Reading the Household: Towards an Economic and Textual Understanding of Early English Drama

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Abstract

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This dissertation examines the domestic household's relationship to early English dramatic narratives from the fourteenth century to the start of the professional London stage. During this period the English household—understood as the basic unit of economic production in society—was both a source of public fascination and an active site of cultural and political meaning. Early English drama repeatedly dramatized household tensions, articulating the complicated social and economic arrangements found within contemporary households. This dissertation studies the English domestic household as a playing space and a dramatic subject while tracing the household's shaping influence on a wide range of early dramatic texts. Attending not only to household players and spectators, the project also traces the history of dramatic "book use": how plays were physically used, read, and altered by household readers. Using economic history, the dissertation examines the domestic household's material and ideological engagement with dramatic narratives while making a contribution to current research in the fields of early English drama and book history.

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— INTRODUCTION —

Reading the Household: Towards an Economic and Textual Understanding of Early English Drama

I will begin by acknowledging that this project brings together a collection of unpopular topics (or, as I will argue, several underrepresented areas of study). My first unpopular topic: the economy. At least one scholar has noted that historians of English drama often give the impression that it is not polite to talk about money.[1] Yet during the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth-centuries, England underwent substantial economic change, this period often being described—the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in particular—as the transitional era in which feudalism ended and capitalism began, the rise of the market economy took place, and the consumer revolution occurred. Collectively, these developments have often led historians to the conclusion that Tudor England ushered in the modern capitalistic world we recognize today.[2] All this, of course, had serious implications for the pattern of English social relations, and nowhere more so than in the domestic household, an institution with particularly strong ties both to the English economy and to early English drama. Ian W. Archer explains that even by the late sixteenth century, "economy" and "household management" remained inextricably linked,

> In common with most early modern people of his class Shakespeare would have understood 'economy' primarily in terms of 'oeconomy' (an English rendering of the Greek term 'oikonomia'), or household management rather than what we think of as 'the' economy. The household was not only a unit for reproduction; it was also conceived as the basic unit of production in society. (Archer 165)

With the household functioning both as a key economic and social unit, scholars studying late medieval and early modern households find themselves in a particularly advantageous position to survey economic conditions and contemporary responses.

In spite of this, this area of study has not drawn immense scholarly interest. Few historians have taken a serious interest in the sixteenth-century domestic household, preferring to focus on demographic or agrarian issues impacting households rather than the domestic household itself, and even fewer literary scholars have given the household sustained attention. But those drama historians who have—such as Lena Cowen Orlin, Frances Dolan, Diana E. Henderson, Suzanne Westfall and Greg Walker—demonstrate that the topic offers insights extending beyond the rise of capitalism and the division of labor at home. In other words, the household was not just a place for women to darn socks out of the rain. Historian David Rollison has described the early modern period as "a culture of households in a landscape" (Rollison 81), and both textual and literary evidence substantiate his claim.

Following the Reformation, in the absence of the authoritarian medieval church or any national police force, the household stood as the primary unit of social control. The individual householder was responsible for the maintenance of the moral order of his home not only for his personal and immediate benefit, but for the health of the greater English commonwealth: the householder was a politically empowered position.[3] "An houshold," John Dod and Robert Cleaver wrote in 1598, "is as it were a little Commonwealth."[4] More importantly, early English drama variously records how the household was economically, socially, politically and ideologically significant.

There are, however, problems with economic approaches to literary scholarship, sometimes referred to as the "new economic criticism." For Archer, the first issue is the

eclecticism of approaches used, a fact that has led some critics to question its coherence as a critical movement. Archer's second complaint is that playgoing constituted only a small fraction of the consumption habits of members of the elite, noting that, "the development of the theatre undoubtedly represents a step-change in the commercialization of leisure but its wider significance should not be exaggerated" (Archer 172). His third concern is that the development of commercial playing was possibly driven by pressure from the court as much as by the marketplace. For example, the proliferation of playhouses in the 1570s was probably encouraged by the Queen's ministers hoping to outsource expensive theatrical productions. And finally, Archer's main problem with some of the work exploring the relationship between economy and sixteenth-century literature is that it too frequently draws upon vague models of economic change avoided by many historians. Archer observes that, "sometimes reading the literary critics one gets the impression that the transition from feudalism to capitalism, or the rise of the market economy, or the consumer revolution occurred in Shakespeare's lifetime. This is not the case" (173). Moreover, historians tend to start not with commerce, markets and credit, but (cautiously) with the way in which the economy responded to rapid demographic changes—a topic frequently overlooked by literary scholarship. To put this in perspective, during Shakespeare's lifetime the population of England rose from 3.06 million to 4.51 million, putting obvious pressure on available resources and triggering inflation. It is not a minor detail.[5]

But in spite of the risks carefully outlined by Archer, economics remains a "sub-division of social life," and can offer meaningful answers to challenging literary questions. At the same time, a literary understanding of economic development is in some ways better informed than an approach heavily reliant on modern understandings of economic activity. Economic historian Keith Wrightson explains that during the late medieval and early modern periods economic

behavior was not yet treated as a distinct area of activity worth study as a science, and contemporaries were not intellectually equipped to fully appreciate economic changes happening around them. Contemporaries were, of course, aware that changes were taking place and could certainly appreciate that economic tensions were on the rise. However, like medieval thinkers, they tended to perceive economic changes and emergent problems through a lens of moral philosophy, interpreting economics as a branch of personal and social morality. Economic problems were therein frequently interpreted as failings within the commonwealth, failings that could be attributed to the misdeeds of specific people and discussed in literary and dramatic contexts.[6]

In a modern academic setting, fifteenth and sixteenth-century attitudes towards economics might best be described as interdisciplinary. The totalizing minds of the period were able to perceive interconnectedness between economics, politics, ethics and semiotics.[7] This is especially evident when, for example, contemporary commentators interpreted usury as a kind of magic and idolatry for how it confers performative power on signs: an urgent matter for a period for which the ethics of representation was a matter of political concern. In terms of modern scholarship, critics are revisiting economic understandings of traditionally non-economic subjects. Literary critics of the New Economic school—including Marc Shell and Jean-Joseph Goux—have argued that financial and linguistic semiotic systems function in analogous ways, and that they can potentially be studied using the same set of critical tools. As for economists, scholars such as Dierdre McClosky have analyzed their discipline as a form of "rhetoric."[8] A growing number of literary critics are now applying similar insights to the field of early modern studies. The most notable recent example is David Landreth's *The Face of Mammon: The Matter of Money in English Renaissance Literature* (2012), which argues that thanks to a series of

economic developments (such as inflations and debasements), sixteenth and seventeenth-century English society began to recognize that financial value was not identical with *specie* but maintained an abstract and semiotic power. For Landreth, financial power was all the more significant for its abstraction, since this allowed money as a concept to work its way into the human psyche.

Likewise, alongside economic concerns, my project focuses on the abstract and semiotic power of the domestic household and its ability, as a concept, to work its way into dramatic narrative. This brings me to my second unpopular topic: the household performance. Suzanne Westfall explains that,

> traditional histories of early modern theater have also slighted household theater as a genre because it was almost always occasional, deliberately, ephemeral, multimedial, and frequently nontextual or metatextual; all these qualities indicate events that are notoriously difficult to document without visual representation; musical scores, or some early equivalent of the glyphic Laban notation to record movement and dance. (Westfall 40)

She adds that, "household drama appears, at first glance, to be a very poor relation indeed to the textual drama of the church, schools, and public stage" (40). As a consequence, modern scholarship tends to relegate household revels to footnotes and appendixes, omitting analysis. Part of what makes household performance so difficult to study is their informality and susceptibility to household whim (which, of course, is difficult to recreate). However, while the household performance space was fluid, amendable to various kinds of performances, the duties and privileges of household members—performers and audiences—were firmly established, allowing these performances to function in complex ideological ways. Moreover, households

functioned both as producers and spectators of their own entertainment. So when household performances are dismissed as, "fleeting and somewhat embarrassing because of their allegedly unsophisticated texts" (57), an opportunity is missed to study socioeconomic relationships between household audiences and performances as well as to recognize the influence household revels had on other English theatrical traditions.

The Tudor hall itself, however, remains a source of scholarly interest. Meg Twycross calls the hall the, "social and administrative heart of the household" (Twycross 55), and describes how their fairly standard shape and pattern dictated Tudor stagecraft. Greg Walker observes that, "the general debt of the playhouse architecture to the lineaments of the Tudor hall is undoubted" (Walker 47), and he offers this further description,

> In the great hall of a Tudor palace or manor house the playing space itself, stretching from the crowded, disordered throng around the screen entrances, to the more decorous civility of the dais where the royal or noble party dined, attended by the sewers, carvers, cupbearers, and ushers provided both a microcosm of society itself and a moralised *mappa mundi*. (Walker 55)

The hall's seating arrangement hall made this possible, reaffirming hierarchical social relations within the household—the closer one sat to the dais, the more important one was—as well as shaping practical aspects of the performance.[9] So if the Tudor hall deserves scholarly attention as a space, does it also deserve attention as an idea? The household certainly mattered as an idea when it came to censorship practices. As Richard Dutton has pointed out, royal censors might be more lenient with potentially seditious materials if they were performed in households, moreover, "as early as 1285, the Statute of Winchester attempted to control masterless wanderers without household affiliations, an effort that was repeated by statutes and royal proclamations

throughout the Tudor period" (Dutton 49). Household affiliations mattered because even if players could not be trusted, patrons could be. The patron was not only responsible for maintaining social order in his household, but was also responsible for ordering and paying for household revels, making him, "the object of the revels, which were designed to glorify him by representing his ideas, his wealth, and his artistic tastes" (49). Of all members of the household, he was the ultimate producer and spectator.

But, crucially, he was not the only spectator. Through drama, the domestic household became one of the few acceptable places for variegated audiences (which could include noble patrons, servants, and everything between) to safely think beyond the micro-politics of their own daily existence and towards the macro-politics of the English commonwealth. Dramatic performances in households—and about households—allowed social grievances to be aired that could probably not be otherwise, and gave audiences an opportunity to reflect on the strict social hierarchies that governed so much of their daily lives. Especially during dramatic performances, households became active sites of cultural, political and economic meaning. As Westfall points out, the household is "itself a paradoxical establishment, embodying binary oppositions; it is a static/active, private/public, and domestic/commercial institution" (Westfall 41). Moreover, as Diana Henderson argues, while the domestic household was clearly a site of hierarchical relations, it is not always entirely obvious who benefited most. When he was away from home, Henderson notes, the patron or householder had to trust his social inferiors to maintain domestic order—an arrangement that often left him vulnerable to the needs and managerial decisions of others. Early drama repeatedly dramatized such tensions, articulating the complicated emotions, attitudes and social arrangements (a household could include a chaotic mix of blood relations, wards, retainers, servants, and tenants) within households.[10]

This brings me to my third unpopular topic: the domestic tragedy. The sixteenth-century domestic household was a source of public fascination, motivating contemporary moralists, political theorists, and writers of household guides to produce a flurry of texts. Likely in response to this intense public interest, professional playwrights began producing "domestic tragedies" for the late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century commercial stage. These plays follow a predicable pattern: they were typically inspired by recent historical events, set around or near the home, and involve the downfall of characters of low(er) birth. These plays operate by addressing familiar threats to the household—such as troublesome wives, tyrannical husbands, general family strife—while articulating how the domestic household stands in opposition to the hostile unfamiliar. As Lena Cowen Orlin observes, such plays reveal strange dangers lurking within the local landscape, including witches, foreigners, and unruly servants. In other words, contemporary audiences were being instructed to interpret the domestic household as a precarious sanctuary. In his classic study of the genre, *English Domestic or Homiletic Tragedy, 1575 to 1642* (1943), H. H. Adams attributes an educational or "homiletic" intention to all domestic tragedies, the list of which generally include: *Arden of Faversham* (1592), *Two Lamentable Tragedies* (1594), *A Warning for Fair Women* (1599), *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1603), *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (1605), and *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621).

While a small number of critics including Henderson and Orlin have studied domestic tragedies, these plays are often dismissed as "second-tier drama," in contrast to drama featuring the tragic fall of princes. This in turn creates, "the illusion of a gaping gulf between kingly 'public' and merely 'private' stories in early modern England" (Henderson 174). But domestic tragedies also have the potential to provide an alternative understanding of sixteenth-century drama and, I believe, have more in common with "serious" forms of early English drama than

current scholarship establishes. Moreover, as the domestic ideology central to the public stage, "was directed primarily at those in the moderately privileged world of the gentry and merchants," (192) they provide an opportunity to examine theater in terms of mercantile priorities and interests, including the production and circulation of playbooks. For early playbook printers like John Rastell, commerce was not a source of disengagement and alienation from society, but a means for direct participation in the political process. For Rastell, print was more than merely a trade, it was a mechanism for spreading the ideals of humanism, for furthering religious change, for enabling legal reforms and education, and for the overall intellectual betterment of the English nation. But no matter how lofty the ideals of the printer, anyone with the money to purchase a playbook had immediate access to its content, in effect making it part of popular culture which (as Henderson notes) is cousin to the domestic tragedies. Michael Bristol even describes the popular element in early modern society in economic terms, writing, "it [the popular element] was, rather, the complex ensemble of guilds, corporations, and local communities that carried out the tasks of actual production for the society as a whole" (Bristol 232). Linked both to popular culture and commercial interests, early playbooks and domestic dramas existed as cultural commodities within a complex network of economic, social and political meaning.

And this brings me to my final unpopular topic: historicism. In 2012 Neema Parvini declared historicism "boring."[11] He explains,

> What was new and exciting about new historicism and cultural materialism in the 1980s was that critics were suddenly free to talk about politics and cultural issues, things that really matter to themselves and their students. However, their enthrallment to anti-humanist theory has had some unfortunate consequences: their Shakespeare, much like

> Tillyard's, is a rather dull individual (if one can call him an individual at all) whose plays are mundane reiterations of the prevailing ideologies of early modern England. […] The characters who populate these plays are not 'people,' but literary constructs whose entire purpose is to expose or confirm and reinforce these ideologies. If anything else, this strikes me as a particularly boring way to read the plays. (Parvini 178)

Considering the longstanding dominance of historicism in early modern scholarship, Parvini's position is nothing if not divisive. What he advocates instead is a move towards "presentist" readings of Shakespeare, and he is not alone. Since 2006 there has been a general movement amongst Shakespearean scholars towards "presentist" readings of his plays, with critics like Michael Bristol, Catherine Belsey, Hugh Grady, Ewan Fernie and Terence Hawkes assessing how early modern drama might be used to help us better understand present-day issues.[12] Hawkes describes presentism as, "a critical movement that takes account of the never-ending dialogue between past and present, seeking out salient aspects of the present as a trigger for its investigations and arguing that an intrusive, shaping awareness of ourselves deserves not condemnation but our closest attention" (Hawkes 1).

At least initially, a presentist approach seems well-suited to discussion of early modern economic developments, being traditionally associated with the rise of individualism and the triumph of capitalism. Furthermore, just as the economy is a matter of intense public concern and scrutiny today, sixteenth-century England was similarly disposed. In fact, there are few modern day realities that Shakespeare and other sixteenth-century writers and dramatists would have understood so personally as economic upheaval and resultant feelings of anxiety and frustration. However, even as they recognized economic problems, the sixteenth-century process of recognition is fundamentally unlike our own. As previously noted, not only was the term

"economy" itself understood differently, but economic problems were identified as social and moral issues, attributed to failings within the strict hierarchical ordering of the English commonwealth. Moreover, their interpretation of individualism and capitalism differed from our own, as late medieval and early modern economic culture was to a considerable degree, "hostile to the notions of untrammelled freedom in economic affairs and material gain as an end in itself. Contemporaries regarded economic activity as being subordinated to ethical ends" (Wrightson 29). Not only is historicism necessary for economic literary criticism of early drama, but Parvini would struggle to find dramatic characters whose entire purpose is to expose or confirm and reinforce economic ideologies.

However, rather than challenge presentist readings (especially since they are generally limited to Shakespearean scholarship), this project responds to what Jonathan Gil Harris identifies as the source of growing dissatisfaction with historicism: the logic of periodization that has long separated Shakespeare from the middle ages. In his groundbreaking study *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages* (1965), O. B. Hardison Jr. became the first modern critic to give serious thought to continuities between medieval and Renaissance forms of drama. Hardison argues that medieval drama was wholly replaced by Renaissance drama during the Elizabethan period, creating an understanding of the trajectory of English theater that has dominated scholarship ever since. Drama historians, including Archer, Eamon Duffy, Harold C. Gardiner, and Michael O'Connell, continue to argue that, in roughly a single generation, the participatory religious theater of the Middle Ages was replaced by the professional secular drama of the public playhouse.[13] Unfortunately, this approach does little to explain all dramatic realities of the sixteenth century. Examples of so-called "medieval drama" appear late in the sixteenth century and evidence of dramatic professionalization and commercialization appear long before

either the emergence of the professional stage in around 1575 or the publication of Jonsons' *Works* in 1616. Sixteenth-century dramatic texts and practices point more towards overlap and interconnectedness than firm boundaries or abrupt divisions.

Projects such as this one will help further discussion about the bridge between the communal drama of medieval England and the professional plays of Elizabethan London. It will also offer deeper insight into the increased commercialization of the book trade and its associations with contemporary drama. As a result, certain features of this "transitional" period will underscore the fluidity of drama development, and the growth of books as valuable and increasingly attainable commodities. The result is that this period will appear less transitional and more like an extension of the manuscript-based world of medieval drama, as it fuses with the ever more profitable and print-dominated world of the professional stage. Furthermore, projects of this nature stress how both manuscript and print play texts can serve as cultural artifacts, bearing witness to how an audience—spectators or readers—might have perceived and responded to socioeconomic events. In other words, these play texts hold the potential to reveal contemporary responses, depending on the specific anticipated or "intended" audience, to economic matters both in terms of a text's content and physical composition, while those matters simultaneously determined the accessibility of such texts and their relationship to live performance. It is a tangle that deserves further study, making possible a more comprehensive understanding of how dramatic practices morphed, ended, and started anew alongside changes within the book trade.

Overall, by examining the household in relation to early English drama, this project challenges three commonplace scholarly assumptions: (1) that in approximately a single generation professional early modern drama replaced participatory medieval drama; (2) that this

change accompanied rapid economic developments including the rise of the market economy, the consumer revolution, and the transition from feudalism to capitalism; and (3) that this all occurred alongside the sudden switch from a manuscript to a print-based culture. Instead, this project emphasizes how slow, uneven, and (sometimes) unwelcome late medieval and early modern economic, dramatic and textual change could prove. Ultimately, through careful study of representative mid-fourteenth, fifteenth, and early sixteenth-century drama, I seek to examine not only the physical and performative media through which texts were communicated and disseminated, but also the interplay between those media and the changing material and sociocultural conditions within which authors and audiences, writers and readers, and producers and consumers functioned.

In terms of organization, the chapters move spatially (further inside the household) and chronologically: the first chapter deals with fifteenth century drama and labor outside the household, the second chapter deals with sixteenth century drama and performances remotely tied to households, the third chapter deals with sixteenth century printed playbooks and specific household performances, and the final chapter deals with late sixteenth-century playbook collecting and the household library. Each chapter attempts to build upon conclusions reached in the previous, but each can also stand alone as an exploration of a particular problem or text (or grouping of texts).

The first chapter, "The Laboring Household: Social (Im)mobility, Economic Discourse and the Wakefield Cycle," attempts to explain why the Wakefield pageant most deeply concerned with the politics of late medieval labor also appears to be the most untouched pageant in the manuscript. In doing so, this chapter seeks to answer questions regarding the cultural work of dramatic depictions of labor by mapping what the pageant reveals about domestic labor onto

its relationship to contemporary political theorization. More specifically, the chapter discusses how the Wakefield cycle (Huntington Library MS HM 1) brings the interplay between economics and theater into dialogue with notions of identity formation and spectatorship. By exploring the multilayered implications of the laboring body on the stage, the Wakefield Master implicates his audience in contemporary economic and cultural discourses—the spectators must learn to "read" Cain's laboring body in terms of his economic and cultural status (alongside their own). Situating the play in relation to questions of audience interpretation allows us to see more clearly how economic issues overlapped with late medieval identity formation. However, situating the play in relation to sixteenth century readership—or the seeming absence of early modern readerly interest—allows us to appreciate how understandings of poverty, the laboring body and identity had shifted from the fifteenth century. This chapter treats the Wakefield cycle as a form of historical record: (1) of connections to Wakefield guilds; (2) of linguistic patterns relating to labor legislation; (3) of contemporary responses to the "golden age of the English laborer;" (4) of literary treatments of the laborer's body; (5) of dramatic portrayals of the "dangerous poor;" and (6) of sixteenth-century signs of play text readership. Overall, this chapter attempts to answer the question: What can an early English play text tell us about household labor, and what can household labor tell us about an early English play text?

The second chapter, "Missing the Household: Vagrancy, Commonwealth and Tudor Interludes," seeks to explain how the household/state analogy worked (or failed to work) in sixteenth-century drama and culture through analysis of ten analogous Tudor interludes. As with the first chapter, this chapter describes the cultural work of these interludes, questioning whether they encouraged or challenged resistance to contemporary political theorization. Here a wider analysis of the relationship between drama and poverty is undertaken, revealing what the

developing political concept of "commonwealth" meant for the poorest members of English society. Factors including population growth, price inflation, the growing divide between poorer social groups and those able to profit from the enhanced value of commodities and of the land, and the worsening threat of vagrancy were all factors tending towards the ideological instability of the household/state. As a result, poverty no longer served a useful societal or spiritual purpose: and indeed was increasingly seen as potentially disruptive of the kind of social and economic order that institutions of household and state existed to impose. These ten interludes register such developments, providing a clearer sense of widespread economic conditions and anxieties than plays about social mobility and political theatricality are able. Moreover, not only do these money-centered plays defy traditional scholarly expectations of Tudor interludes, but they demand a broader definition of sixteenth-century "household entertainment" as well. Throughout the chapter, I argue for interconnectedness between the following: (1) the sixteenth-century household; (2) household players and contemporary legislation; (3) the emergence of the "commonwealth" within sixteenth-century political discourse; (4) the worsening threat of poverty; and (5) social conservatism within forms of early English drama. Overall, this chapter attempts to answer the question: How much does the "household" matter to Tudor household drama?

The third chapter, "The Popular Household: Printed Playbooks, Merchant-Citizens and Domestic Tragedies," explores how the analogy between citizen and household servant worked in early print drama. In the course of the discussion, *Fulgens and Lucres* is analyzed to demonstrate how printed household plays were able to relate politics to their audiences, facilitating new ways of thinking about political issues. In contrast to the previous chapters, with their emphasis on households struggling for basic economic survival, this chapter focuses on

sixteenth-century households attempting to maximize profits by engaging heavily with new and emerging markets—valuing economic change and growth over stability. John Rastell's household is a good example of this second kind of household, providing clues as to why the non-elite household was an area of growing interest for sixteenth-century writers, moralists and political theorists. This chapter establishes that the new commercial class differed from the nobility in its assumptions about wealth and power and in the kinds of drama it valued and printed. It also suggests that for Rastell commerce—printing specifically—became a means for direct participation in the political process, and not a source of disengagement and alienation from society. Throughout the chapter, I argue for interconnectedness between the following: (1) motivations for writing and performing *Fulgens*; (2) the commercial and material history of the English book trade; (3) Rastell's relationship to commerce and "new men"; (4) *Fulgens* and the politics of consumption and censorship; (5) *Fulgens* as it relates to other forms of sixteenth-century drama; and (6) *Fulgens* as an early domestic tragedy. Overall, this chapter addresses the question: What happened when household performances became print commodities?

While the first chapter deals with fictional households, the second chapter deals with absent households, and the third chapter deals with the commercial activities of households, the final chapter considers the physical materials that actually filled sixteenth-century households. "Personal Possessions: Magic, Playbooks and the Household Library," considers the often complex relationship between politics, household possessions and personal identity. More specifically, it focuses on early playbook collecting and attempts to answer the following questions: Aside from players, who was acquiring dramatic literature in pre-playhouse England and what did theatrical activity look like? How did dramatic literature relate to other forms of contemporary literature? How often did dramatic literature appear in personal libraries and what

were perceptions of drama in the period? Through analysis of the Digby manuscript (Bodleian MS Digby 133) and its earliest known owner, Myles Blomefylde, this chapter seeks to develop a theoretical framework for understanding how dramatic literature was integrated into sixteenth-century personal libraries and what this integration meant. Throughout the chapter, I treat the Digby manuscript as a form of historical record: first, of sixteenth century efforts to use dramatic literature to produce multiple cultural functions and effects; second, of the richness and significance of late medieval East Anglian theatrical traditions; third, of how Tudor architecture brought sociocultural and material change into close proximity with literary culture; and fourth, of the meaning of early modern "book use." Overall, this chapter attempts to answer the question: What did it mean when dramatic narratives entered households as material objects rather than performances?

[1] John Coldewey, "Some Economic Aspects of the Late Medieval Drama." *Medieval Drama: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*. ed. John Coldewey (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 98. Coldewey explains:

> Historians of English drama often refer to medieval plays as 'educational,' 'didactic,' 'communal,' 'festive,' and 'inspirational,' echoing the familiar Horatian dictum about instruction and delight. Then they stop short, as though it were not polite to talk about money. Yet the historical fortunes of medieval drama were inextricably linked with real fortunes, of nations, regions, towns and individuals. Like modern drama—like any drama that is actually produced—medieval drama depended upon a variety of economic circumstances and expectations.

[2] Historian Keith Wrightson explains in greater detail in *Earthy Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000):

> Medieval society was not some kind of primitive inversion of modernity, untouched by the commercial spirit. But the period from the sixteenth to the eighteenth did witness the gradual creation of an integrated national economy in which market relationships were the central mechanism—and which was itself closely linked to a nascent world economy. […] The market became not just a means of exchanging goods, but 'a mechanism for sustaining and maintaining an entire society.' Moreover, the market economy, as it emerged, became increasingly a capitalist economy. (Wrightson 22)

[3] See Wrightson.

[4] From *A Godly Form of Household Government: for the Ordering of Private Families, According to the Direction of God's Word.* Cleaver's book was reprinted at least eight times by 1630.

[5] See Archer, "Economy," in *Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare,* ed. Arthur F. Kinney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 174.

[6] See Wrightson.

[7] See Wrightson.

[8] See Deirdre McCloskey, *The Rhetoric of Economics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998).

[9] As explained by T. W. Craik in his classic *The Tudor Interlude* (1958), where he insists there was a contrast between privileged and unprivileged spectators depending on where they sat in the hall.

[10] See Diana E. Henderson, "The Theater and Domestic Culture," in *A New History of Early English Drama,* Ed. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

[11] See Parvini, *Shakespeare and Contemporary Theory: New Historicism and Cultural Materialism*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012).

[12] See *Presentist Shakespeares,* eds., Hugh Grady and Terence Hawkes, (New York: Routledge, 2007).

[13] See Ian W. Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping the of Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992); and Michael O'Connell, *The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm and Theater in Early-Modern England,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

— CHAPTER ONE —

The Laboring Household: Social (Im)mobility, Economic Discourse and the Wakefield Cycle

Discussions about late medieval and early modern English economies are invariably discussions about late medieval and early modern English households: even by the late sixteenth century the term "oeconomy" was still used to refer to household management. Ian W. Archer explains,

> In common with most early modern people of his class Shakespeare would have understood 'economy' primarily in terms of 'oeconomy' (an English rendering of the Greek term 'oikonomia'), or household management rather than what we think of as 'the' economy. The household was not only a unit for reproduction; it was also conceived as the basic unit of production in society. (Archer 165)

The household was also a unit for economic production, if not *the* primary unit for economic production. This chapter—as with the following three chapters—will take economic life as its focus, with the understanding that "oeconomy" is only a "sub-division of social life."[1] However, if we are to place the economic developments of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in their proper perspective, it is essential that we avoid oversimplifying the nature of labor at the turn of the sixteenth century. The ideological, social, political and literary role of "labor" has a long history, and, as historian R. H. Britnell observes, a vital part of that history is medieval. To a very considerable degree, late medieval and early modern economic culture, "lacked the concept of a market order as a self-regulating system of economic relationships," and, "was hostile to the notions of untrammelled individual freedom in economic affairs" (Wrightson 29). In other words, the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth-century laborer had to be controlled—a belief that

found its way into dramatic literature. In turn, early English drama provided a mechanism by which the tensions implicit in the economic rise and fall of laborers could be confronted and worked out, and made available a means by which visual and public recognition could be given to changes in economic relationships. This chapter will treat the Wakefield cycle (Huntington Library MS HM 1) as a form of historical record: (1) of connections to Wakefield guilds; (2) of linguistic patterns relating to labor legislation; (3) of contemporary responses to the "golden age of the English laborer;" (4) of literary treatments of the laborer's body; (5) of dramatic portrayals of the "dangerous poor;" and (6) of sixteenth-century signs of play text readership. Overall, this chapter attempts to answer the question: What can an early English play text tell us about household labor, and what can household labor tell us about an early English play text?

Of early forms of English drama, none has closer or more explicit ties to local economic life than the cycle plays. Not only did local trade enable, nurture and manage the production of cycle dramas, but the very history of craft organizations could frequently be traced alongside developments in regional dramatic activity. In the case of the York Corpus Christi Play, the very first cycle references appeared in the 1380s and 1390s alongside the earliest documentary evidence of formal organization amongst the craft organizations.[2] As Richard Beadle points out, "the origins of the Play may indeed lie, to some extent, in the realm of late fourteenth-century civic politics, and the manipulation of power by one group of citizens over another by economic means" (Beadle 100). In addition to elaborate costume and purpose-built pageant wagons, the 48 York pageants called for over 300 speaking parts and contain around 14,000 lines of verse (of which 13,500 lines survive) that would have taken an entire day to deliver or more—indicative of the substantial monetary and personal pressures placed on participating guilds and the city as a whole.[3] In documentary evidence we find the expression "brought forth," used in relation to the

involvement of crafts (or groups of crafts) in the pageants. When a guild "brought forth" a pageant there was an obligation, with financial consequences otherwise, to provide funding for an annual performance, to maintain a pageant wagon, costumes, and to ensure the quality of the performance.[4] In all, these plays would not have been easy or cheap to put on. Luckily, the York guilds had considerable resources to work with. As Beadle notes, by the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century the York guilds may well have numbered over 60, and the fact that there were at one time 57 plays in the York cycle points to the flourishing guild organizations in that city. Moreover, the York Corpus Christi Plays, both individually and in total, represent a celebration of local commerce and financial achievement as well as deep religious commitment and civic pride. As Beadle puts it,

> The Play was also very much part of the urban *habitus,* the entire set of interrelated social processes and rituals by which people associated with the crafts chose to live, and which, consciously or unconsciously, expressed their commitment to the duties of being both citizen of York and a soul to Christ. (100)

This mingling of the dramatic and the monetary had not only civic and spiritual implications, but left a textual footprint in the form of the *Ordo Paginarum*, a document listing York guilds and descriptions of the pageants they put on.

Although younger than the York cycle the Chester cycle—first referenced in 1422—followed a familiar trajectory, developing under similar local conditions and receiving comparable forms of civic and financial support. The cycle itself played such a significant role in terms of local commercial, spiritual and civic interest that extraordinary lengths were taken to preserve the cycle tradition following the Reformation. The Banns is textual evidence of such efforts, managing to assert that: Chester's two most famous citizens (Randle Higden and Sir John

Arneway) were instrumental in the cycle's creation, that the plays are ancient and unusual, that "author" Higden was in fact a very progressive fourteenth-century monk with Protestant inclinations, and that the plays were at one time a revolutionary attempt to disseminate the true Scriptures to the people of Chester. By generating and perpetuating a flattering proto-Protestant civic history that never actually existed—with Randle Higden declared author of the cycle during Sir John Arneway's mayoralty in the early fourteenth century—the cycle became a mouthpiece for historical yearnings, and, as surely the cycle revisers believed, was safeguarded against Protestant censorship. Ultimately, however, attempts to revise and "contextualize" the Chester cycle enough to satisfy the sixteenth-century custodians of Protestantism failed, and cycle performances—now too provocative—finally came to an end.[5]

Prior to this, for generations of audiences the Chester cycle stood as a prized expression of theological need, civic pride and, of course, commercial reality. As with York, the Chester pageants embodied a fluid response to local economic conditions. As David Mills has pointed out, profit-making, well-organized guilds paid fees known as "pageant-money" which went towards the production of lavish pageants and participation in the cycle itself. On the opposite end of the spectrum, poorly organized and less productive guilds were barred from joining the pageant selection process, and consequently the cycle became unpopular amongst those who felt financial criteria should not be a basis for participation. As much as the Chester cycle represented social cohesion, it could also exacerbate local tensions and highlight stark divisions within the increasingly competitive world of late medieval trade and business. Each year—for Chester as well as York—as lucrative guilds were assigned pageants (the content of which often complemented the trade itself), audience members were given an intense visual reminder of the local commercial hierarchy.[6]

However, the relationship between cycle and guild is not always as straightforward as this. Sparse reference to guilds sets the Wakefield cycle (otherwise known as the Towneley cycle) apart from both Chester and York, and there are several possible explanations for this. Firstly, there is the size of Wakefield to consider. In 1377, while Corpus Christi pageants were being performed in York (this is, in fact, the earliest reference to the York cycle) evidence from a four-penny Poll Tax discloses how much smaller the Wakefield area was at that time. With only around 208 men—apart from beggars—living in or around Wakefield, it is highly unlikely that the area was able to support a cycle containing 243 speaking parts.[7] It is also extremely doubtful that Wakefield guilds were responsible for putting on pageants during the late fourteenth century, or even that a system of guilds comparable to either Chester or York existed in Wakefield at all. In all probability, a religious guild or town corporation managed the plays until local guilds were able to take over following Wakefield's subsequent growth and civic development. Altogether, especially prior to the sixteenth century, evidence for a relationship between the Wakefield cycle and local guilds is very thin.

Secondly, there are textual features of the Wakefield manuscript to consider. If the manuscript was produced in the fifteenth century—as scholars have long argued is plausible—then it was made without any reference to Wakefield guilds. It was not until the sixteenth century that someone assigned six craft names to five pageants: "Barker" and the pageant "Creation," "Glover" and "Killing of Abel," "Litsters pagonn" and "Pharoah," "Fysher pagent" and "The Pilgrims," "Lysters pagon" and "Hanging of Judas." Worth mention, carelessness is not the reason guild references were missing and had to be added later. HM 1 is a fine large folio parchment manuscript containing delicate decorative initials and written primarily in the hand of one scribe—it is quite apparent that the book was made with care and expense. Regardless of

cost, it, like other cycle play manuscripts, was subject to frequent change and open to collaborative input as this was necessary for keeping up to date with local economic, social and political developments. As the cycle's relationship to the Wakefield community changed, the manuscript itself physically transformed. While, for example, it made sense to add six guild names to specific pageants at one point, it also eventually became necessary to remove content throughout the manuscript as it became controversial. There are in fact a number of gaps in the manuscript where pages have been lost: between pageants one and two, four and five, seventeen and eighteen, twenty-nine and thirty. Twelve further leaves are missing from the end of the manuscript, representing possibly 1,000 lines of lost text.[8] Now, of course, central leaves in a quire can be lost accidentally: this is one of the likeliest places for such loss to occur. What makes these gaps appear deliberate is the rough and obvious manner in which the final twelve leaves were torn out. As Peter Meredith notes:

> If the lost leaves did contain Marian material it may well be that they were removed as part of the Reformation reaction against the veneration of the Virgin Mary, which also accounts for the loss of the Chester *Assumption* and for the non-playing of the York Mary pageants. (Meredith 155)

The missing leaves, as with other added features of the manuscript, very likely represent the cycle's responsiveness to social and political change as well as its ability to adapt to the local intellectual and religious climate. This, of course, is not unusual: for all three English cycles, amendments and modifications made to cycle documents bear witness to years of regional, social, economic, and political transformation.

However, in comparison to the York cycle with its extensive supporting documentation, the Wakefield manuscript is younger and surrounding documentation either absent or more

inconclusive. Using paleographical evidence, Alexandra Johnston and Malcolm Parkes have suggested a mid-sixteenth century date for the Wakefield manuscript. If the manuscript is in fact a mid-sixteenth century copy of an older set of pageants, it could have been produced to help re-invigorate Catholicism during Mary's reign. Within this context, changes made to the manuscript were introduced shortly following its production and compilation. However with so little textual evidence and ancillary documentation to work with, questions of dating and provenance, like so many other questions surrounding the Wakefield manuscript, remain points of scholarly debate and require further inquiry.

Finally, there is the function of the Wakefield manuscript to consider. It appears that the manuscript is related—however distantly—to performance but, once again, is difficult to connect directly to guild involvement. Not only are there are no town records to serve as a context for the pageants, but details featured prominently in the York cycle and indicating that the manuscript was an official register, such as running titles, are missing from the Wakefield manuscript. While there are annotations in the Wakefield manuscript—evidence used by Meredith to argue for a relationship to performance—they are few. Across the thirty-two pageants there are sixty-eight stage directions mixed unevenly throughout and appearing within the page layout and margins. Twelve pageants have no stage directions at all, and the directions that do appear seem to vary in purpose. Comparing the Wakefield stage directions to other cycles, however, does not necessarily yield clear answers. Meredith points out:

> That there are few annotations does not matter. We do not know whether the York Register was typical, or even whether there is such a thing as a typical register. And it is important to keep in mind that the annotations in York had around a hundred years in

> which to accumulate. If the late dating of Towneley is right then it had around twenty years at the most. (157)

In other words, it is difficult knowing what to make of Wakefield's small offering of stage directions. It could point to the manuscript's young age, or it could be indicative of textual variations amongst the cycles: different cycles were interacted with differently. Regardless, where we might expect to find the clearest indications of guild involvement in the Wakefield cycle we find very limited information.

Taken altogether, the Wakefield manuscript raises more questions than it readily answers. Modern scholars struggle to determine what the manuscript was used for, when it was made, where it was used, and who was interested in using it. The missing evidence is all the more tantalizing with the shadow of guild involvement—typically such a central feature of cycle drama—seemingly lurking around every corner. But just because the Wakefield cycle is not indisputably tied to a lengthy history of local guild participation, does not mean that economic factors govern the drama any less.

In his influential *The Wakefield Pageants in the Towneley Cycle* (1958), A. C. Cawley offers three pieces of evidence supporting the existence of the "Wakefield Master": the repeated use a characteristic nine-line stanza, a fondness for colloquial language, and verbal parallels existing between specific pageants. The Wakefield Master is known to have written at least five pageants—"Noah," "First Shepherds' Play," "Second Shepherds' Play," "Herod the Great," and "The Buffeting"—and is very likely responsible for "The Killing of Abel" as well. Most scholars would argue that the "Cain" pageant should be studied as the work of the Wakefield Master, and I will be doing the same throughout this chapter. Alongside linguistic clues as well as familiar content and narrative structure, the pageant's fixation with the everyday, and specifically with

the realities and practicalities of the working lower orders, further aligns the play with the five others he is known to have written.[9] No matter the narrative, the Master appears to place high value on commonplace, widely shared experience: hunger, thirst, cold, the physical discomforts of labor, work constraints, and money troubles. Noah complains as he builds his ark, "A! my bak, I traw, will brast!/ this is sory note!/ hit is wonder that I last/ sich an old, dote/ All dold,/ To begyn sich a wark!" (lines 264-267). "The First Shepherds' Play" reminds its audience, "poore men ar in the dyke/ and oft tyme mars,/ The warld is slyke/ also helpars/ Is none here" (lines 93-95). "The Second Shepherds' Play" opens with a speech describing in abundant detail the sufferings of the working poor:

> Bot we sely shephardes/ that walkys on the moore,/ In faith we are nere handys/ out of the doore;/ No wonder as it standys/ if we be poore,/ ffor the tylthe of oure landys/ lyys falow as the floore,/ As ye ken./ we ar so hamyd,/ ffor-taxed and ramyd,/ We are mayde hand tamyd,/ with thyse gentlery men./ Thus thay refe vs oure rest/ oure lady theym wary! (lines 10-19)

And, same as "The First Shepherds' Play," the audience is reminded throughout the pageant of the physical realities of sheep herding: weather troubles, hunger, thirst, poor sleeping conditions, and lack of fair compensation. Although such concerns are less apparent in "Herod the Great" (although like the shepherds, Herod is none too pleased with his current job) the Wakefield Master uses references to contemporary costume and currency to once again turn the audience's attention to both the familiar and the physical: "A hundreth thowsand pownde/ is good wage for a knyght,/ Of pennys good and rownde/ now may ye go light/ with store;" (lines 444-446). And in "The Buffeting," the torturers are tempted to play a contemporary game with Christ involving a stool, a blindfold, and physical abuse known as "Hot Cockles." The Primus Tortor offers, "we

shall teche hym, I wote/ a new play of yoyll,/ And hold hym full hote/ frawrord, a stoyll/ Go fetch vs!" (lines 344-346).

Of course, some similar language appears in the York and Chester cycles. Costume references, for example, likewise appear in Chester's "Slaying of the Innocents," and Herod, in all three cycles, complains vehemently about impediments to his rule. Considering that especially between the York and Wakefield cycles pageant material was sometimes borrowed, textual overlap is not surprising. However, the tone and delivery of work-related complaints is worth mention as it attempts to convey a sense of "authenticity" to its laboring late medieval audience. In the Wakefield Master's plays, work-related consternations are only matched by an overriding suspicion of marriage. Moreover, the physicality of the Wakefield Master's work—his attention to, for instance, hot and cold, dry and damp conditions—sets these six Wakefield pageants aside from their Chester and York counterparts.

Perhaps this was done to engage audience members both emotionally and rationally, or perhaps as a reflexive gesture. Audiences are able to witness and comment on experiences shared by households across the nation. Even if the Wakefield Master is not responsible for the Cain pageant, the author was highly conscious of the dynamic the Wakefield Master was building between the audience, the everyday and the biblical in his pageants. As it happens, it is far more plausible that the Wakefield Master himself, and not a student of his work, was responsible for all six pageants in the cycle. So in spite of failing to follow the nine-line stanza pattern established in the other five Master pageants (with the exception of one stanza) content and language suggests that the Cain pageant does belong to the Wakefield Master grouping and should be approached accordingly.

As far as dating is concerned, textual evidence suggests that the Wakefield Master was working in the fifteenth century. There are basically three types of pageants in the manuscript: those borrowed for York (probably fourteenth-century in origin), those from another source or sources (dating unknown), and those associated with the Wakefield Master. Since this last type is the only to be wholly free of revisions, it can be assumed that the Wakefield Master was the last to work with the text. Martin Stevens has even argued that the Wakefield Master was the "guiding intelligence" (Stevens 172) for the entire cycle, and this suggests that the final form of HM 1 is as the Wakefield Master intended. Lawrence M. Clopper, however, has insisted that the Wakefield Master was a writer of plays rather than the creator of a cycle. While neither position offers a concrete date for the manuscript's compilation, references found in the Wakefield Master's pageants point to the fifteenth century. Costume descriptions, for example, match what we know about mid-fifteenth century dress. Thin as this evidence is—it is always possible to reference older styles of clothing—it is a starting point, and one of the few starting points available to us. However useful for dating purposes today, costume references would originally have linked the drama to specific daily conditions and social codes, emphasizing the reflexive nature of these pageants. Moreover, in his effort to engage his audience emotionally, rationally and reflexively, the Wakefield Master does not limit himself to describing contemporary hoods, but references contemporary forms of labor, festivity, physical conditions, and sources of economic anxiety impacting English households.

Not only do the "Cain" and two "Shepherds" pageants attempt to elicit sympathy for the laboring classes, but language used throughout the entire cycle places an emphasis on labor. This would probably come as little surprise to economic historians, who often make the point that the relationship between identity and labor was inviolate. Michael Uebel and Kellie Robertson both

argue that from the mid-fourteenth to the end of the fifteenth century, work arguably shaped social identity to a much greater extent than in earlier or later times.[10] There is no clearer indication of this than in medieval labor laws. Robertson and Uebel note that labor ordinances issued in the wake of the 1348 Black Plague not only restricted wages but also demanded the textual encoding of identity in the form of letters patent issued for migrating laborers among villages.

Anthony Musson also identifies the extent to which labor laws impacted late medieval society, observing that more than 1/3 of the 77 parliaments held between 1351 and 1420 passed legislation relating to labor.[11] The relationship between work and social identity began to change dramatically following the passing of two pieces of legislation—the Ordinance of Laborers (1349) and the Statute of Laborers (1351)—by an uneasy royal government. These first national labor laws in England represent a governmental response to the economic and demographic disaster brought by plague in the mid-fourteenth century and today the Statue of Laborers of 1351 provides a natural starting point for scholars wishing to study regulations governing employment in medieval England.[12] For the Statute of Laborers in particular, regulations were wide-reaching. As Musson points out, the statutory provisions dictated the terms of service, wage rates, the formation of agreements, restrictions on the hiring of workers and proscribed penalties for non-observance. Furthermore, a variety of occupations were encompassed by the scope of legislation: shopkeepers and artisans as well as agricultural laborers and domestic servants. Even the labor of children was taken into account.

Why pass such unforgiving legislation? Under a perceived sense of threat, the royal government designed and passed these laws, even taking the unusual route of bypassing Parliament. The King's council created the Ordinance and the subsequent Statue of Laborers,

which consolidated and extended the Ordinance's earlier measures. As Musson adds, unlike much other legislation from the period, these mid-fourteenth century labor laws did not derive from petitions from the Commons, but instead embody a coordinated national response to what might best be described as "the problem of labor." Although there are similarities between the provisions of the Ordinance and existing local regulations—suggesting that the lawyers on the King's council were drawing from these models—such legislation still indicates that the government was increasingly taking under its purview the working practices of the bulk of English subjects. As far as the government was concerned, (potentially threatening and disorderly) ordinary workers needed to be regulated, and their working lives should include aspects of greater governmental involvement.

Of course, this matter was not as simple as rulers fearing those they rule. Nothing regarding the sociopolitical and economic events preceding (or following) the Peasant's Revolt of 1381 could be characterized as simple. In his seminal work on the demographic history of the English countryside, M. M. Postan notes, "the probability is that the main pressure behind the legislation came not from feudal landowners, who by now derived the bulk of their revenues from rents, but from the smaller men still cultivating their home farms" (Postan 609). Pressures to legislate—and in a sense "freeze" social mobility—were now coming from new areas of society. Moreover, as Musson argues, the frequent issue of labor legislation demonstrates shifting attitudes amongst even the governing orders. Problematically, although labor was one of the determining factors in social identity, there was fundamental disagreement over the very definition of the term itself, as well as the implications of labor and its place (physically, intellectually and spiritually) within late medieval culture. Throughout the middle ages, in fact, the concept of labor and laborers had never been stable. Categories such as "peasant," "slave,"

and "vagabond" were far from fixed, and as Uebel and Robertson explain, neither Church nor secular authorities (literary and legal) promoted anything resembling an univocal understanding of different labor groups. There was some distinction made between intellectual labor or *labor corporalis* and craftsmanship or *artes mechanicae*, and the terms "work" and "labor" had separate meanings, with labor being the less flattering of the two.[13]

Interestingly, in the case of the Wakefield cycle, the reader is offered numerous illustrations of work and none of labor. Moreover, in terms of linguistic patterns, the Wakefield is distinctive from other cycles in the sheer volume of references to the word "wyrk" itself." "Wyrk" appears 27 times in the Wakefield cycle, as often as the word "within" and more than common words such as "fayth," "lawes," "brother," "begyn," "woman," "word," or "wife."[14] The terms "labor" and "economy" appear nowhere in the text despite both being in usage as well as highly germane to several of the Wakefield pageants. "Labor" appeared as early as 1400 and tended to be associated with farming—to cultivate, till, and plough. The word "economy" first turned up in the mid-fifteenth century and—as previously noted—generally pointed to managing the household or material resources in a community. "Economy" as "the management of money or financial resources" fails to appear until the eighteenth century. "Toil" is likewise absent from the Wakefield manuscript. From its arrival in around 1292, "toil" referred to an argument, dispute, or some form of verbal contention. "Toil" as we know it today—hard and continuous work or exertion that taxes the bodily or mental powers—appears much later, in 1594.[15] Altogether, whatever societal and intellectual confusion existed around medieval work terminology, that confusion does not seem to extend to the writer(s) of the Wakefield pageants, where linguistic patterns appear both deliberate and suggestive.

From a less competent poet, the repeated use of one word—in this case "wyrk"—might easily be overlooked. However for the Wakefield poet, a writer known for his linguistic diversity, repetition deserves critical attention. Throughout the middle ages new words pertaining to "work" appear in both Old English and Middle English. In 1340, in particular, we find an explosion of variations of "work" showing up in writing for the first time, and 1387 and 1400 likewise show a substantial jump in new words relating to work. Linguistic expansion slows down towards the end of the fifteenth century, to only one or two new "work" related words appearing in text per year. Before the trend slows and appears to conclude, there is another small spike between 1575 and 1577, and by the start of the seventeenth century work terminology appears more stable and the selection of available words narrowed. However, for mid-fifteenth century writers like the Wakefield poet, a wide range of work terminology was available for use.[16] In spite of this, the only variation to appear in the Wakefield pageants is "swynk," a word that shows up just four times throughout the manuscript. Perhaps tellingly, while "swynk," has connotations of trouble, affliction, toil, and heavy drinking, the more commonly featured "wyrk" is suggestive of regular occupation or employment, performance, conduct, business, and could be used to contrast faith or grace. Linguistically, the manuscript is an example of economics being interpreted as a branch of personal and social morality: work is a very good thing.

Even more tellingly, the Wakefield Master had an unprecedented range of "labor" terminology available to him. He was writing during a period where new notions of labor and new ways of defining proper and improper labor were increasingly in circulation. These fifteenth-century linguistic developments resulted from earlier, bureaucratically centralized, efforts to govern laborers and implement intrusive regulations on them. In other words, the Wakefield Master's engagement with the laborer's body was made possible by fourteenth-

century responses to laborers. As Robertson explains, "Whereas preplague laboring identity depended primarily on constant public recognition of identity through customary and remembered obligation, postplague laboring identity meant that the body was—as a sign—iterable" (Robertson 19). From the mid-fourteenth through the fifteenth century, it is obvious that the laborer's body was becoming a site of widespread contention and growing uncertainty. And not only did the royal government seek to control what that body did, but they sought to manage how it looked as well. The Sumptuary Law of 1363—inspired by the same events as the Ordinance and the Statute of Laborers—represents a clear governmental mandate to control the laborer's body and make more visible social hierarchy.[17]

The 1363 Sumptuary Law codified what clothing was appropriate for various segments of the society to wear. The Law was not only incredibly specific in how it organized the population and labeled individuals, but the restrictions themselves can best be described as pedantic. While a knight with land worth 400 marks annually was allowed to wear almost anything except weasel fur, ermine, or clothing with precious stones sewn in, an individual at the bottom of the social scale, owning goods of 40 shillings or less of value, was prohibited the use of cloth except for blanket and russet and belts of rope or linen. Merchants with goods valuing 1,000 pounds could wear cloth worth no more than five marks (for a whole cloth), and no cloth of gold, ermine, or clothes with jewels sewn in, but they were permitted use of cloth of silk, silver, miniver, and weasel. Merchants with goods valuing 500 pounds, however, had different restrictions and were limited to using cloth worth no more than four and a half marks (for a whole cloth), and no cloth of gold, silver, precious fur or enamel work. Yeomen and their families could spend no more than two pounds for a whole cloth, and the use of jewels, gold, embroidery, enamelware, poor silk and fur (with the exception of lamb, rabbit, fox, and cat) was prohibited. Women from this

order were not allowed the use of silk veils. The rules for servants were similar, although they could only spend two marks on a whole cloth and women were restricted to veils worth less than 12 pence. The King and magnates, of course, were allowed to wear anything they wanted.[18]

With the poorer members of society banned from using expensive materials for their clothing, and the wealthier members of society limited to materials suitable to their status (for example, Knights with land earning 400 marks annually could not use weasel fur, while esquires with land worth only 200 pounds per year as well as wealthier merchants were allowed use) the Law was designed to make social stratification more tangible and tactile, and give it a stronger visual presence.[19] The laborers' body was, in this way, made more easily identifiable.

As most social and economic historians would point out, there were a lot of them to identify. As Paul Freedman notes, no matter how we choose to define "peasant," medieval Europe was above all a peasant society.[20] Peasants made up the majority of the population, and the labor of peasant households deserves a central place in conversations about the English economy. Put another way, what was happening on English farms in the late middle ages had a ripple effect throughout the economy as a whole. In preindustrial England the major economic activity across households was food production: an enterprise with many opportunities for failure. One major source of concern was that medieval agriculture produced very low grain yields, a matter that has (understandably) drawn considerable scholarly attention from economic historians and has resulted in the so-called "Postan thesis." The Postan thesis argues that low grain yields happened because there was insufficient pasture to keep the arable land fertile, and his argument has become an orthodox technological explanation for low preindustrial yields.[21] It has also inspired further discussion of the difficulties surrounding subsistence living and the constant threat of Malthusian catastrophe. Especially from a modern perspective, medieval

English society was poor, thinly populated and overwhelmingly rural. As Gregory Clark observes, "preindustrial societies, and in particular England before 1600, were at the income levels of the poorest modern countries such as Malawi or Tanzania" (Clark 4). He notes that in 1377 only 5 percent of the population lived in cities of 5,000 or more, and that out of a national total population of 1.36 million there were only 23,314 taxpayers in London, 7,248 in York and 6,345 in Bristol (the three largest cities at this time). Normally, a lack of urbanization on this scale is the marker of a low-income society where the bulk of consumption and production is food.[22]

However, while rural events had wide-reaching influence and rural England was home to most of the population, according to information from fourteenth century poll taxes (from 1377, 1379 and 1381) surprisingly large numbers of households were involved in non-rural work. In 1381, for example, 41-44 percent of the population—including everyone, male and female, who was not indigent or in clerical orders and aged 15 or above—were not engaged in farming or fishing.[23] Christopher Dyer has used such evidence to argue that medieval England had an unusual urban structure with numerous small urban locations that might not be easily distinguished from later purely rural settings. He concludes that if all such urban locations were included, then even in 1300 15-20 percent of England was urbanized. Clark points out that, "even if every person of unknown occupation turned out to be employed in farming in the poll tax returns, there would still only be that 63% of the population engaged in farming 1379-82" (13). Clark concludes that even in the most prosperous parts of England, incomes were not trending upwards as the Industrial Revolution approached (although he notes elsewhere that there was a wage increase in the fifteenth century). But this does not indicate that parts of England were not prospering, or that living costs seriously outstripped wage rates. Clark adds,

"the prosperity of even rural East Anglia in this period is borne witness by parish churches and guildhalls that greatly exceed in their size and complexity any such structures that would be seen now in, for example, the poorest countries of Africa" (13). Despite being a largely rural society where the bulk of production and consumption dealt with food (and in particular a low-yielding crop, grain) and incomes were essentially frozen in place, late medieval English society maintained a surprising diversification of labor and certain regions enjoyed remarkable prosperity. Peasant households require more careful differentiation than can be undertaken here (or than has yet been fully analyzed in literary studies).

This fact, amongst others, has complicated modern scholarship, leaving many critics struggling to decide whether the period in which the Wakefield Master was writing is one of economic growth and prosperity or recession and decline. In 1884 James E. Thorold Rogers firmly came down of the side of prosperity, arguing: "the fifteenth century and the first quarter of the sixteenth century were the golden age of the English labourer, if we are to interpret the wages which he earned by the cost of the necessaries of life. At no time were wages, relatively speaking, so high, and at no time was food so cheap" (326 Rogers). As John Hatcher points out, more recent studies have only confirmed Rogers' findings. Hatcher, however, questions whether this "golden age of the English labourer" actually existed, insisting:

> The real wages of the landless and near landless did not soar nearly as high as it has been conventional to believe, and that it is misguided to believe that the rate of improvement of the real incomes of the lower strata of rural society was representative of the experience of the majority, whose fortunes improved far less dramatically. Preliminary modeling indicates that the real incomes of the substantial body of middling peasants with holdings of roughly subsistence size remained relatively stable in the face of

> dramatic changes in the prices of labour and farm produce, while those of large-scale farmers declined. The golden age of the fifteenth century is in need a severe does of debasement. (Hatcher 6)

One of Hatcher's complaints is that even if fifteenth-century laborers' daily wages matched or exceeded living costs, economic historians are unable to determine how many days those laborers actually worked. Moreover, labor information tends to be compiled from the demesne accounts of large institutions, while the bulk of English farmland was distributed in small parcels and relied on family or household labor: in such cases hired labor would be short-term and intermittent. In essence, regarding the conditions of fifteenth-century labor, available documentary evidence has divided opinion amongst modern economic historians. Few can agree what it was actually like to labor in the fifteenth century.

Whether for modern demographic or agrarian historians the fifteenth century was a golden age for the laborer or not, late medieval literature reveals a complex dynamic between labor, authority and rural communities. Moreover, works of literature from this period establish a tolerant, even sometimes compliant, relationship between laborers and the strict confines of the late medieval English hierarchy. John Ball may have advised his fellow peasant protesters to "cast off the yoke of bondage" in 1381, but contemporary literature did not always share this sentiment. Both prior to and following the Peasants' Revolt, fourteenth and fifteenth century writers felt comfortable producing works in praise of the current, radically unequal, social order. One of the best examples of this is the anonymous allegorical debate poem *Wynnere and Wastoure* (British Library, Additional MS 31042). The poem survives in a fifteenth-century manuscript compiled by Robert Thornton, but a handful of telling contemporary references dates the poem to around 1352 or possibly as late as 1370. The most likely place of origin is the West

Midlands (although the poet seems to have been familiar with London as well). Not only does geography establish some connection between *Wynnere and Wastoure* and the Wakefield pageants, but the content and the timing certainly invites comparison between the two.

Wynnere and Wastoure features a poet who falls asleep and dreams of a giant battle involving almost everyone in society. A great king—in actuality a thinly disguised depiction of Edward III—summons the leaders of the two opposing sides in an effort to facilitate a diplomatic resolution. Winner and Waster appear and they proceed to describe, in painstaking detail, why they despise each other and how each has doomed himself through misbehavior. Winner complains to the king about Waster:

> Alle that I wynn thurgh witt he wastes thurgh pryde;
> I gedir, I glene, and he lattys goo sone;
> I pryke and I pryne, and he the purse opines.
> Why hase this vayteffe no care how men corne sellen?
> His londes liggen alle ley, his lomes aren solde,
> Downn bene his dowfehowses, drye bene his poles;
> The devyll wounder one the wele he weldys at home,
> Bot hungere and heghe howses and howndes full kene.
> Safe a sparthe and a spere sparrede in ane hyrne,
> A bronde at his bede-hede, biddes he no nother
> Bot a cuttede capill to cayre with to his friendes. (230-240)

In surprisingly strong terms, Waster responds by describing Winner as an overly-cautious miser and warns against the spiritual consequences of this manner of conservative living:

> And hase werpede thy wyde howses full of wolle sakkes—

The bemys bended at the rofe, siche bakone there hynges,

Stuffed are sterlynges undere stelen bowndes—

What scholde worthe of that wele if no waste come?

Some rote, some ruste, some ratons fede.

Let by thy cramynge of thi kystes for Cristis lufe of heven!

Late the peple and the pore hafe parte of thi silvere;

For if thou wydwhare scholde walke and waytten the sothe,

Thou scholdeste reme for rewthe, in siche ryfe bene the pore.

For and thou lengare thus lyfe, leve thou no nother,

Thou schall be hanged in helle for that thou here spareste;

For sich a synn haste thou solde thi soule into helle,

And there es ever wellande woo, worlde withowtten ende. (250-262)

Winner, bristling at these remarks, complains that Waster has no stability in his life and no respect for social order:

With thi sturte and thi stryffe thou stroyests up my gudes

In playinge and in wakynge in wynttres nyghttis,

In owttrage, in unthrifte, in angarte pryde.

There es no wele in this werlde to wasschen thyn hands

That ne es gyffen and grounden are thou it getyn have. (265-270)

And then he adds, a little more strongly:

Iche freke one felde ogh the ferdere to be wirche.

Teche thy men for to tille and tynen thyn feldes;

Rayse up thi rent-howses, ryme up thi yerdes,

Owthere hafe as thou done and hope aftir werse—

That es first the faylynge of fode, and than the fire aftir,

To brene the alle at a birre for thi bale dedis. (287-292)

Having heard both arguments, the king's solution involves sending Winner off to live in luxury in Paris, and sending Waster to London in order to encourage people to spend more than they should (or can afford to) on food, booze and general niceties. The manuscript ends shortly after. As Winner and Waster both make clear, this debate over material gain and expenditure has political, social, and spiritual dimensions as well as repercussions. With the opening battlefield description showing that all of society seems to have assembled and sworn allegiance to one of the two sides, it is clear how pervasive and weighty the author considers this topic to be. The author also places a great deal of emphasis on the authority and dignity of the ruling orders—the ruling elite alone seem capable of pacifying the situation and preventing mass civil disorder from erupting. Hints alongside overt indications of violence permeate the text, and the general impression given is that threats of interclass violence are both very real and very near.

Despite being a product of the previous century, *Wynnere and Wastoure* resonated enough with Robert Thornton in the fifteenth century that he took the trouble to compile and preserve the text for personal use. This could be because Thornton was drawn to alliterative poetry and preserved similar texts. However Thornton, himself a member of the gentry, (and some scholars argue that the texts of the "alliterative revival" were designed for aristocratic readership) might have noticed how neatly the suggestions made by this older poem fit in with certain contemporary beliefs and priorities.[24] "Wyrk" is at the heart of the poem—who should do it, how it should be done, when it should be done, and what to do with any profit made. Moreover, the laborer's body is once again a source of serious interest.

The text of *Wynnere and Wastoure* is heavy with physical descriptions of what life is like for different types of laborers: those who freely spend what they earn and those who save. Careful attention is paid to what is worn on the body and what is, and what should be, consumed by different bodies. As with the Wakefield Master pageants, the poem's audience is reminded throughout of the various physical sensations—heat, cold, hunger, thirst, and exhaustion—the body experiences. The strong presence of the tactile and the corporeal effectively makes the poem seem more "real" and relatable than it otherwise might be. It also draws attention to physical threats against the individual body. Wearing inappropriate clothing, ill-suited for one's rank, is linked here to both class turmoil and spiritual distress. Clothing is not a small matter in this context, but rather, if used incorrectly, the beginning of a dangerously slippery slope. The 1363 Sumptuary Law would have given this message special weight, and the poem, with its suggestion that class distinctions exist to protect, a fairly conformist thrust. Considering the flattering way the king and the aristocracy are described in the text, the author might not have minded this development.

Between contemporary legislation, literature, and the reactionary events of 1381, it would seem the late medieval laborer's body was under persistent physical, spiritual, intellectual and legislative attack. As it happens, a prevailing notion that peasant laborers were, in a sense, their own worst enemy, helped justify certain legislative proceedings. While John Ball represents one of the few voices to insist that the ruling elite were responsible for some of these tensions, generally speaking late medieval literature remains conservative and surprisingly quiet on the subject. When there is acknowledgement of the suffering laborer's body, the source of its misery tends to either be natural or treated as such. This is precisely what we find in the Wakefield manuscript.

"The First Shepherds' Play" opens with a shepherd complaining about his recent bad luck and the financial pressures he must endure. He explains:

All my shepe ar gone,
I am not left oone,
The rott has theym slone;
Now beg I and borrow.
My handys may I wryng/ and mowrnyng make,
Bot if good will spryng/ and countre forsake;
ffermes thyk ar coming/ my purs is bot wake,
I haue nerehand nothing/ to pay nor to take;
I may syng
With purs penneles,
That mayks this heuynes,
Wo is me this dystres! (24-35)

Rather than hoping rent might be forgiven or delayed in light of the personal difficulties he has suffered, the shepherd adds, "Now if hap will grynde/ god from his heuen/ send grace." (40-41). The shepherd's rent obligation is as non-negotiable as the illness that killed off his flock of sheep, and just as bound to God's will. The landowning orders avoid further criticism with the next shepherd, who describes who truly should be feared in society:

Cryst saue vs
ffrom all myschefys,
ffrom robers and thefys,
ffrom those mens grefys,

That oft ar agans vs.

Both bosters and bragers/god kepe vs fro,

That with thare long dagers/ dos mekyll wo;

ffrom all byll hagers/ with colknyfys that g;

Sich wryers and wragers/ gose to and fro

ffor to crak. (50-59)

For this shepherd, the clearest threat to personal wellbeing comes not from those higher up in the social hierarchy—with the power to oppress—but from violent criminals: representative of the chaos existing outside the rigid social order. "The Second Shepherds' Play" takes a far stronger stance. The play opens with a shepherd explaining:

we are so hamyd,

ffor-taxed and ramyd,

We ar mayde hand tamyd,

with thyse gentlery men.

Thus thay refe vs oure rest/ oure lady theym wary!

These men that ar lord fest/ thay cause the ploghe tary.

That men say is for the best/ we fynde it contrary;

Thus ar husbandys opprest/ in po[i]nte to myscary,

On lyfe.

Thus hold, thay vs hunder,

Thus thay bryng vs in blonder;

It were greatte wonder,

And euer shuld we thryfe. (15-27)

There is no mistaking his message: the landowning orders actively oppress the lower orders. The shepherd, however, resigns himself to the fact that nothing can be done to remedy this situation, admitting that when it comes to the demands of the aristocracy: "I were better be hangyd/ Than oones say hym nay" (44-45). As reformist as his language may sound, the shepherd makes clear towards the end of his speech that this is intended to be a private rather than public complaint: "It dos me good, as I walk/ thus by myn oone,/ Of this warld, for to talk/ in maner of mone./To my shepe wyll I stalk/ and herkyn anone," (46-48). This suggests that while such sentiments might be commonly shared amongst members of the working orders, they are best expressed in private and limited to idle ranting. As the pageant goes on to explain, these social tensions may be awkward and at times very unpleasant but they, like poor weather and other forms of physical discomfort, are what all poor shepherds must learn to tolerate and accept. The first shepherd's speech on social inequality is followed by another shepherd who complains, just as fiercely, about bad weather and bad wives, therein reducing the first shepherd's problem to just one of many faced in daily life.

The Wakefield Master's use of "wyrk" as one all-encompassing term for labor suggests that the issues faced by the shepherds were not unique to them as laborers. Had the Wakefield Master wanted to use a term more closely associated with specifically rural employment, he probably would have chosen "labor," a word appearing early in the fifteenth century and tending to be associated with farming (to cultivate, till and plough).[25] "Wyrk," on the other hand, has suggestions of regular occupation, performance, conduct, business and could be used to contrast faith or grace. This linguistic gesture has several implications. In addition to widening audience appeal (these plays are not just about one type of laborer), labor itself is flatteringly depicted and any social critique offered up by the Wakefield Master is suitably softened. These Wakefield

labor-pageants acknowledge that work comes with its share of problems and that it is extremely tempting to critique those who appear to work less or occupy a different (perhaps less labor-intensive) position, but complaints about work are similar to complaints about bad weather: permanent change cannot be hoped for. As it happens, change might not even be desirable. The Wakefield Master suggests that because there is inherent value in regular employment, even spiritual connotations with "wykr," this social arrangement is appropriate and even necessary. Moreover, despite complaints about rent, landowners, and the gentry appearing in the text, none of these figures show up on the stage, and nothing aside from natural elements can actually be seen harming anyone. The exploitation of laboring households might be addressed, but only marginally and without a sense of justifiable rancor. While shepherds and farmers are depicted in these three Wakefield pageants, their professions are clearly determined by scriptural narrative and their grievances, despite having associations with (controversial) contemporary conditions, remain judiciously neutral.

All this suggests that while the Wakefield Master was aware of the dilemmas and physical discomforts often experienced by laborers, he was not necessarily calling for social reform or even giving indication that change is necessary. He creates a careful balance between criticism of the social system, and the natural (subordinate) orientation of laborers within that system. In place of more openly hostile social critique—against either the laborer or the exploitation of the laborer—his portrayal of the laboring body allows him to instead engage with tensions surrounding fifteenth-century social mobility: while mobility became increasingly possible the perceived value of a static social order (the English commonwealth) remained firmly entrenched. In a revealing mock feast scene in "The First Shepherds' Play" the shepherds mix terms from aristocratic cookery with poor French and comic English: they are aware that a

distinctive aristocratic food culture exists but are unable to engage with it meaningfully or convincingly. This would have been an ideal moment to condemn aristocratic snobbery, but, yet again, the Wakefield Master avoids a serious treatment of the shepherds' social position and the scene assumes a comic rather than reproachful tone: society may be grossly unjust, but not enough to eliminate the conciliatory effects of humor. Moreover, the social order is reaffirmed rather than reevaluated.

In an intellectual climate where changes to the social order might still be considered rebellious, a conservative literary approach to social mobility was a safe approach. But even in comparison to other late medieval writings critical of the ruling elite, the Wakefield Master (as well as the author of *Wynnere and Wastoure*) can best be described as deeply conservative or extremely cautious. How unique was the Wakefield portrayal? How widespread were the Wakefield Master's seemingly conservative beliefs? Unfortunately for modern critics, literary representations of the peasantry during this period are notoriously difficult to interpret—textual evidence, in general, is often ambiguous, partial or difficult to interpret—and critics oversimplify to their own detriment. As Freedman notes, even in the case of conformist writings medieval discourse about peasants was not merely a crude hegemonic tool, designed to persuade peasants and their masters that the exploitation of the peasantry was both just and natural (although the discourse of medieval elites about peasants contained many justifications for their subjection). [26]

Even if the lower social orders were not in open rebellion against their hierarchical confines, as economic history reveals they lived in the midst of a generally unforgiving—sometimes brutal—system and were surrounded by constant reminders of its existence. The Wakefield pageants suggest that although interest in the individual laborer was increasing, this interest was matched by growing desire to position the individual safely within a larger political system. This

development would have implications for later forms of drama, particularly drama with strong affiliations to the English household. In the case of the Wakefield Master, in contrast to the broad social commentary found in *Wynnere and Wastoure,* the Wakefield pageants appears to privilege personal experience and the role of the individual laborer over a comprehensive assessment of fifteenth-century labor practice and class dynamics. Unlike Abel, Cain is depicted less as a caricature or type and more a fully developed fifteenth-century individual. Of further emphasis—particularly clear in the two "Shepherds' Plays" and in "Cain"—was the threat poverty posed to the English commonwealth and the dangerous behavior of the poverty-stricken.

In keeping with contemporary thinking, the Wakefield Master treats poverty as a legitimate albeit distant dilemma. In terms of the public consciousness, however, poverty-related concerns had been growing for quite some time. As Michel Mollat explains, from the late eleventh through the early thirteenth century, there were major changes in the social position of the poor and in attitudes towards them. Social and economic factors made the poor more urban, more visible, and more alarmingly vocal as they became involved in riots, revolts, and heretical movements. In the mid-fourteenth century the Black Plague ravaged the ranks of the poor but did not serve to eliminate poverty altogether. Instances of the poor visible in social disturbances became menacingly numerous, making neutral or even benevolent attitudes towards the poor increasingly difficult to maintain. None of this was helped by the fact that poverty was generally regarded as a punishment for sin. Finally, the late thirteenth century saw a new type of poverty develop: the working poor.[27]

Mollat observes that while charitable institutions—hospital foundations, alms giving, testamentary bequests, confraternities, community distributions—had existed for centuries for the poorest members of society (the second half of the twelfth century saw a tremendous

outpouring of charity in particular), the working or fiscal poor remained faceless, represented primarily in tax records. Even in artistic depictions of poverty, such as manuscript decorations, beggars are often featured while the working poor remain conspicuously absent. Perhaps this is because they are trickier to depict, and/or perhaps because there were issues identifying them as a distinctive group. As Mollat goes on to note, the working poor were increasingly confused with the growing fringe element of prostitutes, beggars and criminals. Furthermore, denied not only appropriate categorization, the cost of housing often forced the working poor to congregate on the outskirts of cities, leaving them physically as well as intellectually abandoned. Simply put, late medieval English society did not know what to do with their working poor and anxieties were starting to mount. Depending on what the economic landscape of the fifteenth century actually looked like—whether it was the golden age of the laborer or something else—determines how widespread the issue of working poverty actually was. It did not help that abject poverty made sense within late medieval England, and not only were there resources available to aid the desperately poor but also a much firmer intellectual, institutional, as well as spiritual understanding of their role in society. Economically and conceptually, the late medieval working poor seem very much the precursors of the much-feared and misunderstood early modern vagrant.

The Wakefield Cain appears to acknowledge the problem of fifteenth-century working poverty impacting so many English households. Cain enters his pageant plowing, an introduction that conjures the complex late medieval relationship with the laboring body: a source of anxiety, fascination and sometimes praise. From the start, it is clear Cain is having a rough day—his young helper Garcio has not only failed to make himself useful but has actively worked against him, placing stones instead of hay in the oxen's feedbags. In the midst of Cain's battle with his

helper, Abel arrives and further interrupts work that has already suffered major setbacks. Considering the highly inflexible and time-sensitive nature of agricultural labor, a fifteenth or sixteenth-century audience would have most likely had a stronger reaction to these interruptions than any modern audience. They might have laughed, but probably not for very long. For perspective, the alternative to getting in a good harvest were things such the bloody flux. It was long believed that the bloody flux had died out, but in reality the disease was not a disease at all but the symptoms accompanying the final stages of starvation. Delaying chores like plowing and planting, by even so little time as a single week, could spell failure for certain crops—such as peas, which were an essential field crop before the introduction of potatoes—and it is extremely likely that the Wakefield Master's fifteenth-century rural audience would have been keenly aware of this. In short, Cain's frustrations are not necessarily misplaced.

Accordingly, when Abel appears and asks Cain to set aside his plow and turn to spiritual duties instead, his objection is not to the spiritual work itself but to setting aside his own: "Shuld I leife my plogh & all thyng/ And go with the to make offeryng?/ Nay! thou fyndys me not so mad!" (91-93), especially for a God who "me gifys he noght bot soro and wo" (96). When Abel scolds him saying, "Caym, leife this vayn carpyng,/ ffor god giffys the all thi lifyng" (97-98), Cain responds in purely financial terms: "Yit boroed I neuer a farthing/ of hym, here my hend" (99-100). He pleads his case in more detail, explaining to Abel:

> We! wherof shuld I tend, leif brothere?
> ffor I am ich yere wars then othere,
> here my trouth is none othere;
> My wynnyngis ar bot meyn,
> No wonder if that I be leyn;

fful long till hym I may me meyn,

ffor bi hym that me dere boght,

I traw that he will leyn me noght. (108-115)

Not only can Cain not afford to make a large sacrifice, he feels he cannot afford leaving his work at all. Suggestively, any protests made against God are enmeshed with ordinary agricultural concerns: "When all mens corn was fayre in feld,/ Then was myne not worth a neld;/ When I shuld saw, & wantyd seyde,/ And of corn had full grete neyde,/ Then gaf he me none of his,/ No more will I gif hym of this" (122-127).

Even at Cain's most defiant moment, when he refuses to make an appropriate sacrifice to God, he justifies his actions by explaining, "At yere tyme I sew fayre corn,/ yit was it sich when it was shorne,/ Thystyles & brerys, yei grete plente,/ And all kyn wedis that myght be." (200-203). And even after God himself appears and complains about Cain's poor sacrifice—a moment when awareness and repentance might be expected to set in—Cain instead responds by mocking the actor playing God: "Whi, who is that hob-ouer-the-wall?/ we! who was that that piped so small?/ Com go we hens, for perels all:/ God is out of hys wit." (297-300). In other words, for most of the pageant Cain is out of sync with his dramatic "world" and more closely aligned with the real world of the audience, existing with one foot firmly in reality and the other hesitantly in the world of the pageant. Although crowds of the "fourth class" have traditionally maintained a special relationship to cycle drama as a whole—becoming part of the performance as they represent a crowd of early Christians, for example—in this case they are not invited to join the pageant so much as Cain seeks to align himself with them. It is only when Cain becomes fully immersed in the dramatic narrative, when he finally sets aside the anxieties of fifteenth-century subsistence farming, that jealousy takes over and he commits the murder Cain is famous for

committing. Following his crime, Cain tries to convince Garcio that they should become outlaws, and the two engage in silly banter before Cain leaves to go into hiding. Up until that point, it would be understandable and even perhaps expected that contemporary audiences would have identified and empathized with Cain.

Stressing the point that Cain's issues are those of the working poor (more specifically the potential hardships of members of a subsistence economy) and not representative of poverty at large, he distinguishes his poverty from the voluntary poverty of the Church, protesting: "ffor had I giffen away my goode,/ then might I go with a ryffen hood,/ And it is better hold that I haue/ then go from doore to doore & craue." (140-143). In fact, Cain articulates such specific economic and agricultural hardships—he almost never stops talking like an anxious farmer—that is it surprising modern critics have so consistently overlooked this detail. For example, Warren Edminster reads the pageant for its festive forms, arguing that Garcio plays the role of fool, Cain serves as Lord of Misrule and Abel represents officialdom. He insists that the killing of Abel—seen at it is through the prism of these and other festive forms—offers the audience an uncrowning which, in turn, directs festive hostility and scorn towards orthodox obligation. Edminster argues that even if the audience does not fully embrace Cain as Lord of Misrule, they are empathetic towards his complaints. While Edminster recognizes that Cain draws compassion from his audience, and notes the Wakefield Master's interest in social obligation and occupation, Edminster does not go far enough. Neither does he address the seriousness of Cain's predicament at the start of his pageant or the didacticism of his role overall.[28]

The pageant both opens and closes with the act of plowing, the narrative never straying too far from the practicalities and rhythms of agricultural labor. At the end, Cain plays more of a minor farming role—getting Garcio to return to work the fields before he himself must escape

into exile. This final scene suggests that order has been restored now that Cain is forced to leave, but also reinforces the cyclical nature of the play: someone must resume labor, regardless of surrounding events. This idea that no matter the circumstance work must always be returned to is a message that could easily have extended to the fifteenth-century audience themselves, and this points to the play's reflexivity. After the spectacle, at some point after watching the plays, they too must return to some form of labor. The working body, in this way, becomes validated and a unifying force for the Wakefield audience. While the laboring body is not necessarily to be fully trusted or left unchecked—as Winner, Waster, Garcio and Cain ultimately suggest—it nonetheless has the potential to promote social cohesion. Furthermore, in the case of Cain his identity as "laborer" brings symmetry to the play, framing the narrative events. He starts the pageant as a farmer and he ends the pageant as a farmer.

Of course, Cain's body is tainted both by the crime he commits and by his association with working poverty. Despite all his efforts, Cain is only able to manage an impoverished existence, and one that not only places him in material peril but spiritual as well. While *Wynnere and Wastoure* exhibits a more relaxed attitude towards poverty—with the King instructing Waster to encourage widespread poverty amongst lower class Londoners as punishment for their profligate ways—that relatively untroubled stance was perhaps starting to give way to more serious concerns by the mid-fifteenth century. Cain is not reluctant to give sacrifice because he is greedy; he is reluctant because he is already so poor, allowing poverty to contribute to Cain's spiritual and social ruination. And Cain's anger towards God is not that of an unbeliever, or of one unwilling to fulfill religious obligation, but instead stems directly from his pauperism. Being poor is what makes Cain so dangerous.

How comfortable were fifteenth-century audiences with the Wakefield Cain? Suzanne Westfall argues in *Patrons and Performance: Early Tudor Household Revels* (1990), that the Wakefield Master's *Secunda Pastorum* shows the influence of chapel production and seems designed for indoor staging. If other Wakefield pageants were likewise designed for indoor performance, it is possible that fifteenth-century households were actively inviting Cain into private, domestic spaces. However, this level of comfort would have been short-lived: there is a meaningful difference between mid-fifteenth century attitudes towards the working poor and later sixteenth-century fears of the sinister vagrant. Without question, the events of the Plague years, the Peasant's Revolt, the labor legislation, the Sumptuary Law, and periods of poor harvests and food shortage (1438-39 probably being the closest to the time of the Wakefield Master's work) all left their mark on the late medieval collective consciousness. Nonetheless, late sixteenth-century drama reveals far greater hostility—and far more numerous depictions—of the poor than earlier English drama ever did.

In reality, there may have been more widespread poverty to discuss in the early modern period. Historians Catharina Lis and Hugh Soly argue that early modern economic development not only failed to eradicate poverty, it actually increased the likelihood of it. Specifically, they maintain that the incidence of poverty spread as capitalism developed over the course of the period, first as an agricultural system and later as an industrial system. The key mechanism they see at work behind this process is that of proletarianization, asserting that if 40 to 60 percent of western European peasants had insufficient land to maintain a family in the late middle ages, matters only got worse later in early modern Europe. This process of impoverishment included: a long-term trend toward diminishment in the size of peasant holdings, the development of social policies that criminalized the poor, and the massive shift of the labor force away from small

independent holdings and craft workshops toward wage labor in commercial agriculture and industry. But other historians take a more positive view of the spread of capitalist enterprises, arguing that alongside the losers, winners appeared as well. Anne E. C. McCants asserts that Marxist approaches overlook the importance of massive productivity gains in increasing the pool of resources available for distribution. On the other hand, she points out that more conventional Malthusian approaches, which insist that poverty follows from economic underdevelopment, suffer from their impracticality—poverty still exists in developed nations. Overall, just as poverty in early modern England was poorly understood, scholars today continue to debate its cause and its material conditions.[29]

Regardless, by the late sixteenth century discourses on poverty had changed. Alongside beggars and vagrants, English society was particularly concerned about the undeserving poor: those believed to be capable of work but who out of laziness or sheer malice refused to work (or such was the perception). As McCants points out, to aid these individuals was not only seen as counterproductive to the health of the economic and social order, it was actually a sin, and regarded as harmful to the soul of both giver and recipient. The threat of falling into this undesirable category must have relentlessly haunted members of England's working poor. Patricia Fumerton notes that the economic instability of early modern England helped to produce a deeply felt experience of itinerancy and social displacement amongst the working poor. She argues that the period witnessed the emergence of what she calls the "unsettled subjectivity" of poor laborers, a sense of self defined by economic, interpersonal, and spatial mobility. Worth mention, cultural and economic instability was experienced not only by the physically homeless or legally vagrant, but also at times by those slightly higher on the social scale, including: apprentices, servants and housewives.[30]

The proliferation and influence of contemporary writings on poverty reflects these developments. A famous example is Thomas Harman's *A caveat for common cursetors vulgarely called vagabones,* a text that went through four editions between 1566 and 1573. Harman was a self-proclaimed student of the poor and the terms devised in his text would continue to have a lasting influence on English society far after its initial publication. According to Harman, since the 1520s an expanding population of the undeserving poor, or "cursetors" were depriving the deserving poor of their just due. Harman classified almost two dozen cursetor types, such as "Bawdy-baskets" (women who stole clothing drying on hedges and food from unguarded kitchens), listed the names of over 200 practitioners, and offered a glossary of their "pedlar's French." Harman created a history of the undeserving poor—based on their means of deception—with, for example, cursetor's falling after "valiant beggars" and "Egyptians." Harman's writings were in fact taken so seriously, his nomenclature of the migratory poor eventually made its way into formal legislation.[31]

The rise of the vagrant figure in early modern drama can be directly tied to this collective fascination with forms of poverty. Moreover, drama and extreme poverty were now more intimately bound. Not only did dramatic works reflect aspects of a shifting economic landscape, but individual players and vagrants found themselves partnered in legislation. Harman's language found its way specifically into the 1572 "Act for the Punishment of vacabondes, and for the Relief of the Poor & Impotent": the most comprehensive early Elizabethan anti-poverty measure.[32] This statute was particularly harsh on vagabonds and actually served to expand the meaning considerably. Suddenly, and for the first time, the term vagabond included: minstrels, jugglers, interlude players, bearwards, and fencers. The Act also ordered that travelling players without licenses from two justices of the peace "shall be taken, adjudged and deemed rogues,

vagabonds and sturdy beggars." While there had been earlier statutes outlawing various forms of dramatic activity, and Paola Pugliatti argues for an initial date as early as 1284, this Act was exceptional for the way it identified the profession and threatened to criminalize certain members.[33]

Needless to say, the Act's comparison between players and vagrants was not a flattering one. Beggars were capable of drawing both fear and fascination from early modern audiences, and the poor generally elicited a contradictory mixture of sympathy, disgust, charity, reforming zeal, and anxiety above all else. William C. Carroll points out that while poor and vagrant persons were plentiful in early modern England they seem to have peopled the landscape of imagination even more thickly. A flurry of sermons, tracts, pamphlets, and stage plays attest to what can justifiably be called an obsession with poverty. As a result, when the authorities were not busy fantasizing about the poor, they spent a good deal of time classifying, imprisoning, punishing, branding, mutilating, resettling, and occasionally, providing for them. The poor, and specifically the wandering poor, sometimes tried to take advantage of circumstances, engaging in what Carroll labels a "war of signs." For instance, when so-called "deserving beggars" (perhaps those who were physically disabled) were issued identifying badges, counterfeit badges soon followed. The state then reversed strategy and marked the undeserving or "sturdy" beggars by clipping their ears or otherwise mutilating them, thus initiating what Carroll describes as a "penal semiotics." With beggars eliciting fear, fascination—and even, at times, envy or admiration—in early modern England, it is not surprising that depictions of the poor should appear on the stage. Carroll discusses a vogue among early modern playwrights for staging scenes in madhouses and with the emergence of two popular stereotypes: the raving madman and the "Abraham Man" or

counterfeit mad beggar (made famous through Edgar's disguise as Tom O'Bedlam in *King Lear*).[34]

By charting, measuring, labeling and attempting to understand the poor as a group, the nervous early modern world sought to gain mastery over them. Yet this process managed to make the personal experiences of the poor and the working poor more foreign than they had been in the late middle ages—society attempted to protect itself from individuals they understood in quantifiable rather than personal terms. Even a brief survey of early modern drama makes this development surprising. As David Bevington observes, "In many English Renaissance plays, the protagonist is a person distant from the formal structures of power, who has no way of imposing his or her will over others except by subterfuge" (Bevington xxvvii), adding that, "many plays not usually classified as revenge plays likewise set conspirators in a covertly adversarial relationship to the rest of the people in their world". He also makes the point that "it is, as if, in the dramatic worlds of these plays, the total amount of human agency were imagined as fixed, so that if one character successfully seizes more than his share, whether by force of by trickery, he becomes the 'winner' while the others are correspondingly deprived" (xxvviii). Bevington offers a possible explanation:

> Perhaps the precarious social position of so many Renaissance playwrights made them especially alert to the triumphs and transgressions that attend social mobility. Although traditionally one's status and occupation in life depended on one's family background, early modern dramatists very often created characters for whom that criterion was inadequate. (xxviii)

Bevington is not the only one to notice this pattern. In his study of early modern tragedy, Robert Watson argues that, "English Renaissance tragedy repeatedly portrays the struggle of a

remarkable individual against implacable, impersonal forces, a struggle no less impressive for its failure" (Watson 304). Additionally, "a remarkable number of the memorable heroes are destroyed by some version of this confrontation between desiring personal imagination and the relentless machinery of power, whether social, natural, or divine" (304). Within tragedy Watson identifies a self-authored hero (or "a remarkable individual") who struggles against insurmountable odds, but whose hero-status is generated by the struggle itself: in particular, the struggle against the social order.

In this dramatic preoccupation with social mobility, the vagrants and working poor of early modern society have no place. Even with social mobility at the heart of popular new genres—such as Revenge tragedies, which often feature an underling outmaneuvering his social "betters"—the poor existed at the peripheries, appearing as a threatening presence if appearing at all. Although some social mobility is treated negatively, such as in *Doctor Faustus* and *Volpone*, social mobility, or the fantasy of social mobility, was an especially appealing topic for period drama. The belief that exceptional lowborn individuals are capable of transcending rigid social boundaries—so long as they are not too poor to begin with—was increasingly popular and fueled by new economic conditions. The same economic changes that proved disastrous for some represented opportunity for others. Enclosures is probably the most famous example of this: the loss of "common land" left lower class rural residents more susceptible to famine, while enabling landowners to increase wool production and personal wealth. As a consequence of such economic transitioning, Bevington notes, "early modern England was a nation newly alive to the pleasures of affluence and newly aware of opportunities for acquiring it" (Bevington xxxi), adding, "the theater's engagement with the pleasures of consumption was profound" (xxxii). One expression of this engagement is the use of elaborate costume, a gesture signaling not only early

modern social mobility (with lowborn players dressing like the aristocracy) but one that evokes and challenges the thinking behind Sumptuary laws.

The allure of materiality was not limited only to the stage, but could make its presence felt in elaborate manuscripts: such as the Wakefield manuscript itself. Moreover, if Parkes is correct in his assessment that the manuscript was written and decorated in the Marian period (1553-8), then should rightly be studied as an early modern luxury item. Dating the Wakefield manuscript has been a subject of debate since the nineteenth century, and Parkes' argument places the manuscript at least twenty-five years later than any earlier dating. However, while most scholars in the field have come to accept a sixteenth-century date, questions of usage continue to stir controversy. Parkes observed that the more he studied the manuscript, the more it reminded him of contemporary legal documents. Not only does the manuscript feature ornate strap work but it is written in a Chancery hand: both commonplace in sixteenth-century legal texts. Furthermore, Parkes believes that the text functions like a record of judicial significance. While Alexandra Johnston agrees with Parkes, believing that the manuscript was compiled from a group of known West Riding plays by a legal clerk as part of the campaign by the Ecclesiastical Commission to suppress Catholic drama, other critics have arrived at different conclusions.[35] Barbara Palmer made the case that the manuscript was commissioned by the recusant Towneley family of east Lancashire: who rescued many medieval artifacts, including some from Whalley Abbey. Peter Meredith, on the other hand, insists that the manuscript represents a set of plays performed in the late 1550s (for which there are two genuine Wakefield town records). Peter Happe takes a different approach, arguing that the physical characteristics suggest that the codex was a book for reading, and that the volume functioned—and still functions—more like an anthology of plays than a cycle of plays.[36]

Whatever the nature or date of the manuscript, the plays are at least a hundred years older, many of them originating from the first half of the fifteenth century. By the time they were compiled as MS HM1 a lot had changed, and sixteenth-century readers were inclined to use the manuscript differently than earlier readers might have. I believe that signs of use and wear on the physical manuscript support two major claims: those for later sixteenth-century dating and those suggesting that the manuscript represents a form of record (either judicial or nostalgic). With the exception of "The Killing of Abel," discoloration appears fairly evenly throughout the text in spite of how substantially the pages have been trimmed. The manuscript has been heavily handled overall, and dark dirt deposits on the lower outer corner of folios are plainly visible across most pageants. There are several plausible explanations for this. It is possible that the flesh-side of the parchment, typically the whiter side, simply makes the Cain pageant appear untouched, or that color variance in the parchment is simply more noticeable in other pageants. It is also possible that any accumulated discoloration was trimmed away from the Cain pageant. Assuming any of these are the case, they fail to explain why other pages in the manuscript, in spite of also being trimmed, not only show more dramatic signs of use but are thin in places, softened and either slightly clear from grease or stained brown. Put bluntly, it looks like hands have turned these pages far more than others. While it makes sense that the first pages of the manuscript would be worn—and they generally are in manuscripts—it is harder to attribute other signs of damage to parchment conditions, typical reader abuse, or book production practices. The most heavily worn and damaged pages are spaced fairly randomly throughout the manuscript, appearing on pages (numbers based off pagination added much later to the upper right hand corners of folios): 22, 23, 65, 91, 99, 114, 120, 124, and 132. None of these pages belong to the

Cain pageant, and the damage appears to correspond more with content than predictable book wear.[37]

It is also possible that the Cain pageant was genuinely unpopular. Considering the level of modern scholarly attention drawn both to the manuscript and the Wakefield Master, it is surprising no one has studied the patterns of discoloration aside from noting that HM 1 has been heavily handled. That being said, the physical differences between the Cain pageants and others are slight, easily overlooked without careful study, and only really apparent in person. Nonetheless, perhaps this wear pattern should invite scholars to re-think the pageant's relationship to the rest of the manuscript. Assuming that the Cain pageant was intentionally neglected by early readers, it is hard to believe that an expensive readerly play text would have been commissioned to contain a text that no one wanted to read, or that a writer—specifically one as thoughtful and attentive to audience as the Wakefield Master—would have purposely produced an unreadable text. It is easier to believe that the Cain pageant fell out of fashion in the years between its original composition and its inclusion in the Wakefield manuscript, and that the manuscript represents a sort of record of performance. Accordingly, the time between composition and compilation must have been long enough to allow for specific economic and social attitudes to lapse.

For several reasons, the pageant should have been popular with sixteenth-century readers. Firstly, the Wakefield Cain shares features with characters of the increasingly popular early modern stage.[38] Just like many central early modern characters, Cain is distant from formal structures of power—a fact made clear through the description of his farming troubles—and "has no way of imposing his or her will over others except through subterfuge" (Bevington xxvii). Being spiritually and financially inferior to Abel, Cain has no choice but to murder in order to

gain control over the narrative. Revenge tragedies often feature social underlings who push the narrative events along through wicked motives and gross misbehavior, and the Cain pageant is no different. He might have acted more impulsively, but the results were the same and the dramatic pattern familiar.

Secondly, Cain's portrayal should have tapped into the early modern fixation with poverty. While economic historians may not agree on the specifics or the causes, they do agree that expanding segments of the population were touched by structural poverty. However, the growth of a "subculture" of extreme poverty, such as that surrounding vagrancy, is not necessarily warranted by population statistics. According to Paul Fideler, only about 2 percent of the early modern English population could be accurately labeled "vagabond." But reality did not hold fears in check, and Marjorie MacIntosh found that the number of courts reporting poverty-related concerns increased from 2-3 percent early on (c. 1370-99) to 46 percent by the later sixteenth century.[39] The offenses most often associated with poverty were: hedge breaking, feeding or sheltering vagabonds, refusal to work, and harboring subtenants. Individuals were defending themselves against the impoverished in different, more active ways. In these uncertain economic times, when poverty was taking new forms and instigating new modes of social unrest (in one famous example, Northumberland sought the dissatisfied poor of the North to join him in the 1569 rising of the northern earls) this haunting notion of a figure lurking at the very bottom of the social order—existing outside the rules of society—was gaining momentum. As contemporary writings and legislation indicate, poverty was an ideological concern as much as a concrete social problem. Consequently, contemporary audiences would have been particularly sensitive to literary and dramatic portrayals of poverty, and would have paid them careful attention. But, of course, this pageant is an exception.

Finally, evidence from the Wakefield manuscript itself suggests a history of active readership. In addition to usage marks on individual folios, readers managed to wear through bindings at a rate indicative of very regular use. Scholars are certain that the manuscript went through at least three bindings, the second being by Christopher Towneley in the mid-seventeenth century. Depending on when that first binding appeared—whether it was a fifteenth or sixteenth-century binding—determines how heavily the manuscript was used by its earliest readers. Either way, had the volume sat neglected on a shelf, the seventeenth-century rebinding would probably not have been necessary. In a letter to Martin Stevens (July 1970), the Huntington Library Curator of Manuscripts Herbert C. Schulz argues for the earlier binding date, noting that the single clasp fastened in the middle of the upper cover is more typical of fifteenth-century work than of the sixteenth. Regardless, Schulz comments on heavy usage in two letters to Stevens, noting in June 1970: "In view of the unusually heavy use it received, it is doubtful that even a rugged 15th century binding could have lasted long." In the later July letter, Schulz goes into a little more detail:

> The popularity of the Chester Plays as attested by their late 16th century transcripts would tend to support a similar attitude toward the Towneley Plays with their well worn vellum leaves and emphasize the extensive usage to which the volume was subjected. It may be somewhat questionable if even a stout 15th century binding could have held up for a period of 200 years, from about 1470 to 1670, under such unusual conditions.[40]

Clearly, even if the "Cain" pageant was overlooked, the rest of the manuscript was not.

Moreover, there was no dismissal of Cain narratives during the period—sixteenth-century readers might not have been interested in the Wakefield Cain, but the same could not be said of the 1591 Chester cycle manuscript (Huntington Library MS HM 2). The closest cycle drama

contemporary of Wakefield, no complete manuscript of the Chester pageants survives prior to 1591 (sixteen years after the final performance of the plays). Between 1591 and 1607 five copies of the plays were made.[41] As Alexandra Johnston notes, all the identifiable scribes of the Chester manuscripts had close ties with the city and two had guild associations. The scribes' motives seem to have been to preserve a part of their city's past before it was irretrievably lost—these manuscripts were treated more like historical artifacts to be rescued than products of living theater—and four manuscripts were kept by prominent Cheshire families with antiquarian interests: the Egertons, the Cowpers, and the Holmes.[42]

If the reasons for preserving and reproducing Chester cycle manuscripts were nostalgic, it would appear that the Chester Cain was suitably "historic." In other words, the 1591 Chester manuscript shows even wearing and signs of usage—there is nothing to indicate that sixteenth-century readers were skipping this Cain pageant.[43] Compared to either Wakefield or York, the Chester Cain pageant is distinctive, with the Chester Cain figure appearing less developed and more impersonal. The Chester pageant begins by exploring the strong parental presence in Cain and Abel's lives: Adam would assign them their "professions" and both Adam and Eve would teach their sons to learn from their own earlier mistakes. In this portrayal Cain is a dutiful son, and he spends his first lines telling his mother that he will accept his role as ploughman and apply his father's teachings to his life. However, as soon as Adam and Eve disappear, Cain immediately starts to misbehave. Like the Wakefield Cain, he is reluctant to give his best corn to God as a sacrifice, but his reasoning is different. His actions are not influenced by a threat of terrible and seemingly inevitable poverty, but instead the belief that it would be shame to waste perfectly good corn in this way. Cain, in fact, boasts to the audience that he has great plenty: poverty is not a motivator here. Abel is introduced for the first time at his own sacrifice, and

appears genuinely confused by his brother's angry reaction to God's preference. Even God seems a little puzzled, commenting on Cain's short temper and asking him to explain his anger. If the Wakefield Abel represented nagging officialdom, the Chester Abel reads more like an innocent shepherd simply fulfilling spiritual obligation, allowing the audience to sympathize more with his death.

When even God cannot stop Cain from luring Abel deeper into his fields to kill him—a murder scene far more premeditated than what is found in Wakefield or York—the audience has no option but to detest Cain's actions. This is in no way a sympathetic figure. When the Chester Cain expresses remorse, it is only because he has been caught. This is in direct contrast to the Wakefield Cain, who not only makes clear his regret immediately after the murder, but directly addresses the audience (one of two times this happens in the pageant and a feature singular to Wakefield) asking them to personally judge him: "And if any of you thynk I did amys/ I shal it amend wars then it is,/ that all men may it se:/ well wars then it is/ right so shall it be" (331-335). Just as the Wakefield Cain seems to continually struggle against the confines of his fictional world, or at least highlight the permeability of his dramatic boundaries, the Chester Cain seems solidly situated within his. Accordingly, while the Wakefield Cain hurriedly discusses farming responsibilities before his exile begins, the Chester Cain instead seeks to confess his crime to his fictional parents. Coming full circle, the pageant ends with Adam and Eve as they express their grief over Abel's death. Altogether, the Chester Cain is reminiscent of an irascible child, acting with haste—suffering as a consequence—and answering primarily to his own parents. While manuscript wear marks do not indicate that this play was necessarily any more popular than surrounding pageants, the physical evidence does nothing to suggest that readers were not interested or were avoiding this pageant either. Based on manuscript usage discolorations, this

portrayal of Cain seemed to be a viable one. But of course, it is only possible to compare HM 1 (which uses parchment) and HM 2 (which uses paper) to a point, since both materials show wear and absorb oils differently.

Regardless, in terms of chronology and sixteenth-century readerly interest the Chester and Wakefield deserve comparison. However, it terms of language and guild association, the York and Wakefield "Cain" pageants bear clear similarities. The York pageant was put on by the Glovers guild, and someone has written "Glover" (in a sixteenth-century hand) in the margins of the Wakefield Cain pageant, making it one of only six guild references to appear aside five pageants in the entire cycle. In Chester the Cain pageant was sponsored by the Drapers, with the Glovers guild responsible instead for the thirteenth pageant: a play covering the stories of Lazarus, Simon the Leper and Judas' plot. But even more compelling than their connection to the Glovers guild, the York and Wakefield Cain pageants have sizeable chunks of text in common. Since in general the Wakefield cycle borrows language from the earlier York cycle, it is not altogether surprising to find the same lines appearing in both pageants. More specifically, Wakefield lines 130-147, 174-213 and 297-332 have identical counterparts in the York pageant.[44] There are also shared narrative structural elements in the two plays. Following the murder, both pageants show the arrival of a servant figure (Brewbarret in York and Garcio in Wakefield) who Cain immediately orders around and who is asked to help conceal the body of Abel. Both Brewbarret and Garcio are unhelpful to Cain—either intentionally or accidentally—and both provide moments of comic relief following the most solemn part of their respective plays. Both pageants also offer depictions of Cain and Abel that are far more fleshed out and individualized than what is found in Chester. However while the York Abel is the most developed of all three Abels, the Wakefield text puts more effort into developing the personality

of Cain. Written in different times, places and for different audiences, it is not surprising that some disparity exists between these two similar plays. Moreover, the shared language and narrative features are contextualized differently in the pageants and the results unique to each.

While the York Cain pageant seeks alignment with the rest of the York cycle, with speeches linking the play to previous pageants and biblical figures, the Wakefield Cain pageant seeks instead to strengthen the bond between the pageant and contemporary Wakefield itself. In fact, the play offers one of the few clues modern scholars have used to argue for Wakefield performances and to justify the cycle being labeled "Wakefield" and not just "Towneley." Specifically, Cain asks God to "bery me in gudeboure at the quarell hede" (367), with Goodybower Lane being the site of the present Brook Street in Wakefield. Alongside the presence of local geography, the local judiciary likewise wriggles its way into the play with Garcio worried about the legal consequences of helping Cain: "we mon haue a mekill myschaunce/ and the bayles vs take" (405). And further reinforcing the centrality of contemporary Wakefield in the text, towards the end of the pageant Cain adopts the role of town crier, informing the audience that "in the kyngis nayme" (418) they must leave Cain and Garcio alone. He adds that "the kyng wrytis you vntill" (425) that "the kyng will that thay be safe" (428), emphasizing that the King has not only commanded this but has written it down as well. The scene is comic—with Garcio mocking Cain after every line—but its comedy works on several levels (as do comic scenes throughout the pageant).

The audience is asked to laugh at the players as players, to laugh at individual lines, to laugh at the performance for how it breaks from narrative tradition, and—perhaps most meaningfully—to laugh at themselves within the setting of contemporary Wakefield. The audience is told, for example, to leave these actors alone and to "byd euery man thaym luf and

lowt," (434) and "byd euery man theym pleasse to pay" (437) for their performance, but to remember that "this same is he that slo his brother" (433)—so remember the seriousness of the pageant's lesson but love and, if you were pleased, pay the actors. Just as Cain bounces between exposing himself as a player and disappearing within his traditional dramatic role, the audience is drawn into the pageant itself when Cain adopts the role of town crier and the spectators become part of the spectacle while they listen to his "news." This allows them to laugh at themselves, at Cain, at Garcio, and at a common occurrence within town life. And just in case the audience was unclear whether this language applied specifically to them, Garcio adds:

> Now old and yong, or that ye weynd,
> The same blissyng withoutten end,
> All sam then' shall ye haue,
> That god of heuen my master has giffen;
> Browke it well, whils that ye liffen,
> He vowche it full well safe. (448)

Taken altogether, while there is a sense of turning inwards in the York Cain pageant—with the attentions of the audience trained towards the cycle itself and the role of this one play within the greater cycle—the Wakefield Cain pageant is marked by outwardness, seemingly designed to draw the realities of contemporary Wakefield into the pageant and to integrate the dramatic world with the real.

Ironically, of course, the Wakefield cycle has the weakest ties to actual performance and to a historical community of any extant English cycle. But if sixteenth-century readers were ignoring the Cain pageant, it was most likely not for this reason. Manuscripts of the Chester cycle were circulated for reading after performances ceased in 1575 and, as mentioned earlier, all

five of the complete manuscripts available today were produced between 1591 and 1607. Clearly early modern interest in the Chester cycle did not disappear with the end of live performances. The Chester cycle tapped into a nostalgia—real or otherwise—that seems to have eluded the Wakefield Cain pageant. I believe that the Wakefield Cain's depiction of the hardships faced by small producers in a subsistence economy made sixteenth-century readers uncomfortable. Even in the sixteenth century self-provisioning remained crucial, especially for rural farmers, and rural households in general were geared towards providing their own basic subsistence. This portrayal of Cain, one of the most prominent biblical villains, would have been uncomfortably familiar and relatable. Furthermore, the context and conclusions drawn by the Wakefield Master in regards to the laborer's body would perhaps no longer have felt "authentic" or "accurate" to sixteenth-century audiences.

It is possible to see the Wakefield Cain as a clear product of fourteenth and fifteenth-century thinking on poverty and labor—from increasingly numerous fourteenth-century efforts to control and manage the laborer's body, to the fifteenth-century instinct that forms of labor should determine identity. Even though Cain ends the pageant as a type of vagrant himself, it is harder to align the Wakefield Cain with the growing sixteenth-century obsession with vagrancy and extreme poverty. Despite the Wakefield Master's fairly conservative approach, Cain is simply too identifiable and linguistically the pageant is too inclusive to suit the later period's eagerness to represent poverty as a basis for "Otherness." To me, this suggests that HM 1 should be dated as late as 1540 and the manuscript should treated as a form of record, either judicial or of performance. The Huntington Library currently relies on the cataloguing and identification details for HM 1 provided by Consuelo Dutschke in the Huntington Library Guide to Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts. In it, Dutschke asserts that the manuscript was written in England

at the end of the fifteenth or at the beginning of the sixteenth century, pointing out that the close similarity of the initials on ff. 1, 3 to books printed around 1480-1540 helps establish the date of transcription.[45] The unworn appearance of the Cain pageant suggests that readers were no longer interested in certain attitudes towards poverty and subsistence living, and also indicates how sensitive early modern readers were to nuances within economic discourse.[46] Simply put, the realities and hardships of the subsistence economy of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were discussed differently than in the sixteenth century. If the manuscript was transcribed closer to 1540 than 1480, it would help clarify why attitudes and readerly interests had changed from the Wakefield Master's period to the final compilation of HM 1. Moreover, if the manuscript was assembled as a record, then that would explain why sixteenth-century readerly interests were not given greater consideration. If a "golden age of the laborer" had existed, it was over by the mid-sixteenth century and contemporary readers were not nostalgic for it. The impoverished laborer teetering on the edge of vagrancy—represented so vividly by the Wakefield Cain—was a source of growing fear, not of commiseration or of compassion.

In conclusion, the Wakefield cycle may have only indirect or weak ties to the Wakefield economy of the fifteenth century, and the cycle may not establish the strong guild associations typical of English cycle drama, but it nonetheless brings the interplay between economics and theater into dialogue with notions of identity formation and spectatorship. By exploring the multilayered implications of the laboring body on the stage, the Wakefield Master implicates his audience in contemporary economic and cultural discourses—the spectators must learn to "read" Cain's laboring body in terms of his economic and cultural status (alongside their own). Situating the play in relation to questions of audience interpretation allows us to see more clearly how economic issues overlapped with late medieval identity formation. However, situating the

play in relation to sixteenth-century readership—or the seeming absence of early modern readerly interest—allows us to appreciate how understandings of poverty, the laboring body and identity had shifted from the fifteenth century.

What we need to recognize, in terms of larger critical conversations within drama history, is that the timing of the Wakefield manuscript places it between the work of the first Tudor dramatists, who "presented their work as a continuation of earlier dramatic forms" (Watkins 774), and later sixteenth-century dramatists who "emphasized their cultural distance from their medieval predecessors" (774). It also calls for a fuller understanding of how manuscripts of early English plays (and not just performances or printed play texts) relate to economic matters. Finally, it prompts further questions regarding the relationship between cycle drama in the sixteenth century and Tudor plays designed for household performance: the focus of the following chapter.

[1] See Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century*, 3 vols. (New York, 1982), p. 226.
[2] The year 1376 is often given as the earliest possible reference to the existence of the York Play, although Richard Beadle and Peter Meredith question this date.
[3] See Richard Beadle, "The York Corpus Christi Play," *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, eds., Richard Beadle and Alan J. Fletcher, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 102.
[4] See Beadle, p. 102.
[5] See David Mills, "The Chester Cycle," *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, eds., Richard Beadle and Alan J. Fletcher, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 128.
[6] See Mills' description of the Chester cycle, pp.125-152. Also see R. M. Lumiansky and David Mills, *The Chester Mystery Cycle: Essays and Documents* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).
[7] See Martin Rose's "Introduction" to *The Wakefield Mystery Plays* (New York: Norton, 1961), pp. 9-59.
[8] For the best description of the Wakefield manuscript see the "Introduction" to A. C. Cawley and Martin Stevens eds., *The Towneley Cycle: A Facsimile of Huntington MS HM 1*, (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1976). For further details, also see Peter Meredith, "The Towneley Pageants," *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, eds., Richard Beadle and Alan J. Fletcher, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 152-179.
[9] See Cawley and Stevens.
[10] See the "Introduction" to *The Middle Ages at Work: Practicing Labor in Late Medieval* eds., Kellie Robertson and Michael Uebel, (New York: Palgrave, 2004).
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[11] See Anthony Musson, "Reconstructing English Labor Laws: A Medieval Perspective," *The Middle Ages at Work*, eds., Kellie Robertson and Michael Uebel, (New York: Palgrave, 2004), p. 113-32.
[12] See Paul Slack, *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England* (New York: Longman, 1988), p. 22. Also see Musson, "Reconstructing English Labor Laws."
[13] See Robertson and Uebel, p. 6.
[14] See Michael J. Preston, *A Complete Concordance to the Wakefield Pageants in the Towneley Cycle*, (University Microfilms, 1977).
[15] See Preston and OED.
[16] See Preston.
[17] See Kellie Robertson, *The Laborer's Two Bodies: Literary and Legal Productions in Britain, 1350-1500* (New York: Palgrave, 2006).
[18] The texts of the laws of 1363 can be found in *The Statutes of the Realm*, 11 vols. (London: Dawson, repr. 1963), vol. 1, pp. 378-83.
[19] See Robertson and Uebel.
[20] See Paul Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).
[21] The "postan thesis" comes from the scholarship of M. M. Postan, including: *Cambridge Economic History of Europe; The Agrarian Life of the Middle Ages*; and *The Medieval Economy and Society: An Economic History of Britain in the Middle Ages*. The thesis has since been

modified slightly by demographic historians who now tend to argue that the 1315-1322 crisis was more than a mere fluctuation but less than a turning point. Modern agrarian historians also argue that an adequate living could be earned even at the "margins" of society.
[22] See Gregory Clark, "1381 and the Malthus Delusion," p. 2. Also see Clark, *A Farewell to Alms: A Brief Economic History of the World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).
[23] See Gregory Clark, "1381 and the Malthus Delusion." (2010).
[24] See Thorlac Turville-Petre, *The Alliterative Revival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 44. Also see Christine Chism, *Alliterative Revivals* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002) and Ralph Hanna, "Alliterative Poetry," pp. 501-502.
[25] See Preston.
[26] See Freedman.
[27] See Michael Mollat, *The Poor in the Middle Ages: An Essay in Social History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).
[28] See Warren Edminster, *The Preaching Fox: Festive Subversion in the Plays of the Wakefield Master* (New York: Routledge, 2005).
[29] See Catharina Lis and Hugh Soly, *Poverty and Capitalism in Early Modern Europe* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1979). Also see Anne E. C. McCants, "Exotic Good, Popular Consumption, and the Standard of Living: Thinking about Globalization in the Early Modern World, " *Journal of World History,* vol. 18:4, (2007) pp. 213-238.
[30] See Patricia Fumerton, *Unsettled: The Culture of Mobility and the Working Poor in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).
[31] *A Caveat of Warening for Common Cursetors Vulgarely Called Vagabones: Whereunto is Added the Tale of the Second Taking of the Counterfret Crank* (Reeves and Turner, 1573).
[32] See Slack, pp. 114-124.
[33] See Paola Pugliatti, *Shakespeare the Historian* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996).
[34] See William C. Carroll, *Fat King, Lean Beggar: Representations of Poverty in the Age of Shakespeare* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).
[35] See Alexandra Johnston, "Know Your Audience."
[36] See Peter Happe, *The Towneley Cycle: Unity and Diversity* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 2007). Also see A. C. Cawley and Martin Stevens eds., *The Towneley Cycle: A Facsimile of Huntington MS HM 1,* (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1976). Also see Alexandra Johnston, "Know Your Audience, Records of Early English Drama, University of Toronto.
[37] These details come from my own notes, taken during a visit to the Huntington Library.
[38] Andrew Gurr estimates that up to 25,000 people visited London theaters per week in the period 1580-1640.
[39] See Marjorie Keniston McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England, 1350-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). Also see Paul Fideler, *Social Welfare in Pre-Industrial England: The Old Poor Law Tradition* (London: Palgrave, 2006).
[40] Vanessa Wilkie from the Huntington Library emailed me copies of these letters.
[41] See Alexandra Johnston, "The Manuscripts of Early English Drama." Records of Early English Drama, University of Toronto.
[42] See Alexandra Johnston, "Know Your Audience," Records of Early English Drama, University of Toronto.
[43] These details come from my own notes, taken during a visit to the Huntington Library.
[44] See Meredith.

[45] See Conseulo Dutschke, *Guide to Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Huntington Library* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1989).
[46] Of course poverty and subsistence living were still major issues in the sixteenth century, even if literary approaches had changed.

— CHAPTER TWO —

Missing the Household: Vagrancy, Commonwealth and Tudor Interludes

It is impossible to study Tudor interludes for very long before encountering the term "self-fashioning."[1] The term is most often associated with Stephen Greenblatt's landmark study *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (1980), where Greenblatt explains that in the sixteenth century "there appears to be an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as an manipulable, artful process" (Greenblatt 2). Self-fashioning "functions without regard for a sharp distinction between literature and social life" (3), and sixteenth century literature functions, "as a manifestation of the concrete behavior of its particular author, as itself the expression of the codes by which behavior is shaped, and as a reflection upon those codes" (4). Greenblatt argues that self-fashioning is almost exclusively found in language, that it involves submission to an authority situated outside the self, and that it is achieved in relation to something perceived as strange or hostile. Practically speaking, in the sixteenth century, "middle-class and aristocratic males began to feel that they possessed shaping power over their lives," (256) and that, "fashioning oneself, and being fashioned by cultural institutions—family, religion, state—were inseparably intertwined" (256).

This understanding of self-fashioning helps explain why members of the Tudor ruling elite were willing not only to sponsor costly masques and interludes, but to perform in them. Performance allowed these men to advertise their verbal and rhetorical talents—talents carefully cultivated in educational institutions and deemed necessary for government service. John Watkins explains that sixteenth century interludes, "underscore this intimate link between play-acting and education as twin pillars of social advancement." Greenblatt's description of self-

fashioning also explains why examples can often be found in interludes designed for audiences of "new men." These men eagerly appropriated the habits of the aristocracy—including entertaining on a grand scale—and used plays as status markers. Performances were also used to acknowledge the, "growing self-consciousness about the theatricality of governance," a matter of serious consequence for this particular audience. As men from humbler backgrounds were replacing aristocrats in the central government, "a mutually reinforcing system developed in which the king gave social standing and political authority to a new class of bureaucrats, who in turn engineered legislative and judicial reforms that gave the king unprecedented power" (775), which had the effect of undermining the feudal nobility while concentrating power in the Crown.

All this considered, it is no surprise that drama historians focus heavily on how these new Tudor bureaucrats were being fashioned by cultural institutions, and how contemporary drama articulates these political developments. The only problem is that "self-fashioning," with its emphasis on social mobility and political theatricality, is not an equally applicable or useful term for studying all Tudor interludes, and can result in misleading conclusions about what Tudor interludes collectively represent. For example, Watkins offers this description:

> if the interludes do not reject allegory as a mode of dramatic exposition, they do reject the social conservatism that it embodies in the moralities. Instead of resisting class mobility as a manifestation of pride and avarice, they hail it as a reward for righteous living. They openly champion thrift and education, the practices that enabled enterprising individuals to rise above their forebears/ status. (Watkins 775)

While Watkins is not necessarily wrong, his description fails to account for Tudor interludes that do resist class mobility, undermine the value of education, and embrace social conservatism.[2] As it happens, Tudor interludes with a strong emphasis on economic issues often do precisely these

things. Social mobility was not a real possibility for the majority of the Tudor commonwealth, and most households were concerned far more about economic survival than the theatricality of governance. Accordingly, it makes sense that of the surviving sixteenth-century play texts, a number would address these widespread concerns. Moreover, not only do these money-centered plays defy traditional scholarly expectations of Tudor interludes, but they demand a broader definition of sixteenth-century "household entertainment" as well. In my study of ten Tudor plays, I will argue for interconnectedness between the following: (1) the sixteenth-century household; (2) household players and contemporary legislation; (3) the emergence of the "commonwealth" within sixteenth-century political discourse; (4) the worsening threat of poverty; and (5) social conservatism within forms of early English drama. Overall, this chapter attempts to answer the question: How much does the "household" matter to Tudor household drama?

Physically and intellectually, the sixteenth-century household impacted how plays were performed, written, interpreted and watched. The physical layout of indoor halls, for example, greatly influenced much early English drama, from where characters entered and exited, to the position of the audience (both in relationship to the players and other spectators), to the domestic backdrop behind the dramatic action itself. Greg Walker notes that, "the general debt of the playhouse architecture to the lineaments of the Tudor hall is undoubted" (Walker 47). In short, households were actives sites of performance, and plays were frequently designed to accommodate the physical and social realities of indoor halls. Household players were able to tour and adapt performances to a range of venues thanks only to the basic similarity of design across many indoor spaces, from the guildhall to the great hall—many indoor spaces resembled, or could be made to resemble, the domestic household. Particularly before the building of a

permanent playhouse, the household was an active venue for performance across a range of social levels.

The dominance of the household in Tudor drama meant that 47 of the 81 playbooks printed before 1580 (that survive in whole or part) were written for performance in a great hall: from court, to the houses of the nobility or higher clergy, to the Inns of Court, to university colleges, to merchant halls.[3] The physical space of the household not only shaped dramatic action, but traces of great hall performance remain evident in printed texts as well.[4] While some of these play texts might have been printed primarily for reading—although that was more common towards the end of the sixteenth century—it is more likely they were printed for players. The early sixteenth century, the 1520s in particular, saw an increase in the numbers and activities of touring companies, and printers tried, through their title pages and prefaces, to make their play texts appealing to acting companies.[5] Not only were playing companies often connected to specific households, and large numbers of play texts show affiliation with household performance, but the household was shaping the emerging print play text market.

In spite of all this, Suzanne Westfall points out that modern scholars have long dismissed household entertainments as, "fleeting and somewhat embarrassing because of their allegedly unsophisticated texts" (Westfall 57), explaining further:

> Traditional histories of early modern theater have also slighted household theater as a genre because it was almost always occasional, deliberately ephemeral, multimedial, and frequently nontextual or metatextual; all these qualities indicate events that are notoriously difficult to document without visual representation, musical scores, or some early equivalent of the glyphic Laban notation to record movement and dance. In

> addition, household drama appears, at first glance, to be a very poor relation indeed to the textual drama of the church, schools, and public stage. (39)

However, as scholarship increasingly recognizes the role that social conditions and specific locations play in shaping forms of theater as well as audience reception and response, household entertainment might suddenly become a lot more interesting.[6] Most household performances seem to have been multimedial, constructed by a team rather than a single person, with "no particular artist in tyrannical control but rather with many artists participating, with varying degrees of cooperation" (54) and this might have included a varied mix of household members such as, "poets, musicians, painters, tailors, and laborers" who "collaborated to design, write, build, sing, play, and dance one unified performance piece" (54).

What resulted were often complex and surprisingly subtle performances that managed to address very specific audiences and predict responses by way of personal, topical and local allusions. At the same time, performances could be tailored to suit a particular social or religious occasion.[7] It was a complicated juggling act. But it was also a process most pre-playhouse dramatists were familiar with: most were either in the service of a noble household or were closely connected with a noble patron.[8] For that reason alone household entertainments deserve further study.

And while these dramatists might have found themselves dealing with different households with different ideological and entertainment needs, they found themselves dealing with remarkably similar physical spaces. In her detailed description of late medieval/early Tudor great halls, Meg Twycross observes that although the dimensions might vary, most great halls follow a standard shape and pattern, constrained, "partly by building materials and methods, and partly by the social role that they played in the life of the household" (Twycross 56). Entering the

hall through the main entrance, visitors would first see the dais at the far end, where the lord of the household would have been seated. Under his *celure*,[9] the lord of the household was "instantly recognizable and, like the head teacher on the platform at a school assembly, had a commanding view of all the events in the hall" (56). In terms of his view, the lord of the household would have faced a row of permanent wood screens towards the back of the hall, which served to hide the wall containing the kitchen and exterior doors. To either side of the center screen gaps allowed visitors, servants, and members of the household to enter the hall. The body of the hall itself would have contained a rush-strewn floor and, at mealtimes, tables set up to accommodate everyone excepting those worthy of sitting at the high table on the dais.[10] The hall was not just a place for feeding large numbers of people: it was the social and administrative center of the domestic household, used for a wide range of functions. One of those functions, of course, being for dramatic performance.

So at least in part, household entertainments were characterized by their predictability. They were often seasonal—the festive seasons of winter were especially popular times for plays—they were frequently organized around banquets, and they took place in fluid physical spaces.[11] Walker observes that the word interlude, or "enterlude" as it was often spelled in the early Tudor period, "suggests a play or game (*ludus*) that was brought into the hall between (*inter* or *entre*) the courses of a formal meal" (Walker 27). Because there was no special provision for staging at the time, the familiar physical surroundings became integrated into performances in meaningful ways. The fact that players entered the hall through service doors, and performed on the same floor-level as their audience, allowed them to immediately engage with the household dynamic physically as well as socially. Moreover, as Twycross notes, players did not attempt to disregard their surroundings, but rather they drew attention to them. If an

actor, for example, had to push his way through the audience (and it is possible that only the lord and lady had seats in these crowded halls) in order to perform, he could not simply pretend they were not there: so "what starts as a technical convenience is turned into a metatheatrical game" (Twycross 61) as "the players treat the audience as if they and the characters were in the same world, which physically of course they are" (62).

One result of this is that the "stage" space is seldom imagined as a particular fictional location.[12] The hall was only a temporary theater: it was foremost a place where people lived and worked, and this was not a distraction but a fact that enriched the theatrical experience for everyone involved. And, while the geographic space of the hall was fluid, amenable to various uses and kinds of performances, the roles and privileges of the spectators and players were fairly rigid. Great hall performances repeatedly dramatized such tensions, articulating the complicated emotions, attitudes and social arrangements (the audience could include a chaotic mix of blood relations, wards, retainers, servants, and tenants) found within households.[13] Taken altogether, the social and physical structure of the household influenced how plays were written, designed, performed and received.

But this did not prevent players from travelling from one household to another. Although household entertainments tended to be written expressly for one household and designed to celebrate one patron's ideas, financial resources and personal taste, companies of household players did go on tour. They did so, at least in part, because touring increased the stature of their patron. In fact, when civic and household accounts list monies spent on entertainment, they almost always list the patron's name and not the names of individual players—players were seen primarily as representatives of their patrons.[14] Moreover, as Richard Dutton has pointed out, royal censors might be more lenient with potentially seditious materials if they were performed

in households.[15] And, as early as 1285, "the Statute of Winchester attempted to control masterless wanderers without household affiliations, an effort that was repeated by statutes and royal proclamations throughout the Tudor period" (Westfall 49). In other words, the patronage of a household protected players whilst the players promoted the prestige of their household. But this arrangement was still less than ideal. Westfall points out that,

> Although a household performance might contain a tourable text, generally the full presentation did not wear or travel well; far too occasional and cumbersome in set and costume, it could barely move, let alone return a financial profit. Complex staging, properties, music, dance, participation by performers of various ages, specific references to occasion, topical references, focus on audience—all these, particularly in combination, indicate household performance. (55)

And performance difficulties were not the only challenges faced by players. Thanks to prevailing sixteenth-century attitudes on vagrancy—also noted in the previous chapter—itinerant players came to be regarded as a potential threat to the order of the English commonwealth. W. R. Streitberger explains:

> The regulations that the Crown imposed on drama and the injunctions it issued against players had their roots in ecclesiastical laws against the teaching of heretical doctrine and in civil laws against treason. Since players spoke in public, they fell under the laws and regulations governing censorship, and since they moved about the countryside, they fell under the ancient statute governing vagabonds. (Streitberger 342)

In 1551 a Proclamation was passed seeking to enforce statues against players and "divers other disordered persons" involved in any kind of sedition or lawbreaking and explicitly forbidding any performance of plays and interludes in English without special license from the King or

Privy Council. In 1556 a General Order against strolling players spreading sedition and heresy throughout the kingdom was introduced.[16]

Traveling players were not the government's only concern: around this time we also see legislation being introduced designed to manage dramatic texts and performances. The first government statute censoring the content of plays—the Act for the Advancement of True Religion—appeared in 1543 and allowed the performance of moral plays rebuking vice and promoting virtue provided that they "meddle not with interpretations of scripture, contrary to the doctrine set forth, or to be set forth, by the King's Majesty."[17] This was followed by the 1549 Act of Uniformity forbidding interludes containing anything "depraving and despising" the Book of Common Prayer (later reenacted in 1559).[18] What follows are three very important pieces of legislation. In 1551 Edward VI's Privy Council sought to expand existing acts against beggars and vagabonds, and a Proclamation was introduced seeking to enforce statues against players and "divers other disordered persons" involved in any kind of sedition or lawbreaking and explicitly forbidding any performance of plays and interludes in English without special license from the King or Privy Council. The Proclamation included the following language: "Nor that any common players, or other persons, upon like paines, do play thenglish tong, any manner Enterlude, Play, or matter, without they have special lisence to shew for the same, in writing under his majesties signe, or signed by vi. Of his highness privie counsaill."[19]

Two years later Mary I passed an edict "Prohibiting Religious Controversy, Unlicensed Plays, and Printing" and the law sought the "reformation of busy meddlers in matters of religion, and for redress of preachers, printers, and players" and the law sought to enjoin the "playing of interludes and printing of false fond books, ballads, rhymes, and other lewd treatises in the English tongue."[20] This is one of the earliest examples of legislation designed to address

concerns with drama and print concurrently, and the Proclamation ordered "evil disposed persons" who play interludes or print books "concerning doctrine in matters now in question and controversy touching the high points and mysteries of Christian religion" to cease such activities.[21] Finally, in 1559 Elizabethan censorship practices began to develop fully. The 1559 Proclamation prohibited all plays and interludes not licensed for performance by a town council or two Justices of the Peace and instructed these officers not to permit any play "wherein either matters of religion or of the governance of the estate of the Commonwealth shall be handled, or treated: being no meet matters to be written or treated upon, but by men of authority, learning and wisdom, nor to be handled before any audience but of grave and discreet persons."[22] These three pieces of legislation make a few things clear: players were increasingly not to be trusted as individuals, dramatic material (and all those connected to it) was becoming more problematic particularly in matters of religion, and governmental intervention was becoming far more standardized and requisite. Such legislation represents meaningful and suggestive transitions in the way drama was perceived, produced, and potentially consumed.

But in spite of the legislation, in spite of the censorship, and in spite of the semiotic value of the original household audience, players continued to tour with household play texts. Why bother? The most obvious motives are profit and household reputation.[23] However, to endure such hardship (and tours are almost always described by modern critics as deeply unpleasant) for the sake of an institution's reputation points to its ideological significance and, I believe, points to the ability of household plays and players to successfully promote the powerful analogy between the household and the English state or commonwealth. This analogy was effective enough that in some cases household patronage appears to be relegated to the background: the household does not always matter most to household drama. Put another way, in ideological and

historical terms, the household was "both a custodian of tradition and an agent of change" and in the sixteenth century this "dual role was the more significant because of the very centrality of the household to the structuring of the economy, society, and culture of the time" (Wrightson 68). Domestic ideology was as "real" as real households, occasionally rendering them unnecessary.

At least, that is what we find in ten Tudor interludes: *Occupation and Idleness*, *Gentleness and Nobility*, *A Satire of the Three Estates*, *Impatient Poverty*, *Wealth and Health*, *All for Money*, *The Cruel Debtor*, *The Pedlar's Prophecy*, *The Trial of Treasure*, and *The Tide Tarrieth No Man*. These plays might have been performed before aristocratic or courtly households but unlike interludes like *Fulgens and Lucres,* they were not written specifically for the household in which they were first performed. Instead, these were easily adaptable, flexible plays, suitable for a variety of households: seemingly all-purpose interludes.

Not only are all ten plays unaffiliated with any individual household, but other patterns emerge amongst these ten interludes.[24] For the most part, these plays can characterized by: their originality (only two have a identifiable source), poor and disorganized writing, their focus on players, the frequency of doubling schemes offered for actors, a lack of indications as to set, action largely being unlocalized, an emphasis on the corrupting power of money (and the subsequent need to protect the English commonwealth), and heightened metatheatricality. Moreover, these plays indicate that in the early and mid-sixteenth century: there was a taste for drama dealing with economic issues, that demand for new playtexts was fast, that intended audiences maintained a keen interest in contemporary matters where content was privileged over organization. The emphasis placed on these as "acting plays," with the option of doubling often advertised in title pages, shows that these playtexts were designed to appeal to players—perhaps pointing to an early stage of professionalization.

The earliest of these plays—and the only to appear in manuscript form—is free of household ties and was possibly first performed for a University audience. Written in the mid fifteenth century, *Occupation and Idleness* (Winchester College MS 33, fos. 65r-73v) is an anonymous play with unlocalized action and only a single stage direction. In it "Occupation's" devotion to work is contrasted with young "Idleness's" aversion to it. Idleness is suitably embarrassed by this, and tells Occupation that his real name is "Busyness." Occupation engages Busyness in his service and leaves him with ten pounds and the advice to save. Idleness, however, proceeds to spend the money in taverns, eating and drinking it all away. Finding out what Idleness has done, Occupation informs him that only by following the teachings of "Doctrine" will he find honor. Idleness is not a good student at first, yearning for ale, spilling water on his book, and threatening both Doctrine and Occupation. In the end, however, Idleness is made to behave, is transformed into "Cleanness," and Occupation comments that it is easiest teaching people while they are young. In contrast to the other nine interludes, however, while *Occupation* offers some limited dramatic action and a clear sense of an audience, this is not a fully developed play.[25]

The Tide Tarrieth No Man (#2), however, is fully developed. Written by George Wapull, the play has no known source, the actions are unlocalized and there are no indications as to set. The title page does indicate that the play was offered for acting, more specifically: "Four persons may easily play it." The only extant copy available to us today is one printed by Hugh Jackson in 1576.[26] In terms of content, the play has a strong economic and social orientation, and deals with what would have been perceived as especially troublesome at the time: social competition and the problem of personal ambition. *Tide Tarrieth* also references land envy, the threat of foreigners in the realm, usury and debt, and bribery. Accordingly, the play includes characters

with names like “Debtor,” “Wastefulness,” Painted Profit,” “Greediness” (a merchant), “Tenant,” and “No Good Neighborhood”—leaving the audience with few questions regarding what the play will cover.

The text opens with a Prologue describing how corruption in individuals spoils the whole of the commonwealth, and also how the greedy are able to oppress the poor. “Courage,” a Vice, opens the play with a long speech listing dishonest types and declaring his intention to corrupt as many people as possible in the short time he has available. Later, Courage is joined by “Greediness,” a rich landlord and merchant who complains about a priest who has pricked his conscious about greed. Courage dismisses this, saying that life is too short to dispense with material comfort, an argument when Greediness accepts readily. Finally, after the 56 lines of Prologue and 1,879 rambling lines of text (a pretty standard length for this type of work), the play concludes with the message that Christian principles can be used to diminish threats posed by economic corruption in society. The interlude is haphazardly organized, without a known source, designed for players, offers unlocalized action and provides no indications as to set. Furthermore, the play is: cautiously critical of the aristocracy, supports hierarchical institutions (such as the Church, commonwealth, and the monarchy), is socially conservative, and links poverty to acts of violence. The audience witnesses the figure of “Courtier” beaten for his debt, “Wastefulness” encouraged to kill himself by “Despair,” “Greediness” succeeding in killing himself, and a handful of small fights between characters taking place throughout the play.

Similar violent episodes appear in John Lindsay’s *A Satire of the Three Estates* (#3). In *Satire* a “King” is preached to by “Verity,” but her good advice is ignored once Vices summon Catholic clergy to obstruct Verity’s access to the King. A “Parson” threatens Verity with burning if she does not recant her position, but she remains defiant and is taken into captivity and placed

in stocks by the Vices (for which they are rewarded by the clergy). Following this, “Chastity” appears and complains that she’s been abandoned by princes as well as by secular and spiritual lords. She attempts to seek refuge, but is turned away successively by nuns, the clergy, and the lords temporal. Finally a tailor and a shoemaker rescue her. However, this displeases their wives, who chase her off before beating their husbands. In the end, Chastity finds herself in the stocks alongside Verity.

Likewise, a “Pauper” fails to resolve personal issues. In the interlude between Parts I and II, a Pauper comes in and sits in the “King’s” chair (described as a throne with a ladder leading to it). “Diligence,” who was unhappy about this, pulls away the ladder and commands the man to jump down, which he does. Pauper explains that his livestock has been taken by his landlord and the vicar, which has reduced him to penury, and he is seeking justice for which he will pay with his remaining groat. Later in the play, after the Pauper has taken a nap, a “Pardoner” persuades him to part with his groat. When the Pauper learns that all he will receive in return is a pardon, he becomes angry, fights with the Pardoner and ends the interlude by throwing all his relics in the water. As with the tailor and the shoemaker, the Pauper means well but ultimately fails to achieve anything.

Not all lower class characters, however, are impotent. Towards the end of the play we find a character named “John Common Weal” who complaints about the Catholic Church to clergymen. Although a host of other characters agree with him, including Pauper,” “Verity” and “Chastity”, the clergy remain intransigent, claiming that authority of the Pope should exempt their bad behavior. When the financial abuses of the church are detailed, however, “Good Counsel” reminds them that the duty of the clergy is to preach. In the end, the prelates are

stripped of their habits and sent off, John is expensively arrayed and set in Parliament, and Diligence proclaims fifteen acts of ecclesiastical reform.

While this play presents a staunchly anti-Catholic agenda—having analogues in early English Protestant drama—it seems equally committed to offering economic commentary. For this, and other reasons, *Satire* is an interesting play. Three versions of the play exist for us today: 1540 (now lost), 1552, and 1554. The 1552 and 1554 versions represent an elaborate place and scaffold play that was written by Lindsay and performed before the Scottish court.[27] The earlier 1540 version was performed indoors before the Scottish King James V. While of all the ten interludes this play has the closest ties to a specific household, the content is similar, the play is highly adaptable to a range of audiences and performance venues, and the overall structure is largely rambling and episodic, including serious doctrinal points interrupted by moments of folk comedy. However, in comparison to the other ten plays, *Satire* would have been far more impractical and costly to produce and perform. In addition to a large number of characters, the play contains numerous stage directions (some quite complex). The actions are localized and several furnishings and large structures are necessary for the production, including a throne and ladder, a pulpit, gallows, a pavilion or tent, and a body of water. Yet despite what must have been a challenging play to put on, alongside the two performances before the king, *Satire* was known to have been produced three other times during Lindsay's lifetime. This was a play that mattered enough for people to bother with the awkwardness of it. The play's message—that lower class citizens deserve protection from the governing classes but not their trust—seems to have been a popular one (or at least, not unpopular).

The socially conservative message of *Satire* finds analogues in *Impatient Poverty*, *Wealth and Health, All for Money, The Cruel Debtor, The Pedlar's Prophecy,* and *The Trial of Treasure*.

With the sole exception of *The Pedlar's Prophecy*, each of the interludes at some point makes a connection between poverty and acts of violence. Only *Satire* and *Wealth and Health* indicate that they were meant for performance at court, while the rest of the plays offer no indication as to either set or location (other than one court scene in *All for Money*). And, *Satire's* links to French drama aside, only *The Cruel Debtor* has a clearly identifiable source.[28]

The earliest printed interlude here is John Heywood's 1527-30 *Gentleness and Nobility* (#4). This secular debate play features a character called "Ploughman" who argues against "Merchant" and "Knight" for the superiority of his own class. His claim to nobility centers on his own self-sufficiency, to which the Merchant reacts by describing the self-sufficiency of beasts. Undeterred, the Ploughman insists on the worth of his own intellect and reminds both characters that they depend on his class for their survival. Finally, having argued his case, the Ploughman takes off to do market business. Later, in Part II, he emphasizes the importance of individual merits over ancestry. If the play were to end here, we would be left with quite a progressive social message. What happens instead is that the Ploughman eventually becomes overwhelmed by the realities of societal injustice and, when they continue to disagree with him, physically assaults both the Merchant and the Knight. Before withdrawing for the last time, Ploughman compares his living conditions to that of a Christian ascetic and admits that his arguments will never make any difference in the end. The Merchant and the Knight shrug off the Ploughman's talk as idle chatter and agree wealth is a necessary part of governance and that nobility comes from generous rule. The play ends with "Philosopher" approving of the Merchant and the Knight's final argument and encouraging the ruling classes to govern with virtue.

Once again, this play has no known source, no indications as to set, and unlocalized action.[29] John Rastell printed the two copies available to us—one from 1525 and one from 1535

that reads "J. rastell me fieri fecit". While the play presents a lower class character capable of articulating the struggles of his class and the abuses of the ruling orders, he is also depicted as more than capable of undermining his own arguments through bad behavior. Ultimately, the audience is left with the message that while the lower orders deserve some attention and fair treatment, their social position is inextricably linked to their moral lowliness.

But wealth could be just as much a problem as poverty. The anonymous *Impatient Poverty* (#5) is one of several interludes here to address the detrimental effects of wealth. Printed by John King in 1560 and William Copland in 1561, this rambling and episodic interlude depicts the fall and redemption of a central/humanity figure as he discovers dangers posed to his material well-being (notably in place of spiritual well-being).[30] Corruption is foregrounded throughout the dramatic narrative, and one of the central debates in the play is found between an unrepentant and wealthy "Abundance" and "Conscience"—who has lost authority throughout the realm to "Covetise," (including the administration of justice). When Conscience departs in sadness, "Envy" at first pretends to weep in sympathy, but cannot keep from giggling while he reflects on his bad behavior and the amount of trouble he has caused. In the meantime, "Impatient Poverty" has changed his name to "Prosperity" and Envy attempts to claim kinship, with the added incentive that he (Envy) has three hundred pounds that he would like Prosperity to look after. Envy and "Misrule"—who renames himself "Mirth"—decide to make Prosperity/Impatient Poverty as miserable as possible, and with this goal in mind they invite him to gamble and dine. "Peace" attempts to intervene but is unsuccessful. Envy and Misrule eventually return to the stage with "Colhazard," a gambler who has just won two thousand pounds from Prosperity. The play returns to Abundance, who is able to escape a summons with a bribe, after which a Summoner leads Poverty in to do public penance. Peace asks whether due process of law has

been followed, and the Summoner explains that the only principle that operates is bribery and corruption. Finally, Peace rescues Poverty, gives him new clothes, and addresses the audience on the perils of corruption.

No sources have been identified for *Impatient Poverty* and the title page states that "Four men may well and easily play this Interlude" with a doubling scheme offered. Here again, the action is unlocalized, there are no indications as to set and the writing feels haphazard. Throughout, class mobility is shown to be deeply problematic, and Impatient Poverty is depicted as an aggressive and unstable young man. Even after a name change and improved fortunes, Impatient Poverty remains unreliable and untrustworthy—wealthy or poor, he is an inherently threatening figure. *Impatient Poverty*—like *Gentleness and Nobility* and *The Satire of the Three Estates*—draws attention to the complaints of the lower social orders whilst challenging the legitimacy of these complaints. The same can be found in *The Pedlar's Prophecy* (#6). Anonymous (although possible written by Robert Wilson), *Pedlar's Prophecy* was written around 1561-3. Today we have a copy printed in 1595 by Thomas Creede to be sold to William Barley. Again, as we might expect to find: no sources for the play have been identified, the play appears to have been carelessly constructed, action is unlocalized and there are no indications as to set. *Pedlar's Prophecy* is centered on social commentary, more specifically the state of the realm and its ills. The figure of a "Pedlar" appears capable of offering his audience a perceptive analysis of social problems. Unfortunately, he also happens—not so coincidentally—to be a charlatan, and the plays ends with a "Judge" announcing his refusal to pay attention to the ranting of pedlars. This is accompanied by a priest who, like the Judge, acknowledges that the Pedlar belongs to a separate social sphere altogether.

Once again, sixteenth-century audiences encountered a play where the "common" figure possesses an unfortunate mix of social awareness and social ineptitude. The play *Wealth and Health* (#7) suggests that some members of the lower classes are more problematic than others, warning specifically against the machinations of foreign laborers. It is an anonymous play, written in 1553-5 and offered for playing (and possibly performed at court). The two copies we have today were printed by William Copland for John Waley in around 1565, with a title page reading: "Four may easily play this play" (although no doubling scheme is offered and five players are actually necessary). No sources for the play have been identified, the action is unlocalized and there are no indications as to set.[31] The play addresses concerns over the management of wealth and the presence of foreign workers in the realm. Audiences are introduced to a drunken Fleming named "Hance," a French pickpocket named "Shrewd Wit" and the Spanish "Ill Will." The whole play cautions against the actions of immoral servingmen, suggesting that they threaten the entire commonwealth.

The play opens with "Health" and "Wealth" debating which of the two is more important, followed by "Liberty" entering and insisting on his own value. "Ill Will" now makes his appearance, calling himself "Will," claiming kinship with Liberty, and announcing to the audience his intention to deceive. Eventually the Vices become the stewards of Wealth and Health, despite "Good Remedy's" warnings that they (the Vices) are harmful to the realm and wellbeing of the commonwealth. Unfortunately for Wealth and Health, Good Remedy turns out to be have been right, and upon their return they unhappily discover that mayhem and revelry has consumed their own household. While attempting to right these wrongs, Good Remedy finds the time to chastise Hance, as a foreigner, for draining England's wealth. At the end of the play, as a consequence of bad servingmen, Health and Wealth suffer and Liberty finds himself in captivity.

Good Remedy, however, is not finished yet, and he sees Ill Will and Shrewd Wit sent to prison before restoring Wealth, Health, and Liberty to their rightful positions. Finally, the play ends with a prayer for Queen Elizabeth and her government.

Shortly after, the play *All for Money* (#8) was written by Thomas Lupton in around 1559-77 and printed in 1578.[32] Unlike the other interludes discussed here, *All for Money* was possibly inspired by contemporary pamphlets. This highly episodic play deals with the corrupting power of money, specifically in regards to the misuse of both learning and wealth. The play opens with three characters ("Theology," "Science," and "Art") describing their value to society and also, in cases where they are used in the pursuit of material gain, their potentially harmful effects. After they leave, "Money" appears and brags how men of all social ranks covet him. Shortly after, "Pleasure" arrives, explaining how he is the son of Money and "Sin" is his own son.

The players might appear and disappear suddenly (sometimes being "vomited" onto the stage) but there persists a sense that they are all intimately connected. There is also a confusing procession of characters throughout with names such as "Learning with Money" and "Learning without Money" who compare their relative strengths and weaknesses. Interestingly, a beggar figure appears as "Neither Money nor Learning." He is given money by "Money with Learning" after describing his piety and poverty and is also defended by "Learning without Money" as being more admirable than "Money without Learning." Shortly before "Neither Money nor Learning" departs for the final time, "Learning without Money" notes his piety and declares the beggar wealthy in terms of riches and wisdom. Of the ten interludes discussed here, this is the only play where poverty is portrayed as a genuine virtue. And, in fact, the most learned figure of the play makes a point of showing respect to the poorest figure—poverty is less a moral stain and more a way to avoid the moral pitfalls of wealth. At the end of the play, because of their greed

and corruption, all the distasteful characters are judged and then fined. Otherwise, the play retains features found in common with the other interludes: the action is unlocalized (expect for a court scene), the play is conducive to doubling, there are no stage directions for set (aside from a door that is knocked), and although it is possible that the play was inspired by pamphlets there is no clearly identifiable source.[33]

Two of the ten plays, however, do have an identifiable source and *The Cruel Debtor* is one (#9). *Debtor's* inspiration is *Matthew 18:22-35,* the parable of the debtors, and the play (which today exists in fragments) deals with issues of flattery, court life, and deceit. The play describes the troubles of the gentleman "Ophiletis," who faces ruin after spending more of "King Basileus" money than he can repay. After consulting his bookkeeper "Proniticus," the king begins to reprimand Ophiletis before the fragment ends. Yet again, the action is unlocalized and there are no indications as to set. Although authorship is uncertain, it is possible that either a "Lewis" or "William" Wager wrote the play in 1560-5, and it is known that the text was printed by Thomas Colwell in 1566.[34]

Another interlude with connection to Wager is *The Trial of Treasure* (#10). In this case, however, no sources have been identified and, somewhat predictably, the action is unlocalized, the play is offered for acting, and there are no indications as to set.[35] In addition, the title page offers a doubling scheme for characters. As with *The Tide Tarrieth, A Satire of the Three Estates,* and *Impatient Poverty*, *The Trial* links violence to wealth. Abounding with music and physical fighting, the play concerns itself with the dichotomy of "Lust" and "Just." In the play Lust pursues a lady called "Treasure" and chases after her into the house of "Carnal Cogitation." Lust eventually finds Treasure but she is reduced to rust in the end. In the meantime, Just boasts of his renunciation of material wealth and manages to triumph over Lust in the end. The play

concludes with a moral appeal to all estates. Appropriately, the preface cites the story of Diogenes and Alexander to illustrate the emptiness of material pleasure. We have one copy of the play printed by Thomas Purfoote in 1567.

From this sampling of ten interludes, it is possible to argue for the existence of a pattern. While none of these plays have explicit ties to specific households, they have certain narrative, structural, and textual features in common. Moreover, they are concerned with economic issues—which range from concrete labor disputes to ideological tensions—and are oriented towards the performative needs of the players themselves. Not only are doubling schemes generally offered for the players, but the lack of indications as to set, the unlocalized action and the anonymity of these plays make them particularly well-suited for traveling companies. But why would households pay for players to perform plays without clear connections to prominent households, without a well-established playing history, and with no specific ties to their own household? And, considering the expense of household performances, why settle for poorly written dramatic narratives? Because, I believe, these plays appealed to household audiences for their ability to help perpetuate the increasingly powerful household/state analogy. In addition to justifying the rigid social hierarchies that ordered Tudor households, these plays invited audiences to think beyond the micro-politics of daily existence and to reflect on the macro-politics of kingly governance—just the opposite of most of the Tudor interludes appearing in textbooks and modern scholarship. In these ten plays the writing might have been clumsy and players' exits and entrances might have been awkward, but these interludes were effective in articulating the sense of economic anxiety that pervaded Tudor political thinking.

It became possible to view the sixteenth-century household as analogous to the state thanks to recent developments within political ideology. More specifically, the emergence of the

English "commonwealth": a concept that was fundamental to early modern perceptions of the social order and a strong presence within sixteenth-century political discourse. In 1509, while imprisoned in the Tower of London awaiting execution, a lawyer named Edmund Dudley wrote *The Tree of the Commonwealth*. In it Dudley outlines the ideal conditions for the prospering of the kingdom under its new king, Henry VIII.[36] The term "commonwealth" or "commonweal" was a keyword of the sixteenth century, and for Dudley it "meant both the common good, or common interest, and the social and political structures responsible for achieving that condition of public welfare" (Wrightson 27). Relying on elaborate allegory, Dudley imagined the commonwealth as a great tree with four roots: love of God, justice, trust and concord. There were also four fruits of commonwealth: tranquility, good example, worldly prosperity and the honor of God. Within a harmonious commonwealth—where the interests of all the principle social groups are reconciled under the controlling hand of the monarch—the fruits of commonwealth are attainable. In describing the commonwealth, Dudley divided the subjects of the realm into three conventional "estates" or "orders": the clergy, the "chivalrie," and the "commynaltie." Dudley is very clear about the role the commynaltie should play in society (a group which Wrightson argues could have comprised as much as 98 percent of early sixteenth-century England):

> this roote also be well rooted in the Commynaltie of this realm, for there resteth the greate number; therein be all ye merchants, Craftes men and artificers, laborers, franklins, grasiers, farmers, tyllers, and other generallie the people of this realme. Theise folkes maie not murmur nor grudge to liue in labor and paine, and the most pte of thiere tyme with the sweath of theire face. Let not them pesume aboue their owne degree, nor let anie

> of them presume or counterfeit the state of his better, nor let them in anie wise exceede in theire apparell and dyet [37]

Dudley regarded the ideal commonwealth as an association of interdependent parts, but certainly not as an egalitarian social arrangement. According to Dudley, early modern society should consist of communitarian ideals upheld by a graduated ladder of authority and subservience. Dudley's beliefs were not unique, and in fact these societal divisions were characteristic as much of medieval Christian social morality as early modern political thinking. Accordingly, similar sentiments can be found in other contemporary texts, as in the opening paragraph of the *Homily on Obedience* (1547): "Almigty God hath created an appointed all things in heauen, earth, and waters, in a most excellent and perfect order. In Heauen, hee hath appointed distinct and seuerall orders and states of Archangels and Angels. In earth hee hath assigned and appointed Kings, Princes, and with other gouernours vnder them, in all good and necessary order."[38] Adding further on:

> For as much as God hath created and disposed all things in a comely order, we haue beene taught in the first part of the Sermon, concerning good order and obedience, that we also ought in all common weales, to obserue and keepe a due order, and to bee obedient to the powers, their ordinances, and lawes, and that all rulers are appointed of God, for a goodly order to bee kept in the world [39]

Even if sixteenth-century households were not familiar with *The Tree of the Commonwealth*, they would have heard the *Homily on Obedience* read as an official sermon every year. Taken together, both texts offer a useful statement on contemporary perspectives regarding the social order and its emphasis on hierarchy and degree. However, what distinguished early modern

definitions of commonwealth from medieval, and what made Dudley's position unique, was an emphasis on economic prosperity and material well-being. As Wrightson adds,

> This was no simple world of priests, a warrior aristocracy and a myriad of self-supporting peasant communities whose labor and surpluses directly sustained others. On the contrary, Dudley assumed a highly differentiated economic and social structure. It was one in which the division of labor and economic specialization were already relatively advanced, and in which substantial non-agricultural sector was employed in manufactures and in trade. Moreover, it was already a significantly commercialized economy. (29)

It would seem money rested at the heart of the Tudor commonwealth.

All the more intriguingly, since official statistics were not kept and economic behavior was not yet treated as a distinct area of activity worth study as a science, late medieval and early modern contemporaries were ill-equipped to fully understand any economic changes happening around them.[40] In the sixteenth century the interplay between rising prices, demographic growth, the problem of land hunger, and the presence of an economically vulnerable wage laboring population on an unaccustomed scale, was all poorly understood. As previously noted, contemporaries were aware that changes were taking place and could certainly appreciate that economic tensions were on the rise. However, like medieval thinkers, they tended to perceive economic changes and emergent problems through a lens of moral philosophy, interpreting economics as a branch of personal and social morality. Economic problems were therein frequently interpreted as failings within the commonwealth, failings that could be attributed to the misdeeds of specific people and discussed in literary and dramatic contexts.[41]

Accordingly, when members of one of these three interdependent groups failed to fulfill their assigned social obligations, strong reactions—sometimes with legislative significance—frequently followed. Dissidence and autonomy were not concepts that sat particularly well with contemporaries during the period. One intellectual response was the increased use of the paradigm of the body politic, used to show how disease or disorder in any one social group threatened the rest (and also potentially threatened the economic well-being of the other two groups). Politically and intellectually there was a growing sense that any diseased member of the body politic deserved to be cut off: this was the best course of action. This development had enormous consequences for members of the commynaltie, the poorer members of this large category in particular. It seemed that of all the members of the commonwealth, the poorest were most susceptible to the disease and disorder that threatened the body politic.

Consequently, there was a widespread conviction—increasing throughout the sixteenth century—that many of the poor were, as historian Paul Slack notes, enemies to the commonwealth.[42] He goes on to add that the simplest way of defending virtue and order was by defining vice and disorder "and the identification of an external menace protected the essence of a body politic threatened by dissolution. This seems to have been the imperative behind the perception that the poor were outside rather than inside society, that they were marginal men and women" (Slack 24). As previously noted, early modern vagrants—typically defined as any wanderer or poor stranger—were, in particular, linked to vice and disorder.

Overstated and embellished though the vagrant threat to the commonwealth could often be, there were occasions where contemporary anxieties appear justified. According to Francis Bacon vagrants were not only a "burthen, an eye-sore and a scandal" but also "a seed of peril and tumult in a state" (11.252). Even modern historians have tended to interpret early modern

vagabonds as either innocent victims or as a threatening segment of society readily indulging in crimes (petty theft in particular). Slack points out that:

> it should be stressed also that poor strangers and wanderers, known as 'vagabonds,' were in actuality very often involved in crime. This fact can be underestimated because of the legal rule which prevented the description of 'vagrant,' being attached to people who were accused of other forms of crime before quarter sessions or assizes: they were termed 'labourers' or given no status designation at all. Recent research shows beyond doubt, however, that poor wanderers made a large contribution to criminality in early modern England. (Slack 92)

Consequently, there was a relatively quick succession of legislative responses to the growing criminal threat posed by early modern vagrancy. One of the earliest Tudor attempts to protect their political security from the threat of vagrancy was a 1495 Vagrancy Act providing that vagabonds (wanderers and suspect persons) were to be set in the stocks for three days and then sent home. Local responses to this perceived threat escalated during the sixteenth century, so that by 1531 (the Act of 1531) vagrants—and notably before any crime had been committed—could be whipped and sent back to their parish of birth or last residence with a vagrant's passport. In common practice, however, vagrants were either allowed to remain in town after giving sureties, or were expelled without punishment. The 1531 Act also introduced a second measure: the local licensing of approved beggars. Since prior to 1531 vagrants would simply have been placed in stocks, even if not always put into practice by local authorities, the 1531 Act signifies a heightened national uneasiness with vagrancy.[43] Unfortunately, in spite of the Tudor government's best efforts, legislation was not always successful in protecting the commonwealth from vice and disorder, as Slack notes:

> Vagrancy legislation thus helped to create the conditions it was directed against. It was self-confirming. From this perspective, it makes little sense to ask whether vagrants were innocents or criminals, for they had no choice. The circumstances of life on the road prevented them being the first; the law and the constable made them the second. (100)

In other words, the system risked exacerbating the problem of delinquency by attaching the label to more and more individuals who then could not escape its ill-effects.

Arguably, the most disastrous piece of vagrancy legislation was the Vagrancy Act of 1547. Its central provision ordered that vagrants be bound as slaves for two years to masters who would agree to take them on. When not enough slave-owners materialized, the Act had to be repealed in 1550. Although the Act of 1547 was a failure, it exposes the lengths to which the anxious Tudor government sought to protect the body politic from the poor of the commynaltie (deserving or otherwise). It also reveals an important trend in sixteenth century politics: experiments in social engineering were permitted so long as they focused on the commynaltie and left their social betters—the other two segments of society—untouched. As Slack observes:

> Parliament had ceased to legislate against covetousness and come to tolerate usury by 1572; its opposition to enclosure was no more than half-hearted, at any rate after the 1590s; and it repealed sumptuary laws regulating the fashions of the elite in 1604. By contrast, measures intended to reform the manners and behavior of the lower orders enjoyed an increasingly warm parliamentary welcome. Between 1576 and 1610 there were 35 bills on drunkenness, inns and alehouses, 9 against the prophanation of the Sabbath, 9 dealing with bastardy and 6 against swearing. (130)

This pattern reveals a fixation with the manners and behaviors of members of the commynaltie. In spite of all the recent national upheaval caused by political instability (the Wars of the Roses)

and religious transformation (the Reformation), legislation shows how determined the two ruling orders were to protect the sixteenth-century commonwealth from the antics of the rank and file.

Of course it is important to acknowledge that mingled with all this anxiety and vilification was a clear, albeit sometimes confused and seriously misguided, sense of social obligation to help the deserving poor of the nation. Although poverty surveys were not fashionable until the late sixteenth century, according to contemporaries, and modern historians, a larger proportion of the English population was (considered) poor in 1570 than 1500, a fact further supported by the growth of contemporary commentary on the matter.[44] As Ronald Hutton explains, with the continent-wide rise in population between 1500 and 1640 came the associated inflation of prices, and, "this produced a marked increase in poverty and a society more sharply polarized between the poorer social groups and those able to profit form the enhanced value of commodities and of land" (Hutton 112). Poverty was a worsening problem. In addition to attempting to manage subversive behavior, many of the poverty-related early modern statutes establish collections for the deserving poor, regulate the amount of begging permissible (usually prohibiting begging altogether) and encourage schemes for employing the unemployed. In the 1530s the first public-employment schemes appeared. In 1552 Parliament passed a statute encouraging the measurement of local responsibilities—including the creation of registers of the needy poor—and resources available in each parish. Even in 1555, after Mary had taken the throne, a new provision was passed almost identical to that of 1552, with the exception that licensed begging was permitted in certain circumstances. The return to Catholicism had a surprisingly muted effect on government-mandated charity.[45]

Interestingly, in spite of all the sixteenth-century religious turmoil, there was considerable continuity in how the Protestant and Catholic governments helped the poor of the

nation. Moreover, it is overly simplistic to argue that secular poor laws replaced religious institutions following the Dissolution (although certainly the Dissolution did have consequences for poor relief). Thanks to humanist writings, and regardless of religious inclinations, beliefs in certain civic responsibilities were becoming more commonplace in Tudor England; now a secular central authority would control Christian charity. Slack describes the intellectual imperative to do so: "town councils wished to purify their communities from every kind of dirt and disorder which threatened the health of the body politic. They received powerful support from humanist writers who used the same analogy of the body politic to underline the dangers of civic and national disease and decay, and the need for prompt treatment" (116). Thomas More's *Utopia,* for example, outlines both the threat of idleness to the commonwealth and the importance of offering care for the truly deserving. Vagrants were not the only threat to the body politic—so too was the material neglect of those in genuine need. As a consequence, according to the Acts of 1552, 1555, and 1563 individuals unwilling to contribute to the poor could be drawn up. The Act of 1563 went a step further, ordering that those refusing to pay for the poor appear before justices of the peace (who might choose to imprison them).

However despite this growing urgency to aid the genuinely needy, it was often difficult defining who in the English population rightfully belonged to this group. Of course, some cases for aid were more obvious than others: poor widows, orphans, the elderly, and the impoverished sick. Simon Fish reflects widely-held opinion when he insists in his 1529 *A Supplication for the Beggers* that, "all whom God, not their idleness, makes poor, must be relieved."[46] Nonetheless, in spite of political and intellectual efforts to separate the "idle" poor from the rest of the poor, and both from the rest of the commynaltie, sometimes it was impossible to tell these largely artificial groups apart. As well as the issue of recognizing different categories of poverty,

"poverty" itself was a struggle for contemporaries to define (and it continues to be a problem for modern historians). With such factors as seasonal employment, wage fluctuation, changing consumer habits and shifting perceptions of poverty—not to mention the economic hardships of the period—setting an absolute poverty line for early modern England is challenging.

More often than not, poverty was the only thing the poor had in common. As Slack observes, "people moved in and out of poverty in the course of a life-time, and they had other, more precise means of defining their social position. To write their real history, in their own terms, would therefore be to do little less than write the history of the English people" (7). In other words, arguing for a collective consciousness of the early modern poor, or various segments within that population, is problematic. Moreover, even if distinct group identities appeared amongst the poor of the commynaltie the social and political elite often played a significant role in creating these groups initially. Altogether, despite the fact that the medieval dichotomy between deserving and undeserving poor gained greater momentum and force in the sixteenth century—particularly in relation to legislative action—generally speaking these two groups were fluid, changeable and often indistinguishable.

This had a great impact on sixteenth-century domestic households. The fluidity of Tudor society, and the speed with which an entire household might slip into extreme poverty, made the threat of poverty a very familiar one. As Hutton mentions, long-term inflation was a large part of the problem. Rising prices put economic pressure on commynaltie households, forcing them to live in, "a world in which the prices of basic necessities could fluctuate wildly from year to year, above all in accordance with the state of the harvest" (Hutton 116). Wrightson explains,

> Price indices constructed from the records of purchases of foodstuffs and manufactured goods indicate that throughout the later fifteenth century prices had remained relatively

> stable. From around the second decade of the sixteenth century, however, they began to rise, modestly at first, but gathering momentum in the 1520s and 1530s. In the 1540s and 1550s they rose rapidly, before settling back to a slower though still continuing, growth in the 1560s and 1570s. By the 1570s, the price of a hypothetical 'basket of consumables' constructed to reflect most of the basic needs of a typical household was more than three times what it had been at the turn of the century. (Wrightson 116)

Accordingly, historians tend to agree that the first priority of sixteenth-century households was simply economic survival. Most rural households (and most households were rural households) were heavily geared towards providing their own basic subsistence. Agricultural historian Mark Overton estimates that about 80 percent of English farming in the sixteenth century was actually oriented towards the subsistence of the farm family itself, with only a small portion of their produce finding its way to markets.[47] So while rural households did engage with markets it was likely limited, and certainly more restricted in times of intense need. Unfortunately, with regular occurrences like harvest crises (occurring in the 1520s, 1550s, and 1590s) and epidemics (York alone suffered seven epidemics of bubonic plague between 1485 and 1550), the sixteenth-century rural household had to be as prepared for conjunctural or crisis level poverty as it was familiar with forms of structural poverty.[48] For most rural householders—reliant primarily on family labor and consuming most of their own produce—even a small economic hiccup could prove disastrous. With so many people making such a bare living, it comes as little surprise that modern historians often suggest that people in this period tended to value economic security and stability over change and growth. Their economic strategies were often very defensive, the need to minimize risks overshadowing any temptation to maximize opportunities.

Since the household was the principle place not only of residence but of economic production, economic concerns and attitudes assumed deeper cultural significance then they might otherwise have. The somber economic realities of life in the sixteenth century, the pressure to preserve the health of the English commonwealth by fulfilling one's requisite social obligations, and the constant need to navigate a growing collection of social and economic legislation placed unique stress on the Tudor household. As an important unit of economic production, the household was primed to either support the commonwealth or, if facing difficulties (whether it be natural or self-inflicted) to quickly become an enemy of it. Members of the commynaltie might suddenly find themselves subject to the many statutes relating to poverty, a transition signaling not just a decline in economic status, but a serious fall in social status as well. With vagrants and the idle poor referred to as "lawless beasts," and the belief circulating that, "they lived and delighted themselves in the most barbarous and beastly confusion," and were, "the very filth and vermin of the common wealth… the very Sodomites of the land, the children of Belial, without God, without magistrate, without minister; dissolute, disobedient, and reprobate to every good work," any association with vagrancy would have been deeply undesirable.[49] Of course, the difficulty of always accurately identifying separate forms of sixteenth-century poverty meant that the deserving poor could sometimes be confused with the dangerous poor. For the struggling Tudor household, it must have been a perilous position to live in.

However, even when a household did do well financially, for some there was still cause for anxiety. For a group of prominent Protestant moralists, the sixteenth-century rise of self-interested economic behavior was a serious matter. Henry Brinkelow, Robert Crowley, Thomas Becon, John Hales and Hugh Latimer formed a group that came to be known as the

"commonwealthsmen." For these commonwealthsmen, "most of whom were clerics, the Reformation represented not simply the jurisdictional independence of the Church of England from Rome, or doctrinal change, but a spiritual awakening which demanded the remoralising of social relationships" (Wrightson 150). Authoring several pieces of orthodox complaint literature, these men saw the Middle Ages as a golden age of harmony and social responsibility—and a stark contrast to current economic conditions.[50] Moreover, no one in English society was very safe from their opinions. Wrightson explains,

> Their social vision was conservative. Yet it took on potentially subversive implications when they turned from general denunciation of the moral chaos of the times to address the specific failings of particular social groups. No one was exempt from this. Ploughmen and craftsmen were reproved for idleness, shoddy work and excessive consumption of resources through gluttony and drunkenness. The poverty of the 'thriftless poore' was largely attributed to their 'owne defaults.' But the fiercest criticism was reserved for those 'caterpillars of the commonwealth' whose greed and oppression occasioned the suffering of others, above all those 'ungentle gentlemen' who neglected their duty of stewardship. (151)

The timing of pamphlets inspired by such thinking in the 1540s and early 1550s overlapped with the production of many of the interludes discussed here, perhaps even being the direct inspiration for *All for Money*. However, after this mid-century trend of producing "literature of complaint" had passed, and the commonwealthsmen were discredited—eventually blamed (albeit erroneously) for encouraging a series of peasant revolts—discussions of economic distributive justice changed.[51] Nonetheless, the writings of the commonnwealthsmen "left a residual influence long detectable in radical Christian discussions of economic justice" (154).

So, did all of these political, economic and ideological changes taking place throughout the sixteenth century likewise leave a residual influence in household drama? It seems unlikely that they would not have. All ten Tudor interludes seek, on some level, to understand the complexities of Tudor economic relationships: from the economic roles played by individuals to the consequences—legal, social and spiritual—of certain types of economic behavior. Moreover, without ties to individual households the plays are able to negotiate economic issues much more freely. Even if specific household matters were not addressed—no character, for example, casually mentions the effects enclosure has had on his life—the plays articulate feelings of general economic anxiety: throughout these dramatic narratives members of the commynaltie are shown under economic threat from others while themselves remaining a political threat to the greater commonwealth (or larger institutions in general). This is most clearly seen in plays where commynaltie characters are depicted as being keenly attuned to threats of financial and personal injustice, but left generally unaware of the threat they pose to the greater state. In other words, their awareness only extends to a point, beyond which it is the duty of members of different—read superior—groups within the commonwealth to step in and make final determinations.

Ultimately, did these ten interludes encourage audience members to question contemporary political theorization? Did they allow for new thinking about political issues? Not exactly. For example, *Satire of the Three Estates* argues that basically no member of the commynaltie can be fully trusted (certainly not merchants or the poor), and both *Gentleness and Nobility* and *Pedlar's Prophecy* enthusiastically highlight the unruliness of the common man. The rigid hierarchies found in the government, in religious institutions, and in domestic households are therein shown to be necessary to the maintenance of social order. Walker makes much of the role of the Pauper in *Satire*, arguing,[52]

> His occupation of the vacant throne, the consequences of an untrammelled popular politics are equally startlingly presented. The apocalyptic overtones evident in the powerful and unsettling confessions of the vices are thus reflected in the social convulsions threatened by the Pauper's presence in the play. In this context at least, Lindsay's appeal for reform may be rather more urgent in tone, but perhaps less fundamental and radical in implications, than is often suggested. (Walker162)

Furthermore, Walker insists on the meaning of Lindsay's choice of dramatic form. Lindsay was very politically active as a prominent herald and Scottish courtier and, as previously noted, the 1540 *Satire* was performed before the reigning Scottish monarch James V.[53] As a household performance, *Satire* made certain political statements: "the drama of the royal household, and of the political elite more generally, was not marginal to the political process but central to it. Nor were political concerns marginal to the playwright's interests" and "dramatists were concerned with politics and politicians with drama" (127). Without ties to royal households, the other nine interludes might have been less central to the political process, but that did not prevent them from being political. And, just like *Satire*, the other household plays' appeal for reform is (sometimes) urgent in tone but (generally) less radical in actual implications. In other words, these are cautious plays. Yet, despite being conservative, and despite working by informal means (arguably too informal at times), these interludes nevertheless seem to recognize the implications of social change and suggest that small changes could be incorporated into the structure of the social body with minimum friction. By their symbolism, organization, and places of performance, these plays were well-suited to function in this way. They should be reinterpreted both in terms of the social pressures that contributed to their development and in terms of their commentary on these pressures.

For example, *The Pedlar's Prophecy* offers audiences a plebian commentator figure who is genuinely perceptive, able to make insightful statements about contemporary life. However, at various points throughout the narrative, the Pedlar disguises himself as a priest, tricks other characters with fake displays of knowledge, and attempts to sell false prophesies—ultimately giving fellow characters and the audience itself no choice but to ignore him. The play affords the Pedlar numerous opportunities to make insightful social statements, often about the state of the realm, but his actions leave audiences in no doubt as to his untrustworthiness. If the Pedlar has anything useful to say, it seems more an accident than evidence of real wisdom. Likewise, in *Gentleness and Nobility* the Ploughman attempts to build a convincing case for greater distributive justice, explaining to the Merchant and the Knight that they rely on his labor for their survival (and, additionally, that his poverty has a spiritual dimension). However, when the Merchant and the Knight attempt to engage in this debate, they quickly frustrate the Ploughman who retaliates by physically abusing them both. The play ends with the Philosopher exhorting the ruling class to continue ruling, praising the gentleness of the nobility and the political value of mercantile wealth. And, of course, the Ploughman's behavior gives the audience no choice but to arrive at this same conclusion. For all three plays, the appeal for social reform is loud and central to the dramatic narrative, but also empty: it is more of a progressive gesture and an acknowledgement of social inequality than a call for true change. In fact, for all ten interludes the social implications are clearly conservative and, as symbolic systems, like the paradigm of the body politic they too express wholeness. For signs of sixteenth-century social unrest, these are not the plays to turn to.

This is not to forget, however, that the plays do offer audiences an opportunity to scrutinize wealth, greed and personal ambition. Echoing the warnings of the

commonwealthsmen, several of the interludes address problems of material greed, moral corruption and excessive personal ambition. *Impatient Poverty, All for Money, Wealth and Health*, and *The Tide Tarrieth No Man* all variously insist that money corrupts, and all on some level address the problem of social competition and material ambition. *Tide Tarrieth* is the most direct, insisting that economic corruption hurts the commonwealth and the greedy oppress the suffering poor. But, in the end, these ten interludes suggest that while greed and corruption are in fact problematic, poverty is far more indefensible. In keeping with widely-held beliefs, much like famine, plague, flood and fire and other acts of God, poverty is treated as a product of the moral condition of its sufferers. It was held that poverty exists where it needs to exist.

Likewise, household structures received healthy amounts of ideological justification. The sixteenth-century individual "conducted his affairs within a mesh of relationships, of economic and social obligation, reciprocity and exchange," and each household, "was the focal point of a set of overlapping, intersecting network of association, which linked it into larger systems of economic and social relations" (Wrightson 70). While household structures permeated much of sixteenth-century life, some individuals encountered a more complex hierarchical web on a daily basis, especially members of royal or large aristocratic households. As Westfall notes, these households,

> could also comprise concentric circles of smaller households; the king's household would incorporate households of the queen, princes, and princesses, each of whom retained a personal staff of bureaucrats, functionaries, servitors, and artists. These, in turn, especially when they themselves were members of the upper aristocracy or clergy (like Henry VIII's chancellor Cardinal Wolsey or Elizabeth's secretary Lord Burleigh), also retained their own households. (Westfall 41)

Behind these complicated social arrangements in particular, ideological justification is necessary, and interludes such as the ten discussed here produce precisely this kind of validation. *Wealth and Health*, for example, insists that in the wrong hands, the successful management of wealth and property is impossible. While Wealth and Health are virtuous characters they are also naïve, and after entrusting their household to malevolent servingmen, return to discover chaos and mayhem. Here a strict household order is not an option, but a necessity for the economic survival of the entire household.

This kind of message must have resonated strongly with household audiences. Moreover, in spite of their gentle critiques of wealth, greed and personal ambition (and the fact that these plays were not written for specific households softens any criticism even further) these plays offered the sort of message patrons would have been comfortable receiving in a public context. Westfall observes that one of the signifying characteristics of the household theater was the nature of its audience, noting that, "audiences participated both explicitly and implicitly, as the aristocrats took to the stage themselves or as they assumed that the assembled household was closely marking their behavior and response" (Westfall 54). Not only did the patron exercise ownership over his revels—in that he ordered them and paid for them—he was also the object of the revels, which were designed to glorify him by representing his ideas, his wealth, and his artistic tastes.[54] The patron should be viewed as both producer and spectator. Therefore, it is easy imagining a sixteenth-century patron taking his critiques in stride while nodding in agreement when the play's true political message is presented before the entire household audience: failings in the commonwealth (and equally the household) can be attributed to the misdeeds of the commynaltie. Not only do these plays represent the increased use of the paradigm of the body politic, but they also offer further evidence of how politically and socially conservative Tudor

household drama could be. It is worth considering that, as noted earlier, legislative measures intended to reform the manners and behaviors of the lower orders were growing increasingly popular around the same time many of these plays were being produced, and measures were well-established by the time most were printed.

How much resistance accompanied these developments? To what extent did resistance depend on the size and/or wealth of the household? As Alexandra Johnston makes clear, there is "abundant evidence that private houses of every size were venues for plays" explaining that in contemporary documentation there is evidence of "mandatory performance by travelling companies for the mayor and council taking place in the mayor's house" (Johnston 134). Most mayors were "middle-class businessmen and, from the evidence that survives of the houses of such men, their homes were substantial but not commodious town houses" (134). While this would have practical implications for performance—a smaller playing space would obviously place certain physical constraints on players—in terms of reception, it might have had a surprisingly limited effect. Regardless of size, the sixteenth-century household was generally organized according to the principle of hierarchical differentiation.[55] This meant that the entire domestic space was demarcated by place and role: "parlour and servery, chair and stool, featherbeds and straw mattresses. Some dipped first into the dish, and the words of some carried greater power" (Wrightson 64). While households could vary in their composition and functional complexity, regardless of size out of economic necessity, "servants and apprentices were of major importance to the nature of the sixteenth-century household as a unit of residence and as a social and economic institution" (33). In other words, whether a household belonged to a member of the landed gentry or the local mayor, the contributions of their members "were not necessarily regarded as of equal importance or value" even though household economies "relied

on interdependence and complementarity of effort" (64). There was no financial incentive for middling households to be more egalitarian than aristocratic ones.

Because economic organization and domestic organization tended to be one and the same, there is little reason to believe middle-class households would have been more attracted to socially progressive dramatic narratives than elite households. In fact, as critics like Greenblatt and Watkins establish, interludes associated with the wealthy households of new men hail class mobility as a "reward for righteous living," and champion practices that enabled "enterprising individuals to rise about their forebears/status. More importantly, they reject the social conservatism associated with the medieval moralities. Since for most middling households class mobility was not a realistic option, and economic success was far from guaranteed, their dramatic tastes might reflect a greater desire for financial survival over an impulse to challenge the social and ideological ordering of the commonwealth. Perhaps, in order to be fully understood, these ten plays should be approached in terms of the middling household.

That being said, the middling household was not the only place for socially conservative interludes. Although he only mentions two examples, Watkins admits that some interludes, "disrupt the humanist myth of self-sufficiency by voicing anxieties about constitutional developments that underwrote the *arrivistes'* prosperity" (Watkins 784). John Skelton's *Magnificence* (1520-22), is offered as one of his examples, and, "marks one of the period's most striking critiques of the new men who profited form Henrician absolutism" (784). Skelton's play is likely drawn from Lydgate's poem "A Song for Just Mesure" and "Mesure is Tresour," and perhaps also influenced by a lost *Speculum Principis,* the play was printed in around 1530 for John Rastell. Worth mention, as with the other ten interludes, *Magnificence* is concerned with the use of wealth and engages with issues of poverty, excess, problematic servants, as well as

corruption and deception in the state. However, unlike the plays discussed so far, *Magnificence* has a known author, multiple possible sources, and a known location: the play was written specifically for indoor hall performance in London. Furthermore, this moral play is highly organized and well-written, following a classic psychomachia scheme with a single fall and redemption. Overall, the play has strong ties to aristocratic audiences and may have been specifically written as a satire on Cardinal Wolsey. Paula Neuss, however, argues that the play was originally written for a merchant's hall performance, and that its audience would have resented the royal administration more for its onerous taxation than affronts to noble prerogatives.[56]

In addition to a very specific location, what further distinguishes *Magnificence* from other dramatic narratives discussed here is the prominence of rhetorically highly formal speeches as well as the use of sermon and debate. In terms of dramatic narrative, however, *Magnificence* offers as much violence and undignified mayhem as any of the other interludes. The main difference is that *Magnificence* replaces anxiety over the misappropriation of funds with anxiety over courtly misbehavior. The character "Poverty" briefly appears in the play but only to reinforce Magnificence's personal crisis. After "Adversity" takes Magnificence's goods and clothing, Poverty lifts Magnificence onto a bed—the full extent of his dramatic involvement. Instead of addressing the range of ideological issues surrounding the condition of poverty, the play is far more concerned with instructing the wealthy how to best spend their cash. There is no sense that money in and of itself corrupts or that a legitimate lower class threat (a threat either to their wealth or to the social order maintained within the play) exists: those at the helm of the English commonwealth seem safe from the commynaltie. The play's emphasis is instead on wealth management, with considerable focus on costume, dress, and the politics of appearance.

From a player's perspective, *Magnificence* was designed with specific performance parameters. Skelton's play has numerous stage directions, stage properties, and is more verbally/rhetorically complex. The play's well-known, relatively popular sources would have potentially made production less of a gamble, with audiences presumably familiar with and attracted to its content from the outset. Furthermore, players would have easily recognized where to best perform this play and who to perform it for. Having been designed for an indoor London performance and for an audience appreciative of a Wolsey satire and familiar with "advice to princes" literature, there is no question that the play owes its meaning and narrative strength to a very specific context. In place of the randomness sometimes encountered in the ten interludes, here we find structure, organization, and thoughtful design. Overall, the material text greatly lends itself to two interpretations: either as a souvenir of a particular performance or as a detailed template for future performances. In other words, relative to the ten plays, the reader is left with a better-defined sense of what can be done, and what should be done, with *Magnificence*. While this would have allowed players to carefully reproduce a politically sensitive dramatic performance, these reproductions would have been shadows of the original—a point that mitigates the threat of censorship. Walker explains, "They were politically sensitive only in the conditions for which they were produced, in performance in a known household, college, or Inn of Court, before a familiar, or at least a predictable audience, for whom the playwright had tailored his didactic, moral and political material" (Walker 40). Walker adds that, "Heywood's dramatic appeals for political and religious accommodation, like Norton or Sackville's counsel that the queen should marry Robert Dudley rather than King Eric of Sweden, had their greatest political significance only in the context of the royal court and the Inner Temple, at the time when these were live issues" (41).

Put another way, the play text of *Magnificence* represents a politically sensitive performance that can be repeated but, of course, never by fully reproduced in its original context. The same can be said of *Gorboduc* (or *Ferrex and Porrex*), another play influenced by "advice to princes" literature. Written in 1562 by Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville for performance at the Inner Temple, the play was printed in 1565 by William Griffith, in 1570 by John Day, and again in 1590 by Edward Allde for John Perrin. The first play to use blank verse, as well as the being regarded as the first classical tragedy and history play in English, *Gorboduc* is highly significant in terms of English theater history. The play uses the chronicle history of Britain to present a political lesson and to argue for the benefits of strong rule. So, like *Magnificence,* well-known sources for the play exist: Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Histories of the Kings of Britain* as well as Grafton's *Chronicle* of 1556. *Gorboduc* is also similar in that the performance took place under highly circumscribed conditions. In this case, *Gorboduc* was performed before an exclusive courtly audience with the candid goal of delivering a political message to the Queen regarding marriage and the succession. Considering the specificity of its purpose and presentation, once again we can argue that the material play text is likely to have functioned as personal souvenir and/or template for future performance (made more appealing by the status of its original audience). Moreover both plays—and others such as *Respublica*—functioned originally as political petitions, representing dramatic intervention into contemporary political debates. Unlike the ten interludes, however, these types of plays were intended for performance before courtly audiences who could directly influence policy.

It is perhaps with plays like *Magnificence*, *Gorboduc,* and *Respublica* in mind that Walker makes this assertion:

> Those scholars who have searched among the printed playbooks for evidence of the living traditions of popular drama have, then, been looking in the wrong place. Almost by definition, the playbooks surviving in printed form are not the unmediated records of folk drama or community theatre, but posthumous descriptions of productions of high culture. (Walker 40)

But what if Walker is mistaken? What about the printing of plays associated with medieval participatory drama? What if some printed playbooks need to be approached as unmediated records of folk drama or community theater in order to be fully understood? In contrast to *Magnifience, Gorboduc,* or other sixteenth-century interludes associated with courtly audiences or the households of new men, these ten interludes do not resemble political petitions, political debates or seem designed to intervene directly in contemporary politics. But they do manage to express widespread economic and ideological tensions felt across English communities, and in key ways they resemble examples of "medieval" drama more than Tudor interludes like *Gorboduc*.

In general, medieval moralities like *The Pride of Life, Perseverance, Wisdom, Mankind,* and *Everyman* critique English society from a conservative perspective, and their principle vices are sins associated with class mobility.[57] The morality playwrights adopted allegory as their basic mode, "because its subordination of the particular to the universal mirrored the hierarchies of an imagined feudal polity that equated social aspirations with pride" (Watkins 767), moreover, "they do not portray isolated instances of corruption but an entire society" (767) infected by a dangerous desire for profit. The demographic and economic conditions outlined in the historical work of critics such as Georges Lefebvre, Alan Macfarlane, Michael Bennett, Christopher Dyer and Rosemary Horrox explains the conservatism of the moralities as well as their need to insist

that all people share a common history of temptation, fall and redemption.[58] As late medieval wages increased, terms of tenantry improved, and overall standards of living were elevated, subordinate groups "could think of themselves as existing apart from a predetermined social structure" (768). In response—and in the prototypical scenario—Mankind spectacularly fails while attempting to achieve wealth and social mobility. At the same time, his sins are not unique, Mankind is not an individuated character, and *Mankind* leaves its audiences with the message that everyone is at risk for hubris. The traditional social order is not something to meddle with.

To conclude, our ten interludes function more like *Mankind* than *Gorboduc*, providing a mechanism by which the tensions implicit in the economic rise and fall of households could be confronted and worked out. In addition, they made available a means by which visual and public recognition could be given to changes in household hierarchical relationships. From this point of view, these interludes constitute a natural complement to the extravagance of household entertainments. Beside all the material lavishness that typically accompanies sixteenth-century household entertainments, these plays reinforce the wholeness of the social body and its economic purpose: these are economic cautionary tales. More specifically, surrounded by both the tensions and opportunities caused by political and economic change, order and unity within the English household/state analogy needed to be continually reaffirmed. But, of course, during the sixteenth century this kind of political and economic balance was progressively upset. Factors including population growth, price inflation, the growing divide between poorer social groups and those able to profit from the enhanced value of commodities and of the land, and the worsening threat of vagrancy were all factors tending towards the ideological instability of the household/state. As a result, poverty no longer served a useful societal or spiritual purpose: and indeed was increasingly seen as potentially disruptive of the kind of social and economic order

that institutions of household and state existed to impose. These ten interludes register such developments, providing a clearer sense of widespread economic conditions and anxieties than plays about social mobility and political theatricality are able.

Although the term "public opinion" did not exist in sixteenth-century English, and neither the words "public" nor "opinion" were held in particularly high esteem (both had a pejorative connotation in the vocabulary of Renaissance humanism), these plays could be interpreted as signaling the very beginnings of a "bourgeois public sphere" as described by Jurgen Habermas.[59] While Habermas argues in his seminal work *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962) that this bourgeois public sphere emerges in the eighteenth century, he also traces the origins of a specifically bourgeois "public sphere" to the point where emerging market capitalism meets the modern sovereign political state. Between these two social institutions—the state and the family household—a "sphere" for the free exchange of opinions was able to develop. As it happens, even while these plays lack the innovativeness often regarded as characteristic of Tudor interludes, they bring the tensions of nascent capitalism into dialogue with the contemporary household (both in material and ideological terms), offering what might be described as early dramatic expressions of Tudor public opinion. What we need to recognize, in terms of larger critical conversations within drama history, is that these ten plays encourage the reevaluation of the political function of sixteenth-century household drama, in particular its ability to help perpetuate the increasingly powerful household/state analogy. It also calls for a fuller understanding of the early commodification of plays and players, as plays with non-specific household ties began to circulate commercially and printers increasingly aimed play texts at itinerant companies.[60] Finally, it calls into question scholarly definitions of the Tudor interlude and traditional distinctions between medieval moralities and later dramatic forms.

[1] Greg Walker defines "interlude" as "an entire genre of early Renaissance moral and political plays performed in the great halls of noble households and other communal spaces and acted by small touring companies or actors drawn from the nobleman's own household" (Walker 26).
[2] Walker takes a slightly different approach, arguing that, "contrary to the thrust of recent writing, one of the most striking features of the interlude drama was its curiously ambivalent attitude towards royal and noble authority" (Walker 51). See *The Politics of Performance in Early Renaissance Drama*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
[3] See Walker, *The Politics of Performance in Early Renaissance Drama*, p. 34.
[4] See Walker, p. 40.
[5] See Walker, p. 26.
[6] Suzanne Westfall credits postmodern theory with these developments in her essay, "'A Commonty a Christmas gambold or a tumbling trick': Household Theater," *A New History of Early English Drama,* Ed. John C. Cox and David Scott Kastan, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).
[7] Westfall notes in "Household Theater" that, "Spectators at household revels, like those at schools and unlike those at church dramas, civic pageants, and public theaters, were a very specific audience. Besides living and working together, they shared particular cultural paradigms, they gathered in a private space for specific reasons, and they understood personal, topical and local allusions" (Westfall 52).
[8] See Westfall.
[9] Twycross explains that this is otherwise known as a canopy or "cloth of estate".
[10] See Twycross, "The theatricality of medieval English plays," *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre,* eds., Richard Beadle and Alan J. Fletcher, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
[11] Westfall points out that this has prompted some scholars to interpret the Latinate term *interlude* as "entertainments *between* courses."
[12] See Twycross.
[13] See Diana Henderson, "The Theater and Domestic Culture," *A New History of Early English Drama,* Ed. John C. Cox and David Scott Kastan, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 174
[14] See Peter H. Greenfield, "Touring," *A New History of Early English Drama,* eds., John C. Cox and David Scott Kastan, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 257.
[15] See Dutton, "Censorship," in *A New History of Early English Drama,* eds., John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).
[16] See Janette for a select chronology of licenses and censorship, *The Cambridge Introduction to Early English Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 119-120. For quoted texts see *English Professional Theatre, 1530-1660*. Ed. Glynne Wickham, Herbery Berry and William Ingram (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 33-120.
[17] See Dillon, p. 119.
[18] See Dillon, pp. 119-120.
[19] Quoted in Richard Dutton, *Mastering the Revels: The Regulation and Censorship of English Renaissance Drama* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1991), p. 19. Dutton identifies this proclamation as "the first definite attempt to institute a formal system of licensing of materials to be performed, which implicitly also meant censorship" (19).

[20] Proclamation 390, "Offering Freedom of Conscience; Prohibiting Religious Controversy, Unlicensed Plays, and Printing," *Tudor Royal Proclamations Vol. II. The Later Tudors (1553-1587),* eds. Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), p. 5.
[21] See Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations,* p. 5.
[22] See Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations,* p. 115.
[23] Unfortunately, as Greenfield points out, estimating players' income is a difficult subject, "if not impossible" (Greenfield 254). He adds, "extant records do not allow us to reconstruct even the official income from a company's entire tour" (254).
[24] Of all the interludes discussed here, *Satire* would have the closest ties to one particular household. Even in this case, however, the play was highly adaptable, and Lindsay was able to recycle the dramatic narrative for use in multiple contexts and before different audiences. For such reasons, *Satire* is more closely related to plays like *The Tide Tarrieth No Man* than *Fulgens and Lucres* or *Gorboduc*.
[25] Observations about these ten plays come from my own personal notes—I was able to study available play texts at the Huntington Library—and from Darryll Grantley's *English Dramatic Interludes, 1300-1580* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). While I was not able to see *Occupation and Idleness* in person, I was able to see the rest of the plays (as a facsimile at the very least).
[26] See Grantley, p. 347.
[27] See Grantley, p. 312 and Greg Walker, *The Politics of Performance in Early Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) pp. 117-163.
[28] However, while a single source has yet to be found, it is possible that contemporary pamphlets inspired *All for Money*.
[29] See Grantley, p. 117.
[30] See Grantley, p. 151.
[31] See Grantley, p. 363.
[32] See Grantley, p. 15.
[33] See Grantley, p. 15.
[34] See Grantley, p. 75.
[35] See Grantley, p. 355.
[36] See *The Tree of Commonwealth by Edmund Dudley,* ed. D. M. Brodie, (Cambridge, 1948).
[37] See D. M. Brodie (1948) *The Tree of the Commonwealth by Edmund Dudley*
[38] *STC* 13675 [I.10.1] lines 1-9.
[39] *STC* 13675 [I.10.2] lines 124-131.
[40] See Keith Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities, Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).
[41] See Wrightson.
[42] Throughout this section I could have used more recent criticism by Nicola Masciandaro, *The Voice of the Hammer: The Meaning of Work in Middle English Literature* (2007); Avner Greif, *Institutions and the Path to the Modern Economy: Lessons from Medieval Trade* (2006); or Mark Addison Amos, "The Naked and the Dead: The Carpenters' Company and Lay Spirituality in Late Medieval England" (2004) amongst others. However, because Paul Slack's *Poverty and Policy In Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Longman, 1988) remains a landmark work for historians, and since modern studies in economic history reference him so often, I made the

choice to use him (along with Keith Wrightson) as a major influence throughout relevant sections.
[43] See Paul Slack, *Poverty and Policy In Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Longman, 1988), pp. 91-100.
[44] See Slack, p. 61.
[45] See Slack, pp. 113-131.
[46] See Simon Fish of Gray's Inn, Gentleman, *A Supplication for the Beggars [Spring of 1529]*, ed. Edward Arber, (London, 1878).
[47] See Mark Overton, *Agricultural Revolution in England: The Transformation of the Agrarian Economy, 1500-1850,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
[48] See Wrightson, p. 55.
[49] Quotes from: *Greevous Grones for the Poore: Done by a Well-willer, who Wisheth, that the Poore of England Might be so Provided for, as None Should Neede to Go a Begging Within this Realme*. Printed in London for Michaell Sparke in 1621.
[50] Wrightson notes: "perceptions of the sixteenth century as a time of disruption, challenging conventional values concerning the proper ordering of economic affairs, were characteristic of the age and gave rise to the whole literature of economic complaint, itself a novel phenomenon made possible by another innovation of the day: the printing press" (Wrightson 3).
[51] Hutton writes that, "during the early 1580s the flow of complaint literature slackened, to a total of three surviving pieces between 1582 and 1584" (Hutton 131).
[52] Of the ten interludes, *Satire* is the only one to receive much in the way of modern scholarly interest.
[53] There are actually two slightly different versions of *Satire*. The first was the 1540 indoor household performance (now lost) for James V and the second version was used in 1552 and 1554 for an outdoor performance before a wider cross-section of the political community. In 1552 and 1554 a regent governed Scotland.
[54] See Westfall, p. 49.
[55] Wrightson warns that "to insist too emphatically upon the nuclearity of English households in the early modern period can be seriously misleading," adding that this mistake, "threatens to divert attention from the equally important fact that many households in the early modern period included persons linked to the household head by ties other than those of kinship" (Wrightson 32).
[56] See Neuss, ed, *Magnificence,* pp. 42-43.
[57] Watkins lists: avarice, ambition, greed, and extortion. (Watkins 767)
[58] See Georges Lefebvre, *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism* (Verso, 1985); Alan Macfarlane, *The Origins of English Individualism: The Family Property and Social Transition,* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991); Michael Bennett, *Community, Class and Careerism, Chesire and Lancashire Society in the Age of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Christopher Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages: Social Change in England c. 1200-1520* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Rosemary Horrox, ed., *Fifteenth-Century Attitudes: Perceptions of Society in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
[59] See Johnson Kent Wright, "Public Opinion," *Dictionary of Early Modern Europe,* ed. Jonathan Dewald, (Charles Scribner's Sons, 2003) p. 106-109.

[60] However, scholars differ over the buying potential of the itinerant companies and the extent to which printers attempted to appeal to them. In *From Mankind to Marlowe*, David Bevington argues that professional troupes formed the major market for printed playbooks containing a doubling plan. David Bradley and P. W. White both disagree, arguing that it is doubtful early printers could profit much from selling interludes.

— CHAPTER THREE —

The Popular Household: Printed Playbooks, Merchant-Citizens and Domestic Tragedies

The previous chapter discussed economic stressors on the sixteenth-century household. Modern economic historians tend to agree that the first priority of Tudor households was basic economic survival, with up to 80 percent of English farming oriented towards the subsistence of the farm family itself.[1] When households did engage with markets it was likely limited—nonexistent in times of intense need—and only involved a small portion of their produce. Not surprisingly, throughout the period the English were generally oriented towards economic security, valuing stability over financial change and growth, and economic strategies tended to be defensive, designed to minimize risk rather than to maximize monetary opportunities.

This chapter, however, concerns itself with those sixteenth-century English households that approached economic matters differently: attempting to maximize profits, engaging heavily with new and emerging markets, and valuing economic change and growth over stability. One example of this type of household is that of John Rastell (c. 1475-1536). In 1516 Rastell printed the first secular play in English: the "godely interlude" of *Fulgens and Lucres*.[2] In most drama history scholarship *Fulgens* is noted for its innovation: for its departure from the world of medieval manuscripts and for the introduction of the first real sub-plot in English drama (rather than merely being a comic interlude). Less often, scholars interpret *Fulgens* as a continuation of established dramatic conventions or—even less often—as a precursor to the later dramatic developments found on the professional public stage. Even when the historical context of *Fulgens* is taken into account, it is almost always the historical context of the first household performance in the 1490s. But what was happening in 1516 and why is this so often overlooked?

This chapter argues for a new reading of *Fulgens,* one that considers economic, textual, ideological and dramatic developments surrounding the 1516 printing and *Fulgens'* relationship to later forms of domestic theater. It establishes that the new commercial class differed from the nobility in its assumptions about wealth and power and in the kinds of drama it valued and printed. It also suggests that for Rastell commerce—printing specifically—became a means for direct participation in the political process, and not a source of disengagement and alienation from society. "Man in business," complains John Hall in the seventeenth century, "is but a Theatricall person," and this assessment is particularly true of Rastell.[3] In my study of Rastell and *Fulgens,* I will argue for interconnectedness between the following: (1) motivations for writing and performing *Fulgens*; (2) the commercial and material history of the English book trade; (3) Rastell's relationship to commerce and "new men"; (4) *Fulgens* and the politics of consumption and censorship; (5) *Fulgens* as it relates to other forms of sixteenth-century drama; and (6) *Fulgens* as an early domestic tragedy. Overall, this chapter addresses the question: What happened when household performances became print commodities?

During his lifetime, Rastell was a busy man. As E. J. Devereux notes in his *Bibliography of John Rastell* (1999), Rastell worked intermittently as: a lawyer, a coroner, a mathematician (with a special interest in the use of Arabic numerals), a printer or publisher in whose shop he or someone in his employ invented the method of printing music with a single impression, a public servant, a member of Parliament, an agent at court, an engineer in the French wars (and a decorator of pavilions for the Field of Cloth of Gold), one of the first and most important translators and codifiers of English law, a dramatist who wrote and produced interludes on his own stage (and was the first to publish English secular drama), a would-be colonizer of America, a historian, and a controversialist on both the Catholic and Protestant sides of the English

Reformation. In spite of his many, and varied, professional accomplishments, Rastell would eventually die imprisoned "at the kynges own comandment," living miserably on "almys and charytie," and estranged from family and supporters—both political and religious—alike. As Devereux notes, "Most of his contemporaries speak well of his abilities until late in his life, when he seems to have become at least mildly deranged, perhaps as much because of his muddled financial affairs as owing to his startlingly sudden conversion in religion" (Devereux 4). But before his death in 1536, before the years of poor decisions that would result in his personal ruination, Rastell was a compelling advocate for the belief that print could improve the health of the English commonwealth.

Rastell is known to have established three printing presses in London. The first was in Fleet Street at the "abbot of winchecombe his place."[4] Shortly after, 1512 is a likely date, Rastell moved his press to another house at the south side of St. Paul's Cathedral, beside Paul's Chain.[5] If Rastell had success as a printer, it was not thanks to conservative business practices or any sensitivity towards market trends. Even in the 1530s, at the height of his success as a printer, Rastell mostly printed books written either by his friends or himself. For Rastell print was more than merely a trade, it was a mechanism for spreading the ideals of humanism, for furthering religious change (first in support of Catholicism, then Protestantism), for enabling legal reforms and education, and for the overall intellectual betterment of the English nation. Print was also a means for celebrating writings in the vernacular. As the messenger figure in the *Interlude of the Four Elements* informs the audience, the author (Rastell) had often wondered:

> What nomber of bokes in our tonge maternall
> Of toyes and tryffelys be made and impryntyd
> And few of them of matter substancyall

For though many make bokes yet vnneyh ye shall
In our englyshe tonge fynde any warkes
Of connynge tha tis regarded by clerkes.

Moreover, since the Greek and Romans wrote in their own languages, the argument continues, so should the English:

Consyderyng that our tonge is now suffycyent
To expoun any hard sentence euydent
They myght yf they wolde in our englysh
Wryte workys of grauyte somtyme amonge.[6]

Rastell clearly believed that the use of English will "spread knowledge and assert the dignity of the nation; knowledge is not only practically beneficial but moral, for the quest for knowledge makes everybody better; service to the commonwealth is more important than wealth or power" (Devereux 11). Through his work editing and publishing a range of texts—in particular the legal texts he would be most famous for in his lifetime—Rastell would return to this same conclusion, insisting on the intellectual power of the press. Unlike earlier or contemporary stationers, Rastell printed what he wanted, with only a slight regard for the demands of his readers.[7] This does not suggest, however, that Rastell was conflicted about profiting from his printing business, and there is every indication that he was personally ambitious and eager for financial success. Rastell even went so far as to plan a (eventually abandoned) mission to the New World in the hopes of building some kind of "permanent settlement, perhaps a trading fort" (8). While never making it past Ireland, Rastell set sail with ships carrying masonry and carpentry tools, and the intention of returning to England with lumber, fish, soft-wood pitch and soap ashes.[8] Rastell was a figure

eager to apply the ideals of humanism to trade, commerce, and law while reaping any financial awards that should happen to appear along the way.

He was also a man deeply involved in contemporary drama. His interests were varied, extending from the writing and printing of plays, to the building of stages, to the hiring of costumes. For example, in honor of the London visit of Emperor Charles V in 1522, Rastell designed the pageant at the Stocks. He was also the author of *Love and Riches* (a dialogue performed at the Greenwich entertainments of 1527), he likely translated the Spanish play *Calisto and Melibea* (c. 1523-25) and he is one of two proposed authors—the other is John Heywood—of *Gentleness and Nobility* (c. 1519-28). R. Axton argues in "Three Rastell Plays" that Rastell might have had a substantial creative input in *Gentleness*. In 1524 Rastell took a forty-year lease on land in Finsbury Fields, where he built not only a house but a stage for dramatic presentations. Furthermore, evidence from a 1530-31 lawsuit offers insight into Rastell's lucrative costume hire business. Rastell brought the lawsuit against a Henry Walton, accusing him of failing to return costumes left with him for safekeeping while Rastell was in France.[9] Witness statements describe the value of these costumes, with one tailor commenting that while he could not remember how long it took him to sew the costumes, he could recall Rastell's wife helping him with the sewing and getting paid 4d per day in addition to being given food and drink. Not only were these costumes labor-intensive, but their value is further substantiated by the testimony of two of the King's Players, George Mayler and George Birch, who mention that they wore Rastell's costumes for their performances in the Greenwhich revels.[10] Because of the worth of these costumes, Rastell only entrusted them to Walton because the two men knew each other—Walton had worked with Rastell on building the structures for the Greenwich revels and had been employed by Rastell to build a stage for his house at

Finsbury. In addition to providing insight into Rastell's personal and professional life, this lawsuit offers important early clues about sixteenth-century costume practice and usage, specifically the process by which costumes were made, remade and recycled for different performances.

However, in terms of Rastell's contribution to drama history, he is probably most famous for printing *Fulgens*. Not only was Rastell's household involved in a range of lucrative dramatic activities, but printing *Fulgens*, with its complex relationship to the "household," invites discussion of Rastell's perception of his own household and its role within various professional enterprises. Of further interest, in addition to being famous for printing *Fulgens* (at least in terms of modern scholarship, in his own lifetime he would probably have been most famous for his legal contributions), Rastell is also famous for being the brother-in-law of Thomas More, who just happened to be one of *Fulgens* original spectators. Several modern critics, including Greg Walker, suspect that More may have been one the original players as well, possibly as the character "B." As a general practice, it was not unusual for ambitious youths to act in household performances. John Watkins explains, "the men who held the reins of Tudor power not only sponsored masques and interludes but often advertised their verbal and rhetorical talents by acting in them" (Watkins 777). Moreover, just as his family remained professionally involved with drama, More would exhibit a lifelong interest in performance.

William Roper (More's son-in-law) includes in his *Lyfe of Sir Thomas More* a revealing account of More's early interest in drama, writing: "Though he was younge in yeares, yeat wold he at Christmas tyde sodenly sometimes steppe in among the players and, never studyeng for the matter, make a parte of his owne there presently among them, which made the lookers on more

sporte than all the plaiers beside."[11] In response to Roper's account, Walker argues in his "*Fulgens and Lucres* and Early Tudor Drama":

> Scholars have been reluctant to accept the association of this story with the subplot of *Fulgens*, but this seems unnecessarily severe. Admittedly we have precise dates for neither the first performance of the play in Morton's house nor More's period of service there. But the coincidence seems too strong to ignore, and it seems reasonable to infer that a recollection of a young boy apparently stepping in among the actors during a Christmastide play in the cardinal's great hall and a play written for performance in that hall at roughly the same time, in which a couple of characters seem to step in among the players and make parts of their own (thereby providing more sport for the spectators than the rather dour events of the main plot), might very plausibly refer to the same event. Roper's account may well, therefore, be an only slightly fanciful reconstruction of More's own recollection of having played one of the comic servants, most probably B, who does, indeed, as we have seen, promise to improve the play through his involvement. (Walker 25)

As further evidence, Walker also points out: "For the names 'A' and 'B' in the text seem not to have been the given names of characters at all, but flags of convenience indicating two roles that were taken by individuals in Morton's household (and others elsewhere, if the play was later performed by other companies) who would effectively have been 'playing' themselves, and bringing their own names with them" (25).

If Rastell believed print could improve the health of the English commonwealth, what does the printing of *Fulgens* suggest? Henry Medwall wrote *Fulgens* around the year 1497, most likely for performance in the Great Hall of Lambeth Palace, and for the entertainment of John

Morton, the Archbishop of Canterbury.[12] Medwall was born around September 8, 1461, in Southwark to a family probably employed in the cloth trade. He attended Eton College and King's College, Cambridge, studying arts and civil law, before finding employment with the future Cardinal Morton, who was at that time the bishop of Ely.[13] Medwall's disputation drew upon an earlier prose treatise, the *Contoversia de nobilite*, written by the Florentine lawyer Buonaccorso da Montemagno in 1428. The text had been translated into English around 1448 by John Tiptoft, earl of Worcester, a scholar in possession of the charming nickname: "Butcher of England" (for the cruel manner in which his enemies were dealt).[14] Caxton later printed the text as the Declamation of Noblesse in 1481. Eventually, after passing through the hands and influence of Montemagno, Tiptoft, and Caxton, Medwall transformed the text into *Fulgens and Lucres*.[15]

Today a fragment of the play can be found in the British Library and a copy in the Huntington Library (*STC* 17778). The play is 2,353 lines in length and has relatively few characters: Fulgens, Lucres, Gaius Flaminius, Publius Cornelius, Ancilla (Joan), and "A" and "B." The plot essentially deals with the wooing and marriage of Lucres. Father Fulgens allows his daughter to choose her husband between two suitors—the noble Publius Cornelius and the lowborn but worthy Gaius Flaminius. Lucres will eventually choose Flaminius, cementing a position within the sociopolitical debate the entire narrative dances around. In case the audience might lose track of this, the argument is reiterated both at the start of the play and at the end. But it is the characters of A and B who are key in highlighting the social debate at the center of the dramatic narrative. The play begins with A and B summarizing the play they are about to perform. Later, they parody Flaminius and Cornelius by competing for the affections of Lucres' maid Joan. This competition starts with singing, is followed by wrestling, and ends with a mock

joust in the form of a game (referred to as “fart prick in cule”) using brooms and kitchen implements. Throughout this parody the three characters engage in vulgar banter, and the episode concludes with Joan losing her patience and beating her two silly suitors.

The second part of the play mimics this earlier established pattern. It begins with A and B giving an overview of the issues presented in the interlude, before the more “serious” Fulgens and Cornelius enter almost as secondary characters to A and B. Cornelius gives B a token to present to Lucres, reminding the audience of B’s true position as household servant. B proceeds to give the token to Lucres, but manages to shock her with his lewd language in the process. As the dramatic narrative quickly grows more complicated, with characters competing to further their own personal aims, B fetches a group of mummers. Performing a dance, the mummers entertain the audience until the actors on stage are able to finish squabbling over Lucres. Finally, Cornelius and Flaminius present their cases to the audience: Cornelius argues for the value of noble birth and Flaminius argues for the importance of personal wealth and ability. Lucres decides on Flaminius and the narration ends. The performance, however, only concludes after A and B addresses the audience one final time. Here, the two servants once again acknowledge the social matters being considered.

A and B offer a significant organizational purpose, both framing the central marriage narrative and offering somewhat more academic intermissions/interjections on the nature of nobility. Walker argues that mention of A and B “returns us to the most innovative feature of the play, as it alone among the early Tudor interludes has something that is legitimate to describe as a fully developed subplot” (Walker 27). These two highly interchangeable characters are not satisfied staying in their own story, but sneak into Lucres’ sequences as well, offering their services to Flaminius and Cornelius and aiding in their respective suits. Therein the “subplot” of

A and B seems to generate the actual "plot" itself. In the fictional narrative this means that the "kitchen" (where the subplot supposedly takes place) is directly responsible for dramatic action taking place in the "great hall." As it happens, the players would have been physically entering Morton's hall using the same entrance as servants going to and from the kitchens of Lambeth Palace. A and B occupy the same world as the spectators, and the characters repeatedly return to this point, offering allusions to contemporary debates surrounding class, gender, social mobility and nationality. For example, in an interlude filled with characters with classical names, the names of A, B, and Joan signify "Englishness" by comparison, and place-name references further situate the dramatic narrative in contemporary England. In other words, two household servants generate the dramatic framework of *Fulgens* conceptually and pragmatically, enabling a play that would otherwise be rambling and frenetic to progress and develop meaningfully. This had serious implications for the "new men" in the Lambeth Palace audience.

As previously noted, Medwall's play text derives from an aristocratic source: a translation done by John Tiptoft. Tiptoft was a gifted scholar with a humanist education. The Italian Renaissance brought a renewed interest in the nobility debates that had so interested Horace, Cicero and the Stoics: who had asserted that nobility resided in personal virtue rather than social status or wealth.[16] In their own historical period, however, these men were arguing against prevailing notions that guided Roman society, a society governed by a small number of highly influential families. Under similar circumstances, and with the role and influence of university-educated scholars and lawyers on the rise, English thinkers in the later fifteenth century turned their attentions to this vexed issue.[17] Eventually, the notion of a "nobility of merit" would become a humanist commonplace, attracting the attention of commoners who had done just that: climbed the ranks of society thanks to personal ambition and merit. In a society

organized around principles of lineage and aristocratic values, this development was not met without resistance—the men who worked their way to the top of English society did not have many parades thrown in their honor. However, with its emphasis on the cunning and skill of servants, and their ability to manipulate their social betters (for their own good), perhaps this is precisely what *Fulgens* was meant to accomplish. Medwall reworked an aristocratic text to celebrate the abilities of those who operate behind the scenes, and, in doing so, manages to somewhat marginalize the aristocratic characters who are intended to "dominate" the dramatic narrative.

It cannot be an accident that Rastell chose to print this of all secular plays available to him. Moreover, printing plays altogether was not an obvious choice. In spite of all his innovativeness, William Caxton himself had not chosen to publish drama, even though, as Seth Lerer explains, "In many ways, Caxton stands at a cusp in English intellectual history. At times he seems to innovate, reflecting humanist preoccupations with the monumentality of the literary work, with the need to refine the vernacular, and the immortality of poetic fame" (Lerer 722). Regardless of his humanist preoccupations, Caxton seems to have been content leaving works like *Fulgens* alone. What was different for Rastell? Certainly by 1516 the book industry had undergone changes.[18] Shortly after the printing of *Fulgens,* Wynkyn de Worde printed *Hick Scorner* (c. 1516) and Richard Prynson printed *Everyman* (c. 1516 and 1526-8). Walker explains that Latin school drama is probably responsible for this shift:

> One significant factor was probably the popularity of the Latin drama published in both manuscript and printed form in the previous two decades. As humanist teaching methods found their way into the curricula of the English universities and schools, the plays of Plautus, Seneca, and particularly Terrence began to favour as set texts. Terence was

> taught at Cambridge from 1502, and at Oxford from some point after 1505. As early as 1483 Magdalen School, Oxford, had appointed a grammar master, John Anwykyll, who published a textbook, which drew heavily upon Terence's comedies for its material for translation. By 1531 Winchester College was apparently teaching the comedies to its fourth-formers six days a week. (Walker 11)

These developments likely explain why in the late 1490s Richard Pynson printed Latin editions of six comedies (*Andria*, *Eunuchus*, *Heauton Timorumenos*, *Adelphoe*, *Phormio*, and *Hecrya*). Perhaps inspired by the successes of Latin drama, around 1516 printers like Rastell, Worde and Pynson felt it was time to branch out to vernacular play texts. Moreover, since as Lerer points out Caxton's projects, "need to be seen not as a miraculous inventions of a native artisan but as responses to long-standing traditions and new cultural challenges" (Lerer 723), Rastell's decision to print *Fulgens* truly signifies a sixteenth-century innovation and a milestone in book history. It also represents one of the earliest examples of an author firmly attached to an English play.

But the truth is, drama historians struggle to explain why Rastell—or any other early printer of play texts—made the choices he made. While textual scholarship has quite a bit to say about early book history, relatively little is known about early printed play texts. In *The Politics of Performance in Early Renaissance Drama* (2006), Walker describes in painstaking detail how many questions remained unanswered regarding early English drama, particularly in terms of the English book industry. He starts, in fact, by declaring: "even the most basic questions relating to the production of plays and playbooks prove on closer inspection to be problematic" (Walker 6). Walker goes on to list many of the holes found in modern scholarship. We know little about how printers got hold of play texts, and what made them select some plays and not others. We have no idea if there was a direct and profitable arrangement between writer and printer, or what

playbooks sold for. We do not know the size of print runs, or how, once in the printer's hands, the text was transformed into a printed commodity. Scholars are uncertain who purchased play texts, or the extent to which the market for play texts was profitable. Walker reminds us: "in the murky and under-researched world of early drama publishing there are few ready answers to even basic questions such as these" (7).

In fact, the bulk of the evidence modern scholars have regarding early print practices comes from religious and school texts, the two areas that seemed most consistently lucrative for early printers. Interestingly enough, the only evidence we have directly relating to early playbook print runs come from Rastell himself. Two years following his death in 1538, an inventory of Rastell's stock was compiled. In that list appear the titles of four plays and the following figures: 370 copies of *Calisto and Melebea*, 284 copies of *Good Order*, 80 copies of *Gentleness and Nobility*, and 8 of something referred to as "second part of the Play of Epicure."[19] What this suggests is that print runs in the hundreds could have been standard for dramatic texts. What these figures fail to indicate, however, are the reasons for so many excess copies of some play texts and not others. Was *Calisto and Melebea* a poor seller or such a good one that it was necessary to have far more copies on hand than *Gentleness and Nobility*? Both conclusions are tempting but at this point only guesses. In the end, I would argue, a textual approach that emphasizes economic and material aspects to book production yields more clues about early printed play texts than one limited only to performance and reception.

As it happens, Rastell's own household is a good place to start this kind of discussion. In printing *Fulgens*, Rastell was struggling against the low reputation of drama (which was not yet taken seriously as a literary form), the financial risk of testing a new market, and the fact that English audiences were not accustomed to experiencing drama in written form. What he had on

his side was not only the sophistication of the work itself but also the performance history of the play and the individuals associated with it, Thomas More in particular. At the time of its printing More was not yet in the service of Henry VIII, but was nonetheless an important and influential member of English government. *Fulgens* was printed around the time More had been sent on a diplomatic mission to Antwerp and was in the process of completing *Utopia* (although it is possible that *Fulgens* could have appeared after *Utopia*). His list of professional accomplishments would have included studying law starting in around 1496, being made a member of Parliament in 1504, and having been appointed Under-Sheriff of the City of London in 1510.[20] While his most famous professional milestones still lay ahead, it was clear that More was on an upward trajectory. And, of course, More was related to Rastell.

In printing *Fulgens,* with its ties to "new men" such as Morton, Wolsey, More and Rastell himself, Rastell's choice to print was both an example of self-promotion and a commentary on inescapable social change: Rastell's printing aligns him with other London artisans which, in turn, represent a new power structure within the commonwealth. While some historians, such as J. H. Hexter, insist that no stable social body deserving the label "middle class" existed in the sixteenth century, Rastell and his Tudor contemporaries seem to signify that economic and political realignment was occurring. I believe the printing of *Fulgens* is indicative of this fact.

These changes are far more evident towards the end of the sixteenth century. Few Tudor plays do as successful a job of establishing the social and economic value of manual labor and of affirming an artisanal consciousness as Thomas Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday.* First staged in 1599, the play features a shoemaker who rises to become Lord Mayor of London and an aristocrat who chooses to become a shoemaker himself. In suggesting that worldly advancement is possible through a willingness to work, the play lends an aura of respectability to manual labor

while reminding audiences that this was an activity the aristocracy patently avoided. It was a very popular play. When Simon Eyre, the play's protagonist, announces to the audience: "Prince am I none, yet am I princely born" (10.156), this is not meant to be taken facetiously.[21] David Bevington argues that a balancing of opposites pervades the play, and that social aspiration and patrician snobbery cancel each other out in the audience's sympathies.[22] In fact, throughout the play, the desire for upward social mobility and the aristocratic insistence upon social stratification are both accommodated. David Scott Kastan likewise takes note of *Shoemaker's* audience, explaining that, "the play cannot be understood as a realistic portrait of Elizabethan middle-class life. It is a realistic portrait only of Elizabethan middle-class dreams—a fantasy of class fulfillment what would erase the tensions and contradictions created by the nascent capitalism of the late sixteenth-century" (Kastan 325), adding that, "social dislocations are rationalized and contained in a reassuring vision of coherence, and community" (325). Dekker constructs an image of social unity that is tempting, even comforting, but he glosses over the social dislocations emerging capitalism brought: an economic reorganization of society is not without its drawbacks. In doing so, Dekker undermines the political efficacy of his play, rendering it mere fantasy as opposed to a sincere appeal for egalitarianism.

This might seem surprising, considering that for Dekker the realities of urban poverty were personally familiar. In 1598, just one year before *Shoemaker* was first performed, Dekker was jailed for debt and he spent his adult life "marginally in the London slums" (337). However, as Kastan explains, "the reality is that, for Dekker, the play is work, as for his characters work is play" (337). Dekker's relationship to his plays was inherently commercial: he wrote what would sell. While sharers in acting companies (such as Shakespeare, Alleyn and Burbage) could expect substantial profits, playwrights were not generally so fortunate. If Dekker identifies an artisanal

consciousness in his play, it is likely his motives were pragmatic and he was hoping to appeal to London's large number of playgoing artisans.

Nonetheless, even as a fantasy of social mobility, *Shoemaker* signals economic and political realignments taking place. While *Shoemaker* is an important illustration for any discussion of early modern drama and economics, it is not the first play to address these kinds of issues. Most drama historians have unfortunately turned to the commercial stage of professional playhouses as a starting point for Tudor negotiations between drama and the influences (and consequences) of nascent capitalism. However, many of the issues addressed by the professional theater can be found in earlier forms of drama: the emergence of capitalism and the public playhouse were not perfectly synced. If we are considering the nature and significance of capitalism and social dislocations, *Fulgens* is actually a very good place to start, as it suggests a number of interesting things about social mobility and shifting power structures. Not only in terms of content already discussed, but the physical text of *Fulgens* itself makes a meaningful statement about the growing artisanal consciousness expressed in *Shoemaker*.

Of course, by printing *Fulgens* at all Rastell was situating the play text within a broader commercial nexus. As previously noted, plays were not an obvious choice for early sixteenth-century printers but in 1516 printers were still attempting to pinpoint consumer interest and develop standard practices: experimentation did take place. Generally speaking, early consumers could choose between manuscript and print play books in a remarkably sophisticated burgeoning market. Appearances suggest (title-pages in particular) that even before the Stationers' Company was incorporated in 1557, the print book trade operated under certain professional guidelines that anticipated consumer expectation. This is less surprising when considering the impact manuscript production had on the print book trade: there is a scholarly tendency amongst literary

critics to overstate the innovativeness of print and the "newness" of processes of print production and dissemination.[23] Textual scholarship, however, has addressed the fact that with late medieval and early modern manuscripts we find a surprising degree of production organization, textual and visual continuity across various categories, and even a certain level (although this is a matter of serious debate) of pre-print professionalization. Also apparent is that manuscript production—as well as print production—was a fluid and flexible process sensitive to consumer need. There is a growing scholarly suspicion that in many ways, early print texts were manuscripts with more copies.[24] Textual critics have accordingly become increasingly aware of both the early standardization of features of print book production and the singularity of individual print texts. In other words, it is regarded as a mistake to ignore the extent to which print and manuscripts overlap. To the point, while not all manuscripts became printed books (and most did not) documentary evidence suggests that manuscripts were vital to the running of printing-houses, to the content of printed materials, to their visual layout and features, etc. Not all critics, however, have been able to agree how finite the transition from manuscript to print actually was.

In her influential *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (1980), Elizabeth Eisenstein highlights stark differences between, what she considers, the last century of manuscript culture and the first century following Gutenberg. She views 1350-1450 as the "last golden age" of the scriptoria and argues, "changes wrought by printing had a more immediate effect on cerebral activities and on the learned professions than did many other kinds of external events" (Eisenstein 293). And while she admits that "although printing transformed the conditions under which texts were produced, distributed, and consumed, it did so not by discarding the products of scribal culture, but by reproducing them in greater quantities than ever before" (128), Eisenstein makes clear throughout her book that the rise of print ushered in fundamental changes not just in

textual production, but in textual use, consumption, and intellectual conditions overall. Critics are now, however, increasingly questioning this interpretation.

David McKitterick would be one. In his *Print, Manuscript, and the Search for Order, 1450-1830* (2003), McKitterick points out that "print itself has been understood to be unstable since the mid-fifteenth century" (McKitterick 9), and furthermore that "the process of printing was inherently unstable" (118). He points to the early continuity of manuscript and print as forms of textual transmission, arguing "it is misleading to speak of any transition from manuscript to print as if it were a finite process" (47). Moreover, printing, he notes, did not eliminate the need for a whole range of (sometimes sizeable) manuscript insertions within the printed text itself—practices that continued to form part of the print production process well into the seventeenth century. The major milestones of book history affirm McKitterick's views: the manuscript book trade influenced the print book trade tremendously.

But when did the book trade develop initially? There has been longstanding scholarly debate over how and when exactly the commercial book trade developed in late medieval England. The beginning of the commercial book trade is, of course, commonly linked to the growth of universities in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when professional scriveners began to loosen the monastic monopoly on book production. Following this the fourteenth century saw the "important and increasing role of the new breed of non-clerical authors in initiating production" (Pearsall 5). On the continent these authors gave rise to a considerable increase in the commercialization and specialization of book-production, but the English book trade developed a little more slowly and unevenly. This has left modern critics struggling to pinpoint when discussions of an English book trade can rightly begin, and Pearsall opens the important *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475* (1989) with the now-familiar warning:

> In the present state of scholarship, any book on publishing and book-production in England in the century before the introduction of printing is bound to be limited in its ambitions, tentative in its statements, and, to some extent or in some ways, premature. (1)

Pearsall is reacting, at least in part, to arguments made in support of a London bookshop existing as early as the 1330s (arguments reliant on evidence drawn from the collaborative activity apparent in the Auchinleck manuscript), and he is not alone in his concerns. A. I. Doyle and M. B. Parkes question the existence of London bookshops before the mid-fifteenth century when, as Kathleen Scott confirms, groups of scribes and related professionals were working together—even if not housed in the same premises—and producing books, with some even appearing to be speculative. London bookshop aside, surprisingly extensive commercial organization of the book trade did exist by the mid-fourteenth century. As Alexander Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin point out: the guilds of the Textwriters and Limners were first identified in the 1350s, the Scriveners formed their own trade organization in 1373, and in 1403 the guild of Stationers appeared.[25] Mark Bland agrees that commercial organization was in place at this time but offers a slightly different explanation:

> By the end of the fourteenth century, the London book trade was well established, with scribes, limners (illustrators), and binders plying their related trades. Even at this stage, it was apparent that there were two types of scribes: those who primarily prepared books and longer tracts, and those who prepared legal and other documents using a hierarchy of specialized scripts. It was the former who works most closely with the limners and binders. On July 12, 1403 the two groups separated into the Writers of the Court Letter and the Writers of the Text Letter (with the latter joined by the limners).

Ultimately, historical details such as these limit the extent to which we can attribute substantial commercial organization to the rise of print alone (and even by 1500 the entire English book trade was confined to a very small number of printers). Not only was some degree of commercial organization in the book trade a reality by the late fourteenth century, but there was an escalating need for such organization. As Gillespie and Wakelin point out in *The Production of Books in England 1350-1500* (2011)*:*

> pardons, personal correspondences from households other than the king's statutes, archival records, chancery documents, prayerbooks, household manuals, and works for the newly thriving universities—all these were made, or at least, survive, in more copies in the hundred or so years before printing came to England than in previous centuries. (Gillespie 4)

Complicating matters even further are the activities of fifteenth-century scribe John Shirley. After serving as clerk to Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, Shirley rented premises in London where it appears he produced books. Although his exact role in book production remains debatable, Shirley seems to have participated in a range of bookish activities: he functioned variously as a scribe, a "litterateur," a translator, a copyist, a salesman, a literary agent, and an all-round bibliophile.[26] Shirley also organized and complied manuscripts, and by studying his compilation practices textual scholars have begun to suspect that fifteenth-century miscellanies are not wholly random collections of texts. Julia Boffey and John J. Thompson point out:

> Shirley, Thornton, Heege, or Wilde, who may not have been 'professional' compilers any more than some writers were 'professional' authors, but who still found themselves making the types of decisions about their compilations now normally reserved for the publishing editor or even the author. (Boffey 302)

Shirley's example suggests that the work of compiling medieval manuscripts could be the work of a fifteenth-century professional: challenging the conclusion that medieval English vernacular books always "represent defiantly individual impulses."[27] So that in their "oscillation between the planned and the random," medieval book production ran closer to planned than random.[28]

As D.F. McKenzie explains, "every book tells a story quite apart from that recounted by its text" (McKenzie 262), and it would seem that fifteenth and sixteenth century texts—both print and manuscript—tell a very commercial story. Even the materials used to produce *Fulgens* had distinct commercial implications. *Fulgens* was printed on paper, which as critics Orietta Da Rold and R. J. Lyall observe, is not a minor detail to be quickly discounted. Rold points out that, "unfortunately, paper tends to be overlooked in its earlier use in Britain, but given its importance it demands to be studied in its own right" (Rold 14). She continues:

> Cataloguers, editors, and manuscript scholars of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries sometimes seem to consider British paper manuscripts as poor relations to parchment productions—second-class manuscripts written by non -professional and amateur scribes, or at universities. Even E. Heawood, G. S. Ivy and R. J. Lyall in their remarkable contributions to the study of paper tend to emphasize that paper has a low status within the accepted hierarchies of manuscript production. (24)

By overlooking the history of paper, critics are not only neglecting a long and complex history of manufacture and distribution, but they are also overlooking the ways paper is emblematic of various key commercial and administrative developments in late medieval and early modern England. The transition from parchment to paper—although works continued to be produced on parchment for quite some time—began out of economic necessity. As early as the late fourteenth century a quire of paper cost the same as an average piece of parchment. The growth of the paper

trade throughout the following century created such reduction in prices that by 1450 prices had been halved and they were halved again by 1500.[29]

Paper first appeared in Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but was introduced to England later—around the beginning of the fourteenth century. Already by the 1350s, paper was being purchased in large quantities and used in administrative capacities by religious institutions, governmental offices, and royal households. Rold explains that by the middle of the fourteenth century, pressure on the royal administration to keep tabs on London guilds and local affairs led to an increased need for writing materials. As a consequence, most of the guilds' books from that time appear on paper, and the Goldsmiths and the Mercers are two guilds known to have used paper for their own records. Richard II's Chancery and Exchequer also relied on paper. Such fourteenth century evidence implies that paper was not just a fifteenth century phenomenon but was in reality already a popular material choice for texts by the start of the fifteenth century. According to Lyall, the proportion of all manuscripts written on paper rose to 20 percent by 1450 and 50 percent by the final decades of the century.

Once paper was regarded as a viable material option, scribes in the production of literary works increasingly relied on it. The only known Margery Kemp manuscript was written on paper in the mid-fifteenth century (Add. MS 61823,f.1). Another notable example is BL, MS Add. 59678, or the "Winchester Manuscript" of Malory's *Morte Darthur*. Despite all the scholarship this manuscript has received, little critical attention has been paid to the fact it was made using paper. However, by examining the number of paper stocks used (there were three complete stocks), watermarks, quires, and signatures, Rold demonstrates that it is possible to apply such information towards arguments regarding how the scribes worked, how Malory worked, and how we should approach the content of the manuscript as readers. Paper evidence—such as

watermarks and stock changes—can also provide detailed information about a text's production history, as is the case with first editions of Sidney's *Arcadia*.

In all, substantial evidence of early paper use exists, allowing scholars to map out the rise of the paper manuscript, follow paper price fluctuations, determine where paper was being used and by whom, and uncover the production histories of significant texts. Less can be said, however, of paper and print. The extent to which printers, publishers, and other booksellers relied on paper sales as a significant portion of their business still remains unclear. What can be said with far greater confidence is that developments within the English book trade are connected to the rise of paper usage in revealing ways.[30]

From the start, paper had different applications than parchment. Practical manuscripts and medical records were far more likely to appear on paper, while manuscripts with monastic ties, court associations, and liturgical texts tended to be found on parchment. Throughout the early modern period formal parish registers of birth, marriages, wills, deaths, land deeds, as well as other related documents continued to be produced on parchment; the same applied to de luxe manuscripts and important presentation copies of printed books. Literature was unique in that it could appear as easily on paper as parchment—making it worth mention what material choice was made. Furthermore, paper seems to have had close ties with individuals involved in the fifteenth-century London literary scene such as John Shirley, Richard Whittington and John Carpenter.[31]

Literature aside, from the start of its English history paper was used in quite predicable ways and by distinctive social groups. Paper almost instantly became associated with guilds, merchants, townspeople, tradespeople, and government. Keeping town records was one of paper's earliest English applications and Lyall notes, "the merchants and tradespeople who

acquired paper for these purposes [keeping town records] would naturally have extended its use into the devotional and other books which they were increasingly coming to own" (Lyall 13). In other words, paper represented an increasingly complex network of commercial, social and literary interests in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. While the same could be said of parchment, parchment had characteristically weaker ties to specifically urban, mercantile, and administrative interests—the use of parchment was less evocative of commercial need.

While the popularity of paper grew, various groups started to battle for supremacy over the burgeoning print book trade. Even if a London bookshop did exist by the mid-fourteenth century, there was no single controlling entity under which all scribal activity took place. It was evident by the end of the fourteenth and start of the fifteenth century that there were two types of scribes: those who primarily made books and larger tracts, and those who readied legal and other types of documents. Despite similarities in work and structural organization, these two related groups—which would someday become the Stationers and the Scriveners—became more independent and distinctive with time, not less. Without a single body of tradespeople managing and overseeing all book production, the commercial disorder following the arrival of print seems unavoidable. Basically, after the introduction of print a number of groups became involved in book production, including the Drapers, Grocers, Haberdashers, Mercers, and Stationers. While Stationers have long been associated with the printing trade—and early printers Pynson and de Worde were both Stationers—their lack of early industry dominance resulted in a failed incorporation attempt in 1542.[32] As Mark Bland points out, by 1547 only six of the 15 printing houses in England were owned by Stationers. It was simply not clear by the 1540s which group deserved to manage print exclusively. Caxton was himself a Mercer, for instance, and the Drapers asserted their right to print books throughout the sixteenth century. Eventually, the

events of Mary's reign (1553-8) allowed the Stationers to finally seize control. The number of Protestant printers forced into hiding created a vacuum in the industry that the Stationers were quick to fill, eventually leading to their successful incorporation in 1557. Even so, the Stationers' exclusive printing rights continued to be questioned by the Drapers.[33]

As it happens, the commercial organization of the book industry was complicated from an early date. Moreover, the division of text production in the early fifteenth century between two groups of skilled workers, the "Writers of the Court Letters" and The "Writers of the Text Letter," had lasting implications for the overall book trade. While the Writers of the Text Letter would eventually evolve into the "Stationers' Company," the Writers of Court Letters became incorporated as "Scriveners" in 1617.[34] Members of this group were not only apprenticed and trained to produce financial, legal and other types of documents in a range of hands, but they were prepared to serve as moneylenders as well. Like any other early modern copy shop, scriveners produced both manuscripts to order and ones in advance. And, as documentary evidence suggest, they were probably quite busy. There was a rather large selection of texts that were commonly only available by scribal copy (and, as Bland reminds us, not generally available through the printed book trade): political letters and papers, relations of events and proceedings, parliamentary speeches, views of contemporary political issues, discourses on marriage and the arraignments of nobles, treason reports and Star Chamber proceedings, negotiations of state, historical synopses, observations on privileges and ancestry, and similar matters of antiquarian and political interest. Clearly, 1476 did not mark the end of manuscript production in England, nor did it immediately shatter the commercial value of scribal work altogether.[35]

It was into all this commercial complexity that Rastell waded. Moreover, the printed *Fulgens* is a product of these developments. The play text is not only part of a book trade

straddling the worlds of manuscript and print, but the paper it is made from has specific commercial connotations and uses. With his associations with the burgeoning print industry, Rastell seems poised to articulate a growing awareness of artisanal consciousness. Moreover, as Bland observes, "gradually, the economics of the printed trade began to impose its own logic upon the appearance of the page" (Bland 14). This is particularly evident on the title-page of *Fulgens*.[36] Here we find the first print illustration to appear in English drama: a large woodcut image showing a young man and a woman about to embrace. The man stands legs apart with his hands pointed towards the woman's abdomen (which she pushes forwards), all of which seeming to hint at sexual tension. In terms of social status, the clothing worn by both figures appears costly—both are draped in patterned fabrics and the man's coat seems to be trimmed with fur. He also has a nice heavy chain and a smart hat. Finally, the man sports long hair, which can be both a sign of interest in fashion and an indicator of wealth: he can afford the expense and inconvenience of long hair.[37] Since Rastell's image had little to do with the content of *Fulgens,* this image could have served a historic purpose, recording the wealth of Morton's household, or perhaps it functioned pragmatically, offering costume suggestions for future players. Possibly, however, this image is intended to align *Fulgens* with other examples of early print. Woodcuts from other sixteenth century English manuscripts, such as Egerton 3132A (f. 2v) possess remarkably similar images. The Egerton manuscript, to use this example, is quite a different text from *Fulgens* in several respects. It has a later date than *Fulgens* (around 1564), contains not a play but a romance poem entitled "Roberte the Devyll" and appears to have been a more expensive book: it contains fourteen large miniatures resembling wood-cuts in brown, red, green, and black colored inks, and a tidy humanistic cursive is used throughout. The Egerton affirms

that across late fifteenth and sixteenth-century books textual and visual continuities exist for both manuscript and print.

It was not unusual for early printed books to share images. Woodcuts were frequently recycled in the world of early print, and oftentimes had little to do with the content of the adjacent text. For example, in terms of recycling, *The Enterlude of Youth* printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1530 contains figures from his earlier *Hick Scorner*. A later 1560s Copland edition borrows woodcuts from Skot's famous *Everyman*, and this edition also shares woodcuts found in John Heywood's earlier 1544 *The Playe Called the Four PP*. The *Everyman* woodcut further appears in *An new interlude of Impatient Poverty* (printed by Copland in 1561) and Copland's *A New Interlude for Children to Play named Jack Juggler* (printed between 1559 and 1565). In each of these examples given, there seems to be little connection between the illustrations and the play texts: the woodcuts are purely decorative.[38]

But the woodcuts tend to appear on or around title-pages, the most commercially sensitive part of early printed books. Title-pages were often used by early printers to advertise their business and endorse the play being introduced. It is typical, for example, for a printer to list the location of their print shop on a title page, and for their name to appear in larger more noticeable text than the author (if he is known). It is also typical for printers to advertise the didactic qualities of their play, or the moral virtues it seeks in instill in its audience, or even the ease with which the play could be performed and where it could comfortably take place. Following the Act for the Advancement of True Religion in 1543, it was only lawful to "sette forth songes, plaies, and enterludes" if they were for the "rebuking and reproaching of vices and setting foorth of vertue."[39] So there was a clear incentive for printers to openly declare the moral worth and function of their play texts. Rastell, however, was printing long before 1543 and while

there was a cultural expectation that plays—and works of literature in general—would serve a didactic purpose, there was of yet no legal imperative: Rastell made the choice personally to organize his title-page to highlight the improving nature of the play. In doing so, it seems that Rastell not only recognized the commercial value of the title-page, but predicted its ability to intellectually and morally contextualize printed dramatic material. Moreover, Rastell's use of this specific imagery on his title-page suggests he meant to visually align it with established print conventions, as opposed to marketing *Fulgens* as something wholly "new."

So what can the title-page of *Fulgens* tell us about Rastell's relationship to commerce? If, as Devereux suggests, Rastell was not particularly adept at the business of printing—albeit intentionally so—choosing to print books written by friends and by himself in an effort to spread the ideals of humanism, why situate a political household drama in the commercial world of Tudor print? Certainly in 1516 he was not following play text precedent since, of course, no printed playbook market existed. However, the title-page's emphasis on intellectual betterment aligns *Fulgens* with Rastell's motivation to print at all. He believed that print was a means for celebrating writings in the vernacular, understood the potential of print to spread knowledge, and insisted that print could be of service to the English commonwealth.[40] If Rastell uses the *Fulgens* play text, the title-page in particular, to marry the commercial with the sociopolitical (and the personal), he must have believed this was practically beneficial as well as morally so.

So for Rastell, *Fulgens* represents a financial as well as an intellectual risk. He attempts to mitigate both through the title-page by using familiar terminology to describe the text itself, the use of the label "disputacyon" in particular. His title-page reads:

> Here is coteyned a godely interlude of fulgens Cenatoure of Rome. Lucres his doughter. Gayus Flaminius. A {and} publius. Cornelius. of the disputacyon of noblenes. A {and} is

> devyded in two partyes/to be played at ii. tymes. Copyled by mayster henry medwall. late chapelayne to the right reverant fader in god Johnan Morton cardynall A {and} Archebyshhop of Cauterbury.

This introduction takes up the top third of the page and clearly emphasizes how the play functions as a "disputacyon of noblenes" (and this type of dialogue/debate would have been very familiar to educated audiences). The introduction also mentions when and where the play should take place. Most likely the "two times" at which this play was intended to be performed were the two main meals, dinner in the middle of the day and supper in the evening. Probably this all took place on a single day, probably during one of the major holidays in the late medieval calendar, Christmas or Eastertide. These references to time and place might have been directed at those readers interested in putting on the play themselves. And, to add to the play's appeal, Rastell connects the work to figures of social importance: Medwall and Morton. Medwall is even described as "late chapelayne to the right reverant fader in god Johnan Morton" when in fact there is little evidence that Medwall did anything other than legal work for Morton. Perhaps this detail is meant to underscore Medwall's moral value as playwright. What is clear is that Medwall's "background" occupies significant space in the introduction, and—in guaranteeing the author's moral rectitude—provides a model for later printers concerned with the moral value of play texts. Furthermore, in adjusting Medwall's biography, Rastell demonstrates that the "Author," as he actually was, was secondary to his commercial potential.

In 1516, however, it is not obvious how consumers might have responded to *Fulgens*. Who was supposed to buy the text? Players? Readers? For a printed play like *Everyman,* it is easier envisioning the text being purchased for literary and devotional reasons, with the consumer using the text for private reading instead of theatrical performance. But, in terms of

content, *Fulgens* is much more connected to secular humanism, providing commentary on social mobility and shifting social attitudes and practices—not your typical devotional text. As a disputacyon, perhaps Rastell imagined *Fulgens* would function as a contemplative text in its own way, helping, alongside the rest of his printed texts, to "assert the dignity of the nation." That being said, it is unlikely those first consumers would have automatically understood that play texts could, or even should, be privately read. For early English drama, the relationship between stage and text was often an awkward one. As Richard Beadle explains:

> More than in any subsequent era, the plays composed in that time here intended to be seen and heard, not read. As 'quick [living] books', they were designed for a general audience which was more accustomed to hearing its literature than reading it silently, and it is essential to grasp that both the conceptual substance and the imaginative qualities of such plays are inseparable from their theatricality. (Beadle xiii)

Walker adds that, "the idea that early English plays were for playing rather than reading is the founding assumption of much of the recent revival of academic interest in the field, as a glance at any recent textbook or issue of *Medieval English Theatre* will confirm" (Walker 8). And Walker further poses two important questions:

> Music, song, stage business, the vibrant physicality of performance seemingly called for everywhere in these plays—but perhaps most obviously in the parts of the vices—are all lost to the reader of the written text, rendering his or her experience of these plays a substantially impoverished one. Why, then, would anyone wish to pay good money for such an inadequate substitute for a performance? And, more importantly, why would a shrewdly profit-minded printer or bookseller try to sell one? (9)

As the previously noted details of Rastell's life show, he was personally invested in the "music, song, stage business" and the "vibrant physicality of performance." He wrote plays, printed plays, built stages, hired costumes, translated plays, staged plays, and enlisted his wife to help sew costumes. His motivation to print a readerly play text did not stem from some lack of interest in contemporary dramatic performance.

While we cannot know with absolute certainty what those first consumers thought of *Fulgens*, or how they choose to use the text, drama historians do know that later in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries players came increasingly to rely on printed play texts for performance. According to David Bevington, in the sixteenth century professional troupes formed the major market for printed playbooks containing doubling parts. Other scholars have been a bit more cautious in their assessment of the professional market for printed play texts. David Bradley suggests that, when it comes to players, "it seems doubtful if publishers would have found much of a market in that area" (Bradley 17) and P.W. White argues that "it is highly doubtful that printers could profit much from selling interludes at this time" (White 72). Walker concurs, pointing out that since print runs generally consisted of around 600 copies, it seems unlikely that enough players would be purchasing plays to sell out a single print run. All told, the general scholarly consensus is that the development of drama printing was not "market led." Nonetheless, something was happening in the sixteenth century that motivated seventeenth-century players to insist that "these plaies which they so plaied" were "played according ot the printed booke or Bookes" and that "the booke by which [they] did act… was a printed book, And they onelie acted the same according to the contents therein printed, and not otherwise."[41] Of course, by the seventeenth century this could have served a very pragmatic purpose: the use of a printed play as prompt-copy was equivalent to a license from the Master of the Revels and gave

players protection.[42] Joseph Lowenstein describes how the approval of a promptbook extended to approval of a performance, with, "the mark of ideological control [the physical approval of the Master of Revels on the text] being converted into something like an intellectual property right" (Loewenstein 31).

In Rastell's case, however, his use of title-pages in later plays suggests that he did regard players as key consumers. The title-page of Rastell's *Nature of the Four Elements* includes instructions as to how an acting company might shorten the playing time down from an hour and a half to three quarters of an hour.[43] Barbara Mowat explains that, "since Rastell's own press printed this humanist interlude, the appeal to the acting market on the title page carries a double authority of printer and author" (Mowat 215). Rastell clearly expected players to use his printed play texts, seeing the potential for print to guide performance and confer authority to it.

This attitude towards the authority of printed drama would eventually result in printers finding it necessary to clarify when performances deviated from printed play texts. In other words, print allowed the author or printer to "correct" details plays, explaining to readers what had been altered during the process of live performance. In Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* we find in the 1590 "Printer's Epistle to the Readers" a very detailed explanation of how the printed play deviated from the performance version:

> To the gentlemen readers and others that take pleasure in reading histories. Gentlemen, and courteous readers whosoever: I have here published in print for your sakes the two tragical discourses of the Scythian shepherd, Tamburlaine, that became so great a conqueror and so mighty a monarch. My hope is that they will be now no less acceptable unto you to read after your serious affairs and studies than they have been (lately) delightful for many of you to see, when the same were showed in London upon stages. I

> have (purposely) omitted and left out some fond and frivolous gestures, digressing (and in my poor opinion) far unmeet the matter, which I though might seem more tedious unto the wise than any way else to be regarded, though (haply) they have been of some vain conceited fondlings greatly gaped at, what times they were showed upon the stage in their graced deformities. Nevertheless now, to be mixture in print with such matter of worth, it would prove a great disgrace to so honorable and stately a history.[44]

A few interesting conclusions can be drawn from this Epistle. Firstly, print *Tamburlaine* is presented as an intellectual alternative to what was "showed in London upons stages" and more suitable to the topic with the "fond and frivolous gestures" having been removed. While spectacle could be "delightful for many of you to see" it could risk ultimately being a distraction from a worthwhile narrative, and in this case that is exactly what the printer suggests. Secondly, the print version can be seen as a corrective to the performed version where digressions "far unmeet the matter." The reader is here assured that they are missing nothing by reading the play instead of watching it—in fact the printed version seems to be, in reality, superior. Thirdly, while the reader is assumed to concern themselves with "serious affairs and studies," theatergoers are labeled "vain conceited fondlings." Although the printer concedes that it is likely the reader watched the play in person at some point, he makes clear that the "serious" reader has found his ideal version of the play in this printed playtext. Along with the privileging of text over stage, the distinction made here between lowly theatergoer and studious reader is interesting (especially since historical evidence suggests that such categorization is largely unhelpful and untrue). Finally, we have here an example of a printer taking active editorial control over a playtext and giving readers the play as he assumes it should be. The printer thereby exposes his authorial involvement, leaving one to assume that the unambiguous involvement of a profit-minded printer

did not diminish the value of the playtext but in fact raised it. What also seems to be evident is that the reader is not purchasing this version of *Tamburlaine* to mark or memorialize a personal experience in a London theater, he is seeking the "true" version of the play: one better suited to both the topic and the audience.

While other title pages may contain notes to the reader, not all are as informative as the one found on *Tamburlaine*. In the 1600 title page of Ben Jonson's *Every Man Out of His Humour* we find: "The comical satire of Every Man Out of His Humor. As it was first composed by the author B. J. Containing more than hath been publicly spoken or acted. With the several character of every person."[45] Something similar is found on the title page of John Webster's 1623 *The Duchess of Malfi:* "The tragedy of the Duchess of Malfi. As it was presented privately, at the Blackfriars; and publicly at the Globe, by the King's Majesty's Servants. The perfect and exact copy, with divers things printed, that the length of the play would not bear in the presentment."[46] While clearly these notes are much shorter than "The Printer's Epistle to the Readers," they likewise suggest that readers are gaining something by reading the play rather than watching it. Not only are they gaining lost lines—there are obviously many more time constraints when it comes to live performance—but they are gaining a "perfect and exact copy" and the play as "it was first composed by the author." In all three examples the reader can be confident that they are in possession of a version of the play that is fuller, more perfect, and maintains closer ties a single authorial figure. Amongst other things, such evidence seems to give weight to Walker's argument that by the very fact of their written form, all the dramatic texts we now possess are "elite" creations.[47] Even if this is not exactly the case (even the most "elite" drama could easily have become accessible to a wider audience through performance and even audiences in elite venues included servants and other working people) the evidence here

indicates that consumers of printed play texts were buying access to the best possible version of contemporary dramatic narratives.

So, if this is the case in the seventeenth century, what happened in the sixteenth century to make such developments possible? I believe what happened was that Rastell—and other likeminded printers—trusted deeply in the commercial and intellectual capacity of print, establishing patterns that would continue to shape the complex dynamic between printer, player and print play text into the seventeenth century. In other words, commerce became not a source of disengagement and alienation from society, but a means for direct participation in the political process. Just as audiences of the professional playhouses had to be essentially trained into thinking of playgoing as a routine event one paid for, Rastell marries the commercial with the dramatic, appearing to suggest to consumers that this is the way forward.[48] Print and the book industry could amplify the pragmatic and moral virtues of print play texts, the printer offering guidance to players and readers alike. In one sense, the key relationship is not between the printed *Fulgens* and consumers—either readerly consumers or players—its between Rastell and *Fulgens*. Rastell situates *Fulgens* at the nexus between drama, commerce and propaganda (or in his case, the spreading of humanist ideals). Print mattered to Rastell: it was a means for celebrating and circulating ideas that equally mattered. It was also enabled what Eisenstein terms "typographical fixity."[49] As David Finklestein points out, most enduring printing firms tended to be in commercial and trading centers rather than intellectual centers around universities and monasteries.[50] Books were tradable commodities—and typographical fixity "involved the ability of printed books both to lend a substantial and durable form to words and ideas and to amplify this objectified verbal reality by the distribution of numerous identical copies of the same organization of words on the page" (Kernan 53). Therein, print made *Fulgens* a tradable

commodity, and made Rastell's concept of *Fulgens* substantial and durable. Medwall certainly never wrote the play to accomplish either.

Fulgens makes permanent an ephemeral performative occasion, and, as it circulates in print form, makes a self-reflexive statement about sixteenth-century commerce enabling social mobility. Furthermore, the play calls to question traditional social hierarchies using media with a history of placing tension on traditional social hierarchies. As Mark Bland writes, "print glittered. Like a magpie, the authorities noticed: they sought to control what they perceived to be most publicly dangerous or, at least, vicariously unstable" (Bland 190). Between the printing of *Fulgens* and the first performance of *Shoemaker*, quite a lot happened in terms of censorship. Control over printed information became a serious problem for the political administrations during the course of the sixteenth century. Bland adds that, "for early modern authorities, the press was a mixed blessing" (188). Some forms of censorship were not surprising: non-conformist religious texts or Catholic publications were a serious matter for Elizabethan authorities.[51] But print did a pretty good job of filtering out treasonous materials. After 1586, printed books had to make it through two stages in order to become printed books: first, the book had to be "allowed." This meant that a copy of the manuscript had to be approved for publication by the ecclesiastical authorities. Second, the allowed copy was presented to the Stationers' Company to be licensed by the Master and one of the Wardens. A printer might begin work on an allowed book even before it had been properly licensed. That being said, there was little incentive to publish an unlicensed book since the license indicated not only formal approval, but identified the book as the commercial property of the printer.[52]

Still, there were occasions when inappropriate texts did slip through the cracks: licensers could not always obsessively study to the flood of works before them. More often than not,

however, different voices and conflicting views were permitted to "circulate in both manuscripts and print without authoritative interference or molestation, provided they did not seek to undermine the established governments of church and state" (152).[53] For example, "bodily frankness was acceptable, provided it was neither explicitly obscene nor pornographic—one writer recommended copulation as a means of keeping warm in winder in a book dedicated to his sister-in-law" (190).

Nonetheless some modern critics see censorship everywhere they look. As Richard Dutton points out, there are as many ways of "reading" the censorship of the early modern period as there are of reading its plays.[54] In her influential *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (1984), Annabel Patterson argues that, "political censorship was so pervasive that it rose to the forefront, at least among intellectuals and to some extent literate people, as the central problem of consciousness and communication" (Patterson 29). This has led her to argue that all writing from the period, including royal proclamations, is "encoded," and to assert that, "the prevailing codes of communication, the implicit social contract between authors and authorities, as being intelligible to all parties at the time, as being a fully deliberate and conscious arrangement" (17). While Patterson's position is widely accepted, Bland questions this approach, explaining, "an approach to censorship that emphasizes performance and reception obscures the economic and physical aspects to textual production and thus obscures the economic and physical aspects to textual production and thus the conflicts, compromises, and subversions of authority that took place" (Bland 154).

What does this have to do with *Fulgens*? As a controversialist on both the Catholic and Protestant sides of the English Reformation, Rastell was no stranger to censorship. However, he

printed *Fulgens* before many Tudor censorship practices were firmly embedded (although Henry VIII did seek to protect his monarchy and the national church from damaging printed works). Had they been established, it seems less likely that *Fulgens* would have been licensed to print. If late sixteenth-century authorities allowed conflicting views and differing perspectives to circulate so long as they did not seek to undermine the established government or state, Rastell might have had a problem with *Fulgens*.

It is hard to know how much of an influence theater had on early modern audiences. Leeds Barroll has demonstrated that it is easy to overstate this influence. Margot Heinemann has recently argued that, "the influence of the drama has analogies with that of churches and preachers, at least in London where the theatres were most active. Above all, it gave people—including the unprivileged and non-literate—images and languages to think with" (Heinemann 239). Indeed, she claims, theaters helped to "form the 'mentalities' to which they will later appeal, not only at court and among the political elites but more widely among London citizen audiences" (239). Jonas Barish is surely correct in noting that both "adversaries of the stage" and its defenders alike "never doubted its hold over audiences" (Barish 118). And it is indisputable that theater did, in fact, absorb, enact and transmit discourse contained in written and printed texts. So when a printed text addresses sensitive political issues and advocates social unrest, as *Fulgens* does, it becomes a likely candidate for censorship. When early modern playwrights wanted to accomplish either, their only real option for avoiding censorship was to place such discussions in the context of domestic households: leading to the development of the "domestic tragedy." In fact, according to Heinemann the "tragedy of private life" should be read as a sign of late Jacobean censorship of the directly political.[55]

There is a small but established body of literary criticism on early modern domestic tragedies descending from H. H. Adams' *English Domestic or Homiletic Tragedy, 1575 to 1642* (1943). Adams identifies six early modern plays as the corpus of the genre: *Arden of Faversham* (1592), *Two Lamentable Tragedies* (1594), *A Warning for Fair Women* (1599), *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1603), *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (1605), and *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621). As a generic label, "domestic" has most often been applied to tragedies "involving characters within a family of less than royal birth whose downfall does not imperil the kingdom" (Henderson 174). The genre has largely been dismissed as being overly simplistic and superficial, but a group of modern scholars including Lena Cowen Orlin, Frances Dolan, and Diana E. Henderson have sought to set these plays in a larger cultural context and to demonstrate their unrealized importance. Henderson has most recently argued that attending to the social struggles in domestic drama allows an alternative understanding of Elizabethan theater. Orlin explains that the domestic tragedy was concerned with subjects of universal interest: relations between the sexes and the dire consequences of the breakdown of family order. Its themes included "the management of troublesome women" (Orlin 252) and the appropriate responses of the dutiful wife to husbandly tyranny. Orlin argues that exploration of these themes helped to expose the flaws in the analogy between the household and the state, flaws that would ultimately lead to that analogy's elimination from political discourse, and a much sharper separation of "public" and "private."

These plays might not be important to most drama historians but they were important. Moreover, scholarly connections have been drawn between domestic tragedies and a much more well-known genre: medieval morality plays. Adam's was the first to locate the domestic tragedies in the morality tradition. A. P. Rossiter, *English Drama from Early Times to the*

Elizabethans: Its Background, Origins, and Developments (1950), also sees their orientation toward "ordinary ethical and social problems" (Rossiter 161) as an outgrowth of the moralities. L. B. Wright, *Middle Class Culture in Elizabethan England* (1935), distinguishes them as realistic, nonsatirical studies of bourgeois domestic life (631-37). Pamela King offers this description of morality plays: "they offer their audiences moral instruction through dramatic action that is broadly allegorical. Hence they are set in no time, or outside historical time, through their lack of historical specificity is generally exploited by strategically collapsing the eternal with the contemporary (King 235). While King does not claim that *Fulgens* is a domestic tragedy, she does claim that metatheatrical devices "arrestingly exploited" in *Fulgens* are "not so very far removed from the manner in which *Mankind's* author manipulated an audience" (259). King explains that morality plays, "show a variety of ways in which their authors manipulated the boundary between the play world and the real world, often addressing the audience directly and using the varied communication codes of the theater to draw them into the action of the play (259), an observation just as applicable to domestic tragedies as *Fulgens*. King adds that,

> Aspects of the dramaturgy of our five morality plays do turn up in the sixteenth-century interlude with a coherence that argues more strongly for the genre than do individual surviving examples. The pattern of innocence, temptation, fall and redemption was exploited, in the protracted and turbulent years surrounding the Reformation, as an organ of political satire and religious propaganda. (260)

In general (as I note in the previous chapter) morality plays like *Mankind*, *The Pride of Life*, *Wisdom, Perseverance,* and *Everyman* critique English society from a conservative perspective, and their principle vices include: avarice, ambition, greed, extortion, and other sins associated with class mobility. Of the moralities *Everyman* has probably received the most critical attention,

and David Bevington associates the play with, "a Church on the defensive" (Bevington 35).[56] *Everyman* is both the youngest morality play and perhaps the most conservative of the five. Watkins comments that, "precisely because Everyman's isolation subsumes the play's nominal commitment to the Church's communitarian structures, it has become the medieval play most likely to be read in schools and universities" (Watkins 773). While Watkins argues that Everyman is a "corporate figure embodying the humanity that lies beyond the *integumentum* of personality," V. A. Kolve approaches Everyman like an individual character, detecting in Everyman's final abandonment "that movement-into-aloneness generic to tragedy" (Kolve 321).[57] So even for *Everyman,* a play often regarded as the defining morality play, there is scholarly dispute over its relationship to tragedy: once again, it is easier to survey sixteenth-century drama and argue for blurred dramatic distinctions rather than neat divides. This is true when comparing *Everyman* to *Fulgens*.

There are differences between the two plays. *Everyman* illustrates the morality playwrights' tendency to adopt allegory as, "their basic mode because its subordination of the particular to the universal mirrored the hierarchies of an imagined feudal polity and equated social aspirations with pride" (Watkins 767). Furthermore, "tensions between a conservative form and narrative that embraces social change figure in their [Tudor] interludes even more prominently than in *Everyman"* (774). And while moralities like *Everyman* insist that all people share a common history of temptation, fall and redemption, *Fulgens* resists this pattern. Regardless, by exploiting forms of dramaturgy associated with medieval moralities, *Fulgens* is evidence that "the first Tudor dramatists presented their work as a continuation of earlier dramatic forms" (774). Moreover, the play represents an intensification and continuation of cultural developments and dramatic patterns, particularly in how *Fulgens,* and morality plays like

Everyman, enabled the ideological sanctioning of "the transfer of power from a landed nobility and clergy to the rising commercial and mercantile classes" (788) through their didactic content. What is key is that both plays, albeit for different reasons and in different ways, work to efface distinctions between individuals. In *Everyman* this is accomplished through the pattern of temptation, fall and redemption, while *Fulgens* achieves this in multiple ways: by the social commentary found in the dramatic narrative, by the dynamic between audience and performance, by its association with "new men," and by its circulation in print form. This must have had particular political and social resonance during a period in which the extension and intensification of commerce and markets left fewer and fewer people excluded. Taken altogether, these details suggest that something can be gained by reading *Fulgens* in relation to both morality plays and domestic tragedies. Perhaps *Fulgens* should be studied as a kind of "missing link" between these separate genres, representing an early example of domestic drama. Put another way, *Fulgens* could be interpreted as both the commercial cousin of morality plays and the precursor to domestic tragedies.

Where does this leave us? The earliest domestic tragedy, *Arden of Faversham*, asks its audience to "pardon this naked tragedy,/ Wherein no filed points are foisted in/ To make it gracious to the ear or eye;/ For simple truth is gracious enough/ And needs no other points of glozing stuff" (Epilogue 14-18). The play deals with an adulterous affair, the murder of a cuckolded husband by his wife and her lover, and the capture and execution of those responsible (Alice Arden is burnt at the stake). The servants and other lower-class characters involved in murdering Arden are treated with condescension, bringing social distinctions to the forefront. Like the rest of the domestic tragedies, *Arden* derives from an actual case history, is plainly written in the language of ordinary citizens, and suggests that the lives of ordinary citizens can

be treated seriously. As previously noted, Heinemann makes the point that domestic tragedies resulted—at least in part—from censorship practices that restricted open treatment of politically sensitive issues. But what plays like *Arden* accomplish, is the point that ordinary citizens can be the subject of tragedy: which in itself, is a controversial social statement. *Fulgens* makes almost this exact statement in 1516, and it was just as controversial then. This is especially evident when Lucres, Gaius, A and B all issue apologies and disclaimers for the content of their play, and insist that *Fulgens* is not designed to refer to or mock any individual in the audience. Moreover, the dramatic narrative is set in imperial Rome, allowing Medwall to put even more distance between his play and the practical implications of his play's message. In other words, it is a radical play that offers risky advice about the virtues of social climbing in a society dominated by the nobility. Had it been written later in the sixteenth-century, it is very likely that it would have assumed a form very much like *Arden*, where social critique hides behind sensationalism and the personal politics of one household.

While censorship was a stronger shaping influence for the domestic tragedies, and *Fulgens* was printed prior to the installation of the most significant Tudor censorship measures, *Fulgens* should be part of the conversation about sixteenth-century censorship history. It is able to take the form it takes because it was printed in 1516, so had it been printed later in the century it would have, I believe, resembled domestic tragedies much more closely. The point I am trying to make is that while *Fulgens* is treated primarily as an example of "firsts"—first printed English secular play, first real sub-plot in English drama, first English play text to contain a print illustration—is almost never interpreted as a continuation or precursor to other dramatic developments and/or commercial processes. However, when comparing *Fulgens* to morality plays, to *Shoemaker,* and to domestic tragedies like *Arden*, it is hard to ignore shared features.

By turning to print technology, Rastell allows *Fulgens* to make social statements similar to those found in *Shoemaker*: the very physical form of *Fulgens* speaks to the growing influence of an artisanal consciousness. Manuscript culture was active and respected in the sixteenth-century, and some of the most influential dramatic texts circulated in manuscript form. Rastell, however, believed in the integrity of print and its potential for political and legal reform as well as the spreading of humanist ideals (specifically his ideals). Turning to print, actively involving himself in the commercial world of printing (especially since financially and professionally this was not necessary for Rastell), in addition to his refusal to print only for profit, suggests that *Fulgens* needs to be read in the physical context of print and the social context of Tudor book history. With *Fulgens* we witness for the first time a dramatic narrative crossing over from the world of communal performance to the world of commerce, the play text itself (not the performance) becoming a cultural commodity. Rastell was what Bristol terms a "cultural entrepreneur."[58]

While *Shoemaker* and *Arden* both suggest that ordinary citizens can be the subject of drama, both plays establish firm barriers between the dramatic fiction and the real world. More specifically, Dekker reduces the increasingly complex social and economic organization of pre-industrial England to a comforting fiction. *Arden* explores the analogy between family and state, confronting the disintegrative threat of shifting class dynamics, but converts this into sensationalized tales of family scandal—it is the early modern Law & Order. Moreover, throughout the sixteenth century the good government of the "private" sphere of the household became increasingly of "public" interest, and this interest was further enhanced by the analogy (fundamental to the era's political thinking) between the household and the state of which it was a microcosm.[59] Across *Shoemaker, Arden,* and *Fulgens* we witness this analogy repeatedly being

played out, all three plays insisting that the difference between "private" behavior and "public" behavior is almost nonexistent. At the same time, all three also suggest that private behavior creates a political ripple-effect, either for good (*Shoemaker*) or for bad (*Arden*) or somewhere in between (*Fulgens*). In the case of *Fulgens,* Medwall also makes the claim that ordinary citizens can be the subject of drama, but does so in a play with direct ties to "new men": real individuals who were able to advance in society through personal ability and skill, eventually obtaining positions where they could control and guide the English commonwealth. The play is about a joke that turns real. Moreover, *Fulgens* represents the realization of a particularly uncomfortable joke. Put another way, "now that the butcher's boy really had become Chancellor, the drama no longer discounted them as mere epiphenomena. One became nobility by having the material means to mime effectively the attributes of the nobility" (Watkins 776).

Of course, as for most early printed play texts, we do not know why *Fulgens* is still here—we do not know if it survived because it was so popular numerous copies were made, or because it was so unpopular it remained unsold and therefore in good condition. This fact makes convincing play text readership discussions difficult for modern scholars. Complicating matters further is the reality that, shortly after its initial printing in 1516—and as the other plays discussed here demonstrate—the play's content would have presented challenges both as reading material and as a performance text. What makes *Fulgens* problematic is its strong ties to real events, events foregrounded further by Rastell's personal relationship to them. Perhaps Rastell chose *Fulgens* as his first printed play text because he felt it belonged just as much to his household as it did to Cardinal Morton's. Either way, in contrast to *Arden,* which engages with a real event in order to argue against the dangers of inverting the established hierarchical order (of course, from within the safe confines of the domestic household) articulating a "crisis of order,"

Fulgens quietly defends social dislocations before an audience of individuals who had greatly profited from them.[60] This was the case when Medwall wrote the play in the 1490s and even more so when Rastell printed it in 1516 after More's career had started to accelerate. In other words, the play argues and the audience proves that sometimes servants really do know best, and that servants can make the best citizens.

This blurring of the servant/citizen divide had important implications for commerce. After being politically, ideologically and materially elevated, servants ("new men") were less likely than their feudal predecessors to conspire against Tudor authority. This made "servants" very compliant "citizens." It also meant that for these newly elevated individuals there was an impulse to recast their commercial activities as ideologically necessary. So, while on the one hand:

> conspiring with the monarch to diminish the feudal aristocracy's influence, the *arrivistes* worked to strengthen their own social standing. In order to overcome the stigma of relatively low birth, they appropriated the aura, dignities and demeanor of the men whom they displaced. They hawked and hunted on confiscated properties, sported finery, composed verses, and entertained on a grand scale. (775)

On the other hand, figures like Rastell sought to combine social standing with commercial interests. Rastell writes in his *The Four Elements* that, "A great wytted man may sone by enryched" (78) and that the rich man must devote himself to the "common welth" (77). There is a sense that he is trying to accomplish both through *Fulgens*. But beyond Rastell's outspoken humanist aims, the choice to print was laden with political, social and economic meaning. Bristol writes that, "the immediate hands-on relationship with the activity of economic life that marked people as base, common, and popular also distinguished them from the hereditary elite, who

retained a right to bear heraldic arms and to style themselves gentle" (Bristol 233). Despite his elite professional, social and educational status, Rastell elects to engage in a hands-on relationship with the activity of economic life, choosing to marry an aristocratic household play with commercial print technology. Rastell's entrepreneurialism reveals not only an affinity for the London commercial classes, but his penchant for printing texts with didactic qualities implies that for Rastell learning was not always for the sake of learning—sometimes education (literally) paid. In intellectual terms, *Fulgens* is able to clearly articulate the humanist belief that no one was indebted to a feudal social structure for personal worth. Moreover, anyone with the money to purchase *Fulgens* had immediate access to its content, in effect making it part of popular culture which, as Henderson notes, is cousin to the domestic tragedies. As it happens, the domestic ideology central to early modern domestic tragedies was directed primarily "at those in the moderately privileged world of the gentry and merchants" (Henderson 192). In terms of drama history, through its representational realism, *Fulgens* encourages the reevaluation of Tudor interludes as it relates to popular culture and commercial events. It also calls for a fuller understanding of the early modern home and the significance of merchant-citizens in contemporary drama. Finally, it calls into question the logic of periodization and traditional definitions of both medieval morality plays and the early modern domestic tragedy.

[1] See Mark Overton, *Agricultural Revolution in England: The Transformation of the Agrarian Economy, 1500-1850,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Also see Keith Wrightson. *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 51-57.
[2] Darryl Grantley provides the range of 1512-1516. See *English Dramatic Interludes 1300-1580*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 108.
[3] See John Hall, *The Advancement of Learning* (1649), ed. A. K. Croston (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1953), p. 37.
[4] See E. J. Devereux, *A Bibliography of John Rastell,* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), p. 6.
[5] See Devereux, p. 7.
[6] See *The Interlude of the Four Elements,* Ed. James O. Halliwell. London: Richards, 1848. [Early English Poetry, Ballads, and Popular Literature of the Middle Ages, vol. 22].
[7] See Janette Dillon, "John Rastell's Stage," *Medieval English Theatre,* 18 (1996), pp. 15-45.
[8] See Devereux, p. 10.
[9] Details about Rastell's stage and his lawsuit against Walton come from *Theatre in Europe A Documentary History: English, Professional Theatre, 1530-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 229.
[10] See *Theatre in Europe A Documentary History: English, Professional Theatre, 1530-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 232.
[11] See William Roper *The Lyfe of Sir Thomas Moore, Knyghte,* Ed. E. V. Hitchcock, Early English Text Society, vol. 197 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935), p. 5.
[12] According to Grantley, *English Dramatic Interludes 1300-1580* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 108.
[13] See John Watkins, "The Allegorical Theatre: Morality, Interludes, and Protestant Drama" *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*. ed. David Wallace, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 782.
[14] See R. J. Mitchell, *John Tiptoft (1427-1470)*. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1938. p. 83.
[15] See Greg Walker, "*Fulgens and Lucres* and Early Tudor Drama," and Clare Wright, "Henry Medwall, *Fulgens and Lucres," The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama.* eds. Thomas Betteridge and Greg Walker, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 177-192.
[16] See Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought,* 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 1:39-40.
[17] See David Bevington, *Tudor Drama and Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968).
[18] I use the word "industry" cautiously here: it is difficult proving that one existed at this time.
[19] See Greg Walker, *The Politics of Performance in Early Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 13.
[20] See Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 11-74.
[21] *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*, eds. David Bevington, Lars Engle, Katharine Eisaman Maus, and Eric Rasmussen, (New York: Norton & Company, 2002), p. 515.
[22] See *The Theatrical City: Culture, Theatre and Politics in London, 1576-1649,* eds. David L. Smith, Richard Strier and David Bevington (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 101-117.

[23] Elizabeth Eisenstein is likely responsible for this.
[24] See Mark Bland, *A Guide to Early Printed Books and Manuscripts* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2010), p. 13.
[25] See Alexander Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin, *The Production of Books in England, 1350-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
[26] See Julia Boffey and John J. Thompson, "Anthologies and Miscellanies," *The Production of Books in England, 1350-1500,* eds., Alexander Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 284-288.
[27] See Ralph Hanna III, "Miscellany and Vernacularity: Conditions of Literary Production in Late Medieval England." Ed. Stephen G. Nichols and Siegfried Venzel. *The Whole Book: Cultural Perspectives on Medieval Miscellany,* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996).
[28] See Hanna.
[29] See R. J. Lyall. "Materials: The Paper Revolution." *Book Production and Publishing in Britain: 1375-1475*. eds. Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 11.
[30] See Orietta Da Rold, "Materials," *The Production of Books in England, 1350-1500,* eds., Alexander Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 12-34.
[31] See R. J. Lyall, "Materials: the Paper Revolution," *Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375-1475,* eds., Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 11-31. Also see Rold, "Materials."
[32] See Peter W. M. Blayney, *The Stationers' Company before the Charter, 1403-1557,* (London, 2003), p. 41.
[33] See Blayney, *The Stationers' Company before the Charter,* p. 13. See also Mark Bland, *A Guide to Early Printed Books and Manuscripts* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), pp. 183-187.
[34] See Bland, *Early Printed Books*, pp. 183-186.
[35] See Bland, *Early Printed Books*, p. 184.
[36] Even the title page had to be invented. As Margaret M. Smith writes in *The Title-Page: Its Early Development, 1460-1510* (2001), the title-page was not instantly a feature of manuscripts but came into being as one of a series of slowly emerging design changes that marked the first fifty years of printing. Scholars have debated the development of the title-page: suggesting, for example, that the title-page evolved to protect the book block, or that it evolved to identify contents, or that it evolved to encourage sales. According to Smith, first came the manuscript incipit and colophon, "perfectly satisfactory ways of opening and announcing texts," before this format found its way into early printed books. But because printed gatherings might wait some time before binding, a blank began to be added to protect the book block. A simple identifying label, or "label-title," was added to this blank for convenience. Gradually, Smith explains that the label was developed in ways that promoted the book itself. From this, woodcut decorations were added, more information was included and entire decorative title-pages were designed. Finally, in the 1490s, the decorative borders of incipit leaves in luxury manuscripts moved onto the printed title-page. Smith argues that the 1480s was the decade in which title pages definitely "emerged."
[37] Art historian Dr. Laura Cleaver, Trinity College Dublin, helped me interpret this image.
[38] These observations come from archival research at the Huntington Library.

[39] See A. Luders, *et al*., eds., *Statute of the Realm* (11 vols., London, 1810-28), III, p. 894.
[40] See Devereux.
[41] From C. J. Sisson's 1942 account of a "voluminous set of Star Chamber documents recording the [1611] trial… for sedition." See Barbara A. Mowat, "The Theater and Literary Culture," *A New History of Early English Drama,* eds. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 213.
[42] See Mowat, "The Theater and Literary Culture," p. 214.
[43] By leaving out what Rastell calls the "sad [i.e. serious] matter." See Mowat, "The Theater and Literary Culture," p. 215.
[44] See *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology,* eds. David Bevington, Lars Engle, Katharine Eisaman Maus, and Eric Rasmussen, (New York: Norton & Company, 2002), p. 188.
[45] See Ben Jonson, *Every Man Out of His Humour,* ed. Helen Ostovich (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001).
[46] See *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology,* eds. David Bevington, Lars Engle, Katharine Eisaman Maus, and Eric Rasmussen, (New York: Norton & Company, 2002), pp. 1755.
[47] See Greg Walker, *Plays of Persuasion: Drama and Politics at the Court of Henry VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 25.
[48] See Paul Menzer, "Crowd Control," *Imagining the Audience in Early Modern Drama, 1558-1642,* eds. Jennifer A. Low and Nova Myhill, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 19-36.
[49] See Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).
[50] See David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery eds., *An Introduction to Book History,* (New York: Routledge, 2013).
[51] According to Bland, these books typically "circulated through recusant networks, as well as the booksellers, and they often were much more difficult to trace than the ordinary stock sold by the Stationers" (Bland 190).
[52] See P. W. M. Blayney, "The Publication of Playbooks," *A New History of Early English Drama,* eds. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 396-404.
[53] See Mark Bland, "'Invisible Dangers': Censorship and the Subversion of Authority in Early Modern England," Bibliographical Society of America, Papers, 90:2 (1996: June) p. 152.
[54] See Richard Dutton, "Censorship," *A New History of Early English Drama,* eds. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 287.
[55] See Margot Heinemann, "Drama and Opinion in the 1620s: Middleton and Massinger," eds. J. R. Mulryne and Margaret Shewring, *Theatre and Government Under the Earthly Stuarts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 144.
[56] See David Bevington, *Tudor Drama and Politics,* p. 35.
[57] See V. A. Kolve, "*Everyman* and the Parable of the Talents," *The Medieval Drama,* ed. Sandro Sticca (Binghamton, NY: SUNY Press, 1972), p. 321.
[58] See Michael D. Bristol, "Theater and Popular Culture," *A New History of Early English Drama,* eds. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 231-248.

[59] See Orlin, *Private Matters and Public Culture in Post-Reformation England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).
[60] See Frances Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars: Representations of Domestic Crime in England 1550-1700* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

— CHAPTER FOUR —

Personal Possessions: Magic, Playbooks and the Household Library

When looking at the Digby manuscript (Bodleian MS Digby 133), among other things the modern reader is struck by how unattractive the book is. In my case, it invited another reader at the Bodleian to stop what he was doing and comment on the state of my book in comparison to his own Latin manuscript. In spite of appearances, this rough looking book—with its uneven pages and worn edges—contains texts of great importance to the study of early English drama. Moreover, while the clumsy doodles found throughout the book apparently do little today to impress strangers in English libraries, they point to a significant moment in the history of English drama: when play texts were starting to be collected, privately read, and used as expressions of personal identity.

Through analysis of the Digby manuscript and its earliest known owner, Myles Blomefylde, this chapter seeks to develop a theoretical framework for understanding how dramatic literature was integrated into sixteenth-century personal libraries and what this integration meant. Because—as the previous chapter established—the sixteenth-century commercialization of dramatic activity and the growth of the book industry involved numerous and complex historical processes, my goal is not to be comprehensive, but to offer a model for examining these kinds of issues. This chapter will seek to expand E. K. Chambers' influential description of the trajectory of English drama,

> The drama which had already migrated from the church to the market-place, was to migrate still further, to the banqueting-hall. And having passed from the hands of the

> clergy to those of the folk, it was now to pass, after an interval of a thousand years, not immediately but ultimately, into those of a professional class of actors. (Chambers 181)

Rather than limiting my scope to drama's journey from the clergy to the community and finally to professional players, I focus on interruptions and detours along the way, examining the interplay between dramatic narratives and changing material and sociocultural conditions. In doing so, I treat the Digby plays as forms of historical record: first, of sixteenth century efforts to use dramatic literature to produce multiple cultural functions and effects; second, of the richness and significance of late medieval East Anglian theatrical traditions; third, of how Tudor architecture brought sociocultural and material change into close proximity with literary culture; and fourth, of the meaning of early modern "book use." Overall, this chapter attempts to answer the question: What did it mean when dramatic narratives entered households as material objects rather than performances?

Throughout the sixteenth-century—and throughout much of England—audiences had access to a wide range of dramatic activities, a fact that sometimes goes unrecognized. Evidence from Records of Early English Drama (REED) suggests that across the nation, up through the seventeenth century various kinds of theatrical and paratheatrical activity were taking place before diverse audiences and physical settings.[1] Regardless, the modern view that in roughly a single generation the participatory religious theater of the middle ages had been replaced by professional secular drama continues to hold sway, guiding the scholarship of Ian W. Archer, Eamon Duffy and Michael O'Connell amongst others.[2] Moreover, scholarly narratives that focus exclusively on the professional secular stage of the London public playhouse have a tendency to privilege professional over amateur forms of drama. As Martin Stevens explains, all of these are issues of periodization as well as geography:

> The continuity of the native dramatic tradition from its popular roots to the drama of Shakespeare has been given less theoretical attention over the years than the subject commands. In part, I believe, the problem has resulted from the narrow periodization and specialization that has drawn hard and fast boundaries between the culture of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance in England. In part, it results from the widespread tendency to associate Shakespeare with high culture and medieval drama with low culture, (Stevens 104)

Put another way, problems arise when boundaries between dramatic categories are drawn too firmly and intersections are ignored. That being said, distinctions did exist: Greg Walker notes that in the sixteenth century it is "possible to sketch out two distinct forms of dramatic activity" (Walker 47). One form was largely orally transmitted or manuscript based, associated with specific communities and geographic locales (a single town, village or rural area) and used to either raise funds for local projects or celebrate a holiday. The other form circulated increasingly in the form of printed playbooks and was predominately professional and textual, with players taking these plays on tours of urban centers as well as lay and religious households. While occasionally there was some overlap between these two forms of drama—when, for instance, performances took place in nearby towns or local households—for the most part Walker believes there was little exchange. This suggests that multiple kinds of theatrical activity was not only commonplace in sixteenth-century England, but were capable of surviving and flourishing (to various degrees) independently of each other.[3] But Alexandra Johnston also suggests that both forms could come together, noting that the commercial theater could (and for a while did) draw on the past traditional forms, explaining that, "as the sixteenth century progressed, new forms of dramatic expression rooted in the traditions of the vibrant theater of the late Middle Ages came

into being. The language of this drama reflected the nuanced language of the past" (Johnston 22).[4]

And there were other opportunities for the diversity of dramatic activity to be represented physically in one place and at one time: in sixteenth-century household libraries. Like too much of English theater history, the status of early playbook collectors remains a problematic and poorly understood subject.[5] Part of the difficulty results from a lack of evidence and part from the difficulty of interpreting what limited evidence is available. The same, however, could not be said of Elizabethan book collecting activities in general. Julian Roberts notes that, "it is characteristic of the period 1550-1640 that the proportion of English books in libraries gradually rises from the negligible to the dominant, and with this growth goes the readiness to record the presence of books in English in collections" (Roberts 294). Unfortunately for reasons discussed shortly, collectors did not record their dramatic texts as readily as other kinds of texts. But when dramatic literature does appear in personal collections, it holds the potential to demonstrate the particularly contemporary work early drama could perform, intervening directly in sociocultural and political matters.

Around the same time Matthew Parker (1504-1575) assembled his famous collection of medieval manuscripts, a smaller library was quietly growing in East Anglia. Much like Parker, Myles Blomefylde (1525-1603) saw his texts as private possessions, and almost every text that passed through his hands underwent some form of physical transformation thanks to his ownership. As with Parker, Blomefylde's treatment of his books offers insight into the willingness of early modern collectors to modify their books. However, unlike Parker, Blomefylde was not attempting to "restore" the books he owned but—especially in the case of his dramatic texts—was effectively trying to repurpose them. And, unlike Parker, Blomefylde

today receives very little scholarly attention. While books from his personal collection were eventually absorbed into important libraries (such as the Bodleian Library) and individual works belonging to him have received sustained modern critical interest (such as the Digby plays), it is unknown how his library was dismantled or how he even acquired his texts initially. When it comes to questions of the provenance of his books, Blomefylde is often the only, and earliest, owner modern scholars can be certain of.[6]

The problem, however, of studying Blomefylde is his timing. For drama, the book trade, economics, literacy, politics and religion (to name a few) Blomefylde was collecting during a transformative period. Unfortunately, for drama-historians it is also a period where developments within English drama are to a large extent obscured by the paucity of textual evidence: most drama produced before the opening of the professional London stage in the 1570s has now been lost.[7] Moreover, thanks in part to a pervasive belief that early modern drama represents a radical break from the medieval, few scholars have studied dramatic works straddling these two periods, focusing instead on either the participatory religious theater of the middle ages or the professional secular drama of the early modern public playhouse. According to this view, Blomefylde spent most of his life in the "gap" between these two dramatic phases. Subsequently, neither of these scholarly narratives is particularly well suited to describing the significance of Blomefylde's library to the history of early English drama.

But libraries of this nature stress how texts can serve as cultural artifacts, bearing witness to how readers might have perceived and responded to sociocultural events. In other words, Blomefylde's books hold the potential to reveal contemporary responses to sociocultural matters both in terms of the texts' content and physical treatment, while those matters simultaneously determined the accessibility of such texts (and for his dramatic texts, determined their

relationship to contemporary dramatic activity). Because of what his books represent professionally, socially, materially and how the entire collection functions semiotically, Blomefydle's lost library should matter to both drama-historians and those interested in the history of the English book.

Possessing a library with at least twenty-three books in total, Blomefylde acquired both the Digby plays and *Fulgens and Lucres*, showing a taste for dramatic literature before—according to many early modernists—English readers were taking drama seriously in a literary, readerly capacity. Blomefylde obtained works today of immense value in the study of medieval and early print drama, and he has more in common with better known collectors such as Sir Kenelm Digby (1603-1665) and Reverend Cox Macro (1683-1767) than the current dearth of Blomefylde scholarship would suggest. Although drama historians have largely overlooked Blomefylde's collection, relegating him to the occasional footnote or passing reference, this should not be the case. Not only did Blomefylde own some of the most recognizable works of late medieval and early print drama, but from his relationship to his texts a dynamic interplay between drama, popular culture, text and identity emerges. When even the most basic questions about early English drama, especially early print drama, are difficult to answer, collections like Blomefylde's deserve greater attention.

Prior to 1926, when Blomefylde gained the notice of F. S. Boas and A. W. Reed, he largely managed to escape scholarly interest.[8] Not that much has changed. To date, two articles written in 1976 and 1982 by Donald Baker and J. L. Murphy represent the most recent scholarly efforts to study Blomefylde's life and library at length.[9] Here Baker and Murphy, editors of the Early English Text Society (EETS) *The Late Medieval Religious Plays of Bodleian Mss Digby 133 and E Museo 160* (1982), build a case for Blomefylde's importance within drama history,

arguing that the main significance of Blomefylde's book collecting is not only that he preserved four late medieval plays—*Killing of the Children, The Conversion of St. Paul, Mary Magdalen,* and the *Wisdom* fragment—but that he provided evidence about the last days of popular religious drama in East Anglia. While this is true today, why did Blomefylde start collecting plays in the first place?

It is possible that local antiquarian interest, and/or pride in the traditions of his regional community inspired Blomefylde to collect the East Anglian Digby plays. Blomefylde was born in Bury St. Edmunds in 1525. After attending Cambridge and becoming licensed to practice medicine in 1552, he moved to Chelmsford, Essex where he lived until his death in 1603. Alongside practicing medicine, Blomefylde served on various manorial courts and acted as churchwarden in Chelmsford for many years—he was a man of some local importance, a fact he seemed conscious of. He kept the church accounts for most of the time between 1582 and 1590, and Baker and Murphy observe that in these accounts a tone of pompous self-righteousness and a general lack of humor creep in, adding that Blomefylde's accounts, "are quite distinct from the impersonality that marks the entries of other keepers of accounts" (Baker 44). Generally speaking, from church accounts to his private collection, Blomefylde had a habit of engaging with the texts he encountered in very personal ways.

This raises other questions: As an Elizabethan reader and collector, how unusual was Blomefylde? Aside from players, who was acquiring dramatic literature in pre-playhouse England and what did theatrical activity look like? How did dramatic literature relate to other forms of contemporary literature? How often did dramatic literature appear in personal libraries and what were perceptions of drama in the period?

In the first 100 years of the print trade, the circulation of printed playbooks had a surprisingly muted impact on English society. Walker observes that for the vast majority of the rural population "or the citizens of towns such as York or Chester, with their own indigenous playing traditions, the experience of drama in this period probably remained predominantly aural and visual, an in most cases based ultimately upon manuscript rather than printed texts" (Walker 46). Until the 1560s, plays were printed in London on a relatively small scale with only limited availability in local bookshops—these were not instant bestsellers. However, although the first printed playbooks made little difference to all but a very small minority (and these were more than likely players), they seem to have mattered to Blomefylde. At some point Blomefylde made the unique decision to acquire the very first printed dramatic text to appear in English, *Fulgens and Lucres*.

Blomesfylde collected his books during what Sears Jayne calls a "period of revolution" for libraries and book ownership.[10] Between 1500 and 1650 vernacular drama found its way increasingly into collections, marking a transition from medieval libraries with a few costly manuscripts to larger early modern collections dominated by printed books of various sizes and prices.[11] This development was set in motion by Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries in 1538-1539, and the subsequent shift of the bulk of English book ownership away from ecclesiastical institutions and towards private and university libraries. As Heidi Brayman Hackel points out, once the significance of ecclesiastical collections began to diminish, new institutional libraries started to fill that vacuum: the Bodleian opened in 1602 and the first independent library was founded in Norwich in 1608.[12] Just as the physical spaces in which book collections were held changed, so too did the content of those collections. The tenants of medieval book collecting, dominated by the four fields of theology, law, medicine, and philosophy, were

increasingly pushed aside in favor of more dynamic subjects and varied texts. Hackel notes that this meant that collectors, both aristocratic and non-aristocratic, were more likely to acquire works of vernacular drama.[13]

Of course this development, as Sir Thomas Bodley famously illustrated, came with its own set of problems. In the early seventeenth century Bodley wrote twice to Thomas James, the first Keeper of the Bodleian Library, about the matter of including (or not including) plays in the new library's holdings. Bodley lamented that, "there are many idle bookes, & riffe raffes among them, which shall neuer com into the Librarie".[14] While admitting that a (very) small number of plays were worth keeping—hardly one in forty—Bodley went on to complain to James that: "the more I thinke vpon it, the more it doth distast me, that suche kinde of bookes, should be vouchesafed a rowme, in so noble a Librarie."[15]

Unfortunately for modern scholars, it is hard to know the exact amount of "riffe raffe" poor Bodley was forced to contend with. Very few playbooks show up in modern studies of private collections, although both Elisabeth Leedham-Green and Robert Fehrenbach believe that early modern libraries actually contained far more "riff raffe" than many lists of book holdings reveal.[16] Aristocratic collectors may not have been advertising their playbooks as openly and energetically as other types of books in their personal catalogues and inventories, but that does not mean that plays were not being purchased and read. A title missing from an inventory is not always indicative of a book missing from a collection. Moreover, Hackel suggests that Bodley's views were not universal, and that "the gaps in his collection were exceptional for the period" adding that "Bodley's standards for the library's acquisitions seem to have been a point of contention with his librarian, James" (Hackel 121).

There are several explanations for why early modern playbooks fail to appear regularly in wills and inventories of possessions. Personal inventories—in particular probate inventories after the 1590s—conceal the existence of playbooks in libraries more often than one would expect. Because playbooks were often of low value sometimes they do not to appear in these lists at all and sometimes they are lumped together with other items of "household stuffes" and "goods in the study" (Clark 98).[17] This occurred because plays were rarely bound individually and were usually regarded as too inexpensive for owners to bother recording as separate items. They may also have been considered by many "to be too frivolous an item to be recorded in so solemn and formal a document as a will" (Goldberg 184).[18] There is also the possibility that playbooks were not hidden at all, but merely fell apart on their own—it is unlikely all owners would go to the trouble of binding cheap texts when they could simply read and discard when worn (or recycle the paper for other uses). While there is scholarly debate surrounding the actual cost of early modern playbooks—Walker describes playbook prices as "a matter for informed speculation rather than confident assertion" (Walker 13)—as far as books go they were undoubtedly one of the cheapest types available. Most scholars arrive at the conclusion that by the end of the sixteenth century playbooks sold for, on average, between 6d and 8d per text.[19] Earlier in the century they may have sold for even less.

There is also the question of whether play texts were popular items at all. Prior to Peter W. M. Blayney's landmark essay "The Publication of Playbooks," (1997) scholars assumed that play texts were popular with consumers and and profitable for publishers. Blayney, however, argues that new plays never accounted for a very significant fraction of the trade in English books, noting that, "in the two decades before the accession of James I, the average number of new plays published each year was 4.8. In the next two decades it was 5.75" (Blayney 385) and

establishing that new plays comprised a very small percentage of the entries in the *Short Title Catalogue*. He also points out that,

> Before Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558, the drama had made virtually no impact on the English book trade. A few early printed plays have undoubtedly been lost, and others may have been reprinted more often than we know—but Greg's *Bibliography of the English Printed Drama* lists fewer than thirty pre-Elizabethan plays printed in English. During the 1560s and 1570s there was a noticeable increase, but in neither decade did the number of new titles reach thirty. (384)

Not only was the overall market share of new playbooks unimpressive, but Blayney observes that those plays that did reach print rarely sold well. He concludes that while, "a demand for printed plays certainly existed," that demand, "was far from insatiable" (389).

In 2005 Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser challenged Blayney's influential findings.[20] They admit that during the first two decades of regular public playing in London "very few plays were printed. Indeed, for the first thirteen years after the building of the Theatre, there was essentially *no* market for printed professional plays" (Farmer 7). But they also add that, "the criterion that brings us closest to consumer demand is the rate of reprinting of playbooks, since a publisher's decision to reprint can usually be assumed to indicate both that the previous edition had sold out (or was about to sell out) and that the publisher anticipated continued demand for the book" (5). From this, they contend that,

> Judged by reprints, plays sold much better than the average book in Elizabethan and Jacobean England, much better even than sermons—a class of book that appears on Blayney's best-seller list and that is widely considered one of the most popular in the

> early modern book trade. Plays were, in fact, among the most successful books in which an early modern stationer could choose to invest. (6)

So if plays were among the most successful books, what did consumers think of them? What were sixteenth-century attitudes towards drama?

Early English drama found its share of enemies as well as advocates. The Chester Early Banns of 1539-1540 argue that because the Chester plays were produced, "for the augmentation and increase of the holy and catholic faith of our saviour Christ Jesu and to exhort the minds of the common people to good devotion and wholesome doctrine thereof," performances should be allowed to continue.[21] Thomas Heywood adopts a similar approach in his 1612 *Apology for Actors,* insisting that audiences really do benefit from drama, and that plays "have made the ignorant more apprehensive, taught the unlearned the knowledge of many famous histories, instructed such as cannot read in the discovery of all our English chronicles."[22] Not only was drama defended for its didactic merits by figures like Heywood, but the existence of enduring traditions of regional dramatic activity, the early use of print for producing playbooks, and the rise of the professional stage all speak to the cultural value placed on English drama.

However, not everyone was rushing to fill their personal libraries with playbooks, and some were quite concerned about the ill-effects the stage could have on English society. In his 1580 *A Second and Third Blast of Retreat from Plays and Theatres,* Anthony Munday complains that plays are,

> public enemies to virtue and religion, allurements unto sin, corrupters of good manners, the cause of security [(false) confidence] and carelessness, mere brothel houses of bawdry; and both bring the gospel into slander, the Sabbath into contempt, men's souls into danger, and finally the whole commonwealth into disorder.[23]

Munday was not alone in his convictions. Contemporary Stephen Gosson likewise believed that time spent enjoying a play was time utterly wasted. In his 1582 *Plays Confuted in Five Actions* Gosson wrote that, "To seek this [drama] is to spend our studies in things that are merely natural; to spend our time so is to be carnally minded, but to be carnally minded is death."[24] William Prynne took this argument one step further, insisting that playbooks were dangerous not only for the time they consumed, but also for the expensive materials used in their production and the physical spaces they occupied in bookstalls and personal libraries—potentially crowding out "worthier" books. In the 1633 letter "To the Christian Reader" of the antitheatrical text *Histrio-mastix*, Prynne moans that more luxurious materials are used in the production of playbooks than Scripture. He writes,

> Some Play-books since I first undertooke this subject, are growne from *Quarto* into *Folio*; which yet beare so good a price and sale, that I cannot but with griefe relate it, they are now (e) new-printed in farre better paper than most Octavo or Quarto *Bibles*, which hardly finde such vent as they.[25]

Sixteenth-century drama might have undergone significant transformations, giving contemporary antitheatrical writers new causes for alarm, but negative attitudes towards drama was not a Tudor invention. There had existed in the medieval Church a certain level of hostility towards drama and, as Alexandra Johnston points out, "almost all indications of the existence of plays in England before the last quarter of the fourteenth century are couched in terms of prohibitions" (Johnston 3). Even religious drama could not always escape disapprobation. The anonymous *Treatise to Miracles Playing* (1380-1414) warns against placing too much trust in the didactic value of drama, arguing that any effort to instruct audiences is soon overwhelmed by the impact of theatrical spectacle. The author insists that instead of identifying and retaining the important

moral message of the play, spectators are likely to get immersed in the imagery alone, writing that plays are "made more to delighten men bodily than to been books to lewd men. And therefore, if they been quick books, they been quick books to shrewdness more than to goodness."[26]

Not only might sixteenth-century collectors avoid playbooks for moral reasons, but dramatic literature was not yet fully established within the literary culture of the period. Keeping playbooks in your Elizabethan library is not unlike keeping your copy of *Twilight* next to *Jane Eyre*—there is a snobbery suggesting that one of these texts "deserves" its place in the library slightly more. In addition to debate over how to respond to plays in social and moral terms, there was also the matter of how playbooks should be used and (as Bodely so clearly illustrates) divided opinion over how these dramatic texts compare to works of more recognizable literary value. However, when it comes to the question of when drama became undeniably "literary," most critics turn to the events of 1616.

Scholars interested in the relationship between early modern literature and drama have generally pointed to the 1616 publication of Ben Jonson's *Works* as the moment drama achieved respectability as a literary form. Richard Dutton argues that before the appearance of the Jonson volume, "play scripts had not […] been regarded as serious literature […] In retrospect we can see Jonson's decision as a brave and important moment in the history of literature, redefining the significance of drama, and paving the way for Shakespeare's first folio of 1623" (Dutton 4). However, not all critics regard the 1616 publication of the first folio of Jonson's *Works* as *the* definitive turning point of dramatic literature. Walker contends, "the appearance of the *Works* might be better described as a milestone in the long and gradual process of the gentrification of drama rather than the revolutionary moment which this formulation suggests" (Walker 9).

Jonson's decision to publish might have been an unusual choice, but the notion of approaching drama as a reader rather than a spectator was not new. Neither was the view that dramatic texts could be of weighty cultural significance (for this reason cycle play manuscripts were carefully preserved long after performances ceased). Moreover, by 1616 Jonson clearly felt that dramatic literature had earned enough prestige amongst readers to justify printing his costly folio. So while Jonson's move was innovative, the groundwork for this type of publication had already been laid.

In other words, around the time Blomesfylde was collecting his plays, dramatic literature seems to have been experiencing a period of transformation. In fact, Lukas Erne has recently argued that the 1590s were a key time of transition, in which increasing numbers of plays were being both printed and performed—some of these plays achieving popularity in both arenas.[27] Moreover, extracts from plays started finding their way into verse "flowers," suggesting that dramatic texts were increasingly being perceived as literary material. Theater and literary culture in the period had always been a site of interchange, but towards the end of the sixteenth century it seems that this interconnectedness was intensifying. However, by the time of these developments Blomefylde had already assembled his personal library.

But even before the 1590s, playwrights were influenced by what Elizabeth Eisenstein calls the "Commonwealth of Learning" (xiii), wherein the combined impact of technological innovation (print) and classical learning allowed readers access to a newly expanded store of texts. As a result, evidence for a heightened intertextuality can be found throughout early modern drama. As Barbara A. Mowat notes, "When we place the extant texts of early modern plays among the other printed quartos and folios of the early modern period, we find in the pages of chroniclers, poets, pamphleteers, and romance writers many of the stories, ideas, and words

woven into early modern playtexts" (Mowat 223). In other words, sixteenth-century drama absorbed, diffused, and enacted written and printed material, leaving no doubt that a strong relationship existed between dramatic literature and contemporary discourse, literary or otherwise.

As Blomefylde assembled his library, did he consider his plays works of literature? While it is impossible to definitively answer this question, Blomefylde seems to have been interested in how dramatic literature intersected with other sorts of texts, or at least to feel more comfortable mixing dramatic literature with other genres and types of texts than modern readers. Today Bodleian MS Digby 133 exists as a miscellaneous quarto paper manuscript volume of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and contains the late medieval Digby plays alongside astrological and alchemical texts. Originally each of the Digby plays would have been physically distinct manuscripts intended for performance, so someone—and Blomefylde is a likely candidate—had to assemble them into the single manuscript that was eventually granted to the Bodleian Library in 1634. While appearing haphazard to modern readers (enough so that modern scholarship rarely describes the manuscript these famous late medieval plays appear in) perhaps the manuscript's organization is not haphazard at all. The manuscript's composition might actually represent perceptions of textual interconnectedness between dramatic literature and other writings, in this case scientific texts. Even if an earlier owner assembled the manuscript, the textual arrangement made enough sense for Blomefylde, and later owners, to preserve that order. The manuscript, in fact, follows a pattern that applies to Blomefyld's entire collection: the content of the library points to somewhat random collecting but the consideration and individualism that characterizes Blomefylde's engagement with his books suggests otherwise. His library shows him both to be a learned man and an active reader interested in how texts relate

to him intellectually and to the events of his own life. In other words, what unites the texts found in Blomefylde's library—and I would argue the Digby manuscript as well—is Blomefylde the reader.

And Blomefylde was a reader who physical altered the texts he came into contact with. In terms of his dramatic literature, he identified himself as the owner of *The Conversion of St. Paul*, *Mary Magdalen*, *Wisdom*, and *Fulgens and Lucres*. On *The Conversion of St. Paul* he has written "Myles Blomefylde" on the top of the first page. Likewise, the initials "MB" appear on the first pages of both *Mary Magdalen* and the morality play *Wisdom*. In *Fulgens and Lucres* we find "I am Miles Blomefyldes booke" on the colophon page. And Blomefylde did not limit his inscriptions to only dramatic literature. In his copy of *Information for pilgrims into the holy land*, on the recto of the last leaf Blomefylde has written "I Myles Blomefylde of Burye Saynct Edmunde in Suffolke was borne the yeare followyng, after the prynting of this booke (that is to saye) In the yeare of our Lorde 1525. The 5 day of Apryll between 10 and 11 in the nyght nyghest xi my fathers name John and my mothers name Anne." Following this lengthy inscription are six leaves with lists of wards and parishes of the city of London, all in Blomefylde's hand and dated 1551. In his copy of William Thomas' *Historie of Italy*, Blomefylde wrote "Myles Blomefylde" on the title and on p. iv verso: "Myles Blomefylde of Bury St. Edmunde." He has also written next to dates of papal reigns—between the years 1523 and 1535 specifically—"MB borne 1525." In Blomefylde's copy of *Gesta Romanorum* he has noted on the title page that "Reade of ye emprowr in the xij leafe folowyng."

And the list of inscriptions on Blomefylde's collected books goes on and on. For example, Blomefylde's signature appears twice on the title page of his *Ortus vocabularum*, and on the title page of his *A dyaloge descrybyng the orygynall ground of these Lutheran faccyons* he

has written the names “Myles,” “Blome,” and “fylde” in a triangle. In this same book he has written his name several times throughout, going to the trouble of writing them twice (once in red ink and again in black), along with many notes and the identification of characters appearing in a woodcut. In his copy of Leonard Digges’ *A Geometrical Practise, named Pantometria,* Blomefylde has written “Myles Blomefylde” to the title page with a rebus on each side and the date “1573” between the two names. Above the woodcut on the title he has added “Myles Blomefylde. Apryll 5 A. 1573.” In his copy of *De Geographia Liber unus, ab ipso Authore iam nouissime recognitus,* he has written that “Myles Blomefylde owe this booke” together with the date “1551 the .ii. day September.” Later in the text he notes that he bought the book in Cambridge.[28]

Taken altogether, Blomefylde’s engagement with the texts he owned can best be described as dynamic. From these textual interactions patterns emerge and modern scholars are offered a rare glimpse into the world of early playbook collecting (and Tudor collecting in general), and access granted to the poorly understood relationship between book and owner. Knowing what books belonged to a Tudor library is often more straightforward—although of course, this can be a very tricky subject as well—than knowing how owners used those books. Accordingly, the type of inscriptions Blomefylde left future readers is revealing.

Baker and Murphy note that he “seems to have been an interested, alert, diligent, and somewhat egocentric person. Much of the marking in his books reveals a concern to relate himself whenever possible to all subjects” (Baker 44). Blomefylde wrote down his own reflections and autobiographical notes in the margins of his books, underlined passages that were meaningful to him, and frequently drew an alchemical rebus of his own design (which consisted of a cross in the shape of a flower with a blossom at each end). He also had a particular affinity for red ink,

and tended to use red for personal reflections on major issues of the period.[29] Not only are his red markings impossible to miss, but Blomefylde often chose prominent places in his books—typically in the first leaves—to identify himself as the owner.

During Blomefylde's lifetime he was not the only person to write in his books. As many scholars have shown, paper was scarce in the period, and books that had already been printed or written upon constituted an available resource for tasks completely unrelated to their content. But generally in these cases, books were used to preserve practical information—such as family accounts, memos, legal documents, recipes, notes on husbandry, etc.—not necessarily to provide a history of ownership.[30] Seth Lerer, in discussing the early printed quartos of Chaucer, Lydgate, and Heywood, has shown that books functioned for early modern readers not only as intellectual or literary texts to be read, but also as "objects of ownership, places for members of a family to record names and dates, details of bequeathal and, occasionally, bits of public news or personal devotion" (Lerer 327). As it happens, sixteenth-century books might have been filled with various kinds of information, but they were not generally cluttered with the names of owners, a fact that has often made questions of provenance more difficult to answer. So without names and initials aside from those belonging to Blomefylde, it is difficult to know how he acquired his library, where the texts came from, and how they were distributed following his death. In the case of the Digby plays, although Blomefylde's inscriptions reveal that he did in fact possess them, little else is known about the provenance of these playbooks prior to the Digby bequest of 1634.[31] If other collectors owned these plays, or held personal opinions about any part of them, they did not seem to feel inclined to make note of that in the pages. What made Blomefylde different from other collectors?

There are several possible explanations for why Blomefylde collected the books that he did. One explanation, mentioned earlier, is that Blomefylde was inspired to assemble his library by antiquarian interest and a sense of regional pride: the Digby plays had a performance history in Chelmsford and churchwardens were responsible for the town plays until the 1560s. John Coldewey observes that Blomefylde likely came into possession of the plays after their final performance in 1562.[32] The plays all date from around the beginning of the century, and the physical condition of the texts "clearly point towards lengthy performance careers" (Coldewey 218) in East Anglia. For any collector interested in the dramatic traditions of East Anglia, the Digby plays would have been appealing. Antiquarian interest, however, was likely not Blomefylde's sole motivator. He also acquired a copy of *Fulgens and Lucres,* which has—as far as scholars can tell—no connection to East Anglia at all. Furthermore, despite his standing in the community and his interest in books, when the Chelmsford churchwardens were looking to safeguard the Digby playbooks during a period of turmoil in the 1570s, they were given to warden George Martindale, not Blomefylde.[33] In part, this suggests that Blomefylde was not known within his own community for the preservation of valuable traditional texts—or at least, was not the churchwardens' first choice at the time. Perhaps this was because Blomefylde was identified as having a type of relationship to the books in his care that went beyond mere preservation.

Another possible explanation is random collecting for the sake of collecting, suggesting that the library appears somewhat unsystematic because it is somewhat unsystematic. However, there is evidence that Blomefylde did not simply keep every text that passed through his hands. The earliest sign of Blomefylde's book-collecting activities is in fact his sale of "one homyly book" for two shillings in 1566.[34] Furthermore, there is every indication that Blomefylde had an

intimate relationship with his books, drawing attention to places where the texts and his personal life overlap. It seems unlikely that such an involved reader would possess many books that he could not relate to.

Finally, there is the explanation that Blomefylde's collecting was methodical, and that through his choice of texts he sought to create a coherent intellectual picture of himself. He collected various texts because they either related to his personal interests, or to his life, or to both. This certainly appears to be the case in his copy of *Information for pilgrims*, where Blomefylde notes the date of his birth, the exact hour of his birth, the location of his birth and the identity of his parents. Not only does he (literally) insert personal details into the text where he feels prompted to do so, but the nature of these details points to an interest in astrology. We know, in fact, that Blomefylde maintained a deep interest in matters such as astrology, alchemy and traditional folk medicine throughout his lifetime. His library contained numerous alchemical and astrological texts, some, of course, located in the Digby manuscript itself. Also found within his library is a late sixteenth-century paper manuscript containing texts pertaining to the "Phylosophers Ston." The manuscript is entirely written and illustrated in Blomefylde's own hand and concludes with the note, "Thus endeth this Epistle I Miles Blomefylde Physytione ded copie this Epistle owt of A book that was written I thynck two hundred yeares of I was borne As the hand and wrytyng declared that this was present year 1497 full 272 yeres since."[35]

This inscription, however, does more than simply give Blomefylde credit for his scribal efforts—it helps locate his place within the intellectual landscape of the sixteenth century. As Keith Thomas explains in his landmark *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England* (1971), from the beginning of the sixteenth century onwards, astrology pervaded all aspects of scientific thought and was a crucial

element in the educated Englishman's conception of the universe and its workings.[36] It was also a field of study that came to develop aristocratic associations, so that in 1563 Puritan Laurence Humphrey complained that among the nobility the science of astrology was "ravened, embraced, and devoured by many." Blomefylde's library suggests he was one of the many. But Blomefylde's commitment to sixteenth-century science extended beyond the collection and preservation of astrological texts (although it should be added that prior to the mid-seventeenth century astrological treatises were uncommon, and his possession of so many is noteworthy).

Alongside his more orthodox medical practice, Blomefylde appears to have been involved in "cunnynge," serving as a local wizard. In 1578 Blomefylde was brought to court charged with having practiced white magic, second sight and prophecy.[37] Several witnesses gave testimony describing how, in exchange for payment, Blomefylde helped them to find missing items. At the time it was illegal to receive payment for practicing conjuration, witchcraft, enchantment, sorcery, or to help locate stolen goods—and Blomefylde doubtless would have been aware of this.

Although many of their activities were officially frowned upon, finding a local wizard or "cunnynge man," as they were sometimes called, would not have been difficult during Blomefylde's lifetime. Thomas writes that in Elizabethan Essex, "no one lived more than ten miles from a known cunning man" (Thomas 294), and these individuals offered crucial services to their local communities: they were capable of healing the sick, finding lost goods, fortune telling, and divination. While an organized medical profession existed—Blomefylde was himself a licensed physician—the purely academic nature of a doctor's university training, with its fixation on the humoral physiology of Hippocrates, Aristotle and Galen, prevented most Tudor physicians from effectively diagnosing and treating contemporary illnesses.[38] Not only were very

few trained physicians available throughout the nation but (as Thomas notes) local wizards could, in many circumstances, give patients a better chance of survival. In his capacity as cunning man, Blomefylde might have offered clients lore about the healing properties of plants and minerals, forms of ritual or magical healing, and commonsensical remedies based on generations of accumulated first-hand knowledge. Since firm distinctions between the natural and the supernatural were not yet in place—the boundaries between natural remedies and supernatural or symbolic ones was very blurred—it would probably not have occurred to someone in Blomefylde's position that his work as a cunning man did anything other than complement his work as a physician.[39]

Unfortunately, what makes sense intellectually, practically, and in the popular imagination is not always supported by contemporary legislation. The sixteenth century was littered with various Acts and statutes designed to curtail "magical" activities. In practice, however, Tudor authorities could be fairly lenient towards offenders and even in those rare cases where cunning men were convicted of illegal dealings, they could anticipate a light penalty. As Thomas observes, no secular legal action lay against the charmer who succeeded in curing his patients and took no money. But in cases where a paid cunning man either drew unnecessary attention to himself, or fell out with one of his customers, he could then expose himself to the threat of prosecution.[40] Perhaps this is what happened to Blomefylde. However, while the exact results of his Quarter Session hearing are unknown, Blomefylde seems to have left the experience with his reputation intact, serving as Chelmsford churchwarden and keeper of the account book of St. Mary's church.[41] Moreover, Baker and Murphy postulate that Blomefylde's practice of "cunnynge" might have even been a reason for his privileged position in Chelmsford.

From local wizards to aristocratic astrologers, throughout the period "magical inquiry possessed some intellectual respectability" (284). Alongside his more orthodox scientific interests, Blomefylde was committed to exploring the various forms of magical inquiry available to him and was not shy about making this known to the future readers of his books. Moreover, of the three main types of sixteenth-century magical activity that Thomas identifies, Blomefylde can be traced to each one: natural magic, ceremonial magic, and celestial magic. As Blomefylde's role demonstrates, the sixteenth-century saw a convergence of magical practices generally associated with rural areas and the astrological and alchemical interests linked to the ruling classes (and therein urban spaces). Details such as these should be used to address not only Blomefylde's choices as a book collector, but to help grasp all that his library represents intellectually, professionally, socially and materially and how the entire collection functions semiotically.

It is easiest to understand how the library worked professionally and intellectually: the collection contains a variety of texts suited to Blomefylde's overlapping professional and intellectual endeavors. Beyond this these texts represent the attempt of one sixteenth-century reader to reduce natural phenomenon to a sort of tangible order, recording the intellectual endeavors of a lifetime in the process. Moreover, the collection demonstrates that generic distinctions between science and magic are, for this period, difficult to sustain. Socially, the library highlights Blomefylde's level of education and signifies his allegiances to aristocratic, institutionalized, and traditional modes of scientific inquiry. Here was a Cambridge-trained physician who also offered prophecies to local townspeople for a price. Finally, in material terms, Blomefylde could use his texts to physically aid his magical activities.

While it was relatively uncommon for a village wizard to require books—they tended to inherit their knowledge from a relative or another member of the community—certain books were connected to their craft, either in terms of content or usage. As Thomas points out, Tudor readers could gain access to a range of magical, astrological and alchemical texts. From charm books, to books of prophecy, to books for conjuring spirits, to astrological almanacs, sixteenth-century readers could acquire these types of books if they were really necessary and some, such as almanacs, were even commercially successful. Even when the content of a book had seemingly nothing to do with magical activities, that text could still serve a crucial function in forms of natural and ceremonial magic. More specifically, the Bible could be used as an instrument of divination—opened at random the text could reveal an individual's fate. Another example would be the use of books in popular methods of thief-detection. In certain scenarios, the physical book could attain specific magical properties, and this phenomenon was especially heightened when a book could be associated with medieval Catholicism and/or attain an aura of respectable antiquity.[42]

During the period various powers were attributed to medieval saints, monks, the magical properties of holy water, rosaries, church door keys, the sign of the cross, and soil from a churchyard. Even following the Reformation, any association with the medieval church immediately invested any object, prophecy, or magical activity with greater meaning. For this reason, "the pronunciation of Catholic prayers in Latin remained a common ingredient in the magical treatment of illness" (211). Moreover, such was the efficacy attributed to prayers of this kind that sometimes it was enough for them just to be written down on paper and hung around a patient's neck. For Blomefylde and his contemporaries, there was power in the old religion—power in objects related to Catholicism and powers in language related to Catholicism.[43]

This perhaps explains why, despite being actively involved in the Protestant church, Blomefylde owned a series of late medieval Catholic plays. Within the context of Blomefylde's library, instead of operating purely as works of dramatic literature or items of historical value, the physical books themselves (with their Catholic associations) might have been regarded as having some degree of supernatural value similar to rosary beads or churchyard soil. While the blatant Catholicism of plays like *Mary Magdalen* made them theologically problematic, thanks to persistent popular beliefs the texts themselves could have been interpreted as part of the magical legacy Tudor England inherited from its Catholic medieval past. No longer suitable for public performance, there is nothing to suggest that Blomefylde kept the plays in the name of cultural preservation or out of nostalgia for performances past, and there are few indications of readerly activity. What remains evident is Blomefylde's choice to place these works of drama in specific textual contexts, and to very clearly indicate his ownership of them—a prominent figure known for his knowledge of both popular and intellectual forms of magic.

Was this Blomefylde's way of ensuring that early modern readers would interpret these plays as having some type of magical function? Was he recycling works of medieval drama, giving them a new cultural value? If so, the Digby manuscript's seemingly random mixture of alchemical, astrological and dramatic texts suddenly looks far more meaningful. Although popular and intellectual magic were essentially two different activities in the period, largely independent of each other, the Digby anthology is evidence that they did sometimes overlap. Accordingly, the texts contained could have satisfied many of the theoretical needs of the intellectual magician and perhaps even the practical needs of the local wizard. Yet while the physical utility of the Digby plays might have changed under Blomefylde's proprietorship, transforming from performance text to symbolic object, this would not have been the first time

East Anglian plays were correlated with magic. In her work on late medieval drama, Gail McMurry Gibson argues that however rooted East Anglian play texts might have been in orthodox theological commonplaces, their very form and circumstances hints at a powerful aesthetic, one grounded in spectacle, money, and magic.[44] It therefore seems reasonable to propose that Blomefylde's involvement with the Digby plays indicates that they represent an active negotiation with contemporaneous forms of magic—from the magic of medieval spectacle to the magical practices of Tudor England—suggesting that both medieval and early modern East Anglian audiences were predisposed to consider the Digby plays in magical terms.

So why did Blomefylde also invest in a work like *Fulgens and Lucres,* a play with no connection to magic, the supernatural, or any form of scientific inquiry? These two types of drama display essential differences. While the Digby plays belong to the medieval tradition of participatory religious theater, associated with specific communities, and performed to fund specific parish causes, *Fulgens and Lucres* followed a fundamentally different dramatic trajectory. Written around 1497 by Henry Medwall, the play was intended for performance in the Great Hall of Lambeth Palace before John Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury. Before its influential and elite original audience, *Fulgens* poses the question of whether prosperity and social standing should be determined by personal ability or noble birth. The play eventually found its way into the hands of John Rastell, becoming the first printed secular play in English before ultimately landing in Blomefylde's library. Perhaps Blomefylde bought the play because he enjoyed the dramatic narrative. Or maybe he was drawn to the play because it was produced in the early sixteenth century, recognizing that it represented a groundbreaking printed work. Or perhaps Blomefylde believed that a connection between magic and the play existed. Whatever

the reason for Blomefylde's initial interest in *Fulgens*, what is more apparent is his treatment of the text.

As with the Digby plays, when originally performed *Fulgens* would have bound audience members together in a specific performance dynamic or audience function. Playgoers were key participants in late medieval drama, representing, for example, the crowd condemning Christ at the Crucifixion, the masses damned at the Last Judgment, or, in the case of *Fulgens*, members of an elite household (essentially themselves). Although the communal identity forged in this way was temporary, the resulting effects would have nonetheless been real, with individual spectators socially integrated into a unified whole. By the time Blomefylde acquired his texts, the potential for these plays to traditionally grow a performatively constructed community had seriously diminished. The Digby plays were no longer performed in East Anglia and Morton's household had long since dispersed, so that by the late sixteenth century gone were the cultural associations that had encouraged late medieval audience members to imagine themselves as part of a corporate unit. The drama could no longer function as originally intended.

In the absence of these specific performance conditions and tangible social ties, Blomefylde appears to have filled the void with his own active readerly presence. Blomefylde's interactions with his dramatic texts—his drawings, his initials, his notes, how the texts were arranged—makes the act of reading tangible, enacting a form of spectatorship wherein Blomefylde is able to witness and reinforce his role as reader countless times. Moreover, these particular plays are associated with culturally significant performances, whether that be local festive celebrations or a great hall play, and he is able to manufacture a personal relationship to these performances that he otherwise would not have had. Blomefylde's books thus could serve two distinct functions: as symbolic markers of identity and/or professional tools. His books also

emphasize the contemporary belief that particular individuals, events, and objects could have larger, sometimes cosmic significance—sometimes individuals were more than individuals and sometimes books were more than books.

In the example of *Fulgens,* ownership of the play perhaps served to reinforce his high opinion of himself and his social standing in the community. *Fulgens* was linked to an elite and influential household, the dramatic narrative was shaped around an essentially aristocratic debate, and the play was printed in the early sixteenth century—a social statement in itself. From Caxton's prologues and epilogues it is clear that he expected his printed materials to find their ways into the hands of royalty, nobility, gentry, and his own peer among the merchant class.[45] When *Fulgens* was printed, book ownership was an attribute of high social status, and this continued to be the case for quite some time. And because *Fulgens* was not a professionally useful text for Blomefylde, ownership suggests that as a member of the gentry-merchant classes he had the leisure to enjoy a book purely for reasons of edification and personal pleasure.

Blomefylde's play texts reveal that watching and reading exemplify not merely two different ways of engaging with drama, but two different performance modes through which the cultural role of drama could be transformed in the sixteenth-century library. Moreover, each of these performance modes came with resultant participatory modes. Late medieval spectatorship enhanced a sense of communal identity by constructing watching as a form of participation. Blomefylde's active reading followed a different method but maintained a similar purpose: by adopting reading as presentational event, he made readership into both a form of spectatorship and dramatic participation. Although it is tempting to view watching and reading early English drama as opposites—one public and inclusive, the other private and exclusive—both served as identity markers as well as sites of ideological exchange. The dynamics of Blomefylde's

relationship with texts, dramatic literature in particular, constructs a narrative of his own complicated social position.

Blomefylde was a respected member of his local community: he was an active participant in the church, an educated and intellectually curious physician, and a person of some financial and social standing in Chelmsford. He was also involved in illegal activities associated with forms of magical practice and made to face charges. Alongside the risk of legal repercussions, there were serious social consequences as well—the practice of magic of any type set the local cunnynge man apart from the rest of his community, thanks to the access they were granted into the most intimate details of the lives of friends, relatives and neighbors. Blomefylde's position would have been further complicated by theological realities. For one example, in a period where Catholic medieval drama was deemed too controversial to be performed, Blomefylde owned four such plays. And Blomefylde, of course, did not simply preserve these texts, but he openly advertised his ownership of them for future readers. In short, Blomefylde's own life and library underscores the fluidity of religious development, dramatic activities, scientific development, magical practices, and readerly activities in the period. His library underscores his dual roles as good citizen and marginal figure.

It stands to reason that Blomefylde's pragmatic use of the books in his collection deserves further scholarly attention. Not only does Blomefylde gesture towards the bookishness of his world, but his example suggests that libraries were granted the power to signify identity. For drama historians in particular, and considering the lack of evidence from the period available (especially relative to early modern professional playhouse drama), Blomefylde's collection should attract interest. Blomefylde's plays show that dramatic literature could be transferred from one use to another once evacuated of the fixed symbolic meaning associated with earlier

performance. Moreover, these older medieval plays could live a second life as a readerly text, as an indicator of social and professional status, and as a meaningful cultural artifact in its own right.

Modern scholars routinely insist that Jonson in 1616 was the first to fully appreciate how the printed page could serve as a "sphere of self-assertion, a court of public opinion when patrons at Whitehall, or in the theater, proved fickle" (Loewenstein 287). And academic discussion of the politics of literary culture in general tends to focus on developments taking place in the seventeenth century. But perhaps readers and collectors like Blomefylde did not have to wait for the seventeenth century to discover new possibilities for social and intellectual exchange through their books. Perhaps this was already taking place in personal libraries, and, long before Jonson, readers recognized that dramatic literature could be used as a sphere of self-assertion. Ultimately, by moving spectatorship from the streets of Chelmsford and the great hall of Lambeth palace into the quiet of a personal library, Blomefylde did not disavow ties to popular performance traditions, but redeployed them to serve different needs. Blomefylde's library highlights the ways in which dramatic texts produced multiple, often unexpected, cultural functions and effects. Blayney observes that the "fate of many early dramatic texts may have been decided by archivists and collectors who gathered their future treasures according to the whims of an increasingly tyrannical author function" (Blayney 87). Perhaps, however, modern theater-historians should consider the emergence of a controlling collector function as well.

What, if any, influence might the physical library have had on the sixteenth-century collector? Just as Blomefylde's lifetime saw a growth of English books in libraries, the house itself experienced fundamental material changes. More specifically, the architecture and content

of Tudor households placed sociocultural change and literary culture into close, if not confusing, proximity. As Diana E. Henderson explains,

> While most Tudor homes were still dominantly medieval in their architecture, they were beginning to fill with new materials from abroad, the result of European expansion of trade and importation from Asia and the Americas. New dyes allowed greater variation in clothing, new foods enriched the diets, and new ornaments decorated the homes of those who could afford such luxuries. These visible changes, and the dissonant coexistent of residual with emergent cultures, no doubt aggravated many people's fears of a world turned upside down—the old ways lost, the new not yet integrated into a moral code. (Henderson 190)

For someone of Blomefylde's class, to live in a Tudor household was to experience an array of new items being used in new ways—home was not as familiar as it used to be. As the physical space of the household grew more complicated, embodying developments within the material lives of the upper classes, book ownership itself—as demonstrated by Blomefylde's example—changed in meaningful ways. Gone were the days when only wealthy landowners and religious institutions possessed libraries. As the Tudor household was introduced to new objects, and greater quantities of old objects (like books), with it emerged new ways of engaging with the "things" one owned. Blomefylde, for instance, highlights the growing instinct that books could be used in multiple ways, generate multiple social meanings, and support multiple kinds of readerly attention and treatment. Given their historical role as objects of social status, no doubt books reaffirmed for members of the new commercial class the fact that material and social change was actively taking place: books were now more accessible and the nation was becoming increasingly bookish and literate.

In describing changes to sixteenth-century material culture, David Bevington writes, "The most obvious literary consequence of the new alertness to luxury goods is what might be called a 'poetics of magnificence,' a rapturous list of almost imaginative plenty that often invokes as well the glamour of exotic locales" (Bevington xxi). So not only were books becoming more numerous in households, part of the increasingly crowded Tudor home, but the affluence of early modern England was having an influence on textual, dramatic content as well. Certainly in terms of performance, costume would probably be the clearest dramatic expression of these kinds of material change. Characters would have been mocked for dressing above or below their station, and elaborate costuming would have contributed to the overall spectacle of the performance.

However, what are the implications for dramatic playbooks that were no longer used for performance but instead served as readerly texts, stored in personal libraries like any other household item? In the case of the Digby plays, could Tudor material conditions have had an impact on their textual arrangement and presentation?

Before answering, it is necessary to go into a little further detail about each of these plays. As previously noted, whoever bound together these late medieval plays would have been working with physically distinct paper manuscripts once used for performance.[46] Each of the play texts date from the end of the fifteenth and start of the sixteenth centuries, and all four have strong associations with East Anglia in terms of language, dialect and manuscript evidence. Two of the plays, the *Killing of the Children* and the *Wisdom* fragment appear to have been written by the same scribe.[47]

The Conversion of St. Paul is the first play to appear in the Digby manuscript and is probably the youngest of all four plays. This anonymous play tends to be dated to around the first

quarter of the sixteenth century, and there is some evidence suggesting that this could have been a travelling and/or a town play of East Midlands origins. The play derives from the *Acts of the Apostles* (specifically 9:1-27) as well as the offices for the feast of the conversion of St. Paul. For the most part, the play suits the seriousness of the source material. Saul is shown being struck off his horse and blinded on the way to Damascus. He is taken to the house of Ananias where, after initially frightening his host, Saul is cured of his blindness and converted. Unfortunately, Saul's former colleagues Caiphus and Anna get wind of what has transpired, and decide to punish Saul for turning his back on Old Testament law. Saul is warned by an angel that his old friends are plotting his death, and the play ends with an epilogue informing the audience that although the final scene shows Saul trapped in Jerusalem, he is later able to safely escape. The play appears to have been intended for outdoor performance, and three "stations" (possibly fixed scaffolds or pageant wagons) are mentioned in the text. More specifically, at various intervals the audience is urged to follow the players to the next station in order to see how the story continues. In addition to moving from station to station, the play's use of pyrotechnic effects would have made this a visually interesting and stimulating play to watch.[48]

After *The Conversion* (662 lines) comes the much longer and sophisticated *Mary Magdalen* (2,143 lines). Not without note, both plays are rare examples of English saint plays. *Mary* is an older anonymous play from around the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century. The play draws from scriptural references to Mary in *Luke 7* as well as later medieval sources such as Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend* and the *South English Legendary*. In it, we find Mary committing sins, repenting, interacting with Christ, traveling extensively, proselytizing, and living as a hermit. Despite the presence of strong male figures—Emperor Tiberious Caesar, Herod, Cyrus, and the King of Marseilles—with predictably lengthy boasts about their power

and the security of their relative positions, Mary manages to stay conspicuous. Along with being a saint play, the presence of a strong female central figure makes *Mary Magdalen* a very unique piece of early English drama. Generally speaking, the play details a familiar series of narrative events. Early in the play, Mary's father Cyrus dies and she is convinced by the Devil to go out into the world and enjoy various temptations. Mary quickly comes to regret this decision and resolves to follow Christ. She finds him at the house of Simon Leprous and he in turn expels seven devils from her body. Mary returns to the siblings she left behind early in the play and they welcome her, only to have her brother Lazarus fall ill and die shortly after. Christ then raises Lazarus from the dead and announces his own impending death by crucifixion. The crucifixion itself is not shown—perhaps because it would draw attention from Mary—but Mary is shown discovering the empty sepulcher, and later mistaking Christ for a gardener. Later on, now safely in heaven, Jesus sends the angel Raphael to Mary with a mission—she will travel to the King of Marseilles and convert his kingdom. Mary sails to Marseilles and, in response to the King's initial resistance, sets fire to one of his pagan temples. She then, with Christ's help, appears to the King in a dream and he is finally convinced. As soon as his conversion is complete, the King's formerly barren wife discovers she is pregnant and the two of them set sail to the Holy Land to be formally baptized. Along the way, however, the Queen dies in childbirth and the King is forced to leave both bodies on a rock and continue onwards. The King is baptized in Jerusalem by Peter and passes by the rock on his way home, only to discover that his wife and child are alive after all. Once they are back home again, Mary is free to leave Marseilles so she takes off into the desert to live as a hermit. Mary's death ends the play.

Mary Magdalen is a place and scaffold play, and would probably have had a large number of stages and "locations" representing all the traveling, homes, tombs, etc.[49] For practical

reasons it is likely that some of these locations would have been doubled, particularly the lesser locations. The text contains extensive and detailed stage directions and, like *The Conversion*, calls for use of technical devices including pyrotechnics. *Mary* differs for *The Conversion*, however, in the elaborateness of its staging requirements. For example, in addition to a ship that needs to sail around, scaffolds are needed for: Emperor Tiberius, the Castle of Magdalen, a tavern, hell, heaven, Marseille, Jerusalem, Herod, Pilate, Simon, the World and the Flesh. Once the characters arrived at one of these many locations, the demand on mechanical devices (for lifting things, shaking things and burning things) would have been substantial. This would not have been the easiest play to perform. So much so that editors of a recent Early English Text Society edition of the Digby plays state that *Mary Magdalen* is physically the most elaborate play in English religious drama.[50]

Mary Magdalen is followed by *The Killing of the Children* (566 lines), probably the second oldest of the Digby plays. Dating from around 1480-90—although the year 1512 is written in the corner of the first page—*The Killing* is an anonymous East Anglian play meant to be performed for the feast of St. Anne (July 26). The source is scriptural, namely the slaughter of the innocents in *Matthew 2* and the bringing of Christ to Simeon in *Luke 2:27-39*. The play opens with the poet's prologue, where he announces the play is to be for the feast of St. Anne. The audience is then introduced to Herod, who boasts about his power and prosperity before summoning his messenger Watkyn. Watkyn is ordered to search Herod's kingdom for rebels, meanwhile Herod's knight are assigned to kill all children under the age of two. Watkyn asks Herod if he too could be made a knight with the caveat, to Herod's dismay, that he be kept safe from angry parents. Watkyn joins the knights and manages to not only get beaten by the angry mothers, but has to eventually be rescued by the other knights. They all return to Herod who, on

hearing that the women have cursed him, expresses regret for ordering the killing and dies shortly after in a state of distress. This is followed with Simeon's announcement of Christ's coming and Mary Joseph's arrival with the infant Jesus and two doves. Anna the Prophetess then initiates a procession around the temple in honor of Christ using virgins, tapers, and song. Simeon preaches a short sermon before handing Christ back to Mary and they depart. Simeon prophesizes the crucifixion, and the play ends with the Poet begging his audience to forgive their crude eloquence. The play can be neatly divided into two sequences, suggesting that perhaps both parts were part of a cycle or sequence celebrating St. Anne. In contrast to *Mary Magdalen* and *The Conversion of St. Paul*, this play is a simple place and scaffold play. The action is localized primarily in Herod's palace and the temple, which were most likely scaffolds or wagons.[51]

The last Digby play is the *Wisdom* fragment (752 lines). The oldest of the plays, *Wisdom* is an anonymous morality play dating from around 1460-70, and of East Anglian origin. A full copy of *Wisdom* (1,163 lines) appears in another East Anglian collection of plays, the Macro manuscript. The play concerns itself with the corruption of the moral psyche, and Vices occupy a role that is surprisingly minimal for a morality play. Throughout, the Soul is shown being attacked by devils, eventually becoming worn and disfigured before seeking Christ. The Digby fragment begins with Wisdom introducing the Soul to the Five Wits, Mind, Will and Understanding. These figures describe themselves as components of the Soul, and Wisdom warns against the corrupting powers of the World, the Flesh and the Devil. Lucifer enters, complaining about being cast down from heaven, and he plots the Soul's downfall. He returns dressed as a gallant and deprecates the contemplative life to which the Mind, Understanding and the Will are committed—arguing instead for material gain. The trick works, they embrace

worldly ways, and Lucifer sends them off to change their clothes. The parts of the Soul reenter in new dress, and they describe their new life of corruption, sin and material enrichment. The characters introduce a group of six dancers, each with the name of a Vice, before the fragment finally ends. While *Wisdom* might not be as eventful as the other Digby plays, it certainly would have been as visually stimulating, and included processions, dancing and elaborate dress. Although there are no indications as to set, the ceremonial action and dancing suggests a possible hall performance.[52]

Meg Twycross observes that "there was no such thing as casual theatergoing: each of these plays was the centerpiece of a special occasion for a close-knit community," adding that medieval drama was "'community theatre' in the truest sense" (Twycross 27). When they were originally performed, the Digby plays took this notion of "community theater" to a new level. Not only did these plays offer audiences particularly elaborate visual spectacle, but they were directly responsible for bringing income into the community. As Coldewey notes, "the spectacular form of East Anglian plays flows naturally from their function as profit-making enterprises. They *had* to be crowd-pleasers and—as modern entertainment has demonstrated beyond doubt—nothing pleases so well as spectacle" (Coldewey 229). These plays were performed for profit and not as "a display of power and wealth or as a means of pious education for the unlettered," and they offered "economic stability, financial well-being and a nearly surefire source of income to ailing or ambitious parishes everywhere in the region for three or four generations during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries" (225).

Like all the early drama, the Digby plays allowed individuals and communities to stand back from their own experiences and comment on them. In this respect they resembled what the cultural anthropologist Victor Turner has called a "cyclical ritual": "A cyclical ritual is a frame

within which members of a given group strive to see their own reality in new ways and to generate language, verbal or nonverbal, that enables them to talk *about* what they normally talk" (Turner 166).[53] Like such rituals, early drama was exploratory, engaging with social and religious conditions in often complex ways, and encouraging spectators to be both active and responsive. The Digby plays would have informed and educated audiences, and there may also have been additional cultural consequences since they were performed in local spaces with social and cultural meanings already encoded in them. All this suggests that, as Walker notes, early drama is "always collaborative work, and work that is reinvented each time a play is performed. We should not expect such work to be either simple or unequivocal" (Walker 76).

So what happens to their meaning and function when these plays are taken off the street and placed in a library? Take economic references in the Digby plays. In *The Conversion of St. Paul* audiences are treated to a brief comic scene involving an Ostler and a servant. The servant taunts the Ostler over his social status, insinuating that the Ostler carries bags of dog and horse turds, and has fallen face first into cow dung. The servant claims that he once saw the Ostler's face so covered in grime, he resembled a pig. The Ostler protests, asserting that he has never fallen into turds, that he has served his master well for seven years, and that he wears a hood lined with silk and camlet—he is not poor. The servant also accuses the Ostler of resembling an innkeeper, to which the Ostler responds that he is not an innkeeper or an innkeeper type, but rather a gentleman's servant.

In *Mary Magdalen* we find a depiction of a tavern and a tavern keeper. Although this scene is more jolly than humorous—involving dancing, drinking and flirtation—it is markedly less serious than the rest of the play. After deciding to leave her siblings behind and go enjoy the pleasures of the world, Mary first heads to a tavern. Despite being in Jerusalem, the tavern has a

distinctly English feel, with the tavern keeper listing off wines that might be available in any East Anglian tavern. The tavern keeper describes himself as witty and wise, having plenty of wines to offer (all of which are very clear), and managing the best tavern in the city. He happily leads the innocent Mary to her downfall, serving her wine with the promise that it will relieve her from melancholy and distress, and introducing her to the Gallant who seeks to seduce her.

Finally, in *The Killing of the Children*, despite the seriousness of the play's content, audiences meet the character Watkyn. Rather than being horrified at Herod's commandment that all young children be killed, Watkyn asks to join and be made a knight himself. Watkyn assures Herod that he will have no problem killing the babies, but is concerned that the angry parents might cause him some trouble. He claims that he dreads nothing more than a woman with a distaff and, although he boasts he will chop all young children he finds on a block, admits that he will hide from all women he encounters. The actual slaughter scene does not go as well for Watkyn as he would have hoped, and in the end the other knights are compelled to save him from the women's wrath. While this scene has less of an economic tilt than the other two, repeated references to objects such as distaffs situates the scene in terms of social class (women of high rank probably did not spend too much time around distaffs).

For late medieval audiences, no doubt these kinds of economic references would have reminded audiences that their drama was a product of their own community—this is one of several ways these plays might have acted as a cohesive force on the original audience. References to daily household objects, businesses, foodstuffs, and the petty annoyances of hierarchical relationships only served to make these plays feel more relevant, more relatable. Again, this is another reminder of the "cyclical ritual," wherein audiences are able to actively engage with social conditions and to see their own reality in new ways. Or, to borrow from

Stevens, "the ritual enactment transforms the ordinary city into the *theatrum mundi*" (Stevens 106). But the process goes beyond facilitating self-reflexiveness. As Turner notes,[54]

> By means of such genres of theater… performances are presented which probe a community's weaknesses, call its leaders to account, desacralize its most cherished values and beliefs, portray its characteristic conflicts and suggest remedies for them, and generally take stock of its current situation in the known 'world.' (Turner 11)

All this points to the type of cultural work early drama achieved. However, once performances ceased, and play texts suddenly became readerly texts, all of this changed. Twycross points out that,

> Medieval plays were not written for the theater. They were put on in city streets, in churches, on playing fields, in college halls and in private houses, and they exploited each of these venues in its own distinctive way. The shape and acoustics of the venue, the skills of the actors, the nature of the audience and of the occasion, all presented certain constraints and certain opportunities. Add to this a variety of types of subject matter, and we have not one but a whole range of theatricalities. (Twycross 26)

And, as previously mentioned, Walker makes a similar point about the experience of reading a play text being a "substantially impoverished one" (Walker 9) compared to the original performance. So if readerly play texts are inadequate substitutes for performance, why would anyone waste their money on them? Why would anyone waste their time reading them? The answer to this brings us back to the library.

First of all, the geographic setting of Blomefylde's library is important. If there was ever a good place to find and read plays in late medieval England, it was East Anglia. Coldewey notes that the, "predominance of East Anglian over all other regional theatrical traditions in late

medieval England, as evidenced by the sheer number of recorded performances and by the variety of associated play texts, has been apparent since the time of Chambers" (Coldewey 211). Moreover, in spite of its small size, East Anglian play performances, "suggest a richness and diversity of theatrical practice unmatched in any other region of the country" (212). Even beyond the production of drama, East Anglia was unique in terms of overall literary production, and "no other area in England during the 175 years between 1375 and 1550 except for London could boast of so many prominent, identifiable, bookish figures and literary accomplishments" (216). Of course, among other things, high levels of literacy make such developments possible.

Malcolm Parkes has identified the development of three types of literacy throughout the Middle Ages.[55] The first type was the "professional literacy" of the clergy, and the second was the "cultivated literacy" of the Anglo-Norman aristocracy. The final type was the "pragmatic literacy" of the middle classes, acquired originally for business purposes. As this final form of literacy of developed and expanded during the later Middle Ages, the consequences for East Anglia were practical as well as symbolic. Take, for example, the role of St. Anne. The cult of Mary was especially fervent in late medieval East Anglia, so a similar enthusiasm for St. Anne is not surprising. Starting from around the eleventh century, the assumption that because Mary was the Mother of God she must have been both intellectually and spiritually gifted gained momentum, and with it Anne's role in instructing her daughter spread and took on deeper meanings. In the thirteenth century Albert the Great taught that Mary had been a master in the Seven Liberal Arts: information her mother must have taught her.[56] From the early fourteenth century onwards, depictions of Anne and her books seemed to crop up everywhere. She was featured not only in expensively illuminated manuscripts, but also on the walls of parish churches, in panels, figures and sculpture. One prominent sixteenth century statue (ca. 1502-

1512) in the Chapel of Henry VII in Westminster Abbey shows Anne teaching the Virgin Mary. Appropriately, however, the bulk of well-known images of Anne appear in books.[57] In Bodleian MS Aubrey 31 (ca. 1400), Anne is shown being so absorbed in her own readings that she seems to ignore her famous grandson. Other notable examples include the Bedford Hours, British Library MS Add. 18850, fol. 257v (ca. 1423) where the Duchess of Bedford is depicted before St. Anne instructing the Virgin Mary, and MS Auct. D. inf.2.11, fol. 51v (ca. 1430-40) showing St. Anne and the Virgin Mary with books.[58]

In East Anglia Anne held a special kind of appeal. In her *The Theater of Devotion: East Anglian Drama and Society in the Late Middle Ages* (1989), Gibson examines a poem about St. Anne in a fifteenth-century commonplace book. She finds that the poet presents Anne as "a model East Anglian matron, tending to her tithes, her almsbasket, and her prayerbook. She lives a busy, comfortable, and pious life" (Gibson 84). It is difficult, Gibson concludes, "to imagine a saint with more obvious bourgeois appeal" (84). Furthermore, as Pamela Sheingorn notes,

> It is no accident or coincidence that the image of Anne teaching the Virgin Mary appeared when it did. In fact, at the beginning of the fourteenth century there was a new urgency regarding literacy […] in other words, in order to function in their own 'modern world,' people found in increasingly necessary to be literate (Sheingorn 75)

St. Anne was identifiable because she embodied what mattered to a particularly literate region in an increasingly literate nation. Nationwide, by the fifteenth century not only was the working middle class better able to afford books, but they were buying books in increasing numbers. Furthermore, as the popularity (and uses) of Books of Hours attests, the acquisition of books was seen as a sign of social status throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[59] Through the

figure of Anne representations of materiality and spirituality mingle, giving literacy a sense of the sacred.

As scholars such as Theresa Coletti and Caroline Walker Bynum point out, late medieval female saints often maintained strong relationships to the physical world. Bynum argues that in their spiritual lives, holy women and saints did not reject physicality but sought to reach God by "sinking more fully into it," since the "body is not so much a hindrance to the soul's ascent as the opportunity for it" (Bynum 194). And Coletti turns to a Digby play itself (*Mary Magdalen* appropriately enough) to make her case for the significance of materiality in late medieval and early Tudor English drama. Coletti notes that "East Anglian versions of the life of Mary Magdalene elaborate on the physicality that was central to the saint's relationship to Jesus in her conflated biblical vita," (276) adding that "Whether it is present or absent, physical consumption occupies an important role in the Digby play, dominating the involuntary poverty into which Mary Magdalene is thrown" (Coletti 278).

All told, St. Anne was a useful saint for a place like East Anglia. Women as writers were also afforded a special place in East Anglia, which produced two of the most celebrated women authors in medieval England: Julian of Norwich (1343-1413) and Margery Kemp (1373-1439). So it comes as little surprise that three of the four Digby plays contain portrayals of authoritative women and some degree of emphasis on materiality and/or literacy. Following her conversion, Mary in *Mary Magdalen* is depicted as an active and authoritative figure: she is shown not only effectively sermonizing, but has the wherewithal to spontaneously run the kingdom of Marseilles for two years by herself. Mary goes through a series of dramatic transformations throughout the play—from aristocratic lady, to fallen woman, to pauper, to apostle, to ruler, to hermit—and

each of Mary's transformations is shaped to an extent by either materiality or learning, or some combination of the two.

The Conversion of St. Paul opens in praise of Mary and references to readership appear throughout. Each time the play shifts to another "station," some mention of the value of literacy and/or education is made. Before heading to the second station the Poet encourages audience members to read the Holy Bible for a clearer story, and before station three another endorsement for reading Scripture appears alongside an acknowledgement of the problem of translating "so holy a story" unless it receive "favorable correccyon" from "honorable masters." The play ends with the Poet attributing any flaws within the play to the dramatists' lack of literary skills. He beseeches audience members from stations high and low to excuse the play's simplicity and/or rhetorical failings (and it is noteworthy that both groups are expected to potentially take issue with textual simplicity). In short, the play hints at the existence of fairly widespread literacy or at least familiarity with textual convention.

Like *Mary Magdalen, The Killing of the Children* has a clever Mary as well. Although she is only given a handful of lines during the temple sequence, Mary's few lines reveal a character well-versed in religious law. The other female characters—mostly played by the angry mothers of the first sequence—are formidable in other ways: their physical strength and membership within what appears to be a working class collective. The play also has associations with St. Anne: the Prologue and Epilogue remind audiences that the play is dedicated to her, that the play is meant to take place on St. Anne's feast day, and that the play's scribe John Parfrey has links to Bury St. Edmunds' Candlemas Guild (known for giving devotions to St. Anne).

So if late medieval women were given a stronger role in East Anglian drama, literary production and religious thinking, did this have an influence on the sixteenth-century East

Anglian domestic household? This is difficult to answer. Historically the household was a space dominated by women, a place where they spent most of their time. According to Xenophon, whose *Treatise of the household* was first translated into English in 1532, "commonly goods and substance do come into the house by the labour and pain of the man, but the woman for the most part is she that keepeth and bestoweth it where need is" (STC 26075: fol. 11v). But sixteenth-century women were not necessarily doing the types of domestic tasks we tend to association them with. For example, despite the influx of new material goods into the Tudor home, for the majority of contemporary housewives life probably stayed much the same. More than likely, they were not overwhelmed by drastic changes to the domestic sphere, forced to spend their days dusting new teak cabinets and folding miles of exotic fabric. As historian Keith Wrightson explains,

> That of the mistress [her duties] of the household was to display skills in the arts of 'huswifery.' By that term contemporaries understood a range of activity rather different from that implied by its modern derivative 'housewife.' In the first place, it was far less concerned with the maintenance of the domestic environment. Housing was simple. The homestead of even a prosperous farmer consisted of a large 'hall,' earth-floored, open to the rafters, and containing a central hearth, with a screened off 'parlour' at one end, a service area at the other, and perhaps a separate kitchen in the yard. (Wrightson 44)

Adding that,

> Within such dwellings, furnishings were few, consisting for the most part of cooking and eating implements, bedding and provision for seating and storage […] The furnishings of merchants and gentlemen were costlier and rather more elaborate (including, for

> example, bedsteads and joined tables) but they were not essentially different in range and type. A domestic setting of such bare simplicity made relatively few demands. (44)

"Huswivery" was mostly concerned with the management of the household's daily consumption needs, food preparation in particular, and not the acquisition and maintenance of ornamental household luxuries. This, however, does not prevent modern textbooks from painting a very lavish picture of the Elizabethan material world. The "Introduction" to *The Norton Anthology of English Literature for The Sixteenth and The Early Seventeenth Century* (2000) notes that, "Elizabethans had a taste for elaborate ornament in language as in clothing, jewelry, and furniture, and, if we are to appreciate their accomplishments, it helps to set aside the modern preference, particularly in prose, for unadorned simplicity and directness" (485). While this is not necessarily mistaken—sixteenth-century material culture was undergoing significant transformations—it can be slightly misleading, giving the impression that Elizabethan access to elaborate ornament was more widespread than it actually was. The average sixteenth-century housewife would have recognized far more of the "bare" medieval household than that of the heavily furnished eighteenth century home (or even the seventeenth). While Natasha Korda has shown in her *Shakespeare's Domestic Economies: Gender and Property in Early Modern England* (2002) how the role of the housewife shifts in the period from a production to a consumption-based practice, centered on the management of domestic objects, material and architectural histories tell a different story.

It is a different matter, however, when it comes to aristocratic women and aristocratic domestic spaces. Along with other new objects, increasing numbers of books were entering the houses of the gentry and finding their way into purpose-built spaces (sometimes purpose-built gendered spaces). Now there were places for men *and* women to read at home. As Henderson

notes, "during the period 1500-1650, the spaces in which early modern readers made 'rowme' for their books were evolving. Among aristocratic families, records of books stored in chests and trunks gave way to inventories of entire closets and studies stocked with books" (Henderson 118). Overall most book closets were meant for male readers, but some were intended for women. Although architectural historian Mark Girouard locates this shift at the beginning of the seventeenth century, even by 1512 the household accounts of the fifth early of Northumberland refer to "my Lord's Library" and "my Lady's Library."[60] While no sixteenth-century book closet survives in its original state, Henderson cites two further examples (from 1556 and 1586) of homes having separate closets for men and women. By the seventeenth century, developments of this kind led Lawrence Stone to the conclusion that an emergence of a sense of "architectural privacy" was taking place.[61] It was no longer uncommon for aristocratic men and women to have private places for reading.

In her *Private Matters and Public Culture in Post-Reformation England* (1994) Lena Cowen Orlin argues that this shift in the nature of domestic objects has associations with changing conceptions of privacy and interiority. But these changes can only be cautiously described in gendered terms. The household might have had special associations with women, and women might have played a larger role in managing household affairs than historically they have been credited for, but it was still a place—architecturally and ideologically—dominated by men. The ideological structure of the Tudor household was, of course, modeled off examples provided by religious and secular hierarchies, and Henderson explains that domestic culture "relied on theoretical hierarchies (husband-wife, parent-child, master-servant)" (Henderson 173). The 1559 First Book of Homilies carefully (if not dramatically) outlines the value of this strictly hierarchical system to the entire commonwealth:

> Take away kings, princes, rulers, magistrates, judges, and such estate of God's order, no man shall ride or go by the highway unrobed, no man shall sleep in his own house or bed unkilled, no man shall keep his wife, children, and possessions in quietness. All things shall be common and there must needs follow all mischief and utter destruction both of souls, bodies, goods, and commonwealths.[62]

And even when a woman ruled the nation, energetic efforts were made to mitigate threats posed by her sex. Apologists for Elizabeth argued that:

> As England's crowned head, Elizabeth's person was mystically divided between her mortal 'body natural' and the immortal 'body politic.' While the queen's natural body was inevitably subject to the failings of human flesh, the body politic was timeless and perfect. In political terms, therefore, Elizabeth's sex was a matter of no consequence, a thing indifferent.[63]

Examples such as these illustrate that even when changes were taking place in the sixteenth-century domestic sphere, and women were directly involved in these changes, it is hard to argue convincingly that society was growing more egalitarian. If upper-class women were suddenly able to enjoy books and privacy in their homes, it probably points more to political and social changes happening outside the domestic household—outside their sphere of influence. As for East Anglia, although the region produced two important late medieval female authors and depictions of female literacy appear in art, literature and drama with some frequency, it is likely that these are results of sociocultural, economic and political factors affecting the entire regional population—not just the women. But this is not to suggest that there was no impact at all, and Blomefylde's East Anglian library gains an extra layer of meaning simply by being in a region where reading and religion had such a dynamic relationship and the act of reading (reading

women in particular) could have sacred associations. The sixteenth-century domestic space articulated political and sociocultural affairs elsewhere, and this would have been no different in Blomefylde's house. Additional clues from the reading closet helps illustrate the extent to which politics shaped Elizabethan reading habits.

Sixteenth-century reading closets held more than just books. Henderson examines the closets of three upper-class households (one belonging to John Dee) and finds the following items listed in inventories: "scientific equipment, sea compasses, 'watch-clocks,' glass bottles, spice boxes, footstools, taffeta curtains, even petticoats" (119). It made sense for privileged Elizabethans to fill their reading spaces with objects other than books, and they chose items associated with luxury, the exotic, and new forms of knowledge—here the sixteenth-century love of elaborate goods was on full display. Because these were private spaces, the objects in these reading closets point to individual tastes, interest, and notions of selfhood. Orlin explains that, "the study not only inaugurated the experience of a private behavior but also nourished the apprehension of individual selfhood" (Orlin 188). Put another way, in spite of their privacy these closets could function as political and social spaces, and because of their privacy these closets did function as political and social spaces. Moreover, these closets establish that books could function as household furnishings, producing intellectual meaning in ways that extend beyond the transmission of its content.

The "use" of sixteenth-century books has recently become a topic of substantial scholarly interest. Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine first brought attention to the topic in their influential 1990 essay, "'Studied for Action': How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy," where they demonstrate that the "'activity of reading' characteristically envisaged some other outcome of reading beyond accumulation of information; and that envisaged outcome then shaped the relationship between

reader and text" (Grafton 31). A body of criticism on "book use" soon followed, including work by Adrian Johns, Ann Blair, Jennifer Andersen, Elizabeth Sauer, David Cressy, Heidi Brayman Hackel, William Sherman, Bradin Cormack, Carla Mazzio, Margreta De Grazia and Peter Stallybrass.[64] Critics generally approach "book use" as part of the history of reading, but rarely as part of the history of Elizabethan drama. However, as the Digby manuscript proves, a text can be an object with multiple functions, none of which are fully determined by its textual content. Even though "sixteenth-, seventeenth-, and eighteenth-century books, in contemporary bindings, survive in vastly greater numbers than many other domestic objects of that time" (Pearson viii), scholarship rarely, if ever, treats surviving play texts as domestic objects. So as critics like Wendy Wall and Juliet Fleming study domestic objects as texts, perhaps its time to reevaluate how play texts can likewise serve as domestic objects.[65]

So why did Blomefylde, or anyone, bother acquiring and reading plays? They did so because they could. In the sixteenth century, "ceremony and religion together withdrew indoors from the vulgar gaze" (Holt 263) and in some cases play texts followed. Blomefylde and others like him were cultural consumers, finding alternatives to more traditional forms of participatory communal drama. Bringing the Digby plays into the Elizabethan library meant they could not function as originally intended—they could not, for example, raise funds for local projects and they could not strengthen traditional bonds of social obligation. But for the consumer, these play texts could now operate as personal and private objects. Freed from the imperatives of conventional spectatorship, these readers could interact with dramatic narratives in any way they chose. What we need to recognize, in terms of larger critical conversations within drama history, is that the Digby manuscript encourages the reevaluation of sixteenth-century play texts as it relates to identity formation and the domestic household. It also calls for a fuller understanding

of the sixteenth-century library and the politics and practices of early playbook collecting. Finally, it calls into question the suggestion that for Elizabethans the experience of owning and reading a play was a "substantially impoverished one."

[1] See Erika T. Lin, "Popular Festivity and the Early Modern Stage: The Case of *George a Greene*," *Theatre Journal*, 61.2 (2009): 271-97.
[2] See Ian W. Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping the of Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992); and Michael O'Connell, *The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm and Theater in Early-Modern England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
[3] See Greg Walker, *The Politics of Performance in Early Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 47.
[4] She argues elsewhere: "For a while the playwrights and players in the professional theatre could draw on the vital traditions of the past and rely on an audience who had themselves taken part in dramatic activity. But gradually the transitional generation died and with it died the memory of community drama" (Johnston 134).
[5] See Walker, pp. 15-25 and see Heidi Brayman Hackel, "'Rowme' of its Own: Printed Drama in Early Libraries," *A New History of Early English Drama*, eds. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 113-127.
[6] See Timothy Graham, "Matthew Parker's manuscripts: an Elizabethan Library and its use," *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland*, vol. 1, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 322-336.
[7] See Darryll Grantley, *English Dramatic Interludes, 1300-1580*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 1-5.
[8] They noticed Blomefylde during the course of their introduction to their edition of *Fulgens and Lucres*, pp. x-xi.
[9] See Donald Baker and J. L. Murphy, eds. *The Digby Plays: Facsimiles of the plays in Bodley MSS Digby 133 and E Museo 160* (Leeds: University of Leeds, School of English, 1976) and Donald Baker and J. L. Murphy, "Myles Blomefylde, Elizabethan Physician, Alchemist and Book Collector: A Sketch of a Life," *Bodleian Library Record*, 11 (1982-5), pp. 35-46. and Donald Baker and J. L. Murphy, "The Books of Myles Blomefylde," *The Library*, 5th ser., 31 (1976), pp. 377-85.
[10] See Sears Jayne, *Library Catalogues of the English Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956), p. 29.
[11] See Jayne, p. 29.
[12] See Hackel, "'Rowme' of its Own: Printed Drama in Early Libraries," *A New History of Early English Drama*, eds. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 114.
[13] See Hackel.
[14] See G. W. Wheeler ed., *Letters of Sir Thomas Bodley to Thomas James, First Keeper of the Bodleian Library*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926), number 220.
[15] See Wheeler, number 221.
[16] See Fehrenbach, R. J. and E. S. Leedham-Green eds., *Private Libraries in Renaissance England*, 6 vols. Binghamton: SUNY Press, 1992-2004.
[17] See Peter Clark, "The Ownership of Books in England, 1560-1640: The Example of Some Kentish Townsfolk," In Lawrence Stone, ed., *Schooling and Society: Studies in the History of Education* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976).

[18] See P. J. P. Goldberg, "Lay Book Ownership in Late Medieval York: The Evidence of Wills," *The Library,* 6.16 (1994), pp.181-189.
[19] See Fehrenbach, R. J. and E. S. Leedham-Green eds., *Private Libraries in Renaissance England,* 6 vols. Binghamton: SUNY Press, 1992-2004. p. 137. For a fuller discussion, see Peter W. M. Blayney, "The Publication of Playbooks," *A New History of Early English Drama,* eds. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 383-423.
[20] See Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser, "The Popularity of Playbooks Revisited," *Shakespeare Quarterly,* vol. 56, no. 1 (Spring 2005), pp. 1-32.
[21] From *The Chester Mystery Cycle,* ed. R. M. Lumiansky and David Mills, EETS, Special Series, 3 (London: EETS, 1974).
[22] From Thomas Heywood, *An Apology for Actors from the edition of 1612,* with introduction and notes by J. P. Collier, Shakespeare Society Publications, 3 (London: Shakespeare Society, 1841).
[23] From Antony Munday, et. al., *Sir Thomas More,* ed. Vittorio Gabrieli and Giorgio Melchiori, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).
[24] From Janette Dillon, *The Cambridge Introduction to Early English Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 117.
[25] From William Prynne, *Histrio-Mastix. The Players Scourge, or, Actors Tragaedie* (London, 1633), "To the Christian Reader," n. p.
[26] From *A Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge,* ed. Clifford Davidson (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 1993).
[27] See Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Erne also argues against the prevailing view of Shakespeare as primarily a "man of the theater" suggesting instead that Shakespeare wrote his plays with readers in mind, an argument based largely on bibliographical factors such as the length of printed versions and their timing.
[28] These notes come from Baker, "The Books of Myles Blomefylde."
[29] Baker and Murphy make similar observations.
[30] See Juliet Fleming, *Graffiti and the Writing Arts of Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001) p. 10. Also see William Sherman, "What did Renaissance Readers Write in their Books?," *Books and Readers in Early Modern England,* eds., Jennifer Andersen and Elizabeth Sauer, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), p. 131. Sherman explains, "the scraps of paper most readily available for miscellaneous notes were those which surrounded printed texts" (Sherman 131).
[31] When seventeenth-century collector Sir Kenelm Digby handed over the bulk of his large book collection to the Bodleian in 1634-9, the library was gaining an invaluable history of scientific thought in medieval England. The collection features a large number of manuscripts dealing with medicine, mathematics, and science. Digby also collected texts of history, law, political theory, Middle English, literature, and religion—Ian Philip has even called the Digby collection the largest coherent collection of English monastic learning to ever reach the Bodleian.
[32] See John Coldewey, "The Non-Cycle Plays and the East Anglian Tradition," *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre,* eds. Richard Beadle and Alan J. Fletcher, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 218.
[33] See Baker, "A Sketch of a Life," p. 46.
[34] See Baker, "A Sketch of a Life," p. 39.

[35] These notes come from Baker "The Books of Myles Blomefylde."
[36] While I could have used more recent scholarship for these sections, Keith Thomas' *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971) remains the authoritative study of magic and magical thinking for the period. Accordingly, Thomas is a major influence throughout relevant parts of my discussion.
[37] See Baker, "A Sketch of a Life."
[38] See Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971) p. 9.
[39] See Thomas, p. 209-252.
[40] See Thomas, p. 209-252.
[41] See Baker, "A Sketch of a Life," p. 40.
[42] See Thomas, p. 51.
[43] All of these notes come from Thomas.
[44] See Gail McMurray Gibson, *The Theater of Devotion: East Anglian Drama and Society in the Late Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).
[45] See Margaret Lane Ford, "Private Ownership of Printed Books," *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain Vol. III, 1400-1557,* eds. Lotte Hellinga and J. B. Trapp, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 213.
[46] See John Coldewey, "The Non-Cycle Plays and the East Anglian Tradition," *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre,* eds. Richard Beadle and Alan J. Fletcher, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 217.
[47] See Coldewey, p. 217.
[48] See Darryll Grantley's description of "The Conversion of St. Paul" in *English Dramatic Interludes, 1300-1580*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 71.
[49] See Grantley, p. 235.
[50] See Donald Baker, J. L. Murphy and Louis B. Hall, Jr. eds, *The Late Medieval Religious Plays of Bodleian MSS Digby 133 and E Museo 160,* Early English Text Society, no. 283 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), xlvi-xlvii.
[51] See Grantley, p. 178.
[52] See Grantley, p. 370.
[53] See Victor Turner, *Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), p. 166.
[54] See Turner, *From Ritual to Theater: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publication, 1982).
[55] See M. B. Parkes, "The Literacy of the Laity," in *Literature and Western Civilization: The Medieval World,* eds. D. Daiches and A. Thorlby (London, 1973), p. 555. Parkes distinguishes three types of literacy: "that of the professional reader, which is the literacy of the scholar or the professional man of letters; that of the cultivated reader, which is the literacy of recreation; and that of the pragmatic reader; which is the literacy of one who has read to write in the course of transacting any kind of business."
[56] Notes on St. Anne come primarily from Pamela Sheingorn, *Interpreting Cultural Symbols: Saint Anne in Late Medieval Society,* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990).
[57] See Sheingorn.
[58] Art historian Dr. Laura Cleaver, Trinity College Dublin, helped me locate these examples.

[59] See Laurel Amtower, *Engaging Words: The Culture of Reading in the later Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave, 2000). Amtower also notes: "medieval readers were pragmatic in their reading selections but also optimistic—their materials reflect a desire for upward mobility through their very didacticism" (31) and "literacy now seems to have been somewhat more widespread than has been previously thought. The late middle ages is characterized by a sense of its dependency on texts and textual analysis" (32).
[60] See Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978) p. 166.
[61] See Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), pp. 254-255.
[62] *Certayne Sermons Appoynted by the Quenes Maiestie… Newly Imprinted in Partes Accordynge as Is Mencioned in the Booke of Commune Prayers* (London, 1559).
[63] See *The Norton Anthology Of English Literature: The Sixteenth Century and the Early Seventeenth Century,* eds. George M. Logan, Barbara K. Lewalski, M. H. Abrams, and Stephen Greeblatt, (New York: Norton and Company, 2000), p. 480.
[64] See Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Ann Blair, "Reading Strategies for Coping with Information Overload ca. 1550-1700," *Journal of the History of Ideas,* 64, no. 1 (2003) pp. 11-28; Jennifer Andersen and Elizabeth Sauer, eds., *Books and Readers in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002); David Cressy, "Some Non-Textual Uses of Books," *A Companion to the History of the Book,* eds., Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 480-492; Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender, and Literacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); William Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Bradin Cormack and Carla Mazzio, *Book Use, Book Theory: 1500-1700* (Chicago: University of Chicago Library, 2005); Margreta De Grazia and Peter Stallybrass, "The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text," *Shakespeare Quarterly,* 44, no. 3 (1993), pp. 255-283.
[65] See Wendy Wall, "Household 'Writing,' or, the Joys of Carving," *Feminisms and Early Modern Texts: Essays for Phyllis Rackin,* eds., Rebecca Bach and Gwynne Kennedy, (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2009), and Fleming, *Graffiti and the Writing Arts*.

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