

UNTIMELY DEATHS IN RENAISSANCE DRAMA

UNTIMELY DEATHS IN RENAISSANCE DRAMA:

SHAKESPEARE, MIDDLETON, MARLOWE

By

ANDREW GRIFFIN, M.A.

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

McMaster University

© Copyright by Andrew Griffin, July 2008

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (2008)
(English)

McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Untimely Deaths in Renaissance Drama: Shakespeare, Middleton, Marlowe

AUTHOR: Andrew Griffin, M.A. (McMaster University), B.A. (Queen's University)

SUPERVISOR: Professor Helen Ostovich

NUMBER OF PAGES: vi + 242

Abstract

In this dissertation, I read several early modern plays – Shakespeare’s *Richard II*, Middleton’s *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, and Marlowe’s *Dido, Queene of Carthage* – alongside a variety of early modern historiographical works. I pair drama and historiography in order to negotiate the question of early modern untimely deaths. Rather than determining once and for all what it meant to die an untimely death in early modern England, I argue here that one answer to this question requires an understanding of the imagined relationship between individuals and the broader unfolding of history by which they were imagined to be shaped, which they were imagined to shape, or from which they imagined to be alienated. I assume here that drama – particularly historically-minded drama – is an ideal object to consider when approaching such vexed questions, and I also assume that the problematic of untimely deaths provides a framework in which to ask about the historico-culturally specific relationships that were imagined to obtain between subjects and history. While it is critically commonplace to assert that early modern drama often stages the so-called “modern” subject, I argue here that early modern visions of the subject are often closely linked to visions of that subject’s place in the world, particularly in the world that is recorded by historiographers as a world within and of history. I argue that one can begin to make sense of deaths in terms of their timeliness or untimeliness only by recognizing historically specific senses of the narrativized subject and the imagined relationship between that subject and history.

For Bob and Elaine Griffin, and for Sylvia Bowerbank.

Acknowledgements

Helen Ostovich has been an ideal mentor, supervisor, colleague, and friend since 2001, when I first met her in a classroom while studying for my MA. She has often corrected my gaffes, cheered my successes, challenged me to think clearly, and provided me with all varieties of support. She has provided me with a place to live and write in Toronto when she's away, she has introduced me to friends and ideas, she has insisted on an editor's precision, she has insisted on the Oxford comma, she has employed me, and she has taught me – by laughing easily – how to enjoy early modern drama. This project and I would both be far poorer if not for her efforts and care.

Melinda Gough has been a generous interlocutor and a good friend over the past five years. Her seriousness and her professionalism have encouraged me to attempt seriousness and professionalism. I am inspired by the pleasure she takes in the work of criticism, and I am excited by the excitement that she unapologetically exhibits when discussing literature and ideas. She has been an excellent role model. Working with her while writing this dissertation has been both rewarding and fun.

Mary Silcox has often put me at ease by showing confidence in both me and this project from the outset. In the classroom, she taught me how to read more carefully than I would have, and she demonstrated – again and again – that good scholars can have good senses of humour. On occasion, she gave me more than enough rope to hang myself, which is an excellent pedagogical strategy.

Steph Morley, Gary Kuchar, Graham Roebuck, Sylvia Bowerbank, Carolyn Casey, Jed Rasula, and David Clark have generously contributed significant intellectual and personal resources to this project and to others. They have talked me through problems, provided me with new problems, fed me, housed me on research trips, and pointed me in new directions. This dissertation and I are much obliged.

My time at McMaster has included many valuable conversations and great weekends: Suzanne, Shawna, Evan, Jaime, Tim, Emily, Kaley, Brandi Lee, Ben, Justin, and the members of Discipline and Punishment, the departmental softball team, are owed many thanks. I also owe thanks to old friends, Mark, Phil, Matt, Ben, Al, Andrew, Rich, and Marc, and especially Liz, who has been with me for the long haul.

As anyone who knows her will recognize, June Cheng deserves more than thanks. She has been a help and a riot.

This project was funded primarily by a Canadian Graduate Scholarship from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Other funding for this project came from an Ontario Graduate Scholarship and from a McMaster University Graduate Scholarship and from the Marion Northcott Schweitzer Travel Bursary.

Table of Contents

Untimely Deaths in Renaissance Drama	1
On a Regal Lifespan: <i>Richard II</i>	34
Middleton and the Urban Untimely	88
Tragedy and Epic in Marlowe's <i>Dido, Queene of Carthage</i>	154
Horatio's Infelicity	214

Untimely Deaths in Renaissance Drama: Shakespeare, Middleton, Marlowe

In the three stanzas that Chidioc Tichborne included in a letter to his wife on 19

September 1586 – the day before he was executed for participating in the Babington Plot

– he describes the unusualness of his position: about 28 years old, he is a young man, but he is also preparing for his death.

My prime of youth is but a frost of cares,
My feast of joy is but a dish of pain,
My crop of corn is but a field of tares,
And all my good is but vain hope of gain.
The day is past, and yet I saw no sun,
And now I live, and now my life is done.

My tale was heard and yet it was not told,
My fruit is fallen and yet my leaves are green;
My youth is spent and yet I am not old,
I saw the world and yet I was not seen.
My thread is cut and yet it is not spun,
And now I live, and now my life is done.

I sought my death and found it in my womb,
I looked for life and saw it was a shade;
I trod the earth and knew it was my tomb,
And now I die, and now I was but made.
My glass is full, and now my glass is run,
And now I live, and now my life is done.

I quote the entirety of the poem now known as “Tichborne’s Elegy” because its dreary repetition and its *copia* of paradoxes speak to the sense of bafflement that characterizes thinking on untimely deaths. Even though Tichborne will be disemboweled alive the day after writing this poem – an execution so horrific that Queen Elizabeth I will insist it not be repeated on the remaining conspirators – he is more concerned here with his death’s

nonsensicalness than he is with the fact of his death and its attendant agonies. Tichborne is stunned specifically because he is dying and because he is simultaneously too young to die. This preoccupation with the untimeliness of death rather than the state of his soul is particularly striking when one considers that his piety led him to the situation in which he finds himself. At the end of his life, this dedicated Catholic writes a poem that fails to mention God or Church. Rather than contemplating repentance or God or mortality in general, Tichborne here is primarily concerned with the severe disjuncture between the stories that he has imagined proleptically about his life and the current situation in which he finds himself. To distil Tichborne's paradoxes, he presumes that there is something called "his life" which should continue, even though "his life" is coming to an end.

Just as the poem frustratingly refuses to develop – each perfectly balanced line repeats the structure and tropes from the previous line, each stanza repeats the structure of the stanza before it – Tichborne imagines his life in terms of a developmental failure: both his poem and his life end, but neither reaches a satisfying conclusion. The close relationship between the poem's form and its content is perhaps the point of this work because Tichborne imagines his life here in literary, or at least narrative, terms. Though it is a lyric, the poem gestures towards narrative by invoking images of organic development in the form of fruit, trees, and crops, but the lyric *qua* lyric refuses to develop this narrative potential. In lieu of a story is a slew of paradoxes that describe an organic promise nipped in the bud before it blossoms.¹

¹ This relationship between confused seasons and untimely deaths is a common *topos* in the period. See, for instance, Don Andrea in Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* as he complains that "in the harvest of my summer joys / Death's winter nipp'd the blossoms of my bliss" (1.1.12-13). On the "unseasonable destruction of

Tichborne juxtaposes this vision of biological unfolding, however, with other images that complicate any vision of his death as a straightforwardly biological anomaly. The poem's organic imagery is set against his allusion to the Fates who have cut his unspun thread, and here an ambiguously classical sense of fate becomes apparent. In its vision of the Fates, Tichborne's poem seems of two minds, imagining that fate fundamentally shapes human lives while refusing to recognize the fatedness of his own death. This sense of dying before one's fated span is ultimately the fundamental paradox of untimely deaths that the poem negotiates. Fate (in some form) is for Tichborne both a necessary and an inadequate category of thought when working to understand the span and ending of his life.

Such a narratively unsatisfactory end to a life is particularly disappointing in the case of Tichborne because his life, at least as history has generally recorded it, was a life best understood in terms of plots and plotting. A conspiratorial participant in the Babington Plot, Tichborne was ultimately trapped in a counter-plot devised by Sir Francis Walsingham that landed Tichborne in the Tower and eventually led him to the gallows. I introduce the quibble between two senses of plot here – "plot" as "a plan made in secret . . . to achieve an unlawful end" (OED n.4) and plot as "a storyline" (OED n.6) – because the intersection between these two meanings is particularly evocative when dealing with Tichborne and with the construction of his poem.² When plotting with

spring vegetation" as a typically tragic vision of violent death, see Robert Watson, *The Rest is Silence: Death as Annihilation in the English Renaissance*, esp. 58-61.

² There are other meanings of "plot" that I ignore here, such as "plot" meaning measured tract of land (OED n.1), "plot" meaning a map or blueprint (OED n.3). In terms of early English drama, a "plot" is also the outline of the play's plot that would, as in the case of *The Seven Deadly's Sin's* famous "plot" or "plat," be tacked up on the backstage wall or door, allowing actors to remember their exits and entrances and to

Anthony Babington and others some time before December 1585 – when Gilbert Gifford, a co-conspirator, was arrested and turned by Walsingham³ – Tichborne and the other Babington plotters were thinking in narrative terms. More specifically, while plotting the assassination of Elizabeth I in the hope of placing her Catholic cousin Mary on the throne, the conspirators imagined that their actions would become causes, and that these causes would produce specific (desirable) effects at a subsequent moment in time. But this plot – this secret scheme and imagined story – was disrupted by Walsingham who intercepted and de-coded enciphered letters that were sent between Mary, Bernardino de Mendoza (the one-time Spanish ambassador to England), and Anthony Babington. With the surveillance of Walsingham and his allies, the story that the conspirators were telling about themselves, their nation, and their queen failed to become a reality. Specifically, the story that they were telling and in which they were living came to an untimely end, like Tichborne, before it had a chance to conclude. Ultimately, when Tichborne laments in his poem that “My tale was heard, and yet it was not told,” the paradox is both profoundly personal and decidedly political: his biography is cut short, and his tale, (over)heard by Walsingham and Walsingham’s code-breakers, was consequently aborted before it could play itself out by installing Mary on the throne.

follow the play’s overall action. On the plot as a material artifact in the early modern theatre, see David Kathman, “Reconsidering *The Seven Deadly Sins*.” On the intersection of the meanings of “plot,” see Neill, “‘The Exact Map or Discovery of Human Affairs’: Shakespeare and the Plotting of History,” esp. 379-80, and Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative*, 11-13.

³ While it is clear that Gifford was arrested by Walsingham’s men in Rye in December 1585 after meeting with Thomas Morgan, Mary’s factor in Paris, it remains unclear when, precisely, Gifford was turned and began supplying Walsingham with information. Stephen Budiansky, for instance, suggests that Gifford may have been turned well before he left for France, and that his earlier imprisonment in London was part of a plot designed by Walsingham that allowed Gifford to establish contact and cultivate a rapport with other imprisoned Catholics. On the relationship between Walsingham and Gifford, see also Conyers Read, *Mr. Walsingham*, 3, and William Camden, *Annals* 3:S4.

Though interrupted plots seem to be the story of Tichborne's life, his life is also clearly caught up in a plot that unfurls easily, and this is the plot that historians have generally provided: against Tichborne and his sense of narrative abruption sits another more famous story of Walsingham's expert maneuvering, and this Walsingham Plot unfolds without any sense of interruption. Though the Babington conspirators had thought that they had devised a cunning scheme to facilitate a Franco-Spanish invasion and the return of Mary, the plot they devised was Walsingham's rather than their own. Imprisoned under the watch of the dedicated Puritan Sir Amias Paulet in Staffordshire at Chartley Hall, a home of the Earl of Essex, Mary had been cut off from all secret correspondence since the Throckmorton Plot had been exposed. After Throckmorton was able to correspond by letter with Mary in 1583 through either bribed or loyal servants, Mary's jailors no longer bothered to maintain the appearance that Mary was a guest rather than a prisoner, and they made sure to tighten the guard around her. By 1585, Paulet secured her so closely and isolated her so thoroughly that, he claims, he could not "imagine how it may be possible for them to convey [to Mary] a piece of paper as big as my finger" (in Budiansky 139). In this epistolary vacuum – all of her official correspondence was read by Walsingham and forwarded to her, insultingly, unsealed – the only means for secret traffic with Mary, decided the plotters, was through kegs of beer delivered to Chartley once a week by a brewer from the nearby town of Burton. It was a novel scheme of which the Babington conspirators might well have been proud. With this new line of communication opened, the conspirators eventually began to write freely of conspiracy, invasion, and regicide, and they provided specific details and names.

But the conspirators did not realize that the man who had suggested this plan, Gifford, was one of Walsingham's allies, and they did not know that the plan had been devised by a member of the Walsingham circle (either Paulet, Gifford, or the code-breaker Thomas Phelippes: the evidence is unclear). Rather than plotting, the conspirators were in fact caught up in a broader plot, a plot drawn by their enemies into which they had been interjected; this master plot eventually unfolded crisply and cleanly, leading eventually to their discovery, their executions, and the execution of the Queen whom they were attempting to preserve and empower. Indeed, while imagining themselves as plotters, at no point in the Babington conspiracy was Babington's plot ever obscure to Walsingham because two of its major movers – Gifford and Robert Poley – were government plants. Strangely, then, as Conyers Read points out in the standard biography of Walsingham,

if one traced the matter far enough the originator of the murder plot would be found to be no less a person than Walsingham himself, not of course because he wished the death of Elizabeth, but because he wished by implicating Mary Stuart, in such wise to compass her destruction (3:25).⁴

William Camden in his *Annals* concurs with Read's interpretation of the situation when he identifies Walsingham, by way of Poley, as the source of the plot: "Into this company" of conspirators, claims Camden,

Polly [sic] insinuated himselfe, well instructed in the affaires of the Queene of Scots, very expert in dissembling, who still from day to day, laid open all their counsels to *Walsingham*, and by the mischievous advice which he suggested to these yong men, being of themselves inclined to evill, have precipitated them to farre worse matters. (3:S4v)

⁴ See also Alan Gordon Smith, who concurs that Walsingham drew Babington into the plot rather than helping to discover a plot that existed prior to Walsingham's interference.

While thinking that they were plotting, the Babington plotters were plotted, and their eventual arrival at the gallows seems fated, though not necessarily in the sense that Tichborne invokes in his poem. Spurred along by Walsingham's man to undertake "farre worse matters" than they would have otherwise, the plotters end up playing roles in a story written by Walsingham.

By the day of their executions, Tichborne and the rest of the conspirators must have recognized their entrapment and they must have recognized that they were, from the outset of their plotting, caught up in someone else's plot. If, as Camden argues, Poley "precipitated" the conspirators "to farre worse matters," then his absence from the trial and execution must have certainly given them pause, and they must have realized something amiss in the story that they had been imagining when they met secretly at taverns, in St. Giles' field, and at St. Paul's. The story that they thought had been interrupted – the story of revolution – was actually not an interrupted story at all, but instead a perfectly laid plot that would finally reach its conclusion when Mary was executed.

In a strange and poignant way that speaks to the plotters' notorious bumbling, they seem to have been obtusely aware that their collective fate was determined by a force beyond themselves, even though they were unaware of Walsingham's entrapment until they were trapped. In a group portrait of the plotters that was, bizarrely enough, commissioned in the midst of their scheming and perhaps even painted by Babington, the painter included a Latin inscription, "*Hi mihi sunt Comites, quos ipsa Pericula ducunt,*" or "Such be my consorts, as dare incurre my dangers" (Camden's translation 3:S4); this

epigram was subsequently changed, to “*Quorsum haec alio properantibus?*,” or “To what end are these things to men who hurry to another purpose?” (my translation). The latter epigram, though intentionally obscure because the former was “too open and intelligible” (Disraeli 173) or “a little too plain” (Camden 3:S4), speaks ironically to their situation: “these things” – these lives that they live – are ultimately meaningless because these lives are caught up in “another” larger “purpose.” By the day of their trials, however, Tichborne and the other conspirators must have realized that the larger “purpose” in which they were caught was not their own or their God’s, but was instead a purpose devised by Walsingham so that he could cultivate the evidence required to execute Mary, the “bosom serpent” of the realm.

Tichborne’s poem makes sense in a different way when read against this background of double-dealing and entrapment. From Tichborne’s perspective, the story in which he lives is a story characterized by an intellectually and narratively surprising interruption: his thread is cut, but it is not spun. At the same time, however, the “webbe *Walsingham* had closely woven” (Camden 3:2T) was woven of threads spun masterfully, and these threads were allowed to reach their end. In fact, the execution of Tichborne seems narratively quite satisfying to most subsequent historians who suggest that it arrives at precisely the right time when considering this death in terms of espionage or in terms of the judicial proceedings in which it was determined. Specifically, Tichborne’s death arrives at the reasonable end of a process in which execution is the *telos* of a history occupied by crime, trial, and punishment. Tichborne, of course, sees things differently, lamenting the lack of conclusion at the end of his life.

The tension between these two narratives of Tichborne's death is exemplary of a broader tension that I will tease out in various ways throughout this dissertation. In Tichborne's version of his biographical span, his death is best understood as "untimely" according to the terms that I outline below because it seems to him narratively disruptive and unpredictable. In a second version of the story, however, his death is precisely the opposite, arriving not only at the end of a life, but at its conclusion, and fitting neatly within a narrative paradigm of crime and punishment that was familiar enough to early modern readers of history. As I outline below, recognizing this tension is crucial to our understanding of untimely deaths in early modern drama because its playwrights were becoming more aware of the contemporary historiographical traditions in which they often participate. In the pages and chapters that follow, I argue that dramatic attention to protagonists combined with a critical awareness of broader, impersonal historiographical paradigms often forced playwrights to adopt a sort of double-vision when they approached the question of death: When making sense of deaths, should these deaths be considered in terms of biography or historiography? Do lives unfold, or are lives simply caught up in the broader movements of history? Do lives have beginnings, middles, and ends, or is such a narratively satisfying vision of the lifespan somehow inadequate?

To Die an Untimely Death: Narrativity and Lifespans.

When Tichborne imagines his death as untimely, he makes presumptions about the nature of lives and lifespans, and he makes presumptions about the nature of the subject. I want here to negotiate these presumptions. For one to imagine that a death is untimely, one

must, by definition, imagine that it arrives “too soon” in the span of an individual’s life, and this sense of preemption or interruption begs certain questions. How must we relate to deaths before we can think of them in terms of their temporal propriety or impropriety? How must we imagine a lifespan before the death that marks its end can be considered temporally inappropriate? When *should* one die? Given the work that has followed upon Phillipe Ariès’ seminal writing on death and the historicity of death’s conceptualization, it is safe to say that the answers to these questions are historically local. Before I discuss, however, early modern stage representations of untimely deaths – before I discuss some of the historically specific answers that were given to the question of death’s untimeliness – I will first outline the question of death’s timeliness as a concept, delimiting the theoretical field in which this dissertation operates.

If one imagines that one’s death is understandable in terms of its relative timeliness, then one has necessarily posited a vision of the subject as a subject of time. This is not simply to say that subjects exist in time, but that the lives and identities to which subjects lay claim are fundamentally informed by time, caught up with time, affected by time, and characterized in temporal terms. Far from the Cartesian “I” who exists with certainty only in the moment of its thinking, far from the transcendental subject of Kant, and far from what Marshall Grossman describes as the Augustinian “iconic I,” the subject whose life might end too soon is a subject who exists within a story that includes its past and, *in potentia*, its future. While Descartes’ *cogito* exists in and as the moment of its thinking, that is, the subject who lives a life and bears or is borne by a lifespan is necessarily a subject of memory and of stories, a subject that accumulates over

time, existing at the point of contact between its past and its potential, probable, or possible future.

This vision of the subject's relation to time is, of course, familiar through Paul Ricoeur, for instance, and through many thinkers who have figured the subject as the subject of narrative. In Peter Brooks' formulation that opens his *Reading for the Plot*, for instance,

[o]ur lives are ceaselessly intertwined with narrative, with the stories that we tell and hear told, those we dream or imagine or would like to tell, all of which are reworked in that story of our own lives that we narrate to ourselves in an episodic, sometimes semi-conscious, but virtually uninterrupted, monologue. (3)

To say that lives are intertwined with narrative is, of course, not simply to say that subjects tend, in the manner of a habit, to narrate their lives like alienated neurotics. Rather, to recognize the interrelation between subjectivity and narrative is to recognize that to be a subject who exists over time is to be a subject of the stories that one tells about oneself, stories that sustain the subject coherently over time despite the inevitable transformations that occur between birth and death.

Apart from providing an imagined temporal coherence to the subject, narrative is also the source of a subject's singularity and identity: the stories told about an individual are not only the stories through which he or she sustains himself or herself over time, but they are also the stories that produce and found an identity to which individuals might lay claim. As Adriana Cavarero has argued following Hannah Arendt, when we deal with the subject as an individual human being in his or her singularity, we necessarily deal with that individual's biography. Invoking and citing Arendt's *The Human Condition*, Cavarero emphasizes that if

‘the unchangeable identity of the person . . . becomes tangible only in the story of the . . . life’, and if ‘the essence of who somebody is can come into being only when the life departs, leaving behind nothing but a story,’ it is indeed also true that the narration, more than simply translating into words the ‘objective’ and manifest unity of the protagonist, presupposes it and glimpses it in this story that the protagonist left behind. (41)

In a gesture that she repeats throughout *Relating Narratives*, Cavarero here suggests that narrative is not simply that which provides temporal coherence to a subject or that which describes the life that has been lived. In this provocative and compelling reading of Arendt, Cavarero explicitly provides an anti-Platonic, dialectical vision of the subject’s relation to narrative that echoes what one might find often throughout the history of ideas in the West. According to this vision of the subject’s relation to narrative, one must refuse to recognize the subject as a subject prior to its narration. Rather than being subjects who narrate our lives, we are subjects who have lives only insofar as they are narrated. To further demonstrate this point, Cavarero points to the limit case amnesiac: “In so far as she is a *victim* of amnesia, she finds herself being someone who has suddenly become no one, because she is now merely a sort of empirical life without a story” (35). We might also think here of the hysteric as another limit case proving the rule. With a hysterically repressed memory, a hysteric’s biography is missing a crucial point, and all moments around this point are suddenly unstable, allowing the hysteric to comport himself or herself in ways that are “out of character” only because that character, as a narrative construction, has been disturbed.⁵

I draw out Cavarero’s thinking on the necessary narratability of the subject to make sense of the story with which she opens *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and*

⁵ On hysteria as a problem of narrative, see Marshall Grossman, *The Story of All Things*, 8.

Selfhood, a story that implies a valuable contrast to the vision of narrational selves that may be subject to untimely deaths. Cavarero begins *Relating Narratives* by citing Karen Blixon's story of a man and a stork: a man lives by a pond and wakes in the middle of the night because he hears an unusual noise; he wanders and stumbles through the dark, searching for the sound's source; he finds that his dike was leaking, allowing his fish to escape, and he fixes the problem; in the morning, when he awakes, he finds that his apparently aimless footsteps have traced the shape of a stork on the ground (1). Reading this story as an allegory for human lives generally – lives that appear aimless only to reveal at their ends a meaningful coherence – Cavarero asks a question to which she responds in the affirmative: “does the course of every life allow itself to be looked upon in the end like a design that has a meaning?” (1). By concluding eventually that, yes, every life allows itself to be looked upon in the end like a design that has a meaning, Cavarero makes a point about the imaginative completion of biography that privileges the fatal end of biography as the point at or around which lives make sense in the way that novels and plays make sense. In marking the imaginary narrative coherence of an individual life, Cavarero articulates a vision not only of the narratable subject, but also the narratively meaningful subject whose death marks not the end of a life, but its conclusion and consummation. In doing so, she repeats in a different, more affirmative tone the desublimating critique of biographical coherence offered by Sartre in *La Nausée*, a critique in which the end of a life becomes the point at which a life's meaning might recursively be made visible in a gesture of sheer mystification. For Sartre and for Cavarero, though operating in different registers, in different tones, and to different ends,

life becomes coherent only at the moment of death in the form of a quasi-literary narrative that ignores the fact of biographical contingency – the *ad hoc*-ness that characterizes life – by obscuring the experience of directionlessness that Blixon's protagonist, stumbling around in the dark after a noise, embodies. For Sartre, the stumbling is the truth of the subject, where Cavarero finds the subject's truth in the postmortem stork.

This vision of death as the narrative conclusion to a life, rather than the simple end to a life, has early modern and classical analogs in the often recycled gnomic adage that one cannot judge the happiness of one's life until the moment of one's death. Throughout the tradition in which this truism is invoked, however, its meaning remains relatively open, adjusting itself to the historico-ideological context in which it is uttered. At the end of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, for instance, when the Chorus reminds its audience that "none can be called happy until that day when he carries / His happiness down to the grave in peace" (1529-30), the context of the proverb provides a proleptic promise of redemption for Oedipus. Oedipus remains alive at the end of *Oedipus Tyrannus*, and, consequently, the meaning of his life and its total happiness remains undecided. By the time he reaches his death at the end of *Oedipus Coloneus*, when he becomes a protector of Athens and the subject of a hero cult, the meaning of his suffering becomes something different, and it becomes something fixed as well. In this moment at the end of *Oedipus Coloneus*, the meaningfulness of Oedipus' life is finally figured in a way that the oracle had promised, becoming meaningful in a way that would have been unavailable prior to the end of his biography. At the moment of his death, the horrors of

Oedipus' life recursively become tests of piety that he has passed rather than simple indexes of the Fates' cruelty.⁶

Against this vision of a final, inevitable prophesied end, Montaigne's invocation of the same adage in "That We Should Not Judge of Our Happiness Until After Our Death" produces a set of meanings at odds with what emerges in Sophocles' *Theban Plays*. Preoccupied, as he often is, with the popular Renaissance idea that mutability is the truth of human life, Montaigne produces a set of classical and contemporary examples that prove the rule of mutability: he invokes, for instance, "the great Pompey" who becomes synonymous with misery after the collapse of the first triumvirate, and he invokes the "Kings of Macedon that succeeded Alexander the Great, some were afterward seene to become Joyners and Scriveners at Rome: and of Tyrants of Sicilie, Schoolemasters at Corinth" (69). But this sense of sheer mutability – this sense that change, usually for the worse, is simply the rule of human being – becomes something else by the end of his short essay. Rather than speaking simply to the capriciousness of life, it speaks to the sense of culmination and conclusiveness, making the end of a life the "master-day, the day that judgeth all others":

it is the day, saith an auncient Writer, that must judge of all my forepassed yeares. To death doe I referre the essay of my studies fruit. There shall wee see whether

⁶ As Emily Wilson points out, the sense of Oedipus's ultimate "happiness" is troubled by the Chorus's final ode in which it attempts to "take Oedipus's life as exemplary of all human life": "If Oedipus, who seemed to be a great king and the man who saved Thebes from the Sphinx, has fallen, then all men are equal to nothing" (39). For Wilson, however, the ode fails to capture what the play actually performs: "The Oedipus who resists leaving the stage may be an enigma, but he is not dead, and he is hardly equal to nothing" (40). Edward Said concurs with Wilson's ultimate conclusion, arguing in *On Late Style* that "the aged hero is portrayed as having finally attained a remarkable holiness and sense of resolution" at the end of the play (6). Of course, while Oedipus seems to have attained a sense of biographical resolution at the moment he is drawn into the heavens, his progeny continue to feud violently over land. While his own biography concludes, that is, the story of these Oedipii remains open to more horror through the end of *Antigone*.

my discourse proceed from my heart, or from my mouth. I have seene divers, by their death, either in good or evill, give reputation to all their forepassed life. Scipio, father-in-law to Pompey, in well dying, repaired the ill opinion which untill that houre men had ever held of him. . . . (70)

Instead of indicating, as in Sophocles' play, the need for patience while the Fates inevitably unfold a plan for an individual life, Montaigne here, presaging Cavarero, suggests that a death is the moment at which the truth of the subject becomes visible. He explicitly invokes a second truism – that one perfectly exposes oneself at the moment of death – but I am here more interested in his vision of death as it echoes Sophocles'. In this essay, death for Montaigne is that which finally stabilizes identity and provides, once and for all, the truth of the subject. Despite the historically determined vagaries of its meaning, then, and despite the tremendous gap between Sophocles and Montaigne, the adage consistently implies a truism about the recursive power of one's death, as if death might operate as a potentially ironizing or satisfactory conclusion, a conclusion which forms and fixes all that came before it.⁷

I negotiate this conspicuously broad swath of thinkers not to posit a genealogy – drawing lines of influence between Sophocles, Montaigne, Arendt, Cavarero, Sartre, and Brooks would be a daunting and perhaps futile chore – but to emphasize a point on which this dissertation's argument relies. To think of deaths as untimely, one must necessarily think that lives are not only narratively coherent, as if one moment in a life leads

⁷ Jonathan Lear provides a provocative counterpoint to this *ad hoc* tradition, arguing in *Happiness, Death, and the Remainder of Life* that understanding lives as narratively complete wholes forgets that a person's happiness, at least as Aristotle understands happiness in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, might "be affected after he is dead" because "the misfortunes of loved ones" can recursively affect the narrative meaningfulness of an individual's life (30). Suggesting that lives may not be evaluated in terms of happiness at their ends poses obvious problems for the reading of *Oedipus at Colonus* that I have just offered, particularly because Oedipus has no idea what will happen to and among his children after he dies.

coherently to another, but also that lives operate in more obviously literary terms according to which they might be understood as meaningful wholes in the way that literary texts might be taken as coherent wholes. Lives are subject, that is, to the same laws of narrative recursivity and imagined completeness that characterize literary texts. I make this point because it is only through such a vision of the lifespan that deaths may be considered untimely. In the vision of a life to which one's death marks a conclusion, an untimely death is an unsatisfying conclusion, as if the play has ended in its second act because its protagonist has preemptively left the stage without finishing the script.

If an untimely death marks the failure to complete a life, then the vision of lifespans that I have provided above is both crucial and problematic: it makes sense of lives in terms of their wholeness, but it also leaves little room for untimely death as a category of thought. According to the thinkers that I have here invoked, death is the point around and on which a life's imagined completion and meaningfulness is contingent; no matter where or when that death arrives, the story reaches its conclusion. In Brooks, for instance, death performs, necessarily, the simultaneous work of ending and conclusion that forecloses the possibility of imagining death's untimeliness: "everything is transformed by the structuring presence of the end," Brooks argues, "or, as Sartre puts it in respect to autobiographical narration in *Les Mots*, in order to tell his story in terms of the meaning it would acquire only at the end, 'I became my own obituary'" (22). This obituarial vision of biographical coherence is a vision of biographical coherence that makes sense of lives at the moment of deaths, but these deaths arrive always on time in the same way that letters always reach their destinations. Cavarero makes a similar point

when she claims, after telling the stork story, that the design of the stork – the apparent narrative wholeness and fullness of a life – appears precisely and only at the moment of death rather than being something which “guides” one through the “course of a life from the beginning” (1). Such a retrospective and ultimately *ad hoc* formulation of the meaningful coherence of a lifespan scuttles attempts at understanding death as untimely because, whenever this death arrives, it arrives at the right time to end the life for which it becomes a conclusion.

Rather than thinking of death as the endpoint around which coherent lifespans are imagined *ex post facto*, to consider the potential timeliness of a death presumes the opposite of what Cavarero’s allegory of the stork presumes. The untimely death is a death that interrupts the idealized, *predetermined* lifespan, as if the stork were traced on the ground and the individual were expected to wander along such a path over the course of his life. An untimely death in this case would be a death that occurs as the stork is only half traced, as if the man fell into his pond and drowned before returning home to witness his imprints the next day.

According to the vision of lifespans that can conceptually support the idea of an untimely death, the untimely death is ultimately traumatic in a restricted, historically-minded sense, interrupting what Cathy Caruth calls “an ordered experience of time” (“Violence” 25) or providing what she describes as a “breach in the mind’s experience of time, self, and the world” (*Unclaimed* 4). Caruth’s vision of that which counts as traumatic is useful here because it speaks to the character of the untimely death through its vision of the accident, a trope through which Caruth figures the traumatic *tout court*.

Returning to Freud, she emphasizes in her genealogy of thinking on trauma that the traumatic event is “not just any event” that happens to be unsettling or disturbing, but is instead, “significantly, the shocking and unexpected occurrence of an accident. The example of the train accident . . . most obviously illustrates, for Freud, the traumatizing shock. . . . [T]he image of the accident in Freud, as the illustration of the unexpected or accidental, seems to be especially compelling, and indeed becomes the exemplary scene of trauma *par excellence*” (*Unclaimed* 4). In the span of a life, the untimely death is similarly “shocking and unexpected,” it similarly disrupts “an ordered experience of [biographical] time” and it similarly poses problems for narrativization according to a proleptic vision of the procession of a life’s span. But while Caruth is interested in the results of trauma, in the difficulties in representing the traumatic *as* traumatic, and in the ethics of representing such traumatic breeches in experience, I am interested here in the foundations – and in the historical specificity of the foundations – that serve as the conditions of such trauma’s possibility when that trauma is the end of an individual life. While Caruth’s archetypal trauma is the train that leaves the tracks on its destined, scheduled course from point to point, I ask here what might count as the presumed itinerary of a life in early modern England, and consequently what might count as the surprising interruption or conclusion to a life on a particular track. If lives have temporalities or schedules of their own that are interrupted by untimely deaths, then what is the imagined nature of that temporality and how is that schedule imagined?

The obvious answer to this question about the imagined schedule of an individual life is the schedule of brute biology to which Tichborne refers tacitly in his poem. Such a

vision of the lifespan is readily gleaned from the simple empirical observation that individuals left to their own devices and lucky enough to avoid illness tend to reach old age and expire.⁸ From Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (“To everything there is a season . . .”) to Shakespeare’s “Sonnet 12” (“When I do count the clock . . .”) this fairly straightforward observation is, as in Tichborne’s poem, often yoked to the idea of seasonality and the regular temporality of the year. But such casual rhetoric about the seasons of a life was also, as Emily Wilson explains, formally codified in what she describes as “a philosophical and literary tradition suggesting that human bodies and human minds may be constitutionally unfit for lives longer than three score years and ten” (2), and it was more specifically formalized in early modern England in the vision of man’s four (or seven, or nine) ages. As Edward Calver’s *Passion and Discretion, in Youth and Age* (catalogued in EEBO as *Foure Ages of Man*) suggests, there are four steps for which men were expected to prepare in their lives. Before his death, a man will be a “Childe” and then a “Youthe,” and he will subsequently pass through “Man Hood” and “Olde Age.”⁹ Ann Bradstreet would, later in the century, reiterate this often invoked tradition when writing a compendium of tetrads (four ages, four kingdoms, four

⁸ High rates of infant mortality and the limited medical resources available to early modern Londoners often skew data on early modern life expectancies, and an outbreak of plague can serve to skew the data considerably. For instance, the average life expectancy was at a record low in England between 1561 and 1565, with “survival time” figured at approximately 27.8 years. Twenty years later, between 1581 and 1585, life expectancy in England was at a record high with survival time estimated at 41.7 years. Despite this rapid fluctuation in population-wide life expectancies, however, it remains clear that if one could avoid illness and war after surviving infancy, one could expect to live approximately as long as one lives now, or 70 to 80 years. The figures above are from E. R. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541-1571: A Reconstruction*. As James C. Riley points out, however, the Wrigley-Schofield methodology is subject to debate (32n.1).

⁹ For an interesting reading of Calver’s four ages, see John Astington’s “The Ages of Man and the Lord Mayor’s Show” in which he argues that the social functions staged in the four ages are directly related to one’s position in the commercial, guild-based hierarchy of early modern London.

humours, four seasons, etc.) in which she points to the four ages of man, “Childhood and Youth the Manly & Old age,” and argues, in the language of humoralism, that these ages correspond with a relative degree of desiccation and decreased heat (43). According to this vision of an orderly traversal of biological, biographical epochs, the sense of a lifespan is readily comprehensible: there is a beginning, a middle, and an end, and dying prior to the end would, quite simply, be considered untimely. Of course, if such a vision of biological narrative abruption counts for untimeliness, then it is a vision of untimeliness that would have seemed frighteningly familiar in, for instance, early modern London. Living in a city in which plague would occasionally wipe out, as it did in 1603, one-fifth of the population, and in which high rates of infant mortality insured that many infants never saw childhood, early modern Londoners would likely not be surprised, no matter how upset, by a loved one’s untimely death. Perhaps, poignantly, omitting infancy as an age of man speaks to such conditions.

If Ecclesiastes 3:2 is correct and there is, in fact, “A time to be born, and a time to die,” early modern thinkers did not uniformly or uncritically presume that the appropriate time for a death was necessarily yoked to old age or to an organic human possibility. Certainly the “four ages of man” was a relatively well used framework through which lifespans and the timing of deaths might be understood, but the sense of providence was often felt powerfully in early modern England, particularly by reformed theologians and preachers who refused, under the influence of Calvin, to recognize the authority of anything like biological imperatives in matters of life and death – matters that were so clearly under God’s sway. While the general debate around predestination in England

circulated primarily around the question of double predestination and the phrasing of article XVII of the Thirty-Nine articles of the English church, “Of Predestination and Election,” the logic of predestination was widely invoked in less clearly theological contexts to identify the working of God in sublunary matters.¹⁰ When William Prynne, for instance, insists in *Anti-Arminianisme* that England only survived the Gunpowder Plot in 1605 and the Spanish Armada in 1588 thanks to God’s influence (139), he certainly moves away from the debates between liberal and more extreme Calvinists over Article XVII and provides instead a vision of sublunary providence that recognizes divine intervention at a more immediately palpable level. Such a vision of divine intervention was often invoked in cases of what might be considered biological untimely death to ameliorate any sense of that death’s untimeliness, suggesting that human beings simply do not have the capacity to read lifespans correctly if they think that a death is untimely. Rather than allowing for untimely deaths, the termination of a life, often with extreme prejudice, is a termination that always occurs at the right time in God’s view. Such a vision of the end of a life appears clearly, for instance, in the case of Christopher Marlowe, whose untimely death I discuss at greater length in Chapter 3. Marlowe died when he was 29, stabbed through the eye by Ingram Frizer, and his death seems in many ways untimely. Only a year older than Tichborne when Tichborne was executed, Marlowe fits readily into the framework that Tichborne invokes when writing that his fruit has fallen while still green. Both Tichborne and Marlowe, that is, should have

¹⁰ On the debate over article XVII, see Maurice Hunt, *Shakespeare’s Religious Allusiveness*, esp. 99-102. On the debates surrounding the question of predestination and double predestination more generally, see Peter White’s excellent discussion of Beza, Calvin, and Arminius in *Predestination, Policy, and Polemic: Conflict and Consensus in the English Church from the Reformation to the Civil War*, 13-38.

continued if biology is the appropriate measure of a lifespan. But according to the Puritan preacher Thomas Beard, Marlowe's death comes at precisely the right time because the fruit from his tree may have been green, but it was also indubitably spoiled. In Beard's reading of Marlowe's death, one must look to the angry hand of God, not to the hand of Frizer, to find its motive. According to his figuration of Marlowe's death in *The Theater of God's Judgements* (1597) – a figuration that is perhaps factually incorrect – Marlowe “denied God and his sonne Christ”; considering such atheism, Beard's audience should recognize, for its edification and as a warning, “what a hooke the Lord put in the nostrils of this barking dogge” (41-42). William Vaughan makes a similar move in 1600 when, in *The Golden Grove*, he claims – almost certainly incorrectly – that Marlowe, “about 7. yeeres a-goe wrote a booke against the Trinitie” just before his death; consequently, the audience of *The Golden Grove* should “see the effects of Gods justice” (47). From within this framework of providential retribution, the ending of Marlowe's life may appear untimely in terms of biology, but a sense of narrative coherence allows his death to seem timely, too, coming as the reasonable conclusion to a life lived in sin. If, as I have been arguing, an untimely death must be, in a restricted sense, traumatic, then such a death at the hand of God fails to be untimely because it fails to interrupt “the mind's sense of time, self, and the world.” Instead of being characterized by a traumatic breach in the order of lives and the world, retributive deaths ultimately reinforce the mind's sense of a world in which God intervenes and they speak to a temporality of retributive justice, shaped narratively in terms of (sinful) cause and (punitive) effect.

This idea that providential retribution determines the timeliness or narrative propriety of a death is analogous to a sense that more earthly visions of justice – often with a divine inflection – could be invoked to make sense of a given death’s narrative propriety. By locating the apparent propriety of a death in terms of a sense of justice, early modern writers often yoke the question of a death’s relative justness to a sense of its narrative adequacy. The genre of revenge tragedy, in its simultaneous preoccupation with unjust deaths and ghosts, often speaks to this imagined interrelation of time, lifespans, and justice. *Hamlet* provides the most obvious example of this interrelation because the play focuses its considerable intellectual energy on proper human ends and, as Agnes Heller argues, on the relation between the justness of a death and its narrative propriety. The narrative force of the play is typical of revenge tragedy in that its protagonist recognizes (in this case, equivocally) that time has been forced out of joint by a murder and that revenge is a means through which such a disturbed temporality might be set right. This protagonist also recognizes that a potential act of revenge – the murder of Claudius while Claudius prays – is infelicitous not because of its ethical import but because of its ill-timing. Hamlet’s recognition here of the temporal adequacy of a death speaks to the play’s general sense that lives should fit with the stories that we tell about them even though they often fail to do so, as is the case with King Hamlet’s death, for instance, and with time’s consequent out-of-jointness, when he figures his own death in terms of biographical inadequacy. “Cut off” in the conspicuously seasonalized and organic “blossoms of my sin,” King Hamlet was never allowed to complete his biography, forced instead to suffer a fate characterized by its narrative inconclusiveness.

This vision of a too-sudden death for which one is morally unprepared – the *mors improvisa*¹¹ – provides one way of negotiating King Hamlet's death and postmortem lingering in properly narrative terms. His life, interrupted by an injustice, must continue on in some form until it is provided with a more adequate conclusion. Like uncommemorated shades in Virgil's *Aeneid* who are refused entry to the underworld until funereal rites are performed, King Hamlet lives in a hazy liminal space until his life is ultimately concluded with a far more violent rite derived from the logic of retribution rather than the logic of funereal conclusiveness.¹²

Don Andrea finds himself in a similar state at the beginning of Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*: he lingers in a narrative frame without any obvious deigetic reality, dwelling liminally as a Chorus to the story in which he figures centrally. Andrea dwells here not because he died too young, and not because he died in war, but because his death at the hands of Balthazar ran contrary to the laws of chivalry and left him with a death that was unsatisfactory. As Horatio recounts the story of Andrea's death to Andrea's lover Bel-Imperia, "that wicked power" Nemesis "Cut short" Andrea's life, and this cutting-short is characterized by an act of martial injustice: after challenging Balthazar to a solo combat, Andrea is set upon by Portuguese "Halberdiers"; with this external help, Balthazar, "with

¹¹ On the *mors improvisa* – a death for which one is not prepared by way of penitential confession – see Neill, *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy*, esp. 18-19, and Aries, *The Hour of Our Death*, 108.

¹² This is not, of course, to say that *Hamlet* is in any way a typical revenge tragedy. As Neill and Richard Fly each point out, for instance, Hamlet is "a play that dramatizes its hero's resistance to the entrapment of this all-too-familiar narrative [of revenge]" (Neill 244). For Neill, the play is ultimately not about "the ethics of vendetta"; instead, it calls these ethics and their logic into question by staging a play that "is about murderous legacies of the past and the terrible power of memory" (244). Shakespeare's King Hamlet asks to be remembered, that is – "Remember me!" – rather than insisting, "Hamlet, revenge!" Considering the compelling readings of both Fly and Neill, Harold Bloom's reading of the play in *Hamlet: Poem Unlimited* seems ideal: for Bloom, *Hamlet* is a "revenge upon revenge tragedy" (3).

ruthless rage, / Taking advantage of his foe's distress, / Did finish what the Halberdiers begun" (1.4.9, 22-25). Just as King Hamlet's death seems, in its injustice and sudden disruptiveness, to interrupt a span of time – arriving as the end of a life rather than at that life's conclusion – Andrea's death is, according to the framework derived from the chivalric code, narratively inappropriate, and it serves an inadequate end to a courtly, "not ignoble" life (1.1.6). Considering this inconclusive conclusion to his life, it is not surprising that Andrea has also suffered like one of Virgil's unmourned shades: arriving at the shores of Acheron, Andrea is reminded by Charon, the "only boatman there," that his "rights of burial not performed, / [He] might not sit amongst [Charon's] passengers" until three days later, after Andrea's funeral (1.1.19-21). But even after these rites are performed, Andrea cannot rest and cannot feel that his earthly time is complete until he sits, alongside Revenge, to "serve for Chorus in this Tragedy" (1.1.91), watching as his life is completed, after it has ended, by a narratively satisfying act of retribution.

Michael Neill has written powerfully and compellingly in *Issues of Death* about *Hamlet* and *The Spanish Tragedy*, and he has, as I have here, emphasized that these plays and other early modern tragedies are centrally concerned with the meaningfulness and narrative propriety of mortal ends. My own project, however, diverges significantly from the work that Neill performs. For Neill, to understand Renaissance tragedy's preoccupation with death – a preoccupation greater than in any period before or since, he claims – we need to read these plays against a broader, extra-textual "crisis" regarding the representation and understanding of death. In a well executed new historicist move, he follows Ariès, David Cressy, Natalie Zemon Davis, and other social historians to

argue that early modernity was a complicated time in the history of death and that difficulties understanding and accepting the nature of death powerfully inform the period's tragedy. Because the Reformed church abolished purgatory as an operative devotional concept, and because individuals in the period seem to have been more preoccupied with individuality and subjectivity than individuals in previous periods, death came to be experienced as a more pronounced and more catastrophic end to a life; it is through this growing sense of death's horror, claims Neill, that early modern tragedy makes the most sense. With the abolition of purgatory, death's absoluteness came to be felt more powerfully because, without purgatory, the living could no longer interact with the dead, in gestures of love or obligation, by way of indulgences or prayer.¹³ The increasing value that was regularly put upon the individual subject also emphasized and increased the experience of death as a catastrophe. Following Robert Watson – whose work looms large in Neill's book – Neill draws careful attention to the period's focus on the individual subject, and he claims that this focus on individuality often inspired anxiety in individuals as death came to be thought more frequently and more powerfully in terms of subjective annihilation. As one clings more closely to one's own selfhood, the sense of one's death becomes altogether more significant, more terrifying, and more anxiety-ridden. According to Neill, we need to read early modern tragedy through this growing cultural anxiety about death before we can understand the genre's fixation on death and its conception of the lifespan.

¹³ Stephen Greenblatt has recently dealt with the emotional impact of purgatory's abolition and its relationship to Renaissance tragedy; see *Hamlet in Purgatory*.

Whereas Neill's book is primarily focused on the impact of this crisis on representations of death in tragedy, I am interested in the impact on drama of broader intertextual – generally historiographical – forces, particularly with respect to the question of untimely deaths. Certainly early modern anxieties about death affect representations of death on the early modern stage; however, the playwrights with which I deal struggle conspicuously with developments in early modern historiography when they struggle with the logic of narrative emplotment and, consequently, with the considerations of a death's narrative adequacy. I outline above three ways in which a death might be rendered timely, and each of these ways is predicated on a sense of its narrative propriety: if one's life ends at old age, then this death seems timely in biological terms; if one's death seems divinely ordained, then it seems timely in religious terms; if one's death is just, then it seems timely in juridical terms. But, as I discuss below, in the plays on which this dissertation focuses, lives are never wholly independent of history, and a death that seems "untimely" according to the terms that I listed above may, simultaneously, appear quite timely according to the workings of a broader movement in history.

Peter Brooks and Emily Wilson each make similar points about lifespans and history when they read Book 12 of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Here, Adam is convinced that his life is pointless after the fall: his life has gone on too long, according to Wilson, in a manner that inversely corresponds to the sense of untimely deaths that I outline here. His life, that is, is no longer narratively satisfying, and he believes that it has somehow breached its preordained trajectory. But the Archangel Michael provides Adam with a

long view of history in which the fall is simply a small part of a grand narrative, and this long view works to alleviate Adam's anxiety. According to Wilson, this moment in the poem "suggests that, from a divine perspective, Adam's question shows that he misunderstands the plan for human history" (7). Rather than thinking that lives are imbued with temporalities of their own, the poem provides "alternative, nonhuman ways of thinking about time – through history, or *sub specie aeternitas*" (165). Rather than figuring his life in properly individualized narrative terms and rather than recognizing that his life should have ended, Adam comes to realize that the nature of individual lifespans is trivial because individual human lives are simply caught up in broader forces. Brooks makes a similar point about Book 12, claiming that "transitory human time" is exposed here as a triviality or an artificial construction against the sweep of human history between Genesis and Revelation (6). Just as Tichborne's life is caught up in a broader plot that pays little heed to the interests of his individual end, so too are Adam, Eve, and humanity simply moving through moments in a grand unfolding that is obscured by human limitations. Like Eve who looks at her reflection too adoringly, we are caught up in our selves to a point that the bigger picture – an impersonal historical unfolding – eludes us.

Each of the plays on which I focus in this dissertation struggles with similar scales of narrative meaning and emplotment, suggesting tensions between an individual's experience of his or her biographical wholeness and the broader unfolding of history. Of course, considering the methodological heterogeneity of early modern historiography, the nature of this broader historical unfolding often varies: history may be providentially

ordered, say, or it may follow the rational principles outlined by humanist historiographers, or it may be a simple unpredictable sequence of events as accounted for in chronicles.

My first chapter on Shakespeare's *Richard II*, for example, argues that the play is confused about the motive forces of history and about the untimeliness of Richard's death – an untimeliness that Bolingbroke declares in the final line of the play. While Richard's death is certainly untimely in biological terms because he was thirty-three when he died, and it is untimely in generational terms because he died before producing an heir, the play also suggests that his death is perfectly timely because it makes narrative sense. By invoking other narrative frameworks such as those found in humanist historiography or the *de casibus* tradition, for instance, the apparently unsatisfying conclusion to Richard's life is rendered narratively satisfactory. Like kings in the *de casibus* tradition, that is, Richard is smote by God after becoming proud, and like kings in the humanist tradition, Richard dies a death that seems inevitable because of his indecision, his lax leadership, and his decadence. By setting each of these visions of Richard's death against one another, I argue, Shakespeare draws attention not only to the difficulties of historiography, but also to the impossibility of reconciling or accounting for the death of an individual in any simple way.

The second chapter on *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* recognizes a similar set of conflicting historical discourses in Middleton's play, and I argue that the feigned deaths of Moll and Touchwood Junior mean different things depending on which vision of historical unfolding is imagined to take precedence. Throughout *A Chaste Maid*,

Middleton negotiates the variety of historical frameworks through which early modern London was understood in city comedies, chorography, and civic pageantry, and he exploits this historiographical variety to complicate the sense of romantic redemption that the resurrections of Moll and Touchwood Junior imply. While critics have often disagreed over the status of these resurrections, painting them as either indexes of a broadly romantic cultural redemption or as proof of the city's debased and cynical secularity, I argue that the play is decidedly polyvocal, refusing to endorse either vision of what it means to be resurrected in early modern London. Such an ambiguity speaks, I argue, to disciplinary and methodological conflicts that burdened early modern writers such as Middleton who chose to represent a space that was as historiographically overdetermined as London.

The final chapter of this dissertation reads Marlowe's *Dido, Queene of Carthage* and it argues that Marlowe's play – just like Marlowe's life – troubles any sense that one can easily comprehend a death in terms of its relative timeliness. Locating the play within the classical and early modern Dido traditions, I argue that Marlowe works against these traditions and their general assumption that Dido's story is a tragedy that might be disarticulated from the broader historical unfolding that Virgil describes in the *Aeneid*. Certainly the play ends horribly, and certainly Dido's death at the end of Marlowe's play evokes a significant amount of pathos, but the play refuses to figure its titular heroine in tragic terms because it refuses to figure her as the subject of her own failing, instead suggesting that she is just one of many figures whom the play stages who are caught up in the impersonal unfolding of history. Rather than suggesting that her death makes

sense in terms immanent to her life as if her life had a timeline of its own, that is, Marlowe's play suggests instead that her life ends for reasons that pay her no heed.

As the broad generic and historiographical sweep of this dissertation suggests, I work here to provide a general framework in which the question of early modern untimely deaths might be negotiated. Rather than determining once and for all what it meant to die an untimely death in early modern England, I argue here that one answer to this question requires an understanding of the imagined relationship between individuals and the broader unfolding of history by which they are shaped, that they help to shape, or from which they are alienated. A primary assumption of this dissertation is that drama – particularly historically-minded drama – is an ideal object to take when considering such vexed questions, and I also presume that the problematic of untimely deaths is a framework in which such questions become most salient because the question of untimeliness necessarily demands an understanding of the subject's relation to time's unfolding. While it is critically commonplace to assert that early modern drama is a space in which modern forms of hermetically-sealed subjectivity are negotiated – in the form of soliloquies, for instance, or in thematic concerns that plays voice – I argue here that such visions of the subject are inextricably linked to questions of that subject's place in the world, particularly in the world that is recorded by historiographers as a world within and of history. It is only by recognizing this sense of history and its intersection with biography, I argue, that a death might make sense as a death that arrives at the right or wrong time.

Chapter 1

On a Regal Lifespan: *Richard II*

“Is this the promis’d end?”

– Kent in *King Lear* (5.3.264).

This chapter is interested in the death of King Richard at the end of Shakespeare’s *Richard II*, a death that Bolingbroke declares “untimely” in the final line of the play. I will focus here on the narrative logic through which Richard’s life is figured in the play and on the understanding of his lifespan that the play – and Bolingbroke in the final line – offer. More specifically this chapter will ask a few straightforward questions: If Richard dies “too soon” as Bolingbroke claims, then when should he have died? How is the span of Richard’s life understood and managed by the play? To which biographical narrative is Richard’s life relating infelicitously? To ask such questions about Richard is particularly difficult because the play invokes a variety of discourses through which his regal life, as a regal life, is made to make biographical sense. Just as Tichborne’s life is caught within a variety of narrative frameworks that make biographical sense of his biographically senseless death, Richard’s life and death are narratively overdetermined in conflicting ways in Shakespeare’s play. Ultimately, by ending his play with the question – or assertion – of death’s untimeliness, Shakespeare draws attention to these inter-discursive tensions that surround and inform the idea of a regal lifespan. By the end of the play, I argue, we have certainly reached a conclusion of some sort, but it remains unclear which narrative Richard’s ending concludes. As we reach the end of the play,

that is, it remains unclear if we have just witnessed a *de casibus* tragedy that Richard's death concludes satisfactorily, or if we have a history play informed by the logic of humanist historiography, a chronicle play, a typical tragedy, or something else entirely. By staging a play that seems so ambiguous and multivalent in its understanding of history's emplotment and motive forces, Shakespeare ultimately draws attention to the broader theoretical problems that trouble early modern theorists and writers of history such as Edward Hall, Raphael Holinshed, and Thomas Blundeville, and he intervenes in this framework in the mode of negation, ultimately calling into question the very framework through which the timeliness of a death is conceivable.

In a more obviously formalist, literary historical vein, this chapter is also concerned with narrative middles and I will highlight the significance of *Richard II*'s middle sections rather than its beginning and end. I will argue specifically that the middle of the play engenders several distinct plots, each with its own internal logic, which the ending of the play ultimately bears out, contrary to the recursively stabilizing role that endings are often imagined to play. This focus on the middle of the play is at odds with the typical critical privileging of beginnings and ends, the other two moments in the Aristotelian beginning-middle-end narratological triad. The general critical preoccupation with beginnings and ends, with origins and conclusions, with births and deaths, with departures and arrivals, with Genesis and Revelation, no doubt speaks to the crucial role that these two coordinates play in the construction of a coherent narrative and in the construction of meaningfulness for points in the middle of a narrative arc. In a typically or traditionally conceived narrative structure, points in the middle of a narrative

are given meaning *vis-à-vis* an imagined narrative whole only retrospectively by appeal to an imagined origin, proleptically by appeal to a possible ending, or recursively once the conclusion has been reached. One might think here of Book 11 in Augustine's *Confessions* in which he evacuates the central point of any existential life story – the self-consistent “present” in his phenomenological account of temporality – to make room for an imaginatively extensive “soul” that is constituted through, and recognizable only by appeal to, expectation (*praesensio*, literally, pre-perception) and memory.¹⁴ From a more properly literary perspective, one might also think of Ben Jonson's observation in *Discoveries* that a narrative “composition must be more accurate in the beginning and end, than in the midst; and in the end more, than in the beginning; for through the midst the stream bears us” (433). The middle or “midst” for Jonson is here thought in terms of its indeterminacy and its formlessness – it is an ever shifting, always fluctuating, “inaccurate” flow – and its sole function is transport: the middle moves readers and audiences from Point A to Point B. Like the Cincinnati airport that seems to blur into the homogenous space called “middle America,” somewhere between home and an interesting destination, the middle is a necessary waypoint characterized by its indeterminacy, its middle-of-nowhereness, its neither-here-nor-there-ness.

¹⁴ My understanding of Book 11 and its relationship to narrative relies heavily on Paul Ricoeur's reading of Augustine in the first volume of *Time and Narrative* where he teases out at length the particular implications of Augustine's understanding of time on narrative closure and vice versa. See especially “The Aporias of the Experience of Time: Augustine's Book 11.” For a more nuanced reading of the Augustinian subject, see Grossman's chapter “Augustine and the Christian Ego” in his *Story of All Things* where he argues that the Christian subject is “brought into being wholly within a system of signs, yet represents itself as the accurate copy or reflection of an ontically prior and necessarily immutable original” (63). Such a reading of Augustine is obviously at odds with Ricoeur's reading.

Though beginnings and endings are given much more critical attention than middles, endings, as in Jonson, are generally privileged in studies of narrative because of their meaning-making potency.¹⁵ As Shakespeare's Hector suggests in *Troilus and Cressida*, the end is often thought to "crown all" (4.5.248), to finish "all" and to offer "all" the characteristics by which it is recognizable as a narrative whole. While, as Kermode points out in his seminal book on endings, narratives work to obscure the fact of time's "mere chronicity" by offering a vision of "times which are concordant and full" (49-50), it is always specifically "an end [that] will bestow upon the whole duration and meaning" (46). The recursive force of an ending is often capable of changing the meaning of what came before it, retroactively positing meanings that were previously unavailable. In the closed space of a given literary or historical narrative these endings might also either fix one meaning or foreclose the possibility of certain meanings that had previously inhered (as possibilities) in the middle of a text.¹⁶ Shakespeare makes use of this recursive potency in *Macbeth*, for instance, where the witches' vague predictions are offered a degree of concreteness, specificity and accuracy only once the play's action has demonstrated what it is that the witches "really" meant all along. Given the importance

¹⁵ Barbara Hodgdon surveys the limited extant early modern theorizing of dramatic endings in *The End Crowns All*, see especially 5-8. On the narrative importance of beginnings, see Edward Said's *Beginnings: Intention and Method*, for instance, and Lawrence Stern's *Tristram Shandy*.

¹⁶ Gary Saul Morson argues in *Narrative and Freedom: The Shadows of Time* that narrative conclusions tend to foreclose a reader's experience of possibility because the teleological logic of "conclusion" turns what seemed like a possibility into a misapprehension of that narrative's inevitably directed flow. In novels, however, he argues the narrative technique of "sideshadowing" (as compared with foreshadowing) allows for a genuine experience of possibility: "Whereas foreshadowing works by revealing apparent alternatives to be mere illusions, sideshadowing conveys the sense that actual events might just as well not have happened. In an open universe, the illusion is inevitability itself. . . . *Something else* was possible, and sideshadowing is used to create a sense of that 'something else'" (117-8). See especially the fourth chapter of Morson's book, "Sideshadowing and Its Possibilities," 117-72.

that is so often attributed to narrative conclusions it is not surprising that endings have occupied so much critical attention.

Considering the work that narrative endings are expected to perform, the conclusion to *Richard II* is striking for its conventionality, ending as it does at the “right time” according to the logic of many genres through which it is often read. Whether the play is read in terms of the *de casibus* tradition, in terms of humanist historiography, in terms of tragedy, or in terms of a subject-centered biographical logic, the ending performs the typical signs of closure through which one might finally make sense of what has come before it. In this sense, its generic indeterminacy is problematic because the conclusion to the play finishes a number of *different* narrative arcs, each of which, as I will discuss below, relies on its own understanding of time, history, and the individual subject’s relation to historical time. More simply, the middle of the play opens up the possibility of many endings that function according to unique narrative or historical logics and the conclusion of the play seems to conclude all of them.

When dealing with the variety of narrative arcs that the end of *Richard II* “crowns,” I am drawing attention not only to work that Shakespeare performs, but also to a tension in the field of early modern historical writing as it attempted to come to grips with Richard’s death. Perhaps the most narratively satisfying and straightforward early modern discussion of Richard’s life and death is the version of his biography provided by William Baldwin in *A Mirror for Magistrates*, first published in 1559 and subsequently revised and expanded. Indeed, the conclusion to *Richard II* would seem familiar to an audience who was versed in the post-Boccaccio *de casibus* tradition, according to which

Richard's death may seem both unfortunate and "just" according to the logic of a Christianized *Fortuna*.¹⁷ As Paul Budra points out, the generically innovative first-person voice in *Mirror*'s dramatic monologues produces an effect similar to the effect of soliloquy on the stage: it humanizes the individuals whom the *de casibus* writers had previously flattened when reducing them to tokens, emblems, or exempla. *Mirror*, for instance, elicits a sympathetic response to Richard when, as in Shakespeare's play, he laments his own miserable condition through the eyes of an imagined public that "gazes" upon "his woundes" and "howe blew they be about" (12, 19). But Richard's self-pity and a reader's empathy are tempered by Richard's awareness that Fortune is not as blind in a Christian tradition as she is in the classical tradition from which, via Boccaccio, Premierfait and Lydgate, Baldwin and the other *Mirror* writers drew their model. Richard's dramatic monologue in *Mirror* is book-ended by moments in which he seems aware of the *de casibus* tradition within which he finds himself: he figures himself as a king who succumbed to "wilfull pleasures" and who was consequently punished (10). He warns the character Baldwin, who then transcribes Richard's words, that "foul pawes shal light" upon any king "Who wurketh his wil, & shunneth wisdomes sawes / In flatteries clawes, & shames" (119-20). If we read *Richard II* through this *de casibus* logic then Richard's murder is a case-study in divinely ordained retributive justice and it offers a narratively satisfactory sense of cause-and-effect finality. Richard rose, Richard failed morally, Richard consequently fell.

¹⁷ On the Christianization of Fortune in Elizabethan historiography, see D. R. Woolf, *The Idea of History in Early Stuart England: Erudition, Ideology, and 'The Light of Truth' from the Accession of James I to the Civil War*, esp. 5-8.

But Richard's life and death were also figured narratively by chroniclers who were less interested in providing for readers the morals of history and who worked instead to understand history in terms of its reasonable flow from reign to reign. Of course, the transition between the reigns of Richard and Henry was clumsy – a new king was on the throne before the earlier king had died – and such a politically awkward transition proved narratively problematic to chroniclers such as Sir John Hayward and Robert Fabyan as they struggled to assign origins and conclusions. If the monarchical reign served chroniclers as the standard unit of historical time, and if the reign of a monarch mediated the experience of historical periodization, the simultaneous coexistence of two kings – one recently deposed and one recently crowned – begged difficult narrative and formal questions.¹⁸ Does one begin a new chapter – literally in a book or figuratively in a kingdom – when the old king dies or when the new king is crowned? At a historical moment when history was often thought, written about, and experienced as a string of self-contained, discrete reigns, this overlap poses a difficult historical fact. While there seems to be no hard and fast historiographical rule, most sixteenth century chroniclers used Richard's death rather than Henry's ascent as the proper historical dividing line: Richard's death is a good spot to mark a break in the record, the end of an era, or the transition from epoch to epoch. Not surprisingly, this

¹⁸ On problems of historical periodization and the historiographical value of monarchic reigns, see Margreta de Grazia, "Fin-de-Siècle Renaissance England." See also Thomas P. Anderson's *Performing Early Modern Trauma from Shakespeare to Milton*. According to Anderson, many early modern thinkers of history struggled to distance themselves from the past and to figure themselves as subjects at a unique historical moment who had overcome history, as if they found themselves at history's post-Reformation, post-War of the Roses "great day." These assertions of autonomy from history were, however, scuttled by the traumatic weight of the past on the present and the sense that the past was unfinished, even if the present claimed otherwise.

imagined historical break occasionally proves somewhat problematic, as in Fabyan's chronicle where Henry ascends to the throne and Richard is murdered *before* "this fyrste yere of kyng Henry the. iiii." begins (7.341). Hayward, however, found the murder of Richard to be narratively quite useful as he wrote *The Life and raigne of King Henry the IIII* serially. Once Richard is dead and Henry is more securely on the throne, Hayward parses time explicitly and idiosyncratically by suggesting that the "first part" of Henry's reign has come to a close.¹⁹ If Shakespeare was hoping to tell the story of Richard II and Henry IV according to the implicit logics of sixteenth-century historiography then he was right to end *Richard II* with Richard's death rather than with his de-coronation.²⁰

Just as the chroniclers used Richard's death as a narratively satisfying point of conclusion, Shakespeare's Bolingbroke marks a similar sense of conclusion at the end of the play by invoking a conventional and highly conventionalized eulogistic tradition.

While eulogies and mourning rites are often figured by mourners as commemorations of

¹⁹ Hayward never makes explicit the historical logic at work in this temporal partitioning of a reign: How many "parts" does a reign have? Do all reigns have the same number of "parts"? How do we know when the historical unit called "the part of a reign" has ended? To ask a question that is perhaps more materially relevant: Is this just a convenient division that keeps an already large volume from becoming even thicker?

²⁰ John R. Elliot draws a similar conclusion in "History and Tragedy in *Richard II*" when he attempts to delimit the history play's genre in terms that are immanent to dramatic narrative. He argues that a history play is a history play because it takes a unique political historical problem and runs through that problem. For Elliot, we need to understand *Richard II*'s narrative arc not in terms of lives or deaths or reigns, but in terms of the political issues that the play negotiates. According to this logic, the play is "about" the transition from a typically "medieval" understanding of kingship to a "modern," Machiavellian politics. Though his study is limited because it takes *Richard II* as its only example and because it deals with a genre that is notoriously resistant to easy definition, his argument seems generally compelling when we deal with this particular play. See also Graham Holderness, "Shakespeare's History: *Richard II*," in which he challenges the assumption that *Richard II* deals with the transition from "medieval" to "modern" politics. Holderness convincingly argues that Bolingbroke is not the agent of a modern Machiavellian politics, but is instead the ideal of a typically medieval feudal/chivalric order against Richard's *more modern* sense of absolute monarchical authority. Robin Headlam Wells' useful essay, "The Fortunes of Tillyard: Twentieth-Century Critical Debate on Shakespeare's History Plays" also deals with the problematic assumption that *Richard II* is "about" the transition from medieval to modern notions of politics and kingship.

the dead, their more obviously political forms – the forms that Ernst Kantorowicz famously outlines in *The King's Two Bodies*, for instance – serve “to exorcise [the past] under the guise of commemoration” (Jameson, “Purloined” 103).²¹ The eulogistic and the ritualistic aspects of public and political mourning often serve to both mark and reconcile a radical breach in the experience of history: the dead are dead, the living are living, and the act of public mourning constitutes a new world which symbolically excludes the dead by interring them, by saying some masses, by recognizing the reign of a new king as absolute, and so on. It is here that one might speak of “closure,” a term that’s strangely familiar to both narratologists and tabloid news journalists who report on trials and executions. Perhaps aware of the political value that such a closure could offer his tenuous reign Bolingbroke appears eager to begin the rites of public mourning, eleven lines after hearing of Richard’s death and four lines after he admits to “loving” Richard “murderèd”:

Lords, I protest, my soul is full of woe,
That blood should sprinkle me to make me grow.
Come, mourn with me for what I do lament,
And put on sullen black incontinent
.....
March sadly after; grace my mournings here,
In weeping after this untimely bier. (5.6.45-8, 51-2).

If one reads the play as the story of the end of Richard’s singular, biographical life (rather than, say, a story whose end and structure is determined by the considerations of political

²¹ On mourning rites as a problematic attempt to exorcise or “account for” the dead, see Jacques Derrida’s *The Work of Mourning*, esp. the chapter written after the death of Sarah Kofman, “.,” pp. 168-88.

or historical analysis) then concluding the play with a funeral march is appropriate: the new post-Ricardian world is being stitched together symbolically as the play closes.²²

Of course *Richard II* is a play as well as a work of historiography, and if we heed the First Folio's table of contents and read *Richard II* as a tragedy then the play's ending again seems apt. More specifically, a reductively conservative understanding of tragedy might work well when we deal with the final scenes of *Richard II*, either because the conclusion seems to redress the social tensions to which the play has drawn our attention or because it seems to renegotiate the terms through which the social order is thought.²³ If we read the play as a moralistic treatise on the limits of royal prerogative then we are satisfied by an ending that marks the elimination of a king whose behaviour overstepped

²² On the relationship between funeral rites and the ratification of a new reign, see Paul Strohm's "The Trouble With Richard: The Reburial of Richard II and Lancastrian Symbolic Strategy." For Strohm, Richard's complicated legacy was the result of a failure to mourn properly: because Richard's mourning rites were originally botched by Henry IV who insisted on burying Richard in Langley – rather than in a more suitably regal post-mortem home at Westminster – the transition between reigns failed symbolically until Henry V, allying himself with Richard, moved Richard's corpse from Langley into the elaborate tomb at Westminster that Richard had had built for himself while he was king. Within the play, however, the Duchess of Gloucester suggests the affective limitations of such symbolic closure where she describes the "weight" of a sorrow that outlives all ceremonial conclusions: "grief boundeth where it falls, / Not with the empty hollowness, but weight. / I take my leave before I have begun, / For sorrow ends not when it seemeth done" (1.2.58-61). Sorrow, for the Duchess of Gloucester, outlives any attempts to finish it. In Freudian terms, melancholia is the rule and mourning is an impossibility. On the specifically early modern articulation of this uncanny return of the lost in the space of the present, see Anderson, *Performing Early Modern Trauma*, *passim*.

²³ "Described in 'ideal' terms, tragedy and comedy confront opposing value systems, mediate their differences, and, in proposing solutions for the individual as well as for the larger social community, eliminate any threats to traditionally held beliefs" (Hodgdon 10). Also, however, such ideally conceived tragedy might not confirm "traditionally held beliefs," even in its more conservative moments: tragedy deployed for conservative ends might rather enshrine a new set of beliefs that themselves become "traditionally held." The common though problematic reading of *Richard II* as a play about the transition from medieval to modern notions of kingship would be a case in point. Of course, such "ideal" visions of tragedy are always troubled when faced with the dramatic texts from which they are derived. See, for instance, Terry Eagleton's *Sweet Violence: The Idea of the Tragic*, in which he makes this point repeatedly. See also Franco Moretti's *Signs Taken For Wonders* where, in precise opposition to Hodgdon, he claims that tragedy is the only genre *unable* to posit a single ideal because (*pace* Hegel) it relies on a conflict between two rights and because the "surviving value too is darkened by the shadow of mourning" for that which was overcome (28).

his divinely sanctioned authority: a king who acted capriciously and outside God's laws has been replaced by a king who promises to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in order to expiate any residual guilt. Order supplants chaos. If instead we read the play as a dramatic treatise on the nature of political power then the conclusion marks the resolution of a tension between medieval and modern notions of kingship: in an emblematically evocative final moment, the modern has won, sheer political force has supplanted any sense of divine ordination, the Machiavellian Bolingbroke walks off stage while Richard's medieval corpse is carried away. According to this conservative understanding of tragedy, a close relationship might be imagined between tragedy and the *de casibus* tradition,²⁴ and according to this understanding of tragedy the close of *Richard II* seems suitably and conclusively "tragic." Following from such readings of the play, *Richard II* is best read as a more emotionally ambivalent *Cambyzes*: the king is smote by the hand of God in both plays, but Shakespeare offers us the possibility of sympathy in the way that Preston does not.

If narratives are expected to "crown" a story and make the contents more properly legible as a whole by transforming moments of indeterminacy in the middle of a text into turning points or crises that lead to a certain conclusion, then the conclusion to *Richard II* fails by working too successfully. Striking for its conventionality in terms of so many different genres and narrative-historical explanations, the play's ending deploys signals of narrative conclusion deftly but the nature of the narrative that this conclusion

²⁴ On the relationship between *de casibus* poetry – specifically *A Mirror for Magistrates* – and Elizabethan drama, see Paul Budra, *A Mirror for Magistrates and the De Casibus Tradition*, 79-80 and *passim*. See also Tillyard's *Shakespeare's Histories*, esp. 78, and Maurice Hunt's "The Conversion of Opposites and Tragedy in Shakespeare's *Richard II*."

concludes remains difficult to pin down: it is difficult to say at the end of the play what the play is “about” and it is difficult to say precisely how and why – on the level of historical causation – Richard started the play as a monarch and ended the play as a corpse. Is the play about a political struggle and the movement away from medieval conceptions of kingship? Is it about the decline and fall of Richard? If it is about that decline and fall then should we understand that fall as providentially ordained or as a brute fact of a political life? Is it about the interesting circumstances that surround the death of a certain regal individual? More to the point: it is difficult to answer at the end of the play what sort of play we have just witnessed and what forces have compelled the story – or history – forward. The ending to *Richard II*, then, is conclusive in so many ways that it remains profoundly *inconclusive*. By offering a narrative that produces “in the midst” a variety of generic narrative expectations which it subsequently fulfils, the play ultimately begs questions about the nature of Richard’s lifespan: it offers several different narrative frameworks through which the life and death of Richard can be made to make sense, but, as I argue below, it never decisively insists on a single or authoritative narrative logic through which this lifespan is necessarily best understood.

***Richard II* and the Causes of History.**

In a more obviously historico-theoretical sense, the narrative questions that Shakespeare’s play begs are questions about the nature of historical causality. In concerning himself with this question, Shakespeare was not alone, and the historiographical tensions that he stages are clearly anticipated in, for instance, Thomas

Blundeville's *The true order and Methode of writing and reading Hystories* (1574), the first book in English that deals exclusively with theories of historiography. While it may seem that I am engaged in a certain mode of new historicist practice when I read Blundeville alongside Shakespeare I am not attempting to produce, via Blundeville, a context that will determine the correct understanding of Shakespeare's play.²⁵ I do, however, think that Blundeville's book productively illuminates (to use a common new historicist metaphor) the historiographical work that Shakespeare performs. In this sense I agree with Graham Holderness who argues that Shakespeare is performing historiographical work (rather than "simply" dramatic work) in his history plays and I am presuming, consequently, that Shakespeare's play must be taken seriously as historical

²⁵ Such, at least, is the version of new historicism that is often lambasted by its critics, a version of new historicism that very few self-declared new historicists seem to practice and that none have espoused in any of the dozens of books or journals dedicated to a theorization of new historicism (as different from old historicism, as different from cultural materialism, as different from materialist history, as a response to the Thatcher/Reagan years, as a response to the putatively apolitical formalisms and structuralisms that dominated the academy after WWII, etc.). These debates have been so conspicuous – especially in Renaissance literary studies, ever since new historicism's inaugural moment – that I do not feel compelled to rehearse them here: a small list of the innumerable critiques and defences of new historicist methodology will, I hope, suffice to clarify my own methodological position which is itself new historicist in only the loosest of senses (if at all). For three particularly salient and deft critiques of new historicism, see Walter Cohen's often cited "Political Criticism of Shakespeare," Joel Fineman's essay, "The History of the Anecdote: Fiction and Fiction" and Fredric Jameson's chapter "Theory" in *Postmodernism, Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. As for defences or justifications of the new historicist methodology, Jean E. Howard's early essay, "The New Historicism and Renaissance Studies," remains, I think, the strongest and most lucid explanation of new historicism insofar as she hesitantly outlines the interests, assumptions and concerns shared by new historicists generally. Louis Montrose's essay on new historicism in *Redrawing the Boundaries* is also seminal to this debate and noteworthy for its lucid and clear engagement with new historicism's critics, particularly Cohen. More recently, Karen Newman has responded to Jameson's critique of new historicism as the simple "production of homologies" in "Toward a Topographic Imaginary: Early Modern Paris," see esp. 73-6. Finally, Eric Mallin's defense of the new historicist methodology in the introduction to his *Inscribing the Time: Shakespeare and the End of Elizabethan England* is useful because it is both theoretically deft and strikingly commonsensical. For Mallin, the critiques of new historicism rely on a new historicist's putative understanding of culture as a synecdochally or metonymically unified and homogenous whole in which "any one aspect of a society is related to any other" (Cohen 34). Mallin responds by arguing that if "we connect verbal texts to social ones, we cannot but admit that people live, know, converge, fail, fight, create, and adapt in contexts, experienced not as arbitrary but as the bounded real" (3). While culture may not be an homogeneous, fully-saturating force that evenly informs each and every "part" of that culture, it certainly seems, at least loosely, to operate like this quite often.

writing which negotiates the problems faced by historians generally and by early modern history writers specifically. *Richard II*, that is, poses difficult questions in regards to the most central concern of Blundeville's treatise and of early modern historiography: the question of historical causality. A claim that Shakespeare and Blundeville are both interested in historical causality does not itself posit a necessary, contextual, or causal relationship between Shakespeare's play and the work that Blundeville undertook in 1574. It is not necessary for my argument that Shakespeare read Blundeville. He likely didn't. It is also not necessary for my argument to imagine that Blundeville and Shakespeare are part of an ideologically and philosophically homogeneous historical context that articulates itself uniformly at two more or less distinct discursive points. Considering that Blundeville's treatise was published in London approximately 21 years before *Richard II* was first performed, one could say that they are part of the same historical context only in a loose sense that relies on a coarsening periodization and that fails to account for two apparently unimportant decades. Instead of striving after a text-determining context in a typically new historicist gesture, I read Blundeville here because he explicitly addresses the question of historical causality that Shakespeare's play begs and because Blundeville's desire to formalize the goals of historiography can be read as a response to the historiographical confusion *vis-à-vis* historical causality in which texts that became Shakespeare's sources – such as Hall and Holinshed – were mired.

Though Hall and Holinshed have been, in the past, figured as simplistically providentialist in their renderings of history, recent scholars such as Annabel Patterson and Peter Herman have shown that such a reading of Hall and Holinshed is overly

simplistic. As Ivo Kamps points out, for instance, Hall – the historiographer that E. M. W. Tillyard allies most closely with the Tudor myth and its imposing sense of providential determinism – often explains the progress of history in terms more closely allied with humanist historiography, or he offers a simply chroniclistic order of events without regard for explaining their causes (13). The nature of historical causality, that is – whether divine, reasonably human, or simply irrelevant – remains unclear because each understanding of the nature of history sits uneasily beside the other in Hall's *Union of the Two Noble Houses* and Holinshed's *Chronicles*. Such ambiguity seems to require clarification, codification, and explication, particularly at a historical moment during which the English are coming to think more rigorously of themselves in historical terms, and Blundeville's treatise speaks to a desire for such codification. I am ultimately reading Blundeville next to Shakespeare, then, because he explicitly engages, and offers a vocabulary for negotiating, the problematic notions of historical causality that linger in the historical record which Shakespeare used as a source and to which Shakespeare also responds in *Richard II*.

Arthur Ferguson makes similar claims for Blundeville in *Clio Unbound* where he draws the historical trajectory of English historiography from medieval providentialism and encyclopaedic chronicles to the seventeenth century's more modern historiographical practice.²⁶ Put schematically: Ferguson is interested in the move from Brut to

²⁶ Ferguson's characterization of modern historiography is a partial version of the characterization that critics most often offer. Historiography is generally said to be modern once it has fulfilled four fundamental criteria: it must demonstrate a sense of historicity or anachronism; it must be disarticulated from philosophy and poetry; it must rely on documentary or material evidence rather than on previous historical accounts; it must refuse to reduce causality to the workings of providence. For the relationship

Blundeville to Bacon via Bodin, Machiavelli, and Elizabethan antiquaries; he is interested in evolving understandings of historical causality; and he is interested in the imagined relationship between historical change and “the social whole.” For Ferguson, this modernization of historiography relies on two primary theoretical transformations that he finds presaged in Blundeville: an understanding of historicity as such, and an understanding of the historical process that accounts for “impersonal factors within the scheme of things” beyond the workings of “great men” – factors such as “the history of institutions, laws, customs and ideas” (28). Certainly, claims Ferguson, Blundeville remains caught in the humanist assumption that history is solely the history of politics and political agents but *The True Order* “foreshadows, if it did not actually influence, the attitude of such later Elizabethans as Hayward and Bacon. It represents a new sophistication in the relating of history to a peculiarly ‘humane’ wisdom and in it is implied faith in the rational analysis of cause” (26). Ferguson is right here because Blundeville often offers a generally rationalistic understanding of historical causality, but Ferguson fails, I think, to account for the radical inconsistencies in Blundeville’s book. To consider *The True Order* as a halfway point in the transition from providentialist to modern historiography means that one must account for the weight that such halfway-ness can bear if one hopes to understand it in a historically responsible way. Locating Blundeville on a retrospectively posited historical continuum requires a critical recognition, as Ferguson points out, that Blundeville looks “forward” to the seventeenth century; it also requires, however, an awareness of those moments in which Blundeville

between this so-called modern historiography and Shakespeare’s history plays, see Dominique Goy-Blanquet, “Elizabethan Historiography and Shakespeare’s Sources.”

looks faithfully “backward” and it requires an awareness of the tensions that such a Janus-faced split necessarily produces. This fraught position is obvious in the apparent confusion that characterizes *The True Order*. If we anachronistically divide early modern historiographical practice, as is often done, into the species of antiquarianism, providentialism, and humanist historiography (cf. Kamps, Ferguson, Levy, Woolf, Goy-Blanquet, Guibbory), then Blundeville’s book is marred by the obvious category errors that *Richard II* repeats, explores and thematizes.²⁷

Blundeville’s *The True Order* can be located generally in the mainstream of humanist historiographical thought of the second half of the sixteenth century. The book is wholly derivative – it translates earlier treatises by the Italian humanists Francesco Patrizzi and Giacomo Aconcio – and, as D. R. Woolf points out, Blundeville offers “nothing more than his readers expected to hear” (5). Indeed, *The True Order* is filled with many of the commonplaces that one would expect to find in a humanist treatise on the reading and writing of history: history is almost exclusively the history of past politics; one might read history to understand the general and universal facts of political life; studying histories can teach individuals how to comport themselves ethically because the force of historical exemplarity may “stir” readers “by example of the good to followe the good, and by the example of the euill to flee the euill” (165); studying history is useful in the running of a state because it can help individuals to “gather such iudgement and knowledge as you may therby be the more able . . . to giue Counsell lyke

²⁷ David Womersley similarly argues against readings of early modern historiography that locate early modern historiographers soundly within a broad narrative of historiographical modernization. See “Against the Teleology of Technique,” esp. 97-100.

a most prudent Counsellor in publyke causes" (155); studying history allows speakers "to beautifie our owne speache with graue examples" (169).²⁸

Among these commonplaces Blundeville makes some claims about the nature of history and about the correct practice of history writing that are unique for their emphasis, even though they were well worn by the time he wrote them. He seems, for instance, to have a particularly acute sense of historicity: while humanist didacticism relies on a presumption of ahistorical universality – i.e., the lessons learned from the past remain applicable to the very different historical situation of Elizabethan England – Blundeville is careful to point out that readers need to be aware of the uniqueness of a historical circumstance.²⁹ Writing history properly requires a historiographer to be aware of the historically specific "trade of lyfe, the publique reuenewes, the force, & the maner of gouernment" (155), presumably because the assumed universal laws of history, war, peace and human behaviour work differently under different governments and within different social or military organizations. By accounting for these historical idiosyncrasies – "the diuers nature of thinges, and the differences of tymes, and

²⁸ According to F. J. Levy, this grand vision of history's didactic value seems to have been mostly ignored if we consider the actual teaching of history in English schools such as Eton and St. Paul's until the end of the sixteenth century. In these schools, history – particularly classical history written by classical historians – was thought to be valuable primarily because it could help to beautify the speech of bureaucrats in training. Because few students would ever find themselves in a position to counsel a monarch, the "flowers" of speech culled from histories were thought to be more immediately valuable than an understanding of political organization or the workings of a commonwealth. Even though most men trained to be good humanists would never use their training in consultations with statesmen or monarchs, it was clear that statesmen and monarchs would often refer to humanist historiographers and to their own historical training. On the political uses to which humanist historical thought was put, see Anthony Grafton's *What Was History? The Art of History in Early Modern Europe* and Daniel Wakelin's *Humanism, Reading, and English Literature, 1430-1530*, especially "William Worcester and the Commonweal of Readers," 93-125.

²⁹ Anthony Grafton points out Patrizi's startlingly acute sense of historicity in *What Was History? The Art of History in Early Modern Europe*, attributing it to Patrizi's work as an antiquarian (29, 39-40).

occasions, and such like accidents” (168) – the writer of history remains better positioned to understand that which is truly universal and, thus, that which is currently applicable. The writers and readers of history can understand, that is, why “mens purposes haue taken effect at one time, and not at an other” (168), and can adjust accordingly for current situations. Blundeville also dismisses a common part of humanist historiographical practice when he claims that writers of history should avoid putting speeches into the mouths of the historical figures about whom they write. While a classically derived practice encouraged this rhetorical move, Blundeville insists that “historiographers ought not to fayne anye Orations” because it is the historiographer’s “office . . . to tell things as they were done without either augmenting or diminishing them, or swaruing one iote from the truth” (164).

Despite these minor variations from what has come to be considered humanist historiographical doxa, the most historically interesting aspect of *The True Order* is probably its very existence. Blundeville was a courtier under the patronage of Robert Dudley; that he recognized the value to Dudley of such a translation speaks to the centrality of humanist thought among the historically minded courtiers surrounding Elizabeth in the final quarter of the sixteenth century. By 1574, humanist historical thought was intellectually *de rigueur*, so much so that Blundeville presumed it should be explicitly codified, translated into the vernacular, and published as a book closely associated with the Queen by a dedication to and patronage from Dudley.³⁰ From the

³⁰ Of course, if Blundeville were attempting to curry favour with Elizabeth, he picked the wrong patron. In 1573, Dudley was unpopular with the queen for his secret marriage, a fact that would probably have been unknown to Blundeville at the time he wrote his dedication.

moment of its publication, that is, *The True Order* is positioned as a book that will be necessarily seminal, a book designed to clarify, finalize, ratify, justify, and offer the last word on what it is that one must do when one does historiography. Such tacit ambitions speak to a historiographical world that was far from coherently monological in its work – a world that needs some sort of correction and fixing. Looking to the theoretically more sophisticated and more homogeneous world of Italian historiography perhaps seemed to Blundeville like a good place to begin.

In this conventional treatise on humanist historiographical practice, the question of causality is, not surprisingly, central. Because of the didactic and practical justifications for historical study that were offered by humanist historiographers the question of causality was the foundation of historical analysis: if one hopes to extrapolate lessons from past cultures to sixteenth-century England one necessarily needs to understand *why* things happened as they did in past cultures. There was certainly a sense of inevitability to the fall of states in a typical humanistic understanding of history – an inevitability that Blundeville invokes with the classical insistence on the necessary “beginning, agumentacion, state, declynacion, and ende of a Countrie or Citie” – but in spite of (or perhaps because of) this apparent inevitability, second causes, particularly human causes, were central to the study of history for those monarchs and counsellors who hoped to stave off or at least delay this apparently unavoidable “declynacion, and ende” (155).³¹

³¹ On the apparent tension between a sense of inevitable historical cycles and the political or didactic ends of humanist historiography, see the first chapter of Woolf’s *The Idea of History in Early Stuart England*.

Blundeville assumes a sense of historical causality that relies on a distinctly agent-centred vision of history's engine in the first half of his treatise, particularly where he parses closely and explicitly the ultimate horizons of historical understanding. After cursory remarks on the necessary analysis of the historico-cultural specificity of historical events, Blundeville argues that the analysis of history is properly an analysis of history's "dooers" (157). History for Blundeville does not simply happen according to a determinable and cyclic pattern, it is *done* by individuals and one must understand these agents to understand the workings of the historical process. This focus on the human being – usually a monarch or a military leader – speaks again to the didactic ends of the humanist historiographical project: if history is a tool through which the leaders might modify their behaviours in the name of statecraft, then focusing on past leaders and their actions makes sense. But for Blundeville a proper history must get beneath the obvious actions of history's "great men" – their "actes and deedes" (157) or other "enterprises" (156) – and must examine in detail the skills, character, education, and appetites of these agents of history. To understand history is to understand the "inward causes" (156, 157, 159) or "inward principles" (160) that compel these agents to act: "And therefore the writer in telling the actes and deeds, ought to shew of which . . . actes proceeded" (160). One needs to account for the reasoned explanation of an enterprise if that enterprise was reasonable (158, 160), but one must also account for "the boldnesse of natural courage" in these agents (157); one must account for their upbringings, "education, exercises, deedes, and speeches" (160); their families and parents (160); the "inclynacions" which they "hath from . . . cradle & by affections" (160); their "certayne liuelye motions, as

anger, loue, hatred” (160); their “passions bred by custom” (160). According to Blundeville, that is, there are within agents two causes of the actions that become historical – “reason and appetite” (156) – and by understanding these two possible sources of any historical agent’s action one can begin to understand the process of history.

Alongside this typically humanist rhetoric of the first half of *The True Order*, however, we see that the Christianization of humanist historiography complicates the strict schematization of late sixteenth-century historiographical practice into providentialist, humanist, and antiquarian modes. A critical commonplace recognizes that early modern writers of history rarely acknowledged this distinction and mixed these genres at will, but the line is blurry even in this explicitly theoretical treatise. Seeing *The True Order*, as Ferguson does, as a germ from which a more modern historiography will triumphantly emerge by the middle of the sixteenth century only occludes the complicated understanding of history and of historical causality that Blundeville articulates here, at a moment when humanist historiography and the work of Elizabethan antiquaries remain clearly different disciplines, if not disciplines practically at odds with one another.

Where the first half of *The True Order* is filled with claims that one must understand the “inward causes” of historical occurrence, the second half marks a significant qualification of such an observation. According to Blundeville, a writer of history must recognize these “inward causes,” but he must also recognize that the “acts which we doe” are often “forced by outwarde occasion” and thus “deserue neyther blame

nor prayse, neyther are they to be followed or fled sith they proceede not of our owne courage or cowardlynesse” (160). Certain historical events, though apparently determined by the inward causes lurking in the souls of historical agents, might also be caused “by destinie, by force, or by fortune” (159). In the first half of *The True Order*, Blundeville translates Patrizzi and makes little note of the nature of these “outward causes.” This “destinie,” “force,” or “fortune” might be allied loosely with the classical notion of *tyche* or mere chance, probably culled from Tacitus and Petrarch: history is the story of agents who “do” history and sometimes they apparently stumble across some bad luck, sometimes it rains on the day of a battle, sometimes they may have accidents with their swords while riding on horseback. Perhaps recognizing that this vision of chance is too secular and too contingent for his presumably Christian audience, Blundeville stops translating Patrizzi half way through *The True Order* and, in the section entitled “What order and methode is to be obserued in reading hystories,” he begins to translate the more obviously devout Aconcio who spells out in detail the zealously Christian nature of Patrizzi’s “fortune.”

The section of *The True Order* on the reading of histories begins with a typical claim: “Who so is desirous to know howe hystories are to bee readde, had neede first to knowe the endes and purposes for which they are written” (165). These “endes and purposes” are what Blundeville’s audience might expect and they are points that he has made earlier in *The True Order*: histories are written to bestow “wisedome” that will help readers “behaue our seules in all our actions, as well priuate as publique” and they are written to “stir” readers by examples, both good and bad, toward goodness (165). But

such histories “First” are written that “we may learne thereby to acknowledge the prouidence of God, wherby all things are gouerned and directed” (165). What might have seemed like mere chance in the translation of Patrizzi has become clarified to mean providence in the translation of Aconcio, and the humanist and providentialist historiographical systems, each with a unique logic of historical causality, are yoked together.

But the yoking together of providentialism and humanist historiographical practice causes some confusion, and not just for a twenty-first century reader. Immediately after making his claims that reading history tells us of God’s providence, Blundeville insists that history’s students need to pay attention to the second or human causes of historical occurrences because it is through these secondary causes that providence works. Readers of history need to understand the “inward causes” because it is by “meanes” of such inward prodding that God “ouerthroweth one kingdome & setteth vp an other” (165). This reconciliation seems to work because it leaves to theologians and philosophers the question of first causes – i.e., Why would God do that? – while leaving to historiographers the question of method, such as how God overthroweth kingdoms. But after drawing this workable solution to the apparent tensions between a providentialist historiography that sees God’s hand directing history and a humanist historiography that sees historical causality in the workings of individual agents Blundeville suggests that the understanding of secondary causes may be useless to writers of history who attempt to explain the apparently strange events that fill the historical record:

though things many times doe succcede according to the discourse of ma[n]s reason: yet mans wisdom is oftentimes greatly deceyued. And with those accede[n]ts which mans wisdom reiecteth and little regardeth: God by his providence vseth, when he thinketh good, to worke marueylous effects. And though he suffreth the wicked for the most part to liue in prosperitie, and the good in aduersitie: yet we may see by many notable examples, declaring as well his wrath and reuenge towards the wicked, as also his pittie and clemencie towards the good, that nothing is done by chaunce, but all things by his foresight, counsell and diuine providence. (165)

This move that Blundeville makes at the beginning of the second half of *The True Order* is problematic and it ultimately fails because it is burdened by epistemological impasses. According to Blundeville, for instance, one needs to know the workings of secondary causes because providence articulates itself through secondary causes, except for those moments when God intervenes in solely providential terms and when there is no rational explanation for the historical occurrence. Similarly, because explanations for the unfolding of history can be impenetrable to “mans wisdom” as it searches for causes, one needs to understand that God works in mysterious ways to punish the guilty and to aid the good, except when God “suffreth the wicked to liue in prosperitie” and decides not to intervene, which is “for the most part.” Unfortunately, suggests Blundeville, the historiographer’s wisdom is “oftentimes” – not “once in a while,” not “occasionally” – deceived so it is ultimately impossible to tell when searching after second-causes is itself a lost cause.

I make this point about the contradictions in Blundeville’s account of historical causality not simply to draw attention to the fact that Blundeville contradicts himself and that the historiographical method offered in *The True Order* is inconsistent and unworkable. Rather, I want to emphasize that it is difficult to read Blundeville’s treatise,

as I claimed above, as a final codification of historiographical practice that would ameliorate the apparent methodological tensions that exist in the histories that became Shakespeare's sources. Certainly Hall and Holinshed, as is often noted, seem theoretically unsophisticated (or at least inconsistent) as they simultaneously offer humanist and providentialist accounts of Richard's fall, but this inconsistency speaks to a presumed difficulty in understanding historical causes, a difficulty that Blundeville's book amply demonstrates. If *The True Method* hopes to offer *the* true method for the reading and writing of histories then it is clear that this true method must rely on several methods, none of which can claim absolute certainty. While it is situated as the final word on historiographical method near the end of the sixteenth century, Blundeville's final word seems to be that writing and reading histories – understanding historical causality – is difficult if not impossible work: if we are expected to reason out the causes of historical events then we are at a difficult point where reason sometimes works, where reason sometimes fails, and where recognizing the moments where reason fails is impossible to discern reasonably. Ultimately *The True Order* articulates in its perplexing muddle the problems that writers of history might face when they look to the past and ask about why things have happened the way they happened.

The Secrets of History

In Blundeville's *True Order*, the question of history seems not to have a clear answer, and this refusal to unambiguously answer fundamental historiographical questions speaks to the conflicting ideas of historical thought by which early modern writers of history are

surrounded. By tacitly taking up these questions in *Richard II*, I argue below that Shakespeare's play is, as Holderness claims, an act of historical writing that engages and challenges the historiographical texts that serve for him as primary sources in the writing of his play. Just as one might read Blundeville in response to the complexities and contradictions that Patterson, Kamps, Bonahue, and Herman have detected in chronicles, for instance, so too might one read Shakespeare as a writer who responds to these ambiguities by drawing them to our attention. The play, that is, forces its audience to ask certain questions about the nature of historical causality, much as Blundeville does, and the play explicitly thematizes these questions when characters within the play attempt to understand themselves and their world historically.

When I say that Shakespeare's play forces us to ask questions about the nature of historical causality, I am making a point that might be made of any narrative that represents historical events or that represents fictional events in a manner that can be considered historical. In a loose sense, most narratives can be considered historical insofar as they attempt to outline the chronological trajectory of a series of events that is imagined to be self-contained and insofar as they attempt to offer some sort of explanation for why these events are causally related to one another. As Joel Fineman argues in his brilliant reading of Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, any properly historical writing relies on a mutually constitutive relationship between the events that it figures as historical and the narrative formation through which those events are understood: "events derive historical significance because they fit into a representative narrative account, and . . . the narrative account derives its historical

significance because it comprehends significant historical events” (64). To put this point in terms that might be derived from Blundeville, if one understands history as the narrative account of the actions of the great men who compel history forward then certain “inward causes” become historically (rather than, say, biographically) relevant. The narrative account is properly “historical” because it explains events in terms of these inward causes, and, tautologically, these inward causes are historically relevant because they are the foundation of the historical narrative. While a strictly providentialist account of history would ignore a given ruler’s emotional sensitivity or include it as an afterthought, a typically humanistic analysis would take this character trait seriously and might derive from this historical ruler’s demeanour a general rule about the relationship between a ruler’s moodiness and the fall of kingdoms: a certain bad mood or good mood or a certain oscillation between the two moods becomes a historically relevant fact. Put simply, historical events – the facts and events that are considered historically relevant – change depending on the nature of the narrative through which they are represented and they change depending on that narrative’s inherent understanding of historical causality. When applied to a dramatic text, this point is best understood in terms of a certain authorial selectivity: by representing events *as* historical, a play necessarily makes presumptions about the nature of history. Certainly there is room in a dramatic text to include facts which aren’t historically significant according to the logic of history that a given play presumes – i.e., a dramatic account of history could include the historically irrelevant development of minor characters, for instance – but the narrative account of history cannot be considered a properly historical narrative if it excludes any historically

relevant narrative points according to the logic of history that the narrative presumes. Indeed, as Fineman points out, it is precisely through the historical happenings which are treated *as* relevant that a particular historical account's understanding of the historical process is articulated. Ultimately, then, it is impossible to exclude a point that is historically relevant according to the historical logic presumed by a narrative because this historical logic relies for its constitution on the events that are represented as historically significant. As I will argue below, however, *Richard II* belies this general rule of historical narratives by drawing attention to the presumably relevant facts of history that it conspicuously withholds. The play insists upon the relevance of facts that it refuses to give. I will also argue that Shakespeare is not particularly innovative when he troubles historiographical work in this way because his treatment of such questions parallels the strange understanding of Richard's murder that exists in the sources such as Hall's *Union* from which Shakespeare drew much of his story.

By withholding apparently crucial historical facts Shakespeare's play emphasizes the difficulty that one faces when struggling to understand historical causality, and it draws attention to the difficulties that early modern history writers faced when attempting to identify historical facts in a powerfully overdetermined historiographical field. The problem here is not a paucity of historical evidence, but a confusion over what might count as evidence at all. While any dramatic narrative history forces an audience to ask questions about the nature of history that the narrative account of historical events presumes, *Richard II* draws specific attention to such issues of historical emplotment, historical causality, and the facts that are to be thought of as historically relevant. More

specifically, throughout the play Richard and other characters attempt to understand their present situation by appeal to established narrative-historical patterns and they ultimately seem paradoxically too successful in their derivation of a historical self-understanding to be successful at all: the innumerable facts of history that pose themselves as potentially relevant overwhelm Richard's attempts to understand himself in a properly historical way.

By turning here to the question of historical facticity and historical causality, I am turning directly to the question with which this chapter is primarily concerned, the question of Richard's untimely death. As I have outlined in this dissertation's introduction, the question of a death's untimeliness (or the question of untimeliness generally) relies on the assumption of a certain narrative progression. For a death to appear untimely or historically eventful, it must pose itself as unreasonable, radically contingent, or eruptive in terms of the historical narrative that is understood in normative, generally deterministic, terms. It is in this sense that a discussion of historical logics intersects in *Richard II* with questions of Richard's death's potential untimeliness. Before asking questions about the untimeliness of Richard's death one must negotiate the various narrative frameworks to which the play insistently draws an audience's attention. To ask questions about the relative timeliness of Richard's death is to ask questions about the imagined structures and processes of history.

God is, according to many characters in *Richard II*, intimately concerned with the workings of history. The providentialism about which we often hear in the play is not the providentialism of *Paradise Lost* or Augustine's *City of God* – a providentialism of the

longue durée between the fall in Genesis and the redemption in Revelation – it is, rather, a more immediately retributive, micro-managed providentialism of the kind that one finds in *A Mirror for Magistrates*. The play opens with a tacit invocation of this providentialism when Bolingbroke and Mowbray insist, against Richard's wishes, that their feud must be resolved in the lists through a trial by combat.³² When the elaborate lists are finally constructed, both appellant and defendant apostrophically request divine intervention by delivering the same line, "And as I truly fight, defend me, heaven" (Bolingbroke at 1.3.25, Mowbray at 1.3.41), and both are sure that, as Bolingbroke puts it, "God's grace" will articulate itself through a jousting match. Certainly this elevated rhetoric might speak only to the ritualised formality of the trial – perhaps neither Bolingbroke nor Mowbray truly *believe* what they are saying – but within the logic of the lists, such formality presumes the presence of a divine hand which will spell out the truth of an otherwise irresolvable conflict. Gaunt similarly invokes the sublunary presence of God's hand when he explains to the Duchess of Gloucester that he cannot act against Richard even though Richard is clearly culpable in the death of his brother, her husband. Certainly an attack on Richard would operate within the logic of retributive justice that characters in the play often assume to be synonymous with justice *per se*, but because Richard is king – because the meting out of divine justice on earth is a job assigned to Richard's regal hands (1.2.4) – the world must wait for God and His angels to "rain hot vengeance on offenders' heads . . . when they see the hours ripe on earth" (8, 7). For Gaunt, life itself is a massive trial by combat and God's hand will no doubt guide a spear

³² On the relationship between trial by combat and providentialist historical logics, see Henry Jacobs, "Prophecy and Ideology in Shakespeare's *Richard II*."

of some sort when He sees fit. While the platoon of Welsh soldiers whom Richard expects to defend his reign seem barbarically superstitious when they leave their posts – their captain points to cosmic disruptions and omens such as withered bay trees, meteors, and a blood red moon that bode poorly for Richard’s reign (2.4.8-11) – the superstitious foundation of their collective decision implies a similar sense of providential causality that we see often throughout the play. As York insists, “the heavens are over our heads” (3.3.17).

The most critically discussed appeal to a providentialist framework is Richard’s own direct appeal to the *de casibus* tradition. After returning from war in Ireland to defend his crown in England, Richard finds himself abandoned by the Welsh platoon, he finds that most of his closest supporters have either sided with or been executed by Bolingbroke, he finds that York – in whose hands he had left the kingdom – has claimed to “remain as neuter” in the impending battle but has in fact “joined with Bolingbroke” (2.3.158, 3.2.200), and he finds that all commoners “young and old” have actively turned against him (3.2.119). After receiving incrementally more and more of this bad news, Richard desperately tries to muster courage by appeal to his divinely privileged regal position: God will protect him. But then he rethinks this position. Briefly forgetting the rhetoric according to which he is protected as God’s favourite – in Carlisle’s words, “that power that made you king / Hath power to keep you king in spite of all” (3.2.27-8) – he begins to understand himself in a different relationship to divine authority:

For God’s sake let us sit upon the ground
And tell sad stories of the death of kings:
How some have been deposed, some slain in war,
Some haunted by the ghosts they have deposed,

Some poisoned by their wives, some sleeping killed,
All murdered. (3.2.155-60)

Much has been made of this appeal to “sad stories of the death of kings,” and many critics such as Paul Budra have insisted that when “Shakespeare has Richard invoke ‘sad stories’ . . . he is tapping a popular concept of the process of history: virtually all kings die tragically, Richard will too. A tragic metabasis dominates history; Richard’s story is one more proof of this teleology” (86). From this observation that Richard is thinking of himself historically in typically *de casibus* terms, Budra extrapolates to argue that this model of history – the perpetual rise and fall of the *de casibus* kings – “determines the nature of the representation of historical character in the play” (86).

Despite the strength of Budra’s reading of *Mirror for Magistrates*, his sensitivity to the historical logics of *de casibus* makes him perhaps too eager to recognize a univocal *de casibus* providentialism in *Richard II* even though the play and Richard himself are far more confused and ambivalent. According to the logic of *de casibus* that Budra spells out in earlier chapters of his book, by invoking the “sad stories” Richard is here finding his own life mirrored perfectly in a repetitive and punitive historical process: if a *de casibus* king falls, it is because he has done something particularly heinous. If such kings fall, that is, it is because they are haunted by what Richard identifies as the ghosts of previous kings or because God, in the unfolding of history, repeatedly, consistently, and violently punishes the guilty. History according to this *de casibus* logic becomes the story of retributive justice, and God’s hand is repeatedly seen intervening to correct any regal waywardness. While Budra is right to point out that Richard here understands his position historically as one of the many kings whose tragic stories fill the *de casibus*

tradition, Richard more often thinks of himself in historical terms that are equally providentialist though they occupy a radically different moral register. As he stands on the verge of his deposition, Richard appeals not only to these specifically *de casibus* sad stories as he struggles to understand his current situation, he also repeatedly imagines himself by appeal to the sad story of *Christ's* death. Richard's betrayers, according to Richard, are best understood as Judases rather than as agents of a divine, punitive hand (3.2.132, 4.1.171), and Carlisle, one of Richard's strongest supporters in the play, seems to agree with this diagnosis when he imagines a future in which England becomes a medieval English antitype of Golgotha (4.1.144). While Budra argues that *de casibus* "determines the nature of the representation of historical character in the play," then, he is correct, but only partially correct. Richard understands his life according to a historiographical version of typology, and the types to which he appeals for this alienated self-understanding are more various than Budra allows: Richard may be a *de casibus* king but he may also be Christ.

When I say above that Carlisle and Richard "diagnose" their historical position in either *de casibus* or Christological terms I do so to indicate that they understand their position in history by appeal to a logic most often associated with diagnostic medicine. Fineman points out in "The History of the Anecdote: Fiction and Fiction" that Thucydides is one of the first "modern" historians because he introduced, discovered or presupposed

regularizing, normativizing, essentializing laws of historical causation by reference to which it becomes possible to fit particular events into the intelligible whole of a sequential framing narrative – a whole that then becomes a pattern in accord with which one can understand an altogether different set or

sequence of historical events, again on the assumption these events are also subject to or exemplary of one or another principle of nomological historical succession. (61-2)

While this practice is putatively modern because it appeals to secular rather than divine causes it is also clearly homologous to the method that both Richard and Carlisle employ as they attempt to understand themselves historically: the moment in which they live is a moment of crisis, and it is a moment of crisis like the moments of crisis that *de casibus* kings suffer before their life stories turn for the worse or like the moment of crisis that Christ suffered before his crucifixion. This project of diagnostic historical self-understanding makes meaning of the present (or of any historical moment) by appeal to an external though structurally identical narrative arc. Again historiography and typology become similar practices, and they share a fundamental logic, as Fineman emphasizes, with medical diagnoses. Pointing to a critical tradition that understands Thucydides by appeal to Hippocrates, Fineman argues that

Thucydides conceives his history under the model of the medical case history, so that the generic frame of Thucydides's events is imagined in conformity with the organic form of an Hippocratic illness that passes through significant events, i.e. symptoms, which appear in a coherent, chronological succession – one that starts from some zero-degree of vulnerable healthiness, that then builds up, through a series of significant symptoms, to a predictable dramatic climax at a moment of required 'crisis' . . . after which the disease completes its predetermined and internally directed course. (65-6)

The problem with this historiographical practice – a problem to which *Richard II* draws our attention – is that historical symptoms are always difficult to identify with a single “predetermined and internally directed course” when there are so many courses – so many illnesses – that seem to account for the historical symptoms at hand. Because

different illnesses share the same symptoms, various diseases can be misdiagnosed and anticipating the trajectory of an illness is difficult despite the language of prognosis (literally, “fore-knowing”): a sore throat could indicate a streptococcal infection or throat cancer or allergies; a king who loses his throne may be a king whom God is punishing, or he may be a truly Christ-like king whose murder by an unjust usurper will provoke a different type of providential retribution called the War of the Roses. If there are universal forms or repetitive historico-narrative arcs that culminate in “predictable dramatic climaxes” then from within history – and even at a point when a certain historical trajectory is at an imagined end – it is difficult to determine the particular climax from a smattering of confused symptoms being reported by the ill. It is especially difficult to know from within history exactly what counts as a symptom or as a historically relevant event: Was the Welsh captain correct to attribute the fall of meteors, the withering of bay trees, and the reddening of the moon to a far-reaching cosmological disruption of which Richard’s murder was an integral part? Perhaps it is mere coincidence that bay trees and Richard suffered blights at the same time? Is a sick tree a historically relevant fact?³³ In light of such considerations, York’s claim that “the

³³ I borrow the logic of these questions from Derrida’s response to Francis Fukuyama in *Specters of Marx*. In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida first challenges the philosophical framework on which Fukuyama relies when arguing that history has ended (i.e., Fukuyama both relies on and denies the importance of empirical facts; Fukuyama misreads Hegel; etc.), but he subsequently offers a more immediate and deflating response in the chapter “Wears and Tears (Tableau of an Ageless World)” when outlining facts of contemporary history that are likely to trouble any sense that history has ended now that we’ve reached a period of globalized (or gradually expanding) neo-liberalism. To declare the end of history, claims Derrida, Fukuyama has necessarily ignored the historical significance of ten separate facts that will complicate if not wholly scuttle the stability of the current world-historical situation, opening the probability for a radically different historical future. It appears for Derrida that Fukuyama has ignored the historical relevance of facts as obvious and as significant as “inter-ethnic wars (have there ever been another kind?),” unemployment, the “aggravation of foreign debt,” stunning poverty in the so-called third world, and the continued proliferation of nuclear arms. To figure Derrida’s reading of the weakness of Fukuyama’s argument in terms that echo

heavens are over our heads” may be read as a claim for the inscrutability of divine providence: the heavens are “over our heads” because their work is beyond the purview of human reason. They are “over our heads” in the way that a complicated idea is “over our heads”: they are just too difficult to understand.

Characters in *Richard II* further confuse the question of historical causality by offering a series of explanations for Richard’s fall that have nothing at all to do with divine providence. This problematizing move is most obvious, I think, in a strange exchange between Carlisle, Aumerle and Richard in 3.2 as Carlisle and Aumerle try to explain to Richard the political state of affairs in England now that Richard has returned from Ireland:

Carlisle:

Fear not, my lord; that power that made you king.
Hath power to keep you king in spite of all.
The means that heavens yield must be embraced
And not neglected. Else heaven would,
And we will not: heaven’s offer we refuse,
The proffered means of succor and redress.

Aumerle:

He means, my lord, that we are too remiss,
Whilst Bolingbroke through our security
Grows strong and great in substance and in power. (27-35)

Thucydides/Hippocrates, Fukuyama has ignored certain symptoms that are relevant to our understanding of the trajectory of the illness called world history. Consequently, Fukuyama has come to the probably erroneous conclusion that the world is ready to leave the hospital because such wildly obvious symptoms do not fit his diagnosis of a disease called history for which neo-liberalism seems, to Fukuyama, to have been the cure. For Derrida’s ten points against Fukuyama, see pp. 81-3; on Fukuyama’s thesis of history’s end generally, see the entirety of “Wears and Tears” and the chapter “Conjuring – Marxism,” esp. 63-75. It bears mention, however, that Fukuyama has, in *The New York Times*, subsequently softened his position on the end of history by recognizing the problematic status of America’s war in Iraq and by distancing himself from his allies at the Project for a New American Century.

Where Carlisle analyses the situation that Richard faces by appeal to a logic of divine providence in which God cares about politics, Aumerle – always the politic calculator – translates this language into a wholly secular register. Where Carlisle understands the impending rebellion in England by appeal to a framework that finds God's hand in all worldly events, Aumerle implies that the happenings of politics are best understood in terms internal to those politics. Where Carlisle sees in Richard's behaviour a refusal to accept God's "succor and redress," Aumerle sees the pathetic hesitation of a weak king who allows enemies to grow "strong and great in substance and in power."³⁴

Aumerle is not alone in the play when he attempts to explain in secular terms the workings of history and the particular situation that Richard faces. The gardener, for instance, suggests that the fall of Richard is not engendered by a divine will that works to punish Richard; rebellion is, for the gardener, inevitable because Richard has failed to pluck seditious weeds from the garden that is England. The gardener recognizes, that is, the wavering and weakness in Richard's regal posturing – a weakness that the audience has seen, for instance, when Richard waffled on the duration of Bolingbroke's exile – and he locates the cause of his inevitable fall in such weakness. Bushy, Green, and Bagot seem to concur with Aumerle and the gardener that the workings of history are best understood in solely political terms when they first hear of Bolingbroke's early return from exile: Bushy worries, for instance, that it is "all impossible" for Richard's allies "to

³⁴ On these competing explanations of history's unfolding in *Richard II*, see Henry E. Jacobs, "Prophecy and Ideology in Shakespeare's *Richard II*." According to Jacobs, the play begins by offering a providentialist explanation of history before transforming itself into a play that understands history in typically humanistic terms. Where Jacobs recognizes a distinction between the first half and the second half of the play, however, I am arguing that *Richard II* refuses to allow such easy conclusions about which explanation of history is correct.

levy power / Proportionable to the enemy" (125, 123-4) and Bagot imagines that their well-being is threatened not by a divine hand but by a "wavering commons, for their love / Lies in their purses, and whoso empties them / By so much fills their hearts with deadly hate" (128-30). While Carlisle is quick to understand history in terms that rely on the heavens over our heads Richard's other counsellors see the impending rebellion as a matter of political calculation. Because Richard has ruled poorly – he has overtaxed his subjects, reigned capriciously, etc. – and because it is simply impossible for them to muster enough troops, their executions come to seem inevitable. Even the Welsh captain seems able to conceive of history's workings in secular terms. The first half of his speech to Salisbury is filled with withered bays and meteors but the second half of this speech finds "omens" which are more readily recognizable as sublunary. He recognizes that things are not going well for Richard because "Rich men look sad, and ruffians dance and leap, / The one in fear to lose what they enjoy, / The other to enjoy by rage and war" (12-4). As omens go, these visions of worried rich men and happy ruffians seem to be explicable in terms that are more concrete than a blood red moon: the whole population seems to agree that comfortable wealth under Richard is threatened by Bolingbroke's putatively populist rebellion or that a bloody, violent rebellion looms.

Many critics have followed Aumerle, Bagot, Bushy, and Green and they have worked to explain the historical logic of the play without appeal to a providentialist framework. They work to resist readings such as Budra's or Mary Grace Garry's, for instance, or more famously E. M. W. Tillyard's and Lily Campbell's, and they find in the play the story of a political transformation from the medieval notions of kingship that

Richard putatively espouses to the modern sense of politics as a matter of Machiavellian savvy, *virtu*, and calculation. In this reading of the play, Bolingbroke is best understood as a deft politician who knows how to manoeuvre himself in the world that he inhabits while history is best understood without appeal to God's providential plans. The history that an audience sees on stage becomes the history of a complicated political negotiation. I don't intend here to resolve this debate because the debate is simply irresolvable by appeal to the text: *Richard II* refuses to let an audience know who is correct. If wholly political forces are compelling the story forward then why does Richard's fate seem so readily to fit within the *de casibus* paradigm? On the other providential hand, cannot one appeal to providence in order to explain the trajectories of the two historical tetralogies? Is not Bolingbroke's unlawful usurpation finally corrected when the houses of York and Lancaster are reunited at the end of *Richard III*? At the same time, however, cannot we read early modern theories of kingship back into *Richard II* to suggest that the play represents a waning faith in the divine right of kings and sublunary providence? Put simply and more directly: Is God working through providential coincidences, is Bolingbroke a Machiavellian schemer, or is God working through the Machiavellian schemes of Bolingbroke?

In answer to these questions, the play is frustratingly silent: the play offers no Chorus in *Richard II*. A Chorus may not be the ultimate arbiter of a play's meaning – as in *Henry V* an audience may recognize certain disjunctions between the Chorus's description of the action and what one sees on stage – but there's not even a weak attempt in *Richard II* to apply a uniform explanation to the disparate voices that we hear on stage.

Instead of a Chorus there is a variety of characters whose own historical self-understandings conflict. Perhaps more frustratingly, however, particularly for those critics who try to find in the play a wholly political history of Bolingbroke's usurpation of the throne, is the sheer opacity of Bolingbroke's character and his motives.

Blundeville's insistence on the exposition of inward causes of historical events – the inner “passions” of history's imagined agents – is denied by Shakespeare who withholds any understanding of passions or reason in his characterization of Bolingbroke.

Bolingbroke conspicuously never speaks aside from the action, never speaks a soliloquy, and is never on stage in a remotely candid moment. If Bolingbroke seems like a politic Machiavel to some critics it is probably because he never speaks except when in public and because he never delivers a line that fails to please those individuals whose support he immediately requires. He seems like Richard III in Shakespeare's *Richard III* but without those candid moments and cutting asides through which his motives, desires, and passions become visible to an audience.

Of all characters in the play, it seems strange that Bolingbroke never speaks a soliloquy. It is strange not only because Bolingbroke is so central a character but also because an audience can never legitimately claim to understand Bolingbroke's motives and because understanding these motives seems so often crucial to an adequate understanding of the action that the play stages. This is not to say that from Blundeville's perspective – a perspective in which “inward causes” are crucial to the understanding of the historical process – Shakespeare fails as a historian. Rather, the question of Bolingbroke's motives seems crucial to a proper understanding of the play's working: the

play forces us to ask questions of these motives but will not give us the resources to answer the questions it begs. If one hopes to understand, for instance, that Bolingbroke always intends to usurp the throne upon his return to England then direct proof is difficult to come by and is always readily contradicted even as it is affirmed. In 2.1 for instance, one finds a moment in which it seems as if Bolingbroke's return to England has nothing to do with his declared intention to reclaim only his own patrimony. Immediately after Gaunt's death – in the same scene in which Richard lays claim to Bolingbroke's patrimony – Ross, Northumberland and Willoughby explain that Bolingbroke has already sailed for England and they vow to support him. If Bolingbroke has intended only to reclaim his patrimony when he returns then it is surprising that the fleet of ships he leads could already have gathered off the coast before he had time to hear that his patrimony had been wrongfully claimed. But we also see that Northumberland, who apparently knows that Bolingbroke *did not* return to England to secure his proper inheritance, insists in 2.3 that “The noble Duke hath sworn his coming is / But for his own / . . . / And let him never see joy that breaks that oath” (147-8, 150). To see, then, that Bolingbroke returns from England for the sake of the throne requires us to be more suspicious of Bolingbroke than Northumberland is, even though Northumberland clearly and obviously knows that the return involves more than the reclamation of a title, deeds, and rents.³⁵ To

³⁵ Edgar Schell offers an interesting but not particularly compelling reading of this apparent paradox in “*Richard II* and Some Forms of Theatrical Time.” According to Schell, we need to recognize that Shakespeare imagines a temporal gap between the moment in 2.1 where Richard claims Bolingbroke's inheritance and the subsequent moment in which Northumberland, Ross, and Willoughby discuss Bolingbroke's presence off the coast of England. Schell claims that, in silently assuming a temporal gap, Shakespeare relies on a stage practice that characterizes medieval morality plays in which time is treated quickly and loosely. The problem with Schell's argument is that he never suggests *why* Shakespeare would suddenly, at this moment and at no other moment in his entire extant corpus, rely on such conventions

be certain that Bolingbroke has returned to claim the throne requires members of an audience to know more about Bolingbroke than characters in the play know, even though the audience hasn't had the opportunity to hear Bolingbroke speak outside the presence of those other characters. There's a similar moment, similarly problematic, in the scene at Flint Castle when Richard descends from the wall to meet with Bolingbroke. In this scene, Richard remands himself to the custody of Bolingbroke who claims to want, in Northumberland's words to Richard, nothing more than "his lineal royalties" and "Infranchisement immediate" (3.3.112, 113). When granted an audience with Richard, Bolingbroke claims again to "come but for mine own," but subsequent to this claim Richard asks a question of Bolingbroke and Bolingbroke's answer seems to indicate that a transfer of the crown was his sole intention: "Set on towards London," Richard asks, "cousin, is it so?" (3.2.206); Bolingbroke answers, "Yea, my good lord" (3.2.207). Here, again, an audience must claim confusion: Bolingbroke wants nothing more than his inheritance, but he is going to imprison Richard? Bolingbroke is imprisoning a king whom he still refers to as "my good lord"? How does this make sense? The answer, I'd argue, is that it does not make sense: Bolingbroke here may again be read as a political calculator angling for the throne since a time before his return to England or he may be read as a more or less lucky duke who accidentally stumbles into the crown. Either way, Shakespeare leaves Bolingbroke's intentions wholly ambiguous, impossible to discern.

without signalling a shift in the representational logics of his play from the temporally realist style. Despite its weaknesses, however, Schell's argument comes at least close to making sense of this scene that, clearly to me, makes no sense at all.

The sheer opacity of Bolingbroke's character again proves problematic to our understanding the play when Richard is finally murdered at Pomfret. An audience hears from Exton that Bolingbroke, in the shadow of the Winchester plot to restore Richard, has asked publicly and rhetorically in regards to Richard, "Have I no friend will rid me of this living fear?" (5.4.2). Exton, claiming that Bolingbroke subsequently "looked on me, / As who should say, 'I would thou wert the man / That would divorce this terror from my heart'" (5.4.7-9), takes Bolingbroke's cue and performs the extra-judicial execution. But an audience never sees this loaded look, never hears the tone in Bolingbroke's voice, never has the chance to determine whether or not Bolingbroke is actually winking and nudging in Exton's direction. It is possible to recognize here an analogy with the awkwardly punctuated note in Marlowe's *Edward II*: one reading of the note sent by Mortimer to Edward's guards demands that they protect him while an equally plausible reading of the note insists that Edward be executed. But while Marlowe offers his audience a speech by Mortimer to indicate that the latter version is intended and that the former version simply allows for what has come to be known since the Reagan administration as plausible deniability, Shakespeare never offers us the truth of Bolingbroke's intentions.

This difficulty in discerning Bolingbroke's motivations when dealing with Richard's murder seems intentionally ambiguous when read against the account of Richard's murder in Shakespeare's sources. As Lister Matheson argues, Shakespeare necessarily had to make a choice in the staging of Richard's murder: some chronicle accounts claim that Richard was murdered by forced starvation at Pomfret, some claim

that Richard's death by starvation was voluntary, some claim that Exton murdered Richard with Bolingbroke's consent, some claim that Bolingbroke had no idea of the murder until after the fact. Indeed, in Hall's *Union* – a text to which Shakespeare almost certainly referred – each of these accounts besides voluntary starvation is offered. In regards to the murder by Exton, Hall claims that “some saye [Bolingbroke] commaunded, others talk that he condisconded, many wryte that he knewe not tyll it was done and then it confirmed. But howe so ever it was, kyng Rycharde dyed of a violent death, without any infeccion or naturall disease of the body” (fol. xiiij). But against the claims of “some” who “saye,” Hall invokes the “commen fayme” and a story that pathetically evokes Tantalus:

The commen fayme is that he was every daye served at the table wyth costely meate lyke a kyng, to the entent that no creature should suspecte any thyng done contrary to the order taken in the parliament [according to which Richard must be treated with great care], and when the meate was set before hym, he was forbidden that he should not once touche it, ye not to smell to it, and so died of famyn: which kynd of death is the moost miserable, most unnaturall, ye and most detestable that can be, for it is ten tymes more painefull then death (which of all extremities is the moost terrible) to die for thirst standyng in the river, or starve for hunger besette wyth twentie deintte dysshes. (fol.xiii-xiiiib)

After a protracted summation of these various conflicting options – a summation in which the version of the story that Shakespeare uses is given the greatest space – Hall makes a declaration striking for its modesty: “Thus have I declared to you the diversities of opinions concerning the deathe of this unfortunate prince, remittyng to your judgement which you thynke moost trewe, but the very truth is that he died of a violent death, and not by the darte of naturall infirmitie” (fol. xiiiib). From this account in Hall it is clear that Shakespeare would have to make a single choice – staging all options, that is, would

be impossible – but it is conspicuous that he did not choose to stage Richard’s forced starvation because, as Hall claims, that version is the version of “commen fayme,” it is the most generally understood, it is the most widely accepted. Of course it is impossible to determine exactly why Shakespeare made the choice that he made: he might simply be following Holinshed who only offers this version, or, as Matheson claims, he may have chosen to stage the most dramatically exciting version of Richard’s death, or he may have had another reason entirely. Regardless of Shakespeare’s motivations for choosing to stage this version of Richard’s death it is clear that Shakespeare offers the only version of the murder that refuses to explicitly exculpate or definitely implicate Bolingbroke in Richard’s death. Instead of a forced starvation or a commanded murder an audience only hears second-hand from Exton about a provocative rhetorical question and a potentially imagined glance. In offering nothing but ambiguity Shakespeare seems to be following his sources quite closely: the variety of historical meanings offered – the “diversities of opinions,” as Hall calls them – refuse to lend easy certainty to the facts of Richard’s death or about the nature of the history that accounts for this death.

By obscuring Bolingbroke’s intentions in the play Shakespeare makes it impossible to pin down the type of history that the play imagines: it leaves an audience as muddled as Blundeville is at the end of *The True Order* about the nature of historical causality and about the proper way to understand the workings of history. It seems, that is, that history can either be the story of political calculation and power struggles, or it may be the story of God’s repeated interventions in the world of history. Because of this historiographical (and historical) ambiguity it is also difficult to see how we are expected

to understand Richard's death. Coming at the end of the play, the death is certainly conclusive, and according to either of these historical narratives it seems to come at the correct time: the death of Richard seems to "crown" both stories equally well. If an audience hopes to understand the play in wholly political terms – terms that the gardener and other characters offer – then the murder of Richard provides a properly predictable resolution to the play and to Richard's life. Weak kings who rule capriciously but weakly, over-tax their subjects, and live inordinately lavish lives are likely to die at the hands of a usurper who promises some sort of remittance from such injustice. The narrative arc of such a ruler's biography is thus paradoxically expected to end too soon and the proper conclusion seems always early though it fits perfectly when mapped against the trajectory of a history that accounts for politics and the character of rulers. Similarly, Richard's death seems to come at the appropriate time if one hopes to understand the play in terms of a *de casibus* providentialism that accounts for the punishment of rulers who overstep the authority granted them by a divine mandate: the beginning, middle, and end of Richard's life seem mapped out in advance, they seem to adhere perfectly to the ideal narrative arc that the historical record rehearses repeatedly as the post-Boccaccio *de casibus* tradition. In the second version of this providentialist account, however, one can see a vision of Richard's death that is untimely: if Richard's life ends too soon and the proper progression of history is interrupted by a usurper, then the inevitable fact of divine retribution will eventually account for this historical disruption by punishing the guilty. This is, of course, the Tudor myth, and the providential hand of God is expected to correct historical wrongs committed by both

Richard and Bolingbroke when it introduces Richmond to Princess Elizabeth and reunites the houses of York and Lancaster at the end of the War of the Roses. If time is, to quote Hamlet, “out of joint” at the end of *Richard II* – even though from within the play all may appear to be historically in order – then it seems that Richmond and Princess Elizabeth were “born to put it right.”

***Richard II*’s Other Times**

So far in this chapter I have pointed out that *Richard II* draws attention to a variety of historical narratives according to which Richard’s death appears to arrive at the right time, fitting neatly within the familiar plot of *de casibus* tragedy, for instance, or in the similarly familiar logics of humanist historiography. But characters in the play also imagine other parsings of time that are structured by an internal logic which is foreign to orthodox types of early modern historiography. While, as I have argued, the orthodox historiographical schools to which characters allude serve to make Richard’s death a comfortable narrative conclusion, other visions of time’s unfolding, invoked by the Duchess of Gloucester, the Duchess of York, and Richard himself, call into question such pat visions of Richard’s death by positing a version of history that is based on the idea of a familial genealogy – distinct from monarchical succession – or by positing a unique, idiosyncratic biographical law.

Where, in the play’s first scene, Bolingbroke figures his quarrel with Mowbray in the legalistic terms of treason – Mowbray “did plot the Duke of Gloucester’s death” “Like a false traitor or injurious villain” (1.1.100, 91) – the Duchess of Gloucester in the next scene figures the same plot in terms of a biological and genealogical disruption.

Juxtaposed with the elevated, courtly, equivocation of the first scene, the Duchess's speech is striking for its movement away from the language of law and into the language of nature and blood. Indifferent to the mechanics of courtly trial that characterizes the first scene, the Duchess explains the relationship between Gaunt and Gloucester in terms of filial obligation, and she attempts to inspire Gaunt by appeal to this obligation: "Hath love in thy old blood no living fire?" she asks (1.2.10). This sense of a more organic filial duty founded in blood contrasts with the politically mediated vision of treason that informs the rhetoric of the play's first scene, and this vision of a blood-based duty informs her understanding of Gloucester's murder as the unnatural disruption of a biological span. Describing to Gaunt "Edward's seven sons, whereof thyself art one," she describes the brothers as

seven fair branches springing from one root.
 Some of those seven are dried by nature's course,
 Some of those branches by the Destinies cut;
 But Thomas my dear lord, my life my Gloucester
 One vial full of Edward's sacred blood

 Is hack'd down, and his summer leaves all faded. (1.2.9, 11-15, 20)

While the murder of Gloucester seems, in the first scene, to be a matter best conceived legalistically, the Duchess figures murder as the unnatural attenuation of a life, as the disruption of a biological order – implied by conventional organic imagery – that pays no heed to the demands of "nature's course" or the "Destinies."³⁶ Against the rationalizing historiographical logic that might make sense of lifespans in terms of providential retribution, the Duchess here speaks of an unachieved organic *telos*. This vision of a

³⁶ On the association between untimely deaths and images of seasonal or organic disruption, see my introduction, p. 2.

life's span ultimately threatens the rhetoric of, for instance, the play's *de casibus* providentialism by positing a narrative unfolding of lives that exists beyond the imperatives of a divine justice.

The Duchess of York subsequently repeats the Duchess of Gloucester's idea that a lifespan must be measured or understood in extra-political terms, and like the Duchess of Gloucester, the Duchess of York insists on such extra-political visions of life while in dialogue with a relative who thinks politically and ignores the imperatives of blood relations.³⁷ When York discovers that his son, Aumerle, has pledged to usurp the Bolingbroke's crown and replace Richard on the throne, he immediately figures Aumerle in terms that are recognizably legal rather than paternal, "Treason, foul treason! Villain! Traitor! Slave!" (5.2.72), and he reacts by taking juridical action, racing to see Henry and to betray his son in the name of a certain type of justice. Against such a stunning and unambivalent certainty regarding the appropriate juridical channels in which to operate, the Duchess of York thinks in terms that operate beyond political obligation. While York, that is, considers the inevitable end of his son's life in terms of justice – Aumerle is a traitor and must, inevitably, be executed – his wife asks York:

Why, York, what wilt thou do?
Wilt thou not hide the trespass of thine own?
Have we more sons? Or are we like to have?
Is not my teeming date drunk up with time?
And wilt thou pluck my fair son from mine age
And rob me of a happy mother's name? (5.2.89-93)

³⁷ On the Duchess of York / Duchess of Gloucester parallelism and their thematic relationship with Isabella, see Helen Ostovich, "'Here in this Garden': The Iconography of the Virgin Queen," particularly pp. 30-31 where she argues that both the Duchess of Gloucester and the Duchess of York "serve as models for family-centred devotion" (30).

In the Duchess' list of questions lurks a tacit understanding of the natural progression of a life. Beyond the obvious sense that she considers her son in terms of family while York considers his son in terms of the law, she also imagines a biological, family-based, generational temporality that exists beyond the logics of crime and punishment. The Duchess, rather absurdly, thinks to protect Aumerle not because he is her son, but because he is her *only* son,³⁸ irreplaceable because of a post-menopausal womb. As far as the Duchess is concerned, that is, York's plan to expose Aumerle is a problem of generational and genealogical disruption: she, for instance, will have no son in her old age now that she is unable to "teem" again, and the family name will disappear because her son will die too soon, before producing an heir of his own. While the Duchess figures her son in terms of his blood and biology – as one identical with York, she points out (106) – York figures Aumerle in terms of a wholly political and extra-biological inheritance, mediated by the logic of honour, when he claims that Aumerle has spent "mine honour with his shame, / As thriftless sons their scraping fathers' gold" (5.3.66-67).

When this debate moves, at the end of an unstaged family horserace, to Windsor Castle and to Bolingbroke, the situation becomes, as many scholars have noted, comical; it also becomes in a certain sense comedic. Attending to the intense physicality of this scene – such as the possible wrestling and between husband and wife – and to the scene's

³⁸ As Dorothea Kehler points out in "*Richard II* 5.3: Traditions and Subtext," the Duchess seems to have forgotten her other son, Richard of Cambridge: "Since York's other son, Richard of Cambridge, appears in *Henry V*, Shakespeare has apparently chosen to intensify the psychological horror by treating Aumerle as an only son" (135 n.13). While "treating Aumerle as an only son" may certainly "intensify" the scene's "psychological horror," Shakespeare's choice here to erase Richard of Cambridge from *Richard II* also intensifies the sense of potential generational disruption that I deal with here.

mad flurry of genuflection, Sheldon Zitner has argued that 5.3 (and the Aumerle scenes generally) are “fully intended as farce . . . with such salt and savor as to distress the taste for pageant, pathos, and elevated death the play otherwise appeals to and satisfies” (243-44).³⁹ But while Zitner agrees with Bolingbroke that “Our scene is alt’red from a serious thing / And now changed to ‘The Beggar and the King’” when the Duchess arrives at the castle (5.3.77-78), Bolingbroke’s pardon of Aumerle also promises a familial regeneration and the possibility that the Duchess will bear “a happy mother’s name” by maintaining the integrity of her family’s inheritance. While still on her knees – there is, as Zitner points out, no stage direction indicating that she rises – the Duchess closes the scene with a vision of redemption, a redemption that will allow her family to continue to flourish as blood demands, keeping her child alive so that he might reproduce: “Come, my old son, I pray God make thee new.” As in typical New Comedy, then, intergenerational tensions are alleviated at the end of 5.3 by a surprising act – Bolingbroke’s quick pardoning of a traitor – and one part of the world can return to a state of reproductive health that was threatened earlier by age-inappropriateness or a by a life’s potential abruption.

This disarticulation of lives from grand historical narratives culminates at the end of the play when Richard, facing his death, appeals to the imagined “seven ages of man” and the organic, immanent, biological and biographical temporality that the “seven ages” imply. As Emily Wilson points out, it is common in early modern England to imagine the span of a life in such terms: individuals are granted their seventy year spans and their

³⁹ Leonard Barkan, after citing Zitner, makes a similar point about 5.3, arguing that its apparent farcicalness is “incongruous” with the rest of the play.

lives follow predictable arcs from infancy to old age which mirror the lives of all other individuals (2).⁴⁰ Certainly, as I describe above, Richard and other characters understand points in Richard's life by appeal to repetitive, orderly, and predictable historical logics, but Richard himself seems able to imagine lifespans – including his own – in these more mundane, subject-centric, organic terms that don't locate the meaningfulness of a subject's lifespan in a historical framework. After seeing Gaunt die, for instance, Richard is quick to diagnose this death as natural and appropriate: "The ripest fruit falls, and so doth he; / His time is spent, our pilgrimage must be. / So much for that" (153-5). Dorothea Kehler is right to point out that Richard's "truncated response" – "So much for that" – may indicate a certain denial of his own mortality (9), suggesting to himself that he does not need to worry about his own death because he is not old, because lives ripen, lives develop individually, lives fall from the tree when their spans reach an internally determined end that is for Richard, he imagines, still far away. More significant for my reading of the play, however, is that this recognition of an idiosyncratic temporality through which the lifespan can be thought anticipates Richard's provocative soliloquy in 5.5, just prior to his murder:

I wasted time, and now doth Time waste me:
For now hath Time made me his numb'ring clock;
My thoughts are minutes, and with sighs they jar
Their watches on unto mine eyes, the outward watch
Whereto my finger, like a dial's point,
Is point still, in cleansing them from tears.
Now, sir, the sound that tells what hour it is
Are clamorous groans which strike upon my heart,
Which is the bell. So sighs, and tears, and groans,
Show minutes, times, and hours. (49-58)

⁴⁰ See my introduction, 18.

In this moment Richard, alone, no longer a king, struggling to recognize himself in the world (“I have been studying how I may compare / This prison where I live unto the world” [5.5.1-2]), is forced to recognize that he is in fact *outside* the world in some respects. No longer clearly anchored to the alienating historical temporalities of kingship through which he had previously thought of his life’s story, his bare life becomes the source of its own temporality: his body, his tears, and his groans become the clock by which his hours are measured. In a historical limbo that’s materialized as a prison, Richard’s body produces the temporality through which his life must be thought: an individualized, unique chronology. This life seems wholly different from the life that had previously been thought to traverse a predictable arc – predictable because it looked either like the arc of Christ’s life, like the arc of a *de casibus* king’s life, or like the arc of a life that is trapped in the facts of politics. Of course it is difficult to accept Richard’s sudden self-understanding here as the final word in the play. This apparently final conclusion does not resolve what the audience has already seen: that the temporality of a life, particularly a regal life, is difficult to narrate properly because it is difficult to understand exactly which historical causes determine its span. While many critics agree with Slavoj Žižek’s reading of the play and note that here, finally, Richard stops overidentifying with his symbolic mandate as king and begins to understand himself in a more “authentic” way (cf., for instance, McMillin and Forker), one must recognize that Richard’s life story still does, in fact, fit well within the other historical logics that the play has offered.⁴¹ Richard’s voice here is just one voice among many, each of which has

⁴¹ Gary Kuchar offers a provocative reading of the play in his forthcoming *The Poetry of Religious Sorrow*

its own understanding of the narrative that the play offers, each of which is supported by the limited facts that the play stages.

in *Early Modern England* that contradicts this regularly offered narrative of Richard's progression from alienated king to authentic subject: Kuchar claims that rather than becoming an existentially self-contained subject here, Richard is hysterically overidentifying with a variety of incoherent symbolic mandates, rather than "simply" identifying with the role of king that he has played so methodically before. See also Ostovich, "'Here in this garden': The Iconography of the Virgin Queen in Shakespeare's *Richard II*," esp. 32, where she concurs with Kuchar, arguing that Richard here may no longer overidentify with the role of king, but that he certainly continues to imagine himself in Christological terms.

Chapter 2

Middleton and the Urban Untimely

If the city calls, and calls unceasingly, it does so in more than one voice simultaneously.

– Julian Wolfreys, *Writing London*.

This chapter is concerned with the surprising feigned deaths and resurrections of Moll and Touchwood Junior in the final act of Thomas Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*. The possible untimeliness of these feigned deaths is marked by the surprise that they elicit in an audience by their very incongruity: they seem out of place in a play that is broadly comic, they are unique to city comedy in the *pathos* that they evoke, and they are, quite simply, unpredictable given an audience's knowledge of the genre, its expectations produced by the play, and by the generally light and bawdy intrigue that precedes them. Of course, these deaths are feigned and, consequently, they may seem out of place in a dissertation that explores the question of untimely deaths, but I discuss them here because the play evokes a sense of these deaths' relative untimeliness and because the play figures these deaths and resurrections so that they seem genuine until the final reveal. As I will discuss below, the feigned deaths in *A Chaste Maid* are unique in Middleton's plays because their feigned-ness is kept from the audience until the moment of resurrection, forcing an audience to experience these deaths for a time as authentic unless questionable production choices are made.

As in my first chapter on *Richard II*, discussing the relative timeliness or untimeliness of these deaths requires that I situate them within a broader framework of bio-temporal and historiographical thought. In my first chapter I argued that the potential untimeliness of Richard's death is only conceivable by appeal to the narrative-historical logics through which his lifespan is imagined to make sense; the same claim – a claim that stands as a fundamental theoretical presumption of my dissertation – holds true in the case of Moll and Touchwood Junior. However, while Richard negotiates the various temporalities that are imagined to determine and make sense of a regal lifespan, understanding the *de casibus* tradition or the logic of humanist historiography is unhelpful when trying to understand the purported deaths that Middleton stages: the lifespans of Moll and Touchwood Junior as figured by Middleton have nothing to do with the presumed directionality of political history and they have nothing to do with the special kind of special providence imagined to shape the trajectory of a regal life. As I will argue at length below, to make sense of these staged deaths in terms of their timeliness they must be understood according to the specific narrative-historical temporalities thought to inform the space of early modern London and they must be understood according to the logic of a generically Christian narrative of renewal (e.g. death and resurrection, sin and redemption, communal rejuvenation, etc.) that the play invokes. Plotted as a typical romance, the play asks us to read the staged deaths and resurrections of Moll and Touchwood Junior in a particular way: in the unfolding of history – as in any romance – their deaths mark a disruption or a wider cultural decay, and their resurrections serve as an index to cultural renewal. Their individual lifespans,

that is, are imaginatively bound to a sense of historical cyclicity, renewal, and redemption. But the play simultaneously asks questions about the viability of such a romantic plot in the space of a base and vile London and, consequently, it asks questions about the relationship between the individual lifespan and the broader romantic framework: Do their deaths speak to a moment of cultural decay that is redeemed at a moment cotermporal with their resurrections? Is the play incorrigibly cynical and urbane, undermining such visions of a culture-wide redemption that is marked by the putatively miraculous occurrence? Even though the deaths and resurrections are faked – or because the deaths and resurrections are faked – the question of their symbolic value within the deigetic space of the play is up in the air.

It is difficult to pin down the precise narrative-historical logic according to which the lives of Moll and Touchwood Junior are imagined to make sense because, as with *Richard II*, the play's understanding of historical and biographical unfolding is ambiguous and contradictory. I will argue below that the play's apparent self-contradiction in historiographical matters is a formal and historical as well as a thematic difficulty, and that this narrative or historiographical self-contradiction has been indirectly hashed out by various scholars attempting to come to terms with the play's generic awkwardness. Because, as Hayden White argues, genres rely on or produce different understandings of the unfolding of history and time via distinct narrative emplotments, the question of genre in the case of *A Chaste Maid* is fundamentally a

question of historical understanding.⁴² Specifically, the play is narratively double-voiced, and this double-voiced-ness articulates itself as a confusion between the play's romantic structure and its apparently satirical tone. As scholars such as Jack Heller, Arthur Marotti, and Alexander Leggatt have argued, the play is formally structured as a romance and its Lenten setting draws attention to a sense of determined, cyclic renewal of which the story of Christ's death and resurrection is archetypal. In this sense, the play imagines history to be shaped like romance, and it figures a determined, affirming cyclicity in a surprisingly urban, rather than pastoral, setting. Everything has its place in this world, and everything has its time, and after a descent into sin, depravity, death, loss, alienation, etc., the world is eventually redeemed, restored, corrected or purified. In such a world, an untimely death is marked by its miraculous un-doing or correction when cyclic restorative resurrections redeem such disruptions. On the other hand, a significantly larger contingent of scholars including Karen Newman, Lawrence Manley, Roma Gill, Alizon Brunning, and George Rowe have argued that the play deploys these romance conventions ironically and that it is a typically satirical (i.e., un-romantic) city comedy. As George Rowe argues, for instance, *A Chaste Maid* is a comedy whose form is "belied by its content . . . a tissue of patterns and roles – social, linguistic, literary – which no longer have significance" (132). Tacitly invoking or anticipating Brian Gibbons' often-

⁴² By tacitly relying on White's understanding of historical emplotment, I am here standing White's project on its head while respecting its fundamental presumptions. White works to draw attention to historical writing as a "literary artifact" or "verbal fiction" by emphasizing the fundamental troping operations that found any story *per se*, whether that story is historical or fictional. My project here, however, draws attention to the correlative fact of a properly historical or historiographical presumption on which any literary texts rely. Such a project is, of course, not foreign to White's project generally, as when he claims that "Tragic emplotment might be treated as an application of the laws that govern human nature and societies in certain kinds of situations" (*Metahistory* 12). See also "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact," 81-3. On the relationship between literary genres and the structure of history vis-à-vis White's understanding of tropology, see Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 103-110.

invoked argument that city comedies deal satirically with urban issues and exclude “material appropriate to romance, fairy tale, sentimental legend or patriotic chronicle” (25), such scholars read the play’s satirical tone against the play’s structure, and they identify the play’s structure as ironic: there is no real romantic redemption in the play, they argue, because the play stages a world in which redemption is a fantasy.⁴³ As Manley argues, this desublimating critique of romance conventions is a characteristic of city comedies generally as they draw attention to the “incongruity of romantic illusion with urban reality” as a “major source of humour” (*Literature* 433). If this reading of the play is correct and if the romantic structure is ironic, then the play loses any sense of directed historical cyclicity that characterizes romance plots: no longer can city dwellers count on time’s inevitable redemption of the sinfulness in which the city is mired; instead, they are stuck in a world where all redemption is parodic and where urban history sprawls out linearly and, on a local level, according to the whims of the savviest or most conniving individuals. Such is the nature of what Jacques LeGoff identifies as “merchant’s time” in his *Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages* (29, *passim*), a vision of time as “secular, measurable, mechanized, commodifiable, wasteable, exploiting as well as exploitable” (Travis 5). In a world that unfolds historically

⁴³ Such a reading strategy leads to the strange fact that *A Chaste Maid*, while often figured as an exemplary city comedy, can only be read as a city comedy after presuming that its narrative structure is deployed satirically. This complete narrative irony is characteristic of many city comedies if we recognize the parodically redemptive structure of *Eastward Ho!*, or the bleak sense of redemptive reparation at the end of *Volpone*. This is a fundamental characteristic of irony in White’s sense of the term, according to which a narrative structure self-consciously fails to figure adequately the data that it is purportedly designed to explain. This satirization of romance may be located historically in terms of London’s drama if one considers the “war of the theatres,” though Middleton’s play appears well after the end of this supposed and so-called “war.” Perhaps, if one presumes that Middleton is re-writing romance satirically – a point that I complicate in this chapter – one could read his satire of the romance genre as a belated gesture, remembered as part of the genre but stripped of its antagonistic significance because historically removed from the “war.”

according the logic of merchant time – a world in which time is simply the linear and contingent unfolding of occurrences – untimely deaths are also impossible because there is no presumed narrative-historical structure or more-than-heuristic biographical timeline that a death might disrupt. To declare a death untimely in such a world is not to declare that a death somehow disrupts history or that it disrupts a providential plan for that life; rather, it is to declare that someone died, for instance, at a moment when he or she should have had the biological resources to continue living.

Rather than intervening directly in this debate over the relative ironic-ness of *A Chaste Maid*'s romantic narrative structure, I approach the question of irony obliquely and I argue here that such a debate is wrongheaded: the textual uncertainty to which this debate speaks is, I will argue, not something that requires "resolution," and I will argue that this uncertainty is inspired in part by the city that the play stages. The play specifically, Middleton generally, and early modern historiographers broadly are all burdened with the confusing networks of historical unfolding in which early modern London is imagined to be caught up. Rather than isolating and identifying the single understanding of narrative-historical time that Middleton deploys in *A Chaste Maid*, I will argue that the play's confused narrative-historical logic is in part a function of the historiographical confusion that characterizes early modern thinking on London.

Throughout this chapter I will tease out some of the various understandings of early modern London's historical nature that were operative in early modern England, specifically dealing with the visions of early modern London's history that relate to *A Chaste Maid*. First I will outline the confused and wholly secular vision of history that

John Stow provides in his *Survey of London*; second I will outline the idealizing, flattening, and romantic vision of London's history that was on offer in early modern Lord Mayor's shows, particularly Middleton's *The Sunne in Aries*; finally I will discuss *A Chaste Maid* and will argue that the play tacitly invokes both visions of London's historical nature, refusing to provide a clear and straightforward vision of that nature. At stake in this discussion of various narrative-historical figurations of the city is the potential romantic emplotment of early modern London's early modern history. If, as we see in *The Sunne in Aries* or potentially in *A Chaste Maid*, the early modern city is best understood according to visions of a quasi-pastoral redemption narrative, then we need to recognize that individual lifespans are also informed by this narrative: in typical romance fashion, the broader cultural redemption is mirrored in the lives of the individuals who live in that culture and their lifespans follow plots accordingly. If, as we see in Stow's *Survey of London* or potentially in *A Chaste Maid*, the city is historically incoherent, historically undirected, historically unpredictable, then the sense of an individual life's relation to an overarching redemption plot is lost, and so too is the sense that lives have predictable, ordained, metaphysically meaningful trajectories.

Imagining London's History: Stow's *Survey*

When I claim that early modern historiographical thinking about London was confused, I mean that there were myriad conflicting attempts to understand the early modern present in properly historical terms. Historiographers, playwrights, pamphleteers, sermonizers, creators of civic pageantry, antiquarians, and poets were writing about London, and many of them were struggling to imagine how early modern London related to its past. Was

early modern London best understood as Troynovant, the grand culmination of a *translatio imperii* according to which London inherited, via Brute and Aeneas, the cultural energies of Troy and Rome? Was the city best understood, as zealous Puritan polemicists would suggest, as a sink of iniquity, as the end of a fall from grace that began with Adam and Eve, as the antitype of Babylon at the bottom of a proto-Spenglerian cycle? Was the city best understood, as an antiquarian might argue, as the reasonable culmination of a historical trajectory – considering social, political, and material factors – that began with the Britons or with the Saxon invasion?

When one considers the various ideological and theoretical interests at stake in the writing of history, such disagreements over the historical position of London are understandable. When Spenser, for instance, characterizes London as the epic Troynovant in *The Faerie Queene* – a city “The *Troian Brute* did first . . . found” (3.9.46, cf. 4.11.27-8) – he contributes to a sense of London’s greatness by appeal to its position vis-à-vis an imagined classical past. When, in his *Godly Exhortation*, Puritan polemicist John Field figures London as an early modern Babylon that has fallen from grace, he is doing to the historical record what zealots, eager for converts and penitents, have always done and continue to do.⁴⁴ When antiquarians rationalize the history of London by

⁴⁴ As I write this, the UPI wire has just published a story entitled “Bishops Blame Floods on Immorality.” According to the account offered by an uncredited UPI staff writer, “one leading bishop” of the Church of England declared on 1 July 2007 that recent floods in Wales and Southwest England are proof of a “strong and definite [divine] judgment because the world has been arrogant in going its own way. . . . We are reaping the consequences of our moral degradation, as well as the environmental damage that we have caused. We are in serious moral trouble because every type of lifestyle is now regarded as legitimate.” <URL: http://www.upi.com/NewsTrack/Top_News/2007/07/01/bishops_blame_floods_on_immorality/3817/>. In a moment of historical rigor, one might ask this leading bishop to explain previous floods if flooding now is proof of the world’s descent into depravity. For an early modern analog to this reading of contemporary history as the culmination of a decent for which “the world” is soon to be punished, one

figuring it as the culmination of a logical historical trajectory beginning, in John Stow's account, with King Lud's walling of the city (2), they are contributing to a proto-modern quasi-scientific understanding of historiography and social history, and they are working on behalf of political interests to justify a present state of affairs by appeal to "tradition."

While such debates are not surprising considering the ideological interests at stake in the writing of history, early modern London was a perfect site around which these debates might coalesce because the city, undergoing a significant and immediately palpable transformation, seemed to demand such historical explanations. As most scholars who study early modern London recognize, the city's urbanization – both structural and demographic – is crucial to any understanding of early modern London generally, but it is particularly crucial when attempting to negotiate the multiplicity of meanings that the city is forced to bear in early modern literary and historical writing. Early modern writers struggled to pin down the identity of such a rapidly and palpably changing city, and they struggled to locate the city in properly historical terms that could provide a sense of continuity between the present and the past despite the rapidity and socio-cultural breadth of this change.

Demographically, early modern London was growing and diversifying at a phenomenal rate. In 1500, with a population of between 40 000 and 50 000, London was the largest city in England and the tenth largest city in Europe; by 1600, the population had grown between four and five times to 200 000, leaving Naples and Paris as the only

might think of Petrarch's famous figuration of Avignon as the antitype of Babylon in the *Babylonian Sonnets*, 136-138.

cities in Europe more populous.⁴⁵ This rapid population increase changed the face of London drastically. As a result of this dramatic population growth in the sixteenth century, the suburbs of the city began to sprawl and the city itself grew more densely populated. The face of the city's population was also changing dramatically because this population increase was due primarily to immigration, both domestic and international. As the city grew larger, then, it also grew more diverse, and at any given point in the century between 1500 and 1600 approximately 2% of its population had lived in London for less than a year. The rapid influx of migrants to the city inspired problems that all cities unprepared for such an influx suffer: rates of unemployment were consistently high, and so were rates of poverty. As the Dutch Church Libel controversy attests, such immigration and its necessary social impact were also the source of frequent intra-population tensions and occasional xenophobic violence.⁴⁶

These demographic changes are best understood by appeal to the economic changes that were affecting the city and by the city's changing place within the English and European economies. Because conflicts in the Low Countries were making trade at the Bourse in Antwerp less appealing, Gresham's Bourse in London was becoming a hub of European trade and it was attracting merchants from across Europe. Though London

⁴⁵ I cull the statistics in the following paragraphs from a useful chapter by David Harris Sacks, "London's Dominion: The Metropolis, the Market Economy, and the State," though they can be found repeated regularly with slight variations throughout current literature on early modern London. See also Wheatley, Harding, Manley, and others, who invoke these (or very similar) statistics in their discussions of early modern London.

⁴⁶ The Dutch Church Libel was an inflammatory, threatening, anti-immigrant tract posted to the wall of the Dutch Churchyard in London. The libel is historically memorable for two primary reasons: according to a letter sent by the Privy Council to members of the London government, it was more incendiary than other libels posted around the city because it "exceed[ed] the rest in lewdness"; second, because it was signed "Tamerlaine," many biographers assume that it was written by Marlowe or that it at least illuminates his character.

would become the centre of European trade only at the beginning of the eighteenth century (Keene 69), it was growing more significant in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries as a market for manufactured and raw goods. Further, because the overseas and Asian interests of London's merchants were diverting huge amounts of capital into the city, because this capital was circulating primarily within the relatively small merchant class, and because London and Westminster were more frequently becoming the primary royal residence, the trade in luxury goods was thriving. When this increased demand for luxury goods in London was combined with a growing sense within England that London was the centre of domestic and international trade, it became an attractive destination for skilled immigrant tradesmen – often driven from the continent by the conflicts in the Low Countries and by Spanish or French anti-Protestantism – and it became an attractive destination for English workers who presumed that a better living could be made there.

While all cities might be made to bear conflicting meanings, the rapid changes affecting London inspired dramatically contradictory visions of what the city “meant.” Gail Kern Paster points out, for instance, that within the work of a single text such as Thomas Dekker's *The Seven Deadly Sinnes of London*, the city's increasing wealth and poverty – its simultaneous grandeur and privation – inspires a marked ambivalence with regards to its perception and its figuration. As Dekker apostrophizes the city after a particularly severe irruption of plague in 1603, “Thou art the goodliest of thy neighbours, but the prowdest; the welthiest, but the most wanton. Thou has all things in thee to make thee fairest, and all things in thee to make thee foulest; for thou art attir'de like a Bride,

drawing all that looke upon thee, to be in love with thee, but there is much harlot in thine eyes" (in Paster 3). The contradictory identities that Dekker attributes to London are perhaps symptomatic of a dynamic tradition of writing on London in which the city could be figured variously as Troynovant, the New Jerusalem, the epitome of all Britain, a virgin, a mother, a fickle mistress, a monster, a beehive, Babylon, a sprawling palace, a stage or theatre, etc.⁴⁷ But whether Dekker's euphuistic counterpoints here are the result of a confused tradition of writing on London or the result of a city that was almost unfathomable, or both, it is clear that the city's early modern literary identity was characterized by contradiction because of the city's particular situation and because of the situation in which its writers found themselves: London was changing noticeably and rapidly; it was dealing with new conflicts (social, political, religious); its apologists, encomiasts, and inquisitors were burdened by a long, fraught tradition of urban ekphrasis.⁴⁸

Because of London's conflicted identities and its discursive indeterminacy, the act of figuring London was invested with significant ideological weight: at the discursive centre of broad and striking change, writers struggled to imagine a coherent identity for a civic space that offered no apparent or simple sense of its own meaning. As James Knowles explains, for instance, "[c]hronicals, chorographies, topographical descriptions, maps and panoramas all fueled" a sense of civic consciousness by imaging a city that would not have been experienced as a coherent *polis* by someone wandering its streets

⁴⁷ On the various identities that London bore in early modern England, see Stock and Zwierlein, especially 4-5, and Gail Kern Paster's *The Idea of the City in the Age of Shakespeare*.

⁴⁸ This long and fraught tradition becomes obvious after glancing at the huge variety of texts, ideas, and opinions that fill Lawrence Manley's valuable anthology of writing on and from early modern London, *London in the Age of Shakespeare*.

(161). Jean Howard makes similar claims for the power of representation when, in *Theater of a City*, she argues that dramatic texts contributed to and produced early modern London as a coherent and imaginable space. Centrally, Howard argues that the genre she delineates in her introduction – “London comedy” as distinct from “city comedy” – worked “over time” to render “the city ideologically knowable” (23): “[w]riting about London,” she claims, “was one way, of course, discursively to manage change and to provide interpretations and conceptualizations of both new and old aspects of the city” (5). It is this sense that literary texts produce a palpable sense of civic consciousness that interests me here.

While scholars such as Howard and Paster have deftly engaged with the various discourses that came to produce early modern London’s early modern identities, I am interested in the various ways that the city was imagined in properly historical terms. While imagining the city as a coherent whole was a difficult task because of rapid expansion and the emergence of capitalism, this rapid expansion also posed difficulties for writers who struggled to offer historical narratives explaining the current state of London. As Patrick Crogan explains in a very different context, such rapid and unpredictable historical change poses a “challenge to criticality” (167). Discussing the problematic position of a present-day historian of the present, Crogan invokes Paul Virilio, Gilbert Hottois and, Jacques Derrida as he draws attention to the historical incomprehensibility of the contemporary West and to the radical indeterminacy of the West’s future. He explains this indeterminacy by pointing out that the West is currently – and for the foreseeable future – significantly determined in social, economic, cultural,

and political terms by the imperatives of techno-scientific advance. As Crogan argues, the close relationship between techno-science and the socio-political world poses problems for historical understanding: techno-scientific advance significantly informs social organization and its historical directionality is, by its very nature, unpredictable. Despite its obvious deliberateness, techno-scientific research has in the past century repeatedly affected the direction of history in its accidents, its revolutionary unpredictability, its surprising stumblings. One would never expect in 1900, for instance, that the work of a researcher at Bell Labs in the early twentieth century would be foundational to the introduction of widely available microcomputers, which are the foundation of the internet, which facilitates the decentralization of markets, which facilitates globalization, which changes the nature of day-to-day social lives in cities across the planet by outsourcing Western poverty and labour to the non-Western world. While retrospective histories might be written to draw a smooth historical line between a researcher at Bell Labs and the fact of Westernized Bangladeshi youths, such smoothness is always only retrospective, ignoring the eventuality of techno-scientific innovation and its profoundly broad social, political, cultural and economic implications. Such dramatic change disrupts any understanding of the historical process by introducing different variables and infrastructures through which that process unfolds; similarly, the increased rate of change of the rate of political or social change scuttles attempts to understand the present historically. Because – to use a now-unpopular phrase – the objective historical process is (un)guided and hurried by unpredictable techno-scientific advance, that

process is only a process in a haphazard sense: a directionless history, often disturbed by unpredictable events, producing a sequence of purely local synchronic historicities.

Comparing early modern London to the contemporary globalized world obviously requires more caveats and qualifications than I could reasonably offer here, but Derrida, in the essay on which Crogan bases much of his argument, provides a characteristic note of caution when arguing that the speed of nuclear advances in the early 1980s challenges historical understanding; it is this note of caution that I will use to qualify the comparison I make here. In “No Apocalypse, Not Now,” Derrida argues that there

is perhaps no invention, no radically new predicate in the situation known as “the nuclear age.” Of all the dimensions of such an “age” we may always say one thing: it is neither the first time nor the last. The historian’s critical vigilance can always help us verify that repetitiveness; and that historian’s patience, that lucidity of memory must always shed their light on “nuclear criticism,” must oblige it to decelerate, dissuade it from rushing to a conclusion on the subject of speed itself. But this dissuasion and deceleration I am urging carry their own risks: the critical zeal that leads us to recognize precedents, continuities, and repetitions at every turn can make us look like suicidal sleepwalkers, blind and deaf *alongside the unheard-of* . . . (21)

Derrida’s note on historians is a reminder of the paradoxical repetition of the singular event. The singular historical rupture is, as such, a historical leitmotif, and, in this Foucauldian observation, Derrida intimates that comparison between historical ruptures, despite its awkwardness and potential danger, is also intellectually compulsory.

Ironically producing a general rule of the historically singular rupture and then qualifying that rule, Derrida draws an analogy between all eventual ruptures in that they generally disrupt the thinking of history. Surprisingly, then, the theoretical paradigm that Crogan offers via Derrida provides a means for understanding the problems faced by historians –

present day or early modern – who attempt to come to grips with the nature of early modern London. When Crogan and Derrida argue that historical change at a moment of disruptive rapidity changes the nature of historical understanding – that it fundamentally changes the nature of historical change – their argument becomes an argument with which one must deal when dealing with early modern London. While the specific nature of the historical change and historical events with which one deals is clearly crucial if one hopes to understand the nature of a given historical moment – presuming, of course, that “historical moments” have “natures” – it is the fact of the speed and unpredictability of historical change in early modern London in which I am interested. Broadly speaking, when dealing with early modern London, one must consider transitions from feudalism to capitalism, from “Catholicism” to Protestantism, from Eurocentrism to an understanding of globality, and from factious regionalism to an emergent nationalism; one must also consider the dramatic increase in population and the fact of urban sprawl. Such radical changes and rapid shifts – often referred to short-hand as the emergence of “modernity” – certainly pose a “challenge to criticality,” and I will argue here that early modern writers of history – specifically John Stow and Thomas Middleton – were compelled to respond to this challenge as they worked to locate early modern London along a meaningful, coherent, historical trajectory. Though writing in different traditions, both writers hoped to resolve – in *the* gesture of historiography – what Derek Keene describes as early modern “London’s essential discontinuity with its past” (Keene 57).

In the reading of Stow’s *Survey of London* (1598) that follows, I argue that one can recognize “London’s essential discontinuity with its past” and the “challenge to

criticality” posed by rapid urbanization when one considers Stow’s confusion regarding the relationship between the past and the present. In the *Survey*, I argue, Stow produces a vision of the relationship between past and present that is at odds with the vision of this relationship in comparable Elizabethan chorographies produced by his fellow antiquarians – chorographies such as William Lambarde’s *Perambulation of Kent* (1570), William Camden’s *Britannia* (1588), and John Norden’s *Chorographical Description of Middlesex* (1593). Even though Stow explicitly locates his *Survey* among these works, and even though these are books to which, in his dedication, he claims a considerable debt, the *Survey* occupies a strange place in the antiquarian world from which late-Elizabethan chorography emerged; specifically, its figuration of the relationship between past and present troubles the ideological work that chorographies were expected to perform. If, as many critics such as Richard Helgerson and Julian Wolfreys have argued, chorographies allowed readers to imagine the nation or one of its provincial regions as a spatially and temporally coherent whole, then Stow’s chorographical description of London fails at the work of chorography because it complicates any understanding of London that would figure the city as the culmination of a simple or singular historical trajectory. Instead, Stow’s *Survey* is ambivalent regarding the past’s relation to the present, and it figures the past as both radically distant from the present and surprisingly close to it, as absolutely foreign to the present and as something to which the present relates intimately.

My reading of Stow also negotiates the tension between two bizarre scenes that he recounts in the *Survey*. The first scene is set in Spitalfields beyond Bishopsgate at a

brick-making worksite where Roman corpses and artifacts were unearthed in 1576; the second scene is set in the vault at Aldemarie church in Cordwainer Ward, where the body of one former mayor was disinterred to be replaced by the bodies of two more recent mayors. I pay close attention to these scenes because it is at these moments that Stow's ambivalent understanding of the past is most clear: the past for Stow is both intimately involved in the present and an infinitely remote curiosity. More broadly, I will argue that these two scenes belie a historiographical confusion that the *Survey* formally reproduces, and I want to suggest that such a confusion about the relationship between present and past results in part from Stow's object of inquiry – early modern London – and from his attempts to locate London within a historical trajectory using the methods of Elizabethan antiquarianism.

In 1576, just to the east of St. Mary Spittle churchyard, workmen were quarrying clay from Spitalfield when “in the digging whereof many earthen pots, called *urnæ*, were found full of ashes, and burnt bones of men, to wit, the Romans that inhabited here” (Stow 152). When one considers that Stow in 1576 was already a member of the group that would become the Society of Antiquaries, and when one considers that the antiquarian project in England was greatly influenced by the classicist cartographer Abraham Ortelius,⁴⁹ it is not surprising that Stow wandered north to examine these remains of Roman Britain, nor is it surprising that he included an account of his investigation in the *Survey*. But while Stow's interest in these artifacts is not surprising, the account of his archaeological investigation is striking to present-day eyes because – to

⁴⁹ On Ortelius' interest in Roman Britain and his influence on early modern English antiquarianism, see Levy, esp. 144-5.

speaking anachronistically – it seems remarkably unprofessional and stunningly unscientific. In his account of this inquiry, for instance, Stow is unconcerned that work continued around him while he was exploring the site, even though “many . . . pots and glasses were broken in cutting of the clay, so that few were taken up whole” (152). He is also oddly ready to taste what has been unearthed, describing vials of an oil that is predictably “earthy in savour” and vials of water that differed “nothing . . . in clearness, taste, or savour from common spring water” (152). Certainly this willingness to taste the contents of unearthed artifacts may speak to a zeal for thoroughness, but the record Stow leaves in the *Survey* is far from complete: if Stow is interested in thoroughness, then this interest fails to translate into his record of the site, a record that is disjunctive, incomplete, and impressionistic. Of his trip to the site in Spitalfield, he remarks, for instance, that the unearthed coins bore the likenesses of Nero, Anthoninus Pius, Trajanus and “others” whom he fails or forgets to mention (152). He similarly mentions that certain “divers antiques” were found bearing the likenesses of Pallas and other gods whom “I have forgotten” (152), and he spends a disproportionate number of words recounting a debate (which he claims to have won) about the provenance of a collection of long nails that were found at the site, one of which he “reserved” for a private collection (153). If he was as “irascible” as Ian Archer claims (“Historian” 18), then it is possible that Stow decided to “reserve” one of these nails more as the trophy of a debate won than as an artifact, but Stow also decided to “reserve,” in a rather shocking gesture, “the nether jawbone of [. . . a] man, the teeth being great, sound, and fast fixed” (153). It is this “reserving” and this jawbone that most interest me here.

When Stow claims to have “reserved” a nail, a human jawbone and some other unnamed artifacts from the worksite in Spitalfield, he uses a term that speaks to a growing sense among early modern antiquarians that the past is profoundly alien. According to the OED, “To reserve” – meaning “To keep, preserve (antiquities, relics, etc.)” (10b) – was a term of relatively recent coinage when Stow decided to secure artifacts for his personal collection, and it was introduced to the language in William Lambarde’s *Perambulation of Kent*, the first of the Elizabethan chorographies and a book to which Stow admits a significant debt (xxiii). That Lambarde coined a term to describe a certain mode of relating to artifacts is remarkable because it comes at a moment when Elizabethan antiquarians were collectively producing a new understanding of the past that figured the past as radically foreign: to invent a new word for the collection of artifacts makes sense because a new mode of relating to the past requires a new language for describing one’s relation to that past’s bits and pieces. As D. R. Woolf points out, it was the early English antiquarians who began to think of the past in terms of its strangeness and in terms of its sheer difference from the present,⁵⁰ and it was the early English antiquarians who consequently began to see the remains of the past in terms of their “‘novelty’ . . . ‘rarity’ or ‘curiosity’” (141, cf. “Varieties of Antiquarianism” in *The Social Circulation of the Past*). “To reserve” means not only to hold on to the past, then, but also to hold onto the past in a certain way, in a manner that both preserves the past and isolates it as radically different, foreign, and exotic. The past – a past whose remains

⁵⁰ See also Ferguson’s *Clio Unbound*, especially 91-115, where he argues that the antiquarian and chorographical projects introduced a sense of historicity and anachronism to the world of English historiography.

one might “reserve” – becomes a space not unlike the “New World” in its ability to draw attention to one’s cultural singularity, in this case drawing attention to the historical singularity of the present. This past is in fact so foreign – so unlike what one may find in the present – that it is easy for Stow to pick up the jawbone of a dead human being, to casually tuck it away among coins and rusty nails without any sense of incongruity, to think of this jawbone in terms of its artifactualness rather than in terms of its humanness.

This sense of the past’s remoteness translates itself into an often discussed sense of nostalgia in Stow’s *Survey*; rather than reading this nostalgia as an affective relationship to the past, however, I want to read it here as a historical principle. Many critics who read the *Survey* detect Stow’s wistful longing for a version of London that he figures as waning or gone. For Patrick Collinson and Ian Archer, Stow mourns for a version of London that he imagines to have existed in the 1530s, the time of his childhood, and he mourns for a sense of community that is gradually vanishing under the influence of a burgeoning merchant class and its tacit claims to the importance of individualism (Collinson 29; Archer, “Nostalgia” *passim*). Given this lament for a waning sense of community, other scholars have questioned whether Stow’s nostalgia is founded on Catholic sympathies, and they wonder if Stow subtly laments the growing persecution of Catholics under Elizabeth’s reign or the 1536 dissolution of monasteries and the concomitant de-institutionalization of civic charity (Cf. Beer, Kastan, Collinson, Wheatley).⁵¹ Apart from this general nostalgia for an idealized past, Stow also describes

⁵¹ On Stow’s relationship to Catholicism, see Barret L. Beer, “John Stow and the English Reformation,” especially p. 262, and David Scott Kastan, “Opening Gates and Stopping Hedges,” especially p. 72. While Beer argues that Stow tends to be “simply” conservative, troubled by the rapidity of religious change rather than religious change *per se*, Kastan makes a compelling case for Stow’s dedicated, if fairly well

at length the disappearance of the Midsummer Watch which “was . . . accustomed yearly time out of mind, until the year 1539” (94), and he describes the disappearance of moralizing scriptural drama performed by “the parish clerks of London, on the 18th of July” at Clerkenwell (16), northeast of the city’s walls. What often strikes contemporary theatre historians about Stow’s discussion of these civic rites is that he fails to mention that these rites transformed into other rites: Stow feels and records their loss, but their recuperation in other rites and institutions goes unmentioned. As Theodore Levinwand points out, for instance, it “may be said with some certainty” that the Lord Mayor’s annual show originated from the Midsummer Show (138; cf. Manley, “Sites” 47, *Literature* 264-5), but Stow mostly ignores the Lord Mayor’s show – a stunningly elaborate production – even though he spends several pages recounting the nature and the form of the Midsummer Watch which was its forebear. For Stow, the Midsummer Watch seems to vanish rather than transmuting into a different form of civic pageantry. Recognizing a similar lacuna, Angela Stock and other critics have pointed out that the moralizing public theatre was replaced by the highly visible and popular private theatres to which Stow pays no sustained attention in his *Survey*, even though these theatres were the object of heated and ubiquitous critical discussion at the time (Stock 91, *passim*). Again, certain ambiguous “cultural energies” are re-directed into other forms – from public theatre performed by clerks to private theatre performed by professionals, from Midsummer Watch to Mayoral Pageant – but Stow fails to account for this transformation of rites or institutions under subsequent cultural or economic

concealed, Catholicism. On Stow’s worry over the de-institutionalization of charitable work after the dissolution, see Chloe Wheatley, “The Pocket Books of Early Modern History.”

conditions. While contemporary critics imagine the transformation of cultural energies into other forms that perform analogous social and cultural work, Stow's *Survey* is marked by a sense that such a historical translation is impossible. Nostalgia seems to indicate not only a lament for that which is gone, then, but a radical historical rupture from which nothing can be recuperated, translated, recovered. Instead of recognizing continuity in change, Stow recognizes only loss, change, and diachronic fragmentation.

Stow's refusal to account for gradual change over time – his recognition of abrupt shifts and the past's disappearance – has, since the sixteenth century, been figured by critics as a shortcoming in his historiographical ability. William Camden – a friend of Stow's and a fellow chorographer – told Ortelius that Stow “lacked judgment” in historical matters, and he figured Stow as a deft compiler of facts, documents, and antiquarian knowledge rather than as a sound historical thinker. Echoing Camden, Richard Grafton figured Stow as a compiler of facts rather than as a thinker of history, and he punningly derided Stow's prose as the composite of “supersticious foundacions, fables and lyes foolishly stowed together” (in Kastan 66). More recently, F. J. Levy has concurred with Grafton to argue that “Stow could pride himself on the amount of new information he had found” (168), but that all of Stow's historical writings – the *Survey* and his chronicle epitomes – lack “even the relatively simple causative scheme of [Edward] Hall[']s *Union of Two Noble Houses of Lancaster and York*]” (195).⁵² Though coming from very different sources – a friend, a historian with whom Stow had an

⁵² For a dramatically different evaluation of Stow, see Eleanor Rosenberg's *Leicester: Patron of Letters*. Rosenberg describes Stow as an “original and indefatigable scholar” and she lambastes Grafton for being a “mere compiler of facts” (66).

acrimonious relationship, a twentieth-century scholar – these evaluations of Stow's historiographical ability all share a sense that Stow is unable to recognize a sense of causal continuity between the past and the present. For Stow, it seems, the past is composed of discrete events, isolated incidents, historically autonomous cultural lumps, and that the past is stunningly alien to a present without precedent.

But to say that Stow's *Survey* simply posits history as a series of discrete and discontinuous events – that it posits the past as foreign and the present as historically autonomous – is, clearly, to cherry-pick from the *Survey* and to overlook the fact that it is in many ways a typical late Elizabethan chorography. As Julian Wolfreys concisely summarizes it, the project of late Elizabethan chorography was not only to make the nation thinkable as a spatially coherent and homogeneous whole – to produce what Karen Newman following Michel deCerteau calls a “topographic imaginary”⁵³ – but also to produce an “ideological identity” for a given space by imagining a historical continuity for that space and by imagining that that space developed coherently over time (Wolfreys ¶2). According to this figuration of chorography, Stow's *Survey* is often typically chorographical: no matter how often Stow imagines the past as radically dissociated from the present, he also imagines the past can explain the present and that it serves as the foundation on which the present rests; as Edward T. Bonahue notes, by “looking to London's history, Stow found a means of connecting his present to civic tradition in a way that made London's unprecedented phenomena less troubling and more familiar”

⁵³ See also Helgerson who produces a genealogy for late Elizabethan chorography that begins with Saxton's cartographic representations of England and Wales, mostly ignoring the historiographical work that chorography simultaneously performed.

(62). Though Stow often posits a radical discontinuity between past and present he also worries that those by whom he is surrounded fail to recognize the past as a vital source of self-understanding, that they fail to recognize the past as something to which the present relates intimately, and that they fail to recognize the past as something that continues to inform the present in various ways. Typical of late Elizabethan antiquarians, then, Stow has a “respect” for the past, and this respect articulates itself as a degree of intimacy with the past and as a sense of the past’s causal impact on the present and its explanatory value vis-à-vis the present.

Stow’s sense of the past’s contribution to the constitution of the present is most obvious when he speaks of those who fail to recognize the past’s significance, and it is most obvious when the *Survey* becomes a site through which the past may be made visible even though it has been rendered materially invisible in the city’s infrastructure and architecture. Approaching, for instance, the “great cross in West Cheape, which cross was there erected in the year 1290 by Edward I” (238), Stow provides readers with a descriptive history of the cross: he explains that it was erected by Edward I in memory of Queen Eleanor (238), he names citizens who have “re-edified” the cross when it has fallen into disrepair (238), he describes the cross’s early adornments (“images round about the said cross . . . of Christ’s resurrection, of the Virgin Mary, King Edward the Confessor, and such like [238]), he recounts the iconoclastic, post-Reformation “defacement” of the cross’s images (238), and he describes the curious replacement of Marian icons with “an image alabaster of Diana” that had water “prilling from her naked breast” (239). In this description of the cross in West Cheap, Stow produces a history

that explains a shift from a Catholic Marianism to a curious classicism – why an image of Diana? – and in doing so he draws attention to the past’s literal perpetuation in the present. While, as in the case of the Midsummer Watch and the decline of public theatre, the past may simply vanish into nothing for Stow, the *Survey* also works to draw continuities with the past, to preserve the past, and to explain how the past – though effaced, defaced, partially occluded and potentially concealed – continues to persevere. The *Survey* regularly works to make this past more readily visible.

Stow’s strangely bivalent understanding of the relationship between past and present is perhaps most clear when one contrasts his reading of crypts in Cordwainer Ward with his relationship to the Roman tombs in Spitalfield. In a scene repeated again and again in the *Survey*, Stow stops briefly on his peripatetic description when he reaches a church – in this case, Aldemarie church – so that he can list the names of noteworthy citizens buried in the church’s crypts. He includes in this commemorative roll call Richard Chawcer (226), father of Geoffrey Chaucer (whose works Stow edited in 1561), Charles Blunt who “made or glazed the [church’s] east window” (226-7), and the names of other citizens who had made significant contributions to the city. When he turns to the vault shared by former mayors Sir William Laxton and Sir Thomas Lodge, however, Stow begins to editorialize, moving beyond his typically simple description of accomplishments and biographical notes:

Sir William Laxton, grocer, mayor, deceased 1556, and [Sir] Thomas Lodge, grocer, mayor, 1583, were buried in the vault of Henry Keble, whose bones were unkindly cast out, and his monument pulled down; in place whereof

monuments are set up for the later buried. (227)⁵⁴

To suggest that Keble's remains were treated "unkindly" posits a vision of one's relationship to the dead that is clearly at odds with the vision of this relationship that Stow presumed earlier when he pocketed a human jawbone. Certainly, it is unclear here what it would mean to treat the dead with "kindness," but it seems that some bodies for Stow – perhaps bodies with names, bodies joined to civic institutions, bodies of former mayors – require the security of interment, while other bodies remain simply "curious" and become simple curios, their jawbones tucked away neatly among other relics. While the imperatives that lead one to treat a corpse with kindness are never made explicit in the *Survey*, Stow's strange relationship with corpses draws attention to his strange relationship with the past. Again, the past is a place that might be infinitely remote or profoundly close, it may be a space that lingers in the present or it may be a long lost foreign world. The past, that is, might warrant the sort of curiosity granted by a sense of radical distance – a sense of radical distance cultivated by late Elizabethan antiquarians – or it might warrant the sort of respect granted by a sense of the past's intimacy – a sense of intimacy also cultivated by late Elizabethan antiquarians.

⁵⁴ This quotation is from the second edition of the *Survey*. In the first edition, Stow was more obviously critical in his description of Keble's disinterment: "Sir William Laxton, grocer, mayor, deceased 1556, was buried in the vault prepared by Henry Keble, principall founder of that church, for himself, but now his bones are unkindly cast out, his monuments pulled downe, and the bodies of the said Sir William Laxton, and of Sir Thomas Lodge, grocer, mayor, are laid in place, with monuments over them for the time, till an other give money for their place, and then away with them" (227 n.1). It is unclear why Stow made this revision. Sir William Laxton died without an heir so Stow wouldn't have felt pressure from any of Laxton's descendents. It is perhaps more likely that Stow would have felt pressure to temper his criticism of Sir Thomas Lodge by Lodge's son Thomas, the author of *Rosalynde*, etc. Between the publication of the *Survey*'s first edition in 1598 and the second edition in 1603, Thomas Lodge had converted to Catholicism and become a well-established physician in London: If Stow was, as David Scott Kastan claims, a fairly devout recusant, perhaps he felt compelled to minimize any criticism of a fellow recusant's family? Perhaps Lodge's position as a well-regarded physician allowed him to pull some strings?

The tension between a sense of historical discontinuity and a sense of historical continuity explains the *Survey*'s generic strangeness. Certainly, as many critics have argued, the bulk of Stow's *Survey* is organized according to topographical and spatial principles rather than according to typical early modern historiographical principles⁵⁵ – it is a survey that moves from ward to ward rather than a history that moves from beginning to end – but the *Survey* as a whole is far from generically homogeneous. Even if the bulk of the *Survey* is organized topographically, it still begins with “The Original Antiquity, Increase, Modern Estate, and Description of that City” (3), a chronicle that struggles to pinpoint the historical origin of the city while it works to disabuse its reader of any sense that sixteenth-century London was the culmination of a mythopoetic *translatio imperii* or grand Trojan inheritance through the “demi-god Æneas” and Brute (3). While the *Survey*'s opening chronicle makes typically antiquarian moves – it pays attention to the material difference between a “Fastness” and a wall (6); it parses the various definitions of “*civitas*” so that one does not think of pre-Roman London as a city *per se* (5) – it also serves the purpose of more traditional chronicles: it locates the contemporary world as the culmination of a series of causally linked events which have made the world what it is. More specifically, it seeks, imagines, and produces London's origins, thus serving the same originological purpose of any chronicle by founding the present on a stable

⁵⁵ For readings of Stow's *Survey* that describe its narrative structure in spatial rather than historiographical terms, see, for instance, John M. Adrian, “Itineraries, Perambulations, and Surveys: The Intersections of Chorography and Cartography in the Sixteenth Century”; Andrew Gordon, “Overseeing and Overlooking: John Stow and the Surveying of the City”; William Keith Hall, “A Topography of Time: Historical Narration in John Stow's *Survey of London*”; and Cynthia Wall, “Grammars of Space: The Language of London from Stow's *Survey* to Defoe's *Tour*.” For a general discussion of the relationship between cartographical understandings of space and the late Elizabethan chorographical project, see Helgersson, especially “The Land Speaks” in *Forms of Nationhood*, pp. 105-147, and Michael Neill, “‘The Exact Map or Discovery of Human Affairs’: Shakespeare and the Plotting of History.”

historical foundation. While William Keith Hall may be correct when he says that Stow's *Survey* – because of its obvious “literariness” – refuses to offer a *grand récit* of English history (13), he only tells half the text's story by ignoring this sweeping opening gambit as well as the *Survey*'s sheer confusion about the relationship between present and past. Indeed, Hall fails to recognize that Stow begins his *Survey* with a chronicle – a hunting after origins – and that the *Survey* is also, in a gesture of self-contradiction, burdened with stories of discontinuity and nostalgic absence: the *Survey* both provides a *grand récit* of Britain and it provides the disruptive details that compromise any hope of the simple historical coherence that such a grand, long-span history provides and on which it relies.

Stow's bivalent understanding of the past in the *Survey* is in part characteristic of an under-theorized late-Elizabethan antiquarian project, a project that was Janus-faced in its own understanding of the past: its diligent inquiry into the material stuff of the past – documents, coins, tombs, architecture – produced a sense of historical difference and anachronism that had been lacking in more mainstream Elizabethan historical thought⁵⁶; at the same time, however, the political allegiances of the Society of Antiquaries forced antiquarians to find in the past a historical justification of present institutions and social organizations.⁵⁷ Most late Elizabethan chorographers were able to overlook the potentially destabilizing effects caused by this sense of historicity and they were able to produce chorographies that admirably performed the ideological work expected of

⁵⁶ On, for instance, the “basically ahistorical rationalism” of the dominant humanist historiography, see Ferguson, *Clio Unbound*, esp. 57-9.

⁵⁷ On the politicization of the work performed by the Society of Antiquaries, see Levy, 164-6.

them,⁵⁸ but Stow's *Survey* often draws attention to the fact that a sense of historicity can produce a concomitant sense of historical disruption. While the past may work to found the present even if the past is significantly different from that present, a sense of the past's difference might also work to produce an effect of the present's historical isolation or dislocation, it may produce a sense of radical difference from that past, and it may produce an account of historical "progress" that detects contingency and sheer change rather than continuity. In Stow's strange and conflicted understanding of the relationship between past and present, this potential contradiction, usually latent but inherent in late Elizabethan antiquarianism, becomes clear.

Apart from the disciplinary and methodological protocols that seem to explain the contradictions in Stow's historiographical method, perhaps early modern London – in the rapidity, dynamism, and breadth of its development – is the best explanation for Stow's apparently confused understanding of the relationship between past and present. The bivalent understanding of this relationship in the *Survey* speaks, perhaps, not to a failing of Stow's historiographical method, but to his historiographical acumen. Certainly Stow's antiquarian habits provide him with an acute sensitivity to the broad gulf between present and past, but this sense of stark historical distance – often figured in criticism on the *Survey* as a sense of melancholic nostalgia – also speaks more deftly to the state of early modern London than any simple, monological story of development. While Camden, Grafton, and Levy argue that Stow is incapable of recognizing continuity in

⁵⁸ Helgerson, for instance, notes that by the beginning of the seventeenth century, many chorographies had become "little more than undigested collections of manorial and genealogical records" that secured social and political position for patrons by appeal to their status as heirs of indubitable historical pedigree (135).

change, Stow's refusal or inability to imagine a continuity between past and present may be read instead as a tacit critique of historiographical methods that are themselves too simplistic, too eager to perform the work of narration, too selective to make sense of the various historical ruptures that characterize the urban space that he explores by foot. The historical temporality of London for Stow is ultimately characterized by this critical distance from perfectly linear historical narratives, and it is characterized by a sense of historico-temporal multiplicity. The city's historical trajectory becomes for Stow a multitude of independent but interrelated trajectories, some of which die out, some of which emerge as if from nowhere. History for Stow is no longer simply directional, and it is no longer determined by a providential hand as Edward Hall might argue, or by an equally absolute set of human laws as we find in Machiavelli's or Guicciardini's humanistic historiography;⁵⁹ history is instead without structure, without shape, without global meaningfulness, and the present cannot be understood as moving toward a *telos* or moving from a simple, singular origin. Instead, early modern London may be historically adrift and isolated from its past.

The Sunne in Aries and London's Epic History

Up to this point in my chapter I have argued that early modern London was historically baffling and that Stow was consequently caught in a difficult intellectual position. His antiquarian project was twofold: he studied the material and cultural artifacts by which he was surrounded (e.g. nails, buildings, streets, walls, gates, civic-political institutions,

⁵⁹ On the sense of historical flatness that these universal laws of humanist historiography produce, see my "The Banality of History in *Troilus and Cressida*."

public ceremonies, other histories), and he worked to explain the present condition of the city in historical terms by appeal to these artifacts. This project was troubled, however, because understanding the city historically is an exercise in narrative emplotment (“How did the city get to here from there?”) and because this exercise was undermined by the radical social, political, religious, and infrastructural changes that were affecting London in the sixteenth century. Simply, Stow was struggling to produce a historical narrative while the artifacts he studied only offered a sense of disruption and narrative-historical fragmentation. While Hall in his *Union of the Two Noble Houses* can draw a fairly straightforward narrative of providential retribution and reconciliation when he takes only monarchical history and the Wars of the Roses as his object, an antiquarian such as Stow, paying close attention to social and material changes affecting the nature of London, was unable to draw pat narratives or produce a unified vision of historical development.

While Stow recognizes the potentially irremediable complexity of London’s history and while he recognizes the potential impossibility of drawing that history along a single, neat trajectory, the contemporary Lord Mayor’s shows took the same socio-cultural space and produced concertedly idealistic and flattening historiographical narratives. Against Stow’s sense of potential discordance in the historical record and against his sense that his historical present was, in some respects, historically incomprehensible, these mayoral pageants take distinctly early modern phenomena – the political ascendancy of the merchant class and the discovery of the “New World,” for instance – and they yoke these phenomena to broader, pre-established historical narratives. In doing so, they smooth out the historical record, they justify early modern

social structures and institutions by appeal to fantastic histories, and they suggest that London is caught up in a determined and glorious history. In a strange irony, the recently invented Lord Mayor's Day Pageants, first produced only in 1535, worked to justify early modern institutions and rules by appeal to tradition: in a Disney-esque gesture, a new institution was invented, was dressed to look as if it was ancient, and was used to justify the present by appeal to the authority of a tradition of which it was not a part.

Many critics have noted that the Lord Mayor's Day pageants serve specific ideological functions and that they work to produce, as Knowles points out, a sense of community for London at a historical moment when it was riven by "population growth, uncontrolled physical expansion, high prices, dearth, heavy taxation and the resultant destitution, vagabondage and social unrest" (159). Purportedly designed to inaugurate a new mayor's term and to teach that new mayor how to reign virtuously, these processions through London's streets also invoke a vision of the city as an idealized and unified space in which all members of the community – whether the guild members who participate in the procession or the Londoners who watch as the procession passes – have a place and a role. In the idealized London that these pageants stage, "distinctive segments and echelons of society" were, as Manley argues, implicated "in a ritual '*communitas*,' a quasi-sacred condition of solidarity expressing the deepest and most basic values of the collectivity" (*Literature* 214). The potential efficacy of these processions is perhaps best captured in a letter by Piero Contarini, chaplain to the Venetian ambassador Horatio Busino, when he describes the pageant designed for the inauguration of George Bowles in 1617, Middleton's *Triumphs of Honour and Industry*. Along the route of the pageant,

Contarini claims, "All Glasse windowes [were] taken downe, but in their places, sparkeled so many eyes, that had it not bene day, the light which reflected from them, was sufficient to have made one" (in Bergeron, *Pageants* 75). In this image of thousands of eyes silently absorbing the pageant's spectacular displays and recalling a benevolent cosmos, it becomes clear that, as Paster notes, the "ultimate function of these pageants is less to celebrate an individual than to remind the rulers and population of a town or city about their collective higher purpose" (Paster 128): a captive audience drawn to a spectacular display, city dwellers were provided with an idealized image of the city and they were imagined to glean lessons in virtuous supplication. Indeed, as the published versions of these shows often claimed, pageants performed this didactic work self-consciously and unapologetically by training their audiences in "the imitation of Vertue and Noblenesse" (Middleton, *Industry* A3v) and by providing their audiences "faire Examples, large and hie, / Patternes for us to build Honors by" (Middleton, *Integrity* B2r). More specifically, however, virtue and honour are figured in these pageants in decidedly urban terms, and they are yoked to a sense of one's place within an urban, commercial economy. Considering the obvious didactic moralizing and the appearance in pageants of allegorical characters such as "Truth," "Error," and "Pure Love," the relationship between these pageants and the morality play tradition is, as David Bergeron points out, incredibly close ("Moral" 134); it is crucial to recognize, however, that Everyman in civic pageants saves his soul while also earning swaths of money and reserving a spot for himself in the pantheon of civic fame. As the description of the Tower of Virtue in Middleton's *The Sunne in Aries* makes clear, "Vertue" is "indeed as a

Brazen wall to a City or Common-wealth” and it brings “prosperity . . . to a Kingdome”; consequently, the “Top-Turrets or Pinnacles of this Brazen Tower shine bright like Golde . . .” (B1r). Throughout the Lord’s Mayor’s Day pageants of the period, this association between virtue, prosperity, and gold is strenuously asserted.

While many critics have pointed out that the city posited and performed by the Lord Mayor’s Day pageants was an idealized and ideologically coherent space, I am here interested in the city as it is figured *historically* in these pageants. Apart from the ideological work of community building – or as part of the ideological work of community building – these pageants repeatedly posit historical frameworks that re-think the city and the mayoralty within histories of nation, continent, and world. Because these pageants – as pageants – are never compelled to theorize explicitly their understandings of historical causality and because they are not subject to any form of historiographically-minded critical scrutiny, their historiographical work is generally un-rigorous. Instead of specifically identifying the historiographical work that these pageants perform, then, I am instead exploring the use to which they put history and ideological implications of the pageants’ vision of history. In Lord Mayor’s Day pageants, classical history, the history of England’s monarchs, and a quasi-pastoral sense of history are all mapped onto one another, and they are subsequently mapped onto the history of London and the history of the mayoralty. By producing this historiographical palimpsest, pageant writers celebrate the mayor through an imagined historical contiguity to the regal, to the classical, and to the presumably “natural” orders, and they also locate the city within historical frameworks that are dramatically at odds with the historical frameworks (or lack thereof)

that Stow draws. Where Stow imagines significant fragmentation in the historical record, cutting off the early modern present from even recent history, the Lord Mayor's Day pageants imagine that the city is closely related to world history; where Stow imagines that history may be the linear and contingent unfolding of events, history in these civic pageants is figured as orderly, coherent, and meaningful. The histories of the city and of the mayoralty drawn in these pageants are ultimately fraught with what seem like historiographical category errors: the city and mayor are figured within the history of a *translatio imperii* and are celebrated as inheritors of a classical tradition, but they are also closely yoked to the history of British and English monarchs, and they are located within a quasi-pastoral sense of cyclicity. It is the multiplicity of these historical plots in Lord Mayor's Day pageants and the various narrative-historical frameworks in which they locate London that interests me here: where Stow can find no narrative to understand the early modern present historically, Lord Mayor's Day pageants find several incommensurable frameworks and assert their commensurability; where Stow struggles to locate the city within a narrative framework that might explain it easily, these pageants borrow historical plots from other genres and map them onto early modern London in its historical specificity.

The strange historiographical capaciousness of Lord Mayor's Shows is evident in most of the pageants produced in the early seventeenth century, including the conventional *The Sunne in Aries* which I treat here as exemplary of the genre. Written by Middleton for the 1621 inauguration of the draper Edward Barkham, *The Sunne in Aries* is formally typical, and the published account is exceptional for Middleton only because

it was published by Edward Allde “for H.G.” rather than by Nicholas Okes, publisher of *The Triumphs of Love and Antiquity*, *The Triumphs of Honour and Industry*, *The Triumphs of Integrity*, *The Triumphs of Honor and Virtue*, and *The Triumphs of Truth*.⁶⁰ As with all published pageants, the text begins with an extended self-explanation naming the mayor and his guild, and it explains that the guild of the Lord Mayor-elect – the Drapers’ Company in this case – footed the bill for the elaborate processions and triumphs that the text records. After the dedicatory page comes a brief explanation of the primary trope through which the pageant operates – the astrological circuit of the sun – and it describes the first triumph on land in Paul’s churchyard before providing the first speech.

The description of the first triumph in Paul’s churchyard is emblematic of the historiographical polyvocality that I described above:

the first Tryumph by land attends his Lordships most wished arrival, in *Pauls* Church-yard, which is a Chariot most Artfully framed & adorned, bearing the Title of the Chariot of *Honour*: In which Chariot many Worthies are plac’d, that have got Trophies of *Honour* by their Labours & Deserts, such as *Jason*, whose Illustration of Honour is the Golden Fleece, *Hercules* with his *Ne plus ultra*, upon Pilasters of Silver, a fayre Globe, for conquering *Alexander*; a Gilt Lawrell for triumphant *Cesar*, &c. (A3r-A3v)

The sense of historical import in this *tableau* is not immediately apparent until the gloss preceding Jason’s first speech explains that this hero is “the Personage most proper (by his Manifestation) for the Societies Honour” (A3v) because he was the most glorious trader in wool: his golden fleece echoes the drapers’ goods; his adventures with the

⁶⁰ It is unclear who published *The Triumphs of Health and Prosperity* because no extant copies of the pageant include the title page, however a cursory inspection suggests that it was published by someone other than Okes. While the Okes-published pageants all include identically formatted dedications featuring identical decorative features, *The Triumphs of Health and Prosperity* includes none of these consistent traits.

Argonauts echo the perilous “*Adventure*” of statesmanship on which Barkham is preparing to embark; his sea-faring echoes the adventure of international trade on which Barkham’s career as a draper relied (B1r).⁶¹ A recognizable forebear of the Company of Drapers and a mythic antetype of Barkham, Jason becomes “*One of the first [guild] Brothers on Record*” (A3v), and the Drapers become his early modern inheritors, traveling and trading in fleece, hoping for “*Honour got by Danger*” (A3v). In drawing this historical line between Jason and Barkham – and, by extension, between Hercules, Cesar, Alexander, and Barkham – Middleton imagines a history for the Company of Drapers that ignores reason and forgets causality while producing the ideological effect of tradition. The Company of Drapers is figured here as the culmination of a grand *translatio consortio*.

Emphasizing the imagined genealogical relationship between the Company of Drapers, Barkham, and Jason, the second triumph – “the *Tower of Vertue*” (B1r) – is similarly constructed, and it includes more obvious historical forebears for the new mayor. Surrounding the tower are allegorical embodiments of Antiquity, Fame, and the six virtues, and the tower features the names of London’s great men. Included in the exemplary roll call – providing “Encouragement of after Ages” (B1v) – are previous drapers who had served as mayor such as “Sir *Henry Fitz-Alwin* Draper, L. Maior foure and Twenty yeeres together; Sir *John Norman*, the first that was rowed in Barge to

⁶¹ Figuring a draper in terms of international trade is most readily understandable when one accounts for the nature of the national economy at the time of the pageant’s production. As Keene points out, until the middle of the seventeenth century, English exports consisted primarily of white, unfinished woolen cloths (60): drapers, that is, would have been leading exporters, and they would have been traveling abroad – to the burse at Antwerp, for instance – selling their wares. For an early modern account of the trade in unfinished wool and the threat that it was imagined to pose to the English economy, see More’s *Utopia*, 19–20.

Westminster with Silver Oares, at his owne coste” (B1v); also included in the list are men famous for commerce, trade, and civic duty, such as “Sir *Frances Drake*, the *Sonne of Fame*, who in two Yeares and tenne Monthes, did Girdle about the world. The unpareleled, Sir *Symon Eyre*, who built *Leaden Hall* (at his owne cost),” and so on (B1v). Such a recollection of the great men of London reinforces the sense of a grand historical continuum that the first triumph provides. The first triumph’s vision of the relationship between Jason and the Company of Drapers is emphasized in the second triumph because the contiguity between the second and first triumphs collapses the imagined discursive gap between histories of antiquity and London. By piling civic history atop classical history and mythology, that is, and by capriciously heaping these disparate historical registers together in the idealized vision that the performance produces, the pageant works to produce the effect of historical continuity. Suddenly, in the pageant’s histories, Barkham and the Company of Drapers are located within a predictable historical register (Simon Eyre and Francis Drake), within an absurd register (Caesar and Alexander), and within a wholly imaginary register (Jason and Hercules).

The pageant subsequently intimates a historical relationship between the monarchical register of the typical early modern chronicles and the civic space of the city when an embodied Fame compares civic dignitaries to “*The Figures of Illustrious Princes, crowned / As well for Goodnes, as for Stately Birth / Which makes e’em true Heires both to Heaven and Earth*”:

Two Henryes, Edward, Mary, Eliza, James
(*That joy of honest Hearts;*) and there behold
His honour’d Substitute; whom Worth makes bold

To undergoe the weight of Degree. (B2v)⁶²

To locate Barkham and the institution of civic government among monarchs adds another historical register to the pageant's already confused historiographical vision. Alongside his presumed relationship to Hercules and Jason and Alexander, Barkham is now expected to recognize himself within a trans-historical community of greatness that includes monarchs, living and dead. Like great monarchs before him – including Mary, whose reputation was recently recuperated under James – Barkham is a great figure, expected or forced to “*undergoe the weight of Degree*” like these figures with which he is imaginatively allied. Allying Barkham with these monarchs as their substitute begs re-imagination of community and genealogy – a re-imagination of the modes of relation thought to obtain between kings and mayors – according to which the apparently disparate registers can be conceived in terms of unity and identity with Barkham figured as civic “Substitute” and as fundamentally substitutable in the historical categories on offer.⁶³

⁶² As many members of a Shakespeare Association of America seminar on “The Varied Politics of Early Modern Historiography” in 2007 noted, yoking civic and monarchical history was a move that many historiographers made when asserting the crucial historical significance of London. For instance, Robert Fabyan – invoked often during the seminar – followed chronicle tradition when marking the beginning of a chronicle year with the Common Era date and with the year of the monarch's reign, but he also marks historical periodicity in terms of the mayor who was most recently inaugurated. Thomas Heywood – a frequent encomiast of early modern London – performs the same sort of work in *If You Know Not Me 2* when he delivers three parallel stories: a typical prodigal son parable, the history of Thomas Gresham's construction of the New Exchange, and the history of the Armada's attempted invasion, featuring appearances by Queen Elizabeth. The juxtaposition of civic and national histories and figures serves to elevate the city's history by way of discursive contiguity with a history that was, in the period, so often figured in providential and quasi-epic terms.

⁶³ The precise relationship thought to obtain between the mayor and the monarch is difficult to pin down if one only has the Lord Mayor's shows as a guide. Here, the mayor is figured as a “substitute” for the monarch in the city of London, but on the title page he is figured as “His Majesties Lieutenant” (A2r). Mayors are also described as “His Majesties Lieutenant” on the title pages of *The Triumphs of Truth*, for instance, but as the monarch's brother in *The Triumphs of Love and Antiquity* (C4v). Further confusing matters, the court and the city are figured as “Two most Noble Friends” in *The Triumphs of Honour and*

If the pageant loosely imagines a historical relationship between Jason, Cesar, Barkham, and James – between mythological, classical, civic, and monarchical histories – then its central metaphor – the sun’s move between Pisces and Aries – locates this relationship in a temporality of cyclic historical renewal. As the preamble to the pageant-text figures this overarching image,

Pisces, being the last of the *signes*, and the Wayne of the Sunnes Glory; how fitly and desiredly now the Sunne enters into *Aries*, for the comfort and refreshing of the Creatures, and may bee properly called the *spring* time of Right and Justice; observed by the Shepheards Kalendar in the Mountaine, to prone a happy Yeare for poore mens causes, Widdowes, & Orphans Comforts; so much to make good the Sunnes Entrance into that Noble Signe. (A3)

By yoking Barkham’s inauguration to an image of the spring and re-birth, the pageant adds another historical discourse to its already burdened frame: to understand the processes of urban history, suggests the pageant, one understand the city as a microcosm of the astronomical and agrarian worlds, and one must recognize that the installation of a new mayor is analogous with springtime regeneration. Of course, imagining the city within both astrological and “Shepheards” calendars requires some rhetorical sleight-of-hand, and the “renewal” of lambing and springtime is translated into the logic of the early modern *polis*: where Colin Clout finds lambs over which to watch in the springtime, Barkham finds the “poore men,” “Widdowes,” and “Orphans.” And while one needs to recognize the similarity between cyclic annual regeneration and the civic calendar, it is unlikely that anyone witnessing the pageant on 29 October would imagine that spring had just arrived in London. Certainly, that is, the city is figured in terms of an annual renewal

Industry. For an extended discussion of the relationship between court and city as it is imagined in civic pageants, see A. A. Bromham, “Thomas Middleton’s *The Triumphs of Truth*: City Politics in 1613.”

corresponding to the civic calendar but this renewal is disarticulated from the natural cyclicity of the seasons so a probably dreary day in the middle of London's autumn can be imagined as a springtime celebration.

By imagining the city in terms of an annual renewal and the "Shepherds Kalendar," Middleton here works against a well-established tradition of writing and imagining the city. As Paster points out in *The Idea of the City*, urban space is generally imagined in precisely the opposite terms, against the country and the garden:

We can generalize that the city reflects, as the garden does not, the urge to stand apart from the rhythms of the seasonal calendar. It defines time not as the cyclical revolutions of the natural year but as the linear sequence of historical process and visible time. Against literary celebrations of the country, which stress the integration of man with his physical environment, the city expresses human desire for ascendancy over nature through control of the environment by abstract, conceptual mental patterns – the square, the circle, the straight line. (2)⁶⁴

While Paster musters the requisite seminal examples to demonstrate that the city is understood, in temporal terms, as opposed to the country or the garden throughout Western philosophical and literary traditions, such generalizations about the nature of the city fail to account for the bizarrely broad field that Middleton invokes when struggling to understand early modern London. In *The Sunne in Aries*, the urban is not a human departure from the rural and cyclic, but is instead a natural extension of it: as Middleton

⁶⁴ Lawrence Manley makes a similar observation but with explicit reference to civic pageants in *Literature and Culture in Early Modern London*: "In the arguments and symbols that it developed in order to justify the rule of London's oligarchic elite to a variety of constituencies, the Lord Mayor's Show inaugurated a more profane, material time, a secular vision of the city that gave wider scope to the individuals in shaping their surroundings in pursuit of their particular ends" (216). Despite his often brilliant readings of civic pageantry, I have to disagree with Manley here: pageants clearly deal with secular matter – the increasing political power of the guilds, for instance, or the discovery of the "New World" by traders – but, as I have been discussing, they figure this matter within mythopoetic frameworks that have been already established and within the myriad discourses – religious, humanist, neoclassical – that are collapsed upon one another in the average Lord Mayor's show.

points out, for instance, the twelve guild crests, mounted on a triumph, correspond to the “12.Celestiall Signes” of the lunar calendar (B3r).

This vision of a determined cyclicity prompts a return to Stow for the sake of contrast. The historical fragmentation and incoherence that Stow imagines in his *Survey* speaks to the vision of early modern London on which most historians and literary scholars have relied, not without some contention, at least since Ian Archer published *The Pursuit of Stability*. For many current scholars, confusion and instability have become the terms through which early modern London must be thought: one only needs to recognize the frequency with which the stunning demographic statistics are rehearsed in current writing on early modern London to see that incoherence rather than simple identity is central to our understanding of the city. In this space that is apparently characterized by such dramatic change, Stow’s *Survey* becomes a historiographical correlative to the problems of civic identity discussed by current scholars. While most critics explain that it was difficult for early modern writers to imagine a coherent identity for the city, and while many critics, such as Howard, have argued that imagining this identity was of crucial importance to early modern thinkers and writers, Stow suggests that imagining such an identity in historical terms is also difficult and necessary. Not only is the city fundamentally confusing because of its rapid expansion and because of the shocks of the Reformation and the emergence of capitalism, it is also impossible to locate this rapid expansion and the city’s current state along a diachronic axis of historical change. The city becomes, in Stow’s eyes, both immediately and historically confused. But while Stow’s understanding of the city speaks to our current

understanding of early modern London, his vision of the city was not the only vision on offer to those who lived there. As Howard suggests, playwrights were struggling to make the space of early modern London ideologically coherent to London's inhabitants, and this literary assertion of coherent civic identity has a correlative in the historiographical aspects of Lord Mayor's Day shows. Again, while Stow imagines diachronic fragmentation, Middleton in *The Sunne in Aries* finds a bizarre set of historical forebears from which early modern Londoners such as the Lord Mayor might imagine themselves descended, and he also locates the city in narrative-historical frameworks that contradict the sense of historical adriftness that Stow registers. While we must recognize, then, that early modern London was a historically confusing space, it seems that we must also recognize that the sense of this historical confusion was itself conflicted. While the modern city is so often associated with a compulsive newness and the apparent absence of history – while urban space, that is, is so often associated with one understanding of modernity *per se* – this vision of the urban is itself modern, and it only works awkwardly and occasionally when we attempt to reconcile it with early modern understandings of urban space.

A Chaste Maid in Cheapside

By contrasting Stow's *Survey* with Lord Mayor's Day shows such as Middleton's *Sunne in Aries*, I have provided the foundation for a relatively modest thesis: just as the identity of the city was contested in early modern London, the narrative-historical logic in which it was imagined to be caught up was also contested. Early modern London, that is, was

imagined as the heir a grand mythopoesis or civic tradition, was imagined within the framework of a pastoral sense of renewal, and was imagined to be historically isolated after an undefined moment of revolutionary rupture. Not surprisingly, these visions of London's history have, thus far in my chapter, corresponded with generic and methodological coordinates: Stow, the antiquarian chorographer, figures the city as historically adrift, while Middleton, the writer of encomiastic and coarsely ideological pageants, imagines the city as part of a grand tradition, as aligned with a sense of pastoral renewal or as the culmination of a narrative infused with mythopoetic grandeur. But while these two genres seem mutually exclusive, and while their historiographical presumptions seem at odds, I will argue below that Middleton struggles with both visions of historical unfolding in *A Chaste Maid*, and that the city – inscribed with a variety of discourses – refuses to present itself univocally in the play. Middleton is acutely aware of the variety of discourses in which the city is caught up and figured, and the city itself – a central character in the play – speaks polyvocally according to the imperatives of these various discourses. This polyvocality ultimately scuttles any attempt to pin down “the play's voice” because, as the city speaks in the play, it does so in contrary ways, much as the characters in the play often seem to fall into the play's deictic reality from various genres and much as they seem to speak from various discourses simultaneously.

I borrow this vision of London as a semantically polyvalent space from Julian Wolfreys' *Writing London* in which he claims that “the very idea of thinking or writing London is inimical to any ontological project or indeed to any project the purpose of which is definition. The city resists ontology, and thus affirms its alterity, its

multiplicities, its excesses, its heterogeneities" (4). As I will discuss below with regard to Cheapside – the street to the east of St. Paul's with which the *A Chaste Maid* is preoccupied – Wolfreys is correct to suggest that the city, whenever invoked, is fundamentally polyvalent, evoking meanings that no single text can circumscribe.⁶⁵

When we approach London critically, that is, we need to keep in mind that the materiality of the city is always caught in a signifying structure: to invoke the city at all – to mention its name, its streets, its smells and sounds, its landmarks – is to deal not only with a brick-and-mortar fact, but also with innumerable other instances of circulating representation. Of course, this observation might be read as something of a truism that we can apply to any object of representation: when we speak of early modern hearts, for instance, recent criticism reminds us that we should keep in mind Vesalius the anatomist; we should also keep in mind Sidney, who looked to his heart as the index of authenticity before he wrote; we should keep in mind Christ whose heart blazed with love for humanity.⁶⁶ But while it seems like a truism to be kept in mind when dealing with any represented object,

⁶⁵ Though Wolfreys' vision of London is deft, and though it is crucial to any understanding of urban space generally, I disagree with him on a point that he often makes in *Writing London*. In *Writing London*, Wolfreys repeatedly figures London in terms that Derrida uses when describing, via Levinas, the individual's relation to the face of the other: when writing about London, claims Wolfreys, we are called upon to engage London "responsibly" in that we recognize the impossibility of knowing that which we engage; in doing so, we recognize that the singular alterity of London is always beyond representation and that any act of writing London is necessarily and fundamentally failing. In this sense, London is a force in the Derridean sense: it exists only and always as a never-articulable potentiality. For Wolfreys, that is, one must remain true to that which is singularly London even though such singularity can never be known or become knowledge. Such a position is problematic, however, because it reserves for London the same preconceptual singularity that Derrida offers to humans, even though London is a city and, like all cities, fails to exist as such, even in the mode of a preconceptual nonexistence, beyond the domain of the discourses by which it is constituted, whether these discourses are historical, mnemotechnical, poetic, topographical, sociological, civic-legal, etc. As Gertrude Stein famously said of Oakland, there is no there "there" when we deal with the "force" of London, even if we figure there-ness as somehow prediscursive pure spatiality: at such a moment, London – a politically, socially, and culturally determined space – ceases to be London and becomes something else.

⁶⁶ On the various scientific, poetic, philosophical, and religious discourses that took up the heart as an object of concern, see Scott Manning Stevens' "Sacred Heart and Secular Brain."

it is a truism that particularly applies to the city of London because its meaning in the period (as now) was contested within various discourses, each of which summons a particular London. Stow and Dekker, Raleigh and Jonson, Donne and Lancelot Andrewes, Foxe and William Fulke: all of these writers had something to say about the city. Not only, then, is the city the space of heterogeneous voices all calling out above the din to be heard, it is also a place that changes with every call and voice that summons to mind a certain city to be transposed on all the others. As Wolfreys points out in the epigraph to this chapter, “[i]f the city calls, and calls unceasingly, it does so in more than one voice simultaneously” (7). In terms of the texts that I discuss above, this polyvocality of the urban space includes the various historiographical accounts of its historical nature: London was both caught up in a cycle of quasi-pastoral romantic redemption and it was a secular space unfolding linearly in time without any recognizable rhyme or reason.

While, as Wolfreys points out, the city “calls unceasingly . . . in more than one voice simultaneously,” one must also recognize that the city rarely speaks univocally because it is parsed into neighbourhoods and smaller spaces, each with a unique meaning or voice. One must pay attention, that is, to what Mary Bly, following Michel de Certeau, calls the “poetic geography on top of the literal, forbidden, or permitted meaning” and to the subtle shifts in meaning that occur as one traverses the city (64). Bly argues that reading early modern London as a homogenous whole – reading “the city” as opposed to “the suburbs,” for instance, or as opposed to “the country” – ignores the more subtle parsings of early modern London that were familiar to and operative among its inhabitants: the Whitefriars liberty was allied with a sense of grand and vulgar indecency;

the Strand suggested proto-bourgeois indulgence to an early modern audience; Gresham's Burse evoked the political and global potency of an emergent capitalism rather than evoking the Strand's domestic gluttony. To accept this understanding of early modern London forces one to recognize that a more complicated spatial semantics was familiar to the city's inhabitants, operating often at an intuitive level as one wandered streets, decided where to live, chose the tavern at which one would drink. And while Bly invokes her understanding of the idiosyncrasy of urban space to explain the content of certain plays performed in certain theatres in certain neighbourhoods,⁶⁷ her observation holds true when dealing with the representations of space in city comedy. Functioning as an intertextual node, the city's spaces speak voluminously and contradictorily on stage regardless of attempts to circumscribe their meanings. When imagining failed attempts to circumscribe the meaning of a given space, one might think, for instance, of the scene set in the centre aisle of St. Paul's in *Every Man Out of His Humour* (3.1). In this case, Jonson invokes the space of St. Paul's – used in this context exclusively as a space for

⁶⁷ Bly's overall argument in "Playing the Tourist in Early Modern London: Selling the Liberties on Stage" is problematic, though her fundamental insights remain salient. She argues that the neighbourhood in which a theatre was found informed the content of the plays that appeared on its stage. Such an observation may, in fact, be true, and, if true, is certainly in need of more thorough study, but her argument fails to prove the point conclusively. She claims that Whitefriars was imaginatively allied with sexual deviance, prostitution, gambling, etc., and that Blackfriars was generally associated with the puritan preaching that occurred there. As a result of these imagined associations, *Epicoene*, written for the Whitefriars stage, was more sexually daring, whereas *Eastward Ho!*, written for the Blackfriars stage, was typical of city comedy and was less provocative. From this point, she claims that *Epicoene* "depicts an entirely different city. To my mind there is no doubt but that part of the difference is a result of geography. Jonson wrote his most unusual play for an audience in the Whitefriars and a standard city comedy for an audience in the Blackfriars" (66). While geography may indeed explain "part" of the difference between *Epicoene* and *Eastward Ho!*, it is generally difficult to compare these plays and it is near impossible, because of their stark differences, to determine the difference that geography makes: *Epicoene* was produced in 1609 while *Eastward Ho!* was produced in 1605; *Epicoene* was written by Jonson alone while *Eastward Ho!* was written by Jonson, Chapman, and Marston in response to Dekker and Webster, and no one has yet been able to convincingly determine which playwright was responsible for which sections of the text.

parading and purchasing – to satirize foppish affectations: St. Paul’s, that is, produces meanings for the audience – meanings to which Jonson’s characters are blind – and evokes a sense of dramatic irony that only one familiar with St. Paul’s’ simultaneous sacredness might recognize. The space’s semantic excessiveness – an excessiveness to which Mitis and Cordatus are blind – necessarily informs an audience’s experience of a scene in which, for instance, spiritual succour is never discussed.

Though Bly’s observation about the subtle parsing of urban space is a general truism, it is crucial to our understanding of *A Chaste Maid* because, in *A Chaste Maid*, the city itself bears a considerable semantic weight. As David Bergeron and R. B. Parker recognize, *Chaste Maid* is obsessively preoccupied with the geography that the play depicts: throughout the play we hear names of streets, wharves, neighbourhoods, inns, theatres. Moll escapes from her parents’ house to meet Touchwood Junior at Barn Elms so they can be married; Moll’s brother Tim was a terrible student at “the free school in Paul’s churchyard” (3.2.144); the promoters decide that the baby they have been duped into adopting will be breast-fed by a wet-nurse in Brentford (2.2.197-8); and so on. But while the play is generally preoccupied with the city, Cheapside – the street to which the title conspicuously draws attention – is figured as central to the corrupting force of greed that the play repeatedly satirizes: Cheapside becomes synonymous with the commercial spirit that its shops embody. Moll, for instance, lives in Cheapside with her depraved parents, the wholly appalling Yellowhammer and his equally appalling wife Maudline, and we might imagine that the senior Yellowhammers emerged spontaneously from the predominantly commercial neighbourhood. In Cheapside, as the play emphasizes, flesh

is always for sale, whether that flesh is the rump of mutton being illegally sold there during Lent or whether it is an attractive daughter who might be bought by a wealthy, titled potential husband, no matter how corrupt that future husband might be. If we imagine the Yellowhammers as embodiments of Cheapside, then it is unsurprising that Yellowhammer is willing to contract his daughter in marriage to the aptly named Sir Walter Whorehound, even though Yellowhammer knows that Sir Walter has sired seven bastards to Mistress Allwit and her happy wittol husband who acts as her bawd. Showing as much paternal care as we can expect a father to show in this economically minded world, Yellowhammer concludes that

The knight is rich, he shall be my son-in-law,
No matter, so the whore he keeps be wholesome;
My daughter takes no hurt then, so let them wed,
I'll have him sweat well e'er they go to bed. (4.2.273-6)

Paternal responsibility is thought to extend in Cheapside no further than taking precautions to avoid syphilitics and finding a means to marry into land and title.

Taking for granted that Cheapside is invoked in *Chaste Maid* because it was the centre of the luxury trade in early modern London, many critics such as Arthur Kinney, George Rowe, and Alexander Leggatt draw our attention to the irony that lurks in the play's title: we are expected to recognize, they argue, that Cheapside is a particularly corrupt microcosm of a mostly corrupt city and that "chaste maids" are among the few commodities that are impossible to locate in the shops that line the street to the east of Paul's. As Karen Newman claims, for "Middleton's early modern audience, his title, with its pun on *chased*, adorned (metal or plate) with engraving or embossed work, also implied a contradiction since trade in Cheapside would have encompassed not only

commercial, but also sexual, exchange: chaste maids are apparently unusual in Cheapside and thus the title is almost an oxymoron" ("London" 238). These critics fail to note, however, that Chastity herself appeared at Pissing Conduit in Cheapside as part of Middleton's mayoral pageant, *Triumphs of Truth*. In 1613, the same year that *Chaste Maid* first appeared on stage at The Swan, Middleton allegorically locates Chastity in Cheapside "wearing on her Head a Garland of white Roses, in her Hand a white Silke Banner, fild with Starres of Gold" (C3). And just as *Chaste Maid* seems preoccupied with Cheapside, the Lord Mayor's Show that Middleton wrote seems similarly preoccupied as it parades twice down the street in celebration of the new mayor, also named Thomas Middleton. It seems convenient that Middleton pays close attention to Cheapside in his pageant because the new mayor that year was a member of the Grocers' guild and because the Grocers, whose shops lined the street, footed the pageant's huge bill of approximately £1300. But while the Grocers were no doubt particularly happy that Cheapside was the centre of attention, Middleton's focus is entirely conventional for civic pageants that had understood the religious significance of Cheapside for at least the preceding two-and-a-half centuries. Running between Paul's churchyard in the west and St. Thomas à Becket church in the east, Cheapside was central to most civic pageants because these pageants understood its religious significance. For instance, at Pissing Conduit in Cheapside, as Anne Lancashire points out in *London Civic Theatre*, wine flowed instead of water during the 1274 coronation of Edward I and Queen Eleanor; it also ran with wine for the 1299 coronation entry of Margaret of France after she married Edward I on 10 September; it ran again with wine in 1312 to celebrate the birth of Prince

Edward, in 1377 for the coronation of Richard II, in 1392 after Richard had quarrelled and then reconciled with the city, and so on (44, 45). At these moments, the glory of Cheapside is imagined not in economic terms as an important commercial centre but as a space in which the divine is imagined to articulate approval of a certain historical event. As Lancashire recognizes, the sudden switch in the conduit from water to wine “had obvious Christian suggestiveness” (49), and it seemed to mark Pissing Conduit as a strange oracle through which God is imagined to speak approvingly of a new era arriving in the city. Though it may also intimate a taste for drink, a similar sense of providential approval leads Jack Cade to insist in *2 Henry VI*, as his first official decree, that “Pissing Conduit run nothing but claret wine this first year of our reign” (4.6.1-3). Moments of imagined cultural rejuvenation are marked in the city by a purportedly miraculous event that recurs in Cheapside. If we consider the mythopoetic and Christian language in which Cheapside is often figured and by which it is occasionally transformed, it is no stretch to imagine a now lost Puritan sermon – portending an inevitable act of divine retribution – that likens Cheapside to the temple in which Christ was particularly upset to find moneychangers: it is a sacred space being tragically and sinfully exploited.

This vision of the city’s fraught and conflicted identity changes the terms of the debate surrounding the resurrection of Moll and Touchwood Junior in *Chaste Maid*: one can no longer argue that the resurrection is “incongruous” with the “urban reality” that the play stages because the nature of “urban reality” is contested in the play and by the city that the play stages. Both city and play, that is, seem to rely on a duplicity: romantic cyclicity and divine providence are central to a correct understanding of the city in

historical terms, but like Stow's account of the city, these plots and ideological presumptions seem to fail in their accounting for the actual world in which city-dwellers live. If the conclusion of *Chaste Maid* seems incongruous, that is, it seems so because the city that the play stages is characterized by incongruity and because the play draws attention to the city's complicated identity when self-consciously staging these tensions by which it is constituted and through which it is understood. The space of the city is certainly represented in the play, but the play also mimetically *performs* the city as a space characterized by conflict, incoherence, and disintegrity. As many scholars have tacitly argued, reading *A Chaste Maid* as a microcosm of the dynamic city makes sense because city comedy is itself built piecemeal from other genres: Elizabeth Hanson teases out the influence of the Tudor moral interlude on *Ram Alley*, Brian Gibbons argues that city comedies are informed by the tradition of verse satire, Pier Paolo Frasinelli considers the influence of the *commedia dell'arte*, New Comedy and the Morality tradition. Like the city itself, city comedy is a busy genre.

This urban polyvocality is obvious in *A Chaste Maid* when Sir Walter Whorehound repents because at this moment the polyvocality of urban space articulates itself as tonal dramatic heterogeneity. While Touchwood Junior and Sir Walter duel because the former attempted to elope with Moll, both are wounded and Sir Walter's wound leads him to recognize that he has "some certain things to think on / Before I dare go further" (4.3.77-8). In the next scene, it becomes clear that he has to "think on" his spiritual commitments because here he confronts Mistress Allwit, the woman whom he has kept as a prostitute under the watchful eye of her bawd/wittol husband. As Jack Heller

recognizes in *Penitent Brothellers*, we need to recognize the conventionally Calvinist tenor of Sir Walter's repentance and we need to recognize this tone is utterly foreign to *Chaste Maid* if we read the play as simply satirical. "O my vengeance!" Sir Walter cries as he tries to force his "sin" – his bastard children – to leave the room,

Let me for ever hide my cursèd face
From the sight of those that darken all my hopes
And stand between me and the sight of heaven.
Who sees me now, he too and those so near me,
May rightly say, I am o'ergrown with sin.
O how my offences wrestle with my repentance! (5.1.69-75).

Critics have often had a difficult time dealing with Sir Walter's repentance because his final speech marks a startling change in the play's tone, though they have often attempted to recuperate this jarring shift by arguing, for instance, that the impact of the repentance is lessened by Allwit's "continuing incorrigible cynicism" (Leggatt 142). This smoothing of the apparent tonal disjunction seems tenuous, however, when one attempts to imagine an audience familiar with the horrors of sin – horrors that popular Puritan sermons recounted – escaping a sense of uneasiness when watching Sir Walter here as he directly invokes the rhetoric of penitence without any obvious hints of irony. Simply, it is difficult to laugh at Walter as he says, "Let me for ever hide my cursèd face / From the sight of those that darken all my hopes / And stand between me and the sight of heaven" because there are no obvious cues here to suggest that Sir Walter is anything but bleakly earnest. If Middleton were aiming at irony, Sir Walter could quite easily follow the example of Puritan wives earlier in the play and he could drink himself incontinent as he describes the wages of sin. But he remains fully continent and troubled. If Sir Walter pisses himself here then he pisses himself in terror. In attempting to absorb Sir Walter's

repentance into a tonally uniform play, critics imagine a certain dramatic homogeneity that the play obviously lacks: the imagined uniform irony of the play has already been punctuated dramatically, for instance, by the pathos in Maudline's brutal "recovery" of Moll on the banks of the Thames. Even the Watermen, whom Touchwood Senior has described as hardened, are moved to comment when they see Maudline pulling Moll by the hair: "Good mistress, spare her. . . . You are a cruel mother" (4.3.23, 25). And Moll exclaims "O my heart dies!" (4.3.26) before wishing her own death: "O bring me death tonight, love-pitying Fates, / Let me not see tomorrow upon the world" (4.3.46-7). To smooth over too quickly such discontinuities that the play offers is to ignore the effect that such scenes might have on an audience: it is difficult to chuckle after brutality, and striking violence tends to collapse the comfortable distance that cynicism offers. If we assume, following T. B. Tomlinson, that Middleton is hoping to produce in this play a single homogenous voice, then Tomlinson's conclusion about the scene of Sir Walter's repentance is absolutely correct and it might be expanded to include the scene of Moll's capture: it is "certainly a mistake on Middleton's part" (in Leggatt, 142, n. 17). But such assumptions are fundamentally problematic because there is no reason to think that Middleton is hoping to produce a homogeneous voice in his play.

After noting the tonal heterogeneity of *Chaste Maid*, one must also note that the resurrections of Moll and Touchwood Junior at the end of the play are as jarring as the scene of Sir Walter's repentance. If we compare this resurrection to other resurrections in Middleton's plays, the difference is striking. In *Michaelmas Term*, the audience knows that Quomodo has faked his own death and so his return to life loses any dramatic power.

In *The Puritan, Or The Widow of Watling Street*, the audience is similarly privy to the joke: the reported death of Corporal Oath is set up for the audience as part of an elaborate con. But the reported deaths of Moll and Touchwood Junior withhold the palliating dramatic irony that we find in *The Puritan* and *Michaelmas Term*. One director of the play, David Richman, cast the feigned deaths of Moll and Touchwood Junior in similar terms when he directed Upstate Repertory's 1978 production of the play in Rochester, NY. According to his account of the production, Richman seems to have worked diligently – too diligently, I think – to alleviate the shock that comes when Touchwood Junior reportedly dies of a wound he received in the duel with Sir Walter, and when Moll reportedly dies of a broken heart. Relying on the assumption that city comedies are wholly cynical, Richman designed his production to “emphasize the play's lack of moral commentary,” but this presumption “led to a complex problem in staging the first two scenes of the fifth act”:

Having no choric figures to use as guides, I had to determine whether these seemingly tragic scenes ought to be marked in the playing by the ironic humor that characterizes the rest of the play. If I interpreted these scenes as truly tragic, I would risk serious discord in an essentially comic production. (83)

To ensure that his production remained void of “moral commentary,” Richman made some problematic performance choices to avoid the “serious discord” that characterizes *Chaste Maid*. As if we were watching *Michaelmas Term* or *The Puritan*, Richman let the audience in on the joke: Moll gave winks to the audience before faking her death and when the lovers' caskets met during their concurrent funeral processions. A more recent production of the play at the University of Toronto (Mississauga) similarly included

winks from Moll before she “died.” Imagining two lovers kissing from their raised caskets is theatrically terrific because it anticipates Touchwood Senior’s recognition that winding sheets and wedding sheets are interchangeable (5.4.46-7), and Moll’s winks make for good theatre too because they produce the pleasure of dramatic irony. But while these choices may produce interesting effects on stage, they clearly make presumptions about the uniformity of the play’s tone that are, as Richman recognizes, entirely unfounded. Though one would be naïve to think that productions of *A Chaste Maid* should remain true to Middleton (whatever that would mean), it is clear that these choices undercut the effect of the final resurrections by eliminating any sense of their apparent miraculousness. When these resurrections are figured within the play’s Lenten setting and when the suddenness of the resurrections is maintained by refusing to cue an audience to the charade, the play produces an effect not unlike the running of wine from Pissing Conduit: a moral affirmation is yoked to a sense of Christian redemption, even though no one really believes that God has raised lovers from the dead or changed water into wine. The space of the city, then, becomes a space in which one can genuinely imagine the sort of human or communal redemption that a conventionally romantic conclusion allows. By maintaining the sudden resurrections, that is, the play maintains a sense of historical movement that one finds, for instance, in *The Sunne in Aries*: the romantic narrative of history is embodied in urban terms, and the play re-admits that sense of moral affirmation that Manley declares lost in *A Chaste Maid*. It seems that somehow Moll’s baptism in the filthy Thames in 4.3 was properly transformative, and that the Thames is perhaps an appropriate venue for baptisms after all.

Just as one is unable to draw any solid conclusions about the play's tone, then, one is unable to draw any conclusions about the play's narrative and its narrative-historical logic. On the one hand, *A Chaste Maid* draws attention, again and again, to a sense of cyclic redemption that the resurrections of Moll and Touchwood Junior indicate. The play begins in a shop and ends in a community celebration; it begins with cynicism and ends with joy; after a figural purification in the filthy Thames, Moll is ready to rise from a crypt. A. G. Van Den Broeck makes a strong case for this vision of the play when he argues that the play's preoccupation with the number seven speaks to a sense of redemption. Tracing the liturgical import of the number seven and the import of the seven-year spans that the play regularly invokes, Van Den Broeck argues that the play invokes a sense of renewal at a determined juncture in the unfolding of history. After seven years of decay, as in Revelation, the world is redeemed. Simultaneously, however, we are forced to recognize that this sense of liturgically predestined renewal and rejuvenation – as if time has a preordained course – may be only apparent. The play, that is, seems to rely on the vision of a determined historical structure in which the world is redeemed, but it also calls into question the sense of this determined structure in its preoccupation with the secular: a profoundly unruly text, it draws attention again and again to a disarticulation between a historical course according to which – like the Easter Sunday after Lent or the arrival of a new mayor – the city is renewed, and the individuals who dwell in the city generally fail to recognize the occasion of this renewal. Easter Sunday, that is, may exist objectively in Cheapside, and the Lent/Easter, Death/Resurrection narrative may be the lens through which the play's plot is best

understood, but the sense of renewal may also be a red herring, a coincidence, a fantasy abided by the superstitious: we all know, like the Yellowhammers, that the world is about getting and spending and other wholly human and relatively base activity. In such a space, the deaths and resurrections of Moll and Touchwood Junior may be untimely because the deaths mark a moment of disruption before the inevitable redemption of urban space – a moment of which their resurrections are an index, a metaphor, or a synecdoche – or they may be events in a historical record that, as Stow figures, is without pattern or direction. In a vision of history's unfolding like that on offer in *The Sunne in Aries* or *The Triumphs of Truth*, these deaths may be untimely insofar as they speak to a disruption or decay that is subsequently corrected or redeemed. Or, in a confused and wholly secular vision of history like the one Stow offers, these resurrections may mark nothing at all besides the wiles of two young lovers, a habit of the theatre, an ironic death-knell to romance in a city that is free of history's guiding, ultimately redemptive hand.

Certainly, as I have been arguing, these questions are historically specific questions about the status and meaning of early modern London, but they are also questions about historical narratives more generally, and about the capacity for narratives to figure accurately the happening of historical events. Is history an unruly process that familiar plots – such as the typically romantic plot of decay and redemption – fail to represent accurately? Do familiar plots accurately represent a directional and determined movement of history? If familiar plots accurately represent a directional and determined movement of history, then how do the spans of individual lives relate to this movement?

Figured as such, the questions I have been asking are questions about narrative irony in the specific sense that Hayden White invokes when discussing irony, and they are also questions – both historically specific and broadly theoretical – about the difficulty in determining irony as such.

When White discusses irony in *Metahistory*, he discusses it as a characteristic of Enlightenment skepticism and as opposed to the major philosophies of history that operate in the nineteenth century's "historical imagination." Historiography in its skeptical, Enlightenment form is, for White, characteristically ironic, and it is against this irony that the nineteenth century's major theorists of history such as Marx and Hegel were working: both Hegel and Marx, for instance, in obviously different ways, posited meaningful historical processes (for Hegel, humankind's movement toward "Freedom," for Marx, political humankind's movement toward classlessness) that reject Enlightenment irony as the trope through which history must be represented. While the ironic historical imagination recognizes the limits of a human capacity to understand the processes of history, and while the ironic historical imagination often rejects the notion that history is an objective process regardless of the human capacity for its comprehension, Marx and Hegel argue for the objectivity of these processes that, while requiring human intervention and involvement, proceed independently, inevitably, and teleologically without regard for individual human will. Against such visions of history that figure a given historical moment as a step or a stage *en route* to an eventual *telos*, ironic accounts of history deny that "historical series have any kind of larger significance or describe any imaginable plot structure" (White, "Historical" 93). In terms of the texts

discussed above, one could say – following from this coarsely schematic distinction between ironic and un-ironic forms of historical representation – that Stow’s account of history is ironic while Middleton’s account of history in *The Sunne in Aries* is un-ironic. Stow repeatedly draws attention to the grand narratives that explain London’s historical development but he troubles these grand narratives by attending to outlying details that scuttle them, while Middleton – in his idealizing fictions on the day of a Lord Mayor’s Show – takes material from apparently incongruous registers (e.g. classical history, monarchical history, civic history) and incorporates them into a figurally seamless narrative of cumulative progress that allows Edward Barkham, for instance, to become a more civically responsible Jason. In terms of *A Chaste Maid*, this opposition between ironic and un-ironic understandings of history corresponds to the question of the play’s general ironic-ness. Again: Does the romance narrative accurately reflect what happens in the world of the play? Does the play felicitously record the redemption of cultural decay?

In another register, this question might be figured in terms of the relationship that Slavoj Žižek draws between modern and postmodern narrative strategies according to which – and out of step with so much that is invoked tacitly under the banner of “modernism” – the modernist narrative strategies correspond loosely with a pre-modern idealism while negotiating the day-to-day life of realism, while literary postmodernism corresponds with a Brechtian sense of realism as that which defamiliarizes and undermines such idealism. According to Žižek, the paradigmatic modernist gesture is “to stage a common everyday event in such a way that some mythical narrative resonates in

it (the other obvious example, apart from *The Waste Land*, is, of course, Joyce's *Ulysses*)" (35). Postmodernism, on the other hand, refuses the overarching theme and treats these mythical truths as everyday facts independent of meaning beyond their dailiness, un-sublimated by their imagined meaningfulness according to the mandate of an overarching historical paradigm. Perhaps, claims Zizek, "postmodernism inverts modernism: one returns to big mythical themes, but they are deprived of their cosmic resonance and treated like common fragments to be manipulated; in short, in modernism we have fragments of common daily life expressing global metaphysical vision, while in postmodernism we have larger-than-life figures treated as fragments of common life" (29). The difference that Zizek draws here between modern and postmodern narrative strategies may be usefully aphoristic as a pat distinction between two historical periods that share a fraught relationship – it speaks in terms of literary form to Lyotard's "incredulity to metanarratives," for instance – but it fails as a discussion of historically specific literary habits. Zizek's formulation of historically specific "metaphysical visions," that is, is valuable only in the way that formulae such as "the age of irony" or "incredulity to metanarratives" are valuable: as short-hands for historically specific epistemic, economic, social, cultural, and political constellations. Certainly the narrative irony that Zizek identifies as a characteristic of postmodernism may, in fact, be a characteristic of postmodernism but this narrative irony is certainly not unique to postmodernity. Postmodern narratives may be cast ironically, but not all ironic desublimations of "mythical themes" or "global metaphysical visions" are necessarily postmodern, unless, for instance, one wants to figure – in a descriptive move without any

historical sensitivity or critical value – Shakespeare’s *Troilus and Cressida* as “postmodern.”⁶⁸

The problem with such abstract figurations of narrative irony is that they refuse to recognize that the relative ironicness of a narrative is always imprecise and context dependent, relying heavily on impressionistic responses: except in the most heavy-handed examples (e.g. baldly religious allegory or blatant satire) the presumed relationship between “metaphysical” totalities and the individual event is always unclear. This problem becomes particularly obvious when dealing with the question of narrative irony in *A Chaste Maid*. As White points out, irony is not a trope in the same way that metaphor is a trope because irony always fundamentally relies on context (27): when one sees a metaphor, one knows that one sees a metaphor, but – as so many failing jokes attest – irony is contextually determined rather than being determined in terms internal to its form. So when asking about the relative ironicness of a narrative, one begs the question about the precise context that we must invoke when dealing with a putatively ironic utterance. Is it the case that the “cosmic resonance” of *A Chaste Maid*’s romance structure is desublimated by the brute facts of a world of getting and spending and adultery and vulgarity? Is the meaning-determining “context” of *A Chaste Maid* the narratively unruly city of London as Stow imagines it? Is it the vile city of getting and spending in which Yellowhammer feels justified in selling his daughter to a hideous

⁶⁸ As Heather James points out in *Shakespeare’s Troy*, the literary technique of desublimation that Žižek describes (i.e., the reduction of grand narratives to the level of banal dailiness) works through *Troilus and Cressida* as Shakespeare deflates a vision of the *translatio imperii* by providing the backstory of a petulant Paris, a narcissistic Achilles, a glory hungry Hector, a dim Ajax. See also David Hillman’s “*Troilus and Cressida*: The Gastric Epic,” and Matthew A. Greenfield’s “Fragments of Nationalism in *Troilus and Cressida*.”

member of the gentry? Is the “context” of *A Chaste Maid* a vision of London that recognizes the metaphysical import of Cheapside? Is the context of *A Chaste Maid* a properly literary historical context insofar as the play must be understood alongside the generally satirical city comedies with which it is allied or the tradition of verse satire to which Gibbons finds city comedy indebted? Perhaps this struggle to determine the text-fixing context and the ironicness or non-ironicness of the play speaks to a failure of reading, a failure to understand the sorts of radical indeterminacies that texts pose for readers, that plays pose for audiences. To reduce “context” to “setting,” which voice of the city – as “it calls unceasingly” in “more than one voice simultaneously” – can provide a homogenously ironic or un-ironic play?

Urban Uncertainty.

This chapter has dealt with untimely deaths, once again, only obliquely, because the apparatus through which one must negotiate the question of untimely deaths is, my dissertation argues, fundamentally oblique. I have, specifically, referred to the staged deaths and resurrections of Moll and Touchwood Junior as potential “indexes” of a broader sense of cultural redemption, and the question of this indexicality is precisely the question that this chapter has begged. What, put simply, does it mean to identify a death as an “index” of broader cultural redemption? The answer to this question is the answer on which understanding the relative timeliness of these feigned deaths and resurrections relies.

When reading the staged deaths of Moll and Touchwood Jr. as potential indexes of a broader cultural redemption, I am ultimately asking about the relationship between individual lives and the broader historical framework that the text raises. When asking about the sense of a broader cultural redemption that may or may not be staged in *A Chaste Maid*, one necessarily asks about the relation between each individual node in the staged world, and one asks whether or not it synecdochally relates to the broader historical world. It is in this sense that the feigned deaths and resurrections of Moll and Touchwood Junior might be understood as indexes of a broader cultural transfiguration: if the city is to be read as redeemed at the end of the play – a questionable assumption – then it is to be read as redeemed in each of its parts simultaneously. Sir Walter has stopped hounding whores, say; the Kixes have (with the help of Touchwood Senior) restored their marriage; the scholar Tim has successfully entered the world of the city after his cloistering at Cambridge. Only through this synecdochal understanding of the relationship between the individual and the universal can the play's invocations of Christ – through its allusions to Lent and its staging of resurrection – make sense. This synecdochal logic, that is, is precisely the logic of Christ's death and resurrection as it is figured biblically: when Christ dies, the walls of Jerusalem metaphorically fall, Peter is lost before the dawn, the world is dark; when Christ rises, the walls of Jerusalem are rebuilt, Peter becomes the rock on which the church is founded, the world is born again in the mode of promise. As above, so below; in the totality, the individual, and vice versa. Such a reading of *A Chaste Maid* will always be troubled, however, by the fact of the Allwits, as they leave Cheapside to set up a high-end brothel in the Strand: in the field of

redemption, there are outliers. Perhaps operating as an ironic counterpoint to the romance conventions that demand the simultaneous redemption of a culture in all points simultaneously, or perhaps as allegories of the Calvinist reprobates who lurk among the saved as aliens of history, the Allwits never quite fit in.

Of course, as I discussed in terms of Shakespeare's *Richard II*, the question of the lifespan's shape is not necessarily or only determined by the nature of the historical pattern in which the individual operates, and it is never clear whether lifespans in *A Chaste Maid* are imagined to have a shape at all. Certainly the deaths and resurrections of Moll and Touchwood Junior have some sense of indexical potency if we read the play as a non-ironic romance, and their untimely deaths are best understood within a typical narrative of correction. As history is interrupted – as the play is once again tonally interrupted by their deaths – resurrections correct the times' disjointedness. But also, as at the end of *Richard II*, there is a question of whether or not lifespans have shapes, whether or not they should be understood according to determined or variously historical and biographical overdetermined patterns. In a space such as Cheapside – the most sacred and the most profane street in London as it runs between St. Paul's and Thomas à Becket's church while filled with money-hungry merchants – such answers are never clear.

Chapter 3

Tragedy and Epic in Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage***A Prologue: On Marlowe's Character.**

There is a paradox about biographies. We read them to savor the shape and texture of an individual life, yet few literary forms could be more predictable. Everyone has to be born, and almost everyone has to be educated, oppressed by parents, plagued by siblings, and launched into the world; they then enter upon social and sexual relationships of their own, produce children, and finally expire. The structure of biography is biology. For all its tribute to the individual spirit, it is our animal life that underpins it.

– Terry Eagleton, “Buried in the Life.”

In this prologue to my chapter on *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, I am interested in the untimely death of its writer, Christopher Marlowe, who was stabbed through the eye by Ingram Frizer after a day of drinking in Deptford. I have no new evidence to provide to the ongoing debates about the circumstances of Marlowe's death, I have no fresh interpretation of the sparse and ambiguous extant evidence, and I am not here interested in determining the precise circumstances that lead to his death. Rather, I am interested in the biographies that have been written about Marlowe's life and death and in how they illuminate the problems of biography that I have dealt with in my previous chapters. I include this prologue, that is, because the myriad biographical responses to Marlowe's death illustrate the difficulty that biographers face when attempting to recount the life story of someone who has died “too soon”: they struggle to provide the sense of an ending to a life that seems to have ended senselessly. I include this prologue here specifically – before a chapter on Marlowe's *Dido* – because the biographies that have

been written about Marlowe beg the sorts of questions that Marlowe asks in his play. What does it mean, Marlowe asks in *Dido*, to imagine that lives develop linearly in a way that facilitates a sense of narrative coherence? How are we to understand a life that simply fails to make narrative sense on its own terms because the shape of this life is determined by forces external to the subject whose life is imagined to develop smoothly across a lifespan? How do we narratively represent the story of a life if that life's end fails to emerge transparently or directly from biographical moments that came before it?

Marlowe, Biography, Tragedy

In an essay from *Harper's* from which I have culled an epigraph, Terry Eagleton imagines a "paradox about biographies," but the paradox that he detects relies on a fundamental misrecognition of the work that biography performs. According to Eagleton, we "read biographies to savor the shape and texture of an individual life" (89), but we always end up with the same plot no matter who the biography's subject happens to be. The problem with biographies, he claims, is that we struggle to comprehend a singular life when we read them, even though biographies produce plots that are far from singular. Eagleton is wrong to detect a paradox here because he mistakenly imagines that the similarity of plots undermines a readerly desire for singularity. Certainly, as Eagleton suggests, most biographies traverse familiar narrative arcs that are determined by a combination of biology and cultural imperatives – they move from birth, to education, to erotic entanglements, to death, for instance – but they narrate very different lives that have engaged each node of this particular plot in very different ways. Indeed, as dramatic

tragedy amply demonstrates, the same plot can subtend a variety of singular stories that are no less singular for the fact of a shared plot: the stories of Hamlet and Hieronimo may be similar in terms of plot, for instance, but *Hamlet* and *The Spanish Tragedy* are very different plays.

This critique of Eagleton's reading of biography is admittedly impressionistic, but it might be easily translated into formal narratological terms by appeal to the distinction between proairetic and hermeneutic codes that Roland Barthes introduces in *S/Z*. The paradox that seems to surprise Eagleton here is a paradox only if one imagines that readers refuse to move through a text at any level beyond the proairetic level of events and action. If one imagines that the relative predictability of biography is somehow paradoxical – that readers read for interesting plot twists even though there are none to be found – then one must imagine that the reader of biographies reads biographies only to find out what happens next. While it is impossible to demonstrate that such readers of biographies are wholly imaginary (though I believe they are) their numbers are certainly too small to explain, for instance, the apparent popularity of Marlowe biographies in both trade and academic markets. If readers read biographies for plot, and if the plot of Marlowe's biography is always the same – born in Canterbury, dead in Deptford – then one is unable to explain the apparent demand for more and more biographies about Marlowe. Rather than imagining that readers of biographies are plot-hungry, it makes more sense to imagine that these readers read for and respond to the hermeneutic code. Readers of biographies, that is, read biographies under the impulse of an epistemophilic

desire that each biography negotiates differently, and they attempt to divine a mysterious truth: What is the “character” of the subject of the biography?

I draw attention to the fact of this imagined character that informs biographies because it is only through the imagining of this character that one can, as Eagleton does, recognize the genre’s literariness. Biographies, as Eagleton points out, are “literary forms,” and they are “literary forms” that rely – as all narrative literary forms do – on a sense of development. But without an imagined, temporally coherent character to serve as the subject of a biography – without a coherent subject to unfold over time – biography ceases to be a story and becomes instead something akin to chronicle as Hayden White imagines it: the simple chronology of events without a focus, without a compelling directionality, without a sense of causality.⁶⁹ If one is writing a biography, then one necessarily presumes the existence of a coherent character who articulates himself or herself over time, and one also presumes tautologically that one can divine and make sense of each moment in a biography by appeal to a character who articulates him or herself through action. By presuming this vision of an essential character who plays him or herself over time, biographies make lives make sense, and they provide a sense of narrative coherence: when envisioning a life as the unfolding of character, a chronology of things that happened to an individual becomes a series of gestures that articulate the core of a being.

⁶⁹ As Annabel Patterson and others have pointed out, chronicles rarely ever perform the sort of work that White attributes to them – the work of assembling facts in chronological order without implying or arguing for a causal chain between those facts that explains them in properly historical terms. I invoke this vision of chronicle, however, in the way that White obviously means when he discusses “chronicle” as a genre: it is a heuristic category, crucial to our understanding of historically-minded writing.

This relationship between imagined character and biographical narrative coherence becomes particularly clear when dealing with biographies of Marlowe because his biography is always traced along a smooth narrative arc even while his biographers simultaneously describe his death as untimely or as disruptive of a predefined narrative. When writing Marlowe's biography, that is, biographers are faced with a paradox that they resolve: his death is untimely insofar as it is said to come somehow too soon, though it also seems to arrive at the correct time according to Marlowe's character as it unfolds diachronically over the span of twenty-nine years. Constance Brown Kuriyama's most recent biography of Marlowe, *Christopher Marlowe: A Renaissance Life*, deals remarkably and self-consciously with this paradox when she explains, on Marlowe's death at Deptford, that

[a] sudden death, even one that occurred four centuries ago, is an affront to normalcy. Such seemingly absurd events violate our sense of order and coherence, disturb us so profoundly that the need to probe and analyze them is as automatic as breathing. If we cannot undo what has happened, we can at least try to comprehend it. (120)

Here, Kuriyama recognizes the ironic double movement involved in biographies such as Marlowe's that end with untimely deaths: the "absurd event" of the untimely death proves an "affront to normalcy," but this event must be stripped of its essential absurdity so that normalcy will eventually prevail with the aid of "analysis" and "comprehension." Biographies must resist absurdity, then, even when the lives they treat end absurdly. Kuriyama's self-consciousness here is striking for its critical modesty when contrasted with her much earlier reading of Marlowe's death in *Hammer or Anvil: Psychological Patterns in Christopher Marlowe's Plays*. In *Hammer or Anvil*, Kuriyama works

diligently in the language of psychoanalysis to establish Marlowe's essential character through which one can understand his plays, his poetry, his apparent attraction to espionage, his purported atheism, and his death. In this earlier work, there are for Kuriyama no accidents in Marlowe's life because everything that Marlowe says, does, and writes is uniquely and essentially "Marlovian"; even his sudden death makes perfect sense as the culmination of the innate law of his character as it unfolds over time. In the Marlowe of *Hammer or Anvil*, all of his behaviour and thought stems from an unresolved Oedipal complex inspired by an overbearing mother and an unstable father; this Oedipal complex informs the atheistic overreachers that Harry Levin first described in Marlowe's plays, it explains Marlowe's unwillingness to unambiguously serve a single master, it explains his alleged blasphemies, it explains his attraction to the duplicity of espionage, and it explains a bar-room brawl, a "final violent attempt to reassert his dominance, manifesting itself in a sudden attack from behind involving the provocative seizure and use of the prospective victim's weapon (castrating before one is castrated)" (21).

While Kuriyama's vision of Marlowe's Oedipal complex is an extreme example of the biographer's struggle to produce the essential character that renders a biographical unfolding coherent, it remains typical of Marlowe biography generally, particularly in those biographies that work to comprehend Marlowe's death. In Lisa Hopkins' *Christopher Marlowe: A Literary Life*, for instance, Marlowe's death might be read as the result of his irascibility, which is the result of his upbringing in a tumultuous family dynamic like the tumultuous family dynamics that we see in *Dido*. For Marlowe as for Dido, claims Hopkins, "family, rather than character, is fate" (27), and a violent end to

Marlowe is narratively apt considering his childhood. In other biographies, Marlowe's death is eminently reasonable when read as the political assassination of an overreaching contrarian: Marlowe was attracted to espionage because of his contrarian character, and he was murdered because his knowledge made him dangerous to the Earl of Essex (Nicholl in the first edition of *The Reckoning*), or to the Privy Council (De Kalb, Riggs, Lom, and Nicholl in the second edition of *The Reckoning*), or to Walsingham (Williamson). Though these explanations of Marlowe's death are all unique, they share a single attribute: despite its apparent absurdity, Marlowe's death might be "comprehended" narratively. Kenneth Friedenreich discusses this same point when he claims that "[m]ore than a few commentators . . . have said that Marlowe's life is the stuff of great tragedy. We should expect it to resolve like tragedy, with a definite sense of closure. It does not" (361). In this observation, Friedenreich provocatively sums up the point to which I have been alluding: facing the set of events that constitutes the record of Marlowe's life, biographers appeal to familiar narrative logics like the logic of tragedy to make this life cohere.

When Friedenreich invokes tragedy here, he coincidentally highlights a dramatic genre that is strikingly akin to the biographies written about Marlowe: both tragedies and Marlowe biographies regularly struggle to make sense of untimely deaths, and both suggest that their fatal conclusions arrive organically from the character of their protagonists. More specifically, the fatal conclusion of most tragedies, as with the fatal conclusion to most Marlowe biographies, is figured to result from that character's decisions or traits. It would be difficult to imagine, for instance, that *Hamlet* would be

called a tragedy or that his death would be best considered properly tragic if a resolute Fortinbras had attacked Elsinore before a ghost appeared to Horatio, and if Fortinbras' army had killed Hamlet in a volley of arrows on the first day of a siege. While the result would be the same – Hamlet would die – the death of Hamlet would no longer function in narratively tragic terms because this death would no longer occur as a result of Hamlet's character. Quite simply, we would no longer have *The Tragedie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke* and we would have instead the story of a prince who died as a result of international political struggle.⁷⁰ Though apparently unformalized, this observation about *Hamlet* adheres closely to the formally rigorous vision of tragedy found in Aristotle. This is not the space in which to negotiate the question of *hamartia* and its precise meaning in Aristotle's *Poetics*, but for the sake of my argument it is clear enough that, whatever Aristotle means by *hamartia*, he opposes the tragic death caused by *hamartia* to the non-tragic death inspired by external forces. A death inspired by external forces is for Aristotle misadventure rather than tragedy, and it makes for a bad plot (1451a-1452b). When Friedenreich says that Marlowe's death fails to be tragic because it fails to provide "closure," then, one might also suggest that Marlowe's death fails to be tragic if we recognize that this death fails to arise from an essential aspect of his character. Perhaps, that is, Marlowe's death might be attributed to misadventure and contingency or to the

⁷⁰ Hegel makes a similar point when he claims that *Hamlet* is typical of "romantic" tragedy because it focuses on the internal subject-centric causes of its catastrophe: "From a purely external point of view, the death of Hamlet appears as an accident occasioned by his duel with Laertes and the interchange of the daggers. But in the background of Hamlet's soul, death is already present from the first. The sandbank of finite condition will not content his spirit. As the focus of such mourning and weakness, such melancholy, such a loathing of all the conditions of life, we feel from the first that, hemmed within such an environment of horror, he is a lost man, whom the surfeit of the soul has well-nigh already done to death before death itself approaches him from without" (90).

sort of senselessness that troubles Kuriyama. Considering the exiguous and ambiguous extant evidence surrounding the circumstances of Marlowe's death and his relationship with Frizer, such an attribution may not be far off the mark. One might imagine, for instance, that Ingram Frizer was simply a nasty drunk and that Marlowe's death is best explicable not in terms of his life – not because he was castrating before he was castrated, for instance, and not because his childhood made him irascible – but because he decided to get drunk with a malicious con-artist on an afternoon in the late spring. Such an ending, of course, refuses to make much narrative sense of Marlowe's life, but such an ending may be the sort of ending to which Marlowe came.

This intersection between biography and tragedy lays the groundwork for my subsequent discussion of Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage*. In dealing with Marlowe's biography and the question of tragedy, I have argued that Marlowe's death might fail to be "tragic" because it might fail to emerge organically in subject-centric terms and because it might scuttle the biographer's attempt to make sense of deaths as the narratively appropriate conclusion to lives. This vision of tragedy will be important to my reading of *Dido*. Unlike many writers in the Dido tradition such as Virgil, Chaucer, and William Gager, Marlowe challenges the assumption that Dido's life is best understood as a tragedy in these traditional terms, and it challenges the assumption that lives unfold, as a biographer might hope, coherently according to the nature of a subject. Rather, I argue below, when we read Marlowe's play, we are forced to ask the same sorts of questions that I have asked here about Marlowe's death because Marlowe's play refuses to make sense of Dido's life in terms internal to that life. Rather than imagining Dido's story as a

coherent tragedy – as if her death at the end emerges simply or straightforwardly from her character or from decisions that she has made – Marlowe suggests that her life is caught up in the unfolding of empire and history. In this sense, Marlowe's play implies that Dido's death is neither timely nor untimely because the primary plot of the play – a plot that traverses a section of epic history – pays attention to her only instrumentally.

Dido's Difficult Passage.

Before stabbing herself near the end of the fourth book of Virgil's *Aeneid*, Dido carefully and clearly describes her life in terms of its imagined completeness. Here, on the bed she had shared with Aeneas and on which she will end her life, Dido describes her death as coming at the right time according to a Roman vision of Fortune: "I lived my life out to the very end," she claims,

"And passed the stages Fortune had appointed.
Now my tall shade goes to the under world.
I built a famous town, saw my great walls,
Avenged my husband, made my hostile brother
Pay for his crime. Happy, alas, too happy,
If only the Dardanian keels had never
Beached on our coast." And here she kissed the bed. (4.907-14)⁷¹

Dido is certainly not happy with her fate at the end of *Aeneid* IV, and she seems to think that things might have been different, but she is comfortable in her decision: having achieved certain goals and thus rendered the remainder of her life in some way excessive, Dido imagines that her death comes at the right time and that she will be duly welcomed in the underworld to which her shade is going. But Dido is wrong. As Dido lies crumpled on her bed with a sword through her breast, her soul is unwilling to move toward the underworld because her soul is not ready to become disembodied: it is stuck in the body that no longer wants it. Witnessing the difficulty of this situation – a body unwilling to live and a soul unwilling to leave – Juno, the patron of Carthage and the divine ally of Dido, intervenes to make Dido's passage less difficult:

Almighty Juno,
Filled with pity for this long ordeal

⁷¹ Unless otherwise indicated, quotations from the *Aeneid* are from Robert Fitzgerald's 1983 translation.

And difficult passage, now sent Iris down
Out of Olympus to set free
The wrestling spirit from the body's hold.
For since she died, not at her fated span
Nor as she merited, but before her time
Enflamed and driven mad, Proserpina
Had not yet plucked from her the golden hair,
Delivering her to Orcus of the Styx. (4.958-67)

Dido may experience her death as the conclusion to a life that had reached its “fated span,” and she might believe that she has “passed the stages” appointed by Fortune, but Orcus has not been prepared for her arrival and she must be punished for her presumption. The next time she appears in the poem – in the sixth book, when Aeneas visits the underworld to learn Rome’s future history – she is among the souls kept from finding peace because they have, in Dryden’s translation, “suborned fate” and died preemptively.

While Dido’s death in Virgil’s poem is precisely the sort of untimely death with which I deal in this dissertation – a death that interrupts an imagined narrative potential – I am interested here primarily in Marlowe’s adaptation of Virgil’s poem in *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, specifically the ways that he troubles Virgil’s vision of Dido’s untimely death. Rather than repeating Virgil and emphasizing that Dido’s life has been cut short, Marlowe complicates our understanding that lives are readily understandable in such terms. Specifically, Marlowe emphasizes that, when questioning the relative timeliness of Dido’s death, we must recognize that Fate and Fortune operate on a broader, impersonal scale in which her life is also imbricated. Though Dido dies “before her time” according to Virgil’s poem, her time in Marlowe’s play is not entirely her own, and her death must consequently be understood by appeal to the other temporalities in which

she is caught. What does it mean, the play asks, to imagine that individuals live lives determined according to a logic internal to them when these lives are also informed, often with disastrous results, by the unfolding of history? Do lives bear their own narrative coherence, or are they simply incidental to the broader, impersonal development of cities, nations, and empires?

This chapter will unfold much as my previous chapters have done: it opens with a discussion of the play's vision of history and it concludes with a discussion of the relationship between this vision of history and the untimely deaths that the play stages. I follow this format again because, as was the case with *Richard II* and *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, the question of untimely deaths in *Dido* is inextricably bound up with the broader frameworks of historical understanding in which lives are also caught. More specifically, before discussing what to make of Dido's death in Marlowe's play – a death that the *Aeneid* figures as untimely – I will discuss the play's vision of the *translatio imperii*, the imagined westward movement of empire from Troy to Rome that the *Aeneid* proposes and that early modern English writers often invoked to idealize England as the “new” Rome or the “new” Troy.⁷² In *Dido*, I argue, Marlowe draws conspicuous attention to the logic of the *translatio imperii*, and he provides a vision of the *translatio imperii* that differs significantly from the one that Virgil offers in the *Aeneid*. Where

⁷² Heather James argues in *Shakespeare's Troy* that, by the 1570s, the *translatio imperii* was no longer an intellectually valuable category of analysis among historians who had challenged many of its fundamental premises (21-24). Though her argument regarding the worlds of history writing is utterly compelling, the *translatio imperii* remained significantly valuable beyond the worlds of antiquarianism and humanist historiography, appearing regularly in civic pageants, for instance, well into the seventeenth century. Indeed, it seems impossible to read Marlowe's play – based on the founding text of the myth of empire's translation and translatability – without recognizing that the rhetoric of the *translatio imperii* overdetermines and informs what the play stages.

Virgil suggests that the *translatio imperii* is fundamentally supersessionary – that the past has been left behind for a new present – Marlowe takes the vision of empire’s translation more literally and he forces his audience to ask questions about what it might mean to imagine that Troy is “re-born” in Rome and that Rome is “re-born” in England. While Virgil’s poem suggests the supersessional nature of empire’s translation, that is, Marlowe suggests that we need to ask questions about what “re-birth” might mean if taken literally, and he stages a world in which the past is chronically reborn in the present.

In the second section of this chapter, I deal specifically with the death of Dido and I ask how we are expected to understand the death of an individual within a framework that imagines the past haunting the present. In this section, I discuss the intersection of the temporality of epic with the temporality of tragedy. While the temporality of epic is characterized in *Dido* by the sense of broad historical repetition and by the sense of its impersonality, the temporality of tragedy is – or should be – quite different: it should typically suggest that an individual human life is understandable in terms immanent to that human life. In other early modern versions of Dido’s story such as William Gager’s *Dido Tragoedia*, for instance, audiences are asked to understand that Dido’s death is inspired by a moral lapse or by some problem immanent to her own being. As I will discuss, the same thing might be said, with some qualifications, about the death of Dido in Virgil’s poem. But Marlowe’s play foregrounds the intersection of epic history and personal lives in such a way that recognizing death in terms immanent to individual lives becomes difficult if not entirely impossible. If, as is often said, Virgil’s version of Dido’s story seems like a tragedy in the middle of an epic, then the opposite must be said of

Marlowe's play because, in his play, epic progress fundamentally informs the space of tragedy and locates a tragic story within the framework of an epic. In this sense, Dido in Marlowe's play is not a victim of *hamartia*, but a victim of history, and her death cannot be imagined as "untimely" in terms immanent to her own life because lives in Marlowe's play, including Dido's, are always trapped by and in a dreadfully repetitive history.

A Frieze and a Statue: Repetition and Replacement in Marlowe's *Dido*.

After Aeneas is shipwrecked at Carthage in the first act of Marlowe's *Dido*, he tacitly provides a conflicted vision of historical movement that usefully characterizes the unfolding of history that the remainder of the play will stage. Bereft at the loss of Troy and the presumed loss of his Trojan fleet, he feigns a fatalistic confidence when addressing his troops, and he works to inspire them by providing a synoptic history of Trojan struggle and a future history of Trojan redemption:

You sons of care, companions of my course,
Priam's misfortune follows us by sea,
And Helen's rape doth haunt ye at the heels.
How many dangers have we overpassed!
Both barking Scylla and the sounding rocks,
The Cyclops' shelves and grim Ceraunia's seat
Have you o'ergone, and yet remain alive!
Pluck up your hearts, since fate still rests our friend,
And changing heavens may those good days return
Which Pergama did vaunt in all her pride. (1.1.142-51)

Both melancholically fearful and blithely optimistic, Aeneas tries here to situate himself and his troops not spatially but historically. While he opens the second act orienting himself in geographical terms – "Where am I now?" he asks in the second act's first line – he attempts in the first act to find himself within a broader temporal order, and he has

trouble doing so. Describing the situation in which he and his soldiers find themselves, he claims that they are burdened by a past that, in some way, remains with them as they are followed by “Priam’s misfortune” and “haunted” by Helen’s rape. Though they have sailed from the fallen Troy, and though they have traveled an indeterminate distance sailing around the Mediterranean, they remain trapped by a legacy that continues to determine their imperiled state as shipwrecked wanderers. For Aeneas, the primary problem that he and his companions face is one of historical inertia: they struggle to escape their past – they have fled Trojan ruins – but they are unable to do so. In a strange turn at the end of this speech, however, Aeneas suggests a paradoxical solution to this problem: though they are troubled by their inability to escape Troy once and for all, their goal is to return to Troy and to the “good days . . . Which Pergama [i.e., Troy] did vaunt in all her pride.” Instead of positing a forward momentum, a break from the past, a struggle towards a new future, Aeneas hopes that Pergama will “return.” Aeneas’s goal here is to overcome the past by returning to that past, or to move forward into a lost past.

Aeneas is similarly confused about his historical position when he, Achates, and Ascanius, searching for Carthage, stumble across a statue to Priam that Dido has had erected outside the city’s walls. As they wander, Aeneas is struck – he seems “amazed” according to Achates – because he sees it and thinks that the statue, rendered with apparently tremendous verisimilitude, is Priam himself, unslain: “here’s Priamus, / And when I know it is not, then I die” (2.1.8-9). Achates soon after suffers the same delusion, but he catches himself when struck by the limits of mimesis:

I cannot choose but fall upon my knees
And kiss this hand. O, where is Hecuba?

Here she was wont to sit; but, saving air,
Is nothing here, and what is this but stone? (11-15)

Despite Achates' attention to the stoniness of the statue with which they are faced, Aeneas remains strangely divided like Freud's fetishist, both knowing that the statue is carved from stone and believing otherwise. It seems to Aeneas that both "nothing now is left of Priamus" and that "Priamus is left, and this is he!" (20-21), and he succumbs to further delusions, rendered more pathetic by the fact of his own occasional self-consciousness:

Achates, though mine eyes say this is stone,
Yet thinks my mind that this is Priamus
And when my grievèd heart signs and says no,
Then would it leap out to give Priam life.
O were I not at all, so thou mightst be!
Achates, see, King Priam wags his hand!
He is alive, Troy is not overcome! (23-29).

Within this confusion, we see not only the transubstantiation of stone for flesh, but also the sudden transformation of Carthage into Troy – a transformation that plays itself out in varying ways throughout the play. Aeneas recognizes that the walls by which the statue of Priam have been built "should be Carthage walls," but he also thinks "that town there should be Troy, yon Ida's hill" (1, 7). For Aeneas, again, the past continues to loom large in the present: the dead Priam is alive, the fallen Troy is strong.

At this moment in *Dido* when Aeneas remains mired in the past – when he finds Priam reborn in a statue and Troy reborn on the shores of Northern Africa – his distance from Virgil's Aeneas is striking. At the analogous moment in the *Aeneid*, Aeneas is not deluded, he does not see the past reborn in the present, and his perspective is decidedly forward-looking. While Marlowe's Aeneas is stunned before the statue of Priam and

articulates a confusion over his historical position, Virgil's Aeneas articulates a sound historical self-perception when faced not with a statue, but with a frieze that tells the whole story of Trojan loss on the walls of Carthage's great temple:

‘What spot on earth,’
He said, ‘what region of earth, Achatës,
Is not full of the story of our sorrow?
Look, here is Priam. Even so far away
Great valor has due honor; they weep here
For how the world goes, and our life that passes
Touches their hearts. Throw off your fear. This fame
Insures some kind of refuge.’

He broke off
To feast his eyes and mind on a mere image,
Sighing often, cheeks grown wet with tears,
To see again how, fighting around Troy,
The Greeks broke here, and ran before the Trojans,
And there the Phrygians ran, as plumed Achilles
Harried them in his warcar. (1.624-631)

When Aeneas looks here at the frieze, his “appreciation” is certainly in the mode of identification, but it is an identification that locates the past in the past as part of a “life that passes.” While Aeneas can see Priam on a wall, that is, he realizes that this Priam is no longer with him, that this Priam no longer follows him by sea, and that this Priam has taken “refuge” from the realm of the living to dwell in the realm of fame in a devout frieze on a foreign land, “so far away” from where he died. While the past still lays some ambiguous claim on the present for Virgil's Aeneas, he recognizes the present as relatively more autonomous from the past and its violence.

The most obvious difference between these moments in Virgil's poem and Marlowe's play is the mode of historical representation with which each poet asks his Aeneas to deal. In Virgil's poem, Aeneas is faced with a frieze that depicts the fall of

Troy in two dimensions and draws attention to its own mimetic failure. The frieze, that is, “represents” action – Trojans running, Aeneas chasing Trojans in his warcar – but it fails aesthetically if its aim is verisimilitude: it highlights, in its static representation of motion, its difference from that which it aims to represent, and in doing so it emphasizes the gap between the past and the present or between the fall of Troy and the moment at which Aeneas views the frieze. In Marlowe’s play, however, Aeneas is instead faced with a frustratingly lifelike statue that draws attention to the paradoxical gesture that characterizes memorials generally. While memorials work, as memorials, to indicate the pastness of the past, they also threaten to emphasize the simultaneous and often overwhelming presence of the past within the present, particularly when they operate in the mode of re-presentation. Writing in and of a very different context, Andreas Huyssen draws attention to this danger of memorial re-presentations in *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*. In *Present Pasts*, writing of the early 21st century and its characteristic “hypertrophic memory,” Huyssen argues that our “ever more voracious museal culture” bears the weight of “recent and not so recent pasts” that “impinge upon the present through modern media of reproduction like photography, film, recorded music, and the Internet, as well as through the explosion of historical scholarship” (1). It is this sense of “reproduction” specifically that troubles Huyssen because the contemporary discourse of memorialization collapses the politically mobilizing “constitutive tension between past and present” by figuring the memorial not as a simple historical mnemonic but a “representation . . . [a] making present” (10). As Jonathan Gil Harris puts it when responding to Huyssen, “[f]ar from safeguarding the

difference between now and then, memory discourses can expand the empire of the present” so that earlier historical moments are imagined to dwell within and fundamentally inform the present while losing their particular historicity (n.p.).⁷³ I mention Huyssen and Harris here because their arguments about the conflation of past and present through various modes of historical representation speak to the stark differences between Virgil’s poem and Marlowe’s play when each poet locates his Aeneas before a memorial to the lost Trojan past. In Virgil’s poem, this monument forces Aeneas to experience history in supersessionary terms by emphasizing the fundamental difference between the absent past and the present present. The equivalent moment in Marlowe’s play, however, troubles the Virgilian memorial through the early modern rhetoric of sculptural mimesis, according to which verisimilitude is the highest ideal (cf. Barkan *passim*; Meek 400-01). For Marlowe, unlike Virgil, the past’s monuments mark the position of the present within a historical trajectory and, paradoxically, further blur that already ambiguous trajectory through gestures of re-presentation. Just as the verisimilitude characteristic of “modern media of reproduction like photography, film, recorded music, and the Internet” transforms historical representation into a problematic re-presentation, so too does the statue of Priam threaten to infuse the present with a past that cannot be overcome. Reading this scene in light of Marlowe’s obvious Ovidian influence further highlights the past’s imbrication in the

⁷³ Huyssen and Harris are, of course, not alone in recognizing the conflicting temporalities that characterize modern memory discourses. See, for instance, Linda Charnes’ *Hamlet’s Heirs*, or Terence Hawkes and Hugh Grady’s *Presentist Shakespeare*.

present: this statue sitting before Marlowe's Aeneas seems ready to follow Pygmalion's Galatea and come alive at any moment.

Marlowe's difference from Virgil here is crucial to our understanding of Marlowe's play because it microcosmically figures Marlowe's unique vision of history's unfolding: for Marlowe, Aeneas's confusion before the frieze stages a particularly lucid understanding of the historical world in which his Aeneas dwells. By arguing that this moment in the play is crucial to our understanding of the play as a whole and its vision of history in particular, I am moving away from a critical tradition that has tended either to metaphorize this moment or to read it in characterological terms. Typical of this tradition is, for instance, Anthony B. Dawson, who argues that Marlowe – relying on the conventions of the stage rather than the conventions of epic poetry – “has psychologized” this moment in Virgil's poem, “and in a way trivialized it” (64). For Dawson, this moment is about grief, and it tells the story “not so much of a defeated Troy but of a deracinated individual. . . . All this derives first from the fact that Aeneas is grief-stricken and focused on his own feelings”:

This completely reframes what happens in *Aeneid* where Aeneas, when he enters the temple grove and sees the frieze, finds cause for hope for the first time. . . . It is precisely the memory of Troy and its destruction, experienced in grief but leading to Aeneas's mission, that produces the salutary effect, whereas the same memory stops Marlowe's Aeneas in his tracks, leading him into hallucination and possible despair. (64)

Donald Stump largely agrees with this reading of the play, arguing that Aeneas has been transformed by Marlowe into a “deluded exile who distresses children and embarrasses his fellow soldiers” (82), although he expands on Dawson's point to argue that this moment is a moment of radically deflating satire characteristic of the play more broadly.

Emily Bartels offers a similarly psychologicistic reading of the scene when she argues that Aeneas is “in a way right” when he sees Priam “alive,” wagging his hand just outside Carthage’s walls because “Priam and Troy do live on in Carthage in a figurative sense, as a part of the culture’s knowledge, legend, and art” (39). In the argument that follows, I expand on these readings of the scene by taking seriously Aeneas’s observations about the blurring of past and present. Certainly, Dawson is correct when he points out that Marlowe’s Aeneas is riddled by grief while Virgil’s Aeneas uses this moment to galvanize himself and overcome his loss, and certainly Stump is right when he claims that Marlowe’s Aeneas seems “deluded” and unheroic, and certainly Bartels is correct when she says that Priam and Troy continue to function in Carthage in terms of cultural inheritance. But I want to point out here that Aeneas’s delusions speak to the sense of historical haunting that characterizes much of the play. While this scene is interesting characterologically for Dawson and Stump, and while Bartels reads Marlowe’s Aeneas’s statement as true “in a figurative sense,” it has yet to be explored how, throughout the rest of the play, the past is in constant dialogue with the present and that the present in Marlowe’s play repeatedly re-enacts and re-produces that which has come before. In this sense, Aeneas’s “hallucination” speaks more truly to the sense of historical unfolding that the remainder of Marlowe’s play stages. Ultimately both Virgil’s poem and Marlowe’s play get the Aeneas they need: Virgil’s poem is about historical supersession and the movement towards an idealized Roman future and so his Aeneas becomes forward looking and overcomes his past when recognizing its pastness in the frieze; Marlowe’s play, however, is about historical repetition, and Aeneas recognizes that he is stuck in a

chronically repetitive past that threatens to come alive as Aeneas stands before Priam's statue. When Marlowe's Aeneas says "Troy is not overcome," he is in fact correct, and the remainder of the play involves a coming-to-terms with the powerful and frightening truth of this observation.

After recognizing, as I have argued, that Marlowe is preoccupied throughout the play with the reenactment and repetition of the past in the present – the return of the dead in the bodies of the living – the statue and its uncanny effect beg further considerations. When imagining the play performed by the Chapel Children,⁷⁴ one must also imagine that a boy stood onstage, probably stock-still, and played the role of Priam's statue. I suggest that a boy played the role of Priam's statue – rather than imagining that there was a prop statue – because it simply makes sense considering the economics of the theatre. Certainly it is possible to imagine that money would have been spent on elaborate props for a play by the Chapel Children but it seems unreasonable to commission the production of a statue for the stage when a boy serves the turn. I draw attention to this possible dramaturgical choice because it would produce a powerful effect when functioning within Marlowe's play: as Aeneas wavers between thinking that the statue of Priam is Priam himself and thinking that the statue is merely stone, the audience would ultimately experience the same oscillation, recognizing that the statue on stage is a living and breathing boy who is pretending to be a statue that seems living and breathing to

⁷⁴ Apart from a claim on the play's title page that it was performed by the "children of her Maiesties Chappel," there is no evidence that the play ever received an early modern performance. Donald Stump suggests that the children might have performed it in Ipswich or Norwich while touring in 1586 or 1587, and Brian Gibbons suggests in "Unstable Proteus" that it might have been performed at court without leaving a record. Because of a dearth of extant evidence, however, such claims about the play's first performances, if they occurred, are entirely conjectural.

Aeneas. I draw attention to this fact, that is, because it reinforces the sense of repetition with which Marlowe is preoccupied. Just as Aeneas experiences the revivification of the past in the present – the aliveness of the past in the memorializing stone – so too does the audience recognize that, indeed, Priam really might be alive. One can only speculate about what happened on stage at Blackfriars when Aeneas clearly sees Priam's hand wagging, but to imagine a boy's slightly twitching hand is certainly not beyond the realm of possibility.

Reanimating the Past.

Characters in Marlowe's play are often unable to put the past to rest, and they constantly recognize that the past is re-born in the present.⁷⁵ While in Virgil the past seems to echo evocatively in the present, Marlowe draws attention to the logic of replacement and repetition far more conspicuously than Virgil does.⁷⁶ The effect is unsettling. For instance, as mentioned above, "Carthage walls" have already become Trojan walls for Aeneas, but throughout *Dido* other characters make the same mistake when they find that the dead have been reanimated and continue to dwell among the living in decidedly

⁷⁵ Dawson recognizes a sense of repetition in the play that he locates in an anxiety over the imagined relationship between destiny and loss that is played out in early modern England. According to Dawson, Virgil's story is attractive to Marlowe and Shakespeare because it speaks to "the growing sense in the Elizabethan period of England's global, Protestant destiny, combined with the nagging feelings of loss associated with the demise of Catholicism, the erasure of images, the disappearance of embodied comforts before the mastery of a more rigorously austere religious aesthetic" (75). While Dawson deftly teases out the sense of loss that coincides with any sense of progress, I pay more specific attention to the uncanny sense of repetition that characterizes Marlowe's vision of history in the play itself.

⁷⁶ Tracing clusters of images in Books II and IV of the *Aeneid*, Victor A. Estevez points out the parallels that Virgil draws between the fall of Troy and the fall of Carthage. While, as Estevez points out, Virgil emphasizes that both Troy and Carthage are fallen cities by regularly invoking images of wounds and fire in Books II and IV, Marlowe expands on this sense of repetition, as I discuss here, by almost parodically elaborating the Virgilian repetition of image clusters to include the repetition of characters, say, or of precise scenarios.

pathetic ways. After losing her first husband Sichaeus at the hands of her brother Pygmalion, for instance, Dido replaces him with Aeneas: upon her marriage to Aeneas, Dido insists that “‘Sichaeus’, not ‘Aeneas’, be thou called” (3.3.58). Similarly, Ascanius, after losing his mother Creusa in the fall of Troy, insists upon meeting Dido that “‘Madam, you shall be my mother” (2.1.96), and she agrees to bear this role. As is regularly noted, Dido becomes a second Creusa for Aeneas as well as for Ascanius because she is both Aeneas’s second wife and the second woman whom he will leave behind in a cloud of smoke (Smith 186). Finally, adhering to this logic of replacement, Dido asks Aeneas to give her a child by him so that his departure will not be so traumatic: “‘Had I a son by thee, the grief were less, / That I might see Aeneas in his face” (5.1.148-9). In each of these cases, we see repeated the sort of “delusion” that Aeneas suffers before Priam’s statue: a delusion according to which the dead live on in the present and the living spend their lives interacting with ghosts.

These subject-centric examples of repetition and resurrection correspond to a macrocosmic sense of cultural re-building that *Dido* stages. Apart from the swift and crass replacement of individuals in the lives of other individuals – Aeneas for Sichaeus, Dido for Creusa, a child for his parent – the play also draws out this sense of repetition on the broader level of cities, emphasizing that Carthage is best regarded as a second Troy and that it must bear the inevitable pains that such an identification engenders. After deciding to remain in Carthage, for instance – contrary to Virgilian precedent and against the insistence of Mercury and Jove that he continue on his journey – Aeneas explains to Achates that

here [in Carthage, rather than Rome] shall flourish Priam's race,
And thou and I, Achates, for revenge
For Troy, for Priam, for his fifty sons,
Will lead an host against the hateful Greeks
And fire proud Lacedaemon o'er their heads (4.4.87-92).

Aeneas subsequently reiterates this point – that Carthage must be regarded as a second Troy – at the beginning of the fifth act when he declares to his soldiers, “Triumph, my mates, our travels are at end. / Here [again, in Carthage] will Aeneas build a statelier Troy / Than that which grim Atrides overthrew” (5.1.1-3). When asked by Ilioneus “But what shall it be called? ‘Troy’, as before?,” Aeneas claims that “That I have not determined with myself” (18-19). Before finally settling on “Anchiseaeon” as the name of the new Troy town (after his father, Anchises), the analogy between Carthage and Troy has been drawn so clearly that the subsequent and recursive parallels are difficult to ignore. By drawing this analogy and emphasizing it, Marlowe underscores the broad historical pattern that appears throughout the play.

When Marlowe introduces this moment into the story of Dido, he departs significantly from Virgil who neither includes such explicit descriptions of Carthage as the second Troy nor suggests that Aeneas dallies after Mercury arrives; as with many of Marlowe's inventions that move away from his Virgilian model, this change emphasizes the parallel between Carthage and Troy. When, for instance, as I discuss above, Marlowe puts Aeneas before a confusingly lifelike statue of Priam rather than putting him before a frieze, this change to Virgil's text emphasizes the historical paradigm that I have been discussing. Marlowe's change to Virgil's poem produces a similar effect when it highlights the repetition of Sichaeus in Aeneas or Creusa in Dido, and when Aeneas's

description of the Troy's fall figures Dido and Creusa in terms of their identical abandonment. Similarly, as Mary E. Smith points out, when Aeneas describes Cassandra's rape in the temple of Diana – rather than in the temple of Athena – the parallels between the cities or between the past and the present again become clear: “in the sack of Troy narrative [Marlowe] causes Cassandra to be violated in Diana's temple instead of Athena's as mythology dictates” (186 n.1), and in doing so he draws attention to a parallel between Cassandra's rape during the fall of Troy and Dido's “rape” by Aeneas in a cave in the woods (i.e., in the huntress Diana's temple). Repeatedly, that is, when Marlowe makes dramatic or unusual changes to Virgil's story, he does so in ways that draw attention to the vision of Carthage as a second Troy, on the verge of disaster.

The dramaturgy of the play also reinforces the striking parallels between Carthage and Troy to which Marlowe repeatedly draws attention throughout *Dido*. Though the play's original stage set has been the subject of much debate, and though it is impossible to be sure where it was originally performed or if it was – as the title page suggests – performed at all, Smith provides a compelling argument based on textual evidence – rather than on the nature of a specific performing space – to suggest that the “acting area was divided by a wall, probably built of painted laths, and identified by Aeneas as ‘Carthage walles’, running from the back of the stage to the front” (178).⁷⁷ As Smith subsequently points out, this division of the stage in half – one side characterized by a

⁷⁷ The nature of this wall, if it was actually onstage, remains unclear. After surveying the critical literature surrounding this conjectured wall and pointing out some of the (many) dramaturgical problems that such a wall might pose, Smith ultimately agrees with Chambers, Craik, and Hunter that the wall should be on stage and that it was “a fairly open ornamental structure” (178). On the dramatic difficulties that such iconic, stylized, ornamental walls might pose, see the Rude Mechanicals' production of *Pyramis and Thisbe*.

sense of wildness beyond the walls of Carthage with the other side characterized by decorous, orderly civility within the walls – produces a visual pun on Troy in that it conspicuously echoes Troy's famous walls; this visual pun only reinforces the powerful analogy that Marlowe repeatedly draws between Carthage and Troy. Indeed, the language of Marlowe's staged space is particularly evocative when recalling the problem that the original Troy suffered: the original Troy fell catastrophically after welcoming a dangerous foreign gift into its walls, just as Aeneas, a second Trojan horse, is welcomed into the walls of Carthage to wreak havoc.⁷⁸

This vision of historical repetition that characterizes *Dido* is striking in its difference from the vision of history that Virgil provides in the *Aeneid* – a vision of history more obviously concerned with the future story of Rome rather than the Carthaginian Troy. While Marlowe's play constantly refers to historical repetition, Virgil's poem figures a distinctly Roman history that is valued for its uniqueness and that bears its own distinct heroes and monuments: Rome in the *Aeneid* exists in terms of historical perfection rather than in terms of historical repetition. Indeed, in one of the poem's most often cited moments, Aeneas conspicuously figures himself in such properly historical terms. When Anchises promises that Aeneas's trip to the underworld will allow Aeneas to "hear of your whole race to come, / And what walled town is given you" (5.958-59), the journey bears out the promise that Anchises makes in the form of Aeneas's shield. When Aeneas visits the underworld in the next book, he is given his famous shield, made by Vulcan, in which

⁷⁸ Marjorie Garber also makes this point that Aeneas might be read as a second Trojan horse in "Infinite Riches in a Little Room: Closure and Enclosure in *Dido*" (20).

the Lord of Fire,
Knowing the prophets, knowing the age to come,
Had wrought the future story of Italy,
The triumphs of the Romans: there one found
The generations of Ascanius' heirs,
The wars they fought, each one. (8.848-53)

Unlike Marlowe's Aeneas who seems unable to escape the repetition of his past, Virgil's Aeneas distinctly functions within the world that his shield stages in which there is a "future story of Italy" – an "age to come" – that makes his present meaningful within a longer, forward-moving, future-oriented historical trajectory. For Virgil's Aeneas, this gift of a shield and a future history provides him with the distinct pleasure of historical meaningfulness and with a sense of purpose: "Knowing nothing of the events" represented, Aeneas still "felt joy in their pictures, taking up / Upon his shoulder all the destined acts / And fame of his descendants" (9.985). Rather than imagining the present and future as mere repetition, Virgil's Aeneas imagines his present in terms of a future to come that he does not yet understand despite its apparent inevitability. While Marlowe's Aeneas repeats the past, Virgil's struggles to imagine the future. This is the epic temporality of Virgil's poem that seems unavailable in Marlowe's play: Virgil's history is preemptively complete, teleologically ordered, grand in scope, supersessionary.

Contrasting Virgil's and Marlowe's visions of historical self-positioning, Marlowe's Aeneas comes to seem more like Virgil's Helenus than like Virgil's Aeneas. Wandering *en route* to his inevitable founding of Rome, Virgil's Aeneas coincidentally stumbles across Priam's son Helenus married to Andromachë, Hector's widow. Helenus and Andromachë's new encampment exists in stark juxtaposition with the sense of directed, future-oriented inevitability that characterizes Aeneas's travels around the

Mediterranean: Helenus and Andromachë have not overcome their past, and they move nowhere historically, having built for themselves – in a disturbing and heart-rending gesture of mourning – a miniature version of Troy. As Aeneas describes a tour of the encampment that Helenus provides, the scene is pathetic and evocative, bleak and moving:

Walking along with him
I saw before me Troy in miniature
A slender copy of our massive tower,
A dry brooklet named Xanthus . . . and I pressed
My body against a Scaean Gate. (3.476-81)

This rebuilt Troy – its sense of repetition, its bleak historical stasis, its mad entrapment in the past – serves in the *Aeneid* as a contrast to the very project that characterizes Aeneas's own travels and it serves here as a deft summing up of the sort of historical repetition that characterizes Marlowe's play. For Virgil's Aeneas "That day [with Helenus and Andromachë] passed, / And other days. Then sailing weather came / When canvas bellied out, filled by a southwind" (3.485-87). For Marlowe's Aeneas, however, the present and future are experienced as a struggle to rebuild a Scaean gate against which to press: "sailing weather" never comes for Marlowe's Aeneas if we imagine that this sailing weather involves a strong wind to cast him once and for all from the shadows of a fallen Troy.

Against Marlowe's sense of repetition within putative progress, his often-discussed critique of the *translatio imperii* becomes visible in a new way. Modern scholars often point out that Marlowe's play serves to challenge the ideology of the *translatio imperii* on which English imperial aspirations – in a nascent form – were

founded: he draws attention, for instance, to the human cost of colonial logic by emphasizing the outliers of history (cf. Bartels, Hendricks), or he insists on a space for human agency within the teleological unfolding of history. I would here like to expand on these provocative arguments by pointing out that Marlowe also challenges the fundamental logic of the *translatio imperii* when he draws attention to the problems that attend “re-birth” or historical repetition: if one wants to believe that London is Troynovant, that England is Rome reborn, etc., one must also pay attention, Marlowe suggests, to the logic of such re-birth in its less idealistic form. While, as Paola Bono argues, early modern panegyric often figures Elizabeth as a second Dido in very specific terms that omit Dido’s weakness and suicide, Marlowe does the opposite by recognizing the strangeness of such analogies and by attending to their embarrassing undersides. What, the play asks, does it mean to “rebuild” the past in the present if the past is characterized by tragedy and destruction? If one argues that London has become a second Troy in the way that Marlowe’s Carthage has become a second Troy, does one also need to recognize the story of Troy against the background of its inevitable destruction? If one imagines that London has, like Marlowe’s Carthage, become a second Troy, then must the story of London end in catastrophe as the stories of Carthage and Troy end in catastrophe? While such echoes are often subtly present in the *Aeneid*, Marlowe’s play takes more seriously this logic of repetition on which the ideological support of the *translatio imperii* relies, and it exposes what is lost in any consideration of the present that is justified, understood, and idealized by the ghosts it embodies.

Dido, Tragedy, and History.

When writing the story of Dido at the end of the sixteenth century Marlowe was operating in a hotly contested field. On the level of facts, the story of Dido's life was open to considerable debate because many historical accounts of her life differed significantly from the far more popular accounts of her life that were provided by Virgil, Ovid, and their translators. Similarly, but in a more properly ideological register, the story of Dido's life was contested because she could be held up as a model of virtue, as in Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*, or she might be deployed to precisely the opposite end, as in Gavin Douglas' preface to his translation of Virgil in which he claims that Dido, "Throw fulliche lust, wroucht [her] awin undoing" (Y1r).⁷⁹ I argue below that Marlowe makes a unique contribution to this Dido tradition that he inherited by refusing to read Dido's death as typically tragic (in a generic sense), but before I make this argument I will briefly outline and discuss the tradition in which his play operates and to which, I argue, it responds.

A discussion of the tradition in which Marlowe was working when he wrote *Dido* obviously requires a discussion of the *Aeneid* from which he borrowed his plot and many of his lines, but also of the other widely circulating versions of the Dido story – such as Justin's – that Marlowe certainly knew. In most extant versions of the story prior to the *Aeneid*, as in Justin's epitome of Pompeius Trogus' *Philippic History*, Dido's story is significantly different from the story that Virgil tells. Where Virgil wrote of Dido's relationship with Aeneas, Justin's account told a story of Dido that had nothing to do with

⁷⁹ On the use of Dido as an exemplary model in panegyrics to Elizabeth I, see Deanne Williams' excellent, "Dido, Queen of England," Donald Stump's "Marlowe's Travesty of Virgil," and Paola Bono's "Rewriting the Memory of a Queen: Dido, Cleopatra, Elizabeth I."

Aeneas, with meddling divinities, or with the founding of Rome. Like Virgil's, Justin's Dido was the sister of Pygmalion who killed Dido's husband, Sichaeus, in order to secure Sichaeus' fortune; learning of her brother's murderousness, Dido escaped by sea to Libya, vowed to remain a widow, and founded Carthage after duping its original inhabitants in an ingenious land deal. In Justin's account, and corresponding with Virgil, after establishing Carthage, Dido was engaged in a struggle with the barbarous Iarbas, who threatened to declare war unless Dido became his wife. Though she had vowed to remain a widow in honour of Sichaeus, she was also devoted to the security of Carthage, so she pretended to accept Iarbas' offer. After accepting the offer, she built a massive pyre on which to make sacrifices, claiming that she made those sacrifices to appease the shade of Sichaeus on the eve of her second marriage. After ascending the pyre in order, she claimed, to offer a sacrifice, she stabbed herself through the heart and fell into the flames, thus protecting Carthage, preserving her vow to remain a widow, and providing herself a perennial place of honour in subsequent histories of Carthage.

In the tension between the Justinian and the Virgilian accounts of Dido's death, "two Didos" are delineated. As Don Cameron Allen argues, these two Didos appear beside one another throughout subsequent tellings of the legend. The Virgilian account envisions Dido as the temptress who almost scuttles, through her overwhelming desire for Aeneas, the founding of Rome that the *Aeneid* celebrates. This vision of Dido as dangerously desirous serves two functions in the *Aeneid*: first, the story of Dido and her relationship with Aeneas allegorically figures the tension between desire and Roman *pietas* – the virtue idealized by the *Aeneid*; second, the story figures Carthage in a way

that serves more blatantly political ends as Dido's "uncontrolled female passion embodies a monstrosity that characterized Carthage itself, the great barbarian foe of Rome" (Quint 183). Because he was writing under the aegis of Augustus, that is, Virgil debased the Carthaginians by debasing their original queen. Another version of the story, however, figures Dido in precisely the opposite terms: Dido was devout rather than "monstrous" in her desire, and her willingness to end her life rather than betray the memory of her husband was, for many subsequent readers as it was for Justin, a sign of virtue and piety.⁸⁰

After Virgil's *Aeneid*, the different Didos were often conflated or confused, and the virtuous Dido of the Justinian account often informed the vision of Dido operating in subsequent versions of her story, even if those versions followed Virgil in imagining that her life intersected with the life of Aeneas. Interpolated into this story, the virtuous Dido ultimately becomes a victim not of Iarbas but of Aeneas, and she is cast in the "charmless role of the wronged woman," rather than in the role of empire-threatening temptress (Williams 35). While Virgil certainly articulates a degree of sympathy for Dido in the *Aeneid*,⁸¹ subsequent readers of her story such as Ovid made obvious their difference from the ambivalent Virgil by emphasizing without any equivocation that Aeneas's cruelty was the primary cause of the tragedy in Carthage. In Ovid's re-telling of Dido's

⁸⁰ Though Dido's virtue is certainly quite "Roman" in Justin's account, Justin too is quite clear that Carthage is irresolute in its barbarism: much to Justin's disgust, for instance, the Carthaginians after Dido's death proceed to adopt "a cruel religious ceremony, an execrable abomination, as a remedy for [a "pestilence"]": for they immolated human beings as victims, and brought children (whose age excites pity even in enemies) to the altars" (160).

⁸¹ On Virgil's occasionally sympathetic treatment of Dido, see Quint's *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton*, esp. 109-110, 183, and H. J. Oliver's introduction to the Revels edition of *Dido*, where he points out "Virgil's sympathy with the tragedy of his heroine" (xxxvii).

story in *Heroides* VII, for instance, he emphasizes the language of matrimony that Virgil assiduously avoids,⁸² and he highlights the relative guilt of Aeneas in ways utterly foreign to the encomiastic tenor of the *Aeneid*. After breaking a solemn vow to Dido and giving her the gift of his sword, for instance, Ovid's Aeneas – in no uncertain terms – “provided both the cause of death and the sword,” and inspired the death that “Dido herself struck . . . with her own hand” (65-66).

The various accounts of Dido's life often proved either confusing or irrelevant to many early modern writers, and this confusion is perhaps best seen in *Fall of Prynces*, John Lydgate's translation of Boccaccio. In *Fall of Prynces*, Lydgate borrows Justin's account and demonstrates “Howe Dydo queen of Cartage slough her selfe for conservacion of her chastity” (I3r). While Lydgate's translation of Boccaccio follows Justin, however, Lydgate is also keen to praise “my master Chaucer” in his “Prologue,” and he mentions *The Legend of Good Women* among Chaucer's great works (I2v), even though Chaucer there provides a very different story of Dido. In *The Legend of Good Women*, Chaucer recounts the Ovidian version of the story, and he figures Dido as a victim, pointing out that Aeneas has vowed to take Dido as his wife and that his flight from Carthage is fundamentally destructive, unethical, and cruel (376-79).

In celebrating Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women* and thus, without any explicit reservations, Chaucer's version of Dido's story, Lydgate here demonstrates confusion regarding the facts surrounding Dido's life and death, and he also demonstrates that, in a fundamental way, it did not matter for him which story was told because all versions of

⁸² On Virgil's refusal to figure the relationship between Dido and Aeneas in properly matrimonial terms, see Susanna Braund, *Latin Literature*, 94.

the story circulate around the same set of issues by which he is preoccupied. The moralistic and didactic intent of the *Fall of Prynces* is obvious, and it is possible that Lydgate did not care which story he endorsed because, from his moralistic perspective, both versions of the Dido story perform the same ideological work: in both versions, Dido's story continues to orbit around the ideas of love, politics, and virtue, and it makes the same point, always suggesting that desire poses a threat to the well being of empires or cities or individuals. For Lydgate as for most other writers in the Dido tradition, Dido's story teaches specific lessons, particularly for widows. As he points out in his "Lenvoy," widows should heed the story and recognize that their duty is to "provide in your stablenes / That no such foly enter in your courage" (J1r). Indeed, though Lydgate may have written a story that, in its plot, was vastly different from Chaucer's, Chaucer too comes to similar conclusions: Dido's reign is troubled by her relationship with Aeneas and the threat that desire poses. As she asks Aeneas after Aeneas explains his plan to depart:

'Is that in earnest, . . . wil ye so?
Have ye nat sworn to wyve me to take,
Alas! what womman wil ye of me make?
I am a gentil-woman and a queen,
Ye wil nat fro your wyf thus foule fleen?' (380-84).

As in Lydgate, Chaucer's Dido's virtue and kingdom are scuttled by erotic entanglements: a "gentil-woman and a queen" has been transformed into an apparently different, un-gentle, non-regal "womman."

In Lydgate's moralistic and moralizing reading of Dido's story and in Chaucer's more sympathetic account, each poet exhibits a tendency that characterizes most early

modern readings of Dido's story: like Lydgate, most early modern writers figured the story as a story about love and its attendant dangers. As Bartels points out, most early modern re-tellings of Dido work to illustrate the dangers of erotic attachment, the calamitous results of "excessive" desire, the untrustworthiness of individuals in matters of desire, the fickleness of women, etc. (34). When cast in this way, the valuation of both Dido and Aeneas in the Dido tradition circulates generally around the Virgilian description of Dido and of women generally: "*varium et mutabile semper femina*."⁸³ In light of this Virgilian aphorism, the question to ask when reading of Dido's story has often been the question of who has wronged whom, is fickle, is ever-changing. Considering the early modern popularity of Ovid and Virgil, it is not surprising that early modern versions of the Dido story concern themselves with the problematic that Virgil and Ovid laid out seventeen centuries before. Certainly the rhetoric surrounding Dido was changed and Christianized by early modern writers to reflect early modern understandings of virtue (i.e., Douglas' "fuliche lust" is not identical to the "barbaric" or "un-masculine" erotic energy that concerns Virgil, and Dido was certainly not "gentil" in the way that Chaucer suggests) but the primary question in the Dido story remained one of erotic love and its relationship to questions of political or personal responsibility.⁸⁴

⁸³ On the regular invocation of this aphorism and its post-Virgilian afterlife, see Roberts-Baytop, *Dido, Queen of Infinite Literary Variety*, esp. 29-30.

⁸⁴ This intersection between the Dido story and political pedagogy or encomium is most obvious in Quentin Mestys the Younger's c.1583 Siena, or Sieve, Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I. Elizabeth in the foreground holds a sieve, iconically indicating chastity, and the background features scenes from the affair of Dido and Aeneas. Moving against conventions that allied Elizabeth with Dido through the homonymic "Elissa," Dido's Phoenician name, Elizabeth here seems closely allied with Aeneas instead of Dido as she stands, like an imperial wanderer, next to a globe of her own. The portrait's suitably Roman motto further inspires a sense of closeness between Aeneas and Elizabeth: "STANCHO RIPOSO & RIPO SATO AFFA NNO" or "I am weary; having rested, I am still weary."

William Gager's 1583 *Dido Tragoedia* moves away from the tradition that Bartels recognizes – the tradition that figures Dido's story as concerned primarily with love and erotic relationships. For Gager, a staunch humanist, one must engage the story of Dido to glean lessons that are applicable to one's own life, and one can certainly glean lessons about erotic love and its dangers, but the story also provides for Gager examples of numerous precepts that one can valuably extract. Apparently unwilling to trust that his audience at Christ Church Cambridge had the wherewithal to glean these lessons without his prompting, Gager includes in his epilogue a list of the lessons that one should learn from the story of Dido. Gager informs his audience, for instance, that

[h]owever an enemy helps he always offers deceits; however good Juno is to the Trojans, she is arranging treacheries. It is a royal act to extend both faith and help to unfortunate men. Great hospitalities make a distinguished household famous. Whoever lives stripped of distinction is limited in stature; he ceases being independent; should he be thankful as he possibly can he will be believed ungrateful. . . . It is proper to be obedient to the predictions of the gods, and all delay, even if brief, is excessive. Sensitive women are accustomed to be induced to tears, but the strong man ought to close his ears. Good values, whatever they may be, if they fetter the more important ones, should not control anyone. Rarely do foreign marriages proceed happily. The power of love is great; a more violent flame is accustomed to seize women, a lighter inflames men. . . . (91-92).

In this excerpt from Gager's absurdly long list of platitudes that Dido's story illustrates, he both moves away from early modern versions of the Dido story and crystallizes early modern tendencies with regards to the story. While Gager pays attention to many non-erotic matters in ways that are fairly foreign to the Dido tradition, he is typical in that he emphasizes that the story of Dido should be read instrumentally and that its audience can glean lessons from it. In this sense, as I will discuss below, Gager here is typical of a tradition that reads the story of Dido ahistorically: the historical context of Dido's story is

of little value to an audience because, when engaging her story, we are engaging the universally recognizable actions of individuals in a city in Northern Africa that might as well be a city in England.

Dido's Autonomy and the Weight of History.

In my account of the Dido tradition that Marlowe inherited, I mention only a few of the versions of the story to which Marlowe would have had access, but in doing so I tacitly emphasize a fairly obvious point: Dido's story was often re-written in a variety of genres. In doing so, I mean to emphasize that this episode from the *Aeneid* has, since Virgil, often operated as a tale that is readily extricable from the epic machinery of Virgil's poem and that Marlowe's staging of the Dido episode exists within a tradition that has generally seen Dido's story is a story untouched by the broader unfolding of history that the *Aeneid* recounts. Indeed, considering this regular recontextualization and re-functioning of Dido's narrative, it seems strange that so many critics would regard as unique Marlowe's decision to put this story on stage, as theatre. Charles Swinburne, for example, remarks on Marlowe's translation from page to stage and figures it as an artistic misjudgment:

this somewhat thin-spun and evidently hasty play a servile fidelity to the text of Virgil's narrative has naturally resulted in the failure which might have been expected from an attempt at once to transcribe what is essentially inimitable and to reproduce it under the hopelessly alien conditions of dramatic adaptation.
(1:276)

In agreement with Swinburne is H. J. Oliver who claims that, considering *Dido's* relative weakness when compared with Virgil's poem, "it must have been begun from a decision

to turn parts of Virgil's epic poem into a form suitable for the stage" (xxxvi). Focusing less on the aesthetic problems that such translation poses and emphasizing instead its ideological import, Clare Kinney and Troni Y. Grande agree that there is "something inherently transgressive in the very notion that a tragic drama can offer a *mimesis* of epic mythology" (Kinney 272), because it takes "a traditional, authoritative genre" and re-writes it within a "popular, carnivalesque genre" (Grande 84).⁸⁵ While there is certainly a meaningful formal difference between Marlowe's dramatic representation of Dido and Virgil's poetic figuration, Marlowe's staging of epic here seems far less surprising and certainly less transgressive when recognizing that Dido's story had been written and re-written so many times, that it had previously found its way onto the stage in Gager's *unscandalous* play, and that other epics such as the *Odyssey* had received a similar treatment on the stage, as in Gager's *Ulysses Redux*. Indeed, this sense that Dido's story is relatively autonomous within the tradition is perfectly illustrated by the early modern translations of Virgil such as Douglas' or Richard Stanyhurst's that reproduce only the *Aeneid*'s fourth book as a stand-alone text.

The argument that Marlowe is performing some fundamentally transgressive act when he puts Virgil's epic on stage also relies on a misreading of what goes on in Book IV of the *Aeneid*, a book that is clearly informed by Attic tragedy and that seems in many

⁸⁵ Grande here is relying on Bakhtin's questionable assumption that drama is fundamentally dialogical and that epic is essentially monological and uncomplicatedly authoritative. While Grande's reading of Bakhtin is certainly accurate, it is safer, I think, to presume that he deploys the strong distinctions between novels, drama, and epic vis-à-vis the distinction between monological and dialogical texts because it provides a valuable analytic heuristic: the distinctions produce valuable categories and concepts through which one might read texts, though a reader as sensitive as Bakhtin likely recognized that, like all quick generic distinctions, these distinctions fail to apply easily to all drama, all novels, or all epics. For a contradictory reading of epic – one that recognizes the heterogeneity of the epic form – see Kenneth Boris, *Allegory and Epic in English Renaissance Literature: Sidney, Spenser, and Milton*, 55.

ways to be a tragedy set off from the rest of the poem. In Virgil's poem as in the subsequent tradition, Dido's story operates as something of a tragic set piece, disarticulated from the epic progress that Aeneas struggles to accomplish historically and that the *Aeneid* struggles to accomplish narratively. If subsequent writers have read Dido's story in the *Aeneid* and subsequently treated it as a narratively coherent, autonomous tragedy, that is, then they are following Virgil's cues. Regarding the tragic structure of the Dido episode in the *Aeneid*, Mary K. Gamel notices, for instance, that

Vergil's text contains many formal and thematic allusions to tragedy, especially in IV: the agonistic speeches; Anna's role as *nutrix*/confidante; comparisons of Dido to a raging Bacchant (301-3), Pentheus (469-70) and *scaenis agitated Orestes* (471); and her thoughts of imitating the savage violence of Medea and Atreus (600-02). *Aeneid* IV raises the possibility that the poem will metamorphose from epic to tragedy, with Dido taking center stage from Aeneas. (613)⁸⁶

Book IV of Virgil's poem, then, is a story not foreign to dramatic tragedy as Swinburne suggests, but a story foreign to epic: it is a moment of heterogeneity in a poem that many readers have tried to flatten into the archetypal epic. While Oliver identifies as problematic Marlowe's "decision to turn parts of Virgil's epic poem into a form suitable for the stage," one might simultaneously recognize that such a decision was likely not difficult for a keen reader of Virgil such as Marlowe who could have seen the contours of tragedy within the poem.

When emphasizing that the Dido tradition generally figures her story within the framework of tragedy, I mean to emphasize that Dido's life in this tradition is presumed to operate according to a logic internal to itself and apart from the broader movements of

⁸⁶ Susanna Braund makes a similar point about Virgil's tragic inheritance in *Latin Literature*, pointing out echoes of Euripides in Virgil's poem and drawing attention to the tragic structure of books I - IV.

history that Virgil, for instance, describes; it is against this vision of Dido that Marlowe works. According to Roma Gill, "Dido's tragedy is 'detachable' from the rest of the epic, and although it needs the epic context, from before the rape of Helen until the establishment of the Caesars, for its true perspective, it is not dependent upon these for its human appeal" (145). Indeed, when Gager and Douglas readily draw morals from the story of Dido, their moralizing speaks to the vision of tragedy that we see operating in many of the versions of Dido's life that I have recounted here, and it speaks to Gill's sense of the story's "human appeal": Dido's death comes after, and as a result of, some sort of personal failing, whether that failing is her eagerness to enter into a foreign marriage (Gager) or her lustfulness (Douglas). Returning to the question of *hamartia* that I introduced in this chapter's prologue, such a vision of Dido's death is tragic because the plot is motivated by the nature of Dido's character and because the conclusion of her life seems to emerge organically and naturally from her character as it interacts with the exigencies of life. In this case, Dido's death, like Marlowe's death in many biographies, not only marks the end of a life, but the conclusion of a life: the point at which all that was immanent to her character finally plays out and exhausts itself. In this sense, Dido's death in the tragic tradition is best thought in terms of its timeliness: though Virgil is quite eager to figure her death in terms of its untimeliness – as if it came too soon – Dido's death in his poem also makes, as I discuss below, perfect sense, and it seems a narratively satisfying conclusion to her biography. Marlowe, on the other hand, figures Dido's death as the conclusion to a plot that is not, in many ways, her own. Just as one must be wary of biographies of Marlowe in which his death is figured as the conclusion

of his life – as if it necessarily emerges from the moments in his life that came before rather than from contingency or chance – then the same must be said of Dido in Marlowe’s telling of Dido’s story. Marlowe’s *Tragedy of Dido, Queen of Carthage* is, I argue below, not a tragedy if one presumes, following Aristotle, that tragedy is predicated on a sense of the protagonist’s failure or weakness or limitation. If one does not read Aristotle as a philosopher who polices the borders of the tragic but as a critic who simply describes and values that which is before him, then one can certainly recognize that *Dido* remains a tragedy, but that it is a tragedy with a faulty plot – a plot that makes it seem more *Massacre at Carthage* than *Tragedy of Dido*.

To demonstrate more clearly the difference between Marlowe’s formally untragic Dido and the tragic Dido that he inherited, I will return to Virgil’s telling of the story and I will read it against the story that Marlowe put on stage. Many of Marlowe’s revisions to Virgil’s poem are, as scholars such as Patrick Cheney often recognize, typically Ovidian: Marlowe treats the gods irreverently, he clearly sympathizes with Dido, and he figures Aeneas as an oath-breaker. But Marlowe’s refiguration of the Dido story is more radical than Ovid’s revaluation of character and reattribution of guilt. For Marlowe, the plot of Dido’s story is the plot of epic history rather than a plot of necessary individual downfall, and his play regularly and consistently figures Dido as the victim of a fate not determined by her character.

In the *Aeneid*, Dido and Carthage – from the moment of their introduction – are figured as fundamentally decadent. Prior to the intervention of Cupid in Virgil’s poem, and prior to any obvious courtship, Dido already makes Aeneas “linger” in Carthage

“with her blandishments” (1.917), and she seems more like a Siren than a heroic Carthaginian queen. In this already eroticized Carthage she hosts for Aeneas an elaborate feast at which he – discordantly – will tell the story of Troy’s fall and the difficult voyages that have led him to the city. Upon entering the feast, Aeneas finds Dido “amid magnificence / Of tapestries, where she had placed herself / In the very center, on a golden couch” (1.952-54), and he finds “finger bowls,” “bread in baskets,” “boards with meat,” “wine cups,” and Tyrians “crowding through the radiant doors, all bidden / To take their ease on figured cushioning” (1.955, 956, 963, 964, 966-67). Against the vision of hunger on which Book I opens – Aeneas sets out to kill a deer to feed his soldiers – such excess and such delicacy (finger bowls, tapestries, golden couches, embroidered cushioning) is striking. Considering the luxurious space in which the scene takes place, it is not surprising that the narrator mentions Dido’s heated attraction to Aeneas as she “admire[s]” his “gifts”: “Luckless,” the narrator points out, Dido was “already given over to ruin” at this decadent feast that had been prepared prior to her encounter with the disguised god (1.973). While dwelling on Dido’s essential concupiscence, Virgil’s narrator stresses that this concupiscence bears with it a narrative force and that it inspires an in-built (tragic) narrative trajectory. From her moment of longing on a golden couch, that is, Dido is “given over” to ruin, as if the moment of her excessive feasting and desire fundamentally and essentially leads to – “gives her over to” – a certain fate. If Cupid works to inspire in her a potent and decadent love for Aeneas that will leave them to dally wantonly over the course of a winter, then her well honed sense of decadence indicates in Virgil’s poem that such wantonness is far from foreign to the Tyrian queen.

The analogous moment in Marlowe's play is starkly different. Much is often made in the post-Virgilian Dido tradition of this feast at which Aeneas describes at length the story of Troy's fall, as in Gager's elaborate *Dido Tragoedia* that features a confectionary model of Troy around which the story of Troy's fall is told. But this context is entirely omitted from Marlowe's play, and such an omission seems particularly striking when one considers the excessive descriptions of excess that fill so many of Marlowe's plays: one might think of Gaveston's description of life with Edward that opens *Edward II*, or might think of Faustus' promised gifts to the scholars of Germany, or of the moment later in *Dido* when Aeneas describes the ideal city that he intends to build around Carthage – a city to be “clad . . . in a crystal livery” (5.1.5). Rather than engaging in this characteristically Marlovian excess of description, however, there is no elaborate description of the decadent feast at which Aeneas eventually tells to Dido the story of Troy because, quite simply, there is no feast in Marlowe's play. Rather than hearing the story of Troy amid finger bowls, golden couches, and magnificent tapestries, Dido hears it in a more banal and more practical setting: on the streets of Carthage, the city she rules. In this divergence from Virgil, Marlowe refuses to ally Dido with a sense of innate desire: if the decadent feast chamber informs a reader's understanding of Dido in Virgil's poem, then the streets of a well-run city inform the audience's understanding of Dido in Marlowe's play.

Marlowe's Dido also reacts differently from Virgil's Dido to the story of Troy's fall that Aeneas tells. For Virgil's Dido, Aeneas's tale is part of a feast, an entertainment

that logically follows Iopas' lyre playing. After Iopas makes "the room echo with his golden lyre" (1.1012), that is,

Dido, fated queen, drew out the night
With talk of various matters, while she drank
Long draughts of love. . . .
.....
'Come, rather,' then she said, 'dear guest, and tell us
From the beginning the Greek stratagems,
The ruin of your town and your sea-faring . . . ' (1.1021-23, 1027-29).

Amid the scene the narrator describes – a scene of feasting in which Dido languishes and drinks "long draughts of love" – the story comes to operate more as an aphrodisiac than as warning or promise of Carthage's danger. After Aeneas tells of Troy's fall – a story that comprises Books II and III of the *Aeneid* – Dido reappears at the opening of Book IV and her attitude there serves as a counterpoint to the martial seriousness that characterizes Aeneas's tale. The first lines of Book IV remind us immediately that Dido is oblivious to the sense of political peril that Aeneas's tale might engender when the narrator describes Dido:

The queen, for her part, all that evening ached
With longing that her heart's blood fed, a wound
Or inward fire eating her away.
The manhood of the man, his pride of birth,
Came home to her time and again; his looks,
His words remained with her to haunt her mind,
And desire for him gave her no rest. (4.1-7)

Described within the claustrophobic space of a chamber in which only Dido and Anna converse, the "manhood of the man" here is a sexualized manhood not a martial masculinity, the "words" that haunt her mind are divorced from their context (i.e., the story of urban catastrophe), and the story of Troy's destruction becomes simply a love

song of sorts as Aeneas's words "haunt her mind" in their sound but certainly not in their sense.

While Virgil's Dido hears Aeneas's story as an oddly appealing tale, Marlowe's Dido reacts to the story with a sense of horror. As Marlowe's Aeneas tells his story to Dido, he repeatedly interrupts himself to apologize for the grizzliness of his tale – a grizzliness enhanced by Marlowe's addition of details to the story including "Young infants swimming in their parents' blood" and "Headless carcasses [sic] piled up in heaps" (2.1.193-94). In response to Aeneas's apologies, Dido repeatedly compels him to continue his story until, at last, the story becomes too much for her to bear and she asks him to stop – a request he unceremoniously ignores (2.1.243). Throughout Aeneas's story, Dido also repeatedly interrupts with exclamations befitting a queen, befitting the situation, and befitting the content of the tale: "O Hector," she cries, for instance, "who weeps not to hear thy name!" (2.1.209). Once Aeneas finally concludes his story, Dido closes this moment in the scene with a speech that vilifies Helen and conspicuously emphasizes the threat of erotic transgression: "O had that ticing strumpet ne'er been born!" (2.1.300). For Marlowe's Dido, the dangers of erotic desire are obvious, and she resists the sorts of pleasure that Helen – the "ticing strumpet" – embodies. While the Dido episode in Virgil's poem often echoes with Circe, Marlowe refuses to draw such quick associations between Dido and a sense of overwhelming female eroticism.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ On the relationship between Dido and Circe in the *Aeneid*, see "Figures for the Poet? Circe and the Sirens in Homer, Virgil, and Ovid," the first chapter of Melinda Gough's Ph.D. dissertation, *Daughters of Circe: Effeminacy and Poetic Efficacy in Renaissance Epic and Theatre*. On the association between Dido and other figures of female eroticism, "irrationality and disorder" in the *Aeneid* see also Mihoko Suzuki, *Metamorphoses of Helen*, esp. 92-149.

One can make sense of a strange scene in Marlowe's play – 3.1 – only by first recognizing that, as shown above, Marlowe's Dido is essentially different from Virgil's Dido – a Dido “already given over to ruin” burdened by a well developed sense of pleasure and decadence. Where Virgil's Dido is in thrall to the sensual before Cupid replaces Ascanius and appears at a banquet – where Virgil's Cupid only further inflames an existent, effeminate decadence and figures Aeneas as a suitable object for lascivious predispositions – Marlowe's Dido is utterly resistant to desire before Cupid appears, and she struggles against the erotic force borne by the arrow that pricks her. At the opening of 3.1, Cupid appears on stage disguised as Ascanius prior to an exchange between Iarbas and Dido, and he recounts the plan that Venus devised at the end of the previous scene:

Now, Cupid, cause the Carthaginian Queen
To be enamour'd of thy brother's [i.e., Aeneas'] looks;
Convey this golden arrow in they sleeve,
Lest she imagine thou art Venus' son;
And when she strokes thee softly on the head,
Then shall I touch her breast and conquer her. (3.1.1-6).

Given the obvious arc that the scene will subsequently follow after this introduction – Dido will be pricked and become “enamour'd” of Aeneas's “looks” – a key question arises: At what point does Cupid prick Dido? There is no stage direction in the 1594 quarto, and no modern edition includes a stage direction indicating the moment of Cupid's intervention. Instead of an obvious transition in Dido's character, there is a bizarre exchange between Dido and Iarbas as Anna looks on. Iarbas enters with Dido and asks about the status of his courtship:

How long, fair Dido, shall I pine for thee?
'Tis not enough that thou dost grant me love,
But that I may enjoy what I desire:

That love is childish which consists only in words. (7-10)

From the framing of Iarbas' request, it is clear that Marlowe has re-construed the nature of the Dido/Iarbas relationship: while Iarbas is a spurned lover in Virgil's poem, in Marlowe's play he still harbours a hope that his courtship may be viable and that this courtship may come to fruition in "enjoyment" rather than in an exclusively verbal transaction. Dido's response to Iarbas' insistence is particularly fascinating because, if we are to find echoes of Elizabeth I in Dido's character as Bono, Stump, and Williams argue, then it is here that these echoes become loudest. Dido assures Iarbas that, "of all [her] wooers," he has "the greatest favours [she] could give":

I fear me Dido hath been counted light
In being too familiar with Iarbas,
Albeit the Gods do know no wanton thought
Had ever residence in Dido's breast.

.....
Fear not, Iarbas; Dido may be thine. (11-17).

By claiming that "Dido *may* be thine" without making a commitment or a non-verbal gesture of attraction, Dido is typically Elizabeth-like in her vision of foreign policy. This moment stages a set of international political allegiances cultivated within the framework of a courtship that never concludes in matrimony. But within this scene of typically Elizabeth-like deferrals, Cupid is bandied about on Dido's knee and the audience witnesses Dido's bizarre fickleness:

Iarbas: Come, Dido, leave Ascanius; let us walk.

Dido: Go thou away; Ascanius shall stay.

Iarbas: Ungentle Queen, is this thy love to me?

Dido: O stay, Iarbas, and I'll go with thee.

Cupid: And if my mother go, I'll follow her.

Dido: [*To Iarbas*] Why stay'st thou here? thou art no love of mine.

Iarbas: Iarbas, die, seeing she abandons thee!

Dido: No, live Iarbas; what hast thou deserv'd,
That I should say thou art no love of mine? (34-42)

This oscillation – a claim of politically useful love followed by a moment of disdain – is repeated several more times, and the question that I mention above is the question that this moment begs: At what point is Dido pricked on stage? I would suggest that she is repeatedly jabbed, that she might waver in her resistance to Iarbas before Cupid gives a second, third, and fourth poke until she finally insists that Iarbas “never look on” her again (53). Rather than succumbing to her own desire and a predisposition for sensual pleasure, that is, Dido resists – repeatedly, energetically, and conscientiously – the prompting of divine devices.

I emphasize this moment in *Dido* because it provides the audience with a vision of Dido that is radically different from the one found in Virgil's poem. Virgil's Dido desires desire and is only encouraged by Cupid's prick, but Marlowe's Dido undergoes a radical refiguration under the weight of the god's power. Only after this interference do Carthage and Dido become characterized by what Aeneas describes as “courtly ease” (4.3.8), and only after this interference does Dido become, according to Achates, a “ticing dame” (4.3.41). In light of this transformation, her subsequent desire is not a divinely enhanced longing but an utterly artificial yearning as she becomes subject to a plan devised by the gods. Indeed, this sense of her post-Cupid transformation is perhaps best marked by Achates' use of “ticing” to describe Dido: the epithet is first invoked derogatively by Dido to describe Helen, but she has become “ticing,” alluring, and problematic to the stability of a future empire. It is through this sense of radical transformation – Dido for Helen – that we must ultimately read Anna's remonstrance of

Dido when Dido laments the loss of Aeneas: “Sweet sister, cease; remember who you are!” (5.1.263). Dido, that is, has become someone else at the impetus of a divine intervention, and this radical transformation is echoed in the equally bizarre and wholly uncharacteristic desire of the old nurse who longs for Cupid as soon as she is accidentally pricked (4.5). Also in light of this radical transformation in Dido’s character, Aeneas’s obtuseness in the face of her erotic overtures seems less ridiculous: “What means fair Dido by this doubtful speech?,” Aeneas asks after she describes her erotic interest (3.4.30). Though absurd to ask this question – Dido’s meaning is embarrassingly obvious – Aeneas might reasonably wonder because, coming from the figure with whom he has previously dealt, the speech is, in fact, doubtful, baffling, and out of character.

This sense of a struggle between divine authority and Dido’s will is further articulated in the struggle that takes place over Aeneas’s Italian journey. In Virgil’s poem, Mercury appears to Aeneas twice in a dream: once, he encourages Aeneas to “leave the sweet life behind” (4.385), and the second time he warns Aeneas that Dido “hatches / Plots and drastic action” to impede Trojan progress (4.782-83). In Marlowe’s play, however, Mercury appears twice because Aeneas waffles after Mercury’s first appearance: Mercury comes in a dream to remind Aeneas of his fate and Aeneas responds by planning to leave Carthage (4.3); Dido subsequently promises to make Aeneas king of Carthage and he decides to stay (4.4.49, 55); Mercury subsequently returns and presses Aeneas onward again to Italy (5.1.27). As Marlowe’s Dido struggles with Mercury over the fate of Aeneas in juxtaposed scenes, the audience once again recognizes that Dido’s struggle is not one engendered by her essential character – it is not, as in Virgil’s Dido, a

struggle internal to her being that exploits an essential weakness – but is instead a Sisyphean struggle with forces far more powerful than she is. These forces have a plan for Aeneas and for history in which she becomes instrumental against her will, her character, and her desires, and these forces have a plan that leaves her, incidental to this plan, broken.

Within this framework of Dido's instrumentality, Marlowe's verbatim transcription of Virgil's Latin near the end of the play speaks to the plot that the play stages – a plot that is driven not by Dido's predisposition toward the sensual, but by the plans of gods. Once Aeneas is finally fixed on leaving Dido behind in Carthage, he explains his plan to Dido and she responds:

By this right hand, and by our spousal rites,
 [Dido] Desires Aeneas to remain with her:
Si bene quid de te merui, fuit aut tibi quidquam
Dulce meum, Miserere domus labentis: istam
Oro, si quis adhuc precibus locus, exue mentem. (5.1.134-139)

[“If ever I have deserved well from you and if anything relating to me has ever pleased you, take pity on a falling house, and, I pray you – if there is still place for prayers – abandon this present plan”; Oliver's translation.]

Aeneas subsequently replies to Dido's pleas, also in Latin: “*Desine meque tuis incendere teque querelis, / Italiam non sponte sequor* [‘Cease setting both yourself and me on fire with your laments; it is not of my own free will that I seek Italy’; Oliver's trans.]” (140-41). Several scholars such as Kinney and Grande have made a compelling argument that this moment in which Marlowe cites Virgil speaks to the return of the “Latin law of tragedy” (Grande 13-15), and that it marks the end of the “epic transgression” in which Dido and Aeneas contravene Jupiter's will by inhibiting the imperatives inevitable to epic

conquest (Kinney *passim*). They argue, that is, this is the moment at which the authoritative force of historical necessity – embodied by an alien intertext that operates like the voice of a linguistically authoritative god – intervenes in their story and restricts their individual agency. Such readings are compelling, and I want only to augment them by emphasizing two points. First, Dido – the subject of Cupid’s radically transformative prick – has already been caught up in a history that is not uniquely her own so that such a moment only reinforces that which is the case. Second, this moment is an index of Dido’s entire post-Cupid life. This moment speaks to the sense of alienation that characterizes Dido’s position in the plot after she has been subject to the radically transformative imperatives of Cupid’s pricks: she speaks in a foreign tongue, asking Aeneas to remain in Carthage while using a language that is decidedly not her own.

Recognizing that Dido in Marlowe’s play is radically transformed by the intervention of Cupid means that one must also recognize that her death at the end of the play is far from typically tragic. As a point of comparison, one might invoke Sophocles’ *Oedipus Tyrannus*, an Attic tragedy much like those others that inform Virgil’s poem. In *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the tragic-ness of the play is directly related to the gradual and inevitable unfolding of character, and Oedipus’ story involves a coming-into-knowledge of that which was nascent at the core of his being. The conclusion of the play, that is, marks the fatalistic power of character as much as it marks the potency of oracular dictates. As Adriana Cavarera argues in her brilliant reading of the play,

[b]y being ignorant of the factual truth of his birth, [Oedipus] has been able to believe himself to be another; but he was never able to become another. He became exactly who he was and is – in the very times that his uniqueness lived through, perhaps under a false genealogy, but not under a false *daimon*. (11-12)

This fundamental correlation between the shape of Oedipus' life and his identity – he becomes that person whom he already was – is similar to the correlation that one finds in Virgil as Dido is able to become that to which she was “already given over” prior to Cupid's interference. But Dido's story is different in Marlowe's play, and in this sense it fails to be tragic: as Anna points out, Dido forgets herself after Cupid's prick and she becomes in many ways someone else. If Oedipus suffers by becoming that which he always was, then Dido suffers only by becoming other to herself. Rather than suffering a plot to which she is inherently “given over,” Dido suffers a plot that is external to herself. It is only by recognizing that the plot of the tragedy is the plot of the gods rather than the plot of Dido's distinct and self-induced fall that we can make real sense of a strange aspect of the play: unlike any other of Marlowe's plays, the protagonist of Dido's play doesn't show up until the second act, well after the stage is set and well after the play's action – action in which she finds herself caught rather than action to which she seems essentially prone – is underway.

Carthage, Catastrophe, and Conclusions.

Marlowe has, as I have shown, figured Dido as alienated from her own story in at least two separate ways: first, he figures history in terms of a deterministic repetition in which Dido becomes a second Creusa, for instance, or Aeneas becomes a second Sychaeus, or Carthage becomes a second doomed Troy; second, he figures Dido's contact with Aeneas and her subsequent downfall as a far more extreme characterological rupture inspired by meddling gods and their external power. According to this reading of the play, Marlowe

performs work in *Dido* that is strikingly analogous to the work that Margreta de Grazia has recently performed in *Hamlet without Hamlet*. Specifically, he returns the isolated, transhistorically universal hero of a text to the historical story from which he or she has been extricated by years of exegesis, analysis, and re-writing. Just as de Grazia is troubled by a sense that the character Hamlet has, since the beginning of the nineteenth century, been figured as autonomous from his historical milieu – as if he can “readily leave” the plot of his story behind “to wander into other later works, no strings attached” (3) – Marlowe recognizes that Dido’s story is not extricable from a very specific historical situation that circulates around the fall of Troy, its Carthaginian reconstitution, and the interventions of gods into the life of an otherwise admirable monarch. While Dido may appear throughout a long tradition to illustrate certain truisms as in Virgil’s, Ovid’s, Chaucer’s, Gager’s, Boccaccio’s, and Lydgate’s writing, Dido is not, for Marlowe, simply a token to be bandied about; she is not, as Lydgate implies, a typical widow from whom other widows might learn a specific lesson; she is not a figure who finds a fate that is suitable to her character. Marlowe’s Dido is far too trapped in history to allow for gestures of ready substitutability and allegoricity. When Marlowe tells the story of Dido, that is, it is the story of a historically specific moment, not the elaboration of a transhistorical truth about, for instance, the dangers of desire.

Once we recognize that Dido’s life and death are not extricable from a broader, impersonal history in *Dido* – that Marlowe’s Carthage has become, through a certain legacy, the second doomed Troy – we must read the play’s final scene from the way it has generally been read since at least the nineteenth century. When Anthony Trollope

famously declared Dido a “burlesque” in a marginal note to his copy of Dyce’s Marlowe (Oliver ix, n.1), he inaugurated a critical tradition that has subsequently read the play’s final scene – in which Dido, Iarbas, and Anna immolate themselves – as a moment of deflating satire or artistic failure. Even though subsequent critics such as Jackson Cope have disagreed explicitly with Trollope’s quick dismissal of *Dido*, the general critical consensus regarding the final scene of the play has remained firmly fixed upon its deflating irony: by juxtaposing Dido’s death with the deaths of Iarbas and Anna, Marlowe either undermines the scene’s *pathos* or demonstrates the clumsiness of a young playwright. In Oliver’s reading of the scene, for instance, the “deaths of Anna and Iarbas . . . probably unintentionally . . . weaken rather than heighten the tragedy” (xxxvi). According to Margo Hendricks, “as a number of critics have argued, the scene tends to trivialize the tragic implications of what has befallen Dido. What are we (the audience) supposed to think of this sovereign whose death is framed by the ridiculous” (120). And Dawson argues that following Dido’s suicide

comes the anti-climactic, almost casual and certainly inconsequential suicide of Iarbas, Aeneas’s rival . . . to which is added in an almost absurd gesture of mourning lost love, the suicide of Anna, Dido’s sister whose unrequited love for Iarbas has been a glancing subplot throughout. (70)

While I agree with these critics that the deaths of Anna and Iarbas are fairly surprising considering the dearth of characterological development to which Marlowe has previously subjected them, it is strange to argue that the sheer number of deaths at the end of the play is somehow imagined to detract from what Gill calls the scene’s “tragic dignity.” It seems strange perhaps because no one since those eighteenth-century *querrelleurs* who were on side with the decorous *anciens* has argued something similar

about the conclusion to *Hamlet* in which gore and corpses are far more abundant. Rather than quickly dismissing the shock of these deaths, the shock that they engender should be taken seriously as a valuable dramatic effect. If the number of bodies immolated at the end of the play detracts from the imagined tragic singularity of Dido's death, then perhaps this detraction is a point that should be taken seriously. If the deaths seem somehow "absurd," then perhaps this absurdity should be taken seriously.

Indeed, even though the critical tradition has been fairly unkind to the "burlesque" conclusion of the play, dramatic productions inspire a second look at the effect of the conclusion on the audience. I point out this fact because, as D. J. R. Bruckner suggests in his review of David Herskovits' 2001 Target Margin production, the play elicits decidedly pathetic responses in a live audience when put on stage. As Bruckner suggests in his review, the play's final scene is suitably pathetic, stunning, and powerfully evocative rather than strangely ironizing. Even though Herskovits' production was campy – costuming Aeneas in long johns with a floppy pompadour, for instance – and even though the production emphasized the potential absurdity of Marlowe's occasionally hyperbolic rhetoric, Bruckner emphasizes that the final scene came across as anything but absurd:

There is little reverence in the Target Margin Theater Company's production of Christopher Marlowe's 'Dido, Queen of Carthage,' but when Dido sinks into the funeral pyre she builds after Aeneas abandons her it delivers a real emotional punch. Greig Sargeant as Iarbas . . . glows like a pillar of passionate fire as he pursues the queen who rejects him. When he kills himself in sight of her funeral fire the fury of his despair is searing. (n.p.)

Rather than reading the final scene in terms of burlesque, in other words, we might recognize that, on stage, the scene registers in terms of horror, in terms of a sublimity that characterizes the catastrophic affliction of a city without a head.⁸⁸

Though evocative, however, such a conclusion may remain troubling if we wish the play would conclude tragically. If, at the end of a tragedy, we expect to find the conclusion to a life that makes sense in tragic terms – in terms internal to that life – then the conclusion to Marlowe's *Dido* is, as Trollope and others have suggested, unsatisfactory. I would argue, however, that the apparently "absurd" and senseless deaths at the end of *Dido* emphasize that the story is not "about" Dido in any simple way and that it is instead about a historically broader, destructive repetition to which Marlowe repeatedly draws attention. In the juxtaposition between the stunning and apparently senseless deaths that coincide with the death of Dido, we are perhaps forced once again to recognize an analogy between Carthage and Troy: the deaths are in a way impersonal, they are catastrophically heaped one atop the other, and Dido's death is one of several deaths that conclude the coherent plot of a play driven forward not by character but by divine dictates. By staging the absurd deaths of Iarbas and Anna alongside the apparently more reasonable death of Dido, the apparent orderly necessity of her death is ultimately

⁸⁸ While Bruckner suggests that the conclusion to Target Margin's production was suitably evocative and moving, Les Gutman disagrees, claiming that "[e]ven Dido's death is rendered comic, as cast members surround her pyre with cartoonish flames on sticks, which they thrust forward and back as the fire rages" (n.p.) It is prudent, I think, to be leery of Gutman's evaluation of the performance because, early in the same review, he dismisses Marlowe's script for being too talky: "Most all of the second act is then devoted to Aeneas telling the story of the fall of Troy -- over 1200 words in all! When Dido finally interrupts to say 'O end, Aeneas! I can hear no more,' she's reading the audience's mind" (n.p.). I am not leery of Gutman's review because I think that he is a philistine or a fool, but because his approach to the play values naturalism and fails to account for the uniquely stylized aspects of Marlowe's script – aspects such as its elaborate and long speeches. If one approaches the play with naturalism as an ideal – as I think Gutman does – then his evaluation of the conclusion seems quite appropriate.

troubled by its contiguity with contingency and chaos, and with the sense that her death, like the deaths of Iarbas and Anna, is “inconsequential.” It is inconsequential biographically – it is ridiculous nonsense biographically – but it is eminently reasonable if *Dido*’s plot is read as the tragedy of Carthage rather than Dido, the tragic fall of a city rather than the tragic fall of an individual. As Hendricks similarly argues in terms of the play’s politics, we cannot “dissociate Dido’s death from those of Anna and Iarbas” because these connections become “expected outcomes of the political narrative that the play is weaving” (120). While Hendricks and I posit two different readings of the play – I claim that the play operates according to a historical logic of repetition and epic necessity while Hendricks arguing that it follows a political logic – the conclusions that we draw are similar: when struggling to understand Dido’s death at the end of *Dido*, we must look beyond Dido herself and we must look beyond tragic narrative structures to understand the unfolding of the play’s plot and the world that the play stages. By recognizing that the narrative logic of the play operates at a level indifferent to individuals – recognizing that Marlowe has drawn attention again and again to the parallels between a decimated Troy and Carthage, for instance – we see that the play makes sense in a different way: the play becomes “satisfactory” because it ends as Troy did, with flames, with multiple deaths, and with Aeneas aboard a ship sailing west.

This staging of Dido’s story ultimately begs the question with which this dissertation is primarily concerned, namely the question of untimely deaths. Throughout this project I have been working to tease out what it might mean to imagine untimely deaths in early modern England and, from the catastrophe with which Marlowe concludes

his play, I would argue that it might mean very little, at least for Marlowe. As I have argued here, Marlowe's most significant contribution to the Dido tradition was his de-tragification of Dido's death, and in this de-tragification, he troubles the founding assumption on which the idea of the untimely death relies: the sense that lives unfold according to their own imperatives. Just as Marlowe's own life may be reasonably read as a life that ended absurdly – a life that ended for reasons non-immanent to that life – Dido's life ends for reasons that cannot be readily deduced from the moments that precede it. Rather than imagining Dido's death as either timely or untimely, that is, Marlowe undermines a sense that lives can be regarded in ways that take seriously a sense of biographical unfolding. Dido's life is for Marlowe, much as Marlowe's life is for me, a life that ends without concluding: there is no reason immanent to her character that inspires her death. Rather, her death is best understood according to the imperatives of broader forces that exist externally and impersonally – forces that wreck ships accidentally on the shores of an unassuming nation, headed by an unprepared queen.

Conclusion

Horatio's Infelicity

The summer that Coleman took me into his confidence about Faunia Farley and their secret was the summer, fittingly enough, that Bill Clinton's secret emerged in every last mortifying detail – every last *lifelike* detail, the livingness, like the mortification, exuded by the pungency of specific data. . . . The syndicated conservative newspaper columnist William F. Buckley wrote, 'When Abelard did it, it was possible to prevent its happening again,' insinuating that the president's malfeasance – what Buckley elsewhere called Clinton's 'incontinent carnality' – might best be remedied with nothing so bloodless as impeachment but, rather, by the twelfth-century punishment meted out to Canon Abelard by the knife-wielding associates of Abelard's ecclesiastical colleague, Canon Fulbert, for Abelard's secret seduction of and marriage to Fulbert's niece, the virgin Heloise. . . . I myself dreamed of a mammoth banner, draped Dadaistically like a Christo wrapping from one end of the White House to the other and bearing the legend A HUMAN BEING LIVES HERE. It was the summer when – for the billionth time – the jumble, the mayhem, the mess, proved itself more subtle than this one's ideology and that one's morality. It was the summer when a president's penis was on everyone's mind, and life, in all its shameless impurity, once again confounded America.

In this passage from Philip Roth's *The Human Stain*, Roth's narrator Nathan Zuckerman fetishizes the chaotic, "pungent," "*lifelike* details" of certain lives, as if in these incoherent minutiae we can finally witness the truth of what it means to be a human being. There is a chaotic incoherence to human lives, Zuckerman suggests, because these lives are driven by conflicting forces, both internal and external, that fail to be compelled or understood by the ordering and orderly imperatives of ideology or morality. According to this broad vision of what it actually means to be a person, William Buckley stands opposed to Christo and Dada in a battle as ethical as it is intellectual. More specifically, against Christo, who have described their art as "irrational, irresponsible, without any justification," stands the moralizing and insistent allegorizing of Buckley who finds

Abelard and Heloise in the Oval Office. As the above passage suggests, Zuckerman sides throughout *The Human Stain* with Christo, with Bill Clinton, with his recently dead friend Coleman Silk, and with other Whitmanesque figures of incoherent, essentially human desire; such figures are Zuckerman's heroes because he embraces a certain vision of authenticity and because these men resist the easy moralizing that is inimical or simply foreign to that which characterizes his idea of authentic human life. But Zuckerman is too much of a writer – “a professional writer!” as Silk enthusiastically describes him – to avoid the intellectual habit on which Buckley so often banked, an intellectual habit that flattens any sense of biographical “mayhem” or incoherence. Where Buckley looks to Clinton's unwieldy “carnality” and finds the familiar Abelard, Zuckerman looks to Silk's unwieldy libido and finds a pathetic figure like other pathetic figures who have been beaten down, predictably and inevitably, by the deadening forces of order and orthodoxy embodied by Buckley. Where Buckley looks to Clinton and finds Abelard, that is, Zuckerman looks to the apparent incoherence of Silk's life and finds Clinton. Similarly, Zuckerman occasionally looks to Silk and finds in him “the ravening spirit of man” embodied by the *Iliad*'s Achilles, another passionate hero with a weak spot (335). This ability to find recognizable and familiar patterns in the lives of distinctly different men is ultimately the anamorphic gesture that characterizes Zuckerman's story of Silk. Like the skull at the foot of the Ambassadors in Holbein's painting, the social truth of life's blurry “mayhem” comes into view when observed from the correct perspective. Emerging from this anamorphic vision, Silk becomes for Zuckerman the “man who decides to forge a distinct historical destiny, who sets out to spring the historical lock”

(335), but who is also doomed in the end by the historical forces of rectitude, just like Faustus, say, or just like Clinton.⁸⁹

While the plot of Silk's story is entirely familiar to any one who knows the classical literature that Silk, conspicuously enough, taught at the fictional Athena College, Zuckerman wants not to make Silk's life and death seem as if they were somehow fated or coherent, and he says as much at several points throughout *The Human Stain*. According to Zuckerman, the

desire for a beginning, a middle, and an end . . . is realized nowhere so thoroughly as in the plays Coleman taught. . . . But outside classical tragedy of the fifth century B.C.E. the expectation of complete, let alone of a just and perfect, consummation is a foolish illusion for an adult to hold. (315)

Despite this vision of a life's narrative incoherence, however, Zuckerman repeatedly figures Silk's life in narratively satisfying terms. While railing against the sense of complete "consummation" to a life, and while embracing the "pungent" singularity of Silk's life, *The Human Stain* explains away Silk's singularity by figuring it as a wholly understandable and utterly typical desire for "freedom" against the puritanical or oppressive forces that Zuckerman identifies as typically American in their simultaneous prurience and prudery. As the blurb from Sam Tanenhaus on the cover of Vintage's 27th printing aptly and precisely points out, *The Human Stain* is "A master novelist's haunting parable about our troubled modern moment." If *The Human Stain* is a parable – and I think it is – then it is a parable because the life that Zuckerman writes is so familiar, and

⁸⁹ By way of full disclosure: I think that President Clinton should have been impeached and indicted despite his "humanity," though I also fully agree with Roth's (or Zuckerman's) reading of the grating, juvenile, and caustic rhetoric that surrounded the impeachment. I make this point not to moralize, but to distance myself from Zuckerman's absurdly pious anti-moralizing. On the often intolerable unholier-than-thou tone of Roth's narrator, see Christopher Hitchens' review of Roth's *Exit Ghost* in *The Atlantic*, "Zuckerman Undone."

because Silk's life unfolds itself unto the moment of his death as predictably as Icarus' story unfolds. In Silk's biography, all manner of inhumane moralizing plays the role provided for Icarus' sun as it melts the wings of a hero who has hubristically pushed himself, again and again, too far beyond a set of clearly delineated norms or rules. In this sense, Zuckerman becomes, despite his intentions, a Renaissance humanist historiographer, finding the universal, orderly truths of human lives in the specificity of individual stories, even though he looks to them and claims to see little more than chaos.⁹⁰ Such an irony is not unlike the irony I described earlier with respect to Kuriyama's *Christopher Marlowe: A Renaissance Life* when I discussed the difficulty of writing about untimely deaths in biographies. For biographers, enthralled generically by the logic of biographical coherence, it is difficult to register what Kuriyama calls a "senseless" death because biographers necessarily work to establish the sensefulness of a human life and because this sense of sensefulness often extends to the moment of death, finding in it an apt conclusion rather than a mere ending.

Zuckerman's suspicion of imagined biographical wholeness often seems throughout *The Human Stain* to be a historically specific suspicion, characteristic of modernity or postmodernity. Zuckerman, that is, points to the "desire for a beginning, a middle, and an end" as an utterly anachronistic desire foreign to the present, better left in

⁹⁰ Peter J. Euben, in *Platonic Noise*, disagrees with the argument that I make here. Euben reads *The Human Stain* while reading Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Poetics*, and he uncritically sides with Zuckerman's narrative voice as if that voice is not speaking at cross purposes. For Euben, who reads *The Human Stain* as a novel about the necessary incoherence of individual human lives, Zuckerman's resistance to the classical vision of a "consummated" life is the truth of the novel. As Euben reads *The Human Stain*, the novel is about a problem with life in general, because the "human world is always out of joint. . . . [We] are becoming someone other than we were a moment ago, though the trajectories of such changes are both distinctive and allusive (4).

the intellectual world of fifth century B.C.E. Greece. It is as if we postmoderns, incredulous, as Lyotard argues, to broad historical metanarratives, are also skeptical of micronarratives on the level of biography. In the words of the anonymous and conspicuously smug young professor that Silk overhears on the Athena campus, such a narratively coherent vision of the individual life is something to be dismissed as utterly naïve. Describing his students, he complains

Closure! They fix on the conventionalized narrative, with its beginning, middle, and end – every experience, no matter how ambiguous, no matter how knotty or mysterious, must lend itself to this normalizing, conventionalizing, anchorman cliché. Any kid who says ‘closure’ I flunk. They want closure, there’s their closure. (147)

The contempt for narrative wholeness is here obvious, but so too is the sense that such a vision of lifespans is utterly hackneyed and outmoded. To think in terms of beginnings, middles, and ends or to hope for meaningful closure is to operate in the realm of cliché, and it means that one has failed to grasp the apparently obvious incoherence of human lives. But, of course, the novel, serving as a narrative summation of Silk’s life, makes sense of his death in narrative terms – as if his life was a tragedy with a beginning, middle, and end – and it fails to grasp this point that we all should apparently understand. Perhaps the novel is afflicted by such an obvious irony because such contemptible naïveté is central to our understanding of subjects as subjects who exist and develop over time: even in the midst of a given life’s mystery, ambiguity, and knottiness, it seems, there are few other ways to think of a life.

Where Zuckerman and the anonymous young professor simply assert as self-evident the anachronism of the coherent human lifespan, Theodor Adorno makes the

point more specifically and lucidly in a passage that has informed this dissertation from its beginning. According to Adorno in his lectures on metaphysics, we can no longer believe in broad historical narratives of progress after the horrors of Auschwitz, and he claims that this disruption in historical thought must also inform our thinking on biography. Arguing that Heidegger's vision of the subject's coherence in the face of his or her singular death is a "surreptitious attempt to appropriate theologically posited possibilities of experience without theology" (107), Adorno claims that lives can no longer make sense in this way:

one might say, if you will not take my literary references amiss, that there is no longer an epic or a biblical death; no longer is a person able to die weary, old and sated with life. . . . Thus, the reconciliation of life, as something rounded and closed in itself, with death, a reconciliation which was always questionable and precarious and, if it existed at all, was probably a happy exception – that reconciliation is out of the question today. (106, 107)⁹¹

I draw attention to this passage for two reasons. First, by yoking a sense of the temporally appropriate death to the logic of epic poetry, Adorno tacitly recognizes here a point that I have argued repeatedly throughout this dissertation: a sense of narrative literariness undergirds thinking on the timeliness of death. Second, I draw attention to this passage because Adorno recognizes here that, rather than being anachronistic, such a vision of a life's unfolding has perhaps always seemed tenuous, awkward, troubled, and conspicuously *ad hoc*. Rather than being simple and straightforward, the sense of a death's timeliness is something that must, as this dissertation as demonstrated, be jerry-

⁹¹ As Said reads Adorno, such a vision of biographical incoherence also informs Adorno's reading of the late Beethoven. Rather than reading Beethoven's musical biography in terms of resolution and synthesis, as if Beethoven worked throughout his career towards a conclusion, Adorno argues that Beethoven's career culminates in the performance of incoherence and stylistic negation. See Said's *On Late Style: Literature and Music Against the Grain*, especially the introduction.

rigged by appeal to specific frameworks of narrative meaning. But this apparent coherence is rarely seamless. Such jerry-rigging is particularly obvious in Renaissance drama because this drama often borrows from a variety of conflicting discourses through which time is made narratively sensible and meaningful in different ways. When asking about the untimeliness of deaths in Renaissance drama, that is, one is ultimately forced to deal with a variety of frameworks in which, tenuously, the deaths that are staged are made to make sense, even if they appear at first senseless according to another vision of historical unfolding. To return by way of example to *Richard II*, while Richard's death may be untimely according to Bolingbroke in *Richard II*, it also makes sense according to the logic of humanist historiography and the logic of the *de casibus* tradition, and the play ultimately makes some narrative sense of a death that is, in another sense, narratively senseless.

To recognize that the plays I have discussed struggle to make narrative sense of narratively disruptive untimely deaths means that I must draw attention to an embarrassing gap in this dissertation: I have neither found nor negotiated any untimely deaths in Renaissance drama. Certainly, I have dealt with deaths that fit the vision of untimely deaths around which this dissertation operates because I have negotiated staged deaths that are in some sense surprising, startling, and narratively disruptive. But of the plays I have read here, these deaths are also made to make sense by fitting them within other parsings of time through which apparent incoherence becomes coherence. The surprising deaths of Moll and Touchwood Jr. in Middleton's *Chaste Maid*, for instance, make sense, and make a very specific type of sense, if one recognizes that perhaps these

deaths speak to a city-wide romantic redemption in which order is uniformly restored to a morally disordered urban space.

Stephen Greenblatt makes a compelling and related argument when he argues that Shakespeare rarely stages a natural death in any of his plays, and that the category of “natural death” is itself troubled in early modern England. Moving through Shakespeare’s *oeuvre* to find deaths that appear “natural” because they befall the elderly and the ill, he points out that none of these deaths are ever simply natural, and that they are always pulled into a broader set of stories in which they are figured as the result of some other problem or malevolence. After reading the deaths of Gaunt in *Richard II* and Edward in *Richard III*, for instance, Greenblatt eventually comes to the conclusion that

[a]lmost all of the male deaths represented or even alluded to in Shakespearean tragedy and history occur within the general framework of a poetics of answerability. What we have been calling ‘unnatural’ death in Shakespeare is death for which someone is culpable, death that can be assigned a social meaning, that comes from someone in the community, and that has a significance within a shared moral order. (111)

While Greenblatt focuses here on the sense that natural death was a category beset by problems in early modern England because individuals generally regarded ill health as unnatural, I am interested here in the ways that these deaths are themselves made meaningful by locating them within a broader narrative framework. Faced with the end of a life, these deaths are made narratively meaningful by positioning them within a causal chain that turns them into the conclusive ends of actions. Deaths, that is, are something for which someone or something must be answerable, and Shakespeare, claims Greenblatt, always provides an agent able to answer for them.

Of course, one might point out that staging deaths as if they were narratively satisfying is simply the work that any narrative, non-absurdist drama performs. If a protagonist dies in a play, that death is made to make sense within that play's narrative framework, if only because making experience into something narratively meaningful is the thing that playwrights do. The same argument might be made for biographies that work to tell the story of a life so that it concludes rather than ends. While this may certainly be the case, the point of this dissertation is not simply to emphasize that deaths are made narratively meaningful by early modern dramatists, but that they are made meaningful in ways that are determined by a historically local sense of narrative plausibility. If one dies at the right time in these plays, then the timeliness of that death is only conceivable within a framework of historical understanding and explanation; if this timeliness is something that an audience is expected to recognize and find adequate, then the framework of historical understanding and explanation most likely corresponds with other familiar discourses of historical rationalization. Following from Greenblatt's example above, for instance, the naturalized trajectory of biological illness might be a narratively inoperative explanation for a death in these plays because ill health is here considered unnaturally motivated. Because ill health is not a viable narrative explanation for death, these plays invoke another sort of explanation for the deaths that one finds on stage. By way of contrast, while it may seem narratively plausible for Baldwin and the writers of *Mirror for Magistrates* to locate Richard's death within a framework of sin and divine punishment, such a suggestion offered today would seem absurd and unsatisfying,

at least in the modern day scholarly discourse most analogous to the discourse in which the *Mirror* operated.

Having demonstrated that early modern dramatists generally make narrative sense of deaths which might seem untimely and narratively incoherent, I have also worked to demonstrate that such narrative satisfaction is, at least in the plays that I have read here, treated suspiciously. In *Richard II*, for instance, we might read Richard's death as the untimely ruin of a king unjustly overthrown despite the play's efforts to make its audience think otherwise. Despite the humanist historiographical and providential explanations that the play provides, for instance, the play also stages a sympathetic king who reads his own death, at least occasionally, in terms of disruption and violence rather than narrative satisfaction, and it stages a murder that ostensibly arises accidentally from an utterly contingent miscommunication between Bolingbroke and Exton. In the case of *A Chaste Maid* we might similarly read the deaths and resurrections of Moll and Touchwood Jr. within a historiographically broader framework of urban redemption, but we must always be aware of the play's occasionally satirical tone because it potentially undermines any sense of historical coherence in which lives appear narratively meaningful. In these plays, that is, we find a tension similar to the tension that wracks *The Human Stain*: the narrative coherence of lives – the sense that lives have beginnings, middles, and ends – appears specious even while it appears compelling. The case of Dido in Marlowe's *Dido* is, of course, troubling to this generalization that Renaissance drama makes narrative sense of the narratively senseless death and it proves the limit case of this dissertation, renders all such discussions about the relative timeliness of a given

death moot by suggesting that time unfolds in a way that is simply indifferent to the unfolding of a human life.

In emphasizing this ambivalence regarding the question of untimely deaths and human lifespans in the plays with which I have here dealt, my dissertation perhaps makes a point that was made more keenly by Shakespeare in *Hamlet*. Just as one might be suspicious of narrative biographical coherence, such coherence is at least attractive if not necessary. Such a tension is most obvious when Hamlet, at the end of his life, seems skeptical of that coherence even while craving it and insisting upon it. Hamlet, after finding himself in the most extreme of circumstances and struggling to make sense of them, speaks to Horatio:

Things standing thus unknown shall I leave behind me.
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw they breath in pain,
To tell my story. (5.2.324-28)

At this moment, Hamlet asks of Horatio the impossible. Just before his death – he speaks only once more in the play – he insists that Horatio tell Hamlet’s unique story to the world, but Hamlet also knows that this story is untellable. He asks Horatio to absent himself from “felicity” here, but this sense that Horatio should avoid solemn, loyal suicide also quibbles on the sense of “felicity” as “truth” or “accuracy.” Absent yourself from your stoic duty, Hamlet seems to say, but also absent yourself from the truth so that you might tell the story of my life. But this life story is also in excess of any story Horatio will tell because Hamlet’s life is full of “things” that stand “unknown.” Horatio’s infelicitous story, that is, must piece together those limited facts to which he is

privy, must declare that they represent Hamlet felicitously, and must make this faulty narrative into the public, postmortem truth of Hamlet's life. For Hamlet, at this moment when he looks at his own death, the stories of lives remain opaque to the tellers of those stories, but those stories must be told in a "harsh world" where felicity and accuracy in reporting a life always remain second to the desire for a death's meaningfulness at life's conclusion.

Bibliography

- Adorno, Theodor. *Metaphysics: Concept and Problems*. Trans. Edmund Jephcot. Stanford: Stanford U P, 2001.
- Adrian, John M. "Itineraries, Perambulations, and Surveys: The Intersections of Chorography and Cartography in the Sixteenth Century." *Images of Matter: Essays on British Literature of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*. Ed. Yvonne Bruce. Newark: U Delaware P, 2005. 29-46.
- Allen, Don Cameron. "Marlowe's Dido and the Tradition." *Essays on Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama in Honor of Hardin Craig*. Ed. Richard Hosley. New York: Columbia U P, 1962. 55-68.
- Anderson, Thomas P. *Performing Early Modern Trauma from Shakespeare to Milton*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006.
- Archer, Ian W. "John Stow, Citizen and Historian." *John Stow (1525-1605) and the Making of the English Past*. Ed. Ian Gadd and Alexandra Gillespie. London: The British Library, 2004. 13-26.
- , "The Nostalgia of John Stow." *The Theatrical City: Culture, Theatre and Politics in London, 1576-1649*. Ed. David L. Smith, Richard Strier, and David Bevington. New York: Cambridge U P, 1995. 17-34.
- , *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991.
- Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: U Chicago P, 1958.
- Ariès. *Centuries of Childhood*. Trans. Robert Baldick. New York: Penguin, 1973.
- , *The hour of our death*. Trans. Helen Weaver. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.
- Aristotle. *Poetics*. Trans. James Hutton. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1982.
- Astington, John. "The Ages of Man and the Lord Mayor's Show." *Other Voices, Other Views: Expanding the Canon in English Renaissance Studies*. Ed. Helen Ostovich, Mary Silcox and Graham Roebuck. Newark: U Delaware P, 1999. 74-90.
- Auerbach, Erich. *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Trans. Willard R. Trask. Princeton: Princeton U P, 1953.

- Augustine. *Confessions*. Trans. Henry Chadwick. New York: Oxford UP, 1992.
- Baldwin, William, et. al. *A Mirror for Magistrates*. Ed. Lily B. Campbell. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1970.
- Barkan, Leonard. "Living Sculptures: Ovid, Michelangelo, and *The Winter's Tale*." *English Literary History* 48.4 (1981): 639-67.
- , "The Theatrical Consistency of *Richard II*." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 29.1 (1978): 5-19.
- Bartels, Emily. *Spectacles of Strangeness: Imperialism, Alienation, and Marlowe*. Philadelphia: U Pennsylvania Press, 1993.
- Barthes, Roland. *S/Z: An Essay*. Trans. Richard Miller. New York : Hill and Wang, 1974.
- Beard, Thomas. "Selection from *The Theater of God's Judgement*." *Christopher Marlowe: The Critical Heritage*. Ed. Millar MacLure. New York: Routledge, 1995. 41-42.
- Beer, Barrett L. "John Stow and the English Reformation, 1547-1559." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 16.2 (1985): 257-71.
- Bergeron, David. *English Civic Pageantry*. 2nd Ed. Tempe: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 2003.
- , "Middleton's Moral Landscape: A *Chaste Maid in Cheapside* and *The Triumphs of Truth*." *Accompaning the Players: Essays Celebrating Thomas Middleton, 1580-1980*. New York: AMS Press, 1983. 133-146.
- Blundeville, Thomas. *The true order and Methode of writing and reading Hystories*. Ed. Hugh G. Dick. *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 3.2 (1940): 149-170.
- Bly, Mary. "Playing the Tourist in Early Modern London: Selling the Liberties Onstage." *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association* 122.1 (2007): 61-71.
- Boccaccio, Giovanni. *The fall of Prynces Gathered by John Bochas*. Trans. John Lydgate. London: Johannis Wayland, 1554[?].
- Bonahue Jr., Edward T. "Citizen History: Stow's *Survey of London*." *SEL* 38.1 (1998): 61-85.

- Bono, Paola. "Rewriting the Memory of a Queen: Dido, Cleopatra, Elizabeth I." *European Journal of English Studies* 10.2 (2006): 117-30.
- Borris, Kenneth. *Allegory and Epic in English Renaissance Literature: Heroic Form in Sidney, Spenser, and Milton*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2000.
- Bradstreet, Ann. *Several poems compiled with great variety of wit and learning, full of delight*. 2nd Ed. Boston: John Foster, 1678.
- Braund, Susanna. *Latin Literature*. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Bromham, A. A. "Thomas Middleton's *The Triumphs of Truth*: City Politics in 1613." *The Seventeenth Century* 10.1 (1995): 1-25.
- Brooks, Peter. *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative*. New York: A. A. Knopf, 1984.
- Bruckner, D. J. R. "That's One Way to Respond if a Man Decides to Leave." *New York Times* 7 February 2001. <http://theater2.nytimes.com/mem/theater/treview.html?_r=1&res=9B03E0D71E3EF934A35751C0A9679C8B63&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss&oref=slogin> Accessed: 19 February 2008.
- Brunning, Alizon. "'O, how my offences wrestle with my repentance!': The Protestant Poetics of Redemption in Thomas Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*." *EMLS* 8.3: 4.1-51. <URL: <http://purl.oclc.org/emls/08-3/brunchas.html>>.
- Budiansky, Stephen. *Her Majesty's Spymaster*. New York: Viking, 2005.
- Budra, Paul. *A Mirror for Magistrates and the de casibus Tradition*. Toronto: U Toronto P, 2000.
- Calver, Edward. *The Foure Ages of Man*. London: T. & R. Coles, 1635.
- Campbell, Lily B. *Shakespeare's Histories: Mirrors of Elizabethan Policy*. San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1947.
- Camden, William. *Annals, or, The historie of the most renovvned and victorious princesse Elizabeth*. London: Benjamin Fisher, 1635.
- Camus, Albert. *The Outsider*. New York: Penguin, 1965.
- Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996.

-----, "Violence and Time: Traumatic Survivals." *Assemblage* 20 (1993): 24-25.

Cavarero, Adriana. *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood*. Trans. Paul Kottman. New York: Routledge, 2000.

Ceballos, Rod, dir. *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*. Erindale Theatre, 17 March 2007.

Charnes, Linda. *Hamlet's Heirs*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

-----, "Reading for the Wormholes: Micro-periods From the Future. *Early Modern Culture: An Online Seminar* 6 (2008). < <http://emc.eserver.org/1-6/charnes.html>>. Accessed 1 May 2008.

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Legend of Good Women*. East Lansing: Colleagues Press, 1995.

Cheney, Patrick. *Marlowe's Counterfeit Profession: Ovid, Spenser, Counter-Nationhood*. Toronto: U Toronto P, 1997.

Cohen, Walter. "Political Criticism of Shakespeare." *Shakespeare Reproduced: The text in history and ideology*. Ed. Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O'Connor. New York: Methuen, 1987. 18-46.

Collinson, Patrick. "John Stow and nostalgic antiquarianism." *Imagining Early Modern London: Perceptions and Portrayals of the City from Stow to Strype, 1598-1720*. Ed. J. F. Merritt. New York: Cambridge U P, 2001. 27-52.

Cope, Jackson I. "Marlowe's *Dido* and the Titillating Children." *English Literary Renaissance* 4.3 (1974): 315-25.

Covatta, Anthony. *Thomas Middleton's City Comedies*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1973.

Crogan, Patrick. "The Tendency, the Accident, and the Untimely: Paul Virilio's Engagement with the Future." *Theory, Culture and Society* 16.6: 161-76.

Dawson, Anthony B. "'Priamus is Dead': Memorial Repetition in Marlowe and Shakespeare." *Shakespeare, Memory, and Performance*. Ed. Peter Holland. New York: Cambridge U P, 2006. 63-84.

Deats, Sara Munson. "*Dido, Queen of Carthage* and *The Massacre at Paris*." *The Cambridge Companion to Christopher Marlowe*. Ed. Patrick Cheney. New York: Cambridge U P, 2004. 193-206.

- DeCerteau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Los Angeles: U California P, 1984.
- De Grazia, Margreta. "Fin-de-Siècle Renaissance England." *Fins-de-Siècle: English Poetry in 1590, 1690, 1790, 1890, and 1990*. Ed. Elaine Scarry. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins U P, 1995. 37-63.
- . *Hamlet Without Hamlet*. New York: Cambridge U P, 2007.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Specters of Marx*. Trans. Peggy Kamuf. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- . "No Apocalypse, Not Now (full speed ahead, seven missiles, seven missives)." *Diacritics* 14.2 (1984): 20-31.
- . *The Work of Mourning*. Ed. and trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas. Chicago: U Chicago P, 2001.
- Disraeli, Isaac. *Curiosities of Literature*. New York: Routledge, 1858.
- Dollimore, Jonathan. *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*. 3rd ed. Durham: Duke U P, 2004.
- Downie, J. A. "Marlowe: Facts and Fictions." *Constructing Christopher Marlowe*. Ed. J. A. Downie and J. T. Parnell. New York: Cambridge U P, 2000. 13-29.
- . "Marlowe, May 1593, and the 'Must-Have' Theory of Biography." *The Review of English Studies* 58.235 (2007): 245-67.
- Eagleton, Terry. "Aesthetics and Politics." *New Left Review* 107 (1978): 21-34.
- . "Buried in the Life: Thomas Hardy and the Limits of Biographies." *Harper's* 315.1890 (November 2007): 89-93, 94.
- . *Sweet Violence: The Idea of the Tragic*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2003.
- Elliott, John R. "History and Tragedy in *Richard II*." *SEL* 8.2 (1968): 253-71.
- Estevez, Victor A. "Capta Ac Deserta: The Fall of Troy in Aeneid IV." *The Classical Journal* 74.2 (1979): 97-109.
- Euben, J. Peter. *Platonic Noise*. Princeton: Princeton U P, 2003.
- Fabyan, Robert. *Fabyans cronycle*. London: Wyllyam Rastell, 1533.

- Ferguson, Arthur B. *Clio Unbound: Perception of the social and cultural past in Renaissance England*. Durham: Duke U P, 1979.
- Field, John. *A Godly Exhortation, by occasion of the late judgement of God, shewed at Parris-garden -- given to all estates for their instruction, concerning the keeping of the Sabbath day*. London: Robert Walde-Grout, 1583.
- Fineman, Joel. *The Subjectivity Effect in Western Literary Tradition*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991.
- Fisher, Will. "Queer Money." *ELH* 66.1 (1999): 1-23.
- Fly, Richard. "Accommodating Death: The Ending of *Hamlet*." *SEL* 24.2 (1984): 257-74.
- Forker, Charles R. "Unstable Identity in Shakespeare's *Richard II*." *Renascence* 54.1 (2001): 3-22.
- Frassinelli, Pier Paolo. "Realism, Desire and Reification: Thomas Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*." *Early Modern Literary Studies* 8.3 (2003).
<URL:<http://purl.oclc.org/emls/08-3/fraschas.htm>>.
- Gager, William. "Dido Tragoedia." Ed. and Trans. Adrianne Roberts-Baytop. *Dido, Queen of Infinite Literary Variety: The English Renaissance Borrowings and Influences*. Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache Und Literatur, 1976. 37-94.
- Gamel, Mary-Kay. "The Triumph of Cupid: Marlowe's *Dido Queen of Carthage*." *American Journal of Philology* 126 (2005): 613-22.
- Garry, Grace Mary. "Unworthy Sons: Richard II, Phaeton, and the Disturbance of Temporal Order." *Modern Language Studies* 9.1 (1978-9): 15-19.
- Gough, Melinda. *Daughters of Circe: Effeminacy and Poetic Efficacy in Renaissance Epic and Theatre*. Ph.D. Dissertation. Yale University, 1996.
- Gibbons, Brian. *Jacobean City Comedy: A Study of Satiric Plays by Jonson, Marston and Middleton*. London: Rupert Hart-Davies, 1968.
- , "Unstable Proteus: Marlowe's *The Tragedy of Dido Queen of Carthage*." *Christopher Marlowe*. Ed. Brian Morris. London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1968. 27-46
- Gill, Roma. "Marlowe's Virgil: *Dido Queene of Carthage*." *The Review of English Studies* 28.110 (1977): 141-55.

- , "The World of Thomas Middleton." *Accompaning the Players: Essays Celebrating Thomas Middleton, 1580-1980*. New York: AMS Press, 1983. 15-38.
- Gordon, Andrew. "Overseeing and Overlooking: John Stow and the Surveying of the City." *John Stow (1525-1605) and the Making of the English Past*. Ed. Ian Gadd and Alexandra Gillespie. London: The British Library, 2004. 81-8.
- Goy-Blanquet, Dominique. "Elizabethan Historiography and Shakespeare's sources." *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's History Plays*. Ed. Michael Hattaway. New York: Cambridge U P, 2002. 57-70
- Grafton, Anthony. *What Was History? The Art of History in Early Modern Europe*. New York: Cambridge U P, 2007.
- Grande, Troni Y. *Marlovian Tragedy: The Play of Dilation*. Lewisburg: Bucknell U P, 1999.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. "The Eating of the Soul." *Representations* 48 (1994): 97-116.
- , *Hamlet in Purgatory*. Princeton: Princeton U P, 2001.
- Greene, Thomas M. *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry*. New Haven: Yale U P, 1982.
- Greenfield, Matthew A. "Fragments of Nationalism in *Troilus and Cressida*." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 51.2 (2000): 181-200.
- Griffin, Andrew. "The Banality of History in *Troilus and Cressida*." *Early Modern Literary Studies* 12.2 (2006). <URL: <http://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/12-2/grifbana.htm>.>
- Grossman, Marshall. *The Story of All Things: Writing the Self in English Renaissance Narrative Poetry*. Durham: Duke U P, 1998.
- Guibbory, Aschah. *The Map of Time: Seventeenth Century English Literature and the Ideas of Pattern in History*. Urbana: U Illinois P, 1986.
- Hall, Edward. *The union of the two noble and illustre families of Lancastre and Yorke*. Menston: Scolar Press, 1970.
- Hall, William Keith. "A Topography of Time: Historical Narration in John Stow's *Survey of London*." *Studies in Philology* 88.1 (1991): 1-15.

- Hanson, Elizabeth. "There's Meat and Money Too: Rich Widows and Allegories of Wealth in Jacobean City Comedies." *ELH* 72 (2005): 209-38.
- Harris, Jonathan Gil. *Untimely Matter: Reworking Materiality in the Time of Shakespeare*. Philadelphia: U Pennsylvania Press, Forthcoming.
- Hartman, Geoffrey. "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies." *New Literary History* 26.3 (1995): 537-64.
- Hayward, Sir John. *The First Part of the Life and raigne of King Henrie the IIII*. London, John Woolfe, 1599.
- Headlam Wells, Robin. *Shakespeare's Humanism*. New York: Cambridge U P, 2005.
- . "The Fortunes of Tillyard: Twentieth-Century Critical Debate on Shakespeare's History Plays." *English Studies: A Journal of English Language and Literature* 66.5 (1985): 391-403.
- Hegel, G. W. F. *Hegel on Tragedy*. Ed. and Trans. Anne Paolucci and Henry Paolucci. New York: Doubleday, 1962.
- Helgerson, Richard. *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England*. Chicago: U Chicago P, 1992.
- Heller, Herbert Jack. *Penitent Brothellers: Grace, Sexuality, and Genre in Thomas Middleton's City Comedies*. Newark: U Delaware P, 2000.
- Henslowe, Philip. *Henslowe's Diary*. 2nd edition. Ed. R. A. Foakes. New York: Cambridge U P, 2002.
- Herman, Peter. "Rastell's *Pastyme of People*: Monarchy and the Law in Early Modern Historiography." *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30.2 (2000): 275-308.
- Heywood, Thomas. "If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody, Part II." *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Heywood*. Vol. 1. London: John Pearson York Street Covent Gardens, 1874.
- Hillman, David. "The Gastric Epic: *Troilus and Cressida*." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48.3 (1997): 295-313.
- Hilton, Della. *Who Was Kit Marlowe? The Story of the Poet and Playwright*. London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1977.

- Hitchens, Christopher. "Zuckerman Undone." *The Atlantic*. October 2007.
<http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200710/roth-exit-ghost>
- Hopkins, Lisa. *Christopher Marlowe: A Literary Life*. New York: Palgrave, 2000.
- Howard, Jean E. "The New Historicism and Renaissance Studies." *English Literary Renaissance* 16 (1986): 13-43.
- , *Theater of a City: The Places of London Comedy, 1598-1642*. Philadelphia: U Pennsylvania P, 2006.
- Huyssen, Andreas. *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*. Stanford: Stanford U P, 2003.
- Hunt, Maurice. "The Conversion of Opposites and Tragedy in Shakespeare's *Richard II*." *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 25 (1999): 1-17.
- Jacobs, Henry E. "Prophecy and Ideology in Shakespeare's *Richard II*." *South Atlantic Review* 51.1 (1986): 3-17.
- James, Heather. *Shakespeare's Troy: Drama, Politics, and the Translation of Empire*. New York: Cambridge U P, 1997.
- Jameson, Fredric. "Marx's Purloined Letter." *New Left Review* 209 (1995): 75-109.
- . *Postmodernism, Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham: Duke U P, 1991.
- Justin. *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*. Trans. J. S. Watson. London: Henry G. Bohn, York Street, Covent Garden, 1853.
- Jonson, Ben. *Every Man Out of His Humour*. Ed. Helen Ostovich. Manchester: Manchester U P, 2001.
- , "Timber: or Discoveries." *The Complete Poems*. Ed. George A. E. Parfitt. New York: Penguin, 1988. 373-458.
- Kamps, Ivo. *Historiography and Ideology in Stuart Drama*. New York: Oxford U P, 1996.
- Kantorowicz, Ernest. *The King's Two Bodies*. Princeton: Princeton U P, 1957.

- Kastan, David Scott. "Opening gates and stopping hedges: Grafton, Stow, and the politics of Elizabethan history writing." *The project of prose in early modern Europe and the New World*. Ed. Elizabeth Fowler and Roland Greene. New York: Cambridge U P, 1997. 66-79.
- Kehler, Dorothea. "Richard II 5.3: Traditions and Subtext." *Traditions and Innovations: Essays on British Literature of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*. Ed. David G. Allen and Robert A. White. London: Associated University Presses, 1990. 127-136.
- Kermode, Frank. *The Sense of An Ending*. 2nd Edition. New York: Oxford U P, 2000.
- Kinney, Clare R. "Epic Transgression and the Framing of Agency in *Dido Queen of Carthage*." *SEL* 40.2 (2000): 261-76.
- Knowles, James. "The Spectacle of the Realm: civic consciousness, rhetoric and ritual in early modern London." *Theatre and Government Under the Early Stuarts*. New York: Cambridge U P, 1993. 157-189.
- Kuchar, Gary. *The Poetry of Religious Sorrow in Early Modern England*. Cambridge U P, Forthcoming.
- Kuriyama, Constance Brown. *Christopher Marlowe: A Renaissance Life*. Ithaca: Cornell U P, 2002.
- , *Hammer or Anvil: Psychological Patterns in Christopher Marlowe's Plays*. New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers U P, 1980.
- Kyd. *The Spanish Tragedy*. Ed. J. R. Mulryne. 2nd ed. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1989.
- La Capra, Dominick. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins U P, 2001.
- Lancashire, Anne. *London Civic Theatre: City Drama and Pageantry from Roman Times to 1558*. New York: Cambridge U P, 2002.
- Leggatt, Alexander. *Citizen Comedy in the Age of Shakespeare*. Toronto: U Toronto P, 1973.
- LeGoff, Jacques. *Time, work and culture in the Middle Ages*. Trans. Arthur Goldhammer. Chicago: U Chicago P, 1980.

- Leinwand, Theodore B. *The City Staged: Jacobean Comedy, 1603-1613*. Madison: U Wisconsin P, 1986.
- , "London Triumphant: The Jacobean Lord Mayor's Show." *Clio* 11.2 (1982): 137-53.
- Levin, Harry. *The Overreacher: A Study of Christopher Marlowe*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard U P, 1952.
- Levy, F. J. *Tudor Historical Thought*. (Reprint from 1967.) Toronto: U Toronto P, 2004.
- Mallin, Eric S. *Inscribing the Time: Shakespeare and the End of Elizabethan England*. Los Angeles: U California P, 1995.
- Manley, Lawrence. *Literature and Culture in Early Modern London*. New York: Cambridge U P, 1995.
- , *London in the Age of Shakespeare: An Anthology*. London: Croom Helm, 1986.
- , "Of Sites and Rites." *The Theatrical City: Culture, Theatre and Politics in London, 1576-1649*. Eds. David L. Smith, Richard Strier and David Bevington. New York: Cambridge U P, 1995. 35-54.
- Marcus, Leah S. "Textual Indeterminacy and Ideological Difference: The Case of *Doctor Faustus*." *Renaissance Drama* 20 (1989): 1-20.
- Marlowe, Christopher. *Dido, Queene of Carthage*. Ed. H. J. Oliver. London: Methuen, 1968.
- , *Edward II*. Ed. Martin Wiggins and Robert Lindsay. London: Methuen, 2003.
- Marotti, Arthur. "Fertility and Comic Form in *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*." *Comparative Drama* 3 (1969): 65-74.
- Matheson, Lister M. "English Chronicle Contexts for Shakespeare's Death of Richard II." *From Page to Performance: Essays in Early English Drama*. Ed. John A. Alford. East Lansing: Michigan State U P, 1995. 195-219.
- McMillin, Scott. "Shakespeare's *Richard II*: Eyes of Sorrow, Eyes of Desire." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 35.1 (1984): 40-52.
- Meek, Richard. "Ekphrasis in *The Rape of Lucrece* and *The Winter's Tale*." *Studies in English Literature* 46.2 (2006): 389-414.

Middleton, Thomas. "A Chaste Maid in Cheapside." *Five Plays*. Ed. Bryan Loughrey and Neil Taylor. Penguin: New York, 1988.

-----, "Michaelmas Term." *A Mad World, My Masters and Other Plays*. Ed. Michael Taylor. New York: Oxford U P, 1995. 67-136.

-----, *The Sunne in Aries*. London: Edward Allde, 1621.

-----, *The Triumphs of Honour and Industry*. London: Nicholas Okes, 1617.

-----, *The Triumphs of Love and Antiquity*. London: Nicholas Okes, 1619.

-----, *The Triumphs of Integrity*. London: Nicholas Okes, 1623.

-----, *The Triumphs of Truth*. London: Nicholas Okes, 1613.

-----, *The puritaine or The widow of Watling-streete*. London: G. Eld, 1607.

de Montaigne, Michel Equyam. *The Essays of Montaigne Done into English*. Trans. John Florio. London: Nutt, 1892.

Montrose, Louis. "Texts and Histories." *Redrawing the Boundaries: The Transformation of English and American Literary Studies*. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt and Giles Gunn. New York: Modern Language Association, 1992. 392-418.

More, Sir Thomas. *Utopia*. Ed. and Trans. George M. Logan and Robert M. Adams. New York: Cambridge U P, 2002.

Moretti, Franco. *Signs Taken for Wonders: On the Sociology of Literary Forms*. New York: Verso, 2005.

Morson, Gary Saul. *Narrative and Freedom: The Shadows of Time*. New Haven: Yale U P, 1994.

Neill, Michael. *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy*. New York: Oxford U P, 1997.

-----, *Putting History to the Question: Power, Politics, and Society in English Renaissance Drama*. New York: Columbia U P, 2000.

Newman, Karen. "A Chaste Maid in Cheapside and London." *Early Modern English Drama: A Critical Companion*. New York: Oxford U P, 2006. 237-47.

- , "Toward a Topographic Imaginary." *Historicism, Psychoanalysis and Early Modern Culture*. Ed. Carla Mazzio and Douglas Trevor. New York: Routledge, 2000. 59-81.
- Nicholl, Charles. *The Reckoning: The Murder of Christopher Marlowe*. London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1992.
- Oakeshott, Walter and Constance Jordan. "The Siena Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I." *Apollo* 124 (1986): 306-9.
- Orgel, Stephen. "Tobacco and Boys: How Queer Was Marlowe?" *GLQ* 6.4 (2000): 555-576.
- Ostovich, Helen. "'Here in this garden': The Iconography of the Virgin Queen in Shakespeare's *Richard II*." *Marian Moments in Early Modern British Drama*. Ed. Regina Buccola and Lisa Hopkins. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2007.
- Ovid. *Heroides*. Ed. and Trans. Harold Isbell. New York: Penguin, 1990.
- Paster, Gail Kern. *The Idea of the City in the Age of Shakespeare*. Athens: U Georgia P, 1985.
- Preston, Thomas. *Cambyes King of Persia*. London: Edward Allde, 1595.
- Quint, David. *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton*. Princeton: Princeton U P, 1993.
- Radstone, Susanna. "Trauma Theory: Context, Politics, Ethics." *Paragraph* 30.1 (2007): 9-29.
- Read, Conyers. *Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth*. 3 Vols. Cambridge, MA: Harvard U P, 1925.
- Roth, Philip. *The Human Stain*. New York: Vintage, 2000.
- Richman, David. "Directing Middleton's Comedy." *Accompaning the Players: Essays Celebrating Thomas Middleton, 1580-1980*. New York: AMS Press, 1983. 79-88.
- Ricoeur, Paul. *Time and Narrative: Volume I*. Trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer. Chicago: U Chicago P, 1983.
- Riggs, David. *The World of Christopher Marlowe*. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2006.

Riley, James C. *Rising Life Expectancy: A Global History*. New York: Cambridge U P, 2001.

Roberts-Baytop, Adrienne. *Dido, Queen of Infinite Literary Variety: The English Renaissance Borrowings and Influences*. Salzburg: Institut Für Englische Sprache und Literatur, 1976.

Rosenberg, Eleanor. *Leicester: Patron of Letters*. New York: Columbia U P, 1955.

Rowe, Jr., George E. *Thomas Middleton and the New Comedy Tradition*. Lincoln: U Nebraska P, 1979.

Russell, Josiah Cox. *British Medieval Population*. Albuquerque: U New Mexico P, 1948.

-----, "Medieval Population." *Social Forces* 15.4 (1937): 503-11.

Sacks, David Harris. "London's Dominion: The Metropolis, the Market Economy, and the State." *Material London, c. 1600*. Ed. Lena Cowen Orlin. Philadelphia: U Pennsylvania P, 2000. 20-54.

Said, Edward. *Beginnings: Intention and Method*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1975.

-----, *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2006.

Schell, Edgar. "Richard II and Some Forms of Theatrical Time." *Comparative Drama* 24 (1990): 255-69.

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*. Ed. Philip Edwards. New York: Cambridge U P, 2003.

-----, *2 Henry VI*. Ed. David Bevington. New York: Oxford U P, 1998.

-----, *Richard II*. Ed. Kenneth Muir. New York: Cambridge U P, 1967.

-----, *Troilus and Cressida*. Ed. Kenneth Muir. New York: Oxford UP, 1982.

Smith, Alan Gordon. *The Babington Plot*. New York: Macmillan, 1936.

Smith, Mary E. "Staging Marlowe's *Dido Queene of Carthage*." *SEL* 7.2 (1977): 177-90.

- Sophocles. "King Oedipus." *The Theban Plays*. Trans. E. F. Watling. New York: Penguin, 1947.
- Spenser, Edmund. *The Faerie Queene*. Eds. Thomas P. Roche and C. Patrick O'Donnell. New York: Penguin, 1978.
- Stevens, Scott Manning. "Sacred Heart and Secular Brain." *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*. Ed. David Hillman and Carla Mazzio. New York: Routledge, 1997. 263-83.
- Stock, Angela. "Stow's *Survey* and the London Playwrights." *John Stow (1525-1605) and the Making of the English Past*. Ed. Ian Gadd and Alexandra Gillespie. London: The British Library, 2004. 81-88.
- Stock, Angela and Anne-Julia Zwierlein. "Our scene is London . . ." *Plotting Early Modern London: New Essays on Jacobean City Comedy*. Ed. Dieter Mehl, Angela Stock, and Ann-Julia Zwierlein. Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2004. 1-24.
- Stow, John. *The Survey of London*. Ed. Ernest Rhys. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1919.
- Strohm, Paul. "The Trouble With Richard: The Reburial of Richard II and Lancastrian Symbolic Strategy." *Speculum* 71.1 (1996): 87-111.
- Stump, Donald. "Marlowe's Travesty of Virgil: Dido and Elizabethan Dreams of Empire." *Comparative Drama*. 34.1 (2000): 79-107.
- Suzuki, Mihoko. *Metamorphoses of Helen: Authority, Difference, and the Epic*. Ithaca: Cornell U P, 1989.
- Swinburne, Algernon Charles. "The Age of Shakespeare." *The Complete Works of Algernon Swinburne*. Vol. 1. Ed. Sir Edmund Gosse, C. B. Wise and Thomas James Wise. 11 Volumes. London: Heinemann, 1926.
- Thaler, Alwin. "Churchyard and Marlowe." *Modern Language Notes* 38.2 (1923): 89-92.
- Tichborne, Chidiok. "Tichborne's Elegy." *Poems of the Elizabethan Age: An Anthology*. Ed. Geoffrey G. Hiller. London: Methuen, 1977.
- Tillyard, E. M. W. *Shakespeare's History Plays*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1944.

- Travis, Peter W. "Chaucer's Chronographiae, the Confounded Reader, and Fourteenth-Century Measurements of Time." *Disputatio Volume 2: Constructions of Time in the Late Middle Ages*. Ed. Carol Poster and Richard Utz. Chicago: Northwestern U P, 1997. 1-34.
- Van Den Broek, A. G. "Take the Number Seven in Cheapside." *SEL* 28.2 (1988): 319-30.
- Vaughan, William. "from *The Golden Grove*." *Christopher Marlowe: The Critical Heritage*. Ed. Millar MacLure. New York: Routledge, 1995. 46-47.
- Virgil. *Aeneid*. Trans. Robert Fitzgerald. Vintage: New York, 1981.
- , *The First Four Books of Virgil His Aeneid*. Trans. Richard Stanyhurst. Leiden: John Pates, 1582.
- , *Virgill's Aeneados*. Trans. Gavin Douglas. London: William Copland, 1553.
- Von Trier, Lars, dir. *Dancer in the Dark*. Perfs. Bjork, Catherine Deneuve, David Morse. Zentropa Entertainments, 2000.
- Wakelin, Daniel. *Humanism, Reading, and English Literature, 1430-1530*. New York: Oxford U P, 2007.
- Wall, Cynthia. "Grammars of Space: The Language of London from Stow's *Survey* to Defoe's *Tour*." *Philological Quarterly* 76.4 (1997): 387-411.
- Watkins, John. *The Specter of Dido: Spenser and the Virgilian Epic*. New Haven: Yale U P, 1995.
- Watson, Robert. *The Rest is Silence: Death as Annihilation in the English Renaissance*. Los Angeles: U California P, 1994.
- Wheatley, Chloe. "The Pocket Books of Early Modern History." *The Culture of Capital: Property, Cities and Knowledge in Early Modern England*. Ed. Henry S. Turner. New York: Routledge, 2002. 183-202.
- White, Hayden. "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact." *Tropics of Discourse*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U P, 1978. 81-101.
- , *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins U P, 1973.

- . *The Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins U P, 1978.
- Williamson, Hugh Ross. *Kind Kit: An Informal Biography of Christopher Marlowe*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973.
- Wilson, Emily R. *Mocked With Death: Tragic Overliving from Sophocles to Milton*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U P, 2004.
- Wolfreys, Julian. "London Khoragraphic." *ImageText* 1.2 (2004). URL:<http://www.english.ufl.edu/imagetext/archives/v1_2/wolfreys/index.shtml>.
- . *Writing London, Volume Two: Materiality, Memory, Spectrality*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Womersley, David. "Against the Teleology of Technique." *Huntington Library Quarterly* 68.1 (2005): 95-108.
- Woolf, D. R. *The Idea of History in Early Stuart England: Erudition, Ideology, and 'The Light of Truth' from the Accession of James I to the Civil War*. Toronto: U Toronto P, 1990.
- . *The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture, 1500-1730*. New York: Oxford U P, 2003.
- Wrigley, E. A. et. al. *English Population History from Family Reconstitution, 1580-1837*. New York, Cambridge U P, 1997.
- Wrigley, E. A. and R. S. Schofield. *The Population History of England, 1541-1871: A Reconstruction*. New York: Cambridge U P, 1989.
- Zitner, Sheldon P. "Aumerle's Conspiracy." *SEL* 14 (1978): 239-57.
- Zizek, Slavoj. *Did Somebody Say Totalitarianism: Five Interventions in the (Mis)Use of a Notion?* New York: Verso, 2001.
- . *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991.