Chapter Two: The Apocrypha in Rep

Dam. *Wee would speake with the Poet o' the day,* Boy.

Boy. *Sir, hee is not here.*[1]

This chapter returns to the circumstances of the plays' original production in order to pursue a different approach to the question of how 'Shakespearean' a play may be. The history of the development of the categories of 'Canon' and 'Apocrypha' I have outlined above is also a history of the development of an idea of Shakespearean exceptionalism, in which a clear and value-laden distinction is made between Shakespeare's work and that of his contemporaries. A recent example of Shakespeare being treated as exceptional is Lukas Erne's discussion of disputed texts attributed to Shakespeare in print. He identifies the heyday of 'authorial misattribution' from 1634-1660, when several authors had plays misattributed to others. Between 1595 and 1622, however, only Shakespeare is implicated in the practice, with ten playbooks attributed explicitly or implicitly to him.[2] Erne's evidence is invaluable, but his conclusion, that the plays so attributed were all done so deliberately 'in order to capitalize on the popularity of his name' is only one possible interpretation, and he himself notes how remarkable it is that 'no other identifiable playwright [in this period] had a single playbook misattributed to him' (81). For Erne, this demonstrates the exceptional position held by Shakespeare; yet this attempt to create a Shakespearean anomaly rests on Erne's assumptions that the quartos in question are, in fact, to be read as *mis*attributions, and that the initials 'W.S'

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[1] *The Magnetic Lady* in *The workes of Benjamin Jonson* (London, 1641), A2^r.

[2] Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare and the Book Trade* (Cambridge, 2013), 56-89. The playbooks include *Locrine* (1595), *Thomas Lord Cromwell* (1602 and 1613), *The London Prodigal* (1605), *The Puritan* (1607), *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (1608), *The Troublesome Reign of King John* (1611 and 1622) and *1 Sir John Oldcastle* (1619).

must refer to Shakespeare. I find it unlikely that Shakespeare is such a clear-cut

exception to the norm and shall return to Erne's specific claims about *Locrine* in the next

chapter, but here I wish to argue that the meaning of the authorial attribution may in

many of these cases be more fluid than the simple 'written by' on which Erne's narrative

depends.

Recent work in repertory studies provides a framework within which to explore

the relationship between author and collaborative environment in the apocryphal plays.

This work, exemplified diversely by Roslyn Knutson, Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth

MacLean, Lucy Munro and Andrew Gurr, takes a primarily historical perspective that

prioritises the material and communal circumstances of production in the creation of

drama.[3] While not explicitly concerned with authorship, these studies offer a social

context that uses company rather than author as the organisational framework for a

body of work. As Munro argues, repertory study has become 'increasingly attractive

[because of] the influence of post-structuralist uncertainty regarding the place of the

author'; the company remains a solid, historical body in a period of uncertainty over the

definition of authorship.[4] Tom Rutter, however, notes the problem of integrating a

Shakespeare 'who effectively represents the notion of author as individual genius' into

this model; and it is telling that Knutson and Gurr's titles refer to 'The Shakespeare

Company' or 'Shakespeare's Opposites'.[5] These titles are inevitably designed to sell

books, but also insist that the company is itself, in a sense, 'Shakespearean', and thus

the works it produces are also implicitly 'Shakespearean'. Whether writing to the talents

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[3] Roslyn Knutson, *The Repertory of Shakespeare's Company* (Fayetteville, 1991); Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean. *The Queen's Men and Their Plays* (Cambridge, 1998); Lucy Munro, *Children of the Queen's Revels* (Cambridge, 2005), Andrew Gurr, *Shakespeare Opposites* (Cambridge, 2009).

[4] Munro, *Queen's Revels*, 3.

[5] Rutter, 'Introduction', 126. The tension is apparent in Bart van Es's *Shakespeare in Company* (Oxford, 2013), which paradoxically attempts to show how immersion in a company produced an individual writer of 'exceptional genius' (57).

and resources of a particular group of actors, fitting plays to the requirements of the company's performance space or responding to the other drama performed by the company and its competitors, all writers for the Chamberlain's/King's Men, including Shakespeare, worked within a shared set of conditions.

To dissociate the author from his environment in an author-centred canon is thus misleading, creating the impression of a career formed in artistic isolation rather than within a network of connected forces. Within this paradigm, I argue, the apocryphal plays that belonged to the 'Shakespeare Company' have an important role to play in discussion of the Shakespeare canon: they both influence and are influenced by Shakespeare's plays, and contribute to a company repertory that is 'Shakespearean' inasmuch as Shakespeare operates as a major governing figure in the writing, performance and representation of the plays. To borrow from Foucault, the 'author function exceeds [his] own work', an argument extended by Joseph Loewenstein in defence of the attribution of *The Passionate Pilgrim* to Shakespeare: 'a Jacobean stationer's "Shakespeare" might be very nearly generic', a standard descriptor for 'quality love poetry', suggesting that even in a less communally produced medium, the author's name transcends an individual identity.[6]   In this I follow the important work of Margreta de Grazia and Peter Stallybrass, who argue that 'the choice of [Shakespeare's] name may reflect not his authorship, in any traditional sense, but rather his centrality to the company in multiple capacities (as playwright, actor, shareholder), not to mention his distinctive loyalty to that company for which he wrote exclusively'.[7]

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[6] Michel Foucault, 'What Is An Author?' (1969), trans. Josué V. Harari. *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (London, 1984), 114. Loewenstein, *Possessive Authorship*, 60.

[7] De Grazia and Stallybrass, 'Materiality', 275-6. See also Foucault, whose note on Ann Radcliffe argues that her founding of the Gothic horror novel shows that 'her author function exceeds her own work' (114).

Five of Brooke's apocryphal plays were part of the Chamberlain's-King's Men's repertory during Shakespeare's lifetime, and these will be the test cases for this chapter. The anonymous *Mucedorus* is usually dated to the 1580s and was first published in 1598 with no company attribution, but the third quarto of 1610 – which includes new additions – was avowedly performed 'By his Highnes Seruantes vsually playing at the Globe'. The 1602 quarto of *Thomas, Lord Cromwell* (first performed c. 1600) claims it was "sundrie times publikely acted by the right honorable the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants', and the 1613 second quarto updates this to the 'Kings Maiesties Seruants'.[8] Both quartos attribute the play to 'W.S.'. *The London Prodigal* (performed c. 1603; printed 1605) was 'plaide by the Kings Maiesties seruants', and *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (performed c. 1605; printed 1608) 'acted by his Maiesties Players at the Globe'. Both feature explicit attributions to Shakespeare. Finally, *The Merry Devil of Edmonton* (first performed c. 1602) boasts that it was 'sundry times acted, by his Maiesties Seruants, at the Globe, on the banke-side' on the 1608 first quarto and all subsequent publications. *Mucedorus* and *Merry Devil* are also attributed to Shakespeare in the Charles I 'Shakespeare, Vol. 1' anthology.

These plays range from the mid-Elizabethan to the early Jacobean, from domestic tragedy to city comedy, chronicle history to romance, yet all shared the same stage and company in the first decade of the seventeenth century.[9] The aim of this chapter is not to establish precisely what Shakespeare's involvement with the plays may

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[8] For estimated performance dates I follow Knutson, *Repertory*, 179-209, and the second edition of the Oxford Shakespeare. However, as Knutson's work makes clear, the more significant factor here is that plays may have remained in the repertory for several seasons and been experienced out of sequence of composition, a fact occluded when prioritising dates of composition or first performance.

[9] A note of caution is necessary at this point. If we are to mistrust title-page evidence in respect of authorship, there is no logical reason to unquestioningly accept the company attribution either. Leo Kirschbaum, arguing that *Mucedorus* is a 'bad quarto', distrusts the company assignation on this basis ('The Texts of *Mucedorus*', *Modern Language Review* 50 (1955), 1). However, Knutson demonstrates an overwhelming verification of title page company ascriptions by other evidence. 'Evidence for the Assignment of Plays to the Repertory of Shakespeare's Company', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 4 (1989), 65-7.

have been: writer, reviser, adaptor, actor, selector, advisor, commissioner, mentor; the

possibilities are multiple and ultimately unprovable. Rather, operating under the

reasonable assumption that the company, particularly its sharers, was invested in and

responsible for the company's entire output, and acknowledging that Shakespeare is the

only author known to have been associated with these plays in the seventeenth century,

this chapter explores how these plays interact with the concerns and themes of

Shakespeare's contemporaneous plays. Crucially, my method here is not dependent on

these plays sharing *unique* connections with those of Shakespeare.[10] Rather, the point is

that the onstage distinctions between 'Shakespeare' and 'not-Shakespeare' were

blurred enough not to preclude the attachment (prior or subsequent to print) of

Shakespeare's name, and in this chapter I avoid authorial attributions in order to keep

attention fixed on the contents of these plays as experienced by early audiences. In

doing so, the distinctions between 'Shakespeare' and 'not-Shakespeare' imposed by

later generations seem far less acute.

Prodigal Husbands and Patient Wives

'This isn't what we think of as Shakespeare's kind of play'.[11] Proudfoot's statement could

have applied to the majority of the apocryphal plays, though here he is specifically

discussing *The London Prodigal.* It is a regular feature of apocryphal plays that they are

of genres which modern criticism does not associate with Shakespeare. A cursory

browse of Brooke's *Apocrypha* reveals chronicle histories of martyrs, city or humours

comedies, domestic tragedies, and plays on ancient British history. A substantial

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[10] The vast majority of the company's repertory (and the drama of the period in general) is in any case not extant, meaning that any study of company repertories must be partial. As with attribution studies (discussed in Chapter Three), the volume of lost material means that claims of unique connections between plays can only be made between a necessarily limited sample, and the survival of so many plays bearing Shakespeare's name inevitably distorts representations of the company's work.

[11] Richard Proudfoot, 'Shakespeare's Most Neglected Play', *Textual Formations and Reformations*, eds. Laurie E. Maguire and Thomas L. Berger (Newark, 1998), 152.

number of the plays do not share their genre, subject or sensibility with the established

canon, and critical assessment of their 'Shakespearean' quality is thus already usually

negatively biased. The subjectivity implicit in the remark 'what we *think* of as

Shakespeare's' (my emphasis) is a reminder, however, of the slippery associations of the

word 'Shakespearean' itself, as in Robert B. Sharpe's important but dated study which

attempts to demonstrate a more elite repertory for the Chamberlain's Men than for the

Admiral's.[12] As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, the primary concerns dictating

what constituted Shakespeare in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were

historically contingent and influenced by the politics and morals of successive ages.

Underlying this is a commercial imperative: the suggestion that Shakespeare is defined

by what can be *sold* as Shakespearean. Critics must be alert to broad generalisations

that seek to reduce and organise the Shakespearean into categories that are

unrepresentative of their contents.

The choice to divide the plays of the 1623 folio into genres of Tragedy, Comedy

and History represents, in Jowett's words, 'an arbitrary [division] that remains familiar

today and yet creates difficulties in seeing some of the plays for what they are'. He goes

on to point out that

> The overall picture of Shakespeare as a writer of three kinds of play and
>
> three only is a serious distortion. Modern criticism slowly found
>
> alternative labels: romantic comedy, Roman plays, problem plays, late
>
> plays. It has been repeatedly stressed that Shakespeare is a writer
>
> whose works constantly overflow the narrow bounds of genre.[13]

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[12] Robert B. Sharpe, *The Real War of the Theaters* (Boston, 1935).
[13] Jowett, *Shakespeare and Text*, 86, 88.

The folio's genres are part of that volume's particular publishing strategy, presenting

Shakespeare (following Jonson's model) as a playwright in the classical mould in order to

justify the extravagant packaging of this literary form in folio format. However, while

later criticism has sought to undo the generic ordering imposed on Shakespeare by the

compilers of the folio, the implications for Shakespeare's generic associations *before* the

folio have been largely overlooked. Proudfoot's assertion that 'we' do not now think of

The London Prodigal as 'Shakespeare's kind of play' assumes that readers start from a

position of thinking of Shakespeare in terms of his 'Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies',

but prior to the folio a reader would have no reason to think of the play being outside a

usual generic range for 'Shakespeare'. Munro draws on Derrida's 'idea of generic

participation without belonging' to argue that the eclecticism of early modern drama

would have trained audiences to develop a sophisticated and flexible understanding of

generic boundaries, as the self-conscious appropriation of genre by plays acted in itself

to push plays beyond the constraints of genre: 'in marking itself generically, a text

demarcates itself', a view supported by Gurr's historical observation that 'the typology

of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama has always struggled when it attempts to identify

distinctive play species of dramas'.[14] Shakespeare's 'kind of' play may, in fact, be better

thought of in terms of its generic indeterminacy than of its strict categorisation.

The two plays under consideration that are most firmly associated with

Shakespeare are *The London Prodigal* and *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, both unambiguously

attributed to him in print in his lifetime (see Figures 3 and 4). These plays both belong,

on the surface, to genres with which Shakespeare was largely unconcerned, the city

humours comedy and the domestic tragedy. Yet the links between the two and several

of Shakespeare's contemporaneous plays for the King's Men suggest a unifying set of

[14] Munro, *Queen's Revels*, 9-10; Gurr, *Opposites*, 189.

conventions and motifs that allow both plays to exceed the normal constraints of their genres and become part of a broader company interest.

[Figure 3: Title page of *The London Prodigal* (1605). Harvard University Library. [STC 22333]]

[Figure 4: Title page of *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (1608). Huntington Library, San Marino, California.]

Shakespeare's own comedies are often unusually complex in their presentation of more serious elements within the comedy. *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure* are foremost, long christened 'problem plays' or 'dark comedies'. *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Taming of the Shrew* both also incorporate extremes of suffering into their essentially comic plots, and even *The Comedy of Errors* frames its main action with the uncertain fate of Egeon. The difficulties that the folio editors clearly faced in attempting to distribute the plays across their three genres are most notable in the case of *Troilus*: a history on the title page of the quartos, prefaced as 'passing full of the palm comical' and rechristened a tragedy on its appearance in the 1623 folio. There is an attempt here to impose a classical generic framework on a play that defies classification. Similar problems will have faced the compilers of the folio as they made the decision to place *Cymbeline* among the tragedies or *The Winter's Tale* among the comedies, deliberately ignoring the new label of 'tragicomedy' which dominated the stage by the 1620s.

The London Prodigal, as an essentially comic play structured around a serious and disquieting series of plot twists, perhaps bears more in common with the difficult comedies of Shakespeare's middle period than the city comedies or humours plays that provide its most obvious precedents, as Proudfoot himself notes. Like many a city rake,

the prodigal Flowerdale engineers (with the assistance of his disguised father) his betrothal to a wealthy heiress, whose dowry is promptly withdrawn by a disgusted father when Flowerdale is arrested as a debtor. Flowerdale goes out of his way to avoid his wife once they are married (as does Bertram), and is later suspected of murdering her. Like Angelo, he is shadowed by a disguised authority figure (here, his father) who acts to prevent his behaviour resulting in tragic consequences. The connections to the near-contemporary *Measure for Measure* (1604-5) and *All's Well* (c.1607), however, are more than superficial. *The London Prodigal* shares with these plays a treatment of marital issues and patriarchal authority in a domestic context that explicitly points to the utilisation of the stock figures of the Prodigal and the Patient Wife. This in turn links the plays to the contemporary *Yorkshire Tragedy* (c.1605) and its close cousin *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage* (c.1606), which dramatise even more narrowly the relationship between a prodigal husband and a patient wife. Seen together, these plays show the newly christened King's Men displaying a sustained interest in the possibilities of the prodigal narrative at this time, developing it into a more complicatedly moralistic form of comedy – and, in the case of *Yorkshire Tragedy*, tragedy.

The London Prodigal provides the most explicit point of intersection between the prodigal narrative and the motif of the disguised ruler that became popular following the succession of James, which makes it a fascinating locus of genre collision within the repertory of the King's Men. As Hunter points out, the Jacobean moment is usually used to explain the proliferation of disguised ruler plays such as *Measure for Measure*, *The Phoenix*, *The Malcontent* and more, but these plays are also a response to the advent of Italianate tragicomedy,

> a series of plays that reflect, in the period 1602-1604, a movement away
> from the grand confrontation with corruption that *Hamlet* had implied

and toward the compromises by which justice and forgiveness could be embodied in the action . . . the sovereign mind, though eclipsed and dispossessed of its effortless superiority, is able, in the midst of corruption, to retain an adequate control through disguises and cunning and verbal superiority.[15]

Understanding the family as a microcosm of state, though, the 'disguised ruler' motif also recurs in domestic contexts, particularly in *The Phoenix* for the Children of Paul's and the King's Men's *The London Prodigal*, in both of which the 'ruler' is the head of the family, a father. The drama of this period exploits the intersection of state theory and family management through the shared motifs of disguised authority figures, prodigal dependents and personal versus state responsibility, and it is in *The London Prodigal* that these themes most explicitly coincide.

Paul Edmondson offers both an 'alternative canon' for *The London Prodigal* and a separate grouping of contemporary prodigal plays. Both groups range widely in chronology, company and authorship.[16] My grouping of plays, by contrast, all belong to a five-year period in the repertory of a single company, the King's Men, and are uniquely characterised by their balancing of a prodigal protagonist with a strong female counterpart. Where the Patient Grissil narrative traditionally renders the suffering woman passive and pious, in these plays the lead women are proactive and far more balanced. The playwrights do not set up two opposing extremes, but rather a realistic heroine and an outrageous husband. The effect of this is twofold. Firstly, it locates the prodigality of the male figure in a non-mythological environment: he is juxtaposed with

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[15] G.K. Hunter, 'Italian Tragicomedy on the English Stage', *Renaissance Drama* 6 (1973), 137.
[16] Paul Matthew Edmondson, ed., 'A Critical Edition of *The London Prodigal*', diss. (U of Birmingham, 2000), 76. His canon of eight includes *Prodigal*, *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage*, *How a Man May Choose a Good Wife from a Bad*, *The Fair Maid of Bristow*, *The Wise Woman of Hodgson*, *Patient Grissil*, *1 and 2 The Honest Whore* and *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*. The 'prodigal' plays he notes include *All's Well that Ends Well*, *The Winter's Tale*, *1 Henry IV*, *Eastward Ho*, *Coriolanus*, *Histriomastix* and *Cynthia's Revels*.

relatively realistic characters, rather than types. Secondly, it gives the Grissel figure the power, if not the responsibility, to influence the reformation of the man. While there remains an element of the man's having to come to his senses, it becomes possible for the woman to employ her own methods of persuasion – Helena's tricks, Luce's disguise, Isabella's debate – to effect that realisation. The reactions of Helena and Luce to their respective rejections by their new husbands show that the two characters are cast from a similar mould, with both prioritising the comfort and wishes of their rejecters over their own happiness and vowing to take active steps to remedy the situation. Helena 'will be gone, / That pitiful rumour may report my flight / To consolate thine ear' (3.2.120-22), leaving the country in order that Bertram may return home. Luce, meanwhile, vows to Flowerdale that 'All that I can or beg, get, or receive, / Shall be for you' (9.201-2), offering to demean herself even further after being disowned by her family by turning beggar to save her husband. Both women are pious and selfless, yet both are proactive in their grief, seeing it within themselves to rectify their husbands' situations through self-sacrifice.

The London Prodigal occupies a middle ground between All's Well and Yorkshire Tragedy in the immediacy and severity of the husband's rejection of the wife. Bertram, for all his flaws, at least spares Helena public humiliation, deferring the breaking-off of their attachment and arranging for her to be sent home to receive the news in a safe environment where, one supposes, she will be looked after. Flowerdale, by contrast, rejects Luce in the street before her family and friends, climaxing with the shocking instruction to: 'turn whore, that's a good trade: / And so, perhaps, I'll see thee now and then' (9.266-7). Bertram's disregard for Helena's future is exaggerated in Flowerdale's callous instruction. All's Well sets up the potential for miracles with Bertram's conditions for his return, and Helena's task becomes to engineer the fulfilment of those conditions through ingenuity and trial. The London Prodigal, by contrast, constructs a rejection

scenario so damning that it seems to be irreversible. Even the disguised father cannot see a way for them to be reconciled, and his comfort is limited to being able to offer her a position in a house where she can live disguised (and therefore not in shame) and an encouragement to 'Come, grieve no more, where no help can be had; / Weep not for him that is [more] worse than bad' (9.283-4). This pivotal scene pushes the play far beyond the usual boundaries of comedy. Where the prodigal's public humiliation, his bankruptcy and his wife's display of loyalty would usually be expected to provoke his conversion and end the play, they instead cause him to descend to cruel discourtesy in addition to his other behaviour. As such, the prodigal character is no longer a harmless rogue but a dangerous and potentially irredeemable villain, as his own father opines. The traditional prodigal narrative is endangered by his attempts to destroy the possibility of homecoming.

Luce shares with Isabella in *Measure for Measure* the strength to stand up for moral right against authority figures: Luce's public refusal to forsake her husband at her father's instruction is echoed in Isabella's refusal of Angelo's requests and promise to 'tell the world aloud / What man thou art' (2.4.161-62), as well as later in Desdemona's 'divided duty' between Brabantio and Othello (1.3.196-205). The two are further linked by their immediate condemnation by the people for whom they have taken a stand. Flowerdale's 'Bring me your dowry, or never look on me' (9.232) is of a piece with Claudio's 'What sin you do to save a brother's life, / Nature dispenses with the deed so far' (3.1.146-47). The tone of Claudio's rebuke is very different to that of Flowerdale's, but both men fail to appreciate the sacrifice made by the woman in her moral stand, and exhort her to commit vice. Both women are then comforted by the play's disguised authority figure. In *Measure for Measure*, however, the Duke is able to intercede between Isabella and Claudio, and offer the beginnings of a plan to rescue the situation. Old Flowerdale can do neither. *Measure for Measure* is not a prodigal narrative in the

traditional sense, but in its structural parallels with *The London Prodigal* it appropriates

important themes from that narrative, imagining Angelo as a sexual prodigal who is

temporarily given the power to pursue his sinful persuasions until his engineered

reformation.[17] *Measure for Measure* thus experiments with a prodigal structure as an

indictment of other forms of aberrant behaviour; here, the abuse of power occasioned

by lust. Flowerdale's prodigality sees him, rather than softened by marriage, moved

instead to abuse and forsake his domestic responsibilities, as does Bertram. There

appears to be a wider intent within this group of King's Men's plays to reorient the

prodigal story to focus on the effects of the prodigal's behaviour, not on his own

happiness and financial situation, but on the welfare of those around him. In place of

the young irresponsible rakes of plays such as *A Mad World, My Masters* or *2 If You*

Know Not Me, You Know Nobody (the character type common, in fact, to much city

comedy) are men with political or domestic responsibilities that are jeopardised.

These aspects of *The London Prodigal* were clearly in mind when the company

first became aware of the pamphlet *Two moſt unnaturall and bloodie Murthers*,

published in the same year (1605). At a time when the King's Men had been expanding

the role of the stage prodigal to treat discourses of moral and social responsibility, the

story of a young spendthrift murdering his family offered a fitting conclusion to this

short period of the company's work. George Wilkins's *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage*

is ostensibly a comedy, although the abruptness of the happy ending has led critics to

argue that 'Wilkins reimposes a happy ending on the prodigal's story' in what appears to

be a 'hurried alteration'.[18] Several critics around the turn of the nineteenth and

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[17] Ervin Beck offers a tightly argued discussion of the motifs which strictly define the prodigal narrative: the young man, newly come of age and accountable; the rejection of a father figure or social inheritance; the humiliating defeat; the conversion and attempted homecoming. 'Terence Improved: The Paradigm of the Prodigal Son in English Renaissance Comedy,' *Renaissance Drama* 6 (1973), 107-22.

[18] Knutson, *Repertory*, 119; Sykes, *Sidelights*, 94.

twentieth centuries argued that this patched-up ending was a result of the play's

original ending, extant as *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, being excised. My contention is that this

is an aspect of the play's direct response to *The London Prodigal*, taking the prodigal's

behaviour even nearer to disaster and subverting it at the end with a yet more

miraculous recovery on the protagonist's part. The primary agenda of *Miseries* is a

critique of the practices of wardship and arranged marriage, as Glenn H. Blayney

suggests, relating it to the wider contemporary trend for plays on domestic relations,

such as *A Woman Killed with Kindness* and *The Wise Woman of Hogsdon.*[19] As such,

although *Miseries* pushes the prodigal behaviour of his protagonist to an extreme, it

continues to be restricted by the conservative, self-righting conventions of the comedy.

Prodigality in the early modern drama is usually comic, inevitably resulting in humiliation

and repentance, often prompted by a *deus ex machina* figure such as Old Flowerdale.

The prodigal (following the word's biblical origin) is usually a young man deliberately

rebelling against a father figure or, as Beck notes in a context peculiarly applicable to

Yorkshire Tragedy, 'his inheritance from a preceding generation'.[20] The behaviour of the

prodigal is thus made safe for the audience by the social structures within which he

moves; thus, even in *The London Prodigal*, which threatens severe consequences for

those affected by his behaviour, the presence of a disguised father figure and other

senior characters promises that the prodigal will ultimately repent and be assimilated

into polite society. An essential part of the prodigal parable is the return 'home' of the

protagonist.

By contrast, the dramatist of *Yorkshire Tragedy* is concerned with the

destructive nature of prodigality, which was being similarly explored in other King's

Men's works of the time, notably *The London Prodigal* but also *The Fair Maid of Bristow*.

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[19] Glenn H. Blayney, 'Wilkins's Revision in *The Miseries of Inforst Mariage*', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 56.1 (1957), 30-1.
[20] Beck, 'Terence Improved', 109.

Prodigality is central to several of Thomas Middleton's comedies of this period, including *The Puritan*, *A Mad World My Masters* and *A Trick to Catch the Old One*; however, it is more instructive to note here the play's connections to its predecessors in the prodigal comedies of the King's Men. The initial situation is similar, but takes a far more severe stance against prodigality. Here, the 'young master' (1.8) is removed from a wider social structure and becomes the senior figure himself: his Wife's uncle is his 'late guardian' and too far away to exercise influence over his former ward. Uncurbed by polite or restraining influences, and with the domestic authority to fully indulge his prodigality, the Husband cannot be saved by the conventional devices of prodigal comedies, as in *Bristow* or *Prodigal.* Knutson argues that this is because his crime is too heinous.[21] In fact, the reverse is the case: his crimes become thus heinous *because* he cannot be saved. Without the restraining influences of family and authority, prodigality is unfettered and results in tragedy. There can be no return home when the home itself is the locus of prodigal behaviour.

This fits with the theory that the Husband is influenced by demonic possession. The clue for this comes from a woodcut on the title-page of the source pamphlet, which shows a clawed, demonic figure reaching out to Calverley as he raises a club over his prostrate family. Critics who have spotted this argue that the Husband's prodigality leads to 'spiritual consumption', allowing a reading of his behaviour as a form of possession.[22] The relative subtlety of this device has led it to be missed by some critics, including Viviana Comensoli who writes off the Husband's behaviour as a madness caused by the loss of his reputation and property, but Cawley argues that it is only the source pamphlet that refers to madness, while the play deliberately sets out to establish

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[21] Knutson, *Repertory*, 118.
[22] A.C. Cawley and Barry Gaines, eds., *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (Manchester, 1986), 17.

his state of mind as something worse: 'beggary of the soul' (2.36).[23] The language of

devilry and damnation is iterated throughout the play and leads to the inevitable

conclusion of what becomes a Christian tragedy, leaving him 'spiritually defeated'

(Cawley, 117) even after the devil's departure. The amalgamation of prodigal play,

domestic drama and Christian tragedy creates a unique piece of theatre whose most

intriguing parallels may arguably be found with *Doctor Faustus*, first printed in 1604 just

before the writing of *A Yorkshire Tragedy*. Jackson perceptively notes that 'Husband is

shown to be damned because he is convinced he is'; that is, he is in a state so far from

grace that he believes he cannot be saved, and thus is incapable of asking for the

requisite forgiveness.[24] This debate similarly occupies *Faustus*, another play in which

prodigality is unmonitored by authority figures, where a demonic influence is wielded

over the protagonist and where damnation is the only possible consequence of the

behaviours chronicled in the play. The two Edmonton plays similarly feature devils

conjured up at the bidding of human characters: comically in the King's Men's *The Merry*

Devil of Edmonton, and ultimately disastrously in *The Witch of Edmonton* (c.1621). All of

these plays are concerned with damnation as the ultimate end of dabbling in the

demonic. While *Yorkshire Tragedy* shares these concerns, its strategy is far more sober.

Both *Faustus* and *The Witch of Edmonton* visit an uncompromising end upon their devil-

influenced characters, but the bulk of their plots is essentially comic. Most pertinently,

the devils themselves are represented expressly comically in *Witch* and at least

familiarly in *Faustus*, where Mephistopheles has the leisure to engage in conversation

with his victims. The spirits of *Yorkshire Tragedy* are, by contrast, invisible. They may or

may not exist, despite several characters blaming them for the Husband's behaviour.

They are not the fantasy demons of a morality tale, but the real, uninvited monsters of

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[23] Viviana Comensoli, *'Household Business': Domestic Plays of Early Modern England* (Toronto, 1996), 100; A.C. Cawley, '*A Yorkshire Tragedy* and *Two Most Vnnaturall and Bloodie Murthers*', *The Morality of Art*, ed. D.W. Jefferson (London, 1969), 113.

[24] MacDonald P. Jackson, *Studies in Attribution: Shakespeare and Middleton* (Salzburg, 1979), 49.

daily life. While *Faustus* may be considered a Christian tragedy, *Yorkshire Tragedy* presents the lessons locally and uncompromisingly.

It is in this play that the patience of the Patient Grissel figure finds its limits when confronted with murder. As the Wife awakes to find her children slain, she ceases apologising for him:

> What is it has beguiled him of all grace
>
> And stole away humanity from his breast,
>
> To slay his children, purpose to kill his wife,
>
> And spoil his servants? (5.90-3)

Further, she is immediately willing to forsake the family home, as murder 'will ne'er out as long as the house stands' (5.99). In its final and most daring inversion of the prodigal story, the company deny the prodigal his homecoming, his actions condemning both his body to death and his household to ruin. This is in contrast to the 'conventional pious solution' of *The London Prodigal* , which Edmondson agrees is 'a carefully conservative play, which presents an unquestioned notion of social conformity.[25] Criticism of the ending of *Miseries*, meanwhile, is perhaps best expressed in H.H. Adams' opinion that it 'mutilates [the Calverley story] beyond all recognition'.[26] *Yorkshire Tragedy* shows the dramatist's mature, bleak recognition of the tragic inevitability of prodigal narratives by allowing the action to follow uncompromisingly its factual source to complete destruction. It is perhaps no coincidence that the company's *Lear,* first performed around this time, took a similar direction in offering a bleak conclusion to a story where audiences may have anticipated Cordelia's survival.

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[25] Dieter Mehl, *The Elizabethan Dumb Show: The History of a Dramatic Convention* (London, 1965), 172; Edmondson, '"Beyond the Fringe"? Receiving, Adapting, and Performing *The London Prodigal*', *The Shakespeare Apocrypha*, ed. Douglas A. Brooks (Lampeter, 2007), 213.
[26] H.H. Adams, *English Domestic Or, Homiletic Tragedy, 1575 to 1642* (New York, 1943), 160.

While *Yorkshire Tragedy* has attracted attention for its speed and efficiency, it is perhaps even more interesting that this short, focused drama also succeeds in experimenting with a range of genres, pulling together elements familiar from contemporary dramatic traditions and distinguishing itself in each. The play is most commonly referred to as a domestic tragedy or murder play: Keith Sturgess edits it alongside *Arden of Faversham* and *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, while Knutson also links it to other contemporary crime plays such as the Chamberlain's Men's *A Warning for Fair Women* and *The Fair Maid of Bristow*, and the lost plays *Page of Plymouth*, *Cox of Collumpton* and *Thomas Merry*.[27] It is inarguable that *Yorkshire Tragedy* fits this category, yet the category itself is rather general, running the risk of overlooking the differences in this play's approach. With the domestic tragedy, *Yorkshire Tragedy* shares the characteristics of murders based on a contemporary true story, non-aristocratic characters and a (primarily) household setting. *Yorkshire Tragedy* is, however, much later than most other domestic murder plays. Cawley argues that this influences the method by which religious and moral instruction is delivered. The Elizabethan murder plays point towards spiritual redemption at the end of the play; the 'scaffold speeches' of *Arden* or *Kindness* turning the plays into what he describes as 'Christian penitential plays'.[28] *Yorkshire Tragedy*, on the other hand, does not allow the Husband a final repentance. In the final scene he acknowledges that he is 'void of grace' (8.44), and tells his wife 'O, would you *could* pray heaven me to forgive' (8.49, my emphasis). His earthly repentance is tempered by an understanding that there is no divine forgiveness for his actions; this must be compared to *Arden*, in which Alice is 'now going to God' (18.2) and asks 'let me meditate upon my savour Christ, / Whose blood must save me for the blood I shed' (18.10-11). Cawley thus makes a distinction between the penitential play and the

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[27] Knutson, *Repertory*, 45.

[28] A.C. Cawley, *English Domestic Drama: A Yorkshire Tragedy: An Inaugural Lecture* (Cambridge, 1966), 11.

'Christian Tragedy', which completes the fall by damning as well as killing the wrongdoer, warning by negative example rather than through successful repentance.

The domestic tragedy is so called primarily in order to distinguish it from 'high' tragedy, the genre for which Shakespeare is particularly celebrated. Yet Cawley's identification of *Yorkshire Tragedy's* distinction from other domestic tragedies actually serves to bind it more closely to the agendas of high tragedy within the repertory of the King's Men. *Othello*, performed a year or so before *Yorkshire Tragedy*, is an essentially domestic tragedy that similarly denies spiritual redemption: Othello is concerned only with his earthly memory, Iago will not speak word, 'not to pray' (5.2.343) and even Desdemona is denounced by Othello as 'a liar gone to burning hell' (5.2.150). In the company's other early Jacobean tragedies, Macbeth is unable to pray, and Vindice and Hippolito will 'die after a nest of snakes' (5.3.125), although their mother at least converts. *The Lady's Tragedy* – itself associated at one time with Shakespeare – sets up a sustained dichotomy between the Tyrant's damnable acts and Govianus's divinely sanctioned revenge. While *A Yorkshire Tragedy's* setting and characters define it as a domestic drama, therefore, its more complex treatment of spiritual issues links it to higher forms of tragedy. The experimentation works both ways: Shakespeare's *Othello* takes the stock figures of comedy and an essentially domestic-bourgeois story, elevated through the rank of the characters and Othello's self-mythologizing to the status of tragedy; while *A Yorkshire Tragedy* uses a popular domestic drama to explore higher concerns.

This is a deliberate strategy, made apparent in the anonymity of the characters of the latter play. Throughout the entire of *The Yorkshire Tragedy* there is no reference to Yorkshire, the Calverleys or any of the characters' real names. The only location mentioned, in fact, is London. In the opening scene, the servants Oliver and Ralph are

based at the house of their mistress, she who is in a 'passionate humour for the long

absence of her love' (1.1-2). It is iterated throughout Scene 1 that Sam, who brings the

news of Husband's marriage to Wife, arrives 'from London': (8, 15.1, 25, 26, 46-7, 60).

The phrasing suggests that the news he brings is London news, and the setting is

implicitly backed up by the failure of the remainder of the play to specify location at any

point. Maxwell noticed this but dismissed it as an error symptomatic of the 'dreadful

inaptness' of the scene.[29] It seems clear that *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, despite its name, is in

fact set in London. Previous commentators have suggested that the anonymity of the

characters in scenes 2-8 may be an attempt to avoid censure, and Marc Friedlaender

believes Scene 1 with its references to London is a later addition that further attempts

to make the play acceptable for performance. He adds, however, that 'the disguise was

transparent, and was meant to be': the currency of the Calverley story would ensure

that audiences would recognise the play's true subject regardless.[30] Maxwell's

arguments against Friedlaender's theory are entirely unsatisfactory; he contends that

lines such as 'I am right against my house, seat of my ancestors' (8.1) are clearly, by

reference to the pamphlet, glossed as being in Yorkshire. In this he misses the crucial

point of Friedlaender's argument; that, despite the play's dependence for language on

its source material, it exists independently of it in the theatre. On its own terms, *A

Yorkshire Tragedy* does not tell the story of the Calverleys, but the story of an

anonymous family who appear to live in London. By deliberately stripping away the

pamphlet's references to locale, and using Scene 1 to localise the play in London, the

setting is changed, yet remains recognisable to anyone familiar with the pamphlet. I

concur with Friedlaender, except to agree with Jackson that the scene was part of the

play as written rather than a later addition, its anonymity and vague location part of the

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[29] Maxwell, *Shakespeare Apocrypha*, 146.
[30] Marc Friedlaender, 'Some Problems of *A Yorkshire Tragedy'*, *Studies in Philology* 35.2
(1938), 251

fundamental structure of the play. While this may well have been a means of avoiding censure, the anonymity of the story serves to universalise its themes, raising the stakes by avoiding specific contemporary reference.

If the title *A Yorkshire Tragedy* was introduced only to the print publication by Thomas Pavier in order to capitalise on the sales potential of the popular scandal's currency, then the play may even have originally been performed under its far more enigmatic, broader-reaching and leading secondary title, *All's One.* Stanley Wells notes in his introduction to the play for *Thomas Middleton: Collected Works* that 'the headtitle unequivocally presents it as an alternative title for this particular play', as opposed to being an overall title for the 'Four plays in one'.[31] Wells is, however, at a loss to explain what he considers to be an 'entirely inappropriate' title for the play. He glosses the phrase as meaning 'of no account', which he finds inappropriate for a murder play. The title's meaning, however, is suggested by Annabel Patterson's work on *Henry VIII.* Patterson's argument is that that play's original title, the enigmatic *All is True*, is deliberately ironic, directing the audience to question the very conception of historical truth.[32] With this in mind, and in the context of the putative censorship issues surrounding this play, the title of *All's One* yields a possible further meaning: 'All is the *same*'.[33] This London-based murder play was meant to be interpreted as a dramatisation of the popular Calverley murders, yet it could not openly advertise it as such. Thus, the enigmatic title of the piece is designed to alert the audience to the fact that the events are the *same* as those reported in the pamphlets and ballads currently circulated.

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[31] Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino, eds, *Thomas Middleton: Collected Works* (Oxford, 2007), 452.
[32] Annabel Patterson, 'All is True: Negotiating the Past in *Henry VIII*',*Elizabethan Theater: Essays in Honor of S. Schoenbaum*, eds R.B. Parker and S.P. Zitner (Newark, 1996), 147-9.
[33] Cf. *The London Prodigal*: 'if there be any thing between us, then there is / If there be not, then there is not: be or be not, all is one' (8.52-3). The dual senses of 'All is the same' and 'It does not matter' need not be mutually exclusive. Stern notes that 'All is one' was Robert Armin's 'own personal verbal tick', recurring throughout that character's roles for the King's Men, and in his own *Nest of Ninnies* (London, 1608) the line 'fooles thinking to be wise, become flat foolish, but all is one' (sig. B1^r) similarly lends itself to the sense that the fool is the *same* regardless. *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan* (Oxford, 2000), 104.

Yorkshire murders, London murders, all's one; and the audience would have understood

it as such. This title renders the concerns and themes of the play less specific allowing it

to align instead with the company's exploration of the limits of the prodigal motif.

The London Prodigal and *A Yorkshire Tragedy* are therefore, in these senses,

very much Shakespeare's kind of play, in that they share the motifs and generic

complexity of his plays of the same period and act alongside them to tease out the

ramifications of a popular set of stage figures. Regardless of authorship, all's one on

stage, as the shared identity of ensemble company and the repertory it performs aligns

the plays seen on consecutive days with one another. That these two plays were

published bearing Shakespeare's name continues the blurring of distinction between

these play's and Shakespeare's own, suggesting that the reader/spectator may have

seen not difference but a continuous company exploration of a genre and stock figures,

all the plays feeding into one another.

Absent Kings and Common Voices

> O, what a dangerous time is this we live in!
>
> There's Thomas Wolsey, he's already gone,
>
> And Thomas More, he followed after him:
>
> Another Thomas yet there doth remain,
>
> That is far worse then either of those twain,
>
> And if with speed, my Lords, we not pursue it,
>
> I fear the King and all the land will rue it. (*Cromwell* 4.5.53-59)

Within the play-world of *Thomas Lord Cromwell*, the words of Stephen Gardiner refer

with relish to the dangerous political climate of King Henry VIII's court, a world in which

the rise and fall of great men is repeatedly enacted. This little-read play dramatises the

titular counsellor's roots in Putney, his escapades in Europe and his rapid rise and no-

less rapid fall from royal favour, concluding with the execution plotted by Gardiner.

Taken out of their dramatic context, however, the words resonate with both the

theatrical world at the start of the seventeenth century and the editorial and

bibliographic study of the early twenty-first century. Scott McMillin notes that 'The end

of Elizabeth's reign and the beginning of James I's saw a wave of plays on the reign of

Henry VIII'.[34] The audience for *Cromwell* at the Globe in c.1599-1600 would soon be able

to enjoy Henry Chettle's now-lost two part play on the rise and fall of Thomas Wolsey at

the rival Rose playhouse, and may perhaps have also been aware of an attempt to

produce a play dealing with the life of the second Thomas, Thomas More.

The dates and company allegiance of this last play are in more doubt, but John

Jowett and Will Sharpe have lately concurred on the case for the original play being

written c.1600 by Anthony Munday and revised c.1603-4.[35] More controversial, but

compelling, is the recent case that the revisions may have been for the King's Men.

David Kathman destabilises some of the 'facts' surrounding a crucial piece of historical

evidence in arguing that the plot of *2 Seven Deadly Sins* in fact belonged to the

Chamberlain's Men rather than Strange's. Establishing first that the manuscript may

have come into the possession of Dulwich College by way not of Edward Alleyn but of

William Cartwright – who had connections with both Alleyn and the King's Men – he

opens up the possibility that the names of the actors in the plot can be more easily

associated with the Chamberlain's Men of c.1597-98.[36] If *2 Seven Deadly Sins* belonged

to Shakespeare's company, then there is no good cause to believe the scribe who

prepared the part – who is also Hand 'C' of the *More* manuscript – was associated with

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[34] Scott McMillin, *The Elizabethan Theatre and the Book of Sir Thomas More* (Ithaca, 1987), 82.
[35] John Jowett, ed., *Sir Thomas More* (London, 2011), 415-60; Sharpe, 'Authorship and Attribution', 683-97.
[36] David Kathman, 'Reconsidering *The Seven Deadly Sins*', *Early Theatre* 7.1 (2004), 18. Kathman draws on the compelling deconstruction of assumptions by Scott McMillin, 'Building Stories: Greg, Fleay, and the Plot of *2 Seven Deadly Sins*', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 4 (1989): 53-62.

Henslowe's company. This strengthens Gary Taylor's assertion that 'a plausible case

could be made for revival by the King's Men', and allows Shakespeare to have made the

revisions in the middle of his career, as supported by internal evidence.[37] It also supports

McMillin's argument that the revisions are designed for a downscaled revival by a

smaller company with a lead actor accustomed to substantial roles – in this case,

Burbage rather than Alleyn. Gurr has challenged Kathman's arguments, and Jowett

remains ambivalent, suggesting that the revisions could equally have been made for

Worcester's Men in 1603-04.[38] For the purposes of this chapter, it is the *probable*

contemporaneity of the revised play and *possible* shared company ownership with

Cromwell that are important.

The fates of the plays seem to mirror those of their protagonists as described by

Gardiner. *Cardinal Wolsey* is, indeed, 'already gone', a lost play whose contents may

only be guessed. *Sir Thomas More*, too, threatened to have 'followed after him' and may

never have been performed: however, since its reintroduction to critical attention, a

patchwork manuscript of the play has become an important document for theatre

historians. By contrast, *Thomas Lord Cromwell* indeed 'doth remain'. Two extant quartos

(1602 and 1613) are suggestive of theatrical revival, and the play was later included in

the third and fourth Shakespeare folios of 1664 and 1685, leading to the play's

continued presence in the earliest eighteenth-century collections of Shakespeare and

the play's later publication as apocryphal Shakespeare.

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[37] Gary Taylor, 'The Date and Auspices of the Additions to *Sir Thomas More*', *Shakespeare and Sir Thomas More*, ed. T.H. Howard-Hill (Cambridge,1989), 124.

[38] The argument for the re-assignation of *7 Deadly Sins* to the Chamberlain's Men was initially refuted by Gurr, *Shakespeare Company*, 18n, and sustained in *Shakespeare's Opposites*, Gurr maintains that the biggest problem remains the identification of Hand C with the plot of *Fortune's Tennis* (c.1602) for the Admiral's Men, which would suggest that the scribe moved from the Admiral's Men to the Lord Chamberlain's Men and back again. However, as Jowett argues, 'the possibility still remains that Hand C was a freelance scribe/play-doctor with no fixed tie to a single company' (*More*, 102). Gurr's position is thoroughly demolished by Kathman in 'The Seven Deadly Sins and Theatrical Apprenticeship', Early Theatre 14.1 (2011): 121-39, which continues additionally to reinforce at least the possibility of *Sir Thomas More's* ownership by the Chamberlain's Men at the time of its revisions.

The three plays are undeniably connected by subject matter, and the two extant plays share a focus on the rise and fall of a public figure that is also likely to have been shared by the lost plays on Wolsey.[39] Whether or not those playgoers would have thought of the *Thomas* that 'doth remain' as any worse than the others cannot be known, but the cameo appearances of the two other Thomases in 3.3 of *Cromwell* suggest the theatrical currency of Henry VIII's most famous courtiers. It is striking, moreover, that all three stories came to share a connection with William Shakespeare. The initials 'W.S.' on the title page of *Cromwell* were first interpreted as indicating Shakespeare by the compiler of the Charles I volume in the 1630s, an interpretation consolidated by Chetwind in the 1664 folio. The three pages of additions in what has since become known as 'Hand D' in the manuscript of *Sir Thomas More* have been associated with Shakespeare since the end of the nineteenth century, and most scholars now accept that they are in his own hand (but see Chapter Three below). Finally, while the play of *Wolsey* is unconnected with Shakespeare, the fall of Wolsey is one of the key structural strands of Fletcher and Shakespeare's later *Henry VIII*, a play which also features Gardiner plotting against Cromwell, linking it with the earlier Chamberlain's play. Excessive attention to Shakespeare's history 'cycle', as a result of the desire to show Shakespeare's unity of thought and grand design, means that *Henry VIII* is often excluded from book-length studies or collections of criticism on Shakespearean history, contributing to the division between Shakespeare and the popular trend for plays on Tudor history. It is significant, then, that two of the apocryphal plays most likely to be associated with Shakespeare – *More* through the apparent Shakespearean revisions, *Cromwell* as a property of Shakespeare's company, and thus of Shakespeare himself – both deal with the court politics of Henry VIII's reign, which was also the matter of one

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[39] Henslowe's records refer to the first part of *Wolsey* as 'the Rissynge of carnowlle wollsey' (Gurr, *Opposites*, 260), which suggests that the two part play followed a similar structure to *More* and *Cromwell*, perhaps following the successful *Tamburlaine*.

of his final collaborative plays. My concern here is with how one might define this 'Shakespearean' connection.

Cromwell and *More*, together with Samuel Rowley's roughly contemporary *When You See Me, You Know Me* (c.1604), share as their protagonists major figures in Henry VIII's court, but also share concerns surrounding kingship: the conflict between obedience to king and to God; the negotiation between force and mercy in treating subjects; the morality of rebellion and protest; the obtaining of power versus the dangers of ambition; and the authority of religious leaders. Considered as a group, the shared environment of Henry VIII's court becomes a crucible for these debates, played out within the episodic structure of the chronicle history. The debates are not exclusive to these plays, but the court setting creates a conducive language and framework for their discussion, a framework that was available to Fletcher and Shakespeare for adaptation to the concerns of 1613 when the Henrician court was reimagined for *Henry VIII.*

The revival in 1986 of the alternative title *All is True* by the editors of the Oxford Shakespeare as the 'title by which [*Henry VIII*] was known to its first audiences' underscores a key difference between that play and the other histories included in the 1623 folio.[40] While it is assumed that the folio's compilers re-titled the play 'for purposes of continuity with the titles of the other history plays', the enigmatic and aphoristic title also connects the play with the small canon of early Jacobean plays on Tudor history, most relevantly *When You See Me, You Know Me* but also *1* and *2 If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody* (c.1605).[41] The three titles all alert audience members to the layers of truth and allegory inherent in the plays; that the audience, as it 'sees', is expected also

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[40] Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, eds., *William Shakespeare, The Complete Works* (Oxford, 1986), 1193.
[41] Gordon McMullan, ed., *Henry VIII* (London, 2000), 150.

to 'know' the 'truth' of what it is seeing. As Patterson argues, the title of *All is True* is deliberately ironic, articulating a conception of historical truth that sees the creation of history as a collaborative and politically interested process that is freely inventive in its appropriations of 'fact' to advance the chronicler's agenda .[42] It is revealing that these titles, which make explicit their strategies of truth and interpretation, coincide with plays set in the early Tudor court. Few plays are extant dealing with the reign of Henry VII, a situation which gives the impression of a clear divide between the concerns of the chronicle plays on pre-Tudor history (most obviously Shakespeare's tetralogies) and the later histories that take as their subject the courts of Henry VIII and his children.[43] It is to this latter group that *Cromwell* and *More* also belong, both in their subject matter and in the form in which their themes are explored.

Cromwell and *More* are rare examples of English history plays that deliberately avoid portraying the monarch on stage while depicting his closest courtiers. Henry VIII is a continual presence throughout *More* and the second half of *Cromwell*, yet never appears in person or has his words spoken verbatim. He is also, crucially, criticised only through implication, never directly. In this, the two plays show an Elizabethan discretion towards potentially slanderous treatment of the current Queen's father, a discretion relaxed by Rowley in *When You See Me*, first performed during James's reign. The absence of the king in *Cromwell* and *More* is emphasised through the extraordinary number of low-status characters testifying to the title characters' worth. Cromwell is praised by Banister's Wife (2.1.33-35), Seely and his wife (4.2.44-9), nameless merchants (4.3) and citizens (5.4), while More's reputation is established by the rebels (2.4.40-1, 54-5, 85, 3.1.92-103), the players (4.1.268-74, 314-9), his warders and the Poor Woman

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[42] Patterson, 'All is True', 149.
[43] The only extant play I am aware of dealing with Henry VII's reign is John Ford's *Perkin Warbeck* (printed 1634), although the opening minutes of the reign are depicted in Shakespeare's own *Richard III.*

(5.1) and his servants (5.2). The dangers of showing the King on stage are turned into an opportunity by the dramatists to re-make history from the ground up, allowing audiences to see statesmen through the eyes of their peers, as opposed to the earlier chronicle plays that allowed kings to create their own reputation. This develops the successful strategy of Shakespeare's *Henry IV* and *Henry V* plays, which shift towards an emphasis on the commons' view of their leaders. As Edna Zwick Boris notes:

> In the first tetralogy the people, particularly the commons, have little
> formal apparatus through which to make their views known yet have
> great power in helping determine through their support who will be
> king; in the second tetralogy, the people and the support they offer a
> leader progress from being a recurring theme to being accorded formal
> recognition.[44]

The important point here is that it is the *formal* apparatus that the earlier plays lack. Whereas rebels such as Jack Cade and Jack Straw appropriate power through rebellion, the influential shift in *Henry IV* and *Henry V* is towards monarchs actively seeking and listening to the views of common people, allowing the common voice to be mediated through dialogue and argument as well as violence. This is commensurate with the 'Jacobean moment', most often discussed in relation to plays such as *Measure for Measure* and *The London Prodigal*, which courted royal favour upon the Jacobean succession by engaging with the new king's theories of government.[45] The removal of the king and the prioritisation of lower-class voices is a concurrent step in this movement, and thus *Cromwell* and *More* evolve out of Shakespeare's work on history

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[44] Edna Zwick Boris, *Shakespeare's English Kings, the People and the Law* (Rutherford, 1978), 158.
[45] This is particularly relevant to the years 1603-04, during which James's own *True Lawe of Free Monarchies* and *Basilicon Doron* were reprinted two and seven times respectively. See Elizabeth Marie Pope for a survey of the materials dealing with the responsibility of the ruler during these years. 'The Renaissance Background of *Measure for Measure*', *Shakespeare Survey* 2 (1949), esp 70.

plays, just as the related *When You See Me* borrows directly from *Henry V* in its depiction of the disguised king moving among his lowest subjects.

The absence of the king, however, becomes both criticism and warning in *Cromwell*, a play that has received surprisingly little critical attention. Here, the king's absence may be read as a form of political impotence, as he is reduced to little more than a powerless name. As Gardiner's plot reaches its conclusion, Cromwell places faith in Henry: 'The king! Let me go to him face to face:/ No better trial I desire than that' (5.3.33-4). The king, however, is absent, and Cromwell's bitter words later articulate the lesson of the king's absence. 'And is his Princely ears so much bewitched / With scandalous ignomy, and slanderous speeches, / That now he doth deny to look on me?' (5.5. 47-9). The final irony, the arrival of a reprieve and summons from the King moments after Cromwell's execution, shows Henry suffering the penalty for his distance from court affairs. He is dissociated, so out of touch even with matters concerning the man whom he called 'even half himself' (5.5.46) that he is unable to prevent that man's execution. While the play never says anything explicitly negative about Henry VIII, his weakness is implicit and constructed as a direct extension of the lessons learned by Hal/Henry V in Shakespeare's second tetralogy; that only through a connection with one's subjects can a king become strong. This discussion also underpins *When You See Me*, dramatising Henry's strength through his interest in all subjects and his weakness in being manipulated by courtiers with their own agendas. It is no coincidence that the Catholic Gardiner is a key manipulator in both plays, and his reappearance in a similar capacity in *Henry VIII* is telling of the use of Henry VIII's court by dramatists. While retaining individual characteristics, several courtiers such as Wolsey and Gardiner become figures of Vice and Temptation, stock villains with a functional role as the testers of kingly integrity. The plays repeatedly try Henry VIII's ability (or not) to overcome the voices of evil and assert his kingly authority to restore justice.

Sir Thomas More's absent king figure is used differently. Here, there is no visible antagonist or enemy following the opening appearance of the dastardly Lombards. At worst, characters are misguided (the rebels) or foolish (Suresby, Falkner), but even those nobles who oppose More in regard to the King's articles remain sympathetic to his case; Surrey's closing epitaph 'A very learned worthy gentleman / Seals error with his blood' (5.4.110-1) betokens frustration rather than malice. Unavoidably, it is Henry VIII himself who is recast in the Gardiner role here, deliberately orchestrating More's downfall. For obvious reasons, however, this would be unpresentable on the Tudor or early Stuart stage. The removal of Henry and foregrounding of More allows instead for criticism of the king through comparison. More is everything in this play that Henry VIII should be. He is connected to the concerns of the people, charitable, just and, most importantly, possessed of an absolute integrity. It is this integrity that is tested through his refusal to accede to the King's articles, in much the same manner as Henry's is tested in *When You See Me*, but here the battle is, in More's words, ''twixt conscience and my frailer life' (4.5.202), whereas in both *When You See Me* and *Cromwell* the stakes are worldly and political, dealing with accusations of treachery.

The key fear of both Cromwell and More is of hypocrisy, the taint of which both are keen to avoid. In More's case, this is figured through an absolute – and merry – refusal to subscribe to the unnamed articles, allowing him to go to heaven 'void of fear' (5.4.109). In Cromwell's case, the fear is more general and long-lasting. Bagot is able to play on this fear in Antwerp, telling him 'But if your conscience were as white as Snow, / It will be thought that you are otherwise' (2.2.62-63), directly prompting Cromwell's departure in order to avoid even the suspicion of hypocrisy. While he is far less stoic in accepting his fate than More ('O God! Had I but read this letter, / Then had I been free from the lion's paw', 5.5.20-1), in his final moments his primary concern is still his reputation: he expresses bitterness at Henry's ears being 'bewitched' with false report

(5.5.47) and ensures that the King is informed of the truth. Together, the two plays define the virtue of their central characters as a combination of private and public integrity, loyalty and conscience, which is impervious to human influences. The two take the place of the King in their respective plays, and are rendered sympathetic through their charity and generosity; the King's absence therefore implies his separation from these values, and thus from necessary qualities of kingship. That these are the values expected of a monarch is clearly shown in the portrayal of Queen Elizabeth in Heywood's slightly later *1 If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody* (c.1604)*.* The action of the play itself is slight and repetitive, dealing with the persecution of Elizabeth as she moves between different prisons, but the play is designed to demonstrate the future Queen's patience, resilience and loyalty to her monarch, which is rewarded as she ascends the throne. Mary, meanwhile, is strongly influenced by Cardinal Winchester and ignorant of Elizabeth's qualities, placing her in the same position as the absent Henry of *Cromwell* and *More.*

The presence of these qualities in the king-substitute protagonists positions them as necessary for kings; but the fact that More and Cromwell are also subjects argues that the same qualities are also to be expected of the lower orders. *Cromwell* makes this clear with its moralistic subplot, portraying a cycle of goodness, justice and reward among a group of merchant-class characters that Irving Ribner sees as part of the play's 'mutability theme'.[46] Friskiball, a merchant, is first deceived by the broker Bagot into arresting the unfortunate debtor Banister, who is later reprieved by Cromwell; then Friskiball in turn rescues Cromwell in Florence following the latter's suffering robbery; and finally the impoverished Friskiball is in turn relieved by Cromwell in London at the height of Cromwell's power, and reunited happily with the Banisters. The subplot provides a context for Cromwell's story that draws attention to the play's

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[46] Irving Ribner, *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare*, 2nd ed. (London, 1965), 208.

concern with the individual's moral compass and the consequences of not adhering to it. The simplicity of the subplot is countered and complicated by Cromwell's fate. *More*, meanwhile, focuses on civic disobedience in its first two acts, including the scene in which More demands the same qualities of the rebels that he later exhibits himself: patience, sufferance and an adherence to God and authority. It is this sequence which critics regularly link to the Shakespeare canon, particularly *2 Henry VI* and the later *Coriolanus*, but the connections are too structurally integrated into the body of the play to isolate these scenes exclusively as having a Shakespearean connection. The web of influence is wide, and extends into other histories: *Jack Straw*, despite being set during Richard II's reign, shares the foregrounding and individualising of its rebels in 2.2 and 2.3, inviting sympathy for them if not their cause. Just as, in that play, Richard is implicitly criticised for his inability to engage directly with the rebels by the success of the ensuing rebellion, so too is the king of *Cromwell* and *More* criticised for his absence from the practice of necessary values.

It is in the presentation of the lower orders that *More* and *Cromwell* differ significantly from the other plays on Tudor history and approach their subjects in a manner perhaps more associated with Shakespeare's earlier history plays. Both *When You See Me* and *1 If You Know Not Me* focus entirely on monarchs, their courts and their immediate servants, with the only exception being Henry's disguised excursion in scenes 4-7 of *When You See Me*. *2 If You Know Me* focuses primarily on merchant-class characters, but when it does so its concerns are with a merchant history, the founding of the Royal Exchange. Only in the final four scenes does the play shift to the political history of the Armada, clumsily cutting short the story that has dominated the previous four acts. By contrast, *Cromwell* and *More* integrate into their plots a host of lower-class characters through whose eyes political events and figures are sketched, privileging a street-level sense of politics that complements the courtly plot. The opening

presentation of Cromwell himself, studying above his father's shop, grounds the action in city life. Further, the concept of Cromwell and More as king-substitutes is echoed in the presentation in both of serving characters dressed up as nobles: Hodge in *Cromwell* 3.2 and Randall in *More* 8, both of whom reflect on the effects of their costumes on their own sense of self and echo Falstaff's performance of Henry IV in the 'play extempore'. McMillin argues that Randall's 'Before God, I have practised your lordship's shift so well that I think I shall grow proud' (*More* 3.2.23-4) represents 'a moment of pointed irony' following More's discourse on the dangers of the trappings of office.[47] More's annoyed dismissal of Randall ('Fool, painted barbarism, retire thyself / Into thy first creation!', 3.2.165-6) anticipates More's own fall from grace.

Cromwell and *More*, therefore, straddle a line between the 'Shakespearean' history and the contemporary plays on Tudor history, welding the class-conscious commentary of the Hal plays onto the content of Henry VIII's court. The lack of aphoristic titles for these two plays neatly underlines a conceptual difference to the other Tudor history plays: where those impose all-encompassing titles on their focused perspectives to imply universality, these plays embed universal perspectives on their title characters into the text of the plays themselves. The dual title of *Henry VIII/All is True*, meanwhile, draws attention to its difference from other 'Shakespearean' histories and from the similar content of *Cromwell* and *More.* It distinguishes itself through its exclusively courtly focus and the centrality of the king that associate it with the aphoristically-titled plays of Rowley and Heywood. Yet the mediation of debates surrounding kingship through the recognisable figures of Henry's court connects Shakespeare's late collaboration with the earlier plays with which he has been associated. The connection of *More* and *Cromwell* to the Shakespearean repertory is one of content and strategy rather than authorship; yet the sympathy in these plays for

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[47] McMillin, *Elizabethan Theatre*, 26.

the viewpoint of the common man binds these plays closely to the work of the

company's resident writer.

Romance and Nostalgia

If *Sir Thomas More* did belong to the Chamberlain's-King's Men c.1603, and Hand D is

Shakespeare's, then the extant manuscript may preserve an example of the kind of

(re)writing expected of a resident dramatist fitting up plays for performance. While it is

a commonplace that Shakespeare's role in the company is likely to have involved this

kind of work, however, there has as yet been no critical acceptance of Shakespeare's

partial revision of any other extant company play; his collaborative work either includes

works he initiated or in which he had a substantial involvement (*Two Noble Kinsmen*,

Timon of Athens etc.) or is limited to works that appear to predate the formation of the

Chamberlain's Men (*Edward III*, *Arden of Faversham*, *Titus Andronicus*), sustaining a

narrative that emphasises Shakespeare's independence over his company role. Two

possibilities other than *More* have been proposed. George Chalmers was one of the

earliest to suggest that Shakespeare 'did read, and amend Ben Jonson's Sejanus, in

1603', extrapolating from the reference in Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit* to the 'absolute

Iohanues fac totum' that this was a standard part of Shakespeare's role.[48] The revisions

are, of course, not extant, and knowledge of them is limited to Jonson's reference to 'a

second pen' whose work he has excised (Preface, 32). More recently, in the work of

Hugh Craig, Warren Stevenson and Brian Vickers, the case for Shakespeare's authorship

of the 1602 additions to *The Spanish Tragedy* has gained traction, in turn implying that

this play may have belonged to the King's Men at this point.[49] It is worthy of note that

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[48] George Chalmers, *A supplemental apology* (London, 1799), 273; *Greenes groats-vvorth of witte* (London, 1592), F1ᵛ.
[49] Warren Stevenson, *Shakespeare's Additions to Thomas Kyd's The Spanish Tragedy* (Lampeter, 2008);Hugh Craig, 'The 1602 Additions to *The Spanish Tragedy*', *Shakespeare, Computers, and the Mystery of Authorship*, eds Hugh Craig and Arthur F. Kinney Kinney (Cambridge, 2009), 162-80; Brian Vickers, 'Shakespeare and Authorship Studies in the Twenty-First Century', *Shakespeare*

the possible Shakespearean piecemeal contributions to *Sir Thomas More*, *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Sejanus* are roughly contemporaneous with one another, which may be suggestive of a particularly intensive period of collaborative work and fitting up during the years 1602-3.

One of the few company plays known to have been revised during Shakespeare's tenure is *Mucedorus.* Although the play's original composition almost certainly predated the Chamberlain's Men, the 1610 third quarto advertises it as 'Amplified with new additions, as it was acted before the Kings Maiestie at White-hall on Shroue-Sunday night. *By his highness Seruantes usually playing at the Globe*', indicating it belonged to the company by this point. Richard Thornberry, further, draws attention to the fact that the second quarto (1606) lightly revises the epilogue of the play to take account of James's ascension to the throne.[50] This evidence of the continual updating of the play suggests that *Mucedorus* was performed more than once at court between the late 1590s and 1610, supporting the suggestion that the Chamberlain's Men owned the play during this period. Gurr notes that, during Elizabeth's reign, the official position was that 'shows to the public were merely rehearsals for the real aim, to entertain the queen';[51] if the implication is that any plays performed at court were also being 'rehearsed' in the public theatres, then *Mucedorus* was presumably performed regularly in the city during this period. References to the play in Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (c.1607) and Massinger's *The Guardian* (1633), as well as a publication record that stretches to eighteen extant editions, attest to the play's ongoing popularity.

Quarterly 62.1 (2011): 106-42. The play is included in Bate and Rasmussen, *Collaborative Plays*, 2013.

[50] Richard T. Thornberry, 'A Seventeenth-Century Revival of *Mucedorus* in London before 1610', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 28.3 (1977), 162-4. The changes are minor, but consistent, and begin in Comedy's penultimate speech. 'Yeeld to King *Iames*' replaces 'Yeelde to a woman'; 'womans swaie' is replaced by 'Worthies Sway'; simple pronoun changes render the monarch masculine rather than feminine, although 'Prince' is used for both Elizabeth and James (F4^v). Alterations this straightforward need not have been made by the play's original author(s), of course.

[51] Gurr, *Shakespeare Company*, 167.

As I have argued elsewhere, the perceived popularity of *Mucedorus* has

damaged its reputation in modern scholarship.[52] Despite being the best-selling print play

of the period, it stands in relative critical neglect, and scholars have attempted to

account for the aberrance. *Mucedorus* is a short, relatively straightforward

entertainment rooted in earlier traditions of chivalric romance and pastoral comedy,

featuring a prince disguised as a shepherd who wards off a bear, a cannibal and a

disgusted courtly rival for the hand of a foreign princess. Richard Preiss, in the richest

article on the play, attempts to account for the unusual print record by suggesting the

play was deliberately set apart for use by provincial companies, 'surrendering a single

product to disseminate an entire platform'.[53] While Preiss's theory perhaps relies too

heavily on modern notions of intellectual property rights and marketplace protection, it

is an important reminder that anonymity in the period can be a deliberate strategy as

much as an omission. Yet his conclusion perpetuates the idea that *Mucedorus* was a low-

priority product even for the company that owned it.

The critical interest in explaining away *Mucedorus's* popularity rather occludes

the play's importance to the company's repertory. It exerted a major influence on the

development of the tragicomic genre, and examination of the context of the additions

made in 1610 is particularly instructive. The passages added to Q3 of *Mucedorus* are,

with the exception of a short piece of comic business featuring Mouse and the bear,

entirely concerned with Mucedorus's back-story and Valencia, emphasising the serious

nature of Mucedorus's quest and disappearance.[54] This is immediately clear from

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[52] Peter Kirwan, '*Mucedorus*', *The Elizabethan Top Ten*, eds. Andy Kesson and Emma Smith (Farnham, 2013), 225-8.

[53] Richard Preiss, 'A Play Finally Anonymous', *The Shakespeare Apocrypha*, ed. Douglas A. Brooks (Lampeter, 2007), 127.

[54] Critics persist in the belief that the additions are designed to make the play funnier, but this is hardly the case. Preiss mistakenly states that 9.71-121 is an addition (120), despite being in the original; and the bulkiest addition, scene 10, is reminiscent of the melancholy opening to *Twelfth Night* as Valencia orders away the music that 'adds to torment' (10.1).

comparing the two lists of Dramatis Personae, which increase the number of players

needed from eight to ten. The additional scenes introduce Mucedorus's friend Anselmo

and his father, the King of Valencia, but most important is a new opening scene set in

Valencia which shows Mucedorus telling Anselmo of his plans to go disguised to Aragon.

George Reynolds notes that this introduction means that 'the *B* audience [his term for

spectators of the Q3 version] was never in doubt as to who the hero really was', but

does not explore this further.[55] All modern editions follow the 1610 text.[56] The notable

feature of the 1598 text has gone largely unremarked: an audience watching the play

would not know, until the final act, who Mucedorus really was; or, indeed, that he was

anything other than a shepherd. The purpose of the additions is to make clear, and

regularly remind the audience, that Mucedorus is in fact a disguised prince. Leo

Kirschbaum assumes this is a defect in the original that the additions 'make clear'; while

Pavel Drábek argues that the aim is to draw attention to the illusory and self-consciously

theatrical nature of the play, arguing that it means 'the audience know the truth and

willingly take in the illusion of the stage action'.[57] I dispute Drábek's reading, which

misses the point that in neither version are the audience aware of knowing anything

other than the truth. The theatricality Drábek argues for has already been asserted in

both versions by the framing dialogue of Comedy and Envy. In terms of self-consciously

articulating the illusory nature of the stage, the revisions merely shift the articulation of

stage illusion from the climax to the main action.

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[55] George F. Reynolds, '*Mucedorus*, Most Popular Elizabethan Play?" *Studies in the English Renaissance Drama*, eds. Josephine W. Bennett, Oscar Cargill and Vernon Hall Jr. (London, 1961), 254.
[56] The exception is Arvin Jupin's 1987 modern-spelling edition (New York, 1987), which offers some useful insights but is poorly printed and riddled with errors.

[57] Kirschbaum, 'The Texts', 4; Pavel Drábek, 'Shakespeare's Influence on *Mucedorus*', *Shakespeare and His Collaborators over the Centuries*, eds. Pavel Drábek, Klára Kolinská, and Matthew Nicholls (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2008), 50.

MacDonald Jackson, the only critic to realise the significance of the additions, uses it to argue for Shakespeare's authorship of them, suggesting that the change is 'precisely that which one would expect from the author of *Cymbeline*'.[58] The more significant impact, however, is on how an audience interprets and experiences the social aspects of the play. In the 1598 version, the hero is understood to be a pastoral figure, a common man, which may well have appealed to audiences in the public theatres. However, for an aristocratic audience there is an implied social threat: a princess falls in love with a courageous commoner and plans to flee her royal life. This can be related to the 'threat of disorder' that Abigail Scherer argues is embodied by Bremo, the wild man, who personifies the failure of society.[59] The play is full of figures of exclusion: the renegade soldier employed to murder Mucedorus; the outlawed Bremo; the wandering shepherd. It is perhaps no coincidence that in 1610, the year of the revisions, James introduced a special statute to counter the impingement on the royal forests of wild wood-dwellers.

The 1598 text represents an attempt to experiment with audience conceptions and cater to both popular and elite tastes, while not fully accommodating either. By introducing as its chivalric hero a man who appears to be a rustic commoner, the play subverts dramatic convention and makes a unique appeal to the public audience by inviting sympathy and admiration for a character of low social status, in contrast to the cowardly courtier Segasto. Martin Wiggins, speaking of *Tamburlaine*, argues that

> An Elizabethan shepherd could not normally expect to become a
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> gentleman, let alone a lord: the rigidly stratified society of

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[58] MacD. P. Jackson, 'Edward Archer's Ascription of *Mucedorus* to Shakespeare', *Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association* 22 (1964), 246. Sharpe, 'Authorship and Attribution', surveys the scholarship and reports that Jackson is currently revisiting his claims for publication in 2016 ('Authorship and Attribution', 710-6).

[59] Abigail Scherer, '*Mucedorus*'s Wild Man: Disorderly Acts on the Early Modern Stage', *Renaissance Papers 1999*, eds. T.H. Howard-Hill and Philip Rollinson (Rochester, 1999), 65.

contemporary orthodoxy was organized as an ascending hierarchy of

allegiance and responsibility, culminating in the immense and

centralized might of the crown; peasants and aristocrats each had their

place and were expected to remain in it, their lofty or lowly status

defining the nature of their actions.[60]

Tamburlaine and *Mucedorus* thus both appeal to a fantastical interest in over-reaching

commoners. The introduction of a second antagonist, the 'animalistic' Bremo, acts

further to raise the status of the shepherd by comparison.[61] The implicitly transgressive

and upwardly-mobile social agenda of the play is, however, subverted and made safe by

the revelation that Mucedorus is, in fact, a disguised prince, retrospectively

conventionalising the politics and sympathies of the play. While this revelation is

effective in bringing about the play's only inevitable ending, the deception practised on

its audiences is less satisfactory. While the final act revelation justifies Mucedorus's

presumption, any play that kept a courtly audience in a state of social anxiety for three

quarters of its length may have been taking a serious liberty. Presuming the play was

performed around the time of its first publication, it contrasts with the company's

slightly later *As You Like It*, which makes explicit the playfulness of the nobles living 'like

the old Robin Hood of England' (1.1.78), and Munday and Chettle's *Huntington* plays at

the Rose, the first to turn the folk hero into an outlawed nobleman. These plays adhere

to a clear social order that *Mucedorus* threatens to invert.

The 1610 additions establish Mucedorus's character and pedigree from the

start, making the audience complicit in his disguise and allowing the plot to proceed in a

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[60] Martin Wiggins, *Shakespeare and the Drama of his Time* (Oxford, 2000), 37. Michael Hattaway mistakenly believes the 1610 additions were part of the original text, and thus suggests that the sight of *Mucedorus* donning shepherd's clothes were contemporaneous with the first sight of the Scythian shepherd ascending to power. *Elizabethan Popular Theatre* (London, 1982), 135.
[61] Scherer, '*Mucedorus's* Wild Man', 58.

conventional way. The action becomes more ordered and planned: whereas in the 1598

quarto it is implied that Amadine and Mucedorus have met by chance, the 1610 quarto

makes it clear from the start that he is actively seeking her. By removing the surprise of

the prince's disguise, *Mucedorus* is made safe; he is a *self*-excluding figure, exercising

the patriarchal right to adopt disguise previously practised by Henry V, Old Flowerdale

and the Duke of *Measure for Measure*. The audience evaluates the protagonist's actions

as those of a prince, according to James's own political theories that legitimise the use

of disguise in maintaining order.[62] His presumption in defying Segasto and declaring his

love to Amadine is justified, and the ultimate outcome of the comedy assured. The

changes made to *Mucedorus* for the 1609-10 performance become more significant in

the light of the innovations in the King's Men's dramatic output. This revival coincides

with what many critics identify as the beginnings of tragicomedy in plays such as *Pericles*

(c.1607) and *Philaster* (1609). Given that *Pericles* was printed twice in 1609, and that

plays such as *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale* followed hard upon, it seems that the

1609-10 revival of *Mucedorus* with its new additions is intrinsically linked to the

development of the new form.

Gurr, in discussing the early days of tragicomedy, makes an important

observation:

> Fletcher's plays, starting with *Philaster* at the Globe in 1609, depended
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> on their ability to hold the audience in suspense until the surprise
>
> revelation of the ending. *The Winter's Tale* is the only play in all
>
> Shakespeare to surprise its audience with Hermione's living statue, as

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[62] Pope, 'Renaissance Background', 72.

Philaster surprises its audience with the boy page who turns out to be a woman.[63]

At this time, too, Jonson was experimenting with the surprise revelation in a more traditional comedy, *Epicoene*, at the Whitefriars. The 'twist ending' came into vogue as part of the new experiments in dramatic form, providing miraculous revelations by the means of which disaster, or at the very least an uncomfortable ending, was averted. If the 'surprise revelation' is, as Gurr suggests, an essential part of the fashionable new form, it seems particularly surprising that it was at this time that revisers *removed* the surprise element from *Mucedorus.* It is in this removal of the surprise element that Jackson believes the revised version reflects Shakespeare's practice as opposed to that of his contemporaries. It is important, then, to consider *Mucedorus'*s relationship to the tragicomic genre.

Mucedorus has long been recognised as a precursor to tragicomedy, a link between the old Elizabethan pastorals and the more sophisticated versions of the Jacobean and Caroline theatre. Mowat notes that *Mucedorus* is one of a very few plays to explicitly set up a tragicomic debate in its very framework, a dialogue between Envy and Comedy.[64] Fletcher's remarks in *The Faithful Shepherdess* on the nature of pastoral tragicomedy are also applicable:

> Understand therefore a pastorall to be a representation of shepheards
> and shephearddesses, with their actions and passions, which must be
> such as may agree with their natures . . . A tragie-comedie is not so
> called in respect of mirth and killing, but in respect it wants deaths,

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[63] Gurr, *Shakespeare Company*, 46.

[64] Barbara A. Mowat, '"What's in a Name?" Tragicomedy, Romance, or Late Comedy', *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works Vol. IV*, eds. Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard (Malden, 2003), 141.

which is inough to make it no tragedie, yet brings some neere it, which

is inough to make it no comedie.[65]

Mucedorus, until the final revelation, appears to take a shepherd as its lead character. Despite being unambiguously sold in print as '*A* Moft pleasfant Co-medie' (title page), the lead characters are under constant threat of their lives: the bear attack, Tremelio's attempted assassination and Bremo's capture of the fleeing lovers are genuine threats, and there are two onstage murders. This commixture of comic and tragic elements, characteristic of earlier romances, was unusual in a play that had survived so long. It is perhaps possible that the 1610 additions to *Mucedorus* were designed explicitly to *distinguish* the old play from the burgeoning tragicomic form. As Beaumont, Fletcher and Shakespeare in 1609-10 drew on the pastoral traditions of the past in the development of their new form, the company perhaps became aware of a need to separate what Reynolds calls a 'badly worn antique' from the new plays.[66]

Munro, discussing the development of tragicomedy by the Children of the Queen's Revels, identifies a courtly influence on the interest in the genre, emanating from Anna of Denmark's fascination with Italian culture. She notes that the 'Pastoral Trage-comedie', as applied to Daniel's *Arcadia Reformed*, is an 'Italianate generic tag'. *Mucedorus*, on the other hand, is a 'Sidneian pastoral', rooted in English traditions rather than the new Italianate influences.[67] The distinction between Sidney and Daniel speaks more to a distance in time than in matter, but it is perhaps this sense of the old versus the new that is emphasised by the title page descriptions of *Mucedorus* as a comedy, and by the additions that remove the tragicomic element of surprise from the play. As the King's Men, along with the Children of the Queen's Revels, were one of the

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[65] Florence Ada Kirk, ed., *The Faithful Shepherdess* (New York, 1980), 'To the Reader' 11-26.
[66] Reynolds, '*Mucedorus*', 257.
[67] Munro, *Children of the Queen's Revels*, 103-4.

two companies most influential in developing the genre, it seems entirely possible that

the company neither wanted *Mucedorus* to be masquerading as a tragicomedy in the

new form, nor wished what Mowat defines as the 'new Italianate Jacobean tragicomedy'

to be viewed as one of the outdated folk-based entertainments that the old play

represented.[68] Gossett identifies this very strategy in the writing of Beaumont and

Fletcher's *Philaster*, 'demonstrating that the mixed form could be separated from the

pastoral elements that had accompanied it in Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*'.

Mucedorus belonged to the same pastoral tradition that had caused *Faithful*

Shepherdess, in George Chapman's eyes at least, to fail.[69]

The additions to the 1610 quarto are widely accepted by modern editions

because they are 'superior to the rest of the comedy' and 'make it a better play'.[70] In

context, though, I would contend that they actually serve to make the play more

formulaic, softening those elements that pre-empt the newer tragicomedy. By removing

the surprise of the final revelation, much of the dramatic excitement and tension of the

play is lost, the outcome now being clear from Mucedorus's first explanation of his

intentions to Anselmo. In its new form, the outdated *Mucedorus* could serve a fresh

purpose. Considering the new vogue for pastoral themes, the revised play acted as a

simple, palatable entertainment that catered to a newly popular trend while not being

confused with the newer tragicomedies, which are in turn cast as innovative.

In some senses then, *Mucedorus* appears to have been a victim of its own

success. Munro notes that 'with the revival of *Mucedorus* . . . the King's Men began to

develop a tragicomic form', and Mowat also notes the importance of the play in

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68 Mowat, '"What's in a Name?"', 142.
69 Suzanne Gossett, ed., *Philaster* (London, 2009), 2, 11.
70 Brooke, *Apocrypha*, xxv; Russell A. Fraser and Norman Rabkin, eds., *Drama of the English Renaissance 1: The Tudor Period* (New York, 1976), 463.

establishing many of the motifs developed by the Jacobean tragicomedy.[71] As it inspired the new work, however, so too did it need to be severed from it, in order that it not impact on the reception of tragicomedy. Fletcher's defence of the genre in *The Faithful Shepherdess* perhaps indirectly refers to *Mucedorus* when he explains:

> It is a pastoral Tragie-comedie, which the people seeing when it was plaid, having ever had a singuler guift in defining, concluded to be a play of country hired Shepheards, in gray cloakes, with curtaild dogs in strings, sometimes laughing together, and sometimes killing one another: And missing whisun ales, creame, wassel and morris-dances, [the people] began to be angry. ('To the Reader' 3-9)

This new play is to be distinguished from the old play (in which a 'shepherd' kills a woodland dweller) that is primarily known for its folk entertainments, 'the merie conceits of *Moufe*'. *Mucedorus* was remade, both internally and externally, as a straightforward, unsophisticated folk play, popular but unfashionable, the state in which history continues to judge it. This fits with Drábek's suggestion that 'In effect, *Mucedorus* gets much closer to the "mouldy" tale of *Pericles* – the "song that old was sung"' and David Frost's suggestion that *Cymbeline* and *Mucedorus* were part of a short trend for self-conscious, backward-looking parody.[72] In these senses, the revised *Mucedorus* does indeed share a quality associated with the 'Shakespearean' at this moment, regardless of whether or not he wrote the additions. Meanwhile, with the unnecessary weight of the Elizabethan pastoral jettisoned, the tragicomedy of the younger dramatists would go on to become the dominant form in 'a generic transition

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[71] Munro, *Queen's Revels*, 105; Mowat, '"What's in a Name?"', 139-40.
[72] Drábek, 'Shakespeare's Influence', 50; David L. Frost, '"Mouldy Tales": The Context of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*', *Essays and Studies* 39 (1986), 19-38.

that would affect plays until the closing of the theatres', a transition that would continue
to develop long after Shakespeare's death.[73]

Ensemble Comedy

This chapter has so far explored the innovations in genre, dominant motifs and dramatic
strategies that bind canonical and apocryphal plays closely together within the King's
Men's repertory. Implicit in this is an understanding of the ensemble as a unifying
principle, the familiarity of actors and other personnel creating a shared identity for the
plays that generated 'a community experience, a game of the mind free from the
subjection to cinematic realism that blinkers modern eyes'.[74] This emphasis on
communal identity rather than on the contributions of individual writers/actors has
been particularly lacking from discussion of disputed plays, whose lack of dominating
individuals translates into a lack of critical identity. Yet the popular comedy *The Merry
Devil of Edmonton*, first performed c.1602-03 at the Globe, offers one of the clearest
examples of authorship being subsumed into ensemble identity rather than governing it.

What little criticism there is of *The Merry Devil of Edmonton* aside from the
question of authorship falls largely into two categories. The first links the play with the
'superstition' plays of the 1580s and 1590s: *John a Kent and John a Cumber*, *John of
Bordeaux*, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* and *Doctor Faustus.* The play's recent editors
argue that the main plot is adapted from the prose pamphlet *The Famous History of
Friar Bacon* (1627, but assumed to be in circulation earlier), which also provided the
source for the play of *Friar Bacon.*[75] All, of course, feature magicians in prominent roles.
This line of inquiry has perhaps consumed more attention than it merits, with critics
misled by the play's title and Induction, both of which position Peter Fabell, the 'Merry

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[73] Gossett, *Philaster*, 2.
[74] Gurr, *Shakespeare Company*, 16.
[75] William Amos Abrams, ed., *The Merry Devil of Edmonton* (Durham, 1942), 13; Nicola Bennett,
ed., *The Merry Devil of Edmonton* (London, 2000). Quotes from the play are taken from Bennett.

Devil' as the play's central figure. As with the belatedness of *A Yorkshire Tragedy* in

relation to other domestic tragedies, so too does *Merry Devil* fall far later than the other

'superstition plays'. I have argued elsewhere that the core tricks of the play in fact

revolve around non-supernatural disguises, superstitions and evasions, which even

Fabell himself notes are 'pretty sleights . . . / Such as but sat upon the skirts of art: / No

conjurations' (5.1.257-59).[76]

To group the play with the earlier conjuror plays is to obscure fundamental

differences between *Merry Devil* and the sub-genre. Fabell's role as magician is actually

dealt with summarily, completed within an Induction after which his magic is only

referred to and never seen. This performs two key functions. Firstly, the Induction

responds to the recent revival of Marlowe's *Faustus* at the Fortune in 1602 and the

advent of a newly irreverent form of 'devil comedy' in London from 1600, which may

have provided a brief resurgence of interest in the old genre.[77] The Prologue and

Induction to *Merry Devil* serve as a response to and parody of *Faustus's* final scene,

remade with a happy ending: here, the magician tricks the devil and wins from him

another seven years of life.[78] Magic, devilry and Fabell's deferred fate form no part of

the subsequent action. Secondly, it acts to dispense with necessary elements of the

source text. While the main action of the play is lifted from the *Bacon* pamphlet, the

other key source is Thomas Brewer's pamphlet *The Life and Death of the Merry Devill of*

Edmonton. With the pleasant prancks of Smug the Smith, Sir John, and Mine Host of the

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[76] Peter Kirwan, '"We ring this round with our invoking spells": Magic as Embedded Authorship in *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*', *Magical Transformations on the Early Modern English Stage*, eds. Helen Ostovich and Lisa Hopkins (Farnham, 2014).

[77] Gurr, *Opposites*, 43.

[78] In the source pamphlet, Fabell strikes a deal with the Devil that he shall have life until a candle is burned out, which he then immediately extinguishes and preserves. The altering of this in the play to a set period of time ('Seven years from this hour', Induction 74) echoes the deal for 'four-and-twenty years' struck with Faustus (A-text 1.3.93), with damnation imagined as an inevitable consequence of time rather than a condition to be avoided through wordplay.

George, about the stealing of Venison.[79] From the subsequent action, it seems apparent

that it is the 'pleasant prancks' that captured the imagination of the playwright, rather

than the story of the Merry Devil. Smug's antics were sufficiently popular for the 1657

edition of the pamphlet to be rechristened *The Merry Jests of Smug the Smith*, and the

pamphlet's woodcut of Smug atop the Garter Inn adorns the title page of the 1655

quarto of the play. It is this comic story of hapless poachers, intertwined with the

romantic eloping plot of Raymond and Millicent, that forms the action of *The Merry

Devil of Edmonton*: the Merry Devil himself is not the focus of interest, and his story

effectively ends before the play proper even begins.

Ignoring the framing device, the play is a more conventional comedy of cross-

generational trickery, romantic love and comic buffoonery. The second body of criticism

on the play is concerned with the play's relationship to Shakespeare's works, particularly

The Merry Wives of Windsor. Beyond the obvious connection of the titles, the two plays

share an out-of-town setting; a drunken and criminal Sir John; a genial Host; parents

thwarted in a forced marriage attempt; an inn as primary setting; and a night-time

woodland scene featuring the hunting of deer (literal or figurative). Brooke argues that

the 'apparently purposeless' Induction is intended to imply an 'infernal' element in the

'nocturnal' scene of *Merry Devil*, as in *Merry Wives* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.[80]

While these elements are to a greater or lesser extent conventional, the combination of

them all in the later play suggests the influence of the elder, strengthened by more

specific resonances. Rudolph Fiehler argues that the catchphrase of Host Blague, 'I serve

the good Duke of Norfolk' (1.1.7-8 and throughout) is deliberately intended to bring to

mind Falstaff, he that was 'page to Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk' (*2 Henry IV*

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[79] The first extant printing is 1631; however, the same wording appears in Brewer's 1608
stationer's register entry within seven months of that for the play. Bennett, *Merry Devil*, xiii.
[80] Tucker Brooke, 'Elizabethan "Nocturnal" and "Infernal" Plays', *Modern Language Notes* 35.2
(1920), 121.

3.2.18-19). Fiehler further points out that both of Falstaff's antecedents, John Fastolf

and John Oldcastle, were also associated with the Duke in their stage representations,

though probably inaccurately in historical terms.[81] It is in the reminiscences of Falstaff

that the connection of *Merry Devil* to notions of a Shakespearean influence may be most

pertinently noted.

One of the most notorious reactions to Shakespeare's work was what Peter

Corbin and Douglas Sedge refer to as 'The Oldcastle Controversy', the presentation of

the protestant martyr Sir John Oldcastle as a drunken, deceitful and gluttonous

comedian in *1 Henry IV*, and the subsequent change of the character's name (possibly

following complaints by the current Lord Cobham) to Falstaff.[82] This controversy

acknowledged in the pronouncement of the Epilogue to *2 Henry IV* that 'Oldcastle died a

martyr, and this is not the man' (5.5.114-15), but the incident had further-reaching

ramifications, serving to occasion two more plays, both of which came to be associated

with Shakespeare's name.[83] *1 Sir John Oldcastle*, for which Munday, Drayton, Wilson and

Hathway received payments from Philip Henslowe in 1599, was the first of these,

another martyr play during the wave of activity that included *Cromwell* and *More*. A

critical consensus trusts the evidence of Henslowe's records over the evidently

erroneous assertion on the title page of the second (1619) quarto that the play was

'Written by William Shakespeare'. While in this sense, therefore, it is clear that

Shakespeare did not write *Oldcastle*, in another sense it is true that this play was

'authored' by William Shakespeare, in the sense allowed by the OED meaning 'to

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[81] Rudolph Fiehler, '"I Serve the Good Duke of Norfolk"', *Modern Language Quarterly.* 10.3 (1949), 364-5.

[82] Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge, eds. *The Oldcastle Controversy* (Manchester, 1991), 9-12. References to *1 Sir John Oldcastle* are taken from this edition.

[83] This narrative is complicated further by the letter written by Rowland Whyte making reference to a performance of 'Sir *John Old Castell*' by the Lord Chamberlain's players at Hunsdon House on 6 March 1600. Several scholars have assumed this play was one of Shakespeare's Falstaff plays. However, Roslyn Knutson argues for the possibility that the Chamberlain's Men did in fact acquire another play (now lost) treating the historical Oldcastle. The debate is set out in Knutson, 'Oldcastle, Sir John (Chamberlain's)', *Lost Plays Database* (2012).

originate, cause, occasion'.[84] *Oldcastle* exists only and entirely because of Shakespeare,

as the play's prologue makes quite clear: '*It is no pamperd glutton we present, / Nor*

aged Councellor to youthfull sinne' (Prologue 6-7). In existing solely to counter

Shakespeare's Oldcastle, the play admits its dependence on the source it aims to

replace. The addition of Shakespeare's name by Thomas Pavier to his 1619 edition of the

play is perhaps disingenuous, but perhaps is genuine in attaching the play to the writer

that *occasioned* it. James Marino argues that the stage and print presence of

Falstaff/Oldcastle acted with extra-textual authority to 'author' and connect the various

plays in which he featured.[85] To this end, Pavier and Jaggard may have understood the

character as the intellectual property of the King's Men, and attributed it to Shakespeare

accordingly in order to consolidate the connection.

Extending this argument to *Merry Devil*, there is a subtler continuation of the

Oldcastle Controversy that evokes the ghost of Falstaff to supply its humour. Falstaff is

evoked in spirit by Host Blague's references to the Duke of Norfolk and in name by Sir

John the priest. This is in addition to the substantive plot parallels with a play that, in its

first quarto appearance, was entitled *A Most pleasaunt and excellent conceited*

Comedie, of Syr Iohn Falstaffe, and the merrie Wiues of Windsor. The company may have

had a further motivation for this deliberate referencing of the character if, as I have

argued previously, the company was attempting to readjust its comedies to take

account of the departure of Will Kempe, who may have been the original actor of

Falstaff. Both *Merry Devil* and the contemporaneous *Twelfth Night* distribute Falstaff's

comic qualities (wordplay, outlandish plots, drunkenness) evenly among a range of

characters: Smug, the Host, Sir John in the former; Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, Fabian in the

latter. While *Twelfth Night*'s innovation of Feste is symptomatic of the company's

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[84] 'Author, *v.*', def. 1. OED Online, January 6th 2014.
[85] James J. Marino, 'William Shakespeare's *Sir John Oldcastle*', *Renaissance Drama* 30 (2001), 105.

movement towards the more sophisticated musical clowns in which Robert Armin
specialised, *Merry Devil* looks back to the company's Elizabethan work, offering a
retelling of *Merry Wives* without its Falstaff.[86]

This evocation of old Shakespeare, even as the company dramatist moved on to
the more complex comedies of the early Jacobean period, was evidently popular judging
by its six early printings, and potentially had lasting influence. Victoria Hayne notes that
Fabell's disguising of himself and Raymond as friars was 'a popular novelty at the time'
and provides 'interpretative context' for the Duke's assumption of the same disguise in
Measure for Measure , further binding together the company's recurring motifs.[87] The
flight of lovers through the wood, in addition, echoes *Mucedorus* and *A Midsummer
Night's Dream* and anticipates pastorally influenced tragicomedies such as *The Faithful
Shepherdess* and *Philaster.* Bednarz argues that 'Shakespeare's audience and readers
would have strongly identified him with the pastoral genre at the beginning of the
seventeenth century, when he became, on the model of Spenser and Sidney, a
shepherd-poet' ; the inclusion of Dumaine's love-poem in *England's Helicon* (1600)
under the new title of 'The Passionate Sheepheard's Song', he argues, is part of Nicholas
Ling's deliberate appropriation of poets both dead and alive into a multivocal evocation
of pastoral ideals at the turn of the century.[88] Within this network of associations, *Merry
Devil* occupies a similar position to the revived *Mucedorus*. Both plays are deliberately
old-fashioned at the time of performance, embodying outdated but popular forms of
entertainment; it is perhaps no coincidence that, in their first appearance under
Shakespeare's name in the 1630s Charles I volume, they were bound together.

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[86] See Kirwan, '"We ring this round"'.
[87] Victoria Hayne, 'Performing Social Practice: The Example of *Measure for Measure*',
Shakespeare Quarterly 44.1 (1993), 24. Clare Smout pursues a similar argument in 'Actor, Poet,
Playwright, Sharer… Rival? Shakespeare and Heywood, 1603-4', *Early Theatre* 13.2 (2010), 180.
[88] Bednarz, 'Canonizing Shakespeare', 263.

Conclusions

Roslyn Knutson prioritises the importance of commerce and economics in the generation of material within a theatrical company: 'Companies repeated the subjects and formulas that had been successful in their own offerings and in the repertories of their competitors'.[89] The plays generated by any one author, particularly one such as Shakespeare who worked within a single company, are thus dictated by a wider theatrical context than his own *oeuvre*. To separate the authorial canon from its fellow plays, its material and economic conditions and its moment of production is to prioritise, anachronistically, one paradigm of authorship over others. Importantly, this socialised model does not suggest a renewed death of the author. I concur with John Jowett's resistance of the extreme post-structural collapse of the author when he argues that 'the initial premise that language is "socially produced" places the writing of a text within the widest cultural environment. It suggests that a text has a fundamentally nonauthorial determination. To the extent that this is true, it must be true of any text, irrespective of the structure of its authorship'.[90] The social environment does not dissolve the author, but redefines the nature of the authorial presence. To claim the formative *authoring* role of Shakespeare on these disputed plays is not to dissolve a sense of Shakespeare's *writing.*

There is some slight evidence that the Chamberlain's-King's Men understood its authors as part of a group ensemble. Thomas Dekker's *Satiromastix* (c.1601) stages, as its finale, the arraignment of Horace, who stands in for Ben Jonson.[91] Sir Rees ap Vaughan makes Horace/Jonson swear to several oaths including that 'you shall not sit in

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[89] Knutson, *Repertory*, 40.

[90] John Jowett, 'The Pattern of Collaboration in *Timon of Athens*', *Words that Count*, ed. Brian Boyd (Newark, 2004), 182.

[91] *Satiromastix* was performed by both the Chamberlain's Men and the Children of Paul's. While it is impossible to know for sure if the text was the same performed at both theatres, elsewhere the printed Edward White exclusively published plays performed by adult companies.

a Gallery, when your Comedies and Enterludes have entred their Actions, and there make vile and bad faces at euerie lyne, to make Sentlemen haue an eye to you' and 'you must forsweare to venter on the stage, when your Play is ended, and to exchange curtezies, and complements with Gallants in the Lordes rooms' (5.2.298-301, 303-05).[92] Jonson is usually presented as the exemplar of possessive authorship on the early modern stage, but here a play performed by the Chamberlain's Men resists the prominence that Jonson is accused of according himself. Where *Poetaster* concludes with an apologetical dialogue bringing the author (perhaps Jonson playing 'Jonson') onstage to explain his own play, the Epilogue to *Satiromastix* is delivered by Tucca, who explicitly breaks away from 'authorship': 'I recant the opinions which I helde of Courtiers, Ladies, and Cittizens, when once (in an assembly of Friers) I railed vpon them: that Hereticall Libertine *Horace* [Jonson], taught me so to mouth it' (Epilogus 6-9). While an audience would understand the metatheatrical joke that, of course, Tucca is a fictional character whose lines are written by Dekker, it also understands that authorship here is represented through authorial proxy. Tucca becomes his own 'author' and that of the play, accepting responsibility for it and petitioning the audience for their approval.

Peter Fabell's isolation from the main plot of *Merry Devil* has a related function. His role as the young man helping his friends to achieve their romantic ends is a standard one but, unlike analogous figures (such as Rynaldo in Chapman's *All Fools*), Fabell is not related to any other character in the play. His separation from the rest of the characters, emphasised further in the Induction, renders him detachable, the more so because audiences see so little of the magic that would integrate him with the main plot. Fabell, in fact, is himself a representation of authorship: the play is not about him,

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[92] Quotations from *Satiromastix* are taken from Fredson Bowers, ed, *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1953).

but scripted by him. In the Induction he is forced literally to overcome the demons of his own story in order that he might proceed to the matter of comedy, a plot concerning others that Fabell shapes and manipulates. Crucially, the only piece of magic Fabell subsequently performs is in fact that of authorial privilege: he reveals to his young friends the plot of their fathers to thwart their courtship, allowing them to rewrite their own story. Fabell's magic is power over narrative, seeing the unhidden stories and predicting what will happen. The absence of the manifestly supernatural throughout the play allows this power to remain benevolent: the 'merry devil' is not a trickster but a plotter, describing the action and casting players to perform it. Fabell himself is absent for all the key action: the liberation of Millicent, the escape through the forest, the switching of inn signs to confuse the fathers. As Joseph Horrell points out, his 'infrequent appearances do not project him with any of the appurtenances or characteristics of the necromancer'.[93] Instead, he arrives at the conclusion of episodes, approving the interlude and instructing his players on their next scene. He performs the role of the embedded author, separate from but intrinsically connected to his fellows.

It is perhaps not surprising that the plays of the Chamberlain's-King's Men, the first professional company known to have employed an embedded playwright, follow a pattern of embedding ideas of authorship into the content of their plays rather than into paratextual material. Weimann sees Shakespeare's manifestation of authority as 'prepared to share an *ensemble* commitment', *inscribing* modes of performance into his plays.[94] In these plays, representations of authorship are invested – whether through free choice (Fabell), fate (the unseen devil of *Yorkshire Tragedy*) or politic intervention (Old Flowerdale). The instigators of action ingratiate themselves within the plot structure, becoming inseparable from the 'plays' they create, as opposed to more self-

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[93] Joseph Horrell, 'Peter Fabell and Dr. Faustus', *Notes and Queries* 183.2 (1942), 36.
[94] Weimann, *Author's Pen*, 58, 88.

consciously classical dramatists such as Jonson or Webster whose authorial self-presentation is separated from the created text, manifested in prefatory material and addresses to readers. The plays of the Chamberlain's-King's Men, especially the apocryphal plays whose critical treatment has been defined by these notions of detached and disinterested authorship, demonstrate a different fascination with authorship. In these, attention is drawn to the collaborative and integrated processes of authorship that this company, generating plays from within its capitally invested circle of shareholders, was pioneering.

Shakespeare's plays were generated by a collaborative company in which the author played an integral role, neither dissolved nor neatly detachable. They were then subject to a further range of interventions as they pass into print. The name 'Shakespeare' attached to these plays recognises the influence of the company dramatist and his 'ownership' of them insofar as they are commensurate with narratives of company ownership, genre experimentation, response and style. Similar arguments may be extended to the rest of the company's repertory, but the plays discussed here demonstrate the interconnectedness of plays usually kept apart in studies modelled on authorial canons. The connections between Shakespeare's plays and the disputed plays are not unique or suggestive of a privileged position for the Apocrypha, but they display the interdependence of the repertory and go some way towards explaining the endurance of the Shakespeare attribution; the absolute distinction imposed throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is unsustainable. 'Shakespeare' is both individual and plural, a human author and a shorthand for the company's output. By acknowledging the more general participation and influence of 'Shakespeare', the critical rehabilitation of the apocryphal plays can take place unencumbered by a rigid canonical framework dependent on post-Romantic ideals of individual authorship.