

Theatrical Continuity of the Prodigal Stock Character: Patterns and Slippage

In their *Renaissance Drama* articles, Bruster (2013), Donley (2013) and Dowd (2014) attend to how Early Modern economic market conditions structured theatrical forms, shaped theatre's market development, and influenced (or were influenced by) the subject focus of the period's drama. The critics' emphasis on "market forces ... in, through, and with" (Bruster 2) early modern cultural products investigates both how theatrical products were valued, and the values expressed and constructed through performance. An assumption, one well-supported by work of economic and social historians (see Muldrew and Wrightson), is that the value(s) are an outcome of significant social and economic change in the early modern period. Grounded in this assumption, Donley and Dowd critique early modern comedies with central prodigal characters. Their work considers the influence of the prodigal in shaping behavioural norms and expectations beyond the stage. In well-crafted arguments they offer explanation of social shifts experienced in England's "protocapitalist" period (Howard 10, Dowd 119). Bennett's reminder to take a "*long view*" (2) problematizes these recent arguments about the linkage between early modern drama's prodigal characters and high-risk economic ventures and market growth.

I suggest that an "Early Modern England" scope-of-work acts as a form of selective social memory in that it brackets from view the theatrical and economic activity pre-dating 1576. This scope often also "forgets" the degree of exchange with non-English cultural products. Consideration of pre-early-modern drama's prodigal characters allows recognition of continuity of theatrical form and subject. Examining the degree of continuity between historical periods and theatrical forms raises some interesting questions about social habits and economic choice over time. In particular, examination of the prodigal stock character in Tudor drama can productively explore reperformed story-telling. From that work, a pattern emerges of long-standing ambivalence in the handling of comedy's stock prodigal characters – prodigals are rarely punished if they are disciplined at all. In many cases, a quick form of performed repentance (such cases as *Mankind* / *Everyman*, Hal/Prince Harry in *1H4* and *2H4*, Quicksilver in *Eastward Ho!*) is accepted as sufficient compensation for actions that break public codes of acceptable

behaviour. These patterns reveal a code of business behaviour that is theatrically performed and reinforced across the span of feudal to protocapitalist periods, which opens to question the assumptions of progression of socio-economic change.

A recognition of the social habits of prodigal performance in Medieval and Tudor plays challenges us to ask different questions. Using a case-study of a prodigal character from the “Tudor” period (such as Rex Humanitas in Lindsay’s *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*) I will question the theatrical forms that span historical periods and manifest in Shakespeare’s plays such as *Henry IV (Part I and II)*.

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Ivan Lupić

Honesty and Counsel: Kent's Dramatic and Political Allegiance

The Earl of Kent in Shakespeare's *King Lear* is one of the most interesting and probably one of the most studied of Shakespeare's minor characters. Our understanding of the political question in the play, as well as our perception of its more central characters, will to a remarkable extent depend on what we make of Kent. He has often been seen as the voice of good counsel, of faithful and responsible service, and of truth. In the context of literary and dramatic history, his prototypes have been identified in the figure of the plain, blunt Englishman, of the bluff soldier, of the worthy and plain-speaking counselor, or in allegorical stage representations of honesty, indebted to the tradition of morality drama. But critics are far from being unified in their assessment of Kent, either as a dramatic character or as an embodiment of a particular political philosophy. While Kent is clearly associated with the tradition and prerogative of free and plain speech, with *parrhesia* and with counsel, his language is also the language of satire, a rhetorical mode in which language is used aggressively in order to expose vice and, in Kent's case at least, to teach by pure verbal force. Kent's own assertion that "anger hath a privilege," to take just one example, cannot easily be reconciled with the dominant understandings of counsel in the Renaissance. On the contrary, frequent breaches of political decorum that Kent performs throughout the play seem to invite a more complicated political reading. The purpose of this paper is to consider the political meanings of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, especially the question of counsel in the play, from a combined perspective of the history of political thought and the history of dramatic forms.

**Tudor Pedagogues, Plays, and Pupil-Actors:
Or, The Grammar School Tradition, Playwriting, and Popular Performance**

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Traditionally, the grammar school and the related song school have been associated with a merely indirect or even oppositional influence on popular drama. Lynn Enterline, for instance, has focused on Shakespeare's subversive reworking of what she finds to be a humanist pedagogical training that enforced upon pupils a rigid imitation conceived in terms of "parroting" and rote repetition. Arguing that the schoolboy actor was even prompted to replicate the very voice and gestures of his schoolmaster and, repeatedly, to embody feelings that were not his own, she associates such mechanical training with the deepening psychological alienation expected of the Latin-trained, disciplined Englishman. Thus finding that Shakespeare's (mis)use of conventional rhetoric in his characterizations and playwriting reflects his resistance to "the very *telos* of 'masculine' rhetorical mastery humanists aimed to inculcate" ("Eloquent Barbarians" 170), Enterline concludes that the career of this popular playwright was influenced by the grammar school, but hardly indebted to it in any positive sense. Instead, grammar schooling is constructed as something Shakespeare resisted, rejected, and overcame. This paper aims to shift attention to the tradition of play production by humanist pedagogue-playwrights and thus to the school's positive influence upon dramatic authorship and performance in the popular tradition.

Some of the earliest plays in English have a strong connection to grammar school masters and surmasters—from John Redford's educative morality *Wit and Science* or Nicholas Udall's Latinate English comedies to John Lyly's sophisticated classical comedies—long before the "academic" intervention into playwriting for commercial theaters by the so-called University Wits. Moreover, whereas university drama was occasional and extracurricular, drama was integrated into the higher forms of the grammar school curriculum. Notably, within the more widespread institution of the Tudor school, the pedagogues' theatrical experiments developed practices that promoted both dramatic authorship and new performance techniques. Schoolmasters, especially under the influence of the Reformation, were far from providing a simple rote training in imitation aimed at indoctrinating pupils uncritically in Roman ideals or as conservative and unambivalent about classical authority as the current narrative suggests. Rather, even the most conventional humanist notions of *imitatio*, *emulatio*, and *copia* aimed at encouraging creative imitation with a difference and even rivalrous one-upping, not merely uninspired copying. At the same time, humanist rhetorical instruction drawing upon Quintilian's "rule" also had revolutionary implications for acting. Schoolmasters taught boy actors to avoid wooden, unnatural imitation and to empathize and feel, even to the point of recalling their own memories and feelings, in order to be effective orator-actors in vernacular plays that borrowed from classical models as part of a project to elevate English arts. This essay thus offers a revised understanding of the influence of the grammar school tradition upon Elizabethan theater, one that seconds the challenge to the academic/popular binary by recognizing the Tudor schools as agents of change that were productively reshaping popular playwriting and performance practices.

“A counterfeit profession is better / Than unseen hypocrisy”
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In her chapter on “Framing the action” in *Marlowe and the Popular Tradition: Innovation in English Drama Before 1595*, Ruth Lunney argues that “After Barabas, the rhetoric of performance would never be the same,” and that this figure was displaced and, indeed, replaced by “a new generation of ‘Machiavellian’ villains,” including Aaron the Moor (*Titus Andronicus*); Richard of Gloucester; the adulterous Suffolk (*Henry VI*), and Mortimer (*Edward II*) and Mosby (*Arden of Faversham*)” (p. 122). I want to return to my own argument, developed in my dissertation on “The Disabler: Formation and Transformation of a Stage Figure,” which argues that, in a series of dramaturgic experiments, Kyd, Marlowe and Shakespeare managed to synthesize elements of the Vice and the Machiavel, creating a figure which, employing Puttenham’s translation of *meiosis*, I called the disabler. For the dramatists, the figure’s appeal came from the way in which he could simultaneously frame the audience and generate much of the action, and do these things in ways that not only powerfully entertained spectators but created interpretive challenges. One constitutive element of the figure was the way in which his maneuvers compel audiences to experience uncomfortable juxtapositions of tragedy and comedy – as when, in *The Jew of Malta*, Abigail is murdered by her father because she is caught in a classic dilemma of divided loyalties but her death becomes a source of “sport” as Barabas engineers the mutual destruction of the two friars who seek to blackmail him because they know how she was murdered.

In my earlier exploration of *The Spanish Tragedy* I focused on how Kyd redistributed the functions of the Vice and Machiavel in the figures of Lorenzo and Hieronimo, but now I want to explore how he used the framing figures of Revenge and Andrea in a way that also synthesized key elements of these two Vice and the Machiavel – and, in particular, how the transformation of Andrea – to the point where, instead of being satisfied with the destruction of his enemies he requests the privilege of prescribing their ongoing torture in the afterlife – challenges audience members to decide if, ultimately, they share Andrea’s claim that “These are spectacles that please my soul.” This is a challenge that will confront spectators watching not only *The Spanish Tragedy*, *The Jew of Malta*, and *Richard III*, but also those watching plays from *Titus Andronicus* (where Shakespeare, in turn, experiments with figures from both Kyd and Marlowe) and, much later, Jonson’s *Sejanus* and *Volpone*.

Robert Hornback

Tudor Moral Allegory as Sub-Text in the Early Modern Drama

A few critics have challenged the commonplace that allegory ceded ground to supposedly more realistic and complex theatrical modes by the end of the sixteenth century. Notably, Dover Wilson famously argued for the influence of paradigms of the *Play of Youth* in Shakespeare's *Henry IV*; Alan Dessen pointed to the existence of what he called "residual allegory" in Marlowe; Ervin Beck noted the adaptation of prodigal son plays to New Comedy form in the genre of City Comedy; and Lawrence Manley and Sally-Beth MacLean recently discussed "belated morality plays" like a *Knacke to Knowe a Knave* and recurrent morality play emblems as "theatergrams" in the repertory of Lord Strange's Men. Elsewhere, the allegorical mode was alive and well in the frequently "symbolic" acting style of the Queen's Men, the repertoire of roles played by the tragedian Edward Alleyn, the Marprelate war (1588-89), Nashe's *Summer's Last Will and Testament* (1592), the plot of *The Seven Deadly Sins* (ca. 1592-1598), Cambridge *Parnassus* plays of the late 1590s, civic pageants, court masques, Middleton's controversial Jacobean hit *A Game at Chess* (1624), allusions to "the Vice" and devils in plays throughout the period, and in the survival of moralities in popular puppet shows. So omnipresent is the theatrical use of allegory and of the Tudor morality play in particular that we need to revise our understandings significantly. Rather than thinking of allegory as in any way merely "residual," then, we might instead recall what Janet Adelman called "the habit of mind which sees specific ... allegorical figures as the type for human figures" and attend to the pervasive, recurrent presence of sub-textual allegory in early modern plays.

As a case in point, I want to highlight the remarkable influence John Redford's Henrician Paul's boys' *Play of Wit and Science* had on subsequent dramatic imitations such as *The Marriage of Wit and Science* (1569-70) and *The Marriage between Wit and Wisdom* (1579), and, eventually, on Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* (c. 1606-7). The staging of Redford's Everyman "Wit" being gulled by a female Vice temptress (a "strumpet" named "Idleness") required that he be lulled to sleep on her lap, for her to blacken his face, and then for her to place the fool's cap and coat of her attendant black-faced fool "Ignorance" on Wit before he discovers his folly and rebukes himself. Idleness, whose very name connoted "folly" (*OED* 3), also evidently appeared in blackface, "Idleness's mark." Shakespeare evokes such moral allegory when Cleopatra, whose "tawny front" may have been represented via blackface, is associated with the allegorical figure of Idleness (e.g., "I should take you for [I]dleness itself") and Antony, who is called a "strumpet's fool," is iconically figured as resting in her lap. Shakespeare was thus playing upon popular emblems from moralities even in his late Roman plays. Far from being simplistic, the sub-textual allegory made available through such allusions and analogies formed a sophisticated aesthetic that complicated and enriched audiences' responses.

Title: Medieval Mechanical Idols and the Statue of Hermione

Abstract:

The final scene of *The Winter's Tale* has been vital to our understanding of Shakespeare's place in the early modern culture wars, especially the controversy over images. In one sense, the scene invites a not-so-cryptic Catholic reading: as in so many medieval miracles of the Virgin, a statue of Our Lady comes to life (5.3.44-5). Yet the scene also demystifies Catholic "superstition" (5.3.43): it turns out that the seeming miracle is merely a special effect. In this, the scene reenacts the most famous iconoclastic spectacle of the Reformation: the debunking of the Rood of Boxley in 1538. According to legend, this crucifix could weep, bleed, nod, beckon, and even step right off its pedestal. So reformers tore it apart, revealing the hidden wires and engines used by unscrupulous monks to dupe the credulous masses. According to reformist historiography, this event marked the end of enslavement to idolatry and the dawn of reason—a powerful narrative that Whig historians hitched to the myth of secular progress.

It has been argued that *The Winter's Tale* seeks to transpose some aspect of the old religion (like monolithic faith, enchantment, or social wholeness) to the early modern stage. Unfortunately, our understanding of the pre-Reformation relationship between ritual and theater—exemplified by the veneration of the Rood of Boxley—has depended on the unapologetically biased accounts of polemicists. Scholars have been forced to speculate: was the Rood of Boxley a commedia-del-arte puppet, a cutting-edge automaton, or a wild exaggeration? We need not guess: art historians (most notably J. and G. Taubert and Johannes Tripps) have catalogued hundreds of medieval articulable statues that can indeed weep, bleed, and move. I intend to bring their neglected research to bear on the study of early English drama and *The Winter's Tale* in particular, demonstrating that Shakespeare did not resurrect lost enchantment, but rather participated in a continuous ritualistic-theatrical tradition that venerated and desecrated images simultaneously.

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When God Becomes a Prop: The Bible in 16th Century Protestant Morality Plays

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When the medieval God enters a morality play or biblical drama to enact his Word, he authorizes a particular interpretation and precludes questions about what he means. His meaning is motivated and explained by the context. By contrast, Protestant morality plays take God off the stage, and in doing so lose his interpretive authority. Instead, they create God as a text, the Logos. Playwrights typically stage this abstraction as a prop, the Bible. God as Logos can be and is cited by both virtues and vices, but he cannot authorize any particular interpretation. These plays thus dramatize the principle of *sola scriptura*, and in the process reveal how humans are left to their own interpretive devices. Hermeneutic questions and ambiguities inevitably result, so the plays often represent characters engaged with interpretive problems. For instance, two women in *Nice Wanton* dispute what “spare the rod and spoil the child” really means: what force is necessary to discipline children, and how much force is too much? I will refer to a number of sixteenth-century Protestant morality plays that represent God as a Bible, and I will argue that these plays reveal the potential epistemological uncertainty that accompanies the principle of *sola scriptura*.

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Staged Reading: Interpretations of the Divine Word in Shakespeare and Bale

Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* revolves around the written word: packets of letters, the "scriptures of the loyal Leonatus, / All turned to heresy" (3.4.80-1), stand at the center of the action, and the play ends with a prophesy whose correct explication cements the characters' reconciliation. *Cymbeline* foregrounds reading strategies to ask how such scriptures—and particularly the words of a god—function in a treacherous world and in the hands of its fallible interpreters. With the publication of the King James Bible just on the horizon at the time of the play's composition, circa 1609, such questions were perhaps particularly timely. But concerns about the simultaneous necessity of direct access to authoritative writings and the possibility of their misinterpretation appear much earlier, resonating within the dramatic works of mid-sixteenth-century Protestant reformers. Scholarship on John Bale's biblical plays, and especially his *Temptacyon of Our Lorde*, has long recognized that the drama foregrounds competing modes of engagement with scripture, and my work on the play attends to the labor of the staged exegetes, who offer new context to decontextualized scriptural passages and who, like Bale, seek a revolution in interpretive practices. My essay will analyze the possibilities and pitfalls of talking about scripture onstage in order to ask how early Protestant theorizing about dramatized biblical interpretation might inform Jacobean theater's interest in divinely-authored texts. Such a discussion of staged reading potentially opens up a new understanding of Protestant attitudes towards mimesis; although the stage, which simulates the real presence of merely represented persons and events, highlights the distance between the coded text and its audience, for Shakespeare and Bale, I will propose, such distance counterintuitively permits the text to function. The words of god provide a model for the human community precisely because they do not directly describe it—because they require interpretation.

Tudor Resurrections and Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*

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Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* has occasioned several readings of religious topoi like transubstantiation, incarnation, and resurrection—arguably more than any other play in the corpus. These readings consider crossovers between “late medieval” (or “Catholic”) and “post-Reformation” (or “Protestant”) theologies, devotional praxes, and dramatic conventions but pay little attention to Shakespeare's borrowings from early Tudor religious drama. While the performance of Christ's passion and resurrection was the crux of religious cycle plays (such as those performed in York in the late fourteenth century) Lawrence Clopper, Richard Emmerson, Theresa Coletti, and Gail McMurray Gibson have persuasively argued that many of these “late medieval” dramas were actually early Tudor in nature. For example, the Towneley plays (formerly called the “Wakefield Cycle”) are a sixteenth-century manuscript compilation owned by a Catholic recusant family, and the Chester Plays were performed as a complete cycle only in the mid-sixteenth century. What is more, Protestant rewritings of resurrection plays (as Alexandra Johnston and Karen Marsalek have shown) were quite popular in early Tudor England.

One such play is *The Resurrection of Our Lorde*, which was composed between 1530-1560. Its authorship remains anonymous, though J. Dover Wilson and Bertram Dobell speculated tentatively in their 1912 edition that John Bale may be a candidate. The play, which exists as a fragmented scribal copy (Folger MS V.b.192), recounts post-Resurrection episodes, including the Road to Emmaus and Doubting Thomas. These episodes are filtered through the hermeneutic lenses of “Appendix,” a character who teaches the audience how to rightly interpret the relation between dramatic representation and scriptural truth. They also demonstrate the semiotics of the resurrection as related to both scripture reading and the theological controversies over the Eucharist.

This paper shows how *The Resurrection of Our Lorde* dramatizes a pattern of semiotic division and correction with respect to Christ's body and the signs by which it is made known. In the Emmaus episode in particular, Christ appears to his disciples in disguise and then reveals himself in the breaking of bread, at which point he vanishes. The disciples, in turn, can only understand the presence of Christ by struggling to relate sign to thing signified. This semiotic struggle, I argue, motivates Hermione's resurrection in *The Winter's Tale*, which Shakespeare represents not as a metaphysical transformation of stone into flesh but as the culmination of a process of semiotic division and correction by which Leones comes to know the body through the sign, the flesh through the stone. *The Resurrection of Our Lorde* and *The Winter's Tale* draw out of earlier theatrical traditions like *quem quaeritis* and the cycle plays the semiotics of the resurrection and the interpretive challenges it poses; these later dramas do not mark a shift from flesh to word but rather witness the indefatigable tensions that exist between such categories across the Reformation's *longue durée*.