsequently changed to censor some racy sexual content, Foppington was preserved through alterations into the late nineteenth century.²⁵ The character's sartorial practices make him recognizable as a fool. In *The Relapse*, Foppington becomes “the primary

²³ All quotations from *The Relapse* are taken from Curt A. Zimansky's Revels edition (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970).

²⁴ See Zimansky 22 n.107.

²⁵ See Zimansky, xxii-xxiii for a more complete stage history.

representative of the town” and its foolishness.²⁶ Even these garish signifiers cannot mark him as different enough, however. Jeremy Collier, a notorious moralist critic of Restoration comedy and *The Relapse*’s first literary commentator, lambasts Vanbrugh for the play’s indecipherability of character, citing, among other accusations, that Foppington often speaks like a true wit, though he is clearly meant to be the play’s fool.²⁷ Collier’s complaint reflects an audience’s—and perhaps a society’s—desire to know unmistakably and by sight a play’s foolish players.

Discerning and ridiculing the fop figure has stakes in class politics and also in gender identity. The fop threatens to undermine bifurcated notions of gender that had emerged in the late-seventeenth century. Unlike early modern fluid definitions of gender that were measured by degrees, eighteenth century notions of “man” and “woman” were becoming more rigid. As Michael Kimmel outlines in his historical study of masculinity, the eighteenth century’s changing conception of gender roles can be tied to economic shifts and new kinds of work for both men and women. With the dissolution of craft production and London’s emerging status as a mercantile and economic capital of the world, Kimmel argues that Englishmen were experiencing a “profound loss of occupational autonomy.”²⁸ This divorce from an individualized sense of self that had blossomed under a craftsman-based mode of production was confused by an ironic philosophical shift, led by John Locke, that began to privilege individuality.

²⁶ Gerald M. Berkowitz, *Sir John Vanbrugh and the End of Restoration Comedy* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1981), 167.

²⁷ Zimansky, “Introduction,” xx.

²⁸ “From Lord and Master to Cuckold and Fop: Masculinity in 17th-Century England,” *The History of Men: Essays on the History of American and British Masculinities* (Albany: SUNY University Press, 2005), 129.

Resulting urbanization and political enfranchisement also worked to call traditional social roles—including gender roles—into question. A backlash against effeminate men occurred. Men were criticized harshly for failing to fulfill traditionally “manly” duties in fierce attacks that appeared in ranting texts and engendered a pamphlet war of sorts in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Female as well as male pamphleteers claimed widespread effeminization and even homoerotic behavior, and a significant amount of this anxiety was placed on the figure of the fop.

So, what were these characteristics that so troubled seventeenth century gender norms? What exactly did “effeminate” connote? Historically, “effeminate” as an adjective meant “womanish” by the late-sixteenth century.²⁹ The verb “to effeminate” in 1538 meant “to make delicate or make like a woman.”³⁰ It was also defined in 1574 as “to make wonton or nice.”³¹ The *OED* offers a definition of the adjective effeminate that dates as early as the fifteenth century and continues: “As an adjective of persons: that has become like a woman; womanish, unmanly, unervated, feeble; self-indulgent, voluptuous; unbecomingly delicate or over-refined.” It also offers alternate definition of “Physically weak, ‘delicate’” from 1652. Like modern connotations of the term, it seems “effeminacy” associated those who displayed it with women, indicating a transgressive behavior against gender norms. Effeminate men, like fop figures, therefore are associated with women, making him less of a man.

²⁹ Thomas Thomas, *Dictionarium Linguae Latinae et Anglicanae*, 1587. “Effeminate.” STC 24008.

³⁰ Sir Thomas Elyot, *Dictionary of Sir Thomas Elyot*, 1574. “Effeminate.” STC 7659.

³¹ John Baret, *An Alveany or Triple Dictionary in English, Latin and French*, 1538. “Effeminate.” STC 1410.

However, in reducing the fop's distinguishing characteristics as "womanish" and dismissing it as mere gender-crossing, critics run the risk of missing the larger questions about essentialism to which he was a response. Claiming that fops are merely more like women risks diminishing their role in the theatre and in society to a reflection of shifting ideas about gender and gender essentialism. In a study of masculinity in the eighteenth century, Haggerty explains the problematic nature of these associations. Calling specifically on George Etherege's *The Man of Mode*, he argues, "Foppish effeminacy is already coded as a gender all its own, or perhaps it would be more to the point to call it a non-gender."³² The gender-less space the fop occupies makes him a particularly poignant point of inquiry into the unstable social system of the era. More than just the ability to cross genders, Restoration fops like Lord Foppington—and, as I argue, his predecessors who are the focus of this dissertation—have agency to transcend such proscribed categories. The fop's effeminacy, his defining and dangerous social marker, allows him to live outside of a system that depends on labels for successful negotiations of social space.

In Restoration comedies, plays deeply invested in negotiating the social landscape under a changing social code, the fop becomes a site of fear because he accentuates the holes in a system based on fundamental elitism not only of gender, but of social status as well. The unstable position of the fop because of his effeminacy is crucial in understanding his position on stage. Dawson argues that, "Effeminacy marks the presence of semiotic instability and epistemological uncertainty. Gentlemen did not have to present as mollies, dress in women's

³² Haggerty, 50.

clothes and have sex with other adult males in order to be thought of as 'effeminate fops'. The fop's 'effeminacy' referred instead to a lack of correspondence between signifier and signified."³³ The absence of substance that legitimizes a man as effeminate gets to the crux of the fop's psycho-social importance because his effeminate behavior has no cultural reference. That the fop-as-signifier has no essential claim to what he signifies (a gentleman, a fool, effeminacy) is significant given the larger societal concerns about essentialism and birthright.

The fop figure has also been read as a signifier of sexuality in work on the theatre's role as a distributor of signifiers to the wider culture. The fop is often read as a sort of predecessor of the contemporary homosexual, an identity that did not emerge until at least the eighteenth century. However, prior to the eighteenth century, sex between men was not part of an identity, but a singular act, so accusing a character of effeminacy because of suspected sodomitical relationship proves problematic if we seek to categorize characters as fops. In fact, the sodomitical act itself is never referred to with specific reference to an individual and his tendencies on the English stage until old Coupler, the matchmaker in Vanbrugh's *The Relapse*, appears in 1696.³⁴ The early modern fop, therefore, has no *identity* per se. Instead, we can see foppishness as a *designation*, and use it as a way of identifying patterns of behavior that the theatre presented as anti-social.

³³ Dawson, 168.

³⁴ See the introduction to Kristina Straub's *Sexual Suspects: Eighteenth Century Players and Sexual Ideology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992); George Haggerty, *Men in Love: Masculinity and Sexuality in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), especially his chapter "GayFops/Straight Fops," 44-80; and David Orvis, "Reclaiming 'Old Sodom' and 'Dear Dad': Vanbrugh's Celebration of the Sodomitical Subject in *The Relapse*" *The Journal of Homosexuality*. 57.1 (2010), 140-62.

Chapters Two and Four discuss in more detail that sometimes those behaviors include sexual actions toward and between men.

One of the fop figure's tendencies might be homo- or pan-sexual behavior, but this should be taken as a sign of his subscription to a culture of excess, not homo- or bi-sexuality. As critics like Alan Bray and Mario DiGangi have shown, sodomy certainly was considered dangerous and unacceptable, but mostly because it was a form of non-procreative copulation and had the ability to threaten power structures outside of the gender paradigm, depending on the social status of the passive partner. But these critics and their successors such as Randolph Trumbach and Laurence Senelick are also quick to point out that the act of sodomy prior to the eighteenth century did not indicate a homosexual culture because there was no sense of shared identity between the men who engaged in this activity. Haggerty argues a similar point, "The social behavior of these men surely includes the possibility of same-sex object choice as often as not, but no homo/hetero dichotomy results."³⁵ In short, even if a fop character does engage in or even crave male/male trysts, we cannot view these actions within a well-defined binary system of sexuality because such a distinction did not exist.

Joshua Scodel points out that classification of characters and persons cannot and should not be universally applied to all behaviors. He argues, "[early modern authors] treat persons as participants in diverse subsystems with distinctive standards and rules."³⁶ Much of the purpose of this study is to determine how men, particularly fops, negotiated those diverse rules in diverse

³⁵ Haggerty, 53.

³⁶ *Excess and the Mean in Early Modern English Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 9.

settings. For masculine identity to be readable, it must necessarily be contextualized. Following this pattern of classification, there is no universal fop, but rather foppish behaviors within cultural contexts. Guidelines of masculine behavior shifted under cultural conditions of class and environment within the period itself. Thinking broadly about “normative” masculinity is essential if we are to identify those theatrical moments that represent masculine failure in the form of the fop.

Historian Alexandra Shepard, whose several works on masculinity provide fresh connections and discrepancies between concepts of gender in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, provides a comprehensive overview of the qualities concerned in measuring masculinity:

In different combinations and in different measures, many attributes were celebrated or encouraged as being constitutive of (and the justification for) male superiority over women, as well as the superiority of certain men over others. These attributes ranged from strength, valor, courage, magnanimity, and liberality to virtue, reason, prudence, moderation, self-mastery, civility, honesty, independence, thrift, sobriety, and self-sufficiency, and they variously informed male identities ranging from genteel self-fashioning to the respectability associated with the honest poor. Pitted against such attributes in moral commentary, if less so in practice, were a set of anti-patriarchal characteristics ranging from luxury, libertinism, prodigality, drunkenness, disorderliness, comradliness, and licentiousness to idleness, dishonesty, cowardice, “rudeness,” and vulgarity. Moralists and social commentators labored extensively to keep these attributes separate, by celebrating the former as manly and condemning the latter as either effeminate or beastly.³⁷

Shepard positions proper manhood in terms of a dialectic, a methodology that identifies qualities of propriety and impropriety in opposition to each other. In

³⁷ “From Anxious Patriarchs to Refined Gentlemen? Manhood in Britain, 1500-1700,” *Journal of British Studies* 44 (2005), 292.

other words, a quality is determined as a marker of successful masculinity in congruence with its opposite being identified as a marker of failed masculinity. The process of categorization at work here indicates a desire to *measure* masculinity, to judge based on a system of extremes so that “masculinity” falls at one end of the spectrum and “femininity” at the other. “Effeminacy” marks a man’s position as precariously close to “becoming” feminine.

Such a system of classification exemplifies the early modern desire for balance, a concept at work in humoural theory and through the many religious and secular texts praising moderation as a way of life. Scodel calls this the search for a “mean” in a period of excess, and he finds evidence of this “meaning” impulse in various kinds of renaissance texts. He argues that “Early modern English authors deploy the mean to express clashing understandings of themselves—their labors, pleasures, passions, and national identities.”³⁸ So classification is the process by which individuals enact ideological imperatives through everyday behaviors. In the context of the performance of masculinity, authenticity becomes “the mean.” The fop figure represents the extreme in his particular context, but he is an extreme desperately trying to achieve the mean. He is paradoxical in this way, since the harder he tries, the further away he moves from the mean. The system has Aristotelean roots, which acknowledged the potential drawbacks of a system of measurement that advocated “prudence” as proper men’s chief attribute. Under this model, unknowability creates tension, as Scodel posits, “the mean’s imprecision encouraged polemic manipulation and aroused hermeneutic

³⁸ Scodel, 8.

suspicion.”³⁹ Catherine Bates, writing about the gender experimentation that occurred in the literature of the period, argues for divorcing the categorization of early modern masculinity from the Foucauldian power dynamic to which it has been so often tethered. Instead, she proposes that certain brands of “perverted masculinities” can and should be understood to be examples of decided-upon states and its practitioners as subjects who consciously “renege on their phallic inheritance.”⁴⁰ So, not only *can* men break codes of behavior that mark them as masculine, some intentionally *choose* to do so.

The goal of searching for the fop, as this project does, becomes to understand the kinds of gender and sexual transgression that were vilified through an effeminate, affected character to understand how the culture guarded against the ever-present threat of infection by him. Exposing him opens the possibility of containing him, staving off the “symptoms of ideological ruptures” that he represents.⁴¹ However, as DiGangi points out in his discussion of the sodomite:

Attempts to depict the sodomite as a recognizable sexual type whose behavior places him outside the boundaries of a normative community can have the paradoxical effect of revealing the proximity of the sodomites transgressive practices to those familiar practices that constitute the normative community, thus opening the norms themselves to scrutiny.⁴²

I see the fop figure working in a similar way on the early modern English stage; I even see him move beyond commentary on the sexual in this way. While the plots of the plays in which he appears almost always make sure he is punished for

³⁹ Ibid., 4.

⁴⁰ *Masculinity, Gender and Identity in the English Renaissance Lyric* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 5.

⁴¹ DiGangi, *Sexual Types*, 9.

⁴² Ibid., 22.

his transgressions, his presence and often near-success in achieving his goal of social advancement indicates how closely to the fop's failure those characters who successfully navigate the play with the boundaries of propriety stand.

The organizational strategy of this project reflects the contextual nature of the fop figure, his ubiquitousness in the drama of the period, and his versatility in the kinds of gendered and cultural critiques he can help us understand. The chapters examine fop figures in relation to the fictional spaces they inhabited on stage. These space—the court, the academy, the battlefield, and the city—each are governed by their own gendered and classed codes of conduct, or, as Adam Zucker calls them, “place-based competencies.”⁴³ The rules governing conduct and measurements of social success varied based on one's environment. These various and sometimes disparate codes of conduct define courtesy and appropriate behavior along gender lines. The project is divided into fops who occupy various spaces so as to gain a more detailed understanding of how a man's behavior is expected to change based on where he is and what he is doing.

Chapter Two, ““To slaughter noblemen and cherish flatterers’: Anxious Masculinity and the Early Modern Stage Fop at Court,” focuses on the courtier fop on stage, a character who shares much in common with DiGangi's “narcissistic courtier” in *Sexual Types*.⁴⁴ The court as an environment in which these figures move and potentially flourish provides a strong starting point because it naturally leads to a discussion of ambition and excessiveness as defining qualities of the character type. In some ways, the courtier fop comes to

⁴³ *The Places of Wit in Early Modern English Comedy* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 9.

⁴⁴ See DiGangi, *Sexual Types*, Chapter 3.

stand in for the fop-figure in general in this project, as his position is often the ambition of the socially-striving characters I describe in other chapters. All fops are necessarily socially ambitious with eyes toward positions at court, or at least positions that afford them certain sway amongst an elite population. The concept of gentility and its performability are necessary conditions for the type of effeminate foppishness discussed in this project. This chapter attempts to unpack the implications of both topics on early modern masculinity through examinations of effeminate male characters in the period's drama who unsuccessfully strive for courtly acceptance. I identify courtier fop figures in George Chapman's *Monsieur D'Olive* (1606), Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II* (1592), and Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (1601), and *Hamlet* (1602), and produce readings through the presence and actions these characters, a process I replicate in each of the subsequent chapters of this study. These analyses show how acknowledging foppishness in a play can change the way male characters and gender in general are read.

Mainly, the section concentrates on how staged courtier figures measure successful masculinity by how well they perform the courtly masculine role as it was defined by various early modern literary sources, such as conduct books and the theatre itself. Courtesy literature, which acted as how-to guides for proper behavior, was wildly popular, and I argue that its existence points to the ubiquitous potentiality of foppishness. I focus specifically on Baldessare Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* (1528), which was read widely during the period. Specifically, I look at the relationship between the pedantic *Book* and the

didactic function of the theater, and the role they played in forming and disseminating the cultural idea of the courtier. Necessarily, I lay out the historical, political, and cultural situation of the aristocracy in early modern England in order to show how it was restricted, but also how it was porous. A complicated figure, the courtier fop reflects, exposes, and upholds a hierarchical system of gentility by seeming simultaneously familiar and othered by an audience. The chapter also includes a discussion about how this project fits into the critical conversation about homoeroticism and sodomy that has dominated queer readings of early modern drama since the 1980s, a topic revisited in the final chapter of this study.

Chapter Three, “Thou inkie scholar”: Student Fops, Misreading, and Failure in the Early Modern Academy,” focuses on the foppish nature of staged students and scholars. “Student” is broadly defined to include both scholars from traditional academic environments and students of the “cultural,” or those who create and attend academies of manners. The latter type of academies incorporate those institutions that emerged in England in the early-seventeenth century to teach manners and courtly pastimes as well as conceptual academies that existed to instruct participants in genteel customs. Foppish scholars seek to raise their statuses or reputations through training. The theoretical foundation here is the critical tradition that explores the educational systems, and especially the humanist innovations applied to those systems, that dominated in early modern England. The scholar figure provides an opportunity to explore a different kind of cultural capital that the stage presents as concurrently desirable and worthy of

ridicule by fashionable aristocrats. I make an historical argument that students appear as fops on stage as vehicles of critique of the classed aspects of education and the and promoters of new kinds of social knowledge via negative example.

This chapter emphasizes how young men procure, or fail to procure, an acceptable masculine identity through education in an academy. Studious characters on the early modern stage are rendered foppish when their academic or cultural training is exposed for being useless or pretentious. They often relinquish a piece of their manhood—an ability to woo women or fight, for example—in favor of studious pursuit. The centerpiece is an extended analysis of Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* because the play provides opportunities to examine the process of achieving (or striving to achieve) early modern masculinity whilst enrolled in an academy of learning. However, as becomes obvious within the first few lines of the play, the scholastic academy gives way to an academy of manners as the young male characters learn to negotiate heteronormative relationships with each other and with women. Other student fops featured in this chapter reveal similar themes. I look at how a scholarly fop functions to expose the learnability of gentility in John Marston's *What You Will* (1601), and explore the potential of the female fop in Ben Jonson's *Epicoene* (1609).

The fourth chapter, “‘This Effeminate Brat’: Foppish Soldiers on the Early Modern Stage,” focuses on the fop figure as military man. The drama of the period consistently staged plays that that address expectations associated with martial masculinity. Foppish soldiers represent a particularly dangerous breed of

fop because the distractions they cause can have huge political consequence. This chapter analyzes the soldier fop as he appears in comedies and tragedies, often moving through environments in which he clearly does not belong. The foppish soldier has strong roots in the theatrical tradition of soldiers on stage, and part of the project of this chapter includes tracing his history. I establish a pattern of the character type with readings of archetypal soldiers from the period's drama, including Huanebango in George Peele's *The Old Wives Tale* (1595), Parolles in Shakespeare's *All's Well That Ends Well* (1604), Captain Bobadil in Jonson's *Every Man In His Humour* (1598), and the eponymous character in John Fletcher's tragicomedy *The Humorous Lieutenant* (1618).

Chapter Four seeks to understand the impact of fop figures in plays that insert him into historical, militarized situations. I examine effeminate characters that appear on the battlefield in Shakespeare's *Henry IV Part I* and Marlowe's *Tamburlaine The Great Part II* to demonstrate the dangerous nature of foppishness and its accompanying effeminacy. Soldier fops in these plays not only threaten to undermine codes of conduct meant to keep civil order, but violate military codes of conduct that might have wider political consequences. The chapter also argues that the period's drama casts foppishness as infectious among soldiers, a concept that can be compellingly applied to fops in the various situations outlined in this study. This notion of foppishness-as-contagion is similar to the "symptoms" of transgression that DiGangi describes above.

The final chapter of this project, "To Enter into a New Suit": The City-Dwelling Fop and the Materials of Affected Masculinity," examines the early

modern stage fop in an urban context. In many ways, city comedies are the direct predecessors of the comedies of manners that find popularity during the Restoration period. The plays included in this chapter are city comedies. Focusing on plays of this ilk allows me to explore issues of genre and the fop character's relationship to it and to come to an understanding of a shift in the definition and measurement of masculinity that coincided with new socioeconomic and labor conditions brought about by urban migration and population explosion. Because of the importance of economic practices and conditions in these plays, this chapter focuses on the fop's materials, or the "stuff" that the discussed characters use that mark them as effeminate and foppish. These include luxury goods like clothing, but they also include other status markers, such as handsome young boys.

In terms of the plays, the chapter exclusively examines works by Ben Jonson and Thomas Middleton (the latter in collaboration) because they are were so prolific and crucial to the development of the city comedy genre. I first discuss of Middleton and Rowley's *Wit at Several Weapons* (1617), one of the latest plays included in this study, and make use of its character Sir Gregory Fop to complicate prescriptive ideas about foppish identities. I move on to two of Jonson's humour plays—*Every Man In His Humour* (1598) and *Every Man Out of His Humour* (1599)— as early examples of the comedy of manners genre because of their deep concern with decorum and its relationship to money in an increasingly socioeconomically-muddled society. Jonson's emphasis on satire as a dramatic mode of representation makes his plays fertile ground for producing

fop figures. The presence of fop figures in these plays bring to the forefront the social stress placed upon shifting definitions of masculinity as it was related to taste and urban know-how. In Jonson, foppish characters occupy a liminal social space between pure fool and pure gallant, and in doing so offer insight into the frailty in a system that divides them so sharply. The final play discussed is Middleton and Thomas Dekker's *The Roaring Girl* (1611), which provides rich commentary on the culture of conspicuous consumption and plays with the boundaries of the theatrical practice of cross-dressing

The foppish urbanites who appear in these city comedies resemble the Restoration fop most noticeably; the characters perform similar critiques on cultures that look different, but that value appearance and social status above all. The Carolinian comedies from playwrights like James Shirley and Richard Brome that became fashionable in the 1630s in the era before the public theaters closed their doors, inherit these urban characters and focus them even more toward the space of the drawing room that houses the Restoration fop. The plays contained in this project do not extend this far into the early modern period. I stop at this point in theatre history precisely because of the fop figure's increasing recognizability. Certainly work could be done on these later iterations of the character type I examine here, not only to strengthen the foundation on which the history of the character type is built, but also to trace how his evolution reflects the shifts in English conceptions of gender identity.

CHAPTER 2

“TO SLAUGHTER NOBLEMEN AND CHERISH FLATTERERS”: ANXIOUS MASCULINITY AND THE EARLY MODERN STAGE FOP AT COURT

In many ways, the court, or at least the concept of the court, was its own sort of collective fop in early modern England. Ambitious, flamboyant, and interested in trivial matters, yet also politically-definitive and nation-building, the institution displayed many of the same characteristics this study uses to identify individual foppish characters. The lifestyle it embodied was judged and measured against the expectations of courtly perfection as well as other ways of living. Guidelines for courtly conduct pop up in all kinds of literature during the period. In Nicolas Breton's *The Court and the Country* (1618), for example, an anonymous author lays out how a courtier's lavish existence would have been conceived. Two young men debate the advantages and disadvantages of living a simple country existence versus a lavish courtly one. The author's bias leans toward Country, who speaks in wise-sounding proverbs: "Better be Lord over a little of a man's owne," he muses, "then to follow a Lord for the bare name of Gentleman, and better with little to be counted a good man, then with gaping after Gudgions to be thought, I know not what."⁴⁵ Clearly, Country has little respect for the court, which he sees as a school of doltish fish with ambiguous-at-best reputations. Court, on the other hand, sings the praises of court life by listing its pleasures:

⁴⁵ *The court and country, or A briefe discourse dialogue-wise set downe betweene a courtier and a country-man contayning the manner and condition of their liues, with many delectable and pithy sayings worthy obseruation. Also, necessary notes for a courtier*, (1618) C4; STC 3641.

The majesty of the sovereign, the wisdom of the Council, the honour of the Lords, the beauty of the Ladies, the care of the Officers, the courtesy of the Gentlemen, the divine Service of the Morning and Evening, the witty, learned, noble, and pleasant discourses all day, the variety of wits, with the depth of judgements, the dainty fare, sweetly dressed and neatly served, the delicate wines and rare fruits, with excellent Music and admirable Voices, Masques and Plays, Dancing and Riding; diversity of Games, delightful to the Gamesters purposes; and Riddles, Questions and Answers; Poems, Histories, and strange inventions of Wit, to startle the brain of a good understanding; rich Apparel, precious Jewels, fine proportions, and high Spirits, Princely Coaches, stately Horses, royal Buildings, and rare Architecture, sweet Creatures and Civil Behavior.⁴⁶

Unlike his “simple” companion, the courtier doesn’t care about his reputation, only about material goods and immediate experiences. He needs only royal proximity, beautiful women, sumptuous meals, fine clothes, good conversation, intelligent companions, and endless entertainment to be happy. Breton’s narrative encapsulates a popular admonishment of court life that targeted its decadent lifestyle.⁴⁷ His courtier embodies the fop at court in that his values are shallow and his judgement obscured by the glint of a glitzy lifestyle.

The court has been historically scrutinized and subsequently criticized for its excesses.⁴⁸ Elizabeth I’s court specifically came under public fire for the Queen’s blatant favoritism and foreign expenditures.⁴⁹ James I one-upped these

⁴⁶ Ibid., A4-5.

⁴⁷ Beginning in the 1960s, historians have pointed to the early Stuart trend of pitting court life against country life, observing that country life almost always was depicted as more virtuous in early modern literature. See Perez Zagorin, *The Court and the Country* (London: Routledge, 1969); Lawrence Stone, *Causes of the English Revolution* (New York: Routledge, 1972); Lawrence Manley, *Literature and Culture in Early Modern London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 394-395; and R. Malcolm Smuts, *Culture and Power in England, 1585-1685* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 78-94.

⁴⁸ Smuts argues that the gentry’s frustrations over the lack of employment opportunities in Elizabeth’s financially struggling court, as well as the factionalism that increased in the 1590s, contributed to an upsurge in critiques of the court and its practices (*Culture and Power*, 80-82).

⁴⁹ Richard C. McCoy points to the similarities between foreign expenditures under Elizabeth in the 1590s and James in the 1620s. See “Old English Honour in an Evil Time: Aristocratic Principle in

indulgences, showering his chosen courtiers with titles and gifts, spending lavishly on personal and courtly pleasure, and attracting scathing censure from his advisors and public alike.⁵⁰ Criticism of the court for these behaviors increased in the late Elizabethan period because of the common population's "preoccupation with functionality and wastefulness."⁵¹ Of course the decadent sphere of the court, richly ornamented and stylistically cultured, attracted foppish upstarts for centuries. But in Elizabeth's time, the disparity between the court and the people became more visible, not only because the public could see its daily doings or pomp represented on stage, in pamphlets, or in pageants more often than had previously been possible, but also because the divide between two economic extremes becomes more visible with the emergence of a middling position during what Lawrence Stone has called "the century of mobility" between 1540 and 1640.⁵² There was, indeed, a clear line that divided social classes into varying "degrees of men," but it was also clear that the line was, "a permeable membrane and [...] the collective identity of gentlemen concealed a considerable degree of internal differentiation."⁵³ The emergence of the concept of individualism bred aspiration in the middle classes, which gave way to a new kind of resentment stemming from a sense of entitlement. Therefore, as several historians have argued, court service became even more important as the royal system of

the 1620s" in *The Stuart Court and Europe*, ed. R. Malcolm Smuts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 140.

⁵⁰ See Keith M. Brown, "Monarchy and Government, 1603-1637" in *Short Oxford History of the British Isles: The Seventeenth Century*, ed. Jenny Wormald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 24-29.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁵² "Social Mobility in England," *Past & Present* 33 (1966): 16.

⁵³ Keith Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1982), 23.

preferment extended beyond traditional familial ties,⁵⁴ and the rules that guided that service became ever-more complex. As Markku Peltonen points out in his study of dueling in early modern England, the systems of civility in place acted as deterrent regulations to anti-social or anti-monarchical behavior.⁵⁵ The fop's imperviousness to such systems of control makes him a figure of interest.

Nobility with ancient bloodlines felt increasingly threatened by upstarts, represented in drama as fops, and turned to criticizing the changing constitution of the Court.⁵⁶ Evident in Tudor efforts to regulate everything from clothing to punitive measures along the lines of class, this cultural anxiety about the penetrability of the hierarchical system of nobility increased over the course of the period.⁵⁷ Representations of courtiers and courtly life proliferate early modern drama.⁵⁸ Not all of these representations are flattering. Courtiers that are ridiculed in plays belong to a group I call courtier fop figures. Foppish courtiers, both real and imagined, fancy themselves deserving of courtly comforts, like those listed by Breton's starry-eyed courtier. In subsequent chapters, I describe several kinds of early modern fops that appeared on stage. But all of these

⁵⁴ For a succinct overview of the changing socio-economic face of the British court and its impact on the relationship between different categories of the gentry, see J.A. Sharpe, "The Economic and Social Context" in *Short Oxford History of the British Isles: The Seventeenth Century*, 168-173.

⁵⁵ *The Duel in Early Modern England: Civility, Politeness, and Honour*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 6-9.

⁵⁶ See McCoy's discussion of James I's reaction to the Humble Petition, which sought to preserve privilege based on birthright, 140-146. See also Smuts *Culture and Power in England*, 10-12.

⁵⁷ See Laurence Stone *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 18-21. Stone traces the increase of royal efforts to enforce a rigid social structure, which, he claims, culminated in Charles I's frantic efforts prior to the collapse of the Crown in 1640.

⁵⁸ English courtiership has been the subject of many historical and literary studies. I found the following useful for this project: Laurence Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, 183-232; Maurice Ashley, *England in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1952), 16-21; David L. Smith, "Politics in Early Stuart Britain, 1603-1640," in *A Companion to Stuart Britain*, ed. Barry Coward (Malden: Blackwell, 2003), 240-248; Malcolm Smuts, "Court-Centered Politics and the Uses of Roman Historians, c. 1590-1630," in *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, eds. Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 21-25.

types—the scholar, the soldier, and the man about town—have some tie to the court, sometimes aspirational, sometimes actual. And so the characterization of the courtier fop put forth in this chapter lays the groundwork for thinking about the early modern fop in general terms. The courtier fop figure on stage seeks social approval from and a place among his social superiors with an unwavering eye toward advancement. He transgresses the boundaries of courtly behavior by trying too earnestly to abide by them. Fops were chastised, ridiculed, and even punished because their behavior called explicit attention to the mysteries of the court and court life by too-obviously enacting the guidelines that shouldn't have to be spelled out. The fop exposes the strategy of the body he attempts to infiltrate. In early representations, such as *Edward II* and *Hamlet*, the fop figure exposes deep anxiety about a system of hereditary inheritance. Later versions of the character reveals concerns about new measurements of genteel authenticity. However, he always lays bare the bureaucracy and inner-workings of the court,⁵⁹ and shows that there are ways to navigate it, to learn its secrets, and become part of the inside circle.

The early modern courtier stage fop dresses garishly, flatters unabashedly, and often is debauched in his abuses of courtly vices. His behaviors call his masculinity into question because they bespeak effeminacy. Theories of gender identity prevalent in late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth century England held that excess and uncontrollability were feminine characteristics. As incomplete,

⁵⁹ In *Ambition and Privilege The Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy Theory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), Frank Whigham claims that “the screens of bureaucracy” became evident in the period through courtesy literature and conduct manuals (30). I’d like to argue that this exposure was less a result of the manuals themselves, than of the misinterpretation and misapplication of the advice they contained.

insufficient, and imperfect men, women were viewed as ill-equipped to regulate their appetites and their bodies.⁶⁰ Courtly fop figures are also susceptible to vice in this way, and so pose danger to courts and rulers because they represent a masculine body prone to decadence and distraction. I contend that their representation on stage forced into question the stability of those tenets of masculinity so often seemingly held up by those very rulers. His presence reminds us that masculine identity can be corrupted, that early modern constructions of masculinity itself was, to borrow Mark Breitenberg's term, anxious.⁶¹ Through their simultaneous ubiquitousness and insistent transgressions, fop figures topple the concept of the court as a masculine space that promotes and exemplifies nobility, grace, temperance, and heteroeroticism, qualities outlined and preached in the period's courtesy literature like Baldesar Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier*. This chapter examines the system of measurement that helped early modern audiences to identify and evaluate courtier fops in the period's plays by examining the English relationship to this wildly popular courtesy book. I consider some examples of courtier fops in Chapman's *Monsieur D'Olive* (1606), Marlowe's *Edward II* (1594) and Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (c. 1601), and *Hamlet* (c. 1600), and show how these characters

⁶⁰ See Karen Newman, *Fashioning Femininity and English Renaissance Drama* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 136-140; Jean Howard, *Theater of a City: The Places of London Comedy, 1598-1642* (Philadelphia: university of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 29-67; and Howard's "The Evidence of Fiction: Women's Relationship to Goods in London City Drama," in *Culture and Change: Attending to Early Modern Women*, eds. Margaret Mikesell and Adele Seeff (Cranberry, NJ: Rosemont Publishing, 2003), 161-176, for discussions of appetite and consumption as feminine attributes and locations of patriarchal anxiety.

⁶¹ *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), passim.

inform the plays' struggles with complicated notions of masculinity and masculine sexuality.

Politics, Artifice, and the Courtier Fop: Chapman's *Monsieur D'Olive*

In the way that the masculine ideal incorporates notions of physical and political power, foppish courtiers do not really fit the bill. Fops don't crave political power; instead, they crave proximity to power or the accessories of power (*Edward I's* Gaveston, whom I discuss at length in this chapter, is somewhat of an exception to this claim). This is not to say, however, that courtier fops never carry any political weight; quite the opposite proves to be true, at least in the examples laid out in this project. Courtiers, by their very role, are inherently political, serving as advisors, confidants, and ambassadors in the king's personal and political matters, which, of course, are often intricately connected. Indeed, courtiers *are* courtiers because they pledge to serve their sovereign and seek to satisfy princes' material or political desires. Foppish courtiers, however, desire cultural rather than political influence. They seek personal benefit and fame with little regard to their role as a servant to crown and country.⁶² This is partly the impetus behind Chapman's *Monsieur D'Olive*, a satire first performed by the Children of the Queen's Revels at Blackfriars that takes on the social

⁶² Catherine Bates points out that all courtiers had a role in government, and that historians have minimized this role, wrongly driving, "a wedge between court and state, between foppish, sycophantic courtiers, on the one hand, and 'professional' bureaucrats on the other" (*The Rhetoric of Courtship in Elizabethan Language and Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 46. While I agree that the role aristocrats appointed to the court played should not be overlooked, my project is less concerned with the implications of their involvement in government affairs and more interested in understanding the kinds of behaviors social ambition inspired.

experiment of placing a foppish courtier in a diplomatic position.⁶³ The titular courtier is perhaps the character most immediately recognizable as a fop among the courtier fops discussed in this chapter. I begin this chapter with this rather marginal play because Monsieur D'Olive helps us to identify several key features of the fop character type: social ambition, material excess, lack of moral and intellectual substance, and effeminate flamboyance.

Though D'Olive lends his name to the play, his plot is secondary to a rather contrived love plot that sometimes valorizes and sometimes disparages the tenets of courtly love. The comic value of D'Olive and the richness of Chapman's characterization of him save the otherwise farfetched and underdeveloped main action. In the secondary plot, the Duke appoints D'Olive, a court hanger-on and self-proclaimed "admirer of wit and good words" (I.i.260-261),⁶⁴ the ambassador to France upon the encouragement of Roderigue and Mugeron.⁶⁵ The appointment, however, is a convoluted joke on the upstart courtier, a mini-drama constructed to entertain the play's real courtiers. The comedy ensues as the play follows D'Olive's preparation for his embarkment to his country of embassy. Almost immediately after his appointment, D'Olive

⁶³ In his introduction to the play in *The Plays of George Chapman (The Comedies. Volume 2.* New York: Russell & Russell Inc., 1961), Thomas More Parrot points to a critical history that identifies the source of the D'Olive plot line as the embassy of Lord Admiral Northampton to Spain that began in 1604. Apparently, Northampton failed miserably and the embassy became fodder for many jokes among James I's court (774). Similarly, M.C. Bradbrook claims that a number of James I's appointed ambassadors became "jesters in London" because of their extravagances (*George Chapman*. Harlow, UK: Longman Group Ltd., 1977, 42).

⁶⁴ All citations from *Monsieur D'Olive* are taken from *The Plays of George Chapman: The Comedies*, Volume 2, ed. Thomas More Parrot (New York: Russell & Russell Inc., 1961).

⁶⁵ D'Olive's social rank is a bit unclear. In Act I, he claims he is neither "lord" nor an "alderman" (I.I.320). Both Mugeron and the Duke refer to him as a "gentleman" in Act II, scene ii (42,46). He is a sometime courtier, spending the first two acts of the play defending his recent absence from court, which seems to have been widely noticed, though the Duke does not know who he is until they are introduced in Act II.

lets his newfound social power go to his head, recruiting an undiscerned entourage, purchasing lavish coaches and clothes, and exercising sexual liberty. D'Olive is not a clueless gull, however; instead, he is a cunning, snobbish fop with an overwhelming sense of self-importance. The character is not oblivious like so many other fops. He understands the artifice of the court and claims to despise flattery, yet hypocritically welcomes those who flatter and lie to win his good graces. Even as he enjoys the benefits of his fake appointment, D'Olive expresses his distaste for courtly life, complaining of the "chameleons" that populate the court and get by on their "flattery" (III.i.24-25). The court in the play is not entirely without substance; it celebrates honor and integrity in Vandome, the primary plot's hero, whose virtue allows him to help the other characters see the error of their various sinful ways. However, Vandome has little to do with D'Olive, who remains essentially unchanged at play's end, a fact which A.P. Hogan claims, "Suggest[s] the presence of [...] disorders in the larger world of society."⁶⁶ Roderigue, the play's wit, uses the gulling of the foppish D'Olive to reveal these very disorders.

Along with his sidekick Mugeron, Roderigue plots to make an example of the all-too-eager D'Olive, to expose the Court's hubris and decadence via the character's predictably foppish behavior. The two schemers know that D'Olive will fail miserably in a role that is meant to carry at least some political weight because he is "the true map of a gull," and, "a most accomplished ass" (I.i.393, 408). The fop's enthusiasm for his embassy to France has nothing to do with

⁶⁶ "Thematic Unity in George Chapman's *Monsieur D'Olive*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 11 (1971): 295.

the excitement of travel, the honor of service, or the allure of political power; the journey merely “permit[s] him to display his finery”⁶⁷ and disregard social boundaries. At the height of his egoism, he claims, “Men shall reckon their years, women their marriages from the day of our ambassage” (IV.ii.113-114), not because it will be politically important, but because the farewell party he plans to throw himself is to be so lavish. D’Olive sees his political appointment as a get-out-of-jail free card, a pass that allows him to behave excessively without consequence. As Roderigue describes him, he is, “A pagan in belief, an epicure beyond belief, prodigious in lust, prodigal in wasteful expense” (I.i.411-412). Like so many gullish characters in the period’s urban plays, D’Olive spends foolishly, a habit that always carries the threat of financial, and therefore, social ruin.⁶⁸ His tendency toward overindulgence extends to his love of tobacco, a trope for effeminacy also prevalent in the city comedy genre. As in those city comedies, excessive spending contributes to D’Olive’s characterization as effeminate.

Chapman also uses D’Olive to comment on the court’s sexual inconstancy, a characteristic chiefly associated with women and their wandering sexual eye. Effeminacy, an essential element of foppishness, at least as it is deployed in this study, runs underneath D’Olive’s actions. The character’s views on gender are themselves inconstant, confused, and employed conveniently. In Act III, scene i, he lays out his essentialist views on gender roles: “True manhood can neither mourn nor admire. It’s fit for women” (60-61). Just a scene later,

⁶⁷ Ibid., 303.

⁶⁸ For examples of these characters and a discussion of them, see the final chapter of this study.

when describing the importance of a courtier to be able to affect many different humours, he describes the “sin of blushing” as doing “ill to a young waiting-woman” but that it is “monstrous, monstrous in an old courtier” (34-35). In these two examples, D’Olive expresses a viewpoint that masculinity means moderation, that in order to not be a woman, a man must control his emotions and behaviors. Of course, the fop does not live by his own rules. His excessive appetite places him closer to the feminine extremes of his own continuum.

The fop’s unrestrained sexual appetite extends to an implied propensity for young boys. In Act IV, scene ii, D’Olive dubs his pages Pacque and Dicque “my little hermaphrodites” and then invites them into his private quarters: “I entertain you here into my chamber, and if need be, nearer; your service you know” (35-37). Though such homoerotic dalliances did not necessarily indicate an effeminate nature during the period, intemperate sexual appetite did, a characteristic that also manifests in D’Olive’s too-earnest lust for the duchess. Devotion to the pursuit of women was seen as effeminate during the period because it showed a lack of control. In the play, D’Olive’s effeminacy directly threatens his position at court. He makes advances on the Duchess, which is not disrespectful to the Duke as a married man, but also shows that D’Olive ignores his courtly duty to his sovereign, renouncing his courtier role in the process. The fop’s pan-sexuality suggests an inflated sense of power that allows him to write his own rules while believing he can maintain his position within a rule-abiding, indeed rule-obsessed, institution.

The play makes the rules and artifice of the court itself a major theme and scrutinizes the strict boundaries of court life through the character of Roderigue. The glue between Chapman's two plots, Roderigue brings together the two meanings of "to court" through his involvement in both narrative arcs, but more importantly, through his dual criticism of the performativity in the rituals of courtship as well as courtiership.⁶⁹ Early in the play, he entreats Mugeron to "Come, come, let's forget we are courtiers, and talk like honest men" (I.i.202), indicating his distrust of the false court. Roderigue longs for a time "when luxury was unborn... when periwigs and painting, when masks and masking, in a word when court and courting was unknown" (I.i.214-217). His scheme that sets up D'Olive exposes the inauthenticity of the kind of "courting" men do to win a position at court, while his significant role in the love plot, or the "courting" of the ladies Marcellina, Eurione, and Hermione, works to satirize the subterfuge of courtly love. While Roderigue dutifully serves Vandome in his quest to prove his loyalty to his mistress Marcellina, he is hyper-aware and critical of the performative aspects of romantic courtship as well. He particularly maligns women's love of "art" and "painting," or their artifice of behavior and appearance (I.i.213), and complains extensively about the circus Marcellina creates with her performance of mourning her companion's departure (I.i.229-238).

Roderigue is very much concerned with the possibility that the signs of courtiership in both senses of the word can be misread or misappropriated. Catherine Bates, in discussing rhetorical performance at court, emphasizes the

⁶⁹ In *The Rhetoric of Courtship*, Catherine Bates discusses the relationship between the uses of "court" in the political, or social, and romantic spheres. See especially 6-24.

inherently performative nature courtiership, a mode based very much on signifiers and the signified:

Courtship is a delicate, fraught, hazardous procedure which requires constant prudence, tact and subtlety because it depends for its effectiveness upon the appearance of sincerity, an appearance which could (and at time had to be) carefully calculated. Courtship is consequently a mode which puts sincerity and depiction in a teasing and often inextricable position. As a game, role, or way of behaving, courtship is often seen to be a highly codified system, a series of signs aimed at reassuring the prince or mistress of the suitor's unquestioning and dutiful service. And these signs must be interpreted and decoded correctly in order to manipulate the prince or beloved into making the desired gesture of return.⁷⁰

An astute character well aware of his surroundings, Roderigue understands this aspect of courtiership and sees the Court as “twere the stage” (I.i.313). John Astington, in referencing D'Olive's lines that actors and painters make their living by “making mouths and faces” (I.i.291-292), claims that Chapman is invested in the early modern English debate about “essential truth of character.”⁷¹ D'Olive the fop plays a significant part in teasing out this theme. The audience, who is in on the joke, gets to watch as the foppish and unlikable character engages in courtly performance.

As Thomas More Parrot points out, however, Chapman is ultimately kind to his incompetent and imbecilic fop, having the Duke assure his favor and protection to D'Olive.⁷² Unlike Jonson who damns his fops in the end (see, for example, Fastidious Brisk's condemnation to debtor's prison in *Every Man Out of*

⁷⁰ Bates, 2-3.

⁷¹ “Eye and Hand on Shakespeare's Stage,” *Renaissance and Reformation*, 10 (1986): 111. Chapman shows a great deal of interest in chastising artifice in works other than *Monsieur D'Olive*. His contemporary French history *Bussy D'Ambois* (1603) and its sequel, for example, feature a salty crusader against courtly guile whom the debauched French court ultimately tempts into its lifestyle, causing the demise of the brave, valorous man.

⁷² Parrot, 778.

His Humour, a play discussed in Chapter Five of this study), Chapman is genial, making a place for such characters in his fictional courts. D'Olive's threat is mitigated through the Duke's role in the trick against D'Olive. The Duke never loses control of the scheme, and so D'Olive and his excess are never really a true threat, at least no more of a threat than other members of the court, who are all guilty of a certain inauthenticity. The threat to sovereignty, Chapman seems to be saying, is much larger than the easily identifiable and vetted D'Olives of the court. The culture of the court as a whole, which has been cast as empty and meaningless throughout the play, poses a much bigger danger. The Duke has been too lenient and allowed his court to sink into a mere imitation of a ruling body. As Hogan points out, "A ruler should not willingly introduce substanceless form into his realm. Such frivolity wins the open impudence of men."⁷³

D'Olive's entitled attitude and Roderigue's cheekiness signal this potential shift.

D'Olive might be accepted at court, but he is doomed in other ways. His financial responsibility for the followers he has taken on is sure to ruin him, and he becomes as cynical as the dangerous Roderique, a character, "whose cynicism passes by the Duke as if it were invisible."⁷⁴ Sharp, observant critics like Roderique portend exposure of what the court lacks: a true seat of power. The fop D'Olive, seemingly innocuous and ridiculous, has adopted this cynicism at the end of the play. "It has cost me," he laments, "But what it has cost me, it skills not... A plague on that phrase, raising of fortunes... A burning fever light on you, and all such followers!" (V.ii.94,103, 108). D'Olive curses his fellow courtiers to

⁷³ Hogan, 303.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 304.

be plagued with siphonic followers like he has been. The court by its very nature invites these hangers-on into its ranks because it must constantly bolster its own esteem and influence. So, the creation of the courtier figure happens *in tandem* with the creation of the fop figure. As I will show in subsequent examples in this chapter, other fops like Malvolio, Osric, and Gaveston deploy the same type of flattery D'Olive rails against in hope of making their ways up the ladder of courtly rank. True courtiership, which none of these characters realize, is achieved by finding just the right balance between affectation and authenticity. In early modern England, literature that guided young men to this balance proliferated in the form of conduct manuals, or courtesy books.

Courtesy Literature, the Theatre, and the Making of the Early Modern Fop

In 1561, Thomas Hoby published a translation of *Il Cortegiano*, Castiglione's treatise on the constitution of an ideal courtier that first appeared in Italy over 30 years earlier in 1528.⁷⁵ Although this was the first English translation, Englishmen had been reading the *Book of the Courtier* for years. In fact, it seems that most of those who read it in England would have read Bartholomew Clerke's 1571 Latin translation, which saw six editions through

⁷⁵ There are, of course, many other sixteenth and seventeenth century courtesy books that circulated in England during the time period. For a discussion of many of these, see Anna Bryson's *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 26-42. For a comprehensive list of later courtesy literature, see Ruth Kelso, *The Doctrine of the English Gentleman in the Sixteenth Century* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1929); and Gertrude E. Noyes *Bibliography of Courtesy and Conduct Books in Seventeenth Century England* (New Haven: Tuttle, Morehouse, & Taylor Company, 1937).

1611 compared to Hoby's four.⁷⁶ Hoby's project points to an increased popular interest in courtesy literature. Translating the book would have, of course, made it accessible to a larger portion of the reading population. Its publication also reflects a culture-wide fascination with the powerful and decadent courts of Europe, and perhaps a desire to follow in continental footsteps by learning and adopting their courtly practices. Malcolm Smuts has asserted, "In the seventeenth century England, Scotland and Ireland were ruled by an elite whose mental horizons and social environment were essentially European rather than English or British."⁷⁷ The English interest in Castiglione's and other Italian courtier's courtesy books can be seen as part of this European influence on the English aristocracy.⁷⁸

Hoby provides a helpful summary of the book, a list of what he gleans to be the manual's most important lessons.⁷⁹ Among these: advice against being too tall; a recommendation to play at dice and cards; and a proposal that swimming and jumping should be among a gentlemen's crucial skills. I poke fun at Hoby—and by extension, at Castiglione—not only because these trivial matters seem

⁷⁶ Peter Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier: European Reception of Castiglione's Cortegiano* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 65.

⁷⁷ "Introduction" in *The Stuart Court and Europe*, ed. R. Malcolm Smuts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1.

⁷⁸ There has been a significant amount of scholarship produced on Castiglione and his *Book* as they relate to early modern English drama. The following studies specifically discuss gendered aspects of the book, which is the aspect most relevant to my argument in this chapter: Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 124-130; David Kuchta, "The Semiotics of Masculinity in Renaissance England," in *Sexuality and Gender in Early Modern Europe: Institutions, Texts, Images*, ed. James Grantham Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 233-246; and Anthony Fletcher, *Gender Sex and Subordination in England, 1550-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), *passim*.

⁷⁹ John Singleton does not include this list in his edition, from which I quote *The Book* itself (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1959). References to this list, called "A Brief Rehearsal of the Qualities and Conditions of a Courtier," are from Hoby's 1561 translation "The courtyer of Count Baldassar Castillio. STC (2nd ed.) / 4778. The references here are found on pages 191-196.

humorous to a modern audience, but also to point out the level of excruciating detail contained in the *Book* and the English admiration for it. The sustained interest in courtesy books could partly be attributed to a perpetual anxiety about the ephemeral nature of courtiership. Such details might give a potential courtier an edge in gaining the favor of the monarch, an increasingly difficult thing to do as the court increased in numbers in the seventeenth century. As Keith M. Brown has pointed out, under James I, “The King’s unwillingness to disappoint, his tendency to make promises he could not keep, his scant regard for cost, all heightened expectation, creating an unstable level of competitiveness.”⁸⁰ Meticulous adherence to the King’s will and the Court’s rules perhaps kept one on top of this game. The “constraints” on behaviors become useful, “wherever and whenever the individual needs to define himself as ‘civil.’”⁸¹ Hoby, of course, also points to some of Castiglione’s more sensible and civil advice about maintaining this status, the kind of instruction that would have been useful to those men genuinely interested in finding a place for themselves at court, and to those who judged those place-seekers. Guidelines, or principles, such as those laid out in *The Book* function on individual and societal levels.⁸² Richard C. McCoy delineates the difference: “Even while principles can function as rationalizations for self-serving maneuvers, they can also serve as constraints and guidelines, limiting and directing behavior.”⁸³ In the case of courtesy literature,

⁸⁰ Brown, 26.

⁸¹ Bryson, 103.

⁸² Importantly, such codes are also conditional and do not function outside of their social context. See Bryson’s discussion of Erving Goffman’s related ideas about “ceremonial” rules, 10-14.

⁸³ “Old English Honour in and Evil Time: Aristocratic Principle in the 1620s,” in *The Stuart Court and Europe*, ed. R. Malcolm Smuts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 137. McCoy cites an indebtedness to Quentin Skinner for this theory, which appears in, “The Principles and

they function to open up the possibility of personal advancement at court, but exclude the larger population, including court fops, that does not follow practice because of ignorance. It pushes such figures to the outer limits, castigating them and yet providing the opportunity for them to create disorder in the social hierarchy, ways of thinking, and the cultural formation of identity.⁸⁴

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to delineate completely Castiglione's metrics for courtiers. For my purposes, the qualities that make an ideal courtier make an ideal courtly *man*, and the qualities highlighted by Hoby reveal a particularly English idea of courtly masculinity that took Italian custom as a model.⁸⁵ The stated purpose of the dialogue between the courtly gentlemen and women of Urbino that constitutes *The Book* is to characterize the ideal courtier from whom they can learn and upon whom others can model their own behavior. The resulting picture of a man becomes both a mirror of his society and a creative agent within it: he obeys and mimics fashion, but he also sets the fashionable standard. Manuals like the *The Book of the Courtier* make the performative nature of courtiership clear by emphasizing that it can be learned and practiced.

Practice of Opposition: The Case of Bolingbroke vs. Walpole,” in *Historical Perspectives: Studies in English Thought and Society*, ed. Neil McKendrick (Luxembourg: Europa Publications, 1974), 93-128.

⁸⁴ Bryson claims that, “‘courtesy’ and ‘civility’ ... implied not just ways of doing things, like eating or washing, but ways of structuring and interpreting the social world” (20). She draws on Norbert Elias’s 1939 foundational work *The Civilizing Process*.

⁸⁵ Much work has been done on Italian influences on English culture and the Italianate Englishmen. The following have been useful here: For a discussion of the Italian influence on court gentlemen’s and the English nation’s identity, see the chapter on “The English Italian” in Lara Bovilsky’s *Barbarous Play: Race on the English Renaissance Stage* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 103-134, which outlines how Englishmen imagined their own national identity via representing Italians in literature and on stage. See also Smuts, *Court Culture and the Origins of the Royalist Tradition in Early Stuart England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 54; Michael J. Redmond, *Shakespeare, Politics, and Italy: Intertextuality on the Jacobean Stage* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 29-74; and John Rigby Hale, *England and the Italian Renaissance: The Growth of Interest in its History and its Art* (fourth edition. Malden: Blackwell, 2005), 1-40.

By performing flawlessly, Castiglione's courtier teaches others to perform. Wayne Rebhorn argues that the *Book of the Courtier* shows that courtiership not only has a performative quality, but actually *is* a form of masking.⁸⁶ I'd like to expand on Rebhorn's linkage between performance and courtiership and claim that there are important ties between the functions of and messages contained in courtesy literature and the early modern English stage. The courtesy book teaches a literate, and therefore limited, audience through written instruction or examples.⁸⁷ In Castiglione's case, the reader follows a dialogue not unlike those found in classic philosophical texts. The books target those who could potentially put to use the manners and codes contained within them. They describe to an elite audience something that is often inaccessible. The theater, on the other hand, intends to *show* courtly behavior, to *demonstrate* manners or breaches of decorum (this is not to claim that these intentions were always realized). Plays set at court instruct audiences through visual representation, and they reach a wider audience, demystifying court life for the masses.

Because of its popular appeal, the early modern theater, at least in its didactic mode, functioned similarly to courtesy books as an influential form of cultural education. As Jeanette Dillon states, "The stage can display what is already current and give it wider agency, but it can also display what is new and create new currency. In other words, it is a powerful maker and disperser of

⁸⁶ *Courtly Performance: Masking and Festivity in Castiglione's Book of the Courtier* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1978), passim. Interestingly, Rebhorn points out that Thomas Hoby seems to have coined the word "courtiership" in his translation of Castiglione (7).

⁸⁷ For a discussion about the readership of these books and the social change they signaled and ushered in, see Whigham, 3-31. For information about the readership and reception of Castiglione's *Book* in Europe and England, see Burke, 1-19 and passim.

fashions.”⁸⁸ Characters in plays demonstrate to an audience appropriate behavior, emerging and exciting fashions, and new modes of entertainment in a simulated environment. The stage was a perfect place to hawk new wares and model socially appropriate behavior. And the theater had a different if not wider audience than courtesy manuals. Perhaps the dramatic representations of courtly life incited some of those spectators to be ambitious themselves, to desire to rise above their current station in life by adopting fashions and manners. Of course, too, characters in the dramas could show an audience what foolish behavior might look like by exhibiting *unfashionable* customs, or even harmful or dangerous behaviors. There are, in other words, many examples of failed, ridiculous courtiers, just as there are of enviable specimens in early modern English drama. The stage invited courtly gentlemen and ambitious flatterers to occupy the same space, and to be judged by the same audience members. In its way, the simulated environment of the theater helped to police behavior, and the fop figure aided in this task.

As I showed with the example of Monsieur D’Olive, the early modern stage fop calls attention to the rules of courtly behavior by misinterpreting them or failing to adhere to them despite calculated plans to use them to his advantage. One of the many functions the courtier fop performs on stage is acting as a site of ridicule for his failed attempts at gentility. The character type creates a sense of superiority in spectators who can identify him and recognize his offenses against codes of courtly behavior. For male audience members, issues of gender identity

⁸⁸ Dillon, *Theatre, Court and City, 1590-1610* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 16-17.

collide with issues of courtly identity in this character type, who is partly identifiable because of his effeminate behavior that distinguishes his affected performance from those of his peers. The idea that courtly affectation could morph into effeminacy pervaded courtesy books and satirical pamphlets in the time period. Through his character Count Lodovico, Castiglione imparts the following detailed description of effeminate courtiers' appearance and undesirable behavior:

I would have our Courtier's face be such, not so soft and feminine as many attempt to have who not only curl their hair and pluck their eyebrows, but preen themselves in all those ways that the most wanton and dissolute women in the world adopt; and in walking, in posture, and in every act, appear so tender and languid that their limbs seem to be on the verge of falling apart; and utter their words so limply that it seems they are about to expire on the spot; and the more they find themselves in the company of men of rank, the more they make a show of such manners. These, since nature did not make them women as they clearly wish to appear and be, should be treated not as good women, but as public harlots, and driven not only from the courts of great lords but from the society of all noble men.⁸⁹

For Castiglione, effeminate men “preen,” they are “tender,” and they “make a show.” Like women, they call attention to rather than hide their art. This passage makes evident the cultural anxiety around the disintegration of traditional notions of masculinity, which is discussed in the introduction of this study, and there is a distinct tone of anger and disdain here. Effeminate men are despicable, sexually deviant men, “public harlots” who should be banned from courtly company. One of the concerns Castiglione expresses about effeminate courtiers is that they have the potential to dupe the authentic courtiers around him; it seems their manners

⁸⁹ Castiglione, 36.

might be infectious. If such men can gain access to the center of political and social life, then the insular and exclusive way of life amongst the nobility is vulnerable. A cultural fear about authenticity runs beneath the surface of this passage. Early modern fops display many of the characteristics described above, not the least of which is blatant performativity.

Interestingly, courtesy literature, which had the purpose of training those *without* inherited nobility, expressed snobbery on the subject of heredity as well. As the parlor-game discussion about the ideal courtier in Castiglione's book begins, Count Lodovico lays down his first essential characteristic, saying, "I would have the Courtier born of a noble and genteel family."⁹⁰ He goes on to recognize that this gentility sometimes breeds a certain grace:

It is true that, whether favored by the stars or by nature, some men are born endowed with such graces that they seem not to have been born, but to have been fashioned by the hands of some god, and adorned with every excellence of mind and body; even as there are many others so inept and uncouth that we cannot but think that nature brought them into the world out of spite and mockery.⁹¹

In early-seventeenth century England, however, the pedigree such grace required was becoming increasingly rare. Ideal gentlemanliness necessarily became a mix of inherited and learned behavior, reflecting the influence of ancient hierarchical systems based on bloodlines and newly emerging systems based on humanism. In discussing honor, a category very much related to the construction of the masculine ideal, Smuts writes, "Although perhaps logically contradictory, chivalric emphasis on lineage and humanist stress on learning were in practice reconciled by stressing the complementary roles of birth, education and action in

⁹⁰ Ibid., 28.

⁹¹ Ibid., 29.

constituting the ideal gentleman.” He goes on to show that the marriage of these two systems of social value led to new, education-based paths to court favor, “Cultural values and skills linked to success at court were... frequently cultivated.”⁹² Lodovico’s seeming flip-flopping reflects this complementary relationship. Increased social mobility meant that more courtiers—or potential courtiers—glutted Whitehall’s corridors and London’s streets.⁹³ These new members of the aristocracy soon outnumbered their ancient peers, especially once James came to the throne and began selling titles to stay financially afloat.⁹⁴ The aristocratic order endured, of course, but it was changing. The elite, Bryson claims, forged, “new cultural forms, self-images, and codes of conduct which preserved their identity and upheld their legitimacy in a changing world.”⁹⁵ Laying out these rules in courtesy manuals provided a tangible way to define them, but it also opened up opportunity.

More and more newly “made” gentlemen sought lessons in courtly customs and manners, and gradually, they took these lessons out in the open, not bothering to conceal their practiced performance. Dancing schools, academies of manners, and other such schools cropped up in London as courtly ambition of the middling classes grew.⁹⁶ Reborn argues that the purpose of all courtesy literature is, “To educate rustic nobility, help the nonnoble to ape the manners of their betters, and generally increase the levels of civilization among their

⁹² *Culture and Power in England*, 10, 12.

⁹³ Whigham claims there must have been at least 1,000 gentlemen with a place at court during most of Elizabeth I’s reign (10).

⁹⁴ Stone, *Crisis*, 51-61 and 212-217. For a discussion of the correlation between the rapid increase in London’s population and the expansion of the Court, see Stone, 183-191.

⁹⁵ Bryson, 24.

⁹⁶ For a more complete discussion of such academies, see Chapter Three of this study.

countrymen.”⁹⁷ The public theater, in representing fop figures with escalating frequency, marked this shift in the constitution of the court and its members’ acquirement of appropriate behaviors by representing these upstarts on stage. As the fop character matures through the 1630s, he conceals how he achieved courtly manners and fashions less and less, proudly boasting of his French tailors and dance lessons. Fops in these plays come to act as warnings against inappropriate decorum. Pedigree becomes less important as the courtier fop matures. Chapman’s *D’Olive* is an early example of these kinds of staged courtier fops. But, earlier plays expressly address the issue of noble lineage. Both *Edward II* and *Hamlet* are deeply concerned with issues of heredity, succession, and usurpation; bloodlines and nobility are key markers of manhood and courtiership for both Marlowe and Shakespeare. These plays question fop figures’ authenticity not only because of the characters’ performative qualities, but also because of their tenuous claims to court positions.

***Edward II*, Favoritism at Court, and the Homoerotics of Foppishness**

In many ways, *Edward II* is about court culture as it intersects with and shapes politics. It examines the role and constitution of courtiers by pitting noble and experienced court advisors against frivolous and inconstant flatterers. Edward’s favorites Gaveston, and to some extent, Spencer, are the fops here, and their proximity to the King’s body causes a great disturbance in court. The court favorite, especially as he has been analyzed by contemporary critics, shares with the fop a connection to ideas about homoeroticism and sexual identity in the early

⁹⁷ Rebhorn, 12.

modern period. This play has a long history of scholarship behind it, and much of it has focused on the homoerotic or sodomitical relationship between Edward and his favorites, as, indeed, has much of the work on Marlowe himself.⁹⁸ It is also deeply concerned with the nature of kingship and tyranny. I'd like to bring these two strands together by examining the role of the courtier fops in the play.

As a foppish presence at court, Gaveston signals an unstable political and social foundation that has come to rely on artifice rather than authenticity. The upstart fop calls attention to the flattery involved in getting ahead in Edward's court and the means by which he creates—not inherits—his position of power. Gaveston displays effeminate behaviors, such as his careless spending and propensity for fashionable attire, that irk the court's noblemen.⁹⁹ Despite claiming that he does not mind the frivolity, Mortimer Junior criticizes Gaveston and his cronies in terms of their apparel and presentation. He cites his entourage of "outlandish cullions" (iv.410) dressed in "fantastic liveries" (411) and remarks

⁹⁸ Gregory Bredbeck's *Sodomy and Interpretation: Marlowe to Milton* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991) is a particularly useful source that uses Marlowe as a seminal author for his representations of male/male desire. In his discussion of Marlowe, Bredbeck looks at how stories about Edward II and his favorite were often used to explore the implications of authority within sodomitical relationships. Bruce Smith also discusses Marlowe in the context of sodomy laws in *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 204-223. Mario DiGangi has also done a good amount of work on sexuality in Marlowe's plays. Of particular use for my context is his chapter titled "The Homoerotics of Favoritism in Tragedy" in his 1997 *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). DiGangi's *Sexual Types: Embodiment, Agency, and Character from Shakespeare to Shirley* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011) also takes on Marlowe in this context and offers an overview of others who have done so on pages 25-26. See also his Chapter 6, "Making Monsters: The Caroline Favorite and the Erotics of Royal Will," 192-220.

⁹⁹ It is worth noting that *Edward II* has prompted scholarship about gender transgression as well as sexual transgression. Bruce R. Smith (*Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England*), for example, claims that though Gaveston can be read as a dominant "female" in perverse sexual relationship with his King, he does not strictly cross gender lines because he does not cross-dress (215). On the other hand, Robert Hillman in *Shakespeare, Marlowe, and the Politics of France* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), claims that Gaveston—and Edward II—would have been seen as transgressing their genders because of the play's many evocations of their ties with the French model of government and conduct (101).

with scorn on Gaveston's "Italian hooded cloak,/Larded with pearl: and his Tuscan cap [that has]/A jewel of more value than the crown" (414-16).¹⁰⁰ This description marks the difference between the fake courtier brought up by flattery and flash (Gaveston) and the real courtier legitimized by birth and loyalty (Mortimer Junior). Here, Gaveston the fop is amalgamation of purchased foreign parts: a cloak, a cap, a jewel. In this way, he is akin to his Restoration fop brothers, who literally become identifiable by the over-the-top costumes that they wear.¹⁰¹ These men epitomize a key aspect of the fop: his propensity for foreign fashion. Bryson identifies this trend as young men seeking to establish a "prestigious unfamiliarity" by adopting foreign manners and fashion, which made their appearance *and their manners* "artificially conspicuous."¹⁰² The entourage's garish apparel galls Mortimer Junior because it reveals the courtier's "show," his performance. Gaveston's excessive behavior in love and in social conduct signals the King's failure to control his appetite, which was, as Richard Hillman points out, "an established part of the discourse of tyranny."¹⁰³ If fine clothes are what it takes to be recognized by the King, then just about anyone can infiltrate the court, and the King endangers his sovereignty and his country's security.

¹⁰⁰ All citations of *Edward II* are from the 1997 New Mermaids edition (eds. Martin Wiggins and Robert Lindsey. London: A & C Black).

¹⁰¹ The comedic nature of the Restoration fop indeed came to depend on these very materials, especially those that he wore. The most famous example is Lord Foppington's enormous wig in Collie Cibber's *The Relapse* (1696). Fops became recognizable by their ridiculous garb, which became visual jokes that accompanied the behavioral comedic tradition in which these characters flourished.

¹⁰² Bryson, 78. For more on the fop figure's foreign apparel, see Chapter Five of this study.

¹⁰³ Hillman, 100.

The undying and ultimately detrimental favoritism Edward bestows on Gaveston leads to the King's downfall, and their relationship becomes politicized by the angry, jealous courtiers under the leadership of the Mortimers. The lords and earls try desperately to maintain the traditional hierarchy that has given them a natural claim to power in the court, while Edward's unnatural attachment to his ganymede causes him to fritter away his power. As the King proceeds to undermine traditional hierarchy by bestowing titles and favors on to his friend, the court becomes convinced that its foundation is crumbling.¹⁰⁴ In scene iv, the Mortimers lay out the crux of Edward's favoritism. Mortimer Senior lists several great rulers who have had ganymedes themselves, arguing that not all homoerotic relationships corrupt a ruler. Mortimer Junior then locates the anxiety surrounding Edward's behavior, "Uncle, his wanton humor grieves not me, / But this I scorn, that one so basely born / Should by his sovereign's favor grow so pert" (iv.403-405). Here, young Mortimer attributes his dislike of Gaveston to the young man's base birth. He claims not to be worried about wantonness or frivolity, but instead is threatened by the prospect of power doled out to the lowborn rather than inherited. The corruption to which he alludes, a corruption that could be read as a result of the implied sodomitical relationship, is not about violating the King's body but about usurping his sovereignty. As the head of the

¹⁰⁴ Catherine Canino's study of hereditary power and its cultural prominence over an emerging system of patronage in *Shakespeare and the Nobility: The Negotiation of Lineage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) provides a good overview of the causes of the early modern anxiety surrounding power and the court, an anxiety that is central to *Edward II*. She argues that noblemen were fighting fiercely to maintain their relevance and influence as royal favorites and non-familial ties infiltrated a growing, more diverse court. The "flaunting of genealogy," (7) she argues reflected the notion that, "In early modern England, the past legitimized the present and guaranteed the future, and both the legitimization and guarantee were bound up in the notion of family pedigree" (4).

hierarchical system, Edward II's pliability at the hands of "one so basely born" (iv.404) speaks to the pliability of the system as a whole. Gaveston's rise to power forces inquiry into the sustainability of a strictly patrilineal, hierarchical court. Coupled with his weak bloodline, Gaveston's effeminacy works to question not only the power of the monarchy, but the power of the patriarchy upon which it rests.

Mortimer Junior finds Gaveston's claim to power illegitimate and appalling and fears that he will be asked to subjugate himself to the favorite's whims. Struggling to stay loyal to the King despite the current company he keeps, Mortimer Junior swears, "I... live to do him service,/ But whiles I have a sword, a hand, and a heart,/ I will not yield to any such upstart" (iv.422-424). He expresses his masculinity through a willingness to fight and a devotion to a cause for which to fight, and Gaveston has neither. His appeal lies only in his clothes, not his "sword... hand... [or] heart" by which to suitably swear as a man. Although Mortimer sees him as nothing more than a social upstart, he recognizes his potential to corrupt the system. Gaveston's presence turns the world of the court upside down. In scene xv, Kent curses his brother Edward, calling him an "Unnatural King" because he is out "to slaughter noblemen/ And cherish flatterers" (8-9). Kent's accusation carries much weight as it implies that catering to sycophantic, impostor courtiers essentially will eradicate the old order, the "real" noblemen who *belong* in court.

Edward's staunch loyalty to his flattering favorites while he leads a bloody war against his once trusted noblemen causes the court to suffer at the hands of a

young man with pretty clothes and a silver tongue, a humiliating fate. Gaveston gains control over the King as a man, an individual, but the implications of his influence project onto the entire country. After all, the body of the King is the body of his country. The source of Gaveston's political influence over Edward is not easily identifiable, since it seems the King was once a loved and responsible ruler. But the King's devotion to the young man in the play reeks of adolescent romantic infatuation, as does his quick taking up of Spencer Junior as his foppish favorite after Gaveston's demise. It is difficult not to blame Edward's favoritism on an "unnatural" sexual relationship. Indeed, many critics have done so, using this play to argue that the bodily act of sodomy acts as a locatable interaction that subsumes and subverts the "natural" order of things.¹⁰⁵ Their potential sexual relationships become a symbol of an all-too penetrable England.

Edward II's focus on courtly pedigree represents only one concern of courtiership; birth is not enough to make one the elusive "perfect courtier," as Castiglione points out in the passage cited above. Of course, power and the social hierarchy that feeds it are the very heart of the court, and that power, however it is attained or granted, stands as the ultimate prize. The rhetoric, the clothing, the meticulous manners are nothing without the master they serve, and in England at the turn of the seventeenth century, the bloodline nobility still enjoyed a relatively stable relationship with monarchical power despite the encroaching interlopers.

¹⁰⁵ See Bredbeck, 67-77; Bruce R. Smith, 209-223; DiGangi, *Homoerotics*, 104-133; Stephen Orgel, "Nobody's Perfect: Or Why Did the English Stage Take Boys for Men?" *South Atlantic Quarterly* 88 (1989): 7-29; and David Stymeist, "Status, Sodomy, and Theater in Marlowe's *Edward II*," *Studies in English Literature* 44 (2004): 233-253. Jonathan Goldberg has evaluated Gaveston's particular threat to the court as a result of an, "image depend[ant] upon the disquieting equation of homosexuality, effeminization, and transvestism" (*Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 115.

These signifiers of courtiership are facades erected to produce an outward appearance of superiority. In his irreplaceable study on Elizabethan courtesy theory, Frank Whigham describes the circular system of power that necessitates the production of public markers: “The use of artful reascriptive tools against the old order reveals that order’s vulnerability to attack; restorative maneuvers that assault the mobile or reground the ascriptive frame reveal the frame’s basis in human art.”¹⁰⁶ Whigham incorporates an historical imperative within his claim. The “old order” of nobility was being replaced by a new order of achievers who could make their way to the top on the merit of performance alone. The irony, of course, is that the old order created the markers of courtly status—the fine clothing, the fancy carriages—as a way of asserting their dominance; the new courtly order, in turn, then had a way of affecting nobility by adopting those markers and eventually pushing them further.¹⁰⁷

This moment in English history, then, could very well be the starting point for cultural discernment, a system of measurement that could not only signify when someone failed to afford luxury or adopt manners, but also when someone went too far and ventured into the world of the garish. With the birth of the fop, a new emphasis on taste was also born. Hence, authors of courtesy literature had to invent an unnamed, invisible, and therefore an almost unattainable marker to

¹⁰⁶ Whigham, 25.

¹⁰⁷ Compellingly, Virginia Cox has pointed out the inadequacy of measurement when the tool for measuring has been composed by those entrenched in the history they wish to measure (*The Renaissance Dialogue: Literary Dialogue and its Social and Political Contexts, Castiglione to Galileo*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. 48). I believe this inability to create a thorough and accurate measuring tool, like a conduct manual, can be expanded to cultural entrenchment. In other words, a comprehensive, truly insightful book of rules for a courtier cannot be written by a courtier, nor by anyone else with a stake in the court. Therefore, we must question the accuracy of the portrayals of court life and custom that we extrapolate from these manuals.

ensure that “true” courtiers could be spotted amongst their imitators. Patterned after the fashionable courtiers of Europe, the new English courtier’s nobility could be found in his ability to perform, rather than in his purse, in his soil, or in his veins. To return for a moment to *The Book of the Courtier*, Castiglione emphasizes this kind of performativity as an essential trait of an upstanding gentleman. But a courtier’s performance must contain a certain special something, an element of what the author calls sprezzatura. For the author, this most essential element of the courtly self depends on one’s ability to mask his effort. Count Lodovico advises how to achieve this quality:

Avoid affectation in every way possible as though it were some very rough and dangerous reef; and (to pronounce a new word perhaps) to practice in all things a certain sprezzatura [nonchalance], so as to conceal all art and make whatever is done or said appear to be without effort and almost without any thought about it... Therefore we may call that art true art which does not seem to be art; nor must one be more careful of anything than of concealing it, because if it is discovered, this robs a man of all credit and causes him to be held in slight esteem.¹⁰⁸

He goes on to warn potential courtiers not to take even this kind of performativity too far. He says, “because it exceeds certain limits of moderation, such nonchalance is affected, it is unbecoming, and results in the opposite of the desired effect, which is to conceal the art... Blustering about... is simply the affectation of wanting to cut a bold figure.”¹⁰⁹ At other points in the dialogue, Castiglione ties the concept of sprezzatura to elegance, and describes it in gendered terms. He says that an ideal courtier’s countenance, “has something

¹⁰⁸ Castiglione, 43.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 44-45.

manly about it, and yet is full of grace.”¹¹⁰ This quality, this sprezzatura, is difficult to put into words—it’s just that certain something. In its effortless, sprezzatura reads as motiveless. Because of its elusiveness, there is a thin line between acting like a courtier and overacting, which makes one a fool, or, I would claim, a fop. The successful performance of sprezzatura would seem natural, but it is dangerously easy to appear over-practiced.

Striking such a balance sounds resoundingly like acting on the public stage. Consider the period’s most distinct treatise on the craft of acting: Hamlet’s advice to the players in Act III, scene ii.

Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance, that you o’erstep not the modesty of nature. For everything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as twere, the mirror to nature, to show virtue her feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. (III.ii.17-24)¹¹¹

By this description, performing on stage and performing at court are not only similar, but comparably difficult to negotiate. The aim of both practices is to *appear* natural so that those judging—other courtiers or members of an audience—will see something of themselves in the performance, or alternatively, strive to behave in the manner they observe in actors or in gentlemen. Playing the ideal courtier requires accurately employing sprezzatura; much like an actor, a courtier’s performance is successful if he moves those around him by not appearing to be performing at all. In contrast, a courtier can be considered a fop when he performs badly, when his performance is “overdone.” Fops obscure the

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 36.

¹¹¹ All citations of *Hamlet* are from the 2006 Arden edition (Eds. Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor. London: Thompson).

“mirror” by *overacting*, and therefore increase the chances that opportunities for self-reflection will be overlooked to the detriment of “the very age and body of the time.” Acting and performing at court successfully is always self-referential; performing foppishly is always overdetermined.

Social Ambition in the Festive Court: The Fops of *Twelfth Night*

Later in this chapter, I look to *Hamlet* again to examine the fop character Osric and his role in this critique. First, however, I look at another Shakespeare play that contains a courtier fop. *Twelfth Night* features a very different type of court than *Edward II*: a young, peace-time court that lacks any real center of authority and any real threat to its stability. The play takes on the theme of performativity and role-playing with gusto, and has garnered a lot of attention for its treatment of the performance of gender and sexuality.¹¹² I’d like to claim that it deserves attention for the issues of class identity it plays with as well. The Illyrian court’s—and the play’s—tolerance and even encouragement of excess and revelry make the presence of foppish characters almost inevitable, and

¹¹² The research on the play in the area of gender and sexuality varies widely, and includes analyses of various characters. The following list provides an overview: Stephen Greenblatt, “Fiction and Friction,” *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought*. Eds. Thomas C. Heller et. al. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), 48-52; Jean E. Howard, “Crossdressing, the Theater, and the Early Modern Gender Struggle,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39:4 (1988): 430-440; Valerie Traub, *Desire and Anxiety: Circulations of sexuality in Shakespearean Drama* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 130-144; Lisa Jardine, “Twins and Travesties: Gender, Dependency and Sexual Availability in *Twelfth Night*,” *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage* Ed. Susan Zimmerman (London: Routledge 1992), 27-38; Michael Shapiro, *Gender in Play on the Shakespearean Stage: Boy Heroines and Female Pages* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994) 143-172; David Schalwyk, “Love and Service in *Twelfth Night* and the Sonnets,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 56 (2005): 76-100; and Nancy Lindheim, “Rethinking Sexuality and Class in *Twelfth Night*,” *University of Toronto Quarterly: A Canadian Journal of the Humanities*, 76 (2007): 679-713.

Malvolio, at first glance a sombre steward, takes on this role. Sir Andrew Aguecheek also displays foppish characteristics, though the social stakes of this role are not as high for him. The subplot involving the conspiratorial drunkards and the steward who falls victim to their schemes takes its gender cues from the cross-dressing, confused main love plot, but raises the stakes in terms of class, court, and consequence. The play finally purges itself of potential foppishness in the Illyrian court, but it questions the morality of doing so by ending on an uneasy note. While *Twelfth Night* belongs to a comedy of manners tradition, a tradition in which the Restoration fop becomes ubiquitous, both the main plot and the subplot force us to question the nature of the comic, and, using its foppish characters, satirize prescribed male behavior in courtship and at court from affective positioning to romantic courtship and sartorial flamboyancy.

Twelfth Night is a play deeply concerned with issues of status that would have been ever-present in the early modern English courts of both Elizabeth and James.¹¹³ Courtly rules and considerations govern characters' behavior.

Maguarite Tassi claims that, "Illyria is an aristocratic, honor-based society whose inhabitants instinctually seek to preserve their reputations."¹¹⁴ Malvolio, however, is convinced to attempt to bolster his reputation and seek advancement in vain. Similar to the fops D'Olive and Gaveston, Malvolio lacks the clout within the hierarchical social system to maintain his performance of a class

¹¹³ For an alternative reading of *Twelfth Night* that minimizes the importance of social status, see Catherine Belsey's *Why Shakespeare?* (New York: Palgrave, 2007, 141-143), in which Belsey insists that *Twelfth Night* is not the "documentary about social status" that many New Historians have wanted it to be. Instead, she compellingly argues that the play is unbothered and ambiguous about class and rank.

¹¹⁴ *Women and Revenge in Shakespeare: Gender, Genre, and Ethics* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2011), 172.

position above his own. The cruel plot laid out for the upstart steward for the amusement of the play's noblemen force him to perform a role he is not meant to play. Though he seems to naturally show some foppish tendencies, the play makes the servant a fop by offering him possibility and introducing ambition. Malvolio concerns himself enormously with reputation, his own presentation of self-as-gentleman, but his true characteristics belie his social status.

Malvolio tells Maria, his social equal within Olivia's household, "I am not of your element" (III.iv.112), and later, while pleading with Feste to release him, claims "I am a gentleman" (IV.ii).¹¹⁵ The play contains an inordinate amount of declarations of identity like Malvolio's, many of which are expressly intended to conceal a truth. Sir Andrew swears "I am a true knight" (II.iii.54), though we are led to suspect otherwise; Olivia declares of Orsino, "I am not for him" (I.v.282), even though it is clear that on the surface, the pair are a perfect match; Feste the fool also gets in on the confusion, declaring in Act II, scene i, "I am indeed not her fool" (37); and of course Viola famously claims all of the following: "I am a gentleman" (I.v.283), "I am man" (II.ii.25), and only lines later, "I am woman" (II.ii.38); "I am not what I play" (I.v.182), and just like Iago, "I am not what I am" (III.i.148); and finally, as order is restored to Illyria at play's end, "I am Viola" (V.i.265). This playing, the switching between identities, belongs to the play's festive realm. But the fun fair lasts only so long, and the idyllic "green space" to which Illyria has been transformed converts back into a proper court ruled by a social hierarchy consistent with heterosociality and patriarchy.

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These “I am” declarations—weak statements that are easily changed rather than oaths that bear consequence—must give way to more powerful statements of authority: Orsino must (eventually) command Viola to re-don women’s attire (V.i.285, 410), Sebastian must command Olivia to be his wife (275). Malvolio’s final declaration—“I will be revenged on the whole pack of you” (V.i.401)—resonates most powerfully. As several critics have suggested, modern audiences sympathize with the hurt and embarrassment behind this sentiment. Many claim that the impact of the performance depends on our recognition that comedy has been pushed into cruelty in the Malvolio plot.¹¹⁶ This reading depends on understanding the nature of Malvolio’s humiliation for which he seeks revenge. The steward’s characterization as a fop, I believe, allows us to begin to answer this question. Particularly, two key components of his foppishness should be considered: his lack of self-awareness and his social ambition. Perhaps during celebrations and festivity like the occasion of twelfth night, Malvolio and the others can pretend to be something they are not, but his social position necessitates that he discard his aristocratic mask so that he is easily readable by his masters and therefore trustworthy. At first, he is just that. The steward has a reputation of being snobbish, somber, and a spoilsport, partly because he is tasked

¹¹⁶ Allison Hobgood points to the many other critics and performance reviewers who have commented on, “*Twelfth Night’s* capacity to emotionally unsettle playgoers who feel themselves somehow involved or implicated in shameful stage action” (“*Twelfth Night’s* ‘Notorious Abuse’ of Malvolio: Shame, Humorality and Early Modern Spectatorship,” *Shakespeare Bulletin* 24 (2006): 3). Hobgood pays particular attention to recent reviews by Trevor Nunn and D.J.R Bruckner that comment on the emotional disturbances caused by Malvolio’s humiliation. Though plenty of modern productions and critics play up the cruelty of Maria and Toby’s joke on Malvolio, sympathy for the foppish character is nothing new. Famously, John Manningham, a student of the Middle Temple, reviewed a production of *Twelfth Night* in 1602 that reveals just how much Malvolio resonates with audiences by focusing entirely on the subplot. It even seems the play may have been known merely as *Malvolio*, as evidenced by a 1623 entry in the Master of Revels’s records.

with maintaining order in the household.¹¹⁷ Maria describes him as “The devil a Puritan that he is, or anything constantly, but a time-pleaser, an affectioned ass, that cons state without book, and utters it by great swarths: the best persuaded of himself, so crammed (as he thinks) with excellencies, that it is his grounds of faith that all that look on him love him” (II.iii.146-152). The snobbishness and even the foppishness so often assigned to Malvolio can be attributed to a certain sense of superiority, a sense that he somehow has been placed in a role beneath his true self. The fake sentiments Maria and company put into “Olivia’s” letter to him play on this inflated social vanity. *Finally*, he must think, others recognize his misplacement in the social hierarchy also. The trick not only negates this ill-conceived notion, but disallows the possibility of his advancement. For Malvolio, thwarted ambition becomes a thwarted destiny of greatness. The trick only works because he believes the contents of the letter, but it also fails to produce the intended comic outcome because of this blind belief.

For a moment, the court allows its inferior to hope beyond his station, a station he can never really rise above because of who he is at his core. Malvolio, would-be courtier is instead Malvolio, perfect steward. Judith Weil points out, “A disposition to carry out instructions exactly makes Malvolio an invaluable servant,”¹¹⁸ but it is also this disposition that makes him vulnerable to Maria and Toby’s trick. After all, he meticulously executes “Olivia’s” ridiculous orders stated in the letter. By the standards laid out in Castiglione’s *Book*, Malvolio exemplifies allegiance to his master, a foundational aspect of courtiership. But

¹¹⁷ For an alternate reading of Malvolio’s true nature, see Hobgood’s article cited above.

¹¹⁸ Judith Weil, *Service and Dependency in Shakespeare’s Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 65.

Hoby qualifies this allegiance by warning that a courtier needs to discern his master's best interest. The performance of loyalty must be genuine, not self-serving. The courtier should, "Not follow his own fancy, or alter the express words in any point of his commission from his Prince or Lord, unless he be assured that the profit will be more, in case it have good success, then the damage, if it succeed all."¹¹⁹ Malvolio not only plans to carry out Olivia's instructions, but he also plans how he will act after the Countess accepts him and bestows courtly rights upon him: "I will be proud, I will read politic authors, I will baffle Sir Toby, I will wash off gross acquaintance, I will be point-devise the very man" (II.v.165-167). In carrying out the absurd orders laid out in the fake letter, his intention is not to serve his mistress, but to serve himself. He can never be part of the court because he does not function as a courtier in this most necessary way.

While the steward's social ambitions and humiliating failure to achieve those ambitions render him foppish, Malvolio's effeminacy completes his role as a courtier fop. This effeminacy calls into question the stability of the social order in place at the end of the play. Initially, Malvolio's role in relation to his mistress Olivia is similar to the role eunuchs played in the courts of Europe and the near East during the period. He is "safe," a lugubrious Protestant who squelches raucous parties and debauchery, not instigates them.¹²⁰ In this way, he seems rather *unfoppish* in his discipline. But as Jonathan Goldberg has argued, the courtier is inherently effeminate because, "he can influence the prince only by

¹¹⁹ Baldassarre Castiglione, *The courtier of count Baldassar Castillio* (1561), Zi.II; STC 311:06. I use a different edition here that includes Hoby's redacted list of important points from *The Book*.

¹²⁰ I draw here on ideas laid out in John Astington's essay "Malvolio and the Eunuchs: Texts and Revels in *Twelfth Night*," *Shakespeare Survey*. 46 (1994): 23-34.

submitting to him, by behaving ‘like a woman’.”¹²¹ Malvolio’s effeminacy resonates loudly because not only is subordinate—by virtue of his household position as well as by his idiotic kowtowing to instruction—but he is subordinate *to a woman*. In romantic courtship, this is acceptable behavior, but in Malvolio’s attempt to grasp more power in Illyria’s court as a man, this marks his utter failure and humiliation.

The play manifests effeminacy partly through flamboyant sartorial choice. Much of the comedy associated with Malvolio’s humiliation lies in his appearance in the cross-gartered yellow stockings and his carriage while donning them. Distinctive style and apparel were major components of the characterization of the courtier in the period and in eras to follow. In Hoby’s redacted version of Castiglione, the ideal courtier is meant to, “Make his garments after the fashion of the most, and those to be black, or of some darkish and sad colour, not garish.”¹²² Flamboyancy, it seems, is not desirable because it would reveal effort and premeditation. A garish dresser signals ignorance of the rules of fashionable restraint and affectation, though it must be noted that English courtiers often dressed in rich, bright colors. Critics have tried to understand Shakespeare’s color choice of the stockings for many years. Several have concluded that the yellow may have a sexual connotation, though they do not agree as to the nature of the reference. It has been suggested, for example, that it may have signaled cuckoldry, yellow being the color of jealousy in the period.¹²³

¹²¹ Goldberg, 58

¹²² Hoby, 192.

¹²³ See Horace Howard Furness’s 1901 New Variorum edition of the play (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippencott Company) for a note on yellow as it possibly indicated rusticity, jealous, or youth (n.

Another more recent study of the stockings holds that their yellow color signaled illicit sexuality, marital infidelity in particular.¹²⁴ Malvolio's cross-garters and stockings become a sort of cross-dressing that mirrors, or at least imitates, Viola's pageboy garb.¹²⁵ His gender affiliations become confused, and in the end he winds up with what Edward Cahill has called an "unresolved masculine identity."¹²⁶

Malvolio is not the only effeminate fop in the play; Sir Andrew Aguecheek also displays effeminate tendencies. Sir Andrew shares much in common with the steward, though his snobbish self would be reluctant to agree. Both parties are spurned and humiliated, both ridiculed for their affectations. They are even tied together by their fashion choices (and interestingly, Sir Andrew is party to choosing the steward's ridiculous outfit); in his first appearance on stage, Sir Andrew brags about how well his strong leg looks in a "flame-colored stocking" (I.iii.132). He then drunkenly "capers" at the command of Sir Toby to prove their appeal. An important difference between the characters can be found in Sir Andrew's title, for he successfully achieves what Malvolio attempts: he has found his way into the court as a gentleman. His title does not exclude him from being made to look a fop, however, and he too is the butt of

144, 173). Lothian and Craik in the 1975 Arden edition gloss the color as significant mostly for its conspicuousness, though they cite contemporary examples that also indicate that both yellow stockings and cross-gartering were styles worn by young men. By the time the play was written, however, both fashions would have seemed outdated (n. 153-4, 70-71). John L. Styan reads Malvolio as *becoming* a fop with his costume change into the yellow stockings in *Drama Stage and Audience* (Cambridge: Cambridge university Press, 1975), 38-40.

¹²⁴ Loreen L. Giese, "Malvolio's Yellow Stockings: Coding Illicit Sexuality in Early Modern London," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 19 (2006): 235.

¹²⁵ Dymphna Callaghan. "And All is Semblative a Woman's Part: Body Politics and *Twelfth Night*," *Textual Practice* 7 (1993): 433.

¹²⁶ "The Problem of Malvolio," *College Literature* 23 (1996): 79.

jokes and a mark for Sir Toby's cruel schemes. When Sir Toby devises a sure-to-be humiliating duel featuring Aguecheek, he convinces his would-be opponent, the cross-dressed Viola, that though Sir Andrew is fierce in private battle, "He is knight, dubbed with unhatched rapier and on carpet consideration" (III.iv.243-245). His knighthood is apparently suspect based on the reference to the term "carpet knight," which was in fashionable use from the 1570s through the nineteenth century. A "carpet knight" was "a contemptuous term for a knight whose achievements belong to 'the carpet' (i.e. the lady's boudoir, or carpeted chamber) instead of to the field of battle; a stay-at-home soldier."¹²⁷ The term certainly carries with it an effeminate connotation. In addition to insulting Sir Andrew's dueling ability, it also implies a preference for the company of ladies over soldiers.

Sir Andrew's effeminate reputation precedes him. The play introduces him via an argument between Maria and Sir Toby concerning the knight's appropriateness as a suitor to Countess Olivia:

Sir Toby:	Why, he has three thousand ducats a year.
Maria:	Ay, but he'll have but a year in all these ducats: he's a very fool and a prodigal.
Sir Toby:	Fie, that you'll say so! he plays o' the viol-de-gamboys, and speaks three or four languages
	word for word without book, and hath all the good gifts of nature.
Maria:	He hath indeed, almost natural: for besides that he's a fool, he's a great quarreller: and but that he hath the gift of a coward to allay the gust he hath in quarrelling, 'tis thought among the prudent he would quickly have the gift of a grave. (I.iii.22-33)

¹²⁷ "Carpet knight." *Oxford English Dictionary*.

Clearly Sir Andrew's qualities do not help him to triumph in love. It is also clear that Sir Andrew does not actually possess all such qualities: in line 51 of the same scene, he misses the meaning of the word "accost," and in lines 91-94 he shows his ignorance of the French language. He does, however, take many pains to extol and demonstrate frivolous and effeminate skills like his capering. In comparison, perhaps Olivia's preferred suitor—the cross-dressed Viola—is more masculine.

Our sympathies, I think, are meant to go out to both of these fops: to Malvolio because his relatively innocent ambition is thwarted with false hope and the trick played upon him is cruel, and Aguecheek because though he is seemingly clueless, he is clearly sensitive to the affection of others; he wants to be liked, a fact evident in his rather sad line, "I was adored once too" (II.iii.179). These two characters play an important role in the play's complex relationship to the comic genre. At the end of *Twelfth Night*, neither fop character remains part of the Illyrian court. Sir Andrew has left in a huff over the humiliation he endured during his duel with Cesario, and Malvolio chooses to distance himself from the court and seek revenge instead. The court can no longer tolerate the instability these fops represent because its rulers have apparently matured beyond experimentation with identity. With Orsino and Olivia's respective heterosexual, class-appropriate couplings, the possibility for gender- and class-play must be eradicated. But the queer complexities of *Twelfth Night* are also quite staggering, especially if we take "queer" to encompass not only homoerotic relationships, but also—and more accurately—to apply to any relationship that seeks to untie the

social mores of traditional heterosexual love-matches. It is also important to note that the play disallows the one relationship that would make the most traditional sense (Olivia and Orsino) by giving Olivia the power to choose. Her foppish suitors Sir Andrew and Malvolio do not provide much in the way of choice, but they do make her sexual infatuation with Viola and ultimate marriage to her masculine counterpart seem less queer.

Flatterers, Fops, and False Friends in *Hamlet*

Unlike Malvolio, or even Sir Andrew, Osric, the prattling flatterer in *Hamlet*, attains a certain position at court that puts him close to Claudius and affords him some courtly influence. He achieves—before the play even begins—what Malvolio longs for and is denied. And while Malvolio has certainly been referred to as a fop,¹²⁸ Osric's foppishness has often been taken as his chief characteristic.¹²⁹ In *Hamlet*, Osric is a product of his time and of his environment, and he reflects corruption in the court to which he belongs. Prince Hamlet's one-time friends and fops Rosencrantz and Guildenstern also reveal a

¹²⁸ This label is often taken for granted by those who use it; it is sometimes used as a descriptor or as a way to refer to the character in general terms. See: Michael W. Shurgot, "Seeing and Believing: Eavesdropping and Stage Groupings in *Twelfth Night* and *Troilus and Cressida*," *Shakespeare: Text, Subtext, and Context* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1989), 45; Maurice Hunt, *Shakespeare's Religious Allusiveness: Its Play and Tolerance* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2004), 76-77. Although he does not refer to Malvolio as a fop directly (he rather labels Aguecheek this way), much of C.L. Barber's argument about Malvolio's comic function implies such (*Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and its Relation to Social Custom*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), 248-257).

¹²⁹ See for example: Susan Shapiro, "Yon Plumed Dandebrot: Male 'Effeminacy' in English Satire and Criticism" (*Review of English Studies*, 39.155 (1988): 407; Robert Brustein, *The Tainted Muse: Prejudice and Presumption in Shakespeare and His Time* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 53-91; James Marino, *Owning William Shakespeare: The King's Men and Their Intellectual Property* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 97-99; and David Margolies, *Monsters of the Deep: Social Dissolution in Shakespeare's Tragedies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 55-56.

culture of false courtiership and flattery, though their fates are quite different from Osric's. In many ways these fops collectively act as warnings to potential upstart courtiers who watch him blunder his way through the court at Elsinore, yet Osric's survival indicates that the threat of the foppish courtier is perhaps unavoidable.

Hamlet is deeply concerned with proper behavior at court. Violations of the rules governing the system of heredity, politics, and relationships among courtiers drive the action, and the inaction, of the play. Hamlet seeks guidance amidst the chaos. As Jennifer Low has argued, "What Hamlet seeks throughout the play is a way to perform the part of a man according to his father's model."¹³⁰ Accordingly, the play provides a model for the perfect male courtier that must be difficult to achieve. In addition to the detailed instructions to the players that mimic courtesy manuals like Castiglione's discussed above, Ophelia provides a list of characteristics of the perfect courtier as she expresses concern for Hamlet's state of mind:

O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword;
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
The observed of all observers, quite, quite down! (III.ii.163-169)

Here, Ophelia pines for the ideal her beloved used to embody. It seems that before his father's death, Hamlet could have been the perfect courtier. Hamlet wrestles with seeming and inauthenticity throughout the play, and yet this passage indicates that he has been known as a master performer of court ritual. But now,

¹³⁰ *Manhood and the Duel: Masculinity in Early Modern Drama and Culture* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 122.

“Hamlet’s failure to perform any of these roles successfully is seen by Ophelia as proof of his personal disintegration.”¹³¹ He needs new terms by which to measure himself, and this is where Osric comes into play. In comparing the overly-loquacious and silly Osric to Hamlet by the specifications laid out here by Ophelia and elsewhere in the play, guidelines that mimic the terms in *The Courtier*, the Prince obviously comes out as the top courtier in status, in carriage, and in performative capability. Of course in his current situation, such status does not indicate much. In part, Hamlet berates Osric to remind himself of his position of power within the court, of his own potential that lays beyond his debilitating grief for his father. The play recalls this efficiently; in the short time Osric is on stage, he manages to offend many of the key elements of courtiership Hamlet—and therefore Denmark proper—admires.

The foppish courtier Osric does not appear on stage until the final scene, when he becomes the butt of Horatio and Hamlet’s jokes and later the referee of the final duel. He provides a bit of physical comedy in his first appearance, apparently repeatedly putting on and taking off his hat as if he is not sure of the rules of propriety. The business with the hat is somewhat difficult to understand in the text itself because of an always-frustrating lack of stage directions. The best I can decipher is that Hamlet’s line, “I beseech you remember” (V.ii.90), presumably reminds the courtier to put his hat on for the second time, despite the heat. Osric’s unflappable desire to obey makes an ass of him here, and it calls to mind Malvolio’s unquestioning servitude. By his very name, Osric probably

¹³¹ Mary Partridge, *Images of the Courtier in Elizabethan England* (Diss. University of Birmingham, 2008), 95.

would have been recognizable as a foolish, and maybe even a foppish, character. The name appeared in other plays of the time period, including *A Knack to Know a Knave*, in which the Osric character was an old father in a love plot who James Marino speculates was played by the famous clown Will Kempe, and a play known as *Marshall Osric*, a lost play recorded in Henslowe's diary, for which he gave Worcester's men a significant amount of money to costume the title character.¹³²

This scene also associates him with courtly rhetorical excess and flattery, which also help to characterize him as a fop. The courtier enters with the task of requesting Hamlet to attend to Laertes's challenge, and he does so by praising both the Prince ("sweet lord") and, more ostensibly, Hamlet's rival. Osric calls Laertes "The card or calendar of gentry; for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see" (V.ii.95-96). The foppish adulation showcases Osric's tendency toward hyperbole, but it also must annoy Hamlet in its praise for Laertes as a perfect courtier. Just a few scenes earlier, Ophelia extolled *his* praises in the same terms. Hamlet cleverly replies to this assertion by mimicking Osric's over the top vernacular, saying, "In the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article, and his infusion of such dearth and rareness as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror and who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more" (101-105). Hamlet out-flatters the flatterer,¹³³ breaking down rhetoric to a mere transparent courtly observance. Yet Hamlet also

¹³² Marino, 97-99.

¹³³ The editors of the 2006 Arden edition of the play—Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor—note that Osric is puzzled by Hamlet's imitation of his style, and so add a question mark to his single-word line at line 109, "Sir?" This confusion could continue with his line, "Of Laertes?" in 114.

demonstrates his mastery of the skill, artfully insulting the oblivious courtier by calling him a “shadow” and a “follower” of an unworthy man whose most impressive skill is his ability to “sail” (V.ii.101) away from difficult situations, as Laertes does when he returns to France to “ply his music” (II.i.69) and continue his education in the gentlemanly arts. Hamlet’s education, however, continues at court where he develops the judgement and ability to recognize and mock foppishness, making him the better courtier, at least in this particular scenario.¹³⁴

Hamlet sharply observes that the young courtier is no more than a “bubble” (V.ii.173), a shimmering but delicate sphere pumped full of hot air and destined to pop. He is but a “waterfly” (69), a gaudy and bothersome gnat who participates in the performance of courtly masculinity out of self-interest. The courtier believes he is doing the smart thing by flattering the dueler who is backed by King Claudius, but Hamlet sees through Osric’s empty loyalty and his inferred nobility that is based on his “possession of dirt” (V.ii.75). To Hamlet, nobility means more than being a landowner, a code of belief that Castiglione also puts forth in the passage about birthright’s role, or lack of role, in the practice of courtiership cited about. He rejects Laertes’s gentility for the sake of his skill in fighting and by chastising the landowning Osric, discredits the Danish system of noble land owners. He sees Osric as a foolish hanger-on, but he is also a sad reminder of the state of things in Denmark. Hamlet points out that, “A did

¹³⁴ It is worth noting that Horatio, with whom I do not engage much here, also participates in the joke, most notably with his remark upon Osric’s exit: “This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head” (165-166). Horatio’s ability to identify the fop as naive and foppish is crucial for the audience to continue to believe his intelligence and other masculine abilities. Elizabeth Hanson (“Fellow Students: Hamlet, Horatio, and the Early Modern University,” *Shakespeare Quarterly*. 62 (2011): 205-301) discusses this scene as a display of witty acumen between two college friends, hinting at its vaguely homoerotic overtone. She sees Osric as an innocent bystander in a game between Hamlet and Horatio.

comply with his dug before a sucked it. Thus has he, and many more of the same breed that I know the drossy age dotes on, only got the tune of the time” (V.ii.168-171). The tune of the time is a corrupt one as the court of Denmark endures regicide, incest, raucousness, and general deceit. Claudius and Gertrude’s frivolity, perhaps best indicated by the rowdy parties they continue to throw and their own affected performances that cover their wrongdoings, have created foolish courtiers such as Osric. Because they are heads of the state, their own late night parties and sexual corruption manifests in their subjects and produces empty flatterers like Osric rather than loyal subjects. Osric is perhaps fun to mock, but his presence in the court is deeply disturbing. Hamlet attributes Osric’s social success, and the promotion of courtiers like him, to “A kind of yeasty collection, which carries them through and through the most profane and winnowed opinions” (170-172). In other words, the fop’s ability to recognize and perform the trivial rites of courtiership allow him to slip through the cracks. However, his courtly success is equally attributable to the snobbish but undiscerning members of the court who believe the fop’s performance and who “cherish flatterers.”

Hamlet’s teasing of Osric also exposes Laertes and all gentlemen as potential fops. The Prince, a serious student of philosophy, criticizes Laertes’s frivolous French education. Earlier in the play, Polonius employs Reynaldo to follow his son to monitor his behavior. He fears the young man will indulge in, “Such wanton, wild and usual slips/ As are companions noted and most known/ To youth and liberty,” including “gaming,” “drinking, fencing, swearing,/

Quarrelling, drabbing” (II.i.22-26). The need for such surveillance measures signifies the real possibility for excess. Perhaps Laertes is subject to overdoing it. The debauched excesses that tempt him—prostitution, drunkenness, fighting—may be gentlemanly pursuits if regulated, but they bode bad things for a courtier’s reputation. A gentleman must learn to parse this territory, and there is an impossible art to proper behavior. Polonius’s famous advice to his son manifests the difficulty of conducting oneself in a courtly manner.¹³⁵ The demands are painstakingly specific—“Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy/ But not expressed in fancy - rich, not gaudy” (I.iii.69-70). Even the speech’s oft-quoted pinnacle, “This above all, to thine own self be true/ And it must follow as the night the day/ Thou canst not then be false to any man” (I.ii.77-79) is fraught, for the advice Polonius has just imparted contains express direction to *perform* masculinity in certain ways, not to be *natural* in one’s behaviors. Osric’s overwrought performance as a courtier reminds us of the difference.

Hamlet’s other fops, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern,¹³⁶ are also submissive, blindly agreeing to his king’s orders without consideration of the loyalties of friendship. Hamlet’s schoolmates display a similar effeminacy to Osric, but they are not inconstant in terms of their courtly duties; they serve as they are supposed to serve. There is a certain affinity between Hamlet and his friends at first. Hamlet sees in these “indifferent children of the earth” (II.ii.227)

¹³⁵ It has been suggested that Polonius’s speech in I.iii is based on Castiglione’s book. See, for example, Eric Reginald Vincent, ‘Il Cortegiano in Inghilterra,’ (*Rinascimento Europeo e Rinascimento Veneziano*, ed. Vittore Branca Venice: Sansoni, 1968, 100-1), and Walter Raleigh, ‘Introduction’, in Balthesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. by Thomas Hoby (London, 1900), vii – lxxxviii (lxxix).

¹³⁶ See especially Whigham, 21 and Weil, 23-32 for examples of scholarship that identify Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as foppish.

his own frustrations at court, his own subordinate position. But, as Judith Weil has pointed out, after Hamlet's *Mousetrap* yields the desired outcome, Hamlet treats his friends, "as if he were an aristocrat pestered by contemptible sycophants."¹³⁷ Hamlet warns them not to be "sponge[s]... that soak[...] up the King's countenance, his rewards, his authorities" (IV.ii.14-16). In seeking the favor of their king by doing his bidding, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern seem to exemplify courtly loyalty. As Hamlet points out, this devotion, however, is self-serving and misplaced because they sacrifice morality for courtiership. Hamlet struggles with the idea that courtly rules of conduct, whether understood via cultural interaction or prescribed in courtesy literature, cannot be black and white. His loyalties are familial and based on friendship, not, as the Danish court believes they should be, based on a sense of duty to his sovereign, and attributes that sets him apart from most other characters in the play: "Hamlet's deliberate self-alienation from reciprocal relationships, from service and marriage, compels him to ward off both his young, dependent friends and the woman he loves."¹³⁸ The Prince distances himself from the court by distancing himself from hangers-on, from those dependent on him like he inherently is on his Royal father. His predicament directly results from his own sense of courtly and familial servitude, and so he resents such parasitic relationships and further avoids them by casting off Ophelia and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

I do not mean to over-stress the influence of minor characters such as Osric, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern on the interpretation of the play's major

¹³⁷ Weil, 27.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

themes, but rather I mean to point out that scrutinizing *how* characters are foppish can reveal something about the way a play handles questions of performance and authenticity, especially as these concepts apply to identity within hierarchical systems such as gender. The play places much importance on Osric, this ninny of a flip-flopper, for he gets to referee the duel between Laertes and Hamlet in the final scene, which, as Low has argued, becomes “a figure for a certain ethos of manliness.”¹³⁹ The “young” Osric, then, becomes an arbiter of masculinity. He calls out the play’s final action, acting not only a referee, but as a sort of sports commentator. He is the court observer. Anxious to know the fate of his hero Laertes once he is wounded, Osric shouts out, “How is’t, Laertes?” (290), who replies, “Osric: I am justly killed with mine own treachery” (291-2). A few lines later, we see the courtier taking orders from the doomed Hamlet as he exits the stage to lock the door upon the Prince’s command. He re-enters to announce the arrival of Fortinbras, ushering in a new political era and with it, a new court. The fencing match between two sons realizes the action the play and its protagonist has postponed. It is a contest of bravery and a contest of nobility. Of course, both participants die, for though they perform their roles nobly in the end, they have made many mistakes along the way and behaved effeminately. The indecisive Hamlet has behaved like a coward, and the hot-headed Laertes has been unable to control his impulses. Osric, on the other hand, is one of the few Danish men left standing at the end of the play. His lack of virtue, nobility, and masculine bravery may have just saved him his life because it keeps him out of the fight. His threat is more subtle than violence or lurking murder; and his survival stands to show his

¹³⁹ Low, 118.

constant presence—Osric will occupy place in the new court of Denmark. In fact, there will always be Osricks in the royal courts.

Osric and other fops rely on how well they can manipulate the court system to gain favor and therefore, power. Ultimately, they fail. Even Osric, who manages to survive, does not secure a place, for he must now perform his part again to win a place in the court of foreign Fortinbras, a task that seems like a significantly more difficult challenge than navigating his native Danish court. Foppish courtiers' belief in their ability to work the system is contingent on a system being in place; there must be ready roles to play, proscribed gestures to enact. The interests and desires of the sovereign dictate the codes of behavior that constitute the court, for it is him that possesses the power courtiers seek. Yet, as Goldberg contends, "There are finally no rules for courtiership. The desire of the sovereign remains incalculable."¹⁴⁰ Some of the rules that govern the courts in early modern drama are of course political, but others are social, put in place to allow aristocrats to weed out foppish impostors. The impossibility of truly knowing the sovereign's desire makes courtly codes of conduct ultimately unnavigable, a notion that creates potential threats to the reputations of all courtiers, not only those who are overtly foppish.

The courtly fop figure seems to become more innocuous as time passes and theatrical conventions coalesce. In later Elizabethan and Jacobean England, the presence of the courtier fop diminishes. Other foppish characters emerge alongside him and populate the Renaissance stage in the form of soldiers, students, and young city men about town. Yet, interestingly, the courtly version

¹⁴⁰ Goldberg, 35.

is the one that re-emerges in the late seventeenth century, populating drawing rooms in Restoration comedies and rising to comedic fame and eventual stock character status. The political threats the character represents get diluted and the character belongs squarely in the realm of social parody by the end of the eighteenth century. I point out the fop's trajectory because I believe he also begins at court. Flattering, effeminate young men like Gaveston and Osric morph into the bombastic, gaudily dressed fools we recognize as fops. In the early modern English drama, the courtier fop is one lens through which to examine the intersection of court culture and the complicated and contrasting notions of masculinity at work and how those beliefs shift and solidify over the course of the period to reflect more modern sensibilities.

CHAPTER 3

“THOU INKIE SCHOLAR”: STUDENT FOPS, MISREADING, AND FAILURE IN THE EARLY MODERN ACADEMY

In *What You Will*, John Marston’s 1601 contribution to the War of the Theaters,¹⁴¹ Quadratus, a pleasure-seeking poet and satirist, directs the following insult to his rival, the more serious scholastic poet Lamputho Doria: “Uds foot thou gull, thou inkie scholar, ha, thou whoreson fop!” (IV.i.1644).¹⁴² A rather run of the mill insult, especially in a play riddled with polemic frustration expressed by two characters with very different world views, this line reveals something about the historical and cultural attitudes that surround this study’s next character type of inquiry: the foppish student. Quadratus flings these accusations at the clueless Lamputho when the latter ignorantly refuses to adopt a mannerly guise while wooing the lady Meletza, opting instead to treat the match-making as an opportunity to practice logic exercises. Prior to the Lamputho’s ill-fated exchange with the lady, Quadratus promises to reshape him into a gallant, “nimble turn [him], / Unto the habit, fashion of the age, / [...] make thee man the Scholar,

¹⁴¹ A significant amount of the criticism that has been written on the play discusses its role in the War of the Theater, the controversy played out in satire on the late Elizabethan stage between Marston and Thomas Dekker and Ben Jonson from 1599 to 1602. There is some critical dissent on which poet represents Marston and which represents his rival Ben Jonson. M.R. Woodhead, the play’s most recent editor, sees Jonson represented in Quadratus because of his scorn for criticism and love of good wine (Introduction. *What You Will*. Nottingham University: Nottingham Drama Texts, 1980). In *Marston, Rivalry, Rapprochement, and Jonson* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008. 45-58), Charles Cathcart questions the play’s role in the controversy, arguing that the “curious” publication date of the play—1607—indicates that the play might have been a more integral part in the “Poet’s War” than the War of the Theaters. Studies that take on this topic include Phillip J. Finklepearl, *John Marston of the Middle Temple* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969); R.W. Ingram, *John Marston* (Boston: Twayne, 1978); James P. Bednarz, *Shakespeare and the Poets’ War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); Rebecca Yearling, “John Marston’s *What You Will* and the War of the Theatres,” *Ben Jonson Journal*, 13 (2006): 109-123; and Charles Cathcart, “Lampathos’s ‘Delicious Sweet’ in Marston *What You Will*,” *Notes and Queries*, 56 (2009): 610-612.

¹⁴² All lines of *What You Will* have been cited from M.R. Woodhead’s edition cited above, which numbers lines as through-lines in the play.

enable [his] behaviour, / Apt for entertain of any presence” (IV.i.1564-1567).

Instead, Lamputho opts to be himself by playing the “Scholar.” But, according to the play, apparently it is not the right moment to assert this identity.

The insult establishes a rhetorical and conceptual connection between the idea of a “scholar” and the idea of a “fop.” In addition to these terms’ containment in the same lambast, the progression of the line and its context indicate that the first affront (“gull”) breeds the next (“inkie scholler”) and culminates in the third (“whoreson fop”). As Quadratus’s anger heightens, he moves from labeling Lamputho as naive and foolish, to single-minded in his pursuits, to socially unstable. Marston’s use of the word “fop” is perhaps nothing special considered alongside other contemporary usages. Within the lines from *What You Will*, it is very possible to read the deployment of the term as a traditional insult indicating merely “fool,”¹⁴³ but this territory has been covered with “gull.” The definition does not consider the social ineptness that Quadratus links with Lamputho’s identity as a scholar, in this example, a role that is ridiculed with the adjective “inkie.” In his exchange with Meletza he is pedantic, condescending, and clueless about social niceties. He is, therefore, deemed a “whoreson fop” because he does *not* employ the fashionable wooing tactics of the gallant figure (which Quadratus fancies himself); in interesting contrast to many of the figures presented in this study, he is foppish because he does *not* affect.

In many ways, the clear fop in Marston’s *What You Will* is Laverdue, who displays an excessiveness in his consumption and outward appearance akin to that

¹⁴³ For a more detailed etymological discussion of the word “fop” and its historical resonances, see Chapter 1.

shown by several of the soldier, courtier, and urban figures discussed in other parts of this study. But as the scene above indicates, there is something about the scholarly persona of Lamputho that renders him ignorant to his surroundings and excessive in his own way. His inability to affect the manners of a gallant distances him from the other epicurean characters like Laverdue and, to some extent, Quadratus; simultaneously, however, Lamputho displays that foppish characteristic of trying too hard. His over-earnestness as a scholar and later as a would-be gallant makes him an early modern nerd, and it is this kind of social ignorance that causes him to be foppish. To put it in terms the scholar characters would understand, foppish students *misread* their circumstances.

For all of his training, bookish or otherwise, the student fop is a great misreader and misuser of his knowledge and learned social behaviors. Like Lamputho, these fops act inappropriately in social situations because they misunderstand what kind of social capital would make them desirable to women, or even likable to peers. Student fops appear on the early modern stage in the forms of those attending an academy in search of training and as graduates of academies who attempt to use their learned skills in real world social situations. In this chapter, I identify early modern stage fops who attend or have attended these staged academies and discuss how they interact with other characters within the plays. Through these characters, I show how the theater works as an educational agent in the larger societal scheme of constant gender reification of the masculine. The student fop reminds the early modern male audience that

masculinity needs to be always nonchalantly re-proven¹⁴⁴ through obedience and restraint. A study of these characters and their academic environments also reveals general social anxieties about the means of achieving social mobility.

First I point to the early modern connections between foppishness and studentship and the theatrical habit of staging students and their academic environments. I move on to outline what academic institutions would have been teaching, primarily focusing on the early modern humanist tradition, and to show how the theatre itself worked as a sort of academy. After establishing this background, I then continue to discuss *What You Will*, and its two very different, but equally archetypal, fops. The bulk of this chapter focuses on *Love's Labour's Lost* (1598), Shakespeare's play that makes the most blatant use of the Academy, as a case study to demonstrate how the elements of foppishness work within actual and conceived academic spaces to reveal the instability of masculine identity as it is associated with homo- and heterosexual desire. I read *Love's Labour's* fop figure Don Adriano de Armado as a dissuasive example of a scholar and a man against the King and his lords as they navigate their way through what is intended as a classical academy of study but what ultimately proves to be an academy of manners. To end the chapter, I turn briefly to another academy—the all-female college in Jonson's *Epicoene* (1609)—to explore the possibility of a female student fop.

¹⁴⁴ The idea of constant reassertion of gender authenticity through performance is not a new idea, but it is a particularly compelling one as I consider the fop figure as a man who continuously fails to produce proof of authenticity. Elizabeth Foyster's *Manhood in Early Modern England: Honour, Sex and Marriage* (New York: Longman, 1999) is very useful for further consideration of the continuous and anxious process of masculine reproof.

Academic Foppishness on and off the Stage

The early modern stage represented students with some regularity. Beyond the plays discussed in this chapter, explicitly identified students from the period's drama include Hamlet and his student friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and Hieranimo from Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (1587). In *The Taming of the Shrew*, Baptista employs tutors for his daughters so they can become students of music and Latin. There is a somewhat identifiable stage tradition that enjoyed making fun of students in the early modern theater. The Parnasus Plays, a series of four satires performed at Cambridge sometime between 1598 and 1603, featured the road-trip hijinks of two scholars fresh out of university, and are particularly rich examples of unflattering depictions of various types of students. In several plays, scholar characters comprise young men returning from university to their mercantile families in the city, including Tim Yellowhammer in Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*; and Sim Quamodo in Jonson's *Michaelmas Term*. Not until late in the period are female students regularly represented on stage and then only as students of more formalized academies of manners, such as in James Shirley's *School of Complements* (1625) (though, as I will discuss later in this chapter, Jonson's Collegiates in *Epicoene* are somewhat of an earlier exception).

The linkage between the foppish brand of a fool and a scholar was not unique to Marston's play or the stage. In Sir Thomas Overbury's *Characters* (1614), the "Phantastique or The Improvident Young Man" contains many of the

foppish characteristics that this study takes as bases for classification: he is concerned with sartorial display, a follower of fashion, an attendant of frivolous games and sporting events, a pretender to continental culture.¹⁴⁵ He “frizzle[s] like a baboon,” indicating his foolish apishness. Important to the tie between the character of the fop and the character of the student or scholar, Overbury contends that, “a scholar [the Phantastique] pretends himself, and says he hath sweat for it.”¹⁴⁶ That he affects his training, rather than that he is trained, defines this part of himself and is the indicator of his foppishness. Overbury expresses a similar sentiment in his characterization of “A Mere Scholar”: “[W]hat is natural in others, in him (with much ado) is artificial... [M]uch in profession, nothing in practice.”¹⁴⁷ The link here is in the characters’ shared vapidty but also in their pretension to knowledge (the scholarly kind on the part of the socially-adept Phantastique and the social kind on the part of the academically esoteric scholar). The fusion of these two character types on the stage produces the foppish student who is not only vacant but also inept.¹⁴⁸

This study defines student fops as university students, or former university students. To gain an understanding of the university environment, it is necessary to lay out briefly the characteristics of and ideas that governed the educational

¹⁴⁵ *Characters: Character Writings of the Seventeenth Century*. Ed. Henry Morley, (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1941), 25-103.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 73-74.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁴⁸ I would also like to mention John Earle’s entry on “The Young Gentleman at University” from his *Microcosmography* (1628) here. While the date makes it somewhat irrelevant to the characters discussed in this chapter, his mention that the young men who attend university merely “to say hereafter he has been at university” makes him company with “some stale fellow, that has been notorious for an ingle to gold hatbands, whom he admires at first, afterwards scorns” (Ed. Morley, 185-86). There are, perhaps, some connections to be made between a student’s all-male experience and his sexual experimentation via this example, but this is for another study.

system as a whole. This background is particularly important in relation to the period's references to the academy in its drama. Many of these references conflate educational experiences into a singular experience,¹⁴⁹ and so the idea of the early modern English scholastic academy encompasses several levels of education, from grammar school through the university. The academy and its various levels have been the topics of many academic studies, almost all of which emphasize the influence of humanism on the system, and in turn, the influence of the humanist educational system on society at large.¹⁵⁰ The shift toward humanism in the mid-sixteenth century ushered in new curricular emphases in grammar schools, most notably a focus on rhetoric and a doctrine of freedom of thought. The humanist turn toward language and rhetoric as the cornerstone of instruction in schools, "sought to replace the scholastic teaching of logic with instruction in grammar and rhetoric for a new generation of civic-minded

¹⁴⁹ For example, the same jokes intended to poke fun at the monotony of grammar school Latin lessons, like the ones in *What You Will* discussed in this chapter, are similar to the jokes made about the shoddy Latin of university graduates, such as those endured by Tim Yellowhammer and Sim Quamodo.

¹⁵⁰ There exists a long scholarly tradition that outlines the social history of education—particularly humanistic education—in the period, much of which makes connections between pedagogical practice and Renaissance literature. For a good overview of humanism and trends in educational curricula, see Malcolm Smuts *Culture and Power in England, 1585-1685* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 32-40. The following studies on the topic were useful in establishing a background on the topic: Joan Simon, *Education and Society in Tudor England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966); Hugh Kearney, *Scholars and Gentlemen: Universities in Society in Pre-Industrial Britain, 1500-1700* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970); Joel Altman, *The Tudor Play of Mind: Rhetorical Inquiry and the Development of Elizabethan Drama* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); Victoria Kahn, *Rhetoric, Prudence, and Skepticism in the Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985); Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and the Liberal Arts in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986); J.W. Binns, *Intellectual Culture in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: The Latin Writings of the Age* (Leeds, UK: Francis Cairns, 1990); Michael Van Cleave Alexander, *The Growth of English Education, 1348-1648: A Social and Cultural History* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990); Rebecca Bushnell, *A Culture of Teaching: Early Modern Humanism in Theory and Practice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996); Alan Stewart, *Close Readers: Humanism and Sodomy in Early Modern England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); and Lynn Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

men.”¹⁵¹ In part, the adoption of humanist philosophy in the academy directly resulted from a need to produce a different kind of workforce within an emerging economic system that allowed for more opportunity for those trained in letters.

However, the humanist agenda of proto- social egalitarianism was complicated by an ever-present struggle for state and cultural control. Rebecca Bushnell argues that humanist pedagogy, “with its fluctuations between the extremes of liberation and control, variety and limits, play and discipline— matched the heterogeneity of early modern society and politics. Its own ambivalence was a symptom of a world of uncertain hierarchies, shifting relations, conflicting authorities, and contradictory values.”¹⁵² The university was no exception, though Oxford and Cambridge were not quite as quick on the uptake of the more progressive practices of humanist education.¹⁵³ The academy’s focus on education as a means of individual advancement through free thinking certainly did not mean that it lost its role in indoctrination. Richard Halpern argues that, “The schools hammered in ideological content,”¹⁵⁴ an assertion that Bushnell connects with Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron’s theory that institutions are based on an arbitrary allocation of power, and that the academy, “contributes by reproducing the cultural arbitrary which it inculcates, toward reproducing the power relations which are the basis of its power of arbitrary imposition.”¹⁵⁵ Stewart claims, “English humanism... concerns

¹⁵¹ Bushnell, 11.

¹⁵² Bushnell, 19-20.

¹⁵³ Kearney, 35-36.

¹⁵⁴ Richard Halpern, *The Poetics of Primitive Accumulation: English Renaissance Culture and the Genealogy of Capital* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 26.

¹⁵⁵ *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture*. Trans. Richard Nice (London: Sage, 1977), 5, 10, qtd. in Bushnell, 15.

more than the solitary scholar, immersed in philology: it is premised on notions of social relations and transactions... We might say, then, that humanism—in its constant lip service to equality between patron and patronized who are by definition socially unequal—signals an alternative economy of social relations, which produces anxiety.”¹⁵⁶

A significant aspect of the hierarchy, it must be pointed out, was the emphasis placed on successfully negotiating the terms of masculinity. Students learned to function within gender and political strictures at the academy. The key question of the contemporary critic seeking to understand the impact of the rise of humanism on the cultural ideals of gender identity is, as Lynn Enterline phrases it,: “How did grammar school training influence what counted as genteel masculinity in the period?”¹⁵⁷ Most of the scholar fop figures discussed here are older, university educated men. They are, however, products of the grammar schools that emphasized not only the humanist agenda, but also the formation of normative masculine identities. In other words,, “An Elizabethan schoolboy learned his masculine identity while he was learning his letters.”¹⁵⁸ Dramatic representation of academic life also stresses gender socialization, and young male characters often learn from others and teach each other how to act as hetero-desiring men. Catering to adolescent sensibilities, academies breed foppishness and effeminacy because their members have not yet achieved manhood (or

¹⁵⁶ Stewart, xxxvii, xxix.

¹⁵⁷ Enterline, 22.

¹⁵⁸ Bruce R. Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England: A Cultural Poetics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 83. In a more recent book on education in the period, Lynn Enterline challenges scholars to move beyond Smith's assertion by putting pressure on what we mean by “what, precisely, we might mean by invoking *male*, *puberty*, or *rite* to describe the social and literary impact of humanist education” (Enterline, 18).

womanhood) or come to understand gender identification. As Bruce R. Smith and Will Fisher have asserted,¹⁵⁹ the gender of boys' was constituted differently than the gender of men. Calling on Thomas Laqueur's historicized idea of early modern gender as a matter of degree,¹⁶⁰ Fisher contends that, "masculinity was not only constructed in contrast to femininity, but also in contrast to boyhood... men and boys were quite literally two distinct genders."¹⁶¹ There seems to have been some fear that Elizabethan and Stuart humanistic academies, however, did not distinguish between adolescent, feminine and adult, masculine genders so acutely. In his study of humanism's connections with the practice and perception of sodomy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Alan Stewart remarks that the early modern period ushered in a shift away from Tudor ideas of power: "from the sword to the wit, from the feudal valorisation of material prowess to the humanistic valorisation of the wit," a move that also signaled "lost virility."¹⁶² Because of its emphasis on a life of letters and thought, the humanistic academy posed a threat to traditional notions of masculinity and potentially produced more effeminate men. Scholar fop figures on stage represent this fear through an inability to interact successfully with women to bring about appropriate heterosexual marriage matches. They reflect an anxiety that the process of self-fashioning at academies—especially when it comes to gender—was corruptible.

¹⁵⁹ See Smith *Shakespeare and Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 67-101) for a discussion of differentiation and the stages of masculine development. For an argument concerning the prosthetic make-up of boys versus that of men, see Fisher *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 83-93, 108-111.

¹⁶⁰ See especially pages 122-134 in *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹⁶² Stewart, xxiv.

By its very nature a vehicle for self-fashioning through instruction, the academy and its students are eager affecters of manners and knowledge that they see as paths to realizing a better version of themselves. Students, in their various iterations, are in pursuit of some sort of knowledge and are engaged in a process of individuation by the mere fact of their membership in an academy. In her discussion of the various metaphors employed to describe students during the period, Bushnell claims that students were seen as, “completely malleable yet with a natural resistance to manipulation,”¹⁶³ reflecting a sense that students were engaged in a process of finding themselves through change and challenge, through self-fashioning. Enterline also emphasizes the academy as a space rife for alterity. She points out, “School training encouraged a general disposition toward impersonation, and hence a propensity for drama.”¹⁶⁴ The student fop figure’s ambivalence, which becomes obvious in the flip-flopping tendencies of the examples I discuss in this chapter, reflects the educational system that reared him in that it shows a desire to play a part rather than represent himself authentically. The early modern theater itself was an institution that reflected a cultural impulse toward learning to fashion the self. The performative nature of the theater bespeaks a fundamental belief in the ability to change behavior according to circumstance. More than providing a liminal, safe space to experiment with trying on different identities, the theater as institution modeled the processes of self-fashioning and represented on its stages how various social

¹⁶³ Bushnell, 21.

¹⁶⁴ Enterline, 25.

roles could be affected. Theatrical modes of instruction, however, were not limited only to the presentation of ideal human behavior.

Many early modern plays that feature academies of various incarnations use those places of learning to foreground the theater's socially-instructive function. In discussing Thomas Randolph's *The Muse's Looking Glass*, Ira Clark argues that the play, "focuses on the images of plays themselves serving as academies of gentle behavior for their audiences... [The play] complicates the mimetic theory of drama... A play can serve for positive reenforcement of ideal behavior... and also for dissuasion from negative behavior."¹⁶⁵ Many plays employ the dissuasive mode of representation, and in some, the foppish student functions as the anti-example of behavior.¹⁶⁶ Clark dispatches Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus, very generally abstracted as regulated practice of predetermined social behaviors, to posit the early modern theater as a space of social practice and propagation.¹⁶⁷ Particularly important for understanding the Renaissance fop and his place within staged academies is Clark's argument that the theater itself was an academy of conduct, modeling for its audiences the imitable behaviors of the gentry and laying out in front of them exactly what the codes of conduct were in a format easily decoded.

The fears about plays and play-going in the period's anti-theatrical literature reflects the notion that the theater itself was an instructional institution.

¹⁶⁵ *Comedy, Youth, Manhood in Early Modern England* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003), 30-31.

¹⁶⁶ I owe a great deal of the way I conceive of staged academies and their associations with the behaviorally dissuasive function of the early modern theater to Clark's discussion of academies of conduct as they are variously represented in the drama of the period. See especially Chapter 2: "The Place of Academies of Conduct," 29-54.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 48-49.

In *The Anatomie of Abuses* (1583), Phillip Stubbes derides the idea that anything good can be learned from stage plays. Within the dialogue on “Stageplays and Interludes, with their wickedness,” Spudeus imparts to Philoponus that, “I have heard some hold opinion that [stage plays] be as good as Sermons, and that many a good example may be learned out of them?”¹⁶⁸ There is an assumption here that some advocates of the theater have claimed that plays have an instructive quality to them and act as “good example.” While lambasting the idea that one can find righteousness in plays, Philoponus’s reply reflects a fear that the plays are indeed instructive. He acknowledges that “Examples may you see painted before your eyes,” these examples are exclusively of vices such as idleness, sodomy, whoredom, theft, murder, deceit, gluttony, incest, drunkenness, idolatry, and a host of other sins.¹⁶⁹ One must surmise that Stubbes would have extrapolated the staged fop’s ability to “instruct” and corrupt his audience.

The foppish student character is one dramatic vehicle through which the theater becomes an academy of conduct. His failure to be an incisive and analytical observer of his social situations, despite his purposeful involvement in an academy of learning, renders him not only a fool, but a social pariah. His status as such is dictated less by his ineptness and more by the anxiety he instills in those around him. Scholars were becoming more and more valuable in the period due to the shift in ideas about what was valuable knowledge, “As the result of an emerging class of (often lowborn) professional scholars searching for financial and social advancement... command of Latin became a significant form

¹⁶⁸ Margaret Jane Kidnie, Ed. (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies in conjunction with Renaissance English Text Society, 2002), 202.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 202-205.

of cultural capital in early modern England.”¹⁷⁰ Plays that privilege other forms of cultural capital—wit, street-smarts—seek ways to criticize this method for moving up the social ladder because it presumes mastery of knowledge they do not possess themselves. As a result, protagonists whose value is measured by a more undefinable and less specialized set of skills seek opportunities to prove scholar figures fools and fops as a way of protecting and raising their own social capital. In these types of plays, the student fop is an agent of the dissuasive function of the theater to which Clark refers. His effeminacy and social incapability subvert the straightforwardly instructive nature of drama and stand in to ridicule anti-theatrical claims that incorporated this instruction as a threat to “true” masculinity into their arguments.¹⁷¹ On some level, these plays claim that only idiots would allow the theater-going experience to instruct them; indeed, because these particular fops are students themselves, they offer up commentary on the legitimacy and potential for cultural and social upheaval of the academy’s instruction as a whole. In his own way, the student fop figure works to reify emerging notions of political and social hierarchies. That is, the student fop, as far as he stands to represent humanist theories of education that dominated the academy, reflects that system’s elasticity that allowed more room for questioning existing structures, even if the system ultimately buttressed those structures to keep them sturdy.

¹⁷⁰ Enterline, 15.

¹⁷¹ Here, I have in mind anti-theatrical sentiments that accuse the theater of spreading the disease of effeminacy and sodomy, such as those found in Philip Stubbes’ *Anatomy of Abuses* (1583), Robert Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), and William Prynne’s *HistrioMastix* (163389) among others.

The Willful and Incapable Student Fop in *What You Will*

What You Will, Marston's play with which I begin this chapter, provides an obvious non-student model of a fop in who functions differently than the ridiculed Lamputho discussed above. Sir Laverdue is an affected, sartorially-extravagant French knight who has little to do with the scholarly academy that runs underneath much of the play. His presence provides a measuring implement for foppishness. He is a different kind of fop than Lamputho, who thinks he can uncover the secrets of the system, desires its benefits, but puts too much into achieving a place in it. His eagerness to change thwarts his chances at social success. In Act II, scene i, Laverdue makes his first appearance on stage by drawing back the curtains of his bed to reveal himself in the midst of dressing, "his trunk of apparel standing by him."¹⁷² He grills his servant Bidet about his visitors' attire before he will receive them, nervous that his outfit will be outdone. Before they arrive, he demands, "[his] gold-wrought waistcoat and night-cap. Open my trunk, lay my richest suit on top, my velvet slippers, cloth-of-gold gamashes [leggings]; where are my cloth of silver hose?... Set my richest gloves, garters, hats, just in the way of their eyes; so, let them in" (II.i.414-422). Clearly, Laverdue is a man invested in appearances and one who displays excessive, affective behavior. Like Quadratus and even the dim-witted Simplicus who shows many of the same foppish tendencies, he does so knowingly; he is a willing and mostly successful participant in the social world of the play. *What You Will*

¹⁷² This moment bears interesting resemblance to a much later scene in English drama that has been tied to the characterization of the Restoration fop: The opening scene of George Etherege's *Man of Mode* 1676 that finds its gallant hero Dorimant at his toilet. See Harold Weber, "Charles II, George Pines, and Mr. Dorimant: The Politics of Sexual Power in Restoration England," in *Reading with a Difference: Gender, Race, and Cultural Identity*, ed. Arthur F. Marotti et. al. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993), 116-118.

incorporates him into the social sphere through marriage, though to a servant, not to his intended lady. Laverdue does not seem to mind the match, however, as his major goal in matrimony is to regain his extravagant suits, which his tailor holds for lack of payment.

Against Laverdue's steadfast devotion to the sartorial, Lamputho's flip-flopping between interests appears to be flaky and his loquaciousness similarly offensive. Marston introduces Lamputho as a want-to-be a gallant before we learn that he is a jaded scholar. His academic life, it seems, has not paid off, and he seeks to cast off his scholarly identity, but he remains unable to escape his scholarly role throughout the play. His defining characteristic is a archetypal marker of foppishness across social spaces: his convoluted rhetorical style, a common site of criticism about the scholar figure in early modern England. The new emphasis on teaching young men how to speak properly was partly put in place to give them a leg up into an emerging aristocratic class consisting of civil servants. It gave them a new kind of cultural capital that eventually morphed into economic resources. The humanist practices in education, those ardently encouraged since the middle of the sixteenth century, "stamped the prominent members of the new elite with an indelible cultural seal of superiority, it equipped lesser members of the new elite with fluency and the learned habit of attention to textual detail."¹⁷³ The academy provided a new class of men with the necessary skills to prosper in a new economy that allowed for space for men of letters.

The practice of rhetorical excessiveness, then, threatened an old-fashioned idea of the hereditary economy and social status, one favored in *What You Will* by

¹⁷³ Grafton and Jardine, xii.

Quadratus. Therefore, in order to criticize the foppish over-striving of such men, the play renders Lamputho's academic rhetoric ridiculous. Lamputho's first lines, which are spoken to the foppish Laverdue, show his tendency toward excessive language: "Sir, I protest I not only take distinct notice of your dear rarities of exterior presence, but also I protest I am most vehemently enamour's and very passionately on your inward andornments and habilities of spirit; I protest I shall be proud to do you most obsequious vassalage" (II.i.438-442). Like Don Armado, who I discuss later in this chapter, Lamputho obstructs his own attempt to flatter his way into the world of the court with serpentine academic language. Unlike Don Armado, however, he does not affect this way of speaking, but rather cannot hide it, a tendency that appears again in the wooing scene discussed above.

Lamputho's struggle to reconcile his academic rhetorical style reflects a recurring theme on the early English stage. Several verbose or indecipherable characters appeared as manifestations of university snobbery during the period. City comedy, a genre that often criticizes traditional markers of class superiority, gave birth to two such characters, both of whose rhetorical excess comes in the shape of bad Latin learned at school. Thomas Middleton's *Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (1613), for example, features a Cambridge student Tim Yellowhammer who has returned to London to court a "landed niece" by arrangement of the morally questionable Sir Walter Whorehound. Tim repeatedly fails to display the worth of his Cambridge education, which his family obviously supported as a way to propel them into the upper classes. His foppishness is most evident in his pretentious use of Latin as he tries to woo his potential bride, who is

actually a Welsh prostitute. He boasts that he can prove a prostitute an honest woman by use of his university training in logic. The comedy of this subplot is predicated on, at least in part, the way that his Cambridge education has failed him; he is too dense to recognize that his potential wife is a prostitute and he marries her. A similar character appears in Jonson's *Michaelmas Term* (1604). Sim, also a Cambridge student returned to his wealthy though merchant class family in London, demonstrates his worthless university training through his shoddy Latin, a flaw that allows him to be cheated out of his father's inheritance. These two foppish students, though similar as participants in a dramatic trend that mocks the use of learned Latin, work to highlight different types of masculine deficiency. Tim is rendered effeminate by his lack of ability to as a suitor while Sim proves himself naive in the ways of the London streets. In Marston's play, Lamputho recognizes the failure of the academy as a vehicle of social mobility and his resentment comes out when he finds himself in an academic environment.

What You Will contains an example of an actual staged academy of intellectual pursuit, which no other play in this study does (in fact, it seems that few plays in the period actually set their plots in the schoolroom). The scene set in a schoolroom in Act II creates room for a confession of sorts and brings together the gallant and academic worlds, and the play seems to prefer the latter. After witnessing the boys at their lessons and the recruitment of a young student into his current society, Lamputho rails against scholars and the academic way of life in what is perhaps the play's most often quoted speech:

In Heaven's handiwork there's naught,
None more vile, accursed, reprobate to bliss

Than man, and 'mong men a scholar most.
Things only fleshly sensitive, an ox or horse,
They live and eat, and sleep, and drink, and die,
And are not touch'd with recollections
Of things o'er-passe'd, or stagger'd infant doubts
Of things succeeding; but leave the manly beasts,
And give but pence apiece to have a sight
Of beastly man now (II.ii.821-830)

Though it may be obvious that he is a scholar through his characterization before this point in the play, he makes this speech not having revealed that he is a scholar, or at least a former student. The experience, it seems, was so traumatic as to cause him to want to hide this fact of his identity, not to mention incite a vitriolic tirade. A few lines later, he confesses his past: "I was a scholar: seven useful springs / Did I deflower in quotations / Of cross'd opinions 'bout the soul of man. / The more I learnt the more I learnt to doubt: / Knowledge and wit, faith's foes, turn faith about" (844-848). He does not stop there. He goes on for many more lines about the tediousness and uselessness of his education.

Ultimately, he concludes that the experience led him to find his "numbness in this nimble age" (880). His degrees, he believes, have ruined his chances at social success. Of course, Quadratus convinces him to give "pursue the cut, the fashion of the age" (887) by the end of the scene, setting him up to fail to amuse himself and the audience.

Lamputho's efforts to become gallant prove fruitless, despite his passionate expression that he will leave behind his scholarly identity and follow fashion. For him, his position cannot be "what you will." In the failed wooing scene discussed above, the scene that Lamputho so spectacularly misreads, Quadratus becomes annoyed with Lamputho because despite pointed advice, he

does not follow the fashion. Quadratus yells at his rival in frustration: “Wilt not thou clap into our fashion’d gallantry? / Couldst not be proud and scornful, ‘loof and vain?” (IV.i.1645-1646). Sarcasm, vanity, and misanthropic temperament would have led Lamputho to be a successful wooer; without them, he becomes a joke. Quadratus, who labels Lamputho as “fusty” and old-fashioned (II.i.449-450), sees social success as a byproduct of the ability to read a culture and adjust one’s taste accordingly. Under this model—and the play’s, since it unfolds under Quadratus’s direction—Lamputho the “inkie scholar” clings too much to traditional rules of propriety and gallantry to be able to inculcate himself into the social sphere of the play.

In the world of *What You Will*, a dramatic world composed of comedic vignettes rather than traceable plot lines, constancy such as his is not valued. Its very structure reflects an ethos of adaptability; its hero effortlessly navigates the various, seemingly random social scenarios. In this way, the play encourages readings of other characters as foppish. Lamputho and the academy he represents, thrives on ritual and repetition, a fact conveyed in the Act II, scene ii schoolhouse scene during which Lamputho reveals his scholarly roots.¹⁷⁴ The scene begins the boys at their lessons, methodically going through their Latin under the tutelage of their strict and serious teacher. Such a scene would have been familiar not only to the former school boys and university men in the audience,¹⁷⁵ but to theater-goers

¹⁷⁴ The practice of repetition seems arcane and old-fashioned now, but the curricular shift toward Latin and grammar in schools was transformative in early modern England. As Lynn Enterline points out in *Shakespeare’s Schoolroom*, “drilling *imitatio* began to alter literary taste and technique, it began to govern pedagogical and interpersonal relationships” (11).

¹⁷⁵ Because the play was performed by a boys company at an indoor theater, it is almost certain there would have been a large number of Inns of Court men in the audience. As M.R. Woodhead, the play’s most recent editor, observes, “Lamputho’s outcry against learning...would certainly

in general. In fact, scenes that mimic and mock repetitious Latin instruction proliferated the early modern stage. In Shakespeare alone, there are several examples: *Taming of the Shrew*, *Henry V*, *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Titus Andronicus* all contain scenes that recall this practice.

Lamputho and other scholar fops who represent the academy represent the establishment. Lamputho is unable to cast aside his scholarly persona because he has become indoctrinated into the system through such repetitious practices.

In an interesting conflation of the academic and the sexualized subject, the schoolroom scene also releases a homoerotic tension in the play.¹⁷⁶ The doltish Simplicus—a character reminiscent of Jonson's clueless gallants discussed in the final chapter of this study—quickly recruits Holifernes, an insolent dim-witted schoolboy, to be his page. Upon witnessing the boy fail at his lessons, he exclaims, “I am enamoured on the boy” (II.i.792). Holifernes, according to the pedant, was supposed to be “the lady in comedies presented by children, but I knew his voice was too small and his stature too low” (797-799); in other words, he is the perfect ingel (that is, of course, until he collaborates with other servants in the play to dupe their masters). Simplicus is too stupid to be considered a fop, but his extravagances, sexual and otherwise, afford him a position that should be considered in the system of masculine measurement set up in the play. He works as a foil to Lamputho because he is *too* willing to follow the fashion. As

strike a chord in the hearts of the fashionable Inns-of-Court men who witnessed his vacillations” (iii).

¹⁷⁶ Alan Bray suggests that the schoolroom was a common space in which male/male sexual relationships was regularly practiced in his important book *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (London: Gay Men's Press, 1982, 51-53). Like Bray, other critics have made the same claim, often pointing to the conviction of Nicholas Udall, writer and headmaster at Eton, for buggery in 1533. See particularly Jonathan Goldberg, *Queering the Renaissance* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 162-189; and Alan Stewart, 86-120; and Lynn Enterline, 48-60.

Simplicus “goes mad” listing all of the fine things he wants of God (a new suit of specific materials, dinners at ordinaries, the company of counts and countesses), Quadratus finally can’t take it anymore and hints at the infectious nature of Simplicus’s disease of extravagance: “By the salvation of humanity he ‘s more pestilent than the plague of lice that fell upon Egypt” (V.i.1801-1802). His brand of excess equally threatens the idea of masculinity. He is another dissuasive example for audiences to reject.

The Foppish Threat of Academies of Manners

The very nature of academies creates a sense of ambition in students striving to emulate, or mimic, their superiors within their chosen subject of study. Yet instruction in what is proper via exemplars of accomplishment must be buttressed with instruction in what is improper via negative role models. Stephen Greenblatt distinguishes the early modern process of individuation as different from our own in important ways by calling upon the significance of negative examples. He argues, “whereas the post-Enlightenment world tends to sharpen its sense of individuation through a grasp of the normative, the Renaissance tended to acquire an understanding of the order of things through a meditation upon the prodigious.”¹⁷⁷ So, learning to understand oneself as an individual would have been less a process of constantly reiterating social codes and norms (though this process certainly happened), and more a process of studying what behavior fell

¹⁷⁷ “Fiction and Friction” in *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought*. Eds. Thomas C. Heller et. al. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), 36.

outside of the normative culture as an example of what not to be. The mimetic nature of study, especially within the academies of manners, puts all students at risk of foppishness if they do not also possess the good taste and sense to recognize these negative examples, or, of course, if they happen to *be* one of these negative examples.

The academy on stage came in two iterations: 1) the traditional Platonic Academe, such as the schoolroom in *What You Will* and; 2) the more nebulous academy of manners. Academies are often conceptual rather than actual. Of course, the term “academy” incorporates schools, universities, and the Inns of Court, but it also includes less formal institutions set up for the purposes of extra-curricular scholastic inquiry and, most importantly for my argument, social and cultural education. These are the academies of conduct, the dancing schools, the dueling schools, etc., that began to appear across Europe in the early-seventeenth century and then made formal appearances in England closer to the 1630s.¹⁷⁸ I believe that there is often a conflation of these two types of institutions in early modern drama and that academies of conduct appear on stage prior to the historical moment when they begin to actually appear in England. Far from being an adjunct effect of scholastic education, staged representations of the academy suggest that these institutions were constitutive of the men’s perceptions of their own masculinity.

The perceived need that young men required instruction in the gentlemanly arts so they could be more well-rounded in their places at court engendered conduct academies. There is some dissonance in recent scholarship

¹⁷⁸ Jean Howard, *Theater of a City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 165.

about the prominence of these academies in England during the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries.¹⁷⁹ Historical evidence, however, does point to an English desire to establish such places¹⁸⁰ for the sons of nobility. The impulse was to provide noble young men with instruction beyond the academic disciplines offered at Oxford and Cambridge. What is clear is that early versions of academies of conduct—fencing schools, dancing schools¹⁸¹—focused on physical skills rather than social skills. The existence of schools and tutors that taught physical skills indicates a perceived need to provide noble youths with a leg up on their peers despite their inherited noble nature. The impulse here is to perfect physical displays of mastery for semi-private, mostly courtly consumption, an impulse that reveals a lack of confidence in the notion of hierarchical privileged ability. The audience for a given nobleman’s display of physical skill would have been limited and elite. The advent of a theater culture in early modern England, however, made those private displays of physical mastery very public through the bodies of actors that mimicked these events and therefore displayed them to a

¹⁷⁹ In *Theater of a City* Howard describes the rise of “the idea of academies as elite places of instruction” for courtly behavior in France in the early-seventeenth century but claims that, “In England, there were no exclusive court-oriented academies of the sort” (184-5). Though not focused entirely on academies that served to instruct men in *courtly* manners per se, Clark suggests that, “The need of academies for gentlemen was felt early in Elizabeth’s reign” (33). While the purposes of these two critics are certainly linked through their interest in the academy and its ties to the theater, it should be noted that Howard’s interest is in the physical presence of academies of manners on the stage, which doesn’t officially happen until the 1630s, whereas Clark aims to trace the prevalence of the idea of the academy through discursive moments on the stage as early as the 1590s.

¹⁸⁰ In 1573, Sir Humphrey Gilbert suggested in *Queene Elizabeth’s Achademy* that there be established a “Achademy in London” where the “gallant cowtier” could practice “gentlemenlike qualitie” (qtd. in Clark 33). His proposal included instruction in the military sciences, self defense, navigation, horsemanship, dancing, music, and heraldry (Clark 34). There is no indication that such an academy was ever established.

¹⁸¹ See evidence for the existence of such schools in Wilfrid R. Prest’s *The Inns of Court under Elizabeth I and the Early Stuarts 1590-1640* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 1972), 163; and Mark H. Curtis’s *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition 1558-1642: An Essay on Changing Relations between English Universities and English Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 144.

wider audience. Hence, courtly performativity became consumable by a larger public. The same impulse that led to the establishment of instructive academies that focused on physical skill led to a later idea that gentlemanly manners could also be a learned skill in academies of manners. The existence of academies that taught horsemanship or dancing or any other physical skill indicates a cultural impulse to look toward instruction as a means of social mobility. The foppish student fails to properly put to use such instruction. His lack of *social understanding* about the situations in which he finds himself rather than his *physical conduct* that makes him funny, making him distinct from many early modern stage clowns. As manifestations of the desire for access to an elite cultural ideal—and the idea behind them that such skills and manners can be taught at all—academies are a perfect breeding ground for the fop. Academies of manners that taught social behaviors are particularly well positioned for attracting fops.

Academies of manners began to be explicitly represented on stage as they gained popularity in the city in the Caroline period,¹⁸² yet the desire and even perceived necessity of instruction in the cultural arts is evident in earlier plays. Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels* (1601), for example, contains a discussion of a gentleman's desire for pointed instruction, and this desire is explicitly tied to excessive and foppish behavior. Mercury describes the character Hendon as foppish in that he is concerned with frivolous display, which involves maintaining close relationships with his tailors for suits and his barbers for the treatment of venereal disease; pawning and repurchasing extravagant, overwrought suits of

¹⁸² Howard traces this growth in Chapter 4 of *Theater of the City*.

clothing; keeping a monkey; hosting large parties with indiscriminate guest lists; playing tennis; and generally bragging about his fashionable pastimes and possessions to impress ladies (II.i.40-69).¹⁸³ Mercury says of Hendon, “He loves to have a fencer, a pedant, and a musician seen in his lodging in the morning” (II.i.45-6). This description directly ties the foppish practice of conspicuous self-display to his participation in various kinds of instruction. Hendon *wants* people to know of his self-improvement efforts for he “loves to have...seen” his various instructors. In this example, a fop pays for private lessons in courtly arts, the acquisition of socially practical skills through fencing instructors and musicians. However, merely paying for a skill-set that has traditionally been seen as inherent does not render a man a fop; rather foppishness lies in his failure at deploying these skills in the right way.

Despite efforts to ascend the social ladder by learning the leisure skills of the elite in private lessons and at more formal academies, the fop figure never quite becomes part of the social elite, however that category is defined in any given play in which he appears. The fop’s foolishness re-inscribes the notion of inherited social ability because he cannot successfully “pass” as a genteel man who has command of his social surroundings and who possesses *sprezzatura*.¹⁸⁴ In the staged academy, he is the dunce who does not know he has a “kick me” sign on his back; he is largely unaware of his incapability to the point that he is socially ostracized. His social and even his scholastic ineptness stands in to demonstrate his lack of success as a man for much of what he lacks are the skills

¹⁸³ Eds. C.H. Herford and Percy Simpson (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1932).

¹⁸⁴ For a more complete discussion of the fop and his lack of what Baldessare Castiglione identifies as *sprezzatura* in *The Book of the Courtier*, see Chapter Two of this study.

that men value. His presence acts as a reminder that if a man tries too hard to be a man, then he is not truly masculine. In this way, the student fop reveals the fissures within the codified gender system. Of course, all students inherently acknowledge their own desire for instruction in predetermined subjects. What makes the student fop a fop a combination of his *overtly* contrived behavior and *overtly* expressed desire to fit in to an unnamed, and therefore interpretable, gender paradigm as it is mobilized within the academy. Because they are tied to his performance of the roles of an early modern man, the failures of the student fop render him effeminate. The fop's own mimetic propensity adds a performative layer onto an always already performative act of gender reassertion. Part of what distinguishes the student is that he occupies an adolescent space, one full of young, unmarried men who are simultaneously studying scholastic subjects and negotiating their identities as men. The foppish student's behavior partly reflects an unsuccessful negotiation between these separate gender identities. The academy and its fops seem to be exclusively represented in comedies, the genre most often presenting characters' journeys into adulthood.

Foppishness in the Two Academies of *Love's Labour's Lost*

In the comedy *Love's Labour's Lost*, Shakespeare examines the masculine maturation process by representing a gaggle of students undertaking intentional study. The play begins with the establishment of a scholastic academy for the King of Navarre and his lords. I am less interested in establishing a historical reference to the kind of scholastic academy represented in the beginning of the

play¹⁸⁵ than I am in positing a different orientation to the actual function of the academy as it is deployed therein. So much of this play focuses on the formation of mature masculine identities within a pseudo-academic setting, a setting that works to both create and expose the character of the early modern stage fop. Like other foppish characters, the student fop's identity is contextual and contingent on how the character interacts with men who successfully navigate an ordered, heterosocial paradigm defined by the dramatic situation. *Love's Labour's* paradigm, however, morphs and changes, allowing the line between fop and non-fop to be blurred. While the expressed intention behind the creation of the academy in the play is that "[Navarre's] court shall be a little academe / Still and contemplative in living arts" (I.i.13-14)¹⁸⁶ and become "the wonder of the world" (12), studious pursuit quickly transforms into a school for wooers. As Berowne predicts in his initial expression of doubt about his membership in this enclave, "So study evermore is overshot. / While it doth study to have what it would, / It doth forget to do the thing it should; / And when it hath the thing it hunteth most, / 'Tis won as towns with fire: so won, so lost" (I.i.140-44). The play has a vested interest in exploring the bond between young men,¹⁸⁷ but the closed-off Platonic Academe set up at the beginning of the play does little to foster this exploration.

¹⁸⁵ The critical history tying together the scholastic academy in *Love's Labour's Lost* and French academies in the period is significant. In particular, there have been several movements, beginning as far back into the eighteenth century, to read the play as an attack against the "School of Night," a secret academy headed by Sir Walter Raleigh that met to discuss atheism, philosophy, and science. See H.R. Woudhuysen's introduction to the 1998 third Arden edition of the play for a fuller critical history of this link and a good case for its relative unimportance (70-72).

¹⁸⁶ All references to *Love's Labour's Lost* are taken from third Arden edition. Ed. H.R. Woudhuysen. Walton-on-Thames, UK: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd. 1998.

¹⁸⁷ Tom Macfaul contends that *Love's Labour's* isolated and therefore unrealistic setting allows Shakespeare to "explore the nature of male fellowship in the form of anthropological experiment," and remarks that the play is the playwright's least dramatic because it lacks much of the tension brought on by women. See *Male Friendship in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 150.

Rather, the quick dissolution of the initial academic construct makes way for the *real* instruction to begin: instruction in the social and gender hierarchies the play's version of humanism scrutinizes, but ultimately reaffirms.

Berowne's lead in to his prediction of the transgression of the rules of the academy is a reminder to the King of the impending arrival of the French Princess and her ladies. State affairs put an abrupt halt to academic study that is to be punctuated with restrictions on diet, sleep, and, most importantly, fraternization with women. The all-male project is doomed to fail; the figurative walls around the university-like academy crumble even before they are built because the exclusionary terms under which it is established are wrong-headed and adolescent. The King and lords are not expressly concerned with maintaining an all-male social space, but they act in order to fit their experiences into prescribed conventions. Part of their dilemma, then, is figuring out how to service two masters: the court (Navarre's academy) and the metatheatrical genre (heterosocial interaction and marriage). They have "fashion[ed] [their] humours / Even to the opposed end of [their] intents" (V.ii.751). The transgression from the original intent of the academy does not replace or supersede the academic institution's functionality as a space of education in homosociality; rather, it adds a layer of instruction and brings to the forefront the role of the academy in teaching boys to be young men. W. Thomas MacCarey understands the play's central dilemma of the hetero- and homosocial versions of identity formation as a Platonic one, asserting that the play poses the question, "does one complete oneself in the company with those like the self (friends), or does one need the other (a female

lover) to reflect one's image of oneself?"¹⁸⁸ The answer, the play tells us, is of course both. The young men must learn to be men among men by proving their social ability among women as successful lovers. The heterosocial system that emerges with the entrance of the Princess forces the professed students to lay aside their bookish studies to become students of heteroerotic love and desire first before they can gain academic knowledge that can enhance, though not engender, their status as courtly men. The academy's dual function as a space for both homo- and heterosocial identity formation, however, opens space for the threat of potential effeminization.

The play acknowledges that the doomed all-male academy carries with it a risk of enabling homoerotic desire to develop and thrive. The multi-layered spying scene in Act IV, scene iii, encapsulates the homoeroticism present when the young men venture to leave the safe, studious enclave filled exclusively with men for a world of uncertainty and women. As each of the four young men takes his turn confessing his love for a woman, the others watch in hidden turmoil, learning from one another and gaining confidence by the others' confessions. The voyeuristic nature of this scene makes it subtly erotic, and yet the very homosocial bonds that could be called suspect are doing the work of heteroerotic stimulation. The scene is about homosocial bonds fortifying single men against social faux pas and collectively creating a heterosocial identity that is approved by others. Berwone, however, mocks the others, describing what he has witnessed as, "To see a King transformed to a gnat! / To see great Hercules whipping a gig, /

¹⁸⁸ *Friends and Lovers: The Phenomenology of Desire in Shakespearean Comedy* (Columbia University Press, 1985), 74.

And profound Solomon to tune a jig, / And Nestor play at push-pin with the boys,
/ And critic Timon to laugh at idle toys!" (IV.iii.163-167). Berwone tries to undo the homosociality of the scene by calling the young men "boys" and accusing them of wasting time playing at romance rather than pursuing more manly pastimes, such as the studying they have vowed to do. They "transform," "whip," "tune," "play," and "laugh" rather than lead, fight, advise, orate or critique like the great men they are compared to would. In short, their behavior is not the kind that will bring them the fame they crave. What Berwone does not realize, and what the others fail to understand at the beginning of the play when they cloister themselves away, is that men need women in order to become men since masculinity requires a heterosocial competence in addition to the homosocial competence on which they have focused thus far. The maintenance of an all-male community is impossible if the King and his lords are to become the court of men they strive to be.

By the end of the scene, after everyone including Berwone agrees to the agenda of love, the young men realize that their homosocial bonds must inevitably lead them to heteroerotic interaction. Berwone says, "For men's sake, the authors of these women, / Or for women's sake, by whom we men are men, / Let us once lose our oaths to find ourselves, / Or else we lose ourselves to keep our oaths" (IV.iii.333-336). Here the men seemingly relinquish their contractual obligation to the academy so they can enter into marriage-bonds with their lady loves. With the sanctioning of heterosexual love, Berowne wants to link the sexes and yet his own rhetoric pushes them apart. He identifies men as the "authors" of

women, a conceit substantiated by the men as Petrarchan poets in this scene, but yet he attributes this authorship not to men themselves, but to their “sake” or consideration of women. He is less concrete about women’s role in shaping men but maintains that their power in making men lies in their consideration of them and not necessarily in their differently gendered existence. What makes men and women, then, is regard for the opposite sex, emphasis on opposite.

There is, however, a different, homosocial shared identity that gets revealed in these lines. In her discussion of Petrarchism in the play, Catherine Belsey has observed, “Love, experienced as unique and personal, is shown to be at the same time a matter of convention, offering the audience the dual pleasure of recognition and distance.”¹⁸⁹ In this light, the personal humiliations experienced in Act IV scene iii are in fact a fundamentally shared human experience of love. The heterosocial experience that has shamefully crept into this cloistered all-male community, then, functions to fortify their shared masculine bond. The shared humiliation of the reveal scene allows a true male bond to forge, “creat[ing] a more open friendship between the men, one which is not based on hierarchy or contract but on mutual understanding, something that the formal opening scene could not achieve through a notion of scholarly equality.”¹⁹⁰ Because the lords are each other’s audiences in this scene, the homosocial community therefore *incorporates* heterosexual love. Similar to Macfaul, Edward Berry’s reading of the “scene of discovery” sees the acceptance of heterosocial society as a fortification of a shared concept of masculinity, “As one society dissolves...

¹⁸⁹ *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden: The Construction of Family Values in Early Modern Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 31.

¹⁹⁰ Macfaul, 154.

another congeals... [E]ach man comes to terms with his love alone; yet each perceives in turn that he is not alone, that they are all involved, and that the dissolution of one sect of social bonds can bring forth another fellowship.”¹⁹¹ The threat that love seemed to pose to homosociality in the beginning of the play gets folded into the young men’s process of identity formation that had been restricted to their male peers.

Under the rules of traditional comedy, this new intersection of male and female identity should be solidified in marriage. Yet, something is not quite right at the end of *Love’s Labor’s Lost*. The play does not end with a marriage but with a strange twelve-month vow of celibacy and a cuckold’s song. Berowne reminds us that this ending does not fit dramatic convention: “Our wooing doth not end like an old play; / Jack hath not Jill: these ladies' courtesy / Might well have made our sport a comedy” (V.ii.857-860). That there is no marriage to ensure the young men’s “sport” is significant, especially as the strange vow of non-marriage is put up against the song of the cuckoo and the owl, birds that would have represented cuckoldry and ominous events, respectively. Exterior influences that make marriage impossible in this play. Politics intervene, and marginal but influential characters cannot be forever ignored. An inquiry into the fop figure Armado and his role in the King’s and lords’ identity-making in part reveal why the play refuses the traditional happy endings. By using Don Armado as a tool by which to measure masculinity and social and cultural capital in *Love’s Labour’s*, we find that while the young adolescents have gotten closer to being men, they do not quite achieve that status. Indeed, the play seems to forbid this status altogether.

¹⁹¹ *Shakespeare’s Comic Rites* (Cambridge University Press, 1984), 45.

Navarre and his men have a certain cultural swagger, an assurance in their own courtly personas that translates into a belief in their inherent superiority. This sense of primacy gets articulated through their adolescently mean-spirited ridicule of other characters. While no one in this play, including the women they love and even themselves, seems to be safe from the lords' ridicule, the berating is sharply focused on a particular man. Don Armado, an oblivious fool, provides the King and his lords with opportunities to come together in ridicule and solidify their boyish bond. He is to be a one form of entertainment, their "quick recreation granted" (I.i.158) during their serious and sequestered study. According to the King, Armado devotes himself to fashion, the sound of his own voice, and flattery. He is a "child of fancy" (I.i.167) and will be used for "minstrelsy" (I.i.173). Armado lacks the cultural knowledge, the self-assured swagger, that the King and lords attest they possess and that they come to master by play's end.

In his discussion of Stephen Greenblatt's idea of Renaissance self-fashioning, Jonathan Hall points to the freedom that must have been felt when the young men could cast off the academy as the sole signifier of their budding masculine identities. He goes on, however, to point out that, "This new freedom is also the freedom to trap others who may be less alert to the way in which the sign is no longer an indicator of identity or status."¹⁹² In *Love's Labour's*, especially in the very beginning of the play when the premise of the classical version of the academy is still presumed to be in tact, this trap is explicitly set for Armado, who misinterprets his status within the court because of his (supposed)

¹⁹² *Anxious Pleasures: Shakespearean Comedy and the Nation-State* (Madison, NJ: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1995), 88.

involvement in the “little academe.” He wrongly reads his physical and social proximity to the King, and his assigned responsibility as sexual policeman as acceptance. His own perceived social importance in the world of the play makes him a fop because he mistakenly identifies as a student like the King and the lords while unknowingly playing the jester. In its comedy and ridiculousness, Armado’s apishness has a dissuasive function; it acts as an example of inappropriate behavior, even though he mimics the plays’ arbiters of judgement. Hall calls him “the grotesque mirror of the speeches and actions of the King and the others.”¹⁹³

But the mirror, of course, reflects things backwardly. Armado works as a negative example, a personified demonstration of what not to do. His functionality as such is reflected in the other characters’ recognition of his various forms of foolishness that turn him into a caricature. Others’ perceptions of him reveal the anxiety of becoming him. Several characters—noblemen, women, and other foolish, marginalized characters—spend an inordinate amount of time describing Armado, differentiating him from themselves. These begin with the King’s and Berowne’s characterization of the Spaniard:

King: Our court, you know, is haunted
 With a refined traveller of Spain;
 A man in all the world's new fashion planted,
 That hath a mint of phrases in his brain;
 One whom the music of his own vain tongue
 Doth ravish like enchanting harmony;
 A man of compliments, whom right and wrong
 Have chose as umpire of their mutiny:
 This child of fancy, that Armado hight,
 For interim to our studies shall relate
 In high-born words the worth of many a knight

¹⁹³ Hall, 92.

From tawny Spain lost in the world's debate.
How you delight, my lords, I know not, I;
But, I protest, I love to hear him lie
And I will use him for my minstrelsy.
Berowne: Armado is a most illustrious wight,
A man of fire-new words, fashion's own knight.
(I.i.160-178)

From this description that introduces Armado before he appears on stage, there can be gleaned several foppish tendencies. Like Osric and other courtier fops discussed in the previous chapter, Armado is a flatterer full of “compliments,” and the King’s recognition of the self-serving nature of that flattery helps to establish an authoritative understanding of his position as political ruler.

The King also recognizes Armado’s entertainment value as based in his affinity for the fashionable: he is “in all the world’s new fashion planted.” In this passage, “fashion” is applied to rhetoric, and the focus is on Armado’s rhetorical *inability*, his use of academic language at inappropriate times. The fool’s “mint of phrases” and “high-born words” are the stuff of comedy because he is “lost in the world’s debate.” Armado’s misappropriates logic and vocabulary in his comic brand of rhetorical and academic performance, which is most prominently indicated via his academic language and style in the love letter to Jaquenetta. It is not that he is incoherent, but rather that he is “strange.” He does not understand the knowledge he has gained through academic study, partly because, of course, he is merely a soldier who has taken on the role of serious student to please the King. In striving to fit into Navarre’s “little academe,” he falsely casts himself as a capable scholar. His self-misidentification makes him funny, what makes him the butt of others’ jokes, and what ensures that he remains outside the dominant

paradigm of taste and social appropriateness. The King's, and by extension his court's, reverence for the tradition is reflected in his rejection of Armado as a serious member of the court via his ridicule of Armado's use of a new and strange brand of rhetoric and his love of fashion. His and Berowne's respective usages of the archaic "hight" and "wight"¹⁹⁴ reveal the court's inclination toward the traditional, toward a codified system of language that reflects a closed and decipherable history. One must know the code in order to be folded comfortably into their society rather than mocked as an outsider of it.

Much later in the play Holfernes, a pedant who is his own brand of rhetorical fop, offers a description of Armado that recalls the King's in Act I but casts him as a nuisance rather than a welcome source of entertainment. His exchange with Nathaniel about Armado reflects his distaste for the foppish character:

Holfernes: His humour is lofty, his discourse peremptory, his tongue filed, his gait majestical and his general behaviour vain, ridiculous and thrasonical. He is too picked, too spruce, too affected, too odd, as it were, to peregrinate, as I may call it.

Nathaniel: A most singular and choice epithet. (*Draws out his table-book.*)

Holfernes: He draweth out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument. I abhor such fanatical phantasimes, such insociable and point-device companions, such rackers of orthography... it insinuateth me of insanie. (V.i.9-25)

Holfernes's emphasis on vanity and bragging ("thrasonical") very much echoes the King's perception of Armado and reaffirms his marginal position not only among the play's nobility, but also among other members of the scholastic

¹⁹⁴ Woudhuysen glosses that these words were archaic according to the *OED*.

academy. Holofernes seems even more outraged that Armado is a pretender, a phantasm who affects his behavior, than the King is.

Even the French courtiers see Armado's ridiculousness, which is conveyed to them through his misdirected letter to Jaquenetta. Their process of judgement is initiated via Armado's over-striving persona as a scholar as expressed in the love letter, which takes the form of an question-and-answer style exercise in logic and contains obscure and irrelevant references to the likes of King Cophetua. The rhetoric of the letter mirrors Armado's spoken language in its linguistic misuses and hyperbole: Jaquenetta is more "beautiful than beauteous" (IV.i.62) and Armado is her "heroical vassal" (65), for example. In fact, Boyet confirms that the letter was penned by Armado because he "remember[s] the style" (95); the writing is distinctly his. The Princess's reaction to this language and Boyet's subsequent description of the him who is heretofore unbeknownst to the ladies characterize the writer as foppish:

Princess: What plume of feathers is he that indited this letter?
What vane? What weathercock? Did you ever hear
better?

[...]

Boyet: This Armado is a Spaniard that keeps here in court,
A phantasime, a Monarcho, and one that makes sport
To the Prince and his book-mates. (IV.i.93-99)

The Princess recognizes Armado as a show-off ("plume of feathers") and an inconstant man ("weathervane"), while Boyet emphasizes his fantastical nature and his marginal role as court amuser. The letter's rhetorical ridiculousness affords the ladies and Boyet some delight in making fun of Armado's over-the-top persona and casting him as an empty affecting man. His letter stands in sharp

contrast to the fashionable sonnets composed by the King and his lords. As William Carroll points out, Armado's "bombast[ic]" style of wooing is archaic while the lords' sonnets are 'fashionable fluff.'" ¹⁹⁵ The arcane nature of Armado's rhetoric and wooing style stands in stark contrast to his outward presentation as being in "new fashion planted" (I.i.162). He cannot deliver the goods he purports to have; he is a "phantasime" and "Monarcho," a reference to a mad and vain Italian courtier and frequent visitor to Elizabeth's court who was dead by 1580. ¹⁹⁶ He is not, in the vision of Boyet, a student, but rather "sport" to the "Prince and his book-mates."

In many ways, Armado seems intended as an outsider; he has little to do with the central love plots and rarely appears on stage as part of the gang. However, the play takes pains to remind us that he is indeed a welcomed member of the academy. In frustration during a witty exchange of which he is on the losing end, he reminds Moth that "I have promised to study three years with the duke" (I.ii.35-6). His status as a persona establishing him as a dissuasive method of instruction in a play that heavily enforces observation and mimicry as a way into the dominant heterosocial paradigm. In addition to his foreignness, Armado's ridiculous behavior and articulated self-fashioning isolates him apart from the other members of the academy; he doesn't quite "get" the rules of participation, nor does he understand that his true role is that of a clueless jester. Armado brags about his closeness to the royal body in ways that are neither tactful nor articulate. He boasts to the play's other fools as he rehearses "The Nine

¹⁹⁵ *The Great Feast of Language in Love's Labor's Lost* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 10.

¹⁹⁶ See the Woudhuysen's note on page 180 in the 1998 Arden edition.

Worthies” in Act V, scene i, “Sir, the King is a noble gentleman, and my familiar, I do assure ye, very good friend... For I must tell thee it will please his grace, by the world, sometime to lean upon my poor shoulder and with his royal finger thus dally with my excrement, with my mustachio” (88-97). Armado reveals himself as a braggart and royal hanger-on and also as a clueless fool, missing entirely the obvious scatological and homoerotic overtones of his fantasy. Armado’s libidinous nature cannot be overlooked in establishing him as a fop. The position appointed him by the King affords him the unique opportunity to police sexual activity while presumedly practicing it with Jaquenetta the dairymaid. The King’s appointment, made in part so that Armado is kept close enough to ridicule, positions Armado as the keeper of heteroerotic desire and, as Mark Breitenberg has pointed out, it is Armado’s voyeuristic account of Costard and Jaquenetta’s sexual tryst that sets sexual desire loose in the play.¹⁹⁷

Armado’s description of the couple’s encounter emphasizes that the King’s proclamation specifically forbids sexual contact *with women* and is not in the strictest sense a vow of celibacy. Armado’s writes the comically wordy and contrived letter in response to “that obscene and most preposterous event” (I.i.235). The word choice here pays lip service to the King’s restrictions on fraternization, for we find out in the very next scene that Armado does not think of sex as obscene because he himself lusts after Jaquenetta. The letter states that Costard “sorted and consorted, contrary to thy established proclaimed edict and

¹⁹⁷ *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1996), 138-139. Breitenberg’s chapter on *Love’s Labour’s* focuses on the ways the play “grapples with and tries to resolve the paradoxes of masculine desire as they are exemplified in the tradition of romantic love” through a trope of deferral that he explores via Petrarchism. Although his engagement with that character Don Armado is limited, he understands the sexual power bestowed upon this character and the resulting situations as ridiculous.

continent canon, with, with, O with - but with this passion to say wherewith - ... with a child of our grandmother Eve, a female, or, for thy more sweet understanding, a woman” (I.i.248-253). Taking into account Armado’s propensity for the dramatic, especially in written form, it remains revealing that the sexual offense must be clarified and punished as a heteroerotic one, as if to acknowledge the possibility of male-male sex acts. If we follow Breitenberg’s idea that Armado releases a heteroerotic energy into *Love’s Labor’s*, we could extend this argument that he also releases a homoerotic energy as its opposition. Considered against the backdrop of the homosocial community the King has created in the academy, the possibility of male-male sex becomes more potent. Like the threat represented by Gaveston in *Edward II*, the threat of sodomy here should not be taken in the contemporary sense as it is associated with homosexual identity, but rather a political threat to the body of the King and his high ranking courtiers. The rules of gender identity, already confused by the restriction of social contact with women, become even more vague when same-sex relations are the only forum for sexual expression. Immediately following the recitation of Armado’s letter, however, we learn the news of the Princess’s arrival at Navarre’s court. This arrival quickly tempers a now-acknowledged sodomitical threat to the perceived non-erotic safety of this homosocial community.

This temperament, however, does not translate into the expected heterosocial outcome. The play’s marriage plots get interrupted with the news of the death of the Princess’s father and her untimely flight from Navarre. The problematic ending undoes generic expectations by replacing immediate marriage

oaths with oaths of delayed fidelity, oaths not unlike those that bound the men to their Academy and that so soon came to mean nothing. Heteroerotic desire does not disappear from the ending of this play; it is instead pulled to the forefront with the presence of Armado and his public humiliation for his unwed sexual congress with Jaquenetta. In several ways, his foppishness brings about his humiliation, which begins with his refusal to participate in the duel with Costard that he initially proposes in the middle of the comically bad performance of the Nine Worthies, a metatheatrical moment that recalls the theater's instructive function. The challenge comes as a result of Costard's accusation that Armado has gotten Jaquenetta pregnant. Armado claims that he cannot participate because he has "no shirt. [He goes] woolward for penance" (V.ii.705-6), playing it off as if he cannot undress for the duel because he piously wears a hair-shirt. Of course, what this really reveals, as Moth tells everyone, is that Armado wears wool because he is too poor to afford a proper shirt, thus uncovering Armado's performance of the role of a gentleman worthy of membership in the academy. He is also cowardly here, unable to step up to the plate as a man and fight against the slander that places him as the father of a child of a lowly dairymaid. When he enters again later in the scene he takes his leave from the King and his court, claiming to have "vowed to Jaquenetta to hold the plough for her sweet love three year" (V.ii.871-2). Armado acquiesces to his low social status in this moment, taking his rightful role as a poor farmer to be with the father of his child. Dorteia Kehler contends that Armado's reference to "hold[ing] the plough" for Jaquenetta may also

figuratively means “to copulate with,”¹⁹⁸ and so even in his admission of his true identity, Armado continues to be the bearer of heterosexual desire in this play.

Surprisingly, it seems little inquiry has been made into the possibility that Armado is not indeed the father of Jaquenetta’s unborn child.¹⁹⁹ The obvious—and I believe more logical—contender would be Costard whose indiscretion with the maid is confirmed in the first act. On the subject the paternity of Jaquenetta’s child, Kehler believes that Armado is decidedly not the father, an argument she bases on reading of Armado’s following lines: “For mine own part, I breathe free breath. I have seen the day of wrong through the little hole of discretion and I will right myself like a soldier” (V.ii.717-19). It is clearly possible to read this line as Armado’s lamentation against some perceived abuse, and that abuse could most certainly be a false accusation of paternity since Costard has just asserted that claim about 50 lines earlier.²⁰⁰ It could be that Armado’s ultimate humiliation is serving time for a sexual crime he never committed. Kehler says of Armado’s penance, “Armado, the whipping boy, pays not only for his own elitism and attempt to intimidate but also for the wrongheadedness of the gallants, who are protected from greater mortification by their rank.”²⁰¹ Armado’s time as a student is up, for he never learned the rules governing proper social interaction and

¹⁹⁸ “Jaquenetta’s Baby’s Father: Recovering Paternity in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*.” *Love’s Labour’s Lost: Critical Essays*. Ed. Felicia Hardison Londre (New York: Garland, 1997), 307.

¹⁹⁹ Kehler provides a brief list of critics who have contended with this subject. They include Harley Granville-Parker, “*Love’s Labour’s Lost*.” *Prefaces to Shakespeare*. Vol. 4 (Princeton University Press, 1946).; Ronald Berman, “Shakespearean Comedy and the Uses of Reason.” *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 63 (1964), 3.; Herbert A. Ellis, *Shakespeare’s Lusty Punning in Love’s Labour’s Lost with Contemporary Analogues* (The Hague: Mouton, 1973); and Louis Adrian Montrose, “*Curious-knotted garden*: the form, themes, and contexts of Shakespeare’s “*Love’s labour’s lost*” (Salzburg : Institut fuer englische Sprache und Literatur Univ. Salzburg, 1977).

²⁰⁰ Woudhuysen and Kehler alike gloss this line with reference to a proverb, “One may see day at a little hole,” which meant to be no fool.

²⁰¹ Kehler, 309.

violated them; that he will “right [himself] like a soldier” (V.ii.219) indicates that not even he considers himself a student at this point. But the King and his men, too, fail, as both students of love and as students of the Academy. E.M.W Tillyard claims that only at the end of the play, under the penances doled out by their respective ladies, has the “educative process” begun, because up until this point, they have “made no progress beyond the theory of love.”²⁰² The King and his men, however, are afforded more time to perfect what they have just begun to learn about being men. The play tells us that there is still hope for them if they take their much softer punishments as an opportunity to continue to be students in the academy of manners.

The Possibility of the Female Fop: Jonson’s Collegiates

In *Love’s Labour’s*, the fop Armado and the play’s other potential student fops are young men learning to navigate their social surroundings. Neither the “little academe” nor the academy of manners that it becomes invites, or even allows, women to enter its confines. Of course, this is partly because the young women in the play do not seem to have as much to learn as the men and do not indicate a desire to be instructed. The male-centric nature of the tradition of the student fop should come as no surprise given exclusively-male student bodies at schools and universities. Jonson’s Collegiates from *Epicoene* (1609) prove an exception, however. This group of female characters offers a potential site for the existence of a female version of a student fop who differs from her male counterpart because she cannot be effeminate, and yet resembles him in her

²⁰² *Shakespeare’s Early Comedies* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1963), 145.

potential for gender crossing. The Collegiates reflect an anxiety surrounding gender that pervades the play and their masculine characterization has been of much concern to critics.²⁰³ They undo ideals of femininity as an opposite of masculinity, but their behavior and reception also reflect familiar concerns about the construction of masculinity. As is the case with many Jonson's plays, *Epicoene* offers several candidates for fop figures: Sir Amorous La Foole, Jack Daw, and, especially in the rhetorical contexts outlined above, Thomas Otter. This study concentrates the Collegiates as foppish students within an academy, partly for the purposeful and dedicated institution to which they belong and partly because they offer a compelling case for the possibility of female fop characters. Thus far, this study has been concerned with how fops work within plays to reflect, reaffirm, redefine, and undermine ideals of masculine identity. I am interested in the ways in which female characters who possess attributes similar to other characters in this chapter can also be read as indicative of the instability early modern gender identity.

The Collegiates' membership in a formalized academy of manners not only reflects their desire to be instructed in social behaviors, but also, as the proprietresses of this academy, the teachers of these behaviors as well. As students, they belong to a "college" of their own invention, a space where they entertain men, but where they live apart from their husbands within a cadre exclusively comprised of women. The ladies devote their collective time to

²⁰³ The body of critical work on the Collegiates and their characterization as masculine is extensive. Karen Newman's "City Talk: Women and Commodification" in *Staging the Renaissance* (Eds. David Scott Kastan and Peter Sallibrass. New York: Routledge, 1991), 181-195) has been particularly important to my own understanding of these characters and their gendered implications.

hosting dinner parties and seducing men. Michael Shapiro has classified the Collegiate's "strident mannishness" as part of Jonson's commentary on "frivolous vanity and modish decadence in the upper strata of society."²⁰⁴ At its heart, the "college" exists because it is a decadence, a way for a group of women with money to raise their social positions in a decadent London. Jean Howard has cited the college in *Epicoene* as the first in a series of "academies exclusively for women represented on stage as places of instruction in frivolous or lewd practices..." She goes on to claim that the plays in which these academies are featured insist that, "nothing but triviality can be taught in such a place."²⁰⁵ Their membership in their "college" dooms them in the eyes of the play's taste-makers. As Phyllis Rackin argues, "The androgynous characters who do appear in the play—the mannish 'collegiate ladies' and their effeminate male consorts—are minor characters conceived in purely satiric terms, present only to be mocked and abhorred by their fellow characters, their playwright, and their audience."²⁰⁶ Like other fop figures, they exist to be the butt of jokes, to provide fodder for the gallants' wit. Just like Navarre's academy in *Love's Labour's*, the academy featured in *Epicoene* has little to do with serious study; it becomes a vehicle for social critique.

There is an important difference between the students in the Collegiate's academy and Navarre and the lords, however. The Collegiate, while so often

²⁰⁴ "Audience vs. Dramatist in Jonson's *Epicoene* and Other Plays of the Children's Troupes." *English Literary Renaissance* 3(1973): 411.

²⁰⁵ Howard, 204-205. Chapter 4 of Howard's study—"Ballrooms and Academies: Producing the Cosmopolitan Body in West End London"—has been hugely influential in the way I conceive of the instructional nature of the Academy, though her particular focus is on later plays that straightforwardly present the academies of manners.

²⁰⁶ "Androgyny, Mimesis, and the Marriage of the Boy Heroine on the English Renaissance Stage," *PMLA* 102(1987): 30.

described in terms of their masculine, and therefore gender-transgressive, attributes, are not presented as models of behavior, dissuasive or otherwise, for any viable taste-making female character. Mistress Otter and the cross-dressed Epicoene express desire to follow Haughty and company, but they too are foolish pretenders.²⁰⁷ The play provides no female candidates fit for instruction, no women who could live up to the play's high expectations of a witty and socially adept London citizen. The potential for success as an arbiter of taste in the play is exclusively masculine; there is no "right" model for a foppish woman to ape here. The academy as it is represented through the "college" that houses these ladies is itself made out to be a ridiculous endeavor, a commentary on the futility of the promise of such spaces to offer instruction in manners that can lead to increased cultural capital for women. If there is a model woman in this play, it is the wife Epicoene before s/he is taken in by the Collegiates and corrupted into a gossipy version of themselves. Of course, Epicoene is not a woman at all but actually a man disguised as a woman.

As with Armado, other characters provide a picture of the women before they even come on stage. The gallant figures highlight the in-betweenness of the Collegiates' gender and social statuses immediately upon their introduction to the play. Truewit introduces them:

A new foundation, sire, here I' the town, of ladies that call themselves the Collegiates, an order between courtiers and country madams, that live from their husbands and give entertainment to all the Wits and Braveries o' the time, as they call 'em, cry down

²⁰⁷ In fact, Mistress Otter and Mistress Trusty, Haughty's woman, are labeled as "pretenders in "The Persons of the Play."

or up what they like or dislike in a brain or a fashion with most masculine or rather hermaphroditical authority. (I.i.70-6)²⁰⁸

In addition to occupying a social space somewhere between the court and the country, Truewit here speaks to the Collegiates' gender identity as incorporating both masculinity and femininity. They are dually labeled as "madams" and as "masculine." Expressing opinion is an explicitly "masculine" quality and the play presents the gossipy nature of the Collegiates as problematic. Truewit points out that the group of women has chosen to live apart from men and literally outside of domestic tradition by rejecting their husbands, becoming the men of their own household. The other adjective, "hermaphroditical" suggests that the Collegiates actually live outside of the gender binary as both woman and man.²⁰⁹ The word particularly resonates in the context of the description of Collegiates' behavior at the very beginning of the play. They are said to have dressed up Clerimont's ingle in women's clothing and to have kissed him (I.i.12-7). The play casts this behavior as transgressive and disturbing; but it also shows it as potentially desirable and contagious.

Like Don Armado's inflated perception of himself, the ladies' false sense of self-importance casts the Collegiates as foppish. Their vision of themselves as taste-makers is bolstered by the opinion of the other fools in this play. The

²⁰⁸ All citations of the play from *Epicoene*, are from the New Mermaids edition (ed. R.V. Holdsworth. New York: W W Norton, 1990).

²⁰⁹ Several scholars have taken on the concept of hermaphroditism as a critical concept in the early modern period. Especially important to the conversation surrounding this term as an indicator of sexual *and* class transgression, see: A.R. Jones and Peter Stallybrass, "Festishizing Gender: Constructing the Hermaphrodite in Renaissance Europe" in *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, eds. Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub (London: Routledge, 1993); Randolph Trumbach, "London's Sapphists: From Three Sexes to Four Genders in the Making of Modern Culture" in *Third Sex, Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History*, ed. Gilbert H. Herdt (New York: Zone, 1994); and Dawson, 170-172.

strivers and pretenders to wit and social standing in the play desire to be part of the Collegiates' academy. Jack Daw and La Foole value their association with these ladies of "taste." Mistress Otter desperately wants to be considered a collegiate herself:

Mistress Otter: Why, I am a collegiate.

Mavis: But not in ordinary.

Mistress Otter: But I am.

Mavis: We'll dispute that within. (III.vii.32-36)

This dispute over Mistress Otter's status as a student demonstrates the city wife's erroneous sense of herself as a lady of fashion. Her questionable status within the Collegiates' Academy, as expressed here by Mavis, speaks to the ladies' perception of their institution as exclusive by their own choice. They do not let just any student into their enclave; one must be deemed worthy of instruction in the ways of "Wits and Braveries." That La Foole has been entertained at the academy as one of these wits illustrates that their admission criteria is inherently flawed because they are incapable of discerning between true-wits (pun intended) and foppish pretenders. They may have some cultural sway over characters like the ridiculous Mistress Otter, but all that really makes them is the arbiters of foppishness in the play .

The verifiable pundits of taste in this play—Truewit, Clerimont, and Dauphine—scoff at the notion of being invited to the college. While Centaur says of Dauphine "We would all be glad to style him of our friendship, and see him at the college," (IV.vi.52-53), falsely viewing her invitation to their Academy as a compliment to his social ability, the fashionable men see them as ridiculous.

Truewit warns Dauphine about them:

Why, all their actions are governed by crude opinion, without reason or cause; they know not why they do any thing: but, as they are inform'd, believe, judge, praise, condemn, love, hate, and in emulation one of another, do all these things alike. Only they have a natural inclination sways them generally to the worst, when they are left to themselves. (IV.vi.57-64).

Given that the play clearly posits Truewit as one judges of taste in the world of *Epicoene* by virtue of his wit, this description shows the Collegiates' taste as entirely wrongheaded. The college has clearly taught them nothing as they have no "reason" but judge by "crude opinion" and "natural inclination" that leads them to bad assessments of fashion and status. Though they do indeed have judgement, as is expressed in their trepidation of allowing Mistress Otter to join their society, it is not the kind of measurement that is valued in this play.

Clearly, the evaluation of status in this play is not based on a traditional hereditary. Adam Zucker has proposed an alternate measurement of status in the play. In assessing the gallants' wit, which he claims is the means by which characters in *Epicoene* achieve status, he argues, "The wit of the gallants and all those who would aspire to witty urbanity depends upon a vast field of objects, spaces, and knowledges that make cultural competencies recognizable as such."²¹⁰ Based on the descriptions we have of Haughty and her cronies and their behaviors as braggarts about their own social knowledge partly gained at their college, the women seem to understand this brand of social logic.²¹¹ Of course, the Collegiates fail as influential arbiters of taste in this play because they are judged harshly by the gallant figures Truewit, Dauphine, and Clerimont. In the

²¹⁰ *The Places of Wit in Early Modern English Comedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 128-129.

²¹¹ See Zucker's article, "The Social Logic of Ben Jonson's *Epicoene*." *Renaissance Drama*. 33(2004). 37-62.

play, identities, as Marjorie Swann puts it, can only be “affirmed by those who ‘understand’ [the gallant figures’] texts.”²¹² As Truewit’s lays out in his description of the Collegiates, only those who “get” the social hierarchy can assert social legitimacy. By this judgement, the ladies are rendered foppish because they misunderstand their own statuses and misread themselves into the fashionable world of the city. They commit the “cultural crime”²¹³ of misjudgment.

Unlike Shakespeare, Jonson does not seek to redeem an academy gone awry through harsh humiliation of its wayward students, nor even call attention to the peripheral social values of the academy space. At the end of the play, the Collegiates are almost assuredly still an academy even though their tastes have been rendered tasteless and their pastimes misguided and foolish. If there is a statement that *Epicoene* makes about cultural instruction through the academy, it is a warning that organizations like the college will continue to hock their hackneyed services as valuable to the creation of a sense of a socially-elite self. Truewit addresses the Collegiates at the end of the play, telling them to not worry that they have wrongly judged Epicoene to be a woman, but to “Take heed of such *insectae* hereafter” (V.iv.229-230). The line could indeed warn the audience, to whom Truewit turns to address just five lines later, of the Collegiates themselves and their own brand of falsehood. For, as he reminds Haughty earlier in the play, “That falls out often, madam, that he that thinks himself the master-wit, is the master-fool” (III.vi.46-47).

²¹² “Refashioning Society in Ben Jonson’s *Epicoene*.” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*. 38:2 (1998): 305.

²¹³ Zucker, *The Places of Wit*, 69.

Jonson's play asserts that academies such as the Collegiates' threaten the knowability of men and their characters. He pokes fun at an entire system and posits them as ridiculous, empty social constructions much like the fops that represent them. Anyone—including women!—can claim membership to academies of manners, and so the credentials they are meant to produce become meaningless in their non-exclusivity. For Jonson, the existence of such schools exposes cultural proficiency as *learnable*. Scholarly academies function somewhat differently in the *Love's Labour's* and *What You Will*, plays that represent student fops who are socially unsuccessful *because* their academic personas bar them from interacting with the social elite in any meaningful way. Their esoteric rhetoric and stiffness ensure they remain outside of the circle of social success because he cannot adapt to his surroundings. The student fop's problem lies in his inability to read context; in his attempts to mask ignorance with knowledge, adeptness with verbosity, he blinds himself to the cultural codes at work around him. The student fop's context creates the potential for foppishness because he is never in his element. Unlike the function of the city in city comedies and the battlefield in histories, the spaces that are explored in the following chapters of this study, these staged fop-producing academies do not actually take place in an academy, but in other social spaces. The student fop's comedic appeal grows when he inserts himself into various settings, attempting to move beyond the academy to become a lover, gallant, and urban taste-maker. He always fails.

The early modern theatre was often unkind in its representations of

students. Based on the examples of staged students presented here, academic achievement of the scholarly variety often renders a character silly, useless, sexually undesirable, and annoying. As a dramatic archetype, these various fops criticize systems of formal education by insisting they produce awkward, prattling, pretentious buffoons who have few social survival skills. The picture painted on stage of out-of-touch scholars distracted by trifling matters reflects general cultural attitudes toward students, particularly university men, who were often regarded as snobbish or trivial, two dominant characteristics of the fop figure in general. The cultural biases evident in staged and otherwise public portrayals speak to two related, but always classed, fears: that the increasing democratization of formal education threatened traditional hierarchies based on heredity, and that the accessibility of education created a way of getting a leg up on the social and economic ladder newly available to emerging middle classes. The anxiety he creates results from his simultaneous role as mirror and scapegoat for those looking to him as a dissuasive model of a man. Through him, we learn negative and positive reinforcement of our own behavior. In the end, the student fops are schooling us as much as they are being schooled.

CHAPTER 4

“THIS EFFEMINATE BRAT”; FOPPISH SOLDIERS ON THE EARLY MODERN STAGE

During Elizabeth I's reign, England experienced an increased interest in the military and its inner-workings among civilians and soldiers alike. As Simon Barker, Patricia Cahill and other historians have shown, the late-sixteenth century saw barrage of printed material dedicated to martial science, history, and conduct.²¹⁴ This material suggests that new sense of the army as a representative entity of nationalism and a cultural interest in understanding the behavior of men partially responsible for the foreign and domestic affairs of the state developed in the period. Elizabeth I's reign was marked by continuous military involvement with Spain, Ireland, France and other nations.²¹⁵ During these conflicts, the position of the early modern English soldier, and even the soldier's role, was nebulous, partly because the army remained a largely disorganized entity. In some ways, the military was relic of the feudal system that required lords to provide the monarch with knights and other men-at-arms in exchange for their land rights. Soldiers for foreign expeditions were raised on an as-needed basis. While in theory, some Militia Acts passed during Henry VII's and Elizabeth I's

²¹⁴ For a discussion on the emergence of such literature as an indicator of impending nationalism and modernity, see Barker's *War and Nation in the Theatre of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 56-72. For analyses of specific military literature of the period and its impact on martial strategy and public perception of the military, see Cahill's *Unto the Breach: Martial Formations, Historical Trauma, and the Early Modern Stage*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). For a lengthy list of works and authors writing about martial issues in the period, see Adam M. McKeown's *English Mercuries* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2009), 11-12 and 15-20.

²¹⁵ See the following for accounts of military involvement during Elizabeth I's reign: Paul E. J. Hammer's *Elizabeth's Wars* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Wallace T. MacCaffrey's *Elizabeth I: War and Politics 1588-1603* (Princeton University Press, 1992); and Lindsay Boynton's *The Elizabethan Militia 1558-1638* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967).

reigns required all male property owners to keep arms and train, such directives were either ignored or treated as perfunctory and were mostly useless. A national, standing army would not be created in England until during the Civil War, and so the “army” was a sort of mystery in terms of its constitution and function.²¹⁶

The expectations placed on soldiers during both war- and peace-times were also largely undefined, a state that created a certain public interpretability. These men and their lifestyles were rife for criticism and apt for use in cultural debates within wider English society that were played out in printed materials. As Vimala Pasupathi points out, some of the literature produced on the subject of soldiers, especially that which was printed around the time of James I’s ascension to the throne, concerned “the dangers of England’s effeminate passivity and martial laxity.”²¹⁷ At the playhouses,²¹⁸ a similar effeminacy and ennui lead to

²¹⁶ For a comprehensive social history of the army during Elizabeth’s reign and a description of the day-to-day life of Elizabethan soldiers, see C.G. Cruickshank’s *Elizabeth’s Army*, 3rd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968). For an overview of the shifts in the nature of military service in early modern England, see Ian Roy’s chapter “Towards the Standing Army 1485-1660,” (*The Oxford Illustrated History of the British Army*, ed. David Chandler. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) especially pages 34-43. See also William Hunt, “Spectral Origins of the English Revolution: Legitimation Crisis in Early Stuart England” in *Reviving the English Revolution: Reflections and Elaborations on the Work of Christopher Hill*, eds. Geoff Eley and William Hunt (London: Verso, 1988), 305-332.

²¹⁷ “Playing Soldiers: Martial Subjects in Early Modern English Drama, 1590-1660.” (Diss. U of Texas Austin, 2005), 131.

²¹⁸ In addition to Barker’s and Cahill’s contributions to scholarship on drama and early modern English military life and conquest, see Curtis Bright’s *Surveillance: Militarism and Drama in the Elizabethan Era* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1996); Alan Shepard’s *Marlowe’s Soldier’s: Rhetorics of Masculinity in the Age of the Armada* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002); Theodor Meron’s *Bloody Constraint: War and Chivalry in Shakespeare* (Oxford University Press, 1998); Paola Pugliatti’s *Shakespeare and the Just War Tradition* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010); Nina Taunton’s *1590s Drama and Militarism: Portrayals of War in Marlowe, Chapman, and Shakespeare’s Henry V* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2000); and Nick de Somogyi’s *Shakespeare’s Theatre of War* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 1998), which argues that the stage not only reflected but produced attitudes about militarism. The essay collection *Shakespeare and War* Eds. Ros King and Paul J.C. Franssen (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) contains several good pieces on different aspects of representing war and warfare on stage; see especially Ruth Morse’s “Some Social Costs of War” for its historicist reading of how war and its representation may have resonated with those not involved in the fighting. Although not explicitly about drama, Adam M. McKoeown’s *English Mercuries* provides good background on how military culture influenced

the creation of foppish soldier characters. Foppish iterations of the soldier figure appear consistently in the drama of the period, showing up both in plays that celebrate militarism and its attendant stereotypically masculine ideas of heroism and in plays that satirize and treat nervously the new roles that professional soldiers were taking up in social spaces outside of the battlefield.

There are clear patterns in the characterization of soldiers in the plays that participated in some way in the “war fever”²¹⁹ of the 1580s and 90s. These patterns include the expected hyper-masculinized depictions of valiant soldiers, but they also include representations of failed soldiers who are seen as foolish because of their effeminate and clueless behavior.²²⁰ This chapter concerns these staged soldier fop figures as they fit in to the conversation about the cultural places of an increasingly professionalized military and definitions of masculinity within that institution and shows the place of the dramatic fop figure in the military conversation in which the stage participated. It addresses how national anxious attitudes about shifting ideas of soldiership and emerging fears about the effeminization of men came to be popularly represented in individual soldierly characters’ behavior on the early modern English stage.

writers during the period and advocates for an “old historicist” approach to recover a sense that war influenced people’s daily lives.

²¹⁹ Several New Historicist critics have characterized the situation in London in the last two decades of the sixteenth century as being marked by an obsession with England’s military exploits. Alan Shepherd and Patricia Cahill are among these critics.

²²⁰ Certain studies of masculinity and masculine sexuality in early modern English drama have paid particular attention to martial ideas of masculinity that were at work. These include: Mario DiGangi, *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 134-148; Robin Headlam Wells, *Shakespeare on Masculinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), especially Chapter 3 on *Othello* 86-116, and Chapter 4 on *Macbeth*, 117-143; Bruce R. Smith’s *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare’s England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), especially pages 48-64; Smith, *Shakespeare and Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), Chapter 2 on Ideals 39-66 in; and Maurizio Calbi’s *Approximate Bodies: Gender and Power in Early Modern Drama and Anatomy* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 75-82.

I turn to one example of how soldiers were depicted in the literature of the period that contains some popular ideas about the figure and demonstrates how this figure is often rendered foppish. The title given to a 1614 broadside ballad—“A Pleasant Song, made by a Soldier, whofe bringing vp had bin dainty, and partly fed by thofe affections of his unbridled youth, is now beaten with his owne rod, and therefore tearmeth this his repentance, *the fall of his folly*”²²¹ [original emphasis]—suggests it will be a song about a soldier who regrets his unseemly youthful behavior after having seen the light of a disciplined, military lifestyle. What we get, however, is something different that simultaneously lambasts the personal effects of military life and valorizes the soldiers who practices that lifestyle properly. The ballad’s speaker is a young man of “tender age” whose pleasant springtime walk is interrupted by a wailing old soldier he encounters on the roadside. After some coaxing, the soldier agrees to tell his tale. He admits to being his mother’s “softbred” child and that he had few options when she “forsook” him. The title suggests that he had been “dainty,” which is substantiated in the poem with the soldier’s personal, adjectival use of the descriptor, “softbred.” The progression of his personal narrative suggests his daintiness had been detrimental to the development of respectable survival skills that would have allowed him a stable existence. By the old soldier’s own account, it seems a certain wildness in his character was brought on by his mother’s abandonment of him and his resulting un-landed poverty: “I had no land to live upon,/ but [...]’d abroad the worlde so wild.”²²² This description of an

²²¹ Anonymous. London, 1614. STC 22920.7.

²²² Bracketed portion is indecipherable.

aimless youth and his self-identification as “dainty” and “softbred” invites the conclusion that this soldier had been foolish and effeminate in his younger years. He was saved from this lifestyle, it seems, by falling in with “youths of Mars” and joining the army. He describes his martial life as difficult: he is forced to sleep in the thunder, rain, and snow while his “kindred” sleep at home in “stately” beds. His meat is seasoned with his gunpowder and he learns to be a pretty good soldier, keeping his rapier at the ready at all times. The army, in short, beat the fop out of him. He tells the young man that he eventually thrived as a soldier and “lives in this glorious baine,/Until [his] limnis [limbs] were stiff and vain.”

The soldier’s wailing disillusionment does not stem from memories of his difficult life in the army but from the lack of recognition he receives upon his return to life as a civilian. He is virtually shunned by those friends he left behind, who give him “no releefs but words.” Presumably, given the state in which the speaker finds him at the side of the road, the soldier has fallen into abject poverty and is a real example of the “masterless man” that so plagued Elizabeth I during her reign. This soldier’s tale is one that is immediately familiar, even to contemporary readers: veterans return from duty to find a thankless society that downplays their contribution by ignoring their financial needs. What we end up with is a soldier’s disillusionment about his life in the army and deep hurt about his unrecognized contributions. The masculine self that the army cultivated cannot be sustained when the soldier re-enters civilian life.

Failed soldiers, such as the one featured in this ballad, can be considered fop figures because they make ill-considered military decisions based on their

social positions, snobbishness, and adoption of feminine characteristics. These characters do not quite fit the into the masculine paradigms of their circumstance because they behave in ways unfitting of their current location, which is just as often a courtly or domestic space as it is a staged version of the battlefield. In some cases, the foppish soldier fails to live up to his soldierly role in non-martial spaces when he is specifically called upon to represent a soldierly standard of behavior or understanding of his circumstances. Playwrights often represent the character's misunderstanding and/or misappropriation by assigning him effeminate characteristics, which are to be understood as transgressive or delinquent. This chapter considers some of these representations from several plays to show a pattern of foppish soldiers in the drama of the period in order to establish a character history. It begins with a discussion of delinquency and the contagious nature of martial masculine transgression through a discussion of the eponymous character in John Fletcher's tragicomedy *The Humorous Lieutenant* (1618). I consider a version of the foppish soldier in the romantic tradition on the early modern stage by examining Huanebango in George Peele's *The Old Wives Tale* (1595), read the Shakespearean comic soldier of Parolles from *All's Well That Ends Well* (1604) as a version of the braggart soldier, and turn to the Jonsonian brand of topical comedy to examine Captain Bobadil in *Every Man In His Humour* (1598) as an example of an out-of-place soldier fop. The chapter concludes with readings of Shakespeare's *Henry IV Part 1* and (1597) Marlowe's *Tamburlaine Part 2* (1587) that offer insights into how foppish soldiers work within more serious plays not only as satires on antiquated Elizabethan ideas of

the place of the soldier but also as avenues to a larger critique on strict, bounded ideas of masculine heroism.

A foppish soldier's effeminacy on the battlefield simultaneously highlights and questions the hyper-masculine image of the brave Renaissance soldier. The character shares with the more fully-realized Restoration fop not only cowardice in the face of physical threat, but also propensity to misinterpret his surroundings and make mistakes in adhering to a martial code that render him useless. The foppish soldier shares the affected, striving, and effeminate personality of the other fops in this study, but has the unique problem of a propensity to practice in the wrong places what might elsewhere be appropriate behavior. His position is not one of exaggeration as the courtier or student fop's might be, but rather one of misappropriation or lack of appropriation. The foppish soldier does not fulfill his supposedly defining role; he is a delinquent figure because he does not satisfy expectations

Contagious Delinquency and the Masculinity of Soldiers

The foppish soldier provides a good opportunity to show how this project's search for the fop figure fits into discussions on the nature of transgression and delinquency in the period. The soldier fop, and other fops in this study, can be read as a delinquent²²³ figure whose delinquency is defined against pervasive cultural models of acceptable manhood, which for the purposes

²²³ For these ideas about delinquency and its meanings in early modern England, I am indebted to the participants of the 2011 Shakespeare Association of America Seminar, "Delinquent Shakespeares." Comments from Michelle Dowd and Valerie Traub have been particularly useful in formulating my ideas about the circumstantiality of delinquency.

of this chapter on foppish soldier figures, means a violation of obligation or duty. Drawing on Michel de Certeau's theory of "delinquent narrativity," Michelle Dowd argues, "All stories are [...] potentially delinquent, and it is this possibility of narrative disruption and revision that can bring to visibility forms of opposition that are often embedded within more traditional discourses."²²⁴ Thus, delinquent narratives, those stories that lie outside of traditional narrative structures and cultural production, offer a potential alternate mode of analysis of the dominant social paradigm. Looking at fop figures offers a path of inquiry into normative masculinities that plays seem to uphold, especially if we view him as part of a larger social narrative that extends beyond his role within the narrative presented on the page and stage. Those models, however, are circumstantial and constantly shifting. For a character to be considered foppish, he must misapply the situational tenets that govern male behavior within a particular context. In other words, he may indeed be displaying masculine qualities but he is not doing so in the right place at the right time. His crime is bad mimesis that results from a skewed sense of appropriateness in relationship with temporality and location. Soldiers are foppish when they do not act according to soldierly standards of behavior.

Early modern writers of military literature imparted many ideas about codes for martial masculine conduct. In defining the characteristics that a good army officer should possess, T. Digges (1579) cites religiousness, temperance, sobriety, wisdom, valiance, liberality, courteousness, eloquence, and a good

²²⁴ "Delinquent Pedigrees: Revision, Lineage, and Spatial Rhetoric in *The Duchess of Malfi*." *English Literary Renaissance*. 39.3(2009): 512.

reputation.²²⁵ In *A Pathway to Military Practice* (1587), Barnabe Rich states that an officer should be magnanimous, gracious, easy to speak with, constant in his counsel, a quick decision-maker, and able to be discreet.²²⁶ Critics have argued that few early modern works contained explicit definitions of masculinity or its qualities.²²⁷ Some contemporary scholarship on martial masculinity, however, does suggest some other characteristics that may be added to these lists. Jennifer Low, for example, argues that masculinity was in some ways defined by the connection between fighting, sovereign service, and heroism, ideas that she claims helped to stabilize volatile notions of gender. She also shows how men of different social ranks adhered to different masculine codes of conduct and that these notions were heavily influenced by the opinions and actions of other men, proving that concepts of masculinity were not universal.²²⁸ In his study on Marlowe's soldiers and their brands of masculinity, Alan Shepard similarly argues that martial masculinity is a particularly performative gender identity, constantly in flux and circumstantially contingent.²²⁹ Shepard's argument depends on his character subjects' subversion of what he refers to a "code of epic masculinity,"²³⁰ which relies upon ideas of martial honor. Similarly, Cahill makes the connection between soldiers' masculine identity and traditional chivalric codes.²³¹

²²⁵ *An Arithmetical Military Treatise*, 138. Cited in Cruickshank, 34.

²²⁶ Rich, 3. Cited in Cruickshank, 34.

²²⁷ See Shepard, *Meanings*, 7-8.

²²⁸ *Manhood and the Duel: Masculinity in Early Modern Drama and Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 2-5.

²²⁹ *Marlowe's Soldiers*, especially 59-61. In *Unto the Breach*, Cahill also discusses the vulnerability of solid notions of manhood in the period. See especially pages 35, 44, and 117.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 162.

²³¹ Cahill, 101.

Modern critics have also pointed to particular behaviors that were acknowledged as effeminate in the martial sphere. Referencing Thomas Proctor's *Of Knowledge and Conduct of Warres* (1578), Cahill shows the perceived danger of soldiers participating in emasculating activities, including trifling with delicate foods and flamboyant fashions.²³² Barker draws on what he deems timeless notions of martial conduct to argue that early modern soldiers were seen as appropriately masculine only when they were dressed in their uniforms without adornment.²³³ Shepard²³⁴ and Rory Rapple²³⁵ point out the general martial disdain for complicated, overwrought rhetoric. A good, masculine soldier, it seems, was a temperate eater, a sober dresser, and a plain speaker. The oft-staged soldier fop stands in opposition to some of these cultural expectations, often because he finds himself in the wrong place at the wrong time.

On stage, geography becomes a significant problem for the foppish soldier: in certain plays, he is mislocated, displaced resident of some other place or time (see the discussion of Jonson's Captain Bobadil below). The old soldier featured in the ballad I cite above, for example, is discovered as a beggar in the woods, a soldier without a battlefield, a displaced person without the army as a home. His ex-soldier-as-vagabond schtick becomes a trope, both in the culture and on the stage. In the final decade of the sixteenth century, the Privy Council passed several laws that laid out severe punishments for beggars posing as

²³² Ibid., 44.

²³³ Barker, 14.

²³⁴ Alan Shepard, 69-70.

²³⁵ *Martial Power and Elizabethan Political Culture: Military Men in England and Ireland, 1558-1594* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 64 and 76.

veterans, many of whom were attempting to collect soldiers' meagre benefits.²³⁶

The necessity of such legislation, however, speaks to the amount of actual veterans who would have had to result to a vagabond lifestyle during peacetime or after they had otherwise been dismissed from service. In the theatres, this social problem was parodied in such plays as Middleton and Rowley's *Wit at Several Weapons* (1617?) in which Sir Ruinous Gentry disguises himself as a "wounded soldier" and begs for money,²³⁷ Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour* (1598), in which Brainworm "writhen[s] himself, into the habit of one of your poor Infantry, your decayed, ruinous, worm-eaten gentlemen of the round... one of the Reformados" (III.v.8-14),²³⁸ and Middleton and Dekker's *The Roaring Girl* (1611) when Trapdoor appears "like a poor soldier" with his sidekick Tearcat "all tatters" beg the foppish Jack Dapper for money. The proto-professionalism of English soldiers produces thratetre that represents a national anxiety surrounding idle soldiers. Underlying this social problem is the real question of what a hired soldier is to do if there is no martialwork in which he is to be employed. The practical answer, of course, is that he will enter other places of employment or bring his idleness into other spaces, disrupting the everyday business of those institutions.

The early moderns, it seems, viewed a soldier as useless if there are no wars in which he must take part or if he is called from the battlefield to attend to non-martial tasks that he cannot perform. Such futility, it was viewed, breeds

²³⁶ Shepard, 2.

²³⁷ Ed. Michael Dobson. *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

²³⁸ Ed. G.A. Wilkes. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

softness in men who are meant to be hard. Richard as the Duke of Gloucester in *Richard the III* expresses anxiety about this very issue just after he finishes telling us of winter and discontent. He says of War, “And now—instead of mounting barbèd steeds/ To fight the souls of fearful adversaries—/ He [War] capers nimbly in a ladies chamber/ To the lascivious pleasing of a lute” (I.i.10-13).²³⁹ Richard worries that bravery and loyalty—important characteristics of successful soldiers—disappear with the end of the battle. Soldiers who have no soldiering to do will be unready for the next battle, having withered away their soldierly bodies and resoluteness on “capering” with women and indulging in what seems very close to this project’s definition of foppery. The soldiers’ behaviors in these moments of idleness interest me. Richard’s sense that such frolicking corrupts soldiers’ masculine natures is not unique to the upstart King. As with the old soldier in the above-cited broadside ballad, military training depends upon men’s changeability, and foppishness, it seems, is a disease that many soldiers can catch. Exploring the causes and effects of this corruption is the project of this chapter.

The dramatic representation of foppishness as contagious in the martial sphere consistently appears throughout the early modern period, and is perhaps best exemplified in John Fletcher’s little-studied *The Humourous Lieutenant* (1618). The Lieutenant’s plot, positioned as secondary to the main love plot while providing the play’s martial and comic intrigue, focuses on his martial performance in the battlefield scenes and his amorous performance at court. Though sick, the Humourous Lieutenant (he is never given another name) is sent out to lead in battle because, “There fights no braver souldier under the Sun”

²³⁹ Ed. James R. Seimon (London: Arden Shakespeare, Methuen Drama, 2009).

(I.i.362).²⁴⁰ When the Lieutenant performs, he performs well, but foppishness and effeminacy lurk in his changeable and easily distracted character. This play is a fine example of how the fop's non-martial indulgences threaten military success.

The Lieutenant's chief foppish characteristic is his intemperate lust for women, a characteristic shared by other soldiers discussed in this chapter and some Restoration-era fops whose voracious sexual appetites render them effeminate among their male peers. The King, *The Humorous Lieutenant's* arbiter of values, chiefly esteems constancy and focus, and is especially stringent about his soldiers avoiding lustful distraction (though he himself proves lustful and distracted). Leontius, an experienced soldier and surrogate voice of the King, warns young soldiers against spending too much time with women. He claims that though fraternizing with them is "intic[ing]" but that women "Spoils all our trade" (I.i.341, 344). In the martial sphere, women and the feelings of love and lust they induce are dangerous because they distract soldiers from martial tasks and make them "soft" and effeminate. Mark Breitenberg points out a similar strand of thought in his discussion of Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621). Burton's denouncement of sodomy is similar to his denouncement of inordinate sexual desire for women, which "effeminates men, leading to their adoption of women's apparel, gestures and behavior."²⁴¹ Leontius makes clear that the Lieutenant is a lothario and a whoremonger, and that he has the pox to

²⁴⁰ All citations of the play are taken from Philip Oxley's edition for the Renaissance Imagination series (Vol. 24. New York: Garland, 1987).

²⁴¹ *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 58.

prove it. He jeopardizes his entire company of men because he lacks the valued qualities of constancy and sexual temperance. In the play's major comic twist, the Lieutenant's eponymous humoral changes result directly from his indulgent tendencies with women, since his venereal sickness fuels his martial prowess.

The play connects sickness and sexual intemperance in an unexpected way. The Lieutenant's bravery only lasts while he is sick and pocky, for when he is healed, fighting "Shews as a mad a thing to [him] to see [soldiers] scuffle,/ And kill one another foolishly for honour,/ As was to [them], to see [him] play the coxcomb" (III.iii.23-26). After being medically treated for battle wounds, the Lieutenant's pox disappears and he refuses to fight. So, in desperate need of the Lieutenant's martial expertise, Leontius concocts a plan to make him believe he is sick, and the Lieutenant returns to head the army and proves himself brave. Sickness becomes a physical marker of undutiful lust; the Lieutenant's syphilitic body contrasts "emerging rhetoric that figures corporeal perfection as evidence of individual loyalty and national strength."²⁴² However, if we take the Lieutenant's pocky body as a symbol of his defiance of martial rules, that his sickness makes him perform bravely as a soldier shows the arbitrariness of such rules. If he is a delinquent fop because he disregards the King's directives to stay away from women, then his very delinquency works to subvert the King's authority because the Lieutenant is a successful soldier, winning not only personal glory and reputation, but glory and safety for the Crown as well. The Lieutenant's diseased state—a condition that could befall any soldier should he defy orders—offers a good example of how foppish characters complicate cultural ideas about

²⁴² Pasupathi, 115.

appropriate masculine behavior. Clearly, restricting soldiers' access to women in the army's best interest, but the Lieutenant proves an exception, drawing his strength from promiscuity. In him, one effeminate characteristic breeds another important masculine one; these gendered selves are not exclusive, but codependent. What makes the Lieutenant such a compelling example of the foppish soldier is that his foppishness is explicitly contingent on his circumstances: he is foppish at court among women, but he is masculine and brave on the battlefield. His soldiership, however, always functions as his main identifier.

The Tradition of the Foppish Soldier

The humorous lieutenant and other foppish soldiers are part of a fop tradition in that they are figures of ridicule in comedies that extol the virtues of a mannered society. Foppish soldier characters belong to a tradition of the braggart soldier, or *Miles Gloriosus*, that has long been noticed in the scholarship of the early modern theatre, especially in relation to Falstaff.²⁴³ The character has roots in Greek comedies that feature soldiers who are untruthful about their battlefield accomplishments; but, as Daniel C. Boughner points out, these Greek predecessors have “no character for wit” like their later iterations in Plautine and

²⁴³ Though it is an older study, Daniel C. Boughner's *The Braggart in Renaissance Comedy: A Study in Comparative Drama from Aristophanes to Shakespeare* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1954) is an excellent resource in tracing both the character type and the scholarship about it. For broader studies of the influence of Italian theater traditions on the English stage that include discussions of the Capitano and the braggart soldier, see Leo Salingar's *Shakespeare and the Traditions of Comedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), especially Chapters 3-5, and Robert S. Miola's *Shakespeare and Classical Comedy: The Influence of Plautus and Terence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

Terentian comedy.²⁴⁴ Established as an archetype in New Roman Comedy and appropriated endlessly by English and continental playwrights, the Miles Gloriosus is a ridiculous soldier whose exaggerations of his feats of battlefield bravery is accompanied by a gluttonous appetite for vice in the form of food, wine, and women. His dramatic function is often to complicate a love plot by standing in the way as an inadequate but persistent suitor. In Roman comedies, other characters often mock him for his coarseness or tastelessness and offers an opportunity for social satire.²⁴⁵ In the *commedia dell' arte*, Miles Gloriosus becomes the capitano, like Capitano Spavento (translated as “Captain Scare”), who elaborates the character’s boasts and makes him more topical. Traces of the braggart soldier can be seen in medieval morality and folk plays. The titular character in Nicolas Udall’s 1553 *Ralph Roister Doister*, for example, embodies this character type. On the English Renaissance stage, the soldier fop, like the Miles Gloriosus and other traditional soldier characters, brags about his martial and romantic conquests. By the end of these dramas, however, “the braggart’s world collapses, not with a huge bang but with a snicker.”²⁴⁶ This snicker is key to reading the downfall of the English soldier characters as foppish; his ruin must be comedic rather than tragic.

The comedic function of the foppish soldier is always to send up cowardice and effeminacy. However, the character type can play a role in questioning the tropes of genre as well. Huanebango, a character from Peele’s

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 3.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 20.

²⁴⁶ Eugene M. Waith, “Mad Lovers, Vainglorious Soldiers” *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama* (27(1984), 14).

The Old Wives Tale, which was printed in 1595, but probably written between 1588 and 1594, acts as an example; he plays a major role in the play's satirical critique of the chivalric romance.²⁴⁷ Listed as "A Braggart Soldier" in the *Dramatis Personae*, Huanebango remains true to the archetype in most of his behavior. As Frank S. Hook, the editor of the 1970 Yale edition of the play, puts it, "his ranting, his rhetoric, his absurd weapon, his cowardice, his grandiose names for his ancestors" all belie his Plautine roots.²⁴⁸ The character steeped in a few traditions; his precedents clearly include English courtly knights from the romances, Cervantesian idealistic Spanish knights and lovers, and what Hook identifies as the "huffing character" from ritual St. George plays.²⁴⁹

The Old Wives Tale is a hodgepodge of folktales woven together to create a play-within-a-play; its comedy relies very much on antiquated forms and well-known stories. Given the traditions within which the play works, knighthood can be read as soldiership. Huanebango's tale clearly satirizes the romances in which knights and their feats of great bravery in the name of love played such an integral part. In the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, critical discussion of Huanebango revolved around identifying him as a portrait of poet and writer Gabriel Harvey as a way of dating the play, partly because Huanebango is bombastic and full of hot air.²⁵⁰ As a braggart soldier/knight, Huanebango

²⁴⁷ Patricia Binnie, the most recent editor of the play, makes this assumption in dating the play in the introduction to the edition (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), 5.

²⁴⁸ *The Old Wives Tale* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 335. The "absurd weapon" to which Hook refers is Huanebango's huge two-handed sword, which Hook claims would have seemed antiquated in the historical context of the play and at the playhouse.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 335. Though Hook seems doubtful of this dating, E.K. Chambers dates St. George's plays in the late part of the sixteenth century.

²⁵⁰ Harvey, a university poet and friend of Sydney's who claimed to have invented the English hexameter, (Hook, 310) and his brother quarreled publicly with John Lyly between 1589 and 1591

certainly lives up to his reputation via his inflated sense of his own, well, reputation. He brags to Corebus the clown, his questing companion, as he warns a competitor off vying for the hand of the maid Delia whom he seeks to win. He says: “Forget her, whom none must inherit but he that can monsters tame, labours achieve, riddles absolve, loose enchantments, murder magic, and kill conjuring: and that is the great and mighty Huanebango” (280-283).²⁵¹ These lines exemplify his foppishly characteristic bombastic rhetorical style, a style that is criticized by others in the play. Corebus claims that Huanenabango’s over-the-top rhetorical style “makes [Corebus] blind and deaf at once” (343-44), a metaphor that resonates sharply given the knight’s and the clown’s fates in the play. Foppish rhetorical excess continues with Haunebango’s pretentious use of bad Latin as he claims three genders: “*Meus, mea, meum, in contemptum, omnium, grammaticorum*” (293-94). The three gendered uses of “mine” to possess Delia is pompous; so is his appeal to Latin grammarians because it reads as an attempt to show off his learnedness.²⁵²

The foppish knight is also a key element in the play’s parodical take on traditional courtship in the romantic tradition. In a confusing and abrupt turn typical of a play that contains a barrage of characters and sub-plots based on folktales, Huanebango’s quest plot gives way to a mismatched courting plot. His soldiering skills are hardly even tested as he “falleth down” almost immediately

and were the topic of satirical jabs from Thomas Nashe and Robert Green later in the 1590s. The critical suggestion comes from a specific hexameter spoken by Huanebango (line 683) that references Harvey’s *Encomium Lauri*.

²⁵¹ All citations of the play are taken from Patricia Binnie’s Revels Series 1980 edition (Manchester University Press). Only line numbers are provided because the edition is not divided into Acts and scenes.

²⁵² See Mary Ellen Lamb’s discussion of folk knowledge versus learned knowledge in the play: “*Old Wives’ Tale*, George Peele and Narrative Abjection” *Critical Survey* 14:1(2002): 28.

upon entering Sacrapant's lair, is deafened and carried off stage (582-587). The quickness with which the braggart soldier is defeated provides the comedy, but the joke is also on the audience (both the playhouse viewers and the frame story viewers who occupy the stage space). We anticipate seeing Huanebango fail miserably in battle based on stereotypical expectations, but the play denies that moment here, minimizing his humiliation in this episode. The questing knight turns exclusively into a lover and suffers as such as an alternative sanction for his foppish behavior.

The Old Wives Tale punishes the would-be knight's by matching him with a cursed woman, a fitting sentence for his amorous exaggerations, but an unsatisfactory one for his missteps as a soldier. After Sacrapant's easy victory, the conjurer commands Furies to carry off the deafened Huanebango and his servant and drop them at a magical well. The braggart's deafness, however, makes the severity of this punishment suspect. His deafness insures his sustained ignorance to his own inanity because he cannot hear others' ridicule, while those around him must continue to suffer at the hands of his hubris and prating. More interestingly, however, is that he cannot hear the railings of Zantippa, the shrewish maid he encounters at the well. Soon smitten by her because of a combination of her beauty and his deaf ignorance, he proposes marriage, which she accepts because she seeks a husband whom she can dominate. Of course, Huanebango's ignorance, which has been magnified by his sudden deafness, also invites cuckolding, and Zantippa seems to plan to do just that, telling him "cuckold be your destiny" (713). This is the moment that provides the foppish

soldier with his requisite humiliation, though his dishonor is domestic rather than martial in nature.

Mild punishment such as Huanebango's is often a means of recourse to the restoration of social order in comedies. Critics have found *The Old Wives Tale* to be no exception. What remains in question is exactly what "order" means in this play. The conventions of comedy that these critical viewpoints express may be easily and obviously applied to the play's main action, with the victory of Eumenides over the evil conjurer and the morally right knight's achievement of his beloved's hand. The application of the idea that comedic genre working up to restoration and purging²⁵³ to Huanebango's narrative proves rather complicated. After all, as A.R. Braunmuller points out in his Twayne's study on Peele, "A Huanebango who could hear Zantippa... do[es] not fit the ending of *The Old Wives Tale*."²⁵⁴ Like so many foppish soldiers, including Parolles and Bobadil examined below, Huanebango cannot be restored to his former self because his falseness represents a foppish disease that needs purging. His punishment must remain in tact so that the true tenets of knighthood can be clarified. Because peace has been restored with the expulsion of Sacrapant, a martial punishment for this wayward knight would not reflect the new social paradigm. Instead, the

²⁵³ In the introduction to the Revels edition, Patricia Binnie asserts that because of its melding of fairytale and more sophisticated literary genres, Peele's play has, "the power to release and restore" (29). Speaking of Tudor comedy generally in "'Hear my Tale or Kiss my Tail!' *The Old Wife's Tale, Gammer Gurton's Needle*, and the Popular Cultures of Tudor Comedy," (*The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Literature 1485-1603*. Eds. Mike Pincombe and Cathy Shrank. Oxford University Press, 2009), Andrew Hiscock asserts that "comedy as a comforting 'evacuation' recurs as a theme" (745) and that "in Tudor times comedy was viewed as a therapeutic force at work on the collective mind" (747).

²⁵⁴ *George Peele* (Boston: Twayne, 1983), 56.

foppish soldier is transformed into foppish husband so that his punishment can be guaranteed in a peaceful, and therefore more domestic, realm.

Parolles from Shakespeare's *All's Well That Ends Well*, another foppish soldier figure who greatly resembles the Miles Gloriosus, is punished differently, in a way that brings together his martial and courtly personas. He is a different kind of fop, one who has wit and even a certain brand of self-awareness. Like the beloved Falstaff, who makes no effort to hide his martial cowardice at the end of *Henry IV Part 1*, Parolles embraces his own foppish flaws. The Second Lord Dumaine, one of the chief perpetrators of the interrogation that is Parolles's undoing, calls attention to this self-awareness, saying, "Is it possible he should know what he is, and be that he is?" (IV.i.35-6).²⁵⁵ Parolles's own actions suggest a self-awareness of himself as a courtly parasite and fake soldier. He tells Lafew that he is companion, "To any count, to all counts: to what is a man" (II.iii.184), indicating that he has no real loyalty at court and will follow those that can help him. He readily exposes himself to the audience as a coward in Act IV, scene 1, when he contemplates plans of how he will spin his tale about not recovering his drum.

Parolles exemplifies the excess that is common and essential to the foppish character type. He is a loquacious braggart about his martial and sexual conquests, claiming in public to have much military experience and expertise and a lot of luck with women. He uses rich and often quite beautiful speech, as displayed in the sonnet he writes for Bertram to give to Diana. Real, experienced

²⁵⁵ All references from *All's Well* are taken from the Arden edition (Ed. David Scott Kastan. Walton-on-Thames: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 2002.)

courtly characters, such as Lafew, the Countess, and the Lords Dumaine, however, see through his rhetoric and count him a prattling knave. He is sartorially extravagant as well. As a braggart soldier in the French court, he strives to fit in by being fashionable and adopting courtly dress, but he fails miserably and appears clownish instead. Lafew, in one of his many biting assessments of the captain, questions his style choices: “Why dost thou garter up thy arms a’this fashion? Dost make hose of thy sleeves? Do other servants so?” (II.iii.229-231). Lafew refers to the strange way that Parolles wears clothing meant for his lower body (“garters”) on his upper body, calling attention to the nontraditional and ostentatious way he chooses to dress. Insistent on creating social distance between himself—a true courtier—and Parolles—a pretender—Lafew asks if other servants wear this fashion, calling attention to the chasm between the perception of himself as the “real deal” and Parolles as a parasitical fake.

The boundary between the two types, however, gets blurred. Craig Dionne claims that when it came to fashion, social obfuscation was a real possibility for any courtier because he was supposed to at once fit in and push the boundaries; if he overstepped these boundaries, his social-climbing intentions become legible. According to Dionne, we can read, “[Courtiers’] wayward fashion as sign for their errant allegiance and class aspirations,” which allows us to understand that “The braggadocio required to pull off the look of flamboyant luxuriousness misfires in Parolles, and his motley becomes a sad picture of a lout

who doesn't really know whom to please or how to fit in."²⁵⁶ Here, then, is where Parolles's misreading happens. He tries too hard to be a courtier through his fashion choices, and so makes himself an outsider. It is precisely because he identifies himself as a soldier first that he cannot indoctrinate himself into the ways of the court.

Parolles's questionable style choices connect not only with his foppish upstart nature as a courtier but also with his self-created image as a soldier. The many scarves that Parolles famously wears signal his excessive pride in his soldiership and martial abilities.²⁵⁷ Outward markers of his boastfulness, the scarves surreptitiously reveal his true nature to the observant courtier they stand to impress. Lafew offers this assessment of them: "I did think thee, for two ordinaries, to be a pretty wise fellow. Thou didst make tolerable vent of thy travel; it might pass; yet the scarfs and bannerets about thee did manifoldly dissuade me from believing thee a vessel of too great a burden" (II.iii.190-193). The scarves, which are supposed to signal Parolles's success, here lead Lafew to question his authenticity. It seems Lafew was even ready to judge Parolles positively based on his mildly entertaining story about his travels, but the scarves and their excessive number tipped him off that the Captain was not an important personality with whom he should bother. The scarves also become an important symbol of Parolles's empty version of soldiership. During the interrogation scene, the Second Lord Dumaine observes that Parolles "had the whole theoretic of war in the

²⁵⁶ "Playing It Accordingly: Parolles and Shakespeare's Knee-crooking Knaves." *All's Well, That Ends Well: New Critical Essays*. Ed. Gary Waller (New York: Routledge, 2007), 225.

²⁵⁷ See Fraser's note to II.iii.192 for an explanation of Parolles's scarves as denotations of military men.

knot of his scarf” (IV.iii.119) and later, the Interpreter observes, “You are undone, Captain, all but your scarf; that has a knot on’t yet” (IV.iii.270-1). The military scarf and the knot stand in for false martial knowledge and empty claims, respectively. The play makes possible the exposure of Parolles as a rogue, a liar, a coward, and a traitor by calling attention to the futility of affected apparel.

Parolles is turned beggar after a rather cruel quasi-torture scene that exposes his roguery, but the “problem” of this play is that he does not seem to be the only one who deserves punishment for not adhering to the courtly or martial codes of masculine conduct. By the rules of proper manly, soldierly behavior, expressly related to him by the King in Act I, scene ii, Bertram also fails as a man. Much has been made of Parolles’s bad influence on Bertram, but, as Jules Rothman argues, Bertram actually pays very little mind to what Parolles says, relying on his own immature bitterness and too-quick reactions to guide his decisions.²⁵⁸ Given that Bertram is expressly not entirely redeemed through his half-hearted and belated devotion to his marriage, it is difficult to read Parolles, this play’s foppish soldier, as a foil against which a braver hero’s masculinity can be measured. Instead, Parolles acts as a mirror to Bertram that forces recognition of the young man’s own roguery. The difference in these characters and their fates lies merely in their social status, and the increased gap we see between Bertram the Prince and Parolles the beggar at the end of the play helps us to assess whether there is justice in social privilege. Parolles the soldier is punished in a military camp during a cruel interrogation scene, while Bertram the philandering, unfocused soldier looks on. Similarly, Parolles the would-be

²⁵⁸ “A Vindication of Parolles” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 32 (1972): 183-196.

courtier is punished by turning poor beggar deprived of courtly privilege back in France, while still-reluctant and untruthful Bertram is welcomed and encouraged back into the folds of the court. The presence of the foppish, cowardly Parolles and Bertram's loyalty to him do little to quell the sense of corruption brought into the French court by a foppish, flamboyant, bragging soldier.

Parolles's dual role of courtier and soldier speaks to a common theme among foppish soldier types: their foppishness and effeminacy is heavily contingent on their environmental contexts. Their violations of codes of masculine conduct on the battlefield are often carried over into other spaces. Captain Bobadil from Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour* is another example of the braggart soldier who occupies a non-martial space. Unlike Parolles, however, he never has the chance to exhibit his "bravery" on the battlefield. Bobadil is a soldier out of place. He tries to use his reputation as a soldier in the city to gain the good graces of witty, urban gallant figures. Though he feigns reserve at first, he eventually extols his martial skills using grandiose rhetoric and exaggerated cockiness. It becomes clear as the play progresses that he purposefully affects modesty in the company of the play's city gallants, but this quickly gives way to full-blown bragging. When goaded by young Knowell to describe his martial skill, Bobadil answers:

Were I known to Her Majesty, and the Lords (observe me) I would undertake (upon this poor head and life) for the public benefit of the state, not only to spare the entire lives of her subjects in general, but to save the one half, nay, three parts of her yearly charge, in holding war, and against the enemy soever. (IV.vii.56-61)²⁵⁹

²⁵⁹ All citations for *Every Man in his Humour* are from the Oxford Series edition (Ed. G.A. Wilkes. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

His speech contains the soldierly discourse of self-sacrifice for the greater good, indeed, for the good of the “state.” Bobadil casts himself as a brave soldier whose manliness supersedes others’ because of the sheer numbers he can single-handedly fight. Even as the action of the play deflates Bobadil’s bravado when, just a few lines later, he refuses to draw on Downright and is beaten by him, he soldiers on in his pretensions, claiming that martial law prevents him from fighting in peacetime. He seeks to protect his carefully crafted and affected soldierly reputation that has allowed him to gain access to the non-martial social sphere of the city.

Bobadil’s affectation extends beyond his martial abilities to include his crafting of his reputation in according to what he perceives to be the social values at work in the world of the play, which marks him as a fop. From his very description in the “Persons of the Play” as “a Paul’s-man,”²⁶⁰ we can take that there is a vanity to him that extends beyond unsubstantiated claims of his success in the field. He enacts certain behaviors in hopes that they will make him a gallant like Knowell or Wellbred. He strives to fit the fashion of the times, answering Matthew’s rather homoerotic compliment about his boot becoming his leg with, “So, so, it’s the fashion gentlemen now use” (I.v.68). Bobadil’s ridiculous devotion to the benefits of tobacco, on which he pontificates at length in III.v, also marks his foppishness because he obviously falls unblinkingly into trends. Tobacco usage would have had special resonances in a theatre that often

²⁶⁰ “Paul’s men” were gallants who trolled the center aisle at St. Paul’s while gossiping and flaunting their fashionable styles.

ridiculed the practice as decadent and foolish.²⁶¹ All of these interests go against the soldierly ways he purports to embody, but his military experience and lack of genteel manners also disallow him participation in the fashionable society of the city. He is, as Kate Chedzoy has claimed, a transient, vagrant soldier, a “socially dislocated man who has dropped out of the mode of masculinity proper to his class.”²⁶² This status pushes Bobadil outside of the domestic masculine paradigm valued by the main plot of this essentially domestic comedy. If we read Bobadil and his character type in this way, then peacetime English soldiers are always already pushed out of certain masculine modes, those that value children and wives as markers of manhood. In this play and in others like *Tamburlaine*, which I discuss later in this chapter, the soldier’s homosocial lifestyle pushes out the possibility that a man in that role can fully participate in these heterosocial practices.

The Foppish Soldier’s E(A)ffects on History

As Bobadil, Parolles, and Huanebango’s incompetency as soldiers demonstrate, fops are not the stuff of battlefields nor history plays; generically, they are comic figures. So what can we make of the fop’s appearance in a history play as a dainty Lord on the battlefield of a very real, chronicled conflict in *Henry IV Part I*? Or his presence as a wayward son amongst the fierce warriors of storied *Tamburlaine*’s army? When fops show up in history plays, the

²⁶¹ Jonson seems to have been particularly fond of using tobacco to indicate his characters’ foppish affectations and obsessions with fashion. Sogliardo in *Every Man out of His Humour*, the 1599 follow-up to this play, displays the best example of this behavior.

²⁶² “Households” *Ben Jonson in Context* Ed. Julie Sanders (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 256.

implications of their contagious foppish disease are similarly threatening, though the threat they pose has a wider reach given the project of the genre. Specifically, the inclusion of the soldier fop in historical drama reveals martial ideas of masculinity as unstable because they are restrictive and forces us to question masculine values on a nationalized, English scale. In considering these plays' participation in the building of an historical narrative, the queerness of the fop figure in them may be tied to the nature of historical account and its dissemination on the early modern English stage. In a thorough discussion of historical culture and historical consciousness during the Elizabethan period, Brian Walsh asserts that "feelings of loss [...] permeate the historical culture of sixteenth-century England [and a] heightened sensitivity emerged to the break between the past and the present."²⁶³ This notion of history places the producers and consumers of historical accounts in positions distinct from the predecessors about whom they read or hear, but it also brings together those contemporary publics as a definitive "us." Thus, such an understanding of history becomes important in creating a sense of the nation,²⁶⁴ a concept that was emerging in England under Elizabeth. History plays of the late 1580s and 1590s, which were wildly popular, both reflect and participate in creating this simultaneous need to differentiate contemporary culture from its past while preserving versions of it that serve the political present.

²⁶³ *Shakespeare, the Queen's Men, and the Elizabethan Performance of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 10. Walsh clear delineation between historical culture and historical consciousness and the concepts' particular relevance to the historical work of the theater is worth look (13-18). This distinction helped me to understand the implications of the emergence of this genre for the increasingly nationalized notions of "England."

²⁶⁴ See Nicholas Grene's *Shakespeare's Serial History Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), especially Chapter 2, "Staging the National Epic," for a good overview of how early modern senses of history contributed to "The romantic conception of the nation" (31).

Many characters in history plays are, of course, narrativized versions of historical figures. The foppish soldier figure in these plays, however, have no direct historical referents; they are marginal, secondary characters who take up relatively little space in the plays in which they appear and are entirely created for the stage. Even Calyphas, Tamburlaine's son who I will discuss later in this section, is a fictional third offspring, nonexistent in chronicles of the fierce Eastern leader whose two—not three—historical sons squandered his empire by battling against each other. The addition of these characters work to create the sense of “presentness” that Walsh describes as being part of all historical narratives.²⁶⁵ Foppish soldiers are decidedly of their time; that is, they are contemporary insertions into stories from the past. The concerns that these characters represent—concerns about the professionalization of the soldier, pervasive effeminacy, and social affectation that threatens an established hierarchy—are early modern concerns, despite the historical time periods in which they are represented. They are, in short, anachronisms. In this way, the foppish soldier is akin to clown figures whose jests and observations are often topical to an early modern audience. Phyllis Rackin argues that Shakespeare's clown figures produce an “alienation effect” because they are anachronistic in their speech patterns and jokes,²⁶⁶ an effect that Walsh claims “interrupts the representation of the past-ness of the past” in history plays.²⁶⁷ The resulting

²⁶⁵ Walsh, 21.

²⁶⁶ *Stages of History: Shakespeare's English Chronicles* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 94.

²⁶⁷ Walsh, 55.

“rupture”²⁶⁸ of history is fundamental to the project of the history play, which, as we have seen, strives to create a shared sense of contemporary identity by looking to the past. Already transgressive in his historical mislocation, foppish soldiers don’t belong in these plays, making their behaviors especially susceptible to scrutiny, but also especially susceptible to recognition by an audience.

In *Henry IV Part 1*, Shakespeare’s “popinjay” (I.iii.50) or “certain lord” (I.iii.33) who appears only in historical account within the play itself (the audience never sees him) functions to create this rupture through his offensive presence on the freshly-trodden battlefield. At the level of plot, the “certain lord” sets into motion dissonance with the Crown, inspiring Hotspur to refuse Henry IV his prisoners and prompting the would-be English hero to become rebel. On a thematic level, the popinjay provokes inquiry into the role of the soldier and the characteristics he must possess. The importance of the popinjay character in the play and the reaction that he garners lies in his affectation of courtly manners in an inappropriate place. Mimicry as a theme runs throughout *Henry IV Part 1* and is an oft-adopted practice of fop characters. In fact, I would claim that behavioral mimicry is the defining characteristic of the Renaissance stage fop of any type. It is important to distinguish between mimicry and playacting, especially given the theater’s inherently performative nature and the various metatheatrical moments that promote and celebrate acting in *Henry IV Part 1*.²⁶⁹ Foppish mimicry is

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 18.

²⁶⁹ In particular, I am thinking of Hal’s speech in I.ii.183-207 and the Falstaff and Hal’s role reversal scene in the tavern in II.iv.381-468. There are many other instances of conscience performance in this play. For a more thorough discussion, see David Scott Kastan’s introduction to the 2002 Arden edition (Walton-on-Thames: Thomas Nelson and Sons), 62-69. Interestingly, Kastan claims that Hotspur himself “counterfeits” the “certain lord” when he gives an account of his speech in I.iii (63).

misguided affectation, a taking up of styles, manners, and behaviors in order pass as a certain type of man with cultural capital, however a specific play may define it.²⁷⁰ The performative element that connects these two kinds of affectation—mimicry and playacting—however, cannot be ignored, nor can the connection between cultural performances deemed untruthful, such as those the fop participates in, and the theater itself as a performative institution. But foppish mimicry is its own brand of performance; what makes it a particularly undesirable quality is the striving effort that is always apparent in it: it is a performance that is not coded as such by the performer. Hotspur has a particular distaste for this kind of affectation.

Before looking closely at the description of the popinjay in Act I, scene iii, an examination of Hotspur's potent aversion to affectation can help us to understand just why the foppish character enrages him so. As things are looking promising for young Henry Percy and his rebellious camp in the play, we are invited into an *in media res* conversation between Hotspur, Worcester, and the Douglas. There is a tone of collegiality and respect in these lines, the first 12 of Act IV, scene i, as Hotspur agrees with Douglas's opinion on something (we are not privy as to what) and praises the Scot's efforts, being careful to couch his appraisal by eschewing flattery: "By God, I cannot flatter. I do defy/ The tongues of soothers" (IV.i.6-7).²⁷¹ In other rails against flattery and affectation, the young Percy mocks Hal for being a fake soldier, calling him "that same sword-and-

²⁷⁰ I draw here on Adam Zucker's concept of the "social logic" of plays, which contends that what is valued in a the hierarchical social system shifts from play to play. See "The Social Logic of Ben Jonson's *Epicoene*" *Renaissance Drama*. 33(2004): 37-62, and *The Places of Wit in Early Modern English Comedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

²⁷¹ All citations of the play are from Kastan's 2002 edition.

buckler Prince of Wales” (I.iii.228). As David Scott Kastan has noted, the sword and buckler would have been out of fashion as arms and seen as weapons for ruffians, and the phrase would have carried a sense of swaggering.²⁷² Hotspur even goes after the King in these terms, accusing Bolingbroke of rising to power by being a “fawning greyhound” (I.iii.248). He sees himself as a truth-teller unable to affect courtly manners. His insistence on action and his inability to control his hot temper throughout the play bolsters this vision of him.

Hotspur believes the “certain lord” he encounters in the battlefield to be a flatterer and an affecter, the kind of courtier fop, like *Hamlet’s* Osric,²⁷³ who adapts his demeanor and opinions according to the King’s wishes. These affected manners are offensive to Hotspur because they have no place on the battlefield. Often described by critics as foppish,²⁷⁴ the popinjay has incited much commentary because of his stark contrast to Hotspur’s particularly manly ability as a soldier and the contempt that Hotspur has for his “kind.” Hotspur describes a dainty lord that resembles the Restoration fop in both his stylish appearance and his effeminate behavior. As Hotspur stands exhausted on the battlefield as a frontline representative of Henry IV’s half-hearted military cause, he encounters the Lord as a courtly representative of the King’s political cause. The military hero sees a disparity between his brave acts of service that should aid the King’s

²⁷² See Kastan’s note to this line.

²⁷³ In *The Tainted Muse: Prejudice and Presumption in Shakespeare and His Times* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), Robert Brustein contends that “This ‘certain lord’ will re-materialize a few years later as Osric” (54). For more on Osric, see Chapter Two of this study.

²⁷⁴ Critics who have talked about the popinjay as a fop include Susan Shapiro, “Yon Plumed Dandebrot: Male ‘Effeminacy’ in English Satire and Criticism” *Review of English Studies* 39 (1988): 400-412; Stephen Orgle, *The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare’s England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and Simon Shepherd, “What’s So Funny about Ladies’ Tailors? A Survey of Some Male (Homo)Sexual Types in the Renaissance” *Textual Practice* 6 (1992): 17-30.

aims of homeland control and the Lord's affected performance in the name of Henry IV's personal political agenda. The two are immediately at odds. Hotspur describes the lord with contempt, deliberately highlighting the difference between this courtier and himself:

When I was dry with rage and extreme toil,
Breathless and faint, leaning upon my sword,
Came there a certain lord, neat and trimly dressed,
Fresh as a bridegroom and his chin new reaped
Showed like a stubble land at harvest home.
He was perfumèd like a milliner,
And 'twixt his finger and his thumb he held
A pouncet box, which ever and anon
He gave his nose, and took't away again; (I.iii.31-9)

The Lord's neat appearance signals his effeminacy, but not only because he has paid too much attention to his fashions as a woman might. In the particular context of the freshly-trampled, blood-stained battlefield, the Lord is simply not masculine enough when he is compared to his warrior colleagues. Hotspur, the ultimate masculine soldier "resting upon his sword," takes offense at the Lord's "new reaped" and "perfumèd" appearance because it distinguishes him from the "dry," "breathless," and "faint" actualities of what it means to be a man on a battlefield.

The womanishness of the popinjay's appearance—he also "shine[s] so brisk and smell[s] so sweet" (54)—makes Hotspur "mad" (53). His shaved beard, an indication of his immaturity that contrasts the presumedly disheveled and bearded manliness of the soldiers, also offends him. These outward representations work to juxtapose the popinjay not only to the soldiers around him, but to their martial definitions of masculinity. He is a counterexample of the

ideal, but, as Jennifer Low claims, such counterexamples are necessary for definition: “Immaturity and femininity function... as alternative Others that define masculinity.”²⁷⁵ It is because of his immature, beardless appearance, as well as his talking and acting “so like a gentlewoman” (55) that the “certain lord” and his request for Hotspur’s prisoners is ignored and discredited.

As an effeminate Other, the popinjay’s presence helps to define the martial brand of masculinity and champion those ideas of masculinity, but he also helps to expose the shakiness of the foundations on which those definitions lie. Mario DiGangi argues that “sexual types” in early modern drama, such as the popinjay, “function to expose and critique the ideologies that make them intelligible.”²⁷⁶ Hotspur bears some resemblance to the very Lord he ridicules. Part of what incenses him is the Lord’s disconnectedness with the actualities of war, which are manifested in this passage in his ignorance toward what the soldiers have just been through in battle. As a representative from Henry IV, the popinjay stands in for the King’s own increasing disengagement with his wars in England as he longs to go to the Holy Land instead. To Hotspur’s mind, the lord should be connected to the cause of war at hand, just as Henry IV should be more connected to the strife in his own country rather than romantically pining for the glory of the Crusades. The Lord’s effeminate actions, such as his gingerly taking of snuff to

²⁷⁵ *Manhood and the Duel: Masculinity in Early Modern Drama and Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 84. For more on the connections between the gender identities of boys and women, see Bruce R. Smith’s *Shakespeare and Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) for a discussion of differentiation and the stages of masculine development. For an argument concerning the prosthetic make-up of boys versus that of men, especially as it pertains to beards, see Will Fisher’s *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

²⁷⁶ *Sexual Types: Embodiment, Agency, and Dramatic Character from Shakespeare to Shirley*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 4.

squelch the scent of the “unmannerly” (43) and “slovenly unhandsome” (44) corpses of the dead “untaught knaves” (43), further alienate him from the masculine and heroic actions of the battle that have just taken place. To Hotspur at this moment in this martial circumstance, the popinjay’s effeminacy is not just unmanly, it is unkind and inhumane. He ignores the social logic of the battlefield in order to perform the only role for which he deems himself suited: that of the courtier. To Hotspur, whose masculinity is defined by his soldiership and sense of honor, the “certain lord” and those he represents have no business on the battlefield; in the heat of battle, the court is utterly useless because of its effeminacy and because it is unlike Hotspur, the perfect soldier.

The presence of the popinjay does more than reveal Hotspur’s hyper-masculine dedication to his duty as a soldier; it demonstrates the young Henry Percy’s inability to be a well-rounded man and, therefore, a suitable ruler. The retelling of the encounter with the “certain lord” leaves out the verbal details of the exchange, dismissing the King’s message because it is delivered in “holiday and lady terms” (46). The dismissal of such details about speech is echoed in Hotspur’s actions throughout the play: he does not heed Worcester’s and Northumberland’s verbal warnings about his temper in Act I, scene iii; he will not hear the requests of his wife to share his burdened thoughts in Act II, scene iii; he scoffs at, rather than diplomatically listening to and entertaining, Glendower’s hubristic account of his birthright to fierceness and bravery in Act III, scene i, saying “Let me not understand you, then: speak it in Welsh” (116) and subsequently ignores Mortimer’s and Worcester’s advice to hear him out in the

same scene; and he ultimately seals his fate by ignoring Worcester's warnings about their diminished resources for battle in Act IV, scene i.43-53. Keith Botelho claims that "male informational authority," and therefore a patriarchal sense of superiority, was maintained in the period by the ability to listen to and decipher constantly circulating rumors. He says, "There seems to be an early modern concern with the necessity of engaging in discriminating sensory activities, of being able to grasp what is obscure or ambiguous."²⁷⁷ Though he is brave and diligently focused on his martial responsibilities, Hotspur is a dangerous member of Henry IV's court because he refuses to listen to and decipher rhetoric, and yet the threat he poses proves ineffectual in the end.

The history and the history play both remind us that Hotspur's limited, martial definition of masculinity is inadequate because he is defeated by a different foil: Prince Hal. Low asserts that Hal is the play's essential truth-teller, the effortless man who displays sprezzatura.²⁷⁸ Hotspur is the one who tries too hard, who perhaps is as foppish a soldier as the popinjay because he is ever-striving and does not understand propriety at court. Given the three spaces of this play—the battlefield, the court, and the tavern—and Hal's ultimate domination over all of them, Hotspur lacks the cultural knowledge necessary to be a successful man because he is no courtier and certainly no tavern companion. Hal, by contrast, is effortlessly all three, and at this moment in history, allegiance at court is as important as allegiance on the battlefield, a concept Hotspur fails to

²⁷⁷ *Renaissance Earwitnesses: Rumor and Early Modern Masculinity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 2.

²⁷⁸ Low, 90. For a discussion of the concept of sprezzatura as it relates to the fop figure, see Chapter Two.

understand. As Low contends, “In Hal, Shakespeare gives us the courtier, the man of natural grace, who conquers the career soldier because he *can* perform and *can* prove that he is ‘essentially made.’”²⁷⁹ Just as the popinjay is delinquent in his duties as a soldier in the King’s army, Hotspur is delinquent in his as a reliable political member of the court. In Shakespeare’s play, then, part of what Hotspur’s defeat signals is that masculinity is an ever-shifting concept that is contingent upon circumstantiality. Hotspur’s fate and the outcome of *Henry IV Part 1* as a chronicle of history are plotted and inescapable, but the anachronistic presence of the popinjay allows a fixed tale to be fluidly interpreted by an early modern audience so as to open a critical space for self-reflection, especially as it pertains to ideas about gender and its circumstantial nature.

The historical project of *Tamburlaine the Great* may seem to differ significantly from the project of Shakespeare’s and other playwright’s English histories, which seek to create a shared national narrative. But the staged version of Tamburlaine’s historical quest for empire in the East performs similar work in promoting hegemony as it is set up against a cruel, exoticized Other. The presence of a soldier fop in *Tamburlaine the Great*, a decidedly un-English history play based on the life of the great eastern conquerer, adds to the play’s emphasis on the process of self-fashioning, and more specifically, the fashioning of masculine identity.²⁸⁰ Masculinity as it is expressed through military power is the most

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 90.

²⁸⁰ The following studies have been useful to me as they focus on soldiership and/or masculinity as they are related to Tamburlaine’s relationship with Calyphas: Alan Shepard, *Marlowe’s Soldiers*, esp. ch. 1; Troni Y. Grande, *Marlovian Tragedy: The Play of Dilation* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1999), ch. 2; Emily Bartels, *Spectacles of Strangeness: Imperialism, Alienation, and Marlowe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 61-81; Judith Haber, *Desire and Dramatic Form in Early Modern England* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 21-26; Clare

important attribute that allows for the success of *Tamburlaine*'s characters. The play casts Tamburlaine as an example of a tyrannical leader, but also as the ultimate warrior, always ready to battle, prevail, and then rhetorically memorialize his success. It is his play and his history, so his values dominate the men around him, and his judgement and version of masculinity reign supreme. Under this model Calyphas, the conquerer's youngest son, is doomed as a man.

There are implications of the encroaching danger of effeminacy throughout both parts of *Tamburlaine*. The fierce conquerer expresses great concern that his men—and particularly his sons—are not man enough to handle the martial responsibilities his ambition requires. Tamburlaine's interest in his sons' gender identities is particularly strong because their potential effeminate behaviors could not only potentially spread to other soldiers in his army, but his domestic sphere as well. He believes their masculinity to be the prime agent of the propagation of his legacy, and so he seeks in them a replication of the martial fierceness and courage that has kept his name on the tongues of leaders throughout the world. This anxiety expresses itself early and often; in Act I, scene iii, he questions his boys' masculinities: "Methinks their looks are amorous,/ Not martial as the sons of Tamburlaine; [...]/ They are too dainty for the wars./ Their fingers made to quaver on a lute,/ Their arms to hang about a lady's

Harraway, *Re-citing Marlowe: Approaches to Drama* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2000), ch. 2; and Simon Shepherd, *Marlowe and the Politics of Elizabethan Theatre* (Brighton, UK: Harvester Press, 1986), 202-07. My discussion is also informed by arguments concerning sexuality and effeminacy in Marlowe's work, particularly in Gregory Bredbeck, *Sodomy and Interpretation: Marlowe to Milton* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), esp. ch. 2; Jonathan Goldberg, *Sodomities: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 105-44; and Bruce R. Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England: A Cultural Poetics*, esp. ch. 6.

neck,/ Their legs to dance and caper in the air,” (21-31).²⁸¹ For Tamburlaine, a lover who “capers,” plays music, or pays attention to ladies can not also be a soldier because he is too “dainty.” His definitions of masculinity and soldiership are bound together in this way: if one is not a soldier, one cannot be a man. In this scene, he accuses his sons of foppishness as a way to instigate them to *prove* their masculinity, which he reads as loyalty to him. Celebinus and Amyras are quick to defend their masculinity, citing future feats of courage they will perform in the name of their father and casting off any interest in the effeminate activities their father accuses them of. Calyphas, however, does not answer satisfactorily, for which he is accused of being the issue of “some coward’s loins” (69), for he certainly could not have come from brave Tamburlaine’s. For the remainder of the play, Tamburlaine’s relationship with Calyphas is dominated by a father’s disgust for an effeminate, and therefore unworthy, son.

One particular moment of foppishness bears violent consequence. In Act IV of *Part 2*, Tamburlaine murders Calyphas for acting like a fop by refusing to fight, and therefore disgracing his father and the army. After this bloody act, Tamburlaine commands his men to dispose of the body: “Make [the Turkish concubines] bury this effeminate brat,/ For not a common soldier shall defile/ His manly fingers with so faint a boy” (IV.i.159-161). Tamburlaine’s demand in these lines degrades Calyphas by indicating that his “faint” body would make his own soldiers less manly. Bravery, bombast, and strength garner reward in the drama, but here, masculine identity could be tainted by touching a little boy’s

²⁸¹ All citations from *Tamburlaine the Great Part 2* are taken from the Student’s Revels edition of *Tamburlaine the Great*, Eds. J.S. Cunningham and Eithne Henson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

body. Tamburlaine uses “effeminate” to reflect the intensity of this insult; the descriptor attacks his son’s masculinity, the all-important attribute that translates to success in the world of the play. Calyphas’s behavior and Tamburlaine’s assessment explicitly tie together foppishness and effeminacy. The dissenting son is a fop because he basks in the social privileges he enjoys as the son of an emperor, but foolishly fritters away that privilege. The sense of the term “fop” that implies a man who is “devoted to women” can be applied to Calyphas: in Act I, scene iii, he expresses his desire to stay with his mother rather than fight, and in Act IV, scene i, he shows sexual excitement at enjoying Turkish concubines, in his eyes the pinnacle of his father’s spoils.

If through Calyphas the play casts devotion to women as an effeminizing quality, then other male characters are implicated too. Just a scene after this murder and accusation, Theridamas—Tamburlaine’s right-hand man—completely devotes himself to Olympia, even renouncing his military ambition if she will be his princess: “And I will cast off arms and sit with thee,/ Spending my life in sweet discourse of love” (IV.ii.138-45). Tamburlaine himself is also effeminate in his devotion to Zenocrate, something he calls attention to in *Part I*: “But how unseemly is it for my sex,/ My discipline of arms and chivalry,/ My nature, and the terror of my name,/ To harbour thoughts effeminate and faint!” (V.i.174-77). The great soldier here articulates the real danger in the effeminate man: he threatens the possibility of military success by replacing it with a devotion to the female sex. By doting on women, men in both parts of *Tamburlaine the Great* risk contracting the feebler, weaker characteristics of the opposite sex and

essentially becoming women themselves. If Tamburlaine were to dedicate himself entirely to women and their pastimes, as Calyphas does, he would threaten the patriarchal power structure that drives the action of the play, a power structure that he also works hard to create through his own carefully-crafted masculine martial identity. As his behavior in the majority of the play demonstrates, the conquerer's masculinity is defined by his martiality as it is demonstrated in physical prowess, and especially the control he exerts over others by displaying it. Tamburlaine creates the circumstances within the play to bolster the status of these qualities as measurements of masculinity.

Foppish soldier characters like Calyphas do not quite fit into masculine paradigms like the one created by Tamburlaine because they behave in ways unfitting of their current circumstance. In this way, they function not only as satires on antiquated Elizabethan ideas of hyper-masculine soldiership but also as avenues to a larger critique on strict, bounded ideas about masculine heroism. They appear to be *something else* (not mannish). Effeminate behavior is something abnormal, and something that threatens to change a man. Tamburlaine points to the infectious possibilities of effeminacy when he insists that Calyphas's murdered body be taken by Turkish concubines so that it does not "defile the manly fingers" of his soldiers, as shown in the passage quoted above.

Ironically, Calyphas's actions call attention to Tamburlaine's own potential effeminacy. The young boy mirrors his father's devotion to Zenocrate,

which threatens Tamburlaine's devotion to his soldierly mission.²⁸² In Act I, scene iii, Calyphas declares that while his brothers carry on Tamburlaine's martial legacy, he would prefer to "accompany [his] gracious mother" (66). Upon her death, he mourns her with tears, a sign of his effeminacy, while his brothers more appropriately memorialize her with sensual exaggeration akin to their father's (III.ii.47-52). The other sons mirror their father's bravery and penchant for martial exploit, making them valuable and worthy men in Tamburlaine's eyes. Calyphas, however, shows no interest in developing his soldiering skills, nor a natural martial ability or understanding. In an attempt to impress his father amidst his brothers' fantastical accounts of their future bravery and prowess in battle, Calyphas claims, "If any man will hold him, I will strike,/ And cleave him to the channel with my sword" (I.iii.102-103), a rather tame imagined martial act compared to his brothers' ambitions to swim across seas of blood and traverse bridges made of murdered bodies to battle their enemies. Tamburlaine, quick to point out this difference, scolds, "Hold him and cleave him too, or I'll cleave thee" (104). There is an evident discord between Calyphas's sensibilities and those his father wishes to uphold.

In his cowardice, Calyphas actually stands in for a reasonable model of soldierly training. Tamburlaine, however, only sees in the boy cowardice and a misunderstanding of what it means to be a soldier. Intent on indoctrinating his sons into the martial way of life, Tamburlaine turns his focus away from his own mourning toward his boys' military training, as if in a hurry to push aside his own

²⁸² The threat that Tamburlaine's devotion to Zenocrate poses to his martial mission is apparent after his first of many Petrarchan blazons to honor her in *Part I*. Techelles addresses the love-sick Tamburlaine as if to warn him of distraction: "What now? In love?" (I.ii.106).

feminine sensibilities. He explains the excruciating and dangerous exercises in which he wants his sons to partake, prompting Calyphas to complain, “My lord, but this is dangerous to be done./ We may be slain or wounded ere we learn” (III.ii.93-4). The boy demonstrates a certain martial reasoning here, pointing out that perhaps it is not in a military leader’s best interest to put his men in danger during training, but to keep them fresh for the field. He embodies an anachronistic voice of reason, for his martial theory goes against Tamburlaine’s antiquated and exotically cruel conception of military practice. Enraged, Tamburlaine replies, “Villain, art thou the son of Tamburlaine/ And fear’st to die, or with a curtle-axe/ To hew thy flesh and make a gaping wound?... Can’st thou, coward stand in fear of death?” (95-102). Amidst his implied sense of himself as fearless, Tamburlaine expresses a genuine concern that Calyphas misunderstands the role of a soldier, something his single-minded, martial brain cannot comprehend.

The conquerer’s conception of the soldier’s role is exotic enough to distance the tyrannical king’s methods from the early modern audience, who instead might empathize with the more cerebral and sensitive Calyphas because, “He offers a moral alternative to Tamburlaine’s martial code and an interrogation of his father’s concept of manliness.”²⁸³ The boy’s morality, demonstrated as a reasonable reaction against unreasonable treatment of soldiers, provides a softer, more well-rounded version of a masculine model. In response, Tamburlaine lists the tenets of soldiership—acts of bravery, great victories, and homosocial

²⁸³ Sarah Munson Deats, “Marlowe’s Interrogative Drama: *Dido, Tamburlaine, Faustus, and Edward II.*” *Marlowe’s Empery: Expanding his Critical Contexts*. Ed. Sarah Munson Deats and Robert A. Logan (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2002), 116.

camaraderie with fellow men back in camp. He then makes visual that he values self-sacrifice above all, wounding himself dramatically. Celebinus and Amyras, his other sons, beg for this badge of honor, this mark of soldiership, but Calyphas stands silent, refusing to be marked as a soldier or proselytized into his father's version of masculinity.

Because of his insolence, Tamburlaine must expose Calyphas as an effeminate fop and eradicate his son from the narrative so that he maintains his martial authority. When Tamburlaine calls his sons into battle, Calyphas refuses, preferring card-playing to heroic action and the company of women and slaves to that of his brothers and soldiers (IV.i.59-70). He bequeaths the honor of battle to his brothers, claiming "My wisdom shall excuse my cowardice" (IV.i.50), again casting himself as the voice of reason over pure masculine brawn. Under his father's model of martial masculinity, this argument does not fly, and Calyphas must answer for his choice upon Tamburlaine's victorious return. Ever the tyrant seeking to write the account of his own historical narrative in a way he deems fit, the ultimate soldier extinguishes Calyphas's subversive presence by murdering him. When Tamburlaine stabs his son, he declares him, "A form not meet to give that subject essence/ Whose matter is the flesh of Tamburlaine" (IV.ii.112-113). The word "essence" here resonates beyond Tamburlaine's domestic failure to produce a son in his own likeness; it speaks also to the play's complicated ideas about the make-up of masculinity. Because of his foppishness, Calyphas suggests an individualized concept of gender identity, perhaps with the intention of posing

an alternate idea of the essence or root of gender.²⁸⁴ For Alan Shepard, inquiry into the subject of early modern gender construction is one of Marlowe's main projects:

The theatrics of masculinity are central to [Marlowe's] work... What is suggested in part in these visceral epiphanies [i.e. Tamburlaine's murder of Calyphas or the stabbing of his own arm] is that, for soldiers and civilian dissidents alike, masculinity is a fiction, a performance, not an essence that can be counted on to shield a man from incursions into his psyche, nor to steel the nation's borders from enemy fleets or Jesuit priests, or whatnot.²⁸⁵

Pushing Shepard's idea further, Marlowe's "dissidents" actually call attention to the fluid and unfixable nature of masculinity as it is taken up by Marlowe's heroes, rather than how this concept fails for fop figures like Calyphas.

Perhaps Tamburlaine sees more of himself in his foppish son than he cares to admit. By all accounts of his lengthy and poetic speeches, Tamburlaine's words are often hyperbolic and work to obscure an emotional drive in a martial man. At times, his words even seem to overtake him and he must reel himself in by taking action to stop this type of speech. In the first part of *Tamburlaine*, for example, he finds himself overtaken by his love for Zenocrate, leading him to chastise himself for his unsoldierly behavior. Tying together two essential parts of his identity, the martial and the masculine, Tamburlaine finds the strength to think beyond his sexual and romantic love at this moment, and he turns his thoughts immediately following this speech to his "footstool" Bajazeth and the current battle he's waging in Damascus. This is only a temporary solution, however, as the great warrior breaks into even more emotionally-driven speeches

²⁸⁴ My ideas here are, of course, heavily influenced by Judith Butler's theory on the performativity of gender.

²⁸⁵ Alan Shepard, 3.

upon her death in the second Act of *Part 2*, a speech that transcends scenes and extends into Act III, scene ii. If we follow Tamburlaine's words, Calyphas must be killed because he is "traitor to [Tamburlaine's] name and majesty" (IV.i.90). In this way, Tamburlaine casts the murder as a necessity under martial law as a punishment for treason. But we know that Calyphas at least recognizes his father's great might and great cause by the very lines he cites to his brothers in defense of staying out of the battle with the Turks. He finds himself in need of a tactic to control this effeminate part of himself, and killing his softest son is his solution.

The murder of Tamburlaine's son—a domestic act—is shrouded in martial protocol so that the great warrior does not have to admit publicly his failure as a father according to his own system of masculinity. He may be the ultimate soldier, but he fails to understand his other masculine roles. Perhaps his lack of understanding results from his refusal to believe that his own effeminate tendencies could be subsumed into a more inclusive definition of masculinity so that it does not break his "brittle code of manhood."²⁸⁶ At its center, Tamburlaine's murder of Calyphas is more about the murderer than the victim: "Tamburlaine finds his eldest son Calyphas so execrable that he kills him, thus hoping to kill that part of him that tends toward the softer, feminized qualities summed up by Calyphas as 'remorse of conscience.'"²⁸⁷ At this point in the play, the feminine, domestic, and weak parts of Tamburlaine pose an increasing threat as the great hero soon falls ill with the mysterious sickness that will kill him.

²⁸⁶ Alan Shepard, 45.

²⁸⁷ Troni Y. Grande, 60.

Perhaps, then, when he murders his son, he already suspects that he has been infected with sickness, and perhaps that disease is the effeminate disease of the foppish soldier represented in his son. *Tamburlaine the Great* transforms into a domestic tragedy vis-a-vis the introduction of Calyphas. Our titular hero/villain confuses his martial and familial roles because he desires to police and control the masculine codes of conduct at work in each of those worlds. The murder of his son ultimately tarnishes the conquerer's heroic potential as it represents the irreversible blending of his soldierly power with his domestic sphere.

Tamburlaine may be a great and manly martial leader, but he fails to keep control over himself and his household. In killing off the foppishness embodied by his son, Tamburlaine opens up the possibility that his own excessiveness and failures as a man might also be read as effeminate.

The mixing of domestic and martial spheres in early modern plays like *Tamburlaine* suggest that men's idea of their gender—and by extension, themselves—was constantly shifting. In a martial context, foppish soldiers on stage highlight the instability of a hyper-masculine environment and bring fragile codes of masculine behavior under scrutiny. The presence of foppish soldiers in *Tamburlaine the Great* and *1 Henry IV* ultimately remind us that foppishness and effeminacy are ever-present forces that threaten to undermine strict ideas about proper soldierly and masculine behavior as they were conceived in early modern England. Through this character type, foppishness gets cast as an infectious threat to battlefield and military masculine culture that must be eradicated throughout the drama of the period. The consistent representation of foppish soldiers on the

early modern stage contributed to an ongoing cultural inquiry into masculinity, its nature, and its performance. Additionally, the circumstantial nature of defining “foppish” in martial contexts and other contexts in which soldiers find themselves speaks to a desire to define and measure undefinable concepts, such as gender and social status. For this reason, it is useful to think of these characters as delinquent in their martial and masculine performances and deficient in social know-how since delinquency necessitates a firm definition of the acceptable.

Identifying, criticizing, and ultimately punishing soldier fops require other characters—and theatrical audiences—to be socially savvy and discerning of what a play and the culture in which it works values. For example, one play featuring a foppish soldier, like Jonson’s *Every Man In His Humour*, may value a domestic brand of masculinity and so the fop is rendered an outsider by his singlehood and childlessness, while another play, like *Tamburlaine the Great*, may value bravery on the battlefield, and the fop would be deemed so because he avoids martial combat. In the cases of the plays discussed in this chapter, ideas of soldiership and its relationship to definitions of masculinity can be better understood by examining the role of their various foppish soldiers and their relationships with dramatic traditions.

The fop as soldier appears in expected and unexpected places; the character occupies martial, courtly, and even domestic spaces. In all of these spaces, he fails in some way to perform his expected role as a soldier. His effeminacy, whether it manifests in habits of dress, rhetorical practices, or cowardly actions, is measured and identified differently in these disparate spaces,

but it is always present. He also appears across genres, in comedies, tragicomedies and histories, and helps us to read and measure other male characters ranging from kings to clowns. Exploring genre and the ways in which it is transgressed in plays that contain representations of foppish soldiers gives us a way of seeing how male characters butt up against convention in more ways than one. Given the circumstantiality of the character type, it is helpful to see him as anachronistic in that he is usually the character who does not fit in some way. Sometimes, as is the case with the questing knight Huanebango in *The Old Wives Tale*, the character is a relic of a different time or tradition. Other times, the character clearly does not belong in his environment, like the popinjay in *I Henry IV*. This sense of mislocation forces investigation into his purpose because it marks him as different, especially in relation to other soldiers around him.

As a vehicle of inquiry into military culture and perceptions of early modern soldiers, the foppish soldier helps us to understand the social and physical spaces soldiers occupied and how their positions reflected dominant ideas about masculinity and masculine sexuality. The character prompts us to ask and answer questions about what exactly would have been seen as masculine in the army and how, or if, these ideas were pervasive on a larger cultural level. Given the all-male nature of martial environments, such questions then lead to understanding if the rules of masculinity in these spaces were different than in other heterosocial spaces. The foppish soldier character in the drama of the period is uniquely positioned to help us probe early modern performative and proscribed

constructions of masculinity, partly because his very function as a soldier places him so squarely in proximity to other men.

CHAPTER 5

“TO ENTER INTO A NEW SUIT”: THE CITY-DWELLING FOP AND THE MATERIALS OF AFFECTED MASCULINITY

In the late-sixteenth century, for the first time in its history, London became a place full of strangers. England witnessed a large population increase and rapid migration trends that shifted its population from the country to the city. By the end of Elizabeth's reign, the majority of people living in London had not been born there.²⁸⁸ As a result, the city's boundaries expanded and its population diversified, creating a new desire among city-dwellers to demonstrate a masterful knowledge of the metropolis and its culture. In his encyclopedic collection of literary and non-literary excerpts devoted to the description of London and its inhabitants, Lawrence Manley observes, “Just as Tudor-Stuart Englishmen showed new interest in describing their surroundings, so they made unprecedented attempts to analyse their society. At work here was not simply a new awareness of the social framework, but also a sense that it was changing.”²⁸⁹ To some extent, the inclination that Manley identifies emerged under the suspicion that one was perpetually scrutinized and judged because one was

²⁸⁸ Angela Stock and Anne-Julia Zwierlein. “Our Scene is London...” *Plotting Early Modern London: New Essays on Jacobean City Comedy*. Eds. Deiter Mehl, Angela Stock, and Anne-Julia Zwierlein (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 6, n. 23. For more information on population growth in London during the period, see also Roger Finlay and Beatrice Shearer “Population growth and Suburban Expansion” in *London 1500-1700: The Making of the Metropolis* Eds. A.L. Beier and Roger Finlay (New York: Longman, 1986), 37-59; and Finlay's *Population and Metropolis: The Demography of London, 1580-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). See also studies on the growth of early modern London's population by Vanessa Harding, “The Population of London 1550-1700: A Review of the Published Evidence” *London Journal* 15(1990): 111-128 and “City, capital, and metropolis: the changing shape of seventeenth-century London” Ed. J.F. Merritt, J.F. *Imagining early modern London: Perceptions and Portrayals of the City from Stow to Strype, 1598 -1720*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 117-143.

²⁸⁹ *London in the Age of Shakespeare*, Ed. Lawrence Manley (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986), 75.

always in jeopardy of being mistaken for a stranger. Part of that fear manifested into a widespread attack on pretenders to gallantry and breeding. Understanding the city, how it worked, and what its inhabitants valued was simultaneously important and difficult, and so knowledge of the city became a kind of cultural capital.

One concern that emerged across the urban culture was that London's citizens were losing a sense of seriousness and authenticity about their identities as city-dwellers. An anonymous author of "An Apologie for the Citie of London" in John Stow's 1598 *Survey of London* describes the situation thus: "The gentlemen of all shires do fly and flock to this city, the younger sort of them to see and show vanity, and the elder to save the cost and charge of hospitality and housekeeping."²⁹⁰ While economic necessity motivated older landowners to the city, which was quickly solidifying itself as the economic center of England, young men migrated to London in search of pleasure. The early modern stage often represented these men as younger brothers or sons of newly-monied and titled merchants; they were portrayed as naive, of the country, uneducated, and, most dangerously, idle. Cultural perception held that they would resort to indulgent carousing and foolish spending. Early modern urbanites also held the perception that these young men were well-positioned to be the subjects of ridicule. The popular opinion that they were country gulls—or easily imposed upon—seems to have been a mainstay in the English cultural imagination from

²⁹⁰ qtd. in Manley, 87. Gg7v-Gg8.

the late-sixteenth century.²⁹¹ City-dwelling stage fops, on the other hand, are decidedly of the city and are often calculating, even if they appear foolish for not understanding the rules of their urban environments.

City-dwelling fop characters are effeminate, social upstarts who entwine themselves in a particularly urban practice of self-display. This chapter looks at the early modern stage's construction of foppish urbanites through the physical objects that provide the means for other characters and audience members to identify them as such. To make this argument, I read clothing, accessories, and young male same-sexual partners as indicators and creative agents foppish identity.²⁹² In the space of the city as it was staged in early modern England, a foppish city-dweller can be marked by many things—his clothes, his attention to trendy entertainments, his taste for boys as sexual companions—but he need not be marked by *all* of these things. What is important is how he attempts to affect a genteel identity through the use of markers he sees as fashionable. I examine city comedies as the genre that most often produces such characters and their markers, and I have chosen Jonson and Middleton as two representative playwrights of this genre on which to focus. I first turn to Middleton and Rowley's *Wit at Several Weapons* (1613), a play that features a character by the name of Fop who I read as

²⁹¹ The *Oxford English Dictionary* definition of “gull” (n.3) is “A credulous person; one easily imposed upon; a dupe, simpleton, fool.” The first cited example is from Thomas Nashe's *Terrors of Night* (1594).

²⁹² There have been several studies of objects in early modern culture that have helped me with these ideas. These include: Patricia Fumerton, *Cultural Aesthetics: Renaissance Literature and the Practice of Social Ornament* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1991) and Lisa Jardine, *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance* (New York: Doubleday, 1996). Other studies with a material-centered approach to gender- and identity-making include Amanda Bailey, *Flaunting: Style and the Subversive Male Body in Renaissance England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007); Will Fisher, *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and Natasha Korda, *Shakespeare's Domestic Economies: Gender and Property in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).

an important predecessor to, but ironically not an explicit example of, a full-fledged fop. I then look to Middleton and Dekker's *The Roaring Girl* (1611) and Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour* (1598) and *Every Man out of His Humour* (1599) to reveal the patterns of the fop figures that established in the period. These plays expose the process of taste-making not only on the early modern stage, but in London itself.

Fops, Gulls, and Country Ignorance

It is necessary to distinguish between a gull and a city-dweller fop, the character type that is the focus of this chapter, since the former features so prominently in the satirical literature and drama of the exact period in question. There is indeed some overlap between these two designations, and a fop may very well be gulled over the course of a play. Almost all identified gulls in city comedies display some kinds of foppish behavior: they may be excessive spenders, the butts of jokes, or overly-interested in self-presentation. Unlike gulls who migrate from the country, city-dwelling fops are decidedly of the city and are often calculating rather than ignorant, even if they appear foolish for not understanding the rules of their urban environments. Another key difference between the two character types, however, is the self-consciousness of the city-dweller fop versus the cluelessness of the straight gull: city-dwelling fops understand the necessity of a certain level of performativity and strive to achieve social status through such performances. Gulls, on the other hand, are just foolish and are unaware of the status game being played around them.

Thomas Dekker's *Gull's Hornbook* (1609) is a well-known satirical treatise on this emerging group of men; its mock instructional tone reveals insight into the motivations and behaviors of such gulls themselves as well as genteel attitudes towards those individuals. In certain instances within the handbook, Dekker characterizes city-dwelling fops as a type of gull with social ambitions, especially in those parts that emphasize self-display through sartorial choices. In particular his chapter on how men should behave and appear in Paul's Walk reveals a foppish mimetic agenda in choosing one's clothes. St. Paul's Walk, the center aisle in the expansive church, was a place to be seen and to see, and it features as a location with that purpose in several city comedies, including *Your Five Gallants*, *Michaelmas Term*, and *Every Man out of His Humour*. The walkway proved useful to foppish men not only as a place to be seen, but also as a place to learn of new fashion trends. Dekker advises the Paul's stroller:

If therefore you determine to enter into a new suit, warn your tailor to attend you in Paul's, who, with his hat in his hand, shall like a spy discover the stuff, colour, and fashion of any doublet or hose that dare be seen there; and stepping behind a pillar to fill his table-books with those notes, will presently send you into the world an accomplished man; by which means you shall wear your clothes in print with the first edition.²⁹³

That one's suit need be a "first edition" evinces fashionability beyond the conventional desire to dress to fit in, revealing instead a socially excessive need to appear to be first, while in reality sporting a second-issue outfit. A less-ambitious gull might be content to fashion his suits in the exact manner of the gallants he

²⁹³ *The Gull's Hornbook*. Thomas Dekker: *Selected Writings* Ed. E.D. Pendry (London: Edward Arnold, 1967), 90.

strives to imitate, while a fop seeks to outdo him in an attempt to prove social superiority.

Though not all gulls are fops, at least some of the intended targets of Dekker's critiques—like the fashion-plates in Paul's—were foppish and effeminate men like those who appeared in city comedies. But the intended audience of the book were the successful gallants who knew enough to recognize and make fun of this type. Of the *Hornbook*, Jean Howard says, "It is a mock pedagogical manual that makes fun of certain city practices but in doing so reveals the new codes of conduct that the 'gull' is forever doomed to imperfectly imitate." She goes on to add that in putting down failed social-strivers, the satire bolsters the confidence and credibility of the faction of gallants whose tastes defined a certain kind of urban social success: "The fact that the would-be gallant doesn't really know how to make himself an object of admiration only flatters those who do and points to the importance of 'proper' self-display and fashionability as emerging urban values."²⁹⁴ Like the fake intended audience of Dekker's pamphlet, gallants in the audience of city comedies feel superior to inept characters in the plays.²⁹⁵

In rendering themselves ridiculous, the foppish character represented on stage works to validate and even congratulate the true gallant he strives to be. In some ways, the city comedies that feature these characters, then, play to their audiences' sense of vanity, given the well-documented gallant taste for play-

²⁹⁴ *Theater of a City: The Places of London Comedy, 1598-1642*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 6, 7.

²⁹⁵ For an overview on gallants at Elizabethan playhouses, see Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage, 1574-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 227-229.

going. Adam Zucker recognizes the theatre's unique role in this project of cultural differentiation as, "drama's power to mark off divisions in its audiences between the sophisticated, witty viewers who recognize formal conventions as artificial and enjoyable and those... whose pleasure depends upon their failure to learn about, let alone appreciate, conventionality itself."²⁹⁶ But the city-fop does the double work of critiquing the gallant as well. He acts as a warning against vapidness, a reminder that the gallant persona lacks substance in and of itself. The boundary between foppishness and gallantry is thin and easily transgressible; only the judgement of others keeps one on the "proper" side. Discerning and identifying fops at the theater, then, becomes an exercise in judgement that ideally leads to self-inquiry and the formation of an internal system of checks and balances concerning one's own behavior.

Urban Masculinity and Scrutinized Performance in City Comedy

City comedies, often also identified as satires, are chronicles of contemporary social histories in a way that other genres from the period cannot be; they describe and detail the systems of urban knowledge vital to being able to thrive in the city. These plays simultaneously provide an honest picture of the social problems facing Londoners and exaggerated pictorials of the kinds of people (and, perhaps more accurately, the potential kinds of people) inhabitants loathed and feared. The thirty-plus year history of scholarship on city comedy has produced various definitions that have pointed to the genre's satirical and critical nature, and its part in producing an understanding of political and cultural conflicts

²⁹⁶ *The Places of Wit in Early Modern English Comedy* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 105.

of the period.²⁹⁷ I would argue that city comedies also staged the transformation of ideas about gender and sexuality. According to Brian Gibbons, some of the sub-genre's broad cultural concerns include the transformation of "typical elements of city life into significant patterns...., suggesting deeper sources of conflict and change."²⁹⁸ Similarly, Wendy Griswold claims that one significant pattern within the city comedy is its "recurrent concerns about social mobility and social order."²⁹⁹ In addition to the clear commentaries these plays make about the "conflict" caused by notions of class and social mobility, the plays also stage the possibility of fluidity between gender categories and the repercussions of such movement. Citizens, gallants, and gentry co-mingle in these plays in ways that suggest that confused and confusing definitions of masculinity were at work. The characters who emerge as foppish, whether they be gallants or citizens, become the sites on which this confusion plays out.

The relationship between city-dwellers and the city itself as makers of a certain kind of urban knowledge, as Steven Mullaney has pointed out, was symbiotic as London shifted to become a "ritualistic" city: "The ritual life of

²⁹⁷ For some of the most-cited definitions of the genre, see: Alexander Leggatt, *Citizen Comedy in the Age of Shakespeare* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973); Margot Heinemann, *Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), Brian Gibbons, *Jacobean City Comedy: A Study of Satiric Plays by Jonson, Marston, and Middleton* (London: Methuen, 1980); Theodore Levinwand *The City Staged: Jacobean City Comedy 1603-1613* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986); and Mary Beth Rose, *The Expense of Spirit: Love and Sexuality in English Renaissance Drama* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988). It should be noted that Jean Howard has argued for a broader term for plays that have traditionally been known as what Gibbons termed "city comedies." She advocates for use of the term "London comedies" to include London chronicle comedies, satiric city comedies, and London town comedies, the inclusion of which significantly pushes the usually-accepted dating of the city comedy trend that Rose outlines into the 1630s and 40s. See Howard's *Theater of a City*, 19-22. For my purposes, the term "city comedy" best characterizes the plays I am discussing, though there is a significant trend of using a "town fop" figure in the later comedies, especially those by Shirley and Brome.

²⁹⁸ *Jacobean City Comedy*, 4.

²⁹⁹ *Renaissance Revivals: City Comedy and Revenge Tragedy in the London Theatre, 1576-1980* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 34.

the city was organized... around a process of cultural inscription, and interpretation that was at heart dramaturgical, and the city itself... was both the product and exegetical object of that dramaturgy.”³⁰⁰ The inhabitants, then, both created and were created by their environment that increasingly required the power to interpret the signs and the signifiers of urban life. Stage plays emerged as one vehicle that celebrated and honed audience members’ ability to recognize and manipulate their surroundings. As the city and its inhabitants became increasingly unfamiliar and unknowable, anxiety about the inability to recognize and decipher fellow inhabitants developed. At the theater, an institution inherently at the center of the issues surrounding the legitimacy of certain kinds of social performance, this anxiety exhibited itself through socially-striving characters like the fop. While knowability as a theme runs throughout all genres that appeared on the early modern English stage, city comedies produced city-dwelling fop characters whose characterizations speak directly to the problems particular to the emerging urban social atmosphere in London.

Just as the other environments featured in this study (the court, the battlefield, and the academy) produce nuanced standards of behavior for the men that inhabit them, the masculine code of conduct for city-dwelling men has its particular tenets and values. Howard lays out what elements do—and do not—constitute proper masculine behavior in city comedies:

Some forms of masculinity, such as those founded on martial skill, are largely peripheral to the genre of the London comedy.³⁰¹ Rank

³⁰⁰ *The Place of the Stage: License, Play and Power in Renaissance England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 14.

³⁰¹ I disagree with Howard here. Martial codes of conduct, along with other sets of rules governing the behavior of city-dwellers, are also at work in plays that feature soldiers living in the

remained crucial to male identity, but in the urban context it was challenged by money-based forms of status and by a new emphasis on... performative masculinity, that is, the ability to master codes of fashionability and to comport oneself with distinction in the city's emerging arenas for mannerly display... [in later plays] the privileges of both birth and wealth are challenged by an emphasis on new kinds of cultural competencies having to do with deportment, manners, and a sophisticated sense of personal and social style.³⁰²

In the space of the city, the making of masculine identity relied less and less on tried and true—and easily recognizable—formal systems of rank and role. The new rules involved a system of knowledge particular to the city and its elite inhabitants and habits, and were less clear-cut and more contingent on judgement and taste. It was a brand of civility, “which was identified teleologically as the definitive characteristic of the adult man,” according to Amanda Bailey.³⁰³ The code of masculine conduct was changing because new ways of organizing and coming together were emerging. Taste-makers no longer needed to come from a certain pedigree, for the shifting class system produced a new set of monied young men whose leisures and pleasures allowed them to develop new standards of status. This was not a new phenomenon, however. As Dawson argues, the the eighteenth century “fop,” whose main characteristic is a concern for fashion, bears striking resemblance to the earlier “gallant.”³⁰⁴

City comedies regularly contain cohorts of young men defined by their wit and fashion who ridicule the fop. Angela Stock and Anne-Julia Zwiernlein have recognized shared values among these men, who are often the heroes *and* the

city. See my discussion of Captain Bobadil from Jonson's *Every Man Out of His Humor* in Chapter 2.

³⁰² *Theater of a City*, 27-28.

³⁰³ *Flaunting*, 48.

³⁰⁴ Dawson, 146. Dawson believes that the two terms remained somewhat interchangeable until about 1700. He cites Pepys's use of the term “Beau” to describe the figure in a print of a gallant.

“main mischief-makers” in these plays, claiming that among them, “instrumental intelligence, ‘resourcefulness’ and spontaneity are rewarded while the adherence to traditional value systems lands the characters on the sidewalks of the action.”³⁰⁵ The gallant figure, then, embodies a certain rebelliousness against the traditional system of gender values. Labeling these men as a “subculture,” Bailey discusses what these young men had in common: “Habits and preferences... constituted a new kind of symbolic capital for young male subjects to possess, deploy, and develop as they struggled to distinguish themselves through their affiliation with one another.”³⁰⁶ The arbiters of taste, like *Epicoene*’s Clerimont and company, were themselves struggling with social identity and their social places. The theatre was one cultural space where an urbanite could differentiate himself from those who did not know the fashion in order to identify with those who do. The fop fails to embody the tasteful effortlessness involved in the display of sprezzatura.

Self-display is the key performative aspect of the fop’s personality; he *acts* in a certain way to make those around him believe that he is something he is not, that he possesses a “cool” quotient that might help him advance socially in a society that had been forced to reevaluate and redefine exactly what attributes provided cultural capital. The city-dwelling fop self-fashions his persona in many ways: through rhetorical mimicry, displays of urban knowledge, connections with elite members of certain urban subcultures, and the possession and display of materials that signify excessive consumption. The materials include luxurious

³⁰⁵ *Plotting Early Modern London*, 10.

³⁰⁶ *Flaunting*, 18.

apparel and young boys, two things associated with femininity. Will Fisher contends that men's use of prosthetics such as beards and codpieces actually belie the instability of masculinity, since these objects are transferrable and impermanent. Fop figures' excessive use of transferrable materials does similar work, showing that masculine status and identity based on style is easily purchased and inauthentic. As Fisher points out, "Masculinity, by contrast, is imagined as a natural state characterized by lack of ornament."³⁰⁷ The city-dwelling fop's lavish and flamboyant materials of foppery act much like a disguise that masks his emptiness, or lack of status, underneath. If London is his stage, then his apparel is his costume, and he becomes synonymous with the project of theater itself.

Young men of taste have a community with which to identify, a selective community that can choose to exclude who they like, regardless if the subject is of a similar age and/or status. Gender comes into play via the ways in which and degrees to which these habits are enacted. The fop's effeminate behavior is unacceptable among his masculine would-be colleagues. According to Bailey, "Effeminacy signaled the inability to control one's passions, and immoderation in dress was both the cause and the sign of incivility and hence of unmanliness."³⁰⁸ However, the increasing proliferation of stuff and diversions made such control difficult. As Ian Moulton points out: "Urban growth—and the development of urban institutions like public playhouses and the book market—was creating new

³⁰⁷ *Materializing Gender*, 152.

³⁰⁸ *Flaunting*, 48.

and disturbing sites for sensual corruption.”³⁰⁹ With more leisure time and more possibilities for ways to spend that time, exercising consumptive temperance became more difficult, and therefore, more desirable. One way to ensure that moderation remained an elite characteristic was to castigate excess among the non-elite; the fop figure becomes a site of this castigation on stage. While city comedies insist that taste requires an unspoken—and even unspeakable—quality of discernment, one favor that the early modern English theater perhaps did for its audience members was to provide them lessons in how to identify, and therefore avoid becoming, a fop.

How to Tell if a Fop is a Fop: *Wit at Several Weapons*

By virtue of his name, his brand of courting foolishness, his homoerotic attention to boys, and the ways in which other characters perceive his affected behavior, I turn here to Sir Gregory Fop in Middleton and Rowley’s *Wit at Several Weapons* as an example of the foppish city-dweller character. Middleton, like Jonson, often gives his characters names that reflect personality traits to be either ridiculed or celebrated.³¹⁰ Such a tradition would extend into the Restoration, applying perhaps most strikingly to the then wildly popular fop characters.³¹¹ He is first in a line of characters whom audiences and readers can

³⁰⁹ *Before Pornography: Erotic Writing in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 73.

³¹⁰ On pages 21-22 of his critical edition of the play (*Wit at Several Weapons: A Critical Edition*. Diss. University of Auckland, 1982), Iain Sharp acknowledges this Middletonian tendency, with help from W.D. Dunkel’s *The Dramatic Technique of Thomas Middleton in his Comedies of London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925), 54.

³¹¹ Most specifically, I’m thinking of Sir Fopling Flutter in George Etherege’s *Man of Mode* (1676) and Lord Foppington in Vanbrugh’s *The Relapse*, previously discussed above. Interestingly, Cibber reworked *Wit at Several Weapons* for his 1709 *The Rival Fools*, a play in

identify as a fop by his name alone, and therefore expect certain foppish behaviors from him. I read him as an important step in the development of the character of the Restoration fop, not only for his name, but also for the satirical commentary he offers that resembles the social critiques in eighteenth-century drama.

However, as I show in the reading of the play that follows, his identity as a fop is complicated and contradictory, which speak to the messiness surrounding foppish identity that has been shown to be a pattern in this study. Sir Gregory and his fellow fops in *Wit* illuminate how some of the practices and materials of foppery discussed above, namely clothes and suggestive connections with young boys, get used in creating characters' identities. Following the reading of this play, I provide more extensive critical and historical background of these materials before turning back to Middleton's fops and moving on to Jonson's.

To discuss this under-studied play, a brief plot summary becomes necessary.³¹² The play comprises two plots.³¹³ The first, and most prominent, involves Sir Perfidious Oldcraft, a conniving old knight who insists that his son

which he played Samuel Simple, a version of Pompey Doodle. Cibber renames the Sir Gregory Fop character Sir Gregory Goofe. Sharp claims that Cibber "relentlessly plagiarised" and that *The Rival Fools* is "more theft than adaptation" (75). The play—and Cibber's portrayal of Samuel Simple in particular—were not well received. See Sharp 80-82.

³¹² Michael Dobson, the play's most recent editor for the 2007 Clarendon *Collected Works of Middleton*, points out that this play has received very little attention, except from attribution specialists, a fact he calls "a story of spectacularly missed opportunity" (981). Iain Sharp's critical edition of the play with introductory and critical material that heavily follow the attributional tradition. Those who have discussed the play's attribution include: Richard Hindry Barker (*Thomas Middleton*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1958) 177-180; Cyrus Hoy, "The Shares of Fletcher and His Collaborators in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon" (*Studies in Bibliography*. 13(1960)) 77-92; David Lake, *The Canon of Thomas Middleton's Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975) 198-214; and MacDonald P. Jackson, *Studies in Attribution: Middleton and Shakespeare (Salzburg Studies in English Literature, Jacobean Drama Series*. 79 (1979)) 129-127. In addition, Norman A. Brittan includes a brief section on the play's plot with some critical commentary in his Twayne study on Middleton (*Thomas Middleton*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1972. 79-81).

³¹³ Sharp calls them "co-plots" as a way to demonstrate the integrative skill with which the Middleton-Rowley team wrote (53).

Wittypate live by his wits in order to inherit his fortune. The play follows Wittypate's efforts to trick his father with a series of frauds in an effort to ensure his fortune and demonstrate his already sharp wit. The second plot is entwined with the first: Oldcraft also has a Niece, otherwise unnamed, whom he plans to marry off to the foolish Sir Gregory Fop, a landed lord, and dupe out of one third of her dowry. Instead, the Niece falls in love with the penniless Cunningame, a gallant second brother who financially depends on Sir Gregory. Their courtship takes shape as a match of wits, with each lover trying to make the other jealous by feigning interest in inappropriate suitors. The play's ending sees the two matched with the help of Wittypate, Sir Gregory duped into marriage with the low-born and poor Mirabell, and Oldcraft defeated in his efforts to retain his estate. Like so many city comedies, the play brings together the old guard of landowners and new guard of up-and-coming urban young men. With a tertiary plot involving the financially desperate Sir and Lady Ruinous Gentry as roguish tricksters, the play comments on the emergence of a new social order that carries with it new behavioral expectations, especially in terms of gender.

As a lover, Sir Gregory displays foppish tendencies. Unlike Jack Dapper in *The Roaring Girl*, who is discussed later in this chapter, Sir Gregory does not overtly cavort with ingles, however, several homoerotic references bespeak his sexual effeminacy and inexperience. Cunningame, a poor ward of sorts to the Fop estate, financially depends on his foolish provider. Playing on this parasitic relationship, Sir Gregory remarks, "why, his supper / Lies i' my breeches here"

(I.i.142-3).³¹⁴ Additionally, Pompey indicates the possibility of he and his master lying together in a sexual pun. When Niece insists that the clown shouldn't "lie," he responds, "Not with a lasy? I'd rather lie with you than lie with my master, by your leave, in such a case as this" (II.ii.150-152). Though two men sharing a bed was often an issue of practicality, the sexual overtones of the exchange between the Niece and Pompey here suggests that there may be a sexual element to this particular arrangement, making Sir Gregory's sexual preferences suspect, though not entirely inappropriate. Sharp offers another possible example, claiming that the Oldcraft's description of the Niece's coach driven by a "coachman/ Sitting bare-headed to [the horses'] Flanders buttocks" (I.i.129-130) is supposed to sexually excite Sir Gregory because of the reference to the female horses' haunches.³¹⁵ The image might also sexually excite because of its resemblance to an erect male penis. These examples are admittedly thin evidence based on speculation and report, and Sir Gregory's sexual practices with boys and men are certainly not as important in the development of his character as they are with other fops.

Unlike the other fops in this chapter and in this study, it is not Sir Gregory's sexual excess but his sexual inexperience that makes him effeminate. Sir Perfidious rightly surmises that Fop is a virgin: "This is wondrous rare! Come you to London with a maidenhead, knight?" (III.i.23-24). Sir Gregory confirms, "I keep it for your niece" (29). The rarity of virginity among knights is remarkable because it speaks to Sir Gregory's lack of effort to fit into the

³¹⁴ All citations from the play are taken from *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), which Michael Dobson edited.

³¹⁵ *Wit at Several Weapons* n. 131, p. 221

masculine paradigm. The feminine connotation of “maidenhead” effeminates him further. Later in the scene, after being abused yet again by the Niece, Sir Gregory references his maidenhead, declaring, “I am a maiden knight, and cannot look / Upon a naked weapon with any modesty, / Else ‘twould go hard with me” (226). In this pun, the virginal and homoerotic come together to paint a particularly effeminate picture of the fop. This declaration comes after he is has proven a coward and a useless suitor for the Niece’s hand.

Sir Gregory also differs from other fops in this chapter because he is not a city-dweller per se. Rather, like his gullish brethren, he is country gentleman, a visitor to the city and ignorant of its ways. He is akin to Sogliardo from *Every Man out* in this way. Easily duped in the many tricks in place at his expense, he has a lot in common with the gull, and indeed might be read as such. It must be said that because of his countrified ignorance and despite his name, Fop is perhaps the least pure fop in this chapter. He is not of the city; he is not a “man-about-town.” As Oldcraft tells us, he is “Fop of Fop Hall” (I.i.103). Yet unlike many gulls, Sir Gregory does not seem in awe of the city or its customs. He is honest in his ignorance, but that honesty has little value in a play that values savviness and manipulation. Rather than this city-dweller being defined by a tasteless relationship with the city, his foppishness is declared by the witty, urban characters around him, Oldcraft and Cunningame in particular.

Sir Gregory’s sartorial extravagance is more subtle in the text than the excessive attention to fashion displayed by other city-dwelling fops; in fact, he talks very little about his own costume. What we know of his sartorial choice is

limited: an obscure reference in Act I, scene i indicates that he may be wearing a red and black costume (148)³¹⁶ and Cunninggame later identifies him by his broad brimmed hat at lines 227-228 in Act IV, scene i. However, Cunninggame rails against Sir Gregory and his vapidty with specific reference to how the fop dresses. He imparts the following description of Sir Gregory:

He's the nearest kin to a woman, of a thing
Made without substance, that a man can find again.
Some petticoat begot him, I'll be whipped else,
Engend'ring with an old pair of paned hose
Lying in some hot chamber o'er the kitchen;
Very stem bred him.
He never grew where *rem in re* e're came;
The generation of a hundred such
Cannot make a man stand in a white sheet,
For 'tis no act in law; nor can a constable
Pick out a bawdy business for Bridewell in't.
A lamentable case.

He's got with a man's urine, like a mandrake. (IV.i.286-98)
The insinuation here is that Sir Gregory is not a real man, so much so that

Cunninggame posits that he must have been conceived in some way other than heterosexual intercourse. In his anger, the wit uses mixed metaphors to explain: at first, he declares that Sir Gregory must be the product of a dirty petticoat and old paneled breeches³¹⁷ because he is comprised of nothing but steam. In the same speech, however, Cunninggame claims that the Fop must have been begotten via male urine instead of semen, "like a mandrake," which, as Sharp points out,

³¹⁶ Both Dobson (n.148-9, p. 985) and Sharp (n. 148-149, p. 223) refer to the costume as foppish, though I see no real reason *in the text* that this should be the case. The red might be audacious or expensive, but considering there are no other direct references to Sir Gregory's clothing, sartorial choice for performance seems to be a less important part of a foppish personality in this case, at least based on the limited evidence we have of his costume.

³¹⁷ Dobson points out that breeches like these with different colored panels would have been old-fashioned by the seventeenth century (n.289, p. 1012), perhaps indicating that Cunninggame accuses Sir Gregory of being unfashionable.

was a phallic-shaped plant steeped in folklore.³¹⁸ Sir Gregory is a man without parts, “a woman.” These mixed metaphors reveal that even if the practice of sartorial excess must be *assigned* to a foppish character, the important takeaway of this quality is that it belies effeminacy, even womanishness. This description calls attention to his effeminacy, a harsh accusation from a rival lover, but accurate nonetheless. In Sir Gregory’s case, urban foppishness, at least as it is judged by sartorial competence, is constructed and assigned by the taste-making city wits around him, rather than is inherent in his character.

The play insists that it is decidedly *not* Sir Gregory who pieces himself together with clothing, but rather his servant Pompey Doodle who offends in this way. Immediately after he speaks the above tirade against Fop, Cunningame comments of Pompey’s appearance upon his entrance: “How now? Ha! What prodigious bravery’s this? / A most preposterous gallant; the doublet / Sits as if it mocked the breeches” (IV.i.299-300). The clown character—and the play’s man with the least social power—Pompey appears ridiculous and easily read via his adoption of gallant costume. While Sir Gregory can pose politely—and dangerously—among the city wits by marrying into them and traveling with Cunningame as a sort of city wit passport, Pompey’s lack of social power excludes him entirely. He merely plays dress up, much like the actors in the play being performed. The Niece’s abuse of Pompey the clown as a potential lover is the tipping point for Cunningame to recognize that her meandering affections for Sir Gregory are merely part of her witty game. Pompey’s master’s attempt at

³¹⁸ *Wit at Several Weapons* n. 299, p. 269.

infiltrating a social world beneath his station prove similarly difficult, and is ultimately socially punished in a different way.

The play makes clear that Sir Gregory is an old-world country gentlemen among savvy urban gallants with a skill set he lacks. Fop understands that he is an outsider in this world, but he misinterprets what makes him such. As early as Act I, scene ii, he begins to chalk his wooing failures up to his lack of a profession, lamenting that he is not a scholar or a soldier, two professions he believes the Niece would deem manly and desirable. He fails to see that the commodity the Niece desires is wit. He understands enough to know that his own brand of masculinity that is entirely tied up in his title and land are not enough in this urban environment, but he looks to the wrong brands of masculinity to replace it. Being unable to prove himself through a profession, Sir Gregory relies on conveying his worthiness as a man—or, for his immediate purposes, his worthiness as a suitor and husband—through material goods. He sends love tokens—a diamond, a scarf, a musical troupe—instead of showing his wit, like Cunningame does. He runs all over London collecting these tokens and attempting to better himself to win the Niece, not realizing that what he lacks is not for sale. He is a fish out of water; a fop outside of Fop Hall. He becomes an emblem of an archaic value system.

That he must attempt to negotiate the urban landscape at all as part of his wooing efforts baffles Sir Gregory; he does not understand why his title is not enough to win the Niece. What he does recognize is that urban values place little emphasis on traditional sites of cultural power. As Sharp points out, “Formerly

perhaps, a small, select, pedigreed coterie exercised a monopoly on eloquence, wit, and charm. Now, if Sir Gregory is to any extent representative of the peerage, the ancien regime is short on minds as well as funds.”³¹⁹ The fop’s ignorance stands in for the ignorance of his social class, the cluelessness of the gentry to the new system of cultural value in place among the increasingly wealthy and influential city dwellers. This ignorance comes out in his attempts as a suitor. After one of Sir Gregory’s several disastrous attempts at wooing the Niece, Sir Perfidious declares him a fop for the very reason of his ignorance: “Go, you’re a brainless cox, a toy, a fop / (I’ll go no farther than your name, Sir Gregory, / I’ll right myself there); were you from this place / You should perceive I’m heartily angry with you” (III.i.148-51). Emphasizing that Sir Gregory is no Londoner, Oldcraft asserts that the foppish suitor’s ineptitude results from his hereditary seat. In this urban world where wit is king, Sir Gregory is literally no more than a F[f]op. He continues on to insult Sir Gregory’s “manners” in similar terms: “You’re a coxcomb!... An idle, shallow fool - ... Fortune may very well provide thee lordships, / For honesty has left thee little manners” (154-58). Under Oldcraft’s urban brand of masculinity, honesty is foolish, and Sir Gregory is guilty of it too often: he owns up to being a virgin, to not being well-trained with women, to allowing Cunninggame to be a parasite, etc. “Manners” here have little to do with politeness, but refer instead to the ways of the city. The fop’s failure angers Oldcraft because he needs Sir Gregory’s title to raise up his family’s reputation. The old knight sees his success and his family name as contingent upon striking the right power balance between urban money and country titles.

³¹⁹ Sharp, 55.

Almost the entire cast of *Wit at Several Weapons* is invested in the symbiotic relationship between country and city and the systems of power they represent. (The exception seems to be Wittypate, whose masculine “success” is defined by his wit, rather than a match with a wealthy partner.) Cunningame’s financial reliance of Sir Gregory reminds us that even the wits are tied to the old establishment of patrilineal hierarchy and inheritance. His access to the city and his success within that landscape are made possible by his association with a landed family; Sir Gregory, after all, introduces him into the plot and into London. Once there, however, Cunningame proves a successful city-dweller, securing for himself an urban, witty, and most importantly, a monied wife. He will no longer need the holder of the Fop seat to sustain himself as a fashionable man. Contrastingly, the play insists the fop will now need the city. Though the characters never express the sentiment forthrightly, Sir Gregory agrees to marry the Niece, whom he has never seen before the play begins, for financial reasons. She (supposedly) brings with her a substantial fortune, so he may very well be using her as so many ruined gentlemen use wealthy young women. Even Sir Gregory’s marriage to Mirabell, arguably his punishment for being an effeminate and unsuccessful suitor, insists on this connection. By marrying a city girl who lives under Oldcraft’s roof, Sir Gregory’s ties to the London household and the city itself will remain in tact. In other words the play tells us, the influx of Fops is not over. In a society caught in limbo between the old order of cultural capital produced by land and the new cultural capital produced by taste, there will be other Sir Gregories who need London money, and other London money that need

Sir Gregories. *Wit at Several Weapons*, then, does not demonstrate how to eradicate foppishness, an act that the play seems to insist is impossible, but rather it shows how to deal with it in a way that is manageable. The first step in this process is identification. In this play and in others of the period, stage fops were beginning to be identified by the “things” with which they appeared on stage.

Clothes and Sexual Practice as Markers of Foppishness

One aspect of Sir Gregory as a character that makes him legible as a fop is his wardrobe, which others comment upon throughout the play. In early modern England, anti-theatrical tracts put a lot of emphasis on the potential for clothes to make invisible a man’s true essence and render him unreadable. In her important study on cross-dressing in the period, Laura Levine contends that the underlying fear of the practice contained in such tracts was that, “There is nothing essential about [a] ‘valiant man’s’ identity: it slips away from him with his clothes. At the same time there is something permanent and, therefore, essential and clearly monstrous locked away ‘inside’ him, his capacity... for womanishness itself.”³²⁰ Clothing, partly responsible for materializing the fop, temporarily masks a lack of gentlemanly essence, and also acts as a constant reminder that the lack exists underneath.³²¹ Too much attention to outward markers of gender and status, such as fop figures display in their sartorial practices, force the viewer to question his authenticity as an “actor” within the society he attempts to traverse. In her study

³²⁰ *Men in Women’s Clothing: Anti-theatricality and Effeminization, 1579-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 24.

³²¹ I see a connection here with potential psychoanalytic readings of the fop’s effeminacy and the Lacanian concept of “lack.” However, I do not have the space in this project to tackle this connection fully. I do incorporate some of these concepts into my reading of Laxton and Moll Cutpurse in *The Roaring Girl* later in the chapter.

on style, subversion, and masculinity in the period, Bailey proposes that a certain group of disenfranchised young men used clothing to subvert dominant cultural ideas; she convincingly argues that such men created a new measurement of social status through their appropriation of style and therefore helped to change the traditional rules of the status game.³²² However, the fop differs from these young men in intention, for he dresses as a way *impress and infiltrate* the dominant culture, playing into and reasserting a failing patriarchal system of power by being pushed to its margins.

In their quest to impress, city-dwelling fops take up myriad sartorial weapons: silk stockings, feathers, short breeches, colorful scarves, gilded swords, velvet caps, entire new suits, boot spurs. In reference to the famous portrait of Collie Cibber as Vanbrugh's Lord Foppington, Mark Dawson identifies the following materials as signifying "fop:" large wigs, gold trim, gilded but useless swords, snuff boxes, heavy jewelry, numerous buttons, high-heeled shoes, and many other extravagant garments and accessories.³²³ The fop's investment in his clothes signals not only his superficial interest in aesthetic beauty, but more importantly his calculated and affected persona, for his materials are meant to provide a glimpse into his extravagant lifestyle that is so often fabricated. Susan Vincent claims that because of the dismissal of the sumptuary laws at the turn of the seventeenth century, England saw, "A re-coding of sartorial display, which would culminate in notions of vulgarity, restraint and discretion" and that "Social

³²² Bailey, *passim*.

³²³ Dawson, 148.

credit... [was] established through sartorial credit.”³²⁴ Prior to the repeal of such laws, gentlemen not only dressed to out do each other, but to appear superior. Dawson explains, “dressing to dazzle inferiors was superfluous precisely because the gentleman’s superior birth would shine through without such finery... action foppishly... was redundant if one believed (along with one’s fellow gentry) to be naturally superior.”³²⁵ Quite simply, the fop’s flamboyancy discredits his social aims. It stands to reason then that the fop’s over-eager attention to his apparel that creates and displays his person extends to an over-eager attention to other accessories that suggest wealth and status as well. Carriages, homes, and company too become materials that fops use to manufacture their reputations, and often--as happened often to real-life social aspirants--usher in their undoing.³²⁶

In the city comedies, the trademark foppish pride in the display of such items results from a wide array of reasons. At the heart of all of them is the fop’s desire to appear wealthy, and therefore appear to be a members of the monied elite. Foppish city-dwellers covet some objects because of their exoticism or foreignness, a quality closely aligned with the so-called Frenchified fop of the Restoration. Knowledge of Continental fashion and customs becomes a brand of social currency because it signals a worldliness obtainable through wealth and experience, though of course, many foppish characters lack both of these qualities. Other materials signal a fop’s propensity for excess: for example, even if feathers are certifiably a fashion among gentlemen, he might wear *too many*

³²⁴ *Dressing the Elite: Clothes in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Berg Press, 2003), 94.

³²⁵ Dawson, 161.

³²⁶ Conspicuous consumption has been written about from many angles. Scholars who have engaged this subject include Bailey and Newman. Historian Laurence Stone’s analysis of this trend at court is also of interest here. See *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 86-88.

feathers. Garishness in spending, like Fastidious Brisk displays with his innumerable suits in Jonson's *Every Man out of His Humour*, indicates more than a fop's foolishness; it testifies to his effeminacy. As Karen Newman has shown, shopping and over-spending had become a decidedly feminine vice by the beginning of the seventeenth century.³²⁷ To be excessive was to be womanish. The materials of foppery, then, are materials that can also signal gentility if they are used or displayed in a moderate manner. It is the *overabundance* of "stuff" foppish characters use to create and falsely represent themselves that make material practices excessive.

An inclination for the social and sexual company of boys signals some fops' excessiveness in a different way. As we see with Sir Gregory, who is decidedly *non-excessive* in his sexual behavior, sexual transgression or even the suggestion of it, can be telling clues of foppishness. In his influential study *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*, Alan Bray surveys a bevy of late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth satirical literature ranging from pamphlets and satires to poetry and drama that concerns itself with the representation of sodomites. One of the conclusions he reaches is that, "The sodomite is a young man-about-town, with his mistress on one arm and his 'catamite' on the other; he is indolent, extravagant and debauched."³²⁸ He is quick to warn his reader, however, to not take this conclusion too far: his characterization of the early modern sodomite is a sweeping stereotype unconcerned with individual behaviors, and therefore, he posits, useless in understanding how homosexuals

³²⁷ *Fashioning Femininity and English Renaissance Drama* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), Passim.

³²⁸ *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 34.

and the practice of homosexuality appeared in England in the early modern period. For the purpose of this study, one that is concerned with the establishment of just such a stereotype, Bray's observation proves useful. In much of the literature to which Bray points, the sodomite is a particularly urban phenomenon: he is a "man-about-town." Writers John Marston, Michael Drayton, Edward Guilpin, Richard Braithwaite, Thomas Middleton, Ben Jonson, Philip Stubbes, and a myriad of others comment on the vice of sodomy with specific reference to London and its gentry.³²⁹

I am interested in the boys—ingles and catamites³³⁰—who participated in sodomitical practice, as they become symbolic materializations of foppish, effeminate masculinity. A sexual taste in young boys is one aspect of a fop's self-fashioning, one realization of his excessiveness. Rather than the sexual act itself, it is the particular display of ingles as objects that marks their use as effeminate and foppish. Aside from its reference to the particularly urban quality of the sodomite, Bray's above characterization of sodomites also focuses on how—and with what—such young men presented themselves. With an analogous appropriation of accessories in service of creating his persona, the fop figure gets one thing right in his burgeoning capitalistic economy: "Subjectivity is mediated

³²⁹ Bray argues that this urban focus was a result of satirists' general discontent with the state of vice in London and ties it to these writers being fed up with the extravagance of the Court which brought the gentry to the city.

³³⁰ Gregory Bredbeck outlines the different period terms used to reference sex between men and same-sex sexual partners with reference to several early modern lexicons. See *Sodomy and Interpretation: Marlowe to Milton* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 17-18. In *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama*, DiGangi devotes a significant amount of critical space to the figure of the ingle. See especially 64-71.

and realized by material objects.”³³¹ Catamites become merely one brand of material marker of foppish identity present in these plays.

We must be careful, however, of to strictly linking sexual practice with excessive behavior, for, as Bray warns, “[Satires] all make much of the clothes, behaviour and lifestyles of the sodomites they describe, but there is nothing specific to homosexuality in their descriptions: they were not intended to convey homosexuality alone but sexual and material indulgence in general.”³³² Most of the city-dwelling fops in this chapter have a taste for sartorial decadence, but only a few are also defined by their sexually-charged interactions with young boys. Jack Dapper in Middleton and Dekker’s *The Roaring Girl* and Fastidious Brisk and Sogliardo in Jonson’s *Every Man out of His Humour* are the examples of foppish characters who have such interactions, though some of Jonson’s taste-making gallants also reference their “ingles,” particularly Clerimont in *Epicoene*.

A sexual taste for women, too, was often read as effeminate and, I claim, foppish. Just as shopping and sartorial excess were feminine traits, so too were unquenchable sexual appetites.³³³ The perceived need to regulate women and their bodies was born partially out of the belief that women’s naturally unbalanced humors made them more susceptible to their impulses and thus more

³³¹ Bailey, 5.

³³² *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*, 135.

³³³ Many critics have discussed the early modern idea that women’s sexual appetite needed to be regulated because they were naturally more lustful than men. See especially: Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990); Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1993); Valerie Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); and Will Fisher, *Materializing Gender*. For arguments that link feminine sexual appetite to shopping and consumption, see Karen Newman, *Fashioning Femininity*, and Janette Dillon, *Theatre, Court, and City, 1595-1610: Drama and Social Space in London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

susceptible to give in to sexual desires. It follows that men who did not practice moderation when it came to sex were thought of as effeminate in this regard. A fop character like La Foole in Jonson's *Epicoene* brags of his sexual conquests with women to the opposite of his desired effect: instead of appearing more manly because of his numerous liaisons with women, he appears more effeminate because he is sexually indiscreet and publicly intemperate. Gossip about women becomes one type of material marker that makes the fop recognizable. Such excessiveness characterizes some of the earliest iterations of city-dwelling fops that can be seen in Jonson's "humours plays."

Jonson's Humoral Fops

Jonson's emphasis on satire as a dramatic mode of representation makes his plays fertile grounds for producing fop figures. Jonson's city comedies are particularly suited for the kind of analysis invited by identifying city-dwelling fops because, as Adam Zucker claims, "With precision and with a native's perspective, [Jonson] calls up scenarios of local settlement and immediate knowledge that interact with the broader conception in the period that London's growth and diversification over time put stress on and even threatened to undo the social fabric of the city."³³⁴ The presence of fop figures in Jonson's plays bring to the forefront brands of such social stress, most prominently, the social stress placed upon shifting definitions of masculinity as it was related to taste and urban know-how. According to DiGangi, in his satire Jonson bases the definition of

³³⁴ "London and Urban Space" *Ben Jonson in Context*, Ed. Julie Sanders (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 100.

ideal masculinity on “the homosocial fellowship of aggressive male wits.”³³⁵

Additionally, success in his satirical plays is about “cultural competence in the arena of urban space,” as James Mardock writes.³³⁶ In Jonsonian city comedy, fop figures’ inability to achieve mastery over their spatial surroundings and the behaviors tied up with the urban culture render the characters ridiculous but potentially dangerous figures.

To examine the ways in which particular city-dwelling fops introduce notions of social stress into Jonson’s city comedies, his humour plays, *Every Man in His Humour* (1598) and *Every Man out of His Humour* (1599), are good places to start. Neither play—at least in their original iterations—is strictly a city comedy, despite being set in London. However, before the publication of the *Works Folio* in 1616, Jonson revised *Every Man In* to be a city comedy,³³⁷ placing the action in London and Anglicizing characters’ names. Even before the revision, though, there were several references to contemporary London that were clearly meant to resonate with indoor theatre audiences. These plays show that Jonson’s taste for city comedy was beginning to take root even before his collaboration with George Chapman and John Marston for *Eastward Ho* in 1605, a play that Mardock claims “whetted Jonson’s appetite” for the genre.³³⁸ With this growing appetite came a growing interest in presenting the performativity of

³³⁵ *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama*, 68.

³³⁶ *Our Scene is London: Ben Jonson’s City and the Space of the Author* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 23.

³³⁷ A note about dating here: The title page of the Italianate version of the play claims the play was performed by the Lord Chamberlain’s Men in 1598. The revision date, however, is less clear. Most scholars speculate that the play had been revised by 1605 for its revival performance at court by the King’s Men. The only revision date we can be sure of is that it had been revised for the 1616 *Works Folio*.

³³⁸ Mardock, 67.

city life and the relationship between the everyday behavior of London's residents and the cultural projects of the theater itself. As part of this trend, Jonson began to focus his comedy on mocking the widespread affectation he saw around him. His use of foppish characters has not gone unnoticed; Robert Heilman identifies several Jonsonian characters as direct predecessors to the Restoration fop,³³⁹ and DiGangi often uses "fop" to indicate certain personality traits of Jonson's fools.³⁴⁰ City-dwelling fops abound in his work, and it is impossible to discuss them all in any depth in a single chapter. I have chosen *Every Man in His Humour* and *Every Man out of His Humor* as representative works containing fops who inhabit urban space and who construct their identities through the pursuit and display of materials associated with idealized urban masculinity.

I begin with *Every Man in His Humor*, both because it chronologically comes first and because it demonstrates Jonson's early interest in urban space and the fops that live in them. It is, as Gabriele Bernhard Jackson claims, the first of his comedies, "that held all the flavors of the mature harvest... All Jonson's characteristic concerns, values, turns of mind and phrase, dramatic techniques, structural designs."³⁴¹ One of the characteristic concerns present in this play is Jonson's focus on peer judgement. In Claude Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth's opinion, the characters in *Every Man In* can be divided into two categories, with two social ends: "Fools lack self-knowledge and, as a consequence, do not perceive the true nature of the world and fail to participate

³³⁹ "Some Fops and Some Versions of Foppery" *ELH* 49 (1982), 394.

³⁴⁰ See particularly DiGangi's analysis of *Every Man Out* in *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama*, 67-72.

³⁴¹ "Every Man in His Humor: The Comedy of Non-Interaction." *Critical Essays on Ben Jonson*. Ed. Robert N. Watson (New York: G.K. Hall & Co. 1997), 112.

positively in human society. Wits, on the other hand, know themselves and thereby the world about them. Such knowledge makes them able both to perceive and to uphold desirable social values.”³⁴² Of course, there are elements of the fop and his gallant foil in this distinction, especially in the identified difference between self-awareness. However, I believe that not all fools in *Every Man in* are equal, and that the city-dwelling fop figures do fruitful critical work that goes beyond identifying a social problem; they show the social dangers that such foolish behavior presents.

Similarly, the fop figures in *Every Man in* offer the audience a chance to practice their own judgement on the masculinity of all of these characters, an opportunity Jonson encourages in his 1616 prologue to the play. He chides his audience for having “graced monsters” with their praise, but hopes that the contemporary urbanity of the plot and setting will instead make them “like men” (30).³⁴³ Here, Jonson expresses hope that the audience will appreciate men whom he presents as recognizable as men by virtue of their wit, rather than merely laughing at the “monstrous” antics of fools and fops. Fop figures in both *Every Man in* and *Every Man out* are driven by their humours but not all of the humour characters are fop. In *Every Man in*, Jonson defines “humor” as “a gentlemen-like monster, bred, in the special gallantry of our time, by affectation; and fed by folly” (III.iv.18-20). All of the men in the play, then, are foppish, since they are all vexed by a personal humor that indicates affectation. The witty characters,

³⁴² *Ben Jonson Revised* (New York: Twayne, 1999), 36.

³⁴³ All citations for *Every Man In His Humour* are from the Oxford Series edition, Ed. G.A. Wilkes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). For the reason that I analyze this play specifically within the context of city-comedy, I use an edition that reflects Jonson’s 1616 folio revisions.

however, overcome their humor, escaping a state of foppishness. In this play, the foppish state occurs when humoral characters strive to be folded into the normative paradigm of men, a paradigm defined by one's ability to be witty. Three characters from *Every Man In*—Bobadil, Stephen, and Matthew—can be classified as fop figures whose presence provoke inquiry into these systems of judgement.

In the previous chapter, I examine Captain Bobadil from this play as an example of a soldier fop, concentrating in part on how his relationship to the city belies his foppish nature. The captain is a good example of how foppishness as a character classification can and should be fluid, for Bobadil is indeed foppish in his identity as a city-dweller as well as in his identity as a soldier. For this section, however, I concentrate on the play's seemingly gullish characters, Stephen and Matthew, to show that reading them as fops rather than gulls better aligns the characters with Jonson's satirical intention toward urban life. Though they are both foolish, at first it seems that they are meant to represent contrasting brands of folly; Master Stephen is listed on the *dramatis personae* as "a country gull," while Master Matthew is listed as "the town gull." Stephen's narrative does indeed follow the prodigal path, tracing a lucky, inherited young man from the country as he squanders his fortune in pursuit of pleasure and a fashionable persona. Matthew is a different kind of gull; he is entrenched in the city that he inhabits, but coming from a citizen's background (he is the son of a fishmonger) he does not understand the intricacies of its upper echelon's social systems, and so he attempts to infiltrate the system through flattery and foolish spending. Their

brands of foppishness are different, but both rely on the materials taken up by city-dwelling fops. Likewise, both fops probe the foundations of ideas about urban masculinity embodied by the witty gallant figures Edward Knowell and Wellbred through a series of unsuccessful affectations.

Master Stephen is a city fop rather than a country gull because he comes to London to earnestly and eagerly learn and practice fashions that are part of the social fabric of London. He lacks authenticity as he strives to be viewed as a gentleman who understands the latest fads, such as hawking, hunting, and smart dress. He seeks to learn to be gentlemanly but lacks the natural ability. In the first scene of the play, he wants to learn hawking, a process he has set in motion by purchasing all of the requisite materials: “I have bought me a hawk, and a hood and bells, and all; I lack nothing but a book to keep it by” (I.i.33-35). He plays by the book rather than by instinct, and his manners are effortful, not effortless as a true gallant’s should be. He foolishly believes that buying the materials for hawking make him adept in the field. But old Knowell reveals the fop’s true character; he has an “unseasoned, quarrelling, rude fashion: / And still [he] huff[s] it, with a kind of carriage, As void of wit as of humanity” (I.ii.30-32). Wit and humanity become the standards by which gentleman are judged, at least publicly. Master Stephen has neither, and he is rude, but he has license to traverse the city and take part in its entertainments.

Master Stephen is afforded a certain amount of credibility by virtue of his social position; we are told that he is Knowell’s, the old gentleman’s, nephew and second heir, and so he is allowed access to the fashionable homes and taverns of

the city. The play's subplot calls attention to the necessity of the fop figure to be of a certain social status by presenting a potential fop in Cob, who affects a gentlemanly propensity for tobacco and does so to excess. In Cob, a poor water-bearer, Jonson proffers a character who "masterfully parodie[s]"³⁴⁴ the foppish characters' affectations and silly tastes. But Cob's low social rank makes his attempts at fashionability laughable rather than threatening. While foolish for affecting similar behaviors, Master Stephen is less a parody and more a real problem, for he has legitimate access to the urban social spaces occupied by "true" gallants, and so carries with him the possibility for being taken as authentic in a way low characters like Cob never can.

The play features prominently scenes in which Stephen seeks and achieves material objects associated with ideal forms of masculinity. The audience sees him purchasing an inauthentic field rapier and stealing a cloak, two actions that ultimately draw attention to his effeminacy. Ever annoyed by Stephen's unending quest to keep up with city fashions, his cousin Knowell imparts this advice, "not to spend your coin on every bable that you fancy or every foolish brain that humours you" (I.i.61-63). Stephen is almost immediately presented to be driven by consumption of goods, and it seems, of people's "brains," or opinions. Like the foppish practice of overspending on and carriages, extravagant parties and sartorial excesses, Stephen's habits threaten his fortune. He would be better served to be temperate in his behavior. Knowell goes on to tell his cousin not to "blaze" too brightly into the social circle of the urban elite, but "stand sober and contain yourself" (76). On a similar note, Knowell ends the scene with this

³⁴⁴ Summers and Pebworth, 37.

advice, “Nor stand so much on your gentility, which is an airy and mere borrowed thing, From dead men’s dust and bones: and none of your except you make or hold it” (I.i.80-83). So the fop is neither to affect gallantry by purchasing goods nor brag about his fortune or social position by flaunting those purchases.

Stephen, of course, should have heeded his cousin’s advice and ignored the rapier and the cloak as means through which to gain social credibility. They become Stephen’s specific materials of foppishness, and their meanings reflect his character and drive his narrative. The sword, a symbol of martial masculinity, is inauthentic and exaggerated in its appearance; much like its purchaser, it is a cheap imitation. The sword, it turns out, is nothing but, “A poor provant rapier, no better” (III.i.151). As a replacement for the sword, Stephen steals a cloak to be his outward marker, perhaps a complement his silk stockings that show “his reasonable good leg” (I.iii.39). While the act of theft reflects its thief’s desire to mimic and steal the ideas of the gallants around him, it is merely the garment of Downright, a “plain squire malcontent” as the *dramatis personae* lists him. So, Stephen does not even choose the right materials with which to pose. These items reflect misguided and shallow attempts at emulating an elusive code of gallant conduct.

As in so many of Jonson’s plays, the code of conduct governing appropriate behavior in *Every Man in* is abstract at best. Mardock argues that, “[T]he play’s characters define the moral space of London just as tangents can describe a circle in geometry; the absent moral center of the play—the mainly unillustrated virtues that oppose the foolish errors of the humorous characters—

emerges from the combined understanding of the characters' practices of moral space.³⁴⁵ Even though old Knowell suggests that what makes a gentleman is wit and humanity, as discussed above, these characteristics are curiously absent in the play. Old Knowell himself scoffs at such decorum when concocts a scheme to remedy his son Edward of his "idle" (I.i.17) and "vain" (i.i.23) interest in poetry and practice of consorting with unsavory gentlemen like Wellbred, especially since it means going back on his initial word that he would not restrain "the unbridled course of youth in him" (I.ii.14). Even Edward Knowell and Wellbred, who clearly create the standards for and police through ridicule what can be deemed appropriate behavior in the play, exhibit humoral tendencies that flirt with the foppish. Wellbred's letter that so disturbs old Knowell characterizes him as a "man-about-town" who favors the company of whores, making Edward Knowell's choice to be his friend morally suspect. The trickery in which they both engage make them less-than-stellar examples of upstanding young men. Their own brand of morality consists of creating for themselves a superior rank from which they can sit in judgement of the foolish and foppish men beneath them.

Edward and Wellbred's main target for ridicule is Master Matthew, a "rhymmer," as Wellbred tells us, who, "Doth think himself Poet-major, o' the town" (I.ii.75-76). Master Matthew offers another example of a city-dwelling fop in *Every Man In*, and one who is much more explicitly entrenched in his urban environment. His foppishness is expressed through poetry, certainly less tangible and tied up with the economic commentary on the free market that the play might

³⁴⁵ *Our Scene is London*, 51.

offer, but intricately tied up in versions of masculinity that the play holds dear. Old Knowell sets the plot (thin as it is in this play) in motion by expressing concern about his son's desire to be continue to be a university student and poet. However, as Edward's relative success in the play proves, poetry done right and used sparingly can be a gentlemanly calling. But Matthew is a plagiarizing poet, "for he utters nothing but stolen remnants" (IV.ii.49-50). He passes off others' words as his own to woo women and impress the witty gallants. This proves to be the worst crime in a play filled with petty infractions of legal and social codes. The final scene sees Justice Clement defending Edward Knowell as a writer but excommunicating from the impending celebration Bobadil and Matthew, whom he calls "sign o' the soldier, and picture o' the poet" and "so false" (V.v.43-44). Their cowardly foppishness coupled with their social striving and liminal social ranks force their exclusion, while Master Stephen, by virtue of his status, can join in, though he is limited to supping with the low-born Cob and his wife.

The scene between Stephen and Matthew at III.i, in which Matthew encourages Stephen to use his study so he can sit and be melancholy, is comedic and highlights these characters' affectation, their performances. Their constant repetition of "sir" and Stephen's feigned interest in Matthew's poetry highlight their mutual affectations. They also bear mutual admiration for each other and for the equally ridiculous and over-wrought Captain Bobadil, revealing their lack of judgement. Matthew admires Stephen for his melancholy and taste in poetry, Stephen deems Matthew worthy because of his lodging and his choice in friends, and both think Bobadil to be a truly brave and worldly soldier and admire his taste

in speech and rhetoric. Master Stephen goes so far as to mimic directly Bobadil's various, colorful oaths ("Not I, body of me, by this air, St. George, and the foot of Pharaoh" (III.v.140-141)) because he so admires them. They also both prove to be cowards, Matthew running away from a fight with Downright and Stephen copping to his theft of the cloak to avoid jail time in Act IV, scene xi. Importantly, however, as fops, their lack of recognition of each other's foolishness shows their own lack of self-awareness. They are almost literal mirrors in this play, but instead of only reflecting back what they have seen others do, they reflect to the audience their sameness. Ruth Morse has claimed that Jonson wanted to change the taste of London theater-goers to favor classical comedy. She claims, "*Every Man In* was [...] an attempt, by this most pedagogic of poets, to retrain his audience."³⁴⁶ I believe, however, that Jonson had perhaps another potential pedagogical aim in this play: to train his audience to recognize the fops around them. Stephen and Matthew reflect the "deeds, and language, such as men do use" (Prologue 21) that Jonson's prologue to the play touts as integral parts of a new brand of comedy. By highlighting their realism and their foppishness, Jonson reminds his audience that such characters walk among them, and he gives them the tools to recognize the affecters. The playwright's follow-up to this play takes this concept and runs with it.

Every Man in laid the groundwork for Jonsonian archetypes, and Jonsonian fops in particular. The play also centrally positions Jonson's relationship with his audience and their own potential foppishness as an important

³⁴⁶ "What City, Friends, Is This?" *Plotting Early Modern London: New Essays on Jacobean City Comedy*, Eds. Deiter Mehl, Angela Stock, and Anne-Julia Zwierlein. Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate. 2004 181.

part of Jonson's satirical dramatic project. Perhaps being the first in a long line of foppish city-dwellers excuses that Matthew and especially Stephen are not the purest fops in this study. They, along with Bobadil, are, however, the roots to a wide-spreading tree of fops that would appear in Jonson's "comicall satyre[s]." As I show in Chapter Three, *Epicoene* contains not only Jack Daw and La Foole, two fops who are very much "men about town," but also the Collegiates, who open up the possibility for the existence of female fops. In *The Alchemist*, Dapper, Drugger, and Sir Epicure Mammon all display foppish tendencies. The list goes on: *Eastward Ho!* (1605), *The Devil is an Ass* (1616), and *The New Inn* (1629), all contain similar characters. This particular analysis moves on to concentrate on *Every Man out* and Fastidious Brisk,³⁴⁷ a young man whose exaggerated humor makes them foppish and whose use of foppish materials to craft his persona in noteworthy ways.

Every Man out is famously metatheatrical,³⁴⁸ containing a direct-address induction scene and introducing chorus-like commentators in the characters Asper, Cordatus, and Mitis. Through these tactics that break the fourth wall, Jonson focuses his audience's attention on rampant foppishness in the urban spaces both on and off the stage. In the Induction, the "author and presenter" Asper articulates his "scourge" for foppish characters, describing them not only in

³⁴⁷ Thomas Marc Parrott refers to Brisk as a fop directly in the introduction to his 1961 edition of *Monsieur D'Olive* in *The Plays of George Chapman: The Comedies*. (Vol. 2). New York: Russell & Russell Inc. 778.

³⁴⁸ Many critics have commented on this aspect of the play. See, for example, Helen Ostrovich's sections on "The Chorus" and "The Structure" (19-28) in the introduction to the 2001 Revels edition; Amanda Bailey *Flaunting: Style and the Subversive Male Body in Renaissance England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 106-112; and Jonathan Haynes *The Social Relations of Jonson's Theater* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 44-48.

terms of their affective behavior, but also in terms of the materials of their performance:

But that a rook, in wearing his pied feather,
The cable hatband, or the three-piled ruff,
A yard of shoe-tie, or the Switzer's knot
On his French garters, should affect a humour,
O, 'tis more than most ridiculous!
[...]
Well, I scourge those apes,
And to these courteous eyes [*Indicating audience*] oppose a mirror
As large as is the stage whereon we act,
Where they shall see the time's deformity
Anatomized in every nerve and sinew,
With constant courage and contempt of fear. (108-112, 115-120).³⁴⁹

Asper makes analogous the “rook's”³⁵⁰ affected personality and his wardrobe.

The affectation *is* the wearing of the clothing and also *becomes* a foppish person's humor. Then, Asper quickly warns his audience that such “apes” walk among them, and that his play will reveal them as a “mirror” does. The play promises to present what manhood looks like in contemporary London. This is a dangerous undertaking, it seems, as he feels the need to trumpet his authorial courage, and one can surmise that the picture is not good. Mitis is quick to warn Asper to, “Take heed: / The days are dangerous, full of exception, / And men are grown impatient of reproof” (Induc. 121-123). In short, men are tired of being chastised for their behavior, an understandable claim given the ever-growing body of pamphlet literature and plays that asserted their effeminacy and chastised their

³⁴⁹ All citations of *Every Man Out of His Humour* are taken from the 2001 Revels edition. Ed. Helen Ostovich (Manchester: Manchester University Press).

³⁵⁰ Helen Ostovich, the most recent editor of the play for a critical edition, glosses “rook” as, “lout; literally, a raucous-voiced bird of the crow family, which nests in dense colonies.” If taken to be mostly analogous with “fop,” which I do in this reading, the bird reference becomes particularly poignant for embodying the character's disruptive behavior and desire to be part of the pack in urban culture.

taste in clothing. Yet Asper insists his creation will do just this, and as a result the play, “violently attacks various forms of socially and erotically disorderly behavior, from affected dress to the smoking of tobacco and various forms of sodomy.”³⁵¹ *Every Man out* proceeds over five acts to expose foppish city-dwellers for what they are: a potential menace to manhood.

These dangers are located in specific spaces unique to London, adding to the broadness of the play’s social commentary so that it specifically references its very audience.³⁵² Act III, scene i, takes place in Paul’s Walk, the same place on which Dekker focuses his attention in the *Gull’s Hornbook* passage discussed above. This brings the commentary contained in the scene close to home for the audience. As Amanda Bailey argues: “By aligning his fictional gallants with real life Paul’s men, Jonson pressures the generic possibilities of theatrical production to stage certain men appropriating the symbolic aspects of civic culture through the manipulation of its material elements.”³⁵³ The play reaches beyond its stage boundaries by utilizing a realistic and recognizable setting, therefore implicating its audience into the claims it makes about early modern urban masculinity. The symbolic Paul’s Walk recalls the real Paul’s Walk, which had its own codes of behavior. The theater audience of *Every Man out* would have known those codes, and been able to identify those men who transgress them. They also might have seen themselves in the gallant characters represented on stage, especially with the use of material markers.

³⁵¹ Moulton, 201.

³⁵² *Every Man Out* was first performed by the Lord Chamberlain’s Men at the Globe, which means its audience was broad and inclusive, though it appears pointed at the gallants who would have been in the audience.

³⁵³ *Flaunting*, 114.

The most foppish “gallant” of all is Fastidious Brisk,³⁵⁴ an effeminate character whose foppishness cannot be masked by his fashionability. Brisk, “A neat, spruce, affecting courtier” (Charac. 34) obsesses over his and others’ self-presentation. The center aisle at Paul’s is devoted to presentation: the scene unfold in a series of episodes that feature different groups of men discussing how to pose as scholars, how to dress at court, how to purchase coats of arms, and how to properly take tobacco. At Paul’s, presentation has become the new practiced religion, as Macilente the malcontent alludes to in his comment, “O, what copy of fool would this place minister to one observed with patience to observe it!” (III.i.258-59). And Fastidious Brisk seems to be its clergyman. Particularly remarkable are his choice of accessories, namely his catamite, and his boldness in showing them off.

Brisk flaunts his ingle, or his page who “signifies his effeminacy,” according to Mario DiGangi. An audience could have easily “recognized Briske as the fop who has sex with his page and courts his mistress by the book... Although the sexual service provided by Briske’s page may not be evident to us, it may well have been to Jonson’s audience” who would have associated him with satirized characters in the likes of Guilpin and Marston.³⁵⁵ With this stereotype in mind, Brisk’s boy Cinedo³⁵⁶ stands in for an ingle. Brisk certainly praises him with compliments worthy of a lover and he seem proud of possessing him, asking Buffone, “How lik’st thou my boy?” (II.i.14) as if he were showing off a shiny

³⁵⁴ Ostovich traces “Brisk” as a name and concludes that it may have become synonymous with “the fashionable type of gallant” by 1621 (104 n.33).

³⁵⁵ DiGangi, *Homoerotics*, 69.

³⁵⁶ Amanda Bailey points out that Cinedo is an anglicized version of *cinaedus*, Latin for an effeminate, passive same-sexual partner (*Flaunting*, 118).

new suit. The boy is an integral part of his image; he is a beautiful accessory, as Buffone says, “He would show well at a haberdasher’s stall” (II.i.17), but he also helps to make Brisk come off as more powerful than he otherwise might. The master/servant relationship may lessen the implications of sodomitical sex, but the danger of infecting others with his effeminate habits remain. Brisk’s ways soon get taken up by Sogliardo, one of his several imitators. While Sogliardo previously dismisses the idea of hiring a page, preferring “a man” instead, he changes his mind when he speaks aside with Cinedo. He “*leaps from whispering with the Boy*” and exclaims, “I am resolute to keep a page” (II.i.157, emphasis added). It is possible that Cinedo shared with this want-to-be gallant the secrets of his true relationship with his master, and Sogliardo is eager to partake in those activities.

In the eyes of these acquisitive fops, the boy becomes as much of a marker of a certain brand of a gallant brand of masculinity. Bailey makes the point that the body of the boy becomes a marker of status in this play: “By depicting his gallants as attempting to enhance their prestige in the eyes of their peers by appearing in the Walk accompanied by a boy, Jonson acknowledges that for some men the body of the boy, like certain items of apparel, announced one’s inclusion in a community of shared taste.”³⁵⁷ While I agree that boys are used as tools to gain access into a particular society, Bailey’s identification of Brisk and Sogliardo as “gallants” is troubling given their foppishness and ultimate failure at negotiating an urban subculture of young men. In fact, one is hard pressed to find *any* gallant figures in this play.

³⁵⁷ *Flaunting*, 118.

Brisk's other claim to fame is his incomparable fashion sense and his courtly connections. He alleges that Lady Saviolina is his lover and imparts unsolicited advice about how to behave at court. He creates a courtly image of himself through his stories, which are revealed to be exaggerated or altogether untrue. Brisk's unmistakable materials of foppishness, however, are his clothes. For Brisk, clothes literally make—and unmake—the man. He *becomes* his clothes and then his clothes become his undoing. Fungoso's description of Brisk in the Paul's Walk scene illustrates this conflation:

Fungoso: [*to tailor*] O, he is here. Look you, sir, that's the gentleman.

Tailor: What, he i' the blush-coloured satin?

Fungoso: Ay, he, sir. Though his suit blush, he blushes not.

Look you, that's the suit, sir. I would have mine such a suit without difference: such stuff, such a wing, such a sleeve, such a skirt, belly and all. (III.i.278-84)

Much like the “rook” in Asper's induction discussed above, Brisk becomes an amalgam of suit parts. The empty suit, however, succeeds in corrupting other urban dwellers around him.

To the frustration and eventual financial ruin of Fungoso who wants to emulate these clothes, Brisk changes suits multiple times in the play, and each outfit is more sumptuous—and expensive—than the last. He proves to be less a role model and more a spreader of disease. Clearly, Brisk uses clothing as materials to craft his persona, but he uses them excessively, which makes him a fop and so punishable by the play's and the audience's standards. As Jean Howard asserts, “Brisk is thus the source of foppish taste for foreign manners and fashions that spreads like an infection through the city, corrupting country dwellers as well as

citizen households, destabilizing the social order.”³⁵⁸ In this play, the fop is dangerous because he is sometimes not recognized as a fop: others like Fungoso and Sogliardo strive to emulate him. Brisk’s own corruption manifests in his overspending, and the end of the play finds him in debtor’s prison, which Macilente calls, “The plague that treads o’ the heels of [Brisk’s] foppery” (V.iii.568-69).

Every Man out, though “the talkiest play ever written,”³⁵⁹ is void of any real plot; we merely follow the antics of a group of men across the city, but none of these men perform an admirable feat or triumph. This lack of storyline makes the play itself feel indulgent, and I believe that is Jonson’s point. Unlike in other city comedies, no gallant wit figures expose the fop figures; in fact, no real gallant wit figures ever appear in the play. We watch as every character attempts to manipulate the social system in order to acquire some sort of rank among men. It is essentially a series of character sketches who Jonson means to act as warnings to his audience, who, as we will recall, “mirror” the characters on stage. The play is really about the confusion that sets in when young men mix and mimic each other. DiGangi claims, “In *Every Man out of His Humor*, male friendship between equals is vitiated not only by class difference and mercenary self-interest, but because the extremes of courtly effeminacy and urban hypermasculinity impart a disorderly gender style to male homoerotic bonds.”³⁶⁰ The “disorderly gender” speaks to the obfuscation of the tenets of masculinity that result from a culture of display, the type of culture the play presents. So blurry are the rules

³⁵⁸ *Theater of the City*, 85.

³⁵⁹ Haynes, 49.

³⁶⁰ *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama*, 69-70.

governing masculine behavior in Jonson's staged early modern London that no man comes out on top. The characters continue to be dominated by their humors.

The only somewhat admirable and triumphant character in the play is the malcontent Macilente's, who sets the foppish Brisk's punishment in motion. Rather than enjoying the fruits of his vindictive and jealous labor, Macilente expunges himself of his own humoral jealousy when, according to the stage directions, "*The Actor playing the Queen passes over the stage*" (V.iv). This is a strange repentance scene, given the almost complete lack of courtly figures in the play and the way courtly behavior has been parodied through Brisk. Perhaps the Queen's momentary appearance reminds Macilente of an idealized, hereditary social order, one in which jealousy is futile because there is no real possibility of upward mobility. After his repentance, he is invited into the play's frame with the choral characters Cordatus and Mitis, passing into a seat of sanctioned judgement. In doing so, he joins the ranks of the audience who have been part of the frame plot all along. Yet Macilente's border-crossing does not, as it would seem, indicate that the audience members are off the hook themselves in terms of foppishness. Rather, it reminds them that they must repent and re-evaluate their behavior so as not to be seen as foppish themselves.

More Middletonian Fops: *The Roaring Girl*

Jonson's fops certainly bear striking resemblance to Middleton and Rowley's Sir Gregory Fop in their relationship to the city and their roles in blurring gender lines. Middleton created his Sir Gregory, used earlier in the

chapter to exemplify the tenet of foppishness played out in the materials and accessories he chooses to display, within a tradition of foppish characters he had already established. A few of these characters appear in his 1611 collaboration with Dekker, *The Roaring Girl*. Much of the criticism about Middleton and focuses on the constructed aspect of Moll as a cross-dressed woman and that she is a product of the wearable parts she dons to appear manly.³⁶¹ Moll's mannish dress clearly raises concerns about facade and the constructed-ness of gender and of the self. The play's fops contribute to the anxiety about the issue of authenticity. The two foppish characters under scrutiny in this play are Jack Dapper and Laxton. From their appearances in the play's first scene in the city shops, Laxton and the younger Dapper reveal their dispositions toward conspicuous consumption and self-display. Laxton, one of those fashionable city-dwellers who overspends his means, wanders into to Gallipot's shop lustily in search of his mistress, Gallipot's wife, and "a pipe of rich smoke," (II.i.47),³⁶² the price of which appalls the wit Goshawk. He proceeds to appeal to Mistress Gallipot because he is "in extreme want of money" (72) "to keep [him] in fashion

³⁶¹ Moll's cross-dressing and the economic aspects of this play have been the overwhelming foci of the critical attention this play has received. See the following: Mary Beth Rose, "Women in Men's Clothing: Apparel and Social Stability in *The Roaring Girl*" (*English Literary Renaissance* 14:3(1984). 367-391); Sandra Clark, "*Hic Milier, Haec Vir* and the Controversy over Masculine Women" (*Studies in Philology*. 82:2(1985). 157-183; Marjorie Garber, "The Logic of the Transvestite" (*Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama*. Eds. David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass. London: Routledge, 1991. 221-234); Laura Levine, *Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-theatricality and Effeminization, 1579-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Jean Howard, "Crossdressing, the Theatre, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England" (*Shakespeare Quarterly*, 39:4(1998). 418-440); John Twyning, *London Dispossessed: Literature and Social Space in the Early Modern City* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998) 82-91; and Heather Easterling, *Parsing the City: Jonson, Middleton, Dekker and City Comedy's London as Language* (New York: Routledge, 2007) 81-109.

³⁶² All citations of *The Roaring Girl* are taken from the 1997 New Mermaids edition (Ed. Elizabeth Cook. New York: W.W. Norton).

with the gallants” (80). Similarly, Jack Dapper is introduced as a shopper in search of one “spangled feather” (II.i.142) since he refuses to wear the “general feather” (138) that other gallants wear; he prefers to stand out in his fashion. Both characters want to be known by the expensive materials they choose to display, despite their dire financial situations. Laxton, as we know by his plea to Mistress Gallipot is broke, and Dapper’s father Sir Davy complains that his son’s extravagant behavior is depleting his estate (III.iii.64). But these city-dwelling fops not only pose economic threat to their own families and futures, but to the other city inhabitants as well.

Sebastian and the other gallants that populate the play—the gentry these fops strive to imitate—must in some way keep up with their followers. Michelle O’Callaghan suggests that the play concerns itself with a certain urban encroachment, or the dangerous proximity of the gentry with old money to the merchant class upstarts with new money. She claims that Jack Dapper’s plot in particular speaks to, “the downward mobility resulting from the gentry over-extending themselves financially to maintain face within this culture of display.”³⁶³ The castigation of city-dwelling fops results from this fear as so many of them are of the upstart classes. Their obsession with display threatens those with traditional, landed wealth because their kind of money can buy more materials with which to participate in this brand of cultural display. By rendering them foolish, the gentry perhaps attempt to ward off the invasive social influence that they’ve bought at exorbitant prices that only the monied (and the foolish) can afford. In the main plot, Sir Alexander’s anxiety about Sebastian’s marriage to

³⁶³ *Thomas Middleton, Renaissance Dramatist* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 63.

the wealthy but merchant-class Mary Fitzallard results from the same fear. In this play, and in many other city comedies, the gentry's defense lies in their discernment and taste.

Though the fop figures' consumptive behaviors are blatantly tactless, especially as they are coupled with Laxton's swaggering bravado in the house of his married lover, Middleton and Dekker provide voices from within the play to assure that audience's recognize them to be unacceptable. While Laxton makes a show of his skill with smoke and women, two of the play's true gallants, Greenwit and Goshawk, mock him behind his back for the very behaviors about which he brags. Laxton, in turn, sees himself as fashionably superior to Jack Dapper, whom he calls a "fool" (104). All of *The Roaring Girl's* characters, it seems, are intensely invested in sizing one another up to insert themselves at the top of the play's various power structures, which range from the traditional patrilineal system in the main plot to the less-defined masculine hierarchy based on an urban astuteness, fashionability, and conspicuous wealth in the subplots. The use of disguise and affectation makes this process difficult for nearly all involved. In the main plot, Sir Alexander becomes determined to decipher the cross-dressed and the gender-appropriately attired Moll. His friend Sir Davy Dapper is determined to figure out his foppish son's extravagant lifestyle. In the secondary plots involving Jack Dapper and Laxton, the fops work hard to understand and be a part of the London gallants' world. All the while, their own behavior confuses those around them, especially in terms of their versions of masculine sexuality.

Jack Dapper is perhaps the *The Roaring Girl's* most obvious site of ambiguous and anxious sexuality because of the company he keeps. A significant part of Dapper's identity as a gallant is his gaggle of ingles who follow him around town. His Father, Sir Davy Dapper, complains, "When his purse jingles,/ Roaring boys follow at's tale, fencers and ningles,/ Beasts Adam ne'er gave name to: these horse-leeches suck/ My son; he being drawn dry, they all live on smoke" (III.iii.61-64). Though these ingles never appear on stage, another reference to them by Jack's own servant Gull confirms that they are indeed part of Jack's daily schtick: he spends "three pound last night in a supper amongst girls and brave bawdy-house boys" (II.i.114-115). These boys become part of the fop's identity that is marked by his decadence, the exact reason Jack's father is concerned about his son. The reference to these boys, which Jack himself confirms in Act V, scene 1,³⁶⁴ works to construct the gallant figure as an uncontrollable entity with an unrepressed desire. The fop's behavior distresses the older generation because he does not follow the masculine codes of temperance. His association with ingles, his excessive spending, and his constant need to be seen make him effeminate. Jack exemplifies "unmasterable excess."³⁶⁵

In the foppish character Laxton,³⁶⁶ this effeminacy and lack of temperance manifests itself in his lust for the Mistress Gallipot the merchant's wife, but more compellingly, for the cross-dressed Moll. The fictional Moll Cutpurse challenges

³⁶⁴ "and the boy at my elbow" (28).

³⁶⁵ See O Callaghan, 65; Garber, 221; and Viviana Comensoli "Play-making, Domestic Conduct, and the Multiple Plot in *The Roaring Girl*" *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*. 27(1987), 261.

³⁶⁶ As Elizabeth Cook, the editor of the 1997 New Mermaids edition of the play, observes, even Laxton's name connotes desire and effeminacy: "Lack" and "stone," the latter portion of which suggests that the character lacks testicles. See page xxxiii of Cook's introduction.

Laxton to a duel, which he wrongly interprets to be an invitation to a sexual tryst. However, the duel instead strips him of his manhood and his sexuality, and he is ultimately exposed and punished for being not only a rogue, but also a fop. As Moll and Laxton fight, the gender boundaries that should engirdle them both become increasingly blurred, and the homoerotic tone established through the references to Jack Dapper's *ingles* increases. Because Laxton expects to meet with Moll dressed as a woman, looking the way she did when they met in the shop in Act II, scene i, the meeting at first seems to fit into normative heterosexual lust. When she enters dressed as a man "seem[ing] to be some young barrister" (III.i.46), Laxton's sexual desire is undeterred as he tries to usher her into his coach so they can go about their business privately. Of this particular moment in the play, Marjorie Garber has commented that "The homoerotic subtext here... is not merely thematic or illustrative, but intrinsic to the inner dynamics of the play, to what might be called the play's 'unconscious.'"³⁶⁷ These inner dynamics reveal themselves in the discursively constructed private world of the foppish figures, which, as we have seen, most probably include sex with their *ingles* and indiscriminate sex with merchants' wives. Another "unconscious" of the play is in its hyper-theatricality, or its transcendence beyond its own world into the world in which it is being performed. As a play about cross-dressing, it cannot forget that the actors performing the play are cross-dressed themselves. Moll's mannish clothes, which include a codpiece as we are told early on in the play, are signifiers that not only mark her as transgressively gendered, but show

³⁶⁷ Garber, 223.

the men who lust for her, including Sebastian, the play's hero of heteroeroticism, as possessing a transgressive, effeminate sexual desire.

Moll's codpiece is particularly interesting because of Laxton's anxiousness to see what is underneath. Laxton's desire to be with Moll sexually, and assumedly take off that codpiece, must be considered metatheatrically. Jean Howard says, "Laxton, the gentleman rake, makes the [...] mistake, [of] finding her mannish clothes sexually provocative, the gap between the semiotic signals of her dress and her well-known biological identity making her hidden body the more alluring."³⁶⁸ The allure Howard speaks about assumes that Laxton will indeed find a vagina underneath Moll's clothes. In this scene, a gender reveal threatens to show how deceiving outward clothing can be, or that he would find a vagina underneath a codpiece, suggesting that a codpiece might just as well hide nothing on a man. Yet, another threat is that the taking off of Moll's codpiece would reveal the penis of the boy actor portraying her. Numerous anti-theatrical tracts claimed boy actors were actually the sodomitical partners of the older members of the company or even the gallant audience members. With this in mind, then, Laxton's desire becomes at least vaguely homoerotic. By the end of the scene in the park, Laxton surrenders his masculinity and "yield[s] both purse and body" (121) to Moll. The term "purse" connotes both Laxton's financial status and, according to common slang of the period, his testicles, and so, she unmans, and therefore effeminates, him here.

The Roaring Girl ends agreeably enough, with a normative marriage between Mary and Sebastian and Sir Alexander's proclaimed acceptance of Moll

³⁶⁸ "Crossdressing," 437.

into their social circle, though of course, she refuses to ever marry and therefore fully inscribe herself into that society as a woman. Laxton is noticeably absent from these final scenes, because his stripped masculinity and heterosexuality disallow his participation. But, Jack Dapper remains a part of the action, a stalwart figure in the city, sticking around long enough for a lesson in canting and deciphering urban rogues in Act V, scene i. Sir Alexander seeks to cure his son's financial—and social—waywardness by “break[ing]” him with prison time and prompting him to sing “a counter-tenor sure” (III.iii.75, 76). Howard has argued that the “counter-tenor” reference implies that Dapper's time in prison would strip him of his manhood, essentially gelding him like a eunuch choir boy.³⁶⁹ Of course, this fails to happen, and Moll saves him from his father's plan to have him arrested. At the end of the play, the young Dapper continues to roam London's streets, still living an ambiguous, excessive lifestyle. In fact, he might be considered *more* masculine by the terms laid out in the play: he is more knowledgeable of the city he inhabits and its potential dangers, having delighted in a canting lesson and dodged the consequences of his debt. This fop, it seems, is potentially closer to becoming synonymous with the gallants he emulates.

The urban fop is particularly recognizable in a way that other kinds of fops might not be. His concern for outward presentation and reputation among his peers parallels the court fop's similar interest, but the process by which he is deciphered is more universal. One need not decipher his speech or even his intentions to identify him; one only need to recognize the materials that mark him as such. His clothing and his ingles are two such materials, and the staged

³⁶⁹ *Theater of a City*, 73.

versions of these would have been in conversation with actual materials and practices circulating in London. The gallant audiences of city comedies themselves would have both used these materials and associated them with certain types of men. In the city-fops, the possibility of a masculine youth subculture emerges, for they are recognizable “men-about-town” by virtue of their shared practices and their appearances. As we have seen in the analyses above, with one fop comes multiple fops, and his influence spreads rapidly. Jonson and Middleton provide examples of types of men that very well could have been trolling the streets of London, and the only thing that stood between these fops and the gallants they emulated was a hard-to-define and constantly shifting concept of taste.

The city fop’s effeminacy is particular to his urban environment and contingent upon it. It is the city itself that affords him the opportunities to overspend, to overindulge, and to over display. The urban fops discussed in this chapter are early iterations of a character type whose circumstances begin to resemble to social settings that host the Restoration fop. The socially striving characters bask in a certain idleness that allows their trivial lifestyles to be emphasized in the drama. These foppish characters occupy a liminal social space between pure fool and pure gallant, and in doing so offer insight into the frailty in a system that divides them so sharply. The late-seventeenth century version of the fop, the one popularized by Cibber, continued to in opposition to the heroes of dramatic comedy, but he did so on a more solid foundation. The tradition of characters that included the foppish city-dweller became recognizable, dramatized

commentary on public affectation as it influenced constructions of gender and class identity.

CONCLUSION:
THE EARLY MODERN FOP'S LEGACY

This study considers early modern fop figures only as they appeared on stage through the rise of the popularity of city comedies at the theaters. The latest play considered, until this final coda, is Fletcher's *The Humourous Lieutenant* from 1618. The decision to stop here was not a historical one; no significant event changes the way fop figures appear on stage, and James I will remain on the throne for another decade. Neither should this date limitation reflect a particular exclusion of later plays in the early modern period because they play no role in the development of the fop character type. Carolinian fops are indeed enjoyable as characters and worthy of further study as representative figures of important phases the character experiences. I chose to limit the scope of the project precisely because the character develops in certain ways. These fops begin to look very much like the Restoration fops we recognize. They reflect a new kind of contempt for exaggerated display and unveiled social ambition. The comedies they appear in reflect a sharp political shift; these plays exist, "along an axis of decreasing social cohesion... public flaunting and relishing of egocentrism became less palatable."³⁷⁰ As I hope I have shown in this project, this attitude did not spring up spontaneously. The attitudes toward fop figures on stage certainly reflect some of this contempt and other negative feelings such as fear. However,

³⁷⁰ Eric Rothstein and Francis M. Kavenik, *The Designs of Carolean Comedy*, (Carbondale: University of Southern Illinois Press, 1988), 228.

it also means that some of the ambiguousness of the character disappears, making the exercise of identifying and reading him less important or political.

It has not been my intention to claim a new point of origin for the fop figure. I continue to agree with most critics and theatre historians that the fop as he exists in the cultural imagination emerged on the Restoration, not the Renaissance, stage. Rather, I intend that this study places early modern versions of the character on the theatrical timeline as predecessors to a character type that can reveal not only the fop's origins in drama, but his usefulness as a cultural critique. Anxiety around the fop figure continued into the very late-seventeenth century, and it was played out beyond the walls of the theaters. I end this account of the early modern fop figure with a reading of a Restoration fop in a Restoration play to show off his legacy and show how the anxiety around him endured. As I point out in these readings, though the political climate must have been different after the Restoration of Charles II and ideas about gender in the theatre must have changed with the appearance of women on stage, the fop figure does much of the same critical work as he does in the Renaissance.

In *The Man of Mode* (1676), George Etherege presents perhaps the quintessential Restoration fop in Sir Fopling Flutter. He stands apart from the other male characters in the play for his foolishness, extreme affectations, and propensity for everything fashionable. Sir Fopling represents a cultural ambiguity in a play very much invested in concerns about gentility and its role in relationships between women and men. His effeminacy in particular blurs traditional sex and gender roles and calls into question the possibility of

authenticity. The new comic tradition of the Restoration theatre, often spoken of as the beginnings of “the comedy of manners,” pursued an obsession with deciphering authentic gentlemen and gentlewomen through tests of wit and cultural (especially urban) knowledge. Critic Rose Zimbardo places *The Man of Mode* as a center point in the comic tradition that examines these anxieties. She argues, “Etherege’s *The Man of Mode* stands as a crux in the evolution of English comedy. Etherege is midway between the imitation of nature as idea and the imitation of nature as human actuality.”³⁷¹ The new form of comedy posits the possibility of a lack of essence that makes a man what he is. Restoration comedy, and by proxy, the figure of the fop, is heavily invested in the art of discernment and cultural knowledge surrounding the concept of gentility as part of this skepticism about the nature and natural of man.

Part of what defined gender roles in the seventeenth century was tied up in how one employed the rules of gentility that applied to their specific gender. To be genteel in *The Man of Mode* and in other Restoration comedies is of utmost importance for success within the play’s society, which rather self-consciously mimics late seventeenth century society. But the question of what constitutes gentility is not an easy one to answer. Mark Dawson turns to Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes’s investigation of gentility in the late seventeenth century to explain this difficulty: “At the risk of tautology we therefore must conclude that the gentry were that body of men and women whose gentility was acknowledged by

³⁷¹ “Of Women, Comic Imitation of Nature, and Etherege’s *The Man of Mode*” *Studies in English Literature, 1500 - 1900* 21:3 (1981): 379.

others.”³⁷² Gentility, then, is about one’s audience; one is genteel only if one is deemed genteel. The theatre is uniquely positioned to inquire into this type of tautology, especially through characters like the fop, since, by its very nature and existence, it relies on artifice and affected performances.

A major part of this performativity was about affecting gentility. After the restoration of Charles II to the throne, debates about what should constitute a hierarchical organization of society became particularly acute. As Dawson argues, “The common question was how does premodern society discern a true birthright? The cultural medium for consideration of this question was a rehearsal of the gentleman-as-foppish beau.”³⁷³ The fop is the easily readable signifier of affected gentility; at the core of all of the jokes about him lies the fact that he really is not genteel at all, despite his over-the-top efforts. In *The Man of Mode*, we see characters struggling to replace cultural signifiers of birthright with symbols of gentility. Sir Fopling, of course, is the main culprit of this. He puts his clothes on display for approval, calls attention to his French entourage, brags of his singing and dancing abilities, and drops unsubtle gossip that makes him appear in the know. His fellow rakes have fun at his expense because of these practices. As Sir Fopling brags about his new fine French carriage, Dorimant says, “Truly there is a bell-air in Galleashes / as well as men” (III.ii.237-238).³⁷⁴ While Dorimant displays his signature ironic wit in this comment, he also displays the futility of the exercise of discernment—if carriages (Galleashes) can

³⁷² *The Gentry in England and Wales, 1500-1700*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 19.

³⁷³ *Gentility and the Comic Theatre of Late Stuart London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 22.

³⁷⁴ All citations from the play come from the following edition: *Restoration Drama: An Anthology* Ed. David Womersley (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1997).

have refinement, then why can't all men? The remark shows Dorimant's understanding of the affectation of gentility. He is making fun of Sir Fopling because he lacks an essence that should afford him gentility; instead, he has the same amount of refinement as his carriage. However, this comment works to remind us that all characters in the play affect gentility and that there exists no genteel center of being. Similar concerns about gender, sexuality, and authenticity exist in the play.

Sir Fopling seeks the attention of the male rakes over the attention of the female characters. When he first enters in Act III scene ii, he kisses the hands of Lady Townley and Emilia in passing, but quickly heads for Dorimant's embrace. He immediately shows his eagerness to befriend Dorimant, saying, "Thou art a man of Wit, and under- / stands the Town: prithee let thee and I be / intimate, there is no living without making some good man the confident of our pleasures" (III.ii.187-190). It may be tempting to read Sir Fopling's desire for intimacy with his male friend here as homoerotic. However, Sir Fopling's main goal in seeking this intimacy because it will be his means to attain the kind of Town information that is necessary for him to practice his foppish performance. As a man, the empty vessel of Sir Fopling must mimic other men of the town in order to affect their behavior. He seeks their approval of his fashion and his behavior in order to confirm that what he is doing is fashion forward, not because he wants to make them sexual partners.

Turning to men first because they are the makers of taste that affect his own gender, Sir Fopling only turns to women as secondary taste-makers in the

absence of men. There is a lot at stake for Sir Fopling that is tied to his interactions with women; he is not merely rejecting a healthy male interest in the opposite sex. Because he casts off women's attention, Sir Fopling is left single and with no marriage prospects at the end of the play, but he does not seem to mind:

Sir Fopling: An intrigue now would be but temptation to me to throw away the Vigour on one which I mean shall shortly make my court to the whole sex in a Ballet.
Medley: Wisely consider'd, Sir Fopling
Sir Fopling: No one woman is worth the loss of a Cut in a caper. (V.ii.446-451)

In privileging his production of a ballet in honor of the ladies rather than his own sexual match with a single lady, Sir Fopling displays his usual foppish tendency toward spectacle rather than substance. By responding to his lost intrigue with Mrs. Loveit in this way, Sir Fopling rejects marriage, the propagator of the system of landownership that maintains birthright as the paramount test of gentility, in favor of Town entertainments. He would rather be seen *by* women than be seen *with* women.

This casting off of an intention to marry has serious implications for the rest of the characters in the play, especially for the men's whose own aristocratic roots are suspect. Other than Lady Woodvil, her daughter Harriet, the heiress to a country estate, and Lady Townley, the characters in *The Man of Mode* have questionable claims to traditional gentility. The "gentleman" do not carry titles to legitimize them as such. While they are undoubtedly more genteel than Sir Fopling, Medley and Dorimant in particular would need to match themselves

wisely with a landed gentlewoman in order to be exempt from questions about the legitimacy of their status. In fact, the need of a well-matched marriage is the excuse Dorimant gives Mrs. Loveit for abandoning her, “Believe me a Wife, to repair the ruines / of my estate that needs it” (V.ii.346-347). That Sir Fopling’s rejection of marriage brings to light a uneasy alternative for the rakish characters who also seem to rail against marriage through their promiscuous actions with all sorts of women.

The foolish Sir Fopling represents a fate that other gentleman could easily be facing if they do not find some solid claim to gentility, such as marriage. He shares a long list of similarities with the “hero” Dorimant: they have spent time in France, they both dot their speech with French terms, they know the same people, they both spend time dressing (the play opens with Dorimant at his toilet), and they both avoid the question of marriage. Zimbardo argues that Dorimant and Sir Fopling are in fact parallel characters. She says, “Dorimant is every bit as lacking in self-knowledge as Sir Fopling is. Sir Fopling is the doppelgänger of Dorimant—a Man of Mode.”³⁷⁵ It is significant that Harriet asks Dorimant to prove his honorable intentions by allowing himself to be laughed at, or being the butt of Town jokes as Sir Fopling is. The couple’s vague marital status at the end of the play and his indirect answers to her demands express his concern about falling into such a fate.

As the manifestation of the question of genteel legitimacy and authentic masculinity, Sir Fopling pushes the boundaries of the very society that refuses to fully integrate him in *The Man of Mode*. His status as a fop is grounded in his

³⁷⁵ Zimbardo, 386.

effeminate qualities that other characters desperately want to pinpoint in order to avoid, and yet he is elusive because he lacks a natural core of both masculinity and gentility. As Etherege reminds his audience in the Epilogue of the play, “He’s Knight o’ th’ Shire, and represents ye all. / From each he meets, he culls what he can, / Legion’s his name, a people in a man” (16-18). Sir Fopling incorporates both men and women into his person, confusing proscribed gender roles and easy divisions of sexuality. In his affectation of behaviors and fashions, he literally embodies the genteel society that looks to exclude him through ridicule.

In 1691, fifteen years after *The Man of Mode* was first performed, an anonymous pamphlet called *Mundus Foppensis, or the Fop Display’d*³⁷⁶ appeared as a response to the recently published *Mundus Mulierbris* (1690),³⁷⁷ or the *Ladies Dressing-room Unlock’d*, which condemned women for painting and adopting over-the-top fashions. Both pamphlets were part of the “pamphlet wars” that saw a flood of literature condemning behavior that could perhaps render one’s gender ambiguous. *Mundus Foppensis* condemns London’s men for behavior similar to that laid out in *Mundus Mulierbris*, and it pays particular attention to fops and beaus (a term that was beginning to come into popular use in the 1690s). The fear expressed in the pamphlet is that fops, or all of the now more effeminate men, would neglect their wives in order to focus on pleasing other men, “For Men kiss Men, not Women now.” Tirades against effeminacy

³⁷⁶ *Mundus Foppensis Or, The Fop Display’d. Being the Ladies Vindication in Answer to the Late Pamphlet, Entitled, Mundus Muliebris: Or the Ladies Dressing Room Unlock’d*, 1691. STC M3076.

³⁷⁷ Mary Evelyn, *Mundus Muliebris, or, The ladies Dressing-room Unlock’d, and Her Toilette Spread: in Burlesque, Together with the Fop-dictionary, Compiled for the Use of the Fair Sex*, 1690. Reproduction of the original in the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 1956.

would become even more numerous and fearful as England transitioned into a new century. This was an important point in the history of how we understand gender and sexuality. The fop figure as we know him came to be at the center of a debate about gender identity. I believe that early modern studies can provide valuable background to reach an understanding of this moment by seeking the fop in his home in the theater.

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