

**Pedagogy and Parenting  
in English Drama, 1560-1610**

**Flogging Schoolmasters and Cockering Mothers**

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## Abstract

In this thesis I examine the representation of parents and schoolmasters and the conflicts between them in vernacular drama in Reformation England. This was a period of growth in public schooling and a time when numerous treatises on education and childrearing were in circulation in England. Prevailing pedagogical theory privileged the schoolmaster's authority over that of the parents, and set paternal authority over that of the mother. It sought to limit maternal power to the domestic sphere and the infant years, yet the drama examined here suggests that mothers, not fathers, were usually the parent in control of their children's education. The conflicts inherent in these oppositions are played out in drama dealing with schooling and childrearing; each of the works examined here participates in and contributes to public debate over school education and parenting practices in early modern England.

The thesis conducts a close textual and contextual analysis of the representation of schoolmasters and parents and of parent-school relations in seven English plays. A variety of dramatic genres is represented: public drama (*Love's Labour's Lost*, *Patient Grissill*, *The Winter's Tale*), school drama (*Nice Wanton*, *July and Julian*, *The Disobedient Child*), and private royal entertainment (*The Lady of May*). The plays are explicated in terms of the Tudor school culture and the negotiation of authority between fathers, mothers and schoolmasters. The thesis draws extensively on sixteenth-century school dialogues and *vulgaria* and on education treatises, which were available in English in Tudor England, in particular the writings of Erasmus, Vives, Ascham, Mulcaster, Elyot, Brinsley and Becon. School records provide information on school conditions and curricula, the duties and qualities of schoolmasters and the role of schools in civic and public performances. The thesis addresses issues of gender, childrearing, public education and parental and pedagogical authority in the second half of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

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### Note on texts

Titles of Latin texts follow the standard modern scholarly form as used in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd. edn. 1996. Titles of texts in English follow the form given in the edition cited. For books published before 1800, publishers are not given, and place of publication is London unless otherwise stated.

For Shakespeare, unless otherwise stated, the text used is: *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. B. Evans, 2nd edn., Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997.

### Primary pedagogical works

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Roger Ascham	
<i>The Scholemaster</i> (1570) Ed. R. C. Alston. <i>English Linguistics 1500-1800</i> No. 20. Menston: Scolar, 1967.	<i>Scholemaster</i>
Thomas Becon	
<i>A New Catechism set forth Dialogue-wise in Familiar Talk between the Father and the Son</i> (1547-53) Ed. John Ayre. <i>The Catechism of Thomas Becon with Other Pieces Written by him in the Reign of King Edward the Sixth</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1844. 1-410.	<i>Catechism</i>
John Brinsley	
<i>Ludus Literarius or The Grammar Schoole</i> (1612) Ed. E. T. Campagnac. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1917.	<i>Ludus literarius</i>
Maturin Corderius	
<i>Pueriles Confabulatiunculae</i> (1617) Trans. John Brinsley (1614). Ed. R. C. Alston. <i>English Linguistics 1500-1800</i> No. 269. Menston: Scolar, 1971.	<i>Pueriles</i>
Sir Thomas Elyot	
<i>The Book named The Governor</i> (1531) Ed. S. E. Lehmberg. London: Dent, 1962.	<i>Governor</i>
Desiderius Erasmus	
<i>Colloquia familiaria</i> (1519) (The Colloquies) Trans. Craig R. Thompson. <i>The Colloquies of Erasmus</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965.	<i>Colloquia</i>
<i>De pueris statim ac liberaliter instituendis declamatio</i> (1529) (A Declamation on the Subject of Early Liberal Education for Children) Trans. Beert C. Verstraete. Ed. J. K. Sowards. Vol 26. <i>Collected Works of Erasmus: Literary and Educational Writings 4</i> . Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985. 295-346.	<i>De pueris</i>
<i>De ratione studii ac legendi interpretandique auctores</i> (1512) (On the Method of Study) Trans. Brian McGregor. Ed. Craig R. Thompson. Vol 24. <i>Collected Works of Erasmus: Literary and Educational Writings 2</i> . Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978.	<i>De ratione</i>
<i>De recta latini graecique sermonis pronuntiatione dialogus</i> (1528) (The Right Way of Speaking Latin and Greek: A Dialogue) Trans. Maurice Pope. Ed. J. K. Sowards. Vol 26. <i>Collected Works of Erasmus: Literary and Educational Writings 4</i> . Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985. 365-475.	<i>De recta</i>



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*Vulgaria* (1519)  
 English Experience No. 745. Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1975. Cited as  
*Hormon's Vulgaria*
- Richard Mulcaster  
*Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children* (1581)  
 Ed. William Barker. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994. *Positions*  
*The First Part of the Elementarie which entreateth chefelie of the*  
*right writing of our English tung* (1582) *Elementarie*  
 Ed. Foster Watson. *Richard Mulcaster and his Elementarie*. London: 1893.
- Marcellus Palingenius  
*The Zodiake of Life* (c.1531-1535) *Zodiake*  
 Trans. Barnabe Googe (1560). Introd. Rosemond Tuve.  
 New York: Scholars' Facsimiles, 1947.
- John Stanbridge, Robert Whittinton  
*Vulgaria Stanbrigiana* (1508)  
*Vulgaria Roberti Whittintoni Lichfeldiensis* (c.1520) *Vulgaria*  
 Ed. Beatrice White, *The Vulgaria of John Stanbridge and the Vulgaria of*  
*Robert Whittinton*. Early English Text Society, os 187. London: Kegan Paul, 1932.
- Juan Luis Vives  
*De institutione christianae feminae* (1523) *De institutione*  
 (The Instruction of a Christian Woman)  
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*Education of Women*. London: Edward Arnold, 1912. 29-136.  
*De Officio Mariti* (1529) *De officio mariti*  
 (On the Duty of Husbands)  
 Trans. Thomas Paynell (1555?). Ed. Foster Watson. *Vives and the Renaissance*  
*Education of Women*. London: Edward Arnold, 1912. 195-210.  
 Passages of *De Officio Mariti* not in Foster Watson, are cited from  
 "The Office and Duty of an Husband." Trans. Thomas Paynell (1555?)  
 Ed. Joan Larsen Klein. *Daughters, Wives, and Widows: Writings by*  
*Men about Women and Marriage in England 1500-1640*.  
 Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992. 122-36.  
*De ratione studii puerilis* (1523) *De ratione studii*  
 (On the Plan of Studies for a Boy)  
 Trans. and ed. Foster Watson. *Vives and the Renaissance Education of Women*.  
 London: Edward Arnold, 1912. 241-250.  
*De tradendis disciplinis* (1531) *De tradendis*  
 (Transmission of Knowledge)  
 Trans. and ed. Foster Watson. *Vives: On Education, a Translation of the*  
*De Tradendis Disciplinis of Juan Luis Vives*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1912.  
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 (School Dialogues)  
 Trans. and ed. Foster Watson. *Tudor School-boy Life:*  
*The Dialogues of Juan Luis Vives*. London: Frank Cass, 1970.

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	Cited as
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<p><i>Almondbury and its Ancient School being the History of King James's Grammar School, Almondbury</i> Taylor Dyson. Huddersfield: Advertiser, 1926.</p>	Almondbury
<p><i>The Free Grammar School of Bristol, and the Thorns, its Founders</i> J. F. Nichols. Guernsey: Toucan, 1984.</p>	Bristol
<p><i>Calendar of the Manuscripts belonging to the King's School Bruton 1297-1826</i> Ed. T. D. Tremlett. Dorchester: Friary, 1939.</p>	Bruton
<p><i>An Early History of Queen Elizabeth Grammar School</i> Martin Evans. Swansea: n.p., 1987.</p>	Carmarthen
<p><i>Imps of Promise: A History of the King's School Canterbury</i> Thomas Hinde. London: James and James, 1990.</p>	Canterbury
<p><i>Tudor Foundation. A Sketch of the History of Richard Pate's Foundation in Cheltenham</i> Arthur Bell. Buckinghamshire: Pate Foundation, 1974.</p>	Cheltenham
<p><i>Chigwell School</i> D. W. Sylvester. <i>Educational Documents 800-1816</i>. London: Methuen, 1970.</p>	Chigwell
<p><i>The King's School Ely: A collection of Documents relating to the History of the School and its Scholars</i> Eds. Dorothy M. Owen and Dorothea Thurley. Cambridge: Cambridge Antiquarian Records Society, 1982.</p>	Ely
<p><i>The King's School, Gloucester</i> David Robertson. Chichester: Phillimore, 1974.</p>	Gloucester
<p><i>A History of the King's School, Grantham ... 660 years of a Grammar School</i> S. J. Branson. Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1988.</p>	Grantham
<p><i>The Royal Grammar School, Guildford</i> D. M. Sturley. Guildford: n.p., 1980.</p>	Guildford
<p><i>Kirkwall Grammar School: From Sang School to Comprehensive</i> William P. L. Thomson. Kirkwall: Orkney Islands Council, 1976.</p>	Kirkwall
<p><i>Lanark Grammar School (1183-1983)</i> A. D. Robertson and Thomas Harvey. N.p.: Strathclyde Regional Council, 1983.</p>	Lanark
<p><i>Country Grammar School: A History of Ludlow Grammar School through eight centuries against its Local Background.</i> David J. Lloyd. N.p.: n.p., 1977.</p>	Ludlow

- A History of the Paston Grammar School, North Walsham, Norfolk*  
C. R. Forder. North Walsham: n.p., 1934). *A History of the Paston School: Supplementary Notes*. Charles Forder, 2nd edition. Norwich: n.p., 1980. North Walsham
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G. E. J. Holmes. N.p.: n.p., 1963. Ottery St. Mary
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- Ruthin School, Wales*  
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James Went. Leicester: W. H. Lead, 1892. Wyggeston

**A map of schools cited in the text**

## Introduction

Public education underwent major change in England in the sixteenth century. Control of the schools moved from the Church to secular authorities, and the new humanist curriculum was introduced into schools across the country. With the spread of endowed schooling and the opening of many new schools throughout England, Wales and Scotland, a school education became a possibility for many families from all walks of life.<sup>1</sup> A public school education became so popular in late Tudor England that by the early 1580s concern was being expressed at the demand for public school places coming from the lower ranks of society. Richard Mulcaster, headmaster of Merchant Taylors' School, one of England's largest schools, and an ardent supporter of public education, devoted two chapters of his 1581 treatise on education to the problem of over-enrolments. He reiterates a number of times that while "all may learne to write and read [in the vernacular] without daunger," all may not advance to learn Latin, for to have so many "gaping for preferment, as no goulfe hath stoore enough to suffice" is dangerous to the state (*Positions* 137.25; 139.27-28). Drama dealing with the theme of education, and written and performed during these years of growth in public schooling, also suggests that public schools were more interested in wooing the wealthy and the gentry away from private education to public schooling than in recruiting their pupils from the lower ranks of society. Five of the plays in this thesis, notably the earlier ones, deal with public schooling, and each of these shows evidence of the social tensions surrounding the public school and the common schoolmaster; these were tensions generated by the conflicting authorities of schoolmasters and the middling or better sort of families in general, and by the attempts of schools to assert a social authority within their community. The dramatic texts offer insights into domestic and social aspects of the education debate being played out in communities throughout Britain. The two later plays, which do not deal with schools but with the nursery, are of interest for their dramatised explorations of the influence of Tudor pedagogical theory on family relations. These two dramatic works demonstrate the pervasiveness and power of pedagogical theory outside the schoolroom, and they provide evidence of the influence of humanist education and educational theory in the period generally.

Six English plays and one royal entertainment, dating from circa 1560 to 1610, have been selected for their treatment of the pedagogical and parenting issues. Three of the plays, dating from the 1560s, were, in effect, written as promotional tools for public schools: *Nice Wanton*, *July and Julian* and *The Disobedient Child*. Two later works, written at the peak of the schooling boom in 1580 and 1590, feature satirical representations of schoolmasters and treat schooling from a less ideological viewpoint. These plays, *The Lady of May* and *Love's Labour's Lost*, are of interest for their critique of Tudor school values. The final two plays date from the early 1600s and include representations of the nursery and its gendered values. These works, *Patient Grissill* and *The Winter's Tale*, dramatise the damaging effects of a pedagogical code of paternal behaviour which inhibits father-infant relations and leads to mistrust of maternal values.

Three, or possibly four, of the plays discussed fall within the category of school drama, which is defined here as dramatic material written for performance by school-aged boys. Whether the boy players were grammar-school boys or choristers, they came one way or another under the auspices of a school, and under the influences of an elementary or grammar school curriculum. What these plays have to say about parents and schools is therefore peculiarly informed by contemporary school culture.

The growth and spread of school drama in sixteenth-century England is documented by T. H. Vail Motter in *The School Drama in England*. Motter notes that “from the accession of Henry VIII on to 1590 the most casual reading of history will show that the drama was largely in the hands of child actors, of whom the schoolboys were a by no means negligible proportion.”<sup>2</sup> More recently, Margaret Rogerson has collated records of school drama and the activities of schoolmasters to endorse Motter’s observation: “it is clear that, in a large number of English towns, we could well describe the local students as ‘boy theatre companies’ of the provinces.”<sup>3</sup> The plays regarded as school drama in this thesis are likely to belong to this category of performance. Much school drama was put on at Christmas or Shrovetide, and frequently for civic entertainment.<sup>4</sup> At King Edward VI’s Grammar School in Norwich, for example, every year “the High Master was to choose a ‘learned dialogue’ or a comedy or two to be presented by the boys” to an audience which included the mayor (*Norwich* 46).<sup>5</sup> The boy players are generally assumed to have ranged in age from ten and fifteen,<sup>6</sup> and there is

evidence that the stage props and costumes were, at least at some schools, quite extensive.<sup>7</sup>

The Tudor curriculum, which dominated in schools well into the seventeenth century and beyond, was geared towards performance skills. This surprising but unquestionable fact was pondered by Francis Bacon in his essay “Of Boldnesse”:

It is a triviall Grammar-Schoole Text, but yet worthy a wise mans Consideration. Question was asked of *Demosthenes*; *What was the Chiefe Part of an Oratour?* He answered, *Action*; what next? *Action*; what next again? *Action*. ... A strange thing, that that Part of an Oratour, which is but superficiall, and rather the virtue of a Player; should be placed so high, above those other Noble Parts, of Invention, Elocution and the rest:- Nay, almost alone, as if it were All in All.<sup>8</sup>

In a commonplace book from the early seventeenth century, the same quotation from Demosthenes is noted under a section on oratory, together with the definition of the art of gesture as “an eloquence of the body.”<sup>9</sup> Schooling was, in effect, a preparation for public performance: “I have dwelt the longer in this exercise [of loudspeaking],” explains Mulcaster, “bycause it is both the first in rancke, and the best meane to make good pronouncing of any thing, in any auditorie and therefore an exercise not impertinent to scholers” (*Positions* 68.4-7). The curriculum drew heavily on the comedies of Terence and Plautus, on daily exercises in versifying, and on dialogues and declamations. Inevitably, acting skills formed part of the rhetorical techniques, schoolboys being trained to “pronounce without booke, with that kinde of action which the verie propertie of the subject requireth, orations and other declamatory argumentes” (*Positions* 67.9-12). In *Damon and Pithias* (1564-68), a play written for performance by the Children of the Chapel, the prologue reminds the audience of the dramatic decorum of “speeches well pronounste, with action lively framed,” and boasts that the author, Master Richard Edwards, is following Horace whose writings he has taught in school.<sup>10</sup>

Plays written for child players display certain generic features. The following criteria are those identified by T. H. Vail Motter, Michael Shapiro and Martin White as common to children’s plays: comedies dominate the genre, often modelled on Roman comedy, and frequent use is made of satire and irony.<sup>11</sup> More songs and music are included than in drama written for adult companies.<sup>12</sup> Displays of wit and eloquence are common, as is the use of puns and of bawdy - frequently in the mouth of the youngest and

smallest player.<sup>13</sup> Self referential comments on an actor's youth, size or acting ability may highlight the disparity between the child actor and the part performed, creating a dual consciousness in the audience, and further conducive to parody and satirical comment.<sup>14</sup> This last is also a feature of school texts. In "The Courtship" colloquy by Erasmus, for example, Pamphilus, the suitor, humorously comments on his "very thin, squeaky voice" (*Colloquia* 88). This is an indication of just how close the relationship was between schoolbooks and play-texts, between performance in class and performance on a public stage.

It is evident from the school drama analysed here that, although these plays were predominantly vehicles for the promotion of schooling, sometimes of a particular school, the dramatists also saw themselves as negotiators in a public debate on parenting techniques, parental roles and gendered values. Dramatists writing for schoolboy performances had close affiliations with schools and were familiar with the pedagogical debate, with the publicly circulating treatises, with the textbooks the boys studied, and with the school culture. Some were schoolmasters themselves, such as Nicholas Udall, headmaster of Eton (1534-1541), or choirmasters such as John Redford at St. Paul's (d.1547). School performances, whether for a public or private audience, were highly regarded and had the potential to enhance the status of the school, its masters, the boys performing, and, perhaps, that of their parents as well. These plays deal with the area of school and family authority, not surprisingly asserting the superiority of the pedagogues' point of view, but they rarely take as didactic an approach to the superiority of pedagogical authority as the education advice literature does.

### **Methodology and pedagogical sources**

Research has been conducted into a wide range of historical sources of information on sixteenth-century pedagogical theory, pedagogical practice, Tudor schools, schoolmasters, curricula and school drama. Within this historical context, the thesis discusses relevant scenes in each work, identifies the education or parenting questions at issue, considers their dramatic treatment and offers some conclusions as to the position the play takes and how it engages with the contemporary childrearing debate.



The drama is grouped by chapters into the following four thematic fields: schoolmasters; mothers and schools; fathers and schools; and parents and the nursery. Each chapter is structured in two parts. The first part discusses the treatment of the themes and topics in question in a range of contemporary historical sources, and takes into consideration differences in treatment between these sources, such as between pedagogical theorists and practitioners, or between continental and English authors; this allows the thesis to throw light on nuances in dramatic treatment of these issues. The second part of each chapter discusses the dramatic texts. Questions of authorship, date, audience and performance conditions are noted, where these are problematic or significant to the analysis. Particular attention is given to the possibilities for locating a play within the school culture, such as school drama. The thesis seeks to position the play's treatment of the pedagogical issues within the wider debate about parenting skills, and to identify further implications relevant to childrearing, parental authority or schooling in Elizabethan and Jacobean England.

This historicist methodology draws out the nuances of Renaissance pedagogical culture in the dramatic texts. The findings which emerge fall into two categories. At a linguistic level, they reveal the wealth of allusions and intertextual references that an understanding of the Tudor school culture brings to the texts, and to performance possibilities for these plays. At a political and social level, the findings demonstrate that these playwrights were doing more than punning or playing on school contexts or displaying their performers' talents: they were also participating in a broader debate over the nature of public schooling in England and how this impacted on family life.

The research material is taken from three distinct categories of textual sources. First, and of prime significance, are the major pedagogical treatises which were published in the sixteenth century and most of which were available in England in English. These are collectively referred to as the education advice literature and they provide the bulk of the information on Tudor pedagogy and childrearing theory and practice, as well as on teaching standards and classroom conditions. The second category includes various school texts commonly found in the Tudor and Jacobean school curricula, which are of interest for intertextual relationships with the drama, for allusions to the school culture itself, and for the positions they take on parent-school relations and on paternal and

maternal authority. The third category comprises school statutes and records of Tudor schools in England and Scotland. Material from these sources provides information on the appointment and qualifications of schoolmasters, the conditions of schooling, the curriculum and the socio-economic status of pupils, and parent-school relations.

The thesis is interested in a public school education that generally catered to the “middling sort” and the lower gentry. As a consequence certain choices have been made in selecting the research material. The education advice literature, with rare exceptions, is limited to that available in the vernacular in England and thus accessible to parents not literate in Latin; the school texts are those studied in the early years of grammar schooling, and therefore appropriate to families whose children did not necessarily go on to matriculate; and the school records are taken almost exclusively from provincial schools. A map of Britain identifying these schools is included as a useful indicator of geographical diversity. These choices have been made in order to correlate the research material with a broad section of the British population, both as consumers of public education and as assumed audiences for the majority of the plays.

The writings of Desiderius Erasmus (1467-1536), and of Juan Luis Vives (1492-1540), which were extraordinarily influential in sixteenth-century English pedagogical circles, are drawn on more than any others for comparison with the dramatic treatment of parents and education. Erasmus worked closely with John Colet of St. Paul’s School to develop a curriculum that became a model for the founders of many other schools throughout England.<sup>15</sup> Both these humanists had close ties with England and the court of Henry VIII. The works most extensively consulted are Erasmus’ *A Declamation on the Subject of Early Liberal Education for Children* (1529), which went into some fourteen editions (*De pueris* 292-94), and Vives’ *Instruction of a Christian Woman* (c1523), originally written for Princess Mary, which went into over twenty editions published before the end of the sixteenth century (*De institutione* xiii). Both these important treatises were available in translation in English.

Three major pedagogical works by English authors have been consulted. *The Book named the Governour* (1531) by Sir Thomas Elyot (1490?-1546), deals with the education of the English governing class, and was reprinted at least seven times by 1580.<sup>16</sup> *The Scholemaster* (1570), by Roger Ascham (1515-1568), Latin secretary to

Queen Mary and tutor to Queen Elizabeth, is a treatise on the private education of gentlemen, which went into six further editions by 1589.<sup>17</sup> *Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children* (1581), by Richard Mulcaster (c1532-1611), who was headmaster of England's second largest school, Merchant Taylors', for twenty-five years and High Master of St. Paul's for twelve years (*Positions* lxvii), is a detailed, informative treatise on public schooling in England. Also consulted is *A New Catechism* (c1547-53), a lengthy work by Thomas Becon (1512-1567), chaplain to Archbishop Cranmer, written primarily for religious reform in schools, and *Ludus Literarius or The Grammar Schoole* (1612) by John Brinsley (born c1570). This work was written as a teaching aide for schoolmasters, especially "the younger sort of Teachers" in "poore Countrey schooles" (*Ludus Literarius* xxi), and provides much information on the state of provincial schooling in England in the latter years of the sixteenth century.

A number of Tudor lower grammar-school textbooks have been consulted, including dialogues and colloquies which were popular in the teaching of Latin. Those drawn on here are predominantly the *Colloquia* (1519) of Erasmus, which became a standard textbook in English grammar schools and remained so for centuries (*Colloquia*, introduction xiii-xxxiii).<sup>18</sup> These works were generally used in the lower classes (*Ludus Literarius* 219, 221). The 1574 statutes for Ruthin Grammar School, for example, stipulate that the usher, was to read "to the 2nd Class Erasmus his Colloquies" (*Ruthin* 113). The anti-Roman sentiment expressed in many of Erasmus' colloquies stimulated their popularity in Protestant England, where a number of them were translated, paraphrased or plagiarised and published in English. Vives' dialogues, known as the *Linguae Latinae Exercitatio* (1539), were equally popular in English schools for many centuries, and are generally regarded as classroom exercises for seven to fourteen year-olds.<sup>19</sup>

School *vulgaria* are a valuable source of information on Tudor school and family life. These are collections of English phrases, known as "*vulgars*, or Englishes, ... to be made in Latine" (*Ludus Literarius* 148). Schoolmasters throughout Britain and Scotland daily gave the boys "some good vulgars" for translation into Latin (*Peterborough* 15), and the following most popular have been consulted: the *Vulgaria* of John Stanbridge (1463-1510), first published in 1508 by Wynkyn de Worde, which rapidly went into six known editions;<sup>20</sup> the *Vulgaria* of Robert Whittinton (c1480-<1548), a pupil of Stanbridge, also

republished in numerous editions;<sup>21</sup> the 1519 *Vulgaria* of William Hormon (c1450-1535), who was headmaster of Eton and later of Winchester, and whose *vulgaria* encompass an extensive collection of phrases covering many domestic, rural and civic aspects of life in Tudor England (*Vulgaria* xxiv). Another practising schoolmaster, Maturin Cordier (Corderius), who had been appointed by Calvin to conduct his school at Geneva, also wrote a selection of Latin *vulgaria* (1564) which may even have been more popular than the colloquies of Erasmus (*Colloquia*, introduction xxviii). The thesis consults a selection of these translated by John Brinsley, author of *Ludus Literarius*, and published in English under the title of *Pueriles Confabulatiunculae* (1617).

A methodology that compares the dramatic treatment of parenting and school related issues solely with their counterparts in the pedagogical treatises, and with formal school texts, will inevitably miss many topical or local allusions in the drama. The thesis has therefore looked to a number of additional, specifically English sources of information on life within and around schools in sixteenth-century England. These consist primarily of twenty-five school histories (list pages ix-x and map page xi). These records of schools founded, or refounded, in the sixteenth century contain information on hiring schoolmasters, on disputes with schoolmasters and on powerplays within the local community over control of the school. The school statutes, as reprinted in these school histories, are of particular interest and have been drawn on for the following information: conditions within schools; the curriculum; modes of discipline; timetables; conditions of employment of schoolmasters and ushers (undermasters); ages of students; fees and costs to parents and parent-school relations. Primary manuscript sources such as letter collections and personal commonplace books provide further occasional insights into parenting or school related issues.

Provincial schools generally drew their students from the middling sort - merchants, artisans, journeymen, civic figures, and the lower gentry - rather than the upper gentry or the nobility. This is generally the class of family Mulcaster advocates for public schooling: “the midle sorte of parentes which neither welter in to much wealth, nor wrastle with to much want” (*Positions* 144.31-32). A useful definition of “the middling sort” is taken from the introduction to Jonathan Barry’s study:

The middling sort defined themselves in relation to households, which often formed the heart of a trading unit – in farm, shop or craft workplace – but also acted as the key unit

for the reproduction and security of the family, centred on the figure of the adult male householder. The work of this household ensured its independence from poverty and thus laid the foundation for social, cultural and political independence.<sup>22</sup>

This is not to say that sons of the nobility or upper gentry did not attend public schools, but those who did were in the minority, and their public education was usually preceded by a period of private tutoring. Five of the seven dramatic works selected indicate a provincial context, either for performance or for location of the play's action. Private education, which pertains to a narrow social élite in Renaissance Britain, is discussed only insofar as it throws light on aspects of public education or exposes social attitudes towards schooling. For similar reasons the thesis does not discuss higher education or consider Latin or university drama. In general, the emphasis in the education advice literature and the drama is on the education of boys, although the education of girls is relevant to a number of the plays. Girls could, and did, attend public schools, but it was usually only in the elementary classes, where the instruction was generally in English.

### **The issues**

The thesis explores three main areas of interest. The first area is the representation of sixteenth-century schoolmasters, their invidious status within the community and the overwhelmingly negative commentary on schoolmasters found in the pedagogical sources. This material draws on the work of Rebecca Bushnell who has documented the complex and competing authorities of schoolmasters and tutors vis-à-vis fathers. Bushnell's work focuses primarily on the nobility and private education, and this thesis extends her theories to consider local schoolmasters and their relationships with mothers as well as fathers. Maternal authority and female values constitute the second and most significant area of interest for this thesis, which is particularly interested in the involvement of mothers in schooling. Prevailing pedagogical theory asserted the superiority of paternal values and authority, and sought to reduce and restrict a mother's role in the education of her children. The drama, however, offers a defence of maternal authority and hints at the scapegoating of mothers for the failures of fathers. In this analysis of maternal figures in Renaissance drama, the thesis adopts a similar understanding to that of Mary Beth Rose, that is that "dramatic discourse, with its obligation to action and dependence upon conflict, is better equipped not only to

acknowledge potential ideological inconsistencies but also to exploit them.” Rose turned to Protestant discourse material to explore the dramatic representations of mothers, and to demonstrate that “motherhood was very slowly beginning to be construed as a problematic status, and that the perceived conflicts center on parental power and authority.”<sup>23</sup> This thesis serves to some extent as a precursor to Rose’s essay; by exploring this “problematic status” of motherhood in pre-Shakespearean drama, and by considering the role of mothers in relation to schools, the generators of much English drama.<sup>24</sup> Through its study of the drama, the thesis comes to similar conclusions to those reached by Linda Woodbridge in her study of the formal women’s controversy in the English Renaissance, namely, that misogynist attacks in writing were often vehicles for the defence of women.<sup>25</sup> The third area of interest in the drama is paternal authority and paternal codes of behaviour. In contrast to the largely positive treatment of mothers in the drama, fathers are generally represented as less than perfect in their paternal roles. While the drama exploits the humour of incompetent or misguided father figures, it also offers sympathetic and psychologically perceptive insights into the conflicting demands made on fathers by Tudor pedagogical theory. In its discussion of this area, the thesis draws on Richard Helgerson’s work on “the Elizabethan prodigals.”

Chapter One outlines the pedagogical context of public schooling in Tudor Britain, drawing on the work of Nicholas Orme and David Cressy, and identifies middling to lower gentry families as the level of society most likely to be affected by the provision of public school education. The chapter argues that a highpoint in the establishment of schools and in participation rates in public schools, was reached between approximately 1540 and 1580, a period that covers four of the dramatic texts. This overview of Tudor schooling defines stages of schooling, and discusses issues that arise in the plays, such as schooling for girls, schooling as a career asset, public versus private education, relations between school and Church, and between parents and schools.

Chapter Two, on the schoolmaster as comic pedant, considers the satirical representations of schoolmasters in two dramatic works dating from between 1580 and 1596. The schoolmaster as a figure for satire in English drama appears primarily after the growth in public schools had peaked - in other words, at a period when public schools were well established and well patronised and it was no longer a question of encouraging

schooling but of examining the quality of schooling provided. Philip Sidney's Rombus in *The Lady of May* (1578-82) reflects a common low opinion of parish schoolmasters, and may be a prototype for Shakespeare's pedant, Holofernes, in *Love's Labour's Lost* (c1589-98). This chapter builds on the work of H. R. Woudhuysen in defining the similarities between these two figures. Both *The Lady of May* and *Love's Labour's Lost* make fun of the teachings of their schoolmasters, and equate the Tudor education system with conceit, ignorance, superficial learning, faulty judgement and pretentious behaviour. Both works likewise use the articulate voices and the astute judgement of their female characters to bring these negatives into relief.

In Chapter Three, the thesis moves from schooling and schoolmasters to the representation of parents and parental authority in relation to schools. This chapter focusses on mothers, and considers the way two dramatists handled maternal representations in plays written from within the culture of schooling, and at a period of intense interest in education. It places the treatment of two mothers, one in *Nice Wanton* (c1547-60) and one in *July and Julian* (c1559-70), within a popular cultural tradition that blamed mothers for crime in the community, and against a literary tradition of pedagogical antipathy towards mothers. Both plays interrogate the familiar image of the shrewish mother. The dramatist of *Nice Wanton* presents his audience with a maternal stereotype that mirrors the image in popular culture, and whose indulgent attitude is responsible for the deaths of her delinquent children. It is the very familiarity of the plot and the characterisation that leads the thesis to conclude that a contemporary audience would look for the angle the playwright puts on this familiar stereotype. *July and Julian* is another play that presents a mother in control of her children's upbringing, this time a strict and authoritarian maternal figure. The play suggests that the competent exercise of maternal authority renders mothers vulnerable to the epithet of shrew, and draws an analogy between disciplinarian mothers and schoolmasters. The chapter draws on Linda Woodbridge's work on the women's controversy of the 1560s in considering the role of the stage misogynist in interpreting these maternal images.

Chapter Four considers Thomas Ingelend's *The Disobedient Child* (c1559-70), which deals with the problems facing fathers in directing the education of their sons. Ingelend, who may have been writing for a provincial boarding school, treats aspects of the

debate about the relative merits of private and public education. The play presents a wealthy father in control of his son's education, and considers the issue of paternal authority. The father draws on a variety of textual and traditional sources in his role as counsellor to his son, none of which proves effective, and the narrative moves inexorably towards the rod and the school as the only source of satisfactory authority. Richard Helgerson's work on the prodigal son motif in Elizabethan England provides an illuminating pedagogical framework for *The Disobedient Child*. The play engages with various deterrents to public schools, including rumours of cruelty in schools and public perceptions of study as unmanly, and takes issue with a benign mode of parenting such as that advocated in the writings of Erasmus. Pathos and realism of characterisation foreground the difficulties and distress experienced by this father, and the sympathetic portrayal leads to a blurring of gender boundaries in which patriarchal control is ceded to matriarchal authority in the form of the boy's shrewish wife. This is another play which makes the equation between shrewish wives or mothers and disciplinarian schoolmasters, and which takes issue with a pedagogical theory which maintained that fathers were better equipped than mothers to guide their children in the path of education.

The analysis of the drama concludes with a chapter on parents and the infant child, and suggests that the pedagogical theories of Erasmus and Vives may have influenced the anxiety-ridden paternal representations in these two plays: Chettle's *Patient Grissill* (1599), and Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* (c1610). The chapter identifies a split between an English tradition, which regarded the nursery as taboo to men, and a continental ideology, which justified male intervention in the infant years as a necessary preparation for the success of education. Chettle's breastfeeding scene in *Patient Grissill* provides a dramatic exemplum of the dilemma for fathers caught between what may reasonably be called their natural desires as a parent, and an early modern code of paternal behaviour that frowned on playful, affectionate intimacy between fathers and children. Shakespeare expands the topic of maternal versus paternal relationships with infant children, and interrogates a pedagogical theory that encouraged mistrust of mothers and alienated fathers from childhood values. By upholding the values of the nursery and the imaginative world, the playwright links the world of children and mothers to the world of theatre. The figure of the female scold, analysed in earlier chapters for her



disciplinarian value, is also presented here in the figure of Paulina in *The Winter's Tale*, as she enacts the play's fairy tale resolution and restores the values of childhood lost in adulthood.

### **Mothers, fathers and Tudor schooling**

The thesis is based on the premise that changes and growth in public schooling in sixteenth-century England led to changes in patterns of parental responsibility, including a greater involvement by mothers in the schooling of children. Documentary evidence of this is scarce, but clues can be found in the drama and in certain pedagogical texts.

A scene in *A Warning for Fair Women* (1599), depicts a mother and her young son just after he has returned home from school. Mother and son sit on the doorstep talking together. He chatters on eagerly to his mother about school affairs:

Boy.	Mother, shal not I have new bow and shafts, Against our schoole go a feasting?	
Anne.	Yes if ye learn, And against Easter new apparel too.	
Boy.	Youle lend me al your scarfes, and al your rings, And buy me a white feather for my velvet cappe, Wil ye mother? yea say, prairie ye say so.	
Anne.	Goe pratling boy, go bid your sister see My closet lockt when she takes out the fruite.	
Boy.	I wil forsooth, and take some for my paines.	<i>Exit Boy.</i>
Anne.	Wel sir sauce, do's your master teach ye that? I prairie God blesse thee, thart a verie wagge. <sup>26</sup>	

Viviana Comensoli suggests this scene is intended to invoke the signifiers of early modern civility, and she points to the closet, and the items of clothing, the fruit, etc. as evidence of the family's wealth.<sup>27</sup> Her suggestion is supported by the reference to archery, a sport of the gentry, which was taught in a number of schools at a young age. According to Erasmus, "The English are very partial to archery, which is the first thing they teach their children" (*De pueris* 339). When the King's School, Grantham, identifies the permissible recreations for boys, it also offers similar values to those in the play quoted above: "And in playing they shall use Shooting only or other Exercise of running and not bowleing Coiting nor other unlawfull Games and every Scholar by means of their

Friends shall be bound to have Bows and arrows & shall use them” (*Grantham* 144). These accoutrements of school life support the image in the play of a well-to-do or aspiring family; the scene also foregrounds a mother’s involvement in her child’s schooling, her pride in his wit and her support for his education (“if ye learn”), as part of this early modern civility. The father sees little of his child: he is too busy making money on the Exchange. There is little doubt that the play is sketching an “upwardly mobile” Elizabethan family.

The fact that there is little documentary evidence outside the drama of mothers involved in the schooling of their children should not be interpreted as proof of absence of maternal involvement. School statutes, which provide much of the detail on contact between a schoolmaster and a boy’s family, always refer to “parents.” This may be no more than a convention, but it nonetheless includes mothers and possibly other female relations. Although the pedagogical theorists almost invariably write as if the selection of schools were solely a matter for fathers, Richard Mulcaster, with his many years of experience as headmaster of Merchant Taylor’s school, indicates that mothers were at times involved in their children’s placement at school. He writes that although fathers usually brought their sons to school on the first day, often telling the master how much the boy’s mother would make of her son; mothers themselves would come at times “and do [their] owne commendacions” (*Positions* 29.26-29). When Mulcaster urges prospective schoolmasters to use their discretion with regard to corporal punishment, he is fully aware, like another headmaster quoted below, that mothers heeded their sons’ tales. The master ought therefore to:

leave as litle as he may to the childe report, who will alway leane and sway to much to his owne side, and beare away the bell, even against the best maister, cheifly if his mother be either his counsellour, or his attourney: or the father unconstant, and without judgement. (*Positions* 270.29-33)

Mulcaster’s wording emphasises the nature of a mother’s relationship with her son, and distances fathers from such close relationships. A son attending the local grammar school and living at home would be in daily contact with his mother well into his teens. Children started school early in the morning at either 6 or 7 a.m., and, providing they lived close enough to the school, could return home briefly for breakfast, and again at mid-day for a two-hour break for dinner (*Guildford* 76). Often one day a week was a half-

day at school (*Grantham* 143-44; *Northwich* 37). As a consequence, mothers who were not occupied in a trade or activity outside the home could be in regular contact with their schoolchild during the day as well as outside school hours; fathers, as the main income-producers, were less likely to have had time during the day for their children even if they were carrying on their business or craft from home.

Those authors, like Mulcaster, who were or had been practising schoolmasters themselves, tend to acknowledge a greater maternal authority than pedagogical theory allowed. A later anecdote concerning Richard Busby, headmaster of Westminster in the mid seventeenth century (1638-1695), confirms what Mulcaster infers. When asked how he managed to keep all his preferments during the Civil War, the Commonwealth, the Restoration and the Revolution, Busby is said to have replied: “The *fathers* govern the nation; the *mothers* govern the fathers; but the *boys* govern the mothers, and *I* govern the boys!”<sup>28</sup> His comment acknowledges the close relationship between mothers and sons, and reveals the influence of mothers in family life. This is not an image of mothering reflected in the education literature or many of the school texts - unless it is for negative purposes.

The content of the Tudor school curriculum, the humanistic “New Learning,” was inherently hostile to women. It privileged (supposedly) masculine values over (supposedly) feminine values; it prized oratory and performance skills, skills not publicly acceptable in women, and it taught boys to communicate in Latin and Greek, languages not commonly used by women. Schoolboys were encouraged through the medium of Latin school exercises and literary texts to disassociate themselves from feminine values, and to become part of a superior, masculine culture. This is an aspect of Renaissance schooling which Walter J. Ong illuminates in terms of puberty rites for boys.<sup>29</sup> Richard Helgerson, in his review of the prodigal son motif in Renaissance education theory, also points out that “the humanistic tradition, and particularly the tradition of Latin education, was aggressively hostile to women and their influence.”<sup>30</sup> The content of the curriculum itself was often antipathetic to women, whether it was in the works of the classical authors taught in Latin or Greek, or in the contemporary Christian school texts developed by humanist educators for use in schools throughout Europe.<sup>31</sup> Tudor schoolboys were exposed to a pedagogical philosophy that sought to minimise a mother’s participation in

her son's education and to relegate her to the domestic sphere of life. Chapter Three considers this privileging of paternal authority and masculine values over those of the mother in parental representations in popular school dialogues written by Vives and Erasmus, as an introduction to two school plays that put mothers fully in control of their children's schooling.

The pedagogical authors who promoted the New Learning reinforced this hostility towards mothers in their published treatises. Perhaps they inherited their misogyny through their ecclesiastical backgrounds, religious writing of the Middle Ages also shows much hostility towards mothers.<sup>32</sup> Yet by the mid-sixteenth century scholarly concepts of mothering were being circulated beyond the traditional fairly cloistered readership of earlier centuries, and reaching a far wider audience. This was an audience of parents, civic leaders and pedagogues eager to participate in the promised benefits of education, whether in sending a child to school, in founding or endowing a school or in pursuing a career in teaching.

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 NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

<sup>1</sup> Chapter One provides evidence and details of the changes in education in Tudor England.

<sup>2</sup> T. H. Vail Motter, *The School Drama in England* (London: Longmans, 1929) 239-40.

<sup>3</sup> Margaret Rogerson, "Provincial Schoolmasters and Early English Drama," *Essays in Honour of Peter Meredith*, ed. Catherine Batt, *Leeds Studies in English*, 29 (1998) 324; see also Richard L. DeMolen, *Richard Mulcaster (c.1531-1611) and Educational Reform in the Renaissance*, *Bibliotheca Humanistica & Reformatorica* 49 (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1991) 154-58.

<sup>4</sup> Records of dramatic activity for Eton College between 1550 and 1567 indicate plays or interludes were commonly performed at Christmas and at Shrovetide: Eton College Audit Book 62/3, unpublished records courtesy of Alexandra Johnston, REED, Victoria College, University of Toronto.

<sup>5</sup> See also Rogerson, "Provincial Schoolmasters" 321.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Shapiro, *Children of the Revels: The Boy Companies of Shakespeare's Time and Their Plays* (New York: Columbia UP, 1977) 106, 6-11.

<sup>7</sup> Expenditure records for the years 1550-1595 at Eton College identify: players' garments, hats, beards, mechanical props, stage props, candles, torches, etc.: Eton College Audit Books 62/3, 62/4 and 62/5, unpublished records courtesy of Alexandra Johnston, REED, Victoria College, University of Toronto.

<sup>8</sup> Francis Bacon, *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985) (37).3-12. In Joshua Poole's *The English Parnassus* (1657), dialogues are included under the heading of "Dramatic poesie" together with "Tragedies, Comedies, Interludes, Masks, Entertainments, Dialogues, Satires, Frolics etc.": Foster Watson, *The Beginnings of the Teaching of Modern Subjects in England* (London: Pitman, 1909) 37; see also Brinsley, *Ludus Literarius* 212. This emphasis on gestures and action continued well into the seventeenth century: Roger North, *Essays* (1680-1690s), Add. MS. 32523, British Library, London, ff.134v-135; I am grateful to Dr. Mary Chan for introducing me to this material.

<sup>9</sup> Commonplace book, MS. V.a.381, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC, 98-100.

<sup>10</sup> Richard Edwards, *Damon and Pithias: A Critical Old-Spelling Edition*, ed. D. Jerry White (New York: Garland, 1980) 23-24.

<sup>11</sup> Motter, *School Drama* 22; Shapiro, *Children* 57-58, 149.

<sup>12</sup> Shapiro, *Children* 235; Martin White, *Renaissance Drama in Action: An Introduction to Aspects of Theatre Practice and Performance* (London: Routledge, 1998) 79.

<sup>13</sup> Shapiro, *Children* 106-07.

<sup>14</sup> Shapiro, *Children* 108; White, *Renaissance Drama in Action* 79-80.

<sup>15</sup> The 1519 statutes for the Free Grammar School, Bruton, are typical in their provision that "the said Schoolmaster shall teach his scholars Grammar after the good new form used in Magdalen College in Oxford or in the School at Pauls in London": *Bruton* 6.

<sup>16</sup> "Elyot, Thomas," *DNB*, vol 6, 765-68.

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<sup>17</sup> “Ascham, Roger,” *DNB*, vol 1, 622-30.

<sup>18</sup> See also Nicholas Orme, *English Schools in the Middle Ages* (London: Methuen, 1973) 114.

<sup>19</sup> Howard B. Norland, *Drama in Early Tudor Britain 1485-1558* (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1995) 108. The *Exercitatio* of Vives is included, for example, in the statutes for Westminster (1560) in first form: Arthur F. Leach, *Educational Charters and Documents 598 to 1909* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1911) 511.

<sup>20</sup> “Stanbridge, John,” *DNB* vol 18, 878.

<sup>21</sup> “Whittinton, Robert,” *DNB*, vol 21, 157-58.

<sup>22</sup> Jonathan Barry, *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550-1800* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994) 2-3.

<sup>23</sup> Mary Beth Rose, “Where Are the Mothers in Shakespeare? Options for Gender Representation in the English Renaissance,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 42 (1991) 298, 296.

<sup>24</sup> The thesis recognises the powerful Protestant influence behind much of the pedagogical material.

<sup>25</sup> Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womanhood, 1540-1620* (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1984).

<sup>26</sup> *A Warning for Fair Women* (1599), ed. John S. Farmer, *Tudor Facsimile Texts* (n.p.: n.p., 1912) B2v.

<sup>27</sup> Viviana Comensoli, ‘Household Business’: *Domestic Plays of Early Modern England* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1996) 93.

<sup>28</sup> J. D. Carleton, *Westminster* (London: Blackie and Son, 1938) 11.

<sup>29</sup> Walter J. Ong, “Latin Language Study as a Renaissance Puberty Rite,” *Studies in Philology* 56 (1959): 103-24.

<sup>30</sup> Richard Helgerson, *The Elizabethan Prodigals* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1976) 35.

<sup>31</sup> See for example the discussion on the works of Mantuan on page 81.

<sup>32</sup> Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, ed., *Silences of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap - Harvard UP, 1992) vol 2, *A History of Women in the West*; see in particular Chapter 3, Carla Casagrande, “The Protected Woman,” trans. Clarissa Botsford 70-104, and Chapter 4, Silvana Vecchio, “The Good Wife,” trans. Clarissa Botsford 105-135; see also Jennifer Fellows, “Mothers in Middle English Romance,” *Women and Literature in Britain 1150-1500*, ed. Carol M. Meale (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993) 42-43.

## Chapter One

### The pedagogical context: public schooling in Tudor England

#### The social issues

Sixteenth-century schooling differed in two significant ways from medieval schooling: the control of schools was moved out of the church and into secular authority, and education became, generally speaking, free, as endowments by benefactors released schoolmasters from the need to charge fees. Education was moved out of the prerogative of a minority to become an accessible option for the general population. With this shift, many new schools were founded, and others re-founded, across the country. Many schools already existed in pre-Reformation England, a fact sometimes ignored by historians: “too many early modern historians, having no clear interest in the medieval situation, attribute individual schools to sixteenth-century foundation when it is absolutely clear that at least some type of formal schooling was institutionalised in the place earlier, though not necessarily continuously.”<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this thesis, it is the shift to widespread free or subsidised public schooling that is significant.

Nicholas Orme, in *English Schools in the Middle Ages*, has documented this move from ecclesiastical to secular endowed schooling, identifying its beginnings in the fourteenth century and widespread growth in the fifteenth, before reaching its apogee in the sixteenth. The effect of endowed schooling was to widen the population base for education, and to give the laity a share in the teaching profession, which had previously been predominantly a concern of the clergy.<sup>2</sup> Founding patrons came from all ranks of society, from king to commoner, from the nobility, from laymen and laywomen of lesser rank, from London merchants (grocers, mercers, goldsmiths), burgesses of provincial towns, and from urban communities in general. Endowed schooling, which generally meant free tuition, at least for the local children, made education available to a greater cross-section of society than hitherto, and rural and provincial England seems to have benefited sooner than London from the introduction of free schooling. In Orme’s list of medieval secular schools by location, it appears that over sixty locations outside London acquired a school for the first time between 1500 and 1530, the cut-off date for Orme’s list. In the following four decades education reached new heights and new locations in

Tudor England. Most of the large towns acquired their free schools around the middle of the sixteenth century. In London the expansion of education also took place in the mid-sixteenth century, with the foundation of such important schools as Westminster (1540), Christ's Hospital (1552) and Merchant Taylors' (1561).<sup>3</sup> Orme completes his survey on the threshold of the Elizabethan era when the founding of new schools and the drive for popular schooling had reached a high point. This is also the point when the drama dealing with schooling becomes most visible, and the point at which this thesis commences its inquiry via drama into Tudor parenting practices and parent-school relations.

Another study that pinpoints the same period in Tudor England of 1540 - 1580 as a high point in sixteenth-century education is David Cressy's *Literacy and the Social Order*. Using a methodology which measures literacy by signatures or marks on documents, Cressy traces rises and falls in literacy levels and relates these to the earlier years of education of the deponents.<sup>4</sup> Cressy's research concludes there was an educational boom in the 1560s which lasted until about 1580, before entering a period of recession. This boom was occasioned by a proliferation of new grammar schools: thirty-nine foundations in the 1540s, forty-seven in the 1550s, forty-two in the 1560s and thirty in the 1570s. In the York diocese alone there were "75 grammar schools, 118-25 reading schools, and at least 76 song schools before 1548 in the same area, as well as at least two grammar schools and half-a-dozen parish schools in the York city itself."<sup>5</sup> The consequence of this expansion in schooling was that "the reign of Elizabeth saw a solid improvement in literacy among tradesmen and craftsmen in all parts of England."<sup>6</sup> Cressy charts significant falls in illiteracy rates in the social categories of gentlemen, yeomen, tailors and weavers, husbandmen and tradesmen, in a range of towns in England. For example, illiteracy among yeomen in the diocese of Norwich in the 1550s stood at around sixty per cent, yet by 1590 it had been halved, showing that the 1560s and 1570s had been years of great educational progress. By co-ordinating literacy rates back to years of education, Cressy demonstrates that "a period of energetic educational advance, lasting almost to 1580, began with the accession of Elizabeth. Every group in every area, . . . shared in this generation of progress. Even the husbandmen were swept along."<sup>7</sup>



School statutes can also tell us something of, at least, the philanthropical aims of their founders in extending education to disadvantaged families. At the majority of 'Free Schools' tuition was free for the children of local inhabitants, and fees were applied to those outside the locality, or, if local entrance fees were charged, they could be waived for impoverished families:

All such poor children born in the parish of Almondbury whose parents receive weekly or other constant alms of the parish or other charity or by reason of their poverty pay no taxes to the Church or King, shall be taught in the school the Latin and Greek tongues gratis, but such poor children shall be obliged to get moss for the roof of the school and clean the desks and school without neglect to their learning. (*Almondbury* 21)

Many schools, like the King's School, Peterborough, took a set number of poor boys, housing and clothing them as boarders (*Peterborough* 12). Merchant Taylors' statutes limited the numbers of pupils to 250 of whom 100 were to be educated free.<sup>8</sup> Certain schools introduced scales of entrance fees depending on the boy's status; for example, Shrewsbury had a sliding scale from ten shillings for a lord's son, to four pence for the youngest son of a local burgess. In this period of "unusual educational excitement and achievement" (to use Cressy's own words), the topic of schooling could not have failed to be a major issue for the majority of English parents.<sup>9</sup>

It is worth considering the incentives that caused this boom in education. These are the 'push' and 'pull' factors that Cressy considers; the 'pull' factors are the utilitarian or internal persuasions, in other words, social and economic incentives and the value of functional literacy for the market place or private affairs.<sup>10</sup> The 'push' factors are external or ideological, such as exhortations of educators, religious activists, or an official campaign. Article 29 for the Royal Grammar School at Guildford clearly spells out the "push" benefits to Tudor society:

Honesty and cleanness of life, gentle and decent speeches, humility, courtesy and good manners shall be established by all good means. Pride, ribaldry, scurrility, lying, picking, swearing, blaspheming and such other vices shall be sharply punished, and . . . the vertuous Scholars refraining to offend in any of these vices shall be commended and cherished. (*Guildford* 90)

These are the imperatives that lie behind the 1560s interlude *Nice Wanton* and, to a lesser extent, *The Disobedient Child*; they are also the benefits denied to pupils of the scurrilous Holofernes in *Love's Labour's Lost*.

These arguments tended to paint education as serving the interests of the commonweal rather than offering individual gain. Virtue, *civilitas*, religious conformity, were all ‘push’ factors put forward by the state, the reforming church and the educators. According to Cressy, however, there is little evidence to indicate that the improvement in literacy in early modern England was a response to such ideological pressures.<sup>11</sup> The more persuasive ‘pull’ arguments were the ones which promised material gains, such as those enumerated by Brinsley in *Ludus Literarius*, where the rewards of learning are those “which accompany great learned men; namely riches, honours, dignities, favour, pleasures, and whatsoever their hearts can desire” (*Ludus Literarius* 285).

Mulcaster, writing in 1581 after two to three decades of immense educational progress, has to argue against personal ambition in the face of over-enrolments in grammar schools. He acknowledges that schooling was seen as a means to preferment, citing success stories, including possibly that of Wolsey, erstwhile schoolmaster turned Chancellor of England. Mulcaster recognises that ambition was an acceptable pedagogical inducement in elementary schools, but one that should be discouraged in grammar schools because it suggested a dangerous desire for preferment by too many families (*Positions* 139.27-29). As a consequence parents should not put their own interests first: “parentes in disposing of their children [in schools] may upon good warrant surrender their interest to the generall consideration of their common countrie, and thinke that it is not best to have their children bookish, notwithstanding their owne desire” (*Positions* 146.34-147.02).<sup>12</sup> In the opening lines of one play of 1575, *The Glasse of Governement* by George Gascoigne, the issue of education as a career asset is knowingly included. The father of two grammar school boys, having agreed that his sons may “by learning aspire unto greater promotion,” then expressly denies personal ambition as the impulse behind his choice: “Neither yet would I have you conceive hereby that I am ambitious. But if I be not deceived, All desire of promotion (by vertue) is godly and lawful, whereas ambition is commonly nestled in the breasts of the envious.”<sup>13</sup> These introductory lines give evidence of topical debate on the issue of education as a career asset.

The 1560s play discussed here, *The Disobedient Child*, has also been adduced to demonstrate a Protestant bias towards secular interest in education “particularly where

financial profit and social advancement are concerned.”<sup>14</sup> Certainly, by the mid-sixteenth century, there was every reason to regard the ability to read and write as a statement of social superiority for those merchants, yeomen, tradesmen, and husbandmen who looked upwards for their role models. Cressy’s research demonstrates “how well the ranking based on literacy agreed with the ordering by status and esteem.”<sup>15</sup> In the social hierarchy of literacy the skilled, literate professionals, such as ministers, lawyers, and physicians, were accorded a kind of honorary gentle status by virtue of their profession alone. *July and Julian*, a 1560s play that features a family with marked utilitarian values, draws attention to their desire that their son possess good writing skills. However, as Cressy points out, while skilled literacy could achieve a fragile gentility, a gentility based on birth was never revoked by illiteracy.<sup>16</sup> The schoolmaster’s profession is an obvious example of this fragile gentility; Shakespeare’s Holofernes and Sidney’s Rombus are characterised by their pretensions to the status of gentry on the basis of their learning. The schoolmaster’s qualifications – his book learning – were at once his passport to social respect and a bar to aristocratic levels of society.

The ambivalence with which the classical, literary grammar school curriculum was regarded is evident in the general disregard accorded to scholarly studies by the upper gentry and the nobility. Book learning was regarded by the élite as a sedentary occupation, which was potentially unhealthy and therefore not consonant with images of masculinity. All three school plays take up this issue to rebut it, thus betraying their public school origins. In *The Disobedient Child*, the public school culture reveals itself through the father’s support of book learning as a means of control: “And let us thrust them alway to the school, / Whereby at their books they may be kept under” (55). Such advice would have been unacceptable to the socially privileged. In *The Scholemaster*, a treatise described on its title page as “specially purposed for the private bringing up of youth in Gentlemen and noblemen’s houses,” Roger Ascham hastens to correct any false impression he may have given his readers when encouraging a broad range of reading: “I do not meene, by all this my taulke, that yong gentlemen, should alwaies be poring on a booke, and by using good studies, shold lease honest pleasure, and haunt no good pastime. I meene nothing lesse” (*Scholemaster* 19-20). As he continues, he is at pains to deny any association with the killjoy mentality associated with scholars: “For it is well

knowne, that I both like and love, and have always, and do yet still use, all exercises and pastimes . . . I was never, either Stoick in doctrine, or Anabaptist in Religion, to mislike a merie, pleasant, and plaifull nature” (*Scholemaster* 20). Ascham’s defensive language and protestations betray the conflicting values of a scholar in a courtly world. Erasmus and Vives were outspoken about the nobility’s perceived disdain towards learning and literacy, writing their criticisms into their school exercises, as in Erasmus’ satirical colloquy “The Ignoble Knight” (*Colloquia* 424-32), or Vives’ Dialogue X: “The crowd of our nobility do not follow the precept (as to the value of writing), for they think it is a fine and becoming thing not to know how to form their letters” (*Exercitatio* 67). Writing was a mechanical art, an art acquired for the purpose of monetary remuneration, and viewed with disdain by those such as the author of the *Courtiers Academie* (1598): “leaving apart mechanicall art, as impertinent to a civil man.”<sup>17</sup> Shakespeare satirizes this view in the mouth of Hamlet, the scholar-prince:

I once did hold it, as our statistes do,  
A baseness to write fair and labour’d much  
How to forget that learning.

(V.ii.33-35)<sup>18</sup>

Other Jacobean dramatists follow suit: “you scorn to be a scolar, you were born better.”<sup>19</sup>

The self-styled gentleman casually attending university would become a popular target for satire in later literature: “his main loitering is at the library where he studies arms and books of honour, and turns a gentleman-critic in pedigrees. Of all things he endures not to be mistaken for a scholar.”<sup>20</sup> *Love’s Labour’s Lost* plays with the tensions between stock images of melancholy, celibate scholars and lusty, confident young noblemen. These tensions and conflicting values were integral to the education debate and closely allied to images of masculinity; they can be identified in the three school plays discussed in this thesis.

The debate over private versus public education was so common that it became a conventional topic for oratorical disputations. In John Clarke’s *Formulae Oratoriae* the list of subjects includes: “*Educatio publica privatae praeferenda sit?*” (Should public education be preferred before private?) (*Vulgaria* lx). For the lesser gentry and the wealthy merchant families, the question of private versus public education was of relevance. Socially ambitious families who looked upward for their role models, rejected public

education. These are the parents who, as Mulcaster put it, “by cloistering from the common will seeme to keepe a countenance farre above the common” (*Positions* 187.35-38). Mulcaster is particularly scathing about those who without warrant consider themselves gentry: “*riche* men which being no *gentlemen*, but growing to wealth by what meanes soever, will counterfeate *gentlemen* in the education of their children” (*Positions* 194.25-27), and he devotes one of his longest chapters (Chapter 39) to arguing against private education, asking “why is private teaching so much used?” and his answer deems emulation by the lesser gentry of those above them to be the cause (*Positions* 191.31-36).

In *Nice Wanton* the indulgent mother and her delinquent children subscribe to this view of public schools as beneath their status, and in *The Disobedient Child*, the father, who is repeatedly referred to as a “Rich Man,” has misguidedly allowed his son to consider himself above common schools. The boy’s lack of skills and his undisciplined behaviour contribute to his undoing. By characterising the indulged, home-reared boy as cowardly and effeminate, the play claims a role for schools in developing manliness in boys. This is the dramatist’s way of countering the usual arguments which posit a school education as unhealthy and unmasculine. The play exemplifies one of Mulcaster’s arguments in favour of schools, that the child will benefit from witnessing the exercise of discipline, as well as being subject to it: “and withal in schooles he shall perceave that vice is punished, and vertue praised, which where it is not, there is daunger to good manners, but not in schooles, where it is very diligently observed” (*Positions* 191.3-06).

### **The structure of Tudor schooling**

Children received their first instruction in the alphabet, reading, religious principles, music and perhaps drawing, either in the elementary forms of a grammar school or through various other sources of early tuition: dames’ schools, parish schools, reading schools, abc schools, petty schools, and from parish parsons and curates. This stage of learning is described by Mulcaster as “the elementarie, that is the whole matter which children are to learn ... from their first beginning to go to anie school, untill they pass to grammer” (*Elementarie* 1). In theory, seven was the age to start school, as indicated in a phrase in *Vulgaria Stanbrigiana*: “I was set to scole when I was seven yere olde” (*Vulgaria* 14). Erasmus believed tuition could start earlier, “men of learning have rightly rejected

the view that children should not be set to studying before they are seven years old,” but he did not suggest they should go to school earlier (*De pueris* 319). Some authors recommended that children should go to school as early as four years old. William Forrest, chaplain to Queen Mary in 1558, argued that children should start at four, that all schools should be free and that no child under eight should be set to work.<sup>21</sup> Children in London or large cities probably started at a younger age than those in rural schools, since Brinsley regrets the fact that “in our countrey schooles, [entrance] is commonly about seven or eight yeeres old: sixe is very soone. If any beginne so early, they are rather sent to the schoole to keepe them from troubling the house at home” (*Ludus Literarius* 9). Mulcaster, on the other hand, considered seven or eight soon enough, allowing four years for elementary schooling. Sir John Deane’s Grammar School at Northwich, accepted children aged six (*Northwich* 300), whereas Carmarthen, in Wales, specified no earlier than eight (*Carmarthen* 43). Many grammar schools included elementary, preparatory classes for children not yet ready for grammar schooling. Elementary tuition usually focussed on learning the alphabet and reading as a means of introducing children to basic religious instruction; other subjects included music and drawing and sometimes writing and arithmetic.

The petties, as they were called, did not attract the most talented teachers.<sup>22</sup> Mulcaster is particularly critical of the incompetence of elementary schoolmasters, attributing it to their paltry remuneration, and his treatise, *The Elementarie*, was an attempt to achieve uniformity of curriculum and of elementary teaching standards. Francis Clement, author of *The Petie Schole* (1587), shared Mulcaster’s concerns over poor elementary teaching: “children, as we see, almost everywhere are first taught either in private by men and women altogether rude and utterly ignorant of the due composing and just spelling of words, or else in common schools most commonly by boys, very seldom or never by any of sufficient skill.”<sup>23</sup> As Clement comments, senior boys were often used to assist in teaching, or women could be employed to teach the petties, often in dames’ schools. Brinsley indicates that women were employed in teaching the petties to read, because this was a lowly regarded position that few others would take on: “It would helpe some poore man or woman, who knew not how to live otherwise, and who might doe that well [teach the petties to read], if they were rightly directed. Also it would be

such an ease to all Grammar Schoolemasters” (*Ludus Literarius* 13, see also 20, 315). Charles Hoole did not agree with such pragmatism: “The Petty-Schoole is the place where indeed the first Principles of all Religion and learning ought to be taught, and therefore ... it should [not] be left as a work for poor women, or others, whose necessities compel them to undertake it, as a meer shelter from beggary.”<sup>24</sup> Vives and Erasmus were scathing about women teachers (*De institutione* 55-56; *De pueris* 325). In theory, women did not teach in grammar schools, yet necessity may have allowed the occasional exception. When Adam Martindale lists the various masters who taught him in the 1630s, he speaks of one, a woman: “the third I went to was a woman (daughter to a famous schoolmaster) that had some smattering of Latin ... so that with her I did something better than quite lose my time, but not much” (*Prescot* 14). Despite Martindale’s critical tone, the woman in question nonetheless compares favourably with his other male schoolmasters.

In small towns or parishes the local schoolmaster could therefore be responsible for a broad range of instruction depending on the ability of his pupils. The schoolmaster in *Love’s Labour’s Lost* falls into this category, teaching both the abc and Mantuan, the Neo-Latin poet taught in lower grammar school. A single schoolmaster could be teaching pupils ranging in age from six to sixteen or even older, and since the majority of provincial schools had only one master and one single schoolroom, all sat in the one room. The seating arrangements at Carmarthen were probably typical: the youngest pupils sat in the front and the oldest at the back (*Carmarthen* 43). After four to five years of elementary schooling a child was expected to be ready for entry into “the tongues” or grammar school classes. Mulcaster’s *Elementarie*, which deals with school life prior to the teaching of Latin, assumes a transition age of twelve (*Elementarie* 12). It is evident, however, from the ages of entry given in the grammar school statutes - anywhere between six and sixteen (Ludlow, Carmarthen, Shrewsbury) - that ages of entry varied enormously, that classes were very mixed in age (*Positions* 247.23-26), and that grammar schools usually incorporated elementary and petty classes into their schools.

In order to graduate to grammar school classes boys were expected in general to be able to read in English, to spell, and to be capable of beginning the Latin grammar (accidence). Vives and Mulcaster were both concerned at the haste with which students were set to grammar levels: “how many small infantes have wee set to *grammer* which

can scarcely read? how many to learn *latin*, which never wrate letter?" (*Positions* 253.29-31; see also 255-56). Most grammar schools included forms for the petties, such as Shrewsbury (*Shrewsbury* 15), or Sir John Deane's Grammar School, where the master was not bound to teach them, but could delegate the work to a senior pupil (*Northwich* 67). This was an acknowledged problem where only one schoolmaster was appointed: "The very little ones in a towne, in most country townes which are of any bignesse, would require a whole man, of themselves, to bee alwaies hearing, poasing & following them ... it is an extreme vexation, that we must be toiled amongst such little petties" (*Ludus Literarius* 13). King's School, Bruton, tried to overcome this problem by specifically excluding the petties in its statutes, in order to facilitate the school's professed aims of producing only 'perfect Latin men':

and the said master shall not teach his scholars song nor other petite learning as the Crosse Rewe, Reading of the matins or of the psalter or such other small things, neither reading of English but such as shall concern learning of grammer. For the founders of the said school intend with our lords mercy only to have the grammer of latin tongue so sufficiently taught that the scholars, of the same profiting and proving, shall in times to come forever be after their capacities perfect latin men.<sup>25</sup>

For a provincial area like Bruton, such conditions would have been difficult to satisfy in practical terms, and indeed in 1637, when the headmaster was charged with allowing the school to decay, there were only thirteen boys "pettis and all" (*Bruton* 21).

Girls could and did attend school, but usually only the elementary classes. Mulcaster acknowledges that it is "the first *Elementarie*, wherein we see that young *maidens* be ordinarily trained" (*Positions* 169.25-26). "I set not yong *maidens* to publike grammer scholes," he writes, because this is "a thing not used in my countrie" (*Positions* 170.18-20). Most of the schools referred to in this thesis are grammar schools, and many of them provide petty or elementary classes; they often refer in their statutes to "children" rather than to "boys," and this may indicate the occasional acceptance of girls, or it may be a way of differentiating young boys from older boys. Although there is little evidence to suggest that girls regularly attended grammar schools, it has been suggested that quite a few might have been found at the preparatory grammar levels.<sup>26</sup> Harrow School, for example, deemed it necessary to specifically stipulate in its 1591 statutes that the schoolmaster "shall not receyve any gyrls into the same Schoole."<sup>27</sup> Although Mulcaster



writes that the further education of girls is “a thing not used in my countrie” (*Positions* 170.20) he evidently wishes it were. It is easy to see behind Mulcaster’s support for the education of girls his recognition of women’s natural abilities. It is a woman’s right to be educated, he argues, not just to be better able to instruct her own children, as Vives maintains, but because it shames men when women “winne the upper roome and make us stand bare head” and yet they have been denied education by men (*Positions* 171.29-30). The superior faculties of women are a feature of six of the seven plays dealt with in this thesis.

In three of the plays analysed - *Nice Wanton*, *The Disobedient Child* and *Love’s Labour’s Lost* – there are references to girls attending school. Two of the girls speak some Latin, suggesting they had advanced to early grammar classes probably in a local or parish school. In a letter thought to date from the early seventeenth century, Lady Ferrers is provided with details of a private boarding school for girls at Windsor, one that may suit her daughters. The writer particularly notes that the fees are high enough – up to £40 per year for tuition and board - to keep out “the meaner sort.”<sup>28</sup> There are other indications that girls attending public schools may have come from the “meaner sort.” In *The Disobedient Child*, a woman cook proudly remembers her school Latin, whereas in *Nice Wanton* the vain daughter despises her school learning. In *July and Julian*, which deals with a family from the gentry, the school is valued for the education of sons, but has no place in the training of a daughter who is being prepared for marriage. When Mulcaster presents a good match as one advantage of giving daughters a public school education, he is noticeably playing on the ambitions of parents of mean estate: “If the parentes be meane, and the *maidens* in their training shew forth at the verie first some singular rarenesse like to ensue, if they flourish but their natural, there hope maye grow great, that some great matche may as well like of a young maiden excellently qualified” (*Positions* 181.17-21). Ironically, if these hopes should fail then at least the educated maidens still “remaine the gainers, for they have the qualities to comfort their mediocrity” (*Positions* 181.25-26). Mulcaster’s silence with regard to upper-class girls also suggests that public schools were not considered appropriate to such daughters.

### Parent – school relations

There is considerable evidence to show that parents took a very real and often active interest in their child's education, or, as Mulcaster puts it, "parents and friends will be meddlers sometimes to further their young imps;" complaints are common of children being moved by dissatisfied parents from one school to another (*Positions* 155.26-30, 159.26-27, 227.5-9; *Grantham* 146), of parents quarrelling with schools over alleged cruelty, and of their taking children out of school and putting them to a trade for the same reason (*Ludus Literarius* 289, 278), of "clamours and accusations of parents" for "children forgetting to reade English, when they first enter into Latine" (*Ludus Literarius* 72, 315, see also 21, 304), and of the credulity of parents who fall for the tricks boys use to avoid punishment (*Positions* 271.17-19). A further complaint of rural schoolmasters was that students might be away for weeks at a time, "or almost a quarter of a yeere, as in the harvest time ... and yet the Parents will expect, that they should profit as much as if they were [at school] daily" (*Ludus Literarius* 304). School statutes usually include ordinances on absenteeism (*Grantham* 146), sometimes making provision for penalising the schoolmaster financially if a boy was absent for more than six weeks (*Peterborough* 17). School governors were anxious to keep enrolments up. From Brinsley's point of view, parents should either keep their children at school daily, or keep them away altogether. The difficulties facing country schoolmasters were evidently as great as the remuneration was little. The statutes of Sir John Deane's Grammar School, Northwich, were quite explicit that "Upon complaint of the children, their parents do seem to molest and disquiet the schoolmaster against reason and order, I will that all such mens children after due proof of such folly and fondness of the parents herein shall be utterly expelled from the school forever" (*Northwich* 300).

The school's jurisdiction over pupils extended beyond the classroom. Not infrequently, school statutes dictated that the schoolmaster had a duty to monitor the students' behaviour outside of school, and to inform parents of any misbehaviour by their child and if, necessary, to expel the child:

if any Scholar shall be a common picker, stealer, usual swearer or blasphemor of the name of God and cannot be reformed by often admonitions and moderate corrections his friends having knowledge thereof shall immediately take him from the school ... never to be admitted thither again. (*Guildford* 90)

In Yorkshire, the Almondbury school statutes stipulate that the master is to advise the parents if the scholars are not diligent at their books or if they misbehave out of school (*Almondbury* 20-21). Similar provisions applied at Kirkwall in the Orkney Islands (*Kirkwall* 14); this is likely to have been a particular provision of provincial schools and one pertinent to *Nice Wanton*. Such provisions assume close levels of parent-school contact and endorse the schoolmaster's authority within the community.

Despite the uncompromising tone of many of the ordinances, parents in general held more authority than schoolmasters. In an early Tudor schoolbook for 'making Latins' the schoolboy complains that he will be expelled from school if he obeys "he that hath the rule of me" (either his father or master) and is continually late for school.<sup>29</sup> In the Latin dialogues of Corderius this quandary is acknowledged with some humour: "your father hath command at home, I in the schoole" says the master to the boy who is late for school, to which the boy replies: well, he was at home when his father sent him on the errand which made him late for school (*Pueriles* 15-16). When Mulcaster complains that "one displeased parent will do more harme ... then a thousand of the thankfulest will ever do good," he is acknowledging the superiority of parental authority, and he goes on to advocate some public ordinance to help adjudicate in disputes (*Positions* 276.19-30). The maintenance of good relations between parents and schoolmasters was a key feature of Mulcaster's work. "I wish the parents and masters to be friendly acquainted, and domestically familiar," he writes in *Positions*, and he makes the same point in *The Elementarie* (*Positions* 158.25-26; *Elementarie* 23). Mulcaster supported the public display of school ordinances in order to "take away matter of jarre betwene the parentes and the maister" (*Positions* 269.8-26). School ordinances were in fact frequently displayed in public, as well as brought to the attention of parents at the entrance of boys into the school. Brinsley, too, supported good relations to overcome the boys' "mutterings ... [and] whisperings to their Parents" (*Ludus Literarius* 274), and to encourage parents who were able to, to teach their child to read (*Ludus Literarius* 20). This last wish may have been in the hope of assisting the schoolmaster, as much as encouraging parental involvement in education. A further feature of *Positions* is the promotion of "Conference betwene parentes and neighbours" as also between teachers and neighbours (*Positions* 277-78). When Erasmus argues that correct parental guidance would avoid the need for children to

be “forced to beg from their neighbours advice on how to conduct their lives,” he too is drawing on a common understanding of the duty of neighbours (*De pueris* 332). Schooling was not just a parental concern, but a community concern as well. The understanding that neighbours had not only a right but also a duty to inform parents, and schoolmasters, of an erring child is a feature of *Nice Wanton*, where parent-school relations are non-existent. In *July and Julian*, on the other hand, mother-school relations are healthy, while in *Love’s Labour’s Lost* the parents are deceived by their apparent good relations with the schoolmaster.

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 NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

- <sup>1</sup> Helen M. Jewell, *Education in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998) 24.
- <sup>2</sup> Nicholas Orme, *English Schools in the Middle Ages* (London: Methuen, 1973) 150.
- <sup>3</sup> Orme, *English Schools* 203-05, 118, 215, 214.
- <sup>4</sup> Cressy's methodology has been challenged as an accurate marker of literacy, but for the purposes of this thesis, which presumes the ability by parents to read but not necessarily to write in the vernacular, such a methodology, if anything, underestimates reading ability.
- <sup>5</sup> Helen M. Jewell, "The Bringing up of Children in Good Learning and Manners: a Survey of Secular Educational Provision in the North of England, c.1350-1550," *Northern History* 18 (1982): 2.
- <sup>6</sup> David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980) 165; 153.
- <sup>7</sup> Cressy, *Literacy* 167-68; see also Chapter 7, "The Dynamics of Illiteracy."
- <sup>8</sup> Richard L. DeMolen, *Richard Mulcaster (c.1531-1611) and Educational Reform in the Renaissance* *Bibliotheca Humanistica & Reformatorica* 49 (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1991) 11.
- <sup>9</sup> Cressy, *Literacy* 169.
- <sup>10</sup> Cressy, *Literacy* 184.
- <sup>11</sup> Cressy, *Literacy* 188.
- <sup>12</sup> The same argument can be found in a contemporary commonplace book compiled by a university student: Folger MS. V.a.381, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC, 106.
- <sup>13</sup> George Gascoigne, *The Glasse of Governement, The Complete Works of George Gascoigne*, ed. John W. Cunliffe, vol 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1910) 9-10.
- <sup>14</sup> Alan R. Young, *The English Prodigal Son Plays: A theatrical fashion of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*, *Jacobean Drama Studies* 89 (Salzburg: U of Salzburg, 1979) 102.
- <sup>15</sup> Cressy, *Literacy* 118.
- <sup>16</sup> See Cressy, *Literacy*, Chapter 6, "The Structure of Illiteracy" 118-41.
- <sup>17</sup> Quoted in Foster Watson, *The Beginnings of the Teaching of Modern Subjects in England* (London: Pitman, 1909) 268.
- <sup>18</sup> See also Camillo's comment, "Clerk-like experienc'd, which no less adorns / Our gentry than our parents' noble names": *The Winter's Tale*, I.ii.392-93.
- <sup>19</sup> Thomas Middleton, *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* (1611), ed. Anne Lancashire (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1978) I.i.84.
- <sup>20</sup> John Earle, *Microcosmographie* (1628). *The Autograph Manuscript of Microcosmographie*, A Scolar Press Facsimile (Leeds: Scolar P, 1966) 82-83
- <sup>21</sup> William Forrest, *The Governace of Princes* (c1550) reprinted in *The History of Grisild the Second*, ed. W. D. Macray (London: Chiswick P, 1875) 182.
- <sup>22</sup> Cressy, *Literacy* 36-37.

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<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Cressy, *Literacy* 36.

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in Edith Rowland, ed., *A Pedagogue's Commonplace Book* (London: Dent, 1925) 48.

<sup>25</sup> "Records of the King's School Bruton," *Somerset & Dorset Notes & Queries* 3 (June 1893): 245. The 'crosse rewe' is the hornbook used to teach the alphabet.

<sup>26</sup> Jewell, *Education* 11. See also Anthony Munday's comedy *Fedele and Fortunio* (c1584) for evidence of grammar schools including classes for "little wenches" to learn "their needle and thread": *A Critical Edition of Anthony Munday's Fedele and Fortunio*, ed. Richard Hosley (New York: Garland, 1981) V.iv.156-59.

<sup>27</sup> T. W. Baldwin, *William Shakspeare's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke*, vol 1 (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1944) 311.

<sup>28</sup> MS. L.e.644 (temporary number), Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC.

<sup>29</sup> Reprinted in Nicholas Orme, *Education and Society in Medieval and Renaissance England* (London: Hambledon, 1989) 135.

***Pedantius (1580-81)***

STC: 19524

## Chapter Two

### The schoolmaster as comic pedant

#### *The Lady of May and Love's Labour's Lost*

The image of schoolmasters projected by dramatists towards the end of the sixteenth century is, with rare exceptions, one of satire and scorn. An entry in a university student's commonplace book, early in the reign of James I, affirms that the pedant and his lifestyle had become topical material for playwrights: "The conditions of the life of Pedants hath been scorned upon Theatres as the Ape of Tyranny."<sup>1</sup> "Tyranny" and "tyrants" were terms commonly attached to schoolmasters, as detailed below. It is evident from the themes noted in this commonplace book that this is a conscientious and serious student preparing for a vocation in the church or in teaching. He is provoked by an absence of respect for learning. He notes on the same page that "politic men do disable learned men by the name of Pedants," indicating a contemporary climate of mockery towards learning. By the early 1600s, when these entries appear to have been made, schoolmasters had indeed become targets of satire on the public stage. Henry Peacham, writing in the early 1620s, claims that because schoolmasters have generally become "ridiculous and contemptible both in the school and abroad," not only in Italy but also now in England, the profession of teaching is mocked on the stage:

the schoolmaster almost in every comedy being brought upon the stage, to parallel the zany, or pantaloon. ... He made us good sport in that excellent Comedy of Pedantius, acted in our Trinity College in Cambridge: and if I be not deceived, in Priscianus Vapulans, and many of our English plays.<sup>2</sup>

The comic pedant as a dramatic figure had existed for some time in Italian theatre, but few pedants of any note are recorded in English drama until the last quarter of the sixteenth century.<sup>3</sup> The two plays chosen for discussion of the role of the pedant in drama in this thesis were written close to the 1580s, when the growth in public schooling had reached a high point in England, and public criticism of schoolmasters was rife. Mulcaster's and Ascham's treatises, with their many criticisms, were published at this point, corroborating existing dissatisfaction with a teaching profession which had failed to keep pace with the growth of schooling. The two dramatic examples analysed here suggest that the serious subject of education had become a target for concern and for



satire in Elizabethan drama. Both works rely on familiarity with the classroom culture to position audience response, and draw selectively on the vocabulary, textbooks and teaching methods of the schoolroom.

While education *per se* was accorded considerable respect, public schoolmasters rarely shared that respect in sixteenth-century England. Even if Erasmus and Vives are excluded as continental rather than English authorities, there is, nonetheless, a body of evidence demonstrating that Tudor schoolmasters were commonly regarded as ill qualified, ill mannered and harsh floggers. Abraham Fleming, a schoolmaster himself, voices a common opinion when he claims in 1575 that:

It is well knowne that there be in this Englishe land many ignorant and unskilfull instructors of youth in the Latine language, who sometime reede that to their heerers which they themselves understande not, and teache their scholers that which they themselves, had neede to learne.<sup>4</sup>

Roger Ascham repeatedly refers to masters in “common schools,” as “fond” (stupid) and “lewd” (vulgar, boorish). He complains at length of the type of schoolmaster whose own ignorance should be punished before that of his scholars: “These ye will say, be fond scholemasters, and few they be, that be found to be soch. They be fond in deed, but surelie overmany soch be found everie where” (*Scholemaster* 5v). Ascham is also concerned about brutality in schools and opens his treatise on education with an anecdote of flogging at Eton. It could be argued this was a rhetorical tactic on Ascham’s part, but Tudor school statutes indicate a continuing need to control excessive flogging in English schools. Statutes frequently stipulated moderation in discipline, and identified unacceptable punishments such as striking on the head or kicking. The Norwich School regulations of 1566, for example, specifically forbade the High Master or usher to aim “violent blows” or “kicks” at boys (*Norwich* 46). School statutes are the most convincing source of evidence for the poor moral qualities assumed in Tudor schoolmasters, since they emphasise social over academic criteria, consistently using the terms “honest”, “sober” and “discreet” to identify the qualities they are looking for in a master. Not infrequently the vices to be avoided are also listed, as in the following ordinance for the “Order of the admission of the Schoolmaster” at Northwich School:

it is the greatest hinderance and discommodity to the scholars to have a schoolmaster that is negligent in his office or doth not profit the scholars, dissolute in manners, a drunkard,

a whoremaster or entangled with other occupations repugnant to his vocation, a dicer or a common gamester. (*Northwich* 298-99)

Some statutes even specified that the applicant should be “no *Puffer of Tobacco*” (*Chigwell* 120).

Schoolmasters attracted public criticism for a wide range of faults, usually those of ignorance and of cruelty, but including poor standards of social behaviour, conceit and pomposity, a general incompetence in the affairs of the world, and poor judgement. These censures, which are evident in the treatises, implicit in the statutes, and written into the school texts, provide the pedagogical context which informs all the plays treated in the thesis and which dominate the satirical representations of schoolmasters in the two dramatic works discussed below, *The Lady of May* by Philip Sidney and *Love’s Labour’s Lost* by William Shakespeare. Both poets turn to the voices of women to serve as an acute and sobering corrective to their pedant’s inflated self-esteem and misguided value system. Where the two representations differ is in the addition of a vicious edge to Shakespeare’s comic pedant. Presented as it is through the medium of public rather than private entertainment, Shakespeare’s play takes on additional significance for Elizabethan society. This chapter analyses Sidney’s and Shakespeare’s dramatic pedants in the light of prevailing social attitudes towards schoolmasters and demonstrates how closely each conforms to contemporary expectations. Neither pedant has any redeeming features – unless it is an absence in Rombus in *The Lady of May* of those vices of the flesh that characterise Holofernes in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*. Both authors use their comic pedants to lampoon the public school culture. As a product of that system himself, Sidney may be ironically commenting on his own educational worth in *The Lady of May*, and on his presumptuousness in writing for Elizabeth I. With *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, Shakespeare is bolder before the same royal audience, as the play canvasses not only the poor qualities of the local schoolmaster, but also the shallow scholarly values of its courtly characters, the King of Navarre and his companions.

The most significant feature of the pedants in these two dramatic works is their invidious status within the community. This is the aspect of the pedagogue’s relationship with parents that Rebecca Bushnell explores in Tudor education literature, primarily in relation to fathers and private tutors.<sup>5</sup> This chapter adopts the same theory to apply it to relations between families of the middling sort and provincial schoolmasters. Underlying

all the critical commentary on schoolmasters is a social paradox: schoolmasters were in status little different to servants, hired by parents or civic authorities, and as such they were entitled to little social prestige. By dint of their learning, however, which was presumed to be superior to that of the parents, they were entitled to a professional respect within the community. This was particularly relevant in provincial communities, where, as one writer put it, even if farmers and shepherds saw little value in learning, they did yet “reverence learning as well in the Parson of our parish, as our Schoolemaster.”<sup>6</sup> From the schoolmaster’s point of view, however, the rewards for teaching in country schools were so miserable that they could consider themselves little more than “Masters to the children, and slaves to their parents.”<sup>7</sup> At least four of the plays treated in this thesis deal with education in a provincial context, either to promote it as in *Nice Wanton* and *The Disobedient Child*, or to mock it as in *The Lady of May* and *Love’s Labour’s Lost*. In Sidney’s work, as in Shakespeare’s play, the schoolmaster figure is grounded in the disjunction between his inflated self-perception and the more jaundiced opinion the local community has of him.

A competent schoolmaster and a well-run school could be of great benefit to a community. In an early seventeenth-century lawsuit in Carmarthen, Wales, the civic leaders testified that the grammar school had conferred upon the town “virtue and learning ... to the great convenience and commodity of all the inhabitants” (*Carmarthen* 23). In the Tudor philosophy of education, a schoolmaster’s role encompassed the civil and religious education of the local youth to the benefit of the nation generally. He was to instruct his pupils not only in reading, grammar, Latin and occasionally Greek and Hebrew, in oratory, rhetoric and versifying, but also in religious doctrine, and he was further expected to inculcate into his pupils “good manners and bring them up in humanity and civility of life, that they may know how to behave themselves in all places and toward all persons” (*Catechism* 383). All school statutes assume that the schoolmaster teaches manners as well as learning. The emphasis the statutes placed on personal criteria can be explained in the light of this aspect of the schoolmaster’s role. His jurisdiction extended beyond the school walls to the supervision of his pupils’ behaviour in church on Sundays, and often within the community generally. Schoolmasters, in fact, were seen to have a responsibility even greater than that of parents, and were encouraged to see

themselves as fathers of the mind. It was a pedagogical commonplace, as Rebecca Bushnell has demonstrated, that “God created the whole man, the parents gave the body birth, the masters form the mind” (*Exercitatio* 102).<sup>8</sup> The same definition is noted in the Jacobean student’s commonplace book drawn on at the beginning of this chapter: “God gives nature, Parents body and life, Instructors learning and manners.”<sup>9</sup> Bushnell recognises that “the confusion implicit in this analogy with parental authority permeates humanist pedagogical discourse.”<sup>10</sup> A late fifteenth-century schoolbook demonstrates this confusion by providing both sides of the argument. First, it asserts that father and mother brought the boy forth in sin and wretchedness, while the master “went a-bowt dilygently to bryng me up ... to vertu and to the lowe of god,” and therefore, the phrase concludes, “me semeth I ame more bownd to my maisters than to my father or my mother.” The next sentences, however, argue the opposite, since the parents not only brought the boy into the world, but it was they who nourished him and then provided him with the masters. The exercise judiciously, and perhaps humorously, concludes that “howbeit I say not na bot thu art bownd to both.”<sup>11</sup> This confusion between parental and pedagogical authority underpins the first five plays dealt with in this thesis and is implicit in the final two. While the educators promoted this definition of schoolmasters as fathers of the mind, it was widely acknowledged that the reality fell far short of the ideal.

The schoolmaster’s invidious status in the community is reflected in the poor level of remuneration. Salaries at the mid century varied between £5 and £16 per year; they rarely kept up with inflation. Although some schools allowed the master to charge fees for non-local children, the financial prospects for schoolmasters lay more in acquiring a curacy or marrying well than in the schoolmaster’s wages. Quadratus, a railer, in John Marston’s *What You Will* (1607) cynically sums up these prospects:

Well here’s my scholar’s course, first get a school,  
 And then a ten-pound cure, keep both, then buy,  
 (Stay marry, I, marry) then a farm or so,  
 Serve God and Mammon, to the devil go.<sup>12</sup>

Robert Burton, writing fourteen years later (1621) on the prospects for scholars, is no more encouraging:

he shall have Falconer's wages, ten pounds a year, and his diet, or some small stipend, so long as he can please his Patron or the Parish; if they approve him not (for usually they do but a year or two) . . . serving-man-like, he must go look a new Master.<sup>13</sup>

A schoolmaster's status is commonly represented as one of servitude, and his wages unfavourably compared with those of a groomsmen or a falconer, or other keeper of beasts (*Catechism* 306; *De pueris* 313, 324; *Governor* 44).<sup>14</sup> In 1565 the master at Winchester did not miss the opportunity to direct his pupils to the source of this analogy - Juvenal - and to bring to their attention the negligence of fathers who "procure the best possible grooms and herdsmen with a very large wage, yet provide masters either none or cheap to form the manners and characters of his children."<sup>15</sup> Vives and Corderius took the occasion to make the same point in their school dialogues (*Exercitatio* 10; *Pueriles* 25r, 26v). All pedagogical authors agree that schoolmasters were underpaid and held in low esteem. The disjunction between the community's expectations of the schoolmaster and his low rewards was a common theme in their writings:

Among many causes which make schooles so insufficiently appointed, I know not any, nay is there any? that so weakneth the profession as the very nakednesse of allowance doth. . . . Our calling creepes low and hath paine for companion, stil thrust to the wall, though stil confessed good. (*Positions* 227.31-33, see also 228.9-10)

As a consequence of their poor remuneration and low public esteem, schoolmasters were easy targets for criticism and scorn. Outlined below are those criticisms relevant to Sidney's and Shakespeare's pedants, both of whom are elementary and apparently provincial schoolmasters, and thus on the lowest rung of the teaching profession.

### **The schoolmaster as parasite**

The schoolmaster's dependence upon parents, and his special position in relation to their children, may have encouraged the parasite label, which comes technically from the Greek *parasitos*: "one who eats at the table of another," and which was apparently customarily attached to schoolmasters. There is "nothing from which Learning receives more dishonour than to have her freedom engaged to another's trencher," claims the young tutor in *Two Lancashire Lovers* (1640) and, in *Fedele and Fortunio* (1584), stage directions describe the schoolmaster's entry thus: "Enter Pedante the Parasite, attired in a gown and cap like a Schoolmaster."<sup>16</sup> The reputation of schoolmasters as parasites dining at the expense of parents may have been inherited from the *commedia dell'arte* traditions,

but it certainly existed in the English school culture also. The following quotation from the school dialogues of Corderius gives another example. Young John Horne is about to be birched for arriving late at school, and hastily explains that his parents, who were entertaining many guests, kept him up late. His master responds:

Master. Why cald you not me also among your other guests?

John. I will work with my parents, that you may be invited now and then, if you so will.

Master. Do you promise that you will do that so for me?

John. I promise it in good sooth.

Master. See you deceive me not. (*Pueriles* 18)

Corderius may have been keen to promote the “domestically familiar” relations between schoolmaster and parents that Mulcaster envisages (see pages 30-32), as he makes other references in these dialogues to masters dining with parents (*Pueriles* 3, 4), yet his humour also suggests an element of satire. Schoolmasters are represented in the *vulgaria* as keenly interested in dining at the homes of parents, and as using their authority over the child as an unspoken bargaining tool in parental relations. Schoolmaster Parson Evans, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, joins in dinner and breakfast invitations with the comment that “If there is one, I shall make two in the company” (III.iii.235), and relies on his capacity as parson to be invited, “Od’s plessed will, I will not be absence at the grace” (I.i.265). A sharper satirical treatment of the schoolmaster as parasite occurs in John Marston’s *What You Will* (1607). A young schoolboy pleads with his threatening schoolmaster: “O Lord now for God sake; let me go out, my mother told a thing, I shall bewray all else. Hark you Master, my grandmother entreats you to come to dinner tomorrow morning.”<sup>17</sup>

### **The unlettered schoolmaster**

When Mulcaster wrote, “our calling creepes low” (*Positions* 228.10), he was alluding not only to the low social status accorded teaching, but also to the common understanding that the teaching profession attracted second-rate scholars. He discusses at length “a mean to have excellent teachers, and professors generally,” advocating specialist teacher training (*Positions*, Chapter 41). Erasmus uses anecdotes of coarse, brutal and ignorant schoolmasters to emphasise the paucity of good teachers: “I must confess,” he writes,

“that it is much easier to specify the qualities of the ideal schoolmaster than to find any who actually correspond to that ideal” (*De pueris* 333). Even schoolboys themselves were aware of these public complaints from their school *vulgaria*, if not from personal experience:

It becometh a mayster princypally to be sufficyently lerned in that facultye yt he teycheth . . . But we maye see dayly / yt many take upon them to teyche / for whome it were more expediente to lerne. (*Vulgaria* 110)<sup>18</sup>

A grammar school master was supposed to have an accredited university degree. The statutes for Northwich specify “such a one [who] hath taken degree or degrees in the university of Oxford or Cambridge undefamed” (*Northwich* 298). However, when licensing of schoolmasters was instituted in 1556, it was more with religious orthodoxy than graduate status in mind.<sup>19</sup> Only twenty-seven per cent of licensed masters in London in the 1580s were graduates.<sup>20</sup> The percentage in provincial schools would have been considerably lower. Even a century later, according to Thomas Fuller, “young scholars . . . before they have taken any degree in the University, commence Schoolmasters in the country.”<sup>21</sup> The two dramatic schoolmasters discussed below are both elementary teachers, or teachers of the petties as they were also known. Sidney’s Rombus is a village schoolmaster, and the rustic companions accompanying Holofernes also suggest a rural or provincial community. In theory, elementary teachers were also supposed to be licensed but in practice few were, and there were no standard requirements for formal qualifications. Mulcaster, with two decades of teaching behind him, claims the problem of ill-trained schoolmasters was particularly endemic amongst elementary teachers. Because “good scholers will not abase themselves to [elementary teaching], it is left to the meanest, and therefore to the worst” (*Positions* 231.36-232.1). This is the picture presented by Sidney and by Shakespeare. Teaching the petties was considered a last resort for many scholars, a state of affairs that continued well into the next century. David Cressy provides anecdotes from the late seventeenth century to illustrate that “a very sickly, weak and impotent person, by reason whereof altogether uncapable to follow any other employment,” was accepted as teacher of petties.<sup>22</sup> According to Helen Jewell, many elementary schoolmasters combined the job with other employment such as parish clerking, baking or even shoemaking.<sup>23</sup>

### **The conceited schoolmaster**

A schoolmaster's learning, coupled with the authority invested in him by the parents, led to many schoolmasters considering themselves as superior members of the community, and attracting criticism for their conceit. Mulcaster, having catalogued the exceptional qualities required in a schoolmaster, feels constrained to point out that the learned schoolmaster should also show "*courteous lowliness* in himself, as if he were the meanest, though he were known to be the best" (*Positions* 234.37-39). Brinsley even put humility before ability in his chapter on qualifications. A schoolmaster, he claims, ought to be "at least such a one as is tractable, and not conceited, though his ability be the meaner" (*Ludus Literarius* 267). Hormon, in his section *de scolasticis*, includes the phrase: "Latin speche is almoste marred / by proude folis presumynge to teche or ever they lerne" (*Hormon's Vulgaria* 88v). Perhaps provincial schoolmasters were particularly prone to such a weakness. In Bruton, Dorset, for example, Schoolmaster James raised the ire of the local community for a number of reasons, one of which was his "proud carriage" (*Bruton* 27). Humility is not a virtue attached to images of schoolmasters in the sixteenth century, and their pomposity becomes a target for satire in the drama. The two dramatic pedants below are notable for their vanity and their contempt of the local rustics.

### **The flogging schoolmaster**

Conceit and ignorance were frequently associated with brutal behaviour in schoolmasters. The image of the haughty and harsh schoolmaster went back a long way, at least to the Roman poet Horace and his Orbilius Plagosus, a grammarian who had taught Horace.<sup>24</sup> Vives revived the Orbilius figure in his school dialogues to illustrate the connection between ignorance and arrogance, characterising him as "a fierce man, fond of flogging (*plagosus*), imbued with a vast haughtiness, instead of being learned in literature, although he has seriously persuaded himself that he is the Alpha of learned teachers" (*Exercitatio* 91). Brinsley also suggests that "the Master oft deserves to be beaten rather than the scholler" for driving the child by cruelty (*Ludus Literarius* 174). The public had long been aware of the general reputation of schoolmasters as tyrants in the classroom, so much so that the term "tyrant" is a common euphemism for schoolmaster at this period.<sup>25</sup> Such lexical usage comes down to us primarily in the writings of Erasmus, where brutish



behaviour in a schoolmaster is usually linked to ignorance, as for example in *De recta pronuntiatione*, a textbook used in schools, in which boys would read that “nobody loves the cane so much as the man who has not had a liberal education” (*De recta* 383). In Erasmus’ colloquy “Off to School,” two schoolboys discuss the severity of various masters, making comparisons with the Orbilius figure:

John. That goggle-eyes? Woe to our behinds. He’s worse than Orbilius when it comes to flogging.

Sylvius. True, and therefore I’ve often prayed he’d get paralyzed in the arm.

John. It’s not right to curse the master. Instead we ought to be careful not to fall into the tyrant’s clutches. (*Colloquia* 44)

The euphemism is most commonly found in the writings of Erasmus, but also in those of other educators, often linked to the story of the tyrant Dionysius turned schoolmaster (*De pueris* 328). Thomas Elyot used this popular story, in what might have been an attempt to elevate the status of teaching:

Teaching representeth the authority of a Prince; wherefore Dionysius, King of Sicily, when he was for tyranny expelled by his people, he came into Italy, and there in a common school taught grammar, wherewith when he was of his enemies embraided and called a schoolmaster, he answered them that although Sicilians had exiled him, yet in despite of them all he reigned, noting thereby the authority that he had over his scholars.

(*Governor* 18)

By 1658, when William Hill, the headmaster of St. Patrick’s, Dublin, published a schoolbook on grammar and rhetorical figures, he entitled it *Dionysius*.<sup>26</sup> Erasmus, Elyot and Vives were perpetuating a long-standing literary tradition of schoolmasters as tyrants, a tradition that filtered through to the public classroom through the curriculum. In *The Zodiake of Life*, a popular school poem published a number of times in English in the late sixteenth century, the author parodies the boys’ sentiments:

Shut up as it in prison were, whereby they may not go  
Abroad without the Tyrants leave, although them forceth though  
The need they have to ease themselves restrained of bladders might  
Though hunger prick, and lust to play wherein they most delight.

(*Zodiake* 96)

Schoolboy fantasies of revenge were also a mark of the schoolmaster-as-tyrant motif, one that features in the Tudor school play *July and Julian* discussed in Chapter Three. In the work of Prudentius, a Christian poet prescribed for St. Paul’s School, pupils learned of St.

Cassian, a martyred schoolmaster stabbed to death by his own scholars' pens.<sup>27</sup> The instigator of this punishment observes that "it is a pleasant thought that the strict teacher should himself furnish sport to the pupils he has too much held down."<sup>28</sup> In *July and Julian* the young schoolboy, Dick, dreams of revenge towards his song school master who pulls his ears and his grammar master who beats his buttocks. As a school play performed by schoolboys, the playwright is indicating how comfortable he and the school are with such traditions.

Even the schoolchildren, if they were blissfully ignorant before they started their education, learned quickly from their *vulgaria* what to expect of schoolmasters:

My mayster hath bette my bak and syde / whyles the rodde wolde holde in his hande.  
He hath torne my buttokes so that theyr is lefte noo hole skynne upon them.  
Ye wales be so thycke yt one can stande scantly by an other. (*Vulgaria* 102)

Punishment at school was commonly for academic failure, such as the inability to recite grammar lessons correctly. At Aberdeen Grammar School, for example, the recitation of parts was to begin at 7 a.m. after which it was usual to "let the Praeceptor enter and punish those who fail with chidings or stripes" (*Aberdeen* 105). In *July and Julian*, Dick looks forward to leaving school when he will "past [parse] for no man, no not a louse. / [and] From beatings and from books" will be free.<sup>29</sup> Erasmus was an outspoken opponent of such practices, complaining that children "are compelled to memorize the inflections of nouns and verbs and the number of cases, moods, and tenses ... [and that] the school rings with horrific shrieks of pain when it is time for the students to recite all this information" (*De pueris* 340-41; see also 324). A child's standard introduction to grammar included "The Posing of the Rules of the Verbes, called *As in Praesenti*."<sup>30</sup> (See the words spoken by Pedantius in the illustration page 35). This lower school subject gained a reputation for violent treatment, as outlined in Madido's *The Pilgrimage to Parnassus* (1599):

[I] then came to *As in praesenti*, but with great danger, for there are certain people in this cuntrie caled schoolmaisters, that take passingers and sit all day whipping pence out of there tayls; these men tooke mee prisoner, and put to death at leaste three hundred rodes upon my backe.<sup>31</sup>

The linking of *as in praesenti* with schoolmasters and payment in this quotation, is, according to Baldwin, the result of "a coarse pun of which Elizabethans never tire, and of which Shakspeare himself makes use."<sup>32</sup> Baldwin fails to identify the pun but it can be

assumed to play on “present your arse” and may additionally turn on *as* as “arse” and as “farthing” - thus the schoolmaster whips the arse for small coins or his pitiful remuneration.

Given the amount of evidence of excessive cruelty in schools, a play like *The Disobedient Child* that deals with the subject of cruelty has much to offer in the way of topical debate on schooling at a mid-century point. Similarly, simply by naming his schoolmaster after a biblical tyrant, Shakespeare attaches a whole range of vices to Holofernes, including that of lust, which requires no further explanation for his audience.

### **Schoolmasters and sexual abuse**

A schoolroom scene in John Marston’s *What You Will* (c 1601), a play which includes allusions to *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, depicts a young schoolboy about to be untrussed and flogged for “not being perfect in an *Asse in presenty*.”<sup>33</sup> Sexual abuse may be implicit in the text, given the high level of bawdy punning in this play, and is considered below under discussion of *Love’s Labour’s Lost*. In *July and Julian*, Dick complains of the physical punishment he receives at the hands of both parents and masters. The bawdy servant’s response allows the possibility of sexual abuse:

Dick.                    both my parents, and masters, handle me so shrewdly.

Fenell.                Indeed your ij masters play with you too lewdly.

Dick.                    my father doth worse to suffer them verily.<sup>34</sup>

The boy’s response “my father doth worse to suffer them verily,” highlights a father’s responsibility in protecting his child from such abuse. Even the boy’s name, Dick, is more than likely to have had bawdy connotations for an Elizabethan audience, particularly an audience of schoolboys: “A single word has upset some readers,” says Erasmus in regard to his Colloquy *The Young Man and the Harlot*, “for the immodest girl, playing up to the young man, calls him her ‘Dicky.’ But this expression is very common among us, even with respectable ladies” (*Colloquia* 629). Prosecution for sodomy in Renaissance England was rare, leading Alan Bray to conclude that the enforcement of legislation against sodomy was not a major concern. He notes, however, that of those cases which did come to court, a high proportion were brought by parents, from which he concludes that the maintenance of parental rights and social order were the decisive factors in the case coming to court.<sup>35</sup> The case of one prominent Tudor headmaster,

Nicholas Udall of Eton, has been cited as evidence of sodomy in schools. Udall, renowned for his harsh flogging habit, went before the Privy Council in 1541 charged with various “felonious trespasses, whereof he was suspected,” to which he allegedly confessed “that he did commit buggery with the said cheney, sundry times heretofore, and of late the vjth day of this present month in the present year at London, whereupon he was committed to the marshalsea.”<sup>36</sup> Thomas Cheney was one of Udall’s senior pupils. Udall was dismissed from the headmastership and imprisoned for a short time. The fact that Udall did not remain long in prison and went on to become headmaster of Westminster School under Queen Mary has caused debate about the accuracy of the indictment and the influence of Udall’s eminent patrons.<sup>37</sup>

Recent historical and literary scholarship on homosexuality and sodomy in Early Modern England suggests that sodomy was at least a tolerated, if not an accepted, feature of Elizabethan school life. There are, nonetheless, indications that homosexual activity between the boys was not considered acceptable. Under reasons for expulsion of pupils, the King’s School, Grantham, lists such vices as swearing, fighting and stealing and concludes with “Natural filthiness” as a further reason, providing that “after reasonable Correction [it] shall not be reformed for Corrupting of others” (*Grantham* 147). Sodomy was not a taboo subject in schools and was known to boys through the reading of the Greek and Latin poets.<sup>38</sup> The subject may have surfaced more frequently in the Reformation in the form of ammunition by Protestant authors against Catholics. In *The Zodiake of Life*, under verses glossed as “Sodomitical sin. Cuckold makers too many. Incest. Buggery,” boys would read:

. . . What should I reckon here  
 The whoredomes great committed now; all flows with vice we see,  
 The naughty act do young men use, and close misused be,  
 Who plants not hornes in neighbours heads; the bald religious frye  
 (Who should be chaste) abroad with whores or close with boys to lie.

(*Zodiake* 106)

Barnabe Googe, the English translator of this poem, was apparently attracted to *The Zodiake* by his “strongly Protestant admiration of Palingenius” (*Zodiake*, introduction vii-viii). Sixteenth-century pedagogical writers do not discuss the issue overtly, since their writings are intended to persuade, not dissuade, parents of the benefits of schooling, but the

subject can be inferred. Mulcaster makes the point on a number of occasions that schoolmasters should be married. His discreet language suggests a concern for boys who board, either with the master or outside the school, when he cautions parents: “There be also many private considerations, which some parentes follow in the displacing of their children from their owne houses, which I remit to their thoughtes, as I reserve some to myne owne. ... I wish parents therefore to be warie, ear they set over their owne person for more than the training” (*Positions* 224.17-225.26). He voices similar concerns for girls (*Positions* 184.2-5). The 1598 conditions imposed by the Burgh of Aberdeen on Margaret Forbes, teacher of “maidyne bairnis,” suggest the same fears. The permission allowed Margaret and her husband to teach but “to have na man doctour under thame.”<sup>39</sup> Erasmus, when writing of private tutors, gives the following warning:

often behind an austere mask lurks a depraved mind. One would blush to mention some of the indignities to which these monsters have subjected their students through playing on terror and fear. (*De pueris* 324)

He recommends that fathers of young children should pay frequent visits to the classroom, and the analogy he draws suggests sexual concerns: “parents cannot relinquish responsibility as they do when they present their daughter in marriage” (*De pueris* 315). Alan Stewart has also noted this analogy, in his chapter “Traitors to Boyes Buttockes: the Erotics of Humanist Education.” Stewart discusses the way a writer may infer a schoolmaster’s sexual authority over a child through the use of metaphors.<sup>40</sup> One such metaphor is considered in relation to *The Disobedient Child* in Chapter Four. Bushnell also touches briefly on the slippages between flogging as a punishment and as a form of perverse eroticism by drawing out the implications of language in the writings of Erasmus, Elyot and Ascham.<sup>41</sup> This thesis does not explore the sexual orientation of pedagogical techniques or the erotics of texts in schools, but considers the issue in terms of parental trust and duty of care towards their child.

### **The indiscreet schoolmaster**

As if schoolmasters did not have enough weaknesses already, it seems they were renowned for poor judgement, indiscreet behaviour and for inept social relations towards women. These defects were attributed to the scholar’s isolation from the world at large. According to Robert Burton this was a common fault of those who studied, they were

(author's italics) "*but as so many sots in schools ... nor knew how to manage their domestick or publick affairs.*"<sup>42</sup> This is not a criticism found in the education literature, although any reader of the writings of Vives would recognise the extreme apprehension he displays towards the female sex in general; it is in drama that the main evidence for schoolmasters as failures in relations with women may be found. This is a minor feature of Holofernes' characterisation in *Love's Labour's Lost*, but a major theme of the play as a whole, and one that is also reflected in Rombus' difficulties with the May Lady. Both poets use their incompetent schoolmaster figures as a foil for the articulate and intelligent female voices within the drama, and, outside it, to flatter the women in their audience, including Elizabeth, who attended performances of both.

'Honest', 'sober', 'learned', and 'discreet' are common criteria for appointment (*Stockport* 118; *Northwich* 35), but selection committees, such as the feoffees, school governors, and the regional Bishop, could make mistakes. In a list of ex-schoolmasters who taught Adam Martindale in Prescot in the early seventeenth century, Martindale notes their numerous faults, including that of drinking, and claims there was "only [one] schoolmaster that within the time of my observation went away thence a sober man" (*Prescot* 14). It was neither easy to dismiss a public schoolmaster once appointed, nor simple to find a replacement. Whereas a private tutor could be turned out of doors immediately, a public schoolmaster could appeal to his patron, or to the Bishop, either for the retention of his position or for support in the exercise of his authority at school. When John Harrison, High Master at St. Paul's School, London, was charged with neglect and incompetence by the Mercers' Company, he refused to resign and had to be removed by due process of law (*Positions*, introduction lxix). Archbishop Parker had difficulty dismissing Canterbury's famous headmaster, John Twyne, accused in 1560 of riot and drunkenness and meddling with public offices in the town (*Canterbury* 16). In 1549, a complaint is recorded against a schoolmaster at Bruton, who was charged with running a malthouse in the school, yet he remained as master despite numerous efforts to eject him (*Bruton* 20). Like a number of his real life predecessors, Holofernes in *Love's Labour's Lost* is a drunkard. Slight as the allusions are for a twentieth-century audience, they were very obvious to a sixteenth-century audience.

Schoolhouses and malshouses seem to have had frequent affiliations in Tudor England. Why else the need for Shrewsbury School to include the proviso that “no schoolmaster shall keep any alehouse or tavern or house of gaming or other unthriftiness or evil rule”? (*Shrewsbury* 16). Schoolhouses lent themselves to various extra-curricular activities, including in one case a dancing school. This was conducted at night at the King’s School, Ely, for the benefit of the local community, but not without objections from parents. Parents of schoolboys had repeatedly alerted the Dean to their grievances against the headmaster, William Pamplyn, who seldom attended church, kept some of his scholars in his chamber at night, and permitted others to run riot, left the school unattended, exacted bribes for teaching, kept boarders at the school, and allowed his daughter to run the dancing school:

In the one end of the schoole he kept his daughter, and certen boorders, she beinge suspected to be of very loose behaviour as the carriage of herselfe did partelye shewe, for she would not stick to put one boys apparrell and lett boyes putt one hers and come into the schoole in his absence and daunce amongeste the boyes. And moreover where there should be a teachinge schoole in the daytime for the boyes, by her meanes it was made a dauncing schoole at 12 a clock in the night, and sumtymes all the night longe, whither did resorte (and by her meanes sometymes were called) mennes wives, woomens husbands, mennes servauntes and children to be disordered. (*Ely* 55-56)

Her particular offence appears to have been that of cross-dressing with the boys. Dancing and cross-dressing by boys were sanctioned features of Elizabethan drama when conducted under male authority. The transgression here is probably less the cross-dressing *per se* than the fact it took place under female authority, which, as the complainants’ comments indicate, was socially and sexually suspect. The civic authorities may not have viewed these transgressions as seriously as did the parents, since the parents “received so little satisfaction for their pains that by 1609 they were driven to take their sons away and place them elsewhere” (*Ely* 56).

### **Schoolmasters and performance skills**

Perhaps Master Pamplyn’s daughter was only assisting her father in giving the boys some early instruction in performance for female parts in school drama. As outlined in the Introduction, schoolmasters were frequently responsible for the production of drama, or of some other civic entertainment. The school and its master marked special occasions in

the community with epideictic displays, such as speeches and Latin orations to dignitaries, or a school play performed as both public entertainment and as a demonstration of the boys' skills. This was the custom at Shrewsbury, Canterbury, Norwich, North Walsham and Hitchen, for example.<sup>43</sup> On the occasion of royal visits to regional towns or cities, the local schoolmaster might be involved in the program of speeches and entertainment, and such occasions afforded unique opportunities for a schoolmaster to bring himself to the attention of visiting dignitaries. Queen Elizabeth is known to have visited many regional grammar schools, and to have listened to orations by pupils and schoolmasters at, for example, Worcester (1575), Norwich (1578) and Guildford (1601). A talented schoolmaster could do much to raise the profile of a regional town or city, as evidenced by the fame that Thomas Ashton brought to the city of Shrewsbury. Under Ashton's management, Shrewsbury School became famous for its public drama, drawing audiences of thousands to performances, and the school's reputation attracted many sons of the nobility as pupils, Ashton's own prestige rising with that of the school (*Shrewsbury* 12).

There is nothing unusual, therefore, about the schoolmaster in *Love's Labour's Lost* being approached to organise an entertainment before the royal party. What is significant to Shakespeare's audience is Holofernes' mean status as a country, elementary teacher set against his inordinate confidence in his dramatic abilities, the painfully amateur level of the entertainment presented and his desire not just to direct but also to take centre stage. Likewise Rombus in *The Lady of May* is the natural choice in the village to mediate in a debate, but he is not up to the task. Poets, such as Sidney and Shakespeare, may have used their schoolmaster figures to disparage a custom that broadly encouraged schoolmasters to consider themselves professionals in the field of formal entertainment, and therefore as rivals to the poets themselves.<sup>44</sup> At the free school of St. Bartholomew's, Bristol, a dispute arose in 1589 when Schoolmaster Dunne found he had been passed over in favour of an outsider, Thomas Churchyard of London, to script and direct an elaborate royal entry in Bristol. The schoolmaster's objections had some effect, since Churchyard later complained that the entertainment he wrote was not performed *in toto*: "Som of these Speeches could not be spoken / by means of a Scholemaister, who envied that any stranger should set forth these shoes."<sup>45</sup>



The teacher's role was, by its nature, a performative one, and it is evident from the way the education literature wrote about the profession that schoolmasters were encouraged to see themselves as public performers. Mulcaster's writing is marked by his frequent use of performance terminology. In promoting the status of a public schoolmaster over that of a private tutor, he remarks: "I do take public to be simply the better: as being more upon the stage" (*Positions* 192.29-30), and "what one audiorie is two or three boyes for a learned man to provoke him to utteraunce?" (*Positions* 189.34-36). Mulcaster's boys performed in public and at court on many occasions.<sup>46</sup> Given the emphasis on display and performance both in their public roles and within the school program, it is no surprise that schoolmasters acquired a general reputation for parading and flaunting their own skills. Palingenius provides an entertaining image in *The Zodiake of Life* of the schoolmaster performing to his captive audience:

The Master sits with book before that open wide doth lie,  
And spitting oft he well doth view, his great assembled crowd,  
And when he sees them bent to hear, with lofty voice and loud,  
He then expounds some dreadful ghost of doleful tragedy.  
Or else some harlots tricks declares, in wanton comedy.

(*Zodiake* 174)

Whittinton has a similar image in mind when cautioning schoolmasters against lapsing into a performance rather than an explication of his lesson:

When a mayster redeth unto his scholers he may not be to curyose (bycause to shewe hymself) in declaracyon / but studye to make evydent and playne to the profet of the herers.... Ther be some fooles so pompose / yt they study lytle for profet of theyr scholers: so they may have the glorye and prayse of a connyngre reder. (*Vulgaria* 113)

Whittinton's image is a mirror to the pompous Holofernes expounding to his little audience for the benefit of his own glory and praise, rather than for the profit of his hearers.

### **Schoolmasters and the Church**

For many authors, the overriding purpose of public education was religious reform. Thomas Becon wrote his *Catechism* for use in schools as a means to counter "the pestiferous and mortal odours of the errors and heresies, not only of the papists, but also of all other sectaries whom the devil hath already raised up" (*Catechism* 381). The interlude

*Nice Wanton* equates schooling with religious education, and *The Disobedient Child* shows similar tendencies. T. W. Baldwin writes that the Greek and Latin texts “were supposed to be taught in such a way as to make the boys more moral and more religious. Renaissance was propagated because it was supposed to foster Reformation.”<sup>47</sup> Baldwin’s guarded “supposed to” is judicious. There is a noticeable tendency in school statutes to focus on the curriculum and on manners and to pay scant attention to religious instruction. Such instruction is generally restricted to school prayers and catechising after Sunday sermons, while occasionally a Saturday afternoon is given over to writing and religious instruction (*Guildford* 76). Brinsley, writing in 1612, acknowledges that religious instruction is neglected in schools, and included a chapter on the subject (*Ludus Literarius* 253).

Of all the professions, the church and teaching show the most interchangeability and overlap: “men commonly intercalated a few years of teaching in a clerical career, or combined the two activities.”<sup>48</sup> Most Elizabethan pedagogical writers do present themselves as concerned principally with the Christian faith in a child’s education, yet Mulcaster, who is probably more representative of pedagogical practice in public schools in England than any other author, makes little comment on religious instruction (*Positions* xvi). Some schools specifically prohibited schoolmasters who were active in the Church. At Shrewsbury no master was allowed to hold any ministry in the Church (*Shrewsbury* 16), and at Chigwell the directions were most explicit that the Latin schoolmaster to be appointed should be “of a sound Religion, neither *Papist* nor *Puritan*, ... and that as soon as the Schoolmaster do enter into Holy Orders, either Deacon or Priest, his place to become void ipso facto, as if he were dead” (*Chigwell* 119-20). The impetus for such provisions was probably to ensure that schoolmasters were not distracted from their school duties by external clerical duties, but it may also have been to avoid religious conflict.

Vicars and schoolmasters often worked closely together, sometimes in conflict with the local community. In the town of Prescott in 1586, the local gentry tried to restrict the reformist vicar’s influence on the schoolmaster by opting to move the school two miles away from the church. The dispute continued over a number of years and was recorded in correspondence to the Provost for the school and to the Earl of Derby, the school’s patron, who made a number of personal visits to Prescott in an effort to resolve

the dispute. In a letter of 1586 the vicar repeatedly reminds the Provost how important it is that vicar and schoolmaster work together for the furtherance of religion:

Sir, we have a free school in this town of Prescot, which is no small commoditie to the town, and a great furtherance for religion. Schoolmasters and ministers either do or should join hand in hand for instruction of youth, to teach them the true fear of God.

He goes on to claim that churches and schools were traditionally built close to each other for precisely this reason:

Our labours concerning the instruction of youth ... will be better and with greater ease performed when the minister and the schoolmaster are one hand at the elbow of the other, and therefor our forefathers, seeing this, have founded their free schools not far from the mother church. All our gentlemen are either obstinate recusantes or very cold professors, and would gladly work to hinder the good course of the word. (*Prescot 7*)

Schoolmasters were licensed by the Church, and were subject to ecclesiastical supervision and authority. The vicar of Prescot evidently considers he has a right to concern himself with the schoolmaster's activities for the purpose of religious reform. In *Love's Labour's Lost*, the schoolmaster is never on stage without Sir Nathaniel, the curate, at his side, yet, whereas Sir Nathaniel should be concerning himself with the schoolmaster's behaviour for moral if not religious reasons, the curate's dependence on the schoolmaster renders him derelict in his duty. If any in Shakespeare's audience were familiar with Thomas Hudson's translation of Du Bartas' poem, *The Historie of Judith*, published by Vautrollier in 1584, they might have recognised in Nathaniel echoes of the Eunuch in the poem, who, "in place of some faithfull servant to warne [Holophernes] of his vyces ... feedeth him in his humour."<sup>49</sup> Through the impotent curate Shakespeare dramatises the dangers of community failure to monitor the activities of schoolmasters.

### *The Lady of May* (1578-82)

Around 1579, the youthful Philip Sidney (1554-1586), recently student at Shrewsbury School and at Oxford, wrote what is thought to be his first literary work, *The Lady of May*, a short piece of court entertainment for a visit by Elizabeth I to the Earl of Leicester's estate, Kenilworth. Katherine Duncan-Jones notes the academic culture that structures the piece: "The work is characterized by a particularly academic kind of humour, reminding one that Sidney's education had only just been completed. The

substance of it is a rustic parody of a scholastic debate, and the main dramatic tension, or at least interruption, is provided by the figure of false learning in Rombus.<sup>50</sup> The schoolmaster as a figure of “false learning” brings the academic culture that pervades the play into sharp and critical focus. Rombus is the vehicle for Sidney’s lampooning of pedagogical values and methods, a forerunner to the “self-wise-seeming schoolmaster” mocked in *The Defence of Poetry* (c1581), where references to schools and to schooling tend to be pejorative and the narrow focus of formal learning is condemned.<sup>51</sup> “The grammarian speaketh only of the rules of speech,” he writes, and “the rhetorician and logician, considering what in nature soonest prove and persuade, thereon give artificial rules”; only the poet “lifted up with the vigour of his own invention” can freely range “within the zodiac of his own wit.”<sup>52</sup> Sidney repeatedly regrets the absence of “delight” (inspiration and invention) in contemporary pedagogy, and equates that absence with formal academic methods: “the philosophers forthwith putting [poetry] in method, and making a school-art of that which the poets did only teach by a divine delightfulness.”<sup>53</sup>

There is further evidence to suggest that Sidney had a particular interest in education and in its weaknesses at this time. Sometime between 1579 and 1583, Abraham Fraunce dedicated to Sidney a Latin comedy, *Victoria*, which he had translated and adapted from a recent Italian play, *Il Fedele*, which deals with a pedant in the *commedia erudita* tradition. Fraunce, who had been at Shrewsbury School with Sidney, and who went on to write a treatise on logic under Sidney’s patronage, reworked the role of the pedant in the original to render it more central to the play.<sup>54</sup> Fraunce’s increased focus on the schoolmaster suggests an interest by his dedicatee, Sidney. Around the same period, Anthony Munday produced an English translation of this same Italian play, also with an increased emphasis on the pedant.<sup>55</sup> The fact that both Fraunce and Munday should choose to translate the same comedy at this time suggests that the climate was ripe for satirical treatment of schoolmasters.

Sidney’s is possibly the first satirical image of an English schoolmaster in Tudor vernacular drama. A number of critics have viewed Rombus as a prototype for Holofernes, Shakespeare’s pedant, most recently H. R. Woudhuysen, who points to a number of other similarities between Sidney’s work and Shakespeare’s play.<sup>56</sup> Sidney’s characterisation of the pedant corroborates many of the complaints in the treatises, such

as excessive conceit, faulty learning, and arrogance, all of which are later to be found in Holofernes.

*The Lady of May* is a dramatised, comic debate over the familiar topic of the active versus contemplative life, which takes place in Wanstead garden as the Queen is walking by. The Queen is approached by the distressed mother of the Lady of May, whose daughter is troubled with two suitors, a forester and a shepherd, and the Queen is prevailed upon to watch the spectacle and to be the final arbitrator. The schoolmaster is brought in to mediate in the debate.

The invidious status of the schoolmaster is brought to the fore by performance directions early in *The Lady of May*. Rombus arrives on stage in the midst of a tug-of-war between six foresters and six shepherds escorting the Lady of May:

*Master Rombus, a schoolmaster of a village thereby, ... being fully persuaded of his own learned wisdom, came thither with his authority to part their fray; where for an answer he received many unlearned blows. (16.16-22)*

It is essential to the work's purpose that, before Rombus utters a word, the élite and aristocratic audience for Sidney's royal entertainment should identify this schoolmaster as a type, his vanity being evident in his postures and demeanour on stage. His position as a village schoolmaster not only conforms to rustic decorum but also alerts the audience to his low status. Villages did not have grammar schools, so Rombus must be an elementary teacher. His name lends further evidence to his mean status. By naming him Rombus, not just for the written text but in the dialogue also (23.5), Sidney brings to mind for his audience the science of mathematics.<sup>57</sup>

Arithmetic, mathematics, ciphering or casting of accounts are rarely found under the program of studies in grammar-school statutes; they were not considered appropriate to sons of the gentry or to those with aspirations to gentry status, much less to the aristocracy.<sup>58</sup> Some pedagogical authors, notably those writing on behalf of public schooling, were evidently frustrated by such an attitude. Vives complained that "Certain crass noblemen think it a beautiful and 'if God pleases' a highborn characteristic, not to know how to reckon" (*De tradendis* 203). Mulcaster was similarly critical of such attitudes:

Some good wittes ... never thought [the *Mathematicall* sciences] worthey their studie as being without preferment, and within contempt, [and] do use to abase them, and to mocke at mathematicall heades. (*Positions* 237.13-17)



encapsulate two topical criticisms of schoolmasters: conceit and the exercise of discipline in the classroom.

The claim to use “geometrical proportion” in disciplining his students both fits this schoolmaster’s name and indicates that he is using moderation, as required in some school statutes (*Almondbury* 21). However, the pride with which Rombus boasts of this feature of his duties suggests otherwise. His conceit and his ignorance are brought out in his misquotation from Virgil, “*Parcare subjectos et debellire superbos. / spare the humble and vanquish the arrogant*” (23.16). This is a much quoted line from the *Aeneid* which prophesies Rome’s conquests and imperial destiny. That Rombus should appropriate this line for his own feeble victories as a lowly schoolmaster is typical of the work’s parodic humour.<sup>62</sup> As previously noted, humility was not a quality commonly found in schoolmasters, and it is likely this particular quotation was ironically applied to schoolmasters. The fact that Rombus has misquoted such a familiar line also serves to demonstrate his incompetence.

For all “his loquence” (23.4) this pedagogue’s rhetorical skills are painfully amateur. In fact, Sidney may be playing with the Latin term *loquentia*, with its implications of garrulousness.<sup>63</sup> Rombus’ language lacks any semblance of eloquence, as his opening lines amply demonstrate: “Now the thunderthumping Jove transfund his dotes into your excellent formosity, which have with your resplendent beams thus segregated the enmity of these rural animals” (23.10-12). His speech has no natural rhythms, his vocabulary is pompous, and all meaning is lost in the obscure and convoluted language. His language throughout the play is heavily dependent on alliteration and redolent of classroom exercises or of elementary parsing techniques, such as his misquotation: *ad proposito revetebo* (a formal pedagogical interjection).<sup>64</sup> Latin phrases and words are dotted through his speech, further obfuscating meaning. A further quotation by Rombus from the *Aeneid* may well have been another commonplace irony in schoolboy circles; again he misquotes it: *haec olim memonasse juvebit*, which translates as “even this distress it will some day be a joy to recall.”<sup>65</sup> This quotation from the *Aeneid* was (and still is) inscribed on the walls of the Royal Grammar School in Guildford (*Guildford* 90), recalling the saying that schooldays are - supposedly - happy days. Such lines are of no comfort to a suffering schoolboy in his present miseries.

The disparity between the schoolmaster's elevated view of himself and the community's low regard for him is evident in his pretensions to gentle status: he dissociates himself from the villagers, dismissing his fellow parishioners as "rural animals," "plebeians," and "nebulons" (23.12, 17, 27.22). Their treatment of him is equally disdainful, "they yielded me no more reverence than if I had been some *pecorius Asinus*, I, even I, that am, who I am" (23.21-22). *Asinus*, as Brinsley explains, was a term used in schools for those boys nominated to monitor the behaviour of the others and to report back to the master all misdemeanours:

That is a usuall custome in Schooles to appoint *Custodes*, or *Asini* (as they are tearmed in some places) to observe and catch them who speake English in each fourme, or whom they see idle, to give them the Ferula and to make them *Custodes* if they cannot answer a question which they aske. (*Ludus Literarius* 219)

As Brinsley explains it, to be an *Asinus* was not a position of favour, but usually one given to the class dunce. Brinsley's speaker, Philoponus, goes on to comment that he had learned by experience that "if there be any one simple in a fourme, or harder of learning than the rest, they will make him a right *Asinus*" (*Ludus Literarius* 219-20). By having Rombus refer to himself as "some *pecorius Asinus*" ("pecorius" means brute),<sup>66</sup> Sidney has deftly transformed teacher into the classroom dunce, drawing his humour straight out of the schoolroom.

An additional feature of the classroom and of the schoolmaster's self-image that Sidney satirises is the pedant as public performer. As the learned scholar in the village, Rombus is called on to act as mediator in the debate, a usual practice for scholars. Heywood, in his *Apology for Actors* (1612), justifies the dramatic component of a university education by pointing to the public exercises in which scholars participate, such as to "moderate in any Argumentation whatsoever."<sup>67</sup> Sidney's stage directions emphasise the inept and comic picture Rombus presents: "*then came forward Master Rombus, and with many special graces made this learned oration*" (23.8). Such "special graces" are the appropriate countenances and gestures schoolchildren were drilled in when making orations, or declaiming: "Also see yt the gesture be comely with semely and sobre movyng: somtyme of the heed / somtyme of the hande / and fote: and as the cause requyreth with all the body" (*Vulgaria* 114). All pedagogical authors accept the importance of fitting the gesture, visage and the posture to the speech, but dignity required only



moderate gesticulation, lest the orator become comic, for “it is scarcely for serious people to provide fun” warns Erasmus (*De recta* 421). The “special graces” allotted to Rombus are undoubtedly to provide fun for the audience. Much of Sidney’s characterisation of Rombus suggests his part is indeed that of a clown, one who criticises Elizabethan schoolmasters under the cloak of humour.

Despite these criticisms of the Tudor pedant, Sidney’s treatment of Rombus never stoops to accuse him of lust, greed or other vices of the stock pedant of Italian theatre, and one can agree with Duncan-Jones that the dramatic treatment given Rombus is essentially sympathetic (16). The articulate and coherent May Lady curtly dismisses Rombus at one point, “away, away you tedious fool” (24.1), but she then qualifies her dismissal with “leave off *good* Latin Fool” (24.10, my italics), and a note of sympathy enters the stage directions for the schoolmaster’s presumably comic and undignified retreat: “the poor schoolmaster went his way back” (24.13). When Rombus returns to centre stage in his role as mediator, he is in his element, “dilucidat[ing] the very intrinsical marrowbone of the matter” (29.2), as if in the classroom, spouting terms of logic, enthymemes and major and minor premisses. His skills are clearly not up to the task in hand, and the May Lady bluntly informs him “No, no, your ordinary brains shall not deal in that matter; I have already submitted it to one whose sweet spirit hath passed through greater difficulties, neither will I that your blockheads lie in her way” (30.4-7). The schoolmaster has neither the life experiences nor the intelligence to judge in the affairs of the heart. It is of course a woman, the Queen, who has the necessary wisdom and wit to do so. It is noteworthy that it is the women’s voices that provide the plain speech contrast to the reliance on rhetoric by the men. Both the Lady of May and her mother are articulate and to the point. By flattering women’s skills Sidney was in effect flattering his Queen, a strategy that Shakespeare also adopts in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*. Both Sidney and Shakespeare were, of course, also dramatising the traditional opposition between masculine pedagogy and feminine qualities in order to highlight the weaknesses of the former and the strengths of the latter.

It is unlikely Sidney had any particular individual in mind with Rombus, and none has been suggested by critics, although it has been claimed recently that the “absent presence of Sidney in Rombus is so strong as to lead easily to the speculation that here

may be the role played by the author in his creation.”<sup>68</sup> Richard Bear, among other scholars, interprets the entertainment in the light of Elizabeth’s marriage negotiations, and seems to be suggesting that Sidney saw himself as a potential mediator, in the same way Rombus sees himself as the authoritative mediator for the May Lady’s suitors within the play. It is more likely, however, that the self-directed humour was intended to draw attention to the young scholar’s own pretensions in presuming to present a performance before his learned sovereign, and to defuse such pretensions through humour.

That Sidney could afford to mock a village schoolmaster is self-evident, that he chose to do so before Elizabeth, an ardent supporter of education, is perhaps the consequence of the success of the growth of schooling in England. It was at about this period that Mulcaster was writing his *Positions*, in which he considers “the meanes to restraints the overflowing multitude of scholers” (*Positions* 145.36-37), surely a vexed question for an advocate of public education. It was no longer a matter of encouraging the population towards schooling, but one of improving the qualifications of those teaching, as Mulcaster’s work makes evident in its radical plans for improved teacher training. The most urgent area for reform was that of elementary teaching, because “the first grounding would be handled by the best” instead of, as was the case, the worst (*Positions* 232.1-6). And the most disadvantaged elementary students were those in provincial and rural areas who had only their own common sense to counter the inapposite lessons they were receiving. One can perhaps argue that the value accorded to a woman’s voice – that of the May Lady – demonstrates that a mediocre schooling for men in rural Tudor England was more of a handicap than an asset.

### ***Love’s Labour’s Lost* (c1589-1598)**

*Love’s Labour’s Lost* has much in common with *The Lady of May*, and not just in the figure of the schoolmaster as a focus of criticism towards education. Sidney’s work presented a debate by the shepherds and foresters on the popular academic theme of the contemplative versus the active life. Shakespeare similarly draws on this motif, with his band of courtiers proposing a retreat into scholarship. Shakespeare and Sidney wrote for the same royal audience of Queen Elizabeth.<sup>69</sup> Shakespeare’s work, like Sidney’s, offers

the articulate and direct speech of women as a foil for the excessive artifice and rhetoric of the men. Shakespeare's title itself may have been suggested by Sidney's text. In the shepherd's satire in *The Lady of May*, Dorcas, the uneducated shepherd suitor, argues his case by condemning the foolish, lovelorn courtier for wasting his time and passion on women with "too much wit" who made all their "loving labours folly, ... so that with long lost labour, finding their thoughts bare no other wool but despair, of young courtiers they grew old shepherds" (28.22-25). This is a simple but not inaccurate synopsis of the plot of *Love's Labour's Lost*. Woudhuysen puts the case for the influence of Sidney's work in general on this play, drawing a number of parallels from *The Defence of Poetry* and *Astrophel and Stella*, and suggesting that, although there is no direct evidence that Shakespeare read Sidney's work, Philip Sidney is the "presiding spirit of *Love's Labour's Lost*."<sup>70</sup>

*Love's Labour's Lost* cannot be dated with any certainty, and has been placed variously between 1589 and 1598. The title page of the Second Quarto (1631) declares that the play was publicly acted at Blackfriars and the Globe, and it was also performed before James I on the occasion of the release of the Earl of Southampton from the Tower in 1604. There are indications that it was first written for private performance in court circles, and the five parts for boy players (five female, one page), point to a children's troupe or to choristers. Richard L. DeMolen follows Alfred Harbage in suggesting that it was first written for a company of boys in 1588/89.<sup>71</sup> There are two songs in the play, one of which is to be sung by Moth, the young page in Act Three. Richard David concludes that because the professional children's companies were banned from performing between 1590 and 1599, a private house performance was intended.<sup>72</sup> The use of child players would intensify the irony and satire directed towards the school culture, and would encourage deliberate parody in performance. The light humour, the display of wit, the abundant punning, and the "artificiality of its form and tone" would suit a court performance for a festive occasion, such as Christmas and Shrovetide, and David suggests Christmas 1593.<sup>73</sup> Perhaps an internal reference to a Christmas performance can be discerned in Berowne's disparaging: "here was a consent, / Knowing aforehand of our merriment, / To dash it like a Christmas comedy" (V.ii.460-61). It would accord with the main theme of the play for the playwright to publicly deprecate his own

creation; this is, like *The Lady of May*, a play that makes fun of education and of male efforts at impressing and wooing women. The dramatist flatters the women in his audience by juxtaposing the schoolboy performances of the men, figuratively if not literally, with the superior faculties of judgement of the women.

The play draws extensively on the pedagogue's culture to bring out its absurdities and its inflated sense of worth. Lined up against those who subscribe to these values are the women, the rustics and a child, all of whom express their views with lucidity and prove themselves astute judges of the linguistic and ideological absurdities of the opposing camp. Woudhuysen has similarly commented that "the play's comedy and its more serious concerns come out of the clash of these different attitudes to language among those who are broadly realists and those whose grasp of reality is less firm."<sup>74</sup> This chapter will argue that *Love's Labour's Lost* dramatises the failings of the Tudor education system, and that these failings go beyond language and school methods to standards of moral behaviour. Holofernes, who represents the worst of its moral failures, is not introduced until Act Four, but the preceding scenes develop the theme of formal education and the questionable values attached to it.

Shakespeare opens his play with four noble and, presumably, imposing male figures on stage; the opening lines by the King of Navarre use grandiloquent, poetic language and draw on familiar metaphors and imagery of time, death and war, to proclaim the men's quest for an honour beyond the grave. This fourteen-line build-up of "brazen tombs" (I.i.2), "brave conquerors" (I.i.8), and "huge army" (I.i.10), collapses into a pathetic anticlimax in what must surely have been intended to set the satirical tone of the play:

King. Our late edict shall strongly stand in force;  
 Navarre shall be the wonder of the world;  
 Our court shall be a little academe,  
 Still and contemplative in living art.

(I.i.11-14)

If the play was originally written for children to perform, the potential for parody is enhanced: as the young boy struts his royal part and proposes a "little academe," his own school conditions silently undercutting any "Still and contemplative" images of learning. Having introduced an atmosphere of mockery towards the world of study, and having

brought the familiar theme of the contemplative versus active life into play, Shakespeare directs audience consciousness to the classroom culture, into the world of scholars and statutes (I.i.17), and to familiar arguments that study was unhealthy and unmasculine. He goes straight to a satire of the conditions of the scholar's life, to sketch the hungry, sleep-deprived and celibate student of philosophy. Each of the courtier gallants subscribes to this stock image. "'Tis but a three years' fast: / the mind shall banquet, though the body pine," maintains the stoic Longaville (I.i.24-25); Dumaine is mortified: "to love, to wealth, to pomp, I pine and die, / with all these living in philosophy" (I.i.31-32), and Berowne is appalled at the proposed conditions for scholarship:

But there are other strict observances:  
 As not to see a woman in that term,  
 Which I hope well is not enrolled there;  
 And one day in a week to touch no food,  
 And but one meal on every day beside,  
 The which I hope is not enrolled there;  
 And then to sleep but three hours in the night,  
 And not be seen to wink of all the day-  
 . . .  
 O, these are barren tasks, too hard to keep,  
 Not to see ladies, study, fast, not sleep.

(I.i.36-48)

For these would-be scholars, as for the schoolmaster of the play, Holofernes, nothing could be further from the truth than such ascetic ideals.

At intervals throughout the play, audience attention is redirected to the classroom culture, thus effectively bringing schoolmasters and scholars under the one cultural rubric. The dramatist plays on terms reminiscent of the schoolroom, such as "manner and form" (I.i.206); "Negligent student, learn her by heart!" (III.i.35); "prove" (III.i.38); "conster [construe] my speeches better, if you may" (V.ii.341). Versifying exercises, a daily activity in schools, are satirised in Act Four, Scene Three, and attention is drawn to the artifice of composed speeches. When the Princess first comes on stage her opening lines chide her counsellor, Boyet, for his flattering rhetoric, "Good Lord Boyet, my beauty, though but mean, / Needs not the painted flourish of your praise" (II.i.12-14). This articulate and perceptive female sovereign places little value on the men's compositions: "to their penn'd speech, render we no grace," she instructs her companions (V.ii.147). The play

mocks a masculine culture that values such schoolboy rhetoric and, indirectly, flatters the female sovereign in the audience.

Behind the humour is the consistent understanding that formal education may be no enhancement to a natural wit. Rosaline voices this conviction: “better wits have worn plain statute-caps” (V.ii.281), she observes, statute caps being plain woollen caps for apprentices or others of the lower social ranks.<sup>75</sup> Similarly, the Princess also tells the audience that schooling is as likely to nurture folly as wisdom:

folly, in wisdom hatch'd,  
Hath wisdom's warrant and the help of school,  
And wit's own grace to grace a learned fool.

(V.ii.70-72)

This is a lesson the men have to learn, and by the final act a chastened Berowne gives voice to one of the play's underlying motifs:

O, never will I trust to speeches penn'd  
Nor to the motion of a schoolboy's tongue.

(V.ii.402-3)

Schoolboys' tongues and speeches are founded on methods of imitation, and it seems that Shakespeare, like Sidney, is critical of the absence of individual inspiration and invention. If Berowne, who is perhaps the most lucidly critical of the three young courtiers, is a channel for the authorial voice, then it is from Berowne we learn of the playwright's derision for the educator's faith in textual authorities:

Small have continual plodders ever won,  
Save base authority from others' books.

(I.i.86-87)

Such lines as these become particularly pertinent if played by a school-aged boy.

Shakespeare introduces his schoolmaster into the fourth act against a background of young men playing with language and relying on taught skills to impress both the women and each other. The effect of this late introduction of a forceful dramatic figure is to set the preceding amateur displays of knowledge and skill within a culture of pedagogy, and to draw an analogy with the King and his scholar companions. Holofernes and his cohorts thus function as a mirror to the King and his entourage, reflecting similar behaviour patterns. The pedant comes on stage together with the curate, Sir Nathaniel, and the constable, Dull. Holofernes is never without these two, who serve as a ready and

acquiescent audience for his lecturing. The schoolmaster's overbearing manner and obscure language may suggest he is a grammar schoolmaster, but, like Rombus, he is in fact a teacher of the petties, and he is probably, like Rombus, a country schoolmaster, given the rustic characters surrounding him. DeMolen also assumes Holofernes is a country schoolmaster, although less from evidence within the text than in support of his argument that Holofernes represents Richard Mulcaster.<sup>76</sup>

Holofernes teaches the hornbook [V.i.46], a Renaissance tool for children learning the alphabet. Moth teases him with the most elementary of alphabet lessons, "What is *a*, *b*, spell'd backward?" (V.i.47). This was a lesson well known to all who learned even the most basic rudiments of reading (*Ludus Literarius* 19). Likewise, to an audience familiar with lower grammar school, Holofernes' love of Mantuan would suggest third form, a class that was usually taken by the usher, not the grammar master.<sup>77</sup> The audience is also told that Holofernes teaches daughters as well as sons, and while girls could and did attend elementary classes, they rarely continued to grammar school (see pages 28-29). Rombus and Holofernes share generic similarities in characterisation, but when it comes to specifics the differences are revealing. Shakespeare has given his schoolmaster the support of the curate and Dull, the constable, two protectors of public morality, and Shakespeare has characterised his pedant with a number of grosser vices not applicable to Rombus.

With the arrival of this trio on stage, the classroom routine is reproduced in all its pedantry with strings of synonyms, alliteration, explications, epithets, Latinisms, and plays on grammatical terms such as "insinuateth," "concludes" and "figure" (V.i.25, 56, 64). Sir Nathaniel plays the part of the student in this perambulating schoolroom, comically conforming to classroom techniques such as recording Holofernes' use of the word "peregrinate" (V.i.14) in his table book. He is dutifully following pedagogical advice that "any elegant, rare, or necessary word, or a useful *formula loquendi*, or a significant weighty or wise saying" of the teacher, should be noted in a paperbook (*De ratione studii* 244). Holofernes' speech can be generally characterised as similar to that of Polonius in *Hamlet*, that is, devoid of matter and top heavy with art. Excess of amplification is apparently a common characteristic of Tudor schoolmasters: "It is like a schoolmaster

foaming out synonymies, or words of one meaning, and will sooner yield a conjecture of superfluity of words than of sufficiency of matter.”<sup>78</sup>

Conceit is the first of the pedant’s many faults to become apparent to the audience. Holofernes is introduced correcting Sir Nathaniel on the question of the deer hunt:

Nath. Truly, Master Holofernes, the epithites are sweetly varied, like a scholar at the least; but, sir, I assure ye it was a buck of the first head.

Hol. Sir Nathaniel, *haud credo*. [I cannot believe it].

(IV.ii.8-11)

Sir Nathaniel, who is “a foolish mild man, an honest man, look you, and soon dash’d” (V.ii.581-82), quickly capitulates. The schoolmaster cannot so easily silence Dull, the simple, but not unintelligent, constable. Ignorant of the Latin terms in Holofernes’ conversation, Dull hears “*haud credo*” as “old grey doe,” and stubbornly insists on correcting him. This provokes Holofernes into a tedious and pedantic display of grammar, and an offensive attack on the unlettered Dull’s mean status. This is entirely consistent behaviour for an ignorant and arrogant schoolmaster, as Vives explains it:

Since nobody in the school contradicts the teacher, he puts on supercilious airs and arrogance, and particularly brooks no opposition, and perseveres pertinaciously in what he says lest he should lose any of his authority by giving way. For his audience, which consists chiefly of boys, awards the palm not on his merit, but because he never seems to be gainsaid. Schoolmasters often hope to be great by attacking and saying biting things of all kinds of other men. (*De tradendis* 100-01)

The curate mirrors the schoolmaster’s display of contempt for the rustic Dull as he quotes the pedagogical commonplace of beast versus rational man. Nathaniel claims that Dull is “only an animal, only sensible in the duller parts” (IV.ii.26-27), and continues by representing himself and the schoolmaster as the intellectual patrons of the parish, unwittingly satirising their own gross conceits and faults in the process:

And such barren plants are set before us, that we thankful should be -  
Which we of taste and feeling are - for those parts that do fructify in us  
more than he.

For as it would ill become me to be vain, indiscreet, or a fool,  
So were there a patch set on learning, to see him in a school.

(IV.ii.28-31)



Much about these lines and those that follow suggests that they have been incorrectly allocated to the curate, and were intended for the schoolmaster; their length and bold tone are out of character for the mild Sir Nathaniel, who rarely ventures an opinion of his own, unless it is to flatter Holofernes. The arguments and metaphors are all drawn from the classroom, as is the beast versus rational man analogy. The disclaimer, “it would ill become me to be vain, indiscreet, or a fool,” identifies the three most common complaints against schoolmasters: conceit, ignorance and indiscreet behaviour. The statute identifying “The Qualities of the Scolemaister” for Sir John Deane’s Grammar School, for example, states: “Imprimis: I do ordeyne and will that the scolemaister be lerned, sobre, disrete” (*Northwich* 298). Discretion was a quality so frequently demanded of schoolmasters in school statutes, in treatises and elsewhere (*Vulgaria* 111) that it is an obvious choice for satire directed to a schoolmaster, whereas it is not appropriate to the mild and honest curate, and in performance would stand out as out of character.<sup>79</sup>

Goodman Dull is the foil against which the schoolmaster’s erudition is supposed to shine. “Most dull, honest Dull” (V.i.155) is the only person actually invited to speak by Holofernes. Throughout the first scene of Act Five, Dull stands silent on stage as Armado, Moth, and Holofernes jostle for verbal ascendance. “*Via*, goodman Dull! thou hast spoken no word all this while,” encourages the schoolmaster, confident that Dull’s ignorance will revive his own flagging authority. Dull responds in satisfactory fashion, “nor understood none neither, sir” (V.i.151). For Holofernes, Dull merely confirms his ignorance. For the audience, Dull’s response highlights the absurdity of much of the foregoing dialogue. Sidney had used Dorcas, the shepherd, for similar dramatic effect in *The Lady of May*. After a comically pedantic and obscure lecture by Rombus on points of logic, Dorcas prefaced his speech with the lament: “O Dorcas, poor Dorcas, that I was not set in my young days to school, that I might have purchased the understanding of Master Rombus mysterious speeches” (*Lady of May* 28.4-6).

Educators were aware of the problem of obfuscating meaning through inaccessible vocabulary. In his preface to *Toxophilus*, Roger Ascham complained about those who, by “using strange words as Latin, French and Italian, do make all things dark and hard.”<sup>80</sup> Holofernes suffers from this linguistic fault. He not only lards his conversation with Latin terms, but he also draws on simple French and Italian vocabulary, for example “*in*

*via . . . facere . . . ostentare*” (IV.ii.14-15); “*bien venuto*” (IV.ii.157), “*sans question*” (V.i.86). Such faults in Holofernes serve as a mirror to similar linguistic affectations in the courtiers. Let down by the failure of his “three-pil’d hyperboles, spruce affection, / Figures pedantical” (V.ii.407-408), Berowne makes a promise to Rosaline:

Ber. Henceforth my wooing mind shall be express’d  
 In russet yeas and honest kersey noes.  
 And to begin, wench, so God help me law!  
 My love to thee is sound, sans crack or flaw.”  
 Ros. Sans “sans,” I pray you.

(V.ii.412-16)

Only gentlemen spoke French or Italian, not schoolmasters, particularly a master of the petties. Even song schoolmasters knew that: “Jack wald be ane gentleman if he culd speak Frenche,” wrote the Master of the Song School in Aberdeen.<sup>81</sup> According to Foster Watson, there is probably not a single instance of the teaching of a modern language in school statutes in Elizabethan England; these were subjects that belonged to the studies of the privately tutored gentleman.<sup>82</sup> Holofernes’ multi-lingual vocabulary is therefore yet another illustration of his social ambition.

In addition to conceit and affected language, Holofernes, like Rombus, has the comic ability unwittingly to draw attention to his own faults. This is a common feature of the stage pedant whose own obtuseness is the source of much ironic humour. The tediously longwinded Rombus, for example, claims “*Verbus sapiento satus est*” (a grammatically incorrect attempt to say “a word to the wise is enough”) (*Lady of May* 23.22). The verbose Holofernes quotes a similar saying, “*vir sapit qui pauca loquitur*” [that man is wise who speaks little] (IV.ii.80), a saying perhaps considered pertinent to schoolmasters since it is found in various grammar school sources.<sup>83</sup> When, for example, Holofernes criticises Armado for drawing out “the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument,” the effect is to throw into relief his own pedantic verbiage (V.i.16-17).

Holofernes’ sense of himself as a public performer pervades his role. Every word he utters is directed towards an onstage audience, and he is given no soliloquies. He is too thick-skinned ever to question the value of his oratory. “Sir Nathaniel, will you hear an extemporal epitaph on the death of the deer?” asks Holofernes, “and to humour the ignorant, call I the deer the Princess kill’d a pricket” (IV.ii.50-52). Sir Nathaniel knows

the question is rhetorical, and hastens to agree, while letting slip his doubts about the propriety of “pricket.” Holofernes then recites a piece of verse marked by excruciating alliteration. This was perhaps the ill-qualified pedant’s trademark, since Sidney gives Rombus the same woeful facility with poetry. Compare, for instance, the “crafty coward Cupid ... [and] his dire doleful digging dignifying dart” of Rombus (23.30), with the “preyful Princess pierc’d and prick’d a pretty pleasing pricket” of Holofernes (IV.ii.56). Such satirical treatment of a schoolmaster’s poetic skills says much about the inept versifying skills of schoolmasters, especially since versification was a daily exercise in Elizabethan schools.

Equally dismissive is Shakespeare’s treatment of Holofernes as a pretender to dramatic skills. Armado is instructed to approach Holofernes and the curate for some entertainment, on the “understanding that the curate and your sweet self are good at such eruptions and sudden breaking out of mirth” (V.i.113-15). Holofernes nominates the Nine Worthies, crassly asserting the fitness of himself and the curate to play such roles: “I say none so fit as to present the Nine Worthies” (V.i.122-23). This suggestion causes the curate to express some surprise and to ask naively “where will you find men worthy enough to present them?” (V.i.124-25). Holofernes fails even to register the curate’s reservations and allocates parts, giving himself at least three of them. The show will be a farce, as Shakespeare’s audience confidently expects, and as the audience within the play assuredly fears:

King. Berowne, they will shame us; let them not approach.  
 Ber. We are shame-proof, my lord; and ’tis some policy  
 To have one show worse than the King’s and his company.  
 (V.ii.511-13)

The schoolmaster’s antics again serve as a mirror to the behaviour and values of the King and his male companions. They too had put on a show, disguising themselves as Muscovites, naively thinking to fool the Princess and her ladies. Even the outrageously ostentatious Armado has reservations about the pending performance of the Nine Worthies and adds his criticism of Holofernes’ schoolmasterly character defects: “for I protest, the schoolmaster is exceedingly fantastical, too too vain, too too vain” (V.ii.528). Armado attempts, courteously, to dissuade Holofernes from appointing his diminutive page, Moth, to the role of Hercules: “Pardon, sir, error: he is not quantity enough for that

Worthy's thumb," but the schoolmaster stands on his dignity and on mythological learning:

Shall I have audience? He shall present Hercules in minority; his enter and exit shall be strangling a snake; and I will have an apology for that purpose.

(V.i.133-36)

Moth's contribution to the dialogue indicates just how ludicrous an idea this is, and suggests Moth is instructing the theatre audience on how to respond - by hissing - when the time comes:

Moth. An excellent device! So if any of the audience hiss, you may cry, "Well done, Hercules, now thou crushest the snake!" That is the way to make an offense gracious, though few have the grace to do it.

(V.ii.137-41)

Moth has bested the schoolmaster in every exchange, and Holofernes is not going to allow him to do so in performance. He gives Moth no lines to speak, provides the brief apology for Hercules himself, and hurries Moth off stage with a terse injunction not to return and to exit in dignity: "[*Aside.*] Keep some state in thy exit, and vanish" (V.ii.594). This pretty, knavish page is undoubtedly the best actor of them all, having learned his skills by natural observation, rather than through the school-taught art of "action and accent" (V.ii.99). When the young men instruct Moth in performance techniques, "thus must thou speak," and "thus thy body bear" (V.ii.100), their lessons are redundant. Moth has nothing to learn from these amateurs; he has already convincingly demonstrated a natural ability to mimic the affected gestures, looks and voice of the foolish suitor, and he mocks the men's adopted poses:

Moth. . . . these [gentlemanly actions] betray nice wenches that would be betray'd without these; and make them men of note - do you note? - men that most are affected to these.

Armado How hast thou purchased this experience?

Moth. By my penny of observation.

(III.i.23-27)

Moth is one of the few characters Holofernes cannot impress or confuse, and, as Woudhuysen points out, Moth's clever exercises in reasoning and his grasp of the elements of grammar contrast with Holofernes' more laboured understanding.<sup>84</sup>

The pedant as parasite is another feature of Holofernes (see above pages 41-42). When Holofernes pompously announces to his little entourage that "I do dine to-day at

the father's of a certain pupil of mine" (IV.ii.153), the audience is perhaps being invited to read some classroom bargaining into this. The schoolmaster brazenly extends an invitation to the curate to accompany him, specifically to dinner:

If (before repast) it shall please you to gratify the table with a grace, I will, on my privilege I have with the parents of the foresaid child or pupil, undertake your *bien venuto*; where I will prove those verses to be very unlearned, neither savoring of poetry, wit nor invention. I beseech your society.

(IV.ii.154-60)

Holofernes requires the curate's company for two reasons: to facilitate his membership of the gentry in the community, and to provide the pretext for displaying his dialectical skills to the company. But the schoolmaster goes further to include Constable Dull in the dinner company: "Sir, I do invite you too, you shall not say me nay: *pauca verba*" (IV.ii.164-65). Dull, of course, is to provide the necessary ignorance against which Holofernes' wit is to shine. Holofernes and company leave the stage at the end of Act Four, Scene Two to go to dinner. When they return to the stage in Act Five, Scene One, Shakespeare prompts the audience to refer back to the reason for his previous exit:

Hol. *Satis quid sufficit.*

Nath. I praise God for you, sir. Your reasons at dinner have been sharp and sententious.

(V.i.1-03)

Holofernes' Latin epigram, "enough is as good as a feast," has a twofold purpose. It reminds the audience that Holofernes has been at dinner and that his Latin is faulty, the correct form being "*Satis est quod*" not "*quid*." A few lines further, the parasite image is again brought to the attention of the audience, this time by Moth and Costard:

Moth. [*Aside to Costard*] They have been at a great feast of languages,  
and stol'n the scraps.

Cost. O, they have liv'd long on the alms-basket of words.

(V.i.36-38)

These lines play on the concepts of surfeiting on words and subsisting on charity. Costard and Moth characterise the schoolmaster, the curate and the braggart, Armado, as living at the expense of others by their facility with words. All three depend on their use of language to gain employment at the hands of others, the preacher and the teacher being entirely dependent on the community for their living.

The satire that colours this schoolmaster has a harsher hue to it than Sidney's. The pedant as parasite is not part of Sidney's dramatic schoolmaster, nor does Rombus display the other social vices that characterise Holofernes. These are the vices of lust and drunkenness that feature prominently in the treatises and in school statutes and which are implicit in the name "Holofernes." This is where Shakespeare's portrayal can be readily distinguished from Sidney's more sympathetic figure.

As a number of editors have noted, Shakespeare was not the first to use the name Holofernes for a schoolmaster: Rabelais used the same name for the tutor to Gargantua.<sup>85</sup> To name a schoolmaster after a tyrant was in keeping with literary tradition in Renaissance Europe (see pages 44-45). To name one after a tyrant who was tricked by a woman supports the prevailing image of schoolmasters as lacking in judgement towards women. The name was familiar to Elizabethans through the tyrant-general Holofernes in the apocryphal Book of Judith. Judith's triumph over Holofernes was well documented by artists of the period, such as Mantegna, Caravaggio and Rubens.<sup>86</sup> In the *Defence of Poetry*, Philip Sidney cites "Judith killing Holofernes," as an appropriately inspirational theme for artists.<sup>87</sup> There are records of performances of dramatic interludes, now lost, on the subject in 1556 and 1572, one of which may have been *Holophernes*, performed before the then Princess Elizabeth by the Children of Paul's between 1554 and 1556.<sup>88</sup> Schools would have been particularly familiar with the name of Holofernes, through one of the most popular historian-poets in the Tudor grammar school curriculum, Guillaume de Sallust, Seigneur du Bartas (1544-1590), whose works included the epic poem *Historie of Judith*. In a collection of homilies published in 1574, to be "declared and read by all parsons, vicars, and curates," Judith is cited for her piety and Holofernes for the sins of the flesh.<sup>89</sup> To a Renaissance audience the name of Holofernes epitomised the vices of the flesh, of pride and of tyranny.

At first glance, Shakespeare's pedant seems to display only the arrogance of a tyrant, not the brutality. Closer analysis, however, reveals the tyranny of sexual and physical abuse of his young pupils. As the curate, Nathaniel, parrots the Tudor ideology that schooling is the means to "good and profitable members of the commonwealth," a common turn of phrase of the period (see *Paston* 198, *Catechism* 355), sexual innuendo, however, posits a quite different reality (my italics):

- Nathaniel: Sir, I praise the Lord for you, and so may my parishioners; for their *sons are well tutor'd by you, and their daughters profit very greatly under you: you are a good member* of the commonwealth.
- Holofernes: Mehercle! if their sons be [*ingenuous,*] they shall want no instruction; if their daughters *be capable, I will put it to them.* But *vir sapit qui pauca loquitur.*

(IV.ii.73-80)

In the lines that precede this exchange, sexual imagery ('begot', 'womb') prepares the audience for the innuendo of the dialogue, and the lines which follow continue the bawdy tone as Holofernes greets the wench Jaquenetta: 'An if one should be pierced, which is the one?' (IV.ii.84). With "*vir sapit qui pauca loquitur*" [that man is wise who speaks little], Holofernes draws attention to his own gross indiscretion: he has already said too much.

The curate may not be aware of the *double entendre* of his praise, but Holofernes' response leaves no doubts as to this schoolmaster's sexual behaviour. The punning on "profit very greatly under you" is likely to have been a very familiar joke, 'profit' being a term commonly found in school statutes and in school circles generally. When, for example, parents at Grantham objected to a master's behaviour, they complained that his scholars "did not profit under him" (*Grantham* 17). Rubinstein cites Weever's *Epigrammes* to illustrate the bawdy punning:

Many are beholding Lycus for thy pains, / which with their sons and daughters thou hast taine . . . the wenches prove so well you under; / If that but once to Learning's lore you win them . . . you can put learning in them.<sup>90</sup>

The potential for bawdy punning in relation to writing masters is fully exploited by Thomas Dekker in *Westward Ho* (1604) where a naive husband questions his wife's writing master:

- Honeysuckle. And how does my wife profit under you sir? Hope you to do any good upon her?
- Justinian. Master Honeysuckle, I am in great hope she shall fructify: I will do my best for my part: I can do no more then another man can.
- Honeysuckle. Pray sir ply her, for she is capable of any thing.
- Justinian. So far as my poor talent can stretch, it shall not be hidden from her.<sup>91</sup>

Dekker continues in the same vein for several lines, exploiting the bawdy potential of the tools of the writing master's trade, such as 'pen,' 'nib,' the joining of letters, musical notes, and certain letters of the alphabet.

Holofernes' abuse of daughters has been commented on by some Shakespeare editors, such as Steevens and Johnson in their 1778 edition of *Love's Labour's Lost*, and David in the 1990 Arden edition, but abuse of sons is also a distinct possibility here. In bawdy terms "tutored" refers to the older male in a homosexual relationship.<sup>92</sup> In *The Scourge of Villainy*, John Marston warns parents:

Had I some snout fair brats, they should indure  
The new found *Castilian* callenture:  
Before some pedant-Tutor, in his bed  
Should use my frie, like Phrigian *Ganimede*.<sup>93</sup>

The high level of bawdy punning in *Love's Labour's Lost* has been recognised. Woudhuysen, for example, notes the "extraordinary wealth of puns and of obscene jokes" in the play, as have other critics.<sup>94</sup> Structurally, a bawdy interpretation of Holofernes' treatment of sons is to be expected given the repeated pairing of sons and daughters in the quoted passage (IV.ii.73-80). Semantically, Shakespeare's use of the term "ingenuous" allows this possibility.

Confusion between *ingenious* and *ingenuous* has plagued editors of this play, but all Folio and quarto editions give *ingenuous*,<sup>95</sup> as do the earliest editors from Rowe (1709-10) to Johnson (1765). It is only with Capell's emendation in 1767-68 to *ingenious* that subsequent editors have dropped *ingenuous*.<sup>96</sup> This substitution of *ingenious* for *ingenuous* has robbed these lines of their contemporary meaning of an education fit for the gentry, and of the satirical allusions that surrounded the term. *Ingenuous* was a term associated with the education of the well-born child. It implied a training different from that pursued in grammar schools, closer to a courtly education. There are numerous examples of its use in this context, for example, Coryat (1611): "these courtly gentlemen, whose noble parentage, ingenuous education, and vertuous conversation have made worthy to be admitted into your highness court."<sup>97</sup> Holofernes, like Rombus before him, aligns himself with the well born, the "gentles" as he calls them (IV.ii.166).



While Shakespeare may well be punning on *ingenious*, he is also playing on the implications of *ingenuous*. *Ingenuous* meant honest, frank, befitting the well born. That an ingenuous education was not necessarily the most literate is evident from the complaints of pedagogical writers that the nobility frequently disdained academic learning, and from satirical comment in drama, as in Middleton's *Women Beware Women*, "I am not so base to learn to write and read; I was born to better fortunes in my cradle" (I.ii.131).<sup>98</sup> In one sense, Shakespeare is giving Holofernes the occasion to suggest the boys shall not lack instruction, while implying that if the boys are well born they shall not want instruction. In another sense, that of popular usage, Holofernes is indicating that ingenuous (innocent) boys shall not lack corporal (possibly sexual) instruction either. In the *Dialogues* of Corderius the term is used to indicate the stoic submission of the gentle-born boy towards punishment:

Master. What then have you deserved?

Boy. Stripes.

Master. You have deserved indeed and that very plentifully.

Boy. I confess ingenuously.<sup>99</sup>

Such usage probably rendered the term a catchword for naiveté in schoolboy circles, closer to today's sense of ingenuous, and a target for satire in drama.

Whether Shakespeare is alluding only to physical abuse of boys is not clear, but paedophilia in schools is likely to have been as much an issue then as in later centuries. The inclusion of a phrase on sexual abuse in Hormon's *Vulgaria*, under the section entitled "Et improbis moribus," was presumably intended to alert students to the unacceptability of such behaviour: "he gropeth unclenly children and maydens" (*Horman's Vulgaria* 69v). The textual evidence for characterising Holofernes as a pederast is provocative but speculative. The possibility that Holofernes is associated with sexual misconduct is confirmed by a schoolroom scene in John Marston's *What You Will* (c1601), in which there are a number of allusions to *Love's Labour's Lost*, including two small schoolboys named Nathaniell and Holifernes Pippo.<sup>100</sup> Richard L. DeMolen has also considered Marston's use of these names as a direct association with Shakespeare's pedant.<sup>101</sup> Holifernes Pippo fails to recite his *Asse in praesenti* grammar lesson correctly and the wrath of the schoolmaster falls on him:

- Pedant. I say untrusse! Take him up, *Nous*, dispatch: what, not perfect in an *Asse in presenty*?
- Holifernes. In truth I'll be as perfect an *Asse in presenty* as any of this *Company*, with the grace of god law, this once, this once, and I do so any more -
- Pedant. I say hold him up.<sup>102</sup>

Holifernes is to be untrussed, that is, his trousers undone and he is to be held up by other students for a flogging. Marston's young Holifernes pleads for mercy, and the imagery suggests fear has run to his bowels:

- Holifernes. Ha, let me say my prayers first. You know not what you have done now, all the syrup of my brain is run into my buttocks and ye spill the juice of my wit well, ha sweete, ha sweete, hunny barbary sugar sweet Master.
- Pedant. Sans tricks trifles, delays, demurrers, procrastinations or retardations mount him, mount him.<sup>103</sup>

“Mount him” indicates the older boys are to hold the child up while he is flogged, but the level of bawdy punning in Marston's play allows the possibility of “mount” in sexual terms in this scene. It seems possible that Marston, by using the name Holifernes, is suggesting to his audience that brutality in schools provided the breeding grounds for Shakespeare's abusive schoolmaster, and that it was the abused pupils who were likely to become the abusers themselves later in life.

It is largely in relation to the schoolmaster's indiscreet admissions of sexual misconduct that the role of Sir Nathaniel, the curate, takes on its significance. Sir Nathaniel holds the more respected, powerful and better-paid position of the two in the community. For him to fawn on a schoolmaster is therefore socially unusual. Shakespeare's reversal of the norm serves to dramatise the interdependence of Church and school. In the Prescott dispute already cited, the vicar argued that “schoolmasters and ministers either do or should join hand in hand for instruction of youth, to teach them the true fear of God” (see page 55). Holofernes and Nathaniel do join hand in hand, but not for the godly instruction of youth. Their relationship can be read as a dramatised protest at the risks of civic or religious misgovernment inherent in such close relations. Sir Nathaniel's fawning behaviour, together with his limited intelligence, allows the schoolmaster's incompetent and scurrilous behaviour to pass unchecked in the community. The curate twice voices his perceived role as defender of moral standards:

“*Perge*, good Master Holofernes, *perge*; so it shall please you to abrogate squirrility [scurrility]” (IV.ii.5354), and “I praise God for you, sir: your reasons at dinner have been sharp and sententious, pleasant without scurrility” (V.i.4), but he takes no action. ‘Squirrilitie,’ like ‘scurrility,’ is a synonym for obscenity: “Obscenitie? Naie, now I am too nice, squirrilitie were a better word.”<sup>104</sup> The curate’s emphasis on controlling ‘scurrility’ of course lends irony to the hypocrisy or naiveté of his remarks, and displays for a contemporary audience his dereliction of duty. If Sir Nathaniel has doubts he goes no further than hesitantly voicing them. Most schoolmasters were subject to ecclesiastical authority for their appointment and for continuing employment. When Sir John Deane stipulated that both the Bishop of Chester and the schoolmaster of that city were to approve the appointment of a schoolmaster for Norwich, it was because “friendship and ignorance might be an occasion that oftentimes the scholars might be frustrate of such a [learned, sober and discreet] schoolmaster as is aforesaid” (*Northwich* 296). Friendship and ignorance can be said to characterise Sir Nathaniel’s attitude towards Holofernes. The role of the curate in *Love’s Labour’s Lost* brings a social dimension to this schoolmaster that tips his characterisation beyond the purely comic towards the potentially criminal.

Lust, then, is the tyranny that characterises Holofernes in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*. He also shares two other characteristics with his biblical counterpart, namely drunkenness and poor judgement, particularly when it comes to women. An association between schoolmasters and drunkenness occurs frequently in educational documents, both in the pedagogical treatises and in school statutes as has been documented above (see pages 50-51). Similarly, the name Holofernes was associated with the overthrow of judgement through drunkenness, as in Whitney’s emblem *Ludus, luctus, luxus*:

Beholde the frutes of dronkenesse, and plaie:  
 ...  
 The Lapithans, by drinke weare overthrowne,  
 The wisest men, with follie this inflames:  
 What shoulde I speake, of father NOAH aloane,  
 Or bring in LOTT, or HOLOFERNES names.<sup>105</sup>

In discussing the evils of drink, Thomas Becon uses the same example: “Was not Holofernes, that mighty and valiant captain, in his drunkenness slain of a woman?”

(*Catechism* 441). Holofernes' propensity for drink in *Love's Labour's Lost* can be discerned through the punning on "hogshead:"

Jacquenetta. God give you good morrow, master Person.  
 Holofernes. Master Person, *quasi* pers-one [pierce one]. An if one should be pierc'd, which is the one?  
 Costard. Marry, master schoolmaster, he that is likel'est to a hogshead.  
 Holofernes. Of piercing a hogshead! a good lustre of conceit in a turf of earth; fire enough for a flint, pearl enough for a swine: 'tis pretty; it is well.  
 (IV.ii.82-89)

Holofernes can relate easily to the drinking pun "piercing a hogshead," which was slang for getting drunk. He fails, naturally, to recognise its secondary application of "a thick-witted person."<sup>106</sup> This is not the first time the term has been used in relation to schoolmasters:

But nowadays, if to a bachelor or master of art study of philosophy waxeth tedious, if he have a spoonful of Latin, he will show forth a hogshead without any learning, and offer to teach grammar and expound noble writers, and to be in the room of a master; he will, for a small salary, set a false colour of learning on proper wits, which will be washed away with one shower of rain. (*Governor* 58)

Baldwin has also suggested that a biblical reference by Sir Nathaniel can be read as an allusion to Holofernes' drunkenness.<sup>107</sup>

The weakness of poor judgement is a major theme of the play as a whole. The King of Navarre and his lords only see and hear what they want to see and hear. As Woudhuysen puts it, "they pursue love in exactly the same immature and exhibitionist fashion that they had at first pursued learning."<sup>108</sup> They woo the Princess and her ladies, confident in their own attractions and status, relying, like Holofernes, on language to impress others. Holofernes is likewise a poor judge of women. He mistakes Jacquenetta, the local wanton wench, for a chaste virgin. He pompously parades his Latin and Italian in front of her, and calls her a 'damosella virgin' (IV.ii.126) apparently unaware of what everyone else on stage and off stage already knows. In a comic scene at the outset of the play, Costard evasively shifted Jacquenetta's status from 'wench' to 'demsel' to 'virgin' to 'maid' to 'mutton' in an attempt to defend himself from the charge of 'being taken with a wench' (I.i.283-302). Holofernes' comic posturing and his elaborate dismissal of Jacquenetta - 'Trip and go, my sweet; ... stay not thy compliment; I forgive thy duty:

adieu' (IV.ii.140-42) - serve to show how gullible he is, just as his biblical counterpart was, when faced with an attractive woman.

Schoolmasters, and scholars, were prime targets for ineptitude in love affairs. An entry in a sixteenth-century commonplace book asserts that "the greatest scholar if he once take a wife is found so unlearned that he must begin his hornbook."<sup>109</sup> Holofernes appears to have had unsuccessful love affairs in his past. Shakespeare, in a witty exchange between Moth and the schoolmaster on the subject of hornbooks, indicates the schoolmaster may have been cuckolded in the past:

Hol. What is the figure? What is the figure?  
 Moth. Horns.  
 Hol. Thou disputes like an infant; go whip thy gig.  
 Moth. Lend me your horn to make one, and I will whip about your infamy,  
*manu cita* - a gig of a cuckold's horn.

(V.i.64-70)

Costard is ecstatic at Moth's demolition of the schoolmaster, "what a joyful father wouldest thou make me!" he enthuses (V.i.76-77), and his satisfaction suggests a common knowledge of Holofernes' failed love life. Holofernes' reference to Mantuan's Eclogues also suggests a bitter history in his relations with women. He misquotes the opening line of the First Eclogue: "*Facile, precor gelida quando pecus omne sub umbra ruminat*, and so forth" (IV.ii.93-100). An audience familiar with Mantuan's First Eclogue would recognise that Holofernes is reminiscing on past affairs of the heart: "Faustus, I beseech you, while all the cattle ruminate in the shade, let us talk a little of old love-affairs." These are familiar Latin lines from schoolbooks.<sup>110</sup> Manfred Draudt suggests that Shakespeare is inviting the educated members of his audience to continue this hackneyed line in their own minds and to recall the gist of the First Eclogue.<sup>111</sup> The topic in hand is generally the slavish subjection of men in love. Mantuan, known as the Christian Virgil, was an author promoted widely in schools, and his Eclogues, published under the title of *Adulescentia*, were enormously influential on such authors as John Bale. Bale's *notabilia* are all extracted from Mantuan's eclogues on love and women.<sup>112</sup> Of particular relevance to Shakespeare's characterisation of Holofernes is Mantuan's attitude towards women. Lee Piepho claims that "to Mantuan belongs the dubious honour of having introduced misogynistic satire wholesale into the genre."<sup>113</sup> Draudt reveals a considerable number of

interesting parallels in Mantuan with major motifs of the play, not the least of which is the understanding that “men in high positions who seem to be wise behave foolishly when they are in love.”<sup>114</sup> Holofernes, prompted by the presence of Jacquenetta, has called on the most apt author to draw attention to his foolish posturing.

In thematic terms, Shakespeare’s play, like the Book of Judith, charts the downfall of male conceit at the hands of female integrity and intelligence. In the Book of Judith, the heroine chastises her own male elders for their want of ‘a meek spirit’ and repeatedly calls on the need for humility.<sup>115</sup> In *Love’s Labour’s Lost* the Princess leaves the king of Navarre and his three lords humbled and alone, and Holofernes retires from the pageant outraged at the public humiliation he has received at the hands of the gibing nobility. A number of critics see Holofernes in a sympathetic light, largely on the basis of a single line of his in the closing stages of the play: “Even Holofernes, conceited, misguided, intolerant, cannot fail to win our sympathy with his final “This is not generous, not gentle, not humble.””<sup>116</sup> Patricia Winson has recognised the irony here, commenting that it is through the Nine Worthies play that Holofernes learns humility, and that his final words are a commentary “as much upon his inglorious demise as it is upon those who exalt in it.”<sup>117</sup> The schoolmaster’s complaints are indeed valid, but, as he unwittingly calls attention to his own faults again, he fails to realise they apply to himself more than to any other character in the play. There is no indication that Shakespeare intended his audience to feel any sympathy towards Holofernes. Rather, to those who recognise the manifold classroom allusions, all evidence is to the contrary.

There is little doubt that by the turn of the seventeenth century, scholars and schoolmasters had good reason to complain of their dramatic treatment. In the two works discussed here, the parochial public schoolmaster is a target for scorn, derided for ignorance and conceit, linguistic affectation, foolish and indiscreet behaviour, and the abuse of pupils. Sidney and Shakespeare use their schoolmaster figures to critique a male culture dependent on taught skills rather than on innate sense and good judgement, and in so doing they suggest the curriculum was also at fault and of little value to the community. There are indications that by the early 1580s the weaknesses of the Latin-based curriculum were becoming apparent, and the quality of teaching a cause for complaint.<sup>118</sup> Shakespeare’s play takes the pedant’s characterisation further with its

intimations of abuse of students. The silent victims in this comedy never feature in the playtext - that is, the schoolchildren and their unwitting parents – but the boy actors on stage may serve as a constant reminder.

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 NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

- <sup>1</sup> Commonplace book, MS. V.a.381, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC, 124. The author may have the dramatic treatment of the scholar in mind, but it is more likely he is thinking of the comic pedant.
- <sup>2</sup> Henry Peacham, “The Complete Gentleman” (1622), *The Complete Gentleman, The Truth of Our Times, and The Art of Living in London*, ed. Virgil B. Heltzel (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1962) **page?**
- <sup>3</sup> George Gascoigne’s *The Glasse of Governement* (1575) is an exception that presents an image of a serious and worthy but in many ways unsuccessful schoolmaster. This is a play which gestures towards an apology for schoolmasters, suggesting that the expectations parents place in schoolmasters may be unreasonable: *The Complete Works of George Gascoigne*, ed. John W. Cunliffe, vol 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1910).
- <sup>4</sup> Quoted in T. W. Baldwin, *William Shakspeare’s Small Latine & Lesse Greeke*, vol 2 (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1944) 460.
- <sup>5</sup> Rebecca Bushnell, “The Sovereign Master and the Scholar Prince,” *A Culture of Teaching: Early Modern Humanism in Theory and Practice* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1996) 23-72.
- <sup>6</sup> Nicholas Breton, “The Court and Country or A Briefe Discourse Dialogue-wise set downe betweene a Courtier and a Countryman” (1618), reprinted in D. W. Sylvester, ed., *Educational Documents 800-1816* (London: Methuen, 1970) 143.
- <sup>7</sup> Thomas Fuller, *The Holy State* (1642), quoted in Edith Rowland, ed., *A Pedagogue’s Commonplace Book* (London: Dent, 1925) 45.
- <sup>8</sup> Bushnell, *Culture of Teaching* 41.
- <sup>9</sup> Commonplace book, MS. V.a.381, 108.
- <sup>10</sup> Bushnell, *Culture of Teaching* 41.
- <sup>11</sup> Nicholas Orme, *Education and Society in Medieval and Renaissance England* (London: Hambledon, 1989) 142.
- <sup>12</sup> John Marston, *What You Will* (c1601), *The Plays of John Marston*, ed. H. Harvey Wood, vol 2 (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1938) 258.
- <sup>13</sup> Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), eds. Floyd Dell and Paul Jordan-Smith (New York: Tudor, 1938) 264.
- <sup>14</sup> See also Richard Brathwaite, *Two Lancashire Lovers: or The Excellent History of Philocles and Doriclea* (1640), ed. Henry D. Janzen, Barnabe Riche Soc. Publications 8 (Ottawa: Dovehouse, 1998) 211.
- <sup>15</sup> Quoted in Baldwin, *Small Latine*, vol 1, 331; from the notebook of William Badger, student at Winchester 1561-1569.
- <sup>16</sup> Brathwaite, *Two Lancashire Lovers* 211; Richard Hosley, *A Critical Edition of Anthony Munday’s Fedele and Fortunio* (New York: Garland, 1981) sd I.ii.
- <sup>17</sup> Marston, *What You Will* 225.
- <sup>18</sup> See also 113, and *Hormon’s Vulgaria* 86v.
- <sup>19</sup> Nicholas Orme, *English Schools in the Middle Ages* (London: Methuen, 1973) 152, 286.



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- <sup>20</sup> Helen M. Jewell, *Education in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1998) 81.
- <sup>21</sup> Fuller, *Holy State* (1642) 45.
- <sup>22</sup> David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980) 37.
- <sup>23</sup> Jewell, *Education* 97.
- <sup>24</sup> Horace, Epistles, II.i.70-71, *OCD*.
- <sup>25</sup> Ursula Potter, "The Naming of Holofernes in Love's Labour's Lost," *ELN* 37 (2000): 14.
- <sup>26</sup> Foster Watson, *The Beginnings of the Teaching of Modern Subjects in England* (London: Pitman, 1909) 108.
- <sup>27</sup> Baldwin, *Small Latine* vol 1, 28
- <sup>28</sup> Prudentius [Aurelius Clemens Prudentius], "Crowns of Martyrdom," *Prudentius*, trans. H. J. Thomson, vol 2 (London: Heinemann, 1953) 225; see also "Camillus, the Schoolmaster of Falerii," from Livy, Book 5, *Florilegium Latinam*, eds. Moses Hadas and Thomas Sits (New York: Dover, 1992) 145-46, and Geoffrey Whitney, *A Choice of Emblemes and Other Devise* (Leyden 1586), English Experience 161 (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1969) 112.
- <sup>29</sup> *July and Julian*, ed. F. P. Wilson (London: Oxford UP, 1955) lines 341-42.
- <sup>30</sup> John Brinsley, *The Posing of the Parts* (1612), ed. R. C. Alston, English Linguistics 1500-1800 no. 35 (Menston: Scolar, 1967) 54-64.
- <sup>31</sup> Quoted in Baldwin, *Small Latine* vol 1, 753.
- <sup>32</sup> Baldwin, *Small Latine* vol 1, 753.
- <sup>33</sup> Marston, *What You Will* 255.
- <sup>34</sup> *July and Julian* lines 153-55.
- <sup>35</sup> Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*, 2nd ed. (London: Gay Men's P, 1988) 73-74.
- <sup>36</sup> Quoted in Elizabeth Pittenger, "'To Serve the Queere': Nicholas Udall, Master of Revels," *Queering the Renaissance*, ed. Jonathan Goldberg (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1994) 164.
- <sup>37</sup> Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, 3rd ed., vol 2 (Philadelphia: Davis, 1933) 36.
- <sup>38</sup> See for example Bruce Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England: A Cultural Poetics* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1991) 82-84.
- <sup>39</sup> *Extracts from the Council Register of the Burgh of Aberdeen 1570-1625*, vol 2 (Aberdeen: Spalding Club, 1848) 171.
- <sup>40</sup> Alan Stewart, "Traitors to Boyes Buttockes," *Close Readers: Humanism and Sodomy in Early Modern England* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997) 97-100.
- <sup>41</sup> Bushnell, *Culture of Teaching* 29-30.
- <sup>42</sup> Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy* 262.
- <sup>43</sup> See also Margaret Rogerson, "Provincial Schoolmasters," *Essays in Honour of Peter Meredith*, ed. Catherine Batt, *Leeds Studies in English*, 29 (1998): 321-325; Brinsley, *Ludus Literarius* 189.

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- <sup>44</sup> Given the anecdotal evidence that Shakespeare may have spent time as a schoolmaster, there is scope for personal irony here. See *Aubrey's Brief Lives*, ed. Oliver Lawson Dick (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962) 335.
- <sup>45</sup> Mark C. Pilkinton, "Entertainment and the free school of St. Bartholomew, Bristol," *REED Newsletter* 13 (1998): 11.
- <sup>46</sup> Richard L. DeMolen, *Richard Mulcaster (c.1531-1611) and Educational Reform in the Renaissance* Bibliotheca Humanistica & Reformatorica 49 (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1991) 154-58.
- <sup>47</sup> Baldwin, *Small Latine* vol 2, 578.
- <sup>48</sup> Jewell, *Education* 64.
- <sup>49</sup> Thomas Hudson, *Historie of Judith*, ed. James Craigie (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1941) 70. A possible connection with *Love's Labour's Lost* may exist in the naming of Navarre. Du Bartas was originally commissioned to write the story by the Queen of Navarre: introduction xxix.
- <sup>50</sup> Philip Sidney, *The Lady of May, Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney*, eds. Katherine Duncan-Jones and Jan Van Dorsten (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973) 17. All further references are within the text.
- <sup>51</sup> Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poetry, Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney*, eds. Katherine Duncan-Jones and Jan Van Dorsten (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973) 116, 87, 92, 93.
- <sup>52</sup> Sidney, *Defence of Poetry* 78.
- <sup>53</sup> Sidney, *Defence of Poetry* 107.
- <sup>54</sup> Richard Hosley, ed., *A Critical Edition of Anthony Munday's Fedele and Fortunio* (New York: Garland, 1981) 86
- <sup>55</sup> This is *Fedele and Fortunio* listed above.
- <sup>56</sup> H. R. Woudhuysen, ed., *Love's Labour's Lost*, Arden Shakespeare (Walton-on-Thames: Thomas Nelson, 1998) 2-3.
- <sup>57</sup> 'Rhombus' is a mathematical figure whose four sides and opposite angles are equal: see Katherine Duncan-Jones, ed., *Sir Philip Sidney* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989) 335n6.44.
- <sup>58</sup> There is a theory that Shakespeare's schoolmaster in *Love's Labour's Lost* is a satirical representation of Walter Ralegh's mathematics tutor, "the English scientist and mathematician Thomas Harriot": see B. J. Sokol, "Holofernes in Rabelais and Shakespeare and Some Manuscript Verses of Thomas Harriot," *Etudes Rabelaisiennes* 25 (1991): 131-135.
- <sup>59</sup> Watson, *Beginnings* 311; Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy* 273.
- <sup>60</sup> Richard Halpern, *The Poetics of Primitive Accumulation: English Renaissance Culture and the Genealogy of Capital* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991) 23.
- <sup>61</sup> Woudhuysen, *Love's Labour's Lost* 27.
- <sup>62</sup> Duncan-Jones gives an example of Sidney's familiarity with the line, and of the irony attached to it when quoted by an overweening Spanish acquaintance of Sidney's: Duncan-Jones, *Lady of May* 178n23.17.
- <sup>63</sup> Duncan-Jones, *Lady of May* 178n23.4.
- <sup>64</sup> Duncan-Jones, *Lady of May* 179n27.28-9.

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- <sup>65</sup> Duncan-Jones, *Lady of May* 178n23.24.
- <sup>66</sup> Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney* 335n7.79.
- <sup>67</sup> Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992) 96.
- <sup>68</sup> Richard Bear, introduction to *The Lady of May*, online, *Renascence Editions*, University of Oregon, internet, 25.3.99, 3.
- <sup>69</sup> The First Quarto of *Love's Labour's Lost* indicates performance before Elizabeth in 1597 or 1598: Woudhuysen 59-60.
- <sup>70</sup> Woudhuysen, *Love's Labour's Lost* 6, see also 13.
- <sup>71</sup> DeMolen, *Richard Mulcaster* 159.
- <sup>72</sup> Richard David, *Love's Labour's Lost*, Arden Shakespeare (London: Methuen, 1951) 1.
- <sup>73</sup> David, *Love's Labour's Lost* 1-li.
- <sup>74</sup> Woudhuysen, *Love's Labour's Lost* 18.
- <sup>75</sup> Woudhuysen, *Love's Labour's Lost* n V.ii.281.
- <sup>76</sup> DeMolen, *Richard Mulcaster* 160-61.
- <sup>77</sup> Baldwin, *Small Latine*, vol 1, 641.
- <sup>78</sup> J. Hoskins, quoted in Baldwin, *Small Latine* vol 2, 189.
- <sup>79</sup> Performance often picks up discrepancies which editors leave unchallenged: see Homer Swander, "Love's Labor's Lost: Burn the Parasols, Play the Quarto!", *Shakespeare's Sweet Thunder: Essays on the Early Comedies*, ed. Michael J. Collins (Newark: U of Delaware P, 1997) 50-74.
- <sup>80</sup> Quoted in Kenneth J. E. Graham, *The Performance of Conviction: Plainness and Rhetoric in the Early English Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1994) 17.
- <sup>81</sup> *Extracts from the Commonplace Book of Andrew Melville, Doctor and Master in the Song School of Aberdeen 1621-41*, ed. John Rae Smith (Aberdeen: Aberdeen UP, 1899) 7.
- <sup>82</sup> Watson, *Beginnings* 395.
- <sup>83</sup> Such as Lily's grammar: see John Edwin Sandys, *Shakespeare's England: An Account of the Life and Manners of his Age*, vol 1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1932) 232; and Brinsley, *Ludus Literarius* 128.
- <sup>84</sup> Woudhuysen, *Love's Labour's Lost* 53.
- <sup>85</sup> Woudhuysen, *Love's Labour's Lost* 110.
- <sup>86</sup> Whitney Chadwick, *Women, Art, and Society* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990) 93-103.
- <sup>87</sup> Sidney, *Defence of Poetry* 104.
- <sup>88</sup> Ian Lancashire, *Dramatic Texts and Records of Britain: a Chronological Topography to 1558* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1984) 122, 344; T. H. Vail Motter, *The School Drama in England* (London: Longmans, 1929) 104; see also Alfred Harbage, ed., *Annals of English Drama 975-1700*, rev. S. Schoenbaum, 3rd ed., rev. Sylvia Stoler Wagonheim (London: Routledge, 1989) 36.
- <sup>89</sup> *Certain Sermons Appointed by the Queen's Majesty* (1574), ed. G. E. Corrie (Cambridge: n.p., 1850) 302, 318.

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- <sup>90</sup> Frankie Rubinstein, *A Dictionary of Shakespeare's Sexual Puns and their Significance* (London: Macmillan, 1984) 285.
- <sup>91</sup> *Westward Ho* (1604), *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, ed. Fredson Bowers, vol 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1955) II.i.71-76.
- <sup>92</sup> Rubinstein, *Shakespeare's Sexual Puns* 285.
- <sup>93</sup> John Marston, "The Scourge of Villanie," *The Poems of John Marston*, ed. Arnold Davenport (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1961) Satyre 3.75-78. "Callenture" was a Spanish disease characterised by delirium.
- <sup>94</sup> Woudhuysen, *Love's Labour's Lost* 19: see also Ann Thompson, "'Errors' and 'Labors': Feminism and Early Shakespearean Comedy," *Shakespeare's Sweet Thunder* 98-99. According to Homer Swandon, the French Princess and her women have some of the bawdiest lines in all Shakespeare: "Burn the Parasols," 62.
- <sup>95</sup> Variously spelt 'ingenous' or 'ingenuous' or 'ingenuous.'
- <sup>96</sup> E. Capell, ed., *Mr. William Shakespeare his comedies, histories, and tragedies* (London, 1767-68), editions and adaptations of Shakespeare [computer file], Chadwyck-Healey, 1995; Woudhuysen footnotes the confusion but retains *ingenious*. Homer Swandon has called attention to other eighteenth-century editorial interventions in *Love's Labour's Lost*, which, in his words, "separate the actor from Shakespeare's theatrical scripts": "Burn the Parasols!" 54.
- <sup>97</sup> *OED*, ingenuous, quot. 1611.
- <sup>98</sup> Thomas Middleton, *Women Beware Women*, *The Selected Plays of Thomas Middleton*, ed. David L. Frost (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1978) I.ii.131.
- <sup>99</sup> Quoted in Lacey Baldwin Smith, *Treason in Tudor England* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1986) 81. This is one of a number of dialogues omitted from Brinsley's translations of Corderius, *Pueriles Confabulatiunculae*.
- <sup>100</sup> See, for example, the parody of Costard's term for Moth: Marston, *What You Will* 272; in *The Dutch Curtezan* (1605), a barber's boy is named *Holifernes Rains-cure*, a name that may be linked to the kidneys (French 'reins'), seat of the affections, and his role to that of curing the pox: *The Plays of John Marston*, ed. H. Harvey Wood, vol 2 (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1938) 86.
- <sup>101</sup> DeMolen argues for Richard Mulcaster as the real-life identity behind Holifernes; he uses Marston's use of the name Holifernes to support this argument on the basis that Richard Mulcaster, who was High Master of Paul's at the time Marston wrote this play for the Children of Paul's, is also the pedant in Marston's play: Richard L. DeMolen, *Richard Mulcaster (c.1531-1611) and Educational Reform in the Renaissance* (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1991) 168-69.
- <sup>102</sup> Marston, *What You Will* 255.
- <sup>103</sup> Marston, *What You Will* 255.
- <sup>104</sup> *OED*, squirrilitie, quot. 1589. See also "Sir, so long as your mirth bee voyde of all squirrility": Thomas Dekker, *Westward Ho*, *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, ed. Fredson Bowers, vol 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1955) II.i.88.

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- <sup>105</sup> Whitney, *Emblemes* (1586) 17.
- <sup>106</sup> *Love's Labour's Lost*, ed. David IV.ii.80-84, n.
- <sup>107</sup> Baldwin, *Small Latine* vol 2, 638-39.
- <sup>108</sup> Woudhuysen, *Love's Labour's Lost* 32.
- <sup>109</sup> Edward Pudsey, commonplace book, MS. English poet D.3, Bodleian Library, Oxford, 8.
- <sup>110</sup> Woudhuysen, *Love's Labour's Lost* 87.
- <sup>111</sup> Manfred Draudt, "Holofernes and Mantuanus: How Stupid is the Pedant of *Love's Labour's Lost*?" *Anglia* 109 (1991): 448; the translation of the Mantuan quotation at IV.ii.93 is Draudt's.
- <sup>112</sup> Lee Piepho, ed. and trans., *Adulescentia: The Eclogues of Mantuan* (New York: Garland, 1989) xxvii-xxviii, n 64.
- <sup>113</sup> Piepho, *Adulescentia* xxxiv.
- <sup>114</sup> Draudt, "Holofernes and Mantuanus" 450.
- <sup>115</sup> Book of Judith, *The Coverdale Bible* (Folkestone: Dawson, 1975), 8.C.
- <sup>116</sup> David, *Love's Labour's Lost* xvi; see also Woudhuysen, *Love's Labour's Lost* 40.
- <sup>117</sup> Patricia Winson, "'A Double Spirit of Teaching': What Shakespeare's Teachers Teach Us," *Early Modern Literary Studies*, Special Issue 1 (April 1997): 8.1-31, online, Internet 7.4.2000, paragraph 17.
- <sup>118</sup> In Brinsley's review of the problems facing country schoolmasters in the second half of the sixteenth century, he specifically notes the justifiable complaints of parents that schools concentrated too much on Latin and Greek and not enough on English literacy: *Ludus Literarius* Chapter 3.

*Indulgentia parentum, filiorum perniciēs*

Geffrey Whitney, *Emblemes* (1605)

### Chapter Three: Mothers and schooling

#### *Nice Wanton and July and Julian*

There was a familiar tale in Renaissance England that held cockering (pampering) mothers responsible for their children's later crimes. In George Whitney's 1586 book of emblems, the tale is headed *Indulgentia parentum, filiorum perniciēs* (the indulgence of the parents leads to the destruction of the children), but, despite this inclusive gesture towards either parent, it is a mother who features in the emblem and in the accompanying story (see illustration preceding page). The story tells of a young thief on his way to the gallows, and of his anguished mother tenderly kissing him. As she embraces him, and to the horror of those standing by, he bites off her nose. When challenged over this, he responds that if she had been more rigorous in his childhood he would not now be going to his execution, and he ends with an address to the assembled crowd: "I hope my facte shall mothers warne, that do behould this sighte."<sup>1</sup>

Vives had used the same anecdote in his *De institutione christianae feminae* to give the same warning. In a sweeping claim, he accuses mothers of being "the cause of most part of [ev]illness among folks" (*De institutione* 129), and goes on to recount the tale to illustrate his point. His version is tailored to the pedagogue's values: "For if she, said he, had corrected me for stealing my fellow's book out of the school, which was my first theft, then had I not proceeded unto these mischievous deeds (*De institutione* 130). By choosing the theft of a schoolbook as the first crime, Vives places the story's moral within a parent-school context. If the standards at home do not match those taught in schools, the civilising aims of education will fail, and the loss will be not just to the parents but also to the nation. The Tudor interlude, *Nice Wanton*, is a variation on this familiar story and betrays the same pedagogical bias, tracing the prodigal children's turning point back to school crimes of truancy and the tossing away of schoolbooks, and to a mother who does nothing to correct them. As in the emblem tale, the cockering mother of this play is forcefully confronted with her own guilt for the crimes and deaths of her children. Nor was this image of maternal guilt confined to fiction; a poem in an early seventeenth-century commonplace book attributes the death by execution of Sir Francis Bacon Viscount Verulanum to his mother's cockering:

So foolish mothers from their wiser mates  
 Oft filch and steal, weaken their own estates  
 To feed the humour of some wanton boy  
 Then silly women hoping to have joy  
 Of this rank plant when they are sapless grown  
 But [ ] seldom or never hath it yet been known  
     That pampered youth gave parents more relief  
     Then what increased their age with pain and grief.<sup>2</sup>

It is a tragic paradox that Bacon himself complained of parents who made their children wantons.<sup>3</sup>

This chapter considers the treatment of mothers of school-age children in a variety of pedagogical sources, and compares them with the dramatic treatment of mothers in two mid sixteenth-century plays dealing with schooling, *Nice Wanton* and *July and Julian*. These two plays are heavily indebted to the pedagogue's culture and bring to their texts issues common to the child-rearing debate, such as discipline, the education of girls, and the exercise of parental authority; they address popular arguments against a school education and show interest in parent-school relations. Both plays present mothers in full control of their children's schooling, but they participate on opposite sides of the debate.

The pedagogical sources vary in their approach to mothers: Vives and Erasmus almost exclusively present mothers as inimical to education, attacking them along the lines of the emblem tale cited, and consistently presenting fathers as the responsible parent. The school texts, however, embrace a diversity of opinion in their treatment of maternal authority, from the limiting or negative representations in the dialogues of Vives, to the positive support for mothers in the dialogues of Maturin Corderius. This chapter will suggest that the distinctions in treatment of mothers in the textual sources may be related to differences of opinion between the theorists and the school practitioners, and that these two plays are shaped by the conflicting approaches towards maternal authority inherent in these distinctions.

All three school plays addressed in this thesis take Solomon's famous proverb of "spare the rod and spoil the child" as their founding principle. Their plots not only prove the saying, but it features in their texts: *Nice Wanton* opens with this proverb, *The Disobedient Child* closes with it, and *July and Julian* alludes to it through the use of



puns.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, all three plays draw on a familiar pedagogical euphemism of the scolding wife for the schoolmaster's rod: this is the image behind the scolding figure of Xantippe in *Nice Wanton* beating her diligent son Barnabas, as it is behind the shrewish mother in *July and Julian*, who uses strokes on all three children to good effect, and it is given visual and repeated prominence on stage in *The Disobedient Child*, in the figure of the young wife violently cudgelling her cowering husband, again to good effect. Nowhere is there a father figure in any of these plays, either wielding the rod or even threatening to do so. Women are the controlling figures in each case, and in this their dramatists controvert the treatises who assert it is only fathers who have the skills or values necessary to discipline and train their children.

It is common in the education advice literature to find mothers blamed for their children's undoing. Fond mothers were likened to Aesop's Ape, crushing their children to death, or, as Robert Burton puts it, "pampering up their bodies to the undoing of their souls ... Who is he of so little experience that knows not this ... to be true?"<sup>5</sup> Biblical wisdom was cited to the same end, such as the saying from Ecclesiasticus that "the blessing of the father buildeth up the houses of the children; but the mother's curse rooteth out the foundations" (*Catechism* 86), or "The rod and correction give wisdom, but a child set at liberty maketh his mother ashamed. *Prov. 29.15.*" William Kempe quotes these verses on the title page of his *Education of Children* (1588).<sup>6</sup> Few authors share Vives' deep anxiety about mothers, but even the more worldly Erasmus is severe towards them:

What kind of maternal feeling is it that induces some women to keep their children clinging to their skirts until they are six years old and to treat them as imbeciles? If their love of play goes this far, why do they not procure for themselves a monkey or a Maltese puppy? 'They are only children,' they argue. Quite true, but even so, one cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of those first years for the course that a child will follow throughout his entire life. (*De pueris* 309)

"Imbeciles" and the animal analogies here betray the perceived dichotomies of maternal versus pedagogical values, a topic which is expanded in Chapter Five, which deals with parenting and the very young child. The educator's desire to separate children from the "maternal feeling" which so threatens humanist values can be read behind the polemic of both Erasmus and Vives. Erasmus resorts to the language of the law to distance the

values of the nursery from those of the school: “Hard and unbending before his teacher is a child that is the product of such a soft and permissive upbringing - gentleness is their word for it, but its effects are totally corruptive. Should mothers of this type not be prosecuted for maltreatment of their children?” (*De pueris* 309). As in the emblem tale, a mother’s cockering is seen as a public crime rather than a private and domestic affair.

Vives takes a similar approach to Erasmus, viewing lenient and indulgent mothers as impediments to learning and to virtue:

I have seen very few men come to great proof of either learning, wit, or virtue, that had been daintily brought up, nor can the bodies come to their due strength, when they be feeble with delicate [en]keeping. And so when mothers think they save their children, they lose them; and when they go about to keep them in health and strength, they foolishly minish both their health and their life. (*De institutione* 128)

By dainty upbringing Vives means a pampered existence, a lack of moral rigour and a mother who shows too much affection for her children and too little respect for schooling, all faults embodied by the mother in *Nice Wanton*. Vives cites the example of his own mother as the ideal. He writes approvingly of how she showed so little affection towards him as a child that he consciously avoided her, but that when he was an adult and his mother was dead, he revered her memory (*Exercitatio ix*). The implication is that his success as a scholar may be attributed to her rigour in his upbringing, and to the distance in their relationship.

While treatises such as *De institutione* and *De pueris* are the most vocal in their attacks on mothers, the pedagogical debate over a mother’s role extended into the classroom through school texts, giving schoolboys the occasion to consider and compare domestic reality with schoolbook theory. Mothers rarely feature in either the *Exercitatio* of Vives or the *Colloquia* of Erasmus; presumably these authors considered them an inappropriate subject for intellectual or classroom activity. When they do appear, their representation tends to echo the prejudices already cited, and their authority is strictly limited to the home environment and the maintenance of domestic standards (*Exercitatio* 22-23).

Vives’ *Dialogues* were dedicated to the eleven-year-old Prince Philip of Spain. The simplicity of the early dialogues, their separation into short narratives, and the thematic material dealing with the very young schoolboy learning his alphabet and

moving on to advanced material, all attest to youthful readers. As they learned to privilege Latin over the mother tongue, schoolboys studying Vives' dialogues would also learn to privilege masculine over feminine values, and to view women in general as their moral and intellectual inferiors. Only three of Vives' dialogues include a mother. In one, she is a shrewish figure at the centre of domestic conflict, causing her son to weep in front of his school friends as he describes the parental discord:

Turdus. My mother ordered me to stand by her as she called lustily; but I had not the heart to mutter a word against my father. Therefore I was sent to school four days running without breakfast by my enraged mother, and she swore I was not her son, but had been changed by the nurse. (*Exercitatio* 41)

The mother is held entirely to blame. Her characterisation draws on common complaints against women: her scolding tongue, her irrational behaviour, a female culture of old wives' tales with the reference to changelings, and, of course, the assertion of a wife's authority over that of a husband. In the other two dialogues featuring a mother, she is a largely silent figure relegated to the domestic margins of her child's life, and it is here that the pedagogue's parenting ideology is embodied. In "Morning Greetings," one of the first dialogues in the collection, the dichotomy between school and domestic life is rendered through opposing maternal and paternal representations

Mother and father are clearly delineated in characterisation, in function and in literary treatment. The dialogue opens with conventional daily blessings from parent to child. The father stands silently by as the mother questions her young son on how he slept, her detailed questioning is punctuated with such endearments as "my light," "my darling," and she fusses inordinately over a headache experienced by the child, "It grieves me sorely to hear that!" she exclaims, and breathes a sigh of relief to hear it is gone, "Now I breathe again; for you took away my breath" (*Exercitatio* 6-7). The mother's part, which dominates this first narrative, is characterised by melodramatic emotions and by shallowness of matter. Juxtaposition with the father's part reinforces her intellectual limitations. The narrative moves from mother to father through a brief passage entitled "Playing with the Dog," in which Vives introduces the commonplace Renaissance beast versus rational man analogy, as a precursor to discussion on schooling; he uses the puppy to symbolise childish behaviour. This is the same image Erasmus drew on when conceptualising mothers, "If their love of play goes this far, why do they not procure for

themselves a monkey or a Maltese puppy?” he demands (*De pueris* 309). Vives’ dialogue separates maternal and paternal functions through this animal imagery, and the narrative moves to “The Father’s Little Talk with his Boy.” Now the father takes control, even to the point of choosing what the child will eat. The dialogue illuminates the beast analogy, equating the separation of the boy from home with his intellectual development. The father contrasts the puppy’s life with that of his son, and asks the boy what differentiates him from the dog:

*Boy.* But I am a man.

*Father.* How do you know this? What have you now more than a dog?

But there is this difference that he cannot become a man. You can, if you will.

*Boy.* I beg of you, my father, bring this about as soon as possible.

*Father.* It will be done if you go where animals go, to come back men.

*Boy.* I will go, father, with all the pleasure in the world! But where is it?

*Father.* In the school. (*Exercitatio* 7)

Just as the father does not participate in the conversation on his son’s sleeping habits, so the mother is excluded from discussions on schooling. Vives’ desire to separate parental functions reflects contemporary pedagogical theory that a mother’s responsibility is primarily, if not exclusively, for her child’s physical welfare.

Vives’ dialogues rarely show a father in a negative light: at the worst he is a merchant, and therefore “impervious to culture [*crassae Minervae*]” (*Exercitatio* 49). His preferred image of fathers as wise mentors and role models to their sons is expressed in Dialogues III and IV, where a serious father introduces his son to school, and the principles of selecting a teacher are discussed. In the *Exercitatio*, Vives draws on a literary tradition of father-son advice dialogues, as will the father in vain in *The Disobedient Child* in Chapter Four. Dialogue XX, where Vives lays down precepts for good government, gives the pedagogue’s vision of the ideal father, one whose love for his child is expressed not in material terms or displays of affection, but in the care and control of his son’s education (*Exercitatio* 181). In one of the colloquies of Erasmus, “The New Mother,” the same assumptions are made about a mother’s care ending with her son’s departure for school:

Eutrapelus. This time too will come some day, if God will, when you must send the boy out from home to learn his letters - and harder lessons, which are

the father's responsibility rather than the mother's. Now his tender age should be cherished. (*Colloquia* 273)

“Harder lessons” is likely to allude to the grimmer aspects of schools, to physical or mental abuse, a bitter topic for Erasmus, whereas “cherishing” is an entirely positive image of mothering. The separation between maternal and paternal parenting comes with the start of school, and these school texts are participants in that separation.

The colloquies of Erasmus are more numerous and considerably longer and more complex than those of Vives. They stimulated much contemporary controversy with their satirical tone, their descriptions of vulgar behaviour, and their attacks on certain religious orders, and there were those who considered many of them unsuitable material for schoolboys (*Colloquia*, preface 623-24). Given that the *Colloquia* were generally read in second class, as noted earlier, it is evident that pubescent boys were at times the recipients of some highly satirical and explicit images of male and female behaviour. With two notable exceptions, mothers have no place in the *Colloquia*, which are generally more concerned with those issues relevant to a young man rather than a young boy, that is, courtship, marriage, prostitution, travel, government, war and religion. The two exceptions are “The Marriage” and “The New Mother.” In each of these there is an erring husband in the background.

“The Marriage” was one of the most popular of Erasmus' colloquies, translated and published in English by 1557 under the title of *A Merry Dialogue Declaring the Properties of Shrowde Shrews and Honest Wives*.<sup>7</sup> As the title indicates, “The Marriage” is more concerned with marital relations than with mothering, but the colloquy is relevant to the discussion of *Nice Wanton*, for its treatment of Xantippe, the wife of Socrates. Both the colloquy and *Nice Wanton* name their protagonists after the philosopher's notoriously shrewish wife. Erasmus chose the name on the assumption that his schoolboy readers would make the connection with Xantippe's husband, and it can be argued that the playwright chose the name for similar reasons; he may have expected his boy players to be familiar with the colloquy. For example, when Corderius refers boys to the writings of Erasmus for examples of “a crafty old wife” (*Pueriles* 25), it is presumably this colloquy and the wily Eulalia's advice on marital harmony he has in mind.

The name Xantippe had become a cipher for disrespect for learning, and was used as such in Renaissance England by educators and preachers alike.<sup>8</sup> In a Tudor homily on

the State of Matrimony the congregation was expected to know who was meant by “a certain strange Philosopher, which had a cursed wife, a froward and a drunkard.”<sup>9</sup> There was no need to name Xantippe. So well known was she as the scolding wife of Socrates that the relationship between Socrates and Xantippe, that is the relationship between scholarship and domestic life, was commonly proposed as a topic for debate in schools. When Vives is suggesting subjects for debate, he naturally thinks in terms of impediments to learning, and he therefore suggests that “one might for instance make a comparison in the case of the philosopher by adding the idea of his wife” (*De tradendis* 179). When Erasmus identifies what he considers to be topics of humour, interest and delight to the boys, he includes the theme of “if Alcibiades should persuade Socrates that he thrust his quarrelsome and illtongued wife from the house.”<sup>10</sup> Alcibiades, who was Socrates’ most brilliant student, and the “object of [the philosopher’s] impassioned attention,” represents the antithesis to Socrates’ scolding wife.<sup>11</sup> In his colloquy, Erasmus presents Xantippe and her wise neighbour Eulalia (“sweetly speaking”), who also has a counterpart of the same name in *Nice Wanton*, in an extensive discourse on marital harmony. Satire invests the colloquy with much humour, intended to amuse as well as instruct the schoolboy reader. True to her namesake, Xantippe is vocal and complaining, but in Erasmus’ version her husband is a philanderer and a drinker. Xantippe tells Eulalia that he squanders her dowry:

Eul. On what?

Xan. On whatever he pleases: wine - whores - dice.

Eul. That’s no way to talk.

Xan. But it’s the truth. Besides, when he comes home drunk in the middle of the night, after being long awaited, he snores all night and sometimes vomits in bed - to say no worse. (*Colloquia* 116)

Eulalia gives Xantippe advice on how to deal with such a husband, ranging from a contrived Patient Griselda approach to getting pregnant. Xantippe tells Eulalia that she became pregnant before marriage, naively claiming that she did not understand how it happened, and that she suspects she is now pregnant again. Eulalia’s bawdy response, that a good ploughman has found a good field, and that most wives don’t get enough sex from their husbands (*Colloquia* 125), exposes the youthful schoolboys to Renaissance male theories on the insatiable sexual urges of women; or perhaps more narrowly to Erasmus’

theories on women and sex. For thousands of schoolboy readers of “The Marriage” colloquy, Erasmus wryly reduces the great philosopher to a very domestic and unreverend figure. In a 1606 English translation of this colloquy, this image of a difficult husband is brought out by the revised title: “*A very excellent Dialogue betweene a good Woman and a Shrew, shewing how a Woman may win her Husbands love, though he be never so froward.*”<sup>12</sup> There is nothing akin to this humour or this theme in the *Exercitatio* of Vives, who is unlikely to have considered such narratives appropriate for schoolboys. Indeed, Erasmus did have to defend this colloquy, which he did by pointing out that it dealt with the failings of husbands and lauding the wisdom of wives who can overlook such failings and improve husbands’ behaviour (*Colloquia* 629).

Simply by using the name Xantippe in *Nice Wanton*, the playwright draws on a public debate over educational versus domestic values, and brings the issue of paternal authority into the debate. Erasmus regarded parenting as a joint responsibility, but not an equal one (*Colloquia* 60, 67). It was up to husbands to supervise wives and children. In “A Pilgrimage for Religion’s Sake,” a colloquy published in English in 1536, Erasmus sketches a responsible and virtuous father as one who keeps an eye on his family. Menedemus, a character known from Terence and whose name suggests “stay at home,” outlines his own method of overseeing the behaviour of his household:

Thus I go my stations at home, I go into the parlour, and I see unto the chaste living of my daughters, again from thence I go into my shop, I behold what my servants, both men and women be doing, from thence into the kitchen, looking about, if there need any of my counsel, from thence hither and thither observing how my children be occupied, what my wife doth, being carefull that everything be in order.<sup>13</sup>

Erasmus and Vives consistently take the approach that fathers are responsible for the supervision of the family’s activities.

Not all school authors were as negative towards maternal authority as Vives, or as confident of paternal commitment to education as Erasmus. There are hints that mothers were scapegoats for negligent fathers. When anti-mothering material is included in other school exercises, irony may work against the apparent misogyny. In one late fifteenth-century schoolbook, for example, a translation exercise depicts a mother whose son has not slept well. As the day dawns she decides to let her son sleep in, and instructs the household to be quiet. When the boy arrives late at school he blames his mother,

claiming that “she wold not let me be callyd up. Therfor my mother is the cause of my late comyng and not I.”<sup>14</sup> Rebecca Bushnell quotes this text and takes it as given that “mothers, in particular were blamed, just as any female role in the child’s education was suspect.”<sup>15</sup> For prescriptive texts by such authors as Vives she is undoubtedly correct, but this is not necessarily the case with other school texts, such as that quoted above. Irony may well be intended here, schoolboys being notoriously adept at providing novel excuses for tardiness and schoolmasters entirely up to their tricks. Mulcaster, for example, despaired of parents who fell for “the many prety *stratagemes* and devises, which boyes will use to save themselves” (*Positions* 271.17-19). The text may be offering a humorous image of mothers as scapegoats for the errant schoolboy. Mulcaster, too, may have mothers in mind, when he defends women’s intelligence and argues that those who “blame silly wymen as being the onely cause why they went awrie” have some private error of their own (*Positions* 175.12-14). This chapter will, therefore, take into account the potential literary use of the cockering mother image as a rhetorical device for critiquing paternal negligence or resistance towards education.

In the dialogues of Corderius, mothers are quite transparently represented as dedicated supporters of schooling and as figures of authority. Here the mother figure is usually found exhorting lazy sons to get out of bed in order to arrive at school on time, demanding good manners, and more concerned with their child’s attendance at school than leaving home with an empty stomach:

Thomas.	Mother, when shall we dine?
Vincentia.	By and by, if so be that you wait a little?
Thomas.	I must go away forthwith. ... to the very place of execution. ... if you will not give me meat, I will goe away undined.
Vincentia.	... If thou dine not, thou wilt sup more gladly at night.

(*Pueriles* 5, 6, 12)

Irony plays a role in this dialogue, “the very place of execution,” but it is directed at the school and not at the parental figure. A similarly firm maternal figure also coloured by overtones of irony is depicted in *July and Julian*, a comedy written for performance by schoolboys.

These distinctions among the various textual treatments of maternal authority may be indicators of differences of opinion between prescriptive and descriptive writing,



between the theorists, such as Erasmus and Vives, and the practitioners, who compiled some of the *vulgaria*. The *vulgaria* authors, such as Hormon, Corderius, Whittinton, and Stanbridge, had been schoolmasters or headmasters themselves. Even if we acknowledge the likelihood of exaggeration on both sides, whether in the treatises, the school texts or the drama, the contrast in images of parental authority is indicative of an ongoing debate between the two sectors of the teaching profession. Corderius, who been appointed by Calvin to a school in Geneva, chose to present his young readers with positive maternal images in these exercises, aligning mothers with similar values to those of schoolmasters. In the above example, he identifies the simple food served at home, pottage, and the point is made that the family dines sparingly rather than liberally (*Pueriles* 13). This mother is following a medical theory promoted in the education advice literature that argued that a simple and sparing diet was best for study, on the understanding that food created humours in the body that had to be expelled one way or another. Mulcaster also endorsed this advice, although his reasons may have been more to do with reducing interruptions to class: “the lesse they eate, the lesse they neede to voide: and therfore small diet in them [is best]” (*Positions* 56.8-10). Vives built the issue of an approved diet into his dialogue above, but he chose to do so through a father not a mother (see page 96). References to food in *Nice Wanton* and in *July and Julian* conform to these theories and contribute to the positive or negative characterisation of the mother figures.

Corderius includes no dialogues between father and son, but he does refer to fathers a number of times, usually in relation to paternal authority. One dialogue humorously presents a son debating with a friend over a sealed letter from his father to the master. The boy is suspicious and so opens the letter to read it, and there he finds the following request from his father to the schoolmaster:

Hee that delivereth you these letters is most deare unto me, because he is my sonne; I pray you seeke to amend him, lest I begin to hate him, for his naughtinesse, I can doe no good by words, or by rebuking or chiding. I have tryed. Wherefore I earnestly pray you, that you would effect the matter with rods. Take heed you doe not hurt his boanes, I can easily endure that you should beat his skin and his flesh. Farewell. (*Pueriles* 31)

Corderius is representing the preferred relationship between parent and master, acknowledging that a father’s authority may be undermined by affection, in which case he should seek the support of the master who can administer the appropriate corporal

discipline. Allusions to Solomon's proverb, 'he that spareth the rod, the child doth hate,' underwrite this scenario through the terms "most deare" and "hate." Again, the element of irony is directed towards stock images of schoolmasters beating the boy's skin and flesh, and perhaps in the unlikely claim that the father "can easily endure" this. Corderius invests his dialogue with humour, as the witty son rewrites his father's instructions to his own benefit. Given that these are classroom exercises, we are left with the impression that fathers may be fooled, if not masters. Corderius' treatment of fathers suggests that paternal authority is generally imperfect, and his dialogues present schoolmasters as a support system. In one dialogue, the master lectures the boys on the duty and behaviour of sons towards fathers (*Pueriles* 19), including the need to overlook paternal behaviour that might offend a boy:

Master. Take heede lest any of those things displease you, which [your father]  
either saith or doth.

...

Furthermore, if at any time he shall thunder against you beeing offended, beare  
his chiding quietly.

Paul. What? If I have deserved nothing.

Master. Yea learne to endure even an unjust chiding, especially of your parent.

(*Pueriles* 20)

Corderius may have been taking a judicious approach to parents in these classroom exercises. By promoting filial obedience, he may have hoped to use the exercises to encourage good parent-school relations. The dialogues tacitly acknowledge the potentially conflicting values and authority that existed between fathers and schoolmasters and suggest that Corderius did not support a pedagogical theory that dictated that mothers should have no role in their child's schooling.

Much mid sixteenth-century domestic drama, including *Nice Wanton* and *July and Julian*, features poor paternal authority, and this is where the drama, like the dialogues of Corderius, gives evidence of a different pattern of parenting to that promoted by the pedagogical authors, or by the popular emblem tale quoted above. There is evidence behind both these dramatic representations of absolute maternal control that the playwrights recognised weaknesses in a pedagogical theory which represented mothers as an impediment to their children's education, and which sought to put control of schooling in the hands of fathers.

It may, in fact, have been the male sector of the population that offered most resistance to public schooling. Two of the arguments against public schooling were its perceived low social status and fears of boys turning into wasted, melancholic bookmen (see pages 23-24). For the upper levels of society, and for those emulating them, the absence of training in knightly or martial skills was a major drawback to a school education. Thomas Elyot's program of education, written as it was for the gentry and nobility, included wrestling, swimming, riding and other exercises appropriate to that class of society, and he emphasised that tutors should not suffer "the child to be fatigued with continual study or learning, wherewith the delicate and tender wit may be dulled or oppressed" (*Governor* 20). In *The Zodiake of Life*, under verses glossed as "study hurteth the body," boys were informed of the future dangers of too much study:

Great grefes hereby some men, with yll digestion eft sustayne,  
Of many whilste too much they reade, both syght and eyes decay,  
By study great their stomack rawe, their colour falles away.

(*Zodiake* 96)

This was a school text, and perhaps irony was intended. But when Sir Henry Sidney wrote to his son, Philip, then at Shrewsbury School, he showed genuine concern that the study program shall be "safe for your health" and encouraged him to "Give yourself to be merry for you will degenerate from your father if you do not find yourself most able in wit and body to do anything when you be most merry" (*Shrewsbury* 314). Images of masculinity in the upper echelons of society embraced an active lifestyle, a well-developed physique and a lively and sociable personality. The treatise authors repudiated such values: "We are afraid of study as something that will ruin our physical attractiveness," writes Erasmus, and he argues that "it is unmanly to let physical appearance become a matter of excessive concern" (*De pueris* 323). In the plays that follow arguments of health risks and masculinity are addressed either through satire or moral rectitude.

### ***Nice Wanton* (1547-60)**

*Nice Wanton* is one of a number of Tudor prodigal son plays, a genre that lent itself to the theme of parental responsibility whether for religious, educational or social concerns.

The play is difficult to date prior to its entry in the Stationers' Register on June 10th, 1560, but can be located within a broad period of religious and educational reform.<sup>16</sup> *Nice Wanton* conforms entirely to the requirements of the 1543 Act for the Advancement of True Religion which declared it "lawful to 'sette forth songes, plaies and enterludes' only if they were 'for the rebuking and reproaching of vices and setting fourth of vertue,'"<sup>17</sup> On a more specific note, the play reflects the philosophy behind the Royal Injunction of 1547 in which clerics were charged with the duties of:

exhorting and counselling ... fathers and mothers, masters and other governors, diligently to provide and foresee that the youth be in manner or wise brought up in idleness, lest at any time afterward for lack of some craft, occupation or other honest mean to live by, they be driven to fall to begging, and some to theft and murder; which after brought to calamity and misery, do blame their parents.<sup>18</sup>

According to Greg Walker, the play's concentration upon education and the upbringing of children, together with various addresses to "ye children", suggests a school play.<sup>19</sup> Michael Shapiro narrows the field to provincial grammar school boys, and this suggestion is compatible with the relatively unsophisticated audience level implied by the simple action, didactic tone, and emphasis on piety.<sup>20</sup> The tone is generally earnest, at times zealous, and the humour somewhat laboured. Early scenes of debauched behaviour show glimpses of colourful language (lines 195-206; 227-29), but much of the dialogue is concerned with plain moralising. The Prologue outlines the argument and its didactic tone directs the audience to the moral lesson: "as here in this interlude ye shall see plain" (line 12), supported by such loaded vocabulary as "daliance" and "wantonly" and "mischief" (line 15).

The play was published in 1560 by John Kynge, a printer who took a special interest in texts featuring women, and who, according to Linda Woodbridge, "blitzed the market with a number of works on women" in the 1560s as part of the women's controversy being waged at that period. Woodbridge includes *Nice Wanton* in her *exempla* of texts participating in the controversy.<sup>21</sup> Whether the dramatist wrote with the same market in mind is impossible to determine, but the work lends itself to a broader debate on the nature of Renaissance misogyny, as John Kynge evidently recognised.

*Nice Wanton* depicts a cockering mother, Xantippe, as a hindrance to schooling and good citizenship. This is the first known English prodigal son play to feature an

indulgent mother.<sup>22</sup> There is no mother mentioned in the biblical parable and most prodigal son plays from the mid-sixteenth century feature indulgent fathers. Xantippe has two sons and a daughter, all of whom attend school. Two of the children are delinquent and one son is virtuous, yet she favours the delinquents, beats the virtuous child, ignores the good advice of neighbours and has little esteem for school. The delinquent children play truant, fall into bad company and their decline into theft and prostitution earns them early deaths. Xantippe herself is shocked into recognition of her guilt, and condemned to a life of perpetual penitence and shame for her negligence as a mother. She contemplates suicide but is stayed by her virtuous son Barnabas, who is glossed as “The son of comfort” (21), and who represents the voice of moral authority throughout the play. Parental forgiveness, the crucial quality in the prodigal son parable, is only lightly hinted at in Barnabas in his role *in loco parentis*, and is never an option for Xantippe. Her children die and the guilt is all hers. The play closely reflects popular pedagogical warnings, as demonstrated in Whitney’s emblem tale, but the dramatist could equally well have taken his synopsis from Erasmus:

Every day we have examples before our eyes of citizens who, because of their dissolute children, have been reduced from wealth to indigence, who are tormented and crushed by unbearable shame because their son has been led to the gallows or their daughter has turned to prostitution. I know eminent citizens of whose numerous children scarcely one has escaped unscathed: one child, for instance, is being consumed by that horrible affliction euphemistically called the ‘French Pox.’ (*De pueris* 307)

Two characters in the play provide moral guidance. One is Eulalia, the good neighbour whose name is familiar from Erasmus’ colloquy and who has a minor role, and the other is Barnabas, who provides the major voice of pedagogical and religious authority in *Nice Wanton*, despite his youthful persona. Barnabas’ role, according to Richard Helgerson, is more usually played by a father, schoolmaster, or some other older counsellor to a younger protagonist in the opening scene of prodigal son plays.<sup>23</sup> Janette Dillon has concluded that the plain transparent vernacular of Barnabas is representative of the transparency of true Protestant learning, and the playful, bawdy language and oaths of Ismael and Dalila suggest ignorant papistry.<sup>24</sup> The tone of Barnabas’ opening lines is reminiscent of a frustrated schoolmaster dealing with protective and aggressive mothers:

She, for their sake,  
Being her tender tiddlings, will me beat.

Lord, in this perplexity what way shall I take?  
 What will become of them? Grace God them send  
 To apply their learning and their manners amend.

(35-38)

Barnabas represents the authority of the church and the school in the community and voices the difficulties faced by each in dealing with parents. In this play parent-school relations are a failure since there is no contact between mother and school, and pedagogical authority is powerless in the face of parental control. As the audience would have been aware, schoolmasters were often required to keep parents informed of any immoral or profane behaviour out of school, as well as in school. They were sometimes expected to visit parents personally, and were occasionally empowered to institute proceedings to expel pupils considered beyond reform (see pages 30-31). By excluding the schoolmaster from the *dramatis personae*, the play circumvents the delicate question of parent-school contact, but, by giving Barnabas the voice of pedagogical authority and setting him in conflict with an aggressive mother, the play replicates the difficulties schoolmasters faced in confronting parental authority.

Barnabas, like Vives, derives his moral superiority from a rigorous upbringing. The audience learns that he is the one who is beaten by his mother, and his sister later confirms this: “yet we were tiddled, and you beaten now and then” (314). Xantippe herself can take no credit for the success of Barnabas: the beatings not only give evidence of favouritism but, more importantly, they provide the dramatic explanation for the different outcomes amongst siblings in this play. The play is particularly committed to the value of the rod in the successful education of children, so much so that the virtuous child has to be beaten, even if undeservedly, to justify his moral and studious superiority. *Nice Wanton* exemplifies Vives’ arguments that for the scholar to succeed in life he must fear his mother and the rod must be wielded at home” (*De institutione* 133).

Eulalia, the good neighbour, represents the responsible voice in the community. She sees it as her duty to inform Xantippe of the children’s public misdemeanours, and recommends in vain that the mother should use more correction with her delinquent children (111-14). When Xantippe ignores Eulalia’s warnings that her son is “light fingered” (116), and her daughter “hath nice tricks” (117), Xantippe is rejecting a Tudor support system for maintaining community standards. The advice of neighbours was

considered almost a duty, according to Mulcaster in his section on “Conference between parents and neighbours” (*Positions* 277-79). Good advice is for “the *neighbour* to tell friendly [and] the *parent* to take kindly, and to execute wisely” and then much good will follow (*Positions* 278.17-19).

*Nice Wanton* addresses various aspects of school and community relations, among them truancy, the education of girls and prevailing arguments against public schools. The play opens with a truancy scene, with the virtuous son, Barnabas, chastising his siblings for dawdling. Truancy and tardiness were popular themes in school dialogues, usually pitting the child’s desire to play truant against the fear of a thrashing from the master:

Sylvius. Why are you running so, John?

John. Why does a rabbit run to save his skin, as they say?

Sylvius. What’s the point of that proverb?

John. That unless I’m there before roll’s called I’ll get a hiding.

(*Colloquia* 44; see also *Exercitatio* 13)

In *Nice Wanton*, by contrast, it is not a thrashing that is the threat, but the loss of virtue and of learning:

Barnabas: Be ye not ashamed the truands to play,  
Losing your time and learning, and that every day?  
Learning bringeth knowledge of God and honest living to get.  
(45-47)

Erasmus gave his speakers children’s voices and reactions, as did Vives, but the playwright of *Nice Wanton* is less interested in dramatic verisimilitude than in moral explicitness. Helgerson has suggested that truancy appeared dangerously threatening to Elizabethan fathers.<sup>25</sup> Although this is not the impression Mulcaster gives in 1581, when he nominates swearing disobedience, lying, false witness, and picking [thieving] as more serious than the “meaner heresies, *trewantry*, *absence*, *tardies*, and so forth” (*Positions* 270.35-37), it does seem appropriate to the author of *Nice Wanton*, writing some thirty years earlier, with an emphasis on civil and religious obedience, and ending his play so harshly in death and disease.

This is the first play to depict a girl attending a public school, just as it is the first to include a prodigal daughter. The relationship between these two elements warrants consideration. Girls could and did attend public schools, although usually only the

elementary classes (see pages 28-29). It is worth noting that Dalila is the only one to quote any Latin, and when she does she is almost ashamed of it:

Iniquity. Peace, Dalila, speak ye Latin, poor fool?

Dalila. No, no but a proverb I learned at school

(168-69)

There are a number of possibilities embedded in Dalila's use of Latin, "*ceteri nolunt*," a fragment of a proverb. Dillon argues that the Latin inclusion is intended to alert a Protestant audience to mere surface knowledge rather than real learning, and the fact that Dalila has not completed the proverb would endorse this view.<sup>26</sup> Alternatively, her use of Latin may suggest her ability to learn, since it was common knowledge that girls showed a "*naturall towardnesse*" for learning (*Positions* 172.19). If this is the case then the play is emphasising the waste to the community when she dies, in the same way Vives rewrote the emblem tale to emphasise the loss of the prodigal scholar. A third possibility is that her apparent shame at quoting Latin mimics the prevailing disregard by some members of the aristocracy for a public school education (see pages 23-24). This would be consistent with the mother's ambitions that her children should "go handsomely" (line 125), discussed below. A fourth possibility, however, is to view the Latin as an indicator of Dalila's age and approaching sexual maturity. If she is learning some Latin at school it is because she has reached the lower grammar classes, usually reserved for boys. She is, therefore, now at an age when girls were generally expected to leave school for domestic training at home. Latin was the prerogative of boys, and was actively discouraged in girls, since it could lead to women reading potentially inflammatory material, such as Ovid's *Ars amatoria*. The diligent religious student, who made the following entry in his commonplace book, may not have been joking when he wrote:

The sun which shineth early in the morning

A woman which speaketh Latin,

A child that drinketh wine seldom make a good end.<sup>27</sup>

Certainly, Barnabas advocates schooling for girls as a moral and religious preparation for instruction in housewifery: "Learn apace, sister, and after to spin and sew / And other honest housewifely points to know" (49-50). Barnabas' "learn apace" suggests some urgency in moving Dalila out of school and under female instruction. 'To spin' is a socially loaded term in Renaissance usage. An early sixteenth-century *vulgaria* makes



the familiar connection between spinning and maidenly virtue: “A distaffe lade with flexe or wolle and a spyndel with a wharowe: be well semyng for an honeste mayde” (*Hormon’s Vulgaria* 238). Educators, including Vives, who recommended the humble craft of spinning for girls of good families tended to be those who were more concerned with teaching women humility and piety than the liberal arts, and it is in this light that Barnabas’ comments can be read. Conversely, some charitable institutions, such as Christ’s Hospital, specifically excluded spinning as too humble a skill for the girls under their tuition, and trained them in “sewing in silk, silver and gold, lacemaking [as a means of] preferring young maids to good mistresses and in time to good husbands which spinning would never do, for that is the profession of the poorer sorte.”<sup>28</sup> In recommending spinning, Barnabas is playing the parental role again; he is aware that Dalila is on the brink of womanhood and sexual activity, whereas Xantippe appears unaware, even though Eulalia tried to warn her of her daughter’s “nice tricks” (117). Dalila’s early characterisation points to her later sexual corruption: she is pretty (57), she is vain, and concerned that school will damage her good looks: “I am sunburned in summer, in winter the cold / Maketh my limbs gross and my beauty decay” (65-66). The name, Dalila, is a clear signpost to the audience of her sexuality; “Dalila” was one of the many “biblical bogey-women”, as Woodbridge calls them, or negative *exempla*, which peopled the misogynists’ literature in this period.<sup>29</sup>

A number of popular arguments against schooling are introduced into the play, mediated through Xantippe’s adversarial role towards school. Her resistance goes to the heart of conventional public complaints about schools - the lack of physical exercise, the low quality of schoolmasters and their cruelty:

Alas, poor souls, they sit a’ school all day  
In fear of a churl, and if a little they play,  
He beateth them like a devil.

(109-11)

“They sit a’ school all day” alludes to the risks to physical health, a valid argument discussed above, and one to which Erasmus responded “that even if something is lost in the way of physical robustness, this disadvantage is well outweighed by the great intellectual benefits that the child will receive” (*De pueris* 323). The epithet “churl” for the schoolmaster exemplifies a common image of schoolmasters as boors and of low rank,

and Xantippe follows this up with commonplace assumptions of cruelty, “he beateth them like a devil” (111). She is reflecting her children’s opinion, for Ismael, too, is “in fear of a churl” (60), and Dalila responds similarly, “I would sit quaking like a mome for fear” (62). All three unreliable voices are being used by the dramatist to counter public negative images of schooling and of schoolmasters. This mother boasts to Eulalia that her children “go handsomely” (125), indicating it is their looks and social presence she is concerned with. In *Misogonus* (c1571), another contemporary interlude promoting education, it is a father who voices similar erroneous values, as he proudly claims that his son shall learn to look big, stand stout, and go brave.<sup>30</sup>

Xantippe’s characterisation embraces further aspects of the education debate: she shows favouritism in the treatment of her children, and she is ignorant of humoral theory on diet. Favouritism is a sin generally attributed to mothers, as Francis Bacon, in his essay “Of Parents and Children” makes clear: “The difference in Affection, of Parents, towards their severall Children, is many times unequall; And sometimes unworthy; Especially in the mother. As Solomon saith; A wise sonne rejoyceth the Father; but an ungracious sonne shames the Mother.”<sup>31</sup> Diet is another topic of interest in child-rearing literature. When the children come home, Xantippe hurries to feed them. In the dialogues of Corderius, the approved mother made her child wait to eat; likewise in *A Warning for Fair Women* (1599) the schoolboy has just arrived home:

- Boy. Praie ye mother when shal we goe to supper?  
 Anne. Why, when your father comes from the Exchange,  
 Ye are not hungrie since ye came from schoole.  
 Boy. Not hungrie (mother,) but I would faine eate.  
 Anne. Forbear a while until your father come.<sup>32</sup>

This is not the case with Xantippe, who pointedly says “I will go get them meat to make them merry” (140). Xantippe uses “merry” as a signifier of the robust sociability implied in Sir Henry Sidney’s use of “merry” in his letter to his son. For the audience, however, the stress on “merry” also alludes to the Renaissance understanding that meat, as in flesh, was viewed as a stimulant. Meat was very necessary for developing courage and strength in men, and this was an argument used to criticise the high cost of meat in the mid sixteenth-century:

Geeve Englische men meate after their olde usage,

Beefe, mutton, veale, to cheare their courage,  
 And then ... they shall defende this owre noble Englande.<sup>33</sup>

Meat for adolescents, however, was linked to sexual appetites. Vives devotes several pages to the dangers of foods, particularly meats, which stimulate the natural heat of the bodies of young men and maids “in the lusty age.” He was a firm advocate of fasting to control the passions of the blood (*De institutione* 64-65). The dramatist of *Nice Wanton* is following a similar theory.

There is much about the dramatic treatment of Xantippe to indicate that the mother in *Nice Wanton* was little more than a personification of the complaints of educators, not as representative of mothers in general. Her characterisation can be seen in terms of a catalogue of common criticisms levelled at parents by pedagogues: she displays no respect for learning or schoolmasters, values looks over learning, is critical of the lack of exercise in schools and of school discipline, ignores the advice of neighbours, is indulgent in the home, provides an inappropriate diet, fails to supervise her children, and shows favouritism, and she is, of course, a shrew.<sup>34</sup>

Towards the end of *Nice Wanton* the audience is gratuitously reminded of Xantippe’s name. Having been out of the action for most of the play, she is brought back on stage after the death sentence is passed on her son Ismael. The Vice, Worldly Shame, who will confront her with her children’s deaths and her guilt, reminds the audience of her name and her nature:

There is one Xantippe, a curst shrew,  
 I think all the world doth her know.  
 Such a jade she is and so curst a queen,  
 She would out-scold the devil’s dame, I ween.  
 (445-48)

In the mouth of the Vice, this superfluous accusation works in Xantippe’s favour and this is where the play introduces new considerations. Xantippe has been so relentlessly condemned, so systematically characterised with parental weaknesses, and so isolated as the sole source of blame, that she invites sympathy in her role as a victim. Xantippe’s vices were never malicious; she stands condemned for her ignorance and her misguided values, and as such she can be read as a scapegoat. Linda Woodbridge’s argument, that “the stage misogynist is a tool for overcoming prejudice [towards women] through forcing it into the open,” can be applied to *Nice Wanton* in the figure of the Vice.

Woodbridge points out that Xantippe was a favourite *exemplum* of the formal misogynist in drama, and quotes *The Taming of the Shrew*: “as curst and shrewd / As Socrates’ Xanthippe.”<sup>35</sup> As Woodbridge explains, at the deepest level of plays with female protagonists, “Woman is on trial, as she was on trial in the writings of the formal controversy; the misogynist is her accuser.” Xantippe is indeed on trial in *Nice Wanton* but the play also offers her some defence. In this case, the Vice’s comments merely remind the audience that the play is using a literary trope for a shrew, and that this antonomastic trope had an equally famous husband. The play’s conspicuous silence in regard to Xantippe’s husband inevitably brings out the prejudice impelling Xantippe’s characterisation.

As the playwright and the audience for *Nice Wanton* would have known, mothers could not be held entirely to blame for their children’s success or failure; fathers had to accept a measure of responsibility. Under discussion of education in *Description of England*, William Harrison comments that the “poorer sort of women ... being of themselves without competent wit, they are so carelesse in the education of their children” but he adds “wherein their husbands also are to be blamed.”<sup>36</sup> In *Nice Wanton* the audience is indeed reminded several times of a silent and unseen father in the background. The Prologue talks only of “the mother” but early in the play Eulalia, the good citizen neighbour, draws attention three times to the responsibility of the children’s “parents” or “their elders” (85, 92, 94). Twice we learn that Ismael steals from his father’s purse: “By the mass, if he can get his purse, / Now and then he maketh it by half the worse” (180-81). In the daughter’s monologue of penitence, where the play’s moral is reiterated yet again, Dalila three times lays blame on her parents, not just her mother, for their tiddling (cockering):

Yet we were tiddled, and you beaten now and then.  
Thus our parents let us do what we would,  
And you by correction they kept under awe.  
When we grew big we were sturdy and bold,  
By father and mother we set not a straw.

(314-18)

This raises the question of the missing father in the household. It was well known that in the household in Protestant England, the master of the house became “as it were, priest of

the family and took on a number of the spiritual duties formerly the prerogative of the parish priest.”<sup>37</sup> Every schoolboy knew from his *vulgaria* that it was the role of the “good man of the house to kepe all his housolde in due order and rule” (*Hormon’s Vulgaria* 144v). The family in *Nice Wanton* is not impoverished, the children “come of good kin” (357), and their father owns cattle (217). The father’s existence and his awareness of the family shame is brought to the fore in the final lines of the play, as Barnabas exhorts his mother to repent, have faith in God’s salvation and go “and thus comfort my father, I pray you heartily” (527). The Epilogue, which repeats the moral yet again, has shifted from focussing on a mother’s guilt as in the Prologue, to addressing parents jointly in the broader community:

Many miscarry, it is the more ruth,  
By negligence of their elders and not taking pain  
In time good learning and qualities to attain.  
Therefore exhort I all parents to be diligent  
In bringing up their children.

(533-37)

Despite the fact that this dramatist has presented a mother as being in sole control of the children’s upbringing, few in the audience could have failed to understand that she is effectively a scapegoat for the complaints of educators, and that it is fathers as much as mothers that this interlude is addressing.

### ***July and Julian* (c1559-70)**

The MS text of this anonymous play exists in a commonplace book dating from the latter half of the sixteenth century. An examination of the different hands in the MS has led to the play being dated among the earlier material, possibly close to 1560.<sup>38</sup>

*July and Julian* deals with the same childrearing theme as *Nice Wanton*, but any similarity ends there. With the exception of Christian piety, every feature of mothering that is criticised in *Nice Wanton* is replaced here with its commendable counterpart. Mawd, the good mother, keeps a close eye on her children, ensures they are not idle, insists on obedience and diligence, gives them plain fare, shows no favouritism and consults her husband on family affairs. In many ways *July and Julian* is a model of

family harmony and good parenting, or more accurately, good mothering, since all credit must go to the mother for her children's excellent training. She is the antithesis of Xantippe. The sole weakness in this mother is a defect in her moral judgement that may be attributed to the absence of moral guidance by her husband. So closely do the two plays work with the same material, and so contrasting is their treatment of maternal authority, that *July and Julian* could have been written as a response to *Nice Wanton*, or as a novel contribution to the defence of women in the prevailing women's controversy. It treats the same pedagogical issues, it uses satire to demolish the arguments against school, and it defends the mother's controlling role from accusations of shrewish behaviour by suggesting that mothers have to compensate for inadequate paternal involvement. This is where the two plays concur, and where *July and Julian* offers a sympathetic rationale for the predominance of maternal authority.

In terms of genre, tone and performance conditions, *July and Julian* occupies the opposite end of the comedic spectrum to *Nice Wanton*. This is not a moral interlude primarily for religious and civic enlightenment, but a Roman-style comedy intended to entertain. There is no obvious religious reforming impulse behind the plot or the dialogue, as there was in *Nice Wanton*, although there is evidence of a concern with parental moral values. The play's prime purpose is to display the talents of its youthful performers and provide merry entertainment for the audience, as spelled out in the prologue:

We are come hither to troble yow as boyes.  
 And after sage thinges to shewe o<sup>f</sup> trifflinge toyes.  
 Pleaseth hit yow therfore to be so favorable,  
 If we children make myrth as we ben able.  
 Not desiringe prayse but to shewe ower witte,  
 In such exersise as for vs be fitte.<sup>39</sup>

The phrase "after sage thinges" points to a context of some more formal preceding piece, and to "make myrth" and "to shewe ower witte" are the keynotes to the performance conditions. It is clear that the play was to be performed by boys, and both the prologue and epilogue indicate that it is only one part of a much larger program of entertainment extending over at least two days. Such extended celebrations were not unusual. Connections with music, both in and around the play, suggest performance by choristers.

A Song School Master features briefly in one scene, and at one point the eldest son, July, calls attention to his skills on the lute: “I was wont to singe this songe on my lutt merely” (261). Over twenty-five pieces of music are recorded in the commonplace book in which the play is written, including pieces suitable to dramatic accompaniment, such as ‘*Initium*’ for the commencement, and ‘The Motley’ for a jester. John M. Ward, in his analysis of the music, suggests that the author of *July and Julian* was “most likely a schoolmaster and amateur lutenist-composer, one whose tablatures may have served pedagogical ends.”<sup>40</sup> There may be connections with the choristers of St. Paul’s. Two lines in the first act, “Amonge all creatures lesse or mo, / We pore litle boyes a byd muche wo” (33-34), vary only slightly from the first two lines of a song by Paul’s choirmaster, John Redford (d. 1547), which humorously recorded the boys’ lamentations at the cruelty of their master and their sufferings in learning “this pevysh pryk-song” (introduction xi). Another connection with Paul’s may be suggested by one of the many pieces of music, “Paul’s Galliard,” which is included in the commonplace book. Performance as part of a wedding program is one possibility since the resolution of the plot culminates in an espousal, and the epilogue announces that the festivities will continue the following night (1310-12). The play’s theme of good parenting would fit such an occasion.

The deferential tone of both prologue and epilogue reflect a patronage relationship between audience and players, and the audience is addressed a number of times as “most worshipful” and “ryght worshipful” (e.g.1315) thus indicating an audience of gentlemen.<sup>41</sup> Their position of authority over the players is acknowledged:

That we gladlye knowledge o<sup>f</sup> dewtye ys  
Both at yo<sup>r</sup>comandymt to vse o<sup>f</sup> service  
And by yo<sup>r</sup> example to vse honest exercise  
Honester exercise than this ys none.

(1327-30)

There was nothing like this in *Nice Wanton*, where the prologue was blunt as to the moral message, acknowledging only that “all these parts will we play” (24), and paying no compliments to the audience. Here, the emphasis on ‘honest exercise’ suggests a public justification for this comedy, given that the playwright was writing at a time of Protestant debate over the role of pagan drama in schools and in public life.<sup>42</sup> Despite prevailing

reservations on the part of some authors, classical comedy remained familiar fare in Tudor schools, generally valued for “the cultivation of the ornaments of discourse” in Latin (*De tradendis* 136), and defended for the moral lessons it could impart. Terence was particularly valued as a vehicle for developing performance techniques in young orators. The statutes of Ruthin School (1574) stipulate that the Master “shall hear his Scholars rehearse an Act out of Terence’s Comedies or Plautus whom I require to be instructed by the Master. Both in the manner of Speaking and Gesture” (*Ruthin* 114). Roman comedy was also valued for the moral lessons it could impart, such as those claimed for Terence by Palingenius:

For oftentimes a *Comedy* may wholesome doctrine bring:  
 And monish men by pleasant words, to leave some naughty thing.  
 There be, I grant, some Poets works not altogether vain,  
 Which with a pleasant sugred style, proceed from sober brain.  
 These things do help, and void of vice these workes do profit much:  
 In youth bring up your scholars with none other food but such.

(*Zodiake* 6)

The fact that there is noticeably no Latin in the play may also be in deference to a religious climate that associated Latin with ignorant papistry.<sup>43</sup> It is, of course, also possible that the preceding ‘sage things’ involved the presentation of a Latin play by older boys, and thus this following example of scholars’ skills is for the less advanced children. Self-directed parodic humour calls attention to the youth of the boy players, such as the manservant’s comment in the opening scene that “thei w<sup>ch</sup> mark my ledgs [sic] do marvell how I can, / Upon such spindle shankes beare so manly a man” (61-62), or Mawd the ‘old dame principal’ of the household claiming that “I know by my younge age what yough ys” (470). Boys playing female parts is a further source of self-referential humour. Ffenell, the manservant, teases the tearful daughter Nan:

Alas who beats Nane.  
 A foull yll on his fatt face by saynt tane.  
 She hath a womans hart, & well she plaieth a womans part.

(209-11)

The joke gets taken a step further as Ffenell diagnoses sexual frustration (the maid’s sickness) as Nan’s problem and offers his services: “I know what you aild, I cold mend it if i will,” to which Nan replies with a shocked “Oh Ffenell?” and unwisely goes on to talk



about how she was “handled” that day, leading Ffenell to pun on the innuendo of “handled” (214-18).<sup>44</sup>

*July and Julian* is indeed a display of light wit and humour, as the prologue anticipates, and can be classified as a comedy in the Roman manner with scheming servants, a gullible master and mistress, romantic intrigue and a happy ending. The play is explicitly Terentian and the tone one of light satire. The dramatist names two fathers, Chremes and Menedemus, from characters that occur in Terence, for example, in *Phormio* and *The Self Tormentor*. The players would have understood the allusions behind these names, either from their own knowledge of Terence, or from Erasmus’ use of these names in his *Colloquia*. Menedemus, for instance, has already been referred to as the ideal father who stays at home (see page 99). Apart from his naming, twice, as the father of Missis, Menedemus has no function in the play, but Missis, his daughter, has a brief cameo role in which she comically fends off the aggressive and bawdy servant, Ffenell, at her door. The implication is that her ‘stay-at-home’ father is conspicuously absent. In the case of Chremes, the playwright seems to be playing with convention. In a discussion on the delineation of different characters developed by Terence, Erasmus points to an image of ‘Chremes’ as “polite and always calm, self-controlled on every occasion, resolving all differences as far as he can, gentle but hardly simple-minded” (Erasmus *De ratione studii* 687-89). In *July and Julian* he is impulsive, simple-minded and a drunkard, suggesting that the playwright is deliberately challenging the expectations of his informed performers, and others in the audience familiar with Terence.

Despite the Roman names, the play is set in England. The dramatist’s ironic treatment of English school life sets the tone for *July and Julian* as light satire, reminiscent of the *vulgaria* tradition. The school culture is brought humorously to the fore in the voice of the youngest performer, the schoolboy, Dick, who parodies the complaints over booklearning:

And no marvell I am trobled so even from morning to night.  
For first in the morninge I am sent toth gramer scholl,  
Ther to moppe on a old bocke like a foole.  
A bocke, what is a bocke, what can on make of hit.

(157-60)

Dick’s definition of books savors of comic logic:

Thow seist thei be nocht else but paper, inck, and pen.  
 A many babbes, pilgraves, and scrapings of a hen.  
 ...  
 But bocks, doutlyse y<sup>e</sup> devels owne grace from hell did fet.  
 Sith thei be good for nocht, but to mak boyes bett.

(162-67)

Those few scenes in the play that represent the schoolboy culture stand out for their lively humour, wit and colourful detail. Much of the dialogue elsewhere is more laboured in its humour, and scenes with plotting servants or a lovelorn son show less inspiration. This contrast indicates that the dramatist was on familiar grounds when depicting the school culture, and argues for a playwright closely affiliated with a school. *July and Julian* gives the playwright an opportunity to display his skills and his schoolboys' or choristers' talents, and it gives the school or children's company the occasion to promote itself and to engage its audience with an entertaining gloss on contemporary education.

The plot involves an attempt by the parents, Chremes and Mawd, to prevent the love match between their eldest son, July, and his mother's maid, Julian, a gentlewoman. The attempt is foiled through the agency of the servants, Wilkin and Ffenell. The Argument provides the usual synopsis:

[July] loved greatlye his mothers maid Julian.  
 And when that he had to her broken his mynd,  
 He found her to him in all points licke kind.  
 Albehit his mother this well perceyved,  
 Through wilkines devise she was so deceyved,  
 That she thought thone and thother from love as fre,  
 And as honest as any persounes mought be.  
 .....  
 Then the matter w<sup>th</sup> craft ys so conveyed,  
 That Chremes in his dronkennes w<sup>th</sup> avarice ys decey[v]ed,  
 Thinketh his servants to him playd a good part,  
 And so marryed his sonne to the maid w<sup>th</sup> all his hart.

(20-36)

In terms of parenting, the Argument prepares the audience for a straightforward characterisation of the father as gullible, drunken and avaricious. The mother, however, despite her gulling by the servants, is characterised as more alert than her husband, and it

is this positive quality in her that is given powerful emphasis in the play's opening scenes.

Mawd is introduced early in Act One, where the text gives her dramatic status as “Mawd the good wife” (100). This is a “goodly housold” according to the servant Wilkin:

Her is a goodly housold god save all.  
 First my old m<sup>r</sup>, and my old dame principall,  
 Then their ij sonnes my m<sup>f</sup> mr. Jule,  
 And litle Dicke, on dofter maistris Nancye,  
 And on gentell woman w<sup>ch</sup> wayteth on my maistris.

(291-95)

“My old dame principall” may mean no more than the proper domestic hierarchies, but as the play develops it becomes clear that Mawd is the principal figure within the family. In the mouth of this rancorous servant, it could well reflect Mawd's ruling role in the household. While the servants manage to fool her husband with ease, they show more respect for Mawd (1035-38). The same pedagogical issues used to demonstrate maternal negligence in *Nice Wanton* are reworked in *July and Julian* for a positive characterisation of Mawd: truancy, domestic discipline, diet, favouritism and the familiar arguments of schooling as unhealthy, unmasculine and unkind to boys' buttocks.

This is a well-to-do, urban family, and the opening dialogue immediately foregrounds Mawd's utilitarian values. The playwright introduces a sundial as a measure both of Mawd's material values and her adherence to punctuality. The sundial is a symbol of the eternal problem of getting boys out of bed and to school on time. Schools started at 6 a.m. in the summer, 7 a.m. in winter. This was a familiar topic for school texts, such as Vives' dialogue “Getting Dressed and the Morning Constitutional,” which features a sundial and a clock (*Exercitatio* 82). Mawd is proudly showing her country brother, Pierpinte, around her garden. The sundial alerts her to school hours, and she calls her to youngest son Dick:

Pierpinte. Her is a fer diall. All things for pleasur.  
 Mawd. It is past vj<sup>x</sup> a clocke. Dicke.  
 Dick. Here forsoth.  
 Mawd. Here it, trip tothe [sic] schole q<sup>i</sup>ckly, or Ile twidg yo<sup>f</sup> dock.

(109-11)

Mawd is threatening to “twigge” (birch) her son unless he hurries to school; it is more usual to find the schoolmaster accused of such behaviour, as in *The World and the Child*, a 1522 interlude:

I will not go to school but when me lest,  
For there beginneth a sorry feast,  
When the master should lift my dock.<sup>45</sup>

In upholding school rules on punctuality Mawd aligns herself with school values. Her next lines indicate she is equally observant of her servants:

Mawd.           Why fenell where a bowt go yowe.  
Ffenell.         To fetch whitt poddings for yo<sup>r</sup> breckfast, I cold get but thes two.  
Mawd.           Yt is well provided, geve them to Julian, mak hast  
                          That Dicke were had to y<sup>e</sup> schole, it is vj of y<sup>e</sup> clock, & past.

(116-19)

Mawd instructs the servant Fenell to accompany Dick to school, giving a clue to her controlling supervision. Unlike Xantippe, this mother is ensuring that her child will not be given any opportunity to play truant. Likewise, Mawd’s approval of white pudding informs the audience that plain and wholesome fare is served in this household, not meat to make her children merry as in *Nice Wanton*. Mawd’s disciplinarian approach is given humorous emphasis by her refusal to agree to her brother’s request that his nephew should have the day off school in deference to his visit: “Yt is haliday while I am here, m<sup>r</sup> scholm<sup>r</sup> shall a gre,” but the day in question is Monday and Mawd responds decisively: “On the monday wold ye so, nay y<sup>t</sup> cannot be” (120-22). The dramatist may be flagging the uncle’s awareness that Monday was the most dreaded day of the school week, or he may be indicating a country uncle’s undervaluing of schooling. The difficulties of persuading rural families of the value of schooling are still humorously evident in a 1618 treatise on the court and country where the countryman’s view is put forward:

Farmers know their cattle by the heads, and Sheepheards know their sheepe by the brand,  
What more learning have we need of, but that experience will teach us without booke? ...  
Then what should we study for, except it were to talke with the man in the Moone about  
the course of the Starres?<sup>46</sup>

It is just as likely, however, that the dramatist expected his audience to understand Monday as the prompt for the uncle’s request that his nephew be given the day off. This

was the day when punishment was meted out to students for transgressions committed in church on Sunday or at school during the previous week:

Monday at 9 o'clock in the morning every week (unless it be a holiday) an account to be taken in order to examine into Boys faults unless the Master should see occasion to omit or overlook it. But I think it expedient that some Crimes be immediately punished according to the Discretion of the Master and not delayed until Monday. (*Ruthin* 112)<sup>47</sup>

Most schools tried to be strict about attendance, allowing a child a maximum number of days absence a year usually for illness. Occasionally an entire school could be granted one or two free days a year at the request of some eminent person visiting the school. Dick's older brother, July, manages this later in the play, "Master scholm<sup>r</sup>, I pray yow lett yo<sup>r</sup> scholers go play." "By my troth sir," responds the grammar master, "although they have don nought to day, / Yet for yower sake, lett them go" (598-600). The following statute for Almondbury School allows us to identify July's status as a person of quality:

Special holidays may be given at the request of any neighbouring or other gentlemen or persons of quality except to scholars on the Black Bill,<sup>48</sup> once only in two years by the same gentleman. (*Almondbury* 21)

The uncle persists with his request, and Mawd's response highlights two further common complaints against schooling, that of study as unhealthy and as unmasculine. These were the arguments the ignorant Xantippe used to excuse her children from school, but in *July and Julian* Mawd satirises them:

Pierpinte.	I pray y <sup>u</sup> let him go.
Mawd.	I be shrewe me than.
	Tutt with playinge Dicke, thow canst nev <sup>r</sup> be a man.
	To morowe at yower request he shall play.
	And that is tuesday.
	.....
	Nay if boies shuld play to much, y <sup>ei</sup> wold be lystlys.
Pierpinte.	Alas, boyes shuld be borne wythe.

(120-30)

Similar irony attaches to Dick's complaint that:

Men may do what thei lyst god wott, so cannot we.  
 For if I laughe, my father a wanton calles me,  
 If I be sadd, my mother saith, I am dumpish and sorlye.

(147-49)

Here the dramatist turns his satire away from public theories about schooling, to parody pedagogical theories about gendered values in parenting. Pedagogical theory, in general, presented fathers as the more sober and serious parent and depicted mothers as indulgent and lighthearted; the assumption was, according to one Renaissance author, that paternal austerity prepared children for adulthood, while mothers softened and spoiled them.<sup>49</sup> Ecclesiasticus, Proverbs and Paul, which were drawn on as authority for such theories, were all common components of the lower School (*Governor* 39). Houlbrooke cites similar contemporary examples of the adage.<sup>50</sup> The irony of the severe Mawd and the drunken Chremes paying lip service to such a pedagogical theory is typical of the play's humour. Dick would have been familiar with these cultural expectations through his school texts, and it is little wonder domestic reality and schoolbook theory have confused him.

On their way to school, Ffenell and little Dick have the misfortune to meet the Schoolmaster and the Song School Master, who accuse Dick of loitering. Ffenell tenders Mawd's apology for their delay, a sign of good parent-school relations. Ffenell goes further, however, and, in the hope of gaining gentle treatment for his young master, he rashly claims Dick is sick:

Schoolmaster. Are ye sick m<sup>r</sup> Dicke, I am glad I knowe ye.  
 Tak him vp, I will dreve yo<sup>r</sup> malydicke from ye.  
 Thow micher, wilt thou loyter?

Dick. No, awe, nev<sup>r</sup> whill I live.

(181-84)

Stage directions embedded in Dick's "awe" ('ouch'), indicate that the master is lashing out at the boy, prompting Ffenell to observe that "Scholmasters be findishe fellows, ye may me be live" (185-91). Punning on Dick's supposed "maladicke" (malady), the schoolmaster prepares to birch Dick. The words "take him up," mean hold him while he is caned. John Brinsley in *Ludus Literarius or The Grammar Schoole* (1612), gives an explicit and grim picture of how recalcitrant boys are to be held fast by other boys while being caned (*Ludus Literarius* 289). As the audience well knows, Ffenell is quite right: many schoolmasters were indeed fiendish fellows and motherly pleas for gentle treatment of their child often resulted in an unfortunate backlash. The following extract is from a letter written by an ex-student of Richard Mulcaster, headmaster of Merchant Taylor's School in the 1560's:

The prayers of cockering mothers prevailed with him just as far as the requests of indulgent fathers, rather increasing than mitigating his severity on their offending child. In a word he was Plagosus Orbilius; though it may truly be said that others have taught as much learning with fewer lashes.<sup>51</sup>

Mothers were even rumoured to bribe schoolmasters to treat their children gently. A century later, when Thomas Fuller outlines a schoolmaster's qualities, he insists the schoolmaster "is, and will be known to be an absolute Monarch in his school. If cockering Mothers proffer him money to purchase their sons an exemption from his rod ... with disdain he refuseth it, and scorns the late custom in some places of commuting whipping into money, and ransoming boyes from the rod at a set price."<sup>52</sup> The self-directed humour in *July and Julian* on such a common issue as school flogging reveals just how confident the dramatist was that this particular school was exempted from such complaints.

Mawd's parenting skills contrast with Xantippe's deficiencies. Mawd has no favourites, but exacts obedience and diligence from all three children alike. She is quite willing to use corporal punishment and, on the sole occasion her daughter, Nan, is on stage, Nan is caned for failing to follow her mother's instructions: "Sith my words bear no stroks, stroks & words I blend" (194-95). This scene follows directly on young Dick's unhappy encounter with the schoolmasters on his way to school, thereby exploiting dramatic juxtaposition to align the mother with the schoolmaster. Mawd's parenting techniques are in line with the advice of such pedagogues as Vives, who maintained that daughters should be handled without any cherishing for "cherishing marreth sons, but it utterly destroyeth the daughters" (*De institutione* 133).

Both Nan and Dick will complain to Ffenell, the servant, of their mother's strict treatment, providing an opportunity for the servant to undermine the mother's authority. Ffenell encourages Dick to resent his mother's harsh discipline:

Ffenell. By my troth I may be bold to tell y<sup>u</sup> my mynd,  
 Me thinks mastris ys to vnkind,  
 Towards yow, y<sup>t</sup> be so gentle of nature.  
 Ye might have played this day, & taken yo<sup>r</sup> pleasure.

(137-40)

Likewise daughter Nan, having been chastised by her mother, complains to Ffenell of her treatment at the hands of her mother. Ffenell commiserates with Nan, but the daughter's sense of filial duty does not allow her to indulge in criticism of her mother's discipline:

Ffenell. In ded all this is to much for yow,  
                   Hit wer meter y<sup>t</sup> a better shuld have had it, & not yow.  
 Nan.       Hit is trew, but yt is 8 of the clock and past,  
                   I most go mak redy my fathers breckfast.

(240-43)

Nan will not be led into complaining about her mother; rather she is concerned with her household duties, which are identified in her speech:

We must also locke vnto y<sup>e</sup> kichen, and buttery,  
 And se that albe well, but specially all huswiffery.  
 Well, when I am [a] lady wenches shall have more ease.  
 Till then must I never be well at ease.

( 236-39)

According to most authors on the education of women, a good housewife was “never to be idle, but always to be well occupied. Becon considered this an important point since it is glossed in the margin with “Note well” (*Catechism* 343). These are clues for the audience to recognise that this is a well-trained and diligent daughter who will make a good wife; Shakespeare used similar hints in *Othello* to characterise Desdemona as active in household affairs: "But still the house affairs would draw her thence" (I.iii.147). Nan, who is never seen outside the house or idle, is the antithesis to Dalila in *Nice Wanton* who was only seen outside the home and who spent her time in idle and wanton pursuits. There is, however, another aspect to Mawd's expectations of her daughter, and one which is indicative of the difference in genres between *July and Julian*, a comedy in the Roman style, and *Nice Wanton*, a comedy for moral and religious reform. In *Nice Wanton*, to “go handsomely” was not a virtue and a preoccupation with looks was frowned upon. Here the daughter is valued primarily (“First”) for her looks and her figure:

Nan.       First we must be fine, tricke, hansome, & neat,  
                   Small midled, well mad, frolick and feat.  
                   Hed, ye, hand, hill, nor noght most be [ ] a wry.  
                   For the lest of thes (I warrant y<sup>u</sup>) der we must a by.

(232-35)



Mawd had also earlier instructed her daughter to “Be handsome” (196). In *Nice Wanton* Barnabas exhorted his sister to learn to spin and to sew, two very definite indicators of desired qualities in a daughter’s training, and there is no such suggestion for Nan; the emphasis on good looks and worldly values in *July and Julian* suggests a more urbane audience than that expected for *Nice Wanton*. There is also no suggestion in *July and Julian* that Nan has attended school. Daughters who attended public schools are more likely to have come from families of the lower ranks of society (see page 29).

Cause and effect are being established in *July and Julian*, demonstrating that strict parenting produces well-trained children. But is the mother in danger of becoming a shrew? Will the children hate their mother? In anticipation of such a reaction by some in his audience, the dramatist inserts a direct address to his audience in the mouth of the servant Ffenell:

How say yow masters, is not my dame a shrewe,  
I dare not say it my selfe, but ile be judge by you.  
How she canvased litle Nane before yo<sup>r</sup> face?  
And what knaves be thes scholmasters in like case?

(248-51)

Ffenell’s role as stage misogynist, which is similar to that of the Vice-figure in *Nice Wanton*, undercuts his accusation and prompts the audience to recognise that the mother’s ostensibly shrewish behaviour has produced fine, obedient children and she should not be judged by common prejudices. In the next line, the same line of argument is applied to schoolmasters: “and what knaves be thes scholmasters in like case?” (251), thus tacitly acknowledging that mothers and schoolmasters share similar problems and similar roles. The playwright is drawing on a *vulgaria* tradition in which the scolding housewife was presented as a euphemism for the disciplining schoolmaster (*Vulgaria* 87). This parallel between scolding wives and disciplinarian schoolmasters is discussed further in relation to *The Disobedient Child* in Chapter Four.

References to Mawd as a shrew invoke humour, but invariably work in her favour. Potentially negative perceptions of her as a shrewish mother, are offset by references to her good qualities:

July. I thinke it best I do my fault confesse,  
And be take me, to my mothers gentlenes.

(368-69)

July is not fearful of shrewish treatment from his mother since he trusts her “gentlenes.” It is the servants, not the family, who label this mother a shrew. First it was Ffenell and later it is Wilkin, yet their complaints serve only to highlight her shrewdness, not her shrewishness:

Wilkin. I durst take in hand,  
To blynd Chremes quickly, that cold I warrant.  
But when moppinge Mawd, her browes doth bend,  
Methinke the dyvell whyrles on her nos end.

(1035-38)

It is not the master of this household but the mistress who earns the respect of the servants. The servants would easily dupe Chremes, and Mawd is just the wife he needs: shrewd, efficient and supportive. The competent housewife is a boon to her husband, and the *vulgaria* authors were willing to admit it: “I am out of all care for gydyngge of my housolde / as longe as I have suche a wyfe” reads one schoolbook phrase (*Hormon's Vulgaria* 142).<sup>53</sup>

Mawd is following the advice of a number of pedagogical authors. According to Erasmus there are some failings a wife ought to wink at (*Colloquia* 123), and Becon likewise suggests a good wife will not only bear the incommodities, but will “dissemble, cloke, hide, and cover the faults and vices of her husband” (*Catechism* 343). Mawd overlooks her husband’s vices (swearing, drinking, fighting), she humours him, and supports his authority:

Mawd. Julye go writ yower letter yo<sup>r</sup> father did byd yowe.

Wilkin wait on yo<sup>r</sup> m<sup>r</sup> lest he ned yowe.

Take yowe laisere, writ hit faire, hear ye?

(408-10)

Her “writ hit fair, hear ye?” ensures that the audience understands how much value this mother puts on good handwriting. For many in sixteenth-century England, good handwriting was seen as a clerical skill, neither appropriate nor requisite to the nobility or upper gentry (see page 24), and, with the advent of printing, handwriting suffered a further loss of status. Educators were often frustrated by this attitude of disdain:

But now, with the existence of printing, it has come about that some scholars never write at all. If ever they do decide to put their thoughts on paper, their artistry is so marvellous

that they often fail to make out what they have written, and they have to get a secretary to read and recognize what they cannot! (*De recta* 391)

Brinsley devoted an entire chapter to “Directions for faire writing” (*Ludus Literarius* 37-40). Mawd is seen as simultaneously supporting the school’s values and the authority of July’s father. It is notable that the maid, Julian, who will become wife to July, is at one point seen writing in the parlour (427). This is another indication of the educational values impelling this play, and of the type of family the school in question may be hoping to attract. The family is wealthy, has servants and has some status in the community, but they do not disdain schooling or clerical skills for their sons.

Schoolmasters and disciplinarian mothers have nothing in common, however, when it comes to earning children’s hatred. Dick harbours thoughts of revenge against both his grammar and song schoolmaster:

I will pay them home for an old grudge, ffenel y<sup>u</sup> knowest when  
 Because he oth the songe scholl my nears so well can pull,  
 (When I am a man) othe pillery his ears shall strech y<sup>er</sup> full.  
 And he y<sup>t</sup> my buttoke for gram<sup>f</sup> hath slaine,  
 His body (if I live) I will slay a gaine.

(175-79)

The familiar buttocks and grammar partnership is another reminder of school culture, as is the imaginative revenge of the aggrieved schoolboy, a frequent feature of school writings. In Erasmus’ colloquy “Off to School,” the schoolboy hopes the flogging master will be paralysed in the arm (*Colloquia* 44). In *The Birched School-Boy* (c1500), the young narrator has had his arse “pepered ... till it did blede,” and he shows considerably more creativity in imagining his schoolmaster as a hunted hare:

I wold my master were an hare,  
 And all his bokiss howndis were,  
 And I myself a joly hontere:  
 To blowe my horn I wold not spare!  
 Ffor if he were dede I wold not care.<sup>54</sup>

Extended toothache was another form of creative torture in a fifteenth-century school *vulgaria*, apparently worked on the master through the spells of local gossips: “Felows, what is youre mynde? are ye glade that the maister is recoverde of totheache? ... and I

were a riche mann I wolde spende a noble worth of ale emonge goode gosseps so that he hade be vexede a fortnyght longer.”<sup>55</sup>

Tradition and humour allow the dramatist to depict revenge aimed at schoolmasters, but to characterise children as harbouring thoughts of revenge towards a strict parent would defeat the play’s pedagogical purpose. The reverse notion was being drummed into schoolboys through their *vulgaria*, in the image of a child accusing his parents of being too lenient: “Bothe my fader and my moder be so tendre and choyse upon me / yt they wyl not suffre me to be punysshed whome therfore I in tyme to come utterly may curse” (*Vulgaria* 48). This is, of course, the image projected by the emblem at the beginning of this chapter, and also by *Nice Wanton*, where Dalila blames her parents’ “tiddling” (314) for her failures. Neither Dick nor Nan shows any hint of hatred towards their strict mother. July trusts to his mother’s gentleness, and Nan acknowledges that for daughters to be well trained “stroks we must neds have many on” (228-29). Indeed, Nan recognises that her mother acts out of love, “women can never hate that they love beast [sic],” she admits shortly after she receives a hiding (225). For an Elizabethan audience, this statement can only be seen as an allusion to Solomon’s famous proverb that ‘he that spareth the rod, the child doth hate.’

Mawd is never faulted for her discipline; it is her judgement that is in question. July, when frustrated by his mother’s meddling in his romance, still acknowledges that his are good parents: “Yt is noight to have good parents, ill dysorderinge, / Ther good childrens good disposicion” (274-75). With this reference to disposition, the dramatist is engaging with yet another topical pedagogical issue. Many authors, like Vives and later Mulcaster, pointed out the need for schoolmasters to understand a child’s disposition, that is, the child’s nature and talents, and adapt their treatment of the child accordingly. The need for parents to take individual dispositions into account was evidently an issue in contemporary child rearing debate. It features in the educational literature and in personal notations. In Edward Pudsey’s commonplace book, dating from the late 1590s, a quotation identifies the difficulty for parents of balancing discipline with disposition. Glossed in the margin as “Parents Children Disposition,” is the following notation:

It is a good propertie of wisdom in parents to find out the disposition of their children, but it is a principal effect of their judgement to cut off with discipline all corners of errors that feed their natural corruptions.<sup>56</sup>

Similar wording is evident in Peacham's *The Compleat Gentleman* (1622): "it is a principal point of discretion in parents to be thoroughly acquainted with, and observe the disposition and inclination of their children."<sup>57</sup> Perhaps, by the early seventeenth century parents had put overmuch value on disposition, leading Francis Bacon to observe of parents "let them not too much apply themselves, to the Disposition of their Children."<sup>58</sup> For the 1560s playwright of *July and Julian*, however, the issue is of topical interest and opens the way for the play's main criticism of this family – the materialism that characterises both parents. Mawd has erred on the side of cutting off with discipline not July's vices but his virtues, for which, ironically, she might take some of the credit. When July questions why the maid has been sent away, his father's response is to lie, and his mother's to silence his questioning:

Mawd. Will y<sup>u</sup> presume rashly  
 Be fore vs yo<sup>r</sup> parents, to bradge, and to face,  
 We shall tame y<sup>u</sup> sonne Julye w<sup>th</sup>in short space.  
 July. I cry y<sup>u</sup> a mercy mother, I thought y<sup>u</sup> had cast her  
 Of, as though honestye had ben quitt past her.

(823-27)

July is right, his parents had indeed planned to 'cast Julian off' for their own gain. Mawd's threat to 'tame' July may be to support her husband's authority, but the parents' ambitions are threatening the welfare of their son. The potential for tragedy is averted by an anagnorisis that turns parental ignorance into self-knowledge. After a device that tricks the parents into marrying their son to the maid, the scheme is revealed and Mawd and Chremes have the grace to acknowledge their own faults to their son:

Chremes. In ded sonne Julye thow wast in no fault  
 But I my selfe and my wyffe Mawd  
 Which for gaine of a little money  
 Sold Julian quight owt of the contry.

(1068-71)

The only explicit criticism of parenting in the play is directed against the materialism that impelled both parents to use their son and the maid, Julian, in the hope of profiting financially. The dramatist puts this mercenary philosophy in the mouth of Mawd: "at no time, is any time to refusse money" (701). The play's main moral thus treats avarice as the fault both parents share, a fault common to both Terentian comedies

and to Elizabethan domestic drama, and often invoking in the latter the dramatic irony that parents who bring their children up virtuously put them at risk through their own vices. In John Lyly's *Mother Bombie* (c1594), one virtuous daughter comments of her covetous father's plans for her that "[parents] studie twentie yeeres together to make us grow as straight as a wand, and in the ende by bowing us make us crooked as a cammocke."<sup>59</sup> In *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* (1611), the daughter, refusing to prostitute herself to aid an aspiring father, comically points out to him that "I happened righter than you thought I had."<sup>60</sup> As these two examples suggest, it is usually fathers not mothers who are prone to such faults. If *July and Julian* was written as part of a wedding entertainment, a possibility suggested earlier in this chapter, then perhaps the matrimonial material was deliberately developed to demonstrate the value of a wife's support of her husband's authority provided he shows moral guidance, and for both to act as good moral role models to their children.

In the final analysis, it is the father's behaviour that is being criticised, and this is where the play departs from the conventions of Terence in giving such a major controlling part to the mother. Betty Radice comments that mothers are never figures of fun in Terence,<sup>61</sup> but neither were they known, according to Henry Peacham, for supporting paternal authority:

But touching Parents, a great blame and imputation (how justly I know not) is commonly laid upon the Mother; not only for her over tenderness, but in winking at their lewd courses; yea, more in seconding and giving them encouragement to do wrong, though it were, as *Terence* saith, against their own Fathers.<sup>62</sup>

Peacham's statement is typical of the Renaissance literary technique, which turned an apparent defence of women into an attack; he protests that he will say nothing of certain faults mothers were often accused of.<sup>63</sup> His use of Terence, however, provides further evidence of the importance of taking Tudor school culture and school texts into account when considering sixteenth-century audience responses. The name "Chremes" calls attention to the fact that this Chremes is not a reflection of his classical predecessors. He not only curses but he does so within his younger son's hearing (324). He lies (820-21), he has been fined for fighting over land (705), and he is repeatedly mocked for his drunkenness: "thou knowest my master Chremes can tippel well" (1041). Such paternal role models are abhorrent to Erasmus, who despairs of households where "a youngster ...

continually sees his father intoxicated and uttering streams of profanities” (*De pueris* 308). Chremes is also comically simple-minded. After Mawd outlines her scheme to trap the maid to him, he feels compelled to give Mawd the gratuitous advice to “tell [the maid] thereof nothing” (448). He is, in Ffenell’s words, the proverbial “old man twice child” (1117), and is possibly characterised as illiterate since he relies on his son’s literacy skills: “July read thou and I’ll drink” (1119). A more serious fault, however, is revealed in one of Dick’s complaints over the treatment he receives from school and from his parents: “Both my parents, & masters, handle me so shrewdly” (153); Dick is probably referring to being birched, but the servant Ffenell chooses to interpret it bawdily, as he did with Nan:

Ffenell. In ded yo<sup>r</sup> ij masters play w<sup>th</sup> yow to lewdly.

Dick. My father doth worse to suffer them verely.

(154-55)

The subject of parental responsibility for overseeing their child’s treatment at school is the topic in question here. ‘Lewd’ is a term commonly applied to schoolmasters and usually pertaining to vulgar and crude behaviour. The bawdy punning, however, which frequently marks Ffenell’s language, introduces the possibility of sexual abuse. Ffenell is an unreliable character and the audience can discount his words, but it allows the subject of parental responsibility to be raised. Sexual abuse was not unknown in schools as has been discussed (see pages 47-49). The name ‘Dick’ was a common pun for penis,<sup>64</sup> and given the dramatist’s naming techniques it may well suggest his vulnerable, erotic status. Whether or not this is the topic in question, the play raises the issue of paternal duty of care towards a child’s schooling. Throughout the play, there is an underlying sense of criticism directed towards paternal behaviour: in the representation of Chremes, in the Menedemus reference, in the above allusion to treatment by schoolmasters, and in four lines from Julian, the maid. Chremes and Mawd hand Julian over to a stranger with no thought for her welfare, leaving her to give voice to parental duty:

Julian. I know not whother I go, nor to whom,  
I wold I wer wythe my father at whome,  
He wold not lett me be led so fare,  
To serve an vnknowne stranger.

(878-81)

These lines highlight Chremes’ and Mawd’s responsibilities in their roles *in loco parentis* as Julian’s master and mistress, and as parents themselves. What we have in *July and*

*Julian* is a strong, positive image of mothering, and one that consciously shares many of the values of schoolmasters. Where the image fails is in its relationship with paternal authority and values. In providing no moral guidance to his wife, Chremes is putting in jeopardy the profits of her diligence and good qualities as a mother.

Seen against *Nice Wanton*, which was published about the time *July and Julian* is thought to have been composed, *July and Julian* offers a refreshingly different perspective of mothers in control, and one that refutes contemporary pedagogical images of parents. Generically, these two plays, with their interest in schooling, can be viewed as representations of the contrasting maternal depictions found in the pedagogical literature. *Nice Wanton* follows the line of reasoning found in such authors as Vives, who value education predominantly for moral and academic development, and who fear mothers as impediments to a good education. *July and Julian* takes the more utilitarian approach often found in the *vulgaria*, which represents schooling in terms of secular skills, and values mothers for their authority within the household and their support of schooling. Where the two plays converge, is in their implicit criticism of fathers and in their interest in the shrew epithet.

Both plays pose similar questions to their audience. *Nice Wanton* has focussed on Xantippe as a cipher for the complaints of educators, and has raised the question of a husband's responsibility in the education of children. The scheming Ffenell poses a similar question to the audience in *July and Julian*: "how say you my masters, is not my dame a shrewe?" (248). The question goes to the heart of conflicting demands being made by humanist and Protestant authors on women's behaviour. On the one hand, wives were to be rigorous in running the household, and in the bringing up of their children and the maintaining of strict standards, yet on the other hand they were instructed to defer to husbands and speak as little as possible. The quandary is articulated by Vives, ironically the one man whose theories on women may have contributed more to this conflict than any other author. He warns young women how vulnerable to slander a woman's reputation is, and cautions as follows:

If thou talk little in company folks think thou canst but little good; if thou speak much they reckon thee light. If thou speak uncunningly, they count thee dull witted; if thou speak cunningly thou shalt be counted byt a shrew. (*De institutione* 94)



Vives continues at length in the same vein on every possible mode of behaviour. Mawd has generally spoken “cunningly,” that is intelligently, in order to keep her household in order, and the dramatist is drawing attention to the social dilemma this puts her in. Mawd belongs to a dramatic tradition of this period that values the female shrew, or scold, as a necessary feature of a well-run household.

This chapter has analysed the treatment of maternal figures in two plays written from within the culture of schooling, and against a popular tradition that blamed mothers for crime in the community. It has considered these figures in the light of the pedagogical antipathy directed towards mothers in the treatises and in some school texts, in particular those of Erasmus and Vives. The chapter has also pointed to instances of more positive treatment of mothers in certain *vulgaria*. The two plays have engaged fully with pedagogical issues of the period, each with its own slant, and both suggest that mothers are being scapegoated for the negligence of fathers. The understanding which emerges from these two plays is that mothers were indeed engaged with their children’s schooling, and that it may more often have been mothers the schools had to deal with, while all the education literature insisted it should be fathers.

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 NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey Whitney, *A Choice of Emblemes and Other Devises* (Leyden 1586), English Experience 161 (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1969) 155.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander B. Grosart, ed., *The Dr. Farmer Chetham MS.: Being a Commonplace-book in the Chetham Library, Manchester* (n.p.: Chetham Society, 1873) 70.

<sup>3</sup> Francis Bacon, *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985) 23.25.

<sup>4</sup> See also *Misogonus* (c1571), *Six Anonymous Plays*, ed. John S. Farmer (London: Early English Drama Soc., 1906) 168.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), eds. Floyd Dell and Paul Jordan-Smith (New York: Tudor, 1938) 285-86.

<sup>6</sup> Printed in Craig R. Thompson, *Schools in Tudor England* (Washington DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1958) plate 12.

<sup>7</sup> Dickie A. Spurgeon, ed., *Tudor Translations of the Colloquies of Erasmus (1536-1584)* (New York: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1972) 245.

<sup>8</sup> The name Xantippe is variously spelled, but has been standardised in this chapter.

<sup>9</sup> *Homily on the State of Matrimony*, ed. Ian Lancashire, *Renaissance Electronic Texts* 1.2, online, U of Toronto, Internet, 25th Feb. 1999, II:18.1 375; see also Becon, *Catechism* 338.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in T. W. Baldwin, *William Shakspeare's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke*, vol 2 (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1944) 241.

<sup>11</sup> Alcibiades was reknowned for his bi-sexual promiscuity: Philip A. Stadter, introduction to Plutarch's *Greek Lives: A Selection of Nine Greek Lives*, trans. Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998) 218-19. Erasmus may be suggesting that this should be a feature of the debate.

<sup>12</sup> Desiderius Erasmus, *Utile Dulce: or Trueths Libertie*, trans. W. Burton (1606) (Amsterdam: Da Capo P, 1973) H2.

<sup>13</sup> Spurgeon, *Tudor Translations* 96.

<sup>14</sup> Reprinted in Nicholas Orme, *Education and Society in Medieval and Renaissance England* (London: Hambledon, 1989) 139.

<sup>15</sup> Rebecca Bushnell, *A Culture of Teaching: Early Modern Humanism in Theory and Practice* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1996) 40.

<sup>16</sup> Leonard Tennenhouse, ed., *Nice Wanton, The Tudor Interludes Nice Wanton and Impatient Poverty*, Renaissance Imagination 10 (New York: Garland, 1984); Tennenhouse dates the play's composition between 1547 and 1553; all further references are within the text; see also Alan R. Young, *The English Prodigal Son Plays: A Theatrical Fashion of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Jacobean Drama Studies 89 (Salzburg: U of Salzburg, 1979) 92.

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- <sup>17</sup> Greg Walker, *The Politics of Performance in Early Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998) 20.
- <sup>18</sup> Quoted in Tennenhouse, *Nice Wanton* 21.
- <sup>19</sup> Walker, *Politics of Performance* 234-35.
- <sup>20</sup> Michael Shapiro, *Children of the Revels: The Boy Companies of Shakespeare's Time and Their Plays* (New York: Columbia UP, 1977) 152; see also Walker, *Politics of Performance* 234-35.
- <sup>21</sup> Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womanhood, 1540-1620* (Urbana: University of Illinois P, 1984) 49.
- <sup>22</sup> Some later prodigal son plays include *Misogonus* (c1571), Gascoigne's *The Glasse of Governement* (1575), Chapman, Jonson and Marston's *Eastward Ho* (1605) and Middleton's *A Trick to Catch the Old One* (1605).
- <sup>23</sup> Richard Helgerson, *The Elizabethan Prodigals* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1976) 34.
- <sup>24</sup> Janette Dillon, *Language and Stage in Medieval and Renaissance England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998) 127-28.
- <sup>25</sup> Helgerson, *Elizabethan Prodigals* 21.
- <sup>26</sup> Dillon, *Language and Stage* 128.
- <sup>27</sup> Commonplace book, MS. V.a 381, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC 139.
- <sup>28</sup> William Lempriere, *A History of the Girls' School of Christ's Hospital London, Hoddesdon and Hertford* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1924) 3.
- <sup>29</sup> Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance* 41.
- <sup>30</sup> *Misogonus* 140.
- <sup>31</sup> Francis Bacon, "Of Parents and Children," *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985) 23.
- <sup>32</sup> *A Warning for Fair Women* (1599), ed. John S. Farmer, Tudor Facsimile Texts (np: np, 1912) B2v.
- <sup>33</sup> William Forrest, *The Governance of Princes* (c1550), reprinted in *The History of Grisild the Second*, ed. W. D. Macray (London: Chiswick P, 1875) 184.
- <sup>34</sup> The equating of cockering mothers with shrewish behaviour can be found in earlier *vulgaria*: William Nelson, ed., *A Fifteenth Century School Book* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1956) 14.
- <sup>35</sup> Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance* 290; 127.
- <sup>36</sup> Quoted in Frederick Furnivall, ed., *The Babees Book* (London: Trubner, 1867) xxiv, Harrison's comment lends further support to arguing for mothers as the main decision makers in their children's education.
- <sup>37</sup> Young, *Prodigal Son Plays* 99-100.
- <sup>38</sup> John M. Ward, *Music for Elizabethan Lutes*, vol 1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992) 16.
- <sup>39</sup> *July and Julian*, ed. F. P. Wilson, (London: Oxford UP, 1955) lines 7-12. All further references are within the text.
- <sup>40</sup> Ward, *Music for Elizabethan Lutes* 16-21.
- <sup>41</sup> See Peter Laslett, *The World we have lost* (New York, NY: Scribner's, 1965) 38.

<sup>42</sup> Vives had grave doubts about the moral value of Terence and Plautus (*De tradendis* 136); the Puritan preacher John Stockwood expressed the opinion of many in a 1579 sermon, when he demanded that many Roman authors and other “filthy *Poets* and comedies” should be sent back to Rome: Baldwin, *Smalle Latine* vol 1, 110.

<sup>43</sup> Dillon, *Language and Stage* 104

<sup>44</sup> The playwright is probably alluding to greensickness in young virginal daughters as the condition which Ffenell could cure. Greensickness was a medically recognised condition and sexual intercourse was thought to be a possible cure. Greensickness, or the maid’s sickness, was also a fertile topic for satire and comedy in Renaissance drama: Ursula Potter, “Greensickness in *Romeo and Juliet*: considerations on a sixteenth-century disease of virgins,” paper given at the Premodern Teenagers conference, October 1999, Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, Victoria University in the University of Toronto.

<sup>45</sup> *The World and the Child, A Select Collection of Old English Plays*, rev. and enlarged W. Carew Hazlitt, 4th ed., vol 1 (London: n.p., 1874) 247.

<sup>46</sup> Nicholas Breton, “The Court and Country or A Briefe Discourse Dialogue-wise set down between a Courtier and a Countryman” (1618) quoted in Sylvester, *Educational Documents* 142-43.

<sup>47</sup> The same ‘black Monday’ tradition can be seen in a late fifteenth-century song, “The Birched School-Boy,” which features the suffering schoolboy’s lament:

On monday in the mornynge whan I shall rise  
at vj. of the clok, hyt is the gise  
to go to skole without a-vise  
I had lever go xx<sup>ti</sup> myle twyse!

Quoted in Furnivall, *Babees Book* 403-04.

<sup>48</sup> The Black Bill was a paper on which the names of transgressing students were entered for due punishment: Brinsley, *Ludus Literarius* 287.

<sup>49</sup> Ralph A. Houlbrooke cites Jeremy Taylor (1616-1667), *The English Family 1450-1700* (London: Longman, 1984) 141.

<sup>50</sup> Houlbrooke, *English Family* 141.

<sup>51</sup> T. H. Vail Motter, *The School Drama in England* (London: Longman, 1929) 107.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted in Rowland, *Pedagogue’s Commonplace Book* 46. Cf. John Amos Comenius’ treatise on early education (Latin 1654) which encourages better relations between child and master by suggesting the parents send gifts to the schoolmaster, and that the schoolmaster should also give small presents to the child, for which the parents should compensate him: Comenius, *The School of Infancy*, ed. Ernest M. Eller (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1956) 121.

<sup>53</sup> There is no suggestion of irony in the Latin or in the *vulgaria* context.

<sup>54</sup> Quoted in Furnivall, *Babees Book* 404.

<sup>55</sup> Quoted in Sylvester, *Educational Documents* 94.

<sup>56</sup> Edward Pudsey, commonplace book, MS. Eng. poet D.3, Bodleian Library, Oxford 14.

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- <sup>57</sup> Henry Peacham, *The Complete Gentleman* (1622) (Amsterdam: Da Capo, 1969) 34.
- <sup>58</sup> Francis Bacon, "Of Parents and Children," *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985) 24.45-47.
- <sup>59</sup> John Lyly, *Mother Bombie* (c1594), ed. Kathleen M. Lea (London: Oxford UP, 1948) I.iii.316-19.
- <sup>60</sup> Thomas Middleton, *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* (1611), ed. Anne Lancashire (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1978) I.i.167.
- <sup>61</sup> Betty Radice, trans. *Terence: The Comedies* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976) 20.
- <sup>62</sup> Henry Peacham, *The Complete Gentleman, The Truth of Our Times, and The Art of Living in London*, ed. Virgil B. Heltzel (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1962) 43.
- <sup>63</sup> Peacham's approach accords with Woodbridge's assertion that "Renaissance evidence, at least, suggests that far from being responses to misogynistic attacks, defenses of women provided literary models for misogynistic attacks": *Women and the English Renaissance* 44.
- <sup>64</sup> Such use is suggested in the following lines from a bawdy poem on masturbation, found in a late sixteenth-century commonplace book: "But the shaking of Dicks hands is worse than them both / Having left him neither eyes [blind] pennys [penis] nor oathe [oats]": MS. V.a.307, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC 47.

*Pueros castigo, virosque*

Emblem XIV, Nathaniel Crouch, *Delights for the Ingenious* (1684)

## Chapter Four: Fathers and schools

### *The Disobedient Child*

In one of William Cecil's precepts to his son, copied into an Elizabethan commonplace book, the Lord Treasurer touches on the difficulties facing parents in England. He affirms the need for education and for obedience, but stresses the importance of finding the golden mean between severity and indulgence:

Bring up thy children in learning and obedience yet without austerity. Praise them openly. Reprehend them secretly. ... I am persuaded that the foolish cockering of some parents and the overstern carriage of others causeth more men and women to take ill courses, then [their] own vicious inclinations.<sup>1</sup>

It is usually the "foolish cockering" of a parent, not their "overstern carriage," which leads to the child's ill course, and it is not always mothers who are the guilty parent. Under criticism of cockering women, Erasmus conceded that men could behave similarly:

You ought not to pay attention to those silly women, or to men very much like women save only for their beards, who maintain out of a false spirit of tenderness and compassion that children should be left alone until early adolescence, to be pampered in the meantime by their dear mothers and spoiled by nurses. (*De pueris* 299)

This is the scenario Thomas Ingelend presents in *The Disobedient Child* where it is a father who has kept his only son at home, in all luxury and idleness, until early adolescence, and who is unable to persuade his son at that point to go to school. The scorn Erasmus heaps on such fathers is to liken them to "silly women." *The Disobedient Child* does likewise, characterising this father in culturally feminine terms, but the similarities with Erasmus are tempered as the play eschews harsh criticism in favour of empathy and commiseration. This father is a widower, and there is no mother or nurse to share the responsibility for spoiling the boy; rather, women in the play are valued for their competence and their authority – albeit under the epithet of shrew.

For the majority of the prodigal son plays of the mid-sixteenth century it is not mothers who are at fault but fathers, and it is usually wealthy families that these plays deal with, the comfortable lifestyle being a significant risk factor in the cockering of children.<sup>2</sup> This is the case in *The Disobedient Child*, which suggests that public schooling can offer the necessary discipline and authority that may be lacking in such families. The aristocracy's disregard of public schooling undoubtedly kept many sons of the gentry in

the hands of private tutors (see pages 23-25), but the perception of schools as places of cruelty probably acted as an even greater deterrent to many parents. Both of these deterrents to public schooling are canvassed in *The Disobedient Child*. Two effective sources of discipline are proffered by the play: schools and women. While the former is clearly the preferred source of discipline, the latter is not without its merits either. In this regard *The Disobedient Child* can be compared with *July and Julian* in its alignment of the authority of schoolmasters with that of mothers. Here, the concept of feminine authority is again authority by default, negotiated through satire and farce, and shown to be a potential asset in the management of uneducated men, but also a potential threat to the masculine control of patrimony.

The father in *The Disobedient Child* is a wealthy and literate individual, a man of integrity and reason with no apparent vices. It is these very qualities, his *civilitas*, which the play suggests put him at risk of being a poor parent. Ascham may be hinting at a similar understanding when he complains of the lack of discipline in the bringing up of gentlemen's sons in England, pointing out that "commonlie the wisest and also best men, be found the fondest fathers" (*Scholemaster* 14v). Vives likewise maintains that there are fathers "which are grave men and well learned" who nonetheless bring their children up in all pleasure and indulgence (*De institutione* 196; see also *De pueris* 302). The father in this play draws his authority from humanist sources – classical and biblical precedents, the tradition of father-son dialogues, his status as patriarch, and the exercise of reason over passion – but he fails, and his humanist precedents fail with him as the paternal spirit of tenderness overrules reason. *The Disobedient Child* takes the position that sons of such fathers need the discipline of public schools as much as they need the learning. This was, of course, one of Mulcaster's arguments in favour of public schooling: schoolmasters possess the authority that is too often lacking in gentle-natured fathers (*Positions* 191.9-10). Erasmus, too, recognised that schools were used as the antidote to a cockered child, but not with his approval: "What is our practice now?" he asks, "we keep our children at home past their years of puberty. Then having corrupted them with habits of idleness, luxury, and sensuality, we finally send them off belatedly to a public school" (*De pueris* 344-45). For Erasmus public school is the last resort, not the best resort.



Few, if any, other authors mention the option of schools as the answer to inadequate parental authority. Ascham, Elyot and Erasmus all wrote with private education in mind, Vives in theory promoted mass schooling but said little about schools, and it was only Mulcaster who emphatically promoted public schooling as the answer to many parents' problems. This is where Tudor prodigal son drama may be anticipating Mulcaster's arguments in favour of schools. Mulcaster's treatise was not published until 1581, but his work gives evidence of the issues circulating from the 1560s and of the objections raised against schools. Two of these feature in *The Disobedient Child* - the topic of school cruelty and the issue of public schools as socially inferior for the well born child. As a piece of school drama, the play takes up these arguments and refutes them, firstly, by suggesting it is schooling that makes a man out of a boy, and here the play is engaging with the masculinity arguments against schooling, and secondly by raising the question of misinformation. By foregrounding the role of hearsay in the spread of education information, the play draws attention to the way various sources of authority may be used and misused.

There were ample and often conflicting sources of advice for parents on how to discipline their children, ranging from "fathers must be provident, and milde, / unto their fructe, till they of age doe growe,"<sup>3</sup> to "never have the rod off the boy's back" (*De institutione* 133). Biblical injunctions were quoted, preceptual advice abounded, father-son dialogues were offered as exempla for fathers to follow, such as that by William Cecil above, and the pedagogical treatises circulated in Tudor England. If, as Ralph A. Houlbrooke concludes, "it was probably only conscientious and literate parents who attempted to follow the pattern set out in the literature of counsel in their management of their children,"<sup>4</sup> then many fathers would have faced a plethora of often conflicting advice on the exercise of paternal authority. The father in the play draws on a variety of sources of authority, and the text itself dramatises one in particular, that of father-son advice dialogues.

These were advice tracts drawn up in the form of dialogues, which were inherited from classical authors and reworked by Tudor contemporaries. They entered the classroom through such authors as Cicero, Isocrates and Cato. This was a tradition that, in the words of Lazarus Pyott in 1596, offered collections of "Rhethoricall Declamations"

as resources where fathers may find “good arguments to move affections in their children, and children vertuous reconcilements to satisfie their displeas’d fathers.”<sup>5</sup> There were weaknesses to this source of parental advice, however, in their theoretical nature. Thomas Becon’s Catechism, for example, is a sophisticated and dense dialogue purporting to be between Becon and his five-year-old son. Richard Helgerson, who has analysed this classical father-son advice tradition, has pointed to the weaknesses of such advice.<sup>6</sup> What is particularly significant in *The Disobedient Child* is that Ingelend is fully aware of the weaknesses of this theory, and is drawing attention to the ineffectiveness of preceptual and theoretical modes of authority between father and son.

The one symbol of authority endorsed in every pedagogical text to a greater or lesser degree is that of the rod. Erasmus is the outstanding exception to this rule. It was for their excessive use of corporal punishment that Erasmus viewed public schools with apprehension:

We must choose, therefore, between a private tutor and a public school. A public school, of course, is the more common as well as the more economical solution; it is much easier for one schoolmaster to frighten a whole class into submission than to instruct one pupil according to liberal principles. (*De pueris* 325)

Ascham was also critical of schools for similar reasons, and, indeed, the risk of excessive severity in punishing students was of concern to many school governors, who looked for means to curb abuses. The statutes for Bruton, for instance, state that the schoolmaster shall be “alway discrete in correction of his scolers and in especiall that he shall not stryke any of his scolers beyng obedient upon the hedde ne on the fface with rodde ne with palmer.”<sup>7</sup> In 1618, Bruton’s schoolmaster, James, ignored these admirable prohibitions. Having refused permission for two brothers to return home for their breakfast, the bigger boy went home regardless, and at the return of the child, “James gave him three blows with his fist on the left ear ... and then caused his points to be untied and then gave him four unreasonable jerks with his rod” (*Bruton* 27). At Guildford the following inscription on the schoolroom walls was a visible reminder to schoolmasters: “*sit doctor piger ad poenas ad praemia velox et doleat quoties cogitur esse ferox* (let the master be slow to punish and swift to praise and let him grieve as often as he is compelled to be stern” (*Guildford* 90). Parents in Tudor England, without doubt, were privy to much anecdotal evidence on cruelty in schools, but for those seeking

authoritative advice from the treatises Erasmus would have given them just as much cause for concern. Erasmus is more vocal than any other author on the subject of corporal discipline, and colours his pedagogical writings with numerous anecdotes of cruelty by schoolmasters, maintaining that private tutors are of less hazard “because the teacher live[s] under the watchful eye of the parents” (*De pueris* 322; see also *Colloquia* 351-53). The anecdotes of cruelty are usually away from home: “As long as the boy lived at the schoolmaster’s house, no day would go by but that he would be beaten at least once or twice” (*De pueris* 330). In contrast, Mulcaster reflects the voice of support for public schools, “whatsoever inconveniences do grow in *common* schools” asserts Mulcaster, “yet the *private* is much worse, and hatcheth moe odde ills” (*Positions* 187.28-31). He counters accusations of secrecy in schools, accusations probably stemming from Erasmus (see *De pueris* 325), and claims greater dangers under cover of secrecy at home.

Such conflicting advice circulating on schools undoubtedly contributed to the resistance to public schools by the gentry. One modern critic commenting on the emphatic ‘spare the rod, spoil the child’ principle in *The Disobedient Child*, argues that resistance by “certain English Humanists,” by whom he probably means Ascham and Elyot, to this principle “had little influence upon the age.”<sup>8</sup> But I would argue that the influence of the pedagogical writings of Erasmus in Tudor England, while it may not have prevented abuses in schools, may well have influenced parents against public schools, and boarding schools in particular. Houlbrooke has also noted an interest in boarding schools in *The Disobedient Child*, and cites this play as evidence for the benefits of sending a problem child away to school before adolescence.<sup>9</sup> This chapter concurs with Houlbrooke’s observation, and takes the view that it is specifically boarding schools, or schools away from home, for which *The Disobedient Child* is arguing. It was of course specifically boarding schools and colleges that Erasmus targeted for acts of cruelty. Drama performed by schoolchildren offered a forum for combatting negative public perceptions of schools, and it seems likely that *The Disobedient Child* is designed to controvert arguments favouring gentle treatment and oral persuasions as effective child-rearing techniques over the rod. Two particular features of the play lead to this conclusion: the representation of the father as one who relies on “soft words and fair

speaking” (64), a preferred Erasmian form of discipline, and the weighting of attention paid to the issue of cruelty within schools.

Judging by the amount of space devoted to the topic of corporal punishment in the treatises, it must have been the most controversial issue for parents in terms of their child’s education. The understanding by some educators that children needed to be broken in, like an untamed horse, before they could adequately learn, was not uncommon (*Ludus Literarius* 288-89). Erasmus writes with loathing of a professor of theology who used publicly to whip his young students for no other reason than to “humble high spirits” (*De pueris* 327). Erasmus stands out in the pedagogical writings of the period as the only true critic of the harsh discipline approach. He knew he was out of step with most other authors: “At this point someone may din into our ears such Old Testament proverbs as ‘He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes’” (*De pueris* 332). Most interludes from this period dealing with the theme of education certainly din Solomon’s proverb into the ears of its audience; this was evident in the prologue to *Nice Wanton*, and can be found in other prodigal son plays, such as *Misogonus* (1571):

He that spare the rod hates the child, as Solomon writes.  
Whereby, in sparing him, now I perceive  
I hated him much.<sup>10</sup>

*The Disobedient Child* is no exception: “Remember what writeth Solomon the wise: / Qui parcit virgae, odit filium” concludes the Perorator towards the end of the play, urging on the audience a commonplace invariably attached to education.<sup>11</sup> The proverbs of Solomon were familiar to most schoolboys, being routinely included in the curriculum. In the preface to the 1548 standard grammar, Solomon’s proverbs along with the Psalter, and the books of Ecclesiastes and Ecclesiasticus are recommended for use as vulgars for the boys to turn into Latin (Elyot, *Governor* 39).<sup>12</sup> For Erasmus any discipline founded on fear was to be avoided, and he proffered his own paradigm for childrearing:

Our rod should be kind words of guidance; words of reproof are sometimes needed, but they should be filled with gentleness rather than any bitterness. These should be our instruments of discipline; only in this way can our children be properly raised at home and attain moral wisdom. (*De pueris* 332)

A phrase in Whittinton’s *Vulgaria* seems to concur with Erasmus: “The gentell exhortacyons of my mayster allured my mynde merveylously. ey? & made me more

diligent than all his austeryte coude do” (*Vulgaria* 111). The problem for today’s reader is to decide whether satire is intended with “ey?” The answer is probably yes, given the schoolboy audience these phrases were written for.

Few authors endorsed such gentle techniques of persuasion; most saw the rod as necessary, and many, including Vives, advocated the virtual suppression of the natural expression of affections on the part of fathers. This theory is aptly expressed in Googe’s translation (c1560), of *The Zodiake of Life*:

Thou that intendest for to keep a child in virtuousness,  
Now use to chide, and now the rod, and plain the way expresse,  
By which they may their feet direct: in no wise favour show,  
And ever angry: let them not the love of Fathers know.

(*Zodiake* 79)

The educators all offered paradigms of paternal behaviour which privileged reason and emotional control as masculine virtues, accepting that “the severitie of the father may be somewhat mittigated by the levity of the mother” as one treatise put it.<sup>13</sup> Becon, paraphrasing Ecclesiasticus, writes “laugh not with [your son], lest thou weep with him also ... Give him no liberty in his youth, and excuse not his folly” (*Catechism* 354).<sup>14</sup> Those who failed to adhere to such virtues were accused of effeminacy. The play endorses this claim as it vividly dramatises the effeminisation of both the gentle-natured father and the cowardly son. The play takes issue with a pedagogical theory that asserts fathers are better equipped than mothers to guide their children in the path of education, and, in a reversal of gender stereotypes, it goes further to propose, as does *July and Julian*, that women are generally more capable than men.

Considerable space is devoted to commentary on marriage, a topical debate in sixteenth-century literature, both within schools, as for instance in the texts of Palingenius or of Mantuan, and in the wider community. On the surface, the play is blatantly misogynistic, representing all women as shrews and a grief to husbands, yet any contemporary audience familiar with school culture is likely to have understood such misogyny as coloured by satire and to have recognised its function was largely to highlight male failure, not female faults. This is another play like *July and Julian*, which draws analogies between shrewish women and authoritarian schoolmasters, and one that

posits the provocative argument that unless men are better educated the authority of women will generally prevail.

### *The Disobedient Child* (c1559-1570)

Little is known about *The Disobedient Child* apart from its identification as a version of Ravisius Textor's Latin play *Juvenis, Pater, Uxor*.<sup>15</sup> Even less is known about its author, Thomas Ingelend or Ingelond, who, like many Renaissance playwrights, was a university man, "late student in Cambridge" according to the title page, and who has been tentatively identified as a student of Christ's College in about 1520.<sup>16</sup> *Annals of English Drama* dates the play between 1559 and 1570 although an earlier dating is possible.<sup>17</sup> The play has been tentatively identified as the work entered by Thomas Colwell on the Stationer's Register in 1569-70, entitled "an enterlude for boyes to handle and to passe time at christinmas." Colwell seems to have had an interest in material for performance by boys: in the 1560s he was twice licensed to published John Phillip's *The Play of Patient Grissill*, which has a title page announcing the theme of the obedience of children, and which, like *The Disobedient Child*, is suited to performance by children; in 1564-65 Colwell was further licensed to publish a ballad on the obedience of children which, it has been suggested, may have been influenced by Ingelend's work.<sup>18</sup>

*The Disobedient Child* has been recognised as belonging to the genre of school drama.<sup>19</sup> The play lacks the wit or sophistication usually associated with a courtly audience, and, as Michael Shapiro suggests, was "probably performed, if at all, by pupils of provincial grammar schools rather than by the London schoolboy and chorister troupes who brought plays to court each Christmas."<sup>20</sup> At the end of one scene, the prodigal son leaves 'the stage' with the call "Room, I say; room, let me be gone" (page 54).<sup>21</sup> Such a call, and there are others like it, is a convention of players demarcating space in a public hall or location rather than a dedicated theatre space, according to Peter Happé.<sup>22</sup> This would be appropriate for a school performance. The opening directs the audience to London for the initial action, but then moves to a large town forty miles outside London. There are further indications that the play was to be performed in a provincial town, as it includes material on the current state of the church and religion in a regional context, and

discusses local problems relevant to “other great towns beside this same” (page 66). ‘Great town’ is a term used to indicate comparatively small towns with a population of around two thousand according to a late seventeenth-century population study.<sup>23</sup> There is evidence to suggest that the school in question may have been a boarding school, or a school catering to boys from outside the immediate locality but who were lodged within the town (*alieni*), such as the King’s Schools at Canterbury, Peterborough or Ely, all cathedral schools with choristers (*Canterbury* 19; *Peterborough* 12; *Ely* 56).

Direct addresses to the audience make it evident that they belonged to the school community: “masters,” “children,” “parents,” “young men and children” (59, 83, 89). In the lengthy epilogue, the Perorator repeatedly addresses parents, children and young men, and a soliloquy by Satan, in which he warns “my dear children” (82), indicates a costumed devil on stage addressing children in the audience. Frequent references to classical authors and characters suggest a reasonable level of literacy in “the good gentle audience,” although this may be primarily geared to the schoolboys themselves, as may also be the request for “quiet silence” (45). This is another play invested with the pedagogue’s culture, and with the potential for parody and in-house satire. There is evidence of the self-referential material often found in drama written for performance by boys, such as pointing to the disjunction between the size of the youthful actor and the role in question. When the exasperated father asks whether his son will be a soldier and “so among Troyans and Romans be numbered?” (51), the boy responds with an appeal to the audience that draws attention to his youth and size:

See ye not, masters, my father’s advice?  
Have ye the like at any time heard?  
To will me thereto he is not wise,  
If my years and strength he did regard.

(51)

Various features of the school culture are evident, such as references to classical authors or figures, and the somewhat laborious punning on a Latin phrase in the mouths of two cooks is also typical of school drama (59). Academic displays of Latin knowledge are kept to a minimum, and where a rare Latin phrase is included, it is accompanied by a translation or paraphrase in English. This may be consistent with Janet Dillon’s theory that the use of Latin in vernacular, reformation drama held negative papist associations,

and was therefore used sparingly.<sup>24</sup> The Prologue echoes *July and Julian* in asserting the play's "honest intent" (45), indicating no transgression of political and religious propriety.

The tone of the play is set by the expectations of humour in the title: "A Pretie and mery new Enterlude: called the Disobedient Child." Ervin Beck has termed this interlude a "moral satire" in which the prodigal is "comically censured ... for getting himself into a situation from which he cannot extricate himself even though he has repented."<sup>25</sup> Satire, parody and farce colour the first half of the play, which is marked by lively dialogue and domestic action; in the concluding scenes the humour diminishes as lengthy soliloquies on the themes of education and obedience are incorporated, together with a recapitulation of the plot. The purpose of this dramatic convention, evident also in *Nice Wanton*, is to capture audience attention early and to moralise later. Thus the opening scenes are geared towards domestic realism, humour and allusions with which the audience feels comfortable and can readily identify.

The play takes a more secular approach than *Nice Wanton* to the rewards of virtue and obedience. As Alan Young has observed, Ingelend appears to have a utilitarian view of education, intent on equating education with prosperity and worldly comfort.<sup>26</sup> *The Disobedient Child* can be understood as a persuasion to schooling on the basis that a school education provides the appropriate masculine preparation for the inheritance of property and patriarchal responsibilities. The play's outcome suggests that patrimony will either be squandered by an uneducated and undisciplined son or will fall into the wrong hands through his controlling wife. The play justifies this emphasis on secular values by characterising the father as a virtuous man of high moral standards whose only weakness is his tender love for his son.

In this version of the prodigal son story, the son refuses to go to school and announces that he will marry, indicating that he is least fourteen, the legal age for contracting marriage for boys and past the years of puberty.<sup>27</sup> His gentle and concerned father, after lengthy efforts to persuade him to undertake some gainful employment, finally disinherits this his only child. The boy marries, and his wife turns out to be a virago who beats him and forces him into labouring and household work in a clear reversal of domestic roles. The boy repents, accepts that he is worthy of God's curse and returns to his father in the hope of a rescue. The advice he receives is effectively that "as



he had brewed, that so he should bake” (68), and he resigns himself to a bleak future with a violent wife. The ending is equally bleak for the father, as there is no virtuous other child to comfort him, and there is no prospect of future happiness for the son. At the end of the play the father insists his son must return to his wife, and in a direct reversal of the traditional forgiving father of the biblical story he tells his son “I am not he that will thee retain” (88). This variation suggests that the traditional story cannot accommodate the paternal integrity and personal tragedy that the dramatist wishes to demonstrate.

Many of the issues raised in this play were also evident in *Nice Wanton* and *July and Julian*: brutal schoolmasters, public schools as socially inferior, the education of girls, and the representation of shrewish mothers. The introduction of new issues demonstrates how central this play is to the Tudor public school culture: wealth as a risk factor in the cockering of children, the dangers of misinformation on public schools, and, of particular significance, cultural representations of maternal and paternal authority.

The prologue opens the drama by specifying, “in the city of London there was a rich man.” The “rich man” tag, which is retained by the father throughout the play, draws attention to the particular dangers of wealth to a child’s upbringing. “London” will have special meaning for those provincial schoolboys who used Robert Whittinton’s *Vulgaria* (1520): it will signify an ill-mannered and cockered child:

Preceptor:        In this great cytees as in London / yorke / perusy / and suche  
                              where best maner shold be: the chydre be so nysely / and wantonly brought up,  
                              that (comenly) they can lytle good. (*Vulgaria* 116)

The play endorses this theory. It is the father’s sensitive characterisation that is of interest here. This is no *senex iratus* of comedy, but rather a figure for sympathy, whose grief and dignity dominate the opening and closing scenes of the play. His failings as a parent are anticipated in the prologue, he loves his son “most tenderly” and moves him earnestly “now and then, / That he would give his mind to study” (46). His counselling techniques are unhurried and mild, and the modal “would give” expresses not insistence but hope. His arguments are based on pedagogical philosophy, such as “by knowledge, science and learning, / Is at the last gotten a pleasant life” (46). He is playing the older counsellor role, which Helgerson identifies as common to the opening scenes of prodigal son drama, and as exemplified by Barnabas in *Nice Wanton*. The weaknesses of such counsel are hinted

at early in this father's affection and the absence of firm authority. Opposing his father's gentle and considered approach, is the rude behaviour of his son:

His son, notwithstanding this gentle monition,  
As one that was clean devoid of grace,  
Did turn to a mock and open derision  
Most wickedly with an unshamefast face.

(46)

The brief opening sketch opposes a gentle, measured approach by a loving father versed in the theory of education, with a recalcitrant adolescent who holds his father in contempt. As the scene builds up it becomes increasingly evident that where the father fails is not in arguments or integrity, but in the exercise of his authority.

Given the prologue's description of the boy's "open derision," the initial dialogue presents the audience with a potentially ironic image of a son apparently ingenuously looking to his father for advice:

Father, I beseech you, father, show me the way,  
What thing I were best to take in hand,  
Whereby this short life so spend I may,  
That all grief and trouble I might withstand.

(46)

Allusions to familiar father-son dialogues may be in operation here. In one of Vives' dialogues, "The Father's Little Talk with his Boy," a young son hangs eagerly on his father's advice:

Father. My Tulliolus, I should like to have a talk with you soon.  
Boy. Why, my father? For nothing more delightful could happen to me than to listen to you. (*Exercitatio 7*)

This father goes on to propose school for his son, who responds with "I will go, father, with all the pleasure in the world!" (*Exercitatio 8*). In Ingelend's play, however, it becomes clear that the son has no intention of listening to his father's advice, least of all of going to school, and that his request for advice was merely a tactic to bring his father round to accepting marriage as the way to withstand "all grief and trouble" (46). By contrast, the father's responses give evidence of a desire to help his son to a suitable course in life, and he patiently gives each argument the boy puts forward due consideration and a measured, thoughtful answer drawing on prevailing educational wisdom. For an Elizabethan



tender fingers to have handled” (84). The boy proudly and probably exaggeratedly claims that he is a gentleman by birth (79), and parrots a familiar line of reasoning:

Even as to a great man, wealthy and rich,  
Service and bondage is a hard thing,  
So to a boy, both dainty and nice,  
Learning and study is greatly displeasing.

(48)

Here the dramatist is introducing the concept of the boy as effeminate, “dainty and nice,” which will be developed as the play progresses. It is clear that the father himself is not averse to public schooling, or to his son mixing with other boys (46). This is a notable shift from the more usual prodigal son play, such as *Misogonus*, where a wealthy but ignorant father shows nothing but disdain for academic learning:

I am able to keep him gentleman wise;  
I esteem not grammar and these Latin lessons;  
Let them study such which of meaner sort rise.<sup>28</sup>

The boy’s second argument is based on the notion of schools as places of “pain and woe, grief and misery” (47). Ingelend is again drawing on familiar material in representing home as a place of paradise (47), where boys would lie abed until late morning (84). This image was perpetuated through school translation exercises. The following student lament comes from a late fifteenth-century *Vulgaria*:

I was wont to lie still abed till it was forth days, delighting myself in sleep and ease. ...  
But now the world runneth upon another wheel. For now at five of the clock by the moonlight I must go to my book and let sleep and sloth alone. And if our master hap to awake us, he bringeth a rod instead of a candle.<sup>29</sup>

The book and the rod are the two inseparable symbols of schooling in this quotation, as they are in *The Disobedient Child*. For the father, school is symbolised by the authority of the book; for the son it is the authority of the rod, which he claims is wielded by “cruel tyrants” who flay the flesh of young boys (50-51). The familiar epithet for a schoolmaster, “tyrant,” is brought into the play, and Ingelend invites his audience to mock such popular usage by writing it, together with the term “prison” for school, into the son’s hyperbole. The boy claims schoolboys undergo horrific punishments being “whipped and scourged, and beat like a stone” both day and night (48). This may be a gross exaggeration, but the material was well known to boys and to the play’s audience, no matter which sphere of

society they were drawn from. Without any doubt, corporal punishment was a regular feature of school life, its practice discussed freely in the treatises, in school texts, and in school statutes (see pages 44-47). In the play the boy discourses at length on the horrors committed in schools:

Diseases among them do grow apace;  
For out of their back and side doth flow  
Of very gore-blood marvellous abundance;  
And yet for all that is not suffered to go,  
Till death be almost seen in their countenance.

(49)

When his father refuses to believe such treatment could possibly be given to “children of honest condition,” the son tells him the story of “an honest man’s son hereby buried, / Which through many stripes was dead and cold” (49), going into the gory detail:

Men say that of this man, his bloody master,  
Who like a lion most commonly frowned,  
Being hanged up by the heels together,  
Was belly and buttocks grievously whipped;  
And last of all (which to speak I tremble),  
That his head to the wall he had often crushed.

(50)

According to Young, this is a much-expanded version of a mere detail in Textor, leading him to conjecture that the author “may have some childhood experience of his own in mind.”<sup>30</sup> It is more likely that the writings of Erasmus have prompted some of the thematic material here, including the frowning of schoolmasters, which was another bone of contention with pedagogical authors. There are teachers, Erasmus writes, whose “expression is always forbidding, their speech is invariably morose, ... they are unable to say anything in a pleasant manner, and they can hardly manage to return a smile” (*De pueris* 324). More significantly, Erasmus relates two incidents of barbarity with elements similar to the above dramatic image: one where boys were used as battering rams (*De pueris* 331) and another in which a twelve-year-old schoolboy was sent home from school in a desperate condition, having suffered a punishment which included being stripped and “raised aloft by ropes slung underneath his arms, ... And while he hung there, he was savagely beaten on all sides until he nearly died; ... Shortly after the punishment, he fell ill, and both his body and his mind were in great danger” (*De pueris* 329).

Erasmus was the most vocal of all the pedagogical writers on the subject of cruelty by schoolmasters, both physical and emotional. He draws on his own experiences, we are told (*De pueris* 326), but he also offers much anecdotal evidence, as does the son in *The Disobedient Child*. Erasmus writes of diseased and immoral schoolmasters, of regular floggings of innocent boys, and of acts of depravity by schoolmasters and by older boys (*De pueris* 325, 327, 329). To the expert rhetorician, such detail may be understood for what it is, that is “in keeping with the rhetorical principle of *copia*, the argument is expounded in great, often digressive details, supported by a wealth of illustrations, anecdotes, and proverbial sayings” (*De pueris*, introduction 292). As far as the general public is concerned, however, the formalities of rhetorical decorum may be lost in the oral or fragmented transmission, and the bias against schoolmasters is beyond doubt. It is unusual in a school play to devote so much attention to anecdotes of brutality by schoolmasters. What the dramatist appears to be doing is demonstrating the effect on the public of such published anecdotes, pointing out that such material is then used as fuel in the arguments against schooling, and in particular boarding schools since it was effectively boarding institutions which Erasmus was attacking. Almost a century later, when Robert Burton wrote *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, he too claims that children who board in the houses of schoolmasters find “too much severity and ill usage.”<sup>31</sup> Another seventeenth-century pedagogical author, Charles Hoole, also dislikes the boarding school custom of “shutting of children up for a while into a dark room, and depriving them of a meals meat,” which is a punishment used in some Tabling Schools (boarding schools), and which “cannot be commendably or conveniently used in our greater Schooles.”<sup>32</sup> Two references in the play provide some evidence for linking this play with a boarding school: one is the assumption by the boy that it is boarding school his father envisages, when he protests that the stories of cruelty come “of those [boys] truly most of all other: / Which for a certain time have remained / In the house and prison of a schoolmaster” (48), and the other is the belated assertion by the father that if he had many more children he would not suffer “one of them all at home with me to tarry” (55).

Considerable weight is given in the play to the value of personal experience versus rumour:

What trial thereof hast thou taken, / That the school of thee is so ill bespoken? (48)

And this by experience he shall prove true. (69)

Now by experience true I do find. (76)

But yet, alas, I was quite deceived / The thing itself doth easily appear. (84)

Hast thou by proof, son, this thing tried? (85)

The son uses only anecdotal evidence to convince his father of the brutality meted out in schools, and the second-hand nature of his evidence is repeatedly noted: “At other boys’ hands I have it learned,” and “As unto me it was then reported” (48, see also 49). The father rejects such tales as false persuasion, claiming no schoolmaster could be so fierce or so cruel (49). Whether the boy has been falsely persuaded or not is another matter. It seems more likely he is following a policy of consciously using hearsay and hyperbole to manipulate his own father. This appears likely towards the end of the play, when, in desperate need of his father’s help, he tells the audience he will approach his father “without craft or wile” (85). The father himself offers no personal experiences of school to counter the boy’s charges, and this would be in line with the play’s ultimate purpose of persuading a still resistant sector of the community of the value of public schooling. That Ingelend is drawing attention to the dangers of hearsay and other unreliable forms of authority is also evident. All the arguments against schooling have come from the unreliable mouth of the son, and the play’s purpose is to refute them.

While his son has been getting progressively ruder, the father has continued in the same patient and measured vein with which he was characterised at the outset. His *modus operandi* is along the lines proposed by Erasmus, who suggested that when words of reproof were necessary, they should be filled with gentleness rather than bitterness (*De pueris* 332). This father has put his faith in the power of kind words of guidance and assumptions of paternal authority. He reasons with the language of theory and with abstractions verging on platitudes, such as claims that school will “prove so profitable,” is “a way more commodious,” it “maketh a man live so happily,” “A marvellous pleasure it bringeth unto us / As a reward for such painstaking” (46-47). Therefore, he asserts to his son:

come off, and be of good cheer,  
And go to thy book without any fear,  
For a man without knowledge (as I have read)  
May well be compared to one that is dead.

(47)

This is a variation on an argument found in the introduction to *De pueris*, where Erasmus reminds his readers that “a man without education has no humanity at all” (*De pueris* 298).<sup>33</sup> The father’s advice is predicated upon textual authority: “as I have read” (47), “because the scriptures declare” (51), “as the book saith” (87). At the end of the play the audience will be reminded of this by the Perorator: “You heard that by sentences ancient and old, / He stirred his son as he best thought” (90). Such “sentences” hold little weight with an impatient and disrespectful son; he later dismisses them as ironic “sageness and exhortation,” as mere “babble,” as lies from “busy brains” and “spiteful speech” (63-65). In the face of the failure of textual authority to persuade his son, the father falls back on his role as counsellor, “I would wish thee ... not for such tales my counsel to forsake” (50, see also 53, 54), and finally on assumptions of paternal authority: “by thy father’s will and intercession” (50, see also 51, 53).

The father draws his authority from literature, from scripture, and from assumptions of paternal authority, but never from the exercise of such authority. Shocked at his son’s intention to marry, he counsels firmly against marriage to which his son responds “I trust ye will not me otherwise compel” (53). And indeed the father does not compel his son. Here again the play may be echoing Erasmian theory that argued that compulsion was the tool of masters, not fathers, quoting Terence on the issue:

The old man in the comic play was right to believe that there is an immense difference between a father and a master. A master can exert his authority only through compulsion, but a father who appeals to his son’s sense of decency and liberality can gradually build up in him a spontaneous capacity for moral conduct which is untainted by any motive of fear. (*De pueris* 328)

Erasmus is, of course, attacking schoolmasters, and he does so by contrasting them with an approved father image. Robert Burton lights on the same Terentian father, Micio in *Adelphi*, not as an exemplum of gentle persuasion, but of foolish mildness in indulgent fathers who “Micio-like, with too much liberty and too great allowance ... feed their children’s humours.”<sup>34</sup> The usual approach was to suggest, as Ascham does, that if fathers were stricter, schoolmasters would not need to resort to the rod so often (*Scholemaster* 12).

In *The Disobedient Child*, the father’s method has failed, which should come as no surprise to those familiar with the opposing theory of child rearing. Those members of



the audience who had read the English version of *The Zodiake of Life* which dates from the same decade as the play (1560), may recognise that Ingelend is drawing on a familiar paradigm for parenting. The father in *The Disobedient Child* committed every error warned of by Palingenius:

... in no wise favour show  
 And ever angry: let them not the love of Fathers know.  
 For nothing can more hurtful be, than speak them fair unto.  
 (*Zodiake* 79)

Palingenius goes on to predict how sons will behave if fathers are not stern enough, and how fathers will be deceived by their sons' arguments:

Then greater heart in vice they take, then all things dare they do.  
 When you for truth shall take their words and makeest of them too much,  
 Bewitched sore with doting love, to children favour such  
 Is hurtful sure, for fear alone doth make them vice to fly,  
 Not reason then.  
 (*Zodiake* 79)

The father in *The Disobedient Child* made all these mistakes: he never chided, or resorted to the rod or to fear, and he listened to his son in good faith, putting his trust in reason, and in a tradition of paternal advice and authority.

By the end of this extended opening scene, a sense of frustration has been achieved by Ingelend, qualifying audience sympathy for the father by the desire for decisive, disciplinary action towards the disobedient boy. The scene ends with the father alone on stage, delivering a long soliloquy in which he recognises the error of his ways as a parent. As he acknowledges his failure to discipline his child earlier, this soliloquy serves as a gesture towards audience frustrations. His language and tone have changed. No longer measured or couched in modals, it has become one of plaint, and the matter of his soliloquy is no longer drawn from abstract theories or philosophy but from personal, domestic experience. This is where the measured, wise paternal voice takes on more maternal tones:

If I might live a hundred years longer,  
 And should have sons and daughters many,  
 Yet for this boy's sake I will not suffer  
 One of them all at home with me to tarry;  
 They should not be kept thus under my wing. (55)

The differentiating between paternal and maternal behaviour is a subtle feature of this play. The father uses the phrase “under my wing,” a saying which connotes a hen and chicks; it was already used in the prologue to indicate the father’s care for his son, “whilst he was under his father’s wing” (46). “Under the wing” was a term often used in a religious context for God’s love;<sup>35</sup> in secular use it draws on the familiar image of a mother bird protecting her children, as here in Whittinton’s *Vulgaria*:

It is not ye place / but bryngyng up yt maketh a chyld well manerde. for a man shal se a chylde in a gentylmans hous in ye countre that can better maner / than the chylde brought up at home / under ye moders wynges in the mydle of the cyte. (*Vulgaria* 117-8)

In the medieval Chester Mystery Cycle, Isaac submits to his father’s sword and prays for his mother’s blessing for “I come no more under her winge.”<sup>36</sup> The use of this image in *The Disobedient Child* supports the characterisation of this concerned but over-loving father as having behaved in a manner more suited to conventional images of a protective mother. There is, of course, no mother in this play, or any mention of nurses or other women in the household, and all the affection and pampering has come from the father. His self-recriminations echo much that is more familiar in terms of maternal images. In the following soliloquy his use of “we” refers back to his address “to every man that is a father”:

We deck them, we trim them with gorgeous array,  
We pamper and feed them, and keep them so gay,  
That in the end of all this they be our foes.  
We bass them, [we] kiss them, we look round about;  
We marvel and wonder to see them so lean:  
We ever anon do invent and seek out  
To make them go tricky, gallant, and clean.

(55)

These are familiar parental failings in the writings of the educationalists, particularly with regard to wealthy families. Erasmus rails at parents who stuff their child with delicacies, and “foist any novel design in clothing on a child” (*De pueris* 308), thus teaching it to be vain; fathers who commit these sins are in no sense a true father. “Bassing” (embracing) and kissing are quite unacceptable in Vives’ opinion, and inevitably lead to moral decay. The sympathetic portrayal of the father in *The Disobedient Child* necessarily requires him to demonstrate qualities, or failings as they may be perceived, more conventionally

associated with mothers. Left alone once the son has departed, the father expresses his grief in culturally feminine terms: “But yet seeing that he is my son, / He doth me constrain bitterly to weep” (56). Later, after hearing of his son’s marriage, the father’s behaviour is again represented in typically feminine terms:

Into my chamber I went again,  
And there a great while I bitterly weeped:  
This news to me was so great pain.  
And thus with these words I began to moan,  
Lamenting and mourning myself all alone.

(68)

In another prodigal son play, Gascoigne’s *The Glasse of Governement* (1575), the dramatist also canvasses this issue of the acceptable expression of grief in fathers. As one father grieves openly over the loss of his son, the other father chides him. It is right to care for your child, he reasons, “but this womanlike tendernes in you deserveth reprehention.”<sup>37</sup> Both Gascoigne and Ingelend are questioning cultural representations of masculinity as dispassionate and controlled. The pathos Ingelend allows in *The Disobedient Child* affirms that a father’s love is grounded in the heart, not in the head, as the text itself acknowledges (69). This does not, however, exonerate the father of responsibility. His lack of discipline comes into sharp focus when his son’s wife exerts her own form of discipline. When the new bride discovers her young husband has made no “careful provision” (75) for their future, her *modus operandi* is indicated by the stage directions: *Here the Wife must strike her Husband handsomely about the shoulders with something* (75-76). For the first time in the play, in a clear reversal of gender roles, the son sets to work - base manual and domestic work, and for the first time a figure of authority takes the stage.

The exercise of authority is a recurring motif in the play. There are servants who snub their noses at a master’s authority, “Yet for [my master’s] anger I pass not greatly, / His words they be but only wind!” (74), and a priest who addresses the audience on community values and on the problems afflicting the church due to lack of respect for clerical authority. He complains of his negligent clerk who sits “tippling of nut-brown ale” with no sense of shame or fear (65), and presents a scenario of disobedience by the clerk that parallels that of the father-son conflict. During the course of his lengthy

complaint he turns to the audience for support, “Unto you all I do me report” (66), aware that his own dignity within the community is at risk, as was that of the ineffective father. He determines to teach the clerk a lesson (66), thus offering a mirror image of the father’s later demonstration of good judgement in refusing to take his prodigal son back.

Paternal authority held no sway with a son who misjudged his father’s advice as words of spite, not love (80), and who believed no father would ever let his son be forced into taking up manual labour. When his father threatens him with cleaning privies as a consequence of receiving no education, the boy responds that this would be akin to turning him into a “slave” (51). The dramatist may be punning on “slave” by drawing on the school culture. According to Erasmus, “in the common usage of our language, we call our sons *liberi*, realizing that they should have a liberal education, which bears no resemblance to anything servile” (*De pueris* 327; see also *De tradendis* 69). Nonetheless, Erasmus employed the metaphor of slavery a number of times in relation to much contemporary schooling (*De pueris* 327-329), and Burton also suggests that “slavery” is a term commonly used by the grammar scholar and of particular relevance to those who are boarders. The real slavery, as the play ultimately presents it, is that of uneducated men doomed to serve authoritarian wives “as slaves that be hired!” (46).

The son is willing to forgo his inheritance, judging it “enough to be out of bands” from his father (54). He marries not just for lust, but also in order to escape paternal jurisdiction. As soon as the betrothal rites are completed his relief is evident: “Now I am safe, now I am glad, / Now I do live, now I do reign” (62). This allows the dramatist plenty of scope for ironic humour, as the young husband becomes slave to a masterful wife (77). Following a scene of the billing and cooing young lovers (70-71), and then of roistering and “ruffling” or riotous behaviour at extravagant banquets, which draw attention to dietary theories on wanton behaviour (73-74), the wife’s mind turns to the practicalities of how her husband proposes to make “provision” (75) for the two of them. As she points out, this is not her responsibility. For Ingelend’s audience the wife’s words undoubtedly ring true, it was a husband’s duty to “make provision for his wife” (*Catechism* 336), and the boy’s dereliction was serious in the eyes of the Church. According to Thomas Becon, this understanding comes from St. Paul:

To be short, this sentence of St Paul shall for ever and ever abide true, yea, and that unto the condemnation of all sluggish and negligent husbands, and such like: “if any man do

not provide for such as belong unto him, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” (*Catechism* 336)<sup>38</sup>

As the young wife sets about questioning her husband, her mode of address changes from the respectful ‘you’ to the domineering ‘thee,’ indicating a change of relationship. Her firm and authoritative approach presents the audience with a dramatic contrast to that of the tractable father. The young boy, who treated his father with such contempt, and who swaggered off stage in defiance, finds in his wife an authority of a different mettle:

Wife. Wherefore to thee I say once again,  
Because to take pains thou art so loth,  
By Christ, it were best wish might and main  
To fall to some work, I swear a great oath!

(75)

In language more suited to the masculine tongue, she continues to berate the young man for his ‘sluggishness,’ and for his answering back. Line by line, her role becomes that of parent and his of child, as she demonstrates what the father should have done. The decisive action which the father failed to exercise, and the boy never learned to respect, is taken by a young woman – played by a boy of course - with all the comic reversals and lessons about training that this will entail for an Elizabethan audience. Like Mawd, the mother in *July and Julian*, who used strokes on her daughter when words had no effect, this wife also observes that: “I see my commandment can take no place” and turns to more physical measures (75). A sense of comic relief and poetic justice pervade this scene. Humour is built into the text, suggesting that the scene was to be played as a farce, with the boy staggering on stage under a bundle of faggots as his wife scolds him. The boy complains desperately of “that frantic woman” (76-77), making it evident that the wife’s part was a vigorous one, and explicit stage directions indicate she frequently and violently cudgels her husband (76, 77, 78, 79).

The dramatist has allowed no occasion for the audience to develop any sympathy for the boy. His characterisation has focussed solely on immaturity and wilful disobedience, and, for a contemporary audience, the wife becomes the necessary discipline the child should have had from the father, and most certainly would have had from a schoolmaster. The commonplace linking of a wife to the rod of discipline, Mulcaster’s “Lady *birchely*” (*Positions* 270.6-7), is being brought into play and rendered with a comic literalness. Critics, like Viviana Comensoli and Alan Young, who have

taken the shrewish wife at face value have overlooked the pedagogical contexts. Rather than suggesting that “marriage is only tentatively advocated,”<sup>39</sup> the play’s outcome submits that this shrewish wife has been the salvation of her reprobate husband. Rather than being “far more severe than any schoolmaster would have managed,” she is closely allied to the schoolmaster.<sup>40</sup> The shrewish wife is the schoolmaster’s rod, a euphemism with which schoolboys were already familiar from their *vulgaria*:

I maryed my mayster’s doughter to daye full soore agayn my wyll.  
My thynketh her so roughe / and soore a huswyfe yt I cared not & she were brend in the  
hote coles.  
She embraseth or enhaunseth me so yt the prynt of her stykketh upon my buttockes a  
good whyle after. (*Vulgaria* 87-88)

As “embraseth” suggests, a wife symbolises punishment and reward, the one painful and the other erotic. Alan Stewart, in a discussion on homoeroticism in Elizabethan schools, has argued that this metaphorical analogy of wives with school discipline in the *vulgaria* text means “the handing over of the son [to the schoolmaster] makes him into a girl to be enjoyed by her husband/schoolmaster.”<sup>41</sup> Such a homoerotic reading is unlikely in *The Disobedient Child*, given the play’s overt purpose of persuading parents of the benefits of public schools, yet the cultural understanding of the boy’s wife as substitute for the schoolmaster’s rod is likely to have been a familiar one for Ingelend’s audience. The rod, the schoolmaster’s trademark, was commonly used as a simile for a demanding wife. In the prose romance, *Two Lancashire Lovers* (1640), the heroine dissuades an unwanted suitor by using the rhetorical arguments of a scowling wife, a scolding nurse and a brawling child as a deterrent to marriage; she rests her case with “Be a good child and keep yourself from the rod.”<sup>42</sup>

The dramatic climax comes when the boy threatens to kill his wife with a knife; the text again offers opportunities for comic stage action:

Wife. Slay me with thy knife, thou shitten dastard!  
Dost thou think to find me such a dissard?  
By Cock’s bones! I will make thy skin to rattle,  
And the brains in thy skull more deeply to settle.  
[Here the Wife must lay on load upon her Husband.] (77)

Verbally and physically overcome, the defiant boy reverts to a child, lying prostrate on the floor as his wife chides him, “Go to, foolish calf” (77), and then to a complaining,

weeping housewife as she sets him to the laundry and housework (78-79). Such domestic labours may remind the schoolboys of the labours the mythological Omphale set the enslaved Hercules, in Ovid's *Heroides*.<sup>43</sup> Further stage directions continue the visual farce: *Here she must knock her Husband* (78), *Here her Husband must lie along on the ground, as though he were sore beaten and wounded* (79), culminating in a parody of the wife as 'master' of the house instructing the husband as 'mistress' of the house not to move out of doors during his/her absence:

Take heed, I say, this house thee retain,  
And stir not for any thing out of my door,  
Until that I come hither again,  
As thou wilt be rewarded therefore.

(79)

A woman's place was indoors, as authors such as Vives and Becon repeatedly insisted (*Catechism* 343). The reversal of gender roles, already evident in the feminisation of the father, is continued here in the boy as wife, and the wife as master, as father and, by inference, as schoolmaster.

The wife is, of course, being characterised as a shrew, as was Mawd in *July and Julian*. Both plays present the scold as a necessary female corrective to faulty male judgement. The only other female figure in the play endorses this image of women as educators of men. Included in the *dramatis personae* are two cooks, one male and one female, for which there is no precedent in the source text by Textor.<sup>44</sup> Outwardly, the Woman-Cook is a shrew with a sharp-tipped nose, named Blanche, and called "blab-it-out" by her male companion, yet he is named Long-tongue, synonym for a "babbling gossip," and he indeed turns out to be the talkative, nagging one, while she proves more competent and organised. The audience learns that this cook has had some schooling: "in times past I went to school, / And of my Latin primer I took assay" (59). Long-tongue, addressing himself to the audience, responds with the familiar reasoning found in the pedagogical treatises that girls rarely remembered much of what they learned (*Positions* 177.30-178.10):

Masters, this woman did take such assay,  
And then in those days so applied her book,  
That one word thereof she carried not away,  
But then of a scholar was made a cook.

I dare say she knoweth not how her primer began,  
Which of her master she learned then.

(59)

It goes without saying that Blanche proves him wrong, and she quotes a phrase taken from Psalm 50 and found in the English primer,<sup>45</sup> “*Domine labia aperies,*” as proof, thus opening the way for his ignorance in understanding her Latin (59). This choice quotation, “Lord, open my lips” for a ‘blab-it-out’ cook, is another instance of the play’s ironic humour. Cooks, it seems, were proverbially loose tongued. In a colloquy by Erasmus, a female cook is represented as a loose-tongued “blab of a cook,” but the context suggests a backhanded compliment to her for her sense of judgement towards two adult men playing knucklebones; “it’s best to shut the doors, so our cook won’t see us playing like children” one of the men cautions (*Colloquia* 440-41). Erasmus may be suggesting women are sometimes better judges of character than men, as Ingelend seems to hint in *The Disobedient Child*. As the father argues with his son in the opening scene, he vainly hopes that “If thou were as wise as I have judged thee, / Thou wouldst in this case be ruled by me” (53). He has, of course, entirely misjudged his son. Blanche, the Woman-Cook, proves a shrewder judge of character as she notes the bride’s shrewish qualities:

What though she be now so neat and so nice,  
And speaketh as gentle as ever I heard:  
Yet young men, which be both witty and wise,  
Such looks and such words should not regard.

(58)

Her final lines go straight to the heart of the problem; the boy is demonstrably neither witty nor wise. In Dillon’s analysis of language in this play, the cook’s use of Latin, together with her plain vernacular speech, positions her as an authoritative teacher. By contrast, the distortions of Latin by the Man-Cook are representative of the reprobate.<sup>46</sup> Unlike Dalila in *Nice Wanton*, who was ashamed of her Latin, this woman is proud to remember her Latin and her schooling. She thus becomes, as Dillon suggests, a spokeswoman for the virtues of education.<sup>47</sup> Her characterisation by the Man-Cook as a shrew does nothing to undermine this; rather it endorses her as a figure of authority.

Time and again in *The Disobedient Child* the dramatist draws ironic attention to the female shrew, usually in relation to marriage. The dramatic treatment suggests the play is invoking misogyny as a trope for masculine failure. Only when the father first



hears of his son's plans to marry, does his patience finally explode: "Why, foolish idiot, thou goest about a wife, / Which is a burthen and yoke all thy life" (53), and the wise, measured tone turns heated as he realises he has failed, and women become the butt of his acrimony. He discourses bitterly and at length on the effort and expense fathers go to in order to feed and support their children, of the infant that will cry in the cradle, and of the wife who will brawl and scold (68). He concludes his speech with hostile classical precedents on marriage:

True he shall find, that Hipponax did write,  
Who said with a wife are two days of pleasure;  
The first is the joy of the marriage-day and night,  
The second to be at the wife's sepulture.

(69)

Immediately following this scene, the dramatist brings the young couple on stage. Still entranced with each other, they too draw on classical precedents in their eulogies on marriage, but the precedents they choose are comically inappropriate:

Husb. Who then merry marriage can discommend,  
And will not with Aristotle in his Ethics agree?  
But will say, that misery is the end.

(71)

Aristotle was well known for his dispraise of marriage and a level of misogyny that other authors did not share, such as Thomas Elyot who attributed Aristotle's misogyny to a "cankered malice" in the philosopher.<sup>48</sup> Among others, the young husband then chooses Socrates and the Cynic philosopher Crates of Thebes. Crates preached a harsh gospel of voluntary poverty and independence, spending years wandering in poverty with his wife, hardly a role model for this prodigal son's expectations from marriage. Crates was an outspoken critic of parents who failed to educate their children, as Erasmus himself noted (*De pueris* 304). For the initiated, therefore, Ingelend is indulging in irony, as well as drawing attention to the role of classical authors in perpetuating misogyny. Socrates, of course, is also drawn on for further evidence of the miseries of marriage:

If that thou thinkest thyself alone  
Only to lead this irksome life,  
Thou may'st learn what grief, sorrow and moan,  
Socrates had with Xantippe his wife;

Her husband full oft she taunted and checked,  
 And, as the book saith, unhonestly mocked.

(87)

The boy's reply comically exposes his ignorance and suggests that school would have taught him about women too:

I cannot tell what was Socrates' wife,  
 But mine I do know, alas, too well;  
 She is one that is ever more full of strife,  
 And of all scolders beareth the bell.

(87)

The fact that the father, for all his literary quotations and his initially reasoned approach, retreats into embittered misogyny, may indicate that the father himself did not attend school. Much as the boy relied on hearsay, so the father himself could only counter these arguments by quoting what he had read or heard. For a play intent on promoting public schooling, this material is its own evidence of an audience in need of persuasion.

For all the play's apparent misogyny, *The Disobedient Child* has to be viewed as an argument for the authority of women by default. The play's purpose is to show that it is only education and the prospects that come with education, which can make a man out of a boy and thus prevent subjection to women. The Man-Cook, impetuous, gossiping, and in a hurry to get to the ale-house, concedes his dependence on the better educated Woman-Cook, as he nags her to hurry: "Come away, I bid thee, and tarry no longer, / To trust to thy help I am much the better!" (56). As in *Nice Wanton*, where the father's presence hovered off-stage, so here in *The Disobedient Child*, the absent mother becomes part of the play's discourse. The sole reference to the mother, presumed dead, is made by the boy: "Oftentimes unto me heretofore / My father did say, declaring his mind, / That in matrimony was pain evermore" (76). Given the play's treatment of the shrew figure, the inescapable inference is that, had this mother lived, she might have been a more effective parent than her husband. Since she did not live, her son is now locked into a terrible marriage, and her husband faces a lonely and disappointing old age. Shrewish as the young wife may be, she is not likely to cocker her children as her father-in-law did.

Critics of the play have not regarded the shrew as in any way a positive figure. Richard Helgerson attributes to northern Protestant humanism the misogyny evident in this and in other prodigal son plays from this period, and he concludes that the intention

was to remove the option of maternal charity for the prodigal son.<sup>49</sup> This chapter concurs with Helgerson in crediting the misogyny in the play to the humanist education literature, but has argued that, when the school culture is taken into account in plays performed by boys, the dramatic treatment is inevitably coloured by parody and pedagogical intertextuality. *The Disobedient Child* demonstrates that maternal charity was not the only quality mothers were to be valued for; they were also capable as effective educators. Rebecca Bushnell has difficulty reconciling the “uncomfortable analogy between the schoolmaster’s and the shrew’s tyranny,” because she considers such tyranny as suggestive of uncontrolled passion.<sup>50</sup> This difficulty is partially resolved if the shrew’s tyranny is viewed not as uncontrolled passion but as the schoolmaster’s rod, or as the legitimate exercise of discipline for the sake of social control. Where the shrew and the pedagogue’s rod part company is in the end result of such discipline on the male child. As Bushnell herself notes, the shrew’s discipline will turn the boy into a submissive and unmanly subject; the school’s discipline, however, together with the learning it imparts, will turn the boy into a man. This is what the play, on behalf of the school it was written for, is ultimately offering its audience. Women may be able to train boys, exemplified in the play as training in housework, but women cannot train boys in manliness.

Women as educators of men are a feature of this play. The Woman-Cook educates the Man-Cook, and the young wife educates her young husband, albeit with physical discipline. But the play also suggests women have gained by their access to schooling. In a brief reference to church attendance the young wife comments on the skills involved in memorising sermons, and how this appears to be a declining skill:

Sometimes to church [young couples] do repair,  
 To hear the sermon that shall be made,  
 Though it to remember they shall have small care;  
 For why they be now but few of that trade. (71)

Those who are now “few of that trade” are schoolchildren. Schools were usually responsible for ensuring children attended church, and for examining them on the sermon afterwards.<sup>51</sup> At Guildford the boys were to make notes on the sermon “that thereby they may be endowed with vertue and pietie together with good letters” (*Guildford* 76; see also *Wyggeston* 18, *Kirkwall* 14). Brinsley similarly recommends for “all those that can write, the taking of notes of Sermons, and delivering them againe, or making repetitions” and “to

conceive and answer the severall points of the Sermons” in Latin (*Ludus Literarius* 23, see also xviii). The dramatist is drawing attention to the role of schools in religious education. The fact that he puts this in the mouth of the wife gives her knowledge of school that the son does not have. The play presents the education of women here as a threat to men, not in terms of the usual misogynist’s fears of subversive writing or salacious reading by literate women, but in simple terms of ability. Ingelend, like Mulcaster, wrote from a position of support for public schooling. The education of women is included in this support, but with the proviso that men retain control through a superior, presumably Latin, education. The anonymous author of *Nice Wanton*, on the other hand, may have taken a more tokenistic view of education for girls, since that play’s main voice of moral authority, Barnabas, urges his sister to finish her schooling and return to more domestic skills such as spinning and sewing.

One further contemporary argument for wives as educators can be identified, and this one is again treated with dramatic irony. When the son argues for marriage as the answer to his needs, he draws on a prevailing theory that a virtuous wife could control his adolescent behaviour:

For so much as all young men for this my beauty,  
As the moon the stars, I do far excel,  
Therefore out of hand with all speed possibly  
To have a wife, methink, would do well,  
For now I am young, lively, and lusty,  
And welcome besides to all men’s company.

(52)

The suggestion is that without the control of a wife, he is at risk. This is another instance of the effeminsation of the boy: images of “beauty” and “moon” being more usually associated with women, and Ingelend may be suggesting that the son is at risk of becoming a catamite – ironically, precisely because he has not gone to school. The notion that a virtuous wife could transform a wild young man was not uncommon, as Esther Sowernam pointed out in her 1617 contribution to the pamphlet debate on women:

If [fathers] have a sonne given to spending and companiekeeping, who is of a wild and riotous disposition, such a father shall presently be counselled, helpe your sonne to a good wife, marry him, marry him, that is the only way to bring him to good order, to tame him, to bring him to be an honest man.<sup>52</sup>

Sowernam goes on to observe astutely that “the auncient fathers doe herin acknowledge a greater worthinesse in women then in men.”<sup>53</sup> The notion was popular material with dramatists. In *The London Prodigal* (1605), a relieved father tells his reprobate son “[I] applaud thy fortune in this vertuous maide / Whom heaven hath sent to thee to save thy soule.”<sup>54</sup> There is, in fact, a good argument for reading the boy’s wife as his temporal salvation. Without her rigorous discipline, he is more likely to have ended up on the gallows or dying of the pox like other prodigals in similar plays such as *Nice Wanton* or Gascoigne’s *Glasse of Governement*. The drawback to a shrewish wife, however, is that she renders a browbeaten husband unmanly, just as the boy’s dead mother seems to have done to his father.

Authority by default is never satisfactory, and the play’s primary focus is on education as the only way for men to counter female authority, and to ensure the safety of their patrimony. For the play’s intended audience, education, and the material prospects education provides, reside firmly in schooling where authority is derived from both book and rod. The frequent references to textual authority within the play appear to suggest that knowledge and learning are associated exclusively with textual authority, as Dillon has argued. This has led her to consider that here, as in similar plays, the book as icon may be seen as a substitute for Catholic ritual:

It may be the failure of Protestantism to offer any sensory appeal in place of banished Catholic ritual that drives it to fetishise the book as physical object and to produce a drama that repeatedly speaks of, handles and draws the gaze towards the book.<sup>55</sup>

This, however, fails to take into account the inseparable relationship between the book and the rod in Tudor schooling. For all the father’s appeals to textual authority, he failed to persuade his child. The tradition of father-son counselling dialogues has also been drawn into the equation, only to prove similarly unreliable. The father’s approach is an apt example of Helgerson’s assertion that the Elizabethans emphasized appearance rather than reality, form rather than substance, and that their precepts teach a cautiously conventional mode of behavior.<sup>56</sup> In the absence of the rod, the book alone, and preceptual advice, is deprived of much of its professed authority.

In summary, then, this is one of the more carefully considered portrayals of fatherhood in sixteenth-century comedy. It rejects the Terentian comic senex figure, as it does the humanist ideal of the wise and firm father, portraying instead a figure of pathos,

naiveté, and just as prone to the misguided expressions of love for his child more usually attributed to mothers. *The Disobedient Child* appears to set up an Erasmian-style father, whose faith in “kind words of guidance” (*De pueris* 332), proves ill founded, as evidenced in the son’s song :

For whereas he moved me to the school,  
And only to follow my book and learning:  
He could never make me such a fool,  
With all his soft words and fair speaking.

(64)

The play concurs with much that Erasmus and other pedagogical authors have to say about education, such as the need to start early, but it takes issue with other features of the pedagogical debate. The excessive focus on school cruelty is an evident concern. The dramatist may well be pointing to the deterrent effect such public airings of severe corporal punishment have on enrolments, particularly for boarding schools who relied on wealthier parents. Similarly, the play questions assumptions that the father is the more capable parent. The prodigal son plot, with its focus on fathers, offered the ideal vehicle for dealing with paternal resistance to schooling, and had the further merit of directing attention to the absence of maternal authority. The strong focus on women’s practical abilities leaves no doubt that the dramatist values mothers for their practical, and presumably stricter, approach to parenting. However, fathers should look to the public schools to assist in the successful training of sons, preferably public schools away from home, and, contrary to popular belief, they should value schools for the development of manhood. And for the boys in the audience the message is clear: if they wish to be master of their own household and affairs, they should view schooling as preparation for these roles.

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 NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

<sup>1</sup> Sixteenth-century commonplace book, MS. V.a.381, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC 15.

<sup>2</sup> For example, *Misogonus* (c1571), *Six Anonymous Plays*, ed. John S. Farmer (London: Early English Drama Soc., 1906).

<sup>3</sup> Geoffrey Whitney, *A Choice of Emblemes and Other Devises* (Leyden 1586), English Experience 161 (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1969) 73.

<sup>4</sup> Ralph A. Houlbrooke, *The English Family 1450-1700* (London: Longman, 1984) 145..

<sup>5</sup> Lazarus Pyott (1596), quoted in T. W. Baldwin, *William Shakspeare's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke*, vol 2 (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1944) 45.

<sup>6</sup> Richard Helgerson, *The Elizabethan Prodigals* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1976) 17-20.

<sup>7</sup> "Records of the King's School, Bruton," *Somerset & Dorset Notes & Queries* 3 (June 1893): 245.

<sup>8</sup> Alan R. Young, *The English Prodigal Son Plays: A Theatrical Fashion of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Jacobean Drama Studies 89 (Salzburg: U of Salzburg, 1979) 112.

<sup>9</sup> Houlbrooke, *English Family* 151.

<sup>10</sup> *Misogonus* 168.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Ingelend, *The Disobedient Child, The Dramatic Writings of Richard Wever and Thomas Ingelend*, ed. John S. Farmer, (London: Early English Drama Soc., 1905). All further references are within the text.

<sup>12</sup> See also Baldwin, *Small Latine*, vol 1, 683.

<sup>13</sup> W.B., *The Court of good Counsell* (1607), Early English Books 1475-1640, University Microfilms International. Reel No. 1375. Chapter 20.

<sup>14</sup> Boys were familiar with these adages as Ecclesiasticus, Proverbs and Paul were common components of the lower-school curriculum, Elyot, *Governor* 39.

<sup>15</sup> Young, *Prodigal Son Plays* 104-05; see also Janette Dillon, *Language and Stage in Medieval and Renaissance England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998) 237n20.

<sup>16</sup> J. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1922) part I, vol 2.

<sup>17</sup> Alfred Harbage, ed., *Annals of English Drama 975-1700*, rev. by S. Schoenbaum, 3rd ed. rev. by Sylvia Stoler Wagonheim (London: Routledge, 1989) 36; a line in the epilogue, "look that ye truly serve the king," may indicate an earlier dating.

<sup>18</sup> "Ingelend, Thomas," *DNB*, vol 10, 432.

<sup>19</sup> Young, *Prodigal Son Plays*, Chapter III "The Later School Plays," 103-04.

<sup>20</sup> Michael Shapiro, *Children of the Revels: The Boy Companies of Shakespeare's Time and Their Plays* (New York: Columbia U, 1977) 152.

<sup>21</sup> There are no act, scene or line divisions in this edition of the play.

<sup>22</sup> Peter Happé, *English Drama before Shakespeare* (London: Longman, 1999) 15.

- <sup>23</sup> This is Gregory King's survey (1695): Peter Laslett, *The World we have lost* (New York, NY: Scribner's, 1965) 56.
- <sup>24</sup> Dillon, *Language and Stage* 104.
- <sup>25</sup> Ervin Beck, "Terence Improved: The Paradigm of the Prodigal Son in English Renaissance Comedy," *Renaissance Drama*, 6 (1973): 107-22.
- <sup>26</sup> Young, *Prodigal Son Plays* 107.
- <sup>27</sup> Henry Swinburne, *A Treatise of Spousals, or Matrimonial Contracts* (1686) (New York: Garland, 1985) 47.
- <sup>28</sup> *Misogonus* 140.
- <sup>29</sup> Quoted in Craig R. Thompson, *Schools in Tudor England* (Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1958) 5-6.
- <sup>30</sup> Young, *Prodigal Son Plays* 104.
- <sup>31</sup> Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), eds. Floyd Dell and Paul Jordan-Smith (New York: Tudor, 1938) 285.
- <sup>32</sup> Quoted in Edith Rowland, ed., *A Pedagogue's Commonplace Book* (London: Dent, 1925) 212-13.
- <sup>33</sup> The Latin reads: 'Proinde, si cogitaris quam non sit homo, qui literarum expertus est': "De pueris Statim Ac Liberaliter Instituendis," *Opera Omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami*, ed. Jean-Claude Margolin, Ordinis Primi, Tomus Secundus (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1971) 24.
- <sup>34</sup> Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy* 285.
- <sup>35</sup> Matthew 23:37.
- <sup>36</sup> *The Chester Mystery Cycle*, eds. R. M. Lumiansky and David Mills, vol 1, Early English Text Society ss 3 (London: Oxford UP, 1974) 73, line 371.
- <sup>37</sup> George Gascoigne, *The Glasse of Governement, The Complete Works of George Gascoigne*, ed. John W. Cunliffe, vol 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1910) 84.
- <sup>38</sup> 1 Timothy 5:8.
- <sup>39</sup> Viviana Comensoli, *'Household Business': Domestic Plays of Early Modern England* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1996) 41.
- <sup>40</sup> Young, *Prodigal Son Plays* 105.
- <sup>41</sup> Alan Stewart, "Traitors to Boyes Buttockes," *Close Readers: Humanism and Sodomy in Early Modern England* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997) 98, 104.
- <sup>42</sup> Richard Brathwaite, *The Two Lancashire Lovers: or The Excellent Histoyr of Philocles and Doriclea*, ed. Henry D. Janzen, Barnabe Riche Soc. Publications 8 (Ottawa: Dovehouse, 1998) 94.
- <sup>43</sup> As in Ovid's *Heroides*, *OCD* 752.
- <sup>44</sup> Young, *Prodigal Son Plays* 105.
- <sup>45</sup> Dillon, *Language and Stage* 238n23.
- <sup>46</sup> Dillon, *Language and Stage* 131; Dillon notes the cook is a stock figure of earlier drama, as does Young who identifies Plautus as a source, *Prodigal Son Plays* 106n4.



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<sup>47</sup> Dillon, *Language and Stage* 131.

<sup>48</sup> Thomas Elyot, *The Defence of Good Women (1531-38), Vives and the Renaissance Education of Women*, ed. Foster Watson (London: Arnold, 1912) 223.

<sup>49</sup> Helgerson, *Elizabethan Prodigals* 36.

<sup>50</sup> Rebecca Bushnell, *A Culture of Teaching: Early Modern Humanism in Theory and Practice* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1996) 29.

<sup>51</sup> It was apparently in schools that shorthand originated, due to the necessity of trying to get the boys to present *verbatim* reports of sermons: Foster Watson, *The Beginnings of the Teaching of Modern Subjects in England* (London: Pitman, 1909) liv.

<sup>52</sup> Esther Sowernam, "Esther hath hang'd Haman ..." *Half Humankind: Contexts and Texts of the Controversy about Women in England 1540-1640*, eds. Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara F. McManus (Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1985) 231.

<sup>53</sup> Sowernam, "Esther hath hang'd Haman ..." 114.

<sup>54</sup> *The London Prodigal* (1605), Tudor Facsimile Texts, ed. John S. Farmer (n.p: n.p., 1910) G3.

<sup>55</sup> Dillon, *Language and Stage* 125.

<sup>56</sup> Helgerson, *Elizabethan Prodigals* 20.

*The English Gentleman and English Gentlewoman (1631)*

Richard Brathwait

## Chapter Five: Pedagogy, parents and the nursery

### *Patient Grissill and The Winter's Tale*

The stages of development in a child were traditionally measured in early modern thought by seven-year stretches.<sup>1</sup> *Infantia* encompassed from birth to seven, this being the age at which a child could speak, reason and differentiate between good and bad; it was legally possible to contract spousals at the age of seven for this reason.<sup>2</sup> *Pueritia*, from seven to fourteen, covered the years “between infancy and Ripe Age” and was generally limited by the ability to procreate; it was thus assumed to be earlier for girls than for boys.<sup>3</sup> *Adolescentia*, also known as *puberes*, was the third stage of development, between approximately fourteen and twenty-one, and was the time “of Ripe or Lawful Age for Marriage.”<sup>4</sup> The previous chapters have considered plays featuring schools and school-age children; primarily in the *adolescentia* stage, with little Dick, in *July and Julian*, still in *pueritia*. This chapter extends the scope of the thesis to include drama and the *infantia* period of childhood. The plays are fewer in number and the childrearing issues change as the subject matter shifts from the public domain of schools into the private, domestic sphere of the nursery. The primary thrust of drama dealing with school-age children was towards increased moral and physical discipline, and towards defining the relative merits of fathers, mothers and schoolmasters in the exercise of such discipline. Drama dealing with infant care, however, brings to the fore fundamental concepts of parenting which stem from Renaissance dichotomies of gender, and from theories on the nature of mother-child bonding and of childhood. Fear of the close bonds developed between mother and child during pregnancy, and continued in the nursery environment, impels much of a pedagogical theory which claimed that masculine, humanist values must resist feminine influences in infancy if the child is to be successfully educated and become a valued member of civilized society.

This chapter traces a powerful defence in two plays against the exclusive claims of paternal authority as defined by the humanists and pedagogical writers. The two plays belong to the Patient Griselda tradition, the most familiar of all stories on the constancy of women, and both suggest that fathers as well as mothers are the victims of a culture that sought to present the nursery as a threat to patriarchal values. *Patient Grissill* uses one

scene featuring two newborn infants to draw attention to the psychology of parenting at its most instinctive, and *The Winter's Tale* uses a young son to focus attention on gendered values in parenting and on parental duty of care. Both plays uphold many of those values of the nursery, which were criticised by the educators, such as nursery tales and the all-female environment, and both plays dismiss anxieties about other values, such as maternal breastfeeding influences and close mother-infant bonding. *The Winter's Tale* roundly censures a paternal image that fails to value and protect childhood qualities and the nursery environment that nurtures these qualities.

In the early modern period, English tradition held that the *infantia* years were spent under the mother's care, but the continental humanists argued strongly for intervention by fathers, and urged the exercise of paternal authority in the nursery to counter early maternal influences. Erasmus targets the infant years of childhood in his treatise *De pueris Statim ac Liberaliter Instituendis Declamatis* (A Declamation on the Subject of Early Liberal Education for Children). He repeatedly exhorts the male reader not to "follow common fashion and opinion by allowing your son's first years to pass by without the benefits of instruction" (*De pueris* 298; see also 319). Erasmus opens and closes his treatise on this theme: "if you reflect upon all this, you will not allow your new-born son to lose, no, not seven years, but even three days, during which he might receive to some advantage his first grounding or instruction in knowledge" (*De pueris* 346). Famous men of learning started their training at a very young age according to Erasmus, who cites, as an example, the poet Lucan, who was taken at the age of six months to Rome and "immediately entrusted to the care of the most outstanding teachers of his day" (*De pueris* 344). Motivated by the educator's ideals, Erasmus exhorts his readers not to listen to "any ignorant woman or common nobody" (*De pueris* 299), but to hearken to the experts. He concludes with the provocative claim that:

To be a true father, you must take absolute control of your son's entire being; and your primary concern must be for that part of his character which distinguishes him from the animals and comes closest to reflecting the divine. (*De pueris* 299-300)

Implicit in this statement is the humanist understanding that only a father can truly bring out the best moral and intellectual qualities in his child; a mother's care, on the other hand, is "expended on man's lower nature" (*De pueris* 300).

The battle for paternal and pedagogical control identified in the preceding chapters finds its roots in this dichotomy of gender values and of competing interests for control of the infant *tabula rasa*. The hostility directed towards mothers may thus be redefined in terms of professional jealousy by one group of educators towards another, as suggested by the following plea to his readers by Vives: "Children run unto their mother, and ask her advice in all things. They inquire everything of her; whatsoever she answereth, they believe and regard, and take it even for the Gospel. O mothers, what an occasion for you unto your children, to make them whether you will, good or bad!" (*De institutione* 125).

### **Sources of pedagogical authority on infant care**

It is important at the outset of this discussion to note a marked difference between the European humanists and their English counterparts when considering the early childhood years. English parents looking for guidance in the English-authored education advice literature would find little on infant care, whereas continental authors included such topics as pre and post natal care, breastfeeding and early infant training. As a consequence, this chapter draws predominantly on the authorities of Erasmus and Vives for humanist theories on early childcare. The English authors were conspicuously reticent about claiming any expertise for infancy or for issues to do with maternity. This may indicate that the custom which allowed mothers or nurses control of children for the first seven years was strong in England and less receptive to change.<sup>5</sup> By the late sixteenth century, there is, in fact, evidence to suggest that pedagogical claims to authority on infant care were considered an appropriate target for satire in England.

Thomas Elyot begins his program of education at the age of seven, the traditional point of separation between mother and child and the start of formal training. Roger Ascham pointedly includes a disclaimer in his preface, making it clear that his authority started and finished with a child's schooling:

And one thing I would have the Reader consider in readinge this booke, that bicause, no Scholemaster hath charge of any childe, before he enter into hys Schole, therefore I leaving all former care, of their good bringing up, to wise and good Parentes, as a matter

not belonging to the Scholemaster, I do appoynt thys my Scholemaster, than, and there to begin, where his office and charge beginneth. (*Scholemaster* B4)

In another less well known text, “The Governance of Princes,” written in the 1550s, the author, chaplain to Mary I, likewise discreetly suggests “what longeth to the nurcerye women passeth me.”<sup>6</sup> Even Richard Mulcaster, whose *Positions* was written for the general public, felt similarly that eugenics (that is, the physiological influences of conception and pregnancy on forming the ideal child) and the nursery environment did not belong to the schoolmaster’s field of expertise. He humorously mocks the conditions laid down by ancient Greek and Latin writers for the training of the ideal child: “Where they moile themselves sore, with the maners and conditions of the nurse ... And in controversie about milkes ... Nay they go further, as whether may not wishers? and appoint the parentes of this so perfect a child, to be so wise and so well learned” (*Positions* 28.2-24). Mulcaster correctly points out that such books can cause parents to despair, and suggests it is patronising to tell careful parents how to care for their own children (*Positions* 28.35). Yet paediatrics was so much a part of the inherited literary tradition for educators that even Mulcaster, in a discussion on left-handedness, cannot resist citing Plato to claim that “thorough ignoraunt nurses and mothers, we be every one of us halfe lamed,” i.e., not ambidextrous (*Positions* 88.24-5), and Elyot similarly briefly ventures advice on breastfeeding on the authority of “some ancient writers” (*Governor* 15).

The literary decorum that dictated that educators consider themselves qualified to lay down rules on paediatrics became a suitable topic for satire in England, indicating its doubtful status in Elizabethan society. In John Lyly’s *Euphues* (c1578), in a section entitled “Of the Education of Youth,” the author first paraphrases Plutarch on childrearing, and then parodies the instructions of the pedagogues on producing the perfect child-citizen for the commonwealth: “First, that he be of honest parents, nursed of his mother, brought up in such a place as is incorrupt both for y<sup>e</sup> air and manners, wyth such a person as is undefiled, of great zeale, of profounde knowledge, of absolute perfection.... Which if it shall as it may come to passe then doe I hope that if ever Platoes commonweal shall flourish, that my *Ephebus* shall be a citizen.”<sup>7</sup>

By the mid-seventeenth century at least one midwifery expert considered the milk controversy a much overrated topic. Nicholas Culpeper humorously begins his chapter “Of Nursing Children,” with this protestation: “Oh! what a racket do Authors make about

this! What a thwarting and contradicting not of others only, but of themselves? What Reasons do they bring, Why a Woman must needs Nurse her own Child? ... It would make a dying man laugh, or a Horse break his halter to hear how they thwart all this again.”<sup>8</sup> Such commentary in print suggests a growing reaction in some quarters to the divisive and invasive nature of education literature, primarily from the continent, that urged fathers to consider themselves experts in early childcare, and not to trust this period entirely to mothers and nurses. In a breastfeeding scene in the 1599 comedy, *Patient Grissill*, both satire and lyrical poetry are used to defend this maternal role and to expose the damaging effects on fathers of the anxieties raised over the bonding of mother and child. A decade later Shakespeare turned to tragedy to foreground similar fears in *The Winter's Tale*. This is perhaps an indication that tensions surrounding infant care had not diminished in Jacobean England.

Areas of concern raised in the education advice literature range from eugenics, to breastfeeding, to the influence of women around the young child and the place of popular culture within the nursery such as fairy tales, and to the protection of innocence in children. In Act Two of *The Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare introduces a number of these topics as elements in Leontes' desire to remove his son from the nursery and from his mother, Hermione. For a contemporary audience, these references are signifiers of Renaissance theories on mothering and nursery life. A brief survey of these theories follows below, together with examples of their treatment in English drama.

### **Eugenics**

In their quest to create the ideal commonwealth citizen, Erasmus and Vives did more than invade the nursery; they also took it upon themselves to proffer advice on conception and obstetrics. They boldly counselled would-be fathers on selecting breeding stock - the choice of bride (*De pueris* 314) - and eugenics, or the influence of states of mind during intercourse and pregnancy on the unborn child (*De pueris* 314-15; *De officio* 127). It was well accepted that the power of the mind could influence the embryo, and that the mother's imagination could exert a physiological process on the foetus.<sup>9</sup> Thus, in a 1491 medical treatise, under the question “why do children frequently resemble the father more than the mother?”, the author gives the answer that “this is due to the mother's imagination of the

father's disposition during coition."<sup>10</sup> The mother, naturally, has the father's image in her mind at the crucial moment of conception. This theory led to many humorous jests in later drama, usually by foolish fathers pondering who or what their wives were thinking of at the time their foolish sons were conceived. One such comic father is Memphis in John Lyly's *Mother Bombie* (1594):

Memphis.            I marvell [my boy] is such an asse, hee takes it not of his father.  
 ...  
 Dromio.            ... it may be, when this boy was begotten [his mother] thought of a  
                               foole, & so conceived a foole, your selfe beeing verie wise, and she  
                               surpassing honest.  
 Memphis.            It may be, for I have heard of an Aethiopian, that thinking of a faire  
                               picture, brought forth a faire ladie, and yet no bastard.<sup>11</sup>

Shakespeare turned the theory to humorous male advantage in *Henry V* (1599), so that Henry can explain to the French princess why he has such a stern visage: "Now beshrew my fathers ambition! he was thinking of civil wars when he got me; therefore was I created with a stubborn outside, with an aspect of iron, that when I come to woo ladies, I fright them" (*Henry V* V.ii.224-28). In *Ram Alley* (1611) by Lodowick Barry, the same theme is still suitable material for satire:

May not a fool get a wise child, as well as wise men get fools: all lies in the agility of the woman. In troth, I think all fools are got when their mothers sleep; therefore I'll never lie with my wife but when she's broad waking.<sup>12</sup>

All did seem to lie in the agility of the woman. Even if fathers were confident they had sired the child, they still had to worry about who or what the mother was thinking of at the time. Though Shakespeare, Lyly and Barry may be satirising a theory already on the wane, the early education advice literature took it seriously and advised husbands on how to ensure the best possible progeny, and true paternity. In the process they exploited male fears of adulterous wives, as suggested by Erasmus' tacit analogy with cuckoldry when urging fathers to take control of their son's moral training: "You want to be a complete father and want your child to be your true son, reflecting you not only in facial feature and physical detail but resembling you also in gifts of mind and character" (*De pueris* 298).

Leontes in *The Winter's Tale* is seen anxiously examining his young son's face for visual evidence of paternity, before he violently separates mother and son. A father's need to see himself in his child is a familiar and uncontested understanding of paternity



as an extension of the self, and Jacques Du Bosc, writing in 1632, identifies the male ego behind this need: “We love all which resemble us, even our pictures; we affect our image wheresoever we see it. We esteem all that come from us; for this, fathers love their children.”<sup>13</sup> The mirroring of the father in the son provides the basis for the transmission of property, values, and the self and ensures the continuity and self-perpetuation of patriarchal order.<sup>14</sup> Authors such as Erasmus and Vives played on these anxieties by encouraging fathers to mistrust maternal control of sons.

From the moment of conception, fathers were encouraged to see themselves in competition with the mother for their share in the unborn child. The following quotation is taken from one of the earliest obstetric handbooks, *The Birth of Mankind, otherwise named The Woman’s Book* (1545): “If a man would demand to know to whom the child oweth most his generation ye may worthily make answer that to the mother, whether ye regard the pains in bearing, other else the conference of most matter in begetting.”<sup>15</sup> Conception was written of in the light of competing male and female qualities, a dichotomy inherited from Aristotle. Heat was a masculine quality and women’s bodies were thought of as cold and wet. Thus, if a daughter was conceived, this implied that the father’s seed had failed to sufficiently prove itself the “most excellent, active, and lively quality” (*De officio* 124) and was therefore a reflection on the father’s masculinity. When Macbeth exclaims of his wife “Bring forth men-children only! / For thy undaunted mettle should compose / Nothing but males” (I.vii.73-75), he is endowing her with hot masculine qualities, and articulating for the audience the unwomanly and unmaternal behaviour she demonstrates elsewhere in the play. When Paulina in *The Winter’s Tale* asks whether the newborn infant is a boy (II.ii.24), she has Leontes’ fears of cuckoldry in mind. For her purposes a boy would have been more powerful evidence of paternity, whereas a girl provides yet further proof of maternal control over the embryo. In *Patient Grissill*, the mother gives birth to twins, a boy and a girl, an innovation by the dramatist that allows both parents an equal role.<sup>16</sup>

During pregnancy the mother’s diet, exercise and even her states of mind were presumed to exert an influence on the unborn child, leading Vives and others to give advice to fathers on how to protect the healthy development of the embryo (*De institutione* 122). Their concerns were primarily with the welfare of the child as opposed to the

mother. William Gouge was an exception when he warned husbands that they must be very tender over their wives during pregnancy, since a woman may miscarry due to “violence of passion, whether of griefe, or anger.”<sup>17</sup> Hermione, in *The Winter’s Tale*, is not unexpectedly “On her frights and griefs ... something before her time, deliver’d” (II.i.21-23). The playwright may be allowing the possibility for his audience to conclude that Leontes’ violent repudiation of Hermione was a conscious tactic by a vengeful husband who wanted his wife and unborn child dead.

### **Maternal nursing**

After the birth of the child, the education advice literature offered further guidance on breastfeeding on the same genetic principle that regarded the unborn baby as fed and shaped by the mother’s blood during pregnancy. Breast milk was understood to be a refined form of blood carrying with it the mother’s characteristics.<sup>18</sup> Vives is representative of all the pedagogical authors when he claims that “I wot not how, but so it is, that we suck out of our mother’s teat, together with the milk, not only love, but also conditions and dispositions,” and he illustrates his point with the analogy that “they that have been nursed with sow’s milk have rolled in the mire” (*De institutione* 40). The expression was a figurative one, but may have been taken literally by some, since, in a 1607 tract, the author cites mothers in France using animal milk and the children in consequence growing up to be fierce and cruel.<sup>19</sup>

The nurturing breast had long been a potent symbol, both spiritually through Christian imagery and physiologically through the understanding of breast milk as the mother’s blood. Milk was a vital substance, its power and virtue being displayed in paintings of the nursing Madonna and in stories about miracles wrought by her milk.<sup>20</sup> Erasmus scathingly lampoons the misuse of the Virgin’s milk as a magic relic in his colloquy, “The Pilgrimage for Religion’s Sake” (*Colloquia* 287-312), but he vigorously endorses the benefits of maternal breast milk in “The New Mother” (*Colloquia* 267-85). This colloquy was one of seven republished in English in 1606, and the translator’s purpose was to reinforce maternal breastfeeding, or, as the title page notes, to reform “womens delicacie.”<sup>21</sup> It seems from comments in marriage advice tracts, that it was as much the demands of husbands as it was women’s delicacy that kept many women from

nursing their own children.<sup>22</sup> This colloquy further reinforces a pedagogical philosophy in which all aspects of infant care, including breastfeeding, should be subject to male, and preferably paternal, guidance. Fabulla, whose name may link her to nursery tales or alternatively to being talkative, is instructed on her new responsibilities as a mother by Eutrapelus, a male friend. Apparently ill advised by her husband and her parents to put her child out to wet nurse, Eutrapelus convinces Fabulla of the benefits of maternal breastfeeding. Fabulla responds: “Your eloquence has certainly persuaded me, if you could persuade my parents and husband likewise” (*Colloquia* 284). It is not up to Fabulla to enlighten her husband: rather, another man will do that, and thus male authority directs infant care.

As a symbol of maternal duty the breast represented the mother’s role in educating the infant in its first instruction. The title page to Richard Brathwait’s *The English Gentlewoman* (1631), pictures a seated woman centre-top, framed by an arch, holding her breasts in her hands as they stream forth milk onto a book, possibly the Bible, open on her lap (see illustration page 174). The image presents the twin maternal duties of physical and spiritual nurturing: what the mother pours into the pristine infant vessel, literally and metaphorically, is of prime importance for the child’s later instructors. Milk was commonly used as a metaphor for the early instruction of children, as in the title of a 1497 grammar book, *Lac puerorum or Mylke for Children*.<sup>23</sup> According to William Gouge, the metaphor was taken from St. Peter, where it was figuratively used for spiritual education.<sup>24</sup> In the secular literature of Renaissance England the nursing breast became a powerful symbol of maternal influence and of maternal duty, a symbol which male authority attempted to appropriate and control.

Many authors acknowledged the powerful bonding process between mother and child which nursing encouraged. It was argued that a mother’s love was greatest for the child she has breastfed, because that child has so much of the mother in it: “Together with the milke passeth some smacke of the affection and disposition of the mother: which maketh mothers to love such children best as they have given sucke unto.”<sup>25</sup> Vives gave a touching picture of mother and baby as an example of this love, but it is significant that the infant he pictures is a girl:

The mother may more truly reckon her daughter her own, ... unto whom she hath given teat, whom she hath nourished with her own blood, ... and hath holden hard to her breast,

praying God to prosper it. These things shall cause and ingender such reverent and inward love in the daughter toward the mother again, that she shall be far more loved and set by of her daughter. (*De institutione* 39-40)

This is an exceptional passage for its tender image of mothering, offering the reader a quasi-spiritual image of mother and infant daughter, yet such a romantic image is offset by the sense of anxiety that follows it. A little further on, when it comes to the maternal nursing of a son, Vives displays notably less enthusiasm for the child-nurse bonds: “neither I will so great diligence to be given in seeking a nurse for a boy as for a maid” (*De institutione* 40). His expressed rationale is that since boys leave home, any corrupting influences due to wet nursing can soon be countered, but he is simultaneously exposing the educator’s desire to reduce the maternal bonds and influences he so tenderly describes above for mother and daughter. These tender bonds between nursing mother and infant are eloquently dramatised in a singular scene in *Patient Grissill*. The powerful maternal imagery in the play is outstanding, yet of equal dramatic impact is the pathos of a father who feels excluded, and who desperately tries to disempower the mother by claiming that “You are but nurse to them, they are not thine” (IV.i.50). Similar anxieties characterise Leontes in *The Winter’s Tale*.

### **The nursery culture**

Although Elyot and other English authors claim no authority prior to the age of about seven, it is manifest in their writings that they shared many of the reservations uttered by their continental counterparts towards adverse influences in the nursery years. Elyot states that at the age of seven the child was to be removed from the company of women, and by ‘child’ he means boy. He was, of course, writing on the education of the well-born boy (*Governor* 19). Two months before the young Prince Edward was due to turn seven in 1544, Henry VIII instructed that he be taken to Hampton Court by the Lord Chancellor, who was to “discharge all the ladies and gentlewomen out of the house” and to install a retinue of men prior to commencing the Prince’s formal education.<sup>26</sup> In Tudor education theory, the nursery environment tends to be represented as a potential cradle of corruption and the women in it as enemies to pedagogical ideology. The nursery, then, can be viewed as analogous to the womb, in and through which the impressionable foetus or child is shaped by female values and actions.

Fear of female sexuality inevitably lay behind much of the educators' reasoning, and the innocent child was held to be particularly at risk. Female servants in the household were usually targets for suspicion by the educators, who were fearful of the influences of wanton behaviour or idle gossip on children in the family, as a 1598 advice book on education confirms.<sup>27</sup> When Elyot recommends the removal of the seven-year-old boy from the environment of women, he is particularly concerned for the influence of young women on the child's virtue:

[The boy] shall not have any young woman [around him] for though there be no peril of offence in that tender and innocent age, yet in some children nature is more prone to vice than to virtue, and in the tender wits be sparks of voluptuosity which, nourished by any occasion or object, increase often times into so terrible a fire that therewith all virtue and reason is consumed. (*Governor* 19)

Erasmus manifests similar concerns when he claims that "a young child readily responds to the shameless caresses of his nursemaids and is thus handmoulded by their indecent fondling, as the saying goes" (*De pueris* 308). Such bawdy punning by Erasmus indicates a common view of nursery life. The physical affection of nurses was invariably viewed with suspicion, leading one author to include anecdotal evidence of nurses becoming pregnant after abusing their nine or ten year-old male charges.<sup>28</sup> The free expression of affection towards the young child became charged with complex connotations of sexuality and guilt. The threat of concupiscence incited by female company even in the young child is ever present in educational writings. The Protestant discourse of the period associated "the sins of the flesh" with the domestic, female environment. The reformist author, Thomas Becon, writing in the reign of Edward VI, makes the connection by gendering the 'flesh' as female and locating her in a domestic sphere:

Another of our enemies is the flesh, which is an adversary so much the more to be feared because she is domestical and one of household, yea, nourished and brought up even in our own breast. This enemy ceaseth neither night nor day to allure us into her nets.

(*Catechism* 184)

Every aspect of the maternal environment - the breast, the nursery and the household - is tainted under the image of 'the flesh' by Becon, and characterised as a predator. It is difficult to determine whether these authors believed the threat of sexual experience was real, or whether they found it convenient to use it as another tool in their quest for control of the pre-school child. Beyond doubt, however, is the understanding that the spread of

such theories contributed to and reinforced levels of misogyny and of mistrust of mothers in Renaissance society.

Much of the pedagogue's theory on maternal behaviour was inherited from classical and pastoral literature. Erasmus cites Plutarch, Quintilian, and St. Augustine for example, including the understanding that a mother by definition could love only passionately and naturally, her love being therefore blameworthy, whereas a father loved less but his love was intrinsically virtuous. Silvana Vecchio relates such understandings to Christian doctrine:

It was precisely this intense physical love that the Church condemned. It could never enter the sphere of virtuous love because intensity weakened it. It was carnal, passionate love, which privileged the body (the health and well-being of the child) with the risk of losing the spirit. A mother's love was compassionate and given to sacrifice; a mother suffered more than a father through her child's adversities and exulted less in her child's success. Scholars such as Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, and John Buridanus stressed that maternal love was stronger, more manifest, and more constant than paternal love. They also noted that, because it was less rational, it was less noble.<sup>29</sup>

Tudor schoolbooks endorsed this understanding, with such phrases as “the mother all to basseth her childe,” the Latin stressing the passionate nature of the kissing “*Mater natum dissuaviatur*” (*Hormon's Vulgaria* 119r). In another Tudor schoolbook this theory is typically rendered as:

Thoughe thou have ben brought up here afore with thi mother wantonly, yet y consell the to put owt of thi mynd that wantones here, for and if thou do not thou shall sa here-after that thou hast a grett caus to complayn.<sup>30</sup>

Like the emblem tale of the preceding chapter, a child can justly blame his mother for his later failures. The theory that mothers taught only wanton values to their young children was a common one, and can be found in a 1550s interlude, *Jack Jugeler*, “And as for me, of my mother I have byn taught / To bee merie when I may and take no thought.”<sup>31</sup> The educators justified paternal involvement in the infant years by implying that mothers could not be trusted to train the child correctly. They cockered their children, cuddled and kissed them excessively, and played with them as if with puppies or dolls, told them inappropriate nursery stories, and were wanting when it came to discipline or moral instruction.

### Nursery tales

In the education advice literature, the female culture within the nursery is further characterized by gossip, playfulness and the transmission of nursery rhymes, ballads and folk tales. The authors viewed all these with considerable apprehension, but singled out the folk tales and popular culture for particular attention. Vives cited Plato when he reproved nurses for telling vain and trifling fables, recommending instead “mothers shall have ready at hand pleasant histories and honest tales, of the commendation of virtue and rebukings of vice” (*De institutione* 125). In a letter to Henry VIII, Vives argued that the masses would be helped by set studies “by which their good hours may not be passed in reciting old women’s fables, nor in actions indifferent to good conduct.”<sup>32</sup> “Old women’s fables” and “old wive’s [sic] tales” are used by Vives as bywords for ignorance and superstition.<sup>33</sup> Erasmus was similarly critical of the “stupid, often vulgar ballads, ridiculous old wives’ tales, and all sorts of tedious womanish gossip” which a child first hears in his infancy (*De pueris* 338). To designers of humanist education, who drew their authority from the classics and from the Bible, fairy stories and folk tales come perilously close to superstition. Richard Halpern has observed that Erasmus and other humanists were openly hostile to narrative forms of popular culture, and he notes the equation with women in the domestic environment, commenting that it seems that for Erasmus, “*female* servants are the ones who threaten young boys with popular and superstitious materials.”<sup>34</sup> In Becon’s dialogue between father and son, the father asks “Is it not then lawful to use merry talk, singing of pleasant ballads, reading of amorous books, &c?” to which his young son replies, ‘By no means. For St Paul saith: “Let no filthy communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to edify withal”’ (*Catechism* 99). In the opening scene of *Nice Wanton*, Barnabas chastises his brother and sister for singing: “Fie, brother, fie, and specially you, sister Dalila! / Soberness becometh maids always” (41-42). And Barnabas, like Becon, identifies his authority as Paul: “Lewd speaking corrupteth good manners, Saint Paul doth say” (53). Vulgar gossip, folk songs and popular literature were not considered edifying material.

*The Winter’s Tale* takes issue with this attitude. When Leontes confronts Hermione it is at a point in the scene when she and her young son are sitting side-by-side,

deep in the sharing of a fairy tale. The play makes no further references to this shared moment between mother and young son, but a number of later allusions in the play to folk and fairy tales throw light on the play's approach to such popular culture. This is a feature of the play discussed by Mary Ellen Lamb in an enlightening article on the narrative act and the place of old wives' tales in the nursery in three of Shakespeare's plays.<sup>35</sup> My reading, which concurs with most of Lamb's conclusions, draws attention to a dramatic defence of the imaginative act as a quality of childhood which is valued and shared by women, but which men have been taught to mistrust.

For Erasmus and Vives, nursery stories and women's 'distaff philosophy' (*Exercitatio* 40) were responsible for the adult humanist's frustrations:

Think of all the rubbish we can still remember now as grown men - dreams, inane riddles, silly nursery rhymes about phantoms, spectres, ghosts, screech-owls, vampires, bogeymen, fairies and demons; all those unedifying falsehoods taken from popular story-books, and all those crazy tales and fantasies of a risqué sort - all those things we learned as children, sitting with our grandfathers or grandmothers, or with nurses and girls at their spinning, while they caressed us and played with us. (*De pueris* 338)

Erasmus takes a loving family picture and turns it into an accusation of neglect at the hands of women and grandparents. Women were not the only culprits contributing to the humanist's frustrations, it seems. The paralleling of grandfathers with mothers in terms of behaviour is not uncommon in Renaissance writings; grandfathers were old men, and old men were commonly likened to women.<sup>36</sup> This thesis does not discuss grandparents in drama, but it is worth noting that in the Patient Griselda dramatic tradition grandfathers are given benign and positive roles, valued for their sound judgement and their natural affection for children. John Phillip's *Patient Grissill* (c1560) refers to a grandfather's joy, and the Chettle, Dekker and Haughton *Comodie of Patient Grissill*, discussed below, is remarkable for its inclusion of scenes of great charm depicting a grandfather playing with his infant grandchildren.<sup>37</sup> *The Winter's Tale* includes a variation on this benign grandfather theme in the figure of Perdita's adoptive father. Perhaps Shakespeare differed from Erasmus in his valuing of grandparents and old folk tales: in the Banquo ghost scene in *Macbeth*, Lady Macbeth dismisses her husband's hallucinations as "A woman's story at a winter's fire, / Authoriz'd by her grandam" (III.iv.64-65). Lady Macbeth is, of course, doing her best to represent her values as masculine, not feminine, just as she did with the



claim she would dash out the brains of her nursing infant in order to maintain an oath. The play uses Lady Macbeth to criticise such limited understandings of masculinity and the devaluing of the role of grandparents.

### **Innocence as a quality of childhood**

The nursery was traditionally regarded as taboo for men, primarily on the reasoning that this protected the innocent infant from rough and potentially corrupting masculine speech and manners. Elyot makes this point when describing how the women in the nursery should behave: they “shall not suffer in the child’s presence to be shown any act or tache dishonest, or any wanton or unclean word to be spoken; and for that cause all men, except physicians only, should be excluded and kept out of the nursery” (*Governor* 15-16). Elyot’s fears for the child’s innocence are based on an understanding of how sensitive children are at that young age. Rejecting assertions that the young child cannot discern good from evil, he pleads his case in a scenario that is consistent with the tragedy of Mamillius in *The Winter’s Tale*:

And I verily do suppose that in the brains and hearts of children, which be members spiritual, whiles they be tender and the little slips of reason begin in them to burgeon, there may hap by evil custom some pestiferous dew of vice to pierce the said members and infect and corrupt the soft and tender buds, ... and some time contain in it fervent and mortal poison, to the utter destruction of a realm. (*Governor* 16)

In the case of Mamillius, the mortal poison to pierce the child’s innocent mind is the concept of sin in his mother, a concept introduced to the child not by another child or by women, but by his embittered father. Young children learned quickly and profoundly, and it was of paramount concern that their innocence should be maintained. “As soon as it is born, a child absorbs with great ease everything that is characteristically human,” writes Erasmus, and then offers popular metaphors for the innocent mind: “press wax while it is softest, model clay while it is still moist; pour precious liquids only into a jar that has never been used before, and only dye wool that has just arrived spotless white from the fuller’s” (*De pueris* 305-06).<sup>38</sup> In *The Winter’s Tale*, children are the signifiers of innocence and they serve as touchstones for truth: “The innocent babe [is] truly begotten” (III.ii.134); Hermione is as innocent (II.ii.27) as the infant wrenched from her breast, “The innocent milk in it[s] most innocent mouth” (III.ii.100); truth speaks as “from an infant,

freely” (III.ii.74). Authors such as Elyot endorsed a tradition that viewed the company of women as more appropriate than that of men to this tender and innocent age; authors such as Erasmus and Vives did much to undermine these customs. The destruction of innocence is a major theme in *The Winter’s Tale*, and its dramatic treatment defends the English nursery tradition of protecting young children from the corrupted values of the primarily male, adult world.

*Patient Grissill* and *The Winter’s Tale* are rare examples of drama dealing with parenting issues for the very young child. Both belong to the Patient Griselda tradition, a tale of patience and suffering in an innocent mother, which offered the ideal vehicle for dramatising the suppression of a mother’s influence, and for exploring the difficulties of fatherhood in early modern England. The Patient Griselda story was particularly popular in the Elizabethan period, when numerous versions of the story were published in a variety of genres, including two extant plays. The first of these is John Phillip’s *The Comedy of Pacient and meeke Grissill* (c1558-65), and echoes of this work in *The Winter’s Tale* will be discussed. It is, however, the second Patient Griselda play, *The Pleasant Comodie of Patient Grissill* (1599) by Henry Chettle, William Haughton and Thomas Dekker, which is of particular interest to the parenting theme. Scholars have analysed this play largely in terms of marriage commentary, since marriage constitutes the main dramatic material.<sup>39</sup> What the play has to say about parenting has been given less attention. One critic, Edward Pechter, briefly observes that ‘the quality of feeling extends to paternity, moreover, what Gwalter here identifies as “the joy of marriage” (2.2.13), a quality in which we see him blissfully absorbed later on, cuddling his infant son.’ Pechter goes on to consider these scenes in relation to Lawrence Stone’s concept of Elizabethan society as a “low-affect society”:

Scenes like these, in which powerful feelings of wife- and baby-love exist independently of social convenience, political power, and estate succession make people balk at Stone’s idea of the Elizabethans as a “low-affect society.” ... But Stone may be right; such scenes are quite rare.<sup>40</sup>

These scenes are indeed rare, but rare in drama, and this thesis takes the approach that they should perhaps be viewed as warning signs of changes taking place in family life in early modern England, not as representative of a low-affect society.

*The Pleasant Comodie of Patient Grissill (1599)*

*Patient Grissill* was entered in Henslow's Diary in December 1599, and in the Stationer's Register in March 1600, and was first performed in 1600 by the Admiral's Men at the Fortune Theatre.<sup>41</sup> Henry Chettle, William Haughton and Thomas Dekker were joint authors of the play. The scene to be considered here, Act Four Scene One, has been attributed to Henry Chettle, and for the purposes of this analysis he will be noted as the dramatist.<sup>42</sup> Chettle draws on the humanists' model of male dispassion and scepticism towards maternal behaviour to demonstrate its damaging effects on both parents, but particularly on the father. A number of critics have commented on the "splendidly realistic and touching scenes," or the unusual psychological poignancy that characterises the father figure in this version of the Patient Griselda story.<sup>43</sup> The Marquess is driven by an inner struggle, much of which seems directed towards resisting affective images of Grissill as mother, or towards exploring his own emotional responses as a new father. His multiple asides draw attention to the perversity of suppressing his natural feelings, and render him as much a tormented figure as Grissill. It is in the nursery scene that this comes out most forcefully, and where the dialogue is loaded with nursery etiquette.

Grissill gives birth to twins, a son and a daughter, but their first appearance on stage is with their father. The scene opens with the stage directions "*Enter Marquesse and Furio with an infant in his armes.*"<sup>44</sup> The audience is immediately treated to a touching picture of paternal affection as he cradles the baby in his arms:

Marquess.	Give me this blessed burthen, pretty foole, With what an amiable looke it sleepes, And in that slumber how it sweetly smiles, And in the smile how my heart leapes for joy: <i>Furio</i> Ile turne this circle to a cradle, To rocke my deare babe.
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(IV.i.3-8)

The rush of feeling - "my heart leapes for joy"- and the playful cradling are absolutely natural, yet all too soon this father displays embarrassment at his tender and playful behaviour, feeling the need to justify himself in front of another man, Furio, by invoking classical authority:

A great *Romaine* Lord

Taught his young Sonne to ride a Hobby-horse.

Then why should I thinke scorne to dandle mine.

(IV.i.8-10)

The term ‘dandle’ carries pejorative connotations. In a 1560s interlude on the theme of education, an indulgent and misguided father “cockered and dandled” his son.<sup>45</sup> It is precisely the social unacceptability of such paternal behaviour that worries this father here. Some members of the audience may recognise the textual source of this theme, *A Register of Hystories*, translated into English in 1576, which offers examples of famous fathers playing with their young sons in defiance of social derision.<sup>46</sup> The Marquess’s train of thought then leads him to another common source of paternal anxiety - cuckoldry - as he searches for signs of himself in the infant. He has no genuine fears of cuckoldry; he is using the occasion to test his counsellors for flattery and, more significantly, to parody this common feature of paternal anxiety.

As Grissill enters the scene she sees the villainous parasite Mario holding one of her infants, which opens the way for the staging of confrontation between maternal instincts and masculine power. As discussed above, the rule that excluded men from the nursery was intended to protect infant innocence from rough language or offensive behaviour. The transgression of nursery etiquette is underscored by Grissill’s plain and direct language:

Give me mine infant, where’s my other babe?

You cannot plaie the nurse, your horred eyes

Will fright my little ones, and make them crie,

Your tongue’s too ruffe to chime a lullabie.

(IV.i.42-45)

As the scene continues, the Marquess forcibly takes the infant twins from their mother, and holds them in his arms. Underlying his actions is the desire to deprive Grissill of her role as mother, less to test her constancy than to claim for himself the tender parent role. Stage directions inherent in the dialogue emphasise the dramatic effects of a father cradling a babe in each arm. The rush of guilt they occasion in him causes an unalloyed confession of anguish as he looks on the faces of innocence:

Which way so ere I turne I meete a face,

That makes my cheekes blush at mine owne disgrace.

This way or this way, never shall mine eye  
 Looke thus, or thus: but (oh me) presentlie,  
 (Take them for Gods sake *Furio*) presentlie  
 I shall spend childish teares: true teares indeed, [Aside]  
 That thus I wrong my babes and make her bleede.

(IV.i.64-70)

The powerful effect on the father's conscience of his two innocent babes is made central to this scene, a forceful recognition of paternal love, given visual evidence through "true teares" - which are indeed "childish teares," since they are both innocent and unmanly. The infants have touched a raw nerve in him, exposing his own vulnerability as parent. At this point he seems intent on shifting his own torment onto the mother. His description of her reactions is for the audience's benefit, but it has the further effect of revealing his own feelings as he describes what he assumes Grissill experiences:

I know her bosome beares no marble heart,  
 I knowe, a tender Mother cannot part,  
 With such a patient soule, from such sweet soules,  
 She stands and watches sure, and sure she weepes,  
 To see my seeming flintie breast.

(IV.i.79-83)

Voyeurism, sadism and masochism all have a part in the ensuing scene as the Marquess forces Furio, his counsellor, to play the part of emotional torturer to Grissill, while he hides and watches. Central to the torture is the denial of a mother's right to kiss, to cuddle and to breastfeed her child, rights so fundamental that Furio suffers almost as much as the mother:

Furio. Heere Madame take one, I am weary of both, touch it and kisse it to, its a sweet chylde, I would I were rid of my miserie, for I shall drowne my heart, with my tears that fall inward. (*Aside*)

(IV.i.138-40)

For over fifty lines the force of motherhood at its most poignant and most natural is pitted against a male power that would resist it. The pathos and drama of this scene reaches its climax in the poetic verse pictures of Grissill's milky breasts, where the verse blends the beauty of art with the power of nature. Told the babies will be given over to a nurse, Grissill challenges what nurse could provide better milk than hers, and makes a passionate plea to nurse them herself:

I prithee let my teares, let my bow'd knees,  
 Bend thy obdurate hart, see heer's a fountaine,  
 Which heaven into this Alablaster bowles,  
 Instil'd to nourish them: man theyle crie,  
 And blame thee that this ronnes so lavishly,  
 Heres milke for both my babes, two brests for two.

(IV.i.123-28)

In Erasmus' colloquy, "The New Mother," Eutrapelus uses similar imagery as he tells the young mother, "when you see on your breasts those two little swollen fountains, so to speak, flowing with milk of their own accord, believe that Nature is reminding you of your duty. ... the woman who refuses to nurse what she bore is scarcely a half-mother" (*Colloquia* 282). Grissill's overflowing breasts symbolise the ultimate office of motherhood:

I pray thee let them suck, I am most meete  
 To play their Nurse: theyle smile and say tis sweet,  
 Which streames from hence, if thou dost beare them hence.  
 My angrie breasts will swell, and as mine eyes  
 Lets fall salt drops, with these white Necter teares,  
 They will be mixt: this sweet will then be brine,  
 Theyle crie, Ile chide and say the sinne is thine.

(IV.i.129-35)

The dialogue describes what the audience presumably cannot see. There is no hint of parody or of bawdy, but rather a sense of Nature defending her own. Grissill has called on the most tender and powerful emblem of womanhood to express the depths of her feelings. The male defence towards such touching maternal scenes is to retreat into mistrust, as the Marquess demonstrates by playing the male sceptic:

I gave strait charge, she should not touch these brats,  
 Yet has she tempted with *lascivious* teares,  
 The heart of Furio, *see she dandles them*,  
 Take that childe from her. (IV.i.158-61; my italics)

Grissill's tears are parodied as a feature of male anxiety at female wiles; what is also material for comic parody is the perception that mothers dandle infants before men as a calculated, seductive strategy. Affective images are characterised as potential traps which men must resist, "Tempt me not Syren" the Marquess warns Grissill, "since you are so loving, / Hold you, take both your children, get you gon" (IV.i.168-69).

As Grissill and babies are banished, she does what Paulina does in *The Winter's Tale*, and what the nurse did in Phillip's earlier *Patient Griselda* play: she uses the infants to appeal to the father's heart.<sup>47</sup> It is now the mother's turn to articulate to the audience the father's emotions that he cannot publicly acknowledge:

Grissill.	Oh see my Lord,	<i>Run to him</i>
	Sweet prettie fooles they both smil'd at that word.	
	They smile as who should say indeede indeede,	
	Your tongue cryes hence, but your heart's not agree'd,	
	Can you thus part from them? in truth I know,	
	Your true love cannot let these infants goe.	

(IV.i.194-99)

The Marquess will give voice to his heart in asides, but will deny it in public; he is, after all, consciously playing the role of the male sceptic. Grissill's tears, her dandling and loving of her child, the personification of her milk-laden breasts, the tender images of affection, are scenes which move this father, and therein lies the dilemma for men who have been taught to value emotional control, and to mistrust women and the nursery environment. It seems this father yearns to be able to respond to his children as freely as their mother can, but decorum forbids it.

Outside the court environment there are no cultural problems with the spontaneous displays of affection, or with men showing playfulness and showering the babies with kisses and tears. The psychologically tortured behaviour of the Marquess as father is brought out by juxtaposition with that of Babulo, the natural fool, as an affectionate and playful father figure, and that of Grissill's father as adoring grandfather. Further features of this pastoral nursery notably include a lullaby by the grandfather, and snatches of what may be nursery rhymes, old wives' tales, or other folkloric material (IV.ii.4-8). Such positive scenes offer an open challenge to a pedagogical theory that inhibited the expression of paternal love and which devalued oral tradition.

*Patient Grissill* stands out for its interest in father-infant bonding, a subject generally ignored in its literary and dramatic *Patient Griselda* predecessors. It is the first of the genre to offer a psychological explanation of this dramatic father figure. Scholars such as Debora Kuller Shuger have questioned the traditional patriarchal concept of Renaissance fathers put forward by authors such as Lawrence Stone, and plays such as this support Shuger's contention that Renaissance masculine qualities do not exclude

gentleness and emotion.<sup>48</sup> Shuger argues that a father's need for love was greater than the child's need for paternal love, "if the language of patriarchy resonates with the child's need for security, warmth, and parental tenderness, it is also shaped by the pathos of the parents' need for gratitude."<sup>49</sup> This is the concept that lies behind this poignant father figure, as also behind the pathos of the father's representation in *The Disobedient Child*. If we consider the anxiety displayed in the literature over maternal breastfeeding and bonding, and the critical attitudes of much pedagogical literature towards displays of affection or levity in men, towards the nursery culture and the role of women around the young child, even towards affectionate grandparents, then there are grounds for arguing that the play is exposing some of the damaging effects of humanist approaches to parenting. These are issues that Shakespeare takes up in *The Winter's Tale*, and his dramatic treatment of them argues for similar conclusions.

### ***The Winter's Tale* (c1610)**

This later Shakespearean play is thought to have been first performed in 1610 and known to have been played by the King's Men at the Globe in 1611.<sup>50</sup> Shakespeare's primary source has long been identified as Robert Greene's prose romance *Pandosto, The Triumph of Time* (1588),<sup>51</sup> but the play's debt to the older and very familiar Patient Griselda tradition referred to above, has also been acknowledged.<sup>52</sup> The Patient Griselda story, first published in English through Chaucer's *Clerk's Tale*, was a popular theme for poets in Elizabethan England.<sup>53</sup> It is the dramatic versions of this story that show particular interest in using this theme to explore parenting issues: first, in Phillip's 1560s *Patient Grissill*, which focuses primarily on the obedience of children towards parents, but also treats issues of gender and parenting;<sup>54</sup> then in Chettle, Dekker and Haughton's version, with its interest in concepts of parenting; and finally in Shakespeare's exploration of childhood and parental duty of care in *The Winter's Tale*. Shakespeare employs a plot variation initiated by Greene, that is the death of a young son, in order to take the tragic repercussions of domestic conflict further than previous dramatic versions. The father's extended and public suffering for his crimes against his wife and children is an innovation. These variations to the story place a greater emphasis on the duty of care



of parents to their children than any previous dramatic or literary interpretation of the story. Pandosto, the father in Greene's romance, does suffer, but the narrative is not interested in psychological explorations or in parenting as a topic, as *The Winter's Tale* is, and Pandosto is neatly disposed of with "a tragical stratagem" of suicide.<sup>55</sup> Shakespeare's ending not only allows redemptive possibilities but also closes on a fairy tale note appropriate to a play dealing with the qualities of childhood, and that presents itself as a dramatised folk tale.

Recurring references in *The Winter's Tale* to folk and fairy tales draw attention to a dramatic interest in their imaginative appeal and their role as signifiers of an open mind and a healthy capacity to suspend disbelief. The play mourns the loss of a benign imagination, primarily the gift of childhood, in adult life and gestures towards theatre as the adult enactment of these qualities of childhood. Innocence is a related quality of children that is also potentially lost in adulthood. These two qualities of childhood, innocence and a creative imaginative capacity, are central to *The Winter's Tale*. Far from viewing the nursery as a place of contamination, the play offers the understanding of the nursery world as a recuperative environment for degraded adult values, where children are the agency for renewal and women the mediators. *The Winter's Tale* has long been interpreted as an appraisal of the positive, nurturing qualities attached to women, and of the ability of women to influence and educate patriarchal attitudes. Patricia Gourlay, for example, makes the assessment that "Leontes' alienation from his wife, is, in fact, symptomatic of his society's alienation from the qualities the women metaphorically represent." Similarly, Peter B. Erickson's article, "Patriarchal Structures in *The Winter's Tale*," sees the play as valuing "maternal nurturance" and considers the failure of the father-son relationship in this light.<sup>56</sup> My analysis, which concurs in the main with these psychoanalytic interpretations, locates the play within the historical debate on parenting and argues for greater consideration to be given to the place of the child in the play.

*The Winter's Tale* is one of the few plays to include a child with a speaking part in the cast, and his presence both on and off stage informs the first half of the play, the tragic half. The romance of the second half is similarly informed by his sister's presence. Unlike the adolescent players of the children's companies, who tended to mimic adult behaviour, the child on stage here makes no pretence to act like an adult and he functions

therefore as a pristine touchstone against which adult behaviour is measured.<sup>57</sup> The opening scene of Act One, which serves as the prologue to the play, draws attention to Mamillius, the young five or six year-old heir, and to his benign influence on an older generation. This “gallant child” (I.i.38) comes on stage within minutes of the opening lines. His dramatic purpose is to present the audience with powerful childhood values: innocence, creativity, promise and, through his extreme youth, vulnerability. Mamillius is on stage from the opening of Scene Two, and it is immediately obvious to a seventeenth-century audience that he is still young enough to belong in the nursery. He is “unbreech’d” (I.ii.155) - still wearing the long coats or skirts of infancy. In an article on breeching customs in Elizabethan England in relation to *The Winter’s Tale*, Susan Snyder shows that the breeching of boys usually took place between six and seven years of age, sometimes as early as five or as late as eight. Based on internal evidence within the play Snyder concludes that Mamillius is about five.<sup>58</sup> He is still too young to discern good from bad, or to exercise rational judgement, which was regarded as the turning point in a child’s development. Shakespeare is presenting his audience with a young boy who is approaching the move from *infantia* to *pueritia*. The transition from one youthful stage of life to another presents challenges to parents and to the child, and provides fertile material for domestic drama. Shakespeare used the same thematic strategy in *Romeo and Juliet* by placing Juliet on the brink of puberty, too young to understand passion, but old enough to suffer from the effects. If parents do not handle the transition well it can lead to tragedy.<sup>59</sup>

The emotionally damaging effects of parental strife on young children were recognised by educators such as Vives. In one of his three Latin dialogues to include a mother, he sketched a young boy weeping when his “dearest ones disagree” (*Exercitatio* 41). The mother, who is characterised as a shrew, is entirely to blame; she noisily defies her husband, refuses her son his breakfast, and swears he is changeling. Perhaps Vives intended some humour, yet the cursing and abusive wife as a signifier of degraded values occurs elsewhere in his writings with little possibility for humour.<sup>60</sup> Vives is doing what the father in *The Disobedient Child* does; he is retreating into lame blaming of women to exonerate paternal failure. That Vives should use this material in a collection of exercises for young schoolboys betrays his misogyny, and suggests his prejudices towards women

overrode his better judgement as an educator in this instance. *The Winter's Tale* treats the same issue of parental conflict with a greater sensitivity and points to the father as the culprit.

The destruction of childhood innocence is foreshadowed in the play's opening lines, which are coloured with a sense of anxiety and of nostalgia. A Lord of Bohemia voices his apprehensions about Polixenes' capacity to match the excessive hospitality received in Leontes' court: "we cannot with such magnificence-- in so rare-- I know not what to say" he stammers (I.i.12-13). This short, prologue-like opening scene locates the play in a culture where friendship is measured by material and visual tokens; it introduces a sense of nostalgia for the innocent nature of friendship between two boys; and it alerts the audience to a culturally constructed friendship in adult life. Camillo elaborates on the continuing friendship between Polixenes and Leontes, justifying it as "royally attorney'd with interchange of gifts, letters, loving embassies" (I.i.27-28). For many in Shakespeare's audience who understood, like Roger North later in the century, that "much ceremony and true freindship [sic] are inconsistent," this scene signals danger and the unstable nature of friendship.<sup>61</sup> Another clue for the audience is the choice of Sicilia as the home of Leontes, and Bohemia for Polixenes, a reversal of Greene's *Pandosto*. Bullough suggests Sicilia is noted for the crimes of jealousy and revenge;<sup>62</sup> it certainly suggests tyranny and deception to a contemporary audience through the Dionysius story. In *Damon and Pithias* (1564), for example, on arrival in Sicilia, Damon and Pithias comment that "the Ayre is subtle and fine," unaware that the country is better known for its tyrant king Dionysius: "In Cicilia never raygned so cruell a man: / A despightfull Tirant."<sup>63</sup> Likewise, in *The Winter's Tale* as Cleomines and Dion enter Sicilia carrying the oracle's judgement, they comment that "the air [is] most sweet" (III.i.1), but again a tyrant reigns.<sup>64</sup>

A culture of the formalised rules of *amicitia* is being offered to the audience as proof of friendship. Shakespeare's audience is likely to have been familiar with the decorum of letters of friendship through familiarity with the popular *De copia* of Erasmus universally used in Tudor schools. The persuasive, but also deceptive, qualities of the *De copia* letters have been argued by Lisa Jardine in relation to *King Lear*, and her theories on deception may also apply to this later play.<sup>65</sup> Erickson also reads this scene as indicating that "male gift giving is institutionalized. ... Female bounty, in contrast, is

analogous to nature, grounded in giving birth and nurturance to infants.”<sup>66</sup> The qualities of childhood are brought up as the conversation turns to the young prince, Mamillius, “a gentleman of the greatest promise” and “a gallant child, one that, indeed, physics the subject, makes old hearts fresh” (I.i.36-39). For the second time a sense of nostalgia enters the dialogue: age is a disease to which youth can provide the cure. The scene is being set for the introduction of the child against a backdrop of age, anxiety and formality, thus positioning the degeneration of innocence and trust as a product of age and socially inscribed values.

As the action moves to the two friends themselves in Scene Two, the sense of a loss of innocence recurs. Polixenes wistfully reminisces over the innocent childhood friendship that he and Leontes shared. Time and age were meaningless then, as was any concept of sin:

We were as twinn'd lambs that did frisk i' th' sun,  
And bleat the one at th' other. What we chang'd  
Was innocence for innocence;  
We knew not the doctrine of ill-doing, nor dream'd  
That any did.

(I.ii.62-71)

Leontes stands silent, he has nothing to contribute, the destruction of innocence is almost complete in him, only distrust remains; later, in a passing remark, he aptly describes this state of mind, “All’s true that is mistrusted” (II.i.48). He cannot even trust to his own emotions, and as he looks on his child’s face the intensity of his love frightens and unsettles him: “Affection! thy intention stabs the centre. / Thou dost make possible things not so held” (I.ii.138-45). The fear of tender human emotions queried by Chettle’s protagonist is here not a matter for parody but for avowal. Leontes has internalised this fear of emotional vulnerability so completely that he is characterised as a man diseased (I.ii.296-97; see also I.ii.384). Looking on his son’s face, reminded of himself twenty-three years earlier, Leontes resists an intuitive response, fearful of emotional vulnerability:

How sometimes nature will betray its folly!  
Its tenderness! and make itself a pastime  
To harder bosoms!

(I.ii.151-53)

He will later exemplify his own fears, as his own ‘hard bosom’ mocks Antigonus for showing himself “so tenderly officious” (II.iii.159) over the infant daughter, and when he concedes to an appeal not to burn the newborn babe, he will see this as a weakness: “I am a feather for each wind that blows” (II.iii.154; see also II.iii.2). It was not appropriate behaviour for fathers to reveal their own tender emotions towards children. This point was made in *The Disobedient Child* and is worth reiterating here:

in no wise favour show  
 And ever angry: let them not the love of Fathers know.  
 For nothing can more hurtful be, than speak them fair unto.  
 (Zodiake 79)

When Polixenes gives reasons of state for having to return to Bohemia after a long absence, he makes no mention of any wish to see his son, a fault that Hermione points out:

To tell he longs to see his son were strong;  
 But let him say so then, and let him go;  
 But let him swear so, and he shall not stay,  
 We’ll thwack him hence with distaffs.  
 (I.ii.34-37)

Polixenes masks his desire to see his son, for the same reasons that Camillo disparages his own homesickness as “a woman’s longing” (IV.iv.668). It is contrary to male culture to acknowledge emotional ties. Hermione’s parody of gendered icons - male oaths, women’s distaffs - highlights the divide between paternal and maternal behaviour, and calls attention to reliance on cultural constructs rather than intuitive responses.

Polixenes is still capable of recognising that the qualities of childhood in his own son can go some way towards redressing the embittered adult’s worldview:

He makes a July’s day short as December,  
 And with the varying childness cures in me  
 Thoughts that would thicken my blood. (I.ii.169-71)

Leontes may make the same claim of Mamillius, “so stands this squire offic’d with me” (I.ii.172-73), but the reverse proves true. Instead of allowing his son to cure him by returning to a state of trust and to the values of childhood, Leontes will fatally infect his own child.

The mistrust and fear that lead Leontes to destroy his family begins with the old chestnut of cuckoldry, and extends to embrace other fears voiced by the educators

towards mothers and the nursery. Women of course could never share the fear of cuckoldry, despite Paulina's humorous attempt to claim so. Pointing later to the newborn infant's likeness to Leontes, she puns on the yellows of jaundice and jealousy, querying that there is "No yellow in't, lest [the mother] suspect, as he does, / Her children not her husband's!" (II.iii.107-08). Leontes has no reason to fear he did not father Mamillius, yet his suspicions have him searching the boy's face intently for signs of physical, visual reassurance, "Art thou my boy?" he asks, twice, "Art thou my calf?" (I.ii.120, I.ii.127), "What? [hast] smutch'd thy nose? They say it is a copy out of mine" (I.ii.121-22). But it is women who say so, and women are noted liars according to Leontes, who reflects the misogyny of many pedagogical authors:

They say we are  
 Almost alike as eggs; women say so -  
 That will say any thing. But were they false  
 As o'er dy'd blacks, as wind, as waters, false  
 As dice are to be wish'd by one that fixes  
 No bourn 'twixt his and mine, yet were it true  
 To say this boy were like me.

(I.ii.129-35)

Humanist distrust of women and fear of cuckoldry threaten this father's identification with his son. Leontes' choice of the simile 'eggs' draws on conception imagery and it is perhaps more than a coincidence that he should later chance on eggs again in his affectionate banter with his son (I.ii.167). For Mamillius to look like his father not only confirms that Leontes fathered him but, theoretically, further proves the fidelity of Hermione's thoughts at the time.

Leontes' preoccupation with cuckoldry would be unremarkable here, being a common trope for foolish male figures in Renaissance drama, were it not for the presence of his young son. The real significance of this dialogue is the fact that Leontes is breaking the rules of nursery etiquette by expressing his doubts and talking of women in this slanderous way in front of his young son. What has been obvious to an audience, but less so to the reader, is the fact that Mamillius is on stage and close to his father all this time. For many in Shakespeare's audience Leontes' indiscretion is signalled by his apparently innocuous comment to Mamillius, "what, [hast] smutch'd thy nose?" (I.ii.121). This not only reveals embedded stage directions between father and son, but also draws

on a pedagogical metaphor. The analogy between dirt on the skin and a stain in the mind was used by Erasmus in relation to parents as role models: “Would you wash off any dirt that might touch a child’s skin, and yet pollute his mind with disgusting filth? After all, nothing clings more tenaciously than something that is poured into empty mind” (*De pueris* 309).

As the scene progresses Leontes will commit further indiscretions in front of his innocent child. The questions and comments he directs at his son, “come, captain” (I.ii.122), “come, sir page, / Look on me “ (I.ii.135), indicate that Mamillius continues to remain within hearing distance. Every word directed by Leontes to his son is tainted with a sense of male anxiety: “Mine honest friend, / Will you take eggs for money?” (let others take advantage) “No, my lord, I’ll fight” (I.ii.160-62) responds Mamillius, to his father’s satisfaction. Father and young son walk off alone in what the dramatist sets up as a contrast to the later mother-son intimacy. Distracted by his own gross thoughts, Leontes rejects the boy’s company and tells him to go off and play, but the dialogue makes it clear Mamillius stays near:

Go play, boy, play. Thy mother plays, and I  
Play too, but so disgrac’d a part, whose issue  
Will hiss me to my grave: contempt and clamor  
Will be my knell. Go play, boy, play. There have been  
(Or I am much deceiv’d) cuckolds ere now ...

(I.ii.187-91)

The language Leontes uses borders on the obscene: “She has been sluic’d in’s absence, / And his pond fish’d, ... those gates open’d ... it is a bawdy planet: no barricado for a belly. Know’t, / It will let in and out the enemy” (I.ii.194-204). “Know’t” is a direct address, to the audience perhaps, but only two lines further Leontes addresses the boy “How now boy?” (I.ii.207). His son’s response suggests he has absorbed the gist of his father’s fears, “I am like you, [they] say,” to which Leontes replies “Why that’s some comfort.” (I.ii.208). Susan Snyder has pointed out that the boy’s answers become less sure, and that, puzzled at his father’s questioning, he answers with caution and formality, “if you will, my lord,” and “they say” (I.ii.127, I.ii.208).<sup>67</sup> The boy’s powers of observation, hinted at here, are given greater prominence in a later scene.

The father’s damaging lack of discretion in front of his young son exemplifies the reasoning behind a custom which generally assumed men were inappropriate company for

young boys up to the age of seven. Vives was not alone in pointing out that it was the duty of all those around the young child “to express the feelings of their minds in chaste words” (*De tradendis* 90). The damage has been done and Mamillius has received the first dose of what in Elyot’s terms will become a “fervent and mortal poison, to the utter destruction of a realm” (*Governor* 16). This is the last conversation Leontes will have with his son in the play. The fatal blow to the boy’s innocent mind comes in Act Two Scene One, when Leontes invades the nursery and grossly accuses Hermione of adultery in front of Mamillius.

Mother and son are intimately enjoying a fairy tale together, when “Leontes, Antigonus, Lords, [*and others*]” (s.d.II.i.) arrive en masse, presenting a dramatic contrast to the women’s group. The importance of the stage dynamics has been noted by Snyder, who shows how subsequent scenes repeat the alignment of male against female in spatial separation of the genders.<sup>68</sup> Leontes’ first action is to have his son forcibly removed from his mother, thus completing the male/female divide, and psychologically separating the contagion of mother from child. This is precisely what Hermione says later in the trial scene: “From his presence / I am barr’d, like one infectious...” (III.ii.97-98). This is the last the boy will see of his mother, and indeed of his father, before he dies a lonely death. The invasion of the nursery by not just one but an entire retinue of men constitutes a major transgression of decorum, which is compounded by having the child present while his father bluntly accuses his mother:

Give me the boy. I am glad you did not nurse him.  
Though he does bear some signs of me, yet you  
Have too much blood in him.

(II.i.56-58)

Hermione’s bewildered interjection, “What is this? Sport?” (II.i.58), reflects the shock of this verbal and physical violation, as Leontes continues undeterred:

Bear the boy hence, he shall not come about her.  
Away with him! and let her sport herself  
With that she’s big with, for ’tis Polixenes  
Has made thee swell thus.

(II.i.59-62)

“Bear the boy hence” and “Away with him!” indicate the dramatic action that takes place while Leontes continues, without a pause, to make his accusations with no concern for



the child's feelings. The child cannot be carried off stage so rapidly that he hears none of this. Obsessed with thoughts of adultery, Leontes exposes his anxiety over the influences of breast milk and crudely directs attention to Hermione's swollen belly. In dramatic terms he is grasping at straws to reclaim his son from the mother, and giving voice to deep-rooted fears over maternal influences. In the mouth of this deluded father, Shakespeare challenges such understanding. Other references by Shakespeare to breastfeeding tend to reinforce this sense of challenge: in *Coriolanus* a strong element of wish fulfilment colours Volumnia's proud claim for herself of her son's fierceness, "Thy valiantness was mine, thou suck'st it from me" (III.ii.129), and in *Troilus and Cressida* Ulysses deludes the impetuous Ajax by playing on his vanity: "Thank the heavens, Lord, thou art of sweet composure, / Praise him that gat thee, she that gave thee suck" (II.iii.240-41).

The child's role in *The Winter's Tale*, brief though it is, is very clearly delineated into two parts. The first, where Mamillius appears in the presence of his father, presents him as a child in an adult world and as a predominantly silent spectator and auditor on stage. The second presents him in a different light and as a child in a child's world. In Act Two, Mamillius is an active participant in the dialogue and action and it is here that his qualities as a child dominate the stage. The scene opens with the entry of Hermione, her women and the child, and the dialogue suggests a nursery scene. Various features of the nursery of which the educators were critical are written into the dialogue, such as the kissing of young children, the trivial level of discourse, and the telling of fairy tales. Hermione's opening line is important in scene-setting terms: "Take the boy to you; he so troubles me, / Tis past enduring" (II.i.1-2).

Her words serve multiple purposes: again the boy is being rejected, as he was by his father, ("Go play, boy, play" [I.ii.187]), but not because she has other things on her mind, rather because he has worn out his highly pregnant mother. Hermione's fatigue indicates Mamillius is a much livelier boy around his mother than he is with his father, when he spoke only when spoken to. Also embedded in these lines are stage directions, by handing Mamillius over to the other women, Hermione distances herself on stage, both spatially and socially, from the other women and their trivial level of conversation:

[1] Lady.	Come, my gracious lord, Shall I be your playfellow?
Mamillius.	No, I'll none of you.



superior values of school. It is made clear in the play that Mamillius can distinguish between the chatter of the women, whom he refers to as “yond crickets” (II.i.31), and the quality of communication with his mother. Despite the playful tone of the conversation around the boy, there is no transgression of decorum. A respectful distance is kept between Mamillius, the prince, and the women, in their forms of address and the use of ‘you’ throughout, a mode used also between mother and son. Leontes, on the other hand, moved continually between ‘thou’ and ‘you’ in his talk with his young son, indicative of his own instability in the relationship, and unsettling for the boy himself. The vulgar terms of endearment Leontes uses for his son, “bawcock” (I.ii.121), “you wanton calf” (I.ii.126), “Sweet villain! / Most dear’st! my collop!” (I.ii.135-37), contrast sharply with Hermione’s “Good sir” (II.i.27).

Hermione’s sharing of a tale with Mamillius is perhaps the most significant feature of the first half of the play. It is this scene that crystallises the essence of the mother-son relationship, and which serves as a dramatic contrast to the dark and damaging contribution Leontes made to his son’s imagination. The difficulty Hermione has in getting Mamillius to sit down is a nice touch of youthful energy and imperfect maternal authority. Four times she has to ask him to sit down, but she has no trouble getting him to tell a tale:

Hermione.	Come, sir, now
	I am for you again. Pray you sit by us,
	And tell’s a tale.
Mamillius.	Merry, or sad, shall’t be?
Hermione.	As merry as you will.
Mamillius.	A sad tale’s best for winter. I have one
	Of sprites and goblins. (II.i.21-26)

The mother wants a merry tale, her mood is gay, but the boy’s choice is a clear indication of the inner anxiety he has already absorbed from his father. Mary Ellen Lamb interprets the boy’s choice of a winter’s tale as evidence of the feminisation of Mamillius, a winter’s tale being “a trope for tales without serious purpose” and most appropriately told by women during long winter nights. She goes on to connect Mamillius as narrator of a winter’s tale with the male-authored *Winter’s Tale*, and to argue for Shakespeare’s appropriation of a female tradition of “old wives’ tales.”<sup>69</sup> There can be little doubt that the play repeatedly draws attention to the role of women as willing supporters and

participants in the folk tale culture, but it can also be argued that, if the earlier scene between Mamillius and his father is kept in mind, the boy's choice of tale provides a dramatic link between his father's damaging remarks and the impending tragedy.

This scene is exceptional for the level of shared pleasure and intimacy between Mamillius and Hermione who is proud of her son's story-telling skills:

Hermione.           Let's have that, good sir.  
                           Come on, sit down, come on, and do your best  
                           To fright me with your sprites; you're powerful at it.

Mamillius.           There was a man--

Hermione.                         Nay, come sit down; then on.

Mamillius.           Dwelt by a churchyard. I will tell it softly,  
                           Yond crickets shall not hear it.

Hermione.           Come on then,  
                           And give't me in mine ear.

(II.i.27-32)

Mother and son bond through a shared pleasure in the imaginative world of fairy tales, a "rubbish" world of "nursery rhymes about phantoms, spectres, ghosts, etc.," according to Erasmus (*De pueris* 338). In Vives' chapter "Of Children and the Charge and Care about Them" he too warns against telling children trifling fables, fearful that this may impede the child's later intellectual development:

For by reason of such bringing up, some after they be come to sadder age, have such childish and tender stomachs, that they cannot abide to hear anything of wisdom or sadness, but delight altogether in books of peevish fables, which neither be true nor likely. Therefore mothers shall have ready at hand pleasant histories and honest tales, of the commendation of virtue and rebukings of vice. (*De institutione* 125)

Shakespeare's play demonstrates the fallacy of such reasoning. His tale, after all, is just such a one, as one courtier later comments: "That [Hermione] is living, / Were it but told you, should be hooted at / Like an old tale" (V.ii.115-16). Hermione is fulfilling her role as teacher to Mamillius in the way a mother best understands it, in sharing and encouraging a child's imaginative faculties. Given the symbolic use of names in *The Winter's Tale*, such as Perdita, and Mamillius (discussed below), it may be that Shakespeare selected 'Hermione' for its Greek meaning of 'teacher.'<sup>70</sup> According to Bullough, Hermione is a male name in Plutarch, from whom Shakespeare drew many of the names in *The Winter's*

*Tale*; this would then indicate to his audience a similar gender reversal to the dramatic process which took place in *The Disobedient Child*.

Another parent in the play, the Old Shepherd, echoes Hermione's example in his relationship with his simple, childlike son. When the Old Shepherd first finds the infant Perdita, he voices to the audience his opinion that this is the result of some illicit court liaison. But when his son arrives, the father offers a fairy-tale explanation (III.iii.121-25). Mary Ellen Lamb, in her recent article on fairy practices and popular culture, defines the Old Shepherd's move as a convenient "white lie" or euphemism for sexual encounter, which relieves the shepherd of any shame in taking the child and entitles him to the gold found with Perdita.<sup>71</sup> Whether "white lie" or fairy tale, this parent knows how to preserve his son's innocence in a way Leontes did not.

Renaissance theory assumed that children, unlike adults, did not have the capacity to imagine of themselves ill things. As Erasmus explains: "nature in her foresight has spared children these imaginations as a compensation for their lack of physical strength," and this protected their innocence (*De pueris* 341). The play endorses this understanding. Mamillius was not harmed by a diet of "peevish fables which neither be true nor likely," but by the iniquitous fables given out as wisdom by his father. The death of Mamillius is repeatedly attributed to the violation of the innocent young mind, whether by the "[Conceiving of] a gross and foolish sire [who] / Blemished his gracious dam" (III.ii.197-98), or by "Conceiving the dishonour of his mother!" (II.iii.13-14), or "with mere conceit and fear" (III.ii.144). It is not surprising that Mamillius chooses a sad tale, one of spirits and goblins and a churchyard - in other words of death. It is not the power of the imagination that is a danger, but the material it is given to work with. Andrew Riemer has assessed Leontes as suffering from an over-developed imagination, to which both his transgression and his later ability to believe in Hermione's revival have been attributed.<sup>72</sup> Riemer's point can be taken further to show that the play values the powers of the imagination when put to benign use, and that we have this capacity as children and must take care not to lose it as adults. Hermione demonstrates that she has not lost this childlike ability, and the simple country folk whom Autolycus mesmerises with his ballads and trinkets may be dismissed as naively credulous, but the pleasure they derive outweighs the risks of credulity.

### ***The Winter's Tale* and childhood values**

Leontes is more than just a victim of contemporary conceptions of maternal influences; he is also victim of a culture that alienates men from childhood values. Vives articulated this sad feature of humanist theory in his *Office and Duty of a Husband*: “he that doth marry, must cast off all childishness” (Klein, *De officio mariti* 130). Even children themselves were not immune to this ideology. The Protestant imperative behind much education literature sought to separate boys very early from childish pastimes, even in their play. In the words of his five year-old speaker, Becon urges that “In their plays and pastimes let them shew no point of childish lightness, but remember Christian modesty. In their words let them be ware and circumspect, that they abuse not themselves in vain, foolish, trifling, and wanton communication” (*Catechism* 387). And thus, according to Becon, the boys will in time become good and profitable members of the Christian public weal. Women, on the other hand, were often likened to children, partly through their legal status of dependency on their husbands, but also through qualities they shared with children. Elyot, writing on constancy, claims that “we note in children inconstancy, and likewise in women; the one for slenderness of wit, in rebuking a man of inconstancy, to call him a childish or womanly person” (*Governor* 206). Such criticism of women apparently seemed unjust to the author, and his following humorous qualification could serve as an epigraph to Hermione: “albeit some women nowadays be found more constant than men, and specially in love towards their husbands; or else might there happen to be some wrong inheritors” (*Governor* 206-07).

But Elyot’s definition of the nature of women is a common one, as affirmed by the following quotation from a Tudor Homily on the State of Matrimony. Ironically, the Homily uses this definition of woman as the weaker vessel in order to exhort husbands to “use moderation and not tyranny” towards their wives: “The woman is a weake creature, not indued with like strength and constancie of minde, therefore they be the sooner disquieted, and they be the more prone to all weake affections & dispositions of mind more then men bee, & lighter they bee, and more vaine in their fantasies and opinions.”<sup>73</sup>

Leontes is, of course, the one exhibiting behaviour more usually attributed to women. His dramatic characterisation includes exactly those weaknesses defined above

as feminine: the weak affections of his mind, his vain fantasies, and his lack of constancy. Paulina too draws on gendered understandings of the imagination when she scorns Leontes' "Fancies too weak for boys, too green and idle / For girls of nine" (III.ii.181-82), but as she does so she draws a distinct line between a natural pubescent imagination and unnatural adult paranoia.

A sense of playfulness is another characteristic that women shared with children, and which was often perceived as a weakness in men. Mothers were frequently characterised as playful and light-hearted. Such behaviour, while not approved, was tolerated as part of a woman's nature, whereas fathers were expected to be grave and circumspect. Chettle's interest in this contemporary aspect of parenting was developed in the Marquess's repressed urge to play with his infant son. Shakespeare addresses the same issue by drawing analogies with flirtatious behaviour in adults. Hermione's playfulness is evident in her light-hearted banter with her husband and with Polixenes in Act One, and with her son in the opening of Act Two. Nonetheless, everything Hermione says has a wisdom to it, as Leontes himself acknowledges (I.ii.33). It was commonly accepted that women were quicker witted than men, but the compliment was usually qualified to suggest that a woman's wit was merely superficial, whereas men were the repositories of true wisdom. Elizabethan comedy often drew on this understanding: "So it seemes, you have so much mother wit, that you lacke your fathers wisdome."<sup>74</sup> Erasmus, however, explains that a woman's spontaneous and accurate advice is derived from intuition: "the philosophers grant that women are often ready with the sort of impromptu advice they would not manage after long deliberation, as a man might." He goes on to suggest that a man should not be ashamed to listen to good advice from his wife.<sup>75</sup> Hermione's playful but astute command of language is extended to her daughter. When the aging Camillo starts to flirt with Perdita, she responds in kind, drawing attention to his age:

Camillo. I should leave grazing, were I of your flock

And only live by gazing.

Perdita.

Out, alas!

You'd be so lean, that blasts of January

Would blow you through and through.

(IV.iv.109-112)

Perdita herself acknowledges that such free responses can only take place under licensed conditions, “Methinks I play as I have seen them do/ In Whitsun pastorals. Sure this robe of mine / Does change my disposition” (IV.iv.133-35). The play may pay homage to such free exchanges, but without an awareness of the rules they risk misinterpretation in the mind of the sceptic. In the pastoral environment suspicion has no place, thus the country shepherd can happily observe his wife’s drinking, dancing and attending freely on his guests (IV.iv.55-61), and for the same reason he chides Perdita for her shyness (IV.iv.62-68). M. M. Mahood has recognised in Perdita’s playful behaviour as hostess to her father’s guests, “the natural rightness of play, the renewing power of youth which Leontes once had, and lost in Mamillius.”<sup>76</sup> The argument for such free and friendly behaviour as natural and innocent, is eloquently put by the one person who cannot accept it:

Leontes.            This entertainment  
                           May a free face put on, derive a liberty  
                           From heartiness, from bounty, fertile bosom,  
                           And well become the agent; ‘t may- I grant.  
                           But ...

(I.ii.111-15)

Leontes has a different definition of playing: “Thy mother plays,” he tells his son, “and I / Play too, but so disgrac’d a part” (I.ii.187).

Leontes has lost touch with childhood values, and the oracle’s words can be understood in both literal and figurative terms: “the King shall live without an heir, if that which is lost be not found” (III.ii.134-36; V.i.46-47). As Erickson and others have noted, the plot formula contained in the above phrase suggests that the recovery of Perdita means recovery of the values associated with her, and Erickson identifies in particular the innocence of the newborn and of maternal bounty.<sup>77</sup> A healthy imagination and a capacity for fun could be added to this list. Until Leontes regains faith in such qualities of life, he is an alien to the values of women and children. At the point when Hermione comes to life, Paulina charges Leontes with “it is requir’d / You do awake your faith” (V.ii.94-95). Like the theatre audience, he must suspend disbelief in order to participate in the wonder.



### Parental duty of care

Leontes not only fails to relate to his son, but he proves himself derelict as a parent. Parents are repeatedly glossed in the play as symbols of integrity and respect. This point is made early in a number of passing comments, first by Camillo who swears on the honour of his parents, “For by the honour of my parents, I / Have utt’red truth” (I.ii.442-43), then twice by Polixenes, by “our parents’ noble names” (I.ii.393), and again “Come, Camillo, / I will respect thee as a father” (I.ii.461). When Hermione calls on her royal descent - “The Emperor of Russia was my father. / O that he were alive and here beholding his daughter’s trial!” (III.ii.119-21) - it again foregrounds Leontes’ transgression of his own royal blood in his derelict behaviour as a parent. In the same way, Julian’s shocked statement in *July and Julian* drew attention to Chremes and Mawd as derelict in his duty of care towards her (see page 131). The domestic tragedy of *The Winter’s Tale* is located in the gap between Leontes’ image of himself as a father and his actual behaviour as a parent. When his child is suffering, he relays the symptoms and identifies the causes to the audience, but has no understanding of the child’s needs:

Leontes.	To see his nobleness, Conceiving the dishonor of his mother! He straight declin’d, droop’d, took it deeply, Fasten’d and fix’d the shame on’t in himself, Threw off his spirit, his appetite, his sleep, And downright languish’d.
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(II.iii.12-17)

While the audience fears for the child’s life, the father makes no move to comfort or be with him; instead he directs an unnamed, male servant to see the ailing child, “Leave me solely; go, / See how he fares” (II.iii.17-18). The boy’s lonely death is a travesty of parental care. The play presents a damning image of misguided fathering, and suggests that paternal anxieties over a mother’s role have much to do with this. Leontes has wrenched his son away from his mother at too early an age, forcing him into an adult, male environment and feeding him with hostile notions of the maternal world that nurtured him. This precipitate move has been described in various modern psychoanalytic terms.<sup>78</sup> For a Jacobean audience the young boy on stage still in skirts, and bearing the name ‘Mamillius’, may have said it all.

### **The naming of Mamillius**

For a Jacobean audience unfamiliar with Freudian psychology, the name Mamillius would have brought at least two notions to mind, and possibly a third.<sup>79</sup> The first is nursing, and the second recalls a connection with Tarquinius Superbus and the rape of Lucretia. Many scholars, including Snyder and Lamb, have noted the first allusion, that ‘Mamillius’ explicitly invokes the child’s status as still attached to his mother, a symbiotic union.<sup>80</sup> The term “mamilla” was familiar to boys from their vocabulary lists in the *Vulgaria*: “hec mamilla. For a lytel pappe / or for ye teet” (*Vulgaria* 4). Thus the name could be construed to mean ‘a mother’s boy.’<sup>81</sup> Evidence from *The Winter’s Tale* as a whole, however, does not support an image of Mamillius as a pampered child, or as a mother’s boy in any pejorative sense. The audience is informed that Hermione did not nurse Mamillius herself (II.i.56), so the mothering connotations in the name must be understood figuratively. They draw attention to the tender age of the child, and to a mother-son relationship that can only be interpreted as positive and nurturing.<sup>82</sup>

The second allusion attached to the name Mamillius draws attention to the Roman Mamili clan, to which Tarquin belonged. The clan was famous for its nobility, and for the lasting infamy of one member – Tarquinius, who raped Lucretia.<sup>83</sup> Thomas Heywood’s play, *The Rape of Lucrece* (1609), which was published not long before *The Winter’s Tale* was first performed, refers to “*Mamilius Tusculan*” as the powerful and worthy Latin King.<sup>84</sup> Scholars have ignored the Roman allusion, but it is possible that Shakespeare chose the name Mamillius to represent the fall of a royal house by the ignoble actions of one male member towards one female member. Here, the royal house can only be restored through the female line, which carries the recuperative qualities necessary to a healthy state.

### **Paulina the shrew**

The most notable difference between the traditional Patient Griselda story and *The Winter’s Tale* is the father’s public and prolonged suffering. Shakespeare does not allow this father ‘to get away with it,’ and he uses the shrewish dialogue of Paulina to draw out Leontes’ repentance. The voice of the female scold as a necessary counterbalance to defective male judgement was a familiar feature of Renaissance drama, as discussed

earlier in relation to the mother figure in *July and Julian* and the wife in *The Disobedient Child*. In the 1599 Patient Griselda play by Chettle, another wife, the Welsh Gwendolyn, has this function. The nurse, however, is also common figure as the female voice of protest, both in drama and in popular culture. The astute voice of the nurse was recognised in proverbial wisdom: “A nurse’s tongue is privileged to talk.”<sup>85</sup> The nurse in John Phillip’s 1560s Patient Griselda play may be regarded as a precedent for Paulina.

The similarities between the nurse in Phillip’s 1560 *Patient Grissill* and Paulina in *The Winter’s Tale* have sometimes been overlooked, as, for example, in Gourlay’s assumption that there was no precedent in any known source for Paulina, or in Darryll Grantley’s reading of Paulina as a figure from early religious drama, who is “the exemplar of virtue fighting for possession of the soul of man.”<sup>86</sup> Critics who have identified Phillip’s nurse as the literary ancestor of Paulina have tended to consider only the similarity of dramatic purpose, which is that both these female figures act as the voice of maternal outrage to prick the conscience of the erring father.<sup>87</sup> It is possible, however, to identify some specific parallels in treatment between the two plays. Like Paulina, Phillip’s nurse functions as moral instructor to the tyrant father, chiding him in didactic and at times equal terms when she addresses him by “thou,” and bringing the infant daughter to him in the hope that the sight of the child might stir compassion in him: “Oh my Lord behold your Daughter deare, how pretly shee doth smyle.”<sup>88</sup> Paulina adopts the same strategy (II.ii.37-38), and simultaneously calls attention to the father’s looks in the infant: “Behold, my lords, ... the pretty dimples of his chin and cheek, his smiles” (II.iii.98-102). In Chettle’s play, Griselda at one point plays this nurse role herself, “Oh see my Lord, / Sweet prettie fooles they both smil’d at that word. ... Can you thus part from them?” (*Patient Grissill* IV.i.194-97). All three dramatists use the infants to appeal to man’s better nature when logic and reason have failed, and the father figures in the two earlier plays are touched, albeit in asides. Anne Boleyn is said to have appealed to an angry Henry by holding out the infant Elizabeth to him.<sup>89</sup> In *The Winter’s Tale*, Leontes, who is playing the stage-misogynist, reacts with violent abuse towards Paulina and takes refuge in characterising her as a shrew: “A mankind witch! ... A most intelligencing bawd!” (II.iii.68-69), “Dame Partlet ... crone” (II.iii.76-77), “A callat / Of boundless tongue, who late hath beat her husband” (II.iii.92-93), “A gross hag!” (II.iii.108). He charges Paulina’s

husband, Antigonus, with being unable to control his wife - "What, canst not rule her?" - Antigonus defends Paulina's judgement:

La you now, you hear!  
When she will take the rein, I let her run,  
[Aside] But she'll not stumble.

(II.iii.50-52)

There is a similar moment in Phillip's play, when the allegorical character Fidence, defends women's tongues against an attack by the misogynist Vice figure. In response to the taunt that his wife rules him at times, Fidence replies "Yea, and reason."<sup>90</sup>

Given the bias pertaining to laws of property and inheritance, a woman's tongue was her only defence against injustice. Thomas Becon was happy not only to acknowledge this, but also to agree that it was time women were allowed some say: "A woman hath none other weapon but her tongue, which she must needs put in practice. They have been made dolts and fools long enough: it is now high time to take hart of grease unto them" (*Catechism* 345). In the pamphlet war over the women's controversy, Jane Anger argued that women's light tongues were necessary to reprove men's vices.<sup>91</sup> In plays which deal with injustices toward women, for example, *Othello* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, the heroine's virtuous and gentle status and her relationship with the accuser (husband or father) usually preclude her own vocal self-defence, and it is left to another woman to provide the voice of resistance. Hermione, who has been shown as articulate and astute in the opening scenes, and as eloquent and dignified in defending herself, is silenced by her imprisonment, thus allowing Paulina to play the surrogate for the silenced Hermione, as has generally been recognised.<sup>92</sup> However, Paulina's role as presiding genius over the play's resolution gives the shrew figure a status unprecedented in Renaissance drama.

Finally, as theatregoers, the play's audience must surely have been aware of the positive values playwrights and poets attached to the imagination and the capacity for wonder. This is where the earlier discussion over the imagination extends its relevance. Wonder is a term which occurs a number of times in the second half of the play (V.i.133, V.ii.16, V.iii.22), always in relation to the positive ability to suspend disbelief. In a humorous comment towards the end of the play, we may find a wry self-reference to the poet's art and the place of popular culture:

Such a deal of wonder is broken out within this hour that ballad-makers cannot be able to express it.

(V.ii.23-25)

When discussing the ballads of Autolycus, Northrop Frye quotes the above lines, and then ponders: “we begin to suspect that the kind of art manifested by the play itself is in some respects closer to these ‘trumpery’ ballads than to the sophisticated idealism and realism of Polixenes and Romano.”<sup>93</sup> Philip Sidney also valued the poet’s role for its capacity to catch the imagination and to entrance his audience, even with simple winter’s tales: “with a tale forsooth he cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner.”<sup>94</sup> This chapter concurs with Mary Ellen Lamb’s view that *The Winter’s Tale* calls for the audience “to move beyond the critical judgment of adulthood to be filled with the wonder of children again.”<sup>95</sup> Unlike Lamb, however, who reads into the play a sense of anxiety by the playwright towards the nursery environment, women’s influences and the narrative act itself, this chapter views the play as an affirmation of the valuable place of fables and fairy tales, of the ability to wonder and innocently enjoy in Jacobean England, and of a parental love which nurtures and cherishes. All these are features of the nursery world, and mothers are the repositories of such values. *The Winter’s Tale* suggests that men are at risk of losing these simple and precious human qualities, and should look to their own children and to their wives for guidance on how to relearn such skills. Janet Adelman recognises this and puts it down to Shakespeare’s intuition: “in the end, Shakespeare’s deep intuition makes Leontes’s recovery of trust in the world tantamount to his recovery of the benign maternal body in the literal form of Hermione.”<sup>96</sup> I would argue that it was less a matter of intuition, but of the dramatist drawing out an existing theme already treated by Chettle, and one which was central to the childrearing debate.

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 NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

- <sup>1</sup> T. W. Baldwin, *William Shakspeare's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke*, vol 1 (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1944) 664-65.
- <sup>2</sup> Henry Swinburne, *A Treatise of Spousals, or Matrimonial Contracts* (1686) (New York: Garland, 1985) 22.
- <sup>3</sup> Swinburne, *Treatise of Spousals* 26.
- <sup>4</sup> Swinburne, *Treatise of Spousals* 22, 26, 47, see also *Governor* 44.
- <sup>5</sup> It was, of course, possible for information on childbirth, pregnancy and care of the young infant to be accessed through midwifery manuals.
- <sup>6</sup> William Forrest, *The Governace of Princes* (c1550), *The History of Grisild the Second: A narrative, in verse, of the Divorce of Queen Katharine of Arragon*, ed. W. D. Macray (London: Chiswick, 1875) 181.
- <sup>7</sup> John Lyly, *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit, The Complete Works of John Lyly*, ed. R. Warwick Bond (Oxford: Clarendon, 1902) 283-84.
- <sup>8</sup> Nicholas Culpeper, *A Directory for Midwives or A Guide for Women*, 2nd ed. (London: Peter Cole, 1656) 108.
- <sup>9</sup> William F. MacLehose, "Nurturing Danger: High Medieval Medicine and the Problem(s) of the Child," *Medieval Mothering*, eds. John Carmi Parsons and Bonnie Wheeler (New York: Garland, 1996) 16.
- <sup>10</sup> *The Fasciculus Medicinæ of Joahannes de Ketham* (1491), trans. and adapted by Charles Singer, commentary by Karl Sudhoff, English translation Luke Demaitre, facsimile edition (Birmingham, AL: Classics and Medicine Library, 1988) 55.
- <sup>11</sup> John Lyly, *Mother Bombie* (1594), ed. Kathleen M Lea (London: Oxford UP, 1948) I.i.30-45.
- <sup>12</sup> Lodowick Barry, *Ram Alley or Merry Tricks* (1611), *Dodsley's Old English Plays*, rev. W. Carew Hazlitt, 4th ed., vol 10 (London: n.p., 1875) 352.
- <sup>13</sup> Jacques Du Bosc, *The Complete Woman* (1632), trans. N. N. (1639), *Daughters, Wives and Widows. Writings by Men about Women and Marriage in England, 1500-1640*, ed. Joan Larsen Klein (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1992) 282; Du Bosc draws on Plato for this understanding.
- <sup>14</sup> Peter B. Erickson, "Patriarchal Structures in *The Winter's Tale*," *PMLA* 97 (1982): 821.
- <sup>15</sup> Eucharius Roeslin, *The Birth of Mankind, otherwise named The Woman's Book* (1545), trans. Thomas Raynalde (1613), *Daughters, Wives and Widows* 183.
- <sup>16</sup> According to Anna Baldwin, this feature derives from the ballad 'Of Patient Grissel and a Noble Marquesse' (1593?): "From the *Clerk's Tale* to *The Winter's Tale*," *Chaucer Traditions: Studies in Honour of Derek Brewer*, eds. Ruth Morse and Barry Windeatt (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990) 202.
- <sup>17</sup> William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties* (1622) (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1976) 506.
- <sup>18</sup> See, for example, MacLehose: "Nurturing Danger: High Medieval Medicine and the Problem(s) of the Child" 3.

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- <sup>19</sup> W.B., *The Court of good Counsell* (1607), Early English Books 1475-1640, University Microfilms International, Reel no. 1375, Chapter 14.
- <sup>20</sup> Clarissa W. Atkinson, *The Oldest Vocation: Christian Motherhood in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991) 59-60; for medieval nursing theories in general see 57-61.
- <sup>21</sup> Erasmus, *Utile-Dulce or, Trueths Libertie* (1606), English Experience 591 (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1973) title page.
- <sup>22</sup> Gouge, *Domesticall Duties* 516.
- <sup>23</sup> Beatrice White, introduction, *The Vulgaria of John Stanbridge and the Vulgaria of Robert Whittinton*, Early English Text Soc. os 187 (London: Kegan, 1932) xx.
- <sup>24</sup> Gouge, *Domesticall Duties* 507; see also “As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word” (1 Peter 2:2): *De pueris* 299.
- <sup>25</sup> Gouge, *Domesticall Duties* 512.
- <sup>26</sup> Baldwin, *Small Latine & Lesse Greeke* vol 1, 201.
- <sup>27</sup> *The necessarie, fit and convenient education of a yong gentlewoman* (1598), English Experience 168 (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1969) K4.
- <sup>28</sup> Swinburne, *Treatise of Spousals* 53.
- <sup>29</sup> Silvana Vecchio, “The Good Wife,” trans. Clarissa Botsford, *Silences of the Middle Ages*, ed. Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *A History of Women in the West*, vol 2 (Cambridge, MA: Belknap - Harvard, 1992) 123; see also Rebecca W. Bushnell, *A Culture of Teaching: Early Modern Humanism in Theory and Practice* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1996) 40.
- <sup>30</sup> Nicholas Orme, *Education and Society in Medieval and Renaissance England* (London: Hambledon, 1989) 145.
- <sup>31</sup> Nicholas Udall, *Jack Jugeler, Three Tudor Classical Interludes*, ed. Marie Axton (Cambridge: Brewer, 1982) 97-98.
- <sup>32</sup> Foster Watson, *Luis Vives: El Gran Valenciano, 1492-1540* (London: Oxford UP, 1922) 79.
- <sup>33</sup> Vives, “Veritas Fucata,” *J. L. Vives: Early Writings*, eds. C. Matheussen, C. Fantazzi and E. George (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987) 81.
- <sup>34</sup> Richard Halpern, *The Poetics of Primitive Accumulation: English Renaissance Culture and the Genealogy of Capital* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991) note.23.25 (misprint corrected).
- <sup>35</sup> Mary Ellen Lamb, “Engendering the Narrative Act: Old Wives’ Tales in *The Winter’s Tale*, *Macbeth*, and *The Tempest*,” *Criticism* 40 (1998): 529-53.
- <sup>36</sup> Thomas More drew on a stock image when he humorously wrote, referring to himself: “a fond old man is often as full of words as a woman. It is, you wot well ... all the lust of an old fool’s life to sit well ... and drivel and drink and talk”: *Utopia and a Dialogue of Comfort*, Everyman’s Library 461 (London: Dent, 1951) 213.
- <sup>37</sup> John Phillip, *The Play of Patient Grissell*, ed. Ronald B. McKerrow and W. W. Greg, Malone Soc. Reprints (London: Chiswick, 1909), Henry Chettle, William Haughton, and Thomas Dekker, *The Pleasant*

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*Commoedye of Patient Grissill, The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, ed. Fredson Bowers, vol I (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1953); all further references are within the text.

<sup>38</sup> See also Gouge, *Domesticall Duties* 544-45.

<sup>39</sup> See for example Edward Pechter, "Patient Grissil and the Trials of Marriage," *The Elizabethan Theatre* 14, eds. A. L. Magnusson and C. E. McGee (Waterloo, Ontario: P. D. Meany, 1996) 83-108; Viviana Comensoli, *Household Business': Domestic Plays of Early Modern England* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1996) Chapter 2, 56-64.

<sup>40</sup> Pechter, "Patient Grissil and the Trials of Marriage" 93-94.

<sup>41</sup> Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992) 240.

<sup>42</sup> IV.i. Chettle; IV.ii.1-108: Dekker; IV.ii.109-230: Dekker (and Chettle?): Cyrus Hoy, *Introductions, Notes, and Commentaries to texts in The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker edited by Fredson Bowers*, vol 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980) 146.

<sup>43</sup> Anna Baldwin, "From the *Clerk's Tale* to *The Winter's Tale*," *Chaucer Traditions: Studies in Honour of Derek Brewer*, eds. Ruth Morse and Barry Windeatt (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990) 203; Comensoli, *'Household Business': Domestic Plays of Early Modern England* 56; Pechter, "Patient Grissil and the Trials of Marriage," 94.

<sup>44</sup> *The Pleasant Commoedye of Patient Grissill, The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, ed. Fredson Bowers, vol I (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1953) IV.i; all further references are within the text.

<sup>45</sup> *Misogonus, Six Anonymous Plays*, ed. John S. Farmer (London: Early English Drama Soc., 1906) 140.

<sup>46</sup> Hoy, *Introductions, Notes, and Commentaries* 167.

<sup>47</sup> John Phillip, *The Play of Patient Grissell* (c1558-65), eds. Ronald B. Mckerrow and W. W. Greg, (London: Chiswick, 1909) 1073-74.

<sup>48</sup> Debora Kuller Shuger, *Habits of Thought in the English Renaissance Religion, Politics, and the Dominant Culture* (Los Angeles: U of California P, 1990) 220-23.

<sup>49</sup> Shuger, *Habits of Thought* 248.

<sup>50</sup> Gurr, *Shakespearean Stage* 243.

<sup>51</sup> Geoffrey Bullough, ed., *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, vol 8 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975) 118.

<sup>52</sup> Baldwin, "From the *Clerk's Tale* to *The Winter's Tale*" 199-212.

<sup>53</sup> Chaucer's version, "The Clerk's Tale," had been printed in the six sixteenth-century editions of his *Works*; other publications in England included a ballad, a chapbook, a translation from the French, a verse narrative and three plays on the Patient Griselda theme, most of these dating from the latter half of the century: Faith Gildenhuis, ed., *A Gathering of Griseldas: Three Sixteenth-Century Texts*, Barnabe Rich Soc. Publications 6 (Ottawa: Dovehouse, 1996) 31-39.

<sup>54</sup> Phillip's play, written shortly after Elizabeth ascended the throne, can be read as a political allegory for the rehabilitation of Elizabeth's tragic mother, Anne Boleyn: Ursula Potter, "Family Dramas: Tudor Royal



Mothers and the Rise of the Patient Griselda Story,” paper given at the European Society for the Study of English (ESSE-2000) conference, Helsinki, 25-29 August 2000.

<sup>55</sup> Robert Greene, *Pandosto. The Triumph of Time* (1588), *An Anthology of Elizabethan Prose Fiction*, ed. Paul Salzman (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987) 204.

<sup>56</sup> Patricia Southard Gourlay, “‘O my most sacred lady’: Female Metaphor in *The Winter’s Tale*,” *English Literary Renaissance* 5 (1975) 383; Carol Thomas Neely, “Women and Issue in *The Winter’s Tale*,” *William Shakespeare’s The Winter’s Tale*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea, 1982) 75-88; Erickson, “Patriarchal Structures” 819-29.

<sup>57</sup> The tendency of child players to mimic adult behaviour is noted by Andrew Gurr, who quotes a 1602 student play in which “the old kinde of Pantomimick action” is derided: *Shakespearean Stage* 102, 112.

<sup>58</sup> Susan Snyder, “Mamillius and Gender Polarization in *The Winter’s Tale*,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 50 (1999): 2

<sup>59</sup> Ursula Potter, “Greensickness in *Romeo and Juliet*: considerations on a sixteenth-century disease of virgins,” paper given at the Premodern Teenagers conference, October 1999, Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, Victoria University in the University of Toronto.

<sup>60</sup> Vives, “Veritas Fucata” 71.

<sup>61</sup> Roger North, Essays, Add. MS. 32523, British Library, London, f.136v.

<sup>62</sup> Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources* 125.

<sup>63</sup> Richard Edwards, *Damon and Pithias: A Critical Old-Spelling Edition*, ed. D. Jerry White (New York: Garland, 1980) lines 422-23.

<sup>64</sup> Leontes has plausibly been compared to Herod and his slaughter of the innocents in the religious cycle plays: Darryll Grantley, “*The Winter’s Tale* and Early Religious Drama,” *Comparative Drama* 20 (1986) 29-30.

<sup>65</sup> Lisa Jardine, *Reading Shakespeare Historically* (London: Routledge, 1996) 88.

<sup>66</sup> Erickson, “Patriarchal Structures” 820.

<sup>67</sup> Snyder, “Mamillius and Gender Polarization” 1.

<sup>68</sup> Snyder, “Mamillius and Gender Polarization” 6.

<sup>69</sup> Lamb, “Engendering the Narrative Act” 532.

<sup>70</sup> Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources* 125.

<sup>71</sup> Mary Ellen Lamb, “Taken by the Fairies: Fairy Practices and the Production of Popular Culture in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 51 (2000): 284-85.

<sup>72</sup> Andrew Riemer, ed., *The Winter’s Tale* (Sydney: Sydney UP, 1989) 13-14.

<sup>73</sup> *Homily on the State of Matrimony* (c 1563-71), ed. Ian Lancashire, *Renaissance Electronic Texts* 1.2, online, U of Toronto, Internet, 25th Feb. 1999, II:18.1 93-98.

<sup>74</sup> Edwards, *Damon and Pithias* line 1119.

<sup>75</sup> Erika Rummel, *Erasmus on Women* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1996) 124.

<sup>76</sup> M. M. Mahood, "Wordplay in *The Winter's Tale*," *Shakespeare's Later Comedies: An Anthology of Modern Criticism*, ed. D. J. Palmer (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971) 359.

<sup>77</sup> Erickson, "Patriarchal Structures" 820; see also Lamb, "Engendering the Narrative Act" 536.

<sup>78</sup> It has been argued that the name Mamillius suggests that "Leonte's masculine image of himself is maternally fixated": Murray M. Schwartz, "Leontes' jealousy in *The Winter's Tale*," *American Imago* 30 (1974) 205-73; see also Snyder, "Mamillius and Gender Polarization" 4. For Mamillius "as a symbol of the union of male and female" see Coppélia Kahn, "The Providential Tempest," *Representing Shakespeare: New Psychoanalytic Essays*, eds. Murray M. Schwartz and Coppélia Kahn (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1980) 217-43.

<sup>79</sup> Bullough makes a connection with *Mamillia* (1583), a romance written by Robert Greene; but does not comment on any rationale for the connection beyond that of the author: *Narrative and Dramatic Sources in Shakespeare* 124. The theme of Greene's *Mamillia* may be significant to Shakespeare's play: this was the defence of women against contemporary trends to dispraise them, in particular of inconstancy: *The Life and Complete Works in Prose and Verse of Robert Greene*, ed. Alexander B. Grosart, vol 2 (New York: Russell, 1964) 156.

<sup>80</sup> Snyder, "Mamillius and Gender Polarization" 4; Lamb, "Engendering the Narrative Act" 533.

<sup>81</sup> It is used in this sense in an eighteenth-century Italian play:

Mamilius, come, advance; examine well  
By whom thou art surrounded. In the court  
Of Tarquin thou, *effeminately nursed*,  
Hast never yet seen Rome; this, this is she.

Vittorio Attieri (1749-1803) *The First Brutus*, trans. Charles Lloyd (1815), *English Verse Drama Database*, online, Setis, 4.98.

<sup>82</sup> Lamb follows the pedagogue's perspective in her reading of the "dangerous centrality of this relationship between mother and son": Lamb, "Engendering the Narrative Act" 533.

<sup>83</sup> When Tarquinius was exiled from Rome he went to live with his son-in-law, Mamilius Octavius of Tusculum: *OCD*.

<sup>84</sup> Thomas Heywood, *The Rape of Lucrece*, (1609) *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Heywood*, vol 5 (New York: Russell, 1964) 188.

<sup>85</sup> Morris Palmer Tilley, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1950) N355.

<sup>86</sup> Gourlay, "'O my most sacred lady'" *ELR* 5 (1975) 383; Darryll Grantley, "*The Winter's Tale* and Early Religious Drama" 26.

<sup>87</sup> See, for example, Baldwin, "From the *Clerk's Tale* to *The Winter's Tale*" 208; also Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womankind, 1540-1620* (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1984) 199.

<sup>88</sup> Phillip, *Patient Grissell* lines 1073-74.

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<sup>89</sup> Out of favour with Henry, and shortly before her arrest, she appealed to the departing King by holding out the infant Elizabeth to him from a window at Greenwich: E. W. Ives, *Anne Boleyn* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986) 354.

<sup>90</sup> Phillip, *Patient Grissell* line 439.

<sup>91</sup> “Jane Anger, her Protection for Women” (1589), *Half Humankind: Contexts and Texts of the Controversy about Women in England 1540-1640*, eds. Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara F. McManus (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1985) 179.

<sup>92</sup> Erickson, “Patriarchal Structures” 823.

<sup>93</sup> Northrop Frye, “Recognition in *The Winter’s Tale*,” *Shakespeare’s Later Comedies* 340.

<sup>94</sup> Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poetry, Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney*, eds. Katherine Duncan-Jones and Jan Van Dorsten (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973) 92.10-11.

<sup>95</sup> Lamb, “Engendering the Narrative Act” 535.

<sup>96</sup> Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare’s Plays, Hamlet to The Tempest* (New York: Routledge, 1992) 232.

**Juan Luis Vives (1492-1540)**

**Desiderius Erasmus Rotterodamus (1467-1536)**

## Conclusion

The seven plays analysed in this thesis document, in their own differing generic terms and for their differing audiences, changing attitudes towards public schools and pedagogical theory over a fifty-year period. The three earliest plays, from the 1560s (*Nice Wanton*, *July and Julian* and *The Disobedient Child*), are promotional vehicles for public schools written from within the school culture. They do not engage with the curriculum, and they keep schoolmasters either out of their texts altogether or give them only fleeting appearances. Their focus is on the benefits of schooling to society and to the individual, and on the exercise of parental authority. They concern themselves with parent-school relations and with rebutting arguments against public schools. Two of these plays draw on women as supporters of school values and all three of them direct criticism towards paternal authority. The two following plays dating from late 1578 to the early 1590s (*The Lady of May* and *Love's Labour's Lost*), are written from outside the school culture and act as vehicles for public criticism of Tudor schools through the medium of satire. They put schoolmasters on the stage and target the inappropriateness of the curriculum and the poor quality of teaching, and they throw their criticisms into relief through the medium of the articulate and discerning voices of women. The final two plays, which date from 1600 and 1610 (*Patient Grissill* and *The Winter's Tale*), trace the effects of a pedagogical theory that alienated men from maternal values. They demonstrate the damaging effects such divisive theories could have on parental relations, and they, too, offer the articulate voices and values of women as the necessary correctives to a misguided male pedagogical theory.

This exploration of the relationship between pedagogical theory and dramatic representations of parents persistently raises the question of whether Erasmus and others realised how divisive their childrearing advice could be. Did they consider that they might be creating the very insecurity in husbands that they elsewhere condemned? When Mary Beth Rose considered this question in relation to her survey of Protestant authors, which included Vives, she concluded that: "It is clear that the authors, busily constructing a new ideology of private life, for the most part fail to recognize the potential conflicts they have articulated."<sup>1</sup> For Erasmus, however, the answer may have been different.

Under discussion of wives who possess outstanding qualities, Erasmus shows his awareness of psychology in what could stand as a synopsis for *The Winter's Tale*:

These insecure husbands show a similar attitude towards their household, envying it as they would an individual; they cannot bear independent spirits and will put up only with the most abject toadies: to these alone will they give houseroom. I can well believe that they would like to turn their servants into asses; it would make them that much easier to enslave. The famous playwright is relevant here: 'Misgovernment will bring down the best government.'<sup>2</sup>

For authors such as Vives, very few wives possessed any outstanding qualities, and it is significant that in his schoolbook exercises the only good mothers he cites are martyrs, who, like Hermione, are notable for their self-sacrificing roles to male control, for example, Lucretia or Katharine of Aragon (*Exercitatio* 95-96). Vives, who has been credited as a pioneer of women's education, displays the greatest fear of women in his writings, particularly in his *De institutione*, leading even Erasmus to comment that he hoped Vives treated his wife more kindly than he did the women for whom his book was written.<sup>3</sup>

Vives' own childhood experiences may have contributed to his misogyny:

No mother loved her child better than mine did; nor any child did ever less perceive himself loved of his mother than I ... and therefore there was nobody that I did more flee, or was more loath to come nigh, than my mother, when I was a child.

(*Exercitatio* ix)

Vives credited his achievements as a scholar to this strained relationship with his mother; dramatists such as Shakespeare and Chettle would pass harsh judgement on the relative merits of academic scholarship compared to a nurturing mother-child relationship.

Looking back over the six plays and the one dramatic entertainment that have been analysed in this thesis, it is evident that each one of them is engaging in some way with prevailing debate over parenting and education. What is also evident is that these plays do not follow a common pedagogical theory that sought to exclude mothers from involvement in their child's schooling; rather, they offer a defence of maternal voices, or of women's values where no mothers are present, and the majority of them suggest that mothers were the more capable parent. It is, in fact, paternal behaviour that is usually the target of criticism in these plays. Even the most blatantly anti-feminist, *Nice Wanton*, undercuts its own misogyny when viewed from the informed perspective of Tudor education. The pedagogical authors wrote prescriptively: their assumptions of paternal authority and paternal values therefore represent a desired rather than an existing state.

The playwrights, however, whose work rarely endorses the parental paradigms of the treatises, engage with the multifaceted nature of the parent-school debate in Tudor England and offer a defence of maternal authority and of maternal values. Their work reveals that the scapegoating of mothers was a feature of the Tudor pedagogical culture. In Linda Woodbridge's examination of the formal women's controversy in print in Tudor and Jacobean England, she concludes that "critics have been wrong to assume that dramatists agreed with the misogynists they created: ... Genuine contempt for women may emerge as an authorial attitude in a number of Renaissance literary contexts, but the character of the stage misogynist is not one of them. Paradoxically, the stage misogynist is a figure belonging to the defense of women."<sup>4</sup> Like Woodbridge, the exploration by this thesis of mothers in drama has demonstrated the difference between the Renaissance literary contexts and the dramatic contexts, and has argued that the drama is powerful evidence of support for English mothers and their values at a time when pedagogical theory was undermining maternal authority.

### **Mothers as scapegoats**

The blaming of women for men's faults was a topical issue in Renaissance England. This is evident from the dramatic use of the shrew epithet, where the stage misogynist labels women shrews to excuse his own ill-deeds or mistakes. The Vice in *Nice Wanton*, the servant Ffenell in *July and Julian*, the embittered father in *The Disobedient Child*, and Leontes in *The Winter's Tale* all exemplify this practice. It is also identified in Mulcaster's critical comment on men who "upon some private error of their owne, to seeme faultles in wordes, where they be faithles in deedes, blame silly wymen as being the onely cause why they went awrie" (*Positions* 175.11-14). By appropriating Socrates' wife, Xantippe, as a literary euphemism, Renaissance pedagogy centred blame for the failures of education on women, and, more significantly, narrowed the focus to mothers in particular. This may have been a rhetorical strategy that was expected to be understood as such by literate and educated readers. However, like the copious illustrations of brutality by schoolmasters in the writings of Erasmus, the consequences of such a trope on the general and less literate public may have led to a destabilising of paternal values in Elizabethan England, and to the increased expression of misogyny, as dramatised in fathers in *The Disobedient Child*, in *Patient Grissil* and in *The Winter's Tale*.



Most of the hostility directed at mothers by the pedagogues came not from English authors, but from Erasmus and Vives. Chapter Five has indicated ideological differences of opinion between continental and English pedagogical authors over eugenics, obstetrics and care and control of the nursery, and this thesis suggests that the English authors did not share the same levels of anxiety towards mothers. Mulcaster was confident that English parents are “so naturall to their children, both for care before schoole, and for choice in schooling” that he can leave considerations on the child’s infancy and the choice of school to their own care (*Positions* 30.3-8). Mulcaster, who had seen too many children brought into school too young, encouraged parents to wait until the child was ready at seven or eight years of age, and the school statutes tend to support the later starting ages. According to the majority of the English plays analysed here, mothers generally knew better than either fathers or pedagogues how to bring up their children. They are valued in the drama for their sound judgement, for their competent exercise of authority or for their nurturing qualities.

The influence of the writings of Erasmus and Vives in England was enormous and must have stimulated widespread discussion on parenting roles and on the nature of women. Erasmus’ work was frequently translated and circulated by English Protestant supporters, who paraphrased and rewrote with their own bias. Humour, satire and the recognition of male frailties leaven Erasmus’ own misogyny, but these mitigating factors were often lost in translation. For example, a long poem entitled *A Touchestone for this time present* was published in London in 1574, purporting to reveal the “enormities, and abuses as trouble the Church of God,” but also including a freely paraphrased section of Erasmus’ *De pueris instituendis*. Lacking the Erasmian humour and eloquence, the poem’s author selectively and bluntly rewrites certain sections to suit his own bias, including attributing to mothers the argument that schooling was beneath their son’s social status:

As for the wordes that mothers use,  
     my childe hath how to live,  
 He shall (I trust) a living get  
     although he never give  
 Himselfe unto such needelesse toyle  
     and travell at his booke.<sup>5</sup>

This same poem includes material from Vives, some of it taken from *De institutione*. Under the subject of “fonde Parentes” the poem berates daughteers for dancing, for

reading unchaste and amorous books, and for using their learning to write “Pampheticall trifles”<sup>6</sup> – perhaps he had in mind the very pamphlets that Woodbridge consulted. What such material shows is how the writings of Vives and Erasmus were put to use in England, and how they could have influenced English custom. James Cleland’s 1607 *Institution of a Gentleman*, for example, shows evidence of Vives’ attitudes on breastfeeding and mothering, and by 1622 William Gouge’s *Of Domesticall Duties* included a lengthy chapter on breastfeeding.<sup>7</sup>

This is where the anti-mothering theories promoted by Vives and Erasmus, and adopted with reformist zeal, may have impacted on the English family culture. There is some slight anecdotal evidence to suggest that, culturally, wives and mothers enjoyed considerable authority and liberty in England. There were, for example, jokes circulating on the dominance of English wives in comparison with their European counterparts. In one late sixteenth-century commonplace book, the owner has noted a joke about a Jew who refused to convert to an English Christian, the first of his reasons being that Englishmen “suffer their wives to be their maistrs.”<sup>8</sup> A French proverb noted in another English commonplace book, suggests a similar understanding of the status of women in England: “England is the paradise of women, the purgatory of servants and the hell of horses.”<sup>9</sup> And in Dekker’s *Westward Ho* an Italian proverb on the liberty of women in England claims that “if there were a bridge over the narrow Seas, all the women in *Italy* would shew their husbands a Million of light paire of heeles, and flie over into *England*.”<sup>10</sup> Mary Beth Rose also comments on a growing body of historical evidence that English women exercised considerable authority including planning for the education of their children, and of mothers as “important presences in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English life.”<sup>11</sup> The early 1560s plays treated here tend to support these images of controlling English wives. They show mothers as the active parent in the training of children, either explicitly, as with Xantippe in *Nice Wanton*, and Mawd in *July and Julian*, or as implied in the young wife’s controlling role in *The Disobedient Child*. Forty to fifty years later, *Patient Grissill* and *The Winter’s Tale* offer dramatic images of parenting that suggest that unwelcome changes are taking place in English family life; these two plays mount a defence of maternal values and suggest they should indeed prevail over male pedagogical values for the benefit of the mental and emotional health of adult men. *Love’s Labour’s Lost* and *The Lady of May* contribute to this position by

pointing to a rising dissatisfaction with Tudor school values, and by privileging superior female qualities over the pedagogue's culture.

### **Faulty fathers**

Six of the plays actively position women as beneficial educators of men or of children, but each of these plays has had to argue its case. Mothers inhabited a disputed territory when it came to the exercise of their authority over the training of children, and this made them unlikely partners with schoolmasters, who shared similar problems in the exercise of their authority. This partnership was recognised in the pedagogical analogy between the scolding shrew and the schoolmaster's rod. Both groups – mothers and schoolmasters – were subject to the superior authority of fathers, who were supposed to guide and control the education and training of their children, but who often failed to do so according to the drama.

Although the thesis has paid less attention to the representation of fathers in the drama and the education advice literature, a few conclusions on the relationship between fathers and schools may be drawn. There is a notable absence of support by fathers for public schooling in the drama and in certain *vulgaria*. If we consider the main arguments against schools - their socially inferior status, and the perception of booklearning as unhealthy and unmasculine - and the fact that these arguments are frequently raised in the drama, it can be argued that fathers and not mothers may have constituted the major opponents of public schooling, particular fathers of gentry status. The desire to see one's children "go handsomely," as Xantippe puts it (*Nice Wanton* 125), may have been a persuasive argument for fathers living in a century that valued physical prowess and imposing images of masculinity. Dramatists usually put such erroneous opinions in the mouths of misguided fathers or sons (see page 110), repudiating them through parody, satire and, in *The Disobedient Child*, through the manipulation of gendered images. *Nice Wanton* promoted schooling primarily for religious reform, a 'push' factor in Cressy's theory. *July and Julian* and *The Disobedient Child* both include moral imperatives, but stronger 'pull' factors are suggested by their utilitarian promotion of schooling for career and inheritance ends. *The Disobedient Child* goes further by attempting to argue for schools as the training grounds for manhood and for masculine authority, not solely on the basis of learning, but on the understanding that the experience of corporal discipline

taught boys to withstand suffering. Ingelend appears to be trying to overcome a major impediment in the eyes of the public - a predominantly male public I would suggest.

Slight as this evidence is, there are other grounds for arguing that fathers in Tudor England needed more persuading of the benefits of schooling than did mothers. Robert Ashley records in his autobiography that it was his mother who sent him and his younger brother Francis, who was only six years old, to school in Southampton in 1575.<sup>12</sup> In one *vulgaria* there is a humorous, but nonetheless revealing, phrase on a mother's support for her child's education. The phrase addresses an indolent schoolboy, claiming he is wasting his time and his mother's money at school:

If thi mother wich only now that thi father ys deyd fyndes the exhibicion to scole did know thi disposition well, I wene she wold not let the continue long her, for thu canst never a-dell lytyll thu profet in lernyng so that thu myast passe other thi tyme with pleyng and sportyng, and that without beatyng.

The *vulgaria* may be mocking a mother's credulity towards her son's scholastic abilities, but it aligns a mother with support for schooling, and urges her willingness to pay as incentive to the son to work harder; the phrase "only now that thi father ys deyd," may emphasise the additional financial hardship imposed on the mother, but it also suggests that the mother's initiative can only take place now that the father is dead. In the same *vulgaria* another phrase depicts a father's support of schooling as only superficial:

My father send me hether to lerne grammer wenyng that ij yere or at the utter-must iij yere suffices for me sped that mather, but I have bene at grammare this ij yere and me semeth that a-neyth I understand the furst princi[p]les of hit, therfor I can not tell in the world how I shall content my fathers opinion.<sup>13</sup>

### **Mothers and the Tudor school curriculum**

If the pedagogues' anxiety towards mothers in the education advice literature was driving a wedge between parents, it was doing the same between mother and son through the medium of the school texts and the acquisition of Latin. Under discussion of the representation of mothers and female qualities in the dialogues of Vives, Chapter Three raised the issue of the indoctrination of schoolboys into Renaissance gender theory through their schooltexts. In Anthony Munday's 1585 comedy *Fedele and Fortunio*, the pedant teaches his pupil precepts drawn from Ovid's *Ars amatoria*:

Did I not teach you long ago out of tragical *Seneca*:  
His golden saying, *dux omnium malorum femina*?

Did I not cause you with your pen in the margent of your book  
to marke that place:

And yet will you be tooting on a beautiful face?<sup>14</sup>

Munday's satire exposes a common association of pedants and their texts with misogyny. Ingelend, in *The Disobedient Child* written some twenty years earlier, did not overtly identify what lay behind male misogyny, but his use of classical exempla gave some indication. There are strong hints in Mulcaster's writings that he considered some authors too misogynist and is aware of the influence of such material. In a section devoted to the defence of women's natural abilities, he praises Plutarch as a defender of women, but notes:

howsoever some of the lighter heades have lewdly belyed [women], or vainly accused them: yet the verie best and gravest writers thinke worthely of them, and make report of them with honour. *Ariosto* and *Boccacio* will be loth to be tearmed light being so great doctours in their divinitie, yet they be somewhat over heavie to wymen.

(*Positions* 174.26-31)

Another English educator, Elyot, also comments on classical authors who treat women poorly. In *The Defence of Good Women* (1531-38), Elyot argues that authors who were themselves "honest and continent" never wrote in dispraise of women, and he singles out Aristotle for criticism, claiming Aristotle wrote out of spite.<sup>15</sup> It seems well accepted that the Tudor curriculum was responsible for the dissemination of misogyny. Women evidently understood this, if Jane Anger's 1589 pamphlet is representative of an Elizabethan female viewpoint: "ancient writers should have busied their heads about deciphering the deceits of their own sex" rather than writing continually about the follies of women.<sup>16</sup> Twentieth-century parents suffer from similar concerns of gender bias in school texts, now, however, the bias is against boys. In a letter to *The Daily Telegraph*, July 29, 1998 one parent writes:

I was interested in last week's item about the bias against boys in textbooks and exam papers. However, the problem goes a lot further. In most of the television that children watch, you would be hard pressed to find a man who isn't presented as useless, irrelevant or stupid. ... The women are invariably sensible, taking the lead and making decisions.<sup>17</sup>

Twentieth century television comedy appears to have taken much the same line in the portrayal of gender as sixteenth century dramatists of comedy. While the curriculum bias has changed, the purveyors of popular culture do not seem to have changed their view.

The move from the mother tongue to Latin in grammar schools reinforced the separation between domestic and school values, and between mother and son. As Walter J. Ong puts it: “The cleavage between the vernacular world and the Latin world did not coincide with the division between literacy and illiteracy, but it did coincide with the division between family life and a certain type of extra-familial life and with a division between a world in which women had some say and an almost exclusively male world.”<sup>18</sup> Ong goes on to show how the Tudor curriculum developed the cult of the epic hero in poetry in order to inculcate courage and manliness in boys in their early years of grammar schooling and even in the late elementary years; he points to the partnership between the book and the rod, which was so evident in *The Disobedient Child*, when he asserts that “the connection of the teaching of Latin and of literature with puberty rites is further manifest to us, if it was not manifest to Renaissance educators themselves, when these educators explicitly discuss the problem of physical punishment.”<sup>19</sup>

When it comes to the content of the schooltexts and their gendered values, there can be little doubt that the authors of the school texts knew exactly what they were doing. When Virginia W. Callahan considered the influences of Erasmus’ schooltexts on schoolboys, in this instance the *De Copia*, which was used in upper grammar school classes, she comments on the use of “illustrations and exempla that allow Erasmus almost subliminally to instill in the student his views on the moral issues of his time.”<sup>20</sup> Her assumption is that Erasmus knew what he was doing. This thesis takes a similar view with regard to the parental representations in the schooltexts. All these pedagogical authors knew the power of first impressions; the metaphor of the jar flavoured by its first contents is commonly found in the writings of educators and in school texts drawn, of course, from classical authority: “I have red in Horace. A pytcher wyll have a smatche longe after of ye lyquoure yt was fyrst put in it” (*Vulgaria* 110). Mulcaster headed one of his chapters “*That this Elementarie seasoneth the young mindes with the verie best, and sweetest liquor*” and identified elementary school reading and writing material (*Copie*) as part of that liquor:

When the argument of the child’s *Copie* and the direction of his hand, whereby he learns to write shall be answerable to his reading, for choice of good matter, and reverence to young years, neither shall offer anything to the eye, but that may beautify the mind and will deserve memory. (*Elementarie* 22)

Given the high levels of misogyny in the classical authors in the curriculum, and perpetuated in newly introduced Christian texts, such as Mantuan (see page 81), the outlook for women was not encouraging.

The argument canvassed in the Introduction to this thesis proposed that with the growth of public schooling more children, and boys in particular, remained within the maternal orbit into adolescence. Inevitably, mothers could be expected to be more involved in their children's daily lives as the school hours allowed children home for meals, and as children shared school experiences and their learning with the parent most accessible to them. The thesis turned to drama for insights into the impact of Tudor schooling on family life, and the findings suggest that the increased focus on a mother's role led to mounting confusion and conflict over the relative merits of paternal and maternal values and the exercise of parental authority. The thesis concludes that the dramatists were alert to these changes in domestic life, and were sensitive to the difficulties faced by parents in Reformation England, and that they used their work to discuss the issues, expose the dangers and, above all, to defend English mothers.

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 NOTES TO CONCLUSION

<sup>1</sup> Mary Beth Rose, "Where Are the Mothers in Shakespeare? Options for Gender Representation in the English Renaissance," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 42 (1991) 298.

<sup>2</sup> The famous playwright is Publilius Syrus, *Sententiae*: Desiderius Erasmus, *The Institution of Marriage* (1526), *Erasmus on Women*, ed. Erika Rummell, trans. Michael Heath (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1996) 120.

<sup>3</sup> Joan Larsen Klein, ed., *Daughters, Wives and Widows: Writings by Men about Women and Marriage in England, 1500-1640* (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1992) 98n2.

<sup>4</sup> Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womankind, 1540-1620* (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1984) 297.

<sup>5</sup> E[dward] H[ake], *A Touchstone for this time present. ... Whereunto is annexed a perfect rule to be observed of all Parents and Scholemaisters, in the trayning up of their Schollers and Children in learning, 1574* (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1974) F2.

<sup>6</sup> E. H. *Touchstone* F, C4.

<sup>7</sup> William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties* (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1976) 507-19.

<sup>8</sup> Edward Pudsey, commonplace book, MS. English poet D.3, Bodleian Library, Oxford, 81.

<sup>9</sup> Commonplace book (1600-1652), MS. V.a. 381, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC, 31.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Dekker, *Westward Ho, The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, ed. Fredson Bowers, vol 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1955) III.iii.85-88.

<sup>11</sup> Rose, "Where are the Mothers in Shakespeare?" 293-94.

<sup>12</sup> *REED*: Dorset and Cornwall, endnotes 339.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Nicholas Orme, *Education and Society in Medieval and Renaissance England* (London: Hambledon Press, 1989) 143, 144.

<sup>14</sup> Anthony Munday, *A Critical Edition of Anthony Munday's Fedeles and Fortunio*, ed. Richard Hosley (New York: Garland, 1984) 1.2.69-73.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Elyot, *The Defence of Good Women, Vives and the Renaissance Education of Women*, ed. Foster Watson (London: Arnold, 1912) 218, 221-23.

<sup>16</sup> "Jane Anger, her Protection for Women" (1589), *Half Humankind: Contexts and Texts of the Controversy about Women in England 1540-1640*, eds. Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara F. McManus (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1985) 180.

<sup>17</sup> "Any Questions?" John Clare, *The Daily Telegraph*, 29 July 1998: 23.

<sup>18</sup> Walter J. Ong, "Latin Language Study as a Renaissance Puberty Rite," *Studies in Philology* 56 (1959): 107-08.

<sup>19</sup> Ong, "Latin Language Study" 118-19.

<sup>20</sup> Virginia W. Callahan, "The *De Copia*: The Bounteous Horn," *Essays on the Works of Erasmus*, ed. Richard L. DeMolen (New Haven: Yale UP, 1978) 105.



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